



# ST. JOHN

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COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH  
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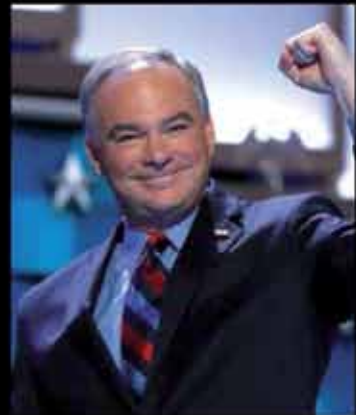
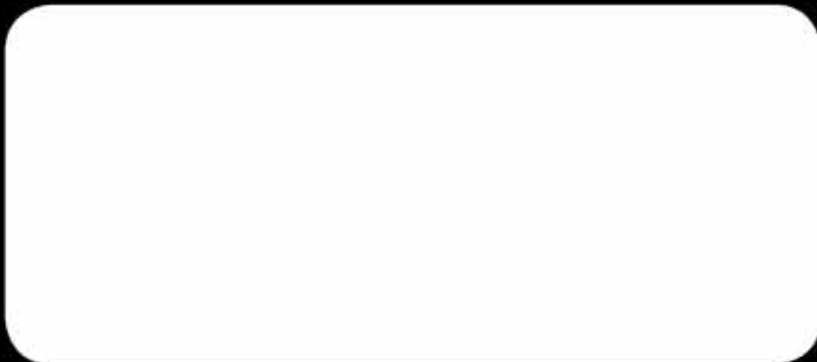
## PREDICTION FOR THE ELECTION



## WHO WILL TURN AMERICA TO GOD?



**MIKE PENCE SAID:**  
1- I'M CHRISTIAN  
2- CONSERVATIVE  
3- REPUBLICAN



**TIM KAINE:**  
JESUIT BACKGROUND

**A CHRISTIAN COPTIC ORTHODOX  
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PUBLISHED BY**



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*Verse  
of the Month*



"The Eyes of the LORD your God are always on  
you, from the beginning of the year to the very  
end of the year." (Deuteronomy 11:12).

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**SCHEDULE of MEETINGS and EVENTS  
for the MONTH of September & October 2015**

SUNDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
+ English Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. (In the New Church)	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy from 8-10 am
* * *	+ <u>Thursday Morning</u> + Senior Citizen Club 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	+ Women's Meeting 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.	+ Vespers; Bible Study 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. + Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 5: 30 p.m. + Elementary Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.
+ Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:15 a.m. (In the Old Church)			
Servants' Meeting + 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday. + Boy Scouts 12 pm	+ THURSDAY Family Meeting 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Fr. Augustinos	+ Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Fr. Gawargious	+ College Youth Meeting 7:00- 9:00 p.m.
			High School & J. High Meetings 7:15 - 9:00 p.m.

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## 1. Thanksgiving Day (Thursday, NOV. 24):

On Thursday, November 24, America celebrates the National Thanksgiving Day. St. John Church celebrates this Day by a Liturgy in the morning from 8:00 to 10:00, and a breakfast with Senior Citizens; and the social committee will celebrate it little earlier on Saturday, Nov. 19 from 11:30 a.m. with the turkey dinner for the new comers and the homeless. May the spirit of thanksgiving abide in us all life-long.



## 2. The Nativity Fast (Friday, NOV. 25):

On Friday, Nov. 25, the Nativity Fast starts, until Christmas Eve on January 6, 2017. May the Lord grant us a blessed fast according to Isaiah 58 and Matt. 6. We need to pray much during this fast for the salvation and safety of America, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and the entire world.



## 3. Kiahk's Vigil:

The four week-vigil of the Coptic month "Kiahk" starts on Saturday, December 10, 2016. In this month we celebrate the Virginal Birth of Christ and praise St. Mary. The prayers, praises and vigil start every Saturday after the Vespers until midnight.



## 4. Celebrating New Year's Eve (2016/ 2017)

St. John Church celebrates New Year's Eve on Saturday, December 31, 2016 starting at 7:30 p.m. The program starts with the vespers and contains spiritual talks, praises and hymns (choir), candle-light prayers, Santa's gifts for children, and contests. There will be two Liturgies, the first ends after midnight and the second (of January 1, 2017) with the regular Sunday Liturgy.



## 5. Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist Martyrdom:

On November 1st, the church commemorates the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist's martyrdom. His name means, "The Torch Bearer" and he actually enlightened the entire world with his two great works, the Gospel of St. Luke and the book of Acts of the Apostles. St. Luke was a physician, artist, great author, and historian. May his blessing and the blessings of his gospel be with us all, Amen.



## 6. H.H. Pope Tawadros:

+ On November 18, 2016, the Coptic Church celebrates the 4th Anniversary of Pope Tawadros' Enthronement. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant His Holiness health, strength, long life and divine support.  
+ Last year on (Saturday evening of October 17, 2015), His

Holiness blessed St. John Church in Covina, CA. He prayed the Vespers and delivered a sermon about Song of Solomon 1: 5, "I am dark, but lovely...like the tents of Kidar, like the curtains of Solomon." His holiness expressed his admiration for the beauty of the church in its building, design, congregation, Bishop, priests and its good order and wrote that in the church autograph.

## 7. H.E. Metropolitan Serapion:



+ On October 2, Anba Serapion ordained deacon Antony Mikhail a priest to serve St. Mary Church in Pasadena.

+ He also ordained Dr George a priest to serve St. Justina Church in Rancho Cucamonga.

+ H.E. also elevated Fr. John Mikhail to Hegomen.

Congratulations, to His Eminence, the two churches and to the three fathers.

## 8. Fr. Augustinos' 27th Anniversary:

By God's grace, on November 14, 2016 Fr. Augustinos Hanna completes 27 years in priesthood, serving St. John Church in Covina, CA, and St. John Magazine. Your prayers for him are greatly needed.



## 9. Feasts of Nov/Dec. Saints:

- 1) Nov. 20, departure of St. Anna, mother of St. Mary
- 2) Nov. 21, remembrance of Archangel Michael.
- 3) Nov. 24, Martyrdom of St. Mina the Miraculous.
- 4) Nov. 26, departure of St. John Chrysostom (407 ad)
- 5) Nov. 27, Martyrdom of St. Philip the Apostle.
- 6) Dec. 4, Martyrdom of St. Philopatir Abu-Sefein.
- 7) Dec. 13, Martyrdom of St. Andrew the Apostle.
- 8) Dec. 15. Departure of Pope Abram (10th century), whom on his hands Mountain Mokattam was moved.
- 9) Dec. 19, departure of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Mora (known now as Santa Clause for his generosity and gifts)!
- 10) Dec. 30, Martyrdom of St. Barnabas the Apostle..





By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

He who lives the life of thanksgiving is a noble person, acknowledges and does not forget a favor. He NEVER forgets any good offered to him, and expresses his thanks.

Thanksgiving is in his heart, on his tongue for God and men.

The Lord Jesus blessed the Samaritan, one of the ten lepers who were cleansed. When the only one returned to Him and “fell down on his face at his feet, giving Him thanks.” So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed. But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” (Luke 17:17). Therefore, when you give thanks, you are glorifying God, acknowledging His loving-kindness to you.

