

ISSUE 5-JAN/FEB 2021

THE **R** **READING** public
MAGAZINE

RASHID
**I AM A
WORSHIPPER
FIRST**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

SPECIAL FEATURE
INDUSTRY
LIFE & MUSIC

LINDEN SPENCER
"STRAIGHT BUTTER"

BUZZ NOTES
NICHOLAS GONG
TIFFANY LEVY

WE LIVE
BY THE SPIRITUAL
TRAIN YOURSELF FOR GODLINESS

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Nuggets From The Word

IF MY

The Covid-19 pandemic has been with us for roughly a year now. Some have grown tired and depressed. Many are facing what may seem insurmountable problems – financially, emotionally, and spiritually. Bombarded by all the negative news, the increasing cases and death toll, the many conspiracy theories, and false prophecies, some have grown frustrated and are losing faith. I would like to again remind you as a child of God to keep focused on God in this season. It is a season when God's people need to draw closer to Him, and not be perturbed by the nega-

tivity that bombards us daily.

I would like to draw to the believers' attention, the following verse of scripture, which the Lord vividly brought to life in my spirit a while back. 2 Chronicles 7:14 reads:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and

will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Do we believe that? Or has it become mere words? Let us break down the verse.

Firstly, note that the Lord is speaking to believers: If MY PEOPLE, who are called by MY NAME. The onus is on the children of God to reach out to Him on behalf of the land, and to turn things around in the spiritual realm. We do not have to wait for a declaration by the Government

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PEOPLE

to fall prostrate on our knees in prayer before Him. The Church, the Body of Christ is called to intercede for the land and to lead this charge.

Secondly, we are to humble ourselves. James 4:6 tells us, “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” Recognizing that we are nothing without God, we are to take off the cloak of pride, religion, and petty prejudices. He is Lord, and we are to humble ourselves before Him, seeking repentance for our sins.

Thirdly, having humbled ourselves before our Heavenly Father, we can now approach Him in intercessory prayer for other believers, our leaders, and our nation. THEN, says the Lord, - I will “hear from heaven, and will

forgive their sin, and will heal our land”.

Do we believe that?

We pray for wisdom for our leaders of Government and our medical professionals around the world. Continue to hold them up in prayer, as well as their families, for the daily sacrifices they are making in these crucial times. Pray that they may seek God for wisdom and knowledge, for He is the Omnipotent God, who is greater than, and above all. He is the source of heavenly wisdom. Therefore, even as we follow established safety protocols, we must continue to put our trust in God.

Psalms 146:5 declares,

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for

his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God.”

My reminder to you as I close, is

Isaiah 59:1.

“Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear”.

“I AM A WOR SHIPPER FIRST”

TRPM recently had the opportunity to interview Rashid Walker, a well known Gospel Singer/Songwriter on the island of Antigua who certainly destined for great and mighty things. To say that he his talented, would be an understatement. There is so much greatness on the inside of this anointed vessel and we are all here for it.

I first became acquainted with Rashid while he Emceed a Fashion Show and his excellence preceeded him. I was impressed and inspired. Since then he has recorded a powerful worship song entitled, “This Too Shall Pass”, a definite athem for the times...which has been receiving much airplay both locally and internationally. So here we are....chatting it up about all that and more...Read on Readers....

Rashid Walker

Antiguan Gospel
Recording Artist,
Worship Leader,
Songwriter





TRPM: Has music always been an integral part of your life? And who are some of the Artists that have inspired you over the years?

Rashid: Music has always been a part of my life. My mother said I was lalaing and lumming songs before I could speak. The artists who have inspired me over the years are Whitney Houson, Micheal Jackson, Bob Marely, Ron Kenoly, Kirk Franklin, FredHammond. These are artists I know for sure had an impact on my life as a child growing up into my teenage years.

From my 20s till now it has been Hill Songs, Israel Houghton, Belly Stelle from Sounds of Blackness, Darnell Davis, Fantasia and Tasha Cobbs.

TRPM: I truly believe that we are intended to be voices of reason in the earth...and that light is to be shed in all the dark places. What do you think about the way alot of Artists in the music industry are using their voices? Good direction or no?

Rashid: The Music Industry is so complex. In general I would say no, not a good direction. When you break it down to genres it's like all the negative lyrics, images and stereotypes are at the forefront of the Music Industry. Then, All the artists with positive, conscious, meaningful lyrics are secondary or at the bottom.

TRPM: How do you view the role of a Worship Leader today?

Rashid: The Role of a Worship Leader is to bring All persons into the dimension where God where God resides. You see the Bible tells us God is a spirit and we must worship Him not just with words but in spirit and in the truth of who we are and where we are. The worship leader must understand and experience this truth.

Then it becomes less about picking the 'right songs' and more about giving God our lives to use so others can experience His love.

TRPM: When did you start writing Songs?

Rashid: I started writing songs before I knew song writing as a thing. As a teenager I got saved at 15 one of the things I would do was memorise verses by singing them to myself and with reading the King James Version I would change the old english into a more modern way I could understand as a teen. Then when I went to college I learnt about song structure, formats and arrangements.

TRPM: Your Single "This Too Shall Pass" has definitely become a huge hit...Are you surprised by that? Also Tell us the story behind the song.

Rashid: Yes I am actually very surprised because I was doing it as a little thing for myself to celebrate my birthday in 2020. The song was written about 8 years ago by my cousin Kura Ralph and he gave it to me and said I could record it

and do whatever it's basically mine but I never did. I just procrastinated and memorized it and would actually sing it to myself when I was actually down or unhappy. It was in the Summer of 2019 I thought to myself in 2020 you are tuning 40 and you have never even recorded a song for yourself. Over the years I had written songs for other people, even sung on projects for other groups but nothing that said this is me on my own, not associated with a school, group or church. In October of 2019 I met up with Cadence Fire Warrior Studios and I spoke to them about the song

I wanted to record. It was on December 1st 2019 I laid down the 1st raw vocal for This Too Shall Pass and by the end of March 2020 the mixing and mastering was done.

I started hearing about Covid-19 in China in January of 2020 but thought nothing of it but by the last week of March Antigua and the whole shutdown.

My Birthday is April 30th so I released that song that month as planned but by then I realized this song was not for me. I would be for the world and what we were about to go through with Covid 19.

TRPM: What would you consider a step to far in regards to experimenting with other genres of Gospel? Is it possible that one day we might hear you singing a Soca?

Rashid: I think once the song makes sense and the message of the gospel is heard then all music can be used to minister the good news of Christ.

Reggae and Soca are cultural expressions of who I am as a Caribbean Artist so you definitely will be hearing some of those influences in my music along the way.

TRPM: What is your perspective on our archiving of historical figures within our culture? Do you believe we are doing a good enough job in chronicling the contributions of those who have paved the way?

