

Alleluia

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All People Deserve to be Honored

Following are a series of sharings on using Social Media to Honor others.



Amy Parris:

"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
(John 13:35)

As a community, this is one call that we live very well. When people visit, they talk about the tangible love they feel. It's our light and we let it shine.

But how can we spread more of that light—that love—to the outside world, a world that is getting darker and darker?

Social media is an excellent tool. Surely, it can be a time drain and a kick in the gut when you are watching the seemingly glorious lives of your "friends." However, it can also be the light that we let shine on those same people.

I've found that when I share links to Christian articles, I may get a handful of people to read them. Usually, that handful is the same group who already believe what the articles say. However, when I post a picture along with an honoring on a loved one's

birthday or anniversary, masses of people not only read it, they respond to it. I'm not preachy about it. I just do it. I honor my children, husband, and family members just as I would at the dinner table. This isn't for their benefit since they are present when I honor them in person. It's a gift for those who can't be present (like out-of-town family members), but mostly it's a witness.

I recently caught the final show of a popular TV star. He had hosted the show for sixteen years and they brought back everyone who had ever been on the show to say goodbye. Those goodbyes were acerbic at best. The host was known for his satire and wit and was getting what most would feel was his just reward. But the fact was he was leaving what is arguably his life's greatest work and his guests were crucifying him on national TV as a way to send him off.

It isn't unexpected...it's the norm. People get uncomfortable when they have to honor someone (especially in public), so they turn to sarcasm and negative humor to save face. It makes me uncomfortable to watch someone endure that. But, just when I was about to lose hope, the last man said

he was going to go "off script" for a moment. He sat face-to-face with the host and honored him for his comedic genius. He honored him for paving the way for other comedians. Then, he thanked him.

In a studio that seconds before was reverberating with the sounds of laughter, it got eerily silent. When the camera focused in on the host, there was a tear in his eye. Someone had honored him in the way he deserved, and it had touched him deeply. If I had been present in that studio, I would have stood up and applauded, as much for the honorer as the honoree. This is the way it should be done. People, all people, deserve to be honored. It encourages us. It gives us strength. It gives us a reason to keep on keeping on. For those who hear it, it calls us on. It makes us want to live the kind of life that will enable someone to say those things about us.

Mostly, it's about love. It demonstrates a very tangible way to love someone. It makes someone feel so very, very loved. Social media just amplifies our microphone. It is the tool we need to extend our light a little further.

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Using Social Media to Honor Others

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Jackie Hoyt:

When I was asked to write this article on honoring, I started thinking of all the ways in today's society that we can honor people. We can

do it at support group, on Facebook, Twitter and on and on. I know, personally, I enjoy calling the person, sending a card or spending time with them.

The first time I was honored on my birthday, it was a little bit embarrassing. That had never happened to me before. I also thought that the people sitting there did not know the real me...faults that I have and the sin I commit. But as I walked away, I realized they were trying to see me as Jesus does. What a wonderful feeling that was! It is also nice to pull up Facebook or look at your phone and see how many people have remembered you on your special day. We also need to realize that everyone does not do Facebook and texting, so you may wish someone happy birthday or happy anniversary and they will never know.

Honoring on a special occasion is a wonderful thing that we do in Community, but I remember one time my mother-in-law was talking to me about Lent and she said, "I am not giving up anything this year. I am doing something different." I asked her what she was doing and she said, "Every day for 40 days I am going to make a person feel special just by a kind word." That spoke volumes to me! Why wait until a special day for our brothers and sisters to tell them how special they are? If we just told one person a day (in or out of Com-

munity) something good about themselves, how great would that be! I try very hard to always look in the eye of every clerk with whom I come in contact and ask how their day is going. It is amazing! A lot of them will tell you, and I have had some that have asked me to pray for them. What a blessing!

To me, honoring someone is a very special thing to do. I feel in my heart that Jesus wants us to honor each other on a daily basis as well as on special occasions. If you think about it, it sure makes people feel very special to hear something good about themselves, even if it is only, "What a beautiful smile you have!"

In closing, I want to take a minute to honor all of you and tell you how wonderful I think you all are. Thank you so much for all of your prayers. You are in mine as well.



Linda Finnegan:

Everyone knows that there are pros and cons to the use of social media. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Linked In, and Twitter

are just a few of the forms of social media that are currently available and new forms are being developed all the time. Social media is fun and we are attracted to it. It is also a great tool to keep in touch with the news, family and friends. The task for Christians is to use this tool as God would like us to use it. Using social media to bless others and thereby furthering the kingdom of God is the challenge of all social media fans.

Often nowadays, family and friends are scattered throughout the United States and the world. Using social media to keep in touch and to share moments big and small with loved

ones far away is certainly a wonderful thing. I love to watch the babies growing up, celebrate the graduations and weddings I cannot attend, cheer on the athletes I am related to, and admire what I need to admire. I love sharing jokes and the trivia of life as well. Social media provides a way to touch the lives of the people I see infrequently and also allows me to nudge my immediate family and neighbors with light touches and support on a weekly or even daily basis.

Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and other special events is one of the best ways to use social media. Facebook helps us to do this with reminders and event calendars. I know that I have been blessed by scores of birthday wishes on my birthday and anniversary. Someone taking the time to send out a personal message on a special occasion has helped make a special day even more special. People who want to get creative can take advantage of the many apps and websites that create e-cards that can be posted to social media sites. I personally have used AmericanGreetings.com and Hallmarkcards.com to send cards to loved ones. I have even seen sites that send gift cards. Moreover the Lord has shown me that it is important to go beyond social media on special days when possible. Many times a social media birthday wish should be followed up by a real card, a cupcake and a hug the next time I see the person.

Encouraging others in their endeavors is also a great use of social media. I have been called on by simple statements like "Go girl," "You can do it!" and "I'm praying for you." Feeling the support of family and friends is always edifying.

Special occasions are not always good or pleasant and social media often notifies me of a need and gives me the opportunity to pray during surgeries, sicknesses, or other trying

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Social Media

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times. It helps me see if there is a physical need that needs meeting like providing babysitting, giving a ride, or making a meal as well.

The thing I always need to remember is that social media cannot be an end all in itself. Has anyone ever been at a family gathering where everyone is looking at their phone and not at each other? I know that I am guilty. Social media cannot replace good times spent face-to-face over dinner, during a walk or at a support group meeting. Sometimes, I need to make that trip to see my relatives or to actually attend that wedding. I definitely need to walk out my door and visit my neighbors. As great a tool that social media is, I can easily abuse it. My task is to use it for the good and to touch people's lives for the better.

Amy Parris is a former teacher in the Alleluia Community School and currently a stay-at-home mom and wife of a support group head. She and her husband, Nelson, have been Full Covenant members of Alleluia since 2007. They have five children and attend the Catholic Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Augusta, Georgia.

Jackie Hoyt is a retired bookkeeper for Alleluia Community and a Support Group Head's wife. She and her husband, Dennis, have been Full Covenant members of Alleluia Community since 1987. They have three adult children and six grandchildren and attend St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church in Grovetown, Georgia.

Linda Finnegan is a Support Group Head's wife, a retired English teacher in the Alleluia Community Middle School and serves as one of twenty-three women who provide overall insight to the Community Elders from a womanly perspective as an Alleluia Handmaid. She and her husband, Bob, have been Full Covenant members of Alleluia since 1980. They have nine adult children, 15 grandchildren and attend St. Joseph Catholic Church in Augusta, Georgia.

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30 Days of September: "Unity in the Body of Christ/Sharing the Gospel"

The Elders have been working on a program for our 30 days of September and have come up with the theme of unity and our sharing the gospel with others. Over the years, we have used the time of September to change our vacation/laid back mindsets of summer and to begin again to refocus ourselves on the work of being a people and living out the great commission of Jesus. We have adopted various disciplines over the years to help us be God's people in this troubled world we live in. This year is no exception in trying to redirect our hearts into serving Jesus and one another.

To do this, we are asking each family to read the book, *The Ultimate Treasure Hunt*, by Kevin Dedmon. As a part of reading the book, we are highly encouraging each Support Group to do at least one treasure hunt during the month of September. We need to all be open to doing this since it mainly is using the charismatic gifts to serve the Body of Christ. People in the world are all looking for hope in a world full of despair. Treasure hunts bring them that hope because it brings them the love of Jesus. Just think of this as showing God's mercy to a hurting world. People who have done treasure hunts will tell you that people are excited to hear you share with them the love of Jesus. They usually cannot believe that God cares so much for them that He sent you to be His messengers to convey that love He has for them.

We also are making available the book by Dan Almeter, *Unity: On Earth as in Heaven*. This will be a tremendous blessing to you as you read about all God has done in our life as Alleluia members. It will build up your unity with the brothers and sisters and strengthen you in your walk

in community. This is not an either one or the other but an attempt to do both during the month. Since we have sabbatical weeks in September and the first week before school starts, people should have plenty of time to do both. If you can't do both, talk with your head and ask which he/she thinks you should do.

As in times past, we are requesting each family or single household to limit their use of the media for the month. Media can be a distraction from our spending time with the Lord or with other brothers and sisters. Try to fast from the use of all those electronic devices that we all use so much. Be intentional as you start the month and decide what you are going to do and then stick to it during the month. Lord's Day/Sabbath meals are special times for us to gather together. Make an attempt to schedule one in September with your household or with the Support Group. Try to invite others outside your social circle to share the meal with you.

Lastly, we need to increase our use of speaking in tongues. If we have that as part of your regular prayer time and you speak in tongues for 10 minutes during September make it 20. Everyone should try to pray in tongues sometime during your day. As you do you will find that things will go so much better at the end of the day. Keep this Scripture in mind as we pray and seek the Lord during September: Esther 4:14, "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance shall arise for the Jews (or Christians) from elsewhere, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows but that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this and for this very occasion?"

The Elders

March for Jesus

By Virginia Norton

Fifth Street was clear heading into the lower end of Reynolds Street around 8 a.m. Saturday – no cops, no traffic, no sign of Arthur Blessitt supporters and the March for Jesus – but not for long.

Only a few cars were parked in the old Reynolds lot behind the Augusta Chronicle. I ducked in and headed over on foot to the Augusta Commons, still hoping to catch up with the marchers as they made their way down Broad Street from Curtis Baptist Church.

A couple more blocks up Reynolds, I spied them and scrambled up a side street to join them. They were moving fast, really fast. And it was loud.

A friend waved to me and I fell in step with her. A dozen black women in matching purple T-shirts burst into song ahead of us while someone somewhere behind us blew a horn over and over. People were happy and chatty.

Onlookers snapped pictures and video as the march joyfully flowed down Broad and onto the Commons. It was a great mix of people, Protestant and Catholic, representing different races and various areas of the state and beyond. The event expressed unity among Christians and solidarity with those now persecuted

for their faith in Christ, especially in the Middle East.

The sun had climbed in the sky by the time we turned into the Commons. Here and there Alleluia friends stood out in their orange T-shirts with the Arabic "N" for Nazarene. The crowd had been exuberant on the street, but not now. Instead people seemed absorbed in their own thoughts, watching the stage at the front or looking down at the grassy lawn. Hardly anyone responded to a "good morning" or glanced my way. It was easy to slip through to the front of the stage.

The man of the hour, Arthur Blessitt, sat at the back of the platform while introductions were made. He has walked the earth since 1968 with a wooden cross, covering more than 41,000 miles, the longest walk anyone has made. It is official — ask Guinness World Records.

"I am the world's No. 1 illegal immigrant," he told the crowd. "I have been in more countries that wouldn't give me a visa, so I went around the border and went in anyway. So I've got orders from above."

He was jailed 24 times, beaten, even stoned, but to him, there was never an option to turn back or to quit, he said.

He led a prayer of repentance and then commitment. "You have a call on your life," he told them and asked the ministers on the stage to join him as he raised his hand to commission the people.

"There is a world that is crying; there is a world that needs you," said Arthur Blessitt, who was born in Mississippi. "The churches need you; the people need you."

He prayed that the Augusta March for Jesus would become an "igniting fire" that would bring "processions of peace and blessings in Jesus' name" throughout the streets in this country and other nations of the world.

He said the Augusta crowd was the largest outdoor event he had seen in Georgia since 1970, when he preached at the Atlanta Rock Festival. One of the ministers on the stage, the Rev. Michael Hull of St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church, later reported that there were some 12,000 people at the march.

During the event, drones passed overhead. Camera people worked on and near the stage during the entire event. The Augusta talk was also live-streamed



on Mr. Blessitt's Facebook page.

"God bless Facebook for giving us the privilege of preaching the gospel for free around the world," he said.

Dorothy and Russell Spaulding, WB-PI-TV, Channel 49, North Augusta; Cleve Walker of Christian radio station WAFJ, 88.3-FM; and Dr. Sandra Kennedy, pastor of Whole Life Ministries, Augusta, were among those who shared the stage with Mr. Blessitt.

A Prayer and Praise Rally for America will be held at 6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13, at the James Brown Arena. For more information, see www.prayerandpraise.org. The event will be sponsored by Sandra Kennedy Ministries and Whole Life Ministries.

Clarification

I would like to thank the brothers and sisters who questioned the validity of a statement I made in my Dove article, "Toward Jerusalem Council II in Dallas." I repeated a statement that was made by a presenter at the consultation concerning the "remaining Jewish bishops not being invited to the Council of Nicea." Upon further research with theologian, Fr. Peter Hocken, that statement cannot be proven.

Fr. Peter states: "It seems clear that there were no leaders of the Jewish church who believed in Jesus at the Council of Nicea, but we do not know why because there is no evidence." He also states that on a prayer journey to Nicea, he, as an ordained priest, led the way in the Catholic confession of sin for the marginalization of the Jewish believers that resulted in their having no representation, no voice at the Council of Nicea in the year 325. I am sorry for any error on my part, as I only want to seek the truth which the Holy Spirit is calling me to.

Blessings, Janet Hatfield

