

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Volume 2 Issue 21

November 21, 2021

Urgency (Such a time as this¹)



I have a round wooden token on my desk that I received while attending a seminar. It was at least 20 years ago, and I've long forgotten the subject matter. The token has the words printed on one

side: "Round Tuit."

Reasonable guesses as to the theme of the seminar would center around urgency. That is, moving from an attitude of "When I get around to

it" towards a greater sense of urgency. Here again, the play on words is powerful. Now that I have the "round tuit" I was waiting for — the time to move forward is now.

I remember an interview with Dr. Brené Brown where she described the culture of her family environment as a "lock and load" mentality.

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Please continue to wear your masks when in the building. If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you.

DONATE

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Purpose (Next Steps¹)



Meryl Feinstein grew up surrounded by expectations reinforced by her parents, her school, and others. The expectations were straightforward. Meryl was expected to go

to college and get a job. So explaining to a Washington Post journalist how she managed to start her own business she called the Pasta Social Club was difficult.²

Her decision was a total surprise to everyone, including herself. After all, she had a steady job that took care of her needs, plenty of support from friends and family, and had the respect of her colleagues. So why throw everything away and start over as a culinary entrepreneur. And whoever heard of an online, hybrid supper club and pasta-making school?

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Purpose (Next Steps¹)cont from page 1

At least in part, the answer may lie in a theory proposed by a psychologist during the early years of World War II. Meryl's story is more familiar than we might realize. With her basic needs taken care of along with security, friends, and self-esteem, coming to know more about herself took center stage. And she just had to figure it out.

Where is your attention focused most of the day? Do you spend a lot of your time figuring out where and how you'll have dinner? Are you spending a lot of your day focused on whether your home or apartment is safe? Do you worry a lot about your relationship with the people around you? Do you worry about what people are saying about you behind your back?

These are all essential subjects. And if you answered yes to one or more of these questions, I'm impressed that you're taking the time to read this article. At least, according to research by psychologists studying human behavior.

Abraham Maslow first proposed his ideas about what makes us tick in a paper titled "A Theory of Human Motivation." In his thesis, Dr. Maslow described human motivation utilizing a five-tier model of human needs that catches our attention and drives our focus.³

Dr. Saul Mcleod, in an article published on the website Simply Psychology, offers a layperson's view of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.⁴

Maslow's assertions are represented as a pyramid with our physiological needs for food and clothing shown at the base. The idea is that our needs lower in the hierarchy must be satisfied before our focus turns to needs higher up.

For example, our need for safety comes into focus once we've had dinner after leaving our favorite clothing store with the latest fashion. This is when we pay closer attention to the poorly lighted parking lot where we left our ride.

Our physical hunger satisfied, sporting our new outfit, and feeling safe, most of us will think about visiting a friend or even going to church. And feeling loved after worship, we may check out how we look in the mirror. We want to know, "Which version of me are others seeing?"

Eventually, according to Maslow, a tiny percent of us can pursue a state that is labeled "self-actualization."

Self-actualization is about reaching our full potential. Finally, we've reached a point where we feel satisfied with life and our role in it. Unfortunately, Dr. Maslow estimated that a mere two percent of us actually ever reach this point. While his research is arguably inconclusive, in terms of the scientific method and highly biased towards people like himself, psychologists, life coaches, consultants, and therapists continue to include Maslow's hierarchy of needs in their dialogue.

So what does this have to do with scripture? The answer is everything. An important theme woven throughout scripture is that God does things on purpose. And this includes creating you and me. Each of us was made on purpose and has a role that God has in mind for us.

So why doesn't God just tell me what to do instead of beating around the bush? I'm glad you asked. The short answer is "free will" means that we're given a choice, but this doesn't mean that God is silent and uninvolved. And scripture is full of stories about God's interventions.

Ruth is a relatively short book found in the Bible named after one of the main characters. Much of our interest as Christians in these ancient stories is that we learn about the human ancestry of Jesus Christ. Likewise, people of the Jewish faith know of Ruth as an ancestor of King David. Both connections are essential for our own self-actualization.

The book begins by explaining that Naomi, her husband, and two sons immigrated to the Kingdom of Moab from their home in the village of Bethlehem because there wasn't enough food available. The storyline moves quickly at this point. Both sons marry Moabite women, Naomi loses her husband, and both sons die.

**Wherever you go, I will go;
wherever you live, I will live.
Your people, and your God
will be my God.**

Ruth 1:16

Within the first couple of paragraphs, we learn that Naomi packs a U-Haul and moves back to Judah, where she has relatives.

