

Spring/Summer 2025



# engage

A Journal for Church of God Ministries



WORLD EVANGELIZATION CENTER

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Dedicated Space at Headquarters to Emphasize Prayer
- Tech Startup Gets Funding
- SURVEY: Young People are Spiritually Open
- Book Review: *Through a Glass Darkly*

*Engage Journal* is published in the interest of providing contemporary aids and resources to pastors and pastoral staffs.

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On the Cover:

*World Evangelization Center, Church of God International Offices.*

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**From the Editor** | Cameron Fisher

## Prayer and the International Offices



*Members of the International Executive Council worship in the prayer center.*

In this issue is an update on a new prayer center that is taking shape on the International Offices campus. While not yet completed, the space, located on the second floor of the Leadership and Communications Center, has already hosted hundreds who have experienced just how powerful a place dedicated to the specific focus of prayer can be.

I have witnessed it on several occasions already. Groups who have visited the campus recently have been drawn in by the anointing that seems to already be manifest in the room. On May 16, hundreds of delegates attending the Ministerial Internship Program (MIP) Commissioning weekend, toured the campus, but had a difficult time leaving the prayer center. The Executive Council, which

now meets downstairs, visited the room during their April session and I saw the same men who prayed out their former chambers last September moved by the transformation of the place where for the last 20 years critical decisions for the Church of God had been made.

The anticipation of the effect the prayer center will have on the Church of God is exciting. While one space does not attract the presence of God over another, there is a reverence that has already been created in the International Offices Prayer Center that as individuals and groups dedicate themselves to seasons of prayer and fasting could have profound implications of the global harvest. Prayer changes things! ■

# INTER

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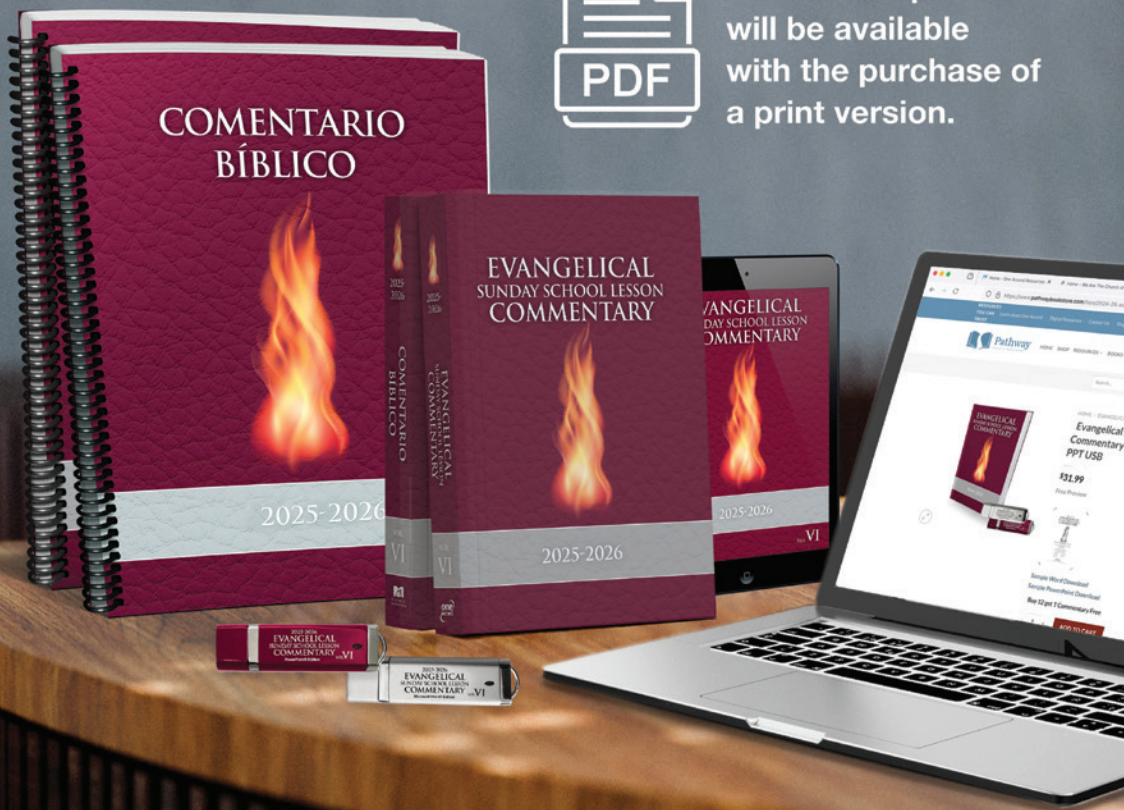


