



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

Useful news and information for members

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 Feedback

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Fact or Fiction:

**"Donors are more interested
in rescue than recovery."**

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'Nevermore' Is Happening

The Citygate Network staff had an all-day, final Annual Conference and Exposition meeting yesterday. ("Nevermore" is the conference theme.) And in the middle of it, a truck came to pick up our pallets of materials, equipment, and more for shipment to Baltimore. Cancellations over COVID-19 concerns have been quite minimal. Our Exhibit Hall is totally full, and registrations are higher than they were for the Palm Springs conference in 2019. All the while, we are taking the necessary precautions and preparation steps, striving to strike the proper balance between safe and comfortable, legal and logical. If you've registered, you will be receiving a what-to-know-before-you-go letter from us tomorrow.

And Now a Word from Our Sponsors

As we prepare for the 2021 Annual Conference and Exposition, we would be remiss if we didn't mention our sponsors. [These companies have played an enormous part in funding this conference.](#) Citygate Network appreciates their involvement and is hugely grateful for their help. Take time during the conference to meet and thank the representatives of these companies for their participation and support. And in case you missed it, it's not too late to register! [Visit our registration page today to meet up with the Citygate Network family,](#) September 16–19.

Members Impacted by Hurricane Ida

We've reached out to several Citygate Network members to see how they are doing following Hurricane Ida, which crashed into the Gulf Coast this past weekend. Phone lines and cell towers have been compromised, making communication difficult. New Orleans Mission CEO David Bottner was finally able to get back to Citygate Network President John Ashmen last night. David said his team had their hands full. They had hundreds of people on-site and no power. David and John plan to talk today to see what help the Citygate Network family may be able to provide. We'll keep members posted on our website or with a *Street Smart Express* news bulletin.

USICH to Create New Federal Strategic Plan

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness ([USICH](#)) is in the process of creating a new [Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#), and wants your input. In a recent email, USICH stated they are "dedicated to addressing deep-rooted racial inequities and to advancing proven practices like Housing First." Most of us in Citygate Network recognize that while Housing First has its benefits, "Housing Plus Services" is critical to see changes in the lives of individuals. USICH states the plan will be guided by equity and evidence. Here is your chance to be heard at the federal level and help change policy. Citygate Network encourages you to use your voice and present your evidence when [submitting your comments and thoughts online](#).

Christian Leaders to Meet on September 7, 2021

The Circle of Protection (CoP), a national coalition composed of Christian denominational and organizational leaders concerned about legislation affecting the poor—Citygate Network President John Ashmen is part of this—is meeting on September 7 to address the latest congressional budget resolution. On August 24, the House passed a \$3.5 trillion resolution and committed to voting on this bill by September 27. The CoP is planning to craft a Spirit-informed response on these momentous bills. The

Circle will have an extended meeting this Tuesday to shape advocacy in the weeks and months ahead. Please be in prayer for these leaders as they work to influence key legislation.

Looking Down the Street

- **Charlotte Rescue Mission** (Charlotte, North Carolina) was recognized by *Newsweek* as one of [America's Best Addiction Treatment Centers](#)! This year, they ranked #1 in North Carolina. The *America's Best Addiction Treatment Centers 2021* list highlights the top facilities based on quality of service, reputation, and accreditation relative to in-state competition.
- Travis McNeal, executive director of **Oliver Gospel Mission** (Columbia, South Carolina) [has been honored as one of 24 Icons and Phenoms in 2021](#). This is exciting as Travis only joined the Oliver Gospel team in January of 2020! Phenoms are defined as the motivated go-getters who are getting things done in new and exciting ways.
- Congratulations to **Redwood Gospel Mission** (Santa Rosa, California) and **Open Door Mission** (Omaha, Nebraska), both of which have renewed their accreditation at the Distinguished Level with Citygate Network. Additionally, congratulations to **Wheeler Rescue Mission** (Indianapolis, Indiana) and **Winchester Rescue Mission** (Winchester, Virginia) for their Essential Level accreditation renewals! Click here to [learn more about our Accreditation program](#) (formerly called Certification Program).

