



Sisters in the Spirit Ministries Newsletter

Empowerment for the Christian Woman

When God Speaks With a Female Voice

god
is within
her, she will
not
fall.
PSALM 46:5

By Rev. Dr. Katrina White Brown

God does speak with a female voice. God has always spoken with a female voice, and a male voice, and in every voice, all languages, every ethnicity, and multi-culturally. God speaks to and through all living things.

The fact that God speaks to women, through women, and lives within women, is Biblically undeniable, yet this spiritual truth is challenged and attacked daily. As a result, many women who have been called to preach simply don't, because they have been convinced that the Word of God has no power or authority when it is spoken with a female voice.

When God speaks with a female voice it is in accordance with His desire for equity between men and women. This is a truth confirmed throughout the Bible; most notably in the story of Creation recorded in the first book of the Bible. We first learn of God's plan for equality in Genesis . Humans were created in the image of the triune God: that image is both female and male.

We were created in the image of God, for His glory and good purposes for us. It is a part of God's beautiful design and plan. God's unconditional love which is the same for both man and woman, and God's Truth, as it is written in

continues on page 6

20 SECONDS OF PRAISE



Health officials recommend washing your hands frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds as a primary defense against germs. You can time this by singing a verse of:

Just as I Am

by Charlotte Elliot

Just as I am
Without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed
for me
And that Thy bidst me come to
Thee
Oh Lamb of God, I come
I come

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Sisters in the Spirit is an outreach ministry created to empower Christian women in better serving the Lord. We are here to help "equip God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ..."

Ephesians 4:12



March is annually observed as Women’s History Month. It’s a celebration of the contributions women have made to history, culture, the arts, and society in general. This observation is a fairly recent one in the United States: it’s only been celebrated here for 35 years - since 1987.

Women’s History Month highlights the often-overlooked contributions of women to history. From Abigail Adams, who was the wife of the second president and was one of the first women to advocate for equal rights and equal education for women; to Susan B. Anthony, who was a suffragette for women’s rights to vote. From Sojourner Truth, the outspoken former slave who fiercely fought for the abolition of slavery, to Rosa Parks, whose bold decision to sit down inspired others to stand up for civil rights; these women embody the quote “well-behaved women seldom make history.” Although these women, and many others, carved a wide path through America’s history, the greatest impact of badly behaved women was made by those fighting the ism and schisms associated with serving the Lord and fulfilling His purpose for their lives. Sexism, racism, ageism, religious imperialism, materialism, classism—these are just some of the ways women have been oppressed while trying to serve God.

As women, we have often been branded as inferior and subservient; as such we have been deprived of the equal right to serve God, particularly in positions of leadership. But when Jesus gave “the Great Commission - the one that tells us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” didn’t consider gender. Jesus didn’t say go he, or go she. Jesus said to “go ye.” This means everybody.

Women have had to fight throughout the generations for recognition, respect, and representation in what had been described as “a man’s world.” And, every time we win a battle we make history. Rahab did, when she aided and abetted Hebrew spies sent to Jericho. Deborah did, when she became the first and only female leader of Israel in the Bible. Mary Magdalene did, when she became a follower of Jesus and when she was chosen to deliver the message of Christ’s resurrection. Lydia did, when she financed the first church planted by the Apostle Paul. These women, and many more, made history by serving the Lord as they were called to do, despite men telling them that they weren’t worthy, or not equipped, or simply telling them no.

In my Spirit for you my sisters is that you continue making history for the Lord. Make history by: answering God’s call on your life; walking boldly in your divine purpose; trusting in the Lord no matter what; studying the Word of God for yourself; and walking by faith and not by sight. You are a living legacy! What women did in the past made a way for our present. You must pass on that legacy to make a way for the future history making women.

Love, Peace, and Blessings Always,

Katrina W. Brown

A History Making Woman After God's Own Heart

By Adelle M. Banks

On July 11, 2000, journalist and clergywoman Vashti Murphy McKenzie became the first female bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. In 2005 she became the denomination's first woman to serve as Titular Head. This interview was conducted as she reflected on her ground-breaking career.



Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie is a woman after God's own heart. She has been faithful in her assignment from God and has been selfless and sacrificial to help all to see the kingdom of God come. And, she's been a practicing "adaptive leadership" without apology. She's lived her life as a trailblazer by going places where women have never been, and all the while letting God lead the way.

