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Agape Love Way Ministries



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ADDRESSING THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH NEEDS OF THE MODERN CHRISTIAN, AND SECURING A FUTURE IN GODLY HOPE.

Wives are key to marital happiness

Atheism on the rise in America

By Keith R. Thompson

It has long been understood and accepted within our churches that husbands are the head of the family but what does that really mean, and what role do wives play in encouraging family stability and long-term success?

To better understand the role of a wife we first need to understand the husband's role within the home. A man's primary role within the family is clear. He is the spiritual head of his house [Eph. 5:23]. This means he should teach his wife and kids the Word of God, and help them to grow spiritually [see Deut. 6:7; I Corin. 14:35].

In contrast, while the husband is the spiritual head it is the wife who is the emotional pillar of the home. Proverbs 31:10 & 11 states "who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trust in her..." [KJV]

The story of Abigail is a powerful story emphasizing a woman's ability to provide emotional balance within her home, and help her husband in the process. Now, even non-biblical research is finding out what women contribute within a marriage relationship. Read the follow-up article to learn more.

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America has long been considered a Christian country, at least that is what many of us have been led to believe for many years. However, as one famous writer once said 'the times, they are a changing'. It seems Atheism is growing so much in the United States that they are even forming their own churches, yes you read right churches. According to a recent poll self-reported atheists are among the highest in Western developed nations, with the United States (4%), Italy (7%), Spain (11%), Great Britain (17%), Germany (20%), and France (32%). These numbers are also growing each year as more and more people leave organized religion.

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Editor's Note

Agape Love Way Ministries is a ministry devoted to the principles and practices of the First Century Church, and the Great Commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely: Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul & strength, and Love your neighbor as yourself [Matt. 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-28].

§ Word of Wisdom Section §

Atheist 'mega-churches' take root across US & world

By GILLIAN FLACCUS

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It looked like a typical Sunday morning at any mega-church. Several hundred people, including families with small children, packed in for more than an hour of rousing music, an inspirational talk and some quiet reflection. The only thing missing was God.

Nearly three dozen gatherings dubbed "atheist mega-churches" by supporters and detractors have sprung up around the U.S. and Australia — with more to come — after finding success in Great Britain earlier this year. The movement fueled by social media and spearheaded by two prominent British comedians is no joke.

On Sunday, the inaugural Sunday Assembly in Los Angeles attracted several hundred people bound by their belief in non-belief. Similar gatherings in San Diego, Nashville, New York and other U.S. cities have drawn hundreds of atheists seeking the camaraderie of a congregation without religion or ritual.

The founders, British duo Sanderson Jones and Pippa Evans, are currently on a tongue-in-cheek "40 Dates, 40 Nights" tour around the U.S. and Australia to drum up donations and help launch new Sunday Assemblies. They hope to raise more than \$800,000 that will help atheists launch their pop-up congregations around the world. So far, they have raised about \$50,000.

They don't bash believers but want to find a new way to meet likeminded people, engage in the community and make their presence more visible in a landscape dominated by

faith. Jones got the first inkling for the idea while leaving a Christmas carol concert six years ago.

"There was so much about it that I loved, but it's a shame because at the heart of it, it's something I don't believe in," Jones said. "If you think about church, there's very little that's bad. It's singing awesome songs, hearing interesting talks, thinking about improving yourself and helping other people — and doing that in a community with wonderful relationships. What part of that is not to like?"

The movement dovetails with new studies that show an increasing number of Americans are drifting from any religious affiliation.

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life released a study last year that found 20 percent of Americans say they have no religious affiliation, an increase from 15 percent in the last five years. Pew researchers stressed, however, that the category also encompassed majorities of people who said they believed in God but had no ties with organized religion and people who consider themselves "spiritual" but not "religious."

Sunday Assembly — whose motto is Live Better, Help Often, Wonder More — taps into that universe of people who left their faith but now miss the community church provided, said Phil Zuckerman, a professor of secular studies at Pitzer College in Claremont.

It also plays into a feeling among some atheists that they should make themselves more visible. For example, last December, an atheist in

Santa Monica created an uproar — and triggered a lawsuit — when he set up a godless display amid Christian nativity scenes that were part of a beloved, decades-old tradition.

