

ISSUE NO. 1, FALL 2023

ACCLAIM

MAGAZINE



PRAISE GOD!

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

"SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG;
SING TO THE LORD ALL THE EARTH.
SING TO THE LORD, BLESS HIS NAME;
PROCLAIM GOOD TIDINGS OF HIS
SALVATION FROM DAY TO DAY"
PSALM 96:1-2.

People take joy in extending adulation and praise! Very often, occasions, events, and people are worthy of applause and acclaim. A standing crowd roused with cheers and loud voices applauds their favorite athletic team making a historic touchdown. (continued Page 2)

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Excited family members and friends with roaring ovations commend graduates promoted to the next levels in their education and careers. With honorable mentions recognizing devoted and concerned public officials is worthwhile as those leaders procure the common good. But none of these persons or events are comparably worthy to the praise, honor, and glory that is due God. He is worthy of all acclaim!

Acclaim is exuberant and public praise. It means to give public approval and admiration. Praise, honor, and thanksgiving are reminiscent of King David's declaration to **"bless the Lord at all times"** (Psalm 34:1)! We should acknowledge and celebrate God's goodness, mercy, and beneficence always! In the US, an entire day is devoted to proffering praise and thanksgiving to God for His divine providence.

In September 1620, the Mayflower Ship carried one hundred and two passengers from Plymouth, England to America. The sojourners journeyed to the Americas in search of religious freedom, land ownership, and other forms of independence. A challenging journey, many pilgrims died on the ship before it landed in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Only half of them survived the exposure to contagious diseases and their first winter in The New World. But the migrants persisted despite their calamities.

The following March, Native Americans (Indians) taught the English settlers to fish, hunt, plant corn and cultivate the land. The unified community efforts proved successful. And, a year later in 1621, William Bradford, the colonist governor, organized a commemorative celebratory feast giving thanks for the successful harvest and provisions from the land. The feast lasted for three days. It was the first Thanksgiving celebration in the United States. **"Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good because His mercy endures forever"** (Psalm

Acclaim is to offer praise to someone or something in a very enthusiastic way. The Bible is replete with acts of exuberant and public praises to God as His people worship Him for His wonderful works. **"When the Lord brought back the captive ones of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with joyful shouting" the psalmist writes** (Psalms 126:1-2).

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, **"all the city was stirred saying, 'Who is this?' And the crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee'"** (Matthew 21:10-11). The city of Jerusalem was moved—it rocked when Jesus made His triumphal entry riding on a donkey. **"The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD: Hosanna in the highest!'"** (Matthew 21:9-11)

Almost two thousand years ago just before the Jewish Passover celebration, crowds publicly and enthusiastically praised Jesus. The festival culminated in Christ's sacrificial death for the sins of the entire world, and His miraculous resurrection after three days! Now, after Jesus' glorious ascension back to heaven how much more should we praise God who miraculously removed our sins and gave us victory? **"Who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God"** (1 Peter 1:21). Glory to God!

God is the God of the valleys and of the hills, a songwriter says! He is our Shepherd— and we praise Him for provisions, protection, restoration, peace, guidance, healing, and eternal life. He is our Father who makes ways out of no ways. And when our fathers and mothers forsake us, friends abandon us; the Lord lifts us to unimaginable heights. He is a very present helper in our troubles; and He promises to never leave or forsake us. God is mighty to save and worthy of all our acclaim! Praise God!

EMBRACED BY GOD

BY BABBIE MASON

I'll never forget the Sunday morning during the church worship service when our pastor instructed those of us in the congregation to turn to our neighbor and say these words, "I am God's favorite." I heard the words as they came out of my mouth, but I wasn't sure I understood what they meant. I've always known that God loves me and honestly speaking, that was enough for me. I was satisfied with that. But to consider that I could ever be God's favorite, I thought, was overstepping a boundary. If God had favorites, then I certainly couldn't be one of them. I thought that was a bit presumptuous on my part.