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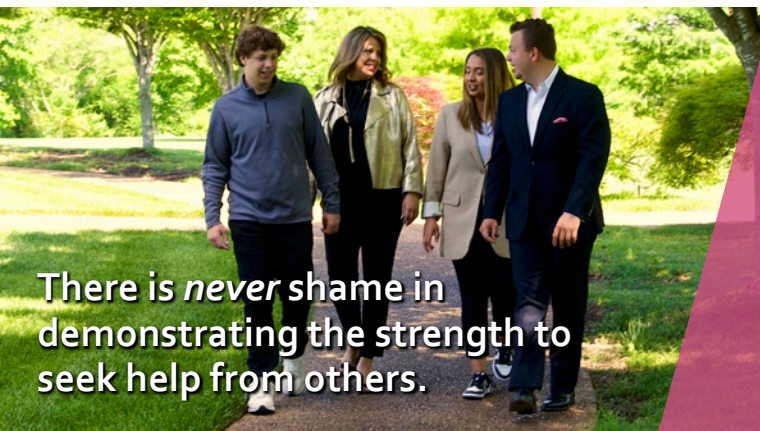
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# Dedicated Space at Headquarters to Emphasize Prayer



*Members of the International Executive Committee join with members of the North American Church of God (Indian) Fellowship at the prayer center.*

**Cleveland, Tennessee**—When Gary Lewis was elected general overseer of the Church of God last July, he introduced what has become a popular and engaging set of initiatives branded #WeAreChurchofGod. The core emphases launched at the General Assembly were We Go, We Care, We Preach, We Disciple, and We Pray. While one emphasis is not necessarily more important than another—as all have come to define us as a Church—prayer has taken center stage at the International Offices in a way it has never before.

Since the current International Offices were built and dedicated in 1968, there have been spaces for prayer. While

it is understood the entire campus can be a place of prayer, there is an exciting new, dedicated space taking shape in what was the former Executive Council chambers in the Leadership and Communications Center. In a sincere and sacrificial action back in September of 2024, the International Executive Council voted to transform their traditional meeting room into a sanctuary of prayer. The final activity by the Council in the room was an anointing of the walls for its future purpose.

While the new prayer center won't be fully completed until later this year, the space has already become a magnet for visitors and leaders who have discovered



the powerful anointing that has come to define the room. Groups, including the Executive Council, which met in person last April, have taken the opportunity to pray in surroundings intended to enhance the prayer experience.

Entering the room, visitors will not mistake the global emphasis. The carpeting is a massive rendition of the world allowing those who wish to kneel or stand on their geographical prayer area. In the center is an interactive kiosk that will, among other items, offer prayer points for the Church of God globally. Speaking of globes, to the right will be a vintage globe that has been a part of the International Offices since the early 1970s. It has appeared in numerous online prayer events, such as Agree and Global Prayer Meetings, and was the centerpiece of the Executive Council chambers, always reminding our top leaders of the global reach of the Church of God. Behind it is a stained-glass window designed specifically for the prayer center.

On the primary walls, a giant LED screen will emphasize more prayer points and can be customized for future events. On the opposite wall is perhaps one of the most stunning features of the room: a replica of the Western/Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, an icon of prayer and

destination site for churches and movements of many persuasions. Those who come to pray may leave folded prayer requests tucked into the crevices of the wall; just as is the case at the wall in Jerusalem. Other items in the room will be prayer altars, benches, and locations where prayer requests can be written on marker boards for groups dedicated to regular prayer times. One of the groups the prayer center will host on a regular basis is PrayerBorne, a coalition of prayer warriors who meet faithfully every week to bring the needs and online prayer requests of the Church before the Lord.

The prayer center will be formally dedicated this fall during the convening of the International Executive Council where those who have helped make the space possible will be honored.

When asked about the prayer center, General Overseer Lewis stated, “As the final touches are put in place, and while the Global Prayer Center becomes a symbolic destination, let us ever be mindful that prayer is not a location, but an individual attitude and dedication to a relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” ■



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# Tech Startup Gets Funding to Expand Church Revenue-Generating Model

*By Nicola Menzie, Faithfully*

As many congregations face declining attendance and financial pressures, leaving valuable church buildings underutilized, a tech startup named ChurchSpace—dubbed “Airbnb for churches”—is looking to duplicate and expand its revenue-generating model in a new partnership with the city of Detroit.

The company, active in Texas since 2022, offers a platform helping churches generate revenue by renting out their facilities for events, businesses, and community needs, turning potentially burdensome properties into assets. Backed by a recent \$1.2 million funding round led by Black Ops Ventures, with participation from investors including Minor Capital and Michigan Rise, ChurchSpace is relocating its headquarters from Houston to Detroit, Michigan.

According to a press release, the move signifies a major expansion for the nascent tech company, cofounded by Day Edwards and Emmanuel

Brown. Both Edwards and Brown are PKs—pastor’s kids—who say the ministry struggles they’ve witnessed firsthand help fuel their mission.

“When God gives vision, He makes provision,” Edwards said in the press release. “This isn’t just tech—it’s about godly stewardship, economic justice, and making sure churches can serve and survive.”

Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan recently welcomed ChurchSpace to his city, revealing the partnership and pilot program in an April 24 announcement.

“Our churches have long been a critical backbone of our neighborhoods—feeding families, mentoring youth, and caring for those in need—and through ChurchSpace’s innovative work, they will be able to generate more resources to do their work,” Duggan said.

ChurchSpace plans to onboard an initial pilot group of up to 15 Detroit





churches to help them utilize their vacant and underutilized spaces to increase revenue.