In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom
 Sylvia Pittman
 Shirley Craig
 Richard Oram



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston Elaine Lamoreaux
 Norma Buzzard Mary Nations

Coming up this week

*** PASTOR BOOK CLUB NEWS:**

Pastor Book Club is still meeting via Zoom. Please call the Church Office for more info 810-235-0016 as it changes.

Meanwhile, as a lot of you are already aware, sharp increases in new infections of COVID are pushing us back into isolation. While our regular attenders are vaccinated, we realize that a large number of persons are not vaccinated.

Therefore, we reinstated our policy to require masks in our building for all persons when not eating or drinking. If you don't have a mask, we can provide one for you, just ask the office.

Thank you and everyone stay safe!

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL!!

- Nov 22 Mon
- Nov 23 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
 Food/Water Distribution
- Nov 24 Wed No Book Club Due to Holiday
 11:00am-12N Food Giveaway at
 South Flint Soup Kitchen
- Nov 25 Thu
- Nov 26 Fri
- Nov 27 Sat 12Noon Food Not Bombs
- Nov 28 Sun 10:30am
 New Beginnings
 Contemporary Worship



(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).)

Asbury Worship Series
Time to go home
(A search for normal)



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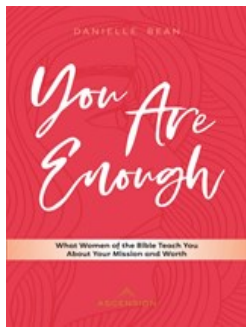
The pandemic has proven pervasive and invasive. Michigan is again at or near the top of new COVID cases. A lack of co-operation, absurd conspiracy theories and outright lies conspire to thwart the efforts of our health professionals to protect us. And we're faced with the potential for another dangerous Christmas season. It's frustrating and downright depressing to think about it.

Our new series, *Time to go home*, is in some ways a search for "normal" or at least a search for the intersection between tradition and our current reality. The idea of going home for the holidays is a favorite Hallmark movie theme. There is something about familiarity that comforts us. ¹

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Book Club News

We're concluding our discussions of Barbara Brown Taylor's book, *Holy Envy*, so we're ready to jump into our next topic. Barbara is clearly a stand-out among women of her generation. A priest, professor, and frequent speaker, her words and stories continue to inspire us.



Over the past year, we've experienced

the election of our first woman Vice President. The election of Kamala Harris places her both in the history books and in the spotlight. Kamala was one of six women who sought nomination as President. A 2019 survey conducted by LeanIn.org found that 53% of registered voters were either "very ready" or "extremely ready" for a woman president.

For our new series, *Better together*, our life group chose a book by a lesser-known yet influential female writer named Danielle Bean.¹ She is the brand manager for CatholicMom.com and former publisher and editor-in-chief of Catholic Digest. Danielle is also the creator and host of a weekly Catholic women's television talk show called *The Gist*. In addition, she has published several books, is a popular public speaker, and hosts her own podcast.

From the back cover of *You are Enough*, we read that Danielle Bean's book is an "invitation from God for belonging and love." Each of us is unique, worthy of love, and called to greatness. But in a divisive world, we get distracted from that truth and begin to doubt God's love is real.

Sadly, too many of us, particularly women, are told that we are not smart enough, pretty enough, sexy enough, or thin enough. So it is no wonder that so many forget that we are already made perfect. We are already enough. And God has made each of us for a unique purpose.

In her book, Danielle Bean introduces us to several women found in the Old Testament. She invites us to see how God's love for each of us shines forth through their stories. She invites us to connect with these remarkable women's hopes, dreams, struggles, and experiences. And to learn how their lives offer valuable lessons for our lives today.

Recent increases in new infections of COVID among the unvaccinated are pushing us back into isolation. While our regular attenders are vaccinated, we realize that a large number of persons are not vaccinated. Therefore, we reinstated our policy to require masks in our building for all persons when not eating or drinking.

We strongly urge all persons to get vaccinated as soon as practical unless advised by your doctor. Avoid news sources that promote baseless claims and pay closer attention to the experts we depend on to keep us safe.

We each make our own arrangements for lunch at this point. However, we look forward to returning to pot-luck lunches when infection rates fall. We anticipate this happening as the number of vaccinations reaches herd immunity levels, and the CDC relaxes precautionary measures.

If you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away I encourage you to [join us online](#) for our Wednesday gatherings. Alternatively, you can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others say by calling (929) 436-2866 -- enter the meeting ID, 282 039 5568#.

We are a diverse group, and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — [FlintAsbury.org](#).

