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Your twice-a-month e-newsletter from Citygate Network

Useful news and information for members

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DEADLINE TODAY!

Today is the last day to save \$30 per person on Citygate Network's 2019 Conference and Exposition, which will be held June 3-6 in Palm Springs, California. The rate goes up at midnight tonight! If you haven't signed up yet for this highly rated once-a-year event, now is the time. Take advantage of the price break and do it today. Head to www.citygatenetwork.org.2019conference for all the details and to register. Or ready to register? Visit our [online registration page](#).

Need Help Getting to Palm Springs?

Citygate Network does have a limited amount of scholarship money that can be accessed by members. The highest priority will be given to those who have never attended a convention before, and/or those whose mission has not received a scholarship in the past three years. If you want to get in on this, apply [here](#) ASAP.

DC Forum Touches on All of the Major Topics

Citygate Network's DC Forum has just concluded, and we had one of our largest-ever crowds for this year's Capitol Hill meetings in Washington. On Tuesday, the group was treated to a visit to the floor of the House of Representatives with Congressman Doug Lamborn (R- CO), and then went to the Museum of the Bible for a full day of presentations and discussion on some of the biggest issues facing accommodations-based ministries these days. Numerous special guests

were on hand, including the House Minority Leader, staff members from several federal agencies, one of the president's key spiritual advisors, attorneys, and several CEOs from other organizations. On Wednesday, attendees expressed their concerns and desires to lawmakers at more than 100 separate meetings with Representatives and Senators and their staffs.

Equality Act Introduced in House of Representatives on Wednesday

We've been expecting this bill to be introduced since the House moved from Republican to Democrat control. It hit the floor yesterday, introduced by Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The Equality Act seeks to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes—with little or no religious freedom protections. The ramifications for missions and other accommodation-based ministries would be game-changing. Even if a ministry did not accept government money, it would still be subject to the statute if it passes as currently written.

This bill has been introduced with more than enough support to pass. It needs 218 votes in the House of Representatives, and it was introduced with 239 co-sponsors in the House. It will be voted on this summer and will certainly pass in the House with a strong yes vote. In the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is unlikely to allow the bill to come to a vote, even though it was introduced in the Senate with 46 co-sponsors. There is speculation that, were it to be voted on in the Senate, it would require only minor adjustment to certain religious liberty sections in order to be deemed passable. Religious liberty advocates are not completely confident that President Trump would veto such a bill, and there is no guarantee that the Supreme Court's make-up by the time it reaches their bench would be such that religious liberty would prevail. An alternative bill is being worked on and will likely be introduced relatively soon. Citygate Network will keep you posted to this challenging situation.

Education Secretary Refuses to Enforce Restriction Based on Religion

Sounding a more positive note for religious liberty, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced this past Monday that her department will no longer enforce a restriction that prohibits religiously affiliated organizations from providing contracted services to private school students under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). According to a *Christian Post* article, the ESEA requires that school districts offer low-income or vulnerable students who attend private schools the same services, such as special education, tutoring, or mentoring, that their public-school counterparts get. The law requires that those contractors, however, be independent of "any religious organization."

DeVos concluded after consulting with her legal team that the restriction on religious organizations in providing services run counter to the 2017 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer*. In that case, it was found that the state of Missouri had unconstitutionally engaged in religious discrimination when it denied a church-run preschool publicly funded tire scraps for its playground.

"The Trinity Lutheran decision reaffirmed the long-understood intent of the First Amendment to not restrict the free exercise of religion," DeVos said in a statement. "Those seeking to provide high-quality educational services to students and teachers should not be discriminated against simply based on the religious character of their organization."

It was noted that the education agency would continue to enforce all other applicable provisions of federal law, ensuring that school districts hire contractors that are independent of the private school for which they are providing services and that the educational services and other benefits being provided by contractors are “secular, neutral, and non-ideological.”

Citygate Network will also continue following this development and provide updates to members, as the decision is likely to be challenged.

Second Class Added to Abuse Recovery Certificate Training

The ARMS Abuse Recovery Certificate Program online training for Citygate Network members that begins March 27 filled up in a matter of days. Because we received more requests for members to participate in this exceptional program, our partners at ARMS decided to add another opportunity to sign up for the course. However, the registration deadline is March 19.

Two classes will be held each Wednesday for 13 weeks. Group A will meet 9:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m. PDT, and Group B will meet 12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m. PDT. If you are a counselor, therapist, navigator, or program leader, you are trusted to touch lives in your ministry. The ARMS abuse recovery program prepares you to lead small groups and meet with women one-to-one and lead them through the healing process outlined in the *Her Journey* program.

