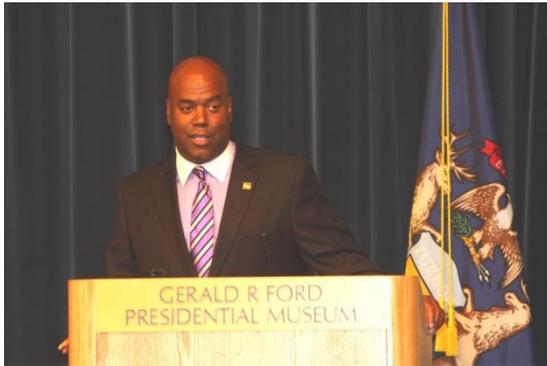


You are invited to attend the Golden Rule International Award Ceremony

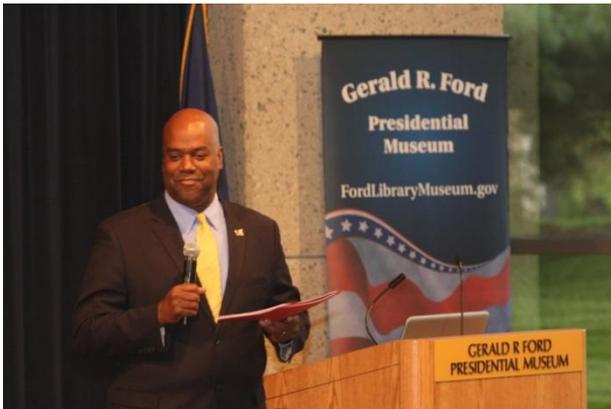
Dr. John W. Smith Golden Rule International Award Recipient



**Ambassador Dr. Clyde Rivers,
Representative for the Interfaith Peace-
building Initiative to the United Nations in
New York and African Union.**

Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum
303 Pearl St NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Friday, April 17, 2015 6:00-8:00 pm.



May 31, 2013



August 22, 2014

On March 10, 2015 I received this letter:

Dear Dr. John Smith,

It has come to our attention that you have the heart and compassion towards others where you have exemplified "Treating Others the Way You Want to Be Treated". Our office has come to know that you impacted your community with trust, dignity and have improved the quality of life by those you have touched through your humanitarian leadership under the organization which you serve.

Please accept our heartiest Congratulations on becoming one of our next recipients of the Golden Rule International Award.

Golden Rule International is affiliated with the Interfaith Peace-Building Initiative Organization, Department of Public Information of United Nations. As a selected member of the Golden Rule International Alumni, your Proclamation will be submitted to the United Nations as a legal document by Dr. Mussie Hailu, Founder and Board Chairman of the Interfaith Peace-building Initiative, to implement a policy of peace. This will carry forth, that on April 5th will be recognized around the World as the Golden Rule Day.

Award ceremony will be held publicly at The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan on Friday April 17th 2015 at 6:00-8:00pm. Whereas, Ambassador Clyde Rivers the Representative for the Interfaith Peace-building Initiative to the United Nations in New York and African Union will personally present honors upon receipt of your confirmation. Nominees are solely responsible for all expenses incurred during their travels to and from the event, everyone is invited.

The Golden Rule Meet & Greet is on April 18th 2015 from 9:00am-12:00pm at the JW Marriot Resort, Salon C. The introducing & launch of the Human Rights Global Congress™ will follow from 4:00pm-6:00pm in the same room.

Once again it's a great honor that you have been selected for this highly esteemed award as your Proclamation becomes a part of history to a new World Policy.

With Up-Most Respect,

Dr. Brian Williams, Associate Director of the North American Division

You are invited to attend the Golden Rule International Award Ceremony

Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum 303 Pearl St NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Friday, April 17, 2015 6:00-8:00 pm.



You are invited to attend the Ordination Worship Service
For International Ministry in Africa
John W. Smith, M.Div., D. Min.



**Dr. John W. Smith with
Bishop John Williams, President
Central Bible Ministries International**

Pastors serving on the John W. Smith Presbytery:

- Bishop John Williams, Central Bible Ministries International
- Rev. Dan Oglesby, Living Word Christian Center
- Rev. James Stokes, New Life Tabernacle Church of God in Christ
- Dr. Dennis McMurray, Renaissance Church of God in Christ
- Rev. Nathaniel Moody, Brown-Hutcherson Ministries
- Rev. Eula Gaddis, The Prince of Peace Missionary Baptist Church
- Rev. Stedford Sims, Step of Faith Ministries, Sherman Street CRC



Living Word Christian Center 1534 Kalamazoo SE Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Sunday, April 19, 2015 4:30 pm.

Ordination Worship Service

For International Ministry in Africa

John W. Smith, M.Div., D. Min.

Living Word Christian Center 1534 Kalamazoo SE Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Sunday, April 19, 2015 4:30 pm.



Order of Service

Welcome and Prayer	Rev. James Stokes, New Life Tabernacle Church of God in Christ
Praise and Worship	Church Choirs and Praise Teams
Old Testament Reading	Rev. Nathaniel Moody, Brown-Hutcherson Ministries
New Testament Reading	Rev. Eula Gaddis, The Prince of Peace Missionary Baptist Church
“Reach Out”	Substance — Orlando Rodriguez
Prayer of Blessing	Dr. Dennis McMurray, Renaissance Church of God in Christ
Ordination	Bishop John Williams and Presbytery
Foot Washing	Bishop John Williams
Charge to the Pastor	Rev. Dan Oglesby, Living Word Christian Center
“My Tribute” — Andre Crouch	Rev. George Davis, From The Heart Church
Message	Bishop John Williams, Central Bible Ministries International
“Do Something”	Matthew West (Recording)
Closing Prayer	Rev. Stedford Sims, Step of Faith Ministries, Sherman Street CRC

Our adventure in faith — learning to trust God . . .

During our senior year at Western Theological Seminary, my wife Sue and I prayed a dangerous prayer: “Lord we will go wherever you want us to go, and we will do whatever you call us to do.”



God answered our prayer when He called me to serve as the Associate Pastor of New Life Community Church, Sayville, Long Island, New York. After serving faithfully for eight years as the Associate Pastor, the Senior Pastor accepted a call to a church in California.

After much prayer and soul searching, I allowed myself to be one of the candidates in a nation-wide search for Senior Pastor. At the end of the search process, I was called to serve as Senior Pastor. God empowered me to serve in that role for fifteen years.



I will always remember when the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City collapsed into heaps of rubble after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

This photo captures a powerful reminder, that when the center of the world's financial power and influence collapsed—the only thing left standing was an old rugged cross made of steel.