Rashid: This has affected me personally because as the Recreation's Supervisor at St. James Club I have had 3 of my best entertainers die suddenly in the last 7 months and they have all made significant contributions to the culture of Antigua and Barbuda. Devon aka Sarg, Calypso Joe, and Tyron Mason needed to have archived what they have done for our nation through music and dance during carnival, the hotel industry, and music industry.

TRPM: How would you define the overall mission that God has given you?

Rashid: I know for sure God wants me to be a worshipper 1st and then using my music as an evangelistic tool to draw people to Jesus.

TRPM: What's next for you in your music ministry?

Rashid: I really do want to work on creating my 1st Album so I hope to release more singles this year and work with more local producers here in Antigua and Barbuda.



Train Yourself In Godliness

But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.
(I Timothy 4:7)

Jesus commands His followers to make disciples. Paul was a great example of someone who understood how to make disciples. He took Timothy, a young Believer, and trained him on how to become a mature Believer and outstanding leader. He taught Timothy how to conduct himself and become an exemplary Believer in the church. (I Timothy 3:15) He taught Timothy how to study the Scripture correctly. (II Tim 2:15) He also trained Timothy on how to be a spiritual role model for others to emulate. (I Timothy 4:12) In training Timothy, Paul gives us an example of how to train converts to become mature disciples of Christ.

When Paul told timothy to exercise himself unto godliness, he made it clear that every believer has the responsibility for their own maturity and spiritual growth. This growth comes through active involvement in the Christian life. We learn by doing, not by listening. We learn to drive by driving. We learn to swim by swimming. Timothy will become godly by learning to do the things that are necessary for godliness.

When we begin our spiritual training, one of the barriers we must overcome is incorrect thinking. Some Christians think that, when it comes to spiritual things, you should simply depend on the Holy Spirit and do what comes naturally. There are several reasons why you should reject this kind of thinking. First, this faulty thinking started before we became Christians. We must put away that kind of belief. The Bible does not encourage us to do what comes naturally. Therefore, we must put away ungodly thinking and be renewed in our minds. Secondly, the Bible teaches clearly that we will never please God through natural abilities. (I Cor. 2:14) That warning was given to a group of Christians who were living in a state of ungodliness. The idea of serving God through natural abilities is spiritual immaturity. Our human abilities must be filled with divine empowerment that comes through the Holy Spirit. Only then will our abilities be pleasing to God and useful for His Kingdom.

PASTOR DAVID HENRY

**CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA**

FACEBOOK: DAVID HENRY



Third, Christians are called to be spiritual. This means we live by things that are spiritual not natural. We are told to live and walk in the Spirit so we will not live by the natural abilities of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16) There is a constant battle inside us between the natural and the spiritual. The natural has an advantage because of our human weakness. We prefer what is ‘natural’ – which usually means choosing that which is easy.

Some people can develop a level of excellence that seems impossible even when we see it with your own eyes. Olympian athletes are examples of the levels of excellence one can reach in a particular ability. The same is true in other areas of life, including your spiritual life. We understand the importance of physical training. But when it comes to the spiritual things, we fail to train ourselves. (I Timothy 4:7) Philippians 1 reminds us that the goal is spiritual excellence through Christ. Believers can achieve a level of spiritual excellence through personal discipline that is lived through the power of the Holy Spirit. God wants us to choose the right way, not the easy way. And He gives us His Holy Spirit that empowers us to overcome natural desires. We are called to live in the Spirit. You have to decide whether you will do what comes naturally or develop the ambition to live up to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14) Paul reminded Timothy that those who will become godly are those who are willing to train themselves unto godliness.

When it comes to spiritual training, we are tempted to leave this up to the Holy Spirit. We overlook the fact that it is our responsibility to train ourselves. (I Timothy 4:7) God provides all the resources, but He will not do for you what He has commanded you to do yourself. He gave you two feet, but He does not walk for you. He provides you with food, but He does not eat it for us. This is one of the reasons Jesus says, “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” (Luke 16:8) The people of the world train themselves to be excellent in what they do. Look at the progress humanity has made in science, technology, agriculture, education, and so many other fields. They train themselves for an earthly prize. We train ourselves for godliness in this life and the one to come.

As you strive to follow that calling, identify an area

in your life where you need to grow the most. For example: prayer – Bible study – church membership, attendance, and involvement – sharing the gospel – understanding and using your spiritual gifts. These are spiritual disciplines that should be visible in the life of every Believer. Another thing you should do is teach a few persons what you have learned and help them experience their own spiritual growth. This is Discipleship. As a disciple of the Lord Jesus, you demonstrate godliness in your personal life when you cultivate spiritual disciplines and train others in becoming mature disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your spiritual training is your personal responsibility. It is not the responsibility of the church to train you. Do not depend on God to do that for you. He has given you a Bible, His Holy Spirit, and other mature Christians to help you. If you are spiritually powerless and immature, there is only one person who is responsible for that. Your journey towards your highest level of spiritual maturity has to include a daily routine of a set of spiritual disciplines that you are cultivating in yourself and others. The quality of your spiritual life and experience can be measured by the level of your commitment to spiritual disciplines in your life and the life of others.

“Paul reminded Timothy that those who will become godly are those who are willing to train themselves unto godliness.”



STRAIGHT BUTTER PRODUCTIONZ

INDUSTRY, LIFE & MUSIC

TRPM: Tell us a little about your upbringing and how you got introduced to music as career.

LINDEN: I was born and raised in Antigua. I had a very solid upbringing. My father, the late great Lowell Spencer, was the most supportive father in the world who always demonstrated an optimal level of integrity. My mother, Gertrude Spencer, was the Principal of various secondary schools in Antigua and is a very religious person. She always kept and still keeps the family firmly grounded in the Christian faith.

I had very supportive siblings growing up as well. In terms of my music career, however, I have to give all earthly credit and acknowledgement to my brother Craig Spencer. You see, we had to share the

same room and every morning at 5am, while I was still deep in sleep, he would be up playing Burning Flames, Cassav, Imagination Brass, Jam Band, and zouk songs on his keyboard. I think this repetitive action drilled musical arrangements and production into my soul. My parents also sent me to piano lessons so I did have some exposure there as well. Over the years, Craig and I would have our little jam sessions with him on another instrument, like the guitar sometimes, and I would play the keyboard. Eventually, we both moved to the states and he got more advanced equipment and he showed me the basics of how to put together a beat.

I used to hang around a lot of rappers at the time and I decided to make a beat for them to rap to, just for fun. Then I realized they actually liked it and were vibing

to it and so after that I just kept making beats everyday really.