Currently on the company's website, visitors can search availability for a church's bowling alley, café space, or cinema-style auditorium at rates ranging anywhere from \$75 an hour to \$240 for a two-hour booking.

With its fresh injection of cash and new empowering partnership, Edwards and Brown envision moving ChurchSpace beyond event rentals to activate church campuses as micro-logistics and last-mile delivery hubs,

creating potential new income streams and community support roles.

Their current revenue model has already shown promise, with some Texas churches reportedly earning nearly \$100,000 annually through the platform, reinvesting funds into local outreach. Mayor Duggan claims Detroit's congregations could also potentially help create more than 150 local jobs for roles at ChurchSpace within the tech company's first three to five years in the city. ■

*(This article was originally published on May 6, 2025. Source: Faith on View)*



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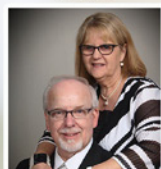
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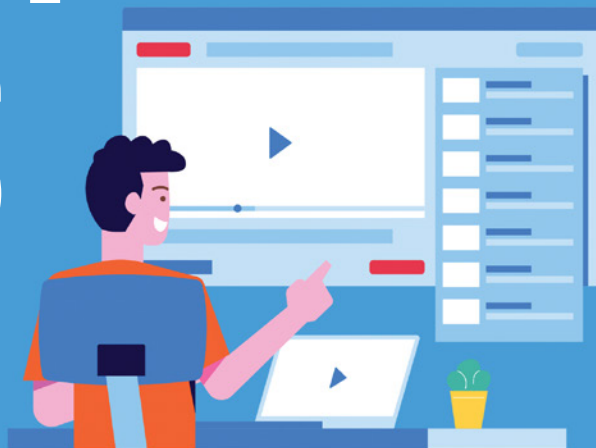
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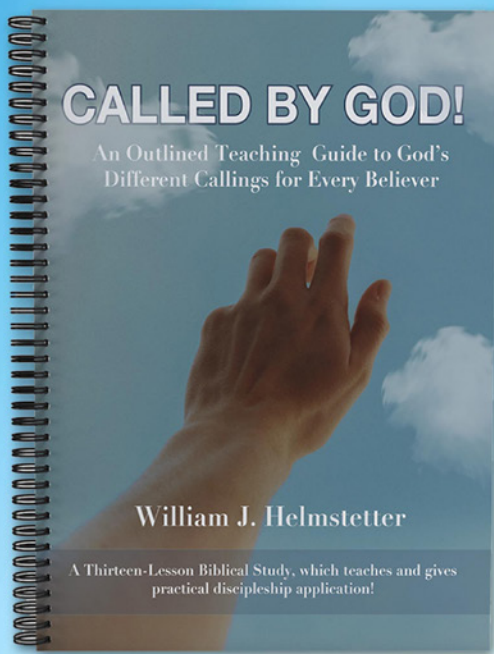


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# SURVEY: Young People are Spiritually Open; Struggle with Established Religion

By David Goodwin, Christianity Today

Despite the gloomy narrative being pushed by the media, a new survey has revealed that reports of God's death in Britain, and across the Western world, may be exaggerated.

Commissioned by author Christopher Glasson in the leadup to the release of his new book, *The Devil's Gospels: Finding God in Four Great Atheist Books*, the Belief in Britain Report saw OnePoll survey 10,000 Britons to discover their thoughts on religion—and delivered some surprising results.

“What is surprising is that young people seem more inclined to spirituality than old people,” Glasson told *The Sunday Times*. “This could be because of societal change: the financial crisis, Covid, the epidemic of loneliness all might encourage young people to look beyond the material world for meaning.

“It could also be because no one ever asked this question before; young people might simply be more idealistic.”

Contrary to popular wisdom, the results suggest that atheism may have peaked among Generation X, those aged between 45 and 60, with a quarter identifying as

atheists. This was higher than the 20 percent reported both by the Baby Boomer generation (those over 65) and Millennials (aged between 25 and 44).

But what will give those in the Church the most hope is that only 13 percent of respondents under 25 identify as atheists, with 62 percent saying they are “very” or “fairly” spiritual.

However, Glasson warned that church leaders should not be too quick to seize the results as a sign that Christian belief in the West is not facing serious challenges.

“I imagine many church leaders will be rubbing their hands thinking this is the answer to their prayers but unfortunately for them, it isn't,” Glasson told *The Sunday Times*.

Saying that it was time to “go back to the vestry for a rethink”, he added, “Whatever the survey might say about young people being more spiritual and religious than old people, it is equally clear that they are put off by established religion.”

The survey found that the Church as an institution has been damaged by the



many public scandals it has faced over the years, and that many young people find it hard to engage with traditional expressions of faith.

“The largest proportion of Christians (43%) have their own idea of God while a further 9% don’t accept every aspect of the religion,” Glasson wrote as part of his report on the findings.

“This suggests that the Church’s interpretation of God is at odds with the majority of Christians’ understanding of God.

“It seems to imply that Church leaders should listen more if they want to win back their flocks.”

