



**Black Christian News Network One Presents**

# 100

**MOST INFLUENTIAL  
BLACK CHRISTIAN  
HISTORY MAKERS**





# 100

## **Most Influential Black Christian History-Makers**

*Black history is important, but making history now is  
more important.*

**Compiled and Edited by the Editors of BCNN1.com  
Black Christian News Network One**



***We thank God for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
and Rosa Parks, but we need a  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and a Rosa Parks today.***



# Introduction

We believe that black history is important. But we also believe that making history today is more important. We cannot rest on the laurels of great luminaries such as Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, George Washington Carver, and others. God used these and others mightily in their time; now He has given us this time and we will have to answer to Him as to how we use it. In light of that, we have attempted to place in one volume the most influential Black Christian History-Makers who are living today and who are serving Jesus Christ with their various gifts and talents.

The ability to lead is not something you can train to have. True leadership is a gift from God that is undeniable by people. You cannot make yourself a leader of people. In other words, you cannot be a leader just because you want to be. Only God makes leaders. One can improve his or her leadership abilities but one cannot make himself or herself a leader.

The people who have been chosen for this list are not people who are trying to be leaders; they were born leaders by the grace of God. However, this book is not really about the people on this list; it is about God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gives us the grace to do things for His glory with the talents and gifts He has given to us. This book of recognition is truly for the glory of God.

We all know that when we get to Heaven, the people who will be in front getting the rewards are those faithful, behind-the-scenes people in the body of Christ who clean the bathrooms, work in the nursery, do the ushering, and cook the food -- not the luminaries that we see out front today.

Be that as it may: we humbly present the ***100 Most Influential Black Christian History-Makers***.

— *Editors, Black Christian News Network One (BCNN1.com)*

# Yolanda Adams

*"My direction has never really changed, because I don't think that you can really work gimmicks in gospel music. With gospel music, there is this central theme that always comes around about the love of God, the love of Jesus and the power that you have through Jesus Christ. You don't need a gimmick when you have that."*

For Gospel legend Yolanda Adams, her stirring Elektra debut, *Mountain High... Valley Low*, was an opportunity to bring both her inspirational vision and her wide range of influences to an audience hungry for spiritual fruit. Since her 1988 debut, the acclaimed and uplifting *Just As I Am*, Yolanda has been wowing gospel audiences all over the world. In 1999, four studio albums and one live album later (the Grammy nominated *Yolanda... Live In Washington*), the Houston, Texas, native was ready to extend her magnificent reach without watering down the message.

"I'm not one of those singers who wants to expand my audience at the expense of the people who already know my music," she says determinedly. "And I've grown both vocally and spiritually since my first album, through each phase of my career. So choosing Elektra was just another step of growth. Gospel music had stepped up and gathered a myriad of influences—jazz, hip-hop, and R&B. I need to be in a place where my message can be heard by everyone. I understand my purpose. I understand what I was put here for. I take that on every day of my life."

Religious audiences have been validating Yolanda for well over a decade. She was employed as an elementary teacher in Houston when she first began to garner recognition for her stunning performances. "I taught second and third grades. I would go on the road during the weekends to sing. Pretty soon the demand started growing. I realized I might be able to make it my career."

The eldest of six siblings, her pioneering spirit and boundless optimism soon became her trademark. Her solid church background and love of all kinds of music, which she says "was inspired by family—everything from Stevie Wonder to Beethoven," left her with a respect for traditional musical hues, as well as a desire for more contemporary interpretation. "Too many times we're put in a box by musical labels," she says.

It was while she served as a lead singer with the Southeast Inspirational Choir that Yolanda caught the eye of the prolific composer/producer Thomas Whitfield. He guided her first album, *Just As I Am*, for Sound of Gospel Records. Yolanda went on to sing for the Tribute label in 1990, and was soon hailed as the most versatile contemporary gospel singer since Aretha Franklin.

Her brilliant follow-up albums, 1991's *Through The Storm* and 1993's *Save The World*, won several Stellar awards, Gospel's highest accolade. 1995's *More Than A Melody* propelled her into the world of R&B Gospel, with hit singles such as "Gotta Have Love" and "Open Arms." The disc won a Soul Train Lady of Soul award, earned her a Grammy nomination, and unforgettable live performance spot on the 1996 Soul Train Music Awards telecast.

The singer, whose love of children's causes is almost as legendary as her singing, eagerly embraces the social responsibility that comes with the blessings of success. She's served as a spokesperson for the FILA Corporation's Operation Rebound program, which addresses the concerns of inner city school children. She recalls her days as a teacher fondly, and tries to instill in her audience the need for positive reinforcement, no matter from what walk of life. "It's been my experience that whatever you ask of them, you must look to the best in them. The transformation can be astounding."

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# Meeke Addison

*"If you are a defender of the Church, I encourage you to persevere in contending for holiness. Don't remain silent, and don't let those who seek to stain the Church bully you."*

Meeke Addison is director of communications for Urban Family Talk a ministry division of American Family Association. Her work with AFA began in 2007 as a stay-at-home mom in Louisiana. Since then, she has primarily served on-air as a radio personality. She has hosted programs on all three of AFR's formats, Music, Talk, and Urban. Meeke is a conference speaker, women's teacher, and pro-family activist who keeps a close eye on politics, pop culture, and the Church. Her focus is on equipping everyday Christians to effectively engage and transform culture.

Before going to AFA, Meeke served as a nationally appointed missionary to America's colleges and universities. She uses her background in ministry and a firm grasp of Scripture to help guide the morning show she co-hosts with her husband, Wil. New Orleans natives, Wil and Meeke have four children who they home-educate.

Facebook: [facebook.com/afrmeeke](https://www.facebook.com/afrmeeke)

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# Thabiti Anyabwile

*"Where is God in suffering? He's in it with us, and in it for us."*

Thabiti Anyabwile is one of the pastors of Anacostia River Church in Washington, D.C. He has served as an elder and pastor in churches in North Carolina, D.C., and the Cayman Islands. After a few years as a practicing Muslim, Thabiti was converted under the preaching of the gospel in the Washington, D.C. area. He and his wife, Kristie, have three children.

Thabiti is the author of several books, including *The Life of God in the Soul of the Church*, *The Gospel for Muslims*, *What Is a Healthy Church Member?* *The Decline of African- American Theology*, and *The Faithful Preacher*. He blogs regularly at The Front Porch and Pure Church.

Website: [anacostiariverchurch.org](http://anacostiariverchurch.org)

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# Lou Baldwin

*"No one can be a good Christian who does not with holy zeal set out to know, delight in, and live by the Word of God!"*

(John R. Rice)

Lou Baldwin is founder and Pastor Emeritus of the Crossroads Baptist Church in Bailey's Crossroads, Virginia, where he pastored for thirty years.

A successful businessman who relocated to the Washington, D.C. area from his native Tallahassee, Florida, Lou Baldwin trusted Christ as Savior on July 22, 1976.

In 1978, he felt the call of God to preach, and entered the Fairfax Baptist Temple Missions Academy to prepare for the ministry. Upon graduation in 1981, his family was commissioned to Washington, D.C., to plant the Northwest Baptist Temple, an independent, fundamental Baptist church. Twenty months later, the church relocated to suburban Northern Virginia and was renamed Crossroads Baptist Church.

In 1993, the Doctor of Divinity degree was conferred upon Pastor Baldwin by the Atlantic Baptist Bible College. In 1996, he was honored with a Doctorate of Laws degree from Bob Jones University.

His personal burden resulted in the inception of the Conference on Evangelizing Black America (COEBA) in 1994. As founder of this

movement, he pilots an international effort to plant fundamental Baptist churches in the black community.

Dr. Baldwin served on the Board of Directors for Atlantic Baptist Bible College for twenty-five years. In addition, he served on the Board of Trustees for Baptist International Missions Incorporated for twenty years, while serving as vice-chairman and chairman for his last several years. He currently serves as a board member on the Bailey's Crossroads Revitalization Committee in Fairfax County, Virginia. Dr. Baldwin has preached in various national meetings including the Southwide Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, and the Bible Conference at Bob Jones University.

Dr. Baldwin's heart for church planting has taken him throughout North and Central America, Europe and the Caribbean. Under his leadership and example, more than 300 men and boys have surrendered to preach and 27 churches have been established. These churches, along with Crossroads, collectively give more than one million dollars annually for world missions. He and his wife Jeanette have three children (Michael, Dee Dee, and Kenny), a son-in-law (Lou Williams), two daughters-in-law (Lora and Bethany), and nine grandchildren. The Baldwins reside in Annandale, Virginia.

Website: [ourcrossroads.org](http://ourcrossroads.org)

# Sho Baraka

*"I keep my eyes and heart bent toward Jesus, therefore no human response can distract me from the Kingdom agenda."*

Educated at Tuskegee University and the University of North Texas, Sho studied Television/Film, Anthropology, and Public Administration. He has become an artist, philosopher, and social-thought leader in contemporary culture. He has spent nine years traveling the world as a recording artist and public speaker. He has done numerous overseas activist work, ranging from race relations in South Africa to establishing musical cohorts in Indonesia. He is a founding member of nationally known Christian hip hop group 116 Clique. Sho Baraka is also the founder of Forth District.

He now desires to blend his artistic platform with his academic leanings to contribute a unique perspective in both arenas in hopes of raising the standard, thereby raising the culture. Sho currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia, and co-leads a consulting network that is active in cultural renewal.

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# LaShawn Barber

*"Marriage is a relationship of opposites. In redefining it to include people of the same sex, marriage is rendered meaningless, and children are deprived of a normal family. Children from same-sex unions, begat through a known or unknown sperm donor or womb, are deprived of what they long for, even if they can't articulate it: a mother and father, not two mothers or two fathers."*

La Shawn Barber is a freelance writer and blogger. Her features, essays, and reviews have appeared in the *Washington Examiner*, *Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *The National Jurist*, *Christianity Today*, *Christian Research Journal*, *Today's Christian Woman*, *BreakPoint.org*, *Beliefnet.com*, *Townhall.com*, *National Review Online*, *BlogCritics.org*, and other publications. She is a *WORLDmag.com* columnist.

La Shawn has appeared on CNN's "Reliable Sources," the BBC, MSNBC, C-SPAN, and several national talk radio programs, including "The Bible Answer Man," NPR, Michael Savage's "The Savage Nation," Bill O'Reilly's "The Radio Factor," and "The Hugh Hewitt Show." Her blog has been featured on CNN, MSNBC, and in the *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*.

Southern born and raised, repentant and Reformed, La Shawn writes about culture, faith, and politics. She's an independent conservative and not a member of any political party.

Website: [lashawnbarber.com](http://lashawnbarber.com)

# Angela Bassett

*"When you realize that every breath is a gift from God. When you realize how small you are, but how much he loved you. That he, Jesus, would die, the son of God himself on earth, then you just weep."*

Captivating, gifted, and sensational, Angela Bassett's presence has been felt in theaters, stages, and television screens throughout the world. Angela Evelyn Bassett was born on August 16, 1958, in New York City, to Betty Jane (Gilbert), a social worker, and Daniel Benjamin Bassett, a preacher's son. Bassett and her sister D'nette grew up in St. Petersburg, Florida, with their mother. As a single mother, Betty stressed the importance of education for her children. With the assistance of an academic scholarship, Bassett matriculated into Yale University. In 1980, she received her B.A. in African-American studies from Yale. In 1983, she earned a Master of Fine Arts Degree from the Yale School of Drama. It was at Yale that Bassett met her husband, Courtney B. Vance, a 1986 graduate of the Drama School. Bassett first appeared in small roles on *The Cosby Show* (1984) and *Spenser: For Hire* (1985), but it was not until 1990 that a spate of television roles brought her notice. Her breakthrough role was playing Tina Turner, whom she had never seen perform before taking the role in *What's Love Got to Do with It* (1993). Bassett's performance earned her an Academy Award nomination and a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress.

Facebook: [facebook.com/ImAngelaBassett](https://www.facebook.com/ImAngelaBassett)

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# Stan Bennett

*“While our primary focus is the proclamation of this wonderful Gospel through teaching and preaching, pragmatically, we recognize our need to minister beyond the four walls of our church building; and to fulfill the command of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to ‘make disciples of all men.’”*

Stan B. Bennett was born in Fairfield, AL, on August 12, 1950. In 1968, he enlisted in the U.S. Marines, and served six years.

On November 18, 1972, Stan Bennett married Deborah Patterson. They have three adult children: Pamela McCoy, Matthew, Jonathan, and nine grandchildren.

On July 29, 1979, Stan Bennett asked the Lord Jesus Christ to be his Savior and followed in Believer’s Baptism while living in Queens, NY. He faithfully served the Lord as a deacon, Sunday School Superintendent, bus captain and usher at International Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York.

In April 1985, Stan Bennett enrolled in Trinity Baptist College and graduated in the class of ‘89 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Church Ministries.

Pastor Bennett has a Master of Arts degree from Louisiana Baptist University. He also has two Honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees, one from Trinity Baptist College in Jacksonville, FL, and the other from New Life Bible College in Concord, NC.

After graduation in June 1989, Pastor Bennett was encouraged to come to the Richmond, Virginia, area to start an Independent Fundamental Baptist Church.

On February 4, 1990, Pastor Bennett was ordained to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ at Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville, FL.

Dr. Stan Bennett was not called to build a black church, but rather a church for all people! It is his belief that one day Black, White, Hispanic, Asian and all nationalities of people will live together in Heaven. So, because of this, we ought to be able to work and worship together on earth, in the house of God!

Website: [cornerstoneinrichmond.org](http://cornerstoneinrichmond.org)

# A.R. Bernard

*“When we commit our hearts, our days, and our work to the One who created us, we experience spiritual abundance.”*

In November of 1979, A.R. Bernard left a ten-year career with a major New York banking institution to go into full time ministry. What started as a small storefront church in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, has now blossomed into a 30,000+ member church that sits on an 11.5 acre campus in the Spring Creek section of Brooklyn, New York. He is founder and CEO of Christian Cultural Center.

A.R. Bernard Sr. is also the president of the Council of Churches of the City of New York, representing 1.5 million Protestants, Anglicans and Orthodox Christians.

Bernard sits on the NYC Economic Development Corporation Board; served on the NYC School Chancellor's Advisory Cabinet; and served on NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg's 2001 Transition Team.

In 1993, he founded Brooklyn Preparatory School, a premier early childhood education program. In 2010, he founded Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek. In 2008, he led a transformational team and won the bid to purchase one of the nation's largest (\$1 billion) Mitchell Lama Housing developments (Starrett City, Brooklyn, NY).

Recognized as a New Influential - 25 Leaders Reshaping New York

(Crain's New York Business, September 2008); Most Influential NY Clergyman (NY Daily News, February 2008); Most Influential African American New Yorker (NY Post, February 2008); and New York's Most Influential (NY Magazine, 2006). Bernard was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Consulate General of Israel in NY in conjunction with the Jewish Community Relations Council and Jewish National Fund. He has been personally cited in the Congressional Records.

Bernard has a Master of Urban Studies and a Master of Divinity from Alliance Theological Seminary. In May of 2009, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Nyack College/Alliance Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Letters from Wagner College.

He and his wife, Karen, have been married since October 1972.

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Twitter: [@ARBernard](https://twitter.com/ARBernard)

# Simone Biles

*"We can push ourselves further. We always have more to give."*

Simone Biles is the most decorated American gymnast, winning 19 Olympic and World Championship medals.

Born in Ohio in 1997, Simone Biles has become one of America's top gymnasts. After dominating at the junior elite level, she won her first U.S. and world all-around titles in 2013. In 2015, she claimed a record third straight world all-around title.

She went on to lead the U.S. Olympic women's gymnastics team, nicknamed "The Final Five," to win gold at the 2016 Summer Games, and dominated the competition, winning gold in the women's individual all-around, vault and floor exercise and bronze in the balance beam.

Facebook: [facebook.com/simonebiles](https://www.facebook.com/simonebiles)

Twitter: [@Simone\\_Biles](https://twitter.com/Simone_Biles)

# Barry C. Black

*"Prayer is one of the most underestimated weapons we have as Christians and we need to use prayer a lot more."*

On June 27, 2003, Rear Admiral Barry C. Black (Ret.) was elected the 62nd Chaplain of the United States Senate. He began working in the Senate on July 7, 2003. Prior to going to Capitol Hill, Chaplain Black served in the U.S. Navy for over twenty-seven years, ending his distinguished career as the Chief of Navy Chaplains.

Commissioned as a Navy Chaplain in 1976, Chaplain Black's first duty station was the Fleet Religious Support Activity in Norfolk, Virginia. Subsequent assignments included Naval Support Activity, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland; First Marine Aircraft Wing, Okinawa, Japan; Naval Training Center, San Diego, California; *U.S.S. Belleau Wood*, Long Beach, California; Naval Chaplains School Advanced Course, Newport, Rhode Island; Marine Aircraft Group Thirty-One, Beaufort, South Carolina; Assistant Staff Chaplain, Chief of Naval Education and Training, Pensacola, Florida; and Fleet Chaplain, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk, Virginia.

As Rear Admiral, his personal decorations include the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal (two medals), Meritorious Service Medals (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals (two awards), and numerous unit awards, campaign, and service medals.

Chaplain Black is a native of Baltimore, Maryland, and an alumnus of Oakwood College, Andrews University, North Carolina Central University, Eastern Baptist Seminary, Salve Regina University, and United States International University. In addition to earning Master of Arts degrees in Divinity, Counseling, and Management, he has received a Doctorate degree in Ministry and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology.

Chaplain Black has been honored for many outstanding achievements. Of particular note, he was chosen from 127 nominees for the 1995 NAACP Renowned Service Award for his contribution to equal opportunity and civil rights. He also received the 2002 Benjamin Elijah Mays Distinguished Leadership Award from The Morehouse School of Religion. In 2004, the Old Dominion University chapter of the NAACP conferred on him the Image Award, "Reaffirming the Dream — Realizing the Vision," for military excellence.

Chaplain Barry C. Black is married to the former Brenda Pearsall of St. Petersburg, Florida. They have three sons: Barry II, Brendan, and Bradford.

Facebook: [facebook.com/SenateChaplain](https://www.facebook.com/SenateChaplain)

# Ken Blackwell

*“Traditional marriage in the platform is the essential building block to our civilization.”*

Ken Blackwell is on the board of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and is a Senior Fellow for Family Empowerment at the Family Research Council, as well as the Ronald Reagan Distinguished Fellow for Public Policy at the Buckeye Institute in Columbus, Ohio. He is a visiting fellow at the Texas Public Policy Foundation and the American Civil Rights Union. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Club for Growth, National Taxpayers Union, and Pastors Retreat Network. Mr. Blackwell is also the Chairman for the Coalition for a Conservative Majority and a member of the National Rifle Association's Public Affairs Committee. He is a columnist for the *New York Sun*, a contributing editor and columnist for the conservative news and opinion site Townhall.com, and a public affairs commentator for the Salem Radio Network.

He has a distinguished record of achievement as a finance executive, entrepreneur, diplomat, educator, and independent corporate director. He is one of the nation's leading conservative voices and a strong advocate of free market enterprise. In 2006, he became the first African-American in Ohio history to be a major party nominee for governor.

In 2004, the American Conservative Union and the Ashbrook Center

for Public Affairs honored Mr. Blackwell with the John M. Ashbrook Award for his steadfast conservative leadership. Past recipients of the award include President Ronald Reagan, Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Charlton Heston.

Mr. Blackwell's public service includes terms as mayor of Cincinnati, undersecretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. In 1994, he became the first African-American elected to a statewide executive office in Ohio when he was elected treasurer of state. He subsequently was elected to two terms as secretary of state.

Mr. Blackwell is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration (2003-present), a director of the Academy for Government Accountability (2007-present), and a former member of the federal senior executive service. He was co-chairman of the board of directors of the Campaign Finance Institute (2003-06) in Washington, D.C. and a member of the Harvard Policy Group on Network-Enabled Services and Government (2003-06). Mr. Blackwell has been a member of the national advisory boards of the Princeton Review (2000-06) and Youth for Christ (2003-05). He is a former chairman of the U.S. Census Monitoring Board (1998-2001) and member of the Advisory Panel of the Federal Elections Commission (1999-2003). In addition, Mr. Blackwell served on the board of directors of the ICMA Retirement Corporation (1999-2004), Fifth Third Bank, Fifth Third Bancorp (1993-94), the Cincinnati Public Employees Retirement System, (1985-88) and Grant/Riverside Methodist Hospitals (1996-99).

In 2002, he received meritorious recognition from the Center for Digital Government, and was recognized by *Government Technology* magazine as one of the top 25 public sector leaders in information technology. He is a past president of the National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council. More than 25 years ago, he began his work in using technology to help government fulfill its mission and commitment to citizens as a member of the board of directors of Public Technology, Inc., located in Washington, D.C.

A certified government finance manager, Mr. Blackwell was a 1999 recipient of the Government Finance Officers Association's Excellence in Government Award. In 2006, he received the prestigious National Leadership Award from the National Forum for Black Public Administrators. He was formerly a Fellow at the Heritage Foundation (1990) in Washington, D.C. He has served on the U.S. Department of Labor's Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans.

Mr. Blackwell was a delegate to the White House Summit on Retirement Savings in 1998 and 2002. During the 1990s, he served on the congressionally appointed National Commission on Economic Growth and Tax Reform, and in 1998, he co-edited a book with Jack Kemp, titled, *IRS v. The People: Time for Real Tax Reform*. In 2006, he co-authored with Jerome R. Corsi *Rebuilding America: A Prescription for Creating Strong Families, Building the Wealth of Working People, and Ending Welfare*. An advocate for tax simplification and government reform, Mr. Blackwell has testified before Congressional committees on taxation, government operations, election systems, education, and banking matters.

Mr. Blackwell also has served on the boards of directors of the International Republican Institute, the American Council of Young Political Leaders, and the Congressional Human Rights Foundation. He was a scholar-in-residence at the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights at the University of Cincinnati College of Law (1991-93).

As the U.S. Representative to the U.N. Human Rights Commission, he led the U.S. delegation to all four of the preparatory meetings for the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and presently serves on the advisory board of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

His international activities have taken him to 53 countries and strengthened his understanding of emerging international markets and the growth of democracy worldwide. Mr. Blackwell has held the nation's highest security clearance, and twice received the U.S. Department of State's Superior Honor Award from the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton for his work in the field of human rights.

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# Charles E. Blake

*“Grace woke you up this morning, grace started you on your way and grace enabled you to survive until this very moment.”*

Bishop Charles E. Blake can primarily be described as a servant. His whole life is dedicated to loving his fellow man more than himself. He is, first, a husband to Mae Lawrence Blake. Together, they have three children and eight grandchildren. He is the pastor of West Angeles Church of God in Christ with a membership of over 24,000. West Angeles is deeply involved in providing not only for the spiritual life of its people, but it also provides more than 80 programs for the psychological, social, and economic enhancement of the community.

Bishop Blake is a humble humanitarian and communitarian. He is the chief executive officer of Save Africa’s Children, a program of the Pan African Children’s Fund. The group has assisted over 300 grassroots and faith-based projects in sub-Saharan Africa, reaching over 90,000 AIDS-affected children. Save Africa’s Children supports more than 100 thousand children in 340 orphan care programs throughout more than 23 nations on the continent of Africa.

Bishop Blake was the founding Chairman of the Board of Directors for C.H. Mason Theological Seminary and has served as an Executive Committee member on the Board of Directors of the Interdenominational Theological Seminary. He also formerly served as an Advisory Committee Member of the Pentecostal World

Conference.

Charles E. Blake was appointed the seventh in succession as Presiding Bishop by the General Assembly of the 6.5 million member Church of God in Christ on November 12, 2007. At the 101st Holy Convocation, during the quadrennial elections in 2008, Bishop Blake was re-elected as Presiding Bishop for another four-year term. He was re-elected for a third term on November 15, 2016. As Presiding Bishop, Blake has become the new face of and an international spokesperson for Pentecostalism as it is known today. Bishop Blake served as Jurisdictional Prelate of the First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Southern California comprised of more than 250 churches for 25 years.

On April 6, 2009, in Washington, D.C., President Barack Obama tapped Bishop Blake to serve on his 25-person White House Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He was also tapped as one of four to speak at the Democratic National Convention's first Ecumenical Service, where he pronounced his status as a pro-life Democrat and challenged both Democrats and Republicans to protect the rights of the unborn and born alike.

Bishop Blake has received numerous awards, commendations, and accolades. A few include: in April 2007, the Distinguished Leadership Award presented by the African Presidential Archives and Research Center at Boston University, the 2006 Trumpet Award, the Salvation Army's William Booth Award, the Greenlining Institute's Big Heart Award, and the designated recipient of the L.A. Urban League's Whitney M. Young Award for the year 2000. In

2003, Bishop Blake was awarded the Harvard Foundation Humanitarian Medal for his work with Save Africa's Children and its mission to support orphanages throughout the continent. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors designated "Bishop Charles E. Blake Day" on February 5, 2004.

Website: [westa.org](http://westa.org)

# Wanda Bolton-Davis

*"Evangelism and discipleship should be the primary goal of every Christian ministry."*

Wanda Bolton-Davis is the wife of Pastor Denny Davis at the St. John Church in North Texas. The Illinois native and mother of three also serves as a teaching pastor and ministry director at the church.

When Rev. Wanda first moved to the Dallas area in 1983, she aided her husband in the work of the church by serving as Minister of Music, starting the Social Service Ministry and founding the Annual Women's Retreat. This was all while working as a social worker in the field of adoption.

Rev. Wanda has a heart for God and His people and possesses a strong passion for discipleship. This passion led her to write and self-publish a discipleship guide called *Victorious Disciples*. The release of the book also served as the foundation for Victorious Disciples Ministries, Inc., a discipleship, mentoring, and leadership development ministry. Victorious Disciples has been implemented in churches all across the United States, Bermuda, Africa, and beyond since its inception in 2004.

Rev. Wanda holds a Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Science, a Master's Degree in Social Work, a Master of Divinity degree from Truett Theological Seminary, where she was selected as their Minister of the Year in 2005, and she is currently pursuing the Doctor of Ministry degree at Talbot School of Theology.

Being the first lady of a mega church is a full job in itself, but Rev. Wanda has managed to always go beyond the call of duty, making great strides of her own within the church and beyond. She has served as Honorary Chairperson and Task Force Member for the American Heart Association, and Chairperson for the Alumni Association of the School of Allied Health Sciences at U.T. Southwestern.

In addition, Rev. Wanda is on the Truett Theological Seminary Advisory Board and, in August 2005, led a ministry team to Africa where they ministered to thousands and implemented Victorious Disciples in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2006, she received the Esther Award at the First Ladies Conference hosted by the Urban Alternative and Dr. Lois Evans, wife to renowned Bible teacher and author, Dr. Tony Evans.

While the Lord has continually opened doors for Rev. Wanda to minister, her daily prayer remains, “Lord, use me in thy service.”

Website: [victoriousdisciples.org](http://victoriousdisciples.org)

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# Anthony Bradley

*“There was a time when evangelicalism had a white male face but, if the data holds, that is the face of American evangelicalism’s past. Many of us have been trying to make the case that there needs to be new leadership faces but few it seems are listening to us.”*

Dr. Anthony B. Bradley is an author, professor, and public intellectual whose provocative and compelling views have made him a highly sought after lecturer, TV commentator, and cultural critic.

Bradley is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at The King’s College in New York City, where he also serves as Director of The Center for the Study of Human Flourishing and Chair of the Religious and Theological Studies program. Dr. Bradley is additionally a Research Fellow at renowned think tank The Acton Institute. He has published several books, including *Black and Tired*, *Liberating Black Theology*, *Aliens in the Promised Land* and *John Rawls and Christian Social Engagement*. Recognized as an authority on issues of race, political economy, welfare policy, religion, hip hop, and youth culture, Bradley has appeared on Al Jazeera, C-SPAN, NPR, CNN/Headline News, and Fox News, among other news outlets. He has also published cultural commentary in a variety of periodicals such as the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Detroit News*, and *World Magazine*.

Previously, Bradley was Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology

and Ethics at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, where he also directed the Francis A. Schaeffer Institute. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from Clemson University, a Master of Divinity from Covenant Theological Seminary, a Master of Arts in Ethics and Society from Fordham University, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Westminster Theological Seminary.

He lives in New York City.

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# David Brown

*"I am a servant. And at my core, I enjoy serving people, and I am a person of faith. I am a Christian, and I believe that service is part of my direction, and loving people, despite themselves, is something I aspire to do."*

David O'Neal Brown was the chief of the Dallas Police Department, which serves the city of Dallas, Texas. He has been widely praised for his reforms designed to reduce violent confrontations between police officers and the community and increase the department's accountability and transparency.

A Dallas native, Brown is a graduate of South Oak Cliff High School and attended the University of Texas at Austin before enrolling in the Dallas police academy, originally with the intention of becoming a prosecutor. He earned a Bachelor of Science from Dallas Baptist University in 1999, and an MBA from Amberton University in 2001. He graduated from the FBI National Academy and the FBI National Executive Institute, the Senior Management Institute for Police, the National Counter-Terrorism Seminar in Tel Aviv, and the United States Secret Service dignitary protection seminar. He is certified by the State of Texas as a master peace officer and a police instructor.

The *New York Times* reported that Brown has "earned a national reputation as a progressive leader whose top priority is improving relations and reducing distrust between the police department and the city's minority residents." He has advocated reducing the use of

force and discouraged chasing suspects in cars and even by foot, since such chases often lead to fatalities. According to published reporting, he also has a reputation as a "tough boss" and has fought with the local police union over his emphasis on less-confrontational strategies and his willingness to fire officers, often publicly.

Brown was chief during the 2016 shooting of Dallas police officers that killed five police officers and injured nine others and two civilians.

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# James Brown

*"Was it just coincidence that I discovered my path once I opened my heart to God? I don't think so. That's why to this day, before I go on the air, I pray for the strength to do a good job, pray to the One who guided me there."*

James Brown returned to CBS Sports as host for the CBS Television Network's NFL pre-game show, *THE NFL TODAY*, and as play-by-play announcer for the Network's coverage of college basketball including the NCAA tournament.

Brown hosts "Inside the NFL" alongside analysts Phil Simms, Cris Collinsworth and Warren Sapp. "Inside the NFL", the award-winning program debuted in 2008 on SHOWTIME. In its first year on SHOWTIME, "Inside the NFL" won the Sports Emmy® Award for Outstanding Studio Show-Weekly.

Brown is the author of *Role of a Lifetime: Reflections on Faith, Family and Significant Living*. In the memoir, Brown relays how he found the role he was meant to play, highlighting both the good and bad decisions he made along the way, teaching readers how to discover life's purpose for themselves.

Brown served as host of Fox NFL Sunday for twelve years prior to returning to CBS Sports. He joined FOX Sports in June 1994 after a decade with CBS Sports. He hosted "Hang Time with James Brown", daily commentaries on Sporting News Radio. He was a one part of the original team of reports for HBO's "Real Sports with

Bryant Gumbel" and a boxing host for HBO pay-per-view.

Brown first joined CBS Sports in 1984 where he was part of the network's broadcast team for its NFL coverage and college basketball coverage as well as reporter for the NBA Finals. While at CBS he was also co-host of "CBS Sports Saturday/Sunday," a weekend anthology series.

Throughout his career he has earned numerous awards, including three Emmy Awards for Outstanding Studio Host for *THE NFL TODAY* (2007) and "FOX NFL Sunday" (1998, 1999)." Brown was honored with the 2009 Dick Schaap Memorial Award for Media Excellence. He received the 2007 Maxwell Football Club's Excellence in Broadcasting Award and the Dallas All Sports Association Award for Excellence in Sports Journalism, and was the first recipient of the annual Pat Summerall Award in 2006, at Super Bowl XL in Detroit. In 2005, he was honored with the Director's Award for Broadcasting from The 100 Black Men of America and the Greater Washington Urban League's Sam Lacy Award 2005. He was the 2002 recipient of the International Black Broadcasters Association's Broadcasting Excellence Award and was chosen as 1999 Sportscaster of the Year (Studio Host) by the American Sportscaster Association. Brown was also awarded the Golden Mike Award (1998) by the Black Broadcasters Alliance, two NATAS Emmys (DC chapter) including the Glenn Brenner Award for excellence in sportscasting (1998), and the Quarterback Club of Washington's Sportscaster of the Year Award (1996).

