A PUBLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

# BUT GOD



## Editor's Note

### **BUT GOD MAGAZINE**

Life is full of "But God" moments. Those where there was no way and suddenly, God made a way. A circumstance that was going in one direction and then, God redirected its trajectory. An ultimate death sentence upon us all, which he overturned through Jesus, giving us the chance of eternal life in Heaven. When we are living these moments often it impacts us in the present and a little while after, but long term we tend to forget the goodness of God. Over and over He rescues us from sin, either our own or from others that might affects us directly or indirectly.

As a publicist, a mother, wife and follower of Jesus I have looked for a publication that would enrich me, challenge me, fill my spirit and keep me updated in the world we live in with healthy recipes, ideas, products, work outs, etc. Unsuccessfully, I just stopped looking for it. One day on a chilled Southern California evening I was showering, and I felt as if God was planting an idea in my mind. What if I started such publication? What if I gave it a try? What if I did what I could with what I had and who I knew? If you know me, I am not one who lives with a mind full of "what ifs". After thought, prayer, many chats with my husband Alex and my PR team, we birthed "But God", a Publication for Christian Women. Pages of hope and encouragement with real stories of "But God moments" that we can hold on to forever.

I'm grateful for what God planted in my mind, Grateful for the support of my husband, the endless hard work of my right arm Amanda Menezes and for my beautiful children who think having a magazine is the coolest idea I've ever had. My prayer is that you, reading this, whether on a screen or going through its pages will know the faithfulness of God and knowing so, will give you grace for today and bright bright hope for tomorrow.

Thais Eliasen



Editor-in-Chief

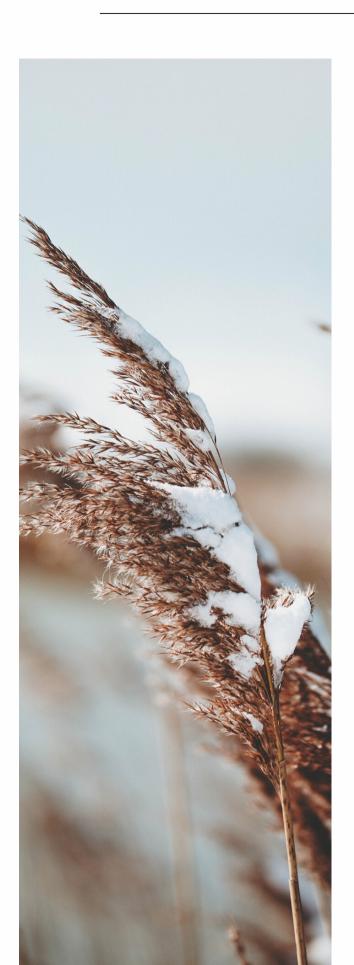
### Get in Touch!

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Mailing address: 1632 Aviation Blvd. Redondo Beach, CA 90278 In this issue, let's follow how women that were called by the Lord has faced the challenges that provided growth and grew their faith. God's purpose is not to make things easy, but to teach us how to trust Him even in the bareness.

But God Magazine O2



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Winter is Here

05

A Sermon by Pastor Roxanne Vargas

### Keep Swiming

09

A Column by Vera Jimenez

### Cover Article

Get to know Michelle Shcaffer, a woman that faced many "But God'moments in life.

### Meet Hope Gatekeeprs

18 We highlighted an amazing mental healht non-profit on this edition

### Dancing in the Desert

19 A Column by Deise Eliasen

### Workout at Home!

20 Provided by Brazilian Fitness Coach Fabi Ford

### Motherhood

21 Meet Melinda Watts

### Leave it Better Foundation

The organization that is equipping good works

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A SERMON BY PASTOR ROXANNE VARGAS

# Winter is Here

In order for there to be new growth, new birth, and new life, the old has to die. Winter is the season of bareness and hope.

One of my favorite times of the year is Winter and the Christmas season. I love to feel the chill in the air and the preparation for one of the most beautiful times of the year. In the winter season, nature has transitioned from the color changing season of Fall to the bare trees of winter. It's so interesting to see the importance of every season and how God intended it to be.

Summer is full of lush green and the bright sun, then gradually shifts into fall where the vibrancy of Summer begins to fade into the deep colors of fall leaves that begin to die off the trees, to the bareness of winter. A sign of what was is now dead. A blank canvas for the next season to take over. Spring awakens something new and a burst of life sprouts over the blank canvas. What was before is no longer, but then something fresh springs forward as the blossoms begin to immerge.

