



AAMA/ LARK NEWS



Highlights by Kenneth Thompson

November 2008

AAMA Assembly 08 Message Highlights

Rising Above Your Circumstances

Friday, Opening Service - **Bishop L.W. Francisco III**
Calvary Community Church, Hampton, VA

Knowing how to handle your emotions is important in rising above your circumstances. Too many people live their lives based on how they feel each day. Don't wait to see how you feel about the day - tell yourself what kind of day you look forward to having! Let the Lord help you manage your life from the 'inside' and not have it controlled from the outside. People experience life moving forward and up or at a standstill and downward because emotions are the driving force of life. They either make us great or bring us grief. Learn to manage them or risk being governed by them.

Nehemiah 1 tells how Nehemiah had just heard distressing news about his hometown. Somebody had to do something. Are you the somebody in your community? 'How do you make a difference in your life? How do you make a difference for others? How do you move from prayers that merely weep, mourn, fast, and plead, and rise into action that causes change? What really makes change happen?' These questions are answered by 4 emotions taken from the life of Nehemiah to help shape our lives and impact the lives of others whom God brings into our sphere of influence for His glory. Nehemiah was given the mantle to go to Jerusalem and turn the city upside down [make a difference].

Nehemiah 1:5-7:

1) GET DISGUSTED . . . with stagnation in a situation - you don't see change without it. Get disgusted with waiting on and waiting for 'someone else' to do what you can do and need to do for yourself, your family, your church and community. Deliverance never comes to those who sit, sigh, wish, or complain. 'Change' is the result of faith being mixed with wanting change, willing to commit to change, and working toward change. It is intentional, never accidental. It is refusing to be satisfied with or settle for mediocrity, scarcity, or excuses.

2) BE DECISIVE . . . and move in faith. You will never know everything there is to know to make a 'perfect' decision - but God gives you enough for you to make the right decision. After you've made a decision Faith and Wisdom will guide your actions toward a good outcome.

Nehemiah 2:1-3:

3) HAVE A DESIRE . . . that knows and is persuaded that God has something better. Desire will wake you up in the middle of the night; it will help propel you to do what you are called to do (*See Proverbs 13:12*). Know what is needed and pursue it with purpose and passion. Believe God has given you everything you need to begin to experience and to be His blessing where you are, for the people and the work He has called you to.

Nehemiah 2:12-18

4) BE DETERMINED . . . to rise above doubt, fear, and persistent circumstances. Each of those enemies of your faith will lead you into an emotional quagmire if you don't resolve to resist them. Actively seek after God's best for your life. Be willing to say: 'I will because GOD CAN!' Promise yourself you will never give up.

Stewardship of Health

Saturday Workshop - **Dr. Zenobia Sowell-Bianchi**
Bethel Mennonite Community Church, Chicago, IL

Every disease has 4 stages: *Acute; Chronic; Malignant; and Terminal*. Tragically, our people often wait too long to seek treatment and wait to go to a doctor after something has turned malignant. Be informed about your health. Early detection, testing and consistent treatment/maintenance are keys to being a good steward of your body and preserving the quality of your life. Among African-Americans **the top 5 afflictions and killers are HIV/AIDS, Hypertension, Diabetes, breast/prostate/lung Cancer, and Stroke**. They can be avoided or successfully managed toward good general health and quality of life by proper nutrition, exercise & rest, early detection & treatment.

Incorporate more fresh fruits & vegetables into your diet. Eat more whole grains and complex carbohydrates, good protein, and essential fatty acids. Look to include parsley, garlic, and onions in your meals. Limit beef, pork and dairy products; eliminate sugars, salt (except sea salt), flour and caffeine from your diet. Include more water and more walking as a start toward good overall health. Give yourself at least 7 hours of sleep and rest, and make time for good recreational activities. And remember to laugh more! Laughter has spiritual, emotional and natural healing value!

Understand and know that *your mouth is the gateway to your body*. Many diseases that afflict the body can be detected early by signs seen first in the mouth. Regular visits to a dentist helps monitor what goes in your mouth (good nutritional health) as well as what's going on in your mouth (good oral health).

Almost 90% of most diseases and physical ailments can be traced back to 1 of 3 things: **(1)** A patient's weak spiritual condition which needs to be strengthened. Living out of the flesh and the mind invites confusion into your body. **(2)** Poor oral health due to irregular check-ups, failure to brush, floss and rinse after every meal. **(3)** Poor nutrition; failing to eat proper foods and drink water in proper amounts to aid in regular elimination of waste from the body. God's will is good health; He wants things to be well with us!

Stewardship of Spiritual Development

Saturday Workshop - **Pastor Samuel Olarewaju**
Berean Fellowship Church, Youngstown, Ohio

The word 'Stewardship' has its history in the Greek language, literally defined as 'to arrange house'. To be a steward is to be entrusted with something of value that belongs to someone of importance, and licensed through delegated authority to serve as the Caretaker, never the Owner, of another's material and business affairs.

Just as a computer functions according to its design and intended purpose by programming its disc operating system, we need to program the Word of God into our belief, thought, and behavior system so that we live our lives at their highest and best as God designed and destined us to live. Your life is not yours to do with as you please. The life of God is in you by virtue of Jesus Christ. We 'have' life

continued on page 2

but we don't *own* life – life belongs to God. We are to render honor to the Lord in how we manage our spirit, soul, and body, serving as 'caretakers' or stewards of what He has entrusted to us.