Brown graduated from Harvard with a degree in American Government. A standout on the basketball court, he received All-Ivy

League honors in his last three seasons at Harvard University and captained the team in his senior year. He was selected as a fourth-round draft pick by the NBA's Atlanta Hawks and a seventh-round pick by the Denver Nuggets. In 1996, Brown was inducted into the Harvard Hall of Fame.

He is a co-founder and principal of the Brown Technology Group, a certified minority owned and operated information technology company, and is a founding partner of the Washington Nationals.

No stranger to charitable efforts, James Brown hosts the Gridiron Gala, featuring "The JB Awards" where NFL players are honored for their outstanding community service. The annual event raises needed funds for Special Olympics DC. He has also worked on behalf of Darrell Green's Youth Life Foundation, the Neimann Pick Disease Foundation, and the Marrow Foundation, among numerous other charities and foundations.

He resides with his wife Dorothy in Maryland.

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# Kim Burrell

*"Time is filled with swift transition / Naught of earth unmoved can stand / Build your hopes on things eternal / Hold to God's unchanging hand."*

Pastor Kim Burrell started her musical career with the Greater Emmanuel C.O.G.I.C. Choir of Houston, Texas. Early in her career, she was featured on recordings with the Gospel Music Workshop of America Youth Choir; Trinity Temple Full Gospel Mass Choir of Dallas, Texas, along with Kirk Franklin, and The Inspirational Sounds Mass Choir of Houston, Texas. She has also been featured on B.E.T.'s *Celebration of Gospel, Lift Every Voice*, as well as the *Bobby Jones Gospel Show*. She has appeared at Lincoln Center, Radio City Music Hall, Rock & Roll Music Hall of Fame, and other notable venues and ministries around the world. She has earned the respect of musicians and artists in all genres and is hailed in colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Since her first solo project, "Try Me Again", she has shared the stage with great Gospel artists such as Pastor Shirley Caesar, Albertina Walker, Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Karen Clark-Sheard, Yolanda Adams, Kirk Franklin and Pastor Marvin Winans. She has also worked with secular artists such as Missy Elliot, Chaka Khan, Stevie Wonder, George Duke, Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs, Whitney Houston, Harry Connick Jr., and many more. She overwhelmed the music industry on Tommy Boy Gospel with her hit projects, "Everlasting Life" and "Kim Burrell Live", with hits like "I Keep Holding On", "I Come To You More Than I Give", "Anything",

"Victory", and "I'll Be There". Her most recent project, "The Love Album" has won a Dove award, two Stellar awards, and was nominated for a Grammy award.

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# Valorie Burton

*"God made no mistakes when He created you. You were uniquely designed for success in your purpose."*

Valorie Burton is a bestselling author, speaker, and life coach dedicated to helping people get unstuck and be unstoppable in every area of life. She is the founder of The Coaching and Positive Psychology (CaPP) Institute and has served as a Certified Personal and Executive Coach to hundreds of clients in over forty states and ten countries.

Valorie knows what it feels like to endure family health challenges and dreams deferred. And she understands the power of being resilient and tenacious in the face of such disappointments. In the summer of 1999, she had an epiphany that confirmed her life purpose: To inspire others to live more fulfilling lives. At the time, she was good at what she did for a living, but not passionate about it. Despite her fears, Valorie took a leap of faith to pursue her dream.

The transformation has led her to write ten books, including: *Get Unstuck, Be Unstoppable*; *Successful Women Think Differently*; and *What's Really Holding You Back?* *Success Magazine* named her book, *Why Not You?*, one of the "Top 25 Must-Read Success Books." Her book, *Happy Women Live Better: 13 Ways to Trigger Your Happiness Every Day*, helps women make intentional choices right now to increase their happiness on a daily basis. Her books have been translated into seven foreign languages.

Valorie has appeared numerous times on the TODAY Show, Dr. Oz, CNN, HLN, and hundreds of other radio and television shows. She has also co-hosted two national television programs, *The Potter's Touch* with T.D. Jakes and *Aspiring Women*, which won two regional Emmy nominations. She has written for *Oprah Magazine*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *Woman's Day*, and many more. And, as a speaker, she has inspired audiences for GE, McDonald's, Goldman Sachs, State Farm, Accenture, General Mills, FDIC, Verizon Wireless, NASA, Wells Fargo, the U.S. Military and hundreds of others.

Valorie has a master's degree in applied positive psychology from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in journalism from Florida A&M University. She earned a B.A. in International Affairs from Florida State University. She and her husband grew up in Denver, Colorado and live near Atlanta, Georgia, with their three children.

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# Reshonda Tate Billingsley

*"If you don't have strength, read Psalm 73:26. If you need help with forgiveness, try Acts 3:19. If you need to see a way out of no way, try First Corinthians 10:13."*

ReShonda Tate Billingsley always did have an active imagination. From making up stories to crafting award-winning poems, the national bestselling author has maintained a love for storytelling. After numerous rejections from publishers, ReShonda stepped out by faith, established her own publishing company, and released her debut novel, *My Brother's Keeper*. It's a move that paid off as megahouse publisher, Simon & Schuster/Pocket Books picked up the book, and to date, has published most of ReShonda's books.

A well-respected journalist for more than two decades, Reshonda has worked as a television reporter and anchor for stations in Oklahoma City, Beaumont, and Houston. ReShonda also works as editor for the *Houston Defender* newspaper, as well as a professional editor, ghostwriter, and literary consultant. She left her job at FOX 26 News in Houston in 2007 to write full-time. And write she does...

ReShonda is the national bestselling author of more than forty books. She writes both adult and teen fiction, as well as nonfiction. Several of her books have been optioned for movies, including her sophomore novel, *Let the Church Say Amen*, directed by actress Regina King, and produced by T.D. Jakes and Queen Latifah. ReShonda made her on-screen movie debut in the film, which aired

in August 2015 and was one of BET's highest rated original programs.

A highly sought-after motivational speaker and award-winning poet, ReShonda is the recipient of the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literature for her book, *Say Amen, Again*, and was also nominated for her books, *Mama's Boy* and *The Secret She Kept*. She has received a plethora of awards and honors for her journalism, fiction, and poetry writing skills, including an induction into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame and a Texas Top Author honor. Considered one of the top inspirational fiction authors in the country, her books remain a staple on bestsellers lists and have been featured in *USA Today*, *Jet*, *People*, *Essence*, and *Ebony* magazines.

ReShonda, along with national bestselling author, Victoria Christopher Murray, is the co-founder of Brown Girls Books, a boutique publishing company aimed at producing quality books from fresh voices and fan favorites.

She is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and Jack & Jill of America.

ReShonda is also a former professor of Broadcast Journalism at Langston University. She is married to Dr. Miron Billingsley, a Vice Chancellor at North Carolina Central University. The Billingsleys have three children.

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# Shirley Caesar

*"God is concerned and He's working it out for you."*

Shirley Ann Caesar-Williams, known professionally as Shirley Caesar, is an American, Gospel music singer, songwriter and recording artist whose career has spanned over six decades. A multi-award-winning artist, with eleven Grammy Awards and seven Dove Awards to her credit, she is known as the "First Lady of Gospel Music." In 2016, her song "Hold My Mule (You Name It)" went viral.

Beginning recording at the age of twelve in 1951, Shirley Caesar has released over forty albums. She has participated in over sixteen compilations and three gospel musicals, *Mama, I Want to Sing*, *Sing: Mama 2* and *Born to Sing: Mama 3*. She is also the creator of the #UNameIt challenge, which occurred during one of her sermons. She opened her eponymous store and plans on using the profits to help others during the holiday season.

Caesar's credits also include a series of commercials for MCI Communications and numerous awards for her recordings. She has won or received 11 Grammy Awards, 14 Stellar Awards, 18 Doves, 1 RIAA gold certification, an Essence Award, McDonald's Golden Circle Lifetime Achievement Award, NAACP Lifetime Achievement Award, SESAC Lifetime Achievement Award, Rhapsody & Rhythm Award from the National Museum of African American Music, as well as induction into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. According to Soundscan, she has sold 2.2 million albums since 1991. She has

made several notable appearances, including the televised Live from Disney World Night of Joy, the Gospel According to VH1, a White House performance for George Bush, and a speech on the Evolution of Gospel Music to the U.S. Treasury Department. In 2017, Caesar was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from The Recording Academy.

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# Kirbyjon Caldwell

*“As painful as death is, it does offer at least one potential prism of enlightenment: Death reminds us of the wonder of life. Life is truly God's most precious gift.”*

Kirbyjon H. Caldwell is Senior Pastor of Windsor Village United Methodist Church. Under the leadership of Caldwell since 1982, Windsor Village Church membership has increased from 25 members to more than 16,000, making it one of the largest Protestant churches in the country. As a result of Caldwell's effective social entrepreneurship, both Caldwell and the Windsor Village Church Family have been featured extensively in national and international print and broadcast media, including *U.S. News & World Report*, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *The Wall Street Journal*, and the CBS Evening News. Caldwell was included in *Newsweek's* “Century Club”, the publication's list of 100 people to watch as America moved into the 21st century.

In partnership with the Windsor Village Church family, Caldwell has spearheaded several independently operated nonprofits and community development projects that have impacted the social and economic landscape of central Southwest Houston, including The Power Center and Pointe 2.3.4. The Power Center is a 21st century service delivery model of private and public partnership that serves 11,000-plus families a month. Pointe 2.3.4. is a 234-acre, mini-master-planned community that encompasses a commercial park which includes a CVS Pharmacy, Walgreens, Advance Auto Parts, McDonald's, Taco Bell, ABC Dental, and TSO; Corinthian Pointe, a

residential subdivision consisting of 462 homes; a YMCA; an HISD elementary school; a senior high charter school; Texas Children's Pediatrics Center; Corinthian Village independent living facility for seniors; and the 183,000-square-foot Kingdom Builders' Community Center. Collectively, the nonprofit projects have produced 700 permanent jobs and make a \$65.5 million cash flow impact on the community annually. Additionally, Caldwell is the founder of three schools that provide education to students from elementary through senior high school.

Caldwell currently serves on several corporate and nonprofit boards, including NRG Energy where he serves as chair of the Governance Nominating Committee Inc., Bridgeway Capital Management, The Greater Houston Partnership Executive Committee, Southern Methodist University, and M.D. Anderson's University Cancer Foundation. He is also a limited partner with the Houston Texans NFL Franchise. A native Houstonian, Caldwell was educated in the Houston public schools; received a B.A. Degree in Economics from Carleton College; an M.B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Business; a Master's Degree in Theology from Southern Methodist University-Perkins School of Theology; and two honorary Doctor of Law degrees, one from Huston-Tillotson College and another from Carleton College.

Caldwell is a husband, father, and author of the best seller, *The Gospel of Good Success*, and co-author of *Entrepreneurial Faith*.

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# Suzette Caldwell

*"Whether you pray less than you think you should or more than most Christians have a desire to, most of us fall short of the Scripture's direction to 'pray continually.'"*

Intense determination to implement God's purpose for her life would describe the character of Pastor Suzette Caldwell. She has committed her life to achieving excellence through biblical living. She strongly believes that any person who is willing to "walk by faith" and trust God will achieve their dreams and desires.

In 1986, Suzette graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering. Caldwell's professional career as an environmental engineer in the public and private sectors span over seventeen years. As an entrepreneur, she owned TC Consulting Group Inc., an environmental consulting company. In September 1997, Governor George W. Bush appointed Mrs. Caldwell to the University of Houston System Board of Regents.

Presently, she serves as an Associate Pastor for Windsor Village United Methodist Church. In addition, Caldwell serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for The Prayer Institute, a non-profit, community-based organization that prays for the Houston metropolitan area and teaches people how to pray. Her service to the community, in addition to her technical career, has better equipped her to empower people to fulfill God's promises for their lives.

Suzette is married to Pastor Kirbyjon H. Caldwell. They are the parents of Turner, Nia, and Alexander Caldwell.

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# Ben Carson

*“When I treat other people with kindness and love, it is part of my way of paying my debt to God and the world for the privilege of living on this planet.”*

Benjamin S. Carson Sr., M.D., had a childhood dream of becoming a physician. However, growing up poor in the 1950's in Detroit, Michigan, with low self esteem, a horrible temper, and in a single-parent household, the statistics were certainly not in his favor. But Ben's mother, having only completed third grade herself, challenged her two children to strive for success by focusing on education. She encouraged her boys to reach beyond their meager circumstances through reading and building their knowledge of the world. As he began to appreciate reading, Ben's grades improved dramatically and he started to develop what would become a lifelong love affair with learning. Young Ben excelled in high school and upon completion, went on to attend college at Yale University where he met Candy, the young lady who would become his wife.

After graduation, Ben worked as an X-ray technician, a bank teller, a school bus driver, a supervisor for highway cleanup crews, and a crane operator in a steel factory, before being accepted into the University of Michigan Medical School. Ben and Candy were married, and after graduating medical school, Ben moved his family to Baltimore where he performed his residency training at Johns Hopkins University Medical Center. Little did he know at the time, but Johns Hopkins and Baltimore, Maryland, would become his home for most of his career. On June 30, 2013, Dr. Carson retired,

and today he is emeritus professor of neurosurgery, oncology, plastic surgery, and pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, after directing pediatric neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center for 39 years.

Some of Dr. Carson's career highlights include the first and only successful separation of craniopagus (Siamese) twins joined at the back of the head in 1987, the first completely successful separation of type-2 vertical craniopagus twins in 1997 in South Africa, and the first successful placement of an intrauterine shunt for a hydrocephalic twin. Although he has been involved in many newsworthy operations, he feels that every case is noteworthy and deserving of maximum attention. He is interested in all aspects of pediatric neurosurgery, and has a special interest in trigeminal neuralgia (a severe facial pain condition) in adults.

In 2001, Dr. Carson was named by CNN and *TIME Magazine* as one of the nation's twenty foremost physicians and scientists. That same year, he was selected by the Library of Congress as one of 89 "Living Legends." He is also the recipient of the 2006 Spingarn Medal which is the highest honor bestowed by the NAACP. In February 2008, Dr. Carson was presented with the Ford's Theatre Lincoln Medal by President Bush at the White House. In May 2008, Dr. Carson was the inaugural recipient of a professorship dedicated in his name when he became the Benjamin S. Carson Sr., M.D. and Dr. Evelyn Spiro, R.N. Professor of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins College of Medicine. In June 2008, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the highest civilian honor in the land. Dr. Carson was recognized in November 2008 by *U.S. News & World Report* and by Harvard's Center for Public

Leadership as one of “America’s Best Leaders.” On February 7, 2009, the award-winning movie titled *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story* based on Dr. Carson's memoirs and starring Cuba Gooding, Jr., premiered on TNT.

Dr. Carson holds more than sixty honorary doctorate degrees and has received literally hundreds of awards and citations. He is a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, the Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Science, the Horatio Alger Society of Distinguished Americans, and many other organizations. He is an Emeritus Fellow of the Yale Corporation, the governing body of Yale University. He was appointed in 2004 by President George W. Bush to serve on the President’s Council on Bioethics.

Dr. Carson is president and co-founder of the Carson Scholars Fund, which recognizes young people of all backgrounds for exceptional academic and humanitarian accomplishments. The Carson Scholars Fund Inc., was founded in 1994 to address the education crisis in the United States. When Ben and his wife, Candy, read a research study about education in the United States, they were alarmed by the findings. The study showed that our nation’s students ranked #21 out of 22 countries, next to the bottom of the list in science and math. Furthermore, the Carsons observed that many school display cases were filled with large trophies paying tribute to their sports teams’ achievements, while honor students only received a pin or certificate.

Dr. and Mrs. Carson felt compelled to take action. They believed that if children could be taught early to excel in school, they would

stay motivated and have a higher chance of educational success later in life. The Carson Scholars Fund was built on these principles.

Recognized by Great Nonprofits as a Top-Rated Nonprofit, Carson Scholars is currently operating in fifty states and the District of Columbia, having awarded more than \$6.2 million dollars to more than 6,200 scholars. The program also establishes Carson Reading Rooms in schools across the country to encourage young students and their families to discover the pleasure of reading and to recognize the true power of learning. To date the program has established over 100 reading rooms in fourteen states in the U.S.

Dr. Carson's first four books, *Gifted Hands*, *THINK BIG*, *The Big Picture*, and *Take the Risk: Learning to Identify, Choose and Live with Acceptable Risk*, provide inspiration and insight for leading a successful life; a fifth book, *America the Beautiful: Rediscovering What Made This Nation Great*, was released in early 2012 and made the *New York Times* Bestseller List in 2013. His sixth book, *One Nation: What We Can All Do To Save America's Future*, was released on May 20, 2014, and has also made the *New York Times* Bestseller List.

Carson was a Republican presidential candidate in the 2016 election. He was nominated for the position of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

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# Ed Carter

*“I have been an evangelist for over thirty years and have been blessed to preach in revivals, evangelistic crusades, bus ministries, tents, rescue missions, and jails across the United States.”*

Ed Carter was born on November 23, 1950, in Pampa, Texas, to Robert and Sarah Carter. Later his family moved to Witchita Falls, Texas, to live with his grandparents. They attended a Baptist church; and at the age of twelve, he joined the church and was baptized.

In 1969, he graduated from Booker T. Washington High School and received a four year scholarship to play football from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. On November 14, 1970, his entire college football team was killed when the plane on which they were passengers crashed. He had traveled to Texas to attend his father's funeral, and he did not make the trip with his team because his mother pleaded with him not to return to make the trip.

On March 10, 1974, he received the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour. He became a member of the Souls for Christ Baptist Church where he surrendered to preach the gospel. The Lord began to open many doors of opportunity for him to preach. In May of 1974, he graduated from Marshall University with a degree in Secondary Education.

On June 11, 1976, Ed and Shirley were married. They moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, in August of 1976, and became members of Highland Park Baptist Church. In September of 1976, he enrolled in

Temple Baptist Seminary. The Lord blessed Ed and his wife to travel together and serve Him and witness many precious souls saved throughout his days in Seminary. In 1979, the Lord blessed Ed to be the chaplain of the Student Body. In 1981, the Lord blessed him to graduate from Temple Baptist Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree.

In 1981, Death Unto Life Ministries was officially organized and later received status as a non-profit organization. Death Unto Life Ministries, Inc., is an evangelistic association and missions ministry. The ministry's goal is to reach people of all walks of life, but has a special burden to reach black America and to establish New Testament churches.

The Lord has blessed Ed and Shirley with two sons: Mark, a graduate of Tennessee Temple University and Home Office Assistant for DULM, Inc., and Jeff, also a graduate of Tennessee Temple University and Bible Seminary, serving with DULM, Inc.

Website: [deathuntolife.org](http://deathuntolife.org)

# Tina Campbell

*"Receive God's unconditional love and grace to accept and let go, fight the good fight of faith, pursue and have complete victory in Jesus, live a blessed and overcoming life, and declare God's greatness in the process."*

Gospel singer, reality television star, and best-selling author Trecina "Tina" Atkins-Campbell was known simply as Tina Atkins when she and her sister launched one of the most commercially successful contemporary gospel acts of the 2000s, Mary Mary.

After forming the group in 1998 with Erica Atkins-Campbell — the Atkins sisters married unrelated men who both had the last name Campbell — Mary Mary went on to earn two gold album awards and climbed to the top of Billboard's Gospel Albums chart.

The duo also released a series of books, including 2003's *Transparent*. Then in 2012 they premiered their reality television series, simply titled *Mary Mary*. In 2015, Tina followed in her sister's footsteps and launched a solo career, both as an author with the memoir *I Need a Day to Pray* and as a singer with the album *It's Personal*.

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# H.B. Charles Jr.

*"Prayer is our Christian duty. It is an expression of submission to God and dependence upon Him. For that matter, prayer is arguably the most objective measurement of our dependence upon God. The things you pray about are the things you trust God to handle. The things you neglect to pray about are the things you trust you can handle on your own."*

H.B. Charles Jr. is the pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church in Jacksonville, FL. Before coming to Shiloh, he led Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles.

Charles attended Master's Seminary and Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

He has written four books: *It Happens After Prayer*, *On Preaching*, *On Pastoring*, and *The Difference Jesus Makes*.

Charles came to faith and surrendered to a call to ministry at an early age. He began serving under his father and other pastoral leaders at Mt. Sinai when he was 11. After the death of his father, Mt. Sinai concluded a year long search for their next pastor by calling Charles when he was only a senior in high school. He stayed there for 18 years until Shiloh voted unanimously to make him their next pastor, the role he has held since 2008.

He hosts the annual Cutting It Straight Expository Preaching

Conference at Shiloh. The conference which is designed to “train, model, and promote expository preaching,” features such speakers as Al Mohler, Mac Brunson, and Bryan Loritts.

Currently, he blogs at [HBCharlesJr.today](http://HBCharlesJr.today) and hosts the “On Preaching” Podcast.

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# Christena Cleveland

*"People can meet God within their cultural context but in order to follow God, they must cross into other cultures because that's what Jesus did in the incarnation and on the cross."*

Christena Cleveland is a social psychologist, public theologian, author, and professor. She is the first Associate Professor of the Practice of Reconciliation at Duke University's Divinity School and the author of *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces that Keep Us Apart*.

As a child growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area, Christena was exposed to the richness of cultural difference. The kids on her neighborhood block represented nine different nationalities, where she quickly discovered that, "Be there in five minutes," means different things depending on who was saying it. At the multi-ethnic church that her parents planted, she learned that different cultures experience and perceive God differently – and that is a good thing.

When she wasn't heading off to an Oakland A's game to catch the Bash Brothers in action, she was studying – ultimately attending Dartmouth College where she double-majored in psychological and brain sciences and sociology, and UC Santa Barbara, where she earned a Ph.D. in social psychology. Recently named one of "5 online shepherds to follow" by *JET* magazine, Christena has devoted much of her vocation to teaching in higher educational institutions as well as serving the Church and broader society by regularly writing, speaking, and consulting with organizations. Now at Duke

Divinity School, Christena teaches classes on race, reconciliation, and conflict, and leads a research team that is investigating self-compassion as a buffer for racial stress.

She's also finishing her second book, *The Priesthood of the Privileged*, which examines inequality in the church and offers a theology of privilege.

A recent transplant to the South, Christena has fallen in love with the Carolina woods, savors the time she spends on her farm with friends, and is thinking about becoming a Durham Bulls fan.

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# Suzan Johnson Cook

*"Life is a journey, a series of significant steps one takes. At times, they are forward, sometimes backward, but always important."*

Suzan D. Johnson Cook served as Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom from May 16, 2011 until October 2013.

Prior to joining the State Department, Johnson Cook served as the senior pastor and CEO of the Bronx Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in New York City from 1996 to 2010. She is also the founder and president of Wisdom Women Worldwide Center and the owner of Charisma Speakers.

In 1993, Johnson Cook was a White House Fellow on the Domestic Policy Council. In that role, she advised President Bill Clinton on a range of issues including homelessness, violence, and community empowerment. She also worked with the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development on faith-based initiatives from 1994 until 1997. President Clinton appointed her in 1997 to serve on his National Initiative on Race as his only faith advisor.

Johnson Cook held the position of Chaplain to the New York City Police Department for twenty-one years, the only woman to serve in

that role. She was also a founder and board member of the Multi-Ethnic Center in New York City. From 1983 to 1996, she served as Senior Pastor to the Mariners Temple Baptist Church, and was a professor at New York Theological Seminary from 1988 to 1996.

Johnson Cook has travelled to five continents to promote religious freedom. She has led interfaith delegations to Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and throughout the Caribbean. She worked with World Vision in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, in its efforts to combat global poverty, and travelled to Zimbabwe and South Africa to meet with Zulu faith leaders to promote interfaith dialogue and tolerance. As a young woman, Johnson Cook worked with Operation Crossroads Africa, where she participated in a cross-cultural exchange with student groups in Ghana and Nigeria. She also spent time living and studying in Valencia, Spain.

Johnson Cook is the recipient of several awards, including the Woman of Conscience Award, the Martin Luther King Award, and the Visionary Leaders Award. She has also authored ten books. She received her Bachelor of Science in Speech from Emerson College in Boston in 1976 and a Master of Arts from Columbia University Teachers College in New York City in 1978. She completed a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York and a Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, in 1983 and 1990, respectively. She was also the recipient of the President's Administrative Fellowship at Harvard University, where she served as Associate Dean and later as professor.

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# Claudette Copeland

*"Self-pity is our worst enemy and if we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in the world." (Helen Keller)*

The Reverend Dr. Claudette A. Copeland is a native of Buffalo, New York. She serves as co-founder and pastor of New Creation Christian Fellowship in San Antonio, Texas.

She received her undergraduate education at the University of Connecticut, where she concentrated her studies in the field of Psychology. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts Degree, she went on to earn her Master of Divinity in Pastoral Care and Counseling from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. She earned the Doctorate of Ministry Degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, where she also served for several years as a visiting Professor and Mentor for doctoral studies.

Licensed as an evangelist at age eighteen in the Church of God in Christ, the ministry is central to her life. Reverend Copeland was ordained in 1979, has served in a variety of ministry settings, including the Hospital Chaplaincy, the Mission Field (in Haiti, South Africa, West Africa, and East Africa), and is a former member of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.

In 1980, she was a commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force

Chaplaincy. She and her husband were the first African-American clergy couple in the history of the U.S. Military Chaplaincy, where they served with distinction before returning to the civilian pastorate.

Dr. Copeland's work has been published in the *African American Devotional Bible* (Zondervan); and in the *African American Pulpit* (Judson Press), where she serves as a board member and contributing writer. She is the author of the book, *Coming Through the Darkness: Cancer and One Woman's Journey To Wholeness* (Red Nail Press), along with the companion prayer journal, *Coming Through*. She also released *Stories from Inner Space: Confessions of a Preacher Woman and other Tales* (Red Nail Press, 2003), and a Musical CD entitled, "There's Never Been a Time," featuring an engaging cross section of sacred music styles. Her latest literary contribution is included in *This Is My Story: Testimonies and Sermons of Black Women in Ministry*, published by John Knox Press, 2005.

Reverend Copeland is the founder of Claudette Copeland Ministries, a national empowerment group for women. She has been featured in many journals and magazines, including *Gospel Today*, *Essence Magazine*, and *Ebony Magazine* as one of the fifteen notable women preachers in the nation. Dr. Copeland was included in the Smithsonian Institute Exhibit: "Speak to My Heart" Communities of Faith and Contemporary African American Lives (Anacostia Museum). She made history as the first woman to offer the keynote address to the National MLK Jr. Commemorative March in a major urban venue, addressing over 80,000 persons in San Antonio for this great event (2004).

She continues to be active with women's groups, cross-denominational churches, and professional ministry groups, both nationally and internationally, seeking justice and joy for women and children.

Reverend Copeland resides in San Antonio, Texas, with her husband, Bishop David M. Copeland.

Website: [claudetteacopeland.org](http://claudetteacopeland.org)

# Ayesha Curry

*"The support of my family and my faith in God helped me to take a giant leap into the unknown as I learned how to turn my love of cooking into a career."*

Born in Canada, Ayesha Curry was raised in Charlotte, N.C., and is a wife and mom currently living in the San Francisco Bay Area. As a busy mom to her two daughters, Riley and Ryan, and the wife of NBA superstar Stephen Curry, Ayesha is always on the go and wouldn't have it any other way.

Her passion for her family and sharing their stories inspired her to create her lifestyle blog and YouTube channel, "Little Lights of Mine," a collection of all the things that bring light into her life. Now only a few years since its inception, the channel has become a sensation, accumulating a vast, loyal community of followers.

Ayesha has previously appeared as a judge on hit Food Network shows *Chopped Junior* and *Guy's Grocery Games*, and she is a regular contributor and frequent guest on *The Rachael Ray Show* and *Good Morning America*. She has also been featured as a go-to lifestyle expert in top lifestyle print and online publications, including *Elle*, *Vogue*, *Forbes*, *Time*, *InStyle*, *People*, *Vanity Fair*, *USA Today*, *Essence*, PopSugar, Refinery29, Elite Daily and *Sunset Magazine*.

Ayesha is an ambassador for No Kid Hungry, an organization that is working to end childhood hunger. Ayesha's first cookbook, *The Seasoned Life*, published by Little, Brown and Company, contains more than 100 of Ayesha's favorite recipes.

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# Stephen Curry

*"There's more to me than just this jersey I wear, and that's Christ living inside of me."*

Renowned for his shooting accuracy, pro basketball player Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors was the first person to be named Most Valuable Player by unanimous vote in NBA history.

Born in Ohio in 1988 to former NBA player Dell Curry and Sonya Curry, Stephen Curry garnered national attention for his impressive play at Davidson College. He was drafted in 2009 by the Golden State Warriors, and eventually developed into one of pro basketball's top players with his stellar shooting skills.

After garnering Most Valuable Player honors and helping the Warriors win the NBA championship in 2015, Curry led the team to a league-record 73 wins the following season. In May 2016, Curry became the first person to be named Most Valuable Player by unanimous vote in NBA history, and one of only 11 players to win the MVP award two years in a row.

Facebook: [facebook.com/StephenCurryOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/StephenCurryOfficial)

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# Valice Cuthbertson

*“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”*  
*(John Piper)*

Valice Cuthbertson has served as a pastor for over twenty years in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is responsible for planting several churches and is known as a powerful soulwinner for the Lord.

# Kimberly Daniels

*“Many leaders in the church do not want to deal with things that relate to the devil.”*

Kimberly Daniels is the founder of Spoken Word Ministries, Kimberly Daniels Ministries International, A Child of the King Learning Center, and Word Bible College. Spoken Word Ministries is an inner-city multi-racial church with a vision to reach the lost for Jesus Christ and to train them to do the greater works. Kimberly Daniels Ministries International is an apostolic vision that reaches cities and nations to impart, equip, and activate the saints in new levels of warfare and deliverance. Kimberly Daniels refers to her ministry as more than a deliverance ministry but a ministry of victorious living.

The foundation of her ministry is strengthened by her powerful outreach that is renowned for the radical transformation of lives. The unique ability of Kimberly Daniels Ministries International to bring deliverance to homosexuals, HIV/AIDS victims, drug addicts, and convicted felons has captivated the attention of many and drawn them to Christ.

Word Bible College provides Christian education and training for students around the world. A Child of the King Learning Center provides early education for children. Apostle Kim’s vision is also to provide studies for teenagers that are below grade level in public

schools. All of the educational programs of the ministry are covered by Spoken Word Ministries.

Kimberly Daniels was the fastest female sprinter in junior college in the nation and in the military around the world. Later, she spiraled into a lifestyle of prostitution and drugs. Since the miraculous intervention of Jesus in her life, she shares her testimony globally. She is a graduate of Florida State University where she obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology. Kim's educational efforts have also blessed her with a Master's Degree in Christian Education and a Doctorate in Christian Counseling.

Kim's ministry endeavors have taken her to countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Croatia, Japan, Germany, Canada, Trinidad, Barbados, Bahamas, South Africa, England, Costa Rica, and many more. She is the author of eight books; *Against All Odds*, *From a Mess to a Miracle*, *Clean House Strong House*, *Delivered to Destiny*, *Give It Back!*, *Inside Out*, *More than Just the Catch*, and *Prayer that Bring Change*.

*Clean House Strong House* is noted as a Bestseller and was nominated for the Christian Retailer's Choice Award under the charismatic category. Kim also writes columns for *Charisma Magazine*, one of the largest Christian periodicals in the world.

Kim currently spearheads a coalition of over 20,000 intercessors called Commanders of the Morning. She and her husband, Ardell, have six children. They travel internationally with the commitment to bring apostolic truth to the body of Christ.

Website: [kimberlydaniels.net](http://kimberlydaniels.net)

# Tony Dungy

*“I am a firm believer that the Lord sometimes has to short-circuit even our best plans for our benefit.”*

Tony Dungy is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Quiet Strength* and *Uncommon*. He led the Indianapolis Colts to Super Bowl victory on February 4, 2007, the first such win for an African-American coach. Dungy established another NFL first by leading his teams to the playoffs for ten consecutive years.