It was still a hobby until one day, I was at a music store in Florida and this popular artist heard me messing around making a reggae beat on a display keyboard and he was interested in working with me. So then my confidence was boosted instantly and I was encouraged to take it to another level and do music production professionally. I really had no plans before that of doing anything music related. I wasn't a raw talent like my brother and I really didn't put in the hard work that others did. How I see it is that I am merely a conduit for the Father to do his work on earth. All of my abilities come directly from Him.

TRPM: How did you get the name Straight Butter?

LINDEN: So I got the nickname "Butter" from some friends while I was attending Antigua Grammar School and the nickname stuck with me to this day. I decided to call the studio Straight Butter Productionz from a term I learned while I was living in the states. On the basketball court, whenever anyone made a 3 pointer, they would say "straight butter". I liked the sound of that so I decided to call the studio that name.

TRPM: What are some of today's musical trends that you think are really good?

LINDEN: I like that it is easier to connect to artists anywhere in the world so you are not just limited to your particular geographical location. I also like that there is a great deal of fusion between genres. I actually started making beats that were a mixture of techno and reggae 20 years ago and I remember I was very discouraged, as some people used to laugh and say that techno music is too soft to be a part of a dancehall beat.



Look at the trends now. This fusion has tremendous international appeal.

TRPM: Who are some of the Artists you have worked with over the years and who would you love to produce for if given the opportunity?

LINDEN: I have worked with many artists locally, regionally and internationally over the years and this in no way is an exhaustive list so no hard feelings to anyone who may not be in this condensed list. Some of them include Wayne Conner, Naycha K.I.D, God Machene, Kulcha D, Jason Mighty, D.A. Jay, Chris Da Ambassador, Mac Truc, Kiyode Erasto and Michelle Merchant.

There is no particular artist that I would like to work with. I, however, would love to work with artists that are serious about their craft. I really like artists who pay attention to detail, can come up with unique melodies and who can think outside the box. I also insist that whatever lyrics are used on my beats must bear a positive message.

TRPM: Do you consider the Caribbean Gospel Music market sustainable enough for Independent Artists? If so, why or why not?

LINDEN: No, the Caribbean Gospel music market is definitely not a sustainable one for artists nor producers. A lot of work and expenses go into the full production of a single song. There are not sufficient avenues in the Caribbean and to an even lesser extent, in Antigua, for these expenses to be recouped by either party. The artist, in his his/her capacity as a performer, relies on live performances to gain an income. With very limited opportunities, the artist is left with an empty bag. This empty bag is then passed on to the producer and others involved in the production process. More support is definitely needed for it to be sustainable. I am hopeful that this unfortunate circumstance will change in the future.

TRPM: What is one project you really had fun working on? And what was the inspiration behind it?

LINDEN: I would say my very first project, taking part in Wayne Conner's album, in Florida, was the most fun and perhaps the most crucial one. This was the beginning phase where possibilities seemed endless. The negative experiences would not have occurred as yet and so it was all fun. Plus, the trust and confidence that was placed in me, a teenager at the time, to take part in the production of an album that had as the Executive Producer, a pastor of a mega church, was the essential foundation for me to build on in order to advance in my journey. As a producer, it is essential to have artists that believe in you and your work. So the confidence placed in me was my inspiration at that time.

TRPM: Are there any Producers whose work really inspires you?

LINDEN: I actually don't know the names of the producers but I tend to listen to music from various genres to get inspiration. Although I do a lot of island beats, a lot of my inspiration comes from Techno, Dance, EDM, and Pop beats.

"How I see it is that I am merely a conduit for the Father to do his work on earth. All of my abilities come directly from Him."

TRPM: What is your own personal vision as a Producer?

LINDEN: As a producer, I just want to play my part in assisting artists to get their work out there. I especially like to assist those up and coming artists who just need someone to work with them production wise. I realize that there are some people who have talent but just lack opportunity and support. I have been blessed with a talent and I always strive to be the producer that aids rather than blocks the development of an artist.

TRPM: Name one thing you would like to see Artists stop doing in the Studio?

LINDEN: I would like to see artists embrace the craft, take it seriously, not take their producer for granted and to appreciate the hard work that goes into a successful production.

"I had very supportive siblings growing up as well. In terms of my music career, however, I have to give all earthly credit and acknowledgement to my brother Craig Spencer."

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“ When asked how they came up with the name “Sauti Sound”, they replied, “after many nights of brainstorming we decided that we would like to keep the African originality while still sending a message out loud and clear that this was a musicshow.”

MEET THE SAUTI SOUND DUO

SO ARISE TV'S NEWEST TRENDSETTER ON A NEW WAVE

The Duo will be bringing 30 minutes of freshness that features a range of short-form content including weekly Artist Spotlights, their weekly Top 5 Playlist Countdown, a music association game they call Icebreaker, music and lifestyle tips and wrap it up with a dance party Afro-Caribbean style! There may also be a surprise switch or two in the future.

One of the remarkable things about this show is that this duo planned, organised and executed it from two different countries. Distance will not be a barrier.





DJ Victor 256 and Presh will be co hosting So Arise Tv's latest Tv show called Sauti Sound, launching this April 2021.

DJ Victor 256 is a Ugandan, born Ulok-cwinywu Victor, a Christian Selecta, all around Multi-Award Winning Disc Jockey/ Artist and OAP (*On Air Personality*) with a passion for gospel music under Geek State Muzik.

He has always been in love with music and making crowds of people dance. Dj Victor is self taught and went on to further mastering his craft, and now skillfully executes his own hype.

Growing up in a predominantly Reggae and Dancehall environment he naturally embraced the culture, making them his favorite genres of music.





Precious Nkanor aka Presh on the other hand is a Nigerian Talent Manager, Music Business Consultant and a music enthusiasts who has dedicated 7 years of her life to creating platforms and helping young up-rising Artists on their journey to the spotlight in the music busi-

ness.

Some of the known names she' has worked with over the years include, Nigeria's Gospel Reggae icon Buchi, Nigeria's Gospel Dance-hall Queen Agent Snypa, Winnie Martins, Fortune Angelo and many more.

BUZZ NOTES

BN

“It takes a strong woman to make a change and to impact many.”



TIFFANY LEVY

TRPM: What is the vision that you have for your life and ministry?

TIFFANY: My vision is to bring a change to many lives while travelling to different countries....growing my ministry out of the borders of Jamaica.

TRPM: Tell us about two of your favourite places to just relax and clear your mind and why.

TIFFANY: There's a something about the sea, hearing the waves and smelling the air of the beach, It's a place where I feel free, a place where I feel inspired to write. The studio is another place where I'd look forward to go the most. It's a place that can mke me forget any negative vibe. it's exciting when you record a new song and meditate.

TRPM: Who are some of the persons that inspired you? What are some of the things that they taught you?

TIFFANY: Kevin Downswell has been an inspiration for years. He has taught me to remain consistent and to believe in my music. I never forget his story on how it took alot of effort to get where he is today and because of that =, it motivated me to continue my journey.