One way of bridging this gap could be becoming more present and supportive in local communities, with almost a third (32%) flagging this as a priority. Only slightly less (31%) called on religious groups to respond to claims or incidents of abuse in the Church with honesty and by implementing effective preventative measures if they wanted to rebuild trust.

The survey collected responses from a range of ages, with 1,039 under 25, 1,696 aged 25-34, 1,637 aged 35-44, 1,667 aged 45-54, 1,605 aged 55-64, and 2,356 over 65. While 69 percent aged over 65 identified as Christian, young people reported far more diverse beliefs. Among those aged under 25, 40 percent identified as Christians, with Muslims

making up 21 percent and Hindus 3 percent.

This backs the findings of reports showing Christian parents have been typically less successful in passing their faith down to their children compared with Muslim parents. Muslims were also much more likely (41%) to “worship regularly and accept the authority of the leaders of my faith” than Christians (14%).

While the survey reveals a number of challenges facing traditional Christian churches, with many young people reporting that they were more likely to express their spirituality through “enjoying nature” and “mindfulness” than “participating in religious practices”, it also shows that there is an opportunity for the church to recapture the spiritual battlefield.

“What I think is happening now is that we have two generations of people (the Millennials and Generation X) growing up in Britain feeling emotionally bereft and struggling with conventional material life goals,” Glasson wrote in his conclusion.

“I am sure that this is an opportunity for all kinds of spiritual entrepreneurs, but I don’t think we should write off conventional Christianity just yet.”

*(This article originally appeared in Christian Today on January 28, 2025) ■*



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## MONEY MATTERS

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# Things to Do BEFORE You Die

No one lives forever!! While that concept is known to everyone, some act as though they are going to live forever, never giving a thought to what would happen to their “estate” should they die. The common response is “I have enough to worry about!” While that may be true, lifelong grudges have developed among family members fighting over insignificant items once a parent or close relative passes away. Therefore, you should take some time now and prepare for what would happen if you were to die. Here are some steps that should be on everyone’s list.

**1. Prepare a Will.** Even the person who has little to no assets should have a will. Most states even allow a hand-drafted will to be used. A will allows you to specify how you want your assets divided upon your death. It alleviates confusion and keeps the state from dividing your estate. While probate seems to be a daunting task, a well-drafted will and advance planning may eliminate the need for probate.

**2. Healthcare Directive or Living Will** Complete a healthcare directive or “living will” to guide your family in case you are ever in a persistent vegetative state and not able to make healthcare decisions on your own. Do you want to be kept alive on life support if you will never regain a functional quality of life? Do you want to be fed by a tube? A healthcare directive allows you to make all these decisions in advance.

### **3. Power of Attorney Authorization**

A trusted spouse, child, or friend should be given the right to transact business for you if you became ill or incapable of taking care of your own affairs. With a durable power of attorney, you can appoint an agent to manage your financial affairs, make health care decisions, or conduct other business for you during your incapacitation. A durable power of attorney may be general or limited. A general durable power of attorney may allow your agent to do every act which may legally be done by you. A limited durable power of attorney



covers specific events, like selling property, making investments, or making health care decisions.

**4. Update Beneficiaries.** Make sure that your retirement accounts, your insurance policies, and certain bank accounts have updated beneficiaries. Those accounts pass to the designated beneficiaries outside of what your will might say and without probate. Therefore, if you write someone out of your will, you must make sure that you delete them from your beneficiary designated accounts as well.

**5. Add a CoSigner.** If you are the only person listed on your checking account or other transactional accounts, a court order may be required for your heirs to access those funds after your death. You may have set aside funeral expense money in your bank account but if someone cannot write a check from that account, it may take months to be able to pay your final expenses. A trusted child or friend should be selected as a cosigner since they will have unlimited access to your bank account.

**6. Access to Safe Deposit Box** Just as adding a cosigner to your checking account, at least one other person should have authority to access your safe deposit box, assuming things of

value are kept in the safe deposit box. Not only should someone have access, more importantly, a trusted child or friend should know that you have a safe deposit box—and should have a general description of its contents.

**7. Access to Your Home** If a close relative does not live nearby, a trusted neighbor should be given a key to your home. If you fall or are unable to come to the door, or if you pass away, it is vital that someone can access your home without having to break in.

**8. List Passwords and Usernames.**

With the proliferation of social media (Facebook, X, Instagram, etc.), online banking, and other Internet-based accounts, a person can have literally dozens of usernames and passwords. It is imperative that a list of those passwords and usernames, along with the appropriate security questions, be kept in a safe place and updated regularly. Without such information, it could take months (and a court order) to have such sites taken off the Internet at your death.

**9. Funeral Plans** Do you know where you would like to be buried? Do you want to be cremated or buried? Who do you want to preach your funeral? While you most likely have answers to all those questions, does anyone else

have that information? For funeral matters, specific instructions should be written and then given to a trusted child or friend—and not placed in a safe deposit box or made a part of your will.

**10. Letter of Instruction.** While a will is vital to pass on major items at your death, there may be smaller and more personal items that you do not want to include in your will – but that you want to make sure gets to the right person. To make sure your wishes are fulfilled, write a letter of instruction that is attached to your will, specifying who is to get your favorite diamond ring or other cherished item. A copy of the letter should be given to a trusted child or friend to make sure that those cherished items are not taken before the will is read. A sample “letter of instruction” is available under “Forms” at [www.benefitsboard.com](http://www.benefitsboard.com).

