



Your twice-a-month e-newsletter from Citygate Network
Useful news and information for members

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 Feedback

This issue of Street Smart is sponsored by:



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The advertisement features a dark, textured background. On the left, there is a silhouette of a signpost with several directional arrows. The text 'FEELING LOST?' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. In the top right corner, the 'BD' logo is shown in red and white, with the tagline 'RELEASING GENEROSITY' underneath. A red button with the text 'LEARN MORE >>' is located in the bottom right corner.



Prepare for an Influx of People at Your Place

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) executive director Robert Marbut and Citygate Network President John Ashmen have been discussing the “decompression” of temporary shelters now occurring in many cities. The plans city leaders and homeless advocates made months ago to use hotels (from high-end to low-budget) to house homeless people during COVID-19 are now unraveling. Some programs are being closed even as you read this. Hotels are wanting to reopen to the public and, what’s more, many of the programs were by and large a failure anyway since no services were offered and on-site supervision was lacking. So now, these cities are putting people back on the street without any plans for housing. Additionally, a good number of the COVID-19 quarantine and isolation shelters are paring back or shutting their doors, with no plans to relocate occupants. A lot of these people are making their way to our member missions and other shelters—just as the flu season is getting started. Citygate Network has already heard from member organizations expressing concern about this developing situation. Let us know if you have begun to see this in your city.

We’ve Given our Opinion to HUD

As many as 45 Citygate Network members participated in a virtual Stakeholder HUDdle call on September 16, hosted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD Secretary Ben Carson addressed the group prior to discussion on the proposed changes to the Equal Access Rule of 2016. The changes would give providers the option to house people based on their facility limitations, faith convictions, and more. The 60-day comment period is now over, so we are awaiting word on the final decision. In addition to making statements during the call, [Citygate Network submitted comments](#) for the record on behalf of all our members.

National Faith and Blue Weekend

On October 9-11, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will join the U.S. Department of Justice and other private and public sector organizations for National Faith and Blue Weekend (NFBW) to further promote conversation and understanding between faith and law enforcement communities. NFBW is an extension of the One Congregation One Precinct initiative (OneCOP), a program introduced by MovementForward, Inc., a bridge-building, solutions-focused, human and civil rights organization based out of Atlanta, Georgia. [Learn more about this initiative](#) on their website, [view a map of events](#) around the country, and/or [sign up to host an event!](#)

Affirming Racial Equality for Ministry Completion

Since August, Citygate Network President John Ashmen and Minister-at-Large Robert Loggins have been convening a cohort with a core of approximately 15 black member CEOs. This cohort has been assessing the level of Citygate Network’s spiritual and racial unity and considering ways to be more intentional with inclusion and promotion. The group has now doubled in size as each black CEO has been joined by a white CEO of their choosing as a prayer partner and advocate for advancement going forward. The cohort is currently working on four goals, one of which will be presented to the Citygate Network board at their meeting later this month. The goal currently under development is “making Citygate Network a safe place where vulnerability is embraced but grace abounds; where engagement with issues related to racial and spiritual unity is encouraged, and where courageous, authentic conversations can be held.” Toward that end, in the next issue of *Street Smart*, we will introduce a new “street.” It will be called “Broadway,” with blurbs offering hope and insight for being unified in Christ.

Exciting News About Citygate Network Insurance Provider

Our long-time contract partner, The Merriam Agency, has just announced a merger with Arthur J. Gallagher & Co, one of the world’s largest and most respected insurance brokerage and risk management firms. Gallagher sought out Merriam for this deal because of their reputation for expertise in the area of rescue missions and similar organizations. The only changes you will see right now will be in the branding—Brian Merriam will continue to operate the company, but you

will see the words “Merriam Insurance, a Gallagher Company.” However, behind the scenes, what this merger means to you is stronger-than-ever financial stability, expanded resources, and the ability to now serve members in Canada and the Caribbean. To learn more about the long-term benefits—whether you currently have insurance through Merriam or would like to discuss that possibility—[feel free to reach out to Brian](#) to talk about it.

Free Publication Available to Members

Citygate Network has available a limited number of the most recent National Association of Evangelicals seasonal magazine, *Evangelicals*. The Fall 2020 publication theme deals with mental and emotional health, including the cover article titled: How Will the Church Respond? Today’s Crises Have Multiplied and Exposed Trauma. For a copy of this free issue, please [reach out to Alice Gifford](#) with your mailing address.