The events and aftermath of September 11 had a profound and lasting impact on my life and ministry.



Very early on Sunday morning, January 6, 2002, I asked the Holy Spirit to speak to my heart through God's Word. He answered my cry and spoke to my heart through Genesis 12:1 “The LORD said to Abram, ‘Leave your native land, your relatives, your father's home, and go to a country that I am going to show you.’” I wrote in my prayer journal, “WOW! That was clear!” Then, during both morning worship services, God spoke to my heart again. He confirmed that He was calling me to leave the safety and security of my position as Senior Pastor of New Life Community Church — and go to a new thing He would show me.

I embraced God's call, surrendered to His will, shared it with my wife Sue, and made it official with the Elder who was Vice-President of our church board that evening. I told him I wanted his help to discern who I should tell, when I should tell them, and what would be my final day at New Life Community Church.

We are one of the few pastoral families who were able to serve in one church for twenty-three years (June 24, 1979 – June 24, 2002).

In February, 2002 I attended the National Pastors Convention in San Diego. On Sunday morning, February 17, 2002, the last day of the convention, God did two very significant works in my heart.

First, God gave me a new calling and a new dream for ministry — to become a pastor to pastors and their families. I have relentlessly pursued God's dream and vision since February 17, 2002.

I served for two years with Alongside, Inc., (2003 – 2004). Alongside provides three week Renewal and Growth Sabbaticals for Missionaries and Pastors.

In January of 2005, I founded the Great Lakes Region of PastorCare Network, Inc. I have enjoyed the privilege of coaching and encouraging hundreds of pastors and spouses. During 2009 and 2010 I also served as the National Director of PastorCare Network during a critical time of transition.



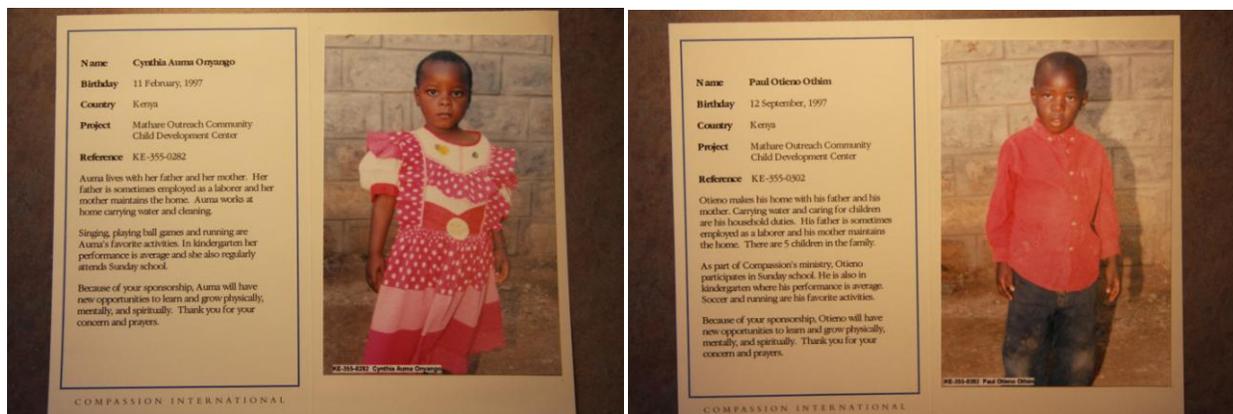
PastorCare
West Michigan
Helping Pastors Soar

Since the fall of 2011, I have been serving as the Executive Director of PastorCare West Michigan.

As I reflect back on my pastoral ministry in New York, I can plainly see that God was preparing me for a specialized ministry where I do more listening than speaking. I do more encouraging than exhorting. I do more ministry one on one behind the scenes, than standing alone on a platform speaking to large crowds. God continues to use every experience of my pastoral ministry as I coach and encourage pastors and spouses. After more than a decade of experience coaching and encouraging pastors—I believe every pastor needs a pastor.

I love being a pastor to pastors! My passion for this ministry never wavers. I believe God will continue to use me to coach and encourage pastors and spouses until Jesus returns, or God calls me home.

The second work God did in my heart on February 17, 2002 was to draw me to the table for Compassion International. As I began to look at the photographs of children, God whispered in my heart to adopt two children from a country I had some emotional connection with and would like to travel to some day. I immediately thought of our dear friend Deb who was a missionary in Kenya for many years. As I looked into the eyes of the children from Kenya, my heart was drawn to Cynthia and to Paul. I took the cards with their photos, filled out the paperwork, and began sponsoring them.



Here are excerpts from two letters dated March 9, 2015, put alongside our most recent photos.

My name is Reverend Victor Okeyo and I am the pastor of the Mathare Community Outreach Child Development Center. This Center is in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya, situated in Mathare Valley, which is the second largest dwelling slum in Nairobi with a population of more than one million people.

I take this opportunity to thank you and appreciate the noble task you have undertaken to help Cynthia Auma Anyango, who really needs the support that you have continuously provided. Your support has enabled Auma to continue attending school year after year.



Cynthia Auma Onyango Born Feb 11, 1997

When we came to minister in this area it was not easy but later we realized that we could reach the community through children. This being a slum, drug abuse, brewing of illegal drinks and all sorts of thugs was the norm of the day and most people in the community were and are still living under poor conditions. There is very little access to clean water and electricity and the houses in the area are of mud and old iron sheets.

The children who are in our sponsorship program have a good future as they get formal education as opposed to other children within the community who have taken to the streets. This process has made the vision of the children to become better and responsible fulfilled Christian adults a reality.

On behalf of the church, the center, the child and the community I personally thank you for the noble task you have taken to help a child whose future was bleak. Thank you and God bless you.

My name is Rev. Fredrick Muvengei, associate Pastor in the Redeemed Gospel Church, and pastor of the Huruma Child Development Center, which is attended by your sponsored child. We have been partnering with Compassion International in releasing children from all forms of poverty in Jesus name since 1993. Our Church center is located approximately 5 km East of Nairobi. We thank you for sponsoring Paul Otieno Othim.



Paul Otieno Othim Born Sep 12, 1997

The center is located in the heart of Mathare informal settlement, which has a population of approximately 800,000 people. The living standard of this population is very low with the majority of people living below a dollar a day. Cramped shanties, poor sanitation and lack of sewerage systems and poor communication systems are some of the characteristics of this area.

The poverty of this population has forced people to engage in illegal economic activities, which include child labor, child prostitution, illicit brewing, and robbery with violence, drug peddling and general insecurity in the area.

The center has developed different professionals out of the formerly sponsored children, including pastors, Evangelists, lawyers, economists, teachers, and nurses. My vision to this community is a community free from all form of poverty including spiritual, social, physical, as well as economic poverty.