A woman after God's own heart is someone in compliance with God's own intent, will, or inclination. She is "someone that can agree with God to do His will". This is a commitment that helped Bishop McKenzie, now retired, succeed as the first woman to hold many roles in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Her heart for God, plus her adaptive style of leadership has provided what's she's needed in times of crisis.

"Adaptive leadership means that you are faced with situations but do not have a solution or answer that comes from past experiences, so you have to adapt," said Bishop McKenzie. "You have to know how to pivot, you have to step back, get on the balcony, survey the scene, throw out what you know or what you think you know and then find the answer that's going to fit this issue right here."

Although retired, Bishop McKenzie remains the national chaplain of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority. She reflected on her life as a female trailblazer in the 209-year-old denomination that she led.

In 2000, Bishop McKenzie was the first woman elected bishop and later the first to serve as president of its Council of Bishops and to chair of the General Conference Commission, which organizes the denomination's quadrennial meeting.

She is often asked about a woman's ability to lead.

"Do I think women can do this? Yes," she said. "Do I think women are called to this? Yes. Do I think the women that have been elected in my denomination have done an exceptional job? Absolutely."

As she led AME regional districts in Africa, Tennessee, and Texas, Bishop McKenzie said she focused on her work rather than her title, letting the results speak for themselves. She modeled what it meant to be willing to partner with God in whatever role she had been assigned. She says that she had to be willing to operate in God's strength, and not her own, because when she was elected bishop, she didn't have a standard operating manual as a reference on how to do the job.

"Being the first of anything, there is no book. There is no DVD. There's no movie. There's nobody in front of you, to be able to share back experiences of what it's going to look like and feel like and be like and so you're charting your own way. And as people receive you — not only as you are in your position but also receive you as a human being — and begin to see you have something to bring to the table and be able to embrace the uniqueness of my femininity. I do what bishops have to do, but I don't do them in the same way because I'm Vashti."

Bishop McKenzie's career started out very differently. Her family had long been in the journalism business, running the Afro American newspaper chain in the Baltimore-DC area. She wrote newspaper articles starting at age 16, and as bishop she oversaw denominational publications including The Christian Recorder. But moving from being in the news business to becoming a newsmaker was all a part of God's plan. "It was a little bit different being on the other side of the microphone, the other side of the camera and on the other side of the notepad, really, because I grew up telling some other people's stories. And then the shift comes where then you become the story. My intention was not to have my episcopal career be about me, but that it would be about the people I serve. So I was intentional; to focus on the work. God didn't just call me to be first. God called me to do the work. And so that's what I focused on in each of the districts I served.

Although 2000 was a turning point for women bishops, Bishop McKenzie pointed out that it was preceded through earlier actions by many women who helped pave the way. "Women whose names were not written, who did not get a footnote in history, who were in the margins; women with faces and names people have forgotten a long time ago."

Bishop McKenzie point out that "beginning with Jarena Lee, women have been determined to do God's will." Rev. Jarena Lee was the first woman ever licensed to preach in the AME church, which had a strict prohibition against women in the pulpit. "Jarena Lee stood up at a time when Bishop Richard

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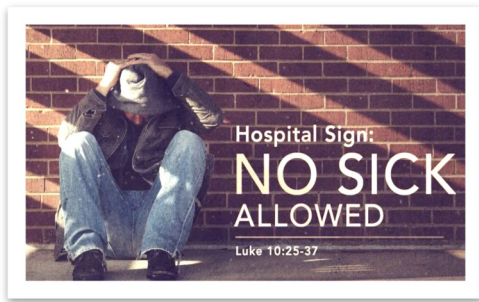
Spring Has Sprung!

Find these words that announce the arrival of Springtime

Just for Fun

S T P E N I H S N U S R S Z K S L C C Q N M N Q
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| Baseball | Beehive | Birds | Blooming | Breezy |
| Bunny | Butterfly | Caterpillar | Changing weather | Chicks |
| Clouds | Clover | Daffodil | Daisy | Easter |
| Farmer | Flowers | Gardening | Grass | Hatching |
| Iris | Kite | Lamb | Lilac | March Madness |
| Mild temperatures | Nest | Outdoor | Pastel colors | Rainbow |
| Rainy days | Robin | Season | Showers | Spring Cleaning |
| Sprout | Sunshine | Tulip | Umbrella | Windy |



Can You Afford to be Sick?



