



the ENCOURAGER magazine

July 2019



GOD PREPARES US

C O L U M B I A C O M M U N I T Y C H U R C H



ON THE COVER

Congregant Dr. Anna McPhatter enjoys the warmth of a summer day during her September 1, 2019 photo shoot at Columbia Community Church and Shipley's Grant.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE **1** A Word from the Word

PAGE **3** A Healthy Life: Carolyn Fleming, RN

PAGE **4** My Favorite Verses: Winnie Chambers

PAGE **5** A Place for You: Taylor Landrum

PAGE **7** Christian Comedy Corner

PAGE **8** Operation Christmas Child: Mike & Janet Spry

PAGE **9** Getting to Know: Dr. Anna McPhatter

PAGE **20** Let Us Pray: Angela Hunt Bonitto

PAGE **21** Featured Article: Kim Odoms-Bolden

PAGE **23** The Librian's Desk: Desiree Collins

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A WORD FROM **THE WORD**

PASTOR REGINALD L. ELLIOTT

who knoweth
whether
thou
art come
to the kingdom
for such a time
as this
Esther 4:14



GOD PREPARES US

*L*ife reveals a mystical interplay between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. The sovereignty of God speaks of the right of God to act as He wills and the free will of man speaks of the ability of man to respond to God as he wills. The amazing story of life is that circumstances work together to produce the fulfillment of God's plan even while God is acting in His sovereign authority and man is exercising his free will. Consider the case of Esther.

people and hinder the plan of God to bring forth the Messiah through the Jews. After becoming queen, Esther's cousin Mordecai learned of a plot to destroy the Jews and beckoned Esther to go and tell the King. Esther was not free to approach the King at any time she desired, and if not beckoned by the King she could suffer severe consequences for approaching him. Mordecai pleaded with her to approach the King with these words, "who knoweth

" We are so involved in living our lives that we seldom recognize the hand of God preparing us... "


Pastor Reginald L. Elliott

The story begins with the Persian Queen Vashti refusing to obey an order from her husband, King Ahasuerus. Because of her disobedience she was banished and the king began a search for a new queen. All the young beautiful women in the Persian Empire were brought before the King, and Esther, a Jewish woman, was chosen and became Queen. Little did anyone know at that time that God had prepared Esther for this moment. We are so involved in living our lives that we seldom recognize the hand of God preparing us to fulfill a God ordained purpose. Such was the case of Esther.

The Persian Empire was one of several empires which were tools of Satan to destroy the Jewish

whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" In other words, could it be that God has prepared you for this time?

The answer was yes, God had prepared her for such a time. These words encouraged Esther to approach the King, the plot to destroy the Jews was foiled, and the plan of God to bring forth the Messiah through the Jews continued to its fulfillment.

God does prepare people for certain tasks that will further His work here on earth. To realize your purpose, you need only live a life of obedience to God - exercise your free will to obey God, and the sovereign God of the universe will perform in your life that for which He has prepared you. 

Prepare To Live A

HEALTHY LIFE
CAROLYN FLEMING, RN



P

reparation is a key ingredient to living a good life. Teachers prepare lesson plans. Coaches prepare game plans. We plan what activities and duties will fill our day. God has provided us with the Master Plan – His Word. If we diligently follow it, all the answers we need to live well are there. The word “prepare” gives us some good keys to live by.

P: Pray; “Pray without Ceasing” (1Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is simply talking to God. Thank Him for the beginning of each new day. Thank Him at the end of each day. Talk to Him as you go about the activities of your day. He will give you the strength to keep going even when you don’t think you can.

R: Rest; Rest helps keep your mind and body healthy. The recommendation for adults is 7-8 hours of good quality sleep on a regular schedule each night. Stress is a major factor that prevents us from clearing our minds at night so that we can get good restorative rest. Thank God in advance for providing a good night’s sleep, and work at shutting out all those things that plagued you during the day. They will most likely be there in the morning, but you will be better equipped to tackle them after a good night’s sleep. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 12:28).

E: Eat well; learn to make good food choices. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, cut down on saturated fats and sugar and eat less salt, just to name a few things. It is unrealistic to think that if pizza is your


favorite food, you are never going to eat it again. What you have to do with your favorites is cut down the frequency and portion sizes when you do indulge.

P: Play; Remember when we just played in the neighborhood for hours with our friends without a care in the world? We may not be able to recapture all of that childhood pleasure, but we do have to incorporate some fun times in our busy adult lives. What makes you laugh? What makes you feel like a kid again? Find time to do it.

A: Act; Nothing happens if we just sit around and think about what we “shoulda, woulda, coulda” done. Useless excuses can consume too much of our lives. Come up with a plan and move forward.

R: Reassess periodically; Think about your daily routines and habits. What needs to decrease? What needs to increase? What provides the most calm and peace in your life? What causes the most stress? Keep a journal of the things that will help you become happier and healthier, and evaluate from time to time how you are progressing toward your goals.

E: Exercise; Regular physical activity is good for everyone, no matter the age or body type. Exercise combats health conditions and diseases, controls weight, boosts energy, improves mood, and promotes better sleep, just to name a few proven benefits. As a general goal, aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

PREPARE to go forward living a victorious, happy and healthy life. 