**11. Gift now.** If you have specific items that you want to leave to children, grandchildren, or friends, why wait until you die? Why not gift those items now so that you can watch the recipient enjoy the gift while you are still alive. The tax laws allow you to make certain gifts while you are alive without creating any tax liabilities.

**12. Take Care of Your Spouse.** If you were to die today, is your spouse capable of taking care of himself or herself or would they need to move in with a child or have a caregiver? Are resources available for a caregiver for your spouse at your death from an insurance policy or other assets that you may leave? You should have the discussion now as to how your spouse would be cared for at your death. The last thing that should be discussed at your funeral is “Who is going to take care of Dad now that Mom is gone?”

Obviously, none of these topics are fun and enjoyable, but all are necessary to discuss with family. A little preparation now will go a long way toward making your transition from your earthly home to your heavenly home easier for your family and friends. So don’t delay in making your final preparations. ■

*Art Rhodes is President and CEO of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc.*

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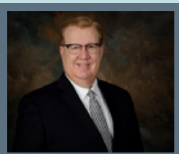


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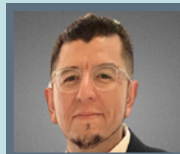
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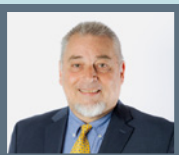
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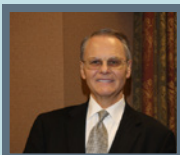
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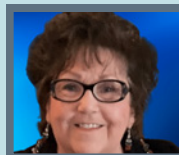
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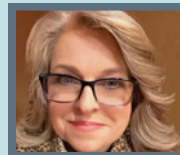
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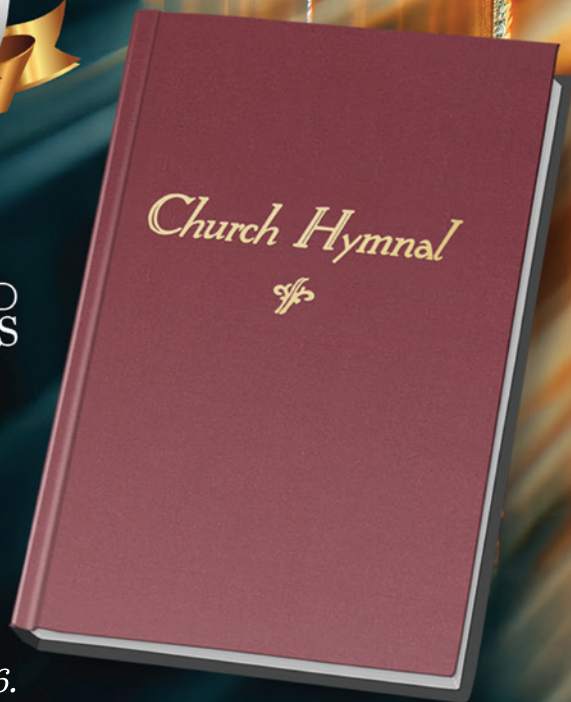


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## LEGAL NOTES

DENNIS WATKINS

# The Immigration Issue: May our churches be designated as “sanctuaries”? . . . What should we do if ICE comes to our church?



## Background

On January 20, 2025, the Trump administration rescinded a Biden-era policy that protected certain areas—such as churches, schools, and hospitals—from immigration enforcement, replacing it with a directive that gives ICE agents power to take enforcement actions in any of these spaces, using “common sense.”

I have received numerous calls on this issue, and I am of the opinion that Church of God has proponents on both sides of this issue, at both extremes, and everywhere in between. We have members who believe that anyone in the country without proper documentation should

be apprehended and deported immediately. At the same time, we have members who believe that the new immigration policies of the Trump administration are evil and that the efforts of the government should be opposed and thwarted, including harboring undocumented persons in the church. I would point out that I am speaking from my own opinion and not officially from the Church of God. Let’s address these questions.

## May our churches be designated as “sanctuaries?”

How far will the government go to prosecute people in churches for “harboring” undocumented immigrants? We do



know that the government appears to be targeting hardened criminals, gang members, and repeat offenders.

What we do not know is whether the government will turn its full attention to non-violent, non-criminal persons who are residing in the country without creating any problems. There is some indication that efforts to remove all undocumented persons may indeed increase.

One source I reviewed says that: “Congregations that choose to designate themselves as ‘sanctuaries’ should be aware of potential legal implications, including criminal law, against ‘harboring’ of undocumented immigrants...” If a local church takes the position of active “harboring,” that would be at the church’s peril.

### **What should we do if ICE agents appear at the church?**

#### **On one extreme:**

If there is a warrant or proper subpoena for someone’s arrest that is produced, clearly, we would want to comply with that warrant or any proper subpoena, or any order of a court.

#### **On the other extreme:**

If there is no warrant or legal document, are we required to comply with the requests/demands of government agents?

This question has not been fully answered as of this time.