Receiving a letter is like receiving love from their sponsor, and children know that someone values them. For some children, this is the first time they know they are loved and valued, and it makes a big impact in their lives. I hope you will remember and write to Otieno often.

Cynthia and Paul will both turn eighteen this year. My heart's desire is to visit them in Kenya. It would be awesome to see them, hug them, bless them, encourage them, and pray with them! I would also love to visit Pastor Victor Okeyo, and Pastor Fredrick Muvengei. I want to thank them, bless them, and encourage them to continue in this important ministry God has called them to.

Over a decade ago, the Holy Spirit began prompting me to build relationships with African American Pastors in the area. My wife Sue and I have worshiped in many African American churches. We have been ministered to and inspired by these wonderful, Spirit-filled, African American Pastors. We have grown spiritually and we have been blessed in so many ways. Please enjoy some of the photos I have taken of African American pastors and spouses.



Pastor Dan Oglesby and grandson Delvin



Rev. Jo Ann and Rev. Dan Oglesby



Rev. George Davis



Rev. Stedford Sims



Pastor James, Jevana, and MacKenzie Stokes



Pastor Jeffrey and Joann Stokes



Rev. Eula and Enid Gaddis



Rev. Fredric and Kan'Dace Brock



Rev. Jerry Bishop



Dr. Clifton Rhodes, Jr.



Rev. Howard Earle, Jr.



Dr. Eric Price, Jr.



Dr. Vicki Harris



Dr. Curley Bell



Rev. Bill & Lyn VandenBosch and Rev. James Jones



Rev. Chico and Vanessa Daniels



Apostle David and Prophetess Donna Spearman



Minister Garrett Fox



Rev. Harold Tyler, Jr.



Rev. Reuben Richardson



Rev. Darrel Delaney



Rev. Ken and Sheronda Hoskins



Rev. Eric Williams



Evangelist Katina Aker



Minister Demetrio Dockery



Rev. Kyle Ray



Rev. Jathan Austin



Rev. Veverly Austin



First Lady Abney



Assistant Pastor Anthony Kirkland



Dr. Dennis and Dr. E. Jean McMurray



Parris & Fallon, ChaVon, Jean, Dennis, Austin



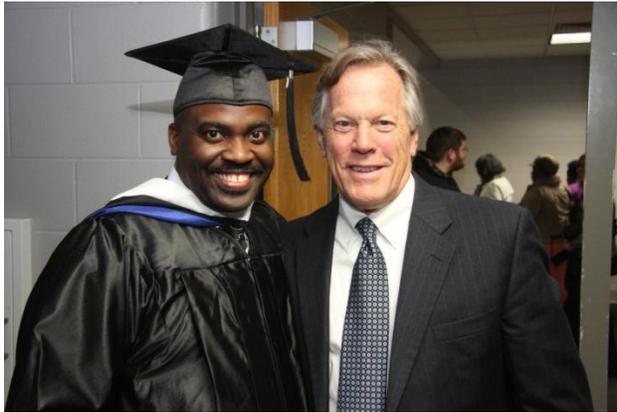
Rev. Leonard Gant

Dr. Charlie Jones

Dr. Clifton Rhodes, Jr.



Dr. Wayne and Jan Schmidt, Rev. Nathaniel and Laura Moody, Rev. Kyle and Petra Ray, Rev. Chico and Vanessa Daniels, Rev. Eula and Enid Gaddis, Rev. Dan and Jo Ann Oglesby, Dr. John and Sue Smith



Rev. James Stokes and Dr. Joe Stowell



Minister Lisa Butler & Pastor Doriane Parker-Sims



Dr. Jermone and Erica Glenn



Pastor JR and Evette Pittman



Wayburn and Janae Dean



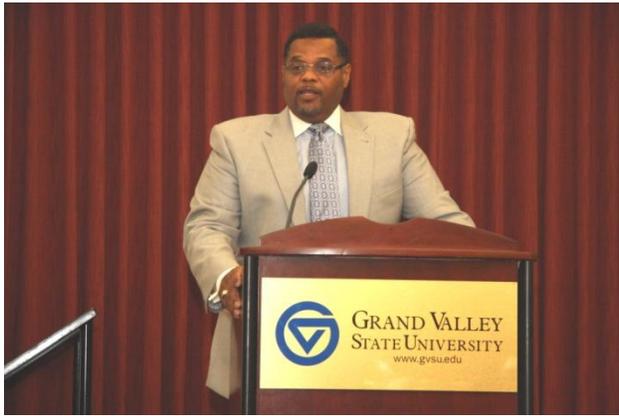
Rev. Artie and Raquel Lindsay with Tony Jolliffi



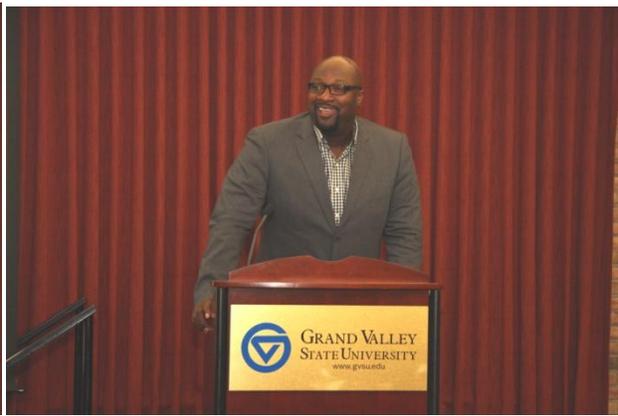
Rev. Robert Dean and Substance (Orlando Rodriguez)



Ernest Tisdale, Youth Pastor



Rev. Nathaniel Moody



Rev. Alton Hardy



Parris McMurray, Youth Pastor



Noele Stith, Youth Minister



Dr. Timothy Harris



Rev. Dorothy Jenkins



Minister Veruynca Williams



Minister Ron Fleming



Rev. Troy Evans



Rev. Thomas Wilson



Dr. John Perkins



Dr. R.A. Vernon



Dr. John Smith and Dr. Jones Morris



Dr. Marvin Sapp



Rev. Joe Jones



Rev. Stedford Sims and Bishop John Williams

This is only a partial list of the wonderful African American Pastors in Grand Rapids.

Grand Rapids — we are truly blessed!

We experience a foretaste of heaven in worship!







On October 16, 2010, Pastor Dan Oglesby asked me to join his staff at Living Word Christian Center as an Associate Pastor. He said he needed my wisdom, maturity, and years of experience in ministry. He said, "I can't pay you anything, but I need you on my team." I prayed about it, followed the Spirit's leading and accepted the invitation to serve the Lord and help my friend.



