

PUSHING RESET BY RENEWING YOUR MIND

# MOMENTUM

ISSUE #11 • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF COLORADO BAPTISTS

COLORADOBAPTISTS.ORG



# FORWARD TOGETHER

In the midst of life's chaos, we must continue to move forward together and rely on God's provision.



**SPIRITUAL BRITCHES  
IN A BUNCH?**



**WHEN YOU FEEL SPREAD  
THIN EMOTIONALLY**



# PUSHING RESET

**WAS RAISED IN THE BEGINNING OF THE VIDEO GAME ERA.**

My first recollection of playing video games was on a machine called Atari. However, somewhere in the mid 80's Nintendo burst on the scene and took the world by storm. It was a newer technology that intrigued the minds of gamers before gaming was "cool." I can remember getting a Nintendo at a young age and spending countless hours learning how to play new games. There was so much to love about the new systems that was changing the world at a rapid pace. However, to me, the greatest feature of Nintendo was the ability to reset the game. It didn't matter what I was playing. At any time, if the game was not going my way, I could simply push a button and completely reset the game. That's right, no matter how long I had been playing, I could start all over.

Somewhere in the middle of 2020, I begin having this longing on a larger scale. I simply did not like how this crazy and uncertain year was going. As we have experienced together,



2020 has been unpredictable, uncertain, and difficult. I found myself desiring the simplicity of pushing a reset button and starting over. Obviously, there is no reset button in life. We cannot go back in time and erase what we have walked through. However, as I was spending time with the Lord one morning, my studies brought me to Romans 12:2. In this verse Paul writes, "Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." It was in that moment, I was reminded that I could in fact hit the reset button. Each day I can push reset in my mind and have my mind renewed by the truth of God's word and the Holy Spirit. It was also in this moment, that I was reminded how often I need to push that button in my mind and heart and once again focus on the things of God and not so much my circumstances. I want to encourage you as well to push reset in your life. As we begin to close out 2020 and hope together for a better 2021, allow the Holy Spirit to meet you where you are and to reset and renew your mind for the things of God. Fix your eyes on all that God has blessed you with and called you to. Focus on how kind God has been to you in your life and to your family. In doing this, you will feel a sense of gratefulness even in difficulties. As crazy as 2020 has been, God's goodness and faithfulness has not wavered. He is still in control and is still walking alongside of us.

**Dr. Nathan Lorick**  
Executive Director



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Sometimes you find the height of your purpose in the midst of the divine appointments to which you are most reluctant to surrender. Those God-directed options we see as the least attractive short-term often prove to be the most fulfilling endeavors long-term.



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# FROM MY LIPS TO YOUR EARS



**A**S I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT TO SAY for this edition, I've felt led more toward a heart-to-heart conversation, rather than a formal "article." Thus, as you read, I'm asking you to imagine we're sitting in a coffee shop sharing our hearts with one another. Some might argue that approach is not very presidential, but I think transparency as a leader is underrated. Thus, hear my heart when I say the following 3 things...

**Race will not divide us.** Let's just talk about the elephant in the room, I am black and most of you reading this are not. As we examine the landscape of the country, one of the most inflammatory and divisive elements, which we face today, is that of race. From my mouth to your ears - ***Race Will Not Divide Colorado Baptists!*** To be sure, there are things that we will see from differing perspectives and quite likely, will conclude differently as a result of those perspectives, but I want to assure you that my heart is to love - to love Jesus, and to love His people. All of His people! So, whether you are Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, or any other ethnicity, if you are a part of the Colorado Baptists family and network of churches, we are on the same team! I am committed to unity above all things. So, from my lips to your ears - ***Race Will Not Divide Us.***

**Politics will not divide us.** God has Christians who politically

identify as Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. He must! The notion that all Christians belong to one party or the other is simply not reasonable. Though, there are some politicians who would have us to believe that. Tim Keller has an insightful perspective that we'd all do well to hear. He recently stated, "The Bible binds my conscience to care for the poor, but it does not tell me the best practical way to do it. Any particular strategy (high taxes and government services vs. low taxes and private charity) may be good and wise and may even be somewhat inferred from other things the Bible teaches, but they are not directly commanded..." We must not allow ourselves to be manipulated by political messages. This is not to say that there aren't Gospel implications in some political decisions, however, we must take care not to think that it is the intention of God to rule the world through political means. There is no biblical evidence to support this view. God uses government to steward His earthly resources and people, not to carry out a theological agenda. So, from my lips to your ears - ***Politics Will Not Divide Us.***

**The Love of Jesus will unite us.** As Jesus was preparing to be crucified, He prayed to the Father that those whom The Father had given to Him would "...be one as We [Father and Son] are."-John 17:11 It is love, as demonstrated through mutual respect and regard for all men, that will unite us. We may disagree but we don't have to be disagreeable. We can have different viewpoints without villainizing one another. We can value different agenda items and still exist in harmony. We don't have to be clones of one another to exist within the same body (of Christ).