Roxanne Vargas was born and raised in Southern California. She is married to the love of her life and this year they celebrated 32 years of marriage. They have two children, a daughter and a son who served in the Marine Corps. Their daughter gifted them with two grandsons that are the joy of their lives. Roxanne & her husband Eddie have been pastoring for 20 years. They pioneered a church in Redondo Beach in 2002 that quickly grew as God began to pour out His spirit in such a beautiful way. Today they continue to serve the body of Christ as lead pastors of Restoration Life Church in Lawndale California. A thriving family church that continues to reach the local community and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

# THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND A SEASON FOR EVERY ACTIVITY UNDER THE HEAVENS. ECCLESIASTES 3:1

Just as the seasons were created for a reason, our lives in Christ Jesus will also go through seasons of change that are necessary for growth. We will go through seasons of joy and seasons of sorrow, seasons of moving and seasons of waiting. When we see our struggles through our physical eyes, we cannot comprehend why God is allowing some of these difficulties to take place. We may feel like we are in a dry and desolate place, thirsting, with no sign of hope and question our heavenly Father "Why God"? "Why am I going through this"? I will say this, as confident as the sun will rise in the morning, stand firm and hold on to the promises found in the Word of God. God IS faithful and God WILL keep His promises. Psalm 36:5-7 says "Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, Lord, preserve both people and animals. How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

God is sovereign. There is nothing that catches God by surprise. He is completely aware of the season of difficulty you may be in or will be in at some point and He is right there with you. He has allowed it for our sanctification, for our growth, for our dependence on Him and not ourselves, and for His glory.

Just as the trees and nature purge themselves from the old and allow what was, to die, It is the same for us spiritually. In order for there to be new growth, new birth, and new life, the old has to die. In the valley and in the desert seasons, is where most of our growth takes place. In those moments we have to completely depend on the Lord to sustain us. Not the gifts, talents, or abilities we carry, but completely dependent on the Lord. That's when we grow.

WE DON'T GIVE UP, WE DON'T WALK
AWAY WHEN IT'S HARD, BUT WE HOLD
STEADFAST TO HIS PROMISES AND
FIND STRENGTH AND SUSTENANCE IN
HIS PRESENCE AND IN HIS WORD.

Isaiah 46:4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Philippians 2:13 "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

He loves you so much. His love for you is so powerful that He has promised to never leave you nor forsake you.

Charles H Spurgeon wrote "The seasons change and you change but the lord

change and you change, but the Lord abides evermore the same, and the streams of His love are as deep, as broad and as full as ever."

Winter will come again. We will find ourselves in a season of bareness like we've been stripped away, Oh but just wait beautiful one, and remember, Spring is coming! A new season of life and life more abundantly! A season of breakthrough and freshness will spring forth! Wait on the Lord in the season of bareness. Take root and do not be moved because that season is almost over, and you WILL walk in the abundance of His favor and provision.

WINTER EDITION BUT GOD 06







t's a gloomy December morning along the Pacific Ocean. The air temperature is cold. The water feels frigid as it laps against my bare feet. I am in a wetsuit designed for winter surfing, trying to convince myself that it's not that cold. This will be my first ocean swim in December.

I've lived along the beach for over a dozen years and while I spend as much time as possible on the sand, I rarely go in the water. It's cold, mirky, rough and uninviting. As a kid, I loved body surfing, but as an adult, I lost my taste for the white, foamy waves.

I had not learned how to swim properly which was a bigger reason to stay on shore, never mind the dark abyss, the fish and sharks, and the seaweed that tied me up.

A soft quiet voice called me from the ocean over the years. One I ignored. But God showed up. He wasn't whispering in my ear, He was screaming loudly, commanding me to swim. The path was 2.2 miles from the Hermosa Beach Pier to Manhattan Beach Pier before my 50th birthday.

I was excited, scared, nervous and wanted to quit before I started. Turning 50 was so exciting and this was the party he wanted us have. I am created in his image; I can do all things through him.

I started doing laps in a twenty-five-yard pool, barely getting from one end to the other. It was rough, gasping for air, shocking on water, and battling motion sickness, made me feel frustrated, defeated, angry, and mostly angry that learning to swim was so difficult. Breathing, stroking, and kicking were far too complicated at the same time. Imagine a girl with two left feet clapping on one and three, trying to move gracefully through the water, ha!

