

Take a Risk!

A monthly publication from Risk Takers for Christ

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Candid.



Love in Any Language

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

*"I have become all things to all men, that I
might by all means save some."*

- I Corinthians 9:22"

Sports and music are two "international languages" that virtually everyone speaks, and which cross almost every demographic and geographic boundary. That is why, I believe, God led me to start America's first-ever athletic prison ministry back in 1987. Using sports as a vehicle to share the gospel was so effective that - during my 35 years of prison ministry - I was privileged to share my faith with an estimated 500,000 inmates in more than 400 different correctional institutions across North America and Africa.

Was it effective? YES! In fact, an estimated 30,000 inmates made professions of faith in Jesus Christ as a result of our softball, basketball, soccer, volleyball, and power lifting teams visiting their institutions.

Would these men and women have come to saving faith in Christ any other way? PROBABLY NOT, because surveys continue to show that 80% of inmates refuse to attend a conventional religious program such as a chapel service or a Bible study. However, they will gladly attend a sporting event at which the gospel is presented, and the plan of salvation is explained.



Today, I still see the effectiveness of using sports as an evangelistic tool through our Living H2O Initiative. Young men who would never darken a church door for a worship service enthusiastically show up at a church gym every Monday night for some "Bible and basketball." Sure, they may be coming mostly for the basketball, but each and every week they hear a gospel message from God's Word, too.

But what about music? How is Risk Takers for Christ using that other "international language" to reach lost people for Jesus?

Well, let me give you three recent examples...

On December 8th, Midway Bible Fellowship hosted a special Christmas concert featuring gospel singer Kenny Munds. Kenny, as the lead singer for Brush Arbor, had once opened for such country music legends as Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, and Charlie Rich. Over the past 30 years, Kenny has used his expert guitar playing and soaring vocals to minister to thousands of inmates throughout the southeastern United States.

Wanting to attract unsaved people to our church, we invited Kenny to minister in music during the Christmas season. Because of his musical reputation, Kenny was able to draw dozens of unbelievers to the concert, where they were entertained, encouraged, and evangelized (see picture above).

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Love in Any Language

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Then, on January 12th, we hosted a second concert especially designed to attract the French Canadians who winter in our RV community. This time our guest vocalist was my brother Gary, a professional entertainer who has appeared on stage, on TV, and on cruise ships throughout Europe, Asia, and North America.

Since Gary owns a home in Normandy and speaks fluent French (as well as Italian and five other languages), he performed half of his concert in French. You should have seen the eyes of our visitors from Quebec light up as they heard him sing in their native tongue!

To make them feel even more welcome, we served French pastries - including cookies and croissants - as

well as Perrier and Canada Dry sodas. Most importantly, we made French New Testaments and other French gospel literature available to all attendees.

Our third concert is scheduled for February 2nd and will feature Edmund and Cathi Nalzaro. Edmund once starred on Broadway in Miss Saigon and Cathi's beautiful voice complements his perfectly. They will be singing mostly love songs - both Christian and secular - in an effort to draw even more lost, but spiritually-searching people from our community.

As the Sandi Patty songs says...

*Love in any language
Straight from the heart
Pulls us all together
Never apart
And once we learn to speak it
All the world will hear
Love in any language
Fluently spoken here*

Listening to the Father's Heart

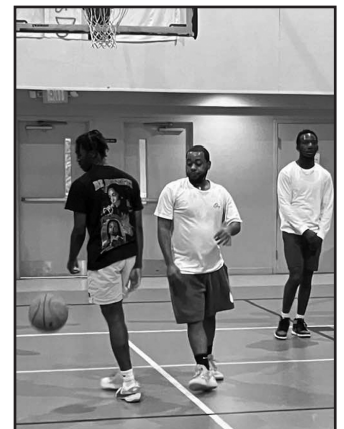
by Os Hillman

Son, I want you to think differently about failure. In my kingdom failure does not make you a failure; it makes you experienced and prepares you for success. Some may want to define you by your failures; I do not. I allow failure because humility is a quality I value greatly. I have to work this quality into you in order for you to achieve your destiny and to receive all the inheritance I have predetermined you to receive. Do you remember my son Moses? He was the most humble man on earth. He got there through many failures. But he was very successful because those experiences taught him how to walk with me. Moses got to a place with me where I could speak face to face with him. I did this with no other son. I desire this same level of relationship with all my sons and daughters. Learn all you can from your failures. They are your friends, not your enemies, if you learn what they are designed to teach you.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand." - Psalm 37: 23

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Living H2O Initiative Photos



Meant for Service

by Alistair Begg

“And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights.”
- 1 Kings 19:8

All the strength supplied to us by our gracious God is meant for service, not for indulgence or pride. When the prophet Elijah found the cake baked on the coals and the jar of water placed at his head as he lay under the juniper tree, he was not being given a special treat that he could lie back and enjoy - he was being sustained so that he could fulfill his responsibilities for the next forty days and forty nights. When the Master invited the disciples to come and eat with Him, after the meal was over He said to Peter, “Feed my sheep,” then added, “Follow me.”