I love you and I trust that you love me. May no political position, race nor any other factor ever allow us to believe anything different. Should someone suggest otherwise, tell them that you heard it from my lips to your ears. Be encouraged.



**John Moreland**  
President

# NEED HELP THROUGH COVID?



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**From Ethiopia to Colorado**

Alayu and Yegile Dubale have been busy doing ministry in Ethiopia and in Colorado during the pandemic, in addition to planting Ethio Gospel Believers' Church in Aurora. They have provided food to pastors and their families as well as various community groups, both here and abroad. They have also formed partnerships with other churches to distribute backpacks and school supplies to students in need. The response within the Ethiopian community has been amazing. God is opening many doors to establish relationships and share the gospel of Christ!



**VBS in a Box**



Connect Church in Canon City and Aberdeen Baptist in Pueblo partnered together to reach children in their communities through "VBS in a Box". They packaged Bible stories, activities and snacks, and delivered them to families. How incredible it is to see churches on mission together to share Jesus and transform lives!

**Drive-thru food distribution**



Lynn Gardens in Pueblo has continued to minister to hundreds of people by adapting their food distribution ministry to a drive-thru method to ensure they can safely provide food to their community in the midst of the pandemic.

**First Baptist Westcliffe enjoying new facility**



First Baptist Westcliffe has been enjoying God's faithfulness and provision in their new worship facility. The church is experiencing great growth and all of the glory goes to God!

**Winter interns sharing Christ in Fraser Valley**



Fraser Valley Baptist Church is thankful for their winter interns, Benjamin, Ellie, and Gunnar! They are working jobs in the valley and using every opportunity they can to point people to Christ!

# BAPTISMS



Christ Church in Windsor held their very first baptism service this summer. Nothing, not even a pandemic, can stop the hand of God at work in our churches!



**36 Baptized in Canon City**

Catalyst Church in Canon City, led by pastor Ryan McBride, baptized 36 individuals in the last couple months! God is working mightily and lives are being radically changed!



**Baptism with a view**

Summit Church in Dillon celebrated a life transformed and devoted to Christ with an incredible mountain view baptism.



**8 Baptized in Aurora**

Bethel Russian Community, led by Pastor Yuri Kreyman in Aurora, had 8 individuals declare their faith publicly through baptism.





# WHEN YOU FEEL SPREAD THIN EMOTIONALLY

BY CHRISTINE HOOVER  
Author, Podcaster, Bible Teacher

When we moved to Charlottesville, Virginia to plant a church, we knew one whole person: our realtor. Soon after, we met our neighbors, who when we cheerily explained why we'd moved in, stared at us, speechless, as if we were aliens from another planet. Apparently church planting was going to be harder than I'd envisioned.

**And it was.**

ILLUSTRATION BY LIGHTNER CREATIVE

We started a Bible study in our living room and despite how desperately I wanted our little church to grow at the time and how much fear I felt, I sometimes look back at those days with longing. We had no idea what we were doing, but we could invite our entire church over for dinner, and we were a happy little band of brothers and sisters.

Then the church began to grow. As we passed certain milestones, I began feeling pulled in many different relational directions. We could no longer have everyone over for dinner at one time, or even everyone a handful at a time. People were coming to us faster than we could know them all, but still we tried to know them all, even as we tried to maintain relationships with those we'd known and loved since the church's inception. From year 3 to year 5 of our church's existence, I lived in perpetual motion. At the same time, I couldn't figure out how to navigate all of the relationships, I constantly felt guilty that I couldn't be all things to all people, and my new normal became various levels of bone-tired.

