

SALT & LIGHT

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FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

- Medical Interventions on Chopping Block
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A Message from Dran Reese | SLC President

PEACEFUL TRANSITION OF POWER IN D.C.

On January 20, 2025, we witnessed the peaceful transition of presidential power. I am incredibly proud of our nation and the future that lies ahead. President Trump's message was one of optimism and hope, acknowledging the challenges we face while inspiring confidence in our ability to overcome them. President Trump acknowledged God four times. In particular, "I was saved by God to make America great again." Yes, the Lord saved him and raised him for such a time as this. The President also said, "There are only two genders male and female." It's about time we have a leader with common sense. We must stop abusing our children with dangerous "gender" choices. It is a great day for America to be reminded God is still on the throne. The song, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" struck me with the enduring words, "His truth is marching on." Indeed, The Lord's truth continues to march on. Gratefully we sense restored hope and a future. It is time for Christians to march forward as witnesses for Jesus Christ, no longer afraid to speak about our faith and the life-saving grace it brings.

National

MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS ON CHOPPING BLOCK

After the White House defined sex as only male or female, another executive order aims to curtail "gender" transitions for people under age 19. The order directs federally-run insurance programs, including TRICARE for military families and Medicaid, exclude coverage for such care, and calls on the Department of Justice to vigorously pursue litigation and legislation to oppose the practice. "Across the country today, medical professionals are maiming and sterilizing a growing number of impressionable children under the radical and false claim that adults can change a child's sex through a series of irreversible medical interventions," the order reads. "This dangerous trend will be a stain on our Nation's history,

and it must end." Meanwhile, the Supreme Court agreed to hear *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, which would determine whether schools can force teachers to read LGBTQ books to elementary-age children despite parental objections. At issue is whether parents will have the right to opt their children out of such instructions.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 18:6; Luke 17:2.

PRAY: Pray government submits to parental authority.

ACTION: In your own words, write a postcard to President Donald Trump that you are praying for God's wisdom as he leads his administration. President Donald Trump, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20500.

<https://www.fox7austin.com/news/trump-gender-executive-order>
<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trumps-two-sexes-executive-order-comes-heels-scotus-accepting-another-challenge-lgbt-agenda>

BILL PASSED PROTECTING WOMEN & GIRLS

In mid-January, the U.S. House passed bill HR 28, The Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, in a 218 to 206 vote that now heads to the Senate. The bill requires federally funded schools to defend the safety rights of women and girls and would restrict women's sports to those who are born female. The legislation makes it a violation of Title IX rules to allow 'transgender'—those who are born male—to take part in women's athletics in most schools. House Speaker Mike Johnson defended the bill from a Christian standpoint, citing Genesis 1:27: "God created them male and female." "It's biology...[Not] bigotry...[This] is to protect women and girls..." Its passage comes less than a week after a federal district court in Kentucky ruled the administration unlawfully attempted to change the meaning of "sex" in Title IX to include "gender identity." Riley Gaines, collegiate swimmer and women's rights activist, commented, "It is necessary and urgent" to protect girls and women, confirming, "Men do not belong in women's sports."

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 5:2; 1 Corinthians, 6:19-20.

PRAY: The Senate votes to protect women in sports.

ACTION: In your own words, write a postcard to Senate Majority Leader John Thune urging the Senate to pass the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act protecting women in sports. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, U.S. Senate SD-511, Washington, DC 20510.

<https://cbn.com/news/us/house-passes-legislation-protect-women-and-girls-sports>

https://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=40943

HOMECOMING & SENATE BLOCKS ICC BILL

A cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas in Gaza took effect Sunday, January 19. Hours later, Israel welcomed home the first three released hostages. Prof. Itai Pessach, head of the hostage recovery team, reassured the public: "I'm happy to report that they are in stable condition. That allows us and them to focus on what is the most important thing for now, is reuniting with their families." Israeli military's chief spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari stated, "We cannot imagine the horrors these three young women have endured in fifteen months of Hamas captivity. Today we salute and embrace them and their families as they reunite

after so long. [Our] mission is not over until every single hostage comes home." In the U.S., the Senate blocked a bipartisan 243-140 House effort to advance "The Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act" falling six lawmakers short of the 60 needed to bring the legislation to a floor vote. The bill sanctioned the International Criminal Court (ICC) over arrest warrants issued against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Brian Mast had said, "America is passing this law because a kangaroo court is seeking to arrest the prime minister of our great ally, Israel."

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 32:43; 2 Chronicles 7:20.

PRAY: Peace through strength and release of the hostages.