By Contributing Columnist
Dr. Pamela Hamilton-Stubbs
BSN, M.D., CNS

During the delta period of the coronavirus pandemic, researchers found that African Americans and people with diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, cancer, immune compromised conditions, and older than 60 years of age are more likely to require hospitalization for severe COVID-19. Researchers also discovered that a high blood sugar level, even in people without diabetes, increases the risk for severe COVID-19 and death.

Over time, new variants of the coronavirus with lower hospitalization and mortality rates have evolved. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) cautions that the pandemic is in transition and remains a health emergency. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies released warnings that all countries remain unprepared for future outbreaks.

The United States' vaccination program is designed to prevent severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Vaccinations are most effective against the original coronavirus. The coronavirus booster is effective against the Omicron variant and BA.4/BA.5 sub-variants. Booster shots offer much less protection against the newest variants of the coronavirus, XBB and a sub-lineage, XBB.1.5. However, even a small boost in protection is beneficial to the most vulnerable populations, people older than 65 years of age, and people who are immunocompromised.

Currently, XBB and XBB.1.5 viruses are causing a spike in

COVID-19. Some who become infected will need hospitalization or out-patient medical care. Treatment for COVID-19 is expensive. People without insurance may find medical care unaffordable. People with health insurance can reach their out-of-pocket max with just one drug infusion. Health insurance does not cover most vitamins, supplements, alternative therapies and experimental treatments.

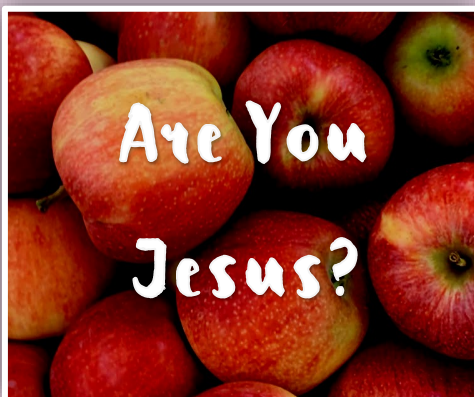
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention currently recommends getting vaccinated, avoiding crowded indoor spaces, and frequent hand washing. Immunocompromised individuals and senior citizens should consider wearing masks. Following the American Heart Association recommendation of limiting added sugar to a maximum of six teaspoons per day for women and nine teaspoons per day for men can reduce blood sugar level. To suppress sugar cravings, download a free copy of the *Sensual Eating Guide to Stop Sugar Cravings and Overeating* at shop.drhamiltonstubbs.com/sensual.

Beyond healthcare cost, COVID-19 results in lost earnings, disability, and reduced quality of life, especially for those who develop long term COVID-19. It is best to avoid becoming infected.

References:

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<https://health.ucdavis.edu/news/headlines/xbb15-what-you-need-to-know-about-covid-19s-kraken-variant-/2023/01>



A few years ago, a group of salesmen went to a regional sales convention in Chicago. They had assured their wives that they would be home in plenty of time for Friday night's dinner.

In their rush, with tickets and briefcases in hand, moving quickly through the airport terminal, one of these salesmen inadvertently kicked over a table which held a display of apples. Apples flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time for their nearly missed boarding.

All but one! He paused, took a deep breath, quickly assessed the situation -- and experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned. He told his buddies to go on without him, waved good-bye, told one of them to call his wife when they arrived at their home destination and explain why he was taking a later flight. Then, he returned to the terminal where the apples were still all over the terminal floor.

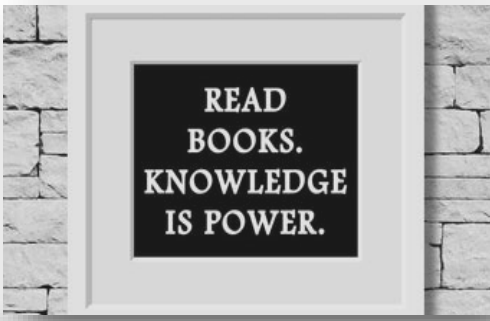
The man was glad he did. The 16-year-old girl running the stand, he discovered, was totally blind! She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in frustration, all the while helplessly groping for her spilled produce as the rushing crowd swirled about her, no one stopping and no one caring for her plight.