The truth is that I didn't want to admit to myself that I couldn't do it all. I didn't want to disappoint people, so I searched for some magic formula that would enable me to do all the things and have all the relationships. More than anything, I didn't want to have say no. As a result, I became spread so thin relationally that I lost track of God's voice beneath the persistent human voices and felt devoid of purpose and joy.

I think many folks in ministry feel this way at one time or another, especially if they're leading or serving in a growing church. In a church plant, there is a low-grade pressure to be and do things how you've been and done things from the beginning, even when the

church has evolved entirely.

When I looked around at my life during those years, all I saw were good things. A happy family and marriage. A growing church full of absolutely wonderful people. Opportunities to serve the larger church through writing and speaking. Personal relationships with women I adore to this day. In other words, all I saw around me was abundance. So why was I struggling?

One day my husband used the phrase "stewarding the abundance," and it stunned me with its accuracy. We'd been given an abundance of relationships, and we'd need to consider how to navigate them all in a way that honored others but also didn't move us away from what God had originally called us to do.

Perhaps you too feel spread thin relationally. Maybe you feel like you're juggling or you're trying to keep up with all of your roles and responsibilities.

Know that God intends you to steward the abundance He's given—not resent it or fear it or worry about it. Steward it. Steward means making choices, saying yes and also saying no, and being purposeful and intentional in all the yeses and no's.

I needed to learn to discern God's leading again so that I could separate "best" from "better" and "good," relationally and otherwise. I had to go through the excruciating pain of learning to say no when I'd just been saying yes, yes, and yes. Here are a few things I've learned along the way:

### **Praise God for Abundance**

If your ministry or your life has vitality, praise God. If you have relationships and friendships, praise God. If you have more coming at you than you know what to do with, praise God. Thank God for the influence and opportunities He's given you. Don't allow your

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heart to become embittered because of the pulling and pressure that come with the abundance. Don't allow yourself to swell with pride, thinking that you've done something to earn this abundance. God and God alone has given you what you have.

#### Check Your Heart

Are you spreading yourself too thin because of self-idolatry? This has been the case for me far too much. When I set myself up as a god to myself or others, I believe things about myself that are an affront to God and I act in ways that are detrimental and harmful. I will actually try to be all things to all people (omnipresent). I will try to fix everyone's issues (omnipotent). I will also seek glory for myself in the form of respect, admiration, and appreciation. When I recognize my position before God, I'm humbled and able to embrace my limits. I'm encouraged to trust God for my own needs, as well as the needs of others. I'm also reminded that my life is not my own but is to be poured out for God by serving others.

#### Clarify Your People Priorities

Ask God to give you laser focus on those people in your life He wants you to cultivate relationships with. After spouse and kids or roommate relationships, who are the people He most wants you to invest your life in? Who do you need to dive deep with? I've heard it said, "Do for one what you wish you could do for everyone." I've taken this to heart in the area of discipleship and leaders within the church.

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#### Say Yes and Also Say No

One way to not become embittered is to learn to say a prayerful yes as well as a prayerful no. I've learned that a slow response gives me time to ask God about it. I'd gotten so used to saying yes that saying no felt uncomfortable and awkward, but when I knew it was a no from God, that made the discomfort worth it. And when it was a yes, it was an enthusiastic, joy-filled yes! (I highly recommend the chapter "Saying No" in the book *Essentialism* by Greg McKeown for thoughts on how to say a gracious no.)

#### Cultivate Intersections Rather Than Being a Cul-De-Sac

Be a connector. Use your opportunities and influence to connect people with each other, with small groups, and with ministry opportunities. Widen the circle.

#### Plan Ahead for Friendship

Plan ahead for time with those you consider heart friends. Get those plans on the calendar ahead of church and work and whatever else demands of your time. Choose friends who encourage you to trust God and to rest but also to serve and work as unto the Lord. Deep friendship is jet fuel for the life-layer-downer.

None of this is easy, my friends. However, being intentional with your time and relationships, paces you for a lifetime of ministry to others.

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# SPIRITUAL BRITCHES IN A BUNCH?

BY CORBIN HOBBS

The Heights Church, Denver CO

**A** FEW WEEKS AGO I WAS ON A COUNSELING CALL where I realized that “my spiritual britches were in a bunch.” That is a quote from my leadership counselor, Jim. I wasn’t aware that I had spiritual britches in the first place, but I was even more unaware that they were in a bunch.

