

“Hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” 1 Th. 5:21-22



1776
SONS
OF
LIBERTY

P12

Christian

KINGS COUNTY **NewsMagazine**

DEAR
NOELLE
SEEKING AFTER
God's wisdom



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Central Valley Gospel Music: The Gilly Girls Band



The Gilly Girls Band is made up of four sisters (two sets of twins) who have been uniquely gifted by God to play bluegrass, southern gospel and old-time music. The oldest sister, Savannah specializes in fiddle music and vocals. Morgan plays bass, mandolin, ukulele and vocals. Hailey is a talented guitarist and singer and Jillian plays mandolin, bass, banjo and vocals. Lord willing, they will be coming to Hanford for this year's The Night of Light event on October 31st at Grace Bible Church. The sisters were recently in

Europe. While there, they brought their unique style of music to the country of Albania. After returning to the Central Valley, they were kind enough to answer the following questions about serving God through the gift of music.

Jillian, why do you enjoy playing bluegrass, southern gospel, and old-time music? What led your band to focus on those types of music? Ever since I can remember, that's the music we grew up on! So, it's always had a special place in my heart because it's nostalgic. Given the instruments we play, bluegrass and

"old time" music is sort of a given, but it's fun to play. Our music teacher, Evo Bluestein, started us on the country, swing, and old-time track, and it just stuck. That's what we played from day one, learning our instruments.

Savannah, When did you and your sisters start playing musical instruments? Did you start with playing the fiddle or did you gravitate towards that instrument? We all took piano as our first instrument when we were little. Morgan and I were six, and the younger twins were about 7 when they started. then we started on the P4

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER11 Fall Fest at College of the Sequoia in Hanford 10 am	OCTOBER17-30 Pumpkin Patch at Glad Tidings - 1 PM - 9 PM	OCTOBER18 Walk for Life at Calvary Chapel Hanford	OCTOBER19 Calico Arts Festival at Kings River Hardwick School
OCTOBER19 Kings Symphony Fall Classic at the Fox Theater	OCTOBER26 Storybook Garden Fall Event Showcase	OCTOBER26 Pumpkin Bash at SouthValley Community Church	OCTOBER27 KC Farm Bureau Golf Tournament
OCTOBER31 The Night of Light at Grace Bible Church Hanford	NOVEMBER1 Counseling Conference - Grace Church of the Valley Kingsburg	NOVEMBER22 Winter Wonderland Opens in Hanford	NOVEMBER28 Hanford Christmas Parade



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Kings County Christian NewsMagazine - Published by:

County NewsMagazine / Terry & Georgia Wild

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LOOK TO THE MOUNTAINS

Christ & Common Sense



Pastor Tim Dinkins

One of the greatest things about going up to the mountains is that it brings perspective to the troubles we face in the valley.

When you are looking down at Yosemite valley or looking up at the giant redwoods in Kings canyon you immediately get a sense of perspective. You begin to wonder, “Why was I so worried about the concerns of the day?” ‘Did I really need to be anxious about all those problems last week?’ I remember driving up to Shaver Lake and as I looked over the beautiful vista I had a deep sense of peace, “Why worry? I know God is in control.”

It certainly helps to go up to the mountains to get perspective on life, but I have found the more I study the Bible the less I need to go somewhere to find peace and renewal for my soul. Psalm 121 says, “I lift my eyes up to the hills, from where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber... The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever more.” (English Standard Version)

What a powerful principle! If you know how to study God's word you can save some gas money and renew your mind from the comfort of your own home. Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” The difficult part of discerning the will of God is comparing your thoughts

and feelings to what God's word says. You may be tempted to worry about what will happen tomorrow. But the Bible repeatedly tells us, “Don't worry. Trust God.”

Jesus said, “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Mt. 6:34) It is that simple. Christians do not need to be consumed with worry about anything that is happening tomorrow because God has everything under control.

Even when bad things happen the Christian can be at ease. Romans 8:28 reminds us that the Christian's sense of peace is undergirded by the sovereignty of God, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Those who deny God can never experience this kind of peace until they submit their lives to God. If you are the “god” of your own life then you will never find lasting peace because you can never guarantee that bad things will turn out good for you. The God of the Bible is able to guarantee a positive outcome. He is able to turn even the worst situation (the death of Christ) into the best situation (the glory of God and the salvation of sinners).

The perspective of the Bible goes even further than turning a negative situation to a neutral situation. The Bible actually makes it possible for the Christian to have joy in the midst of difficulties. That is why James 1:3 says, “Consider it all joy my brothers when you encounter trials of various kinds, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and endurance when it has it's full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” God is able to use the most difficult problems in life help believers to grow in Godliness.

Where else can you go to have your perspective genuinely changed from negative to positive? I have found that it can only be done with the supernatural help of God's word. That is the only place we can learn that our sins are paid for. It is the only place we can have “the peace that surpasses understanding that will



guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7) The deeper we dig into the goldmine of God's word, the more richly we will strengthen ourselves with the supernatural perspective of our creator God.