Looking Down the Street

- The film *One Life at a Time* premieres on October 10, World Homelessness Day, which coincides with the 120th anniversary of **Mel Trotter Ministries** (Grand Rapids, Michigan). The movie tells a story of what homelessness could look like through the eyes of someone with a different upbringing and socioeconomic status. Filmed in and around the mission last summer, it honors mission founder Melvin E. Trotter and will eventually stream on Amazon and be picked up by PureFlix, with DVDs available at national retailers. [Click here to watch the trailer.](#)
- Continue to pray for **Waterfront Rescue Mission** (Pensacola, Florida and Mobile, Alabama), after 30” of rain fell in the area over a 24-hour period when Hurricane Sally crawled through at one mile per hour. Staff split up to work on damage at the mission, while others managed programs and services out of the local civic center. They hope to have power and people back on their campuses by early October.
- **Home of Grace** (Vance, Mississippi) reported no injuries or damage from Hurricane Sally’s recent onslaught, but several ministries located about 90 miles away were not so fortunate. CEO Josh Barton coordinated a skid loader and volunteer team with chainsaws and other equipment to drive over and help clear their debris.
- Michelle Porter, CEO at **Souls Harbour Rescue Mission** (Halifax, Nova Scotia) reported that Hurricane Teddy “was a bit of a dud,” but the high winds and rain caused the roof at their new under-construction facility to leak, flooding dorm rooms. Michelle expressed gratitude for the opportunity to get that taken care of before moving people in.
- In response to the many fires burning along the West Coast, **Medford Gospel Mission** (Medford, Oregon) will transform a facility to serve women with children who are direct fire victims. Because these people have different needs and suffered a different kind of trauma than the typical mission guest, the mission will develop new policies, procedures, and guidelines for the converted premises.
- **Springs Rescue Mission** (Colorado Springs, Colorado) unveiled its new kitchen and 185-seat dining hall on September 17. The new facility not only triples the number of available seats for meals, but creates space for culinary training courses, life skills classes, and job opportunities through the mission’s social enterprise catering business.
- Justin Behrens, CEO at **Keystone Mission** (Scranton, Pennsylvania), recently started a 501(c)(4) to offer advocacy and lobbying for evangelistic issues in Pennsylvania. If the model succeeds, they want to expand into the federal sector.
- On September 25, **Americas Keswick Colony of Mercy** (Whiting, New Jersey) celebrated 123 years since their founding in 1897. They expressed gratitude for the Raws family’s century of leadership and all those who have served with them.
- In August, Citygate Network President John Ashmen made a guest appearance on **Nashville Rescue Mission** (Nashville, Tennessee) CEO, Glenn Cranfield’s new podcast, *Real Hope*. You can [access the session](#) talking about the effects that 2020 events have had on the homeless community and hear practical ways to serve through these challenging days.

TELL US: Do you have news to share with other network members? Send a blurb to [Alice Gifford](#). Include as many details as possible. We'll handle the editing.



Pandemic Brings Surge in Intimate Partner Violence

These days victims of domestic violence face even greater challenges when they find the courage to leave the abusive environments they've been living in. COVID-19 quarantines, lockdowns, and shutdowns all contribute to the daily struggle for access to food, transportation, and a safe place to sleep. According to results of a recent Rutgers University study, when faced with the choice of abuse or homelessness, some [victims have moved back into unsafe situations](#) in order to have somewhere to go. Because of the ongoing social isolation and unrest, high unemployment, as well as the lack of the usual community resources, intimate partner violence (IPV) has increased over the last six months. The New England Journal of Medicine recently published a thorough [article addressing this "pandemic within a pandemic."](#) *Consider: Have you implemented measures to help keep victims of IPV from feeling pressured to return to abusive environments?*

Commerce Department Prohibits WeChat and TikTok Transactions

In August, the president signed executive orders against two apps that were suspected to capture vast swaths of information from U.S. users, leaving the data vulnerable to the Chinese Communist Party to access for nefarious purposes. In seeking to protect national security, the Commerce Department responded by prohibiting the following transactions as of September 20, 2020:

1. Any provision of service to distribute or maintain the WeChat or TikTok mobile applications, constituent code, or application updates through an online mobile application store in the U.S.;
2. Any provision of services through the WeChat mobile application for the purpose of transferring funds or processing payments within the U.S.

As of September 20, 2020, for WeChat and as of November 12, 2020, for TikTok, the following transactions are prohibited:

1. Any provision of internet hosting services enabling the functioning or optimization of the mobile application in the U.S.;
2. Any provision of content delivery network services enabling the functioning or optimization of the mobile application in the U.S.;
3. Any provision directly contracted or arranged internet transit or peering services enabling the function or optimization of the mobile application within the U.S.;
4. Any utilization of the mobile application's constituent code, functions, or services in the functioning of software or services developed and/or accessible within the U.S.

Do Mask-Wearers Get Less Severe Cases of the Virus?

Masks have been proven an effective preventative measure to slow the spread of the Coronavirus by protecting those around you in case you are infected and don't know it. However, new research points to another previously unexplored benefit. Researchers from the University of California suggest that [mask-wearing could also reduce the severity of COVID-19](#) infections, leading to more asymptomatic cases, because masks block a significant number of virus-infected droplets, thus decreasing the dose of the virus a person inhales. Dr. Craig Jenne, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Calgary says, "When we look at how we study other viruses ...when we infect an animal with a high dose of

influenza, the disease is far more severe. If we give them smaller doses, they will still get sick, but it's mild and they recover quickly."