Pastor Tommy

¹ [Danielle Bean](#). *You are Enough: What Women of the Bible Teach You about Your Mission and*

Leadership in Worship & Service

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Tony, Mirium | Welcome Team |
| Anthony, Jim | Ushers |
| Jonathon, Terrance | Production Team |
| Miriam | Children |
| Cyndi | Worship Leader |
| Christine & Norma | Cafe |

Asbury Staff

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel | Pastor & Exec Dir |
| Connie Portillo | Office Manager |
| Sylvia Pittman | Empowerment Arts |
| Jim Craig | Board & Leadership Chair |
| Kevin Croom | Exec Chef & Dir Opers |

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Matt DePalma | Farms Manager |
| Chris Freeman | South Campus Bldg Mgr |
| Israel Unger | Finance Director |
| Kim Sims | Connections Suprv |
| Terrance Williams | Arts Center Mgr |
| Katelin Maylum | Sr Mgr Local Food |



Time to go home (A search for normal) ... Asbury Worship Series

If our memories of home are tainted with trauma, our search looks elsewhere when we feel as though our joy is under siege.

Families, communities, cities, and religious groups have varying ideas for rituals of celebration. And our calendars routinely overlap. Since Asbury Church comes out of Christian orientation, our calendar calls for a time of reflection, celebration, and communal rituals beginning on the last Sunday of November. The insider term is "Advent," but we're okay with simply calling this time the holiday season.

Advent captures a sense of anticipation about the future. Traditionally, we choose a theme each week that illuminates that which we're anticipating. Words like hope, peace, joy, and love show up on banners and posters to remind us of what we're expecting to find as we celebrate Christmas and beyond.

This year, our plan is to capture the spirit of this particular Christmas in a dramatic role-play that combines our present-day reality with the wonderment of anticipation. Even though the birth of Christ took place over two thousand years ago, we want to share the emotion felt by first-hand witnesses. But we weren't there, and any attempt we make looking backward is only partial.

We believe that the birth of the Christ child was anticipated for generations and interpret ancient prophecies as predictions of His arrival. Therefore, Advent is also about the promises He made and our anticipation of their fulfillment.

The main character in our role-playing is Mary, and the connection with the biblical character is intentional. Christmas is a big deal for Mary. And each year, she looks forward to time off from work, getting together with family, exchanging gifts, and lots of Christmas gatherings. Last year was a massive disappointment for Mary. This Christmas was supposed to be different.

Mary's Christmas journey isn't her's alone. Along the way, she meets others who, like her, struggle with our present circumstances. Mary also meets a few fascinating characters who try to help her see the joy in every Christmas.

Home is whatever place you feel hope, peace, joy, and love. It is a place where hope never fades entirely out. Home is space, feelings, longing, desires, and wholeness. And so, going home is a journey worth making.

The latest colder weather is bringing more people together indoors. Closer contact with each other, supercharged by new variants of COVID, is driving a resurgence of new infections among the unvaccinated. It's time to come out of whatever fears or biases keep you from being a part of the solution. Get vaccinated! If you've already done your part, thank you, but don't forget to get your booster.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We share our weekly episodes live on our ***YouTube channel***. We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our ***website*** at ***FlintAsbury.org***.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Katelin Maylum, Tommy McDoniel, and Terrance Williams. "Home for Christmas. Flint, Michigan. © Asbury Church, 2021.

Urgency (Such a time as this¹).. *cont. from pg 1*

The inclination seems to suggest that her family was action-oriented with little or no planning ahead of time.

Another phrase that illustrates this tendency to respond without first looking at consequences is "ready-fire-aim." Consultants seem to never run out of slogans that remind us of essential points.

Admittedly, I've collected numerous slogans over the years, trying most of them on for size and either adopting or discarding them along the way. I've also left for trips without so much as a map or a plan. And I've missed opportunities waiting for the right time. It's hard to get the timing just right.

This reminds me of another favorite — a good plan well executed is better than a great plan waiting to get started. The goal is to find a balance between fact gathering, planning, and moving ahead.

If only it was so easy.

Who else has discovered very rational reasons for hesitation when it comes to risk? Behavior psychologists, fascinated with researching why some of us are risk-takers while others are risk-averse, have written volumes on determining where we fit.

One of my favorites is a mother-daughter duo, Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers. While their contemporaries criticize their lack of scientific rigidity in their research, their observations opened up a century of debate on the subject. Are we born as either risk-takers or risk-avoiders?

The Book of Esther is a fascinating story about risk-taking and timing and was written sometime after the fall of Jerusalem when Jews were scattered.