Most people give thanks to God at the beginning and end of each day and on some occasions like New Year, (Thanksgiving day), Feasts and certain important events in their lives, but the life of thanksgiving has its characteristics, perhaps in the first place is the saying of the apostle:

*“Give thanks always for all things”*

*(Eph. 5:20)*

Giving thanks to God has no specific occasions but it must be “Always”. As long as it is continuous, it covers the whole life and therefore the expression “Life of Thanksgiving” applies to it. The same teaching was explained in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, “Re-

joice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks” (1 Thess. 5:17-18). For this reason the Prayer of Thanksgiving precedes all other prayers in our Church. All the Church rituals and liturgies begin with the prayer of Thanks-giving, also the seven prayers of the Agbeya start with the thanksgiving prayer. We thank God for every hour that passes in peace.

### *Thanksgiving for All Things*

The Church begins with the prayer of thanksgiving even at funerals. The apostle says “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God” (Col. 3:17).

We thank You in every occasion, in every condition and for all things. So, it is not only giving thanks always but also for all things because God continually makes good to us. The apostle said, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God” (Rom.8:28), either in the apparent good or in matters that seem not for good, but in fact it is good and we do not know! For this we call God the “Beneficent”, He does not do except good, and the person who believes in God’s quality, gladly accepts everything which gives thanks to God. Joseph’s brothers sold him as a slave; their action was in itself evil, treachery, and lack of love, cruelty and envy. But God changed that evil into good and Joseph “was made a father to Pharaoh and Lord of his people”. He was the second man in the kingdom, and his stay in Egypt was to preserve life. He told his brothers, “You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good...to save many people alive”

(Gen. 50:20). The children of God are always joyful, they thank Him for all things. They thank Him from all their hearts, not only by words, but also by offering a sacrifice of praise, peace offerings or vows. As the prophet David says, "I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all people" (Ps. 116:13, 14).

### *Levels of Thanksgiving*

Thanksgiving in the life of the children of God is in levels:

The least is giving thanks for the miracles, gifts, great pleasures and the plentiful good things, which no one doubts its goodness and benefit. Perhaps, other than this, some do not give thanks!

There is a higher level of thanksgiving; to give thanks over little: It might be a normal level in the life of thanksgiving to give thanks over the recovery from a serious illness like cancer. But, if a person gave thanks for the recovery from a flu or cold, it indicates that in his life he is used to give thanks over many or little things. If we gave thanks over a few things God will make us rulers over many things. Perhaps, among the advantages of thanksgiving are the continuity of the blessings and its increase, as one of the Church Fathers said, *"Not a gift without increase, except that without thanksgiving"*.

There is also thanksgiving over what is hidden and unseen. Thanksgiving for the wars and troubles which were possible to come to us but did not because of God's keeping and care. Thanksgiving for the work of God in looking after us, although we cannot see that, but we completely believe in it. Undoubtedly, Satan is doing his utmost to harm us and to make us fall. If we are now well, it is because God has stopped the harm which we do not know...and we thank God for that. Naturally, we thank God over the tribulations from which He saved us, but there are difficulties that He stopped on the way before it comes to us. We do not know it, but we thank Him for protecting us.

Believe me, if God uncovers the calamities we were exposed to, and He cast away from us, our whole life will not be enough to thank Him.

We give thanks for the hidden matters, which are in God's knowledge, and which we might know later, or might never know... In all this, thanksgiving is mixed with love. Constant thanksgiving does not need a spe-

cific reason but it is enough that we are in God's care, and we are His children, and such feeling is connected with the life of submission.

### *Thanksgiving over Tribulation*

The highest level of thanksgiving is to give thanks to God over tribulations. We thank God over the tribulations from which He saved us, and this is the least. But, what is greater than this is also thank Him over the prevailing tribulations which we bear and live in. By faith we believe it is for our good. To endure and bear tribulations is a virtue. To be content with the tribulation and accept it is a greater virtue. And what is more important is to give thanks over the tribulation with complete surrender and joy. If we thank God for the gifts only, then our love is for the gifts not for God the giver Himself. But if we give thanks to God in tribulation we prove that we love God Himself and not for His gifts. We do not only love Him for the nice gifts He gives us, health, wealth, success, peace and comforts of life, but God must be our goal, either He gave us good things or tribulations. We thank Him whatever happens, and do not allow mishaps to lessen our gratitude and faith in God's protection. We should not allow such events to take away our peace from us or our joy in the Lord. No matter what the outer circumstances may be, we rejoice in the Lord always and do not lose our peace with God and man.

It is written that the fruits of the Spirit are "Love, peace, joy..." (Gal. 5:22), and our peace, comfort and joy will affect others and by our good example we lead others to God.

Also, tribulation needs thanksgiving because it strengthens the spiritual life. It gives us depth in prayer and depth in our relationship with God, depth in fasting and in faith. It gives the Church power and unity. Sometimes, a severe tribulation leads man to repentance. More than a hundred sermons or reading many spiritual books. In tribulations, we see the hand of the Lord working, His coming into our lives, and His care and protection. In the tribulation, we see the hand of God, His wonders and His power. It gives us experience we could not attain without it. Also, it sifts the Church and separates the tares from the wheat.

For all these reasons, we give thanks to God over tribulation and consider it a blessing. Of course the person who thanks over tribulation shall give thanks for all other things. He lives the constant life of thanksgiving and never murmurs or complains.





The human body consists of a group of organs. Some of these being vital organs that are the human cannot live without them. Examples of such organs are the liver, the brain, the heart, the lungs, the kidneys and the pancreas. Humans can live without eyes, for example, but they cannot live without a liver. Some diseases cause failure in the functions of one or more of the vital organs, and this leads to death. With the scientific developments in the field of surgery, anesthesia and immunology, the human mind was able to overcome the problem of failure in the functions of many vital organs through transplanting a healthy organ from a living person, or from a person who has just died, into patient's body, and thus we hear of the transplantation of a heart, a liver, a kidney, and other such organs. This has saved the lives of people who were close to death. Organ transplantation, however, although giving a lot of people hope, has raised many questions, of which are:

### 1. Is the interference to save a person's life considered as interference with God's Will?

According to H. H. Pope Shenouda III, '...saving a person's life does not contradict religion, neither does making use of modern science for preserving human life contradict religion. Science itself is a gift from God, and the human mind is also a gift from God, thus it can be used for doing good and not evil.' Scientific development in this field is a fruit of the mind, which God has given to man. God gave the human a mind so that he may use it for his good and for this life. Besides this fact, it is not only organ transplantation, which saves many people's lives. The discovery of some drugs, such as antibiotics, has also saved the lives of many who were close to death. Moreover, organ transplantation does not guarantee that the patient will live; he might die after the transplantation as left to God's will.

### 2. Is it allowed for a person to sell his organs?

God gave the human body a special dignity. "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ Himself?" (1 Cor. 6:15), and "Do you not know that your body is temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" You are not

your own" (1 Cor. 6:19). Therefore, human organs are not for sale as they belong to God. God however, asks us to love one another and also asks that our love be in deed and not only with words, "Let us not love with words or tongues but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3: 19). The greatest love of all is to give oneself to the others; "greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Thus, although man is not allowed to sell his organs for money, donating his organs for saving a patient's life is considered a noble thing. On this point, H.H. Pope Shenouda says, "If love can reach the extent of giving, and giving can reach the extent of laying down one's life, then how easy it is for the one who lays down his life for others to donate an organ of his body to others?"

### 3. Is it allowed for a Christian to donate his organ to a non-Christian?

Organ donation is a labor of love that reaches up to giving oneself. Christian love is deep love that knows no restriction. It is not hindered by any difference in religion, belief or country. Christian love that urges man to donate his organs takes into consideration the patient's need, and not his beliefs or religion.