On Being Prepared

MY FAVORITE VERSES

WINNIE LaFRANCE-CHAMBERS

page 04
the ENCOURAGER magazine

Remember back to when you were a kid and you had a list of school supplies that you needed to have for the school year? It was neat and organized to ensure you'd be prepared for the tasks ahead, created to help build your intelligence. God has laid out His word in a similar way! He has left us the Bible as a guide to take us through life! Not only do we have His word, He is right by our side every step of the way. We can walk with our heads held high knowing that God knows our beginning, our end, and everything in between. Since He is for us, we can conquer any and every thing. He is our protector and our comfort.

Below are some of my favorite verses about how God prepares and takes care of us:

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. (Psalm 32:8)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. (Jeremiah 1:5)

The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:8)

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31:8)



A PLACE FOR YOU
TAYLOR LANDRUM

Human beings are fallible, flawed creatures. At birth we are helpless – we need our parents to feed us, clothe us, and teach us. Over the course of our lives we learn to walk, talk, and feed ourselves, but as we grow we also begin to develop habits... and not all of them are good. Even the eldest of us, for all the wizened understanding they have gained, have lost much of the physical ability that they may have once had. The smartest people are often physically challenged; the greatest athletes are not often the champion scholars. Even those of us who seem to excel in every outward facet of our lives face inner turmoil. No man is perfect. Our imperfection; however, is not to our ultimate undoing. God has given every man his imperfections so that we can turn towards Him, and the One who did achieve perfection.

When most people think about God's preparation, they think of how God uses the circumstances of a person's life to prepare them for a greater work. God can take *anyone's* negative experiences and turn them into an instrument for His ultimate will – all of the hero's of the Bible overcome personal struggle to become champions for God. Paul's persecution of the early Christian church was necessary for him to blossom into the believer and spreader of the Gospel that he became. By understanding the *other* side, Paul was better able to express the love of Christ,




"God can use any circumstance...and turn it into a tool for the true harvest."

-Taylor Landrum

and how anyone can become one of God's chosen. If Christ could take hold of one of his most powerful enemies and turn him into one of his most powerful advocates, then who could he not change? God *prepared* Paul for that work by allowing him to rise as an enemy, learning techniques that he initially used to persecute God's people to eventually lead them. God prepares people today in many of the same ways, cultivating them through their experiences so that they eventually are able to do a work for Him. Tim Tebow was gifted with incredible football ability, but he himself would tell you that his athletic gifts were merely a gift from God to prepare him for the platform of spreading the Gospel. C.S. Lewis was given amazing writing talent – penning novels such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* – but the true gift of his writing talent was to help teach Christians. God takes teachers in classrooms and turns them into teachers in churches. God takes talented musicians and turns them into

members of the choir. God takes felons and turns them into prison ministers. God can use any circumstance in a person's life and turn it into a tool for the true harvest.

Yet, God's preparation for us is deeper even than that. God does not just prepare us for good works here on Earth. The Bible says, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Jesus is not just preparing us – his modern-day disciples – to bring more people to Christ. God is preparing us to receive and inherit his Kingdom. The same experiences He uses to bring you to Him, He is using to prepare you for Glory. Although everyone's gifts are different, when they come from Christ they carry the same basic principles. Those tools of forgiveness, love, compassion, and joy are badges of honor that God wants you to carry into Heaven. 

CHRISTIAN COMEDY **CORNER**

CAROLYN JACKSON
COLLIN DUNLAP

REMEMBER

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine"

Proverbs 17:22 (KJV)

What did the grape do when stepped on? It let out a little whine.



Noah asked God, "What should I use to make the ark out of?" God said, "Go for (gopher) wood."

St. Peter met a woman in heaven at the Pearly Gates. In order to get in he asked her to spell the best emotion. She spells L-O-V-E. So before he can open the gates, he receives a call that another batch is approaching and asks her to monitor the gate until he returns, and NOT let anyone in unless they pass the same spelling test. Up walks her ex-husband and says, "I'm surprised to see you

here!" She says, "In order to get in you have to spell ONE word correctly!" He smiles and asks, "What word?" She says, "Czechoslovakia!"

Mother: Well Mia, what did you learn in Sunday school today?


Mia: I learned about God and Cheez-It.

Mother: Oh you mean God and Jesus.

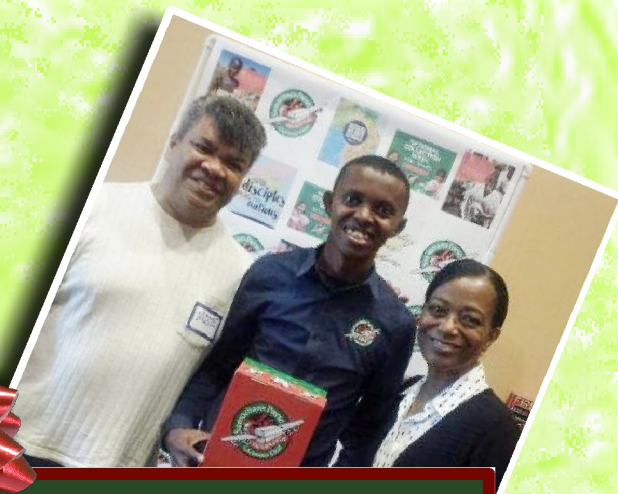
Mia: No, shaking her head, I mean God and Cheez-It.