I had the awesome privilege of serving under Pastor Oglesby and Lady O. for two years. It was an incredible time of learning and growth. I was exposed to new things in praise and worship, in personal relationship with God, and the power of the Holy Spirit to heal, restore, and empower us for life and service in the Kingdom of God.



On January 4, 2013, I received a phone call from Dr. John Barner at Focus on the Family regarding Lionel and Melissa Awasing. Lionel is from Cameroon, Africa. His wife Melissa is from Alma, MI. They met and got married, and she became pregnant, in Korea. Melisa told me that her husband Lionel arrived in the U.S. three weeks ago. He just received word that his father died in Africa. According to African tradition, as the oldest son, it is his responsibility to make all the arrangements to bury his father. He needed \$1,800 for the plane ticket back to Cameroon, plus money for the funeral arrangements. I told her I would send a check and I would send out an email appeal to other friends to try to raise more money for them. God granted us favor, and he was able to return to Cameroon to bury his father.





On June 14, 2013, my wife Sue prepared a delicious meal to share with three people God connected me with from Cameroon. These three men from Cameroon quickly became friends and discovered they had many mutual friends in Cameroon. It was such a fun evening! We all became friends and we have stayed in touch with each other.



I had met Katie Pouga on May 8, 2013, when she was working as the Community School Coordinator at Harrison Park School. She told me about her husband Zach when I noticed the photo of the two of them in her office. Zach is an attorney and he took a position in the law office of Ernst & Young in New York city. They moved to New York just a few days after we have them to our house for dinner. I connected Zach with my friend Heather Pearson, who is an Assistant District Attorney with the Manhattan DA's office. She also welcomed them to Redeemer Presbyterian Church.



My friend Eric Verstraete, introduced me to his friend Jean (last name omitted for safety), a refugee from Cameroon. He is highly educated and trained. He has 15 years of experience in business in both Africa and the U.S. He has his BA, Masters, MBA, and DBA in Entrepreneurship & Business Management — Logistics Management. He is the winner of Exxon Mobil Global Merit Award for his "Outstanding Contribution to the Vision and Values of Exxon Mobil Organization. He is the President and CEO, Harvard Consulting USA. He also teaches as an Adjunct Professor of Management at Grand Valley State University.



My friend Adam Dabaja introduced me to Sunday "Sunny" Daleng on September 1, 2013. I took them out to lunch we became friends as I listened to his heart and passion for Africa.

Sunny is the Nigeria National Coordinator for One Hope. Their Mission Statement: To affect destiny by providing God's eternal Word to all the children and youth of the world. We don't define success by how many children we touch with God's Word-but by the impact we see on the lives of the children we reach.



Sunny and Salome also minister with Peniel Outreach.

They are blessed with four children: Grace, Jason, Victoria, and Mari Beth.

They live and serve in Lagos, Nigeria.



My daughter Sarah had many good friends at New Life Community Church on Long Island. But there was one special friend that I thank God for on a regular basis. Her name was Theresa Andersen. She truly loved Sarah at a time when Sarah needed it the most.

Today, Theresa lives in Nairobi, Kenya, with her husband Jake Boon, and their two children, Joel and Aly. They are missionaries with SIM. Sue and I love being part of their support team.

Theresa gives music lessons. Jake preaches and teaches, and provides training for Pastors and Christian leaders.



Theresa, Jake, Joel, and Aly on a family outing to meet some crocodiles.



I became friends with Reuben Ndjerareau on March 21, 2014. I had the privilege of becoming friends with his father, Dr. Abel Ndjerareou on June 17, 2014. They are from Chad, Africa. Reuben is completing his Masters of Divinity at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. Dr. Abel Ndjerareau is the Director of Transafrican Education Network: Equipping Pastoral Leadership to French-Speaking Africa. Abel was very interested in learning more about the ministry of PastorCare. They both confirmed the great need for PastorCare in Africa.

God has given Abel and Reuben a dream to create a conference center in Chad to serve as a place of refreshment and renewal for Pastors and families. I met with Dr. Abel Ndjerareou again on March 18 and 19, 2015. He wants me to partner with him in Africa, so I can provide one to one confidential coaching for the rural area pastors they are teaching and training.



David and Rachael Carter are serving with Pioneer as missionaries in Guereda, Chad.

Their children are Benjamin, Hannah, and Joel.

Sue and I are grateful to be part of their support team.

When the timing is right, I will connect David and Rachael with Abel and Reuben Ndjerareau.

In March, 2013, I began meeting with Pastor JR Pittman, Pastor Nathaniel Moody, Pastor Matt Zainea, Pastor Tim Hoyt, Mark and Carol Sands, Pastor Dorothy Jenkins, Sonja Forte, and Pastor Khary Bridgewater, for almost a year as we planned and prepared for the One Church, One City conference with Dr. Tony Evans, on November 14-15, 2013.



Dr. John Smith and Dr. Tony Evans



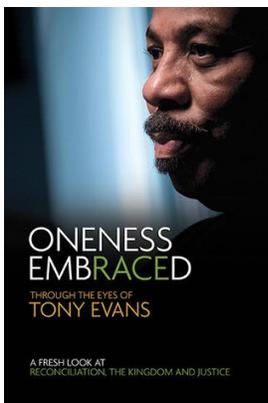
Rev. Nathaniel Moody



Dr. Tony Evans gave three powerful presentations. We are praying for God to cultivate all the seeds that were planted in Grand Rapids through One Church, One City.



I spent November 16 and 17 reading every word of my autographed copy of *ONENESS EMBRACED THROUGH THE EYES OF TONY EVANS: A FRESH LOOK AT RECONCILIATION, THE KINGDOM, AND JUSTICE*. I highly recommend Dr. Evans' book for everyone.



I have intentionally chosen the term embraced in the title and throughout this book based on the unique nature of the kingdom and its bid for us not to be "color blind" with regard to God's creative diversity. A kingdom perspective urges us to open our eyes, hearts, and minds in order to take what we learn about ourselves, and from each other, with regard to the strengths inherent within each of us, and merge these together to form a more productive union.

It is my contention that at the core of the problem of racial disunity in America is the failure to understand and execute a kingdom-based theology on both righteousness and justice. A balance between the two is absolutely critical since it is from God's kingdom throne that both righteousness and justice originate (Psalm 89:14).

The goal of the church should be to glorify God by reflecting the values of God among the people of God through letting the truth of God be the standard by which we measure right and wrong and the

way we accept skin color, class, and culture. Until we can embrace how we were born and raised, we will never be able to manifest the values of God in history so that people can understand and fully see that God is a God of multi-coloredness. God loves the variety in His garden called earth, and each one of us has equal value; after all, He died for each one.