Perhaps David, a man after God's own heart, or the Apostle Paul, who wrote over half the New Testament and many others could stand ahead of me for the prize of being God's favorite, but certainly not me. Those words troubled me at first. Initially, I thought, "How could I be God's favorite? I have a past filled with mistakes. I have a history of broken relationships. I have issues and challenges." The words motivated me to seek God and the truth of His Word. As I searched and studied the scriptures, I found the words of Jesus in John 17:22-23. The passage is known as the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. It gives me a great sense of comfort and confidence knowing that Jesus prays for us. As we read this, we open the door and observe an intimate conversation between Jesus and our Heavenly Father. Here is a portion of what Jesus prayed.

I HAVE GIVEN THEM THE GLORY YOU GAVE ME, SO THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ARE ONE. I AM IN THEM AND YOU ARE IN ME. MAY THEY EXPERIENCE SUCH PERFECT UNITY THAT THE WORLD WILL KNOW THAT YOU SENT ME AND THAT YOU LOVE THEM AS MUCH AS YOU LOVE ME. NLT

God loves you just as much as He loves His Son! This love revelation has caused a love revolution in my own life. It inspired me to write a book called Embraced By God. It's a very encouraging book reminding the reader that God loves us just as much as He loves Jesus. Think about that for a moment. The God of the universe loves us in the same manner that He loves Jesus. At first thought, you might find it easy to conclude that because you may have messed up in life way too many times, that God loves the next person more. But, my friend, without Christ, we are all in the same sinful condition. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." His Word assures us, that because of Christ's great sacrifice at the cross, it was enough to pay the penalty for all of your sin and mine - once and for all! His love is not just for the next person. It's for you! God has always loved you and He always will. He didn't start to love you the day you accepted Christ as Savior. He didn't start to love you when you decided to obey His commands. He loves you and He has always loved you without condition and without exception. He loves you right where you are at this very moment.

So, the next time you hear the words, "God loves you", don't just say, "Isn't that nice" and then walk away unaffected to live beneath your privilege. But remember the price Jesus paid for this love. It cost Jesus His life. So, as a blood-bought, born again, child of the King, begin living as one who knows that God loves you as if you were the only one to love. God loves you just as much as He loves Jesus. Please don't take that love for granted for another moment. Instead, turn that fundamental truth over and over in your mind then let it sink to the very foundation of your heart, giving you a firm place to stand. In the times that we now live, you'll need to know that truth more and more. When you are discouraged, remember God loves you. When you are lonely, remember God loves you. When you are confused, remember God loves you. He always has and He always will. So, don't run from God's love. Run to His love. There is nothing you can do to make Him love you any less and there is nothing you can do to make Him love you anymore. His love for you is a perfect love. When you make it a practice to rehearse the powerful promise that God loves you just as much as He loves His Son, Jesus, you will begin to discover what most people fail to even notice. It all begins with God's love.

Babbie Mason is a Dove Award-winning singer, songwriter, author, and speaker. Visit babbie.com for more information about her ministry.



DISCIPLESHIP MATTERS!

BY REV. DR. ERWIN TROLLINGER, JR.

In its inception the Church was a fellowship of men and women centering on the resurrected Jesus Christ. Then the Church moved to Greece, where it was influenced by philosophy. Later it expanded to Rome and became an institution. Next, onto Europe, the church was a culture. And, finally, the church came to America, where it became an enterprise and entertainment.

The Church has survived many uncertain time periods. The function and methodology of the familiar local church has shifted to adjust to the road of uncertainty. What was known is no more. The way to be clear amid the uncertainty is to direct our attention to what was the original methodology and commission for the Church Universal and the local assembly.

From the writings of the early apostles, we discover patterns, models and concepts that have stood the test of time. The Holy Scriptures are unique. They reveal to the reader the past, present, and future of God's sovereign will and reign of His Kingdom.