Bishop Courtney MacLean is one of the persons who made me into the woman I am today. Because of his inspiration I have a strong desire to grow in every aspect of my life. One of the things he said is that, "There's a you that is in you that you don't know yet."

TRPM: There have been many outstanding women throughout history and even at present who have and are impacting our world in a

significant way. How do you view the importance of the role of women today?

TIFFANY: To be honest, I believe women have it hard and because of that I really respect the women who have made their mark in history. It takes a strong woman to make a change and to impact many.

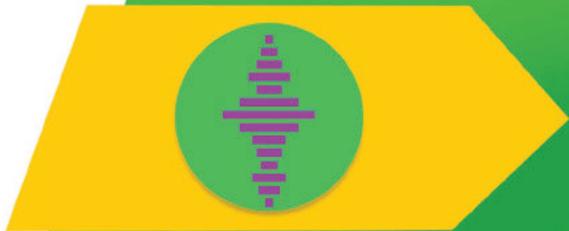
TRPM: What is the latest in regards to your Music Ministry?

TIFFANY: Currently I'm working on new music. Also because everything is more digital I am planning on being more creative with my music through social media.

TRPM: As a newly wed what have you learned thus far about what makes a marriage work?

TIFFANY: When you hear people say that after marriage would be the honeymoon stage, that's absolutely wrong. Myhusband and I had started to really know each other after living under one roof. We learned to adjust and compromise because of the clashing of our different cultures.

The main key to what has kept us going is good communication. It is not something you get, it is achieved by practising until you have mastered it. I strongly believe communication is very essential.



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BUZZ NOTES

BN

*“The journey
in life is
never easy,
it takes great
encouragement
through faith
and trusting in
Jesus Christ to
guide you along
the way.”*



NICHOLAS GONG



TRPM: Many have called for the Caribbean to unite in order to become a stronger force economically. Do you think this is achievable and how do you see that even impacting the music industry on a whole?

NICHOLAS: The Caribbean is already united and yes it's achievable. But the mindset of an individual has to change, we as a people have the tendency to feel threatened by others who are doing better than us or have something that's different. So instead of asking "how can you help me to be better?"And have the conversation...That doesn't happen.

If we understand as individuals that EACH one REACH one, then collaborative efforts will be easy in all areas, in Medicine, Education, Economics, Transportation, Development etc....

It will benefit all of us.

TRPM: How did you get your start in music?

NICHOLAS: I got my start in music because of a friend of mine by the name of Duane Besentia aka "CHOZENN". He and I met at a Singing competition in Jamaica called "Rising Stars" and the rest is history.

TRPM: There is an evident generational gap in reference to the passing on of skilled knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation, which leaves a lot of wealth untapped. How important is mentorship from your perspective?

NICHOLAS: Mentorship is very important, because anyone who's starting in music or any kind of field that they are venturing into need mentorship. But in this day and age nobody trust anyone to pass on anything to, because of TRUST & LOYALTY.

As mentors we can't keep what we have learnt to ourselves and not pass it on. The younger generation needs people to look up to and to inspire them. If we are not teaching them the right things, how will they be guided to the right path in life so they can also teach and guide others coming up?

TRPM: Who are some of the persons that have contributed to the man you are today?

NICHOLAS: The person's that have contributed to the man that I am are: JESUS CHRIST, my mom Roselda Barnaby-Henry, my wife Tracy GonG, my Kids Zachary & Zhayne GonG, Melique & Tori Edman, My mentors, Johnny Clark, CHOZENN and Yvette Ebanks.

TRPM: You sang "Hosanna" at the 6th Annual Antigua Barbuda Gospel Music & Media Awards in 2020, What is the inspiration behind that song?

NICHOLAS: The inspiration behind "HOSANNA" birth from when I was in a deep state of depression in my life and suicidal thoughts. But at 2am in the morning something came over me letting me know that the life that I have does not belong to me it belongs to the Lord. I broke down in tears asking God to take away whatever that was leading me in this state of mind and for him to purify me in order for him to use me.

TRPM: What's next for you?

NICHOLAS: What's next for Nicholas GonG is with help of my producers Justin Chiverton from St. Martin, Kevin Smith from G.I Production, and also True Reverence Production, we will be putting out purposeful, feel good, worship music which speaks to the heart and mind of the young and old.

My name is Nicholas Gong and this is my biography, I was born in the garrison of Denham Town in Kingston Jamaica, where it was just my mom and myself. I grew up around alot of violence but still kept under the protection and the watchful eyes of a praying woman of God, who always told me that I can become anything I wanna be once I put my mind into it and trust in God.

So I took up music, at the young age of 6 years old. I remember the first time my mom heard me singing she went to the stores downtown and bought a sound system for me to sing on and listen music and also so she could listen to me.

Although the garrison was surrounded by violence and full of influence that could cause you to stray, I never did. But life always has its twists and turns, bumps and curves, when you are call to do what God wants you to do, so it will never be easy.

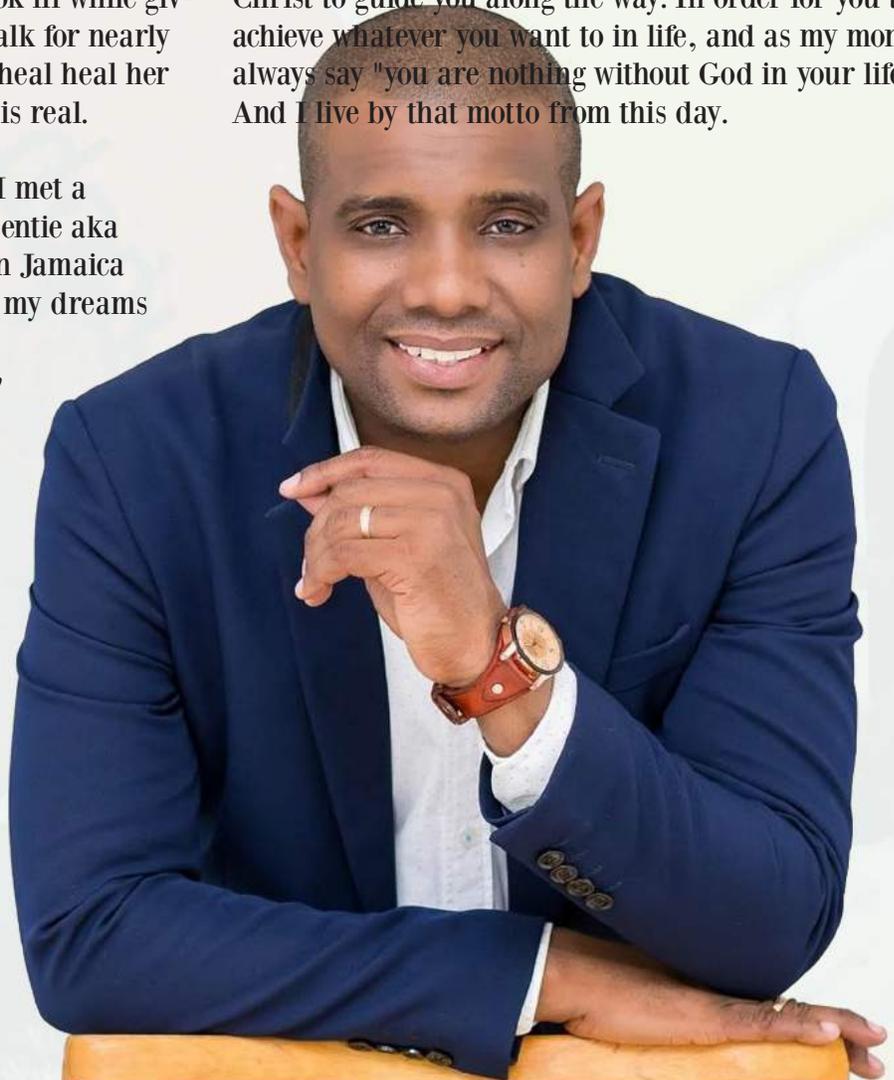
While going to high school my mom took ill while giving birth to my brother, she couldnt walk for nearly 2 years. It took a miracle from God to heal her and that open my eyes to see that God is real.