Pastor Tim Dinkins serves at Grace Bible Church in Hanford, CA. He can be reached for questions and comments at timothydinkins@gmail.com

“the peace that surpasses understanding that will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)

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stringed instruments when we were about 9 and 11. I started with the mandolin, which gave me a great foundation for the violin, which I gravitated towards soon after.

Morgan, what was the first instrument you began playing and why? What is it like moving from one of the smallest stringed instruments (the mandolin) to largest with the stand-up bass? I started on the piano at 5, I was begging my mom to start lessons because I loved music so much, and then I moved to the mandolin and then to the stand up bass. Switching from the smallest to the largest instrument is pretty ironic, seeing as I'm the shortest in the band.

Hailey, you and your sisters create great harmonies in your songs. Who taught you to harmonize and what harmony parts do each of you usually sing? We took voice lessons for about 2 years, and she taught us to find the harmonies on the piano and how to write them out. I normally sing the high harmony, Morgan sings melody, Jillian sings the low harmony, Savannah will either sing a fourth harmony or double up on the part that needs to be louder. We all switch between who sings melody and who sings the harmony parts, but that's usually how it goes.

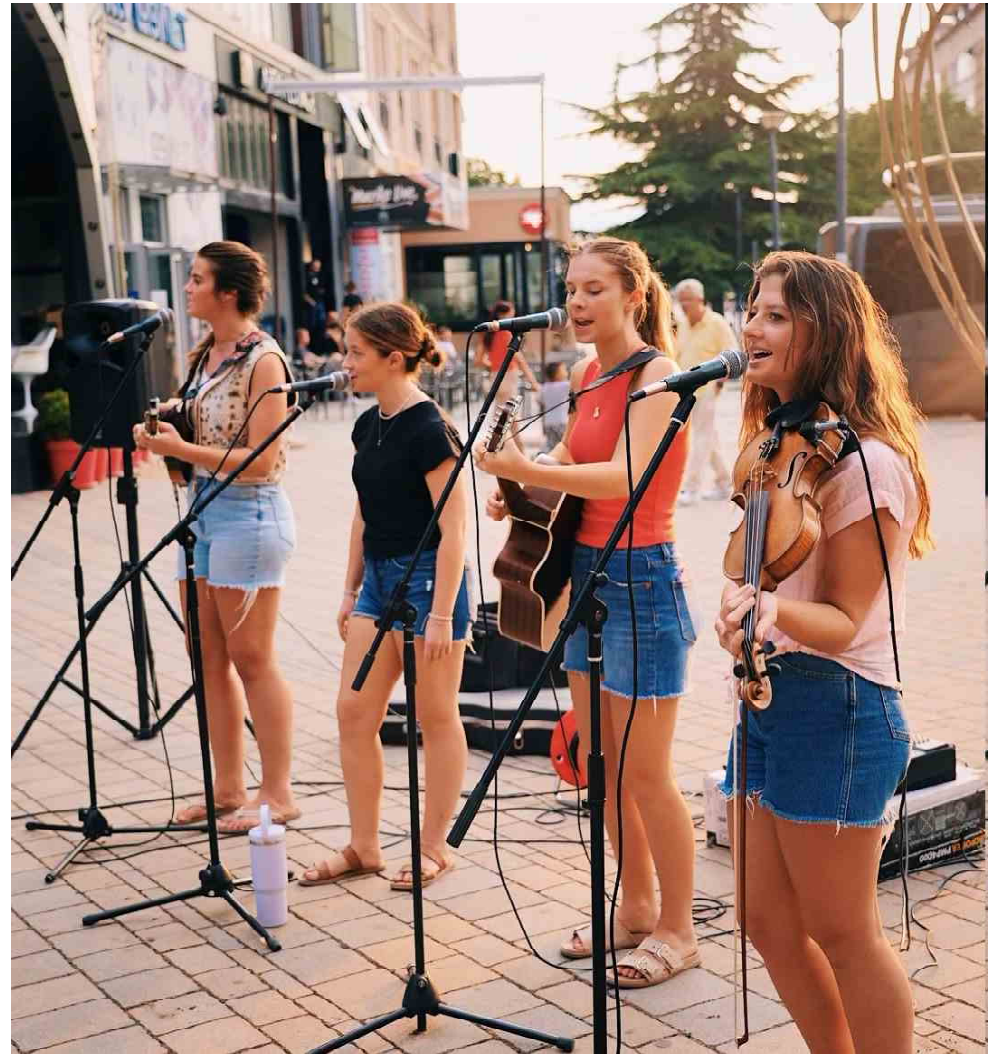
Your band has played in many different venues and received different awards. Are there some venues or competitions that have meant a lot to you or that have been memorable over the years? This past summer we had the honor to play at our friends' weddings, which was so special. We also got the opportunity to play in Silver Dollar City in 2022 which was super special and fun! We've had so many unique concerts and events over the 10 years we've been doing this, every concert is always memorable.