### 4. Is transplanting organs against his dignity?

Regarding the transplantation of the organs of the deceased, H. H. says, 'after death, man's organs are eaten by worms, and they are turned into dust. Thus, it is good if a person makes use of the organs of someone who has left our present world in order to live with them, instead of leaving them to be the food of the worms or to be turned into dust.' The noble aim that lies behind transplanting a dead person's organs gives dignity to the deceased, not the opposite. Moreover, a dead person's body is nowadays autopsied for scientific or legal purposes, and this is not considered to be against the dead person's dignity.

We should encourage people to give directions concerning the use of their organs after death in order to save patients' lives. Due to the fact that it is sometimes difficult to think of death and to write a will concerning one's organs, some developed countries consider every dead person a donor if he does not give other directions. This is called "hypothetical donation" and it helps in establishing banks of organs.

### 5. How can the poor benefit from organ transplantation?

Organ transplantation, like any other fruit of scientific development, is very costly. Many classes of society are considered poor in terms of the high cost of such surgery. In many of the developed countries, medical insurance covers such operations. In Egypt, there was a successful experiment in transplanting a cornea. This has started as early as the fifties! A law was issued to regulate obtaining the corneas of those who have died recently. This made possible the establishment of a bank of corneas with reasonable prices that many could afford. This bank also supplies the university hospitals with the corneas they need for free treatment of the poor.

# The Benefits and Blessings of Fasting

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna



The three pillars of Christian worship and service, as the Lord Jesus mentioned in His Sermon on the Mount, are:

(1) Giving alms (2) Prayer (3) Fasting (Matthew 6). They are extremely important to spiritual life, without which there is no spiritual life at all. The house that is founded on three pillars, if one of them fell down, the entire building will collapse. The Lord Jesus Christ, although He was perfect, but He fasted to show us how much fasting is important and we all need it.

The benefits of fasting are so many, but I will try to summarize some of them here:

## ***1. Fasting is a way of worshipping God:***

By prayer we worship God with our spirit, and with fasting we worship God through our body, and with giving alms we worship God by our money (Matt. 6; Acts 10 & 13)

We also read about Anna, the prophetess who was of a very old age, and had lived with a husband seven from virginity; and became a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day..." (Luke 2:36, 37).

## ***2. Fasting is a means of serving God:***

In his second letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul mentioned fasting among the means of serving God as he said, "But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings..." (2 Cor. 6:4).

Also, the book of Acts of the Apostles says, "In the church of Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers; Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius....as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:1-3).

## ***3. Fasting is one of the means of repentance:***

The people of Nineveh expressed their repentance by strict fasting for three days (Jonah 3). Also, the Lord says, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping.... etc.," (Joel 2:12).

## ***4. Fasting strengthens the will power:***

One of the goals of fasting is to strengthen our will power so that we can say NO to all kinds of sins.

As Christians we have to say NO to smoking, drugs,

sexual immorality, cheating, lying, judging others, swearing, telling dirty jokes, cursing and to bad habits. The New Testament orders us, "Have NO fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11).

## ***5. Fasting is a bridle to tame the tongue:***

The sins of speaking are not less dangerous than the big evil sins in the sight of men, such as murder, adultery, gambling and stealing. They can take us to hell as well. Through fasting we can tame the tongue and abstain from its fatal sins such as swearing, lying, gossiping, backstabbing and judging others (James 3:2, 3).

***6. Fasting joined with prayer, is a huge powerful spiritual weapon and can cast out demons*** (Matt. 4 & 17:21).

***7. Fasting strengthens prayer and lifts up our prayers to heaven like a rocket*** (Isa. 58: 4).

St. Augustine said, "If you want your prayer to ascend to God, give it the two wings of fasting and giving alms."

***8. In fasting we gain the virtues of self-control, perseverance, purity and humility*** (Psa.35 & Isa.58: 3, 5).

***9. Fasting helps us uproot vice, malice, shortcomings and to break the bonds of evil*** (Isa. 58:6)

***10. Fasting makes us feel the need of the poor and share our bread with them*** (Isa. 58:7).

***11. Fasting with prayer solve the tough problems which seem impossible*** (See Esther 4-8; also when President Sadat wanted to apply the Islamic law on Christians in Egypt and all the Copts fasted and prayed, God responded miraculously and cancelled it and canceled his life!).

***12. Fasting and prayer uncover the mysteries and secrets and give inspiration and enlightenment*** (as in the case of Daniel 2).

***13. Fasting helps molding our personality and gaining the moralities and virtues of peace, meekness and mercy.***

***14. Fasting is healthy to the body as a temple for the Holy Spirit: "Your healing shall spring forth speedily; and strengthen your bones"***(Isa.58: 8, 11).

***15. Fasting, combined with works of mercy, gives Satisfaction, guidance, protection and glory: "The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your soul... the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard"*** (Isa. 58:8-12).



# I Have a Friend!

"THERE IS A FRIEND WHO  
STICKS CLOSER THAN A  
BROTHER"

(PROVERBS 18:24)

Upon reaching the age of 102, a man was asked, "Mort, how have you lived to be 102?"

A rather usual answer was expected like never drinking, never smoking, etc., but instead he said, "It is the will of God. When the day comes that it is the will of God that I go home to heaven, I will go and gladly."

Mort continued, "You know, the other day a man said to me, 'Mort, you are 102 and you must know that you are going to die any day now. You cannot live for long at 102. Aren't you afraid to die?'"

Mort looked at him and said, "Why, you know something? I'm never going to die." And the man asked in astonishment, "You are telling me that you are never going to die? You are only human, you are mortal. You are going to die."

"No," said Mort. "You see, I have a Friend."

"I first met Him many years ago, and He has been my Friend ever since. This Friend told me one time, 'Mort, don't be afraid, ever. *Because I live, you shall live also.*' So when He comes to me and says, 'Mort, the time is here,' I will know that He is not saying, 'You're going to die, but, 'You're going to live! He will usher me into a more beautiful place than I have ever known before."

Well, Mort died physically, but he went to be with his Friend- the One Who loved him and gave Himself for him; the One Who prepared an eternal home for him in heaven.

Remember what Jesus said, "*No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you*" (Jn.15:15).

Have you cultivated a special friendship with the best Friend you will ever have: JESUS CHRIST? You may have many, many friends in life, but they will all remain behind. The only One whose friendship can make the greatest difference in your life; the One whose friendship continues beyond this earthly life and beyond the grave for all eternity; the One without whose friendship eternity will be hell is JESUS. The Lord of the universe calls us friends. And He is our Friend-the best Friend we have; the Friend who created this whole big beautiful world for us to use and to enjoy; the Friend who give us the gift of life; the Friend who died on our stead on the cross; the Friend who prayed for us, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"; the Friend Who said to the dying thief, "Today, you will be with Me in Paradise"; the Friend who said to the adulteress, "Your sins are forgiven, go and sin no more", the Friend who says to all of us in our moments of sorrow, "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I give you rest", the Friend who rose from the dead to give us the promise of life eternal.

Can we afford to enter eternity, much less go through life, without this Great, extraordinary, Friend?

We have many friends in life. But there is only **ONE SPECIAL FRIEND: JESUS.**

When it comes time for us to leave this world, it will be this Friend calling us to come to a special place He has prepared for us (John 14:2, 3).





# One Life Is Not Enough

Edited by  
Fr. Augustinos Hanna



THERE IS A TV PROGRAM CALLED "ONE LIFE TO LIVE". This title is not correct. It is the motto of the atheists and the desperate people who believe in the present life only, those who live and die like beasts without knowing Christ or having hope in eternal life.

This is not a wish but God's declaration in His Bible.