My journey started off in music when I met a good friend by the name of Duane Besentie aka CHOZENN, at a singing competition in Jamaica called Rising Stars. I never gave up on my dreams

back then even though I didnt make it in the competition. I went from studio to studios recording, stage shows to stage shows performing, with the aid of my friend. Nevertheless, deep down I knew that this (secular) music was something God never wanted me to pursue, so I stopped doing music for awhile.

On September 18, 2017, I gave my life to the Lord and funny enough my wife Tracy Gong followed me and also gave her life to God. I met up with my friend CHOZENN back again and the two of us did a collaboration together which was our first single off his UNASHAMED ALBUM entitled "ENCOUNTER" and then our second collaboration "WITHOUT YOU". Seeing what was done I was convinced now that this was it, the purpose that God had on my life to go out and spread his words through the gospel, and I never turned back.

The journey in life is never easy but it takes great encouragement through faith and trusting in Jesus Christ to guide you along the way. In order for you to achieve whatever you want to in life, and as my mom always say "you are nothing without God in your life". And I live by that motto from this day.



BIO-NICHOLAS GONG

"The younger generation needs people to look up to and to inspire them."

LIFE-CHANGING ESSENTIALS FOR LIVING LIFE
AND REALLY LOVING IT

-BY CLEPHANE W. "TERRIFIC" ROBERTS
INSPIRATIONAL FACILITATOR

FOUNDING DIRECTOR:
SUCCESS CONCEPTS INTERNATIONAL

A smiling woman with long braids, wearing a colorful striped shirt, is the central focus of the image. The background is a solid teal color. The text is overlaid on the image.

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

IN THE MIDST OF CHALLENGING
EXPERIENCES

Welcome to this quarter's Life-changing Essentials for living life and really loving it discourse. We shall examine some thoughts on maintaining a positive attitude in the midst of challenging experiences.

Life can be very unpredictable. We run into obstacles in life that make it difficult to stay afloat. Whether it is the loss of a loved one or financial problems, everyone has gone through hardships. It may be difficult to stay positive when in today's society, there is a never ending depressing news [negative worthless stimulation] cycle. In addition to that, the stress of daily tasks and work may make it challenging for one to stay hopeful.

In spite of all the unfavorable events that are going on around us, it is important to note the psychological, emotional and even physical benefits of being in a

consistent state of happiness.

Being happy is good for us and our brain. Happiness comes with many benefits that often go unrecognized. A few of the many benefits include better relationships with people, more focused and concentrated, more confidence, ability to combat stress more effectively, stronger immune system, overall healthier lifestyle, can help reduce pain, and increased longevity of life in general.

I must here mention that it is understood that being in a state of happiness is easier said than done. At times, we are expected to get so many things done at once; and remaining positive may be the least of our concerns. Even though this can be difficult, it doesn't make being positive any less important.

So, here are some suggestions on how to remain positive during trying times. I speak from experience here.

1. BECOME MORE SELF-AWARE

Having an understanding of our emotions and how we react to certain stressors is very important when trying to remain positive. The ability to predict when we are becoming overwhelmed or anxious is the first step. By being aware of our emotions- knowing ourselves, we will be better able to prevent certain negative emotions from heavily impacting our lives and essentially, remaining positive.

For example, we can incorporate coping mechanisms or self-care activities that specifically work for us. Listening to favorite, empowering and recreational music or going on a walk may help calm us down and help us think rationally and optimistically.

2. KEEP A STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE

“Let the weak say ‘I am strong,’ is the ancient wisdom for us. When we are feeling temporarily down, do we ever feel like nothing is going well in your lives? Being able to identify the strengths in our life is very important for our mental health and overall outlook

on life. No matter how big or small the strength is, it is important to acknowledge them when we are feeling down for a while. It makes so much of a positive difference.

For example, having a supportive family or healthy relationships is a strength. Other strengths can range from having good time management skills, the ability multitasking, choosing to be grateful in all situations, and so much more are all strengths we may tap into during down times; all of which which are advantageous for our general wellbeing.

3. GET ADEQUATE SLEEP

Getting enough sleep to increase positivity may seem too good or too simple to be true. The experts suggest that getting the right amount of sleep comes with many benefits. Sleep is a time to process emotions and recharge physically and mentally for the upcoming day. Without doing so, we may not have the emotional resilience to bounce back from the challenges we may have to encounter.

Sleep comes with many other benefits that can indirectly impact our happiness and positive states: these may include improvement in relationships, better work performance, increased ability to control pain, among others.

4. ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVES IN SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE.

The amount of positive energy we give out to people tends to be returned to us. It would do us well to remember the powerful and wise saying at this time: "Treat others how you want to be treated." Well, how we treat and think about others also can have a powerful influence on how we treat and think about ourselves.

For example, doing an act of kindness will not only make another person feel better, but will positively impact our psychological and emotional states as well. Some ways that we can help spread positivity include helping others in whatever way we can, genuinely listening to others while they are sharing, and speaking uplifting and encouraging words to those who may be experiencing feelings of fear and doubt .

5. TAKE SOME DEEP, SLOW BREATHS. MEDITATE. THEN CHALLENGE THE NEGATIVE STATE THAT IS SEEKING ATTENTION.

During difficult situations, it is sometimes difficult to remain calm. Giving ourselves a few minutes, ranging from five to twenty minutes to regroup and look at the bigger picture, whether our strategy is deep breathing or simply going on a walk, can be hugely beneficial. Once we are in a calm state, we may now ask ourselves: "What can I do to be more positive about this particular situation?" We may challenge ourselves to try and think of different options or optimistic outcomes, rather than only the negatives.