Ours is a purpose-driven stewardship: to emulate Jesus Christ; we are to do what Christ would do in every life situation. The world cares more about how your life matches what you believe and cares less about what you say you believe.

We must apply the Word in daily living. The benefits of living in the Word transform our lives through giving direction to our minds, illumination to our spirits, and inspiration to our lives to conduct ourselves in honor and virtue. God's ways are revealed to us for development in righteousness, correction of attitudes, and consecration of service unto God and our fellow man. We have to be stewards of our house cleaning; live a life of constant confession of sin. We sin daily and we need to confess, be healed and be delivered.

The worship of God liberates our soul, revives our spirit, and humbles our minds to be grateful for what we've been given. None of this spiritual growth happens without knowledge of the Word and a growing understanding of it. For Christ love is doing, not just feeling. Obedience to the Word is necessary for spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth and development takes time and discipline. You cannot hasten the process but you can prolong the process unnecessarily. God is committed to your growth so be willing and obedient to grow. Also be willing to use your gifts to help others grow.

In conclusion, stewardship of our spiritual development entails nurturing our new life to maturity in Christ through knowing the Word, using our spiritual gifts and daily confession of our sins.

Stewardship of Finances

Saturday Workshop - **Bishop L.W. Francisco III**
Calvary Community Church, Hampton, VA

Do not make the mistake of living or ministering without a financial plan in place. You cannot simply 'pray in' the money needed for life and ministry. You need to have a plan for management of and increase in finances. Living and ministering without a financial plan is *not* living by faith. Living without a plan is living recklessly. *It is living in presumption and risk.* Far too many ministers of the gospel come to a sad transition or unwelcome end in ministry because of sickness, burdensome debt, or early death. Each of these is stressful and leaves a family in turmoil spiraling downward into a seemingly hopeless situation. It is so important to plan properly and live wisely. Position yourself to be a blessing to your family and the work of ministry.

Too many of our people are deceived into thinking the *appearance of living rich* is the same as the *reality of being wealthy*. Too many try to impress others through costly things that depreciate in value rather than providing for themselves and their families the substance of things that reproduce in value and worth over time. Our people need to learn and understand both the value of a dollar *and* the management of that dollar to reproduce in savings, interest, earnings, tithes & offerings, and gifts of love & mercy. God's blessings of favor from Heaven in Malachi 3:10-12 and Proverbs 3:9 are given to those who are cheerful givers in worship and wisely sow good seed into productive soil with hopes of a good harvest. It is an illustration of good stewardship and smart living that is always rewarded.

God's lasting favor and true increase will not come to greedy, wasteful, slothful, covetous, fearful or careless

people. It always comes to industrious, informed, committed, faithful, charitable and thankful people. Don't strive to *make* money – instead work and learn how to *make money work* for you and your family. And work toward owning something of value. Others pass by the same land, property, or business opportunity you do, and unless you have a plan in advance that will lead and empower you to own it-plant it-grow it at the right time, someone else will be in position to take your opportunity to increase.

Statistically, our people have a disturbing gap between our earning power, and our savings and net worth. The average net worth of Anglo-American and Asian families is about \$70,000 compared to the average net worth of African-American families at about \$6,000. Our families and our churches struggle not for lack of faith in the Lord or love for His work; we tend to struggle because of our failure to do the right thing at the right time for the right reasons with the resources and abilities God has blessed us with.

You cannot and must not depend on the kindness of others to do for you what you need to do and prepare for yourself and your family. It's not what you have but what you do with what you have. Develop a plan to manage your money with a mission, and live life with a purpose to be blessed and ready to provide for every good work.

Determine needs versus wants. Those who live out their dreams first had to live within their means. Set financial goals. Live and spend according to knowledge, not emotion or impulse. *Put something away from every dollar every time.* Expect emergency expenses. Always stick to your budget and don't compromise. Proper budgeting tells us where our money goes so we don't end up wondering where it all went! Seek out a competent financial planner; don't try to do it on your own. Remember 3 principles: wise planning, common sense and keep abreast of the facts (Proverbs 24:3).

Walking Stewardship

Saturday Closing Service - **Ben Brickhouse**
(Young Adult Speaker) Calvary Community Church, Hampton, VA

Be occupied with your stewardship. Our living strong and living well takes action and good intent. Know your purpose and be confident of the God-given ability within you because of Jesus Christ. Meet every challenge in life as an opportunity for, rather than an obstacle of, your growth.

Ordinary people become superheroes through sudden adversity and eventually overcoming adversity. Think about Batman, Spiderman, and Superman. Something rises within them to affect change in things around them. They didn't volunteer – they were chosen by 'fate' to use the power they were given. Jesus Christ places in us everything we need to rise above any adversity to affect change where we are. We say 'Yes!' to God's will for our lives to represent Him and His Kingdom well before the people in our realm of influence.

God's design is for us to know how to 'sit, stand, walk and run' with Him. We are never to be stopped by, fall into, crawl under or bow down to the pressures of the world, the flesh or the enemy. In your 'make or break moment' you see what makes you who God predestined you to be. 'Greater is He who is in you!' exhorts us to stay alert to and informed of God's greatness.

Our lives will be and must be above average. Superheroes became less captivated by what made them different and instead chose to rise and make a difference. Similarly, we are different to make a difference for God. God provides everything we need as often as we need it in the measure and the hour we need it. God's grace is given both for comfort through trials and courage toward triumph in the Name of Jesus and the authority of His Word!