I have read through the entire Bible many times. But I must confess—I never understood how deeply the Bible is rooted in Africa, until I read chapter 6, THE BLACK PRESENCE IN THE BIBLE.

(I added photos for visual interest and impact).

*God is reaffirming our historical and contemporary significance in the culture at large and His kingdom. The rise of this awareness has provided an awakening of black self-consciousness and an appreciation for black culture and achievement. Egyptology and the study of African history and culture are highlighting the unique role black people have played in the development of the human race and world civilizations. Anthropologists of all races are grappling with the increasing plausibility that the roots of human civilization are in Africa with black people. The Rev. Walter McCray, author of *The Black Presence in the Bible*, wrote,*

The preponderance of contemporary evidence being gathered by archaeologists and historians says that Africa (in Egypt's Nile Valley) was the origination of humanity and civilization. It was from here that humanity, an indigenous "black" humanity, had its beginnings. The preponderance of archaeological and historical facts say that the roots of all people are in Africa! — Egypt, Africa.

Whether one holds to the traditional view of a Mesopotamian origination of humanity, or to the more substantial view of the origination of humanity in Africa, one point of harmony is certain: indigenous humanity and the originators of the civilizations in each of these areas were black! They were black in Egyptian Africa and they were black in Asia's lower Mesopotamia! Either way one cuts it, the originators of civilization were a black people.

Such evidence includes the discoveries in the Tanzanian Canyon of the Olduvai Gorge, which reveals that tool making began in Africa and then spread to Europe. It includes the discoveries in the Nile Valley that demonstrate that people of Negroid African descent manufactured pottery before pottery was made in the world's oldest known city. Archaeological evidence even suggests African sailors explored the New World prior to Columbus. This evidence includes an extensive number of portraits of Negroes on clay, gold, and stone unearthed in pre-Columbian strata in Central and South America. In fact, paintings by Negro people date prior to 3000 BC.

"Civilization started in the great river valleys of Africa and Asia, in the Fertile Crescent in the Near East and along the narrow ribbon of the Nile in Africa," says historian Lerone Bennett. "In the Nile Valley that beginning was an African as well as an Asian achievement. Blacks, or people who would be considered black today, were among the first people to use tools, paint pictures, plant seeds, and worship gods." Bennett's conclusion concurs with Moses' assertion that Adam was created from soil in or near that land of Cush, who was Ham's son and originator of the great Ethiopian civilization (Genesis 2:7, 12; 10:6, 8; Isaiah 18:1-2).



Moses faced racial prejudice when his sister, Miriam, and brother, Aaron, challenged his God-given leadership because he was married to an African woman, a Cushite (Numbers 12:1). What apparently bothered them was not simply that Moses' new bride was dark-complexioned, because it has been proven that other Israelites were also dark-skinned. Rather, it was that she was black and foreign. Her African ethnic origin was unacceptable. It is important to note here that God punished Miriam with the disease of leprosy for her rebellion against Moses "because of the Cushite woman whom he had married. God turned Miriam's skin white, causing her to be "leprosy, as white as snow" (Numbers 12:10).

Racism, whether based on skin color or ethnicity, has always been a terrible sin in the eyes of God and worthy of His severest judgment. Both white and black people who allow race to determine social and political structures in America need to remember that.

It is clear from Scripture that black people are objects of God's love and grace. The very lineage of Jesus included blacks, and Africans were among leaders of the first-century church. Thus, African-Americans and white Americans can see that black people are an integral part of God's redemptive agenda and have played a decisive role in disseminating that kingdom agenda to the rest of the world. All Christians need to understand the eternal dimension of black history.



There is only one race: the human race (Acts 17:26). All humans stem from one root, Adam and Eve. Yet within the human race there are varieties of individuals and groups. One of the ways we distinguish between individuals and groups is by color.

It is important to remember that the claim to the inheritance of Jacob was not a matter of skin color, but instead a matter of lineage. The critical question was, "Who was your father?" not "What color is your skin?" It is also important to remember that Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph while he was in Egypt.

Yet Jacob (Israel) made it very clear in Genesis 48:5 that Manasseh and Ephraim were to be treated as though they were Jacob's sons; therefore they were to receive an inheritance in the Promised Land. Nubian genetics definitely entered the line of Israel at this juncture, if not before.

Furthermore, a total of seventy people from Jacob's family entered Egypt (Genesis 46:27). Yet the Bible says that some six hundred thousand men alone came out of Egypt with Moses (Exodus 12:37). The total number involved in the Exodus, including women and children, is estimated to be more than two million. Marriages to Egyptian women, much like those of Joseph and Eleazar, would have produced dark-skinned offspring such as Phinehas.

The Shulamite bride of King Solomon twice describes her complexion as black (Song of Solomon 1:5-6). Of special note here is the spirit of legitimate pride associated with her recognition of her color, for she saw herself as black and beautiful.

Hamitic peoples were crucial to the program of God throughout Old Testament biblical history. Joseph's wife, an Egyptian woman (Genesis 41:45, 50-52), was the mother of Manasseh and Ephraim, who later became leaders of Jewish tribes. In fact, the tribe of Ephraim produced one of the greatest leaders Israel ever had — Moses' successor, Joshua (Numbers 13:8; 1 Chronicles 7:22-27). This Jewish-African link is very strong in Scripture. The prophet Amos said, "Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to Me, O sons of Israel?" declares the Lord" (Amos 9:7).

Caleb was the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite; the Kenizzites were a part of the Canaanite tribes (Genesis 15:19) and descendants of Ham. Caleb also came from the tribe of Judah (Joshua 14:6, 14). Judah, the progenitor of the tribe, fathered twin sons by Tamar, a Hamitic woman (Genesis 38). Caleb joined with Joshua as one of the two spies who went to explore Canaan and brought back a positive report to enter the land and take possession of it, as God had declared (Numbers 13-14).

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, from whom Moses received the greatest single piece of advice regarding national leadership, ministry organization, political strategy, and personal planning (Exodus 18:13-27) ever recorded, was a Kenite (Judges 1:16), part of the Canaanite tribes (Genesis 15:19) who descended from Ham. At that time, the Kenites had settled in the land of Midian.

Another interesting observation regarding Jethro is that he is identified as "the priest of Midian" (Exodus 3:1). Since he was a priest, yet he was not a Levite and the Aaronic priesthood had not yet been established, the question is: What kind of priesthood could this have been? The only other priesthood within the framework of Scripture to which Jethro could have belonged was the priesthood of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18). This is significant because Christ was a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:17). This means that the priest Jethro, who was of African descent, may have been indicative of pre-Aaronic priesthoods, such as that of Melchizedek, which foreshadowed the priestly role of both Christ and the church.