In a sense, if you are reading this and responsible for leading anything—from a Bible study to a massive organization—your spiritual britches have probably been in a bunch at some point since March, 2020. You feel exhausted but there is still work to be done. You have decision fatigue but decisions need to be made. You sit down to spend time reading your Bible and ask God to move only to find yourself rushing through it because you have too much to do.

From all of this, you feel uptight and it might express itself in anger or lingering sadness. What do you do when your spiritual britches are in a bunch?

In John 21 there is a scene where Jesus is restoring Peter and re-inviting him to follow him. It’s an incredible scene that shows us the extravagant grace and patience of Jesus. In the same way Peter had denied Jesus three times, Jesus re-invites him to follow him three times. It’s Jesus showing Peter and us that there is more grace in him than sin in us. It’s truly the best news in the world. Jesus restores him and then lays out the plans for his life. He would be the one to preach the sermon at Pentecost. He would be the rock that Jesus would build his church on. Jesus has great plans for Peter. But in the middle of this scene, Peter had something else on his mind. In v. 21 Peter looks over at his friend John and says, “Lord, what about this man?” Peter is playing the comparison game. And look at how Jesus responds in verse 22, “Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

There is a lot of pressure in life and ministry to be someone other than the person that God created you to be. It’s the primary reason that my spiritual britches get in a bunch. I’m sure you are the same way. We make the same mistake that Peter makes in John 21 as we start to worry about everyone else. And in that moment Jesus speaks the same thing to us that he said to Peter in verse 22, “What is that to you? You follow me!”

Instead of leading from comparison or fear or reaction Jesus invites us to lead from communion with him. The call that initiated our relationship with Jesus is the same call he is giving to us as leaders today, “You follow me.” I am learning that my primary responsibility as a spiritual leader in my home and in our church family is for me to stay close to Jesus. To lead from a place not of comparison or fear or reaction but communion with him.

So how do I get my spiritual britches straightened out? I use the silly acronym S.E.L.F. I’ll share it with you here and hopefully Jesus can use it to un-bunch your spiritual britches and bring rest and renewal into your life. Sometimes I use this over sixty seconds, other times I use this as the outline of a prayer and fasting retreat. It depends. Use it however you think it will serve you the best.

## Slow Down

Typically, I’m moving too quickly. I’m trying to out-pace Jesus. That’s where that trouble starts. The first thing I need is to

slow down. Maybe you need 30 seconds of silence or maybe you need an eight-week sabbatical. One thing is for sure, you need space to slow down.

## Embrace your limitations

Jesus only calls you to be who he created you to be. We need to re-realize that we are not God and we don’t have to be. The pressure is off. We are finite and God knows that. We are only called to be faithful in the things that Jesus has put before us.

## Listen to Jesus

Open your Bible expecting Jesus to speak to you. I heard a friend say once that the day Christianity got boring is the same day that we quit expecting Jesus to speak personally to us in the Bible. Ask Jesus if there is anywhere in his Word that he wants you to give your attention to. Then open it and listen to him.

## Follow Him

After listening to him, determine to follow him. Or in more plain language, determine in your heart and make plans to obey exactly what he has said in your time of listening.

After all, Jesus is the one who said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” It doesn’t sound like he wants us to have our spiritual britches in a bunch.

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# COLORADO BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF RESPONDING TO MANY NEEDS AROUND THE COUNTRY

BY DENNIS BELZ  
DIRECTOR, CBDR

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, CBDR has continued to respond to those in need at home and around the country. Be assured that all safety requirements have been kept as we strive to BRING: Help, Hope and Healing to those in need. With the work that we do, it is not always easy to keep a 6ft distance, but we do our best. I am very pleased with the great ministry that our CBDR Volunteers are doing!



## CBDR DEPLOYS TO PUEBLO FOR EMERGENCY FEEDING

In August, CBDR received a request from the American Red Cross for Emergency Feeding in Pueblo for 100 people that had been forced from their apartments due to a large fire. Our Feeding Team quickly made contact with Majestic Baptist Church in Pueblo West to be able to use their facilities and parking lot to begin preparing meals. The next day our newly remodeled Rapid Response Feeding Unit and support units were heading down 1-25 to begin setting up and preparing food. Our CBDR Volunteers which came from several different areas of Colorado, gathered and began the two-week feeding process which prepared over two thousand meals.