Her Journey fosters a healing environment for those who have experienced abuse and trauma in their lives. Women will experience new hope as they learn about their God-given purpose and true self-worth. Inspired by the gospel message, lives are changed and better decisions are made. Best of all, you get to be part of the healing process as a certified facilitator.

Visit our [online registration page](#) to sign up now and be ready to help the women in your programs in new ways.

Looking Down the Street...

- Please welcome Citygate Network’s newest member, **Brunswick Christian Recovery Center** (Ash, North Carolina). [Josh Torbich](#) serves as executive director.
- Please also welcome our newest business member, **Money for Ministry, LLC** (Lowell, Michigan). [Mike Buwalda](#) is the company’s executive director.



Infectious Diseases Are Resurging Among Those Experiencing Homelessness

Infectious diseases—including some that ravaged populations in the Middle Ages—are resurging in California and around the country, and they are hitting homeless populations especially hard. Los Angeles recently experienced an outbreak of typhus—a disease spread by infected fleas on

rats and other animals. Officials briefly closed part of City Hall after reporting that rodents had invaded the building. According to a [report](#) by ABC News, people in Washington state have been infected with Shigella bacteria, which is spread through feces and causes the diarrheal disease shigellosis, as well as Bartonella quintana, which spreads through body lice and causes trench fever. Hepatitis A, also spread primarily through feces, infected more than 1,000 people in Southern California in the past two years. The disease also has erupted in New Mexico, Ohio, and Kentucky, primarily among people who are homeless or use drugs. Public health officials and politicians are using terms like “disaster” and “public health crisis” to describe the outbreaks, and they warn that these diseases could easily jump beyond the homeless population.

Los Angeles Aims to Keep Homeless People and Pets Together

Hoping to find homes for homeless people who have pets, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors took the first step earlier this week in drawing up an ordinance that would require all county-funded housing to allow pets. According to a [report](#) by NBC Los Angeles, supervisors Hilda Solis and Kathryn Barger co-authored the motion, citing estimates that nearly 10 percent of homeless people have pets. “Studies show that individuals with pets experience fewer symptoms of depression and loneliness. Pets provide emotional stability and protection for those who lack that type of support,” Solis said. “For many, a pet may be their only sense of family...No one should have to sever a bond with a pet in order to find housing.” Many supportive housing developments either prohibit dogs and cats or don't have the infrastructure to care for pets.

Students Sleep Outside for Homelessness Awareness

University students across Canada are camping out in the cold this month to raise awareness and donations for homeless individuals. The 5 Days campaign is run by the Canadian Association of Business Students and is in its 14th year. According to a CTV News [report](#), participating students can only bring a pillow, blanket, and the clothes on their backs as they spend five days sleeping outside without personal comforts such as showers and warm beds, while having to rely on family, friends, and strangers for necessities like food. Participating students are also expected to help raise funds for a local partner charity while still attending all scheduled classes and writing examinations.



Opioid Epidemic Is Hindering U.S. Labor Force Participation

The U.S. opioid crisis is hitting the country on many fronts, including the labor market, according to data reviewed by a CNBC [report](#). States that prescribe more opioids per 100 people tend to have fewer people in their labor force. West Virginia, a state with one of the highest opioid prescription rates in the country in 2015, had the lowest labor force participation rate in 2018 at 54 percent. Alabama, the state with the highest prescription rate, has a participation rate of 57 percent—which is also one of the lowest. In turn, states like Minnesota and Colorado have two of the highest labor force participation rates along with low opioid prescription levels.

Schools Finding Record Numbers of Homeless Students

States have never found so many homeless students in public schools before. The next challenge

will be finding ways to keep those students in school long enough to earn a diploma. Nearly 1.36 million children—equivalent to more than all the students in New York City—went to school in 2017 without knowing where they would sleep at night, finds a new report by the national campaign Education Leads Home. The organization looked at new national data as well as graduation rates for homeless students in 26 states. According to an [article](#) in *Education Week*, that number jumped more than 100,000 students from 2016, making 2017 an all-time high since the group began tracking in 2007. The report found that nationwide, only 64 percent of homeless students earn a high school diploma, and there is a wide variation from state to state in what percentage of homeless students complete a high school diploma. That's nearly 20 percentage points lower than the average graduation rate for all students, and nearly 14 percentage points lower than the graduation rate for students who are living in poverty but have stable housing.