## **Man is The Masterpiece of God:**

- + Only man was made by a special creative act of God.
- + Only man was made in God's own image and by His mighty hands, words and breath (Gen. 1:26,27; 2:7).
- + Only man possesses a mind and free will.
- + Only man can split the atom.
- + Only man can invent TV, computer, supersonic jets, space shuttles and can land on the moon.
- + Only man can taste art, music, poetry and beautiful paintings.
- + Only man who has the privilege to eat the body of Christ and drink His blood.
- + Only man can talk to God, praise Him and listen to Him in the Bible.
- + Only man who has the Holy Spirit of God within him.
- + Only man who has eternal spirit, redeemed by God and was chosen to be Christ's bride.

## **We are Luckier than Angels Sometimes!**

1. When Lucifer the archangel and the angels that followed him fell in rebellion and pride, they became demons, condemned to hell and destruction, God did not redeem them or prepare salvation for them.

But when man fell, God saved him and redeemed him by Himself through Jesus Christ! (2 Pet. 2:4; John.3: 16).

2. When God wanted to choose a bride for His Son Jesus Christ, He did not choose her from the rank of angels, but from mankind, the church, you and me.

3. God gave man, not angels, the privilege of Communion. But despite the unique excellence of man, God would be a master of

cruelty if man's existence were limited to this present life only. **Unless there is life beyond the grave, man is not God's masterpiece.** Unless there is another life, man is the most miserable of all God's creatures. One life is not enough for God's masterpiece. St. Paul says, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

- One life is not enough for St. James, who was killed by the sword of Herod before starting his ministry.

- One life is not enough for St. Stephen who was stoned to death in the beginning of Christianity.

- One life is not enough for St. Abanoub who was martyred in his childhood for Christ's sake.

- And these are some examples from our current community:

- One life is not enough for H.G. Bishop Karas who died of cancer in his forties.

- One life is not enough for our brother Adel Karas, loving husband and father of three, who was murdered unfairly in a hate crime around September 11, 2001.

- One life is not enough for Dr. Assaad Naguib, the brilliant physician, loving husband, father and friend who lost his life early in a car accident.

- On life is not enough for Mark Hanna who got MS after graduating from Law School that crippled him completely about twenty years!

- One life is not enough for those young men and women who were born blind or autistic and had to remain so all their lives.

- One life is not enough for that young man in the mental hospital, or that elderly woman sitting in a wheelchair all her life.

- One life is not enough for that young doctor who just graduated, then suddenly discovered that he had a brain cancer!

- One life is not enough for our beloved friends, who left us after intimate relationship, devoted service and the world still needed them. God did not create His masterpiece for suffering and pain in such short life and that is it. This present life does not make sense if there is not another life. The resurrected Christ comes to our funerals to assure us that funerals are not final and there is another life, a far better life that will have no end, eternal life.

- Life is a round trip ticket. The Lord Jesus said, "Because I live, you shall live also...I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever believes in Me shall never die but shall have eternal life."

It is written in the book of Ecclesiastic, "God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts" (3:11). We can't view nor understand our short life on earth, apart from the background of eternity. Against that background of eternity, our suffering will be momentary, but goodness is eternal. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30: 5).

Life does make sense. Man is still God's masterpiece. God is not cruel. He is our perfect Father. He loves. He cares. He guarantees our full salvation. He did not create us for dust and decay, but for a great purpose and eternal happiness with Him. This life is just a kindergarten and preparation for the eternal life, the blessed happy full life.

St. Jerome once said, "When man fell in sin and disobedience, God said, to him, 'You are dust, and to dust you shall return. But after enjoying the salvation and reconciliation of Christ, God will say to him, 'You are heavenly, and to heaven you shall return'."



By Mark M. Hanna

# The Upward Look:

CONNECTING THE DOTS LEADING TO OUR HOMELAND

An American-Indian legend tells the story of a baby eagle that came out of its egg but there were no parent eagles there to care for it, feed it or teach it how to fly. Rather, a tribe of sage chicken adopted this baby eagle. (Sage chickens are a type of hens that live on the plains, and are raised by the American-Indians. They are plump and have longer legs than the average chicken. They can only fly short distances and barely high enough to be considered flying). This baby eagle learned to live as all sage chicken, eat like sage chicken, and most tragically not really fly like sage chicken. One day that baby eagle looked up and saw an eagle soaring high in the sky with its wings spread apart. That baby eagle wished it were able to fly as that eagle in the sky. The little eagle went into the office of the chief of the sage chickens and said to him, "Chief! I want to fly like that bird up there," pointing to the eagle soaring in the sky. The chief replied, "You can't! You're a sage chicken!" That little eagle lived and died believing it was a sage chicken and never soared high in the air like it was naturally able to.

We too have a nature unlike that we grew to assume is ours. I am referring to our heavenly nature. It was because we were raised in this world that we feel like we are of this world. But we are not! The Lord Jesus Christ, in His final prayer in the garden prayed saying, "they are not of the world, as I am not of the world" (John 17:16).

St. John the Apostle tells us, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

St. Paul adds, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colos. 3:1-2). Summarizing these is the verse that the Psalmist says, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon the earth that I desire besides You" (Psalm 73:25).

In praising the Patriarch Abraham's willingness to leave his country and his people in order to follow God, St. Paul writes,

*"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.... These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."* (Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16).

**St. John Chrysostom comments on the above passage saying,**

They called themselves therefore "strangers"; but Paul said somewhat much beyond this: for not merely



did he call himself a stranger, but said that he was dead to the world, and that the world was dead to him. "For the world" (he says) "has been crucified to me and I to the world." (Gal. 6:14). But we, both citizens and quite alive, busy ourselves about everything here as citizens. And what righteous men were to the world, "strangers" and "dead," that we are to Heaven.

The Lord Jesus who called Abraham away from his comfortable surrounding, comforted those who so eagerly awaited Him so many years later saying, *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you"* (John 14:18). After rising from the dead, the Lord assured His disciples that He would always be with them; however, He ascended to heaven, seemingly leaving them again. As the disciples and the Lord's followers looked upward at Him ascending to heaven in bewilderment and sorrow—

*Behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:9-11).

That scene must have brought the Lord's words to mind which He spoke to them,

*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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also* (John 14:2-3).

As for here in the world, the Lord reminded them, *"you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful (Jn. 16:20), "In the world you will have tribulation" (Jn. 16:33). "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you"* (Jn. 16:22).

If there could be a theme that spans humanity's entire relationship with God since the creation until the last day on earth, it would be that this world is not home. *St. Augustine, who tasted the "joy" of the world and the pleasures of the world as a youth, after repenting said this timeless statement, "You made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."* Here on earth we are bound to the necessities of survival and these materialize into various preoccupations that take our heart from wholly being with God. No matter what occupation we practice, there comes with it the stress of living, various ailments due to this, internal and external stressors, etc. But these are typical of what the world knows how to give.

The Israelites thought that reaching the Promised Land was actually reaching their rest. However, they discovered that even in the earthly Promised Land they found no rest. This is why St. Paul writes to the Hebrews reminding them, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. *There remains therefore a rest for the people of God*" (Hebrews 4:7-9). This rest is the same that St. Augustine said we would not find until we find it in God.

God's design was always to be in the midst of His people and they surrounding Him. In the revelation of St. John, God reminds us of His eternal aim,

*"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."* (Revelation 20:3-4).

The search for a homeland requires a comparison between here and there. The above passages and the one immediately above clearly portray the difference between here and there. Our city, country and homeland are there with God while here we have nothing. There we will find that *"city whose builder and maker is God", i.e., eternal. This is what we look upward for!*

St. John Chrysostom questioning our attachment to here writes: "when things on earth were promised them, regarded them not, but sought the future "city": whereas God again and again speaks to us of the city which is above, and yet we seek that which is here."