6. LEARN HOW TO TAKE CRITICISM IN A HEALTHY WAY.

Many people fear being criticized which can prevent them from living how they want to. Listening to someone critique you or speak negatively about you may hurt our feelings and be quite upsetting.

Interestingly, taking in criticism in a healthy way may reduce feelings of pessimism and negativity. When listening to criticism, we can assume that the person criticising has good intentions. We may try not to get defensive or make up excuses concerning what we might have done. It is important to consider criticism as a learning experience and to be open to change. Furthermore, it is important to remember never, ever to be too hard on ourselves, considering the fact that everyone demonstrates a degree of inaccuracies from time to time.

7. DETERMINE WHAT IS OUT OF YOUR CONTROL

Worrying about things that are out of our control can be very disastrous to our mental and emotional health. We may get overwhelmed or anxious in spending so much time on something that we cannot change.

It is important to come to terms with what we can and can not control; then stop putting so much effort into what is out of your control. This may only exhaust us and make us feel hopeless. Instead, we can try to make positive change on the aspects of our lives that are in our reach and go forward from there.

8. JOIN FORCES WITH OTHERS

When bad things happen, it is easy to become close-minded. But chances are, we are not alone during difficult times. There are likely to be many people who feel the same way as we do even though they may not voice out loud. For instance, if we are worried about job security, recruit the help of our superiors or upline by discussing the implications of the crisis on our service and what we can best do to keep it. Our boss may appreciate our proactive approach and may even be glad that there is someone who shares the same sentiment. If we are unemployed, besides making trips to recruitment and government agencies to cast our employment net, we can connect with others who are in the same boat as we are. We can take this lull period to expand our network. The many talented friends that we will make during hard times could become lifetime friendships, and even turn into unexpected help in the future. And if we are an employer, this is a great time to boost our business with skillful and experienced people to help us ride out the crisis storm waters.

9. QUIT BEING A VICTIM

It is easier to assume the role of a victim during tough times than taking responsibilities for ourselves. But doing so may only prolong our suffering and put off people who may be able to help us out. Letting go of the victim label also frees us from resentment and bitterness which may only block up the creative energies we need to get out of the mess. We may think and act like a victor or conqueror instead. The ball is in our court; let's play it well.

10. GIVE THANKS

Having considered and even listed the positives we can think of, it would do us very well to give thanks for the current situation as well as the things that we already have going well for us. For one, things could be a lot more worse! It won't be easy to be thankful in the face of harsh challenges, but focusing on what you do have, instead of what you have so-called lost, will actually put us in a better position to solve problems on hands than being in a self-pity and

sorrowful state. An attitude of gratitude always goes a long way.

In closing this discourse, let me leave us with the words of world-renowned psychiatrist, Victor Frankl, from his classic, 'Man's Search For Meaning.' And I quote: " "Man is not free from conditions. But he is free to take a stand in regard to them. The conditions do not completely condition him. Within limits it is up to him whether or not he succumbs and surrenders to the conditions. He may as well rise above them and by so doing open up and enter the human dimension... Ultimately, man is not subject to the conditions that confront him; rather, these conditions are subject to his decision. Wittingly or unwittingly, he decides whether he will face up or give in, whether or not he will let himself be determined by the conditions."

May we all grow stronger, and broader in our perspectives as we continue to navigate our way through the challenges we will inevitably encounter on our varied journeys.

High blood pressure to some has become a cliché while for others it is a growing norm a stigmatized to only older population. This idiopathic disease is known to have created turmoil among the rich, poor and predominately black communities. This writing seeks to high-

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a common condition in which the long-term force of the blood against your artery walls is high enough that it may eventually cause health problems, such as heart disease.

Blood pressure is determined both by the amount of blood your heart pumps and the amount of resistance to blood flow in your arteries. The more blood your heart pumps and the narrower your arteries, the higher your blood pressure. A blood pressure reading is given in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). It has two numbers.

- Top number (systolic pressure). The first, or upper, number measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats.
- Bottom number (diastolic pressure). The second, or lower, number measures the pressure in your arteries between beats.

Hypertension is slowly rising to the top as one of the primary causes of morbidity in the world. Here are the current statistics of the status of hypertension in some of the leading countries.

- In the total US population of persons with hypertension, 90% to 95% have primary hypertension or high blood pressure from an unidentified cause.
- An estimated 1.13 billion people worldwide have hypertension, most (two-thirds) living in low- and middle-income countries.
- African-Americans have the highest prevalence rate of 37%.
- Hypertension is also termed as the “silent killer” because 24% of people who had pressures exceeding 140/90 mmHg were unaware that their blood pressures were elevated.

There are two types of high blood pressure.

light main key points in promoting a good and healthy lifestyle and provide ways in lowering the risk of developing high blood pressure. Together we can keep our communities healthy! - *Julien Kentish BScN-Candidate UWI*

PRIMARY (ESSENTIAL) HYPERTENSION:

For most adults, there’s no identifiable cause of high blood pressure. This type of high blood pressure, called primary (essential) hypertension, tends to develop gradually over many years.

SECONDARY HYPERTENSION:

Some people have high blood pressure caused by an underlying condition. This type of high blood pressure, called secondary hypertension, tends to appear suddenly and cause higher blood pressure than does primary hypertension. Various conditions and medications can lead to secondary hypertension, including:

- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Kidney disease
- Adrenal gland tumors
- Thyroid problems
- Certain defects you’re born with (congenital) in blood vessels
- Certain medications, such as birth control pills, cold remedies, decongestants, over-the-counter pain relievers and some prescription drugs
- Illegal drugs, such as cocaine and amphetamines

Hypertension has four categories that have no compelling indications. These four categories rely on the blood pressure measurements of individuals so these must be taken accurately.

- Normal: The normal range for blood pressure is between, less than 120 mmHg and less than 80 mmHg.
- Elevated: Elevated stage starts from 120 mmHg to 129 mmHg for systolic blood pressure and less than 80 mmHg for diastolic pressure.
- Stage 1 hypertension. Stage 1 starts when the patient has a systolic pressure of 130 to 139 mmHg and a diastolic pressure of 80 to 89 mmHg.
- Stage 2 hypertension. Stage 2 starts when the systolic pressure is already more than or equal than 140 mmHg and the diastolic is more than or equal than 90 mmHg.

Most people with high blood pressure have no signs or symptoms, even if blood pressure readings reach dangerously high levels.

A few people with high blood pressure may have headaches, shortness of breath or nosebleeds, but these signs and symptoms aren't specific and usually don't occur until high blood pressure has reached a severe or life-threatening stage. The only way to detect hypertension is to have a health professional measure blood pressure.