Some of the Gilly Girls Band serve the Lord by playing in the worship team at Grace Church of the Valley in Kingsburg. What is it like to play for a church service? How fulfilling is it to use your gifts to serve the Lord in that way? Yes, we all play in the worship band and we all love it. Getting to lead our church in worshipping our Savior, and getting to hear everyone sing is so special, it's my (Jillian) favorite part of church, getting to sing with everyone.

God's word says, "I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music" (Psalm 101:1 LSB). Do you have certain verses that inspire you as you make music for the Lord? We've always loved Psalms 98:4 which says "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth."

You were recently in the country of Albania. What was it like? We had such an incredible time in Albania! We were there for six weeks with our good missionary friends Ty and Lysi Tartaglia, and we helped them run their summer camp, Legacy Hill. We also had the opportunity to play music in the center of Korca to hand out flyers for camp, and we got to help Ty lead worship at their church.

Your parents are very involved in your musical career. What is it like having your parents help as the band manager and sound technician? Getting to travel with the whole family is so much fun, we are constantly laughing! Mom and Dad help us out so much, and we would have no idea what to do if our dad didn't do our sound!



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Julia Pedro Varsity Volleyball Junior at Hanford High School



Being a“student at Hanford High School was definitely a time of developing who I want“to be as a person. Throughout my high school experience I have gone through“many different struggles. No matter what life threw at me, God helped me“through each and every bit of it. At times when I felt like I had no one, I“always had God. This school year I am taking more challenging classes, but some“of my favorite classes are history, psychology, and english. The teachers for“all of my classes are amazing and they want to help me grow my education and “prepare me for the future.

You are playing on the varsity volleyball team for coach Lauren De La“Cruz. What is it like having her as a coach?

This is my second“year on varsity and my second year having Lauren as a coach. She has seen me at“my absolute worst, like last season when I broke my ankle, but she’s also seen me at my best like this year being able to play“and hopefully achieve my goal of 100 blocks before the end of the season. She“is tough on me but that’s because she knows my potential. I struggle with self“confidence and her along with the other coaching staff (Emma, Curtis, Jessica,“and Alexis) continue to remind me to believe in myself because they believe in“me.

The Varsity team has a great group of players this year. What is it like“playing with this team?

The team this“year is very close, I consider each and every one of the girls on my team a“good friend of mine. We all support each other on and off the court along with“sharing a love for volleyball and God. Before every game we circle up and pray“over the game. Most of the girls on this team I have played along-side since my“freshman year, and even the ones I haven’t we still have a strong bond. As we“go into the last 4 weeks of the season I have really been thinking about all“the memories we’ve made and it’s truly so beautiful to see.

You have been playing volleyball for many years. How would you describe“the change from playing this year compared to previous years?

Comparing“this season to last season I have really just come so far not just as an“athlete but as a teammate. Referring back to my injury last season, it really“helped me realize how fast your season can be over. Sitting on the sidelines“last season really played into the teammate I am today. I encourage

my“teammates, am the loudest on the court, and really advocate for their mental“health as an athlete. Going through the struggles last season really helps me“understand my teammates on another level.

You are also a softball player at Hanford High. Do you prefer one sport“over the other? What are some things you appreciate about both sports?

I prefer“volleyball over softball because of the faster pace in volleyball there is“always something going on and the constant action adds an adrenaline rush to“the game. In volleyball there is also a lot more team chemistry. You guys move“around each other so the connection on the court needs to be tight. Both sports“overall have made me the person I am today. The experiences and friendships“that I have been blessed with are things I will remember forever.

Has there been a particular game that has been especially memorable to“you when you play volleyball or softball?

A game that“was very memorable to me was this season when we played Sierra Pacific. This“game was very memorable for me because I got to play against most of my travel“volleyball teammates, and my travel volleyball coaches. Coach Cass, Coach Madi,“and my KCV volleyball teammates have made such a big impact in my life. This“was also the last time I got to play against my senior teammates, so it was a“very emotional time as well.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says “So whether you eat or drink, or“whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” What are some ways you try to“keep focused on God while playing sports?

Before every“game me and my teammates circle up and pray over the game. I personally pray“before each game and turn to God for guidance. Playing sports has really given“me a voice in the Hanford community and with that voice I’m hoping to share the love of God, especially during times“when the world needs God most. Anytime a friend or teammate asks for advice I“try to bring God into the conversation. You never know who may need that little “extra push to grow their faith or even start it.

Your family has had a big impact on“who you are today. What are some of the ways your parents and your siblings“have encouraged you as you play sports and serve God?

My parents“started me in sports at a very young age, I’ve been playing sports since I was five. My family tried to“make it to every single game that they can, they don’t just support me physically but also mentally. My grandma “goes to every single home game, she has definitely made the biggest impact in“my life. She constantly pushes me towards God and encourages me to place my“faith within him.