### BY THE NUMBERS



CBDR RECEIVED REQUEST  
FROM AMERICAN RED CROSS FOR  
EMERGENCY FEEDING IN PUEBLO

- ▶ **100**  
PEOPLE FORCED  
FROM APARTMENT
- ▶ **2-WEEK**  
FEEDING PROCESS
- ▶ **2,000 +**  
MEALS PREPARED

## CAMERON PEAK WILD FIRE IN LARIMER COUNTY, CO

Our Ash-Out and Feeding Teams responded to help with what is now known as the largest wildfire in state history. The Cameron Peak Fire has burned over 200,000 acres of land and is likely still burning at the time of this publication. It has destroyed numerous buildings and homes within the Larimer County area. This work consisted of doing sifting and clean-up to some of the structures destroyed in this fire. Since we do not have any heavy equipment (Skid-steer, Mini-X) we looked for equipment to borrow or rent for a few weeks. This job would be impossible without this equipment as metal from roofs, appliances, stoves and other heavy items needed to be removed from the ash-filled basements before any sifting could begin. Then our teams

sifted looking for special items that the property owners may have wanted, like diamond rings, jewelry, coins, pictures, and even baseball card collections (yes, these items and more can survive a major fire) as we always strive to seek all we can to bring Hope and Healing to the families.

Our CBDR Feeding team also deployed to feed those that had to evacuate from the fires and of course our CBDR teams that were out working. Those were very long, dirty and hot days, but our faithful volunteers continued their work daily!

As the CBDR State Director, I want to thank you for your continued prayers and donations that you give to help us to continue to BRING: Help, Hope, and Healing to those in need!



## HURRICANE LAURA

With Hurricanes building up in the Atlantic and the Gulf, our CBDR teams were put on ALERT for Feeding and Chainsaw deployments. In September a team of 8 volunteers left for DeRidder, LA to do chainsaw and clean-up working out of FBC DeRidder, LA. Hurricane Laura effected a large area from Cameron, LA to Lake Charles and beyond. Several areas along the state line of Texas also suffered a lot of damage. This team worked hard hours in extreme heat to get trees removed from homes and those blocking entrance to their homes.

The following week, six of our CBDR Feeding Team volunteers deployed to FBC DeRidder to provide meals for those that had to evacuate and

also all the SBDR Volunteers from other states that were serving at this location. This team had to begin cooking at 5:00 a.m. each morning and then serve the meal. They got a short rest, then began making lunch and the evening meal. They were the last feeding team at this location, so their final job was cleaning and packing up the feeding units.

I am thankful for our dedicated CBDR teams that are willing to respond even hundreds of miles away!

Testimony: One of our new volunteers that went on his first deployment to Louisiana with the chainsaw team wrote to me while on deployment and said, "Dennis, I am HOOKED! Really enjoying working with CBDR."





## GIVING BACK



BY BART POOLE

Trinity Baptist Church, Aurora, CO

**WE ALL STAND ON SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOULDERS.** I remember the first time I heard that statement and I honestly didn't understand it. I remember a familiar story of a man who runs into a rather strange sight and the circumstances creates some angst as he tries to figure out the cause and effect of his discovery. Out in the middle of nowhere, he finds a turtle sitting on the top of a fence. Ok we all know turtles can't climb fences or walls so how did that turtle get up there? After thinking through, imagining different scenarios—he finally comes to a profound conclusion. Turtles can't get to the top of a fence on their own. Someone helped him get there. And that turtle reminds us, we all stand on someone else's shoulders.

Someone invested. Someone taught. Someone inspired you and you are where you are at in life because of the influence, the

training, the coaching of others—in your life. There are many who believe they are self-made and that any ounce of success or achievement has come through personal brilliance and hard work. Those attributes are a nice addition in anyone's life, but turtles don't find themselves sitting on top of a fence on their own. Someone helped them to get there. The trick or maybe better said, real wisdom comes when said 'turtle' realizes where he'd be without a helping hand in his life and reciprocates the aid in his life with gratitude and action.