Sidnie Crawford, in her commentary, describes Esther's story as "an exciting, fast-paced story... with all the elements of a popular romance novel." The writers leave God's role in this story to the imaginations and faith of the reader. But the storyteller's ability to use drama and humor to expose themes of racial hatred, pride, vanity, and the threat of genocide makes this novelette a must-read. It seems fitting that Sidnie would dedicate her interpretation of Esther to her mother, who she declares is likewise a heroine.²

The story's setting is ancient Persia during a time when King Xerxes ruled over 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. The king loved to show off his wealth and was generous with his guests, which sometimes included all of his subjects, whether rich or poor. His parties featured an open bar with no limits.

One day the king sent for Queen Vashti to show her off to his guests, but the Queen refused to come. The king was furious at the Queen's rejection. So he issued a mandate naming men the head of their households with total authority over everyone in their homes. And with the urging of his advisors, Xerxes authorized a search for a new queen.

Esther was a young woman at the time and became one of the chosen candidates. She attended charm and beauty schools, along with the other candidates, but stood out among all of the others. Esther kept her heritage a secret at the advice of her older cousin, Mordecai, who adopted her as his daughter. Esther's relatives were among the thousands of Jews living throughout Persia.

Esther becomes Queen, and Mordecai is given an administrative position in the palace with access to the king's top advisors. Hearing two officials plotting against the king, Mordecai tells Esther, who exposes their plans to the king, who launches an investigation that validates the plot.

A catastrophe of pandemic proportions overwhelmed Naomi's family, and the telling of her story glosses over the emotional devastation that was undoubtedly present.

But after living in Moab long enough for her sons to marry and leave widows behind, Naomi wasn't alone in her grief. So as Naomi says her goodbyes to her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, both women offer to go with her to Judah.

Naomi doesn't see the point in either of them tagging along since Moab is their home. They have relatives they can count on for help and possibly remarry and begin a new family. Naomi is too old to remarry, she argues, and it's best if they go their separate ways. Anyway, Naomi adds, it's clear that God turned against her, so it's best not to be associated with someone like her.

Reviewing the women's situation using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they're clearly at the bottom levels of the pyramid. They're worried about food, clothing, security, belonging, and self-esteem. Any ideas about God's purpose, starting a new business, or celebrating accomplishments must wait.

Jesus said that if you focus your attention on food, clothing, and safety, then your focus is taken away from what really matters, which is not about you per se. What really matters is your relationship with God which brings us right to the top of the pyramid of needs.

In Matthew, Jesus says, "This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need to stay alive, or about clothes for your body" (Matthew 6:25).

Can you imagine yourself letting go of any worries that you have about lunch or dinner? This may be hard if you depend on the Eastside Mission or the South Flint Soup Kitchen for your meal. What if something happens and they aren't open the day that you need food?

The point isn't that God doesn't expect you to get involved in making sure that you have food on the table. Go read the story, and you'll learn that Ruth went to the fields herself and gathered the grain after the harvesters finished. She and Naomi likely baked bread even when their feet and back hurt from a hard day's work.

Jesus reminds us in Luke that "Five sparrows are sold for two pennies, yet not one sparrow is forgotten by God. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows!" (Luke 12:6-7).

Jesus tells us that instead of focusing on those things at the bottom of the pyramid, we need to "Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what God requires of you (Matthew 6:33).

What is your next step? Last Sunday, we welcomed Lisa and John as new members of Asbury Church. They both saw their next step as getting directly involved in the leadership of our church. Discovering and realizing our purpose is seldom a one-time epiphany but more of a journey of next steps.

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Pastor Tommy

¹ Much of the content of this series is based on the book: Danielle Bean. *You are Enough: What Women of the Bible Teach You about Your Mission and Worth*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Publishing, 2018.

² "Finding her purpose through pasta," © *Washington Post*, July, 2021.

³ Abraham H. Maslow. *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2013. Originally published in the *Psychological Review*, 1943.

⁴ McLeod, S. A. (2020, March 20). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. © *Simply Psychology*, March 20, 2020.

Life groups questions & notes:

Yet who knows—maybe it was for a time like this that you were made queen!

Esther 4:14 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read the book of Esther. This book can be described as a novelette with the intrigue, humor, drama, and spiciness of a modern mystery story. Do you agree? Which characters do you most connect with? Which characters do you admire? Which ones do you despise? Where did you find yourself in the story?
2. Read the article in this week’s Circuit Rider, *Urgency*. How do you go about making important decisions? Do you consider yourself a risk taker? Why or why not? How often do you use the expression “When I get around to it? Do you need a “round tuit?” Are there any decisions that you are facing that you are putting off? If so, what is keeping you from going forward?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you to be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God? Pray for each other to have the Holy Spirit bless you with more courage.