No one else, that is. The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many of them had become battered and bruised. These he set aside in another basket.

When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, "Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay?" She nodded through her tears. "I hope we didn't spoil your day too badly," he said.

As the salesman started to walk away, the bewildered blind girl called out to him, "Mister..." He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, "Are you Jesus?"

He stopped in mid-stride, and he wondered, stunned by the words. Then slowly, he made his way to catch the later flight with that question burning in his soul: "Are you Jesus?"



When God Speaks with a Female Voice

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REASON TO RETURN

BY ERICKA ANDERSEN

Ericka Andersen wants you to have FOMO (“Fear of Missing Out”). She wants you to wonder what everyone else is doing. She wants you to suspect they might be getting more satisfaction than you are. She wants

you to conclude that continuing to stay home from church is probably the wrong decision. And she wants to compel you to change your ways.

In *Reason to Return: Why Women Need the Church and the Church Needs Women*, Andersen writes “you should fear missing out on what God has for you! Fear missing the transformation, healing, and growth that will happen when you invest your faith life through church community.”

Reason to Return appeals to women who want to develop a richer life of faith but who aren’t sure how—and aren’t convinced that church is the place to do it. These women may have been part of a church in the past, but some combination of disillusionment, hurt, or pandemic strains has led them to spend their Sundays elsewhere. Andersen writes out of personal experience, detailing how she questioned the place church had in her life during an earlier struggle with an eating disorder and a more recent struggle with alcohol. For a time, she writes, she walked away from church entirely. She’s since come back, and she’d like to invite other women to join her.

Reason to Return runs through the reasons many women are staying away from church these days, based on interviews with women who have come and gone from church (and often come back again). Andersen explores a variety of hindrances to church commitment covering such topics as insufficient time, disillusionment with past churches, personal discomfort, and spiritual doubts. The book then explores incentives to return to church - reasons to commit to being part of a local body and spending time with its members in worship and fellowship. Andersen unpacks some of these reasons as: our own spiritual growth, our need for friendship, and discipleship of our children, as being among the benefits of church attendance.

Several times in the book, she repeats this statement: “The church of your past doesn’t have to be the church of your future.” But Andersen acknowledges that returning to church comes at a cost; it will require emotional involvement, relational discomfort, and even money. She helpfully compares the work of committing to a local church to the work of giving birth: “The process of labor and waiting is incredibly difficult, but you know the reason behind this pain.” So too, we bring our questions and hesitations to the local church, trusting that God has good for us there in the end.

And, ultimately, the church is not about what it does for those who belong. It’s about the sovereign God who calls it into existence, organizes it according to His wisdom, directs it according to His Word and Spirit, and commands His people to join it.

Reviewed by Megan Hill, the managing editor for *The Gospel Coalition*. *A Reason to Return* is available at amazon.com and Christianbooks.com

the Bible, does not give a greater role to one gender over the other. God did create differences in purpose for men and women. Still, the assignments and the calling on the lives of men and women have always been similar.

Centuries of Biblical history record the powerful spiritual legacies passed down to and through women. The legacies include that of prophetesses, deacons, church planters, disciples, judges, warriors, queens, and servants of the Lord who trusted God and operated in their divine assignments.

When raising up women leaders, God spoke with a female’s voice. Deborah, Esther, Lydia, Pricilla, Huldah, Miriam, Tabitha (Dorcas), Junia, Phoebe, and Pricilla are just a few of the women who were anointed and appointed by God to serve and lead God’s people.

God spoke with a female voice through *Deborah*. As both prophet and judge, she exercised complete religious, political, judicial, and military authority over the people of Israel. Deborah was Israel’s commander-in-chief, and under her leadership the people of Israel enjoyed forty years of peace before the cycle of violence began again. Her story is found in Judges 4.

God spoke with a female voice through *Miriam*. The prophet Micah identifies her as one of the three leaders sent by God to bring Israel out of Egypt (Micah 6:4). Like Deborah, Miriam was known as a prophetess, and she held special responsibilities in leading the Israelites in worship.

God spoke with a female voice through *Huldah*. During the reign of King Josiah, he learned that the long-lost Book of the Law (The Torah) had been discovered in the temple. He summoned the wise and knowledgeable Prophetess Huldah to confirm the scroll’s authenticity. She prophesized that the disobedience of Israel would indeed lead to its destruction.