Given what we know and what we don’t know at this point, what should our position as a church and as local churches be? First, our position should be that we will obey the laws of the land. If a warrant or subpoena is produced at the church, certainly, that should generate compliance on our part.

Next, if there is no warrant or subpoena but we know that undocumented persons are on church property, that does place the church in a potential danger of “harboring” illegal persons in the church. That decision could generate liability on the church’s part.

### **Conclusion**

As to how far the government will enforce its policies, we simply don’t know at this time—it will have to play out. My opinion is that the only logical and proper position for our churches to take is that “we will obey the laws of the land.” I think we will hear more information and further positions on this issue in the coming days. Stay tuned! ■

*Dennis Watkins is legal counsel for the Church of God. The writer is not engaged in rendering legal or other professional services herein. If legal advice or expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. Special thanks to Grayson Cook and Tatum Price for their assistance in writing this article.*

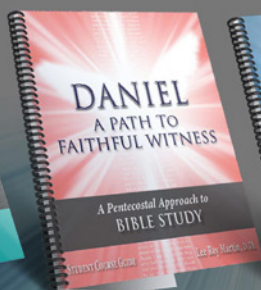
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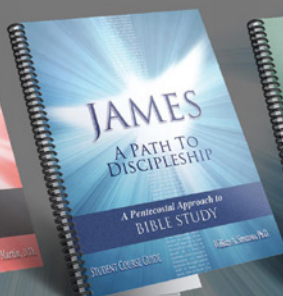
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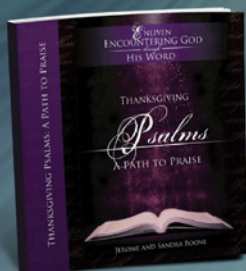
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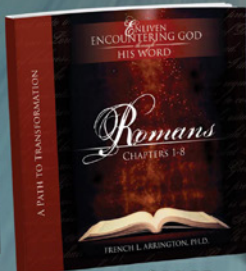
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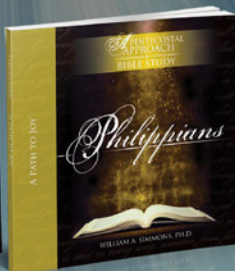
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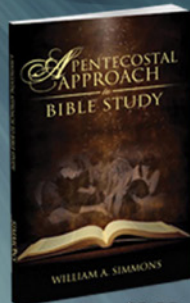
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### **Tampa, Florida**

**January 9-10, 2026**

*Emerging Leaders Conference*

### **Cleveland, Tennessee**

**April 24-26, 2025**

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## New Book Offers Guidance for Serving the Grieving

Church of God Publications recently announced the release of *Through a Glass Darkly: Shedding Light on Serving the Grieving*, a deeply insightful and compassionate resource by J. Greg Rush. Rush provides a faith-based guide to navigating end-of-life care, supporting grieving families, and honoring the lives of the deceased.

Rush has served in funeral service for over four decades, providing compassionate end-of-life care and support. His extensive experience, coupled with his deep faith, has shaped his understanding of grief, loss, and the sacred responsibility of honoring the deceased.

Viewing funeral service as both a calling and a ministry, Rush integrates practical guidance, personal experiences, and Scriptural truths to equip pastors, caregivers, counselors, and families with the tools they need to offer comfort and care. His experience shines through the book offering wisdom drawn from real-life situations.

Dr. Raymond F. Culpepper, Executive Director of Church of God Care Ministries, endorses the book, stating, “I only wish I’d had this resource when I started my ministry.”

“The Lord gave this to me (the idea for the book) about eight years ago and it took about that long to get it written,” Rush stated. “I hope it can be a blessing to some of these young ministers starting out.” Rush is owner of Rush Funeral Home in Cleveland, Tennessee, and is an elder at Westmore Church of God.

This guide helps readers navigate one of life’s most challenging moments by providing clear, actionable steps for honoring loved ones and supporting grieving families; real-life stories and insights from decades of funeral service; faith-based encouragement for those ministering to the bereaved; and a roadmap for honoring the lives of departed loved ones with dignity and meaning.

*Through A Glass Darkly* is for pastors, caregivers, counselors, and church leaders, and now available through [pathwaybookstore.com](http://pathwaybookstore.com). ■



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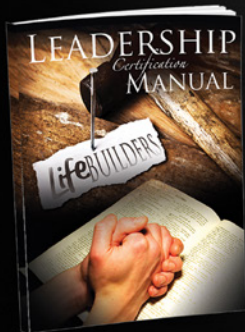
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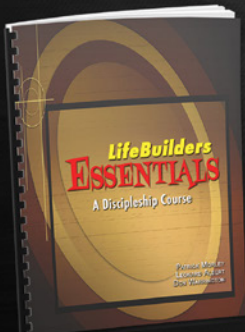
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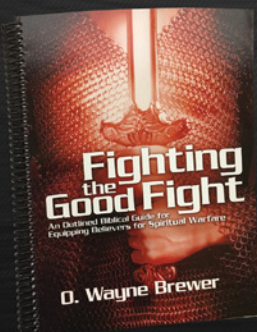
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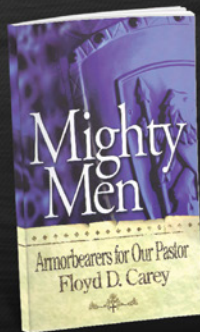
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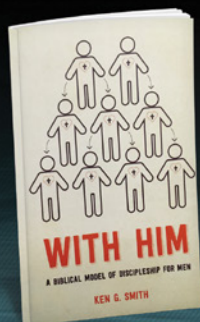