Tyler's mom is on a diet. She wants to eat healthy, and she can have a "cheat" day. So on Monday she ate a box of Oreos. On Wednesday she went to Popeye's for fried chicken. On Thursday it was Rita's water ice. So Tyler said, "Mom you might as well forget it. You have five cheat days a month and you used three just this week! When does your diet start and your cheat days stop?"

Turn that frown upside down....**SMILE!!** 





Please help support the **Operation Christmas Child**
Drop Off Your Gift-Filled
Shoe Boxes In The Hospitality Room
NOW thru Nov. 17th

Dear Valued Reader,

If you have never participated in Operation Christmas Child (OCC) before it is our prayer that you will consider filling a shoe box this holiday season, and if you have done so in the past we "thank you" and it is our prayer that you will continue! As Janet and I attended the OCC Project Leaders regional meeting, the Holy Spirit pressed on our hearts to inquire which group of children receive the least support. We were informed that when children reach the age of 14 they are no longer allowed to receive shoe boxes and so this powerful witnessing tool may never reach children beyond that age and, consequently, limits their opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Boys Ages 10-14

received the least amount of shoe boxes. Therefore, we ask and strongly encourage our congregation and readers to focus on filling this year's shoe boxes for that demographic so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may reach these young men before they age out of the OCC program.

For ideas on what to pack visit:

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/what-goes-in-my-shoebox-suggestions/>

Last year we collected approximately 75 shoe boxes and would like to make

100 Shoe Boxes Our Goal for 2019

Complimentary shoe boxes may be picked up at the display table in the Hospitality Room while supplies last!

Janet and I are excited to share that while attending the Project Leaders regional meeting, we were blessed to meet and talk with Alex Nsengimana, a "full-circle" recipient of the OCC Shoe Box program. He has an amazing and incredible story on how receiving his shoe box eternally changed his life, and we invite you to read his testimony at:

<https://video.samaritanspurse.org/?s=alex>

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/shoebox-stories-alex/>

Janet and I are looking forward to joining our resources with all of you in a unified effort to bless children around the world and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them and their families!

In Love & In Christ...Mike & Janet Spry

DR. ANNA *McPhatter*
GETTING TO KNOW
MINISTER LINWOODCHILDS



OT he words of an anonymous British author: Whether the weather be fine, or whether the weather be not, whether the weather be cold, whether the weather be hot, we'll weather the weather, whatever the weather, whether we like it or not. This famous tongue twister speaks of having to confront things over which we may have little, if any, control. Sometimes you get caught in a storm, literally or figuratively, and you have to go through it regardless of how well you're prepared. It was my privilege to speak with Anna McPhatter a few weeks ago.

Linwood Childs: You are involved in major things in Baltimore, involving the repairing and supporting of our culture; sometimes first responders, at other times in the recovery of families from tragedy. It doesn't just happen. You have worked tirelessly to provide leadership and training to those who hold our society together. Given your current level of responsibilities, how important is the concept of being prepared, not just for yourself, but impactfully so for those whom you are trying to serve?

Anna McPhatter: Not just me, but what all of us who believe in Jesus Christ have to be really clear about, is that we don't know all the answers. Right? And we don't have to know all the answers,

because He already knows *all* of the answers. So, my preparedness is always to strive, for the most part, to be in touch with the idea that I am not in this by myself. I don't have to know all the answers, I just have to know who does and how to be in touch with His Spirit and be able to move all the noise out of my head so I can hear His direction. It keeps me centered in the midst of very chaotic situations as I practice my career as a social worker.

LC: How did you start your career?

AM: I started my career as social worker in a juvenile justice system and I directed a juvenile detention center. The little kids thought they were thugs—they had lots of family dysfunction issues, and I was moving kids in and out of homes. So, I had to find a way to be okay and calm in those crisis situations or else I'm useless. I didn't just wake up one day and I'm there, but over the years it happens as you get to have a stronger and stronger relationship with the Lord. This becomes clear: that keeping it together is the only way to become effective, and it comes by walking in His presence and other people see you in the strength of that light.

LC: You've helped everyday people and
(Continued on Page 11)

They can see
[Christ]
in how you
TREAT AND
RELATE TO
PEOPLE
even how you
forgive

Dr. Anna McPhatter





professionals ask and help answer the questions: What are you prepared to do? What are you psychologically, spiritually and intellectually prepared to do when confronting the major challenges of our current society?

AM: So, its education of course and it's extremely important.

LC: Anna McPhatter earned a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Missouri. The "i" is pronounced as a short a vowel. People from Missouri will correct or inform you if you say it wrong. Anna is from Missouri, I mean Missoura.

AM: Education provides you options that you might not otherwise have. Did you know that only about 30% of people have a college degree? Among African Americans only about 2% have doctorates. What that says to me is that getting a college education is really a very good thing. We want to encourage our kids in that direction. We can learn a lot of things about ourselves and about how things function. Yet there are people who doing fine and are making a living who don't have a degree. So it really is not the only way. But the most important thing or message you can give people is for them to understand and embrace who God is! Follow fully what He wants of us. Now in educational systems I cannot just come out with that sermon, yet they have to be able to clearly see

that message in me. As our pastor always says we are Christ's ambassadors. They can see that in how you treat and relate to people, even how you forgive those who may do things to you that are not good things. But it's challenging because you are working with people who are not like-minded.