When I was pastoring in Colorado Springs. We had a guy in our church that trained soldiers in Fort Carson. Periodically, he'd ask me if there were some projects 'his' soldiers could do around the church. I'd find projects and on a Saturday afternoon, soldiers from Carson would be working around our church. One Saturday I came by to check on the 'team' and asked my friend why he required soldiers he was training to do service projects for others. He smiled and without hesitation told me, "All of us have had someone take time, sacrifice some part of their lives, helped us grow so that we are able to live our lives, complete our jobs and have the option for success in our lives. It's time for us to give back and not hoard the opportunities we have been given, but give back so someone else can flourish through our experiences. I'm teaching these young soldiers to give back!"

No matter where you are in life, his counsel is great! Everyone should not only learn how but practice a lifetime of 'giving back' to others. Shovel your neighbors walk, pick up some trash,

feed those less fortunate, get on your knees and look a child in the eye as they tell you a story. Give back!

Over the last few years, I've been a part of a 'giving back' venture with Fellowship of the Rockies and Open Bible Church in Colorado Springs. The project was part of a 10-12-year dream of Stewart McWilliams in the Dominican Republic. Fellowship of the Rockies has invested time, people, finances, and dreams in a border city, Dajabon, for years. They've helped build and remodel churches, train pastors, encourage leaders, and establish lifetime relationships as they endeavor to 'give back' honoring the multitude of ways God has blessed their church. I've been on a number of those trips with Fellowship and helped them build, teach, and encourage the people from Dajabon.

The last two years, some new and excited 'branching out' has taken place. In the United States, we are quick to run to conferences where Levi Lusko, Craig Groeshel, Andy Stanley, Steve Furtick and other 'big names' divulge their ministry experience to leaders hoping to one day mirror their ministries. It's funny. When you've been around ministry for long enough you realize we all need help. We are all looking for solutions that haunt us in our daily ministry. We all need a 'shot in the arm' from time to time to get us over the hump. That's what has taken place in the Dominican Republic. Four pastors last year, three pastors this year went to specifically train and encourage pastors. The team asked leaders from two cities what pastors needed help with and pastor conferences were set up so that regular guys in ministry could speak to leaders about practical ways to help their ministries be stronger. The needs have varied over the last few years but the team has taught finances, sermon prep, leadership training, organizational tools, personal development, meeting community needs, and harmony among local congregations. Every time an event has been scheduled, more leaders show up to the conferences than were expected. There is an amazing hunger to learn especially since many of the leaders in the Dominican Republic don't have the luxury of theological training. They have been called by God. They are passionate for their people. They just need someone to set them up on a fence and let them thrive.

This year the team was also asked to do a marriage conference for the leaders in the DR. A night was set

**“Everyone should not only learn how but practice a lifetime of 'giving back' to others.”**

aside, decorations went up, good food was cooked and the team taught from Gary Smalley's *5 Love Languages*. Each pastor and the youth pastor's wife from Fellowship of the Rockies taught a session to pastors/leaders and their spouses who enthusiastically participated in the training. The divorce rate with pastors in the Dominican Republic is equal to the divorce rate of everyday families. The pressure of ministry; the financial strains on families; the constant pull of poverty and its effect on the local church has created a culture of 'checking out' for leaders in their country. Four sessions took place and at the end of the night you could see hope in the eyes of men and women because someone was honest enough with them to say—we know how hard marriage can be but we also know how rewarding it can be. Let's point you in the right direction so that you won't simply be another troubling statistic but will establish marriages that are honoring to God. When the conference was over, pastors from all over the Dominican Republic were asking the team if we'd do a marriage conference in their city and my city and this city and that city. The need is great! The hunger is real. The workers are few.

Giving back may not be the bumper sticker you have displayed on the back of your car. It might not be part of your everyday vernacular but it could be. I think it should be, especially if you are wise and will take some time to retrace your own steps. Someone took the time to encourage you. Someone paid for a meal, gave your babies some Huggies, wrote a letter of encouragement, or spoke words that brought hope. It's time to give back. In big ways and small ways, you can take what God has used in your life and 'give back' to others who need someone, anyone to help them. Remember, we ALL stand on someone else's shoulders. Give back and watch what God will do!

# HURRIED SOULS



BY GREG TEEL

Calvary Baptist Church, Delta, CO

**F**OR MANY OF US, THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS A RUSH of overwhelming activities and demands. As a blessed Gateway Seminary graduate serving as a pastor of a Western Slope church, its “hammered” busy. We get so busy with our plans—hurried souls we are—that we fail to see what God sees. Noah BenShea writes, “It’s the space between the notes that makes the music.” It is in the space of our souls that God writes his music. The spiritual disciplines, or exercises of grace, are how God writes his music.