Having blood pressure measured is quick and painless. Individuals can also measure their own blood pressure using automated devices, however, an evaluation by a health professional is important for assessment of risk and associated conditions.

CONTROL WHAT CAN BE SILENTLY LETHAL !

Prevention of hypertension mainly relies on a healthy lifestyle and self-discipline. Reducing hypertension prevents heart attack, stroke, and kidney damage, as well as other health problems. As the elders say, prevention is better than cure therefore people are advised to follow this guideline in order to minimize your risk of developing high blood pressure:-

- Reducing salt intake (to less than 5g daily)

- Eating more fruit and vegetables
- Being physically active on a regular basis
- Avoiding use of tobacco
- Reducing alcohol consumption
- Limiting the intake of foods high in saturated fats
- Eliminating/reducing trans fats in diet

What if you are living with this non communicable disease? All is not lost, follow these lifestyle changes and you are on the road to managing high blood pressure:-

- *Reducing and managing mental stress*
- *Regularly checking blood pressure*
- *Treating high blood pressure*
- *Managing other medical conditions*

Talk with your health care team right away if you think you have high blood pressure or if you've been told you have high blood pressure but do not have it under control.

By taking action to lower your blood pressure, you can help protect yourself against heart disease and stroke, also sometimes called cardiovascular disease (CVD).

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POE TRY



WHAT HAPPENED???

Gazing through the glass,
of humanities agony;
How long will we look on,
before we liberate the en-
slaved,
subjugated by the anguish,
triggered by the apparatus!?

We all know the English
proverb,
Children should be seen and
not heard.

But, what I've seen in the
Word,
contradicts what we've
learned.

David wrote in Psalm 8 and 2,
"You have taught children
and infants,
to tell of Your strength,
silencing Your enemies
and all who oppose You."

How many times,
have we silenced our allies?
How many times,
have we oppressed our own
happiness?

Why do we believe,
we can not receive truth from
the youth?
Well, take a good look around
you!

Why are we disenfranchised,
marginalized, ostracised,
criticized and deprived?
Was it the children that
caused the monstrosity of
atrocities?
Didn't we as children,
learn to memorize the lies?
Now our children have to
assimilate
the rubbish we know, still
don't integrate.

Doctrines, ideologies,
philosophies and notions.
We're being spun in a twister,
taking us futher away from
conviction.

That's the irony of the para-
dox,
We're being ushered by con-
victions,
Subservients,
of iron boxes and encroach-

ments.

Why do they fear our youths,
caging them like animals,
or shooting the innocent like
brutes?

We have so many conun-
drums,
Yet, very little correspon-
dence.

Listen to the juveniles,
Master their innocence.
They aren't wax statues,
They ain't plastic manne-
quins.
Remember those times,
you wanted to be heard and
not just seen.

Maybe they can change the
world,
We've done a good job at
killing the dream.
What happened???

I thought we all wanted to be
free!?

© Melisa Mel Melody Dyce

DISH IT! OUT!

PASTOR RICKY PAYNE



TRPM: What was one of your favorite dishes growing up?

RICKY: One of my favorite dishes growing up was Stew peas with salted beef and Oxtail over white rice.

TRPM: Who taught you how to cook and do you think more men should learn their way around the kitchen?

RICKY: I learned how to cook by watching my Grandmother in the kitchen. Granny didn't mind us in the kitchen. She rather us being in the house than playing in the streets with our neighborhood friends. Absolutely, I am a firm believer that it is important that more parents teaches their sons from an early age on how to maneuver around the kitchen, and learn how to cook different dishes because this will allow them to assist their wives after a long day at work. Furthermore, in the event that they are single this would help them to save more of their take home pay by cooking a hot meal rather than eating out.

TRPM: Which seasoning is a must add for you in most of meals?

RICKY: All purpose seasoning is imperative in cooking because it contains a touch of different spices, and adds more flavors to the dish being prepared.

TRPM: Tell us one item on the menu at one of your favorite restaurants that you always order.

RICKY: One of my favorite item on the menu whenever I dine out at one of my favorite Caribbean restaurant is brown stew Red Snapper fish with hot peppers served with rice and peas.