A dear friend passed away recently, and her son came in the funeral home cursing like a sailor and carrying on. He was recently released from extended incarceration where he spent time reading. I felt he wanted to impress me with what he thought he knew. We got into a conversation and he let me know that he did not believe in Jesus. So at that moment I told him...

LC: Anna spoke these words as if he was right there in the room with us, with soft tones and measured speech.

AM: "... well I certainly believe in Him and I'm just on my way to heaven". But concerning Jesus, the young man wanted me to know he was not having any part of that. But you have to be able, in all those situations, to discern between all you've learned (i.e. education, information), and discern what it is God wants you to do with your life. He created you and He had all of this laid out before you were in your mother's womb. It not about the degrees you may have, God caused the opportunity for you to have that, but God wants you to use it and use it according to His purpose. I think that is



something we have to always be vigilant about.

LC: Why social work? Before Anna answered she laughed heartily as if I she had a burning secret I would not believe!

AM: At first I didn't know what I wanted to do. I went to the University of Missouri, with 20,000 white students, only 200 black students, and with just one black professor on the entire campus. It... was... challenging. I was never a great test-taker. So, a student guide told me directly that I was not going to make it here and that I should probably go to the junior college.

LC: She paused as if something was temporarily stuck in her throat.

AM: When I look back on it... oh! You have to keep remembering, because we can forget, that God has been there all along! When he said that I felt terrible, I thought, "I'm not good enough." I walked into the financial aid building and talked with a black man who was the head of the financial aid department. He tenderly and quietly said to me don't listen to that, you'll be fine. Now let's figure out how we're going to get through this. Years later I reminded him what he said, because we have to then tell others those same words also, "let's see

how were going to get through this." Don't listen to those voices that say you're not good enough and not going to make it. Black people get those messages a lot. Don't listen to them. When you start looking back, then you can see that the Lord was moving. I didn't see it then but looking back, God was there.

LC: I wanted to interrupt her with, "How did you get through that?" But no need, for precious memories had taken over the will.

AM: I stopped college for a while because I needed to work. I always had really good clerical skills, so I worked in an adult probation office as a secretary. One of the things that office had was social work interns. So, I would interact with them all the time. One day this man came in to see his probation officer, but he was busy, and the man had to wait. So, while he waited I talked with him. We talked and he told me about things that were going on. Not too much later his probation officer came out and saw him. But his probation officer spoke to me. He said, "I listened as you spoke with him, you're a natural... get back into to school! Look at social work as a career." I said, really, do you think that I... he said, "I don't *think I know*". I said, "Okay." So, it was social work. I was 19 then. This man was Bill Duncan, a white man, in Missouri! When

(Continued on Page 13)

you're in the right profession it feels like it belongs to you.

LC: Anna graduated undergraduate college in 1972.

AM: In Missouri, I headed up a juvenile detention center. We would get calls at various times. One late, late night I got a call from the police and they needed assistance. An awful tragedy occurred, a small girl was raped by a young teenager. Whenever the police are called for this, someone from juvenile justice is called. I'm out there with the girl and family making sure she's taken care of medically and returns back home to her family, all the while holding back my tears. The next morning when the young lad who did this was in my center!

That was a turning point for me. It was at that moment I realized I did not know enough to handle this. I very soon picked up the phone and called Atlanta University and enrolled in their graduate social work school.

LC: *[In 1977 a M.S.W., was conferred upon Anna from Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia; Concentration: Social Service Administration, Policy and Planning, Thesis topic: Factors that Influence Attitude and Behavior toward Alcohol Use in Black Adolescents]* Excellent. If I may ask, how did your family life prepare you for your career?

AM: Well... I'm doing fine now, but then, we were very poor. We picked cotton, by hand. In fact, in

*We can forget
that God
has been there
all along!*

Dr. Anna McPhatter





the small town we grew up in, that was the only work available. When the supplier changed and used machines to pick cotton it basically wiped out our town's economy. Not being prepared to do much else we went on welfare. Then the only to get welfare was if the father was NOT in the home. They would send white men out in the middle of the night to check if a man was in the house! If he was there you would lose your support. Of course dad would have to quickly leave when they showed up. I being the oldest of 12 children felt responsible for helping the others from being overly traumatized. I remember the white social workers coming to the house and totally disrespecting my mom and family.

LC: Anna described how she would barely contain her disdain with outbursts of her adolescent defense.

AM: I remember thinking, why did they have to be so mean.

LC: Anna had a strong Christian uncle who was known to speak openly to his community about his faith in Christ and how people, especially men, had a responsibility for their community.

AM: One day my uncle broke up a scuffle with this

young man and slapped him up behind his head and sent him off. Shortly afterward, while my uncle was working a tall ladder, the boy's father approached where my uncle and I were. He was cursing and swearing what he was going to do him. My uncle, who was not known for holding his peace started to come down from the ladder. With each step he took he recited out loud: Our Father...step...which art in heaven...another step down...hallowed be thy name...step...thy kingdom come...step. I stood back waiting to see what was going to happen! By the time he reached the ground God had changed that angry man's heart completely. I saw that grown man repent openly. These two men became the best of friends from that day on.