God spoke with a female voice through *Esther*. Her courage in defiantly speaking out for her people, at the risk of her own death, ultimately saved the Jewish people.

God spoke with a female voice through *Mary of Nazareth*. God saw fit to honor women by entering the world through one of them. God partnered with a woman, in her flesh, to become flesh.” Mary was a leader in the formation of Christianity. Undoubtedly, her passion regarding justice for the poor and marginalized influenced the teachings of Jesus and also his brother James. Mary urged Jesus to perform his first miracle.

God spoke with a female voice through *Mary Magdalene*. She is mentioned in the Gospel of Luke in the same context as the Twelve disciples; as one who traveled with Jesus. All four gospel accounts identify Mary Magdalene as among the first witnesses of the empty tomb, declaring that “I have seen the Lord.” The early church honored Mary Magdalene with the title of Apostle to the Apostles. That Christ was resurrected in the presence of women, and that He sent them out as the first witnesses of the complete gospel story, is perhaps the boldest, most overt affirmation of equality in His kingdom that Jesus ever delivered.

God values each of us equally - Jesus died on the cross for both males and females. We are called to use our spiritual gifts to the Glory of God. Although some try not to listen when God speaks with a female’s voice, and others attempt to limit women using the gifts that have been given her to use for God’s glory, God will continue to speak with a female voice because “God is within her, she will not fall.” (Psalm 46:5)

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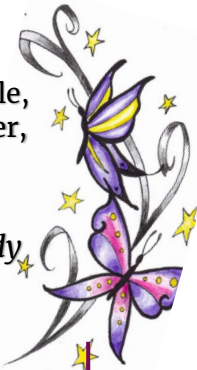
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A History Making Woman After God's Own Heart

Continued from page 3

Allen (the founder of the AME church movement) said that he was not going to license women. But God created an opportunity for her and she stood up, and then she went off walking hundreds of miles and preaching as she went."

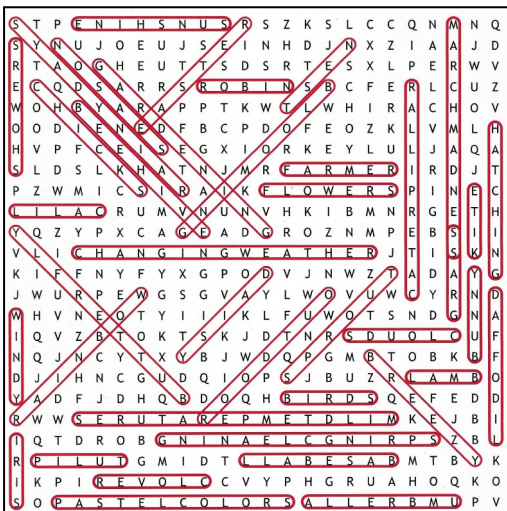
"Elizabeth Scott was another woman who ran for the episcopacy for many, many, many years. There were women who were appointed presiding elders; women who were appointed pastors. They all did fabulous work because if they didn't, then they would never have given another woman a chance."

Bishop McKenzie has always been an outspoken advocate in the longtime struggle for women to gain ordination, and to achieve the rank of bishop. But she says that there is still work to be done. "What seems to be difficult for the church at large - I'm talking about the universal church and denominations at large - is the inability of embracing inclusivity as far as women are concerned. Just because you're at the table, doesn't mean it's success for all women. Just because there's one presiding elder, one woman who is a bishop, doesn't mean the playing field is level for all women. And so in order for that to happen, we have to be intentional. Intentional means you don't promote or assign just because a woman is a woman. You recognize her gifts. When I ran for the office of bishop, I didn't run on a platform saying elect me because I'm a woman. I ran on a platform that said elect me because I'm qualified.

So, what's next for this woman after God's own heart, now that she has retired? "I'm going to continue with Selah (Leadership Encounters for Women, her professional women's empowerment organization) because I have a passion for leadership. I plan to write. This is a good time to sit down and put some thoughts down on paper. And then, as they say, we'll look into the horizon to see what else God has for me next."