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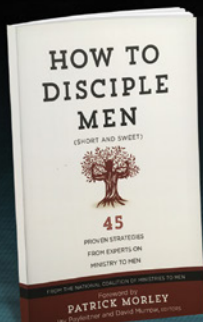


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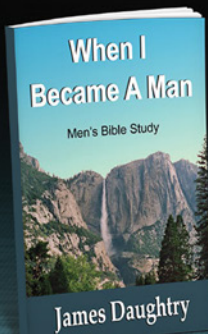
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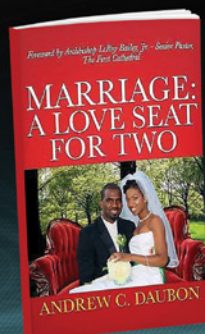
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# Church of God HIGHLIGHTS

*Abbreviated items of interest to the Church of God published on Faith News Network between January 21, 2025, and May 20, 2025. To read the articles in their entirety and others, please visit [faithnews.cc](http://faithnews.cc).*

## Operation Compassion Dedicates New Warehouse

**March 4, 2025-Cleveland, TN—**

Operation Compassion, an independent benevolent agency with roots in the Church of God, held a day of celebrations for the opening of a massive warehouse and office space to better serve the ministry and its outreaches.

On Tuesday, March 4, leaders gathered for ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the 125,000 square-foot warehouse that serves as a command center for distribution of product during disasters and other benevolent causes.

Since its inception more than 25 years ago in the garage of its founder David Lorency, Operation Compassion (OC) has responded to over 100 natural disasters, including some of the most devastating hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, and wildfires that have hit the United States and around the globe. Outreach efforts have reached 48 states and 73 nations. Every year OC serves more than 2.6 million people by transporting and distributing



*Operation Compassion Executive Director Kelvin Page, center, is joined by members of the Executive Committee (l-r) Mark Williams, Wayne Dority, Gary Lewis and Tony Stewart displaying “Blessing Boxes” prepared at the new warehouse on dedication day*

7,400 tons of disaster relief supplies worth more than \$93 million.

“While disaster relief remains at the core of our mission, Operation Compassion continues to expand our efforts and outreaches,” said OC Director Kelvin Page. “These include our Living Waters program, Second Chance rehabilitation and job training, and food distribution networks.” The dedication represents a thrust into a larger reach of ministry and expansion with a greater emphasis on the Living Waters and Second Chance initiatives. Operation Compassion





recently enlarged its footprint with the opening of warehouses and operations space on 105 acres of land in cooperation with Southwest Indian Ministries (S.W.I.M.) in Gallup, New Mexico.

“This is a huge, huge day for Operation Compassion and the Church of God,” said Second Assistant General Overseer Wayne Dority as he led a responsive reading for the dedication. “We look forward to even more developments coming for this dynamic ministry.” ■

## Lewis Launches New Ministry Podcast

**March 20, 2025 Cleveland, TN**— Church of God General Overseer Dr. Gary Lewis has launched the first installment of a new podcast entitled, “Between Sundays,” offstage conversations about real life and ministry.

The podcast features Lewis as host joined by three prominent Church of God pastors as cohosts who offer their take on pastoral ministry drawn from decades of combined leadership. Each episode will feature a guest pastor, church planter, or leader who will expound on their ministry journey offering unique and engaging perspectives.

One of the cohosts is Loran Livingston who serves as senior pastor of the Central Church of God in Charlotte, North Carolina, a church he has pastored for 48 years. Livingston’s sermons have also been featured on the Church of God’s Forward in Faith radio broadcast since 1990.



*General Overseer Gary Lewis is joined by his co-hosts on the set of “Between Sundays” podcast. L-R: Lewis, Livingston, Cooper, and Williams*

Also joining Lewis is Mark L. Williams, third assistant general overseer. Williams contributes leadership knowledge based upon his service as a former general overseer for the Church of God (2012-2016) and years as a pastor at prominent congregations.

The inaugural episode entitled “The Calling, the Challenges, and the Journey” featured David Cooper, another long-term pastor in the Church of God, who is also a cohost on the podcast. Lead pastor at Mount Paran



Church in Atlanta, Cooper became senior pastor following the legendary leadership of Dr. Paul L. Walker.

Between Sundays released on March 21, 2025, debuting on Church of God YouTube and Facebook (@COGHQ). It is also available on Apple and Spotify platforms, or wherever you download your favorite podcast. ■

## **Executive Committee Announces New Overseer Assignments**

**April 24, 2025-Cleveland, TN—** On behalf of the International Executive Committee of the Church of God, General Overseer Gary Lewis recently released a statement announcing a series of leadership appointments that will be effective on August 1, 2025. The appointments impact several states and regions.