LC: *[Wow, look at God. Not only did Anna complete her Masters, but she earned her Doctorial degree in Social Work from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1988. Dissertation Topic: The Experience of Black Women Who Have Successfully Coped With Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood]* How did you get to Morgan?

DrM: I was at the University of Pittsburgh. Comfortable, well paid. The university had money and resources. I had a short teaching load, everything was cool. My office was on the 23rd

(Continued on Page 15)



floor in the Cathedral of Learning looking out over the city of Pittsburgh. One time I happened to be in Baltimore, and I bumped into someone I knew who worked at Morgan. He said take by business card I want to talk you. We exchanged cards. I took it but just dropped it into the bottom of my purse. So, he called me a couple of times telling me that there was a position at Morgan he wanted me to apply for. I replied politely, no thank you I'm good. I'm good.

He continued to call me several times in fact. I told one of my closest friends that I worked with at Pittsburgh about the offer. She said it would hurt my heart to lose you, but you should apply. I actually got mad at her. Why would you say something like that? He kept calling and calling. He called and requested that I submit my resume. I said, if I send you my resume will you stop calling me. I am not coming to that HBCU. No, I'm not doing that.

An hour after I sent it, then he called me back and said he showed it to Morgan's president, and he wants to know what do we have to do to get you to come? I told him I'm flattered but I'm just not going to do that. I'm so sorry but I'm not coming.

Later at home, while contemplating this, my 13-year-old son walks by and got him to stop long

enough to ask. They've been trying to get me to come to Morgan, what do you think about that? He asked, "Mom why did you become a social worker?" I responded with the typical stuff, I wanted to help people and make a difference. He asked, "Who needs you the most?" He turned around and went back into his room and left me standing there. So, I did agree to come down for the interview. After the interview I said to myself, I'm definitely not coming. Back at Pittsburgh I went. I was just about to cross the street to go into the building where I worked, when things changed. I'm talking with the Lord: I don't want to do this, besides I'm a faculty member not an administrator, I don't know how to do this. I don't really think I can do that. Here's how the Lord has to sometimes work. While I'm waiting to cross, I hear a voice so loud and clear that I turn around to see who it was that's talking to me, and the Voice said, "I would not send you *anywhere* that I'm not going with you." Immediately, He sent the peace I needed. I came and I have *never* regretted it! It's been 25 years since that time. When I say that with our own educated and rational minds we think we can figure stuff out, sometimes God has to bang our heads so we can hear.

LC: Dr. Anna McPhatter has spent 35 years teaching Undergraduate, Masters and Doctoral Programs in the field of Social Work. The last 25



years founding the current School of Social Work at Morgan State University.

DrM: I no longer teach classes, but administer the programs.

LC: That was an understatement. Over the last 16+ years Dr McPhatter has research projects funded in the millions of dollars, authored and published many scholarly articles that address our society and effective approach to healing, coupling willing hands together with prepared heads. She also recently co-authored a book in her field.


DrM: It has been an experience working with young people. Seeing what a difference it makes. When you have to get up into their face!!! I don't teach anymore now, but I would have to come from behind the podium and sit down in front of the podium and have a parental moment! When you have to stop being the professor and talk to these young brothers and sister for a second for some real talk. "You're not getting your assignments done because you're lazy and undisciplined. But it's not fatal. I'm going to help you with that. So, all that stuff (excuses) you're talking, I'm not listening to that!"

This one young woman (you may describe her as a

hot mess!), she laid me out. She didn't know that I was the Department Chair. She was angry and disrespectful and all of that. I listened to her and I said to her, "You know with that attitude you're not going very far." Her reply, "Well ya'all can't be tellin' me what to do...." "By the time she got to graduation you would *not* have known her. That happens a lot at Morgan, which is what I love about working at there. They are trying. These students come, they are barely making it, but they're trying. Some come seeking financial aid to help support their mom or to pay a light bill. Then they see the flame, catch the fire and they stay. You see their changes, then they begin to see how *they* can make a difference and they see how they can help somebody. This is way I stay.

Now that experience of actually hearing a voice when there was not a soul there but me had never happened to me before and has never happened since. So it was what my 13-year-old told me, asking why are you doing this anyway? Because it is something I'm really passionate about. I think others can see it.

Several years ago, a young man came into my office and he was just weeping. I asked what was wrong! He said the health department called his home, and I went down there and they told me that
(Continued on Page 17)



I have HIV. He could hardly breathe. I'm just sitting there, in his mind he had a death sentence. And he had a little girl also who was less than a year old and he showed me her picture. I must have spent about 2 hours talking to him trying to get him to understand that you *have* to believe that you're *going* to live. Look at this little girl of yours. Well I looked up last year and that brother was in my Master's program! I saw him and he ran to me and we hugged and hugged and hugged. He's still here and doing things to help somebody else.