Mother Mary was a peasant Jewish girl from a backwater town that suddenly had her busy plans of a wonderful wedding interrupted. The angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her she was favored to carry and mother the Christ Child, even as a virgin. What was her reaction? Not to be angry, disgruntled, or anxious about the change in her plans. She would

have been justifiably worried about how her parents, future in-laws, and betrothed Joseph would take the new reality. In fact, she was in danger of potentially being shunned from her community. Yet, what does she do? What is her instant reaction? According to the Luke 1, Mary worshipped God. She glorified God for his interruption. She set aside her desires and plans for the Lord’s. Now people usually do what they feel most comfortable doing and have done in the past to deal with stress. Mary was suddenly stressed now. Her fallback? Mary engages in the spiritual exercise that she always did and knew that drew her close to God—worship. She worships God for what he has done and for what he will do. She worships God mostly for his goodness, personal care, and power in the interruptions in her life. Read Luke 1:46-55 to see her praises for yourself.

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit has rejoiced in

God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> because He has looked with favor on the humble condition of His slave.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup> because the Mighty One

has done great things for me, and His name is holy.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him.

<sup>51</sup> He has done a mighty deed with His arm;

He has scattered the proud

because of the thoughts of their hearts;

<sup>52</sup> He has toppled the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly.

<sup>53</sup> He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped His servant Israel, mindful of His mercy,

<sup>55</sup> just as He spoke to our ancestors,

to Abraham and his descendants forever.



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What will you and I do in our interruptions? As the Christmas season rushes to a close, and the New Year approaches with all its challenges, ones we will be suddenly, brutally confronted with without warning, will we have a Mary heart? Will we praise God for what he will do in our newfound challenges? Will we praise him for his perfect character working itself out on our behalf, even when we do not understand or see what God is doing? To praise him for what he will do is to declare that he knows better than I do, what is best for my life and for others in my sphere of influence. It is the heart of faith. This is the path of Mary and her son Jesus. Both exhibit this trust and complete surrender to the will of God during their life challenges and struggles. Both worship God and submit their wills to God's will knowing that he is in charge and looking out for their best interest. Will we also worship God in the middle of our sudden, unforeseen suffering or other struggles in the New Year?

Let's continue through this Christmas and New Year season developing a Mary heart. How can we do that? By practicing the spiritual discipline of Mary and Jesus—worship. Try practicing the following:

- ▶ Write out your own song of praise to God for what he has shown himself to do in your life. Thank him for his great faithfulness in the past and keep an eye to the future blessings of God in your life. Say, sing, or write it out daily for one week as an act of praise.



**“It is the heart of faith. This is the path of Mary and her son Jesus. Both exhibit this trust and complete surrender to the will of God during their life challenges and struggles.”**

- ▶ Read Revelation 19-22, one chapter a day for a week. In these chapters we see God's plan, his redemptive historical plan, fulfilled and consummated. Notice and praise him for everything he will make right and whole. Praise him for the ushering in of his kingdom with the Advent of Christ. On Friday, journal about what you cannot wait to experience personally at this fulfillment.

- ▶ Choose one of the worst experiences in your life and ask God to show you where and how he was *huge* during it. Praise God in prayer, in singing, and journal specifically how God worked to support and strengthen you during that awful time. He will see you through new challenges also.

## THE HEIGHT OF OUR GLORY

BY MICHELE NIGRO

Colorado Baptists, Executive Board Member

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“Joy comes from seeing the complete fulfillment of the specific purpose for which I was created and born again, not from successfully doing something of my own choosing.”

—OSWALD CHAMBERS, MARCH 5

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**S**OMETIMES YOU FIND THE HEIGHT OF YOUR PURPOSE in the midst of the divine appointments to which you are most reluctant to surrender. Those God-directed options we see as the least attractive short-term often prove to be the most fulfilling endeavors long-term. I have certainly discovered this to be true, and it's become a guiding principle in my own walk with God.

I spent 20 years as a public elementary school teacher. I loved my job, and like the majority of my colleagues, was vehemently opposed to home education. Shortly after the birth of our third child, my husband asked if we should consider homeschool for our oldest. I replied, somewhat indignantly, that I would never homeschool as it would ruin our three “perfect” children! Looking back, I'm surprised I didn't hear an audible laugh from my Heavenly Father at that precise moment.

