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MAGAZINE

Bearing Witness

Trading Missions and Evangelism for Friendship and Curiosity

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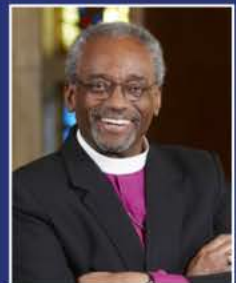
A Sermon for Every Sunday was founded in 2014 by Jim Somerville, Pastor of Richmond's First Baptist Church, and David Powers, President of Belltower Pictures, as a way to help churches that didn't have, or couldn't afford, a regular preacher.

In October 2024, Good Faith Media acquired ASFES and will continue to provide quality sermons to you by a variety of diverse pastors from around the country.

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FEATURING:



FROM THE EDITOR

“Good faith” is a flexible phrase with two (probably more) meanings, each of which depends on which word you stress.

There are some who take umbrage with the name “Good Faith Media,” because it may imply that some individuals and media outlets (but not us) have

bad faith. This argument chooses to place the stress on the word “good.” It assumes that whoever is uttering the phrase “good faith” walks around as jury and judge, deciding whose faith is good, whose is bad, and whose is just so-so.

Placing the stress on “faith,” though, creates meaning that transcends both words in the phrase. In this way of speaking, good faith is about faith and goodness, but it is about something more. It evokes attitudes of openness, empathy, and trust.

Interestingly, “Good *faith*” often precedes the word “argument,” which seems jarring. Is there anything good or faithful about arguments? For the conflict-averse among us, the answer may be a clear “absolutely not.” But for others, arguments made in good faith are, by definition, good and faithful.

Perhaps it would be helpful to replace the word “argument” with the softer, more pillowy word “conversation?” (Don’t think I didn’t just see those of you who aren’t conflict-averse rolling your eyes.)

People who participate in good faith conversations assume the best about all parties involved. They listen and empathize. They are open to being moved, but are also honest about standing their ground when they believe it is necessary.

When I think about good faith conversations, the story from Acts 8 of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch comes to mind. Those of us who have read



Craig Nash

the story since childhood know the ending – the eunuch comes to faith in Jesus. But I’m more drawn to the setup than I am the conclusion.

Both Philip and the eunuch are, in their own ways, outsiders. Philip is a secondary character in a cast of leading men and women. The eunuch is on the margins of society and gender norms. The scene occurs outside the institutional confines of Jerusalem. Philip leads with a question, “Do you know about what you’re reading?” The eunuch replies with an invitation, “Why don’t you come up into my chariot to talk about it?”

It’s tempting to assume an attitude of coercion in Philip’s approach. That may have existed, but it isn’t in the text. If we grew up immersed in the Christian story, we also may assume a naivete in the eunuch that also isn’t in the text.

What is in the story are two people having a good conversation – a good faith conversation.

I need you to know something here at the outset of *Good Faith Magazine*: In our current environment, good faith conversations are difficult for me. I don’t think I’m alone. The fact that I write about faith doesn’t help, because I am often tempted to place the stress on “good” when writing from my faith perspective, while silently judging the quality of the faith of others. I hope you take my confession as a good faith attempt to begin a conversation.

I also invite you receive what is contained within this publication in good faith. We are bearing witness to the things we have seen, heard, and experienced. You may agree and resonate with everything you read here, but I doubt it. In fact, disagreement may invite a spirit of good faith more easily than agreement. It encourages a spirit of curiosity and kindness, which, I believe, is very good. **GFM**

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R. Kirby Godsey, Guy Rutland III, Mary Etta Sanders,

Mel Williams, Winnie V. Williams

GOOD FAITH MEDIA

R. Mitch Randall, *Chief Executive Officer*

mitch@goodfaithmedia.org

Craig Nash, *Senior Editor*

craig@goodfaithmedia.org

Cliff Vaughn, *Media Producer*

cliff@goodfaithmedia.org

Missy Randall, *Program Director*

missy@goodfaithmedia.org

Starlette Thomas, *Director of the Raceless Gospel Initiative*

starlette@goodfaithmedia.org

Cally Chisholm, *Creative Coordinator*

cally@goodfaithmedia.org

Stephanie Brueggeman, *Information & Subscriptions*

Manager stephanie@goodfaithmedia.org

Roderious Phillips, *Associate Media Producer*

rod@goodfaithmedia.org



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Good Faith Bible Studies, found inside the
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are both scholarly and applicable to faithful living.

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06

FAITH & DEMOCRACY

**Introduction to the Faith
& Democracy Initiative**

By Mitch Randall

08

RACELESS GOSPEL

**On the Tip of Your
Tongue: A Pedagogy for
the Self-Emancipated**

by Starlette Thomas

14

BIBLE STUDIES

**Find Old and New
Testament Bible Studies
for January-March** By

Kathy and Nathan Maxwell
& Rev. Natalie Webb

42

ART & CULTURE

Theatre of Faith By Trent
Clifford // **A Minister
Goes to the Theatre: Our
Towns, Our Churches** By
Brett Younger



IN THIS ISSUE

VOL. 43, ISSUE 1 | JANUARY-MARCH 2025

FEATURES

- 4 #PeopleofGoodFaith Profiles** featuring Marcy Bursac
and Michael Cheuk
- 46 Bearing Witness: Trading Missions and Evangelism for
Friendship and Curiosity** by Craig Nash
- 60 Karis Parenting: Teaching Children the Unforced
Rhythms of Grace** by Dr. Sam Rogers & Rev. Laura Bratton
- 62 GFM On the Go** by Cally Chisholm

COLUMNS

- 12 Dear Readers** by Nathan and Kathy Maxwell
- 40 Invoking the Spirit of Will Campbell** by Justin Cox
- 44 No Exit** by Jack Moline
- 45 Intern Reflections** by Lilly Hawkins
- 56 IBTS: Passing the Peace of Christ** by Dr Enoch Šeba

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