I was telling the recent Ph'd student group last week, that when you see Morgan's 1500 students walk across the graduation stage each year with a degree and their lives have changed, and their family's lives change, and their community changes, then you know you're doing something you're suppose to be doing. You know what is really happening, that it is kind of a metamorphosis occurring. They're getting very serious about what is going on in our society. There is about seven of them in this class. They are just serious, saying things like, "We have to be part of the solution." "We have to do the research to understand these social issues that are bringing down our city." These students are very mature. Sometimes we get some who are there because they are enamored by someone calling them 'doctor'. Sometimes we have

people who feel they can jive their way through the program. Oh, by the end of the first semester they figure out that that is not going to work. But these seem to have a real drive, passion and purpose as to why they are there. They remind me of when I got to the point where I realized that I needed more education, because what I knew wasn't cutting it. They are entering these studies with a very high level of interest and drive. It's hard to be in this city and this area and not be affected by it.

The students want to be part of the solution. For the most part they are practicing social workers who are coming back to get their doctorates. These have been in the social trenches, and they are trying to make sense of it. Right? That's a really good thing. But I had to warn them, because most of them still work full time jobs, that with this program their life is about to change and they had better really learn what time management means. You cannot continue to do the all the things you've been doing.

My students are extremely concerned with what is going on in our society. *They* have to *do* the research to understand these social issues. Some people are enamored about the title of doctor, or PhD, but they just want to be part of the solution to these major social problems that bring down our cities. They have a sincere drive with a purpose affected by what is happening around them.



LC: In 2014 Dr. Anna McPhatter, the Dean of the School of Social Work served as the Chair of the Search Committee that appointed Morgan's 2015's former Provost, Gloria Gibson. Four years later, Dr. McPhatter accepted the year-long position as Interim Provost after Gibson resigned to serve as the first African American female president at Northeastern Illinois University in 2018. Dr. McPhatter was offered the permanent provost position but declined. The President of Morgan, Dr. Wilson appointed Dr. McPhatter as the Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs in June 2018, to serve until a permanent replacement was named.

DrM: When Morgan's senior leadership told me I needed to be on a conference call at 4:30 in the morning, I simply asked, "Why?" Their response was because we have to make a decision about whether we are going to close or open the university because of the weather. Asking further, I pressed, why do I need to be on the call. Well because you're head of Academic Affairs, and your decision affects the classes and events which impact the school's academic schedule. Oh, you cannot be serious, 4:30 am...ugh...7 people trying to make a decision about the weather! This was just a sample, because that year was non-stop and never disconnecting. It was literally *the* most challenging

thing I've ever faced. In my dean's role at the end of the day, I could leave work somewhat behind, go home and clean my house, or cook if I wanted to, or do I don't know what, whatever. That was *never* even possible while in that position, it was non-stop, meaning non-stop with one crisis after the other. I would say the President and senior administrators, do you all know what work-life balance is? Seriously! I believe in it!

But it was an extraordinary experience that made me go even deeper, in terms of understanding. It made me painfully aware of my personal walk and who I am. Not really bothered with likes it or not. "No, I don't drink, no thank you." I talk about my church, I tell my colleagues that I believe in Divine intervention. It strengthened me and I don't have to change who I am to fit into this. I need to let people know who I am, what is important to me.

LC: How do you manage staying in your lane? You're confronted with so many different things, pulled in many different directions, all of which needs attention. How do you say, I have to hand this off for someone else to handle?

DrM: Brother Childs, I've gotten a lot better at it. I have l-e-a-r-n-e-d slowly, because I'm a doer. On any given day I could get 200 emails. I had
(Continued on Page 19)



prided myself in getting a response back to people within 24 hours. I couldn't even get to the emails! You know what I learned? You don't have to do everything yourself. Instead of waiting for it to be done, my usual is get in there and get it done. As I chair my executive board meetings, now I may say, "That's a really good idea. Work on an approach and get back to me on what you come up with."

LC: In August 2019, Dr. McPhatter returned to her first love, Social Work. She approached Morgan's president with another major initiative.

DrM: Have each major provide an intern program which shows students how to impart their skills and knowledge back to the black community. Engineering, IT, Accounting, all the disciplines need to see how important they are to the entire community, especially the local black community.

Then we can measure our impact and know how effective we are.

LC: Dr. Wilson, Morgan's president, loved it so much he just made her special assistant to the president just to get it done. Morgan State

University, being in a black urban setting, finds itself engulfed in many of the same vicissitudes of the surrounding society. Its culture, like that of most

I don't
have to
change
who
I am

Anna McPhatter



HBCU's, has been described as a black social microcosm overlaid with regional idiosyncrasies. For some a perfect storm, for others a golden opportunity. Education can be similar to being handed rain gear years before the storm. Like that anonymous English writer, Dr. McPhatter believes, not by word alone, but by copious selfless deeds, that we must help others to weather the weather, whatever the weather, whether we like it the weather or not.



His Purpose Deep In Our Hearts

LET US PRAY
ANGELA HUNT BONITTO

page 20
the ENCOURAGER magazine

Are you unsatisfied with your life or believe you are supposed to be doing more with your life? Be of good courage you were born with God-given purpose and your fulfillment, satisfaction and peace of mind are all tied to that purpose! Here are few points I believe will help you get closer to understanding why you are here on this earth:

Point #1: Ecclesiastes 3:1 says “There is a season for everything and a time for every delight and event or purpose under heaven.”

