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JULY

LEADING
[INSIDE]
STORIES

PAGE

2



A Lesson On Faith
THE CHARLES BLONDIN STORY

PAGE

3



HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH
HELP THE PEOPLE WITH
MENTAL ILLNESS? -
A STUDY

PAGE

4



WHY OUR WEAKNESS CAN
OPEN OUR EYES TO GOD'S
STRENGTH? -
THE SECRET OF JOY IN
THE MIDST OF TRIALS

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Pope Francis will Visit One of Latin America's Most Violent Prisons on Trip

Special correspondent

Bolivia: Pope Francis will visit one of Latin America's most violent prisons during his trip to the continent of his birth in July. A program for the July 6-13 visit to Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay showed that Francis will enter the notorious Palmasola prison in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on July 10, his last day in the country. He has called for a



re-distribution of wealth and highlighted how issues such as climate

change affect poorest countries most. The trip to Latin American, his

second as pope, will give him a chance to

Cont.. to page 2

"This is a Great Day"- Netanyahu lauds biblical bond with America ahead of fourth of July



Netanyahu, President Reuven Rivlin and other Israeli leaders participated in American Independence Day celebrations at US Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro's residence in Herzliya,

expressing congratulations and stressing the close and "unbreakable" bond between the two nations.

Cont.. to page 2

Greece and its membership in Europe's joint currency faced an uncertain future

ATHENS: Greece and its membership in Europe's joint currency faced an uncertain future Monday, with the country under pressure to reach a bailout deal with creditors as soon as possible



"America to Sinful Course" Franklin Graham

Special correspondent

Washington:President Obama is calling the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage a "victory for America," but the Rev. Franklin Graham warns Obama is

leading the nation on a sinful course and "God will judge him and us as a nation if we don't repent."

At a Gay Pride event in the White House prior to the court ruling this

week, Obama said, "There has been an incredible shift in attitudes across the country," and he was right, Graham wrote in a post on his Facebook page.

"But it is definitely

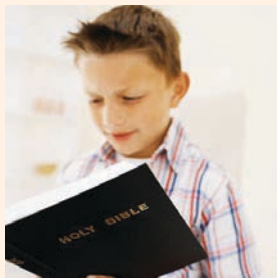
not a shift for the good of America. The shift in attitudes he refers to is the moral decline we are seeing manifest daily around us," Graham, who leads the Billy Graham

Cont.. to page 2

Idaho proposes resolution supporting use of the Bible in Public Schools

According to reports, the resolution initially asked that lawmakers propose a bill allowing elective Bible classes "for any of the secular discipline study purposes stated above if students, parents, and/or school district electors request such a course." However, the language was removed after some expressed concern that the same could be done with the Koran.

Republican Party Committee Executive Director David Johnston told KBOI News that the resolution still leaves the use of the Bible as an option—rather than a requirement—and is meant as a statement of support for a teacher's



right to use it if he or she wishes.

"I don't see it as a forcing upon anybody or interfering with it," he said. "Whether it be geography, history, literature or frankly just the study of the world religions; if there is a school district that thinks having the bible as part of the curriculum would be useful, this resolution is basically saying, 'we support

Cont.. to page 3

Christianity today speaks out in support of Traditional Marriage



In an article titled "Breaking News: 2 Billion Christians Believe in Traditional Marriage," Galli writes that former Christianity Today editor David Neff voiced support for Campolo but the magazine still believes in biblical marriage.

In an email to Galli, Neff said, "I think the ethically responsible thing for gay and lesbian Christians to do is to form lasting, covenant-

ed partnerships. I also believe that the church should help them in those partnerships in the same way the church should fortify traditional marriages. We still firmly believe that the Bible teaches that God intends the most intimate of covenant relationships to be enjoyed exclusively by a man and a woman," he wrote.

The church is still

Cont.. to page 3

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A LESSON ON FAITH

THE CHARLES BLONDIN STORY

The amazing story of Charles Blondin, a famous French tightrope walker, is a wonderful illustration of what true faith is.