BUT GOD HAD PUT THIS IN MY HEART. THERE WAS A LESSON, GROWTH, AND HUMBLING FOR ME AS I ENTERED THE NEXT CHAPTER OF MY LIFE, SO I CONTINUED SHOWING UP.

By the time I went to Dede, my swim instructor, I had survived multiple ugly ocean swims, but had not drowned, so there was hope. I reminded myself that God orders my steps, and this journey was based on obedience. Sometimes things make sense, and sometimes they don't. But God doesn't promise to reveal his plan, he promises that all things work for your good.

I didn't know what to feel on D-Day. There were so many moments along the journey that stand out, like my first ocean swim with Jim and Veronica that took us over 2 hours to swim three quarters of a mile because I wouldn't get out until I finished the route. Then there was my first solo swim around the buoy and pier, oh how I laughed and cried with elation because I had not died. Then there was my first solo pier to pier, I spent the entire time repeating every positive affirmation I knew while thanking God at every stroke.

When I finished my official Pier to Pier, I was happy, grateful, proud, but mostly peaceful and serene. God performs small miracles like this every day, that go mostly unnoticed. This was also a miracle, one I will always honor and cherish.

I am created in His image; I can do all Things Through Him.

Vera Jimenez is a Journalist and Metereoligst, going live on the screens of KTLA5 at 6, 6:30, 10, and 11 on weeknights. Vera has earned two Emmys, three Golden Mikes, and three Golden Pylons. She is originally from Mexico but was raised in Southern California, the place she chose to make her home.

Aside from her journalism career, Vera has owned a restaurant with her husband for over 5 years. She is a motivational speaker and leads people in entrepreneurship, by speaking at organizations and events, and sharing her journey on social media.

WINTER EDITION BUT GOD 10

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.





n a cool winter morning in Southern California, you can find Michelle Schaffer sitting in her home office navigating zoom calls and emails. Even though she

runs her business from home, she is dressed as if she is headed to a board room meeting. At 49, Michelle Schaffer is living out her calling in a way she never expected. She is a mother of 3, with one grandchild. She is married to her business partner and who she proclaims to be, her mentor. The bulk of her life is filled with "But God" moments, times when she was faced with adversities she thought would break her, or unexpected u-turns that made her feel as if she was going backwards. But God had other plans.

Michelle became a mom at the young age of 16 years old. She was just entering her junior year in high school. She had aspirations of becoming a journalist, or a lawyer or maybe even an actress. All at once, those dreams were crushed. She chose her baby and motherhood. She married her high school sweetheart at 17, and got divorced at 21 with 2 kids.

Michelle never wanted her children to feel the burden of having such a young mom.

She was ambitious and willing to work hard to create a life for them that they could be proud of and enjoy.

She worked hard to put herself through trade school to become a hairstylist, while working full time in a restaurant. It was not easy to navigate being a single mother along with having to attend school and having a full time job. There were many long days and night for everyone. During these years, Michelle prayed for God's grace to sustain her and her kids. She knew she was incapable of doing it all on her own and needed His strength to keep going. She shares how, many nights, she would lay awake and pray,

"God help me do this. Help me take care of my children, help me make a good life for them."

As a stylist Michelle built a successful business. "I always felt my business was kind of my ministry. I used to have deep and meaningful conversations with my clients, I'd pray in my heart over them while washing their hair...



The highlight of the ups and downs, the But God moments of Michelle Schaffer's journey.

WINTER EDITION BUT GOD 12

Deep inside I always felt the calling to work for the Kingdom of God, I just didn't know how that looked outside of working in a church".

Michelle had been a single mom for six years. She believed that she was destined to remain single forever, after all, she initiated her divorce and we all know divorce is not the heart of God. She accepted the fact that she was undeserving of a husband or a marriage.



### **BUT GOD: IN RELATIONSHIPS**

On a blind date in 2000, one that she says she didn't want to go on, she met the man that would become her soul mate. "I will never forget the way I felt. God are you really allowing me to have this? Are you really going to bring me this kind of love?" She never forgot that God's grace is so encompassing. He doesn't hold over our heads when we ask for forgiveness and repent. He shows up for us over and over, loving us through our own mess.