Point #2: Timothy 1:9 says “for He delivered us and saved us and called us with a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of His own purpose and grace, which was granted to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Point #3: Romans 11:29 says “for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

Point #4: Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed and progressively changed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is that which is good, and acceptable and perfect.”

You may wonder, “How do I find my purpose?” First, Proverbs 20:18 says, “every purpose is established by counsel”. Our Bible tells us which counselor to inquire of concerning our purpose.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The

Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Our counselor is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ! He is not just any counselor. He is our Wonderful Counselor! When we seek His counsel, there is no possibility of failing because His counsel is excellent (Isaiah 28:29).

Now bare in mind when asking, "Lord, what is my purpose?" He will answer you, but according to Hebrews 5:13-14, “He will answer immediately, but how we hear depends on our level of spiritual growth and development. In his book, "The Crossover", Dr. Demetrius A. Jackson states that Mark 4:20 puts it plainly, “The people who are attentive, quick to listen, quick to obey, quick to forgive and quick to repent, effortlessly hear God's voice and act on His Word”, and "The people who are distracted, slow to listen, slow to obey, slow to forgive and slow to repent, have a harder time hearing from God" (Mark 4:14-19). Which one will you be... attentive or distracted? It's up to you.

Let Us Pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank you for reminding us that You created us with a purpose in mind. Help us to incline our ears to You that we may hear clearly what our purpose is. If we are distracted, remove those distractions, Lord. Our intent is to serve You and to be agents of change on this earth for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Solitude or Isolation

FEATURED **ARTICLE**
KIM ODOMS-BOLDEN



In four months I will have been out of work for two years. Exhausted savings, no regular income, no retirement, no unemployment insurance, no monetary Welfare, and no SSDI at this time. Even today when I think about my current circumstance I am simply, unbelievably overwhelmed with our God.

Years ago I remember hearing and later reading in the book of Malachi, “‘Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My (God’s) house. Test Me in this,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,’ says the LORD Almighty” (Malachi 3:10-12 NIV). The Message Bible version states, “Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in My Temple. Test Me in this and see if I don’t open up the heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.”

I had and still often hear people say when you experience crises you will find out who your real friends are. In fact I was experiencing a period in my life when I was hugely underwhelmed with the world and people. I found myself looking for any scriptures that may be aligned with the often heard cliché, “No man is an island.” I did so because before isolating people from my life a very small part of me wanted to know what God thought about it. In my head, I knew that choosing isolation was a tool in the devil’s tool belt to steal, kill, and destroy. But my heart thought different. I could not

**“I could not
figure out why I should
have anything to do with
any people”**

KIM ODOMS BOLDEN

figure out why I should have anything to do with any people. This included family, friends, and the church. I felt unloved, betrayed, invaluable, and even persecuted by some family members, people who I called, chose to befriend, and by

people who call themselves Christians. In the Bible, in the book of Job in Chapter 19:14 Job stated, “My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.” In verse 19 Job stated, “All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved turned against me.” King David stated, “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Psalm 41:9). Jesus said to Judas who He knew would betray Him and sold Him to be killed, “Do what you came for, friend” (Matthew 26:50).

What I knew unequivocally, was that God knew what I was going through and He indeed had allowed it. I know the Word is a like a balm in Gilead. It’s like putting Neosporin, a triple anti-biotic ointment, on an open wound that gives immediate pain relief and soothes the wound. After reading the above scriptures I did not feel the comfort, or pain relief I believed the balm would provide to heal my broken heart. Something I had grown to expect and feel almost immediately after reading God’s Word. Where was God’s ram in the bush? I kept reading and there it was: Jesus stated, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” Then Jesus further stated, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit-fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you” (John 15:15-16).

It is WELL with me. Jesus calls me friend. Jesus chose me to be a friend of His. It appeared I was alone but that was far from the truth. It was God who said He alone would never forsake us. The devil's tool is isolation, but God had allowed solitude. God's plan of not allowing those who I thought should be there and some who may have somehow desired to reach out and help me was so I could draw closer to Him and further mature spiritually causing me to totally rely on Him alone. Hence, bearing and ultimately growing fruit that would last beyond earthly relationships. All of a sudden it became clear.

I believe with every fiber of my being the blessing of the LORD Almighty unilaterally sustains me by His unchanging ALMIGHTY hand. God's provisions may not have come by the way I thought and who I thought but, ultimately, it was God all by Himself who sent people who came along side me that I never expected. God prepared me emotionally, physically, and spiritually for what He alone knew was on my horizon.