Blondin's greatest fame came on September 14, 1860, when he became the first person to cross a tightrope stretched 11,000 feet (over a quarter of a mile) across the mighty Niagara Falls. People from both Canada and America came from miles away to see this great feat. He walked across, 160 feet above the falls, several times... each time with a different daring feat - once in a sack, on stilts, on a bicycle, in the dark, and blindfolded. One time he even carried a stove and cooked an omelet in the middle of the rope! A large crowd gathered and the buzz of excitement ran along both sides of the river bank. The crowd "Oohed and Aahed!" as Blondin carefully walked across - one dangerous step after another - pushing a wheelbarrow holding a sack of potatoes. Then at one point, he asked for the participation of a volunteer. Upon reaching the other side, the crowd's applause was louder than the roar of the falls!

Blondin suddenly stopped and addressed his audience: "Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?" The crowd enthusiastically yelled, "Yes! You are the greatest tightrope walker in the world. We believe!" "Okay," said Blondin, "Who wants to get into the wheelbarrow." As far as the Blondin story goes, no one did at the time!

This unique story illustrates a real life picture of what faith actually is. The crowd watched these daring feats. They said they believed. But... their actions proved they truly did not believe. Similarly, it is one thing for us to say we believe in God. However, it's true faith when we believe God and put our faith and trust in His Son, Jesus Christ.



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"This is a Great Day"

bond between the two countries

"This is a great day because on the 4th of July, all Israelis unite with our American brothers and sisters. It's our celebration too," stated Netanyahu. "That's because the history of our two countries is remarkably intertwined. The Founding Fathers of America were inspired by the Bible, and specifically by the Book of Exodus, by the dream of building freedom in a new Prom-

ised Land. And as you stand in the Chamber of the American Congress, you see right across you the image of one man—Moses—with a quote from the Bible."

The Israeli leader continued to extol the heritage and values that both nations share, noting "the vision of justice and the vision of peace espoused by the Prophets of Israel" that motivated American leaders. "But just as our heritage inspired America, Ameri-

ca inspired us. If you read the Founding Fathers of Zionism, you see how powerful and inspirational the American Revolution was—the ideas of freedom and liberty."

"On behalf of all Israelis, I wish all Americans a happy 4th of July. God bless Israel and God bless the United States of America," the Israeli premier concluded.

"Our relationship is first and foremost an emotional one," President Reuven Rivlin told

the crowd. "Growing up in the years after the Second World War, when the world was divided between East and West and defined in terms of good versus evil, the 'Stars and Stripes' represented, in our eyes, freedom and progress—the American Dream, as we saw it. For the first time in centuries, perhaps for the first time in history, we, the Jewish nation, and later on the State of Israel, felt we had a true friend standing beside us."

cont.. from 1 st page

Pope Francis will Visit ...

emphasize his defense of the poor and his calls for social justice on his native continent. Speaking out in defense of the poor and downtrodden has been a major plank of Francis's papacy. He has called for a re-distribution of wealth and highlighted how issues such as climate change affect

cont.. from 1 st page

"America to Sinful Course"?

Evangelistic Association, wrote.

"Accepting wrong as right—accepting sin as something to be proud of. Yes, that's definitely

a shift. Should we be surprised that he thanked the LGBT community for all that they had helped him accomplish during his time as president?"

Graham added, noting that Obama said, "A lot of what we've accomplished over these last six and a half years has been because of you."

cont.. from 1 st page

Man, girl spotted parading...

graphed walking past a group of Scouts outside the Houses of Parliament as he wore a large Islamic State flag in Iraq and Syria

(ISIS) flag on his back. He was carrying a small child on his shoulders, who was waving a smaller flag. Police were criticised for

failing to arrest the man who was seen wandering near the Parliament and the Big Ben draped in the Islamic State flag.



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Most people don't talk much about mental illness. And because of this silence, many of us have the misconception that mental illness is something rare, something that happens to unusual people at the margins of society.

Most church leaders have encountered mental illness in their churches. When people seek help for mental illness, 25 % of them go first to the church. This is higher than the percentage of people who go to psychiatrists and general medical doctors. Many people are looking to the church for help, but many church leaders don't know how to help.