Dungy joined the Colts in 2002 after serving as the most successful head coach in Tampa Bay Buccaneers history. He has also held assistant coaching positions with the University of Minnesota, Pittsburgh Steelers, Kansas City Chiefs, and Minnesota Vikings. Before becoming a coach, Dungy played three seasons in the NFL.

Dungy has been involved in a wide variety of charitable organizations including the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Athletes in Action, Mentors for Life, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Clubs, the Prison Crusade Ministry, and All Pro Dad. He also works with Basket of Hope, the Black Coaches Association National Convention, Indiana Black Expo, the United Way of Central Indiana, and the American Diabetes Association.

He retired from coaching in 2008 and now serves as an analyst for

NBC's Football Night in America. He and his wife, Lauren, are the parents of seven children.

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# Anthony Evans

*"Prayer is a strong wall and fortress of the church; it is a goodly Christian weapon." (Martin Luther)*

Rev. Anthony Evans has fought tirelessly to reduce health disparities, foreclosure, homelessness, and black on black crime as well as promote traditional marriage, financial literacy, and help to preserve environmental justice across the country.

While still a college student, Rev. Evans mobilized local colleges in Vermont to donate \$15,000 to the investigation of the Atlanta child killings in the early eighties.

A native of Savannah, Georgia, Rev. Evans earned a Bachelor's degree in Religion in 1981 from Middlebury College in Vermont. Rev. Evans was ordained in 1982 and went on to earn a Masters in Divinity in 1988 from Howard University School of Divinity.

He became the National Black Church Initiative's president in 1992 and continues to work on behalf of social and economic justice issues. He leads a coalition of 34,000 churches across the country fighting against health disparities, promoting financial literacy, protecting babies from abuse and neglect, and helping to preserve the environment.

In 1989, Rev. Evans publicly showed the ferventness of his convictions when he was arrested during a protest in front of the South African embassy until the end of minority rule and the freeing of Nelson Mandela. He helped continue that protest for nearly two years.

In 2005, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Rev. Evans and NBCI mobilized over 15,000 volunteers to serve in the disaster relief effort. These volunteers came from NBCI member and sister churches and from many ethnic backgrounds, illustrating NBCI's policy of an interfaith and interracial approach to solving social problems. NBCI churches, along with other minority churches across the country, helped to raise more than \$1 billion in cash and social services.

In July 2006, Rev. Evans participated in a massive protest outside the Sudanese embassy to denounce the country's role in the genocide of its African citizens.

In 2010, Rev. Evans organized a group of young hip-hop artists and traditional black church leaders to launch an intensive initiative to aid Haiti and Haitians. He committed NBCI for seven years to work through Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention to aid in the reconstruction of Haiti, especially in the areas of housing, parenthood, economic development, and civil society.

Rev. Evans is now launching three significant programs that will affect millions of African-Americans over the next seven years: NBCI's Health Emergency Declaration, NBCI's Financial Literacy

Initiative, and NBCI's Educational Initiative.

Rev. Evans has a clear understanding of how public policy affects and determines the impact of these issues in which the black church fights for and against. He is determined to preserve the moral authority of the black church's voice in the public square.

Website: [NaltBlackChurch.com](http://NaltBlackChurch.com)

# Tony Evans

*“God expects that since He is good to you, you should be good to somebody else.”*

Dr. Tony Evans is one of the country’s most respected leaders in evangelical circles. As a pastor, teacher, author and speaker, he serves the body of Christ through his unique ability to communicate complex theological truths through simple, yet profound, illustrations. While addressing the practical issues of today, Dr. Evans is known as a relevant expositor. New and veteran pastors alike regard him as a pastor of pastors and a father in the faith.

The first African-American to graduate with a doctoral degree from Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS), he served as an associate professor in DTS’ Pastoral Ministries Department in the areas of evangelism, homiletics and black church studies. He continues to serve DTS on the Board of Incorporate Members. Dr. Evans holds the rare honor of serving as chaplain for the NBA’s Dallas Mavericks over the last three decades, the longest standing NBA chaplaincy on record. He is also the former chaplain of the Dallas Cowboys.

Through his local church and national ministry, Dr. Evans promotes a kingdom agenda philosophy that teaches God’s comprehensive rule over every sphere of life as demonstrated through the

individual, family, church, and society. This philosophy connects biblical spirituality with social responsibility.

At the heart of this vision is the use of church and school partnerships to effect spiritual and social change in communities. Dr. Evans' church and school outreach philosophy has been attributed as a catalyst for former President George W. Bush's Faith Based Initiative, which was his first formal act of office. Dr. Evans seeks to train churches, schools and volunteers in this philosophy, as well as in the functional practicalities, through the National Church Adopt-A-School Initiative which is a ministry underneath the umbrella of The Urban Alternative.

Dr. Evans has served as the senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship for close to four decades. Dr. Evans also serves as the founder and president of The Urban Alternative. He seeks to restore hope and transform lives through the proclamation and the application of the Word of God. His daily radio broadcast, *The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans*, can be heard on more than 1,000 radio outlets throughout the United States and in more than 130 countries.

Dr. Evans has written over 100 books, booklets, and Bible studies including his legacy work, *Oneness Embraced*, as well as his vision work, *The Kingdom Agenda*. Some of his most more popular titles include *Kingdom Man*, *Kingdom Woman*, *Marriage Matters*, and *Victory in Spiritual Warfare*.

Dr. Tony Evans is married to Lois, his wife and ministry partner for over four decades. They are the proud parents of four, grandparents

of twelve, and great-grandparents of one.

Dr. Evans has received many honors, including the Father of the Year award voted by the Dallas Father of the Year Committee and the Marian Pfister Anshutz Award for “dedication to protecting, encouraging, and strengthening the American family” from the Family Research Center.

Other honors include...

- “Student of the Year” from Carver Bible College (1972)
- “Outstanding Achievement Award” from Dallas Theological Seminary (1976)
- Listed in Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges
- Listed in Outstanding Young Men of America
- Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship named in the Top 50 of America’s Most Influential Churches (2006)
- Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Eastern College in St. Davids, PA
- Honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Dallas Baptist University in Dallas, TX

Website: [tonyevans.org](http://tonyevans.org)

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# Lois Evans

*"When I am plagued by negative, destructive thoughts, I work at replacing them with positive, uplifting ones. This is not always easy to do, especially for people who have established a pattern of pessimism, but it is possible. All things are possible with God."*

Dr. Lois Evans currently serves as Senior Vice President of The Urban Alternative and is the founder of Pastors' Wives Ministry.

Dr. Evans has been employed by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the Grand Old Gospel Fellowship Ministry, Dallas Federal Savings and Loan, as well as numerous executive management positions with The Urban Alternative since its inception in 1982, including serving as Executive Vice President from 1989 to 1995.

She serves in the office of the Senior Pastor at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship Church, National Religious Broadcasters Board, NRB Television Board, and The Urban Alternative Board of Directors. In addition, she is a member of Leadership Southwest, sponsored by the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce and served on the Board of the Christian Management Association. She also served as the first President of the Global Pastors' Wives Network.

Lois received a B.A. in Business Administration from Dallas Baptist

University. She was honored in 1995 with the Good Samaritan Award from Dallas Baptist University for outstanding Christian service to the community. In 1996, she received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Eastern College and in 2000 she received the Status of Women Award from Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. She also received The Woman of the Year in Ministry Award presented by the Women of Influence Inc.

Dr. Evans has traveled throughout the United States, the Caribbean, China, India, South America, Europe, and West Africa. She is a much sought after speaker for conferences and churches around the globe, as well as an accomplished singer.

In addition to many magazine and newsletter articles, Dr. Evans was a contributing author to *Promises Promises: Understanding and Encouraging Your Husband* (Vision House, 1996). She is co-author of *Our Love Is Here To Stay* (Multnomah Publishing, 2004), author of *Seasons Of A Woman's Life* (Moody, 2000), and *Stones of Remembrance: A Rock-Hard Faith for Rock-Hard Places* (Moody, 2006) with Jane Rubietta. She also recorded two albums in 1983 and in 1989.

Lois is married to her favorite pastor/teacher and best friend, Dr. Tony Evans, Senior Pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship. She has four children: Chrystal, Priscilla, Anthony Jr., and Jonathan, four granddaughters, eight grandsons, and one great-granddaughter.

Website: [loisevans.org](http://loisevans.org)

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# Allyson Felix

*"I have learned that track doesn't define me. My faith defines me.  
I'm running because I have been blessed with a gift."*

American runner Allyson Felix has won nine Olympic medals, making her the most decorated woman in U.S. track and field history.

Allyson Felix was born on November 18, 1985 in California. Nicknamed "Chicken Legs" for her lanky physique, Felix went out for the track team as a high school freshman. She excelled from the start, within a year finishing seventh in the 200-meter dash at the CIF California State Meet, eventually becoming a five-time winner. At the age of 18, Felix won a silver medal at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. She went on to compete at the 2008, 2012, and 2016 Olympics, winning a total of nine medals, six gold and three silver. She is currently the most decorated woman in U.S. track and field history.

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# Elaine Flake

*"Faith is not merely hope, and it must be more than belief; faith is a knowing of the heart."*

Long recognized as a powerful preacher, teacher, and role model with a gift for reaching worshippers of all ages, the Reverend Margaret Elaine M. Flake has been impacting the many lives she touches at The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral (GAC) and throughout the country. She has dedicated her life to the betterment of others by leading Christian education, evangelistic, and outreach ministries.

Dr. Flake is an itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She and her husband, Reverend Floyd H. Flake founded the Allen Christian School in 1982. This is a leading Christian educational institution, which provides a competitive education and special curriculum for young Christians, Pre-K through eighth grade. The school currently enrolls over 500 African-American students.

Fondly called Reverend Elaine by the GAC congregation, she was instrumental in developing the Allen Women's Resource Center which houses women and children who are victims of domestic violence; the Allen Prison Ministry, and many of the 100 ministries at the GAC that serve both the church and the community. She acts

as Advisor to the Missionary Department and as Advisor/Coordinator of the Allen Women's Ministry Department. Each year over 1,000 women from across the country and the Caribbean attend the retreats she hosts. In 2006, the conference attendees raised \$64,000 for Women of Darfur, and in 2010, they raised \$20,000 for Women in Haiti. Reverend Elaine has played a crucial role in increasing the membership of The Greater Allen A.M.E Cathedral to over 15,000. She mentors many male and female leaders in the New York City area and is frequently invited to speak throughout the country.

Dr. Flake is the author of the popular book, *God In Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Hurting Women* and has contributed to the *Women of Color Study Bible* and *Souls of My Sisters: Black Women Break Their Silence, Tell Their Stories, and Heal Their Spirits*. She and her husband authored two books, *Practical Virtues: Everyday Values and Devotions for African American Families Learning to Live With All Our Souls*, published in 2003 by HarperCollins and *African-American Church Management Handbook*, published in 2005 by Judson Press.

A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. Flake earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. She received a Master of Arts Degree in English from Boston University and a Master of Divinity Degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She was awarded the Doctor of Ministry Degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

She has also received numerous citations and awards. Most recently, The Alumni Trailblazers Award was conferred upon her by Union Seminary. She is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, The Links Incorporated, and the National Council of Negro Women. She currently serves as the National Chaplain of the The Links Inc.

Married for more than 35 years, the Flakes are the parents of four adult children: Aliya, Nailah, Robert Rasheed, and Harold Hasan. She has one granddaughter, Nia Renee.

Website: [allencathedral.org](http://allencathedral.org)

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# **Bellandra B. Foster**

*"Bellandra Foster has overcome obstacles in her personal and professional life with quiet strength and implacable grace." (Bonnie St. John)*

Dr. Bellandra B. Foster is the president and principal engineer of BBF Engineering Services, PC (BBF). The company is a civil and transportation engineering consulting firm incorporated in the state of Michigan. With a staff of 12, BBF specializes in road and bridge related construction inspection/engineering, traffic and transportation engineering, utility and permit coordination and project management.

Dr. Foster, who founded BBF in 1994 as a sole proprietorship, is a native of Flint, Michigan. At an early age she exhibited talent in math and science. Her late parents, Dr. George and Ella Pearl Benefield, encouraged her to concentrate on her interests, even though girls were not typically directed toward these subjects in the 1970s.

When Dr. Foster was planning for college, her father suggested that she set her sights on engineering. She enrolled in Michigan State University (MSU) not knowing whether she would pursue civil, mechanical, or industrial engineering, all options potentially open to her. After successfully completing her first two years at MSU, Dr.

Foster applied and was accepted into the civil engineering program at MSU's College of Engineering in her junior year.

Dr. Foster launched her career working as a structural engineer for Bechtel Power Corporation in the fall of 1983, followed by a posting as Assistant Road Design Unit Leader for the Road Commission for Oakland County (MI). From 1985 to 1992, she took on progressively more challenging positions with the Michigan Department of Transportation including Staff Engineer, Assistant Design Unit Leader, and finally Metro Region Utilities Permits Engineer. Each of these positions advanced her traffic and transportation engineering knowledge-base.

In 1992, Dr. Foster put her transportation know-how to work in the city of Atlanta (GA) Department of Public Works when the late Mayor Maynard Jackson appointed her Director of the Bureau of Highways and Streets. She was charged with guiding a staff of 550 employees and seeing to the design, construction, and maintenance of the booming city's streets and sewer system.

In the spring of 1993, Dr. Foster and her husband, Michael, a fellow engineer whom she had married in 1984, decided to return to Michigan. There the couple would start their family and Dr. Foster would take on two other demanding projects: pursuing a doctorate in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Michigan State University, and opening her own business—BBF Engineering Services, P.C.

The triple challenge of being a new mother, a new entrepreneur, and

reimmersion into the world of academia was made manageable by a supportive network that included her husband, colleagues, family, and close friends, all of whom were as determined as Dr. Foster herself to see her succeed.

Life might have been considerably easier had Dr. Foster chosen to open a business in a field in which women and minorities were already well represented—but she didn't. So despite her years of experience and professional connections, finding contracts was challenging. Only by starting small, staying focused, and overcoming often unfair obstacles has Dr. Foster grown BBF from a small at-home business into a company with two offices and gross revenues of \$2 million. Among her clients are the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Detroit Department of Transportation, the Detroit Department of Public Works, the Pontiac Silverdome Stadium Authority, Detroit Entertainment, and a number of engineering consulting firms.

In 1999, Dr. Foster earned her Doctorate from Michigan State University's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering having previously earned a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering at Wayne State University ten years earlier.

Dr. Foster's achievements have gained regional and national recognition. In 1998, the Federal Highway Administration named BBF its United States Department of Transportation Minority Business Enterprise of the Year. In 2004, the company was profiled in *Black Enterprise* magazine and again in *Essence* magazine in 2005. BBF has also been highlighted in *Michigan Contractor and*

*Builder* magazine, *Jet* magazine, and the *Detroit Free Press*. Dr. Foster has been recognized as a notable alumnus by Michigan State University. She is an ENO Transportation Fellow, a King-Chavez-Parks Fellow and has won the Wayne State University Headliner Award.

To further spread the message that one can have both a successful business and a sane, happy family life, Dr. Foster has written a book titled *For Love and Money: Seven Guidelines for Achieving Success in Your Home and Business*. In it she details steps aimed at inspiring and advising would-be entrepreneurs. She discusses the keys to finding and acting upon one's true purpose, the necessity of careful research and preparation before starting up any business venture, and the value in finding a vision partner. She tells readers what it means to be an effective leader in your own organization and most of all of the importance of always playing for the "home team" by putting family first.

Dr. Foster resides with her husband, Michael, and two sons in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Facebook: [facebook.com/drbfoster](https://www.facebook.com/drbfoster)

# Natalie A. Francisco

*“Women must conjure up the courage and harness the hope necessary to strengthen, sustain and succeed not just individually, but corporately in our homes, communities, nation and world.”*

Dr. Natalie A. Francisco has served as co-pastor of Calvary Community Church and co-founder of Calvary Christian Academy in Hampton, Virginia, alongside her husband, Bishop L. W. Francisco III. She has also served extensively in full-time ministry for over twenty-six years in areas of leadership in both the Music and Arts and Christian Education departments of her local church. The culmination of her years of experience in relating to women and children of all ages have been instrumental in affording her the opportunity to author three books: *Wisdom for Women of Worth & Worship: Lessons for a Life of Virtue, Value & Victory*; *Parenting and Partnering with Purpose: Linking Homes, Schools and Churches to Educate Our Children*; and *A Woman's Journal for Joyful Living: Successful Steps to Holistic Health*.

As founder and executive director of the Women of Worth Conference and the Women of Worth and Worship Institute (WOWWI), Dr. Francisco seeks to provide godly and practical instruction to women who desire to learn and implement biblical truths and principles from her life's lessons. As a personal mentor and a consultant, she strives to equip others to excel in the areas of ministry, daily living and education. This is accomplished via her

books, conferences, seminars, weekly women's noonday Bible studies, retreats and several eight-week sessions held throughout the year on location as requested as well as online for registered participants across the country and around the world.

With over 15 years of television experience alongside her husband, Bishop L. W. Francisco III, Dr. Francisco also is a contributor to the Shaping Families radio broadcast sponsored by Third Way Media, She offers pastoral insight and biblical solutions while addressing difficult, real life issues that families often face. The broadcast is aired weekly on several radio stations nationwide and can also be heard online. Additionally, Dr. Francisco serves as director on various community and financial services boards, and as an advisory board member of Wisdom Women Worldwide founded by Dr. Suzan Johnson Cook.

Although Dr. Francisco has served as a motivational speaker, teacher, worship leader, and author, her greatest joys are found in serving God, spending time with her family and friends, and practicing self-care.

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# DeVon Franklin

*"Don't downgrade your dream to match your reality. Upgrade your faith to match your destiny."*

DeVon Franklin serves as the President/CEO of Franklin Entertainment, a new first-look production company with Sony Pictures Entertainment.

As the former Senior Vice President of Columbia TriStar Pictures, DeVon worked on a number of the studio's most successful films, including *The Karate Kid*, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, and *Jumping the Broom*. Franklin also oversaw the sleeper hit *Heaven is For Real*. Produced on a modest \$12 million budget, *Heaven is For Real* outpaced all industry estimates and grossed more than \$100 million worldwide at the box office.

In addition to his entertainment-industry pursuits, DeVon is a growing force in media. He's made appearances on CNN, FOX News, OWN's *Super Soul Sunday Show*, Oprah's *LifeClass*, OWN's *Help Desk Show* and the *Dr. Phil Show*. He's a published author, preacher, and highly sought after motivational speaker who wrote *Produced By Faith*, a bestselling how-to guide about pursuing your career without compromising your faith.

*Ebony Magazine* has named him one of the top 100 influential African-Americans in America and *Beliefnet* named him one of the

“Most Influential Christians Under 40.”

He began his career as an intern for Will Smith and James Lassiter at Overbrook Entertainment. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a minor in Cinema-Television from the University of Southern California.

He lives in Los Angeles and is married to the love of his life, Meagan Good.

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# Clement W. Fugh

*"There is but one Church in which men find salvation, just as outside the ark of Noah it was not possible for anyone to be saved."*

*(Thomas Aquinas)*

Dr. Clement W. Fugh received his B.B.A from the University of Memphis, his Th.M. from the Boston University School of Theology, and his D.Min. from United Theological Seminary. He completed additional studies at Atlanta University, Payne Theological Seminary, and Memphis Theological Seminary.

Fugh is the General Secretary and Chief Information Officer of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He served over thirty years as Pastor to congregations in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, and has contributed to *Liberation and Unity*, a COCU sponsored devotional, to the *African American Devotional Bible*, and to *The Pastor's Manual for the Twenty-First Century*.

He served as Secretary to the Committee on Worship and Liturgy that gave to the AMEC the Bicentennial Hymnal and the Book of Worship. He has been involved in the revision and compilation of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* since 1980.

In 1980, he became pastor of the First Baptist Church.

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# Meagan Good

*"Making sure that each of us ends up with the people we are meant to be with is important to the Lord, so He takes His time making sure that the circumstances are right."*

Born in Panorama City, California, Meagan Good began starring in commercials at age 4, and to date has completed over 60 national television commercials. She made her primetime television debut starring as Sarah's best friend Katie on the Friday night WB show, *Raising Dad*.

Good's first major television role was as a series regular on the TV hit *Cousin Skeeter*. Meagan did a four episode stint on the law drama, *Kevin Hill*. She also guest starred on various shows, "House", "Cold Case", "Moesha", "Touched By An Angel", "The Steve Harvey Show", "The Famous Jett Jackson", "The Division", and "The Parent 'Hood" to name a few.

Meagan also executive produced and starred opposite actor/director Ty Hodges in *Miles from Home*. *Miles from Home* premiered at the Pan African Film & Arts Festival, the Washington DC Independent Film Festival, and the Atlanta Film Festival in which it swept all the awards—best feature, best actor & actress, and best director.

Meagan's top grossing films included the romantic comedy, *The*

*Love Guru*, alongside Mike Myers, *Stomp the Yard* which debuted #1 at the box office, and intense thriller *Saw V*.

Some of Meagan's other credits include: David S. Goyer's *The Unborn*, Rian Johnson's *Brick*, Queen Latifah's *The Cookout*, Screen Gems feature *You Got Served*, DreamWorks Pictures *Biker Boyz*, the romantic comedy *Deliver Us From Eva*, *Friday* with Ice Cube, Holly Goldberg Sloan's *The Secret Life of Girls*, Chris Stokes' *House Party 4*. In 2011, Good featured in an ensemble cast of the successful film version of *Think Like a Man*. She played Joanna Locasto, the lead character on the NBC drama series *Deception*. She also starred in the 2013 comedy *Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues* starring Will Ferrell. Good has also earned a reputation as a scream queen, having starred in the horror films *Venom* (2005), *One Missed Call* (2008), *Saw V* (2008), and *The Unborn* (2009).

Good currently lives in California with her husband, DeVon Franklin, and enjoys performing with her female group The H.E.L.L.O Girls, and reading the Bible.

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# Derwin Gray

*"The gospel Paul preached destroyed racism ("neither Jew nor Greek"), economic classism ("slave nor free"), and gender inequality ("no male and female"). The local church should be a mosaic that the world looks at and says, "So that's what heaven looks like."*

Derwin L. Gray is the founding and Lead Pastor of Transformation Church, a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, mission-shaped community with two campuses in South Carolina (Indian Land and Rock Hill), both just south of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Transformation Church (TC) also has two campuses in South Carolina Correctional Institutions (Kershaw and Lee). TC has been recognized as one of the top 100 fastest-growing churches in America by *Outreach* magazine.

Pastor Derwin met his wife, Vicki, at Brigham Young University. They have been married for 23 years and have two children.

After graduating from Brigham Young University, Pastor Derwin played professional football in the NFL for five years with the Indianapolis Colts (1993-1997) and one year with the Carolina Panthers (1998). During that time, he and Vicki began their journey with Christ and experienced God's faithfulness and direction as He moved their hearts to know Him and make Him known.

Pastor Derwin and Vicki began an itinerant speaking ministry in 1999—One Heart at a Time Ministries—and Pastor Derwin went on to graduate magna cum laude from Southern Evangelical Seminary with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree, with a concentration in Apologetics. But following God’s call on their lives and their desire to shepherd people towards transforming their world through the mission of Christ, the Lord transitioned Derwin from his primary role of itinerant speaker to being the Lead Pastor of Transformation Church in January of 2010. Coupling his dynamic speaking style with a shepherd’s heart, his intense passion for seeing lives and culture transformed is both contagious and inspiring.

In addition to his role at Transformation Church, Pastor Derwin speaks at conferences nationwide and is recognized by many as the “Evangelism Linebacker.” Pastor Derwin is currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry in New Testament Context at Northern Seminary and has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He is the author of *Hero: Unleashing God’s Power in a Man’s Heart* (2010), *Limitless Life: You Are More Than Your Past When God Holds Your Future* (2013), *Crazy Grace for Crazy Times Bible Study* (2015), and *The High-Definition Leader* (2015).

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# Teresa Hairston

*"Let's pray about it and then be about it."*

You may know her as the founder and publisher of *Gospel Today* or as the host of the *Gospel Today TV Show*. What you may not know about Teresa Hairston, however, is that back in 1989, as a divorced mother of three small children, all she was able to scrape together to invest in her "dream" of becoming a publisher was \$300. That's it. She had \$300, three small children, no husband, and a dream.

Today, *Gospel Today Magazine* is a reality, and is the most respected Urban Christian lifestyle publication in existence. *GT's* covers have been graced by Steve Harvey, Kirk Franklin, Star Jones, Bishop T. D. Jakes, Mary Mary, Denzel Washington and more. *GT* is a fixture among progressive ministries and Christians who want inspiring reading material.

In step with her mission to inspire, educate, inform, and empower, Hairston has maintained her strong connection with her Gospel musical roots. In 1996, she founded The Gospel Heritage Foundation, a non-profit organization that plans to launch the world's first International Gospel Heritage Center, a place that will house the Gospel legacy and teach visitors about the Gospel Heritage.

In 2002, she launched the annual "Praise & Worship Conference" which has quickly gained momentum as the top national conference of its type. In September of 2002, Hairston relocated the headquarters of *Gospel Today* and GHF to Atlanta.

She says the move was divinely inspired. That same year, *Gospel Today* co-ventured with Verity Records to produce a nationally-distributed CD, *Praise & Worship '02* featuring the Gospel Heritage Mass Choir. The project garnered national airplay and acclaim. The next CD, *Praise & Worship... Volume 2* was released in February 2004 and featured artists, Vickie Winans, Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Pastor Marvin Sapp, Elder William Murphy and others. In 2005, Hairston launched her own label, Gospel Today Entertainment which has released two national CD projects.

Hairston is a minister of the Gospel and graduated with an earned Doctor of Ministry degree in 2008. In March 2011, Hairston became an ordained elder under the leadership of Bishop Liston Page Sr., of Greater Highway Churches of Christ.

Her motto is: "When God gives you a vision, He'll make the provision!" Her favorite Scripture is Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." She says, "My goal in life is to use everything that I've been through, everything that I am, and everything that I endeavor to do to glorify God and build His Kingdom. I want to help people understand that they can achieve their God-inspired visions. Just step out on faith, and watch God make the way."

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# Cynthia Hale

*“There comes a time when we start knowing who we are, because we begin to see ourselves through the eyes of Whose we are.”*

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale is the founder and Senior Pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Georgia. The Ray of Hope Christian Church is a congregation that has a vision to "impact and transform this present world into the Kingdom of God" through housing, healthcare, and education initiatives. It is recognized in the book, *Excellent Protestant Congregations: A Guide to Best Places and Practices*, as one of 300 excellent Protestant congregations in the United States.

Dr. Hale is a native of Roanoke, Virginia. Her natural talent in music led her to study at Hollins College in Virginia, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree. She holds a Master of Divinity degree from Duke University and a Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Hale also holds five Honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees.

As a woman of vision, Dr. Hale is revered locally, nationally, and internationally for her leadership, integrity, and compassion. In 2004, Dr. Hale established a mentoring program known as Elah Pastoral Ministries Inc. to assist in the spiritual as well as practical development of pastors and parachurch leaders. In September 2005,

she convened her first Women in Ministry Conference, a premiere, national conference with a focused mission to develop, coach, and mentor Christian women in ministry for the 21st century. Dr. Hale presently serves on the Board of Trustees at Hollins University, as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors at Beulah Heights University, as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors for the City of Hope Ministries Inc., and is the Assistant Secretary for the Hampton Ministers' Conference.

As a recipient of numerous honors and recognitions, Dr. Hale was inducted into the African-American Biographies Hall of Fame and the Martin Luther King Board of Preachers of Morehouse College. Selected by then-Senator Barack Obama and the Democratic Party, Dr. Hale gave the opening invocation at the 2008 Democratic National Convention. She also served as Co-Chair for "Women in Ministry for Obama." Dr. Hale attended the Inauguration for President Barack Obama and read scripture during the Inaugural Interfaith Prayer Service, which was held at the National Cathedral. In July 2009, Dr. Hale was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. Dr. Hale is a dedicated active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

Dr. Hale is a contributing writer for many books and publications including the book, *Power in the Pulpit II: How America's Most Effective Black Preachers Prepare Their Sermons*. In January 2010, she authored her first book titled, *I'm A Piece of Work: Sisters Shaped by God*. In September 2011, Dr. Hale was honored by the National Urban League and is a recipient of the inaugural "Women

of Power" award.

Dr. Hale has been in ministry for 33 years. Her ministerial gift has drawn thousands, young and old, to witness the anointing of a woman totally sold out for the Kingdom of God.

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## Andrew Hamilton

*“Rest assured, the Christian life is full of storms. If your life seems to have been smooth sailing, there may just be a storm headed your way. You better get yourself prepared to recognize that when the storm comes, if you're a child of God, Jesus will be there with you.”*

Andrew Hamilton is pastor of the Berean Baptist Church in Thomasville, GA. He is a faithful church planter and evangelist who has planted churches across the South for many years. He and his wife, Bessie, have been married for over twenty-four years.

# Michelle McKinney Hammond

*"Femininity is definitely strength under control. Femininity is strength wrapped in a velvet glove. It doesn't insist on its own way, but most of the time it gets it."*

As a bestselling author, speaker, singer, and television co-host, Michelle has authored over 30 books (selling over one million copies worldwide), including best-selling titles: *The Diva Principle*, *Sassy, Single and Satisfied*, *101 Ways to Get and Keep His Attention*, and *Secrets of an Irresistible Woman*. A gifted vocalist, Michelle has recorded two CD's: "It's Amazing" and "Let's Go In," and co-hosted the Emmy Award-winning television talk show *Aspiring Women*.

She has appeared on countless television shows including: *Bill Maher's Politically Incorrect*, E Channel's "Soap Talk," NBC's *The Other Half*, *The 700 Club*, and BET's *Oh Drama!* as well as a regular relationship segment on WGN Morning News. She has graced the covers of magazines such as *Today's Christian Woman*, *Precious Times*, *The Plain Truth*, and *Gospel Today*. She has also been a contributing writer for *Spirit Led Woman* and *Discipleship Journal* and has been featured in articles in *Shine*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *Jet*, *Black Enterprise Magazine*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Associated Press* and *The New York Times*.

Following several successful years in an award-winning advertising career as an art director/writer/producer (her clients included Coca-Cola USA, McDonald's, Procter and Gamble, GMC, and Ford Motor Company), Michelle suffered a devastating leg injury after being hit by a car. For her, the accident was a spiritual turning point, a wake up call to embrace her purpose and fulfill her destiny. Those bedridden months gave birth to her first bestseller, *What to Do Until Love Finds You*. Since then Michelle has emerged as a highly-respected author, speaker, and singer, reaching a diverse audience nationally and internationally. Crossing denominational lines, addressing secular audiences, as well as addressing men and women from every walk of life, Michelle is known for "keeping it real." She addresses real-life issues with candor and wit, and the hard questions with sensitivity and empathy. This merits her reputation as a relationship and life empowerment coach, crossing the great divide and sharing keys that lead to reconciliation between the sexes.

Michelle's underlying message is "get yourself in spiritual order and your natural life will come together." Her passion is to give relevant and workable solutions to people's questions based on timeless spiritual truths. Sharing solid, effective principles that will help her audience to navigate through the journey of life and reach the ultimate destination of living and loving to their fullest potential.

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# Steve Harvey

*"I'm just a living witness that you can be an imperfect soldier and still be in the army fighting for God Almighty. Don't you think you got to be perfect 'cause I ain't."*

Steve Harvey is a media conglomerate personified in a man whose career began doing stand-up comedy in the mid-1980s. His career has continued to flourish, becoming a top-rated radio host, fashion entrepreneur, bestselling author, popular game show host on *Family Feud*, and 2013 People's Choice Award winner as "Favorite New Talk Show Host" for his new daytime show *Steve Harvey*. Harvey renewed deals in January 2013 for his daytime show and radio show.

In addition to hosting his new daytime show, Harvey also serves as the host of the long-running syndicated game show, *Family Feud* and is the host of the #1 rated nationally syndicated radio show, "Steve Harvey Morning Show," which attracts approximately 7 million listeners each week.