“Feed Flint”



“Feed Flint”



A meal goes a long way for a senior living alone, a family struggling to make ends meet, or a child fearful of empty shelves at home. But for the residents of Flint who carry the effects of lead-tainted water, nutrition is critical. Feed Flint provides locally grown, chemical-free, fresh produce to residents living in and around Flint. And we're hoping that you can help us provide 10,000 meals this summer.

Feed Flint includes takeout meals, produce boxes with recipes, and home deliveries as part of our work to guide and support families in moving to sustainable abundance. The reality is that Michigan's food insecurity levels got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this summer's recovery is leaving behind those at the most risk of having to miss meals.

Flint families continue to struggle with the ongoing effects of the water crisis.

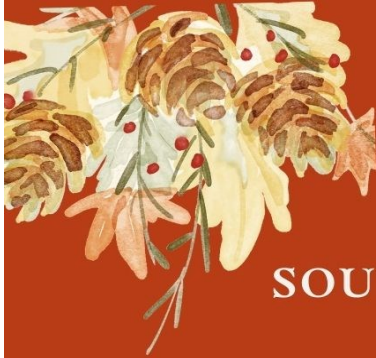
We're bringing together the resources of the Asbury Community Development Corporation. This includes Asbury Farms, the South Flint Soup Kitchen, the Asbury Community Help Center, multiple food pantries, and our Sizzling Culture Mobile Food Trailer. Our plan is to care for our neighbors when they need it most. We accept all people as they are, and our doors are always open to anyone.

Asbury Farms provides locally grown produce used to create fabulous and nutritious meals. Our seed-to-table approach is community-based. This not only helps families make it through emergencies and crises. We help move families towards sustainable abundance.

Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated abundance.

Our work is also about food and justice. Our vision is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into active citizens. And all residents can enjoy safety, good health, and a culture that fosters life-long learning and satisfying lives. This summer, help us address food insecurity and strengthen Flint's budding local food system by supporting the Feed Flint campaign. Thank you for taking the time to see what we're doing and considering how you can help.

**Donate to our Feed Flint Campaign by visiting:
flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate**



SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN
PRESENTS....

*November Angel
Closet & Food
Giveaway Dates*

Food Giveaways - 11/3/21 & 11/24/21
11am-noon

Angel Closet - 11/10/21 & 11/17/21
APPOINTMENT ONLY, email or call
to book an appointment.

Questions??? Call 810-239-3427 or
email southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com



South Flint Soup Kitchen
3410 Fenton Road
3 blocks north of Atherton
Flint, MI 48507





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- TRY OUR WEEKLY VEGGIE BOX FOR \$10.00 -

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Select what goes in your box from each week's harvest. Get \$5 off your next order when you fill your box with \$15 of produce.

WANT US TO DECIDE FOR YOU?

Choose Veggie Box Subscription and we will fill your order with a variety of each week's harvest. Pay when you pick up your box. **A \$15 VALUE FOR \$10.**

*** CONVENIENT PICKUP AT ASBURY OR AT THE SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN ***

Meanwhile, the king appoints a new Prime Minister by the name of Haman and orders all subjects to bow to him. But Mordecai refuses to bow. When Haman demands an explanation, Mordecai explains that he is Jewish and their customs prevent showing such allegiance.

Haman is furious and goes to the king with a plan to justify arresting and executing anyone of Jewish descent. His approach is straightforward and gets repeated by candidates and politicians throughout history. These people are not like us and pose a threat so let's rob and eliminate them for our own protection and peace of mind.

When Esther learns that Mordecai is protesting, she sends messengers to try and convince him to stop, but he refuses. Instead, Mordecai sends back a message often repeated by persons knowledgeable of this story and facing a difficult decision.

Yet who knows—maybe it was for a time like this that you were made queen!

Esther 4:14

Mordecai acknowledges the great risk that Esther is facing if she chooses to confront the King about his decision. And then, as

though it was simply an afterthought, Mordecai adds, "Yet who knows—maybe it was for a time like this that you were made queen!"

Hundreds of years later people of Jewish faith celebrate the Festival of Purim. This celebration remembers the heroic acts of Esther who saved her people through her willingness to take action with urgency, despite the risk. And her story is retold year after year as part of her people's celebrations.

Perhaps you are not faced with an act of heroism or even a decision that comes with great risk. On the other hand, life often presents forks in the roads we travel. Our choices may be between multiple options or not. But no choice is still a choice.

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Pastor Tommy

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² Sidnie White Crawford. "The Book of Esther," *The New Interpreters Bible*, Vol III. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.