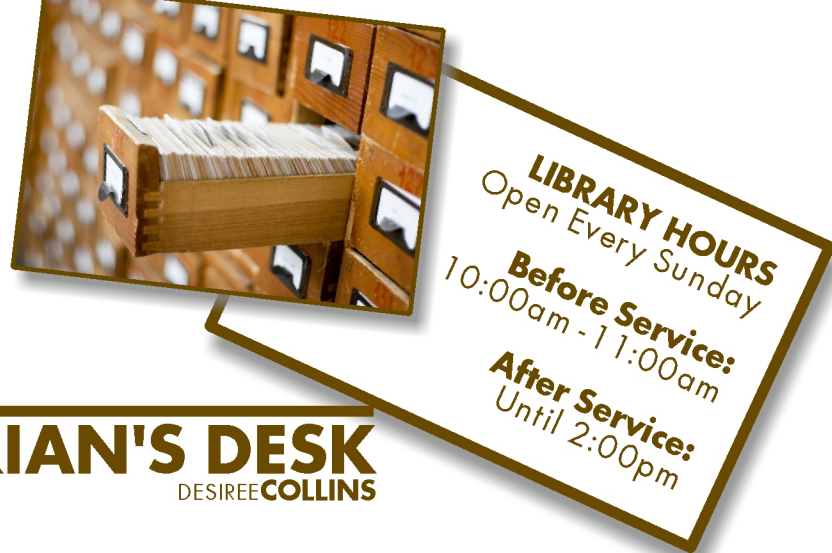
In Malachi God told me He would open the floodgates of heaven and pour out blessings beyond

my wildest dreams. Albeit, this journey has taught me valuable lessons. Some who call themselves friends are not. Family is family I love them the same. Not everyone who calls themselves a Christian is a Christian. Reading the Word, seeking God, applying the Word, and being obedient to

God's commands as provided in Malachi prepares us for life's challenges. I had indeed tested His promise and I believe the obedience of tithing bore fruit that emphatically was God's preparation for what He knew was imminent and is directly, partially, tied to

His financial blessings and His chosen rewards. I am appreciative to those who have been obedient to God's call. For that I thank Him and them. When the broken pieces of my heart are repaired some pieces will remain undone. Away from me they lay and away from me they will stay. I yield my will and allow God to leave out the pieces that mean me no good. I choose solitude over isolation. God alone has done exceedingly and abundantly more than I could think or ask. Indeed He will continue to do just that and, again, I thank Him. An ounce of preparation is worth a pound of reward!





THE LIBRARIAN'S DESK

DESIREE COLLINS

God's way is not our way and thank God for that! If God's way was our way, we would be where "hope is a stranger". Often times in life it appears to us that God is not listening or hearing a single word we are saying. We wait in silence; has God forgotten us? Hold on...silence from God is often a time of serious preparation. God is simply "preparing us" in ways we cannot fully comprehend. 2 Peter 3:8-9 tells us, "But do not forget this one thing, dear friend: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness."

Much like the dormant winter season, when the earth seems silent and cold, we know that Winter is preparing itself for Spring, when everything comes back to life. Just as there are seasons in our life when God seems dormant...are you maximizing that time in prayer and meditation?

Going deep within, requires spending serious time seeking God's face. That doesn't mean nothing is happening. Sometimes God has to prepare us internally before we can handle what will happen externally. Rest assured God's timing is perfect. He is in control and He doesn't make mistakes. Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 tells us that there is a "time for everything, and a season for every activity under Heaven."

Because God's ways are not our ways, we may think we are ready for something we may not be ready for. We never want to make the mistake of getting ahead of God's plan for us. Timing is everything. It's better to be standing still in His will than moving full speed into troubled water. Solitude and Waiting are not Human beings favorite past time.

In Philippians 4:7 God gives us a wonderful promise: "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your heart and your minds in Christ Jesus". God's supernatural peace surpasses natural understanding. God is not waiting for situations to come into our lives so He can prepare us. He calls "those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). Recall how God prepared and protected Noah and his family from the flood.

Stay faithful to the Word and persevere in obedience. We can live fearless, embolden lives no matter what is going on around us because we know that God has prepared us by giving us His "Living Word", the Bible.

In our spiritual journey God prepares us toward "Christ likeness". Trusting God is a lifelong adventure and journey. Build your prayer life. Continually talk to God, thank Him and ask Him for His help. Stuff happens, life happens, but God has and will continue to prepare us.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:





ON THE INSIDE COVERS

Inside Front: Congregant Sommer Joe takes time to acknowledge the camera during CCC's 40th Anniversary Banquet on April 26, 2019
Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2019

Inside Back: The Men's Choir lift their hands in praise during worship service on August 11, 2019
Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2019

COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

8516 Thomas Williams Way
P.O. Box 2292
Columbia, MD 21045

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY:

10:00 AM Church School (All Ages)
11:00 AM Meditation & Prayer
11:15 AM Morning Worship

COMMUNION SERVICE:

1st Sunday of Every Month

EVERY WEDNESDAY:

Noon-Day Prayer 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Noon-Day Bible Study 12:00 PM - 01:00 PM
Evening Prayer 07:30 PM - 08:00 PM
Evening Bible Study 08:00 PM - 09:00 PM

1st & 3rd WEDNESDAYS:

Youth Bible Study 07:00 PM - 08:00 PM

GENERAL INFORMATION

CARE & COMFORT MINISTRY

Sis. Linda M. Byrd: 410-313-9673 / Sis. Donna Givhan / 410-997-3276
columbiamdcareandcomfort@gmail.com

CHURCH CONTACTS

Phone: 410-465-7040 / Fax: 410-465-0943
Church Website: www.columbiaccmd.org

CHURCH LIBRARY

Open Every Sunday 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM and after service until 2:00 PM