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FAITH IN ACTION



Kevin Dalafu Admin. at KCS

Kings Christian School has organized missions trips in the past. This year you traveled to Kenya on a medical dental trip. When did the trip happen and who did you go with?

We left on September 4th and returned on the 14th. I went with Dr. Rushi Panchal, Todd Cotta, Dr. Dave Smith and a gentleman named Johnny Johnson. These four men are a part of Hope Inc., which is an organization that gives opportunities to get out of a life of poverty. These men are the original founders of the trip. I believe this is the fifth time they have gone. The first time they went was in 2019. At that time there were 400 children that they helped. Out of all those students, only two had seen a dentist before.

What was your itinerary on the way there and on the way back?

We drove to Los Angeles and then we flew from LAX to Istanbul, Turkey where we had a layover. Then we flew to Nairobi, Kenya. After we arrived in Nairobi, we drove three hours and had breakfast. Then we drove to Nakuru, Kenya. It took forty five hours to travel from Hanford to our final destination. We started the medical part of our trip on Sunday, September 4th.

On the way back, we left Friday morning from Masai Mara, which is located toward the south of Kenya. We drove about seven hours to Nairobi and then we stopped and had dinner. Then we left there at 11:30 pm and then we flew out the next morning to Istanbul. We arrived at noon. We stayed at a hotel and then we were able to do some sight-seeing. We went to the Great Bazaar and the Hagia Sophia. The next morning we flew back.

Once you arrived how long did it take to get over jet lag?

What is the time difference? It is a ten hour time difference between California and Kenya. I did not have much jet lag because I was so tired from all of the traveling. I slept well when I arrived. The next day we started the mission right away. We didn't feel the jet lag much. On the way back it was the same thing. I didn't feel very jet lagged, but I was starving and it was only ten in the morning.

What did you do during the first days you were there?

My job was sanitization of the medical equipment. We dealt with students and adults that had different medical conditions so we had to make sure to do the sanitization correctly. We would clean the used instruments and then sanitize them in special equipment. It took about forty minutes to sanitize the equipment.

What services were provided for the people there?

Every student received a dental cleaning and a dental inspection.

Anyone who needed a tooth extraction was helped. The four main areas we helped people with were education, inspection, cleaning, and extraction. The doctors had some medicine that they could give to those who were in need.

We were able to help with food distribution at two different times. Once was at a church where every Sunday the people feed mainly homeless and drug addicted people. They feed them porridge and bread. The other food distribution was at an orphanage. There is not a lot of money in that area of Kenya. The teachers at the school do not make much money. Many people there believe that education is a way to move to a different area.

What was it like going to a school in Kenya? What were some of the biggest differences between the school and KCS?

Most of the students were boarding students instead of being day students. Many of them did not have clean water and proper toilet sanitation. They had to wear uniforms. We were able to serve about 120 students. It wasn't a Christian school, but the culture of Kenya has a lot of Christian influence. On the last day they did a performance for us and they played Christian music and they danced to Christian music. They performed the dance as a way to say thank you. All of our team sat and watched. The principal of the school came and said thank you. He said they appreciated us. Our team leads also gave some words of encouragement.

It looks like you had some time to do sight-seeing. What were some of the highlights?



I was able to go on a safari for the first time. We rode in Toyota Land Cruisers and we were able to see God's creation. We were right on the border between Kenya and Tanzania. That was the only sight-seeing we did. I was surprised how green it was and the natural beauty. We saw all kinds of animals: monkeys, hippos, zebras and lions. It was great to see elephants walking right past us. One highlight was being able to watch a group of lions hunt antelope. The antelope are called eland antelope. The lions came up to the edge of the grass and they were crouched down ready to attack. Some of the antelope had their heads up and they were ready. The lions did not attack, but we were able to see the whole thing.



CULTURE & CHURCH



AB 495 Risk to Child Safety and Parental Authority

The California Senate Appropriations Committee is currently scheduled to review AB 495, sponsored

by Assembly Member Celeste Rodriguez, on August 18, 2025. We urge you to take the following actions to protect our children and parental rights:

1. Get Educated: A copy of AB 495 can be found here: [AB495 | California 2025-2026 | Family Preparedness Plan Act of 2025.](#) | [TrackBill](#)
2. Contact Your Senator: Call or email your state senator, especially if they serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee. Urge them to oppose AB 495 due to its risks to child safety and parental authority. Find your senator's



contact information at <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov>.

2. Submit Public Comments: Submit written opposition directly to members of the Senate Appropriations Committee by August 15, 2025. Email your comments to appropriations.senate@senate.ca.gov, clearly stating your concerns about AB 495's lack of safeguards and potential for abuse.

3. Spread the Word: Share this email with your family, friends, church members and community. Post about AB 495 on social media using hashtags like #StopAB495 and #ProtectParentalRights to raise awareness of the far-reaching implications of AB 495.