His first book *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man* was released in 2009 and became a #1 *New York Times* Bestseller, selling over 2 million copies and spending 64 weeks on this prestigious list. In December 2010, Harvey released his second book, *Straight Talk, No Chaser: How to Find, Keep, and Understand a Man*, which debuted at #1 on the *New York Times* Bestseller list. The hit film based on

Harvey's best-selling book, *Think Like A Man*, starring Taraji P. Henson and Kevin Hart, debuted on April 20, 2012, as the #1 movie in America for two weeks in a row. *Think Like A Man Too* debuted in Spring 2014.

Harvey was born in Welch, West Virginia, and grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, the youngest of five children to a mom who was a homemaker and a dad who was a day laborer. As a young boy, Harvey always dreamed of being a performer. He would use a toothbrush as a microphone and practice being a comedian, while his dad shaved in front of the mirror. Harvey had a variety of jobs before he started his career in entertainment, such as a paperboy, grocery store clerk, employee at Ford Motor Company, owner of a carpet cleaning business, insurance seller, and numerous other jobs before embarking on his career in stand-up comedy.

A dedicated husband and father, together with his wife, Marjorie, they are parents to seven children.

Long dedicated to philanthropy, Harvey and his wife, Marjorie, believe that "dreaming is more important than anything." Together, they advocate for the education, health, and welfare of men, women, and children worldwide. With the Steve and Marjorie Harvey Foundation, they create and support programs, events, scholarships, and organizations including the Disney Dreamers Academy, the Steve & Marjorie Harvey Foundation Gala, the Steve Harvey Mentoring Weekend for Young Men, and the Girls Who Rule the World Mentoring Weekend, where they have served over 1,000 young men and women thus far. In addition to fostering the education and wellbeing of youth, Harvey has created uplifting

community endeavors including The Neighborhood Awards, a yearly Thanksgiving turkey giveaway, donating technology and supplies to schools and more.

Each weekday in his new multi-topic show, Harvey talks to real people with real issues and brings his funny, fresh, insightful and common sense approach to everyday problems. Drawing from his varied life experiences, Harvey entertains, informs, and inspires, covering a vast range of relatable topics such as marriage, dating, finances, parenting, workplace issues, friendship, and the daily dramas we face throughout our lives, all with his unique comedic spin.

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# Dianna Hobbs

*"Even if we aren't comfortable taking gigantic steps, we have to be willing to do something once God places a vision in our hearts. Doing something is better than nothing, because believing for the future without working toward future goals is futile."*

Warm, down-to-earth, a lover of God and people.

This is how Dianna Hobbs, the writer of "Your Daily Cup of Inspiration," is often described by those who know her. The Buffalo, New York, native, who is a wife and home-schooling mother of four, began blogging in 2007 with a handful of readers and a heart full of desire to inspire others.

Her devotional writing, she says, is driven by a burning passion and calling to help others continually trust God, grow in their faith, as well as their understanding of His word.

Today, "Your Daily Cup of Inspiration," which began humbly, is listed as one of the Top 100 blogs for women of faith according to Women's Bible Café.

Dianna, who is founder of Empowering Everyday Women Ministries, also sits at the helm of *EEW Magazine*, one of the premier web publications for women of faith and color.

A gifted speaker with a passion for expounding upon the Word of God, Dianna loves ministering at women's conferences and youth gatherings across the country.

Dianna is also the best-selling author of *The New A-list: Abstinence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder*, which spent three consecutive months on the indie bestseller list. It provides practical and Bible-based information and help to singles seeking to remain abstinent until marriage.

Dianna's love for the Lord and faithfulness in serving Him has opened many great doors for her ministry, but she tells people that her first ministry is to her family.

She and her husband Kenya, whom she wed in 1998, are both respected in their local community as servants and beacons of light, and received the distinguished "Family of the Year" award from the city's Mayor Byron W. Brown.

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# Chrystal Evans Hurst

Chrystal Hurst is an energetic, fun-loving, “girl-next-door” who loves to encourage other women in fulfilling their full potential in Christ. Chrystal firmly believes God’s promise in Jeremiah 29:11, “I know the plans that I have for you...” and she desires to help other Christian women believe and apply that truth to their lives.

Chrystal is a gifted writer, speaker, and worship leader. Being the eldest child of Dr. Tony and Lois Evans, Chrystal has been surrounded by the Word of God her entire life. As a member of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Chrystal assists her mom in leading the women’s ministry and loves to encourage women toward a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Chrystal co-authored the book, *Kingdom Woman*, with her dad. You can also find Chrystal writing on her blog—Chrystal’s Chronicles—where she poignantly reflects her thoughts about her faith and day-to-day experiences.

Most importantly, Chrystal is a dedicated wife and homeschooling mother of five. She considers herself to be the COO (Chief Operating Officer) of the Hurst household.

Chrystal and her husband, Jessie reside in a small town just outside of Dallas, Texas.

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# Connie Jackson

*"She is a transformational communicator who energizes dreams, ignites visions, and illuminates the path to unlimited possibilities."*

(About Connie Jackson)

The Rev. Connie Jackson (Rev. CJ) is a dynamic combination of minister, entrepreneur, and political activist. As an ordained minister and former elected official, Jackson has lectured and preached for diverse audiences in North America, Europe, the Bahamas, Africa and other locations around the globe. Her mesmerizing and motivational oratory has granted her audiences with Fortune 500 companies, universities, civic and religious organizations for conferences, seminars, revivals, and economic and community development consultation.

Rev. CJ is a trailblazer among women in the political arena. Mentored by the late U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, Jackson followed in Jordan's footsteps by serving in various sectors of government service for two decades. She holds the distinction of being the first African American woman elected to a city council position in the 153-year history of Galveston County when she was elected to the City Council of Texas City, Texas in May 1992. Prior to this historic election, Jackson served as district chief of staff for the Dean of the Texas Senate, Primary Elections Administrator for

the Texas Democratic Party, and chief consultant for numerous successful political campaigns.

The History Makers, a national, video oral history archive dedicated to preserving African American history, based in Chicago, Illinois, selected Jackson as a "Civic History Maker" and chronicled her historic election to the city council position in Texas City and her precedent setting involvement in Texas politics. After serving five terms as an elected official, Jackson retired to devote her full attention to ministerial endeavors.

Rev. CJ's multi-disciplinary educational background includes political science, theology, economics, psychology, sociology, and spirituality.

Her work experience includes civic leadership, business development, foreign affairs, biblical studies and pastoral care. Jackson earned a Bachelor of Arts in Government from the University of Texas at Austin, a Master of Divinity from the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta, Georgia and graduated from the Harvard Divinity School Certificate Program in Leadership Development. While pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at the ITC, she served as student body president, Presidential Fellow, and was the recipient of the Isaac R. Clark Preaching Award. On March 26, 2010, ITC honored Rev. CJ with the James H. Costen Emerging Leader Award. A prolific writer, she has been published in The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center and has been a contributing writer for several religious publications and *Essence* Magazine Online.

The Rev. Connie Jackson is a native Texan who recently relocated to Texas after serving as a global development consultant in Southern Africa and serving as executive director for a community development corporation in Atlanta, Georgia, where she worked to make affordable housing and quality healthcare available to low and moderate income families. Her latest pioneering venture, "On the Edge with Rev. CJ" consists of a morning drive-time Bible Study on Houston's Gospel 1360 AM; a radio talk show with a socio-political-theological format which airs on Radio One's Praise 92.1 FM in Houston, and a regional women's Bible study held twice a month in Houston.

This transformational communicator energizes dreams, ignites visions, and illuminates the path to unlimited possibilities.

Rev. CJ is a much sought after consultant in the areas of Leadership Development, Corporate Diversity, Strategic Planning (Nonprofits and Small Businesses), and Community Development (Housing and Healthcare).

A provocative writer, Rev. CJ has been published in The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center and has been a contributing writer for several religious publications and *Essence Magazine Online*.

She is currently working on two books; one that's written to empower the body of Christ to boldly exert its influence upon the world and the second work will deal with moving from a life of

excuses to extraordinary living.

Website: [conniejackson.org](http://conniejackson.org)

# **E.W. Jackson**

Bishop E. W. Jackson, Sr. is author of the book, *Ten Commandments to an Extraordinary Life: Making Your Dreams Come True* published in 2008. He is also Founder of Exodus Faith Ministries, a nondenominational ministry headquartered in Chesapeake, Virginia with a satellite church in Boston, Massachusetts.

On July 4, 2009, he launched S.T.A.N.D. [Staying True to America's National Destiny]. STAND is a national grassroots organization dedicated to restoring America's Judeo-Christian history, faith and values and preserving its Christian culture. Its signature project is establishing January as "American History Month", a time for celebrating the nobility of our nation's founding and history.

He is originally from Chester, Pennsylvania. After three years in the U.S. Marine Corp, he attended the University of Massachusetts in Boston, graduating Summa Cum Laude with a B.A. in 1975. He finished college in three years, and was awarded the Phi Beta Kappa Key.

A 1978 graduate of Harvard Law School, he also studied theology at Harvard Divinity School and was licensed to preach by Ebenezer Baptist Church in Boston. Shortly after graduating from law school he became a Deputy Commissioner of Banks for Massachusetts. He later served three years as Executive Director of the West Medford

Community Center, a human service agency.

A gifted communicator, Bishop Jackson was a panelist on “Topic Religion,” Boston’s longest running religious radio talk show, a full time co-host for “Jackson & Jurkowitz” on Boston’s WHDH radio and host of a daily nationally syndicated program on Radio America.

During his career in Boston, he practiced law for 15 years and started Boston’s first and only all-gospel radio station.

In recognition of his national leadership, he was consecrated a bishop on June 28, 1998. He and his wife moved to Chesapeake, Virginia, to plant another church and establish the headquarters for Exodus Faith Ministries Intl. While in Boston, he served five years as a minister for the Boston Red Sox Chapel services and protestant Chaplain for the Boston Fire Department.

He has taught Administrative Law at Northeastern University and Business and Commercial Law at Strayer University in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, Virginia.

He and his wife are the founders of the “Chesapeake MLK Leadership Breakfast” which brings together hundreds of people from the greater Chesapeake area to celebrate the life and ideals of Dr. King. They are also the Founders of “Youth With A Destiny” which is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping youth avoid gangs, drugs and violence through faith, education and positive activities.

He presently serves as a member of the Chesapeake Police Advisory Board, a Trustee of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, a Board Member of its Chesapeake Division and a Trustee for Lead Hampton Roads.

Bishop Jackson's media appearances include ABC's *Good Morning America*, ABC's *Politically Incorrect*, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, C-Span's *Washington Journal*, ABC Radio Network, National Public Radio, Janet Parshall's *America* and Tony Macrini's morning show on AM790, WNIS in Norfolk. He also does weekly commentaries for STAND which air on 300 radio stations through the Radio America network. He hosts his own Christian teaching program on WYRM AM 1110 in Norfolk, it can be heard all over the world via the internet.

His work has been reported by the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times* and many other publications. His editorial contributions have appeared in newspapers around the country. He is often requested as a guest speaker for churches and other organizations.

# Harry Jackson, Jr.

“Redefining marriage will be the beginning of the end of the family as we know it.”

Harry R. Jackson, Jr. is senior pastor of Hope Christian Church, a 3,000-member congregation in the nation’s Capital with his wife Michele. Having earned an MBA from Harvard, Bishop Jackson approaches ministry from a unique perspective.

His writing is featured in periodicals such as *Charisma*, *Christian Parenting*, *Kairos*, *New Man*, *Ministry Today*, *The Church Report*, *BCNN1*, *The Christian Post*, and the *Elijah List*. His articles on Townhall.com and other websites are widely read. Bishop Jackson’s books to date include, *In-laws*, *Outlaws and the Functional Family*, *The Warrior’s Heart*, *The Way of the Warrior*, the Silver Medallion Award winning *High Impact African-American Churches*, *Personal Faith Public Policy*, and *The Truth In Black and White*.

Bishop Jackson has appeared on the CBS Nightly News, BET, the O’Reilly Factor on FOX, CBN, and TBN. His articles have been featured in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Associated Press*, and many others.

He also is founder and president of High Impact Leadership

Coalition, which exists to protect the moral compass of America and be an agent of healing to our nation by educating and empowering churches, community and political leaders. The energy of this organization and the grassroots mobilization produced by it have impacted government officials locally, in multiple states, and in the federal government.

Bishop Jackson has been recognized as a leader of leaders. He is in demand to minister both nationally and internationally. He has recently formed the International Communion of Evangelical Churches. This network of networks currently oversees 1000+ churches around the world.

Website: [www.TheHopeConnection.org](http://www.TheHopeConnection.org)

# Wayne T. Jackson

Business and political leader, philanthropist, pastor and broadcast entrepreneur, Bishop Wayne T. Jackson serves as an accomplished leader in all five of these arenas. Bishop Wayne T. Jackson is a tenacious and charismatic individual whose accomplishments have not only touched the spiritual sector, but has made significant impact in both the political and business arenas.

With over 20 years of television experience, he is acquainted by millions who tune in to watch his weekly television program “Miracles Do Happen” which he is the host and executive producer of. It is the top rated show in it’s time slot.

As a broadcast entrepreneur, Bishop Wayne T. Jackson brings his innovative and cutting edge approach to The Impact Network. As the senior pastor of Great Faith Ministries International located in the city of Detroit, Bishop Jackson and his wife, Dr. Beverly Y. Jackson have devoted their lives to serving their congregation for over 30 years. During this time they have developed programs and resources to empower and transform the lives of those who have fallen on hard times. Politically, Bishop Wayne T. Jackson has been a trusted spiritual advisor and a frequent guest to the White House for over the past two decades.

Because of his reputation, he has sat with prominent world leaders,

presidents, governors, mayors, councilmen and councilwomen and has been instrumental in the political landscape locally, nationally and internationally. Bishop Wayne T. Jackson is also an experienced business leader in the city of Detroit. For over the past 25 years, he has owned and operated many businesses bringing jobs and revitalization to the local community.

# Serita Jakes

*"Cinderella forgot that she was the rightful heir to her father's fortune. Shamed into servanthood, she allowed her inheritance to be squandered by unworthy benefactors. Have you forfeited what your Father in heaven has written in His will for you?"*

Mrs. Serita A. Jakes is an inspirational woman of God who leads with wisdom and grace. Throughout her nearly 30 years of marriage, she has diligently served alongside her husband, Bishop T. D. Jakes, with purpose and precision. An insightful speaker, she draws heavily from her education and background in theater and mass communications. A soft-spoken woman offstage, Mrs. Jakes possesses the rare ability to reach and stir her audiences as she works to complement her husband's ministry.

In her role as Executive Director of The Potter's House Women's Ministries, Mrs. Jakes' heart for women is made evident in her efforts to embrace and encourage women from all backgrounds. She oversees Rahab International Ministries for survivors of domestic violence, as well as the highly acclaimed God's Leading Ladies Life Enrichment Program (GLL) for women who seek to lead excellent spiritual, personal and professional lifestyles, and the Debutante Program for teenage girls. Because of the success of GLL, the program was launched internationally in 2011.

A gifted speaker and author, Mrs. Jakes released her first book in August 1999, *The Princess Within*, which to date has sold more than 200,000 copies. The book is a poignant and revealing autobiographical reflection of encouragement and victory over pain, trauma and abuse. Mrs. Jakes wrote the book as a vehicle of encouragement for hurting women who want to break the silence surrounding their secret pain and obtain healing from it. That same year, Mrs. Jakes traveled extensively as co-executive producer with the *Woman, Thou Art Loosed* stage play. She also served as public spokesperson on the performance tour, addressing the critical issues of sexual abuse, alcoholism, abortion, and addictive relationships that were dramatized by the play. In 2000, Mrs. Jakes was co-executive producer of her husband's stage play *Behind Closed Doors*, which addressed the critical issue of breast cancer among women. In November 2003, Warner Faith published Mrs. Jakes' second book, *Beside Every Good Man: Loving Myself While Standing By Him*. It challenges women to explore the seasons that shape their views of male influence in their eyes.

In 2009, Mrs. Jakes appeared in the movie, *Not Easily Broken*, which was released January of that same year by Sony Pictures. The movie ranked No. 9 nationally during opening week. Because of her heart for women, in 2011, Mrs. Jakes debuted *eMotions Magazine*, a digital publication that seeks to inspire and educate all women. She also assisted in the production of her husband's film *Jumping the Broom*. The comedy opened in theaters May 2011 and topped box office numbers during opening weekend. Mrs. Jakes was also intricately involved with her husband's sitcom, *One Love*, and released her nonfiction book, *The Crossing*, on September 6, 2011.

The book, which centers on young people, explores the traumatic situations they encounter that transpire into their adulthood. The book also addresses what they must do to move forward in their lives.

With echoes of her husband's preaching style, Mrs. Jakes boldly challenges women to serve as blessings to their husbands and families. The Potter's House family attributes Mrs. Jakes' wisdom and leadership to the emphasis she places on a close personal relationship with God.

A loving wife, mother, and grandmother, Mrs. Jakes and Bishop Jakes have five children and two grandchildren.

Website: [tdjakes.org/thecrossing](http://tdjakes.org/thecrossing)

# T.D. Jakes

*“Whatever crisis you face, pray through it. Whatever obstacle you must overcome, pray on it.”*

T. D. Jakes is a charismatic leader, visionary, provocative thinker, and entrepreneur who serves as senior pastor of The Potter's House, a global humanitarian organization and 30,000-member church located in Dallas.

Named "America's Best Preacher" by *Time Magazine*, Jakes' voice reverberates from the world's most prominent stages. Through a nexus of charitable works, T.D. Jakes extends a hand of help to the needy, heart of compassion to the hurting, and message of empowerment to the oppressed and disenfranchised.

Beyond the pulpit, Jakes ranks among *EBONY's* Power100 and is the winner of several prestigious awards including BET Honors, Stellar Award, NAACP Image Award, Keeper of the Dream Award and McDonald's 365Black Award for his humanitarian efforts. His worldwide impact is also felt through high profile conference series such as MegaFest which recently drew more than 75,000 participants and an empire that spans film, television, radio, best-selling books, and the T.D. Jakes School of Leadership.

Bishop Jakes made his presence felt in Hollywood with eight films to date including the hit, “Winnie Mandela” starring Jennifer Hudson; a top five release, “SPARKLE,” featuring Jordin Sparks and the late Whitney Houston; “On the Seventh Day,” the first sequel in the “Woman Thou Art Loosed” franchise which outperformed the competition on a per screen average; and “Jumping the Broom,” an award winning romantic comedy that debuted as the #1 comedy and grossed nearly seven times its budget in 2011. He is also the producer of “Black Nativity” and “Heaven Is For Real” based on the bestselling.

Celebrating 32 years of marriage, Thomas Dexter and Serita Jakes are parents to five children and three grandchildren. He credits his own parents as the source of his perseverance and sense of self-reliance.

After more than 36 years in ministry, Jakes continues to be a leading voice of innovation, inspiration, and influence in Christendom today.

Website: [www.tdjakes.org](http://www.tdjakes.org)

## **Kay Coles James**

Kay Coles James, the Gloucester Institute’s founder and President, has an extensive background in nearly every sector of America’s

economy. She has worked at the local, state, and federal levels of government under the administrations of former U.S. president George H. W. Bush (1989-1993), former Virginia governor George Allen (1994-1998), and former U.S. president George W. Bush (2001-2009), and has served dozens of organizations in the corporate, nonprofit, and academic arenas.

During her nearly 30-year career, Mrs. James has served on numerous boards and commissions, including the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, the Virginia Empowerment Commission, the National Commission on Children, the Medicaid Commission, the Carter-Baker Commission, the NASA Advisory Council, the Fairfax County School Board, the Virginia State Board of Education, the boards of Focus on the Family and Young Life, and the board of the Amerigroup Corporation, on which she chaired the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee. Mrs. James also served as secretary of the Republican National Convention in 1996 and twice chaired the Virginia State Republican Convention before co-chairing former Virginia governor Robert McDonnell's transition team.

Mrs. James served under former president George H. W. Bush as associate director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and as assistant secretary for public affairs at the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Mrs. James also served during that time as a senior fellow and director of The Citizenship Project at the Heritage Foundation, as dean of the School of Government at Regent University, as the senior vice president of the Family Research Council, and as the executive vice president and chief operating officer for One to One Partnership, a

national umbrella organization for mentoring programs.

As Secretary of Health and Human Resources under former Virginia governor George Allen, Mrs. James designed and implemented Virginia's landmark welfare reform initiative, affecting fourteen state agencies and over 19,000 employees.

Mrs. James was appointed Director of the U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) by President George W. Bush in 2001 and led a department of 3,600 employees. As director, she served as President Bush's principal advisor in matters of personnel administration for the 1.8 million members of the federal civil service, and was responsible for all personnel practices and programs, including stewardship of over 650 billion dollars in federal retirement, health, life, and long-term care insurance assets. In this position, Mrs. James played an instrumental role in conducting one of the largest personnel mergers in history by designing the process and system through which nearly 170,000 employees from 22 different agencies—each with different cultures and human resources services, and represented by 17 separate labor unions—merged into the new Department of Homeland Security.

During her time as director of OPM, Mrs. James served as one of the chairs of the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP) Principals, a joint undertaking of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the General Accounting Office, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Personnel Management to improve financial management practices in government. She also chaired the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council (a group composed of the top human resources officers from cabinet

departments and other agencies), was a member of the President's Management Council, and by President Bush's appointment, served on the White House Fellows Commission.

Mrs. James is the founder and President of The Gloucester Institute, an organization which trains and nurtures leaders in the African-American community. The Gloucester Institute is committed to providing an intellectually safe environment where ideas can be discussed and transformed into practical solutions that produce results.

She currently sits on the board of PNC Financial Services Group where she serves as a member of the Risk and Nominating and Governance committees. In previous years, she has also served on the Personnel and Compensation Committee for PNC. Mrs. James serves on the National Board of Cancer Treatment Centers of America where she serves on both the Growth and the Talent Committees. Mrs. James also sits on the Magellan Health Services board, where she serves on the Compensation committee. Mrs. James is a former board member of the Amerigroup Corporation where she chaired the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee and the Compensation Committee. She is a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors and has done continuing board education at the Harvard School of Business. Her volunteer boards include the Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees and the T.C. Walker and Woodville/Rosenwald School Foundation. Mrs. James previously sat on the Virginia Commonwealth University board where she chaired the Academic and Student Affairs Committee.

A graduate of Hampton University, Mrs. James is the recipient of numerous honorary degrees, including a Doctor of Laws from Pepperdine University, the University of Virginia's Publius Award for Public Service, and the Spirit of Democracy Award for Public Policy Leadership from the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation.

As a commentator and lecturer, Mrs. James has appeared on network morning shows and several national news and talk programs. She is the author of three books: her award-winning autobiography *Never Forget* (1993); *Transforming America from the Inside Out* (1995); and *What I Wish I'd Known Before I Got Married* (2001).

Most importantly, Kay Coles James is the wife of Charles James, Sr. and the proud mother of three grown children and five grandchildren.

Website: [gloucesterinstitute.org](http://gloucesterinstitute.org)

# Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr.

*“Why is it that when it comes to worshiping God, we are often so quiet and reserved? No one had to tell the fans to stand and make a joyful noise when Coach Dungy came onto the field. They didn't have to be persuaded to cheer or clap their hands. Surely, we can be just as enthusiastic when we are in the presence of the One who leads us to victory after victory.”*

Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr. is a spirit-filled preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He accepted his call to ministry at the age of 17. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religion from Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, graduating with honors. He also attended Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Pastor Johnson accepted his call to pastor Eastern Star Church in 1988. Under his leadership, the congregation has over 10,000 members. The ministry now meets at three worship facilities.

The church currently has over 130 full and part-time employees and more than 30 ministries that meet the spiritual, social, and physical needs of its growing congregation. This growth is the result of sound biblical principles, expository preaching and teaching, and an innovative approach to church business. The success of Eastern Star Church is attributed to the biblical principle of sowing and reaping

and giving back 10% of its Annual Budget to the community.

In addition to weekly services, the Word of God and the love of Christ is shared through JEWEL Ministry. "JEWEL" is an abbreviated version of the church motto: "Where Jesus is Exalted, and the Word is ExpLained." JEWEL Ministry is the Media ministry of Eastern Star Church comprised of Radio and Television, Audio, Video and Prayer Partner ministries. With all efforts combined, JEWEL Ministry reaches more than one-million people.

Led by the spirit of God, Pastor Johnson orchestrated a five million-dollar project to build a new Sanctuary and Family Life Center. The project was completed in 1994. In 1998, the church completed a \$16 million, 120-thousand square foot worship facility called the JEWEL Christian Education and Conference Center. The facility houses JEWEL Childcare/Preschool ministry, JEWEL Christian Academy, JEWEL Bible Bookstore, a full service gym and fitness center, and a multi-purpose conference center which facilitates Christian education for adults and youth Sunday Church School and JEWEL Bible Institute.

In August 2001, Pastor Johnson and the Eastern Star Church planted its first church, New Life Worship Center, with Pastor John F. Ramsey as the Senior Pastor.

In August 2003, Eastern Star Church opened the doors of its Northeast Campus in Fishers, Indiana. The new worship facility offers a 1,700-seat Sanctuary, Conference Rooms, a Chapel, Youth Activity Wing, JEWEL Café, and its second bookstore, JEWEL

Bible Bookstore-Northeast. God has done and is doing tremendous things through his humble servant Pastor Johnson.

In March 2004, Pastor Johnson and the Eastern Star Church planted its second church, New Beginnings Fellowship Church, with Pastor James A. Jackson as the Senior Pastor.

In October 2006, Pastor Johnson received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from St. Thomas Christian College in Jacksonville, Florida.

In September 2006, Pastor Johnson and the Eastern Star Church planted its third church, New Horizons Church with Pastor Eric Wiggins.

In May 2007, Pastor Johnson received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Simmons College in Louisville, Kentucky.

In August 2007, Pastor Johnson published his first book and study guide entitled, *The Song of Solomon, Love, Sex and Relationships* and launched Kingdom Word Ministries.

In May 2008, Pastor Johnson received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Martin University in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In December 2008, Pastor Johnson published his second book, *Making a Comeback: Reclaiming Our Lives in Christ*.

In May 2009, Pastor Johnson received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas.

In November 2009, Pastor Johnson published his third book, *Life Illustrated: Daily Thoughts for Your Daily Walk*, a 365-day devotional.

In November 2011, Pastor Johnson published his fourth book, *Dialogue With My Daughters*, and the accompanying journal, *Dialogue With My Daughters: My Personal Reflections*.

In March 2010, Pastor Johnson opened the doors of its Northwest Campus on the Northwest side of Indianapolis, Indiana. The new worship facility offers a 3,000-seat Sanctuary, a Chapel, a Youth and Adult activity Wing, a state of the art technology and administrative offices. God continues to show favor on this ministry through his faith.

Pastor Johnson has served as the Assistant Chaplain of the Indiana Pacers and also enjoys playing basketball. He serves on the board of JEWEL Educational Services, JEWEL Human Services and numerous others in the community.

A devoted husband and dedicated family man, Pastor Johnson is married to Sharon Henry Johnson and is the loving father of four sons: Jeffrey Allen II, Jordan Adam, Jalon Alexander and Josiah Andrew. God has certainly laid His hands on the life and ministry of Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson Sr.

Website: [easternstarchurch.org](http://easternstarchurch.org)



## Joey Johnson, Sr.

*“I don't understand it when Christians act like something's wrong when Satan's attacking them. Get used to it: He's going to come back every day. The Bible says that when Jesus was driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, Satan left Him--to return at an opportune time. Satan is always waiting and lurking. He's going to be after you day after day.”*

Bishop Flavis Josephus Johnson, II, better known as Bishop Joey, is the Organizer and Senior Pastor of The House of the Lord® church in Akron, Ohio, and the Presiding Bishop of the Beth-El Fellowship of Visionary Churches. As a visionary, Bishop Johnson founded Johnson Leadership Institute (formerly known as the Pastoral Mentoring Institute), where he utilizes his powerful gifting to train and mentor senior pastors and other church leaders to be more effective in their local churches and to make an impact on today's society and on generations to come for the cause of Jesus Christ.

As a lover of the Holy Scriptures, with keen intellectual curiosity and an insatiable appetite for reading, Bishop Johnson founded Emmanuel Christian Academy and Logos Bible Institute to present opportunities to both children and adults to become educated and equipped in the foundation of God's Word.

Bishop Johnson was promoted to the Bishopric through the providential wisdom of God and at the request of the senior pastors he mentors. His consecration and ordination in 2004 was accompanied by having the Doctor of Divinity degree conferred upon him by the Joint College of African American Pentecostal Bishops Congress. Bishop Johnson serves as Presiding Bishop of the Beth-El Fellowship of Visionary Churches.

Within the Christian community at large, Bishop Johnson's apostolic responsibilities include the oversight of Beth-El Fellowship of Visionary Churches. The Beth-El Fellowship of Visionary Churches was created to be a source of spiritual covering, encouragement, practical leadership development and team building, as well as a haven of rest for senior pastors, their spouses, and other church leadership. Bishop Johnson offers four decades of pastoral wisdom and guidance to the senior pastors of these churches and their congregations.

Bishop Johnson is a prolific and renowned author. He has authored five books and a study guide on a wide range of subjects such as the family, relationships, church doctrine, and the Holy Spirit. His two most popular books are *God is Greater Than Family Mess* and *The Eight Ministries of the Holy Spirit - From Denomination to Reformation: An Introduction to Biblecostalism*.

In 2007, Dr. Johnson launched a new business venture called Finished in the Fire! LLC, that provides workshops and training for leaders and business people to develop their character through the refinery of adversity and suffering.

On December 11, 2014, Bishop Johnson was appointed by Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine to serve on the Attorney General's Advisory Group on Law Enforcement Training whose purpose is to conduct a thorough review of the quality, availability, and practical application of peace officer training. God has raised Bishop Johnson up as a clarion prophetic voice of reason, a biblical voice, and host of conversations "for such a time as this."

Bishop Johnson has been married to Pastor Cathy since 1973. She has been an integral part of The House of the Lord, serving in many capacities since its inception. Pastor Cathy is an ordained Pastor and Elder of their church, as well as an extremely talented and anointed vocalist. She is also the Director of Women Walking Together in Christ (WWTIC), an outreach ministry for women that extends to other churches and cities.

Bishop Johnson and Pastor Cathy have two adult children and seven grandchildren.

Bishop Johnson's life has been one of steadfast, passionate pursuit of his Heavenly Father and His righteousness. He demonstrates God's compassion and love for all people, with a special heart for the downtrodden and less fortunate. God has honored Bishop's obedience and anointed his preaching of His Word and ministry with the power of the Holy Spirit in a dynamic way.

Website: [www.thotl.org](http://www.thotl.org)

Website: [www.bishopjohnsonministries.com](http://www.bishopjohnsonministries.com)



# Lee Jenkins

*"God didn't create your financial problems, so instead of doubting Him, I urge you to rely on His Word to resolve your problems."*

Lee Jenkins has always maintained a high level of performance, starting as the “Most Likely to Succeed” in his training class and becoming one of the nation’s most trusted financial advisors, according to *On Wall Street* magazine. He is currently a Managing Partner with Atlanta Capital Group, ranked as one of the top 33 independent investment advisory firms in the U.S. by Registered Rep magazine.

Lee’s investment career began in the 1980’s as one of 150 students in a stockbroker training class at the World Trade Center where his intellect, integrity, insight, and tenacity earned him the title “Most Likely To Succeed.” Lee’s fellow Wall Street trainees weren’t the only ones impressed with his potential; after graduating, a Wall Street firm made him the youngest African-American stockbroker ever hired by the company’s Atlanta office.

As an investment advisor, Lee flourished, rising to the position of Vice President of Investments at two major firms: Morgan Stanley Smith Barney and Raymond James & Associates. Lee’s success was also evident by his induction into the prestigious President’s Club - first at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney and later at Raymond James & Associates. In 1998, Lee received the Circle of Life Award at

Raymond James for applying his financial expertise to impact his community.

At the turn of the century, Lee broke new ground by founding Jenkins Wealth Advisors, LLC. As the guiding force behind this independent advisory firm, Lee provided advice and managed investments for multi-millionaires, business executives, entrepreneurs, celebrities, religious leaders and educational institutions. Nine years later, in 2009, his firm merged with Atlanta Capital Group, combining client assets of more than \$500 million.