We are not of this world and will continue to be restless here until we tire in seeking God and actually find Him. We live in the world but nevertheless our heart is above. The Lord Jesus said, *"where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (12:34). So, we live in the world, or as St. Paul puts it, *"use this world as not misusing it. For the world is passing away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). "For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory"* (Colossians 3:3-4). Because we are hidden with Christ, the world does not know us. We are not one of its own.

Unlike that little eagle who was told what he was not, you must know yourself, know what you are capable of, what God created you to be, i.e., heavenly and eternal, why the world does not recognize you, and what God has prepared for you.

# My Prediction for November 9 Election

By Max Lucado / Oct 13, 2016



Republican U.S. presidential nominee Donald Trump and Democratic U.S. presidential nominee Hillary Clinton pause at the conclusion of their presidential town hall debate at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S., October 9, 2016. REUTERS/Saul Loeb/Pool

We are really ready for this presidential election to be over. We're ready for an end to the rancor and tackiness. Voters on both sides feel frustrated, even embarrassed by it all. There is a visceral fear, angst about the result. What if so and so wins? When we wake up to November 9, post-election, when the confetti is swept away and the election is finally over, what will we see?

I have a prediction. I know exactly what November 9 will bring. **Another day of God's perfect sovereignty. He will still be in charge. His throne will still be occupied. He will still manage the affairs of the world. Never before has His providence depended on a king, president, or ruler.** And it won't on November 9, 2016.

*"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes"* (Prov. 21:1).

On one occasion the Lord turned the heart of the King of Assyria so that he aided them in the construction of the Temple. On another occasion, he stirred the heart of Cyrus to release the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar was considered to be the mightiest king of his generation. But God humbled and put him in "detention" for seven years. "The kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations" (Psalms 22:28).

**Understanding God's sovereignty over the nations opens the door to peace.** When we realize that God influences the hearts of all rulers, we can then choose to pray for them rather than fret about them.

Rather than wring our hands we bend our knees, we select prayer over despair.

Jeremiah did this. He was the prophet to Israel during one of her darkest periods of rebellion. He was called "the weeping prophet" because he was one. He wept at the condition of the people and the depravity of their faith. He was so distressed that one of his books was entitled Lamentations. But then he considered the work of God. Note the intentionality of his words: ***This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.***



*The LORD's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness (Lam. 3:21-23)*

Imitate Jeremiah. Lift up your eyes. Dare to believe that good things will happen. Dare to believe that God was speaking to us when he said: *"All things work together for good to those who love God"* (Romans 8:28).

Many years ago, I spent a week visiting the interior of Brazil with a long-time missionary pilot. He flew a circuit of remote towns in a small plane that threatened to come undone at the slightest gust of wind.

I could not get comfortable. I kept thinking that the plane was going to crash in some Brazilian jungle and I'd be gobbled up by piranhas or swallowed by an anaconda.

I kept shifting around, looking down, and gripping my seat. (As if that would help). Finally, the pilot had had enough of my squirming. He looked at me and shouted over the airplane noise. "We won't face anything I can't handle. You might as well trust me to fly the plane."

Is God saying the same to you? If so, make this your prayer:

***Dear Lord,***

You are perfect. You could not be better than you are. You are self-created. You exist because you choose to exist.

You are self-sustaining. No one helps you. No one gives you strength. You are self-governing. Who can question your deeds? Who dares advise you?

You are correct. In every way, in every choice, You regret no decision. You have never failed. Never! You cannot fail! You are God! You will accomplish Your plan. You are happy. Eternally joyful. Endlessly content. You are the king, supreme ruler, absolute Monarchy, overlord, and rajah of all history.

An arch of your eyebrow and a million angels will pivot and salute. *Every throne is a footstool to yours. Every crown is papier-mâché to yours. No limitations, hesitations, questions, second thoughts, or backward glances. You consult no clock. You keep no calendar. You report to no one. You are in charge.*

*And I trust you.*

Circle November 9 on your calendar and write upon it the words: Our good God rules the world.

*[Max Lucado is the best-selling Christian author with 32 books and preacher in San Antonio, Texas. More than 100 million readers have found comfort in the writings of Lucado]*



"Show me the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul." (Psalm 143:8)

Two of the greatest inventions of my time have been the laptop computer and e-mail. The laptop means I no longer have to stay in one place to be productive in my business life. E-mail has allowed me to stay connected to people all around the world with the touch of a button.

My greatest frustration is when either of these does not work. Sometimes e-mail cannot be used because I can't get a connection. Sometimes I cannot use my laptop because I have not properly charged it, and then the charge runs out while I am on an airplane. Both of these situations mean I am unable to tap into the resource that allows me to fulfill my calling in my work to the fullest.

The morning time with God is much like these situations. God pours His Word into my spirit and I am recharged. This recharging has an important effect on my day. It allows me the greatest opportunity to hear the small voice that directs my steps. If I refuse to "get

connected," I risk following my own ways of fulfilling the duties of my day. It sets forth the opportunity for God to speak into my spirit what He desires for me each day. It allows me to focus on God's purposes, not mine.

# Excerpts from the Book

## "I Am N"

By Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) Magazine



### **"I am N" What does that mean?**

When militants from the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) moved into northern Iraq, they began identifying Christian-owned property. Families would find the Arabic letter (nun, noon), or N, painted on their homes and churches. This single letter conveyed the powerful accusation that the occupants were "Nazarenes", people who followed Jesus of Nazareth (Christians are referred to in Muslim Koraan as Nazarenes).

To be labeled "N" in a community dominated by Muslim extremists is to undergo an immediate identity and life change. With this mark comes the ultimatum: [If you convert to Islam or pay the tax, you can keep your material possessions and remain in this community. If not, leave or you will die.](#)

Any person who takes a stand for Jesus in occupied Iraq, any person who chooses to be "N" pays a high cost. Without warning, some Christians are dragged from their homes or businesses by armed militants and they are never seen again. Pastors [or priests] who share the message of Jesus in their communities are beheaded in front of their families. Children or teens who will not renounce Jesus may be taken from their families and forced into service to ISIS or beaten, mutilated, and shot.

[Since 2003, such persecution has forced more than a million Iraqi Christians, who refuse to renounce Jesus Christ, to flee. Many survivors live in refugee camps, trusting God daily for their food, shelter, and safety because they have no money, no work options, and no other place to go. Even more challenging is the reality that their situation is not temporary; their circumstances on this earth are unlikely to improve ever.](#)

Yet their courageous, steadfast commitment to God in the face of persecution provides Jesus followers all over the world with a powerful picture of what being "n" is all about. They willingly sacrifice everything they have in this world in order to fulfill God's calling to obey and serve Him. [Like the heroes of the faith whose stories we read in the Bible and in the record of church history](#), they are living out Paul's words in Philippians 1:21:

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

### **Stories That Must Be Shared**

We want you to have the opportunity to get to know some of the persecuted Jesus followers who live in hostile communities and nations. Their stories matter because they are our brothers and sisters in the global family of Jesus Christ and they need us to stand with them. We, in turn, need their example of faithfulness in the face of persecution to encourage us in our walk with the Lord (Heb. 12:1-2).

We are sharing these stories through eyewitness accounts and interviews. They are current and real, having taken place between 2001 and 2015. For every one of these stories, there are hundreds more that will never make the evening news or a twitter feed. We have eaten meals with these brothers and sisters in Christ, prayed with them, and helped to meet some of their needs. It has been our honor and privilege to pray, weep, and serve alongside brothers and sisters who have suffered for Christ. (Phil. 1:3-5).