4. Attend the Hearing: If you're able, attend the Senate Appropriations Committee hearing in Sacramento on August 18, 2025, to show your opposition in person. Details on the hearing location and time can be found at <https://www.senate.ca.gov>. Let me be clear: Our children's safety and your parental rights are at stake. AB 495's well-intentioned facade cannot mask its dangerous implications. Together, we can stop this bill and ensure California prioritizes the protection of our families over risky, unchecked policies.

Parents Urged to OPT OUT CA Students Larry Pegram



LARRY PEGRAM
www.ip-ca.org

Now you can opt-out by just going online

Founder, Informed Parents of California

As a new school year begins, Christian parents across California are being urged to take a closer look at what their children are being taught—and take action. Informed Parents of California, a statewide grassroots organization, offers parents the opportunity to OPT OUT their children from inappropriate curricula, books, gender studies, counseling, and intrusive surveys. The OPT OUT System is designed to help moms and dads safeguard their children from controversial lessons and activities that conflict with their faith and values.

For too many years, parents have assumed that public schools would respect their role as the primary educators of their children. Yet in recent times, troubling trends have emerged. Curriculums increasingly include sexual content, ideologies about gender and identity, and political activism that many families believe has no place in the classroom.

The Bible reminds us that parents, not the state, are charged with raising children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The OPT OUT Notice is a practical way for parents to reassert their God-given authority. The system works simply: parents visit the Informed Parents of California website, www.ip-ca.org, Click on the green OPT OUT button, complete an information

form that identifies them, their child and their child's school, DocuSign on the screen, click submit and a legally binding OPT OUT Notice is sent by email to the child's school principal and school district superintendent...all in less than two minutes!

For many Christian families, this means protecting children from lessons promoting radical gender theory, graphic sexual education, or surveys probing into private family matters. By filing the OPT OUT Notice, parents stand on firm legal ground while ensuring that their voice is heard in the classroom.

Advocates stress that the OPT OUT system is not about withdrawing from education, but about reclaiming it. Our children deserve an excellent education that strengthens their minds without compromising their souls.

The call to action is clear: parents should not wait until harmful lessons are taught to react. Instead, they can be proactive—submitting the OPT OUT Notice at the start of the year.

As the culture continues to press into America's schools, Christian families have both the right and the responsibility to set boundaries. The OPT OUT Notice is one way to do just that—equipping parents to raise up the next generation to walk in truth.



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BELIEVERS IN BUSINESS

Albert Armenta Owner of Fugazzis Restaurant in Hanford

How long have you been working at Fugazzis in Hanford?

I have been working for the company for 12 years, the last eight years at the Hanford location. Our restaurant is located at 601 W 7th St, Hanford, California.

What are some of the things you love about working there?

The restaurant is family oriented. I appreciate the support of the regulars and the clientele around Hanford. Everything that we do, we do with love. All our food is made from scratch on our menu. It is a great place to work at because we have great employees.

Can you tell us a little bit about the restaurant?

Fugazzis in Hanford is open Monday to Sunday from 11 am to 9 pm. The restaurant has a capacity of 120 people and can accommodate large and small groups. We have two private rooms. We offer a full menu with excellent steak cuts and different entrees for dinner. Our steaks and our pastas are the most popular. The spicy chicken chipotle is popular. The chicken tequila fettuccine and pesto three cheese tortellini are favorite dishes.

What do your customers say they like about Fugazzis?

They like the ambience, the food, and the service. They like how we remember their names and how we treat them at the door and when they leave. The regular clientele come so often I see them come back again and again. That shows me how much they like good food and customer service.

What are some of the places you worked before this restaurant?

I worked a pistachio company as a manager for many years. It was very different from the restaurant business. Being the manager there helped me enhance my skills to run Fugazzis now.

1 Corinthians 10:13 says “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,

do all for the glory of God.” How does your relationship with God help you in this job?

I live in Visalia and I have a 20 minute drive to work. When I drive I pray and thank God for work and for a beautiful day. I like to Thank God for another day and for taking care of my family and business. On my drive home I like to praise God everything went well and I am glad to get home safely.

How does your family help you?

My wife is named Linda and she is my accountant. I have an office at home and she takes care of all the bills and she helps make sure that everything is running right. One way to think of it is that I do the front of the house and she does the back of the house business.

You became the owner two years ago. How has the business changed since then?

I started at Fugazzis as a delivery driver. Then I worked in the kitchen. I worked in bussing tables, serving, bar tending and then I managed a restaurant. Seven years later I have become the owner of the Hanford location. It has been a roller coaster. When we manage a restaurant we don't know the details until you become the owner. It has been a blessing. I love not knowing who is going to come in that door, but it is my pleasure to see them and serve them.

You have great employees. How do they help the restaurant thrive?

I see how much they care for the restaurant and I see how they treat it like it is there own. They pay attention to their customers and their needs. They come with a great attitude to work and that is key for our servers.

Are there any ways that your restaurant reaches out and serves the community?