ACTION: In your own words, write a postcard to Rep. Brian Mast thanking him for supporting HR 23 backing of our ally Israel. Encourage him to remain diligent and committed to bringing home hostages. Rep. Brian Mast—Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, 2182 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515-0921. <https://cnn.com/news/israel/joy-and-anger-three-hostages-return-israel-amid-hamas-declaring-victory>
https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/democrats-block-gop-effort-to-push-us-sanctions-on-icc-through-senate/

CHALLENGES FOR CHRISTIANS IN CULTURE

According to Dr. George Barna of the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, 2025 will usher in numerous significant changes that will combine to continually redefine the American experience. This, according to a brief report Barna released in late January. Barna emphasized the importance of faith and worldview in shaping a balanced and viable society. "Because a culture is a reflection of people's choices, and those choices are a reflection of people's worldview, and that worldviews are founded on the faith perspectives held by the public, attending to the worldview of the citizenry must be a central focus of family, government, educators, and journalists," he explained. "The coming five years or so represent a prime time for biblical Christians to add direction and value to their culture by strategically and intentionally introducing God's ways and truths into what is presently a turbulent cultural milieu." Barna also noted that Christian parents and churches could play a crucial role in helping the nation get back on track spiritually and morally. "In the end, it's all about worldview."

SCRIPTURE: 1 Chronicles 12:32; Acts 17:11.

PRAY: Christians understand the importance of worldview.

ACTION: For a Prayer and Action Meeting, read the new the Cultural Research Center's 2025 Trends report on spiritual and cultural trends, and discuss how Christians can best use their time, talents and resources in 2025.

<https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/CRC-Spiritual-and-Cultural-Trends-2025-1.pdf>

https://www.amazon.com/Raising-Spiritual-Champions-Nurturing-Childs/dp/1957616474/ref=sr_1_1?sr=8-1

GOD'S COVERING AND SUPERNATURAL PEACE

Actors Carlos and Alexa PenaVega believe God has been faithful in their lives by providing healing from grief following a tragedy in April 2024 after losing their fourth child, Indy, who was stillborn. A day later, feeling God's calling, they pondered attending church. "Me and Alexa, and our three kids went to church that next day and we

didn't know anybody. It was our second time ever going, and we were worshipping ... and I'll never forget that we're standing in the middle ... and Alexa and I are holding each other and we're just bawling." Carlos described finding a "supernatural peace," as parishioners—people they barely knew—surrounded them and prayed over them. They experienced God's healing in amazing ways. "He has a reason for everything, and He takes whatever the enemy meant for evil and turned it to good." Throughout 2024, they developed their new company-- Good for You Entertainment, and a first film, *Get Him Back for Christmas*, a heartfelt romantic story—holiday fare that delivers deep themes of doing good, caring for others, and being inspired by genuine and unadulterated kindness. All rendered with God's covering!

SCRIPTURE: John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

PRAY: The power & love of God multiply exponentially.

ACTION: For a Prayer and Action Meeting, evaluate hospitality and prayer support to meet current needs.

<https://www.crosswalk.com/headlines/contributors/milton-quintanilla/how-carlos-penavega-found-comfort-in-god-during-a-season-of-grief.html>

<https://tinyurl.com/3fdynky5>

SALT & LIGHT MINISTRY MOMENT:

NOTE: Ministry Moment is for educational purposes only. The information offered by organizations is from their websites and should not be used as a substitute for your research.

AUTISM FAITH NETWORK

Tonya Nash, Founder

"If there's any space that should be equipped to welcome autistic people, it should be in places of worship," says Tonya Nash, a wife and mother of two autistic sons. For years, the Nash clan moved as a military family attending different churches. Faithfully attending services became difficult with the unpredictable nature of congregations and crowds, causing anxiety for her sons. Those helping in children's church often didn't know how to effectively work with the boys. In 2013, Bethesda Church of God saw the family's struggle and started a special needs ministry for their oldest son. Bethesda's act of kindness led Tonya to become the founder of Autism Faith Network. The network's mission is to spread autism awareness, acceptance and inclusion in local and faith-based communities worldwide. Four Goals are highlighted: to create awareness about autism; promote the need for timely screenings for autism and early intervention; work to eliminate stigmas about autism; and encourage acceptance and inclusion. The network provides resources, tools and inspiration for autism ministry in local churches.

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 6:10.

PRAY: Support for those affected by autism.

ACTION: For a Prayer and Action Meeting, evaluate the congregation's ministry and knowledge about autism.

<https://autismfaithnetwork.com/>

Contact Congress and TAKE ACTION!

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/>

Newsletter approved for church-wide distribution by legal firm: Liberty Counsel.

Liberty Counsel Website: www.LC.org Phone: (800) 671-1776

The Salt & Light Council, Website: www.saltandlightcouncil.org

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