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



National Recovery Month Begins September 1

Today starts [National Recovery Month; the nationwide observance is held every September](#). The main objective of this annual event is to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the emergence of a solid and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible. In 2020, the federal government turned the reigns over to the recovery community to sponsor and manage the Recovery Month observance. *Consider: Are you taking advantage of this opportunity to tell your story?*

Temporary Eviction Ban Struck Down by Supreme Court

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reimposed an eviction ban on August 3, citing an increase in transmissions of the Delta variant. However, the high court ruled that this action would require the involvement of Congress to move forward and, in fact, overturned the CDC's action. [The court's actions end protections for roughly 3.5 million people](#) who indicated they would likely face eviction in the next two months. Three justices dissented, citing the increase of COVID-19 was reason enough to keep the moratorium in place. The President had hoped the court would have allowed the ruling to stay in place, providing a more significant opportunity to distribute the \$46.5 billion in rental assistance previously approved by Congress. However, despite an increase in households having received help, local governments have distributed only 11 percent, or a bit over \$5 billion. Additionally,

the administration has called on local and state governments like California, Maryland, and New Jersey, to implement individual moratoriums until more landlords and tenants can access these funds. *Consider: What have you done to prepare for a potential uptick of guests looking for shelter and more at your place?*

Hobby Lobby Fined for Requiring Transgender Woman to Use Unisex Restroom

A [Hobby Lobby store in East Aurora, Illinois, was fined \\$220,000](#) in a case where a transgender woman was prohibited from using the women's restroom. Although the store had allowed her to use a unisex bathroom, the three-judge panel upheld a ruling by the Human Rights Commission of Illinois, ruling that Hobby Lobby violated an anti-discrimination law when it barred the biological male identifying as female to use the women's facilities. Despite the store's concession in providing the unisex restroom, the panel still ruled that the action of Hobby Lobby to deny access to the women's lavatory constituted a violation of the plaintiff's civil rights. *Consider: Are your policies vetted by an attorney and does your staff know how to properly handle things if you are faced with a similar situation?*



Poll Reveals American Teen's Perspective

As 14- to 18-year-olds are growing up amid social, political, medical, and racial unrest, they carry a healthy dose of reality despite the images shown in popular social media. *The Washington Post* [poll of teens ages 14 to 18 revealed a large variety of perspectives](#). An overwhelming 51 percent say now is a challenging time to be a teen, versus 31 percent just 16 years ago. And their parents are even more negative, with 60 percent in agreement. Political divisions, health costs, racial discrimination, and gun violence are the highest-rated threats to their generation. Fifty-nine percent consider political divisions a significant threat, 33 percent feel the cost of healthcare is a big issue, and 57 percent see racial discrimination and gun violence respectively, as something of concern. Despite the rising concerns suggested in the poll, nine in 10 youth believe they are very or reasonably likely to achieve a good standard of living as an adult. Nearly 50 percent believe their chance to succeed is better than their parents. Forty-five percent of teens surveyed report the last year has impacted their mental health negatively, and just 10 percent say the previous year affected their mental health favorably. Relationally, the last year saw a 10 percent drop in friendships, saying instead their relationship with their parents improved.

A Third of Foundations Increased their Giving in 2020

While 2020 will be remembered as a financially challenging year for many businesses, [a strong stock market carried most foundations through, allowing a robust increase in giving](#). The annual *Council on Foundations—Commonfund* study collected data from 260 private and community foundations with a combined holding of \$115.4 billion in assets in the U.S. These community and private foundations reported some remarkable results in the face of the challenge. Community foundations showed a 12.1 percent return on investing, while private foundations indicated a 13.1 percent increase. Individual giving to community foundations also experienced an increase, with 45 percent reporting an 84 percent increase in median giving. Responsible investing practices also contributed to the changes in 2020, with

19 percent of private foundations saying they sought to invest in companies ranking high in environmental, social, and governance, an increase of 14 percent over reports from 2018.