Best-selling author Lee Jenkins is the “go to” man, for TV networks like CNN, when an articulate, reliable, and insightful financial advisor is needed to address current issues. Lee was a guest panelist on the 2009 CNN Prime Time Special *In God We Trust: Faith & Money* in America and has been a guest commentator on CNN’s popular financial show *Your Bottom Line* with host Gerri Willis. He has also appeared on ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox network affiliate programs, as well as on Christian networks like TBN, and The 700 Club on CBN.

Before appearing on TV and radio, Lee was introduced to households across the country as the author of *Taking Care of Business: Establishing a Financial Legacy for the African American Family*, published in 2001 by Moody Publishing/Lift Every Voice. Within a year *Taking Care of Business* was a recommended reading at the Harvard Divinity School’s Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) and on the Black Expressions Book Club list.

The warm reception of his first book encouraged Lee to write two

additional user-friendly books: *What to Do When Your Money is Funny: Real Solutions to Financial Challenges* (2007), and *Lee Jenkins on Money* (2009), which in 2010 made the Black Christian Bestseller's List along with notable authors like T.D. Jakes, Colin Powell, Tony Dungy, Bill Cosby, George Foreman, and Tony Evans.

As Lee's reputation for providing sensible financial advice began to spread - newspapers, magazines and websites like *USA Today*, *Money*, *Washington Post/Newsweek Interactive*, *Black Enterprise Magazine*, and the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* clamored for his opinions and commentary. After being courted by several media outlets, Lee agreed to pen a bi-monthly financial advice column for *Gospel Today* magazine.

Lee Jenkins was raised in a Christian home and has always found comfort in God's counsel. In 1991 Lee was ordained as a Christian minister and has served as an Elder at one of the fastest growing non-denominational churches in America.

Lee resides outside of Atlanta, Georgia, with his wife Martica. They are the proud parents of three wonderful children; Kristin, Martin, and Ryan.

Website: [leejenkinsgroup.com](http://leejenkinsgroup.com)

# Alveda King

*"I have a dream that America will pray and God will forgive us our sins."*

Dr. Alveda C. King founded King for America, Inc., "to assist people in enriching their lives spiritually, personally, mentally, and economically." She is the daughter of the late civil rights activist Rev. A.D. King and Naomi Barber King. Alveda is the grateful mother of six children and she is a doting grandmother.

During the more than half century of her life, Alveda has worked towards her purpose of glorifying God in the earth by accomplishing many goals. Currently, Alveda is a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, serving as Director of African American Outreach for Gospel of Life, headed up by Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life. She also consults with the Africa Humanitarian Christian Fellowship, founded by her mentor, Pastor Allen McNair of Believers' Bible Christian Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

She is a former college professor, holding a Master of Arts degree in Business Management from Central Michigan University. Her undergraduate studies in journalism and sociology helped her to become a published author, her most popular works being the best selling books *Sons Of Thunder: The King Family Legacy* and *I Don't Want Your Man, I Want My Own*.

Alveda's Doctorate of Laws was conferred by Saint Anselm College. She has served on the boards and committees of numerous organizations, including the Silent No More Awareness Campaign, Coalition of African American Pastors, and the Judeo-Christian Coalition for Constitutional Restoration. She also served in the Georgia State House of Representatives, and is an accomplished actress and songwriter.

During the years of the Civil Rights Movement, led by her uncle, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Alveda's family home was bombed in Birmingham, Alabama, in the heat of the struggle. "Daddy's house was bombed, then in Louisville, Kentucky, his church office was bombed. I was also jailed during the open housing movement," she recalls.

Alveda has continued her long-term work as a civil rights activist, speaking out on issues that face society today. "I believe that school choice is a pressing civil rights issue. Perhaps the most compelling issue of all is the life of the unborn," Alveda says. "Faith in God, and the commitment to fulfill His will for our lives—not faith in government bureaucracy—is the key to positive action. Have faith in God!" This is the message that Alveda carries to the world.

Website: [kingforamerica.com](http://kingforamerica.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/dralvedaking](http://www.facebook.com/dralvedaking)

Twitter: [@AlvedaCKing](https://twitter.com/AlvedaCKing)



# Aaron E. Lavender

*“Our purpose is to glorify God by conducting a sovereign, Bible-believing, Christ-honoring Baptist Church in accordance with God’s word.”*

Pastor Aaron E. Lavender was born and raised in Cleveland, OH. He was led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ by his mother, Bernice Lavender. While attending his home church, the Community Baptist Church of East Cleveland, OH, he met and eventually married his wife Ledora in 1973. To that union the Lord blessed them with three children: Dwight (wife, Kristene), Brian, and Jessica (daughter, Joi). Dr. Lavender considers his wife, Ledora, to be a shining example of what a pastor’s wife should be. Her meek and gentle spirit has become a testimony and model for other women to follow.

In 1975 Pastor Lavender was called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was nurtured and mentored by his pastor, the late Dr. Richard C. Mattox. Several years later he and his family relocated to Atlanta, GA., where Pastor Lavender attended and then graduated from the Carver Bible Institute and College in 1980, with a Bachelor of Biblical Education degree. Upon graduation, the Lavender family relocated to Indiana where Pastor Lavender began pursuing his Master’s degree at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN. After one semester of study, he sensed the leading of the Lord to move to Charleston, WV, to pastor a newly planted church, the

Grace Bible Church. He served as pastor from 1981-1986. During that time he also continued his education by extension through Covington Theological Seminary, obtaining both his Master of Ministry and Doctor of Ministry degrees.

Since September 1986, Pastor Lavender has served as the senior pastor of Grace Baptist Church, and Vice President of Carver Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, in Kansas City, Missouri. He also serves as Vice President of Church Development for the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship Association ([www.fbfa.us](http://www.fbfa.us)).

In continued pursuit of ministry excellence, Pastor Lavender, in 2005, received a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry and Doctor of Practical Theology, both with an emphasis in Expository Preaching. That same year he was also recognized as a Fellow of the Institute of Biblical Preaching, from the Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching (Memphis, TN).

Pastor Lavender is in great demand as a Bible teacher, conference speaker, workshop facilitator, and developer of church leaders, especially pastors. He is the author of the book, *Are You A Full Gospel Christian?*, published by Xulon Press.

Pastor & Mrs. Lavender currently reside in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Website: [www.gbcgkc.org](http://www.gbcgkc.org)





# Trip Lee

*“There are no super-Christians, only regular Christians denying themselves and embracing their Lord.”*

Trip Lee is an author, teacher, hip-hop artist, and thought leader. A pastor in Atlanta, he regularly preaches and teaches at Christian conferences and events, and has performed his music for thousands of listeners around the world.

In his first book, *The Good Life*, Lee points to the abundant life available only in Christ—a life beyond anything the world can offer. His second book, *Rise*, calls a younger generation not to wait to follow God, but to get up and live now.

As a hip-hop artist, Lee’s music has received critical acclaim while reaching a large and growing audience. He’s won a Stellar award and has been nominated for several Dove Awards. His last three albums have debuted at #1 on the Billboard Gospel charts, and his album, *Rise*, debuted at #2 on the Billboard Rap charts and #16 on the Billboard 200.

Trip’s deepest desire in his writing, teaching, and performing is to declare the goodness and glory of Jesus Christ.

Website: [builttobrag.com](http://builttobrag.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/TripLee](https://facebook.com/TripLee)

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# Bryan Loritts

*“Trials not only refine our faith, they reveal our hearts.”*

Bryan Loritts is the Lead Pastor of Abundant Life Church in Silicon Valley, California. He also serves as the President of the Kainos Movement, an organization committed to seeing the multi-ethnic church become the new normal in our world. In addition to these positions, Bryan serves on the board of trustees for Biola University, and is the husband of Korie Loritts, and father of Quentin, Myles, and Jaden. He's been a featured speaker at the Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit, Catalyst, and a host of other events.

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# Crawford Loritts

*“All we have to give to the next generation is what we have become.”*

Crawford was ordained to the ministry in March 1972. He attended Cairn University in Philadelphia, PA, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Bible with an emphasis on pastoral studies. He and his wife, Karen, married on May 22, 1971.

Crawford has traveled throughout the U.S., Caribbean, Asia, Canada, South America, Africa, and parts of Europe preaching in churches, evangelistic outreaches, conferences, colleges, and seminaries. He has also been the featured speaker for professional sports teams in Super Bowls, NCAA Final Four Chapel, and the Pentagon with senior military officers.

Crawford and his wife Karen are featured speakers at Family Life marriage conferences. They are co-authors of *Developing Character in Your Child*. They have four married children. Bryan, Heather, Bryndan, and Holly, and have ten grandchildren.

Crawford has written eight books including, *Unshaken*. Presently, Crawford serves as Senior Pastor at Fellowship Bible Church in Roswell, GA.

Crawford has a Doctor of Divinity from Biola University, a Doctor

of Sacred Theology from Cairn University, a Doctor of Divinity from Moody Bible Institute, a Doctor of Letters from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a Doctor of Divinity from Columbia International University. He holds several board positions including CRU (Campus Crusade for Christ). He is a visiting professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Crawford is the host of two national radio programs, the weekend program *Living a Legacy*, and the daily program *Legacy Moments*.

Website: [moodyradio.org/programs/living-a-legacy/](http://moodyradio.org/programs/living-a-legacy/)

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# Fred Luter

*"I try to touch the hearts of people and really make them feel the sermon. Every sermon I preach, I preach to me first. I've got to feel it before I can share it with someone else."*

Pastor Fred Luter, Jr., is the Senior Pastor at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the first African American to be elected as President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Under Fred Luter's vision and leadership, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church has grown from a membership of sixty-five to its current membership of 7000-plus worshippers. Despite the growth of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, Pastor Luter has remained a humble man. He says he is able to be humble for many reasons. "I know my background. I have not accomplished this on my own. It was the grace and mercy of God, committed folk, and my wife Elizabeth."

When Pastor Luter attributes his success to God, he is not being modest. It has truly been grace that has brought him this far. Pastor Luter began his career as what he fondly refers to as a street preacher. Before he was called to the FABC pastorate in 1986, he spent his time preaching on different street corners in the "Lower Nine" area where he grew up. Only having received his call to the ministry three years earlier, the members of FABC elected him

pastor even though he had no pastoral experience.

Obviously those members sensed Pastor Luter's leadership potential, and today he is just that -- a well respected leader. He does not, however, want the members of FABC to put him on a pedestal. "I try to mention that it's not about me." That is why members of Franklin Avenue often hear: It's not about the Pastor. It's about the Master.

Pastor Luter is also a respected speaker/preacher across the country. The senior pastor made headlines as the first African-American to be elected to the Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in 1992. He made headlines again in June 2001 when he was the first African-American to preach the Southern Baptist Convention Message. In the Summer 2002 issue of *Growing Churches* Magazine, Pastor Luter recounts how it was both exciting and nerve-racking to "preach to preachers, seminary professors, and former presidents of the Convention," and to be in the company of Southern Baptist dignitaries Jerry Vines, Dr. Adrian Rogers, and Dr. Paige Patterson, among others.

Despite FABC's growth and recognition (FABC is the largest Southern Baptist church in the state), Pastor Luter wants the congregation to remember Franklin Avenue is not in competition with other churches. He wants members to "continue to stay focused on what God has called us to do as a church." That calling is embodied in the church mission statement: to spiritually impact our families, neighborhoods, city, and state by exalting the Savior, equipping the saints, and evangelizing the sinners. And, under Pastor Luter's continued tutelage and vision for the church, Franklin

Avenue Baptist Church will do just that for many years to come.

Website: [franklinabc.com](http://franklinabc.com)

# Samuel L. Madison

*“Black America is religious, but, sad to say, we are not as biblical as we should be.”*

Samuel L. Madison is the founder and president of Intelligent Faith Ministries in Atlanta, Georgia. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Allen University and he is a graduate of Columbia University with a Master’s degree in Education.

He is an ordained minister of the Gospel and has written numerous editorials and articles on the spiritual and moral state of Black America. He is the author of the book, *From Glory to Shame: The Rise & Fall of Black America (And How She Can Rise Again) A Spiritual Bridge to Tavis Smiley's The Covenant*.

He is also husband to the lovely Juanita Madison and he is the proud father of three grown children: Daryl, Natosha, and Santosha.

# Roland Martin

*"When I was in meditation, God began to speak to me, and God said, 'Roland, I have enough preachers. I need people where you are in your positions. When you are on radio, when you are on television, you speak into more people in the five minutes than some preachers speak to in an entire year.'"*

Roland S. Martin is a nationally award-winning and multifaceted journalist.

A nationally syndicated columnist with Creators Syndicate, Mr. Martin is the author of *Listening to the Spirit Within: 50 Perspectives on Faith*; *Speak, Brother! A Black Man's View of America*; and *The First: President Barack Obama's Road to the White House*.

Mr. Martin is a commentator for TV One Cable Network and host of News One Now, a one-hour weekday morning news show. He is also a CNN Analyst, appearing on a variety of the network's shows. In October 2008, he joined the Tom Joyner Morning Show as senior analyst.

Named by *Ebony* Magazine in 2008, 2009 and 2010 as one of the 150 Most Influential African Americans in the United States, he is the 2009 winner of the NAACP Image Award for Best Interview for "In Conversation: The Michelle Obama Interview." He is the 2008

winner of the NAACP Image Award for Best Interview for "In Conversation: The Sen. Barack Obama Interview."

In 2009, CNN was awarded the Peabody Award for its outstanding 2008 election coverage, of which Martin was a member of the Best Political Team on Television.

Martin, named one of the top 50 political pundits by the Daily Telegraph in the United Kingdom, was also awarded the 2008 President's Award by the National Association of Black Journalists for his work in multiple media platforms. In 2008, he was also inducted into the Texas A&M University Journalism Hall of Honor.

An insightful and provocative analyst, Mr. Martin has appeared numerous times on a variety of American networks, as well as media outlets in Canada, Columbia, Italy, Australia, and South Africa.

From October 2005 to October 2008, he served as a radio talk show host for WVON-AM in Chicago, first as mid-day host and later as morning drive host.

He is the former executive editor/general manager of the *Chicago Defender*, the nation's most historic Black newspaper. He is the former founding news editor for *Savoy Magazine* under the team of New York-based Vanguarde Media, and the former founding editor of BlackAmericaWeb.com.

He previously served as owner/publisher of *Dallas-Fort Worth Heritage*, a Christian monthly newspaper. He also has worked as managing editor of the *Houston Defender* and the *Dallas Weekly*,

which he led to a number of local, state, and national journalism awards. Mr. Martin has worked as morning drive reporter for KRLD/1080 AM; news director and morning anchor at KKDA-AM in Dallas; city hall reporter for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*; and county government and neighbors reporter for the *Austin American-Statesman*. He has also written pieces for *Ebony* and *Essence* magazines.

He has won more than 30 professional awards for journalistic excellence, including a regional Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio Television News Directors; top reporting honors from the National Association of Black Journalists; the National Association of Minorities in Cable; and the National Associated Press-Managing Editors Conference.

Mr. Martin is a 20-year member of the National Association of Black Journalists, and a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

He is a 1987 graduate of Jack Yates High School-Magnet School of Communications, and a 1991 graduate of Texas A&M University, where he earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Journalism. In May 2008, Martin received a Master's Degree in Christian Communications from Louisiana Baptist University.

He has been awarded honorary degrees from Florida Memorial University and the University of Maryland-University College.

He is married to the Rev. Jacquie Hood Martin, author of *Fulfilled! The Art and Joy of Balanced Living*, and vice president of Kennedy-

King College in Chicago. They reside in Chicago.

Website: [www.rolandmartin.com](http://www.rolandmartin.com)

# Eric Mason

*“One of the reasons why revival tarries is because Christians won’t repent...No one wants to talk about sin.”*

Dr. Eric Mason is the founder and pastor of Epiphany Fellowship in Philadelphia, PA. He and his wife, Yvette, have three sons: Immanuel, Nehemiah, and Ephraim, as well as one daughter, Amalyah. After more than two decades of gospel ministry, Dr. Mason has become known for his unquenchable passion to see the glory of Jesus Christ robustly and relevantly engaged in broken cities with the comprehensive Gospel. Urban ministry is the heartbeat of his ministry and calling.

He is the founder and president of Thriving, an urban resource organization committed to developing leaders for ministry in the urban context, and is the author of three books: *Manhood Restored*, *Beat God to the Punch*, and *Unleashed*.

Dr. Mason has been graced by God to preach and teach at churches and conferences in the United States and overseas. He is the recipient of multiple earned degrees, including a BS in Psychology from Bowie State University, a Master of Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a Doctoral degree from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Dr. Mason has served as an adjunct professor at the College of Biblical Studies in Houston, TX, and Biblical

Theological Seminary outside of Philadelphia, PA.

Dr. Mason serves through the local church in helping coach and train families to plant churches in cities locally, nationally, and internationally. Specifically, over the last 45 years through Epiphany Fellowship, they have and are planting in Camden, NJ; Germantown, Philly (PA); Brooklyn, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Southwest Philly; Wilmington, DE; and Baltimore, MD. Also through Epiphany Fellowship, they are helping to plant eleven churches in Africa.

Dr. Mason considers himself a foodie and coffee snob, and he also enjoys reading, writing, art, and biking.

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# Donnie McClurkin

*“It's a poor frog that doesn't praise his own pond.”*

Pastor Donnie McClurkin served as an assistant to Pastor Marvin L. Winans at Perfecting Church, Detroit, Michigan, for over a decade. He was ordained and sent out by Pastor Winans in 2001 to establish Perfecting Faith Church (PFC) in Freeport, New York. The church was established with approximately two hundred members, it has grown to nearly 3,000 members since its inception.

Taking on the spirit of its leader, the ministry's lifeblood is evangelism and outreach to lost and hurting people. This is evident by its annual Church Without Walls (CWOW) crusade during July and August, where the ministry goes into the community and brings the church outdoors. Along with ministering to the spiritual, PFC also ministers to the natural and social needs by holding health fairs, clothing drives, assisting in shelters, and caring for the whole person.

Pastor McClurkin is also the founder and president of The New York Call. This is a coalition of over one hundred pastors and ministries throughout the Tri-State area. The New York Call stretches across denominational, ethnic, and social barriers in order to bring the Body of Christ together in unity and in the bond of peace. This annual event (held at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow, NY, and

most recently The Nikon at Jones Beach Theater) draws fifteen to seventeen thousand people each year.

Two near-simultaneous events changed McClurkin's life forever. Just as he was appointed as an associate minister at Marvin Winans' Perfecting Church in Detroit, he also learned that he'd been stricken with leukemia. While battling the disease, Donnie was signed to Warner Alliance Records as a solo artist where he recorded his pivotal self-titled album, marked by a smooth sophistication in the production that couched his soaring tenor for a series of soul-stirring numbers. Through BeBe Winans, media mogul Oprah Winfrey learned of Donnie's music and struggle, invited him on her top-rated TV show, a golden opportunity that catapulted his CD to #4 on the Gospel charts, recognition beyond the church world and gold sales. Donnie soon after signed to Verity Records where his first CD, *Live in London and More*, would far surpass his solo debut thanks to secular radio embracing his gracefully reassuring "We Fall Down." The song met with international acclaim, made the Top 40 of Billboard's R&B chart and rocketed past platinum sales of over one million copies sold instantly making Donnie among Gospel's best selling artists.

He earned a trophy case full of Dove and Stellar Awards plus other honors including an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Gospel Artist. In 2003, Donnie release the magnificent musical work *Again* and, in 2005, he released the double-CD *Psalms, Hymns & Spiritual Songs*, each one garnering the coveted Grammy Award.

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# **Allen McFarland**

Dr. Allen R. McFarland is the Senior Pastor of Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Virginia, and an anointed servant of Jesus Christ. Pastor McFarland hails from Charleston, South Carolina where he attended South Carolina State University before moving to Washington, DC. He has attended Washington Bible College and holds a B.A. in Pastoral Studies from Liberty University as well as a Masters of Divinity, a Doctorate of Divinity, and a Doctorate of Ministry from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. McFarland is a member of the Board of Trustees of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia; a Board Member of Atlantic Shores Christian Schools in Virginia Beach, VA; a member of the Board of Directors (Kids Across America), Branson, Missouri; a Board Member of the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Tidewater, Inc. (Norfolk, Virginia); and the President of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship Association.

Pastor McFarland is a Bible preacher, teacher, and minister of the Word. He is founder and Chancellor of the Angelos Bible College. His radio ministry, "The Joyous Sound", which airs daily on a local AM station, exemplifies his belief that the only road to successful Christian living is the direct application of the Word of God to one's life. In 1995, he started the Joyous Sound Education and Enrichment Center, which currently enrolls children, Pre-K through third grade.

Pastor McFarland and Doris are the parents of four daughters and one son. They are the the proud grandparents of 13 grandchildren.

Website: [www.calvaryevangelical.org](http://www.calvaryevangelical.org)

# Vashti McKenzie

*"Don't let the pain of living take you out of this life before time! The joy of the Lord is your strength!"*

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie serves as the 117th elected and consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Her historic election in the year 2000 represents the first time in the over 200-year history of the A.M.E. Church, in which a woman had obtained that level of Episcopal office. She again made history becoming the first woman to become the Titular Head of the Denomination, as the president of the Council of Bishops, making her the highest-ranking woman in the predominately Black Methodist denominations.

Bishop McKenzie is honored to serve as the presiding prelate of the 13th Episcopal District which includes the State of Tennessee and Commonwealth of Kentucky. Her husband, Stan McKenzie, serves as the Supervisor of Missions.

She had previously served in 2000-2004 as the chief pastor of the 18th Episcopal District in Southeast Africa, which is comprised of Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, and Mozambique. Bishop McKenzie instituted an ambitious agenda: "Strength to Climb." This included strengthening the District's infrastructure by instituting computer labs in two AME high schools, creating seven entrepreneurial

business projects, thirty-seven new church starts, facilitating two USA-African teacher workshops and summits, producing four new classrooms, and supplying school supplies for AME schools and scholarships for clergy and high school students.

She completed nine buildings, purchased four parcels of land, built eight new mission houses, and built twelve new church buildings. She opened a not-for-profit computer center in Lesotho, three District office/centers, initiated the AME Schools Annual Conferences in Lesotho and Swaziland, and provided scholarships for thirty-one students. She also expanded services to seventy-five children orphaned or affected by the HIV/Aids pandemic in a day program in Botswana.

In Mbabane, Swaziland, the Selulah Sandlah AME Village was built that includes three large group homes for thirty-six orphaned children plus house parents. It was built without government grants or support, but by many people who believed something needed to be done to help children left homeless and abandoned by this disease. The three group homes were dedicated in December 2002, and the first children arrived in October 2003.

This kind of innovative ministry is not foreign to Bishop McKenzie.

She has served as a pastor of three congregations from the rural to the urban center, from seven members to over 1,700 members. Most recently, prior to becoming a bishop, she served for ten years as the pastor of historic Payne Memorial AME Church in Baltimore, Maryland, growing that congregation from 330 to over 1,700

members, increasing property value from 1.6 to 5.6 million dollars, launching twenty-five innovative ministries and instituting and organizing Payne Memorial Outreach, Inc, a million dollar faith based non-profit organization.

She also led the Payne Memorial congregation to petition and secure a \$1.5 million welfare-to-work contract with the State of Maryland, the only congregation to bid and win. More than 600 men and women were educated, trained, and placed in jobs leaving the welfare system behind them. Under Bishop McKenzie's leadership, the church purchased a two-story office building to house twelve community service programs and renovated a vacant five-story apartment building on a drug infested corner, making it into a \$1.8 million human and economic development center, with a senior adult day care, a Headstart and other businesses.

She has been active in other areas, including being the founding president and organizer of the Collective Banking Group of Baltimore, as well as the organizer of the Church Health Coalition, and a former president of the A.M.E. Ministerial Alliance.

Bishop McKenzie is the author of three books. The first two, *Not Without a Struggle* and *Strength in the Struggle*, addresses leadership and professional growth for women. Her book, *Journey to the Well*, helps women seek new directions for personal growth following the footsteps of the Biblical Samaritan woman. This book has made several bestseller lists including *Essence* Magazine's Bestseller List for nonfiction publications.

She is a graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park; holds a Master of Divinity from Howard University School of Divinity and has earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. A poll of national civic, social, religious and academic leaders selected Bishop McKenzie for *Ebony* Magazine's "Honor Roll of Great African American Preachers" in 1993 and again in 1997. She was honored to be named at the top of *Ebony's* "15 Greatest African American Female Preachers."

Characterized as being an electrifying preacher, the former journalist and electronic broadcaster has held a variety of media positions: from a radio program director, an on-air personality, a city desk reporter, a staff writer, to even becoming the corporate vice president of programming. Bishop McKenzie has been honored for her community service, outstanding achievement, and being a religious role model by a number of diverse civic, educational, business, and governmental leaders. She is also the National Chaplain for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., an international public service organization, and life member of the NAACP. She has received honorary doctorates from Howard University, Wilberforce University, Morgan State University, and Goucher College.

She is the wife of Stan McKenzie, the supervisor of missions for the 13th Episcopal District. Currently, he is a human resource consultant and a former player in the National Basketball Association. Together, they have three children.

Bishop McKenzie is humbled and grateful to God for the many opportunities and blessings afforded her as she strives to serve with

excellence in the Kingdom of God.

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Twitter: [@vashtimckenzie](https://twitter.com/vashtimckenzie)

# Dwight McKissic

*“Jesus said that the kingdom of God has suffered violence from the days of John the Baptist until now, but the violent must take it by force. It is way past time for the church to simply be a cruise ship, it is time in the life of the church, once again, that we become a battleship.”*

Dwight McKissic began a church in 1983 in his garage. Today, Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, now averages 1,800 on Sundays. McKissic's vision is to continue developing a multi-cultural ministry that will house a K-12 school, retreat and communications center, and develop ministries to reach and mentor fatherless children.

In addition to mentoring church planters, he is the author of several books including: *Beyond Roots: In Search of Blacks In The Bible*, *Beyond Roots II: If Anybody Asks You Who I Am* and *Moving From Fear to Faith*. McKissic has served as a guest lecturer for schools such as Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he serves as a trustee, Criswell College, University of Minnesota, Emory University, Southern Illinois University, Wheaton College, and Harvard.

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# Vera McKissic

*"Leaders have two characteristics: first they are going somewhere, and second they are able to persuade other people to go with them."  
(John Maxwell)*

Vera is the Minister of Education at Cornerstone Church in Arlington, Texas where she has served for twenty years. She values the experience of working alongside her husband who is the pastor of the church that started in their garage thirty-two years ago.

Before serving full time at the church she worked as a public school teacher for twelve years. She spent two years as a community liaison for Arlington Public Schools. Serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission for four years was a highlight in her life.

In addition to providing leadership to Sunday school and discipleship ministries, she started a mentoring program for young girls in 2005 in which she trains and works with other mentors to teach young ladies skills for success in life.

She is also the leader of the women's group which seeks to prepare women for kingdom living here on earth. She enjoys teaching on leadership, personal growth, and speaking to pastors' wives and women's groups to help others live a healthy spiritual life that honors God.

In her community she volunteers as a member of the Rotary Club of Arlington.

She has four adult children and enjoys spending time with her husband and twelve grandchildren.

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# Vaughn McLaughlin

*“We need to stop being more passionate about our political views than we are about our biblical views.”*

Bishop Vaughn McLaughlin was born on April 20, 1957 to Monroe and Elease McLaughlin. He attended the public schools of Jacksonville, Florida, graduating from William M. Raines Senior High School. He was inducted into the Raines High School Basketball Hall of Fame in 2003. He attended the University of Tampa on an athletic scholarship and later transferred to the University of Tennessee majoring in psychology. He holds a Master's and Doctorate Degree in Theology from North Florida Theological Seminary.

It was not until the age of twenty-six that Bishop McLaughlin made a personal profession of faith and submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In just a few months after his conversion he was called by God to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Bishop McLaughlin began preaching the Gospel anywhere and everywhere there was someone who would listen. He began working with youth and was later staffed at the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church where he served the local body in any and every capacity imaginable. In 1987, at age twenty-nine, Bishop McLaughlin served as interim pastor at his first church

in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Eleven months later, Bishop McLaughlin resigned to answer the call of God to pioneer a local church that would reflect the biblical pattern of a non-traditional and Kingdom-focused ministry.

In 1988, he founded The Potter's House Christian Fellowship. Starting with only about forty members, today The Potter's House is home to well over 5,000 members. Bishop McLaughlin reaches the masses through daily radio programs as well as numerous outreach ministries. Bishop McLaughlin and The Potter's House have been acknowledged and awarded by local, state, and federal agencies for its outstanding and consistent work in the area of jails and prisons, nursing home and hospital ministry, food and clothing efforts and other innovative ways to reach those Christ came to save.

After years of mentoring other pastors and demonstrating a father's heart, Bishop McLaughlin was consecrated into the office of bishop on March 6, 1999. In preparation for the office of Bishop, he submitted to the tutelage of the Joint College of Bishops and successfully completed the courses of study required for certification from the Joint College at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Bishop McLaughlin, through Covenant Fellowship International, is now covering for over 100 ministries and pastors around the globe. Churches have been birthed and reformed from the Caribbean to India. Covenant Fellowship India is now establishing new local churches and orphanages, training and equipping new preachers and leaders for the endtime move of God.

Bishop McLaughlin is the founder and Chancellor of The Potter's House Christian Academy. The Academy is a fully accredited education institution. The Potter's House Christian Academy also set a standard during the accreditation process by becoming the first private school in the state of Florida to attain unanimous approval for accreditation without any recommendations for improvement on its first application. This honor speaks to the excellence in which Bishop McLaughlin and the school operate.

Bishop McLaughlin's anointed and skillful exegetical handling of the Scriptures, along with his personal and 'down to earth' approach to the Gospel has drawn followers locally, throughout the U.S. and abroad. Bishop McLaughlin travels the world sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Over 3000 recorded messages are available through The Potter's House audio/video ministry of Bishop McLaughlin's powerful preaching. The nation's leading Christian magazines have featured his accomplishments and the ministry as cover stories. He has graced the covers of *Charisma Magazine*, *Ministry Today*, *Leadership Journal*, *Church Executive Magazine*, *Gospel Today* and has even been featured in the *Wall Street Journal* and many other periodicals.

He names his greatest of all accomplishments as being happily married to Narlene Jackson, his college sweetheart, for thirty-three years. His wife assists him in the ministry as the church, mall, and school administrator. They minister together at conferences and workshops and serve as a model couple to pastors and ministry leaders around the world. They have two children: Angel Narlene and Stephen Vaughn.

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# Brenda Salter McNeil

*"My mission is to inspire and equip young Christian leaders to practice reconciliation around the world and to build communities that partner with God to bring relational healing and social wholeness."*

Brenda Salter McNeil is a dynamic speaker, author, and trailblazer with over twenty-five years of experience in the ministry of reconciliation. Her mission is to inspire, equip, and empower emerging Christian leaders to be practitioners of reconciliation in their various spheres of influence around the world.

She is an associate professor of reconciliation studies in the School of Theology at Seattle Pacific University where she also directs the Reconciliation Studies program. She previously served on the staff of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship for fourteen years as a Multiethnic Ministries Specialist. She earned a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary, a Doctorate of Ministry from Palmer Theological Seminary, and was awarded a Doctorate of Humane Letters from North Park University.

She is an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Covenant Church and is on the pastoral staff of Quest Church in Seattle. In addition, she serves on the Board of Directors for Wycliffe USA and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA. Dr. Brenda is recognized internationally

as one of the foremost leaders of reconciliation and was featured as one of the fifty most influential women to watch by *Christianity Today* in 2012. She is also the coauthor of *The Heart of Racial Justice* and the author of *A Credible Witness* and *Roadmap to Reconciliation*. Dr. Brenda is married to Dr. J. Derek McNeil and they are the proud parents of two adult children.

