

the **Informer** *newsletter*



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
PARAGON CHRISTIAN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL
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ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSION



*By Dr. Henry Harbuck, PCAI International
General Overseer*

As we study the Word of God and do the work of the Kingdom, it is important to feel a sense of accomplishment and understanding.

The Holy Spirit will help us; however, we must apply ourselves and be faithful if we are to reach the goal and complete our mission. Paul writes, "Run in such a way that you may win." The Isthmian Games to which Paul referred, were open to everyone. Of course the object of running the race was to win! We all know it is not just a matter of putting on the right shoes or outfit and enjoying the scenery; it is preparation and perseverance that makes a winner.

So, what is the secret of winning? First of all, everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things (I Cor. 9:25). Athletes who run to win exercise restraint of their emotions and desires. Second, they watch their diet, get plenty of rest and train their bodies in a certain way. Paul says those who ran in the Isthmian Games did so to win "a perishable wreath." Actually, the victors were treated like royalty. Many times their debts were cancelled and they were allowed to live tax free the rest of their lives, as well as enjoy many more benefits.

Paul goes on to point out, as valuable as the leafy crown was, it can't compare to the eternal rewards that await those who are in Christ. So we must run our race with eternity in view. When we reach the end of our race there is a crown laid up for us. This crown will never perish! ♥



Who We Are?

"We are (PCAI) PARAGON CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL, INC. - PCAI is officially and legally recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) and holds a "Group Status" in which it has been given the authority by the IRS to issue the 501(c)(3) to qualified religious organizations referred to as "subordinates." Each ministry (subordinate) is autonomous and sovereign operated by its' own governing board."

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Lively Narratives of Wisdom

By Rev. Daniel O.C. Agomoh

Job 28:12-17
“But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living. The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’ It cannot be purchased for gold, nor can silver be weighed for its price”

But where shall Wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knows not the price of it; neither is it found in the land of the living.

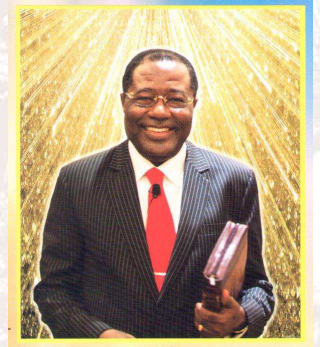
The deep says, Wisdom is not in me; and the sea says, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price of it. It cannot be valued in terms of the gold of Ophir, in the precious onyx or beryl, or the sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal Wisdom, nor can it be exchanged for jewels or vessels of fine gold.

Remember Jesus Christ our Lord is God’s wisdom in manifestation. Do not play victim neither waste time feeling sorry for yourself. Be fair, compassionate and kind but unafraid to speak up when

your values are put to the test. Always celebrate other people’s success. Remember this: blowing out someone else’s candle will never make yours shine any brighter.

Do not try to please everybody for you can’t. You are not under any obligation to self-immolate yourself to keep others warm. Don’t ever live in the past for every moment that you spend in the past is a great wasted moment of the present and future. Stop the overthinking because worrying never accomplished anything, therefore, do not stress over what you cannot control.

Do not put yourself down but do remember that you talk to yourself more than anybody else, so be kind to yourself. Remember, if you are not kind



to yourself none else will. Most of the generous people on the planet today are those with little resources called money.

Some of the wisest people have no education but Jesus Christ. Some of the kindest people have been hurt the most but healed by our gracious Lord Jesus.

May you be blessed with heavenly divine wisdom in Jesus’ mighty name, Amen!

Everybody shout a loud, “AMEN & AMEN”! ♥

How to Provide Spiritual and Emotional Care in the Wake of Natural Disasters

By Jamie D. Aten & Laura Shannonhouse

When people think of disasters like hurricanes, they often recount the physical damages caused. However, disasters also cause significant spiritual, psychological, and emotional distress.

If you are a church leader from an affected community, you will likely be called upon to help respond to the needs left behind by a storm. Walking alongside those who are suffering is part and parcel of every church leader’s calling. But when major disasters strike, even some of the most seasoned church leaders aren’t sure how to provide effective spiritual and emotional care. Here are some tried-and-true ways to help survivors.

What Not to Say

Disasters can shake our most sacred beliefs and lead to questions such as, “Where was God in all of this?” It’s difficult to find the “right” words when reaching out and caring for others around you. Disasters can leave us feeling helpless, cause us to “freeze” up, or say things we wouldn’t normally say.

