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"By the blessing of the upright, a city is exalted."

April 24, 2020

Dear Ones,

Our City, Pittsburgh, is in great need of a spoken word of blessing. On Easter Sunday, a few weeks ago, worship leaders from 25 churches in the metropolitan area released a worship experience called "The Pittsburgh Blessing." The outcomes and the responses were overwhelming, and there were more than 245,000 responses from those who viewed it and even further were the testimonies of persons who regularly watch it as it speaks to the deep needs they have to know that they are blessed.

I believe it would be timely for the pastors to continue this kairos moment. One way we can do this would be to use the same framework for each of us to speak a blessing over our City. I believe the inherent power of the song they chose to sing in "The Pittsburgh Blessing" was that it originated in the Bible. Many of us continue to pronounce the **Aaronic Blessing** found in Numbers 6:24 - 26 in our contemporary worship experiences, although it is thousands of years old; it is the word of God and continues to yield blessings to those who hear it.

Let's seize this moment to continue to speak words of life over our beloved City. Every week, we carefully select words from the Bible to encourage, affirm, and bless people; we can do the same thing for the City of Pittsburgh. We will use the words that were inspired by the Holy Spirit, that have produced faith and hope in troubled times for centuries. These are the same words we speak to our congregations each week.

I propose that we use selections from various passages in the Old and New Testament and speak those words over the people of our City. These same words, when spoken with faith in the One who gave them to us, can engender life in those who hear them; this we have as a promise from the God who gave them to us.

As I read Proverbs 3:27, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it" (ESV); I realize that each of us possesses the power to do good. We are informed in Scripture, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." We have the power to speak life, the Holy Spirit has the power to effectuate those words.

Two months ago, this may have been a crazy idea, but a few weeks ago, a “crazy idea” is now the “breakthrough” we proudly call the Pittsburgh Blessing: a fresh and innovative way to give the Church of Pittsburgh one voice.

Two of the young men who inspired and challenged the worship leaders of churches in our City to use their collective talents to produce a unique gift to our City are willing to assist us in the production of this effort. They didn’t have a lot of time to prepare and produce the end product, but it happened. “Opportunities of a lifetime must be seized in the lifetime of the opportunity.” Leonard Ravenhill motivated many people with these words, and I sense that this is one of those times for Pittsburgh. These same young men have agreed to help us put a similar project together, and I believe we can have it ready for Mother’s Day, 2020.

I believe that it is in our “power” to use God’s words to bless the people of our City, through words spoken in faith, by people of faith, from the only Book in the world that promises faith to those who hear its words. We have the collective ability to lift the spirits of many and give them a needed sense of hope in what some only see as times of hopelessness.

This morning, Friday, April 24, at 9:30 AM, Pastor Gary Mitrik and I went on air at Cornerstone Television Network. At that time, we shared our sense of need to continue to pursue God’s agenda and purpose in these times and opportunities He is giving to us. We shared a proposal that would gather all of our voices, *as one, in one* incredible blessing over a truly amazing city. If you were unable to join us at 9:30 this morning, CTVN will rebroadcast the program at 8 PM this evening. After watching, I invite to express your desire to participate in another sacred moment in our City, for our City. Please indicate your interest by responding to this letter by emailing us at info@pittsburghpastorsunited.org. We will forward you the details within the next few days, with the information you will need to have in order to make this a successful event.

Yours In Christ

Bishop Joseph L. Garlington, Sr.
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