Mental Health in Canada Takes a Dip

The Canadian workforce is in jeopardy, according to a recent report. [An online survey—completed between June 30 and July 12, 2021—of more than 3,000 employed Canadians](#), reported low levels of mental health over the last 16 months. These responses indicated a drop from the Mental Health Index benchmark of previous timeframes. The overall score was -10.1 points, reflecting a significant reduction from the baseline of zero reported 16 months prior. Among those surveyed, a majority indicated a widening gap in what employers are doing to support a culture of well-being. More than 65 percent of respondents stated working from home full-time positively impacted their mental health, and 34 percent enjoyed a lack of commuting time, both of which contributed to a greater sense of positive mental health. Researchers expect that organizations that focus on overall well-being will fare well in the future due to the high number of people who are considering resigning from their current employment.

Citizens of Calgary to Prepare for Afghan Refugees

As many are endeavoring to escape the violence of Afghanistan, [support agencies in Calgary, Alberta, are prepping to aid those displaced](#) by the increased violence in their home country. Initially expecting to evacuate 20,000 individuals, the efforts ended with approximately 3,700 people being rescued. Most of the refugees currently reside in Eastern Canada, with the more significant portions staying in Toronto. Still, Calgary is getting ready to care for hundreds if not thousands of evacuees. Many of those coming into Canada need significant emotional support, having escaped their traumatic contexts. Support agencies are looking for used furniture, clothing, and culturally appropriate food donations to support several societies.



Higher-Ed Cancel Student Debt with Federal Funds

For many college and university students of color, the financial burden of a college education is a daily reality. On average, black college graduates owe \$25,000 more than their white peers, and more than 50 percent indicate their net worth is less than the balance of their student loans. But now, due to federal pandemic relief funding and an increase in private donations, many students are finding their debts forgiven. [Many historically black colleges and universities \(HBCUs\) are using relief money to wipe out current educational debts](#). One prominent university is committing \$5 million to assist nearly 2,000 students in helping them complete their education. With about 20 HBCUs wiping out student balances, this trend is also finding assistance from philanthropic organizations like the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

providing large sums. Still, the lion's share is being accomplished due to the aid from the federal government in the form of pandemic relief.

Black Immigrants Look for Change

Imagine being born in East Africa, moving to Canada, then trying to make it into the United States while dealing with poverty and homelessness. [Black immigrants say they routinely face unfair treatment](#). According to the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, it is not unusual for a black immigrant to routinely pay a higher bond than a non-black immigrant when seeking release. Furthermore, the estimated 4.6 million black non-natives regularly deal with racism and are more likely to be deported than those of other races. But advocacy organizations are calling on leaders to discuss the immigration policies that harm many seeking asylum. This includes addressing how immigrants are treated in the criminal justice system, affording chances for those unjustly deported to manage their case, and reviewing how black immigrants are treated at the U.S.–Mexico border.



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[Work Therapy Coordinator](#), Phoenix Rescue Mission, Phoenix, AZ

[Youth Program Director](#), Great Falls Rescue Mission, Great Falls, MT



Into the Wilderness

“To be commanded to love God at all, let alone in the wilderness, is like being commanded to be well when we are sick, to sing for joy when we are dying of thirst, to run when our legs are broken. But this is the first and great commandment nonetheless. Even in the wilderness – especially in the wilderness – you shall love him.” — Frederick Buechner

The story of Jesus being driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, has become for me, the symbolic acting out of the Purgative way. In it, we see Jesus participating in asceticism, practicing the spiritual discipline of fasting for forty days. Then we witness his temptation, resisting our common enemy. And in the background of it all, he endures affliction, embracing the pain of hunger and the suffering of isolation.

Christ, the divine man, was not exempt from the Purgative way, and neither are we. Our task as we progress toward union with the Trinity, is not just to learn about these purifying experiences, but to somehow embrace them.

Written by Jonathan R. Bailey and used with permission

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.

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