The two were married and in 2002 had Michelle's third child, and her husband's first. The blended family was now a party

of 5. Michelle had been a stay-at-home mom when her first two children were born. She was just a teenager at the time, had no career and had the help of her parents. When her third child was born, she was 29 and had a very busy career in the salon. "I got so so sad when I got back to work and my sweet baby was only 9 weeks old", recalls Michelle. Her heart longed to be home with all of her kids.

Now married and having her family complete, the way she felt about her career began to shift. She longed to be at home, to be present with her kids. The days of being alone and stressed about making money were gone. She had a true partner in life and a beautiful family, but was at work 50 - 60 hours a week.

### BUT GOD: ON CAREER

This became a deep longing, a desperate need, as she describes it. Michelle knew she needed to make a shift. She knew that if she wanted things to change she would have to change things. She prayed for God to give her a solution that would allow her to be home with her family more.

She stepped into the world of network marketing. Her husband had already achieved high levels of success in the profession. She knew she had a built-in mentor. Once again she added even more work to her already very busy workload. However this time the goal was to bring her home from the career she had built over almost a decade. With the support and partnership of her husband, and with a lot of work, six months into her journey, she retired from her career as a stylist.

Michelle fell in love with the network marketing profession. She was able to work from home, and make the same income as she had before. She was addicted to helping women transform their lives and their finances. Together, the Schaffer's achieved incredible levels of success. Over the next decade and a half, they would build huge teams, work on the corporate side of network marketing and even open their own company in 2010 with the help of some investors.

The launch of this company was a dream realized for both her and her husband. Michelle felt God was redeeming her past:

a teen mom, no formal education and divorced, now the Co-Founder and President of her own company.

They worked hard to build their dream. God's hands were all over it, they even had Isaiah 43:18-19 printed on every bottle and box of their products. Two and a half years in, at a quarterly board meeting, the investors voted Michelle and her husband (the company CEO) out of the company.



Michelle says she does not take one step that God has not laid out before her. In addition to being able to grow in community together, Michelle wants to help other women create financial freedom. GPA has an opportunity for women to earn and earn big for anyone who decides to become an Ambassador. Michelle says she can see so clearly now how God used so many of her experiences over the last three decades to bring her to exactly where she is now.

Girl Power Alliance is already represented in eight countries – with more on the way. They believe in their mission statement - To impact the world by empowering women to dream bigger and build wealth through kingdom minded mentoring and leadership.

Michelle says she has never seen the kind of transformations that are happening at GPA. "God is doing a mighty work in these women's lives. We believe there is 'no competition in the kingdom'. And we do everything we can to live that out and be an example of that everyday from the top down."

Girl Power Alliance believes in discipleship and are pioneering some incredible programs for Christian leadership and coaching. Michelle says this is just the beginning of how God wants to redeem the profession of network marketing. "I know that GPA will be able to 'provide streams in the desert' for women financially when the world's economy goes nuts. We operate in the kingdom economy", Michelle says.

### A LIFE OF "BUT GOD" MOMENTS

"At every turn, when I felt things were falling apart, when I felt the most lost, the most hopeless..

But God. He has never been even a step away from me. He has walked me through each obstacle to train me up for the calling on my life. I am thankful to God for every terrible thing that I've been through." says Michelle.

Go to www.girlpoweralliance.com to join their free community, participate in the live prayer calls and become a member of Girl Power Alliance.



# Items to Your Makeup Bag

### Kandesn® Face Palette

J Guderne

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Our all-in-one face palette features five blendable neutral matte shades that let you create endless makeup looks. Our highly pigmented powders blend seamlessly into skin for a flawless finish and a long-lasting glow. Vegetable-based squalane moisturizes skin for a smooth application and comfortable feel while antioxidant powerhouse vitamin E nourishes and protects.



### Kandesn® Lip Colors

Our hydrating lip colors glide on in high-impact hues that keep your lips soft, supple, and nourished. Our clean, natural formula is enriched with sodium hyaluronate—a superior form of hyaluronic acid—to deliver next-level volume for a plumper, fuller look. Antioxidant-rich botanical oils provide intensive moisture, a comfortable feel, and protection from the elements. Long-lasting, craveable colors leave your lips with an irresistible velvety finish.





## The Hope Gatekeepers

"Suicide is the most preventable death —and still we lose someone every 11 minutes to suicide."