We are a family oriented restaurant and we have been serving local shelters for many years. We serve the men's shelter every Tuesday. We serve the women's shelter on Wednesdays. We have been serving hundreds of people for fifteen years. We like to give back to the community. We are so grateful for God blessing us and sustaining the business for so many years. We always sponsor the schools. Sometimes the city of Hanford needs help and we donate food to those in need.



From the Publisher:



What are we really fighting for? By: Terry Wild

What Are We Fighting For?

The question “What are we fighting for?” is not just a slogan; it is a life-defining inquiry. Ask ten people and you may hear answers such as *God, Family and Country*. These words sound noble and inspiring, but behind them lies a deeper struggle that demands clarity. Unless we truly understand what we are fighting for, we risk defending shadows instead of substance.

God: Who Defines Him?

The word “god” is used in countless ways. In some cultures there are thousands—even millions—of gods. Ancient civilizations bowed before carved idols. Modern societies often worship money, power, fame, or even self-image. For many, “god” is simply whatever they prize most.

Christians, however, confess that there is one true and living God, revealed through the Holy Scriptures. Our understanding of Him is not based on opinion polls, private feelings, or cultural fads. It is based on the authority of the Bible. Scripture tells us plainly: “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one*” (Deut. 6:4).

The profound truth is that God gave humanity free will. Each person has the right to choose whom they will serve. Yet freedom of choice does not make all choices equally valid. There is only one Creator of heaven and earth, only one Redeemer who entered time and space to save humanity, and only one Holy Spirit who regenerates the heart. That is the God Christians fight to honor and proclaim.

Country: A Stewardship, Not an Idol

Patriotism is a noble virtue when properly ordered. Christians are called to seek the welfare of their nation, to pray for leaders, and to uphold justice. Yet our loyalty to country is not blind nationalism. Nations rise and fall, but God’s kingdom endures forever.

Still, Christians recognize that freedom is a stewardship worth defending. Religious liberty, freedom of speech, and the rule of law are not accidental privileges—they are gifts entrusted to us. To neglect or squander them is to fail future generations. Fighting for our country, then, is not about waving flags for the sake of sentimentality; it is about preserving the conditions that allow the Gospel to be preached and families to flourish.

Family: The Foundation of Society

Alongside faith and country stands family—the bedrock of human life. From the beginning, God designed the family as the primary place where love is nurtured, children are raised, and values are passed on. Marriage between one man and one woman, the bond between parents and children, and the wider circle of extended kinship provide the structure that civilizations rest upon.

Our fight for family today is urgent. Cultural pressures seek to redefine marriage, devalue parenthood, and undermine God’s design. Yet Christians fight not with anger but with truth and compassion. We fight by demonstrating what healthy, God-centered families look like—homes filled with forgiveness, sacrifice, joy, and prayer. When the family is strong, the church is strong, and society itself is renewed.

The Deeper Battle

Yet beneath these visible fronts—God, Country, and Family—lies the real battlefield: the human heart. Scripture reminds us that “*we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers*” (Eph. 6:12). Our fight is spiritual before it is political or cultural.

Christians are called to live transformed lives, not merely to win arguments. If our outward activism is not rooted in inward renewal, our efforts will collapse. The gospel teaches us that real change begins with repentance, faith, and obedience to Jesus Christ. He is not only the center of our faith but also the source of our strength.

Fighting With God’s Weapons

So, what are we fighting with? Not with bitterness or hatred, but with the weapons God provides: truth, prayer, faith, love, and perseverance. The apostle Paul urges believers to put on the full armor of God—belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:13-17).

When Christians arm themselves this way, they can face cultural hostility without fear. They can stand firm for truth without becoming harsh. They can defend the faith without losing sight of grace. The world may mock or oppose, but the battle belongs to the Lord.

A Call to Clarity

So again, *what are we fighting for?*

- We fight for God—not the vague “god” of cultural opinion, but the living God revealed in Scripture.
- We fight for our country—not as an idol, but as a trust where freedom can be preserved for future generations.
- We fight for family—not merely as a social unit, but as the sacred institution God designed to mirror His covenant love.

And above all, we fight for hearts and souls—to see men and women reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. That is the most profound and vital battle of all.

Let us be clear, steadfast, and courageous. For when Christians know what they are truly fighting for, they do not fight in vain.

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DEAR NOELLE by Noelle B. Nightingale Biblical Counsel for Christian Women

Dear Noelle,

My parents want me to wait until I'm 16 to date, but a lot of my friends started dating in middle school. Didn't girls get married at 14 in the Bible? Does the Bible say how old you need to be to start dating?

~ "Ready to date"

Dear "Ready to date,"

It's true that girls in Bible times were often married at 14, but the Bible doesn't actually have a category for dating. Girls in the Bible were either single, betrothed (engaged), married, divorced, or widowed. There is no description of dating in the Bible. But even though we don't see it mentioned in the Bible, there are many principles in the Bible that do apply to dating relationships today.