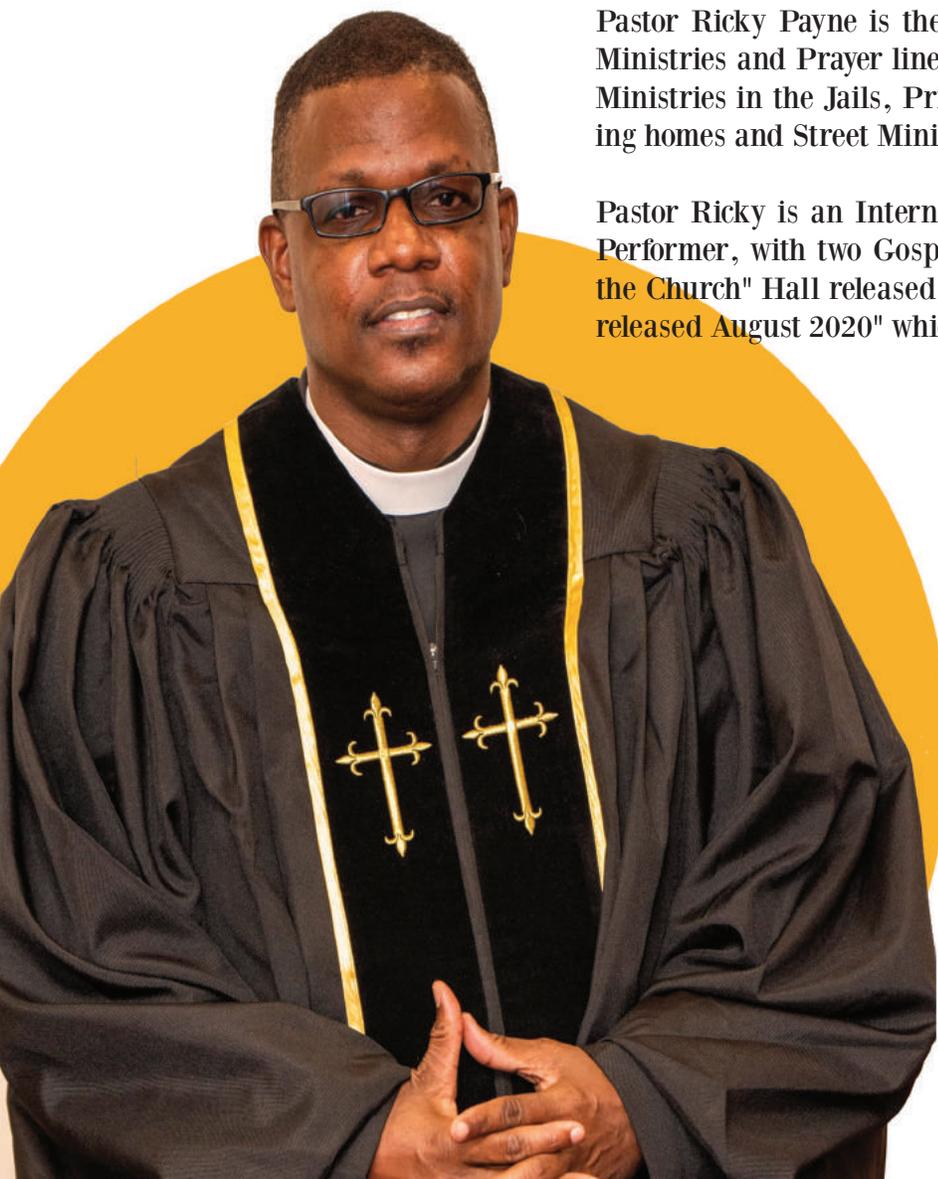


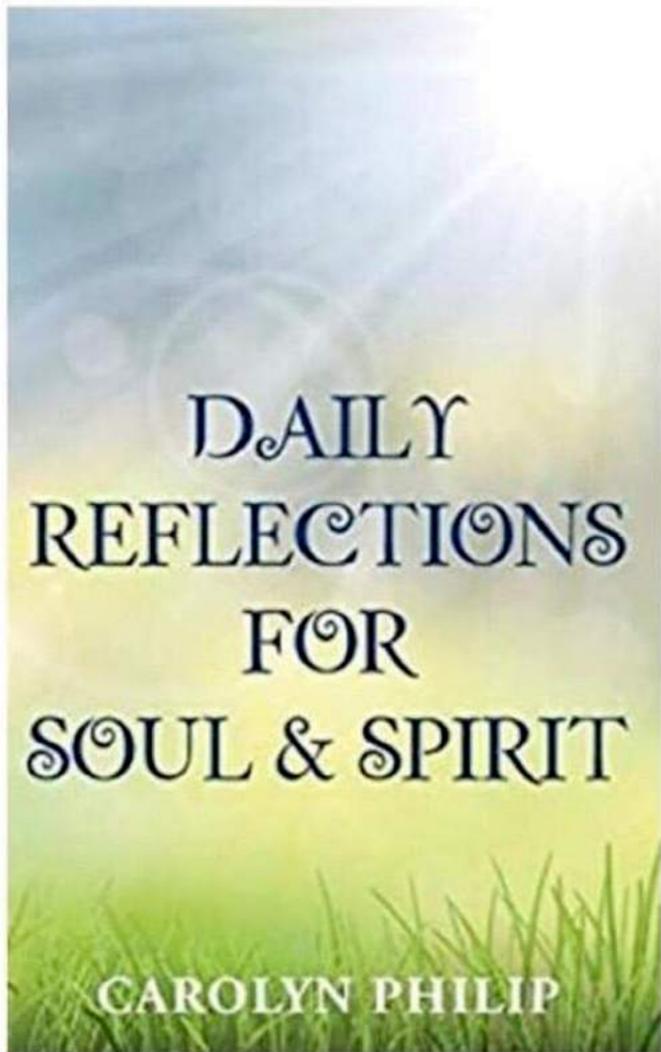
Pastor Ricky Payne was born in Kingston Jamaica. He migrated to the United States in 1982.

He graduated from Northwestern High school located in Adelphi, Maryland. Through God's Grace, Pastor Ricky graduated from Jericho Christian Training Bible College in June 1998. He earned a BS in Management from the University of Potomac in June 2006 and an MBA from Columbia Union College in June 2008. He attended Washington Capitol Bible Seminary from September 2008 through June 2011 where he pursued an MDIV in Ministry with a concentration in Pastoral counseling.

Pastor Ricky Payne is the Pastor of Kingdom Connection Outreach Ministries and Prayer line. His ministry is geared towards Outreach Ministries in the Jails, Prisons, Homeless Shelters, Hospitals, Nursing homes and Street Ministries.

Pastor Ricky is an International, Nominating awards, Song writer, Performer, with two Gospel Albums titled "From the Dance Hall to the Church" Hall released June 2019, and "Blessed to be a Blessing" released August 2020" which consists of 19 songs along with 6 singles.





ION-SPIRITUALITY

This book was conceptualized from feedback received from readers of my Facebook page, *Daily Food for Soul and Spirit* which started in 2016, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It provides inspiration to those who are hurting, confused, or weary of life's troubles, pointing them to Jesus – the author and Finisher of our faith. It is hoped that through these devotions, souls will be saved, hearts will experience revival and hope renewed.



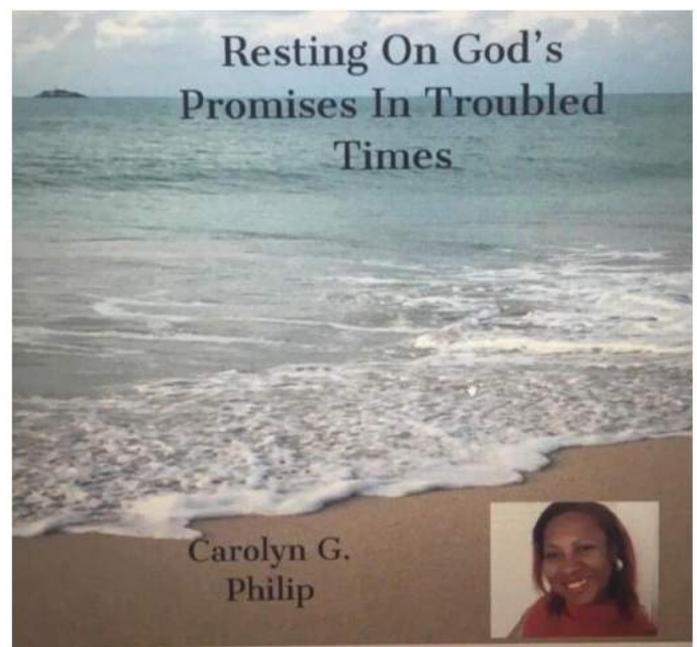
CAROLYN PHILIP is the author of the daily devotions for the Facebook page, *Daily Food for Soul and Spirit*. She has an intense desire to see Christians grow in the knowledge of God's Word and in their relationship with Jesus. This book is a compilation of some of her Facebook devotions and is being published to encourage believers along their Christian

walk. Carolyn gave her heart to the Lord at age 16 and has been actively serving in the Kingdom of God having served as, Youth Sunday School Teacher for several years. She has also served as Sunday School, Planning, and Prayer Warrior Director.

Carolyn is married with three grown children.

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help but
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him”

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