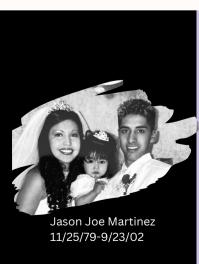
Hope Gatekeepers was created from the tragic loss of the founder's first husband. In 2020, Misty Rivera started her work to bring suicide prevention and mental health awareness to the forefront. On September 23, 2022, marked the opening day for Hope Gatekeepers' new office in Rancho Palos Verdes, California—and sadly marked the 20th year since losing her first husband to suicide.

Misty Rivera and her team are a combination of certified suicide prevention instructors, child development experts, mental health advocates, survivors of suicide loss, and mental health responders. The team continues to grow in mental health knowledge to better serve the community with the most reliable solutions to help save lives.

Hope Gatekeepers was created to end the stigma on mental health and stop suicide. The services include emotional support, family support, suicide prevention training, social connection, referral support, grieving support, and mental health crisis visits. They provide suicide prevention and mental health awareness classes, workshops, and events; along with peer-to-peer mentorship and a safe place to receive resources and authentic care.

With your encouragement and support, Hope Gatekeepers will be able to give HOPE to families and individuals around the world. The organization is funded and supported by business owners, residents, families—and people like you!

To learn more about their work visit www.hopegatekeepers.com





### **Our Services:**

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# SUICIDE PREVENTION: ASK & PREVENT

ENDING THE STIGMA ON MENTAL HEALTH AND TAKING ACTION TOWARDS SUICIDE PREVENTION.

www.HopeGatekeepers.com





know about Jesus since I was in my mom's womb.
As she was preaching and teaching others about Him, I was there also learning.

But only when the Holy Spirit revealed it to my spirit, I understood that Jesus is God, the Saviour, the Rescuer, and the Friend I needed and wanted in my life.

Jesus prayed it: "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" John 17:20. On that day when you are visited by the Holy Spirit, when the ministry of the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will understand. Has He already come?

When we read this, we hear that it is the Holy Spirit who places us in the bosom of the divine community, in the wheel, in the dance of the eternal communion of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. I understand that the Holy Spirit involves us, and we perceive and feel welcomed and embraced by God.

The Bible says that in the beginning what we know as the universe, it was empty, dark, and shapeless, a frightening chaos. No beauty, no harmony, no meaning. And there are many people who still live like this.

Their own universe is empty, dark and shapeless. But when the Holy Spirit comes, one can experience the embrace of God, that big hug, and discover that the universe is not dark, it is not empty, it is not scary because...

### God fills the whole universe and brings light and form.

So, when you see yourself in God's embrace, in His arms, you hear and feel that you are a beloved child of God. The darkness and emptiness go away!

So, when we pray: Father, give us your Holy Spirit, we are asking: give us your embrace. Give us the experience of your embrace, of your love.

Are you dancing with God, embraced by His everlasting loving arms?

Then you can say: Understood, realized WOW!

"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you"
John 17:20



Deise Eliasen is a commissioner of The Salvation Army, serving Johannesburg. She is originally from Brazil and has lived in many countries out there, such as Mozambique, England and Chile. After graduating in Journalism, she was called to serve as a full-time pastor. Deise is maried to Torben Eliasen, with whom she share the blessing of two beautiful daughters and six very naughty grandchildren who are their source of endless love and inspiration. To follow Jesus Christ and share His abundant life is the Eliasen's ultimate goal which they embrace wholeheartedly.

# WORKOUT

Brazilian Fitness Coach, Fabi Ford, shared the perfect workout for you to do in the comfort of your home!



### **LOWER BODY**

This is a Lower body workout separated in 4 sections. Make sure to take your time, breath and move you body consciously, feeling your muscles contracting. Repeat 10x each exercise, then rest for 45 seconds after each circuit, and make sure to do each round.

#### WARM-UP

5 Minutes of Bike or Elliptical

#### **CIRCUIT 1**

Sumo squats + pulse (10x)
Cross lunges alternating legs (10x)
Kettlebell swing (10x)
3 Rounds

### **CIRCUIT 2**

Side lunges (10x)
Standing hip abduction with band (10x)
Clamshell (10x)
3 Rounds

### **CIRCUIT 3**

Plank rolls (10x) Climber taps (20x) Dead bug (20x) **3 Rounds** 

Need help with the exercise? Scan the code and watch selected video tutorials!