When Jesus selected His first disciples, He chose twelve men that He Himself would teach and train. The twelve received lifestyle applications that they could transmit to others. This created methods that would make up what I call "Discipleship Lifestyle."

In the book of the Acts of the Apostles chapter 2:39-47 we discover the pattern and the biblical results of following the apostles' methodology. "The Biblical Way will only produce biblical results." In Acts 2:41- 47 we see five operational purposes that the early Christian Church and its disciples lived by: Discipleship, Fellowship, Ministry, Worship and Evangelism. These five purposes are the operational methods that drive the vision/mission for the Discipleship Lifestyle. Christian discipleship is an alternative to the worldly lifestyle today, and in Acts we read what the early disciples modeled as a lifestyle.

Discipleship Lifestyle is not a programmatic means to do something different. It is a lifestyle choice to follow the New Testament pattern that the early disciples followed. Discipleship Lifestyle moves the congregation from me, myself, and I to a Christ Centered focus. One of the desired results of Discipleship Lifestyle is that the local Body of Christ {Church} be graced and empowered as a special place to send its members out to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship Lifestyle is enhanced as we live a life that is growing and maturing. As we unite in prayer, we will cause a maturing in every aspect of our lives. Even our corporate

worship will become more intense. The Disciple's lifestyle of prayer will develop and enhance the life of the Disciple. As Disciples grow and mature there will be an understanding that the mission of the Church is in progress. Discipleship matters today like never before. As the Church moves forward and follows the Great Commission, we will see the biblical results. Discipleship matters!



Rev. Dr. Erwin Lee Trollinger, Jr. the Shepherd of Calvary Baptist Church of White Plains, New York. He attended Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia, majoring in Social Work and Theology. He earned a master's degree in sacred theology at the Christ Theological Seminary; and he has received honorary doctorate degrees. Dr. Trollinger is the sixth Pastor of the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, and he is the President of the Ministers' Fellowship Council. In 2022 he was consecrated to the Office of Bishop, and he presides over the Agape Christian Ministers College, Kumasi, Ghana. Rev. Trollinger has shared the gospel in several countries including Jamaica, England, and West Africa.



**"...GOD'S
SALVIFIC WORK
WILL BREAK OUR
EXPECTATIONS."**

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT TO SEE?

BY MISSIONARY TODD MALONE

Visibly shaken, the two men I invited just got up and ran out the front door before the worship service ended. I wondered what had happened. Did someone do or say something offensive? Later that week, I caught up with the two men for tea in a cafe. "How was it?" I asked, peering out behind the cup of hot chai in my hands. One guy said, "I never experienced people being so kind." His friend nodded with the same awe, and we began to talk.

When people brush up against Jesus, they often respond with surprise! John the Baptist, caught off guard by Jesus asked, "Are you really the One, or shall we look for someone else?" (Matthew 11:3). Jesus answered the crowd sent to Him by John and said, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive

their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Mt. 11:4-5). The encounter with the living God is rarely mundane, but that does not mean He doesn't use the ordinary people for revealing His glory.

Personally, we see God the Father at work in the hearts of people in the Middle East. Outreach events are gathering a thousand souls for Christmas services in large cities. Yet the stories we keep hearing are that the beating heart of Jesus displayed through His believers' love and lives is what surprises people the most. This past Sunday a believer's wife confessed her faith in a house church meeting. During the service she wept with joy and declared her love for Christ. Her husband had been praying for her for five years. In the majority Muslim world, it could be a sentence of family banishment or worse if the woman becomes a Christian.

Why would someone turn their back on their family, tribe, or country to give their allegiance to a Middle Eastern man (Jesus) who died on a cross two-thousand years ago? When the vision of God's love through the cross, the empty tomb, and His believers become real, people change completely. This is the surprise that the world needs to see and hear. So how will they hear? We tend to believe that when people come to faith it is because of our charisma, strategies, or spiritual gifts.