Lenders Frustrated with PPP Loan Forgiveness Delays

Lenders have grown weary of the lack of communication from the Small Business Administration (SBA) regarding [PPP loan forgiveness applications](#). The SBA, which is administering the program with the Treasury Department, has 90 days to review files and reach decisions. The Government Accountability Office reported roughly 56,000 loan forgiveness applications had been received as of September 8, but the SBA has declined to confirm how many applications they have received or approved. Meanwhile, lenders have pursued a number of reforms for the PPP, including simpler application forms and automatic forgiveness for loans of up to \$150,000 to streamline the process and eliminate billions in administrative costs, but congressional gridlock over a new round of economic stimulus has stalled progress.

Recognizing Positive Reports

According to a news conference last week, there are several good news items on the COVID-19 front, including that the fatality rate has decreased 85 percent since April. In addition, statistics show that 99.98 percent of all individuals under the age of 50 who have contracted the virus, have recovered. And finally, referring to a [Brown University study of more than 550 schools](#) across 46 states, only 0.076 percent of students have had confirmed cases of COVID-19 and only 0.15 percent of teachers, in spite of the swirling reports about outbreaks. Consider: In spite of all the difficulties and disruptions that COVID-19 has caused in every sector of society, be sure to take time to acknowledge the silver linings and unexpected blessings that have come as a result of the swirling reports about outbreaks.

Consider: In spite of all the difficulties and disruptions that COVID-19 has caused in every sector of society, be sure to take time to acknowledge the silver linings and unexpected blessings that have come as a result of the pandemic.

Census Nearing Completion

The U.S. Census Bureau identified about 49,000 places around the country where they would focus on counting the transitory population, including more than 33,000 camps, and almost 10,000 shelters and 5,000 soup kitchens between September 24 – 26. As of September 29th, over 98 percent of housing units had been accounted for in the 2020 Census, but the [pandemic restrictions delayed efforts to count the unhoused](#) since that undertaking requires a large mobilization of in-person workers. Usually that portion of the count takes place while it's still cold and dark so that fewer people are out and about, but the revised late September count has some people worried that the Census Bureau will miss quite a few in that vulnerable population. Thank you for doing your part to help with this critical part of the census during this unusual year—your communities will benefit from the accurate numbers and reporting that you facilitated.



Canadian Province Well Prepared for Hurricane Teddy

The Chief Operating Officer at the Nova Scotia Power Company said they spent the summer planning [how to respond to a storm while following COVID-19-safe protocols](#). As Teddy came ashore around Halifax and north up the eastern seashore, their preparations helped them withstand the heavy rains and winds. Hundreds of [crews were mobilized to](#)

[respond](#) to the emergency and the \$20 million Nova Scotia Power invested since Hurricane Dorian proved effective. Customers who lost power due to the downed lines in the path of the storm had electricity restored by that evening.

Another Leader Steps Down

Tina Namiesniowski, the [president of the Public Health Agency of Canada abruptly resigned](#) from her post on September 18, leaving the department in charge of the country's response to the coronavirus without a leader. Namiesniowski was appointed to the job in May 2019 but she said Canada needs someone with the energy and stamina to take the agency and their response to the pandemic to the next level. [Prime Minister Trudeau tapped Iain Stewart](#) for the role effective September 28, although Stewart has served just two years of his five-year term as the head of the National Research Council, the government's primary scientific research organization.

Streamlining Housing Strategies

The Canada Housing and Mortgage Corp. (CHMC) is a key overseer of the decade-long Canadian national housing strategy, and as such, is responsible for tens of billions in federal and provincial funding and financing. The head of the agency admitted that their strategy will need [new tools to move more quickly from ideas to finished projects](#), especially because of the COVID-19 pandemic which has made housing affordability an even bigger issue. According to CMHC estimates, about \$1 billion worth of mortgage payments were deferred each month during the pandemic. This has complicated the mission of the federal agency whose goal was to ensure everyone in Canada had a home they could afford by 2030.



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Wise Choices

Your word is a lamp that gives light wherever I walk.

Psalm 119:105 CEV

Obviously, the Bible provides clear guidance for making certain choices that have moral or ethical implications, but I'm talking about more individual decisions that can have far-reaching influences on our futures. Once we have determined that neither option causes us to deviate from scripture, how do we know which way God wants us to go?

Several of my recent exchanges with the Lord have wrestled with this question, and I believe He's teaching me something new: sometimes there's not a right or wrong choice. In other words, He wants me to make an informed, well-thought out decision after carefully considering the ramifications of both opportunities and understanding what it would look like to walk out my responsibilities in each scenario.

For example, when I made the decision to raise my kids in Colorado rather than North Carolina—He didn't require me to choose a specific location in order to remain in His will. I just needed to think through the implications of each option and determine whether I was willing to deal with things like living on the East Coast when their father lived on the West Coast, or coping with humidity versus winter conditions, or how each environment might influence my children, or what kind of Christian communities I could join. But neither decision would have been wrong.

God does not play games with His followers or try to trip us up. When we stay in tune with His voice and pay attention to scripture and wise counsel, He allows us to make choices without fear of losing His backing.

Be careful to preserve the fact God is extending a choice, not forcing us into what He wants out of control and manipulation.

Melissa Helser, from Cultivate Vol V: The Art of Connection Pt. 1 (The God Card)

Written by Alice Gifford, Citygate Network

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