"In the U.S., there's a little bit of a feeling that if you're not religious, you're not patriotic. I think a lot of secular people say, 'Hey, wait a minute. We are charitable, we are good people, we're good parents and we are just as good citizens as you and we're going to start a church to prove it,'" said Zuckerman. "It's still a minority, but there's enough of them now."

That impulse, however, has raised the ire of those who have spent years pushing back against the idea that atheism itself is a religion.

"The idea that you're building an entire organization based on what you don't believe, to me, sounds like an offense against sensibility," said Michael Luciano, a self-described atheist who was raised Roman Catholic but left when he became disillusioned.

"There's something not OK with appropriating all of this religious language, imagery and ritual for atheism," said Luciano, who blogged about the movement at the site policymic.com. That sentiment didn't seem to detract from the excitement Sunday at the inaugural meeting in Los Angeles.

Hundreds of atheists and atheist-curious packed into a Hollywood auditorium for a boisterous service filled with live music, moments of reflection,

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§ Word of Wisdom Section §

Atheist 'mega-churches' take root across US & world

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an "inspirational talk" about forgotten — but important — inventors and scientists and some stand-up comedy.

During the service, attendees stomped their feet, clapped their hands and cheered as Jones and Evans led the group through rousing renditions of "Lean on Me," "Here Comes the Sun" and other hits that took the place of gospel songs. Congregants dissolved into laughter at a get-to-know-you game that involved clapping and slapping the hands of

the person next to them and applauded as members of the audience spoke about community service projects they had started in LA.

At the end, volunteers passed cardboard boxes for donations as attendees mingled over coffee and pastries and children played on the floor. For atheist Elijah Senn, the morning was perfect.

"I think the image that we have put forward in a lot of ways has been a scary, mean, we want to tear down the walls, we want to do destructive

things kind of image is what a lot of people have of us," he said. "I'm really excited to be able to come together and show that it's not about destruction. It's about making things and making things better." §

Editor's note:

This is a 'call-to-action' moment for the Church. When atheists can organize themselves to 'mimic' other churches and be so up-front about it then it is time for us to step up our commitment to evangelizing and winning back those members who have grown disillusioned with organized religion. The Church should not be about organized religion, but about impacting souls & lives.

After hearing from so many of you over the past seven months we have decided to publish some of the comments we received. Thanks to all for sharing how this newsletter has impacted their lives. Please keep sending those emails of encouragement, and supporting us through your prayers and other contributions. They mean a lot to this ministry, and to the overall work of the Lord.

Dear (Agape Love),
I enjoyed reading this month's Newsletter. It was thought provoking and inspiring. God bless!
N. O. (MD) – 2/27/14

I enjoyed this... thanks for putting it together. May the lord bless you immensely for your efforts.
N. J. (FL) – 1/27/14

Greetings Elder:
Thanks for the newsletter. I am impressed with the article "The true meaning of Christmas".
Pastor W. R. (NY) – 12/23/13

May God continue to bless you both as you undertake His work.

Best regards,
P. V. (FL) – 12/9/13

I just want to let you know that I appreciate what you are doing. I believe this is going to touch many lives. I love the topics you cover they are well-timed. God bless and keep up the good work.
N. H. (NJ) – 12/6/13

Thank you for sharing this beautiful newsletter. There are good people out there doing God's work and I am pleased that (you are) one of them... Praise be to God! May He continue to bless you and your family abundantly.
P. V. (FL) – 12/4/13

Thank you Elder - very insightful stuff about love relationships and finances.

Keep sending them.
Pastor O. P. (NJ) – 11/6/13

Good job...I am proud of you. I have a lot of work to do but cannot wait to hear the next issue.
C. W. (NY) – 10/13/13

Thanks!
Excellent article on man taking responsibility for his Success at the pool after 38yrs. Keep up the good work ...