Too often, Christians offer “bumper sticker theology”—short phrases that sound good but lack depth, like “God only tests the strong.” As a result, we often fall into the trap of relying on platitudes that aren’t helpful and can even be harmful for

someone going through a trauma. If you really want to help, avoid words that might make wounds deeper. Instead, offer to journey with those seeking answers.

Respond to Basic Needs

One of the most effective acts involves helping survivors attend to their pressing basic needs. By caring for their practical needs, you are caring for psychological and spiritual needs, too. Throughout the Scriptures, we see numerous examples of times when Christ and his disciples attended to both spiritual and practical needs, such as offering hope and food in tandem—



remember the miracle of the loaves and fishes in Matthew 14? Basic needs include safety, comfort, and belonging. This may mean helping someone find a place to stay where they feel safe or getting someone something to eat when they’re hungry. It may not feel as though you are doing much, but you are helping more than you realize. Focus on the tangible and immediate to get through the crisis.

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How to Provide Spiritual... continued from page 2

Use Prayer

As people of faith, we are called to pray for others, especially for those in need. In disasters, we shouldn't see prayer as an afterthought, but rather as one of the most powerful things we can do to help. Prayer can be a strong source of aid. There is example after example throughout the Scriptures of the power of prayer, and we know we should pray with the confidence that our prayers will be heard. You might ask God for help and healing on behalf of those you are helping. If you aren't sure how to pray, you might try something like the Serenity Prayer. Know that it's also okay to pray silently to God or to pray with the person you are helping. This, too, can be a powerful way to connect. Just remember to not force prayer onto others.

Practice the Ministry of Presence

Another powerful way you can help after a disaster is to embody the ministry of presence. Practicing the ministry of presence means being available to those who are hurting and suffering. It means being there for others physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Simply put, it means being there for others when they need you most: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11).

Listen with acceptance and empathy. To truly empathize, we must help from a place of humility and try to meet people where they are, in their current condition and place in life. Remind those you are helping that they are not alone. Picking up the pieces of one's life after a disaster can feel lonely; disaster survivors often feel unsafe and forgotten. Don't

just try to express connection through your words. Instead, foster connection through your actions.

Foster Fortitude

Recovering from a disaster takes time, and the people you are helping are going to need fortitude. The church has long taught fortitude as the virtue of adversity and as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) marked by endurance and enterprise. Fortitude helps us persevere in times of overwhelming challenges, as captured in 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." At the core of fortitude is the ability to cope with long-suffering.

Some ways to cultivate fortitude include helping others find purpose in their suffering, encouraging them to keep going, and seeking to help them find refuge in their faith.

Don't Force Survivors to Tell Their Story

Telling one's disaster story can help survivors gain mastery over their crisis experience. However, we need to be careful not to force survivors to tell their stories if they aren't ready. Sharing one's trauma before one is ready is like volunteering to have a wound opened when there are no supplies available for bandaging the injury.

Historically, mental health professionals used an intervention called "critical incident stress debriefing" right after disasters. The idea was that if people could get together to tell their stories right after a major tragedy, trauma could be prevented. We now know that, at best, this approach is not helpful; at worst, it's downright harmful.

Sometimes people need to hold onto their stories for a period so they can keep their coping intact. Know that healing and recovery take time. Give survivors the space and time they need so they feel in control of telling their story.

Gather in Community

Expressions of public faith can be powerful and healing sources of memorial and remembrance. For some, this may mean gathering as a church body for fellowship and to worship. Broader faith-led community gatherings can also be helpful, such as engagement in prayer vigils to show support to those affected.

After 9/11, psychology professor Daniel N. McIntosh and colleagues looked at a national sample of nearly 900 participants from across the US. They found that participation in religious social structures helped to buffer against physical and mental health problems. Coming together shows survivors they are not alone and they are not forgotten. Your presence, even if you observe in silence, can speak volumes.

Know When to Refer

It is important that you recognize when a disaster survivor may need additional follow-up services from a licensed mental health professional. Pay attention to common stress reactions. The list of possible symptoms is long and includes changes in emotional, cognitive, behavioral, physical, and spiritual domains. Also, pay attention to stress symptoms that seem really intense, don't seem to go away with time, start to interfere with everyday life, or appear much later

(further removed from the event) than you expect. If any of those occur, you should start to be concerned.

Look for signs of serious symptoms like extreme emotional reactions, impulsive or risky behaviors, and self-medication with drugs or alcohol. These sorts of behaviors are all red flags indicating professional support may be needed.

Moreover, listen for signals that your loved one might be thinking about or contemplating harm to self or others, or even ending their own life. Make sure you are not ignoring a potential cry for help. Referring a loved one who may be considering harm to self or others to a mental health professional can save a life.