This, then, is another basis for recognizing the strategic role Africans played in the biblical saga that continues today, because all Christians are related to Jethro and his priesthood as part of the royal priesthood.

King David is known not only a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14) but as one of the greatest kings in Israel's history. David's great-grandmother was a Canaanite woman, Rahab, who is also listed in the Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11:31). David's grandmother was Ruth, a Moabite, from a people who were Canaanites as well. David, one of the heroes of the faith, hailed from mixed Jewish and Hamitic ancestry and stands as a leader of whom blacks can be proud to call our own.

Solomon was David's son with Bathsheba, a Hamitic woman. Bathsheba literally means the daughter of Sheba. The Table of Nations identifies Sheba in the line of Ham, making Sheba a descendent from an African nation (Genesis 10:7). The Song of Solomon describes Solomon's features as "tanned and handsome, better than ten thousand others! His head is purest gold. And he has wavy raven hair" (Song of Solomon 5:10-11 TLB). Solomon was not only the wisest man to rule a nation, but he also brought about the greatest extension of Israel's reach as a kingdom (1 Kings 3:3-14). Solomon's great-great-grandmother, great-grandmother, and mother gave him roots within the black race, and place him as an example of black achievement.

Underscoring the fact that black people are an integral part of God's revelatory process in both the proclamation and recording of divine revelation is the prophet Zephaniah.

The Old Testament states that Zephaniah was of Hamitic origin. He was from the lineage of Cush (Zephaniah 1:1), and he prophesied God's judgment on Judah and her enemies for their rebellion against God and their gross idolatry; yet, he proclaimed, the grace of God would save a remnant and restore blessing to the people. People of African descent can take pride in God's prophet Zephaniah, one of the biblical authors, as their forefather.



The Ethiopian eunuch, who was most likely responsible for the establishment or expansion of the Coptic church in Africa, revealed the high degree of organizational and administrative responsibility that existed within the upper echelons of Ethiopian culture. The Bible describes him as a eunuch of great authority under "Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure" (Acts 8:27). According to the standard Greek lexical studies, the word Ethiopian is of Greek origin. It literally means "burnt face." The term eunuch does not necessarily denote emasculation; it can refer to high military and political officials.

The scriptural account of the Ethiopian official is significant for two reasons. First, it acknowledges the existence of a kingdom of dark-skinned peoples at the time of first-century Christianity. Second, it records the continuation of Christianity in Africa after having been initiated through the first African-Jewish proselytes who were converts at Pentecost (Acts 2:10). This account of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian official verifies God's promise in Zephaniah 3:9-10: "For then I will give to the people's purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshippers, My dispersed ones, will bring My offerings."

These verses show God's desire: He wishes to call to Himself people from the African continent, not into servitude and disdain as some incorrectly surmise, but into brotherhood with all men to serve Him "shoulder to shoulder."



Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry His cross, was of African descent. This we know because Cyrene is a country in North Africa (Matthew 27:32). The church at Antioch had two black men as leaders. Their names were Simeon, who was called Niger or black (as I mentioned earlier), and Lucius, who was from Cyrene. These two black men assisted in the ordination and commissioning of the apostle Paul (Acts 13:1-3). This verifies that black people were not only leaders in the culture of the New Testament era, but also leaders in the church itself.

Deserving of our greatest attention is the lineage of Christ, who is the heart and soul of the Christian faith. Over and over again, the prophets prophesied that the Messiah would come from the seed of David. As we have already seen, the Davidic line finds a number of black people within it. Of the five women mentioned in Matthew's genealogy (Matthew 1:1-16), four are of Hamitic descent—Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba, and Ruth.

The point here is not that Jesus was black. To assert such, as some black theologians and religious leaders do, is to fall into the exclusionist perspective of many whites, who would make Jesus an Anglo-European, blue-eyed blond who had very little relevance to people of color. It would also fail to respect the distinct Jewish heritage of Christ. Rather, Jesus was mestizo—a person of mixed ancestry.

It blesses me to know that Jesus had black in His blood, because this destroys any perception of black inferiority once and for all. In Christ we find perfect man and sinless Savior. This knowledge frees blacks from an inferiority complex, and at the same time it frees whites from the superiority myth. In Christ, we all have our heritage.

Black people, as all other people, can find a place of historical, cultural, and racial identity in Him. As Savior of all mankind, He can relate to all people, in every situation. In Him, any person from any background can find comfort, understanding, direction, and affinity, as long as He is revered as the Son of God, a designation that transcends every culture and race and one to which all nations of people must pay homage.

I listen to Christian radio while I am driving in my car. God touched my heart through a song by Matthew West — *Do Something*.



Out of the darkness of complacency and into the light of compassion...

I will never forget meeting Andrea. If I were judging a book by its cover, I'd say she looked like a college girl, maybe in a sorority or something, lots of friends, bound to be successful someday. And in a way, that would be a correct assessment. But that is not the whole story. Andrea, a former University of Colorado student had chosen to spend a semester abroad learning micro-financing in Uganda. While there, she happened upon an orphanage in critical condition. The children were being badly neglected and even abused. Her heart broke for these orphans who had no advocate. That's when this college student decided to do something. She called her parents and said, "I'm not coming home." She refused to leave these children until something was done to improve the conditions.

By sheer determination and refusal to give up, Andrea and her sister convinced the Ugandan government to close down that orphanage, which left about forty children with no place to go. The government handed the children to her. Andrea brought this need back to the states with a new vision and desire to create a safe place for these children to grow and learn. Today, Musana (which means "sunshine") is a thriving orphanage in Iganga, Uganda, housing over one hundred children! Andrea prefers spending most of her time in Uganda, not the U.S. She's a long way from a sorority house or a college campus. She's reaching the world, and bringing hope to people, one helpless child at a time. When asked what it was that made her fight for these children she simply said, "I just kept thinking, 'if I don't do something, who will?'"

Andrea's story floored me. Today, so many of us Christians talk so much about being the hands and feet of Christ, but never really displaying what that looks like. Andrea has gone to the extremes to

show us all what wild abandon to the cause of Christ looks like. It's not about talking. It's about doing!!! It's time for us to do something! Matthew West

Verse 1:

I woke up this morning
Saw a world full of trouble now
Thought, how'd we ever get so far down
How's it ever gonna turn around

So I turned my eyes to Heaven
I thought, "God, why don't You do something?"
Well, I just couldn't bear the thought of
People living in poverty

Children sold into slavery
The thought disgusted me
So, I shook my fist at Heaven
Said, "God, why don't You do something?"