Adelle M. Banks is a writer for the online publication RNS—Religious News Service

Spring has Sprung solution



MARCH IS

Women's
HISTORY MONTH





Sisters in the Spirit Newsletter

This is a free monthly publication of Sisters in the Spirit Ministries, Inc, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded to empower Christian women in better fulfilling their God-given purpose. Editor: Dr. Katrina W. Brown The newsletter is distributed via mail and online throughout the United States and the Caribbean.

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The LAST Laugh



Talking dog for Sale

A guy is driving around the backwoods of Montana and he sees a sign in front of a broken down shanty-style house: Talking Dog For Sale. He rings the bell and the owner appears and tells him the dog is in the backyard. The guy goes into the backyard and sees a nice looking Labrador Retriever sitting there. "You talk?" he asks. "Yep" the Lab replies.

After the guy recovers from the shock of hearing a dog talk, he says, "So, what's your story?" The Lab looks up and says, "Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government, so I told the CIA. In no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping, I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running... but the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger so I decided to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired."

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog. "Ten dollars" the guy says. "Ten dollars? This dog is amazing! Why on Earth are you selling him so cheap?" "Because he's a liar. He's never been out of the yard."

Quick thinking

A man decides to go on a safari. He took his faithful dog along for company. One day the dog starts chasing butterflies and before long the dog discovers that he is lost. So, wandering about, he notices a leopard heading rapidly in his direction with the obvious intention of having lunch. The dog thinks, "Oh boy, I'm in deep stuff now." Then he notices some bones lying nearby on the ground and immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching cat.

Just as the leopard is about to leap, the dog exclaims loudly, "That was one delicious leopard. I wonder if there are any more around here?" Hearing this, the leopard halts his attack in mid-stride, and slinks away into the trees. "Whew", says the leopard. "That was close. That dog nearly had me."

Meanwhile, a monkey who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree, figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the leopard. So off he goes. But the dog sees him heading off after the leopard and figures that something is amiss. The monkey soon catches up with the leopard, spills the beans about the dog's ruse and strikes a deal for himself with the leopard. The leopard is furious at being made a fool of and says, "Hop on my back, monkey, and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine." Now the dog sees the leopard coming with the monkey on his back, and thinks, "Oh boy, it looks like I've really had it now." But instead of running, the dog sits down with his back to the leopard and the monkey and pretends that he hasn't seen them. And just when they get close enough to hear him, the dog says... "Where is that monkey? .. I sent him off an hour ago to get me another leopard and he's still not back."

Scam Alert

I had a call from a scammer the other day. Me: "Hello."
NOT-Microsoft support: "Hello. This is Bob from Microsoft Support. We are seeing a lot of virus activity from your device." Me: "Oh no. My device? Are you sure?"
NOT-Microsoft support: "Oh yes, we have many reports." Me: "Oh goodness. How can I fix it?" NOT-Microsoft support: "It's okay Sir. We can help you right now. Are you in front of your device Sir?" Me: "Yes. I was just about to use it. I'm glad you called."
NOT-Microsoft support: "Yes Sir, we are going to help you. Can you please push the Start button?" Me: "I think it's already on."
NOT-Microsoft support: "Okay, Sir. Now you want to click on Control Panel." Me: "I don't see that." NOT-Microsoft support: "Do you see a bunch of information above the Start button?" Me: "Yes." NOT-Microsoft support: "That is your Control Panel." Me: "Wow, I didn't realize it had a name."
NOT-Microsoft support: "Yes Sir, now press on Internet Options." Me: "Yeah, I definitely don't see any Internet options. I don't think I purchased that feature. This is just a cheap one." NOT-Microsoft support: "They all have the Internet, Sir. Press the Start button again." Me: "Okay, it's the same as before."
NOT-Microsoft support: "That's okay Sir. We are going to restart your device. Can you please turn it off?" Me: "Um ... I don't know how. I've never turned it off. Since I bought it, it just kind of stays on all the time." NOT-Microsoft support: "There must be an off button on your device. How do you stop it when it's running?" Me: "In those cases, I usually press the big button."
NOT-Microsoft support: "Okay sir. Please press that button." Me: "Okay." NOT-Microsoft support: "Is your device off?" Me: "No. The door popped open." NOT-Microsoft support: "Door? Is there a disc inside the door?" Me: "No, there's a burrito." NOT-Microsoft support: "Why is there a burrito in your computer?" Me: "Computer? I thought you said this was microwave support."