Practice Self-Care

When we help others affected by disasters, we sometimes forget to consider our own needs. This can put us at risk for "compassion fatigue" and burnout. The people you are helping need you now—but they are also going to need you over the long haul. You will be a more effective helper if you remember to help yourself, too.

Listen to your body and pay attention to what your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations are trying to tell you. Be mindful that helping others affected by disasters can sometimes unearth your own previous hurts and struggles.

Be sure to find time to recharge among the chaos. As best as you can, look for ways to bring some normalcy to your daily routine in the wake of disaster. Yes, you are doing God's work as you care for others. But keep in mind that even Christ sought out moments and times of solitude, fellowship, and renewal during his ministry on Earth. You would be wise to do the same. ♥

Safe Sleep For Babies Act

Excerpt from Christian Law Association Publication

A new federal law may impact your church or ministry. Safe Sleep Babies Act, a federal statute, was signed into law in May. Because this new statute may impact your church or ministry, it is important to be familiarized with the legal requirements to ensure compliance with the regulations and keep young infants safe in ministries' care.

This new statute does two things. First, it bans infant inclined sleepers with an inclined sleep surface greater than ten degrees that is intended for infants up to age one. Your church may have infant products in its nursery or Mothers Day Out program that need to be removed. Ministries should also implement a written policy forbidding workers and volunteers from permitting babies to sleep in any item that is deemed hazardous like a baby swing, inclined bassinet, boppy lounger, or the like. While a Mothers Day Out program may have previously allowed an infant to fall asleep in a baby swing this should no longer be permitted.

The second thing the Act does is ban crib bumpers. Crib bumpers are pads that lay around the bottom edge of a crib to prevent babies' heads from bumping crib slats. If your church nursery has crib bumpers on cribs, remove them immediately and document the removal with dates and keep such documentation in your ministry's document retention system.

This Act goes into effect in November of 2022 but it is important to remove such items from your church nursery prior to that date. Churches are already on notice that these products are hazardous to babies' health. If something happened to a baby between now and November while in the care of your ministry/church related to one of these products, even if it is not illegal to have the item in your possession, it would be considered negligent and a breach of your duty of care to use such items when you have knowledge that it could harm an infant.

When Safe Sleep for Babies Act goes into effect in November both inclined sleepers and crib bumpers will be considered "banned hazardous products" under Section 8 of the Consumer Product Safety Act. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies sleep alone and on their backs on a firm, flat surface. We strongly recommend that all ministries heed this guidance and not permit infants in their care to use an inclined sleeper or crib bumper while in the care of the ministry effective immediately.

1. Remove inclined surfaces where babies sleep.
2. Remove crib bumpers
3. Document the dates when these items were removed.
4. Have babies sleep alone and on a firm surface on their backs. ♥

Audio Recording on Security Cameras

A pastor recently purchased a comprehensive security system for his growing church, complete with multiple security cameras. While the default function was video only, he noticed his cameras also had the option of recording audio. He called the Christian Law Association –would that be a good idea?

Our attorneys told Pastor to be cautious. Recording audio triggers much stricter laws in almost every state, and can potentially even lead to a lawsuit. It is generally safer to just stick to recording video in places with no expectations of privacy. ♥

2023 Charter Renewal

DEADLINE: MARCH 28TH



ATTENTION!

501(c)(3) Chartered Ministries & Churches under PCAI Group Exemption will receive their Charter Renewal Yearly Report Packet this month.

OR, Forms are also available in our website: <https://www.paragonchristianalliance.org> under "Resources" tab in a PDF file.

It is important that your report be received in our office no later than March 28th.

These renewals are **necessary to remain in compliance** with the IRS code and maintain your charter's tax-exempt status under the PCAI Group Exemption.

PLEASE REVIEW: This is a good time to review your monthly giving obligation to ensure you are up-to-date on your ministerial and charter giving. These must be current in order for your 501(c)(3) to be renewed in 2023.

ANNOUNCEMENT

**IMPORTANT
LEGAL INFO**

ANNUAL CHARTER RENEWAL

Check with your Secretary of State office to verify that your state incorporation is current and active. Some states vary from needing renewal every year or like Texas every four (4) years. Without valid state incorporation your federal incorporation (501 c 3) becomes invalid. You may not receive notice from your Secretary of State that it is due as it is your responsibility to handle this.

Have you renewed your state incorporation and have confirmation that it is active? Without a current state incorporation your federal incorporation (501 c 3) becomes void. You may not receive notice from your Secretary of State that it is due since it is your responsibility.

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