He said, "I did, I created you"

Chorus:

If not us, then who
If not me and you
Right now, it's time for us to do something
If not now, then when
Will we see an end
To all this pain
It's not enough to do nothing
It's time for us to do something

Verse 2:

I'm so tired of talking
About how we are God's hands and feet
But it's easier to say than to be
Live like angels of apathy who tell ourselves
It's alright, "somebody else will do something"

Well, I don't know about you
But I'm sick and tired of life with no desire
I don't want a flame, I want a fire
I wanna be the one who stands up and says,
"I'm gonna do something"

Chorus:

If not us, then who
If not me and you
Right now, it's time for us to do something (yes, it is)
If not now, then when
Will we see an end
To all this pain
It's not enough to do nothing
It's time for us to do something

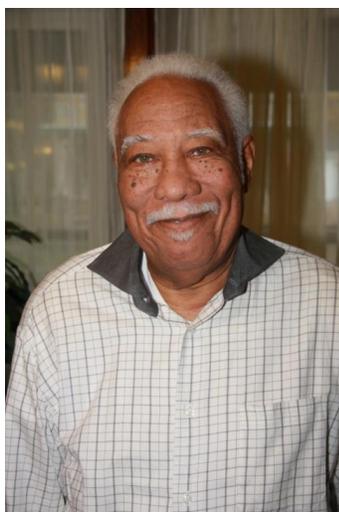
Bridge:

We are the salt of the earth
We are a city on a hill (shine shine, shine shine)
But we're never gonna change the world
By standing still
No we won't stand still (x3)

Chorus:
If not us, then who
If not me and you
Right now, it's time for us to do something
If not now, then when
Will we see an end
To all this pain
It's not enough to do nothing
It's time for us to do something

It's time for us to do something (x2)

On October 22, 2014 I accepted an invitation from Bill Dykstra, to attend the Men of Purpose Lunch at Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church. It is hosted on the second and fourth Wednesdays, every month, by Rev. Stedford Sims, Pastor of Step of Faith Ministries.



Pastor Stedford started the meeting with a greeting and welcome. Then he made a special introduction of Bishop John H. Williams, who was sitting at the table next to me. Stedford described Bishop Williams as the person God used to confirm God's calling on his life and encourage him to embrace God's calling for him to become a pastor. Pastor Stedford went on to share that Bishop Williams is the one who ordained him to serve as a Pastor. He shared his pulpit with him and affirmed his ability to preach the Word of God under the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Stedford continued, "Then he gave me his church!"

Then next thing Pastor Stedford asked us to do was quickly have every person around every table share their name and what ministry or work they are involved with. Bishop Williams introduced himself as, "A Missionary to Africa." When I heard Bishop Williams say that, the Holy Spirit whispered in my heart, "You need to get to know this brother. He is the reason why I led you here today."



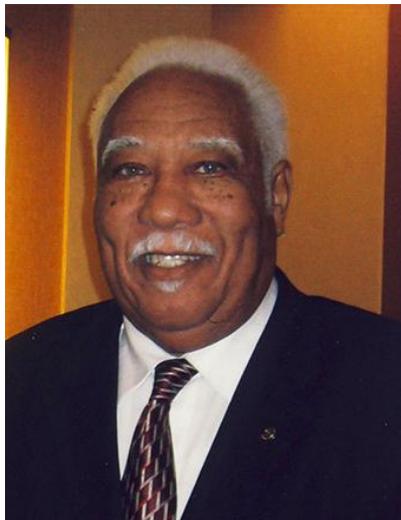
On Monday, October 28, 2014, I treated Bishop Williams to breakfast at Real Food Café in Alger Heights.

Bishop John H. Williams began his journey of life eighty years ago in Mississippi. His mother and grandmother saved their pennies for two years, until they had enough to send John, at age eleven, on a train to Detroit to live with his relatives. They wanted his future to be better than picking cotton and slopping hogs.

When he left Mississippi, he couldn't read or write. But he told his mother he would earn a college degree by age forty. When he was forty-two years old, John placed his college diploma in his mother's hands, and she wept tears of joy and gratitude to Almighty God.

John Williams was the first elected black city council member in Muskegon. He told me about various businesses he owned and operated. I enjoyed every minute as I listened to Bishop Williams share his amazing journey of faith through the challenges, obstacles, and difficulties of life. I love his positive, never complain, never give up, always trust God attitude.

Bishop Williams served as a pastor in Muskegon, MI for several years. When God gave Bishop Williams a vision to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world — he stepped out in faith and founded Central Bible Ministries International as a 501(c)(3) non-profit ministry. There are so many amazing stories to tell about what God has done through this ministry during the past thirty-four years!



Winning Souls, Changing Lives and Planting Churches in Tanzania, Liberia, and Kenya, Africa

"He that wins souls is wise" Proverbs 11:30

Central Bible Ministries is a Christian Ministry founded in 1981. They are committed to stepping into All the World, where we are winning souls to Christ and imparting wisdom to the people by planting churches, distributing literature, providing vocational training, adult education, and stewardship training. We have 24 hour intercessory prayer, a home for orphans, and we provide AIDS care and other medical care.

Bishop John Williams

www.CentralMinistriesInAfrica.com

Our School Project in Liberia



The John Williams Christian Academy in Paynesville, Liberia, West Africa was founded in 2010.

The growth and development of this academy is strategic because the illiteracy rate in Liberia is 75-80 percent.

There were 70 students enrolled before all the schools in Liberia were closed because of the Ebola virus epidemic.



Rev., Dr. Jones Morris serves as the Director of the John Williams Christian Academy. Dr. Morris is the pastor of Bethel Royal Church, which is the third church he has planted in Liberia. Dr. Morris also serves as the National Training Director, Liberia District, for Bethel World Outreach Ministries International. Dr. Morris came to the U.S. in July 2014, for teaching and preaching assignments in New York, Georgia, North Dakota, and Minnesota. He was in the U.S. before the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Epidemic. The U.S. Immigration Department granted him an extension on his visa.



Sarah Morris serves as the Principal of the John Williams Christian Academy. She remains in Liberia with their five adult children and one grandchild. She calls her husband on the phone every other day. They miss each other so much! But Sarah told him to stay in America for now. All the schools, colleges, and universities are closed in Liberia. He would have no place to teach or lecture or work.

They have no running water or electricity. A gas operated generator is their only source of power. Sarah also operates a small grocery store. Most of the food supply comes from the northern section of Liberia. But it has been quarantined off. So the cost of food in their area has tripled and quadrupled in price. We are raising money and gathering supplies to ship to Liberia, so they will be ready and well prepared for the influx of students once the school reopens in September 2015—Lord willing.