“With the upcoming retirement of Ron Martin, Administrative Bishop of Ohio, later this summer, the International Executive Committee has announced the following Administrative Bishop appointments, effective August 1:

- Ohio – Derwood Perkins
- Mississippi – Tommy Powell
- Michigan – David Kemp

- Illinois – Mike White
- Northern New England – Mitchell Corder (interim)

By announcing these appointments now, each state or region can celebrate and honor their departing state overseer during the upcoming camp meeting season. We believe that God has ordained each move and that the churches in each of these states and regions will prosper.” ■

## **Dr. Phil Cook Appointed Next Lee University President**

**May 9, 2025 Cleveland, TN—** The Lee University Board of Directors announced the appointment of Phil Cook as the school’s next president, effective July 1, 2025. Dr. Cook will succeed veteran president Dr. Paul Conn, who will complete a one-year term as president and return to his role as chancellor.

“It’s my pleasure to name Dr. Cook as the 18th person to lead Lee University,” said Board Chair Wade Lombard. “The entire board shares my excitement and optimism that President-elect Cook will add an exciting and fruitful chapter to the history of Lee University.”



Cook brings over 30 years of experience in higher education, most recently serving as President and CEO of the North American Coalition for Christian Admissions Professionals (NACCAP) since 2021. From 1997 to 2021, he held several senior roles at Lee University, including Vice President for Enrollment. He holds a doctorate in higher education administration, a Master of Divinity, and a Bachelor of Science in business from Lee. An ordained bishop in the Church of God, Phil is married to Tonya Cook, and they have three adult children.

Cook responded to the appointment saying, “I am deeply honored and humbled to return to Lee University as president. Tonya and I are grateful to the Board of Directors for entrusting us with this opportunity to serve. We look forward to returning to our alma mater to support our students, faculty, staff, alumni, church, and community. We thank the Lord for His guidance throughout this journey and are eager to get to work.”

The search for the new university president began last fall with the formation of the Presidential Search Committee and the engagement of FaithSearch Partners of Dallas to lead

a national search. From an initial pool of 79 applicants, FaithSearch conducted a rigorous review that narrowed the field to 12 semifinalists.



“Dr. Cook emerged from a field of exceptionally strong candidates,” Lombard added. “While that made the selection process more challenging and competitive, it also makes us more confident that Dr. Cook is the right leader to take us toward Lee’s exciting future.” ■



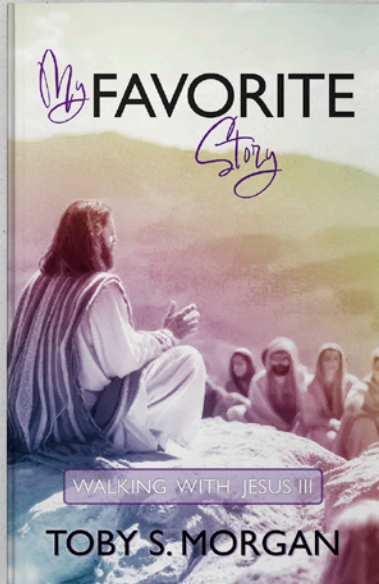
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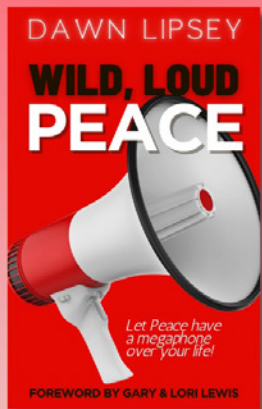
449 McCarn Circle  
Sevierville, TN 37862  
865.453.4644





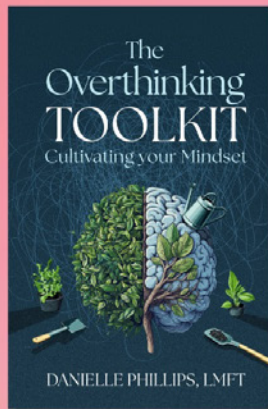
# DISCIPLE.

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MEGAPHONE  
OVER YOUR  
LIFE.

6- WEEK BIBLE  
STUDY



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YOU TO HAVE A  
SOUND MIND  
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FOR  
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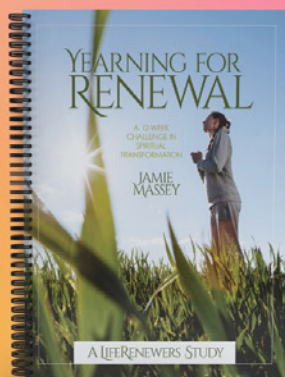
# WOMEN.

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THEIR JOURNEY  
OF  
OVERCOMING.

13- WEEK BIBLE  
STUDY



A 12- WEEK  
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## GRACE FOR GREECE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF  
YWEA25 AND YOUTH  
MISSIONS!



**Max & Rebecca  
Reyes**

Youth & Discipleship  
Assistant Director

**Brian & Cathy  
Yaun**

Youth & Discipleship  
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**Daniel & Jordan  
Maples**

Youth & Discipleship  
Coordinator