The best way to help someone who is struggling with mental illness is to be real community to them. This often works best in small groups. Small-group leaders are in a unique position because they minister so closely to a few people. When mental illness affects someone, either personally or as a family issue, that person carries that burden every single day, and small groups can help them carry the load. But small-group leaders and members may not know how to help and may actually respond in ways that are counterproductive. Here are some productive ways you can respond:

-Acknowledge your fears. Many of our first reactions to mental illness are based in fear, either because we see our own potential reflected in people with mental illness, because we believe people with mental illness are inherently violent (which is not true), or because we're nervous about uncomfortable conversations or situations we don't know how to handle. It's important to acknowledge these fears and to learn to separate legitimate fear from irrational fear.

-Recognize and embrace the truth that people with mental illness are people created in the image of God, loved and valuable. People with mental illness are no less important than others, and people with symptoms are no less valuable than when they're not experiencing symptoms. This attitude is an important starting point for ministry.

-Foster a culture of compassion and authenticity in your group. Set the example so it becomes normal for people to be real about what they're experiencing, even when that truth is not pretty. This doesn't have to mean your group is obsessed with sharing the worst about themselves with no regard for social consequences; this can



HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH HELP THE PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS? - A STUDY

Most church leaders have encountered mental illness in their churches. When people seek help for mental illness, 25 % of them go first to the church. This is higher than the percentage of people who go to psychiatrists and general medical doctors.

be modeled in a healthy and redemptive way. Neither does it have to mean giving people an excuse to stay where they are and refuse to grow. It's just a matter of giving people the chance to be honest about who they are and the circumstances of their lives. This will go a long way toward allowing people affected by mental illness to feel less marginalized.

-Watch your response. If a person announces he or she has a mental disorder, don't act shocked, try to give them answers about why they're suffering, or try to solve the problem for

them. Accept the news as you would an announcement that someone has a heart condition or a back injury. A loving and emotionally even response will show acceptance and maturity that mental illness is not always met with.

-Care for them. Think about what your group is already equipped to do for

someone in crisis or suffering from other kinds of sickness, and do that same kind of practical ministry: bring meals, care for their children, visit them in the hospital, and visit them at home if you're welcome. Also realize that unlike some other medical conditions, mental illness is often chronic or repetitive. So the crisis might repeat itself, and you may need to provide this kind of support again. You may even need to help on an ongoing basis for a matter of years. It's important to have appropriate expectations and to be patient with afflicted people and their families.



GOD IS HERE

An atheist teacher was very eager to spread his views against the existence of God among his students. One day he eloquently taught his students against their faith in God. He was proud and glad that he had proved and could convince them that God did not exist. Victoriously he wrote the summary of his sermon on the black board in large capital letters: "GOD IS NOWHERE."

But in his excitement, unknowingly, he happened to leave a little more space in between the letters W and H when he wrote the word, 'NOWHERE.'

He then jubilantly asked his students to read aloud the concluding sentence on the board. The innocent students read aloud,

"GOD IS NOW HERE."

The atheist was lost for words. He left the class sadly as the students had publicly denied his concept. The students apparently reiterated their firm faith in the loving God who is now present there, with them.

A teacher once overheard the dialogue between two innocent infants in a school. One asked the other, "How many Gods are there?" The other child replied confidently, "Only one."

"How can you be so sure?" asked the first student.

The second one said, "God fills the whole world, oceans and the sky above. So there is no space for another God!" The teacher felt enlightened. The simple kids had provided a clear answer to an important question which the teacher had been trying to answer.

God is the Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnibenevolent. He is infinitely intelligent, virtuous, truthful and perfect. He is eternal, immortal and infinite. He is our creator, sustainer, guardian, provider, and protector. He is the final and most just judge of our actions.



A little girl walked to and from school daily. Though the weather that morning was questionable and clouds were forming, she made her daily trek to the elementary school. As the afternoon progressed, the winds whipped up, along with thunder and lightning. The mother of the little girl felt concerned that her daughter would be frightened as she walked home from school and she herself feared that the electrical storm might harm her child.