WINTER EDITION BUT GOD 20



Melinda Watts is a singer, a worship leader, an influencer and a mom. Getting her start at a young age in church, Watts knew in high school that she wanted to pursue singing as her full-time work. Today, she's living her young dream: traveling around the world to sing, speak and inspire other women.

While performing live is officially her 9 to 5, she also has a broad social media presence — more than 25,000 people follow her as she posts about her life as a mom of four, fashionista, traveler, and singer.

Balancing the musical career and social influencing sounds tricky, but she says "It's almost like it's built-in, I don't do a lot of extra work to create my brand because I share the real and raw. I simply share what I'm doing, whether that's getting my kids dressed in the morning or traveling with my family."

The main reason for this work is to help people. She says "I sing to help people's lives... so with influencing it wouldn't

be different." She's sharing brands and products that make her feel good but also having conversations that will inspire women to use their talents for the Kingdom. "It's really a cool way to show my whole life and share the processes I went through so I could serve the Lord and others in a better way." Melinda was taken on a journey to find her true identity, especially after having her children. "I didn't know what to do with my gift after giving birth. How should I serve? Where was Melinda Watts behind the mom, wife, and singer? It was when I found myself at Jesus' feet, that I found my true identity."

Melinda's platform is for women and others who feel like, because they're moms, they may not be able to follow their dreams anymore or they may feel like a burden. They don't have an outlet to show their gifts and their talents. Melinda shared that what she tries to do is to encourage mothers who may have struggled with depression or anxiety that they can be all that God created them to be. "Women, you have the power within you through the help of the Holy Spirit to carry out your God-given purpose at home and







We work to equip good works around the world. How do you change the world? One person at a time.

## Leave it Better

Oftentimes we can look at all of the issues in the world and wonder, "Can I even make a difference?" As one person we may feel our impact is so small that it wouldn't even matter if we did do something to make an impact.

At the Leave It Better Foundation we are working to increase the impact of those who are brave enough to take a stand to make their lives count. Currently, there are over 10 million non-profit organizations around the world. There are millions upon millions of people who work every day to help others through their business and random acts of kindness.

The truth is, there is a lot of good being done all over the globe. If you are anything like us, you want to help them all, you want to support them all. Our mission is to raise as much money as we can to support the efforts of as many people and organizations as we can.

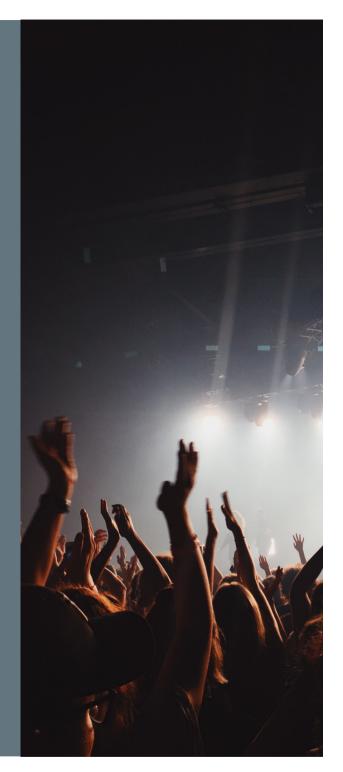
We work to equip good works around the world. How do you change the world? One person at a time.

The Leave It Better Foundation desires to build a lasting legacy. Our fundraising efforts will go to those individuals, businesses, and organizations who are working tirelessly to leave the world better than they found it.

When you donate to LIBF you will be assured that those hard-earned resources will not be squandered, they will go to humanitarian efforts, impacting the next generation through education, environmental works, protecting and preserving animals, and disaster relief.

LIBF will allow the collective efforts of each of us to have an exponential impact.

Join us in doing your part to leave the world better than you found it. You can donate one time to set up monthly giving, visit leaveitbetter.foundation/.



## **EVENTS**

### Devoted Marriage Seminar

February 17th @7pm \$60 per couple 4236 W 147th St Lawndale Ca 90260

Details: visit restorationlife.church

### Radiant Women's Conference "HOLY"

4236 W 147th St Lawndale Ca 90260 May 19-20 \$75 early bird \$95 regular admission Details: visit restorationlife.church

### **ACTIVATE 2023**

October 5-7 Dallas, Tx Info SOON at <u>girlpoweralliance.com</u>

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### A PUBLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

## BUT GOD