First of all, the Bible tells younger girls not to awaken love too early; instead they should patiently wait for romance until the right time (Song of Songs 8:4-9). This instruction comes at the end of Song of Songs, which celebrates the intimate relationship between a husband and a wife. But at the end of the book, the younger sister is told to wait and not hurry into this kind of relationship. So, dating needs to be done in such a way as not to awaken uncontrolled passion but rather prayerfully wait on God's timing.

The Bible also says that unmarried couples have no rights over each other. Only a married couple has a claim to ownership, a wife to her husband and a husband to his wife (1 Cor. 7:3-4). Also the Bible says that intimacy between a man and a woman is only permitted within marriage (Ex. 20:14) and is not even allowed for those who are engaged (1 Cor. 7:36; Heb. 13:4). Instead, believers are to be holy, able to control their bodies in order to stay sexually pure (1 Thess. 4:3-4). So, if you're in a dating relationship, you have no claim over your boyfriend, and he has no claim on you. Instead, you need to keep your relationship sexually pure.

Third, marriage should be the goal of the dating relationship. I think that one reason the Bible does not mention dating is because it was unnecessary for marriage at the time. Today dating should serve the purpose of getting to know one another sufficiently to determine if you want to get married or not. If you get to a place in your dating relationship that you already know that you don't want to get married, then you should stop dating. A dating relationship that does not have marriage in view serves no purpose and will often result in heartache and unnecessary drama and may easily cross the boundary of staying pure.

Fourth, our identity as Christians is in Christ, not in a dating relationship. We should not seek a boyfriend in order to feel valued or special. We do not get our worth from a boyfriend but from being united to Christ. If you're wishing for a boyfriend in order to feel special, then I would caution you about dating. It's best to find contentment in Christ before you ever start dating.

Fifth, Christians girls should only date Christian boys (2 Cor. 6:14). Be careful about who you date. You should only choose to be in a dating relationship with a guy who has a strong relationship with Christ and could lead you and your future family spiritually. This might mean that a lot of cute guys are not even an option for you, but having a commitment to only date a Christian guy



can save you from having a painful breakup later on or even worse, marrying someone who is not a believer.

Finally, your parents are still the God-given authority in your life until you get married (Eph. 6:1-2). Once you get married, then your husband becomes the God-given authority in your life (Eph. 5:22-24). So even if you feel like you're old enough to date right now, you can honor your parents and God by following their instructions about dating. You can have God's peace and joy even now by being content to wait until they give you permission to date.

So how old do you need to be to start dating? The age probably varies slightly depending on the person and the family, but most girls are not ready to start thinking seriously about marriage until mid-way through high school or maybe not even until college. Junior high is definitely too young in our culture to be thinking about marriage. But if you find yourself in the waiting period, I would encourage you to turn to the Lord and be in the Word. This can be a very sweet time of drawing near to God as you prayerfully wait for Him to bring a godly man into your life.

***Noelle is a wife and mother and enjoys counseling women in the church.**

SEND IN YOUR LETTER TO: Noelle@ChristianNewsMagazine.com





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1776 Sons of Liberty – Standing for Faith, Freedom, and the Constitution in Hanford, CA



In the heart of California's Central Valley, a patriotic movement is inspiring citizens to take a stand for the principles that made America great. The 1776 Sons of Liberty in Hanford,

California, is a dynamic grassroots organization rooted in conservative, constitutional, and Christian values. Founded in 2020 in Kings County, the group meets regularly at the Hanford Elks Lodge and proudly operates from its local headquarters.

The organization takes its name from the original Sons of Liberty—the brave patriots who, in 1776, rose up against tyranny to claim freedom and self-governance for the American colonies. In that same spirit, today's 1776 Sons of Liberty sees itself as a modern movement of “warriors of liberty and seekers of truth,” dedicated to defending constitutional rights, limited government, and individual freedom.

Each meeting begins with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, setting a tone of unity, reverence, and patriotic devotion. The gatherings bring together a diverse mix of local leaders—farmers, business owners, veterans, and pastors—who share a love for God, country, and community. Together, they discuss issues ranging from national politics and education to local governance and agricultural policy, always guided by the belief that America's greatness begins with strong moral and spiritual foundations.

Among the group's respected members are John Darpli, a local alfalfa broker and coach who helped found the organization, and Adam

Medeiros, a longtime Hanford resident, small business owner, and elected school trustee known for his faith-based leadership and commitment to family values. These men, along with many others, exemplify the kind of citizen engagement that strengthens communities and keeps freedom alive.

The 1776 Sons of Liberty also sponsors public events, candidate forums, and community discussions that promote civic awareness and conservative solutions to California's challenges. The group's online presence—including its Rumble channel, “1776 Sons of Liberty – Kings County”—features guest speakers, educational content, and inspiring messages encouraging citizens to get involved and make a difference.

Firmly grounded in biblical truth and the founding ideals of the republic, the organization stands boldly for God, family, and freedom. Members are unashamed to express their support for leaders who champion these values, including President Donald J. Trump, whom they see as a defender of America's sovereignty and traditional morality.