Following the roar of thunder, lightning, like a flaming sword, would cut through the sky. Full of concern, the mother quickly got into her car and drove along the route to her child's school. As she did so, she saw her little girl walking along, but at each flash of lightning, the child would stop, look up and smile. Another and another were to follow quickly and with each the little girl would look at the streak of light and smile.

When the mother's car drove up beside the child she lowered the window and called to her.

"What are you doing? Why do you keep stopping?"

The child answered, "I am trying to look pretty, God keeps taking my picture."

cont.. from 1 st page

Idaho proposes resolution...

the idea of allowing them to have that tool in their tool box.'

Some outside of the committee are taking issue with the motion because of its references to science and law, stating that Christianity should only be used in history courses but not anything of a legal or scientific nature.

cont.. from 1 st page

Christianity today speaks out...

largely committed to supporting traditional marriage. Christians who support gay marriage are in the minority and churches that "ascribe to a more liberal sexual ethic" are suffering. Galli does not believe the church is on the verge of collapse due as it upholds scripture.

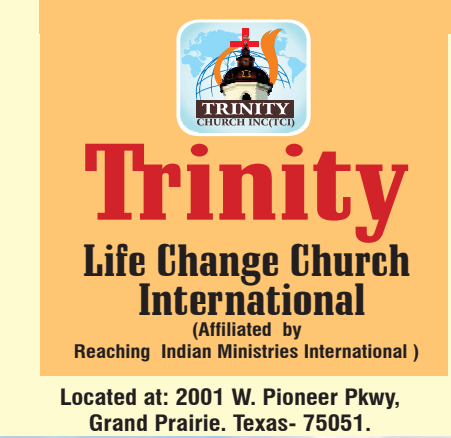


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WHY OUR WEAKNESS CAN OPEN OUR EYES TO GOD'S STRENGTH ?- THE SECRET OF JOY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS

Lydia Paul



You can brush your sin under the rug and hope that enough years will take care of it, but one day, perhaps years later, God will apply some sort of pressure in your life and your conscience will stir. Maybe it will be a single word, spoken inadvertently by someone.

Have you ever heard of a berkutchi? A berkutchi is an Asian man who trains eagles for hunting. The capture, taming, training, and keeping of eagles is highly ritualized. Most eagles, which have a life span of about 40 years, are caught when very young—either snatched from a nest or trapped in a baited net. Once captured, the eagle is hooded and placed in a cage with a perch that sways constantly so it cannot rest or sleep. For two or three days it is also deprived of food. During this time the berkutchi talks, sings, and chants to the eagle for hours on end. Finally, he begins to feed and stroke it. Slowly the weakened creature comes to rely on its master. When the berkutchi decides that their relationship has become strong enough, the training begins. Not all eagles can be trained, but those who take to life with a master display intense loyalty. While the training and breaking of the eagle may seem harsh, it is a picture of how over time God breaks our independent spirit to draw us close to Him.

God uses broken things: broken soil to produce a crop, broken

clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, and broken bread to give strength

You can brush your sin under the rug and hope that enough years will take care of it, but one day, perhaps years later, God will apply some sort of pressure in your life and your conscience will stir. Maybe it will be a single word, spoken inadvertently by someone. "Egypt!" Your sin flashes vividly in your mind as if it was yesterday. Far better to keep short accounts and deal with your sin now than later. Sin compounds with some serious interest! Better to pay up as quickly as possible. God could have simply washed His hands of these brothers. He could have said, "Fine, forget it." But that's not what He did with the Israelites and that's not what He does with you and me. God loves us too much to let us go without a fight. So, at times He exercises "tough love." He brings a crisis into our life that forces us to address ultimate issues. It may be an unexpected diagnosis, a financial emergency, an overwhelming situation, or a family crisis. In these situations God is often seeking to awaken us out of our spiritual lethargy. God lovingly put Jacob and his family in the midst of a famine in order to draw them to Him.

Are you going through a tough time? Is life a struggle right now? Could it be that God is trying to get your attention? Could it be that He is trying

to awaken you out of your spiritual slumber? Is it possible that God loves you so much and that He wants you to be His with such intensity that He will stop at nothing to turn your heart to Him?

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