Pastor O. P. (NJ) –

§ Family Life & Relationships §

Wives Are in Control When It Comes to Marital Happiness



By [Jennifer Carofano, Shine Staff](http://shine.yahoo.com/love-sex/wives-are-in-control-when-it-comes-to-marital-happiness-230419202.html)
<http://shine.yahoo.com/love-sex/wives-are-in-control-when-it-comes-to-marital-happiness-230419202.html>

When it comes to marital satisfaction, it turns out women are in the driver's seat.

A new study from researchers at the University of California, Berkeley looked at the interactions of more than 80 middle-aged and older heterosexual couples, focusing on how they recovered from disagreements. Those in marriages in which the wives calmed down quickly during an argument were found to be the happiest. What's more, those same marriages were shown to be happiest in the long run too.

According to Lian Bloch, lead author of the study and assistant professor at the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology—Stanford Psy.D. Consortium at Palo Alto University, even when both men and women were good at calming

down during a disagreement, the emotional outcome of the fight was determined by how the wife was feeling, which, in part, might stem from long-held gender beliefs “Cultural stereotypes of women as the emotional center of marriage — and men as emotional dummies — led couples in this study to be more attuned to the wife's emotional regulation, and that, in turn, is what is feeding both spouses' perceptions of marital quality,” Bloch tells Yahoo Shine. Translation: If the wife is happy, so is her husband, and as a result, so is the marriage. But, explains Bloch, this outcome may be generational. “It's an interesting nuance to see what would happen if we did this study with younger couples,” she says. “As our cultural stereotypes about gender and emotion evolve, we might move away from this model that women are the emotional center of the marriage.”

Regardless of a couple's age, Bloch says that an important part of resolving conflict is being able to step back and take stock during a disagreement. “You don't have to have an anger-free marriage to have a happy marriage,” she says. “By calming down emotionally instead of being

caught up in the negative hot spots, couples are able to think and communicate solutions more clearly and this drives marital satisfaction.”

And, of course, communication is key for happy couples, says Teri Orbuch, PhD., professor of sociology at Oakland University, research professor at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, and a certified family and marriage and family therapist. “Wives are more bothered by conflict than husbands are, and it causes more distress to them and has ramifications for their long-term marital happiness,” Orbuch tells Yahoo Shine. Her advice? Go to bed mad. “We have all heard the opposite. But the reality is that nighttime, when we're tired and stressed out, is a terrible time to fight,” she says. “Wait until the light of day when you both have had some sleep. That way, you won't end up saying things you'll regret.” §

Editor's note:

While we acknowledge that happiness is only one component of a successful marriage it is nonetheless critical that both parties learn how to laugh together, and find happiness and comfort with each other. And as the Bible instructs husbands should live with their wives understanding that they are the more emotionally fragile partners [1 Peter 3:7].

‘By calming down emotionally ... couples are able to think and communicate solutions more clearly and this drives marital satisfaction.’

LIAN BLOCH, PHD.

§ Special Section §

Below is a guest article in honor of Social Work month.

All People Matter

by Tracey Thompson MSW, LCSW, DRCC

March is Social Work Month and for 2014, The National Association of Social Workers has declared that the theme for this year is: "All People Matter." According to the NASW, the theme was selected to help raise awareness about the American social work profession's 116-year commitment to improving social conditions and quality of life opportunities for everyone.

The history of social work is rich with examples of social workers treating every individual with dignity and respect. The theme for this year truly embodies the heart of the profession as social workers continue to strive to account for social justice by reducing inequality and improving the quality of life for disenfranchised individuals. Social workers attempt to help others to realize their potential and as such, advance the organization and morals of a culture. Beginning with the settlement houses in Chicago in 1889, Jane Adams and Ellen Starr provided for the poor, while speaking out about social injustice, raising funds, and conducting research on social problems. (www.historyofsocialwork.org) From the first Nobel Peace Prize to Jane Adams in 1931 through the establishment of the National Association of Social Workers Center for Social Policy in 1987 and beyond, social work is now celebrated annually in March.

Social work is a very prolific discipline that is adaptable to all walks of life. Social workers work in just about every area from [mental health](#),

corrections, group homes, nursing homes, youth agencies, education/schools, hospitals, clinics, [homeless shelters](#). We serve just about every population - infants, children, youth, young adults, adults, couples, and elderly facing every kind of problem - medical issues, mental health issues, [domestic violence](#), sexual assault, Child welfare, social services and public housing.