Flash forward three years. Circumstances at my school, also the same school attended by our oldest, pushed me to investigate alternatives for her education. As I interviewed, researched and prayed, I felt the Holy Spirit compel me to move the homeschool option to the top of my considerations. It was springtime, and I generously gave God until August 1 to “change His mind.” Over that summer I cried, pleaded,



and prayer-walked my way into a serious hip injury. Like Jacob in Genesis 32, I walked away from that season physically limping, emotionally resigned to misery, and spiritually surrendering to the sure and clear call of God on my life. On August 2, I resigned my teaching position and purchased homeschool curriculum.

Several months later my children and I were starting our school day. While my three cherubs ate breakfast, I sorted laundry. I distinctly remember my attire: a fuzzy pink bathrobe and furry slippers; I had become the stereotype of my worst nightmare. I separated piles as I grumbled (see Phil. 2:14). My complaining reached an unexpectedly audible level when I announced, "I have a degree in education and 20 years teaching experience, and I'm standing here in a bathrobe surrounded by tons of dirty clothes while homeschooling three children!" Then from the little voice of my oldest came these words, "But Mommy, you are at the height of your glory right now, teaching and taking care of us!" Oh, how I'd like to say that I fell on my knees in repentance and Godly sorrow at that moment; unfortunately, confession would come much later. It took several months to realize that God was instructing me through the lips of an infant.

By God's grace I educated all three children through 12th grade. One has her college degree, one will receive his bachelor's degree and continue on to seminary, and that third babe is about to finish her freshman year of college. Homeschool proved to be one of the best gifts God gave our family.

However, this isn't really an article about home education. Instead, it's a confession that "the height of our glory" is uncovered in those unexpected places. It's in the call on our life that we wrestle with the most, those circumstances we are certain will bring mostly misery and hardship. Our God is amazing like that. He alone brings fulfillment and, dare I say it, JOY in the least desirable options. Not just the joy of obedience, though that certainly applies, but sweet happiness that you never get over. Don't underestimate fuzzy pink bathrobes; these days I wouldn't trade them for all the robes in Queen Elizabeth's closet, because in God's economy they're worth more than silver or gold. Oswald Chambers said it best: "When the Lord does something through us, He always transforms it," (February 19). And, indeed He does!



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## PONDEROSA'S SUMMIT WINTER CAMP

# BACK TO REALITY

### CHOOSE YOUR WEEKEND:

Weekend A  
January 8-10, 2021  
Pastor: Mike Keahbone

Weekend B  
January 15-17, 2021  
Pastor: Eddie Briery

Book your Group Reservations at [www.visitponderosa.com](http://www.visitponderosa.com)

Cost: \$155 with \$25 deposit due by November 16

Registration deadline: December 14

Sorry, NO REFUNDS can be issued after January 1!

“More Than This”  
will be leading  
worship during  
both weekends!

## PRAY FOR PONDEROSA!

Just like many of our churches have made adjustments during this time, Ponderosa Retreat Center is stepping up to meet its own set of challenges. Starting in March, many groups, retreats, and camps were cancelled. Camps were finally able to meet starting in July. As we pray for our churches, let us also pray for Ponderosa. May God continue to work mightily in the midst of these circumstances.





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## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Our Strategy is a  
4-step process  
to help you:  
Discover, Design,  
Engage, and  
Celebrate!

Discover Your Next Step at  
[ColoradoBaptists.org](http://ColoradoBaptists.org)



### **Discover Your Next Step**

Every church has a Next Step.  
Let us help you bring clarity  
to your vision and discover  
your next step.



### **Design Your Road Map**

Having a strategic plan to achieve your Next Step is key to focusing your church's people, resources, and efforts to have a greater Gospel impact together. Your Next Step Guide will help you design a road map that is customized to your church.



### **Celebrate Your Gospel Impact**

The journey may be long and wearisome at times, but taking every opportunity to celebrate what God is doing is vital to our momentum. We want to help you look for how God is at work, and celebrate as a church how the Gospel is advancing in your community.



### **Engage Your Journey**

Now that you have a road map, engage the journey to see culture changed and communities transformed!  
As a convention we will come alongside you to cheer you on and look for opportunities to resource you.