Surely, missionaries everywhere deserve recognition and praise for their labors and ability to suffer in the face of opposition. Without our Bible translations, social media campaigns, and polished sermons how would anything get done? Yet the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob finds a way to make foolish all the wisdom of this world (1 Corinthians 1:25-31). He invites us to join Him in His work.

He has chosen to call people to Himself and uses the Body of Christ in the Middle East and all over the world to help save the lost sheep. Just as Elijah did not hear God in the mighty wind, God's salvific work will break our expectations. It will rescue people beyond our wildest imaginations and Christ's ultimate glory will be revealed!

Todd Malone - missionary in Central Asia, July 2023

ABOUT THE EDITOR

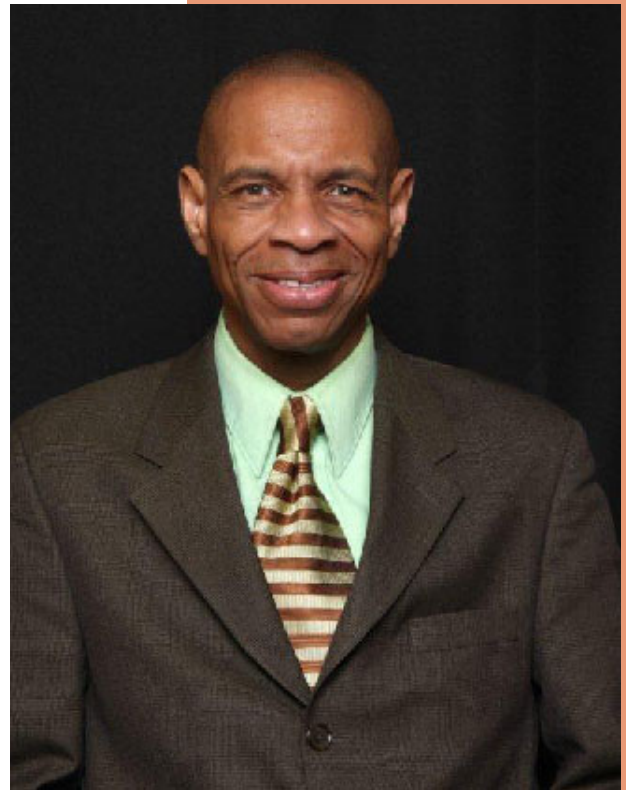
Dr. Donald L. D. Ellis-Johnson is the founder and president of Lifeline Ministries International headquartered in the Atlanta, GA area. The ministry was founded in 2005 while Dr. Johnson disciplined and mentored inner-city youths involved with the criminal justice system and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Lifeline Ministries explains and proclaims God's Word to change peoples' lives. And the organization aims to transform culture by helping people change. Johnson is a Bible Teacher, Preacher, Evangelist, Christian Educator, Author, Community Activist, and a Pastor to many! He ministers internationally and is a frequent guest on TV, radio, talk shows, and podcasts.

Dr. Johnson is a native New Yorker who loves

bagels, traveling, theology, and experimenting with health foods. He is a retired Family Court Probation Officer and graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Johnson has written and or contributed to five books including his groundbreaking autobiography, *This Far by Grace*, the Incredible Story of One Man's Journey Out of Darkness into God's Marvelous Light reaching many people and encouraging them to overcome life controlling problems.

Dr. Johnson is a member of the Global Evangelistic Alliance, the Next Generation Alliance of the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, and a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Evangelical Missiological Society, the Alliance for Black Pentecostal Scholarship, the Pentecostal Theological Society, and a past member of the Evangelical Homiletical Society, and the American Probation and Parole Association. He resides in the Atlanta, GA area and is a member of the local church there.

His motto is **If I can help somebody then my living will not be in vain!**



**EXPLAINING THE WORD;
PROCLAIMING THE TRUTH;
TRANSFORMING LIVES!**



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