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## **John McNeal Jr.**

*“We need to stir each other up and go back to do something for our cities and our communities. We ought to be the light. And may God help us to be that light before it is eternally too late.”*

Dr. John McNeal Jr. is the founder and senior pastor of Atlanta Bible Baptist Church. He has an undergraduate degree from Fort Valley State Teacher's College and graduate degrees from Grace Theological Seminary and Georgia State University. For twenty years, he served as Dean of Students and professor at Carver Bible College in Atlanta, Georgia. He has served on the boards of Baptist Bible College and Seminary, Evangelical Baptist Missions, and Baptist Church Planters. Dr. McNeal served four years in the United States Air Force. He and his wife Earlene, have two grown daughters, two sons-in-law, and a granddaughter and grandson.

Dr. McNeal is featured in *When Black Preachers Preach: Leading Black Preachers Give Direction & Encouragement to a Nation That Has Lost Its Way, Vol. 1.*

Website: [atlantabiblebaptist.org](http://atlantabiblebaptist.org)

# Miles McPherson

*“God has a way of getting His way. Stop fighting Him. You're only going to lose in the end. Besides, He has your best interest in mind.”*

Whether sharing the stage with a former U.S. president or producing an Emmy Award-winning documentary, Miles McPherson stands at the forefront of transformational evangelism and ministry mobilization.

Miles McPherson is the President of Miles Ahead Ministries and senior pastor of the Rock Church and Academy in San Diego, California. A nationally known speaker, McPherson's bold, down-to-earth, humorous style has become his trademark. His relevant messages challenge both the young and young-minded and often compel them to recalibrate their lives in light of the Gospel.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in March 1960, the second oldest of five children, McPherson was raised on Long Island in a strong family. After excelling in football throughout high school, he attended the University of New Haven, where he majored in engineering. McPherson was the university's first player to achieve All-American honors in football and be drafted into the NFL. Strong athletics run in the McPherson family; Miles' brother, Don McPherson, was a Heisman Trophy runner-up in 1987.

Miles was originally drafted by the Los Angeles Rams; he was cut and went on to play defensive back for the San Diego Chargers.

Off the field, his life began to spiral out of control. Two years into his professional football career, McPherson was battling a drug problem and living an immoral lifestyle. That's when teammate Sherman Smith, now an NFL coach, asked McPherson a simple question: "If you were to die right now, would you go to Heaven?" It took over six months for McPherson to answer that question. In April 1984, having been up all night doing cocaine and realizing that his life was empty, McPherson gave his life to Jesus Christ.

The change was dramatic and instant. He began attending Horizon Christian Fellowship in San Diego and reaching out to teenagers. McPherson also began doing motivational speaking with the Chargers' organization. In September 1986, within a week after retiring from football, McPherson went to work as a youth pastor for Horizon and enrolled in Azusa Pacific University's School of Theology. He received his Master of Divinity degree in 1991.

In 1992, McPherson founded Miles Ahead, a non-profit organization that reaches out to youth around the globe with the Gospel. Since its inception, more than 45,000 young people have given their lives to the Lord. McPherson earned an Emmy Award in 2007 for a documentary on methamphetamine, available through Miles Ahead.

The Rock Church was founded by McPherson in 2000. More than 3,300 attended the first service on February 27 in Montezuma Hall at San Diego State University. This is believed to have been the

largest opening church service in the nation’s history. The congregation grew quickly. Named by *Outreach Magazine* as one of the country’s fastest growing churches, the Rock currently has more than 12,000 people attending one of its five weekend services.

The church recently moved to a newly-refurbished 210,000-square-foot complex in the Point Loma area of San Diego. The state-of-the-art sanctuary seats 3,500 and a 1,600 square-foot high-definition picture screen enhances the experience. The Rock is known as a “Do Something Church,” with close to 100 ministries that reach out to the community in many ways.

McPherson is the author of several articles and books, including *DO Something! Make Your Life Count*, which was released in January 2010. The Church Campaign Kit version of DO Something! was released as well.

He and his wife, Debbie, have three children and reside in San Diego.

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# James T. Meeks

*“If you have God's least you will still have more than you can ever imagine.”*

Reverend Senator James T. Meeks has quickly risen to become one of the most dynamic religious and civic leaders in the nation.

He is the founder and senior pastor of Salem Baptist Church of Chicago. Located in Chicago's Roseland community, Salem is the largest African American church in Illinois with over 20,000 members and one of the fastest growing in the nation.

In 2005, Rev. Senator Meeks led Salem in the construction of the House of Hope, a \$50 million, 10,000-seat community and worship center.

In 2002, Rev. Senator Meeks successfully ran for the Illinois State Senate for the 15th Legislative District. His win made him the first Independent legislator ever elected to the Illinois Senate. Rev. He also served as the joint chairman of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus.

Driven by his passion for education, Rev. Senator Meeks opened Salem Christian Academy in 1990, where children in grades K-8

receive quality educational instruction combined with Christian-based principles to ensure young people of today are prepared to become tomorrow's generation of leaders.

He is the author of two books, *How To Get Out of Debt and Into Praise*, and *Life-Changing Relationships* which have been received with critical acclaim.

Rev. Senator Meeks received his B.A. in Religion and Philosophy from Bishop College in Dallas, TX.

He and his wife Jamell are the proud parents of four children.

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# Lecrae Moore

*“You are not defined by your possessions, looks, or popularity. You are made in God's image. Live for him & live with purpose.”*

On Tuesday, Sept. 9th, 2016, Lecrae released his seventh studio album, *Anomaly*, and made history! The album officially debuted at #1 on the Billboard 200 Album Chart as well as several other Billboard charts including Digital Album, Rap Album, Christian Album, and Gospel Album. For the first time in Billboard chart history, an artist occupied the No. 1 album spot on both the Gospel Albums and Billboard Top 200 list. And it's only the fifth album ever to be on both the Christian Albums chart and the Billboard 200. *Anomaly* isn't the first No. 1 album for Lecrae: It's actually his sixth. But unlike the past five albums, *Anomaly* branches out from the Gospel and Christian charts at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Lecrae's music has been recognized in *Rolling Stone*, *XXL Magazine*, *Vibe Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic* and the cover of *The Huffington Post Magazine* to industry trades such as *Billboard Magazine*, *Variety*, and *Vulture*. His performance on *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon, perfectly timed with his album's release, had fans buzzing as he performed multiple hit records from *Anomaly*. He's performed at the BET Experience, co-hosted The Dove Awards, co-headlined the highest ticketed tour in the country (Winter Jam) and received a nomination for Best Impact

Track at the BET Hip Hop Awards. Sway Calloway, MTV News Executive Producer and host of the nationally syndicated radio show, *The Wake Up Show*, recently proclaimed Lecrae as the “Evolution of Hip-Hop.” And yet there’s still so much more on the horizon for Lecrae.

Remaining true to his beliefs, Lecrae is an artist who redefines mainstream popular culture. Thematically, one can find inspiration, faith, and honesty in his music. But it’s more than that and yet it is quite transparent. If Oscar Wilde was correct when he said, "Most people are other people, their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation," it’s simple to understand the easy attraction to Lecrae. In a sea of indulgent music, he's swimming against the tide embracing all the things that make him the man he is, including his faith. And at the heart of it all, Lecrae is pleased to share the secret to his success. He explains, "I just have to have integrity and be true to who I am and what I believe in. Music doesn't need to be categorized. It just needs to be good." Indeed Lecrae is at the climactic crossroad of his career.

For the past few years, Lecrae has been the epitome of transcendence. What started as a practical approach to mentoring the youth population at a local juvenile detention center has led to a worldwide mission. As an artist, Lecrae has nearly reached the pinnacle of success. He's released seven bestselling albums, two mixtapes and won two Grammy awards and a Billboard Music Award in the process and landed a global distribution deal with Red Distribution/Sony Music for the record label he co-owns, Reach Records.

In 2010, Lecrae released the critically-acclaimed album *Rehab*. It debuted in the Top 20 on the coveted Billboard Top 200 Album Chart. By 2011, Lecrae released a follow-up album, *Gravity*, scoring the #1 pole position atop the Rap Album and Independent Album charts and debuting at #3 on the Billboard Top 200. He's since performed at the BET Hip Hop Awards, contributed to Statik Selektah's mixtape and collaborated with a litany of hip-hop veterans and producers. In between albums, Lecrae produced and released *Church Clothes*, his own mixtape, hosted by radio legend Don Cannon. It featured production by Boi-1da, 9th Wonder, S-1 and Street Symphony, an indication that Lecrae's positive message has been well received by his contemporaries. In fact, the mixtape earned a double platinum rating and debuted at #10 on iTunes.

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# Paul Morton

*“As Christians, we love people because God loves people and He tells us what is right and what is wrong. Either we will stand with God or against Him.”*

Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr. was born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada but was destined to move to the United States. God had a special calling on his life that extended far beyond the Canadian borders. In 1972, he moved to New Orleans, Louisiana. Not long after, he became the senior pastor of the Greater Saint Stephen Missionary Baptist Church. He served faithfully there for thirty-three years. Under his leadership, it became a "Full Gospel" Baptist Church, expanding to three areas of the city, maximizing at seven services per Sunday.

However, after the devastating storm, Katrina, God repositioned him. At God's command, he passed the mantle to his wife, Debra B. Morton, who now serves as senior pastor of the mother church in New Orleans. Bishop Morton now serves as senior pastor of the "baby" church, G.S.S. Changing A Generation, in Atlanta, Georgia, which was birthed out of the mother church. Bishop Paul S. Morton and Pastor Debra Morton now serve as each other's Co-Pastor. Now "One Church in Two States," their slogan is "Changing The Way We Do Church!"

Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr. is also the founding Presiding Bishop of one of the fastest growing movements in America - The Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International.

As an apostle, he has birthed many churches out of Greater Saint Stephen, New Orleans. Bishop Morton is also an international

television preacher who, for over twenty-five years, reaches thousands of souls for the Lord on a weekly basis.

Morton is also a gifted author and an anointed singer, having received five Stellar Awards.

His life in Christ is evidenced by his love and compassion for his family, the brethren, and those who are lost.

Many esteem him as a pastor's pastor and a leader's leader. His wife and children revere him as a loving husband and role model father.

Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr. who strives to exemplify the heart of God, is truly God's man!

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# Victoria Christopher Murray

*“It’s when people are tired that they’re the most vulnerable, most open to temptation.”*

Victoria Christopher Murray always knew she would become an author, even as she was taking an unlikely path to that destination. A native of Queens, Victoria first left New York to attend Hampton University where she majored in Communication Disorders. After graduating, Victoria attended New York University where she received her MBA.

Victoria spent ten years in Corporate America before she tested her entrepreneurial spirit. She opened a Financial Services Agency for Aegon, USA where she managed the number one division for nine consecutive years. However, Victoria never lost the dream to write and when the “bug” hit her again in 1997, she answered the call.

Victoria originally self-published her first novel, *Temptation* and in 2000, Time Warner published that novel. *Temptation* made numerous best sellers list and remained on the *Essence* bestsellers list for nine consecutive months. In 2001, *Temptation* was nominated for an NAACP Image Award in Outstanding Literature.

Since *Temptation*, Victoria has written over twenty other adult novels, including: *JOY*, *Grown Folks Business*, *The Ex Files*, *The Deal*, *the Dance and the Devil* and the popular *Jasmine Cox Larson*

*Bush* series.

Victoria has received numerous awards including the Golden Pen Award for Best Inspirational Fiction and the Phyllis Wheatley Trailblazer Award for being a pioneer in African American Fiction. Since 2007, Victoria has won nine African American Literary Awards for best novel, best Christian fiction and Author of the Year — Female. After four nominations, Victoria finally won an NAACP Image Award in Outstanding Literary Work for her social commentary novel, *Stand Your Ground*.

Several of Victoria's novels have been optioned to become movies, including *The Deal, the Dance and the Devil* and the *Ex Files* series.

With over one million books in print, Victoria is one of the country's top African American contemporary authors.

Victoria splits her time between Los Angeles and Washington D.C. In Los Angeles, she attends Bible Enrichment Fellowship International Church under the spiritual tutelage of Dr. Beverly Crawford and she is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

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## **Sophia A. Nelson**

*“The twenty-first-century successful black woman is brilliant and tenacious and not afraid to flex her intellectual, spiritual, or*

*financial muscles. She has accomplished, earned, and owned more than black women of any other generation in American history.”*

Sophia A. Nelson, Esquire is an award-winning author of two nonfiction books and an award-winning journalist for her groundbreaking feature magazine articles. She has appeared on every major network, media outlet, and cable news show platform. Her work and advice have been endorsed by top writers, journalists, and business leaders.

A former Congressional Committee Investigative counsel and corporate lobbyist, Nelson left legal practice in 2007 to pursue her childhood passion to become a journalist. In 2008, she became a freelance reporter and White House correspondent for *JET* magazine and various other outlets.

She is now a noted TV and radio personality, as well as a highly sought-after motivational speaker and corporate leadership trainer for *Fortune 500* companies, nonprofits, and major universities. She contributes regularly to national media outlets.

Nelson is a lifelong, well-known black moderate Republican. However, what makes her unique is that she is very well respected in the black community and is viewed as a role model for women and girls around the globe.

She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She was the first White House Correspondent for the iconic *JET* Magazine in 2009-2012. She is also a corporate diversity champion award winner (2012), a Pulitzer Prize-nominated author in letters (2011), and she

receives over thirty paid speeches and corporate engagements per year. She is a true crossover writer in both her careers as a journalist and an author. She has a strong female base of support across racial, religious, and socio-economic lines.

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# William Owens

*“Marriage is an institution that benefits all of society; therefore every citizen has an interest in protecting marriage from brazen attacks.”*

William Owens is the president of the Coalition of African American Pastors, a grassroots movement of Christians who believe in traditional family values such as supporting the role of religion in American public life, protecting the lives of the unborn, and defending the sacred institution of marriage.

CAAP is not affiliated with any political party or religious denomination. It welcomes believers of all races and backgrounds to join with them as they work to encourage Christians everywhere to take a stand for their beliefs and convictions.

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# Star Parker

*"This country is about freedom. There's no substitute for the fruits of personal responsibility. Giving it up for the conceit of socialism is indeed a fatal mistake."*

Star Parker is the founder and president of CURE, the Center for Urban Renewal and Education, a 501(c)(3) non-profit think tank which promotes market-based public policy to fight poverty.

Before involvement in social activism, Star Parker had seven years of first-hand experience in the grip of welfare dependency. Now, as a social policy consultant, Star is bringing new energy to policy discussions on how to transition America's poor from government dependency.

She is a sought after expert on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC and for national radio, television, and print interviews.

Star has a BS degree in Marketing and Business from Woodbury University and has received numerous awards and commendations for her work on public policy issues. She consults with Republican legislators on numerous urban issues, has lectured on anti-poverty initiatives at more than 180 colleges and universities, and serves on the advisory boards for several national organizations.

Star Parker's personal transformation from welfare dependent to conservative crusader has been chronicled by ABC's *20/20*, Rush Limbaugh, *Reader's Digest*, James Dobson, *The 700 Club*, Dr. George Grant, *Christianity Today*, James Robison, *Newsmax*, *Charisma*, and *World Magazine*.

Other major accomplishments include speaking at the 1996 Republican National Convention, and hosting a documentary on poverty with the BBC in London. She has debated Jesse Jackson on various headline issues, fought for school choice on Larry King Live, defended welfare reform on the Oprah Winfrey Show, and debated healthcare reform against Michael Moore on ABC's *The View* with host Barbara Walters.

Currently, Star is a regular commentator on CNN, TBN, C-SPAN, CBN, and FOX News. Articles and quotes by Star continuously appear in major publications around the world. She has written several books including *Uncle Sam's Plantation* and *White Ghetto*.

In 2010, she ran for the Congressional seat for California's 37th District and was unanimously nominated by the Republican Party. Though she did not win, she more than doubled Republican votes in the district.

Today, in addition to heading CURE, Star is a syndicated columnist for Scripps News Service, offering weekly op-eds to more than 300 newspapers and internet news sites worldwide, including the *Boston Herald*, the *Dallas Morning News*, the *Orange County Register*, the *Korean Times*, the *Washington Examiner*, and the *Star and Stripes*,

which is the largest newspaper serving the men and women of our Armed Forces stateside and abroad.

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# James C. Perkins

*“God has equipped all of us to stand up to life's challenges. He has given all of us something to win with.”*

The Reverend Dr. James C. Perkins has served as pastor of Greater Christ Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, for thirty-three years. He was elected as the president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention in 2016. He received his Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio (1990 Samuel DeWitt Proctor Fellow). An internationally recognized minister, Dr. Perkins fulfills speaking engagements at churches, seminaries, and conferences across the United States and abroad.

He is the author of *Building Up Zion's Walls: Ministry for Empowering the African American Family* and *Playbook for Christian Manhood: 12 Key Plays for Black Teen Boys*. His other writings, as well as profiles of his ministry and details of his community activism, have been included in both secular and Christian publications such as *Black Enterprise*, *USA Today*, *Ebony*, *American Baptist*, *The African-American Pulpit*, several edited works published by Judson Press, and the best-selling *Success Runs in Our Race* by George Fraser.

Believing that the church has a responsibility to serve both the temporal as well as the spiritual needs of the surrounding

community, Dr. Perkins has established numerous enterprises that support that vision. In 1992, he founded the Fellowship Nonprofit Housing Corporation as a vehicle for community economic development. In the spring of 2006, Providence Place was constructed. This \$10 million development provides fifty single family homes for low and middle income families. Responding to the crisis he witnessed in the available educational options for young, urban African American males, Dr. Perkins founded the Benjamin E. Mays Male Academy in 1993. This kindergarten through sixth grade Christian school for boys operated for seventeen years and positively impacted the future of hundreds of males.

In addition, Dr. Perkins has served on numerous boards. He is a past President of the Michigan Progressive Baptist Convention and member of the Detroit Baptist Pastors Council, Detroit Chapter NAACP, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., board member of The Micro-Enterprise Fund, Steering Committee member of The Detroit Jobs Alliance, member of the board of the Detroit Conservancy, and member of the Board of Trustees of Wiley College in Marshall, TX.

He was also a recipient of the Ghandi, King, Ikeda Award, Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA; the Pastor of the Year Award, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; the Benjamin E. Mays Award, Howard University, Washington, D.C.; the Charles Andrew Hill Achievement Award, Michigan Progressive Baptist Convention; *Michigan Chronicle's* Pastor's Salute Award; Who's Who in Black Detroit (Inaugural Edition); and the Outstanding Church Leadership Award, American Baptist Churches of Michigan.

Dr. Perkins is married to Linda Adkins Perkins and is the father of

two daughters and the grandfather of one grandson.

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# Tyler Perry

*“It doesn't matter if a million people tell you what you can't do, or if ten million tell you no, if you get one yes from God that's all you need.”*

Writer, actor, producer, and director Tyler Perry has built an entertainment empire that consists of successful films, plays, and a best-selling book.

Tyler Perry was born September 13, 1969, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He had a difficult childhood, suffering years of abuse. In 1992, he directed, produced, and starred in the musical *I Know I've Been Changed*. His 2000 play, *I Can Do Bad All by Myself*, brought to life the character Madea, who would later appear in several successful films. Perry has also developed several television shows, including *House of Payne*, and acted in such films as *Gone Girl*.

Perry proved himself to be a box office powerhouse with the release of his debut film, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, starring Kimberly Elise as the scorned wife and Steve Harris as the adulterous husband. Perry appeared as three different characters in the film, including the legendary Madea. Eventually grossing more than \$50 million, the film's success showed Hollywood that there was a market for urban African-American comedies.

Perry's plays continued to make a successful leap to the big screen. He took on the leading role in *Madea's Family Reunion*, which he also directed and produced, which scored well with moviegoers bringing in more than \$63 million. Now a major media figure, Perry established his own movie and acting studio in Atlanta in 2003. He also launched his first television series, *House of Payne*, on the TBS cable network. Starring Cassi Davis and LaVan Davis, the sitcom featured a multigenerational African-American family.

Adding to his already dynamic career, Perry wrote the 2006 best-selling book, *Don't Make a Black Woman Take Off Her Earrings: Madea's Uninhibited Commentaries on Love and Life*. The book went on to win two Quill Awards—Book of the Year and Best in Humor.

On the small screen, Perry has launched several new series in recent years, including *Love Thy Neighbor*, *The Haves and the Have Nots*, *For Better or Worse*, *If Loving You Is Wrong*, and *Too Close to Home*. He has also enjoyed a thriving career as an actor. In addition to working on his own projects, Perry starred in the crime drama *Alex Cross* as the title character. He also had a supporting role in the thriller *Gone Girl* starring Ben Affleck.

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# Frank M. Reid III

Frank Madison Reid III is an internationally-known leader, a preeminent power speaker, a cutting-edge thinker, as well as a motivator who encourages and equips people to rebuild their broken lives and communities.

During his college years, Bishop Reid answered the call to ministry and preached his trial sermon in August of 1971 at Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, D.C. When he received his license to preach, he became the fifth generation of his family to become a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In September 1974, Bishop Reid began his studies at the Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1975, Bishop Reid took a sabbatical to travel to Monrovia, Liberia, in West Africa where he taught at Monrovia College and was co-pastor of the Historic Eliza Turner A.M.E. Church. He returned to Harvard in the fall of 1976 where he received his Master of Divinity Degree in 1978. Since 1978, Bishop Reid has served congregations in Charlotte, North Carolina, at Greater Bethel A.M.E. (1978-80); Los Angeles, California, at Ward A.M.E. Church (1980-88); and most recently in Baltimore, Maryland, at the historic Bethel A.M.E. Church. In the midst of a successful ministry, Bishop Reid became a part of the first class of Samuel DeWitt Proctor Doctoral Fellows at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He graduated with a Doctor of Ministry Degree in 1990.

Bishop Reid is a servant leader whose ministry of over thirty years

has been on the cutting edge of positive change.

During the 50th Quadrennial Session of the AME General Conference, Bishop Reid was elected and consecrated a Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bishop Reid is married to Supervisor Marlaa Hall Reid, a talented woman in her own right; they have been married for over thirty-three years. They are the parents of two daughters, Lady FranShon Reid-Barnes and Min. Faith Reid, and one son, Shane Reid.

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# Condoleezza Rice

*“The essence of America – that which really unites us — is not ethnicity, or nationality, or religion. It is an idea — and what an idea it is: That you can come from humble circumstances and do great things. That it doesn’t matter where you came from but where you are going.”*

Condoleezza Rice is the Denning Professor in Global Business and the Economy at the Stanford Graduate School of Business; the Thomas and Barbara Stephenson Senior Fellow on Public Policy at the Hoover Institution; and a professor of Political Science at Stanford University. She is also a founding partner of RiceHadleyGates, LLC.

From January 2005-2009, Rice served as the 66th Secretary of State of the United States, the second woman and first African American woman to hold the post. Rice also served as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (National Security Advisor) from January 2001-2005 under President George W. Bush, the first woman to hold that position.

Rice served as Stanford University’s Provost from 1993-1999, during which she was the institution's chief budget and academic officer. As Provost, she was responsible for a \$1.5 billion annual budget and the academic program involving 1,400 faculty members

and 14,000 students. In 1997, she also served on the Federal Advisory Committee on Gender-Integrated Training in the Military.

From 1989 through March 1991, Rice served on President George H.W. Bush's National Security Council staff. She served as Senior Director of Soviet and East European Affairs and Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. In 1986, while an international affairs fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations, Rice also served as Special Assistant to the Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

As professor of Political Science, Rice has been on the Stanford faculty since 1981 and has won two of the highest teaching honors—the 1984 Walter J. Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching and the 1993 School of Humanities and Sciences Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching.

She has authored and co-authored numerous books, including two bestsellers, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (2011) and *Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family* (2010); *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (1995) with Philip Zelikow; *The Gorbachev Era* (1986) with Alexander Dallin; and *Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army* (1984).

In 1991, Rice cofounded the Center for a New Generation (CNG), an innovative, after-school academic enrichment program for students in East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park, California. In 1996, CNG merged with the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula (an affiliate club of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America). CNG has

since expanded to local BGCA chapters in Birmingham, Atlanta, and Dallas. She remains an active proponent of an extended learning day through after-school programs.

Since 2009, Rice has served as a founding partner at RiceHadleyGates, LLC, an international strategic consulting firm based in Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C. The firm works with senior executives of major companies to implement strategic plans and expand in emerging markets. Other partners include former National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley and former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

Rice currently serves on the board of Dropbox, an online-storage technology company; C3, an energy software company; and Makena Capital, a private endowment firm. In addition, she is a member of the boards of the George W. Bush Institute, the Commonwealth Club, the Aspen Institute, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Previously, Rice served on various additional boards, including: KiOR, Inc., the Chevron Corporation, the Charles Schwab Corporation, the Transamerica Corporation, the Hewlett-Packard Company, the University of Notre Dame, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the San Francisco Symphony Board of Governors.

In 2013, Rice was appointed to the College Football Playoff Committee (CFPC), formerly the Bowl Championship Series (BCS).

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Rice earned her bachelor's degree in political science, cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, from the University of Denver; her master's from the University of Notre

Dame; and her Ph.D. from the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

Rice is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has been awarded eleven honorary doctorates. She currently resides in Stanford, California.

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# Kimberla Lawson Roby

*“Write something every single day. Figure out what your own style of writing is. Never, ever try to mimic another author. Really believe in your craft and in your story.”*

New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Kimberla Lawson Roby has published 24 novels which include *A Sinful Calling*, *Best Friends Forever*, *The Ultimate Betrayal*, *A Christmas Prayer*, *The Prodigal Son*, *A House Divided*, *The Perfect Marriage*, *The Reverend’s Wife*, *Secret Obsession*, *Love, Honor, and Betray*, *Be Careful What You Pray For*, *A Deep Dark Secret*, *The Best of Everything*, *One In A Million*, *Sin No More*, *Love & Lies*, *Changing Faces*, *The Best-kept Secret*, *Too Much of a Good Thing*, *A Taste of Reality*, *It’s a Thin Line*, *Casting the First Stone*, *Here and Now*, and her debut title, *Behind Closed Doors*, which was originally self-published through her own company, Lenox Press.

She has sold more than 2.7 million copies of her novels, and they have frequented numerous bestseller lists, including *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Essence Magazine*, *Upscale Magazine*, *AALBC.com*, Barnes and Noble, *Amazon.com*, *Wal-Mart*, *The Dallas Morning News*, and *The Austin Chronicle* to name a few. Both *Behind Closed Doors* and *Casting the First Stone* were #1 Blackboard bestsellers for four consecutive months in both 1997 and 2000. *Behind Closed Doors*

was the #1 Blackboard best-selling book for paperback fiction in 1997.

Kimberla is the 2013 NAACP Image Award Winner for Outstanding Literary Work – Fiction, the recipient of the 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2013 Author of the Year – Female award presented by the African-American Literary Award Show in New York; the recipient of the 2014 AAMBC Award for Female Author of the Year; the recipient of the Blackboard Fiction Book of the Year Award in 2001 for  *Casting the First Stone* ; the recipient of the 1998 First-Time Author Award from Chicago’s Black History Month Book Fair and Conference; and in 2001, Kimberla was inducted into the Rock Valley College Alumni Hall of Fame (Rockford, IL).

Kimberla’s novels deal with very real issues, including corruption within the church, drug addiction, gambling addiction, infidelity, social status, single motherhood, breast cancer, infertility, sibling rivalry and jealousy, domestic violence, sexual abuse, mental illness, care-giving of a parent, racial and gender discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment, and overweight issues to name a few.

Kimberla resides in Illinois with her husband, Will.

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Facebook: [facebook.com/KimberlaLawsonRoby](https://www.facebook.com/KimberlaLawsonRoby)

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# Tim Scott

*“The future of the Republican Party and the future of America is based on a values system and the issues that drive those values are on our side.”*

Growing up poor in a single parent household in North Charleston, South Carolina, Tim learned the importance of faith, hard work, and living within your means. By understanding the basic economic principles Washington so often forgets, and with the same determination he brings to advancing conservative principles in the Senate, Scott grew from his humble beginnings to build one of the most successful Allstate agencies in South Carolina.

An unbridled optimist, Senator Scott believes that despite our current challenges, our nation’s brightest days are ahead of us. As a teenager, Tim had the fortune of meeting a strong, conservative mentor, John Moniz. Moniz helped instill in Tim the notion that you can think your way out of poverty, and that the golden opportunity is always right around the corner. The American Dream is alive and well, and Tim’s story is a concrete example of that.

Senator Scott was sworn in to the U.S. Senate in January 2013. He has launched his Opportunity Agenda, a new way forward including robust initiatives that give students and workers the greatest chance to succeed. Tim knows that success is created in studio apartments and garages, at kitchen tables, and in classrooms across the nation—

not in government conference rooms in Washington.

His agenda aims to empower Americans through economic freedom and high-quality education. Senator Scott will work with anyone else committed to building a better future to develop bold ideas that break away from our past failures. This includes tax reform to increase economic freedom, expanding school choice so every child has a chance at a quality education, and providing alternatives for single parents to work their forty hours a week by allowing for wider use of comp time.

Senator Scott is also working to find ways to help redevelop poorer areas without pushing current residents out, bring down energy costs that consume a quarter of after-tax income for families making \$30,000 or less, help young offenders and those aging out of the foster care system to receive the vital opportunity for education, and ensure kids who want to attend college can do so without incurring debilitating debt.

Tim also continues his work to get the nation's spending under control, and has opposed measures he believes do not go far enough. In his first hundred days as a Senator, he worked with colleagues to introduce a Balanced Budget Amendment, and was an original cosponsor on a bill to permanently ban the wasteful earmarking process.

Prior to being sworn in to the Senate, Senator Scott served in the United States House of Representatives from 2011-2013, where he was a member of House leadership and sat on the influential House Rules Committee. Tim also served on the Charleston County

Council for thirteen years, including four terms as Chair and in the South Carolina House of Representatives for two years where he was elected Chairman of the Freshman Caucus and House Whip. He was the owner of Tim Scott Allstate and partner of Pathway Real Estate Group.

Website: [scott.senate.gov](http://scott.senate.gov)

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# Julius R. Scruggs

*“Some churches don't know how to minister (in their communities) and rather stay inside the walls and praise God and take care of their own facilities. They don't see their responsibility as reaching out to the community...”*

Julius Richard Scruggs was born in Elkton, TN, to Reverend and Mrs. Earl Scruggs, Sr., and reared in Toney, AL. He is a graduate of Council Training High School in Huntsville, AL. After earning his Bachelor of Arts degree at American Baptist College in Nashville, TN, he also completed requirements for the Master of Divinity (M. Div.) and Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) degrees at Vanderbilt University School of Divinity in Nashville, TN.

His pastoral experience began at age eighteen at Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church (Harvest, AL) where he served 1960-1965. From 1965-1972, he pastored the Mt. Ararat Baptist Church (Nashville, TN). He continued to follow the Holy Spirit's call and pastored the Antioch Baptist Church (East Chicago, IN) from 1972 to 1977. Since January 1977, he has been the shepherd of God's people at First Missionary Baptist Church in Huntsville.

Dr. Scruggs has authored four books: *Meditations on the Church*, *Baptist Preachers with Social Consciousness: A Comparative Study of Martin Luther King Jr.*, and *Harry Fosdick, God is Faithful* and

*How to Study and Teach the Bible.*

He is a man of deep social consciousness, which is apparent in his contributions to religious and community causes. He is a member of the Board of Trustees at American Baptist College, former board member of Selma University and former President of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention (President Emeritus). Locally, he is a former member of the Huntsville Human Relations Commission; member and former president of the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship (GHIMF); and provides advisory support to a wide range of community movements.

On September 9, 1999, Dr. Scruggs was elected Vice President-at-Large of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. As a part of the leadership team, he has helped to bring vision, integrity, structure, and accountability to the largest African American church organization in the nation. He served as President of the National Baptist Convention from 2009 to 2014.

His accomplishments have been recognized in "Who's Who in Religion," "Outstanding Young Men in America," and "Personalities in America Hall of Fame." Additionally, he is the 1998 recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Award presented by GHIMF and a recipient of the Alpha Phi Alpha Award.

Dr. Scruggs is a much sought-after minister for his biblically-based, doctrinally-sound, and life-centered preaching and teaching. His servant-leadership style and his personal integrity have molded and

shaped the thrust of First Missionary Baptist Church's Christian Education emphasis, outreach ministry, stewardship commitment, physical growth, and spiritual maturity.