With that being said, we need more social workers. According to Department of Labor, employment of social workers is projected to grow 19 percent from 2012 to 2022, faster than the average for all occupations. Employment growth will be driven by increased demand for health care and social services, but will vary by specialty. (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers>)

Becoming a social worker requires a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in the field, social workers who are advance in their career usually become a LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) which takes four years undergraduate studies and at least two years graduate work. Then you have three years of training for your clinical license and, if you specialize in a discipline, such as drug and alcohol counseling, you have an additional three years.

While like other occupations, social work can sometimes be emotionally draining, it can also be an extremely rewarding and fulfilling career path. Becoming a social worker can allow

you to make significant differences in your clients' lives, as well as to society as a whole. It also help you learn about yourself because ever so often social workers are often placed in situations which allows one to self-reflect. For example, you can cultivate qualities like compassion and insight through working with clients who are less fortunate. Further, while helping others deal with their struggles, you have the opportunity to learn more about your own beliefs and values, which can enable you to grow as a person.

As we celebrate the theme "All people matter," let's also celebrate social workers for they also matter.

March Awareness Month

Not only is March Social Worker's Month, it is also the awareness month of the following:

- * Multiple Sclerosis
- * Women's History
- * Mental Retardation
- * Nutrition
- * Red Cross

Past awareness months include for January:

Financial Wellness (covered in the January edition), Poverty Awareness (covered in the February edition), Glaucoma & Mental Wellness.

The February awareness months include:

African-American History, Children's Dental Health & Heart health.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Dear (Agape Love) –

I enjoyed reading this month's Newsletter. It was thought provoking and inspiring. As I read this newsletter I can't stop wondering 'what caused the poor to be poor' and who is classified as "poor". I know you mentioned that we should not discriminate but at what point do you cut off aid/assistance to people who remain poor because of socially "unhealthy behaviors" or decisions/chooses that leave them in a perpetual state if being poor?

Thanks

God bless!

N. O. (MD) – 2/27/14

Thank you for those kind, yet thoughtful comments. We do not always know the answers to every question but I believe that the Lord wants us to show a heart of compassion towards his people, no matter what is the cause of their problem. I also think that we should help the 'poor' in a structured manner, and not simply give money to people who beg for it as Peter demonstrated in Acts.

Sincerely,

Agape Love Way Newsletter Editorial team

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6:8 (KNJV)



**Agape Love Way
Ministries**

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More About Agape Love Way Ministries

Agape Love Way is a Christian-based non-profit organization established to promote charity care initiatives within a religious context, and according to the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes the underlying precept of the Great Commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely "Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul & strength, and Love your neighbor as yourself."

Agape Love Way engages in services that support the homeless and those in need of basic food sustenance. As such we aim to help individuals in all areas of accommodation needs, food aid, and basic social services, all the while promoting the Word and the work of the Lord. We also provide financial, organizational and administrative support to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are engaged in such services. To learn more about who we are and what we do send us an email at:

info@agapeloveway.org

Agape Love Way is led by its Executive Director, Keith Thompson, who is also a Professor of Business, Economics and Finance at a local NJ college. Professor Keith Thompson is a man anointed and inspired to teach the Word of God through Love. Email him at:

ExecDirector@agapeloveway.org

If you have an article or a recipe or even a testimony that you believe the Body of Christ will benefit from or be blessed by then submit it to us for consideration in this newsletter at: newsletter@agapeloveway.org

If you like something about this Christian newsletter, or even if you just have a comment to share then we look forward to hearing from you so email us at:

contact@agapeloveway.org

To help us fulfill our mandate and support our various ministries please consider donating to the cause. We accept cash and in-kind donations such as food items, lightly-worn clothing and household appliances that are no longer needed. 100% of ALL donations will go to our various charities. To learn more about how to donate please send us an email at: donations@agapeloveway.org

Help Agape Love Way Ministries support our various ministries. We financially and directly support food banks, homeless centers, and other agencies that help the less fortunate.

Thanks for your continued prayers and support.

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