

VOICES OF HOPE



DR. LASHARND A BECKWITH

MISSION

Ignited by faith, we live out God's love by embracing, equipping and empowering vulnerable people in Southern California

VISION

Sharing the love of Christ, we are a community to care and be cared for...

Where the vulnerable are safer and stronger

Where the dependent are self-sustaining

Where the isolated dwell in community

Where the weary will be given hope

VALUES

*Compassion / Advocacy
Collaboration / Respect
Innovation / Stewardship*

Happy Friday!

As many of you know, the wildfires have put so many people in harm's way. Two firefighters here in Orange County were hurt, with 50% of their bodies burned due to the fires. Others are working hard to fight the fires and are exhausted but continue to push ahead anyway. Yet, others are displaced due to the fires burning so close to their homes.

Before moving to California, we would see the fires on the news, say prayers for those fighting the fires, and for those who faced losing everything due to the fires. We would see people who evacuated but had to sleep in cars, gyms, church houses, or even parking lots. We always saw it but never experienced it until this past week. For three nights this week, I had to sleep somewhere other than my home.

Each night of this past week, I was able to go to a hotel, and lay my head on a clean pillow, get a shower, brush my teeth, comb my hair, and eat a meal. I was able to go to a store and buy clothes to wear, and I was blessed to return home yesterday with no damage to the house. Unfortunately, that's not the case for many. After sitting down with teacups in our hands last night, my husband and I thanked God for His hand of protection. We also thought of people in other areas of California, where 3.7 million acres have burned, and people were affected. We also thought of others in places like New Orleans or Puerto Rico. Many of you know that these places continue to be hampered by hurricanes. New Orleans is currently dealing with Hurricane Zeta, where widespread damage has occurred, and more than 2 million people are without power. Only 3 or 4 weeks ago, New Orleans was hit by Hurricane Delta, and before Delta, Hurricane Laura back in August.

These kinds of reports bring a lot of sad information to consume. Not only is it a lot and painful, but it is information that causes fear and anxiety! That's why we sometimes face "stuff" that can overwhelm us; we need to have God's Word close so that we do not lose hope. First, I am grateful for my grandmother, who always taught me to read my Bible and pray. I grew up seeing her do it, and I developed those same disciplines. Second, I am grateful for the scripture that says, *"Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin again thee."* I think of this scripture as saying let God's word be carved in my heart so that I can resist any assaults that come my way. Third, what I allow into my thoughts will come out in words or actions; therefore, I need to think good thoughts, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. Why? So that I don't become pessimistic about the adversity.

I want to encourage you to do the same. Whatever you face today, tomorrow, or next week, GOD IS FOR YOU. I don't care what disasters you face; GOD IS FOR YOU. I don't care who is against you; GOD IS FOR YOU! If He is for you, who can be against you?

Blessings sent your way this Friday!

Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith
President & Chief Executive Officer