During his more than thirty years in the pastorate at First Baptist, he has led the church in giving to Home and Foreign Mission causes annually. The church has built and paid for two houses in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, allocated funds annually to the program, and members of the church have assisted in building twelve other Habitat homes.

But, even more significant than Dr. Scruggs' many pastoral accomplishments and academic credentials, is his genuine love for the people of God. He is a "tender shepherd" who takes his calling seriously.

He is married to the former Josephine Stewart Tipton and they are the proud parents of a daughter, Jennifer Juliette Scruggs, and a son, Rev. Morris E. (Marty) Tipton II. They have three grandchildren: Morris E. Tipton III, Morgan Taylor Tipton, and Elizabeth Francina Scruggs.

Website: [fmbc.org](http://fmbc.org)

# John Sentamu

*“The Gospel offers forgiveness for the past, new life for the present, and hope for the future.”*

John Tucker Mugabi Sentamu was born into Uganda's Buffalo clan on June 10, 1949. He is the sixth of thirteen children. Encouraged in his education by English missionaries and teachers, he graduated in law from Makerere University, Kampala, and is an Advocate of the High Court of Uganda. He practised Law both at the Bar and at the Bench before he went to the UK in 1974.

He read theology at Selwyn College Cambridge where he gained a Masters Degree and a Doctorate. He trained for ordination at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, then part of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges. Following his ordination in 1979, he served as Assistant Chaplain at Selwyn College, Cambridge. From 1979-1982, he was Chaplain at HM Remand Centre Latchmere House and Curate of St Andrew's, Ham in the Diocese of Southwark.

From 1982-1983, he was Curate of St Paul's Church, Herne Hill, in South London and, from 1983-1984, Priest-in-Charge at Holy Trinity, Tulse Hill, and Parish Priest of St Matthias Upper Tulse Hill. He then became Vicar of the joint benefice of Holy Trinity and St Matthias from 1984-1986. Between 1987 and 1989 he was also Priest-in-Charge of St. Saviour Brixton Hill.

He was appointed Bishop for Stepney in 1996, Bishop for Birmingham in 2002 and Archbishop of York in 2005. He is Primate of England and Metropolitan, a member of the House of Lords and a Privy Councillor.

From 1997 to 1999, Dr Sentamu was Adviser to the Stephen Lawrence Judicial Inquiry, and he chaired the Damilola Taylor Murder Review, 2002. He chaired the NHS Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Screening Programme from 2001 to November 2013. He supported and advised workers affected by the closure of the Rover car plant in Birmingham and campaigned against guns, knives, drugs, and gangs throughout the Midlands, after the killings of Charlene Ellis and Letisha Shakespeare and worked hard to ensure that their killers are brought to trial.

Between 2002 and 2004, he was Chairman of the EC1 New Deal. He became President of Youth for Christ in 2004 and President of the YMCA in April 2005. In 2009, the Archbishop set up his Youth Trust and also launched his online charity Acts435. In 2013, Dr John Sentamu chaired an independent Commission on the future of the Living Wage; this followed from his work as Sponsor of the Fairness Commission in York.

Dr. Sentamu is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. His interests include music, cooking, reading, athletics, rugby, and football. He is married to Margaret, and they have two grown children, Grace and Geoffrey, and two grown-up foster children.

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# William J. Shaw

*“He [William Shaw] attempts, whether through sermons or through general conversation, to make us reach higher, not to accept something that is less than what we are capable of doing.” (Oteria G. Trapp to the Washington Post)*

William J. Shaw was born in Marshall, Texas, the youngest of six children. At a young age, he dedicated his life to serving God. He was baptized at age seven and preached his trial sermon by age eleven. Growing in faith, he served as supply pastor to his home church at the age of fifteen and was ordained as Pastor of the Oak Hill Baptist Church in Harrison County, Texas at seventeen.

He attended Bishop College graduating Summa cum laude at age nineteen with a major in Philosophy and Religion and a minor in World History. Dr. Shaw received his Bachelor of Divinity Degree (now known as the Master of Divinity) from Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1957. He earned a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York in 1975 with an emphasis on Biblical Interpretation from the Black Perspective. A Doctor of Humane Letters was conferred upon him in 2000 from Barber-Scotia College in Concord, North Carolina.

Dr. Shaw was called to serve as Pastor of the White Rock Baptist Church in Philadelphia in 1956. He considers his work as Pastor his highest calling. He has led White Rock through a period of strong growth with the establishment of several outreach ministries, including a science and math after school program, and a substance abuse ministry.

In addition to his work as Pastor of the White Rock Baptist Church, Dr. Shaw is a recognized leader in Pennsylvania and across the nation. He serves as Chairman of the Trustee Board for the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and is a member ex officio on the Board of Penn Medicine. His other civic affiliations include a seat on the Board of Directors of Junior Achievement of Delaware Valley, Inc., and membership in the Philadelphia Rotary; Martin Luther King, Jr., Fellows in Black Church Studies; Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, and the Airport Advisory Board. Dr. Shaw has also served as Executive Director of the Opportunities Industrialization Center.

Dr. Shaw has been a religious leader on the local, state, and national levels. He served as President of the Pennsylvania Baptist State Convention, Inc.. Dr. Shaw has also served as President of The Baptist Ministers' Conference of Philadelphia and Vicinity, The Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia, and Union Theological Seminary National Alumni Association. From 1981 through 1994, Dr. Shaw served as Director of the Ministers' Division of the National Congress of Christian Education. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including most recently, the Unitas Award, given by the Alumni Association of the Union Theological Seminary, and the T. B. Maston Foundation Christian

Ethics Award from the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

On September 9, 1999, Dr. Shaw was elected the sixteenth President of The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. During his first term, he led the Convention to become a more Christ-centered body. With Dr. Shaw's focus on Vision, Integrity, Structure, and Accountability (VISA), the convention reached several milestones including burning the mortgage on the Baptist World Center, paying more than \$1.125 million dollars of inherited debt, implementing a retirement plan for pastors and church workers, establishing fiscal accountability, and increasing the role of technology in the Convention. Dr. Shaw was re-elected to the Convention presidency in September 2004. He completed his second term as President of the Convention in 2009.

In 2009, President Barack Obama appointed Dr. Shaw to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and, in 2010, appointed him as a Commissioner on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. Dr. Shaw was reappointed by President Barack Obama in 2013 to serve a second term as a Commissioner on the USCIRF Committee.

Dr. Shaw is married to Camellia L. Shaw. They are parents to one son—Timothy, grandparents to two granddaughters—Lillian and Brittany, and great-grandparents to two great-granddaughters—Zanaira and Nyela.



# Priscilla Shirer

*“We pray because our own solutions don’t work and because prayer deploys, activates, and fortifies us against the attacks of the enemy. We pray because we’re serious about taking back the ground he has sought to take from us.”*

Priscilla Shirer is a wife and mom first. But put a Bible in her hand and a message in her heart and you’ll see why thousands flock to her conferences and dive into her Bible study series each year.

A graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, Priscilla holds a Master’s degree in Biblical Studies and loves nothing more than to serve her sisters in Christ through the teaching of God’s Word. She considers it a privilege to serve believers from every denomination and culture by helping them to know the truths of Scripture intellectually and by encouraging them to experience these truths practically by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to Priscilla’s participation in many church and para-church conferences across the globe each year, Going Beyond Ministries hosts AWAKEN—an outreach event designed to encourage and mobilize women locally. This free gathering brings together thousands of women from different denominations and backgrounds several times a year for an opportunity to not only hear the Word but to live it out in practical ways.

The ministry also equips believers with Bible study resources by partnering with LifeWay Christian resources. Priscilla has authored ten video-driven studies on a myriad of Biblical characters and topics including Jonah, Gideon, the Exodus, discerning God’s voice and *The Armor of God*.

Priscilla has published numerous books including *Discerning the Voice of God*, *God is Able*, and two *New York Times* Bestsellers – *The Resolution for Women* and *Fervent: A Woman’s Battle Plan for Serious, Specific, and Strategic Prayer*. With her latest project, she has ventured into the world of children’s publishing with *The Prince Warriors*, a fiction trilogy adventure series designed to arm tweens for victory in spiritual warfare.

Priscilla has been married to Jerry for seventeen years. Between studying and writing, she spends most of her time cleaning up after (and trying to satisfy the appetites of) their three growing boys—Jackson, Jerry Jr., and Jude.

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# Michelle Singletary

*"Why are so many of us penny poor before our next paycheck comes? We're not good stewards of our money. It's crucial to save for what you say you value."*

Michelle Singletary is a nationally syndicated columnist for *The Washington Post*. Her award-winning column, "The Color of Money," is carried in more than 100 newspapers across the country including the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Miami Herald*, *Boston Globe*, *Tampa Tribune* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

In 2003, she published her first book, *7 Money Mantras For A Richer Life: How To Live Well With The Money You Have*. The paperback was retitled *Spend Well, Live Rich*.

Her second book, *Your Money and Your Man: How You and Prince Charming Can Spend Well and Live Rich* was released in January 2006, also published by Random House. Her third book, *The Power to Prosper: 21 Days to Financial Freedom*, was released in January 2010 by Zondervan, a HarperCollins company.

In January 2006, Singletary launched her first national television program *Singletary Says* on TV One, owned by Radio One and Comcast. *Singletary Says* is a half hour personal finance reality

show in which Singletary visits people in their homes to help resolve various financial issues. Following her second season, she hosted a personal finance special for TV One, "Real Estate Realities: When the Boom Goes Bust." The special, which aired in 2008, focused on how the real estate crisis impacted the African-American community.

Singletary was a regular personal finance contributor for National Public Radio's afternoon program *Day To Day*. Although NPR eliminated the program for budgetary reasons, Singletary can still be heard on various NPR shows including *All Things Considered*, *Talk of the Nation*, and *Tell Me More*. She is an AOL money coach having produced a series of workshops on love and money.

She is frequently asked to appear on local and national radio programs including the *Diane Rehm Show* and *The Yolanda Adams Morning Show*. She has appeared on all three major networks, NBC, ABC and CBS. She has prepared personal finance segments for local and national news programs, and for a number of network and nationally syndicated programs, including *Oprah*, NBC's *Today Show*, *The Early Show* on CBS, *Nightline*, CNN, *The View*, and *Tavis Smiley* on PBS. She has appeared on *Meet The Press* and other national news programs, including CNN. In 2000, she was recruited as a regular contributor to do live financial segments for MSNBC.

For nearly a decade, Singletary was also a regular contributor on Howard University's evening news radio program, *Insight*. During the 1997-1998 television season, Singletary was a regular correspondent on BET's *Real Business*. She has filled in for

nationally syndicated radio host Clark Howard on his local program on the top-rated News-Talk 750 WSB in Atlanta.

Singletary is frequently requested to be a keynote speaker. She has given workshops or presentations for Georgetown University, *Essence*, and Simmons College School of Management in Boston. She has also conducted personal finance workshops for the National Football League's annual Rookie Symposium for incoming freshman players. In the religious community, she has been invited to speak numerous times at her home church, First Baptist Church of Glenarden under the leadership of Pastor John K. Jenkins Sr. In her spare time, Singletary is the director of "Prosperity Partners Ministry," a program she founded at her church. Once a month, Singletary conducts a workshop for the ministry group on topics that range from tithing, to developing a budget, to getting out of debt.

In 2009, she was selected to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award from Johns Hopkins University. She also received the 2009 Matrix Award for Professional Achievements from The Association for Women in Communications.

Just a year after starting her column, *The Washington Post* nominated it for a Pulitzer Prize. Most recently, her column won a prestigious award from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers. She won Best in Business for a series of columns that ran in 2007. The judges wrote: "Michelle Singletary's work illustrates a range of writing that's both approachable and explanatory." "The Color of Money" has placed first in the major newspaper category of the ICI Education Foundation/American

University awards for Excellence in Personal Finance Reporting. The column also earned a first place for business writing from the National Association of Black Journalists.

Before going to the *Post*, Singletary was a business reporter for the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, where she also covered police, religion, politics, and zoning. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland at College Park and Johns Hopkins University, where she earned a master's degree in business and management. Singletary and her husband reside in Maryland with their three children.

Website: [michellesingletary.com](http://michellesingletary.com)

## **E. Dewey Smith**

*“If you'll stay SMALL enough LONG enough GOD will make you  
BIG enough SOON enough!”*

Dr. E. Dewey Smith is the Senior Pastor/Teacher of The House of Hope Atlanta and The House of Hope Macon in Georgia—one church in two locations—with a membership roll of more than 15,000. A proud native of Macon, GA, he has been a minister of the Gospel for more than twenty-five years. He commenced his preaching ministry at age seventeen and his pastoral ministry at age nineteen. God has highly favored Dr. Smith by allowing explosive growth and outreach to accompany his ministry. His first congregation in Macon, Georgia, Beulahland, grew from 48 to over 3,000 people in thirteen years. Since 2004, he has served as the Senior Pastor/Teacher of The House of Hope Atlanta and was blessed to expand his ministry with the launch of The House of Hope Macon in January 2015. The ministry grew again with the launch of The House of Hope South Pointe in 2016.

Dr. Smith is the co-host of *The Preachers*, the ground-breaking talk show that premiered on FOX stations in July 2016. Executively produced by some of Hollywood's most renowned producers, the show marks a historic moment in American television as the first faith-based, daytime talk show to air on a major network. *The Preachers* is Smith's latest foray into television. He is the recipient

of the 2015 “Programmer of the Year” Allen Award, received for his television program, *Living Hope*. The show is broadcast weekly on The Word Network which has a reach in the United States alone of 86 million households. His television broadcasts and media ministries have an international reach and are viewed by millions around the world. Dr. Smith has also been writing and producing film, mini-movies, and other visual media for nearly twenty years. His media productions are widely acclaimed internationally.

Smith is a learned man—with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Morehouse College, in Atlanta, GA. He graduated Magna Cum Laude with his Master of Science degree from Southern Christian University in Montgomery, AL, and earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Additionally, he was inducted into the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Board of Preachers at Morehouse College as a “Distinguished Preacher.” Dr. Smith has served on the Board of Directors for the Morehouse School of Religion as well as the Board of Directors for the United Theological Seminary and Bible College of Monroe, LA.

He is an author of theological articles and books. Dr. Smith’s works have been included in publications such as *The African American Pulpit Journal*, and his most recent book, *A God Dream*, is considered a literary gem. Dr. Smith is a musician, producer, and songwriter. He was the Executive Producer for The Hope Mass Choir’s *Live at the Cathedral* project and also released his single, “I’m A Christian Man.”

A personable and humble man, Dr. Smith has been honored to share in ministry across the world. He has served as the keynote speaker

on some of today's most renowned platforms and has had the opportunity to address key topics that impact the lives and livelihoods of others. Smith is intentional in his efforts to minister to five generations and his ministry impacts persons from all socioeconomic classes. Counted among those inspired by his message of HOPE are students, educators, doctors, professional NBA/NFL athletes, Gospel and R&B artists, Hollywood actors and other celebrities.

Dr. Smith is married to the lovely former Andrea Fambro, his best friend of over twenty years. They have been blessed with two sons: Kamari Elijah and Kylene Isaiah.

Website: [edeweysmith.org](http://edeweysmith.org)

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Twitter: [@edeweysmith](https://twitter.com/edeweysmith)

# DeForest B. Soaries, Jr.

*"Consumer debt grips millions of people with plastic shackles every bit as powerful as the iron chains that once bound slaves."*

Dr. DeForest B. Soaries, Jr., is the Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset, New Jersey. His pastoral ministry focuses on spiritual growth, educational excellence, economic empowerment, and faith-based community development.

He is the author of *dfree™ Breaking Free from Financial Slavery*, which was published in February 2011 by Zondervan. *dfree®* is based on Dr. Soaries' strategy, which uses a four-prong approach to teach people how to be debt free. It is his goal for his 7,000-member congregation to be debt free. A *dfree®* lifestyle means living without debt, deficits, and delinquencies. The *dfree®* strategy, established in 2005, is available to churches, credit unions, and colleges and universities across America.

*dfree®* was also the focus of the third installment of CNN's *Black in America* documentary "Almighty Debt," which aired Oct. 21, 2010. The 90-minute cable-news feature highlighted three families at First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens who were facing tough financial times as a result of the recession, from home foreclosure to underemployment and the struggles associated with paying for

college.

Nearly a year after dfree® was featured on CNN, Soaries announced the Billion Dollar Challenge on Oct. 7, 2011. The Billion Dollar Challenge is a grassroots campaign that challenges people to pay off their debt. His goal is to get 125,000 people to pay off \$1 billion in debt in three years. Participants are able to track their debt payments through an online tool on his dfree® website. Soaries has also launched a multi-city campaign to spread the word about the Challenge.

In addition to helping people to live dfree®, Dr. Soaries is known for being an active agent for change. He served as the mediator and facilitator in the meeting between Don Imus and the Rutgers women's basketball team on April 12, 2007, after the radio talk show host used racially insensitive language to describe the Scarlet Knights.

His experience in creating change stems from his youth. As a college student, Dr. Soaries led a campaign against drug use on campus that resulted in his being kidnapped at gunpoint from his dormitory room by drug dealers. He later worked on civil rights issues for the Urban League as a community organizer and Operation PUSH as the national coordinator.

His roles during and after college eventually led to historic and noteworthy government positions. From Jan. 12, 1999, to Jan. 15, 2002, Dr. Soaries served as New Jersey's 30th Secretary of State making him the first African-American male to serve as a

constitutional officer of the state. In this position, he managed one of the premier departments of state government and served as a senior advisor to the governor on issues that transcended traditional departmental lines.

Dr. Soaries is also the former chairman of the United States Election Assistance Commission. This commission was established by Congress to implement the "Help America Vote Act" of 2002. Dr. Soaries was appointed by the President of the United States on Dec. 15, 2003, after being confirmed by the United States Senate. He was elected chairman of the commission on Jan. 5, 2004, at the first meeting of the four-member bi-partisan commission. In November 2004, this commission was the first federal agency to oversee a Presidential election.

Dr. Soaries is a popular speaker at colleges, universities, conferences, and churches around the world, as well as a frequent advisor to major corporations in the areas of diversity, philanthropy, and community relations. He is also special advisor to His Majesty the Okyenhene (King) of the Akyem Abuaka Traditional Kingdom in Ghana, Osageyfu Amotia Ofori Panin II.

Dr. Soaries earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Fordham University, a Master of Divinity Degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry Degree from United Theological Seminary. He has also received six honorary Doctorate degrees from institutions of higher learning.

He was recently recognized by both houses of the New Jersey

Legislature for his religious and community leadership. His work has been featured in several publications including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Ebony Magazine*, *Black Enterprise*, and *Government Executive Magazine*.

Born in New York and raised in New Jersey, Dr. Soaries resides in Monmouth Junction, New Jersey, with his wife, Donna, and twin sons, Malcolm and Martin.

Website: [fbcsomerset.com](http://fbcsomerset.com) | [mydfree.org](http://mydfree.org)

# Jordin Sparks

*“Love is like the wind. You may not see it, but you can feel it.”*

Jordin Sparks may have been the youngest American Idol when she won the title on the reality show's sixth season, but the Glendale, Arizona, resident had already packed plenty of accomplishments into seventeen years. The daughter of Phillippi Sparks, former left cornerback for the Dallas Cowboys and former defensive back for the New York Giants, Sparks had no formal vocal training, but showed a flair for singing while still a toddler and was drawn to performing of all kinds at an early age. By her early teens, Sparks was singing, acting in plays, and modeling, and already winning acclaim for her talents. Along with performing with Alice Cooper and Michael W. Smith, she was Coca-Cola's Rising Star in 2002 and made her recording debut with 2003's *For Now* EP with CCM artist Matthew Ward and engineer Gary Leach. The following year, she won two awards at the 2004 Gospel Music Association Academy, placed second overall in that year's *Music in the Rockies* competition, and appeared on *America's Most Talented Kids* twice. In 2006, she won a plus-size model search held by the Torrid clothing line and appeared in an ad for Torrid in the December issue of *Seventeen* magazine.

That year, Sparks also auditioned for American Idol, performing in the Los Angeles tryouts. While she didn't make the cut, she later

won the American Idol-affiliated contest Arizona Idol, which allowed her to audition again for the show in Seattle. She made it through to Hollywood on the strength of her rendition of Celine Dion's "Because You Loved Me" and found a place among the twelve American Idol finalists early in 2007. Her performances of songs such as "I (Who Have Nothing)" and "Hey Baby" showed her charm and versatility, and soon made her a fan favorite. Like fellow American Idols Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood, and Taylor Hicks, Sparks was never in the bottom two or three performers throughout the entire competition. Ultimately, Sparks beat out Blake Lewis and Melinda Doolittle to become the sixth American Idol on May 23, 2007. Her debut single, "This Is My Now," was released soon after the show's May finale, and Sparks spent that summer appearing on the American Idol tour.

She also began working on material for her album, reteaming with Leach on songs that were previewed on her website. The single "Tattoo" preceded her self-titled debut album, which arrived in time for the 2007 holiday season. It also spawned the 2008 hit, "No Air," which featured Chris Brown and peaked at number three on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. Sparks returned in summer 2009 with *Battlefield*, which was heralded by its namesake single and helped provide the "spark" for her first headlining tour of the U.S. Sparks spent the next five years concentrating on television work, film music, and appearing on compilations, but in 2015 she ended the hiatus on her solo career with a new studio LP, *Right Here Right Now*, which was issued via her new joint label deal with Louder Than Life/RAL.

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# Mavis Staples

*"The devil ain't got no music. All music is God's music."*

Mavis Staples is best known for her extensive gospel career with the Staples Singers.

Mavis Staples was born July 10, 1939, in Chicago, Illinois. She began singing with her family, The Staple Singers, at local Chicago churches before signing with the gospel label Vee-Jay Records in 1953. The family put on a concert in Montgomery, Alabama, which Martin Luther King Jr. was attending. The group later had a number of soul hits and a No. 1 pop song with *Let's Do It Again* from the film soundtrack of the same name. Mavis has also established a solo career while working with a range of artists, from Prince to Natalie Merchant.

In 1953, the Staple Singers dropped their first single, "These They Are," under the Royal label. The following year, the group released the song "Sit Down Servant" on United, based in Chicago. Then in 1957, having signed with Vee-Jay Records, the Staple Singers scored their first major hit with "Uncloudy Day," with Staples' shockingly mature vocals reaching national audiences.

"I was a skinny little knock-kneed girl with a big voice that comes from my mother's side," she remembered. "Deejays would

announce, 'This is little 15-year-old Mavis singing' and people would say it's gotta either be a man or a big lady. People were betting that I was not a little girl."

The Staple Singers toured the country and developed an impressive grassroots following, but they limited their concerts to weekends until Staples graduated from high school in 1957. They recorded two more national hits in the late 1950s: "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" and "This May Be the Last Time," a song later adapted by The Rolling Stones.

Beginning with her 1969 self-titled debut solo album, Mavis Staples also maintained a solo career simultaneously while she worked with the Staple Singers. And while she released eight solo albums during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, all of which received high praise from critics, none of her solo material found much of an audience.

That pattern finally changed with Staples' 2004 album *Have a Little Faith*, her first release following the death of her father in 2000. *Have a Little Faith* received rave reviews, paving the way for Staples to achieve a late career renaissance with the albums, *We'll Never Turn Back* (2007) and *Live: Hope at the Hideout* (2008). Her most recent album, 2010's *You Are Not Alone*, won the Grammy Award for Best Americana Album.

In December 2016, Staples and her contribution to the music industry were celebrated at the 39th Kennedy Center Honors.

Mavis Staples will doubtlessly go down in history as one of the greatest gospel singers of all time, the breathtaking voice powering

one of America's great family bands, The Staple Singers. From the traditional gospel music of the 1950s to the 1960s protest songs that underscored some of the decade's most dramatic social changes, from the self-empowerment anthems of the 1970s to the soulful love tunes and mature Americana of more recent years, Staples and her family have consistently created some of the best and most inspirational music of the past half-century.

And although Staples is now more than seventy years old, she has no intention of giving up the calling that has consumed her since she was a child. "Ain't no stopping me, I will sing," Staples declared in a recent interview. "You know, you'd have to come and scoop me off the stage. I'm gonna sing till I die."

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# Sandra Steen

*"What is God's will for YOUR life? Find it, do it, otherwise you'll live in frustration, competing and comparing yourself with others."*

Sandra Steen frequently begins her training and motivational messages with this question: Are you ready for breakthrough and change? Inspiration and personal growth? How about abundant and joy-filled living? Are you ready for the you that you were created to be?

Then you are ready for Sandra Steen—one of the world's most prolific and well-respected inspirational speakers. Sandra is passionate about life and the joy that it holds.

She believes that each person has a specific purpose that must be cultivated in order to fulfill their destiny. Sandra's personal wisdom offers a unique and motivating message that is sure to cause the individual to realize their value and significance.

As the Founder and CEO of Sandra Steen Consulting, LLC, an internationally acclaimed speaking, training and consulting firm, Sandra is established as a powerful expert in the areas of Inspiration and Motivation, Sales and Customer Service, Communication and Leadership, and Diversity in the workplace.

Sandra is the recipient of various accolades and awards for outstanding contributions in corporate America including: Entrepreneurial Spirit Award, Women of Enterprise Award, Finalist: Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Texas Woman to Watch, International Firm of the Year, and the African American Business Professional Service Award.

More than 500,000 people have attended her training workshops and keynote presentations on such topics as: Who Stole My Joy?, Finding The Joyous You, Mission P.O.S.S.I.B.L.E., Finding Your Place Called There, Coaching the Coach, Teambuilding & Communication, Diversity: The Power of Identity, and Communication and Leadership.

Working with such organizations as Sony, AT&T, SBC, JCPenney, USAA, Sea World, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Proctor & Gamble, Credicard of Brazil, the San Antonio Spurs, and many others, has established Sandra Steen as a cornerstone in the training and development industry. Whether corporate training, organizational retreats, or executive coaching, Sandra has a timely message for you and your team.

Sandra's personal philosophy says that corporate America must embrace both the corporate purpose as well as the individual purpose. When organizations choose to impact individual lives, change is not only inspired but also inhabited.

Sandra Steen's expert presentations are sure to inspire, challenge, and change the lives of those in her audiences. Her purpose-driven

messages provide a rare blend of bold energy, incredible enthusiasm, and life-changing information.

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# Stephen J. Thurston

Rev. Stephen John Thurston was born July 20, 1952, in Chicago, Illinois. The second child of the late Rev. John and Ruth Hall Thurston, his ministry represents the third generation of Thurston men to not only preach the gospel, but to also pastor the great New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church.

The Reverend Stephen John Thurston was elected in September of 2003 as the 14th President of the National Baptist Convention of America, Incorporated. Prior to his election, he served as 3rd Vice President for fifteen years. At the age of 37, he was appointed as 3rd Vice-President by then President E. Edward Jones, Sr. President Thurston holds the blessed distinction of being the youngest Vice President and the youngest president in the history of NBCA, Inc.

He is a product of the Chicago Public School system. The educational pursuits of Pastor Thurston led him to Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, where his college matriculation culminated in a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religion in 1975. His post-graduate studies have included coursework at Wheaton Christian College in Wheaton, Illinois.

Possessing strong family values, Rev. Thurston married the former Joyce D. Hand in the summer of 1977. To this union, four children were born: Stephen John II, Nicole D’Vaughn, Teniece Rael, and Christon Avery Elijah.

On Easter Sunday in 1971, he preached his initial sermon after having acknowledged his calling by God. On Easter Sunday in 1974, he was ordained and appointed as Assistant Pastor of New Covenant. On Easter Sunday in 1975, he was appointed Co-Pastor. Upon the death of his father in 1979, he became Pastor of the New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church.

Pastor Thurston is a very active and dedicated preacher. He is a renowned and much sought-after revivalist. His ministry has impacted the lives of people as far away as Africa, the Holy Land, and the Caribbean.

Prior to being elected president, Rev. Thurston served as 3rd Vice President of the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.; President of the Illinois National Baptist State Convention; Chairman of Finance for the Chicago Baptist Institute; and member of the Broadcast Ministers Alliance of Chicago and Vicinity.

President Stephen John Thurston's testimony remains: "God Has Done Great Things."

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# Cindy Trimm

*"You can take control of your life and experience divine success and prosperity by following God's direction outlined in His Word."*

Dr. Cindy Trimm has dedicated her life to serving God and humanity. A best-selling author, high impact teacher, and former senator, Dr. Trimm is a sought-after empowerment specialist, revolutionary thinker, and transformational leader. She has earned a distinguished reputation as a catalyst for change and voice of hope to the nations.

Dr. Trimm travels worldwide partnering with social, spiritual, and civic leaders in an effort to equip people everywhere to discover purpose, maximize potential, and leave a positive footprint through their lives. Viewing this world as a global village, she continues to initiate strategic interdisciplinary forums, as well as host conferences and summits designed to develop practical solutions toward the healing of our world from its deeply rooted social and spiritual ills.

Best-selling books by Dr. Trimm include: *Commanding Your Morning*, *Rules of Engagement*, and *The Art of War for Spiritual Battle*, which have sold over one million copies.

Dr. Trimm combines her wealth of leadership expertise with her depth of spiritual understanding to reveal life-transforming messages that empower and inspire. Seasoned with humor, compassion, revelatory insight, and personal candor, Dr. Trimm opens minds and touches hearts with biblically-based principles of inner healing and personal empowerment.

Pulling on her background in government, education, psychology, and human development, Dr. Trimm translates hard-hitting spiritual insights into everyday language that empowers individuals to transform their lives.

Cindy Trimm has become recognized as a leading empowerment strategist in her capacity as a cultural change agent—an empowerment specialist in her work as a personal coach and business consultant—and an empowerment intellect in her ability to research, synthesize, and convey profound truths that restore minds and transform lives.

Dr. Trimm is dedicated to shattering the paradigms that hold human souls captive—empowering people everywhere to break free from the social, psychological, and physical limitations caused by toxic belief systems.

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# Kenneth Ulmer

*“Carrying a bigger Bible, putting a bigger bumper sticker on the back of your car, and hollering a little louder during praise and worship may get you seen and heard, but it won't get you any closer to God. If your Sunday-go-to-meetin' conduct doesn't carry over into your Monday through Saturday, it's only a parody of true godliness.”*

"Passionately pursuing God's will and wisdom." These words best describe the life of Dr. Kenneth C. Ulmer.

Dr. Ulmer serves as the senior pastor-teacher of Faithful Central Bible Church in Inglewood, California. Under Dr. Ulmer's steady leadership, Faithful Central Bible Church has grown from 350 people to more than 13,000 since he arrived in 1982. Through a series of miraculous events, the Lord made it possible for Faithful Central to purchase the Great Western Forum, which has allowed the church to easily accommodate the incredible growth it has seen.

Dr. Ulmer envisions Faithful Central as a conduit of God's love and power as it reaches out to Los Angeles and makes an eternal impact across the globe.

In looking back over Dr. Ulmer's life, it's easy to see that he has always had a passion for realizing and obeying God's will for his life—to go along with an inexhaustible thirst for the knowledge and

wisdom of God. In his eyes, though, his greatest success and satisfaction has come as the husband of his wife, Togetta, and the father of their three children—daughters: RoShaun and Keniya, and son: Kendan. In addition, he has two sons-in-law and five beautiful granddaughters. Dr. Ulmer and Togetta have been married for over thirty years and currently reside in Los Angeles, California.

Dr. Ulmer has continued his pursuit of biblically-based knowledge. He furthered his education by participating in the study of ecumenical liturgy and worship at Magdalene College at Oxford University, Oxford, England, in 1994. Today, he continues his ongoing studies at Christ Church and Wadham College at Oxford University.

Desiring to share the knowledge and wisdom the Lord has blessed him with, Dr. Ulmer has also served as an instructor in Pastoral Ministry and Homiletics at Grace Theological Seminary, an instructor of African-American Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, an Adjunct Professor at both Biola University and Pepperdine University, and a mentor in the Doctor of Ministry degree program at United Theological Seminary. Dr. Ulmer has served as both Adjunct Professor and Summer Dean at The King's College and Seminary in Los Angeles.