[There is no doubt that radical Islam is one of the greatest challenges facing the church \[and the world\] today. These inspiring accounts of the persecuted church will move you to tears and then drive you to your knees. Don't let the horrors described here intimidate you, because fear is a terrorists'](#)



greatest weapon. Instead, be stirred up to pray that the Holy Spirit may grant you boldness to speak out, to take action, to get involved. Similarly, don't let these indescribable crimes fill you with hate for Muslims. Many Muslims would join us in condemning these atrocities. [We are called to follow our Savior in loving our enemies, serving their needs, and having compassion on their blindness.](#) The sacrificial faith of these suffering saints show us how we are to respond at this time of crisis, courageously daring to love Muslims with the love of Christ."

God is at work in extraordinary ways in the midst of the worst possible terror, oppression, and violence. These Christians reveal a hope and strength that is supernatural. These family members have completely abandoned their personal agendas and are learning to trust God absolutely. We have much to learn from their example

## (1)

### **The Day ISIS Arrived in Mosul**

#### **Abu Fadi - from Iraq**

The June 2014 day broke like almost any other day in Mosul, Iraq: hot and dusty and teeming with people, traffic. People flocked to marketplaces in Iraq's second-largest city (population 660,000). Horns honked amid the pent-up traffic. As the day progressed, street-side chatter rose appreciably.

That's when Abu Fadi, a sixty-five-year-old Mosul native living just miles from the city, received the phone call that changed everything. For some, the phone call marked the beginning of the end of life as they knew it and for some, their very lives.

"Abu Fadi" said to a friend in Arabic, "ISIS is coming. We have heard from someone we trust. Today is the day."

For weeks the rumor mill had been churning that ISIS terrorists who had been ravaging cities elsewhere in Iraq would take Mosul next. That's where Abu Fadi's mother, Sara, and sister, Dleen, still lived. As Christians, they would be in grave danger. ISIS hated many people in the world, but especially Christians. [The ultimatum to followers of Jesus? Convert to Islam, pay an extremely high tax, leave, or be killed.](#)

"How can we hope to get my mother and sister out?" asked Abu Fadi. Both women were disabled and in wheel-chairs.

"It will not be easy," his friend stated. "And if Mosul falls, can your city be far behind? We must pray very hard, Abu Fadi."

An ISIS military water tanker, rigged with explosives, blew up near the Mosul Hotel, where government security officers were stationed. Abu Fadi's friend hung up the phone. Chaos descended on Mosul.

Armored vehicles rumbled down streets. ISIS troops began freeing the first of about one thousand prisoners. Gunfire broke out. A woman who had planned to celebrate this

day as her wedding day died in a blast.

[ISIS fighters ripped down the cross on the Syriac Orthodox Cathedral of Mar Afram. They replaced the cross with loudspeakers proclaiming that Islam, not Jesus, was the way.](#)

Everywhere chaos reigned. People dragged possessions to cars. Traffic jams closed roads. Screams of panic echoed. Amid it all, Abu Fadi received sporadic phone reports from his friend in Mosul, who at one point said, "The Iraqi army is now fleeing the city."

During the following weeks, Abu Fadi secured permission from an ISIS judge to permit his mother and sister to stay in Mosul. A few weeks after taking Mosul,

ISIS swept into Abu Fadi's city, just as he had feared. More Christians hastily packed and fled, but Abu Fadi and his wife, Rukia, could not leave Sara and Dleen in Mosul.

For 16 days, ISIS occupied the area where Abu Fadi lived. 16 days that to Abu Fadi seemed like 16 years.

"Please come get me, Abu Fadi" Pleaded his mother during yet another phone call from Mosul. "It is not safe here. You must\_\_." A man's hardened voice cut in on the line. ["Let me state it more clearly," the ISIS soldier declared. "If you do not come get these two infidel dogs, they will either be converted to Islam with guns at their heads or thrown onto the street."](#)

Abu Fadi had a chance to get his mother that day because he'd be going against the surge of frantic people escaping the city. Both women were allowed to stay with a Muslim neighbor for the night, but the ISIS soldier confiscated their house, pulled a can of spray paint from a bag, and tagged the front of the house with نَسْرَ (Arabic n for "Nazarene"), Christians live here. Property of the Islamic state.

Like almost forty thousand others who fled the purge in Mosul and the surrounding area, they crammed the few possessions they could fit into the car and headed east for relative safety in the city of Erbil, sixty miles away. Soon Abu Fadi and his family arrived at the first checkpoint. Cars weighed down with people and their possessions inched forward in dozens of lines. ISIS guards stood with firearms and swords. Abu Fadi had prayed about this moment for courage to stand for his beliefs.

- "Who are you?" a guard asked.

- "We are Christians leaving Mosul, because we are not permitted to stay in the Muslim land," Abu Fadi replied.

The guard, now joined by others, refused to let the family pass. Instead, they placed a call to superiors. Thirty minutes later, two shiny SUVs arrived. Young men with new, expensive firearms stepped out and began peppering the family with questions.

Abu Fadi answered honestly: "Yes, we are Christians."

"Leaving is no longer an option for you and the rest of your infidel family," said the leader. "Convert to Islam or be killed."

It is that simple. It is an easy choice, no?"

Abu Fadi pleaded with the men to let his family proceed. He referred to passages in the Quran that allow Christians to live if they pay the Jizya (Islamic Tax).

For ninety agonizing minutes, the discussion continued, as if a bomb were ticking and destined to go off any second. As they talked, an ISIS fighter wielding a sword circled Abu Fadi, ready to strike if he tried to run.

"Enough," declared the leader. He grabbed Abu Fadi and led him away as his wife, mother, and sister wept, pleaded, and prayed. "Prepare to die," he said, pushing Abu Fadi to his knees. "Last chance. Will you convert to Islam?"

Abu Fadi looked back to the three women, then heavenward. He prayed for strength, wisdom, and courage. Even though he felt weak and expected the sword to plunge into him at any moment, he sensed God's peace strengthening him. "No, I will not be a Muslim," he stated. "I do not denounce Jesus."

The man raised his sword. Abu fadi bowed his head, closed his eyes, and prayed. Then he heard another vehicle arrive and exhaled. Another black SUV. Out came another ISIS official, who inquired about the situation and then walked over to Abu Fadi.

"I have a message for you to deliver to your church leaders as you leave our

land," he said. "We are victorious. And we will follow you Christians all over the world. We will reach the Vatican and convert the pope to Islam if we have to."

Abu Fadi didn't know what to say but reminded himself not to utter anything disrespectful toward the Muslims. Simply be honest, he told himself. "We wish no harm on you people," he said. "Only to practice our faith as we please."

The official looked at him and spit. "Get out of here, you dogs," he said, turning and walking away.

At a second checkpoint, ISIS soldiers again detained the family. They checked the car for valuables. Abu Fadi surrendered all he had. When a guard found money that Abu Fadi's wife had hidden beneath a seat, he ordered the family out of the car.

"If you convert," said one guard, "all that we took from you will be given back. You will even be protected. So, tell us you embrace Islam."

**"I am a Christian,"** Said Abu Fadi.

Each time the ISIS guard asked Abu Fadi to convert and each time Abu Fadi politely but firmly said he was a Christian and would not. Finally, another guard, a supervisor, came and fired questions at Abu Fadi.

"So, you have left behind a home and would be willing to pay the tax?" The supervisor asked.

Abu Fadi nodded. Yes, the previous checkpoint had taken substantial money that could be used for the tax. And yes, they did own a home. The supervisor instructed the interrogating guard to make a call. After the guard left, the supervisor said to Abu Fadi. "Be gone! Fast!"