It is the same for us; we eat the bread of heaven so that we can expend our strength in the Master’s service. We come to the table and eat of the paschal lamb in a spirit of readiness, so that we may leave as soon as we have satisfied our hunger.

Some Christians are for living on Christ but are not so anxious to live for Christ. Earth should be a preparation for heaven; and heaven is the place where saints feast most and work most. They sit down at the table of our Lord, and they serve Him day and night in His temple. They eat of heavenly food and offer perfect service.

Believer, in the strength you daily gain from Christ, work for Him. Some of us have a lot to learn concerning the design of our Lord in giving us His grace. We are not to hide the precious grains of truth without giving that truth an opportunity to grow: We must sow it and water it. Why does the Lord send the rain upon the thirsty earth and give the sunshine? Is it not in order that sun and rain may help the fruits of the earth to yield food for us? Even so the Lord feeds and refreshes our souls so that we may use our renewed strength in the promotion of His glory.

Devotional material is taken from “Morning and Evening,” written by C.H. Spurgeon, revised and updated by Alistair Begg. Copyright © 2003, Good News Publishers

Mike Johnson and the Apostle Paul Syndrome

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

The average pastor in America changes churches once every four years. Youth pastors last roughly three years before they move on to supposedly greener pastures.

Whereas it might be argued that youth pastors leave because they are hoping to have a church of their own someday, the career path of a senior pastor usually takes a different route. The first year of his pastorate is an unabashed honeymoon period where the proverbial “bloom is still on the rose.” Simply put, the pastor loves his new church, and his congregation loves him back.

That mutual admiration society often lasts well into his second and third years and together, much is accomplished for God’s glory. Attendance is up, perhaps necessitating a second service, and there is even talk about launching a building program.

And then it happens...

It could be the result of a hard-hitting sermon that steps on too many people’s toes, especially if one or more of them are elders or serve on the deacon board. Or it could be as simple as congregants realizing that their new pas-

tor really isn’t the second coming of Billy Graham or Billy Sunday.

And so, the murmuring begins all the while the pastor is updating (and circulating) his resume, hoping against hope that a position will open up in a new church before his current one asks him to leave.

Wash... rinse... repeat.

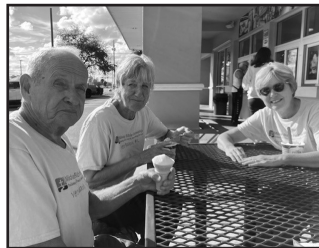
This sad analogy came to my mind recently when I heard a well-meaning conservative friend say, “I’ll give him the benefit of the doubt for now, but time will tell. He may prove to be just another RINO who caves into the Washington establishment when the pressure is on and the going gets tough.”

Who was my conservative friend talking about, you ask? Try Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA), the new Speaker of the House.

In a chaotic and often clownish effort to replace former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, the GOP caucus took a page right out of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Just like a bowl of porridge, Jim Jordan (R-OH) was considered to be too hot, and Steve Scalise (R-LA) was considered to be too cold. So was Tom Emmer (R-MN) and a few

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Midway Bible Fellowship stands for life!



Mike Johnson and the Apostle Paul Syndrome

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other speaker wannabees whose candidacies lasted about as long as Britney Spears' first marriage.

Finally, the caucus members settled on Mike Johnson, a relatively obscure 4-term congressman from Shreveport. That being said, I have been extremely impressed by Speaker Johnson, who seems like the real deal to me. His acceptance speech was humble, even self-deprecating, and contained multiple references to the U.S. Constitution. It was also chockful of Scripture verses, which shouldn't have surprised anyone because Speaker Johnson wears his faith on his sleeve.

Nevertheless, there are still some "Doubting Thomases" inside the House chambers as well as in the Republican hinterlands. Just ask my conservative friend, who seems to be waiting for the other shoe to drop so he can say "I told you so."

In evangelical circles, it is often said that some churches wouldn't be happy if the Apostle Paul himself was their pastor. Sad, but very true, because Christians and conservatives alike often set impossibly high standards based on their own value system. One misstep and you are put out to pasture... and don't let the door hit you on the way out!

Let's just hope that people give Mike Johnson a chance to settle into his new position and prove himself before they start judging his tenure and lining up candidates to succeed him. He deserves that much... and more.

After all, there is no such thing as a perfect person, pastor, or politician.

We Have a QR Code

Everyone can use a spiritual lift in the morning, especially on weekdays when work, school, and other demands vie for our time and attention... and sap our strength. Risk Takers for Christ wants to help by offering a free weekday devotional message that will challenge and encourage you in your daily walk.



Point your smartphone camera at this QR code to receive an uplifting devotional message each weekday.

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