Poverty Statistics on American Indian Children Are Difficult to Measure

For one group of children in particular, American Indians and Alaska Natives, exceedingly high poverty rates have had profound effects on community well-being and long-term cohesiveness. Given the best available data, from U.S. Census data, child poverty rates among American Indians and Alaska Natives have consistently exceeded 40 percent for almost the past 30 years. However, a recent National Academies of Sciences (NAS) report affirms what many in these communities have long known—that the data on poverty is sparse and not as reliable for this group as it is for other groups or communities in the U.S. According to a [report](#) by the Brookings Institute, small sample sizes in population surveys have made it particularly difficult to reliably measure poverty rates among American Indian and Alaska Native children. Moreover, little is known about the effectiveness of a number of important programs and policies—whether provided by the tribes, by the states, or by the federal government—that affect this population.



[Biblical Pastoral Counselor](#): Union Gospel Mission (Spokane), Spokane, WA

[Breakfast Cook](#): Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA

[Care Support Specialist](#): Light of Life Ministries, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA

[Chief Financial Officer](#): Buffalo City Mission, Buffalo, NY

[Chief Financial Officer](#): St. Matthew's House, Naples, FL

[Development and Database Corrdinator](#): Union Gospel Mission, Dallas, TX

[Development Director](#): The Gospel Rescue Mission, Inc., Muskogee, OK

[Development Director](#): Open Door Mission, Glens Falls, NY

[Director of Emergency Shelter Services](#): Denver Rescue Mission, Denver, CO

[Director of Programs](#): Light of life Ministries, Inc., Pittsburgh,PA

[DIRECTOR of SAN FERNANDO VALLEY RESCUE MISSION](#): Rescue Mission Alliance, Oxnard, CA

[Donor Development Professional](#): Madera Rescue Mission, Madera, CA

[Executive Director](#): Rescue Mission of Utica, Inc., Utica, NY

[Executive Director](#): Klamath Falls Gospel Mission, Klamath Falls, OR

[Extended Care Program Manager](#): Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA

[Food Services Manager](#): Turlock Gospel Mission, Turlock, CA

[Justin's Place Manager](#): St. Matthew's House, Naples, FL

[Major Gifts Director](#): Union Gospel Mission, Dallas, TX

[Major Gifts Officer](#): Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA

[Men's Ministry Night Manager](#): Good Samaritan Mission, Jackson, WY

[Outreach Specialist](#): Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA

[Public Relations Manager](#): Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA

[Residential Coordinator Cornerstone Manor Facility](#): Buffalo City Mission, Buffalo, NY

[Salesforce Data Analyst](#): Atlanta Mission, Atlanta, GA

[Shelter Manager](#): Turlock Gospel Mission, Turlock, CA

[Shelter Supervisor](#): Open Door Mission, Glens Falls, NY

[Vice President of Development](#): Career Cross Training, Colorado Springs, CO

[Volunteer Engagement Specialist](#): Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA

[Weekend Cook](#): Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA

[Women and Children's Program Manager](#): Hope Gospel Mission, Eau Claire, WI

[Women's Program Manager - Laura's Home](#): The City Mission, Cleveland, OH

[Women's Recovery Counselor](#): Union Gospel Mission (Spokane), Spokane, WA



Christ's Righteousness

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV).

Jesus traded His perfect rightness before God for our utter depravity. His sacrifice was not lacking, it was complete, flawless, and whole. In fact, Jesus said it Himself, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

However, often we attempt to add to Christ's finished work.

We justify ourselves in our own minds and hearts by doing good things (i.e. reading our Bibles, going to church, giving our tithe, serving others). When we do these good things we come to believe that we are good people.

Yes, we believe Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6), but God's opinion of us is still largely based on the merit we earn by doing the right things.

The belief that we can add anything to the completed work of Christ on the cross is dripping with pride!

On the opposite side of this pride coin, however, lurks another evil.

It is the idea that we can also subtract from His work. The notion that we aren't doing enough of those good things to earn God's favor and love is just as heinous, as it completely undermines the truth that all of our righteousness springs from Christ.

We will, as Christians, walk as He walked, think as He thought, and do as He did (1 John 2:5-6), but not as the means for our justification.

We will walk in relationship with our Father through the reconciling work of Jesus alone!

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To contribute: If you would like to write a devotional thought for StreetLight, please make it about 200 words and include at least one Bible verse or passage, and submit via [email](#).

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