Dr. Ulmer has also taken on additional responsibilities at the leading of the Lord. In 1994, he was consecrated Bishop of Christian Education of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, where he also served on the Bishops Council. Dr. Ulmer has also served on the Board of Directors of The Gospel Music Workshop of America,

the Board of Trustees of Biola University, the Pastors Advisory Council for the City of Inglewood, and the Board of Trustees of Southern California School of Ministry. Additionally, he is a founding board member of The King's College and Seminary. It is his recent appointment to President of this fine institution, which will further broaden his exposure in the world of academia and make accessible his leadership and teaching gifts on the university level.

In 2000, another great calling from God came to Dr. Ulmer. He was installed as the Presiding Bishop over the Macedonia International Bible Fellowship, with churches representing the countries of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Republic of the Congo, South Africa, and the United States.

One other way that Dr. Ulmer has sought to share his message is through the printed word. He is the author of four books: *A New Thing*, a reflection on the Full Gospel Baptist Movement; *Spiritually Fit To Run The Race*, a guide to everyday godly living; and *The Anatomy of God*, a major release from Whitaker House. These books vividly relate the awesome attributes of God. *In His Image* introduces us to God Who is teachable, emotional, and accessible. A new publication, *Making Your Money Count*, clearly articulates biblically-sound truth on the topic of money, while understanding God's purpose for money to reach our Kingdom potential and our Kingdom blessings.

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# Joseph H. Walker III

Bishop Joseph Warren Walker, III, pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, to Deacon Joseph and Rosa Walker.

Bishop Walker received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; a Master of Divinity degree from Vanderbilt University; and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. He holds two honorary Doctorates from Meharry Medical College and Southern University respectively. He is also a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the Kappa Kappa Psi Band Fraternity.

He is married to the former Dr. Stephaine Hale, who is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neonatology at Vanderbilt University. Both agree that their most joyous accomplishment to date has been the birth of their daughter, Jovanni Willow Walker, who was born in May of 2012.

Bishop Walker currently serves as the International Presiding Bishop in the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, International. In July 2013, he was chosen to succeed International Presiding Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr. in 2015.

In 1992, at the age of twenty-four, Bishop Walker began his pastorate at Mt. Zion with 175 members. Presently, the ministry has grown to over 30,000 and continues to grow at a phenomenal rate of over 2,000 souls per year. Under his leadership, Mt. Zion's ministry

has expanded beyond its original location on Historic Jefferson Street to seven weekly services in three physical locations and also includes a worldwide virtual church location [www.mtzionanywhere.tv](http://www.mtzionanywhere.tv) which ministers to millions around the world, as well as the Word Network that reaches over 88 million viewers worldwide. In April 2006, his leadership also expanded to Jackson, Tennessee, where the Zion Church became the first church plant of Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

A recipient of numerous awards and honors, Bishop Walker sits on noteworthy boards, including the Board of the American Red Cross, Citizens Bank, and in February 2016 was elected to serve on the Board of Trustees of Meharry Medical College

Throughout his life and ministry, Bishop Walker has demonstrated a caliber of leadership well beyond his years. Recognized as a man from humble beginnings, he is a teacher, humanitarian, philanthropist, businessman, community volunteer, husband, father, and pastor. Bishop Joseph Warren Walker, III, is the International Presiding Bishop of Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, which consists of hundreds of churches across the globe that is connected together by common theologies of the church experience. This is an anointed man of God whose voice is calling for national and global leadership that enhances the quality of life for all people.

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# Denzel Washington

*“At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished. It's about what you've done with those accomplishments. It's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It about what you've given back.”*

Denzel Washington is an American actor and filmmaker. He has received three Golden Globe awards, a Tony Award, and two Academy Awards: Best Supporting Actor for the historical war drama film *Glory* (1989) and Best Actor for his role as a corrupt cop in the crime thriller *Training Day* (2001).

Denzel Hayes Washington, Jr. was born on December 28, 1954, in Mount Vernon, New York. He is the middle of three children of a beautician mother, Lennis (Lowe), from Georgia, and a Pentecostal minister father, Denzel Washington, Sr., from Virginia. After graduating from high school, Denzel enrolled at Fordham University, intent on a career in journalism. However, he caught the acting bug while appearing in student drama productions, and upon graduation, he moved to San Francisco and enrolled at the American Conservatory Theater. He left A.C.T. after only one year to seek work as an actor. His first paid acting role was in a summer stock theater stage production in St. Mary's City, Maryland. The play was "Wings of the Morning," which is about the founding of the colony of Maryland (now the state of Maryland) and the early days of the Maryland colonial assembly (a legislative body). He played the part of a real historical character, Mathias Da Sousa, although much of the dialogue was created. Afterwards he began to pursue screen roles

in earnest. With his acting versatility and powerful sexual presence, he had no difficulty finding work in numerous television productions.

He made his first big screen appearance in *Carbon Copy* (1981) with George Segal. Through the 1980s, he worked in both movies and television and was chosen for the plum role of Dr. Philip Chandler in NBC's hit medical series *St. Elsewhere* (1982), a role that he would play for six years. In 1989, his film career began to take precedence when he won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Tripp, the runaway slave in Edward Zwick's powerful historical masterpiece *Glory* (1989).

Washington has received much critical acclaim for his film work since the 1990s, including his portrayals of real-life figures such as South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko in *Cry Freedom* (1987), Muslim minister and human rights activist Malcolm X in *Malcolm X* (1992), boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter in *The Hurricane* (1999), football coach Herman Boone in *Remember the Titans* (2000), poet and educator Melvin B. Tolson in *The Great Debaters* (2007), and drug kingpin Frank Lucas in *American Gangster* (2007). *Malcolm X* and *The Hurricane* garnered him Oscar nominations for Best Actor before he finally won that statuette in 2002 for his lead role in *Training Day* (2001).

He continued to define his onscreen persona as the tough, no-nonsense hero through the 2000s in films like *Out of Time* (2003), *Man on Fire* (2004), *Inside Man* (2006), and *The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3* (2009). Cerebral and meticulous in his film work, he made his debut as a director with *Antwone Fisher* (2002); he also directed *The*

*Great Debaters* (2007) and *Fences* (2016).

In 2010, Washington headlined *The Book of Eli* (2010), a post-Apocalyptic drama. Later that year, he starred as a veteran railroad engineer in the action film *Unstoppable* (2010), about an unmanned, half-mile-long runaway freight train carrying dangerous cargo. The film was his fifth and final collaboration with director Tony Scott, following *Crimson Tide* (1995), *Man on Fire* (2004), *Déjà Vu* (2006) and *The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3*. He has also been a featured actor in the films produced by Jerry Bruckheimer and has been a frequent collaborator of director Spike Lee.

In 2012, Washington starred in *Flight* (2012), for which he was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor. He co-starred with Ryan Reynolds in *Safe House* (2012), and prepared for his role by subjecting himself to a torture session that included waterboarding. In 2013, Washington starred in *2 Guns* (2013), alongside Mark Wahlberg. In 2014, he starred in *The Equalizer* (2014), an action thriller film directed by Antoine Fuqua and written by Richard Wenk, based on the television series of same name starring Edward Woodward. During this time period, he also took on the role of producer for some of his films, including *The Book of Eli* and *Safe House*.

In 2016, he was selected as the recipient for the Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award at the 73rd Golden Globe Awards.

He lives in Los Angeles, California, with his wife, Pauletta Washington, and their four children.

# Benjamin Watson

*“There is a unique power within the human heart to overcome hate and racism.”*

Benjamin Watson is a tight end for the Baltimore Ravens. Watson attended Northwestern High School in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and was a letterman in football. In football, as a senior, he caught 31 passes for 515 yards. The two-time All-Region selection and Northwestern HS Student of the Year led his team to the state championship in his junior season. He was also a member of his high school chapter of The Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

After attending Duke University as a freshman, he transferred to the University of Georgia where he majored in finance. After an all-SEC senior campaign, he was drafted in the 1st round of the 2004 NFL Draft by the New England Patriots. As a Patriot, Benjamin was blessed to receive a Super Bowl ring in his rookie season as well as appear in another in 2007.

In the 2005 AFC Divisional Game against the Denver Broncos, he made perhaps one of the most notable plays in NFL history, when he tackled Denver cornerback Champ Bailey one yard short of what would be a 101-yard interception off Tom Brady. Bailey intercepted the pass one yard inside of the Patriot end zone and proceeded 100 yards before Watson, the only Patriot within ten yards of Bailey, hit Bailey violently, knocking both the ball and Bailey out at the Denver 1-yard line. This play is of note due to the fact that Watson was on the other side of the field when Bailey made the play. He had to

sprint an estimated 120-yards, run through a referee and never gave up in the chase.

On March 12, 2010, he signed a three year deal with the Cleveland Browns reuniting him with former Patriots assistant coach, Eric Mangini. In the 2010 season, he led the Browns in receptions, receiving yards, and receiving touchdowns. On March 18, 2013, he agreed to terms on a three year contract with the New Orleans Saints and was named a team captain for the 2015-2016 season. In his 12th year in the NFL, Watson had a career season where he had a career bests in receptions (74) and yards (825), and tied his career high in touchdowns (six). On March 9, 2016, Benjamin Watson signed a two-year deal with the Baltimore Ravens.

Off the field, Benjamin stays busy with his foundation One More, his growing family, and the NFL Players Association, where he serves on the Executive Committee. He is also an NFL Spokesman for the All Pro Dad Campaign. In 2015, Watson published his first book, *Under Our Skin: Getting Real About Race- And Getting Free From The Fears and Frustrations That Divide Us*. In October of 2016, he authored a *Group Conversation Guide* to aid readers' journey to honest conversation about race, bias, and justice in America. On May 2, 2017, Watson will release his next literary work, *The New Dad's Playbook: Gearing Up for the Biggest Game of Your Life*.

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# Renita Weems

*"Sometimes the feeling that we're on the verge of something comes and goes--and then comes back, each time with greater intensity until we're gripped by it and unable to ignore it."*

Dr. Renita J. Weems is a Bible scholar and an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church whose scholarly insights into modern faith, biblical texts, and the role of spirituality in everyday lives have made her a much sought after author and speaker. Dr. Weems, formerly a member of the faculty of Vanderbilt University and former Visiting Professor at Spelman College, has been celebrated by Ebony Magazine as one of America's top 15 preachers.

A former contributing writer to *Essence* Magazine, Dr. Weems is the author of several widely acclaimed books on women's spirituality and wholeness: *Just A Sister Away, I Asked for Intimacy, Showing Mary: How Women Can Share Prayers, Wisdom, and the Blessings of God* and *What Matters Most: Ten Passionate Lessons from the Song of Solomon*. Dr. Weems is a popular radio and television personality, regularly providing expert commentary on religion, gender, race, and sexuality. A guest speaker for numerous national gatherings of religious, civic, and sorority organizations, local churches, community wide events, and radio and television programs, Dr. Weems is in much demand as a speaker, preacher, and workshop leader on topics as wide ranging as miracles in the Bible, women, violence, and spirituality, and male-female relationships.

Ordained an elder in the AME Church since 1984, Dr. Weems has written about the waxing and waning of faith that all believers endure on the spiritual journey. Her 1999 book *Listening for God: A Minister's Journey through Silence and Doubt* won the Religious Communicators' Council's prestigious 1999 Wilbur Award for excellence in communicating spiritual values to the secular media. She earned her undergraduate degree from Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and her Master and Ph.D. degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

When she is not travelling and speaking, Dr. Weems is at home writing for Beliefnet.com where she contributes a regular column on politics and faith, and keeping up with her readers on her blog Somethingwithin.com which allows her to wax passionately, and sometimes even eloquently, about a wide range of issues having to do with faith, popular culture, values, and women's spirituality and other topics of interest to what she likes to call "thinking women of faith."

Finally, Dr. Renita Weems lives in Nashville, Tennessee with her husband and daughter.

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# Thelma Wells

*“The truth is God’s favor makes whatever we do for Him successful. When we obey His directions, He works miracles through us—even in spite of us!”*

For the past 30 years, Thelma has been dedicated to inspiring women to be their best, first in the corporate arena and later through her own ministry called A Woman of God Ministries. As a speaker she has encouraged thousands of women across the nation at conferences hosted by organizations like Women of Faith, Extraordinary Women, Women in Christian Media, and countless other women's groups, workshops and conferences.

In 2009, she began her own conference entitled, Ready to Win Women’s Conference, held annually in Grapevine, Texas, on Martin Luther King Day. She also offers girl's getaways - quick weekend trips to inspire, encourage and rejuvenate women for days to come, and each Labor Day weekend she hosts the "Picnic at the Lake with Thelma," a lake-house retreat.

Her messages can be heard on NRB Channel 378 on Direct TV. This show offers a fresh perspective on today's issues for women through dialogue and teaching. Thelma can also be heard on American Family Radio KSUR 88.9FM and KBDE 89.9FM with her "Mama T Says..." radio spots. These one-minute inspirational messages offer hope to listeners every day.

Her book titles include: *Don't Give In--God Wants YOU to Win!*,

*Ready to Win over Depression, Mama T Says...Rise & Shine: Devotions with a Kick, Ready to Win over Worry & Anxiety, Ready to Win over Anger and her DVD Bible Study, God, I'm Ready to Walk in Faith.*

Thelma has been married to George Wells, her best friend, supporter, and encourager, for more than fifty years. The couple resides in Dallas, Texas, and has three children, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

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# Ralph Douglas West

*“There comes a time when the faithful minister and the church has to tell the truth, even when most people do not want to hear the truth. In fact, the minister who does not tell the truth commits theological malpractice.”*

Dr. Ralph Douglas West serves as founder and senior pastor of The Church Without Walls (Brookhollow Baptist Church, Houston, Texas). He first preached as a sixteen year old in his native Houston. The church began with thirty-two members and now embraces 24,000 families meeting in three locations and conducting six services each Sunday.

Dr. West completed degrees at Bishop College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Beeson Divinity School, where he received the Doctor of Ministry Degree. He serves as Adjunct Professor of Preaching at the George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University. He has an abiding commitment to the church and the academy, relating with equal ease to both venues and using his influence to mentor ministers in both locations. He speaks perennially at colleges, universities, and seminaries across America as well as at Regent’s Park College, Oxford University.

Dr. West’s preaching style includes careful explanation of Scripture combined with his signature ability to tell detailed, credible, and indelible stories from contemporary life that enrich the sermon and relate to the congregation. He also makes penetrating and specific application of the text to his people. He does all of this while

maintaining the vibrant preaching tradition of church and culture in an atmosphere of celebration.

West is a leader beyond his own church and serves on boards, agencies, trusteeships, and committees at local, state, and national levels.

Through publications, television, and the internet, his messages are available across the world and are witnessed by thousands beyond his church each week. A perpetually demanded conference speaker, he has spoken multiple times at conferences such as the Hampton Institute, the largest gathering to hear preaching each year. From the pulpit to the lectern he is sought for his preaching gift.

Although West can boast of a number of degrees, honors, and associations, those who sit under his preaching would most aptly describe his attitude using Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: "When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."

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# Daniel Whyte III

*"The God-blessed life is a life that is full of contentment, joy, fulfillment, peace, and productivity. It is the kind of life where you know you are in the center of God's will."*

*"Pray. Think. Do."*

Daniel Whyte III has spoken in meetings across the United States and in over twenty-five foreign countries. He is the author of over sixty books including the *Essence Magazine*, *Dallas Morning News*, and Amazon.com national bestseller, *Letters to Young Black Men*.

He is the president of Gospel Light Society International, a worldwide evangelistic ministry that reaches thousands with the Gospel each week with multiple outreaches including Gospel Light House of Prayer Discipleship Ministries and GoToChurchOnline.TV through which thousands of people around the world are able to visit and participate in live church services from the comfort of their homes from any device, and it was designed particularly to reach people in areas around the world where there are no churches to attend due to persecution and other reasons. He is also the president of GLM Omnimedia Group LLC which is the parent company of over 35 news and communication sites as well over 800 other gospel-focused news sites around the world.

He is heard by thousands each week on his over thirty podcasts and broadcasts with his most popular broadcasts being The Gospel Light Minute X, the Gospel Light Minute, the Prayer Motivator

Devotional, The Prayer Motivator Minute, and the Prophet Daniel's Report. He preached the Gospel for 100 days straight leading up to the 2012 election, and he preached the Gospel every day for 367 days straight from January 1, 2016 to January 1, 2017 through the controversial election season.

He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Theology from Bethany Divinity College, a Bachelor's degree in Religion from Texas Wesleyan University, a Master's degree in Religion, a Master of Divinity degree, and a Master of Theology degree from Liberty University's Rawlings School of Divinity (formerly Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary). He is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

He has been married to the former Meriqua Althea Dixon, of Christiana, Jamaica since 1987. God has blessed their union with seven children.

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# Michelle Williams

Michelle Williams became a top pop music star as part of the band Destiny's Child. She has also enjoyed success as a solo gospel music artist and an actress.

Born in 1980, Michelle Williams started singing as a child. She performed gospel music for much of her early life. In 1999, Williams became a backup singer for R&B artist Monica. She then joined Destiny's Child the following year. With Destiny's Child, Williams made such hits as "Survivor" and "Bootylicious." The group broke up in 2005, but they have reunited several times since. Williams has released several solo albums as well, including 2008's *Unexpected*. She performed at the Super Bowl with Destiny's Child in 2013.

Williams became a member of Destiny's Child in early 2000. "Independent Women Part 1," which appeared on the *Charlie's Angels* soundtrack, was the first song she recorded with the group. It also proved to be the group's first No. 1 hit on the pop charts.

Williams enjoyed more success with Destiny's Child in 2001, with their release *Survivor*. The album instantly became a top-seller, buoyed by such hits as "Survivor" and "Bootylicious." She took on a more prominent role on the group's next studio album, 2004's *Destiny Fulfilled*, taking on more writing responsibilities. After the tour to support the record ended in 2005, Destiny's Child announced that they would be breaking up.

While with Destiny's Child, Williams successfully returned to her gospel roots with her first solo album *Heart to Yours* in 2002. She made her Broadway debut the following year, taking over for singer Toni Braxton in the musical *Aida*. On a roll professionally, Williams released another popular gospel album in 2004, *Do You Know*.

After Destiny's Child split up, Williams continued to pursue a range of creative endeavors. She starred in a national tour of the Broadway hit *The Color Purple*, based on the book by Alice Walker, in 2007. In the music world, Williams tried her hand at pop success with her third solo album, *Unexpected*, released in 2008. The album featured two dance hits: "We Break the Dawn" and "The Greatest."

Williams returned to the Broadway stage in 2010, playing the role of Roxie Hart in the musical *Chicago*. Across the pond, she also starred in the British competition program *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2010.

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# Barbara Williams-Skinner

*“Anything short of seeing and valuing others as God sees and values them, does not portend well for America’s future. We can all do better.”*

Skinner Leadership Institute president Barbara Williams-Skinner was born in Antioch, California, in 1943. Williams-Skinner completed her undergraduate degree at San Francisco State University before attending the University of California, Los Angeles. Williams-Skinner went on to earn her M.S.W. and her J.D. degrees from UCLA. For several years, Williams-Skinner promoted urban leadership and inner-city concerns as executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus. Williams-Skinner also served on the boards of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center; Volunteers of America, the National Political Congress of Black Women, the Christian Community Development Association, and Evangelicals for Social Action.

In 1992, Williams-Skinner and her husband, the Reverend Tom Skinner, former chaplain to the Washington Redskins and New York Yankees, founded the Skinner Leadership Institute. The endeavor combined two of Williams-Skinner's core ambitions—leadership building and evangelism—into one occupation. The Institute offered leadership development and reconciliation to people of all backgrounds and faiths, especially leaders, students, and youth with emerging leadership potential. The Skinner Leadership Institute aimed to produce a new cadre of leaders who were both technically excellent and spiritually mature, pledged to promoting

reconciliation, and working for those in physical or spiritual need.

Williams-Skinner also served as a board member of Operation Rainbow PUSH, the Christian Community Development Association, and the Neighborhood Learning Center. Williams-Skinner was involved with the Community Empowerment Equity Partnership, which ran an Urban Leadership Academy at Ballou Senior High School in Washington, D.C. Williams-Skinner provided leadership development curriculum and teacher training for the program.

Barbara Williams-Skinner raised two stepdaughters: Lauren Skinner Gaines, and Kyla Jewell Skinner.

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# CeCe Winans

*"When you're in the throne room, your focus is just God. Nothing's more powerful than that. When you do other music—positive music, gospel, inspirational, whatever you want to name it—you're teaching lessons to other people, which is still very important. But nothing is more powerful than when you're face to face with God."*

If you ask CeCe Winans what drives her, the answer will be far removed from her endless list of accolades, best-selling albums, widespread industry recognition, and vast amounts of press coverage.

She'll make no mention of the multiple GRAMMY®, Stellar, and Dove awards she's garnered over the years, let alone the several gold- and platinum-certified albums she's scored—not even those she nabbed with brother BeBe as part of the hit-making duo BeBe & CeCe Winans.

She won't tell you she's graced the covers of high-profile publications such as *Essence*, *Jet*, *CCM*, and *Today's Christian Woman*, among countless others, or that she's made her rounds in the talk-show circuit, making appearances on *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *Oprah*, *Live with Regis & Kathie Lee*, and more. And radio hits? Forget about it.

"It's great to sing songs that help us or that encourage us to live right, or to talk right, or to love each other, and those are all powerful messages, things that God smiles upon," CeCe says. "But

when you just talk about the power of the living God and His awesomeness and His holiness, nothing is more powerful than that. It penetrates the heart more than anything."

"Being on the corner, preaching to the lost, which is what Jesus came here for in the first place, is important," she says. "But when you just sit in the sanctuary, you're just surrounded by His presence. You just rest in the sanctuary. You just rest and you flow there".

"At the end of the day, if I'm sitting in church, I'm really happy, I'm really at home. When you're outside of that, it becomes more about the call. But when you're inside, you don't have to be mindful of other things. You're just alone in His presence."

Winans has released eleven studio albums: *Alone in His Presence*, *Everlasting Love*, *His Gift*, *Alabaster Box*, *CeCe Winans*, *Throne Room*, *Purified*, *Thy Kingdom Come*, *Songs of Emotional Healing*, *For Always: The Best of CeCe Winans*, and *Let Them Fall in Love*.

She co-pastors Nashville Life Church with her husband, Alvin Love. They have two children.

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# Oprah Winfrey

*“Everyone wants to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.”*

Oprah Winfrey was born Orpah Gail Winfrey in Kosciusko, Mississippi, to Vernita Lee, a former maid, and Vernon Winfrey, a coal miner, barber, and city councilman.

While Winfrey has been cited as the richest African American of the 20th century, she does not come from a rich, or even middle-class family. She was born in an economically-troubled neighborhood and raised by a single, teenaged mother in the city of Milwaukee. Orpah, named after a biblical character, had a name no one could pronounce, so her family and friends started calling her Oprah.

Shortly after Oprah's birth, Vernita Lee left her daughter and traveled north. Oprah was then raised by her grandmother, Hatti Mae Lee. Oprah, while being raised by her grandmother, lived in terrible conditions. Her only friends were farm animals; however, even at that age, Oprah had a very imaginative mind. Oprah would frequently give the animals dramatic parts and included them in games. This was perhaps where she had got the craze for acting, and would soon be seen in legendary masterpieces such as *The Color Purple* (1985).

Oprah, because of her grandmother's values, had religion and God instilled in her at a very young age. She knew how to read and write

before the age of three. During church, she would recite poems and verses from the Bible. Soon the church and the entire neighborhood knew she had a gift and she was nicknamed, "The Little Speaker." This would prompt her to become a woman with a strong perspective, which millions across the world would want to listen to. This prepared her for *The Oprah Winfrey Show* which began in 1986.

Due to her ability to read and write before the age of three, when enrolled in school, she was often promoted several grades ahead of her age. Oprah, at the age of six, went to live with her mother, Vernita Lee. Vernita worked as a maid, so Oprah was often left alone at home with her cousins. Oprah started misbehaving and talking back to her mother. Vernita Lee then decided it was best for Oprah live with her father in Nashville, Tennessee.

Oprah, while living in Tennessee, found out her mother was pregnant and her mother requested for her to come back to Milwaukee to live with her mother and half-sister. When Oprah was nine she was raped by her nineteen-year-old cousin who was babysitting her. She would then be sexually abused by her cousin, a family friend, her mother's boyfriend, and her uncle during her stay in Milwaukee. In the midst of all these incidents, she never told a soul because the predators swore her to silence. At the age of thirteen, Oprah ran away from home and at the age of fourteen she became pregnant with an ill son who died shortly after birth. Oprah took the death of her son as a sign that she was given a second chance in life. Oprah's mother sent her to live once again with her father in Nashville, Tennessee. Oprah's father was very strict and made education the number one priority.

Oprah attended Nashville East High School. While she wasn't certain what she wanted to do in life, she knew it was something involving speaking or drama. Oprah was also elected school president and met with President Richard Nixon as part of public speaking classes in her high school.

During her last year of high school, Oprah was rehearsing with her drama class when a local radio station, WVOL, spotted her and asked her if she would like to read on radio. Oprah was then given a job reading the news on the radio. She soon entered into a public speaking contest where the grand prize was a scholarship to Tennessee State University. Oprah won the contest, and she majored in Speech Communication and Performing Arts at TSU..

While in college, she was offered a job as a co-anchor on the local CBS station. She declined several times before she was convinced by her speech professor that it may be the ultimate step to launch her career. Oprah wanted to find work outside of Nashville, and was soon offered a job in Baltimore, Maryland. The job offer came up a few months before her graduation and she had to choose between the job and graduating. She decided to go for the job, but she wasn't a very good reporter and was shortly fired. Oprah's boss set her up as a talk show host on a morning talk show called *People Are Talking* (1978). Immediately after the first show Oprah knew this was what she wanted to do for the rest of her life. Oprah strengthened the talk show for seven years and then she decided it was time to move on.

In 1981, Oprah sent recorded tapes of the show to a talk show in Chicago called *A.M. Chicago*. They immediately offered her the job

and in September of 1985 she changed the name of the show to *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. The first national broadcast of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* was on September 8, 1986. *The Oprah Winfrey Show* first targeted women; however, soon, due to controversial and intriguing topics, it began to appeal to people of all genders, ethnicities, and ages. Oprah promoted many things on her show such as books and movie releases. From its first broadcast, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* went on to receive multiple Daytime Emmy Awards and several other prestigious awards. Winfrey expanded the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and started releasing a monthly magazine, *O: The Oprah Magazine*. The first issue was in 2000. The series finale of the *Oprah Winfrey Show* was on its twenty-fifth season and it aired on May 25, 2011.

Oprah's made her debut as a film actress in the 1985 period drama, *The Color Purple*. She played a troubled housewife named Sofia. She was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. This movie went on to become a Broadway musical adaptation. In 1998, Oprah starred in the movie *Beloved* which she also produced. Winfrey played the character Sethe who was a former slave. Winfrey has also acted in several movies such as *Charlotte's Web* (2006), *Bee Movie* (2007), and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009).

Oprah Winfrey, in 1998, received an Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. In 2011, Oprah received a Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

After ending the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, Oprah went on to establish

her own channel, OWN, the Oprah Winfrey Network. The channel features live interview programs, sitcoms, comedies, and dramas such as *Greenleaf*, a show about the black church which she stars in and helps produce.

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# Jerry Young

Pastor Jerry Young was born in Scott, Mississippi. One of ten children born to Reverend E.L. and Elizabeth Young, Jerry was raised alongside a diverse group of siblings, seven boys and two girls. He fondly recalls his life as a “preacher’s son.” Add growing up in the Mississippi Delta in the heart of the Civil Rights era, enduring the pains and struggles of several disappointments, and beating the odds of his predetermined failures, and it becomes increasingly clear why God called Pastor Young to the ministry at the tender age of seventeen. His service began at Mt. Tennia Baptist Church in Lamont, Mississippi, and extended to him serving as pastor of St. John and Pilgrim Rest Baptist Churches, both in Greenville, Mississippi. Dr. Young has faithfully led the vibrant congregation of New Hope Baptist Church since 1980. He is the founder and headmaster of New Hope Christian Pre-School and New Hope Christian Elementary School, together serving 300+ students from infants to 6th grade.

An avid scholar and lifelong learner, Pastor Young attended Nugent Center High School in Bolivar County and went on to attain an Associate of Arts in Social Science from Coahoma Junior College in Clarksdale, Mississippi. He received a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Social Welfare from Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi, where he met and married the love of his life, Mrs. Helen Akins Young. With her support and encouragement, Pastor Young has earned a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry from Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi. Instilling the values of faith, education, and love, they are the proud

parents of two daughters, Dr. Jerlen Nelson and Kelli Elizabeth (Benjamin) Hart. Adding to their life's joy are their three granddaughters and one grandson.

Dr. Jerry Young has led his congregation to embrace a vision for ministry and missions. "Our vision is to touch our community with the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in order that a Christian worldview and life-view may permeate our communities." With this global perspective in mind, Dr. Young's major objective for the church is "to glorify God through our commitment to help Christ fulfill His mission in the world." Under his watchful care, Pastor Young has led New Hope to experience explosive growth physically, spiritually, and influentially for the cause of Christ.

The ministry is comprised of over three thousand members and forty-four ministries. As a mission-driven institution, New Hope excels in ministries and missions, from as close as the church's backyard all the way to Honduras and Africa, with the visionary leadership of Dr. Young, coupled with the various talents and sacrifices of the church staff, administrative staff, and members of the body. He credits the "quality people who help me do ministry" with the effectiveness of the church's call to answer. In the midst of a major capital campaign to build a new facility on the 27-acre property purchased around the corner from the present campus, Dr. Young provided inspiration for New Hope to adopt a new motto: "It takes teamwork to make the dream work!" "They make it happen", he says. And indeed, from the young children to the seasoned adults, they are all on the team, making it happen.

Active in the community, Dr. Young has served on several local,

state, and national boards and has been awarded numerous prestigious honors and awards. In addition, he is a regularly invited guest to speak/lecture at the various schools, colleges, and school districts throughout Mississippi and across the nation. A highly-skilled and sought-after minister, Dr. Young has had the opportunity to preach in pulpits across the country and has breached several racial and denominational lines, touching them with the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Presently, Dr. Young serves on the Board of Trustees at Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi, as well as his alma mater, Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. He is the immediate past President of the General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Mississippi, Incorporated.

Dr. Young was elected as the 18th President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., in September 2014, during the convention's 134th Annual Session held in New Orleans, Louisiana. Dr. Young has served the convention for over fifteen years. Dr. William J. Shaw, 16th President of the NBC USA, Inc., appointed Dr. Young as the 2nd Vice President over the Southwestern Region, where he served two terms. During Dr. Julius R. Scruggs's term as 17th President, Dr. Young served as Vice President-at-Large.

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# **You, Too, Can Make History by Trusting Jesus Christ as Your Saviour Today**

While the many people profiled in this book come from different denominational, social, and economic backgrounds, the one thing that they have in common is that they have a relationship with Jesus Christ. And for all of them, their relationship with Christ is the driving force in their life that has caused them to accomplish great things for the glory of God.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, please read the following to find out how you can begin your relationship with Jesus Christ today:

1. Accept the fact that you are a sinner, and that you have broken God's law. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7:20, "For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." Romans 3:23 reads, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."
2. Accept the fact that there is a penalty for sin. The Bible states in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death..."
3. Accept the fact that you are on the road to hell. Jesus Christ said in Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The Bible says in Revelation 21:8, "But

the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

4. Accept the fact that you cannot do anything to save yourself! The Bible states in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

5. Accept the fact that God loves you more than you love yourself and that He wants to save you from hell. Jesus Christ said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

6. With these facts in mind, please repent of your sins, believe on the Lord Jesus and ask Him to come into your heart and save you this very moment. The Bible states in the book of Romans 10:9, 13: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

If you are willing to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, please pray with me the following simple prayer: Heavenly Father, I realize that I am a sinner and that I have done some bad things in my life. For Jesus Christ sake, please forgive me of my sins. I now believe with all of my heart that Jesus Christ died for me, was buried, and rose again. Lord Jesus, please come into my heart and

save my soul and change my life today. Amen.

Congratulations on doing the most important thing in life and that is accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour!