

# INSIDE:

- + **Christianity in Media**
- + **Laundry Love**



A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance

June 2024





ONE is the official publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA) which guides its mission, content, and theme. The ECMA encourage submissions from ECMA congregations. Photographs, stories, testimonies, and other submissions should be directed toward your church leaders or sent via email to

**one@ourecma.com.**

The ECMA ONE Advisory Board will choose appropriate and timely submissions for publication. The columns in ONE represent the views of the author.

Volume 18, Issue 2 • ourecma.com • Copyright 2024 individual authors and ECMA

### **Advisory Board**

Kurt Beyers  
Ben Houchen  
Anna Towns

### **Editor**

Terri Braun  
terribraun91@gmail.com

## **Editor's Note:**

This month we asked our writers, "What do you think of the depictions of Christianity and Christians in visual media?"

## ***Portrayal of Religion in Television***

### ***Written by:***

***Rev. Jon Anderson***

Until recently, it seems like most network TV shows treated religion in one of two ways. Either they virtually ignored it or they made fun of it, portraying religious people as ignorant rubes at best or villains at worst.

For the former, you can look to sitcoms like "I Love Lucy," "The Dick Van Dyke Show," or "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," in which religion was seldom mentioned, and then only briefly, very rarely did religion figure in the plot. For the latter, you can look to more recent shows like "Two and a Half Men," or "Mike and Molly," in which religion was portrayed as boring or repressive or both. I'll never forget an episode of "Mike

and Molly" which portrayed a Christmas Eve service that was the most boring and depressing Christmas service I'd ever seen-one I'd never want to attend, and I'm a pastor!

In the past, there were a few shows, like "The Waltons," "Little House on the Prairie," and "Touched by an Angel" in which religion was treated positively and was the subject of different episodes, but they were the exception. But lately, more shows have begun treating religion with more respect. The best example of this is "Blue Bloods," which portrays the life of a family made up largely of New York City police officers. They are all practicing Catholics. They make a point of eating dinner together at least once a week, and of saying grace

before each meal. They struggle with doubts-when they sin, they go to confession-overall, they take their faith seriously.

Other recent examples include two shows from a surprising source. Earlier, I mentioned "Two and a Half Men" and "Mike and Molly" as shows that portrayed religion in a negative light. Their producer is Chuck Lorre, responsible for a great many sitcoms in the last few years. Surprisingly, two of his more recent shows "Bob Hearts Abishola" and "Young Sheldon" put a much more positive spin on religion. "Bob Hearts Abishola" is about Bob, the president of a family-owned sock company, who falls in love with Abishola, the Nigerian nurse who cares for him after his heart attack. Bob wasn't



## ***Portrayal of Religion in Television (Continued)***

raised in any church, but when his mother has her heart attack, he goes to the hospital chapel and cries out to God to heal her. Abishola is a deeply committed Christian, and although Bob is skeptical, he goes to church with her, and becomes part of the community.

“Young Sheldon” is about a boy genius named Sheldon

Cooper. He’s an atheist, but his family is Christian, especially his mother, whose faith journey is taken seriously. Although Sheldon doesn’t share her faith, he appreciates its importance in her life, supports her involvement, and even goes to church and Sunday School with the family. Other shows are also showing a new awareness of the importance of faith in people’s lives. I

hope that this trend continues, and that both the joys and the struggles associated with faith will be truthfully portrayed.



*Rev. Jon Anderson serves Prairie Faith Shared Ministry, a group of four Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America (ELCA) congregations in Western Kansas.*

## ***Christianity and Social Media***

***Written by:***  
***Esther Courtney***

There are many different avenues of social media. There is radio, TV, movies, cell phones, concerts, etc. We can see how Christianity and religion and anti-Christian ideologies are portrayed in all of these. There is, at our fingertips, explicit images, video games destroying our youth, music depicting violence upon women, and other self-destructing ideologies. We must be wise and discerning with our families and with the ideas and subject matter we put in our minds. We can see something over and over and over and soon, what once seemed wrong, now seems okay!!! We have

become immune to evil—that old devil called Satan is at work in our world. We must be on the alert. We become what we put in our minds.

I would like to discuss the movie “The Chosen.” I liked the Christian message from this series. It portrayed Jesus as a kind and gentle man, but still firm in His expectations of what He requires of those who profess to follow Him. Many people call themselves Christians—they claim they know the Lord because they pray, they tithe, they go to church every week, they know the Bible somewhat, etc. But they do all this on their own terms, not God’s terms. Is this really good enough?

When we follow Christ, we have to give up everything, just as the apostles were portrayed doing in this movie. Many people think this sounds boring...where’s the beer, the bars, the women, the partying, the cussing? What about those times with the boys and partying with the girls? Guess what!!! When you follow Christ, you will not want to do those things.

May I tell you, God will lead you on adventures you could not think of, you simply follow. When we bring God our “loaves and fishes,” this simply means our submission to Him. What will follow is His miracle in our lives. He will never make us do anything we do not

## ***Christianity and Social Media (Continued)***

choose to do. It's our choice. Just as in the Garden of Eden, Eve was deceived by that old serpent, the devil... but Adam chose to follow Eve. He wanted to please man more than God, Galatians 1:10 (NIV).

Another movie film I want to discuss is "The Help" from 2011. This film holds a valuable lesson about kindness and loving each other. It is a story set in the 1960's in a Mississippi high society and is about black slaves in a white man's world. It tells of the slaves being demeaned, devalued as humans, abused, intimidated, etc. It tells of abuse where families were ripped apart; of being unable to voice their

feelings when their hearts were bleeding from a cruel blow, physically or mentally; when they heard words that cut like a knife; when they saw actions that spoke louder than the words.

When a young white reporter asked them to tell their story, they had to think about it...what would the consequences be if they were found out. Everything had to be done in secret. Is this a Christian story? You bet it is!! There is right and wrong, good and evil, truth and lies. God is no respecter of one people over another. We are all equal in His eyes; we are all made in His image; we all bleed red. Skin color does not matter to God. In fact, I heard it said, "In order for

justice to be served, we have to be color-blind." This show touched my heart. 1 John 4:8 (NIV) says, "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." John 15:12-13 (NIV) says, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

There is persecution all over the world. This world needs Jesus. He's waiting for us. Will you follow?



*Esther Courtney is an Elder of the Hays SDA Church.*

## ***Pray More, Worry Less***

***Written by:***  
***Cheryl Glassman***

1 Peter 5:7 (NIV) says, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

School's out! Summer holidays are upon us. Temperatures are warming up and there are a lot of sunshiny days. We can spend more time outside. So then, why are so many people worried and anxious?

Anxiety plagues just about everyone. Some people are anxious daily - some hourly! We worry about finances, soaring prices, family traveling, making it to work on time, and even our health. The list can be endless, but does being anxious and expending energy worrying really help us?

As a person very well acquainted with the concept of worrying, I have learned

the most important thing I can do to combat worry and anxiety is to pray. Prayer really is such a gift. You can pray anywhere, anytime. You can pray out loud or silently. You can pray through song, spoken word, or silence. I have several prayer books I turn to or prayers I recite. I also speak to God with my own prayer words. I cannot remember a time wherein I finished praying and did not

## ***Pray More, Worry Less (Continued)***

feel more relaxed or at peace.

One of my favorite activities when I taught at TMP-Marian was the retreats. We met at St. Nicholas of Myra and different grade levels of students spent the whole day in retreat. One activity we did, I still do myself to this day. I would like to share it with all of you.

Find a comfortable, quiet place. If you cannot find a place like that, let your mind find one for you. I have done this in a crowded airport! Close your eyes. Imagine yourself on a beach, the warm sand under your feet, the smell of the water, the sound of the waves; maybe you are at the top of a mountain, the cool grass waving gently, the crisp air of a gentle breeze blowing through your hair; maybe you find yourself in the sanctuary of a church or your home.

Wherever you find yourself, take a deep breath and close your eyes. See the beauty around you. As you find yourself in the space, with your eyes still closed, you sense someone coming toward you. He is silent, walks up to you and then sits beside you. It is Jesus. He doesn't speak but sits by your side. Take another deep breath and acknowledge Christ's presence. Give Him your worry, your anxious thoughts. Feel His love around you. Know His peace, His strength. Let His light shine to warm your anxious heart.

Open your eyes. Remember the words of Psalm 46:10 (NIV), "*Be still and know that I am God.*" I hope this helps you feel lighter and to see Christ for who He truly is - He is the one and only savior of the world, of your heart, and of your spirit.

I also love to pray through the gift of song. I have put pen to paper and written songs and love to sing and pray using them. One of the songs was written as I sat in church. It has this lyric: "Do you listen to the silence as you sit here in the place? Do you do you feel God's love around you as you look into each face? The love of God surrounds us if only we would see - His light within each other, His love in you and me?"

May the love of God surround each of you. May you worry less, pray more, and find the presence of Jesus walking with you every step of the journey.



*Cheryl Glassman is the Director of Music at St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church in Hays.*

## ***Free Laundry Assistance Program Coming to Ellis County***

***Written by:***  
***Linn Ann Huntington***

In 2003, Greg Russinger of Portland, Ore., and a friend decided to start an organization that would provide free laundry

assistance to low or no-income individuals and families.

Thus, was born the non-profit organization Laundry Love, which eventually went nation-wide.

According to its website, "Laundry Love is a neighboring movement that partners with groups, schools, and local laundromats to wash the clothes and bedding of low-

## ***Free Laundry Assistance Program Coming (Continued)***

income and/or no-income families and person(s).” Twenty-one years and 3 million loads of laundry later, Laundry Love is coming to Ellis County.

Starting Thursday, June 20, any Ellis County resident will be able to wash up to five loads of laundry for free from 4 to 7 p.m. at the 27th & Hall Laundromat, 507 W. 27th St. in Hays. The free service will continue the third Thursday of every month during those same hours, said Macey Pfeifer, Executive Director of First Call for Help of Ellis County. No proof of income is required.

Pfeifer said First Call was approached by officials at Sunflower Bank in Hays, who have agreed to sponsor the project for the rest of 2024. First Call is looking for businesses or organizations who would like to be a sponsor in 2025. The cost is \$400 per month.

Here is how the service will work: First Call staff or volunteers will be at the laundromat each month on the designated day. They will take the name and phone number of each person wanting to wash clothes. This is only so individuals can be called if

they do not move their items out of the washer, Pfeifer emphasized.

Each client will be assigned a number. That number will be attached to a magnet that will be placed on the appropriate washer or dryer, Pfeifer said. Then First Call volunteers will place the coins into the appropriate machine(s).

Laundry Love has a contract with Earth Breeze laundry detergent and will provide boxes of the detergent sheets free of charge. Pfeifer said First Call will also have liquid laundry detergent available, along with a stain-removing product, fabric softener, and dryer sheets. These will all be provided for free, she said.

After Sunflower Bank offered to fund the project for the rest of 2024, Pfeifer said she met with officials from the United Way of Central Kansas, which oversees the Laundry Love operations in Great Bend and Larned. The Ellis County operation will follow the same guidelines as the ones used in those other cities, she said.

This is not the first time a free laundry assistance program has been offered in

Ellis County. Individual churches have sponsored similar programs, Pfeifer said, but she was unsure if any are currently in operation.

Russinger, one of the young co-founders who is now president of Laundry Love’s Board of Directors, said on his website: “We see the laundromat as an inclusive and welcoming place where strangers become friends, people are known by name, hope is hustled, and the worth of every human being is acknowledged and celebrated.”

Pfeifer put it much more simply: “Everyone deserves to wear clean clothes and feel good in them, regardless of their financial situation.”

Those wishing to become a monthly sponsor for 2025 may contact Pfeifer at (785) 623-2800.

More information about Laundry Love is available at <https://laundrylove.org>.



*Linn Ann Huntington of Hays is a professional writer and retired professor. She attends North Oak Community Church.*





**THANK YOU!**

To the Hays VFW for  
your hospitality and all  
those that led us in  
prayer and song. It  
made this day a success!



**NATIONAL  
DAY OF  
PRAYER**



TM