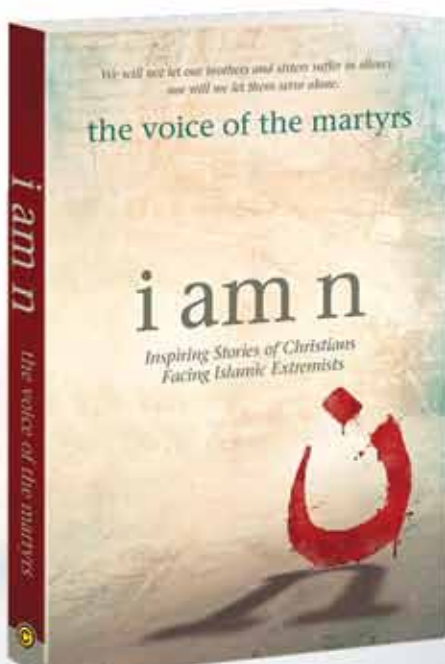
Abu Fadi felt like a fish that had been hooked and fighting for its life when suddenly the fisherman cut the line. He nodded his thanks and returned to the car.

Upon reaching Erbil, they saw that the city was already overpopulated with Syrian refugees. Because of the ISIS purge in Iraq, the city was swamped. What did most of these refugees have in common? They were Christians whose lives had been pulled out from underneath them. Students who had been ready to graduate from the University of Mosul now had no records to show they had even been enrolled. Young people engaged to be married now didn't even know where their fiancés were. Adults who had jobs now were jobless. They sacrificed it all. They left behind their homes, the lives they had lived, and their hopes for the future, choosing instead to trust in God and serve him wherever he would lead.

The conditions in Erbil were miserable. Nauseating smells rose from garbage and raw sewage. People curled up beneath make shift tents made of blankets, towels, or scrap materials, anything to protect them from the relentless sun and oppressive heat. They searched desperately for water and food.

Amid all this, Abu Fadi set up a lean-to tarp for his family. "Now," he said quietly, "we thank God for a safe journey." And they bowed their heads to pray. As Abu Fadi and his family did, we must remember that the God we serve is with us wherever we go. We must place out hope in Him, not in a place or circumstances.

God is far less concerned about where we live than where our hearts are. He cares most about where we place our trust, what we value, and whether the desire of our hearts is to focus our eyes on Him. He is pleased when we are so focused on Him that we can affirm our hope and trust with these words: "But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He had prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).





# The Brotherhood is a wolf in sheep's clothing

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S  
GOAL IS FOR ISLAM TO  
DOMINATE THE WORLD.



Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna is quoted as declaring, "It is in the nature of Islam to dominate, not to be dominated, to impose its law on all nations and to extend its power to the entire planet."

**Their motto reads, "Allah is our objective. The prophet is our leader. The Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope. Allahu Akbar!"**

As Al-Jazeera reported on the Brotherhood several years ago, "The movement's ideology revolves around cementing the Quran and Islamic teachings as a way of life, reviving the Caliphate and rejecting colonial rule. It strives for an all-encompassing system of social justice through this Islamic base."

Hamas is among the Brotherhood's partner organizations, and they also support Hezbollah's war against the Jews. **They refer to the current day Israelites as "monkeys and pigs."**

One of the organizations' most influential leaders was a racist, anti-Semite, and outspoken hater of the United States.

As Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) asserted earlier this week, "The U.S. has officially

listed individual members, branches, and charities of the Muslim Brotherhood as terrorists, but has not designated the organization as a whole. The Muslim Brotherhood poses a direct and severe threat to U.S. national security through radical jihadist attempts to eliminate and destroy America and its allies."

**+ The United States' national security is at risk from this wolf in sheep's clothing.**

Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) have introduced the *Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist Designation* Act into the Senate and House, urging John Kerry, the Secretary of State to formally designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a sanctioned foreign terrorist organization.

The bill details the Muslim Brotherhood's involvement in violent terrorist aggression, and their links to radical terrorist organizations. The bill's sponsors also demand answers as to why the State Department and the Obama administration have failed to recognize and designate the Brotherhood for what it is, a "Foreign Terrorist Organization."

Liberty Counsel Action is supporting this initiative by Senator Cruz and Representative Diaz-Balart. Our online petition endorses the Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist Designation Act and rightfully supports the designation of the Brotherhood as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization."

Join with us — for the sake of the United States' national security, the safety of Israel, and for security everywhere the Muslim Brotherhood has influence.

Congress owes it to the American people to uncover and reveal the truth — as Sen. Cruz also advocates:

"We have to stop pretending that the Brotherhood are not responsible for the terrorism they advocate and finance. We have to see it for what it is: a key international organization dedicated to waging violent jihad. Since the Obama administration refuses to utter the words 'radical Islamic terrorism,' Congress owes it to the American people to tell them the truth about this threat."

The petition supporting the Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist Designation Act will be delivered to key leaders of both Chambers of Congress as soon as we gather enough names to make a strong impact, or before a vote in either Chamber.

P.S. Please consider forwarding the link below to your friends or posting it on your social networking sites so they can also be made aware and participate in this important campaign:

[www.lcaction.cc/201463/petition.asp](http://www.lcaction.cc/201463/petition.asp)

# A Psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins:

## 'Transgendered Men Don't Become Women'



By: Hannah Bleau

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Millennials. They take every sort of abnormal or bizarre behavior and attempt to normalize it while screaming at dissenters. It's their mission in life. They've been attempting to push the LGBT agenda down our throats for some time now, but lately, they've been focusing on transgenders. It's the latest trend, and I HATE to call it that, because I know there are individuals out there who genuinely struggle with gender dysphoria. Liberal millennials aren't concerned about that. They're desperate for attention and want to right the wrongs in the world without actually doing anything. So they find a tiny percentage of the population, convince them of their victim status and launch an all out whine war over what they perceive to be an injustice. That's what they're doing with the LGBT community.

It's not just about forcing society to accept—no, embrace—abnormal behavior. I'm genuinely concerned for those the left has deemed victims. They've convinced them that the opposing side hates them.

### Quite the contrary.

These people are suffering from a mental illness, and altering the physical body does absolutely nothing to address the root of the issue. **These people need help. Not encouragement.** They don't need to be coddled and told that their struggle is normal. It's not. It's out of LOVE that I want these people to get all the help and support they need. And no. Support doesn't mean "facilitate their lifestyle."

But what do I know? I'm not a psychiatrist. But this guy is. Dr. Paul R. McHugh is the "Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University and former psychiatrist-in-chief for Johns Hopkins Hospital." **He's studied transgender individuals for 40 years and concludes that "transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men."**

In an article for The Witherspoon Institute, McHugh writes that [these individuals](#) "become feminized men or masculinized women, counterfeits or impersonators of the sex with which they 'identify.'"

In other words, you can't get some female body parts, put on a dress and call yourself a woman. It doesn't work that way. What's more, McHugh said this forced idea—that one can change his or her gender at any given moment (or "gender fluidity") is damaging to individuals, especially young people who are still developing.

The idea that one's gender is a feeling and not a biological fact "is doing much damage to families, adolescents, and children and should be confronted as an opinion without biological foundation wherever it emerges," said Dr. McHugh in his article, *Transgenderism: A Pathogenic Meme*.

"I am ever trying to be the boy among the bystanders who points to what's real," said Dr. McHugh, who is also professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins. "I do so not only because truth matters, but also because overlooked amid the hoopla—enhanced now by Bruce Jenner's celebrity and Annie Leibovitz's photography—stand many victims."