Operating in a state dominated by progressive politics, the 1776 Sons of Liberty represents the enduring strength of conservative California—a reminder that the spirit of 1776 still burns bright in the hearts of those who love their country.

With courage, conviction, and community at its core, the 1776 Sons of Liberty of Hanford continues to carry the torch of liberty, inspiring others to rise, speak truth, and stand firm for the America our Founders envisioned—one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.



Complaining is Not Action—it's Time to Rise and Rebuild California



DRAN REESE President Salt & Light Council
www.SaltandLightCouncil.org

California is in crisis. We see it in the soaring crime rates, the tent cities overtaking our streets, and the ever-growing cost of living. Our state now holds the unfortunate distinction of having the highest taxes, gas prices, and housing costs in the nation — while also ranking among the lowest in education and infrastructure. Families are fleeing for more sensible states, and who can blame them?

But here's the truth: complaining isn't action.

Yes, our challenges are real — from failing schools and mismanaged resources to declining public morality and leadership that often feels out of touch with the values of everyday Californians. The imbalance in Sacramento — with over 80 Democrats to just 40 Republicans — has enabled extreme policies to pass unchecked. From taxpayer-funded gender surgeries for minors to weakened parental rights and leniency on human trafficking laws, it's clear that something deeper is broken. And perhaps even intentionally so.

Yet despite the frustration many of us feel, we must remember: the government isn't going to fix this. We the people must.

I've lived in this state since I was four years old. I love California. But the decay is undeniable — neglected roads, rising homelessness, and a widespread sense of hopelessness. Still, this is no time to give up. It's time to step up.

Now more than ever, we need citizens — especially Christians and conservatives — to engage like never before. That means more than voting. It means running for office. It means supporting values-based candidates who believe in life, family, and

freedom. It means using your voice — in your church, your community, and your circles of influence — to bring light to the darkness.

Today, instead of merely venting, I'm taking action. I'll be donating to three candidates I know are fighting for life, marriage, and parental rights. I'll be writing another newsletter to rally churches and faith leaders to get informed, get equipped, and get involved. That's just the start.

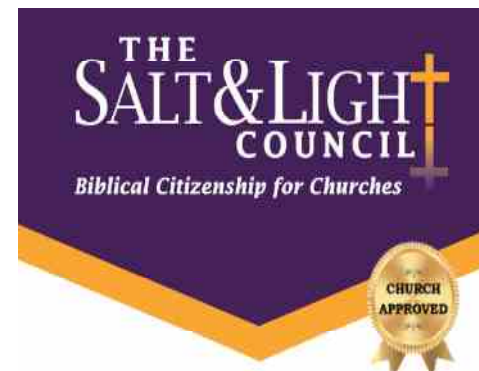
What about you?

If you're looking for a place to begin, visit www.SaltandLightCouncil.org. We provide practical tools to help you impact your church, your city, and your state. From starting a Salt & Light Biblical Citizenship Ministry in your congregation to engaging your local school board or city council — there is a place for you in this fight.

The hour is late, but not too late.

California doesn't need more spectators. It needs more principled leaders and bold citizens. It needs you. Let's stop wringing our hands and start rolling up our sleeves. Let's rebuild our state — not on the shifting sands of political agendas, but on the solid foundation of truth.

You can do this. We all can. But if we don't act now, let's be honest — we've forfeited our right to complain.



WHO IS THE SALT & LIGHT COUNCIL?

We are a non-political, non-partisan 501c3, dedicated to promoting biblical moral values in the public sector. Further, we are a coalition of cross-denominational churches with active Salt & Light Biblical Citizenship Ministries working to rebuild our

Judeo-Christian heritage in America.

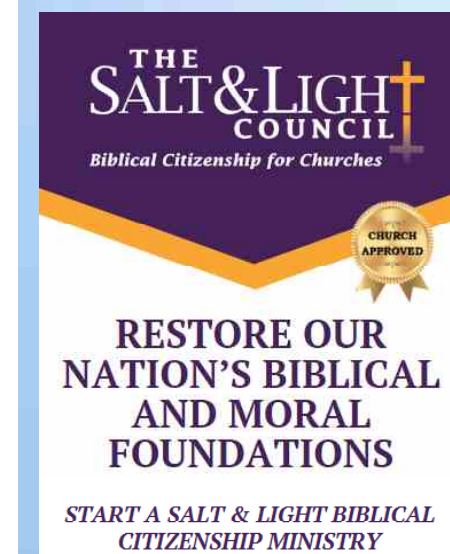
We mobilize Christians at the grassroots level, helping them to live out their responsibility to influence government and civic affairs for good. History has clearly shown that without a strong, godly influence to overcome the natural tendency toward evil, governmental authority will destroy God-given rights, including the right to hear and speak His truth.

We seek to love and care for all of God's people, transforming hearts and minds through prayer, education and action.

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