We plan to ship barrels filled with school supplies: Computers, Bibles, commentaries, books, dictionaries, school stationary materials, children's bibles, book bags, black shoes for girls and boys, sneakers, slippers, clothing, socks, writing pads, pens, pencils, teddy bears, play toys, phonic materials, drawing materials, sheets, chalk, markers, paints, visual aids, library materials, school materials for nursery and beginners, plastic plates and cups, spoons, canned food, juices, video players, tape players, radios, games, toys, movies for kids, text books for all subjects, tooth paste, tooth brushes, and personal hygiene items.



The Church Plant in Tanzania



Our latest building progress in Tanzania!

As God provides, the work goes on day by day.

Every time we receive a donation, new blocks are added to the building.

When we finish, we will be totally debt free!

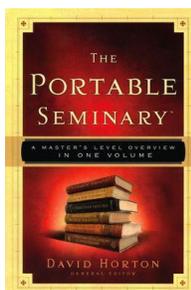


The Church Plant in Kenya



Central Bible Ministries International is an independent ministry, registered in Lansing, Nov. 1980 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Central Bible Ministries is also registered with ecclesiastical authority to license and ordain pastors with credentials that are recognized worldwide. The attorney who prepared all the official documents for Central Bible Ministries International almost 35 years ago, said, "It is set up as rock solid as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association."

After listening to Bishop Williams share stories about ordaining pastors and bishops in America and in Africa, I asked if he would consider ordaining me? His reply was wonderful. He said, "I have never recruited anyone to be licensed and ordained through this ministry. God has always told me to wait for people to ask him." I said, "I am asking." He replied, "Yes, we can start the process."



Bishop Williams gave me my first assignment—to read *The Portable Seminary* by David Horton. Before the end of the day, (October 28, 2014) I purchased the only used copy of the book at Baker Book House. That evening I began the journey of reading all 676 pages.

After I completed reading *The Portable Seminary*, the next step was to write a detailed summary of the book. Bishop told me it needed to be 15 pages. I enjoyed it so much that I wrote 43 pages.



I praise God for the wonderful privilege of spending many hours on several occasions with Bishop John Williams in his home. We believe God brought us together in His own unique way, in His perfect timing. It's not every day that you meet a Black African American Pastor with a heart and passion for Kingdom ministry in Africa. And it's not every day that you meet a White Dutch American Pastor with a heart and passion for Kingdom ministry in Africa. We believe God is answering our prayers and the desires of our hearts through this new friendship and ministry partnership.

We had deep conversations exploring the possibilities of our ministry relationship, and our shared passion for Africa. We are both very excited about what God is doing through our partnership.

Rev. Stedford Sims was ordained by Bishop John Williams through Central Bible Ministries International. Stedford is also ordained through the Christian Reformed Church. My sequence is just the opposite. I was ordained through the Reformed Church in America on June 7, 1979. I will be ordained by Bishop John Williams through Central Bible Ministries International on April 19, 2015.



Andrae Crouch - My Tribute

Rev. Steve Vander Molen sang "My Tribute" at my ordination service on June 7, 1979 at Hope Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, MI.

Rev. George Davis will sing "My Tribute" at my ordination service on April 19, 2015 at Living Word Christian Center in Grand Rapids, MI.

[Verse:]

How can I say thanks
for the things You have done for me?
Things so undeserved,
yet You gave to prove Your love for me;
the voices of a million angels
could not express my gratitude.
All that I am and ever hope to be,
I owe it all to Thee.

[Chorus 1:]

To God be the glory,
to God be the glory,
to God be the glory
for the things He has done.

[Chorus 2:]

With His blood He has saved me,
with His power He has raised me;
to God be the glory
for the things He has done.

[Bridge:]

Just let me live my life,
let it pleasing, Lord to Thee,
and if I gain any praise,
let it go to Calvary.

[Chorus 2]

Our adventure in faith—learning to trust God continues . . .

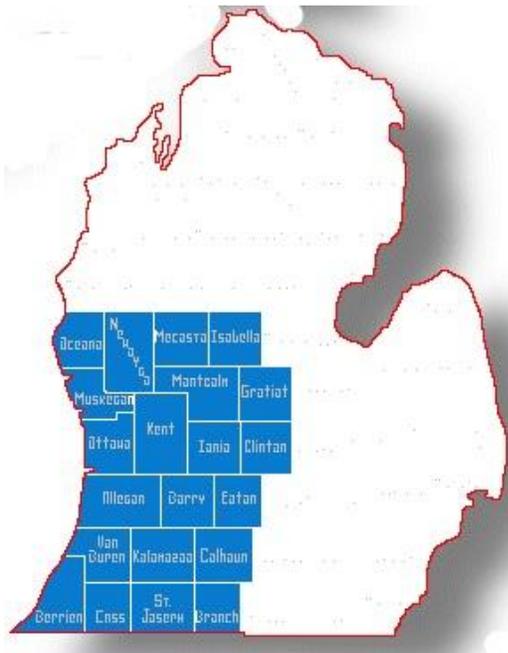
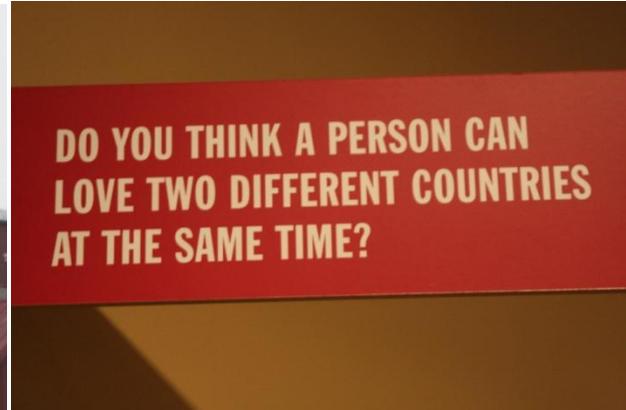
Some believe that when God is guiding us—our road will be smooth and our path will be straight. But I don't see that as I read the stories of God's people in the Bible. When we read the stories of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11, we see a journey that was not straight, easy, or simple. The road signs on our adventure of faith look more like this.



There was a plaque hanging on the bathroom wall in my parent's home. Every day as a child, I saw this simple and profound message.

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

C.T Studd



I believe God is calling me to continue serving Him in West Michigan. I also believe God is calling me to begin serving Him in Africa. God hasn't told me exactly what it all looks like. He simply asked me to trust Him and follow Him. So, our adventure of faith—learning to trust God . . . continues!



Blessings from Pastor John and Sue Smith

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