"Think, for example, of the parents whom no one—not doctors, schools, nor even churches—will help to rescue their children from these strange notions of being transgendered and the problematic lives these notions herald," warned McHugh.

That goes right along with the consensus from the American College of Pediatricians.

There are those who truly struggle with gender dysphoria, but as McHugh points out, it's difficult to find a counselor or doctor who actually tries to help the individuals. Often times, the professional encourages the patient to embrace their desired sexuality.

In addition, he said, "both the state and federal governments are actively seeking to block any treatments that can be construed as challenging the assumptions and choices of transgendered youngsters."

**The truth? This is a mental illness and should be treated as such.** We don't treat any other mental illness that way. Can you imagine if we did? "Oh, you're anorexic? Keep it up! In fact, since you're so worried you're overweight even though you're totally not, we'll give you a little lipo to help you along!"

"In fact, gender dysphoria—the official psychiatric term for feeling oneself to be of the opposite sex—belongs in the family of similarly disordered assumptions about the body, such as anorexia nervosa and body dysmorphic disorder," said McHugh.

"Its treatment should not be directed at the body as with surgery and hormones any more than one treats obesity-fearing anorexic patients with liposuction," he said.

"Transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men," he said. "All (including Bruce Jenner) become feminized men or masculinized women, counterfeits or impersonators of the sex with which they 'identify.' In that lies their problematic future." This only hurts these individuals in the long run.

When "the tumult and shouting dies," McHugh continued, "it proves neither easy nor wise to live in a counterfeit sexual garb. The most thorough follow-up of sex-reassigned people—extending over 30 years and conducted in" Sweden, where the culture is strongly supportive of the transgendered—documents their lifelong mental unrest.

**"Ten to 15 years after surgical re-assignment, the suicide rate of those who had undergone sex-reassignment surgery rose to 20 times that of comparable peers," said McHugh.**

This culture of "gender fluidity" isn't helping anyone. And if you disagree, you're considered transphobic.

**CNS News**



## The Best is Yet to Come

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"

(Deuteronomy 33:27)

**Are the best days** of your life in front of you? Our outlook on life — and our answer to that question—can change with time. When we're younger, we look ahead, wanting to grow up. And once we've grown older, we yearn for the past, wanting to be young again. But when we walk with God, whatever our age, the best is yet to come! Over the course of his long life, Moses witnessed the amazing things God did, and many of those amazing things happened when he was no longer a young man. Moses was 80 years old when he confronted Pharaoh and saw God miraculously set his people free from slavery (EX. 3-13), Moses saw the Red Sea part, saw manna fall from heaven, and even spoke with God "face to face" (14:21; 16:4; 33:11).

Throughout his life, Moses lived expectantly, looking ahead to what God would do (HEW 11:24-27). He was 120 years old in his final year of life on this earth, and even then he understood that his life with God was just getting started and that he would never see an end to God's greatness and love.

**Regardless of our age, "the eternal God is {our} refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (DEUT. 33:27) that faithfulness carry us into His joy each day.**



# When God Pretends!

By Maged Makar



**+ When God pretends that He does not know,** as He did when He asked Cain ‘where is your brother?’ He really knows all things because He searches the hearts and reigns. He simply wanted to give Cain the opportunity to confess his sin and seek forgiveness.

**+ When God pretends to want or need sacrifices** as He pretended to want Abraham to offer his only son Isaac as a burnt offering, He takes no pleasure in burnt (or human) sacrifices. He only wanted to expose, reward, and bless Abraham’s love and faithfulness by later making Abraham the father of His only Son, the incarnate God, Who is the true sacrifice for mankind. So, He took that as a type, or figurative sense, of what God Himself was going to do in fullness of time on the same Mount of Moriah (the old name of Calvary or Golgotha- Gen. 22:2 & Heb. 11:17-19 & 2 Chron. 3:1).

**+ When God pretends to be in need,** as He did when He asked the Samaritan woman to give Him water at the well, He really needs nothing from anyone. He is the Giver of life and every good gift. He simply wanted to give the woman Living Water and eternal life (John 4).

**+ When God pretends He doesn’t have a solution** as He did when He asked Phillip how they will feed the multitudes in the wilderness, God has a perfect solution for everything. He simply wanted to see if Phillip’s solution would involve Him?

**+ When God pretends to not care,** as He did when He said to the Canaanite woman, **“It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs,”** He cares like no other. He said, “Though the mother may forget, I will not forget you!” God simply wanted to test (or rather honor) the woman’s faith in His love, compassion, and healing power, as He said, “O woman, great is your faith! (Matthew 15:21-28),

**+ When God pretends to sleep** as He did when He slept while the ship was about to collapse in the storm (Matt. 8:24). He really doesn’t sleep. He who watches over Israel will neither sleep nor slumber (Psalm 121).

He simply wanted all in the ship to know He has Divine power over any sea or storm and all creation.

**+ When God pretends to not be present** (in time of need), as He did when His friend Lazarus was dying, He is really omnipresent (i.e. present everywhere) and His Glory fills the heavens and the earth. He did it so that all who witness the miracle of raising of Lazarus from the dead after four days, including Lazarus himself, would know that He has power over death and He is more than just a healer. He did it so that all would know and believe that He is the “Resurrection and the Life” (Jn. 11:25).

***There are many other Biblical examples where God simply pretends, in order to test, teach, sometimes rebuke, expose, purify and eventually reward and bless those around Him.***

**+ He did so again with the Samaritan woman,** when He asked her to call her husband, knowing very well she had no husband, in order to gently lead her to confess her sins.

**+ He did so when He asked, “Who touched Me?”,** knowing very well it was the woman with the issue of blood, in order to expose her faith and reassure her of His forgiveness.

**+ He did so with the two disciples of Emmaus** as He pretended to be a perfect stranger to them until they invited Him in and He opened their eyes to His resurrection- as He rebuked their unbelief.

**+ He did so with Peter when He asked him three times if he loved Him,** knowing very well that Peter would eventually die for Him (Jn. 21). When God pretends that He doesn’t know, hear, see or care about you, it is so that He can also test or praise your faith in His love, compassion, mercy, and power. Rather than despair and fail His test (and walk away from Him empty-handed) - Cling to Him and His promises even tighter.

This is what Jacob did when he wrestled with God and said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!”

After that, wait on the Lord, be confident in His unfailing mercy and unlimited power-fully assured that His deliverance and healing is on its way quickly!



# Congratulations

## Weddings



didn't receive pictures

ST. John Church congratulates,  
**Christine Marie Hanna  
& Sherif Iskander**

On their marriage, praying the Lord Jesus Christ to bless their life together and grant them joy, harmony, long life and a fruitful Christian home built on the Rock of the holy Bible and the Church. Congratulations also to their two blessed families.

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ST. John Church congratulates,  
**Ramy Ghabrial  
&  
Reham Matta**

For the crown of marriage, wishing them every blessing, health, success and happiness in Christ. The church also congratulates their blessed two families.



## Baptisms



St. John Church congratulates Madeline and Wael  
Takla for the baptism of their blessed son

**Mikhail Takla**

May the Lord Jesus bless his life and grant him health and growth in the stature, grace, knowledge and spirit

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St. John Church congratulates Ezzat Ibrahim and  
Caroline for the baptism of their baby girl,

**Caitlyn (Martha)**

May God bless her life and grant her growth in health, grace, knowledge and long life.







**San John basketball team won the championship for Coptic league for the first time ever 1**

**H.E. Metropolitan Tadros' Visit**



**Boys high schools retreat**





