

Sharing the good
news of Jesus
and His Kingdom
and equipping the
church to do the
same.

Life
JOHN 20:31
IN HIS NAME



Greg West, Evangelist

Puertas Abiertas!

Praise the Lord for open doors!

Pastor David Cunningham and I met recently for coffee and fellowship. His church, Light of Hope UMC, is less than 10 minutes from my house. He talked about the growing Hispanic population around the church. So, I'm partnering with his

congregation to connect with the Hispanic community.

I've also been in dialogue with a Hispanic lay pastor who is guiding a small congregation. I worshipped with them and I am praying about how God would have me serve them.

Voices from the Kingdom

Rev. Richard Allen



Richard Allen was a Methodist preacher in the late 1700s. He left the church with his friend, Absalom Jones, to protest mistreatment and racial segregation during times of worship and prayer.

Allen, as an African American preacher, at Saint George's Methodist Church, was confined to preaching during early morning services and the black congregants he attracted were seated in an area separate from

whites. Commonly, the area designated for black congregants was referred to as the, "Negro Pew" or "African Corner." Allen's friend, Absalom Jones, accidentally sat in a white pew and was grabbed by a trustee in the midst of prayer and directed to get up and move. This was the last straw for Allen.

Despite his issues with segregation, Allen still had a heart for Christ and the Methodist movement. Therefore, he founded the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the first fully independent black denomination in America. He was ordained as the first black Methodist minister in America by Bishop Francis Asbury. In 1816, Allen became the AME church's first bishop.

Great Ministry Resource

BE *the* BRIDGE

MOVING TOWARD
RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Be the Bridge is dedicated to bringing racial reconciliation and correcting racial injustice. Their self-proclaimed mission is, "that people and organizations are aware and responding to the racial brokenness and systemic injustice in our world."

This organization is rooted first and foremost in scripture, as exemplified by the fact that their many values (confession, grace, justice, and reconciliation), are based in scriptures such as: 2 Corinthians 7:10, John 1:16, Micah 6:8, and 2 Corinthians 5:19-20.

Be the Bridge began in 2015 as a small group led by

Latasha Morrison. Today, the organization continues to make its vision realized through small groups. As their website states, "Local Be the Bridge groups continue to be the heart and soul of our organization. All over the country there are hundreds of groups meeting in living rooms, churches, college campuses and coffee shops to engage in important conversations about race."

Be the Bridge offers resources on their website for those who want to begin local groups. Be the Bridge also offers a virtual community via Facebook. There are plenty of ways to engage with Be the Bridge.



Truth and Testimony



An icon depicting Jesus and the Samaritan woman from John 4.

I walked into a Chinese restaurant and was surprised that a young Latino came to take my order. I spoke to him in Spanish, wanting to connect with him and wanting practice! After I ordered, I noticed statues on shelves against the wall. There were quite a few of them, lined up so that it looked like a shrine. I asked him, "What are those?" He answered, "dioses (gods)." I smiled and said, "no, idols." He responded, "It depends on what you believe." I countered, "No, it depends on what is truth."

Our belief does not create reality. Yet, we live in a time where much of the world is content to embrace relativism concerning all spiritual things. You'll hear people say things like, "All religions basically teach the same thing," and "It doesn't really matter what you believe, just be a good person." It seems to me people are often led by feelings rather than reason. A Christian author shared that the time we're in, "post-modernity", is essentially a mood. A mood can be a dangerous state of mind because it crushes reason under the weight of feeling.

Dialogue with people who have this belief in relativism is fun for me. If you engage with a smile on your face and the love of Christ within you, it really can be a joy. A topic that always comes up is the exclusive claims of faith. What people don't realize is the statement, "All religions basically teach the same thing" is an exclusive claim as well! Remember, we follow the One who said he is the truth (John 14:6)! Training is helpful when the conversation involves different beliefs, religions and worldviews. We live in a time where training is at our fingertip and amazing resources are available. If you need some recommendations, please reach out to me.

Some people like to argue about all the differing truth claims and honest dialogue can fall apart. When the arguments begin, I usually switch to testimony. People can argue about God, religion and whether or not something is

ultimately true. However, it's a lot harder to argue with someone's story. During the 40 days Jesus was with the disciples after rising from the dead, he said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)."

God, by His Spirit will dwell within us, giving us power and boldness to tell our stories about what Christ has done for us! Jesus uses the word "witnesses" – not theologians, not lawyers, but "witnesses." You're the expert on you! If Christ has forgiven you, saved you, healed you and given you new life, you can put it into your own words and share!

Jesus had an encounter with a Samaritan woman in John 4. As Jesus reveals his identity to her it is an amazing story. Her response

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If Christ has forgiven you, saved you, healed you, and given you new life, you can put it into your own words and share!

doesn't get enough attention! She went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ (John 4:29)?" The town was moved by her words. After they spent two days with Jesus, they said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world (John 4:42)!" God used her testimony to bring a town to true faith!

If you've read this far, I urge you, walk closely with Jesus and tell others what he has done for you! You never know how God will use your witness for his glory! My friend Kurt has been helping me out with some video projects and I'm thrilled that my testimony is now recorded. Some don't know about how Jesus pulled me out of darkness and danger. If you watch the video, you will hear how God used the testimonies of my mom, Pastor Al Honaker, a friend named Spencer and many testimonies on the Emmaus spiritual retreat to open my eyes to the truth of Jesus Christ! I encourage you to watch it and share it with a friend if you think it could be of help.

We belong to Jesus as He has bought us with His very life! He longs to rescue others using our testimony, acts of love and service to help people know him. Hallelujah!