

# GPGGT™

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CHRISTMAS 2016

CHRISTMAS  
MIRACLE  
*BELIEVE AGAIN!*

**NARROWING  
THE GAP:**  
BRINGING & KEEPING WEALTH  
IN OUR COMMUNITIES

**MEDICINE WOMAN:  
DR. EBONY JADE**

**HILTON-BUCHHOLZ**



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Summer 2016

ISSUE



MAGAZINE

[goodpeoplegreatthings.co](http://goodpeoplegreatthings.co)

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Letter from

# editor



**C**hristmas Miracle! How appropriate is the title of this issue? In fact, it is a miracle that it was even published. Glory to God! Our faithful readers may recall that I went in to deliver my second miracle child the day that our previous Summer 2016 issue was released and that was a miracle in and of its self. As we journey through this holiday season and the remainder of 2016, I want to encourage each of you to press forward and hang on with all that you've got. Continue to fill yourself with positivity everyday with God being your primary source. Never lose hope and remember to always keep the faith! Remember your ending doesn't necessarily determine your next beginning because God is always doing something **NEW!** Allow God to begin with you today.

Many Blessings for a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to You and your family! As always we thank you for your support you give us with your readership and through the purchasing of advertisements.

**GPGT's** core belief is that, "God uses good (regular, ordinary) people to do great things" and it is our goal to feature them in this publication. Please send your letters to the editor at [info@valencyathompson.com](mailto:info@valencyathompson.com) with GPGT in the subject line and your feedback or inquiries to [info@goodpeoplegreatthings.co](mailto:info@goodpeoplegreatthings.co).

Would you like to view our media kit or recommend a feature? Please visit [goodpeoplegreatthings.co](http://goodpeoplegreatthings.co)!

God's Blessings to You! May You Be on **Path** to **Purpose!**

~Valencya Thompson



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**Purpose  
Pusher!**

*Christmas*



*Miracle\**

**Faith:**

Yes, God still performs miracles.

**Work:**

Yes, there is still work for you to do.

***It is my belief that in identifying our spirit (God) - led passions, we might be propelled into purpose.***

**A**re you ready for a miracle? I know I am! I also know of many friends who are as well. 2016 has definitely been a year! While there have been many accomplishments, many of us have also had our share of struggles, heartache, and pain. There have been various illnesses and death in many forms. Physical deaths of loved ones, deaths to former careers and businesses, and even deaths to relationships. Yet, God provides. As a matter of fact, I see many on social media wishing for this year to be gone already, but I also see God's blessings bestowed on His people in many ways. I dare to go on and say there is much for us to be

grateful for. There were weddings, beautiful babies born, new careers generated, new ministries blossomed, and many of our day-to-day needs were met.

It is important for God's people to adopt an attitude of gratitude, particularly in this season. As usual, Satan is showing up to do his job everyday and his followers are staying on post. That being said, all forces must submit to a higher power and that Higher Power belongs to Almighty God!

How blessed are we that our Heavenly Father has granted us the authority to trample on the heads of scorpions and serpents (see Luke 10:19)! I am most thankful for my new perspective. For the first time in forever,

I am looking forward to receiving and giving Christmas gifts in a different form. I cherish the sounds of babies cooing, toddler feet running, my spouse who lies next to me every night and demonstrates his love for me in his everyday actions.

I have newly found freedom for releasing guilt I have about things that I cannot change. I proudly wear the garment of God's peace instead.

I am standing in agreement with you for your family's miracle and my own. May God Richly Bless You.

**Merry Christmas!**



Valencya Thompson

**Passion for Purpose:**

*Tips for Preparing for your Christmas Miracle:*

- 1) ***Understand Kingdom positions. (John 10:10)***
- 2) ***Don't count your problems. Count your blessings. (1 Thess 5:16-18)***
- 3) ***Tell fear, "Goodbye." (Isaiah 41:10)***

**#PUSH**



# Merry Christmas!

## A Reflection for the Weary

By: Rev. Brandon Harris

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### **Luke 2:10-11**

***<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,<sup>[a]</sup> the Lord.***

If we are honest with ourselves we are more tired than we realize. The pressures of daily life, work, school, family, relationships, social life, church life all crowd in on us until we feel as if we can't breathe. Life can seem like an endless chore with challenges and difficulties that arise seemingly out of nowhere to crowd out the moments of joy that we do have. We are surrounded by noise and busyness. Surrounded by the voices of so many: the news, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, family, and friends we can barely hear ourselves think.

The busyness, the pressures, the noise of life is exhausting so we become weary, cynical, and hopeless. We begin to wonder if this is how life is supposed to be? One of my favorite Poems “Supplication” by Joseph S. Cotter states:

I AM so tired and weary,  
So tired of the endless fight,  
So weary of waiting the dawn  
And finding endless night.  
That I ask but rest and quiet --  
Rest for days that are gone,  
And quiet for the little space  
That I must journey on.<sup>1</sup>

All we desire more than anything is rest, or good news, a reminder that life is so much more than a rat race. We desire to know that we are loved, cherished, remembered, and cared for. We are weary of the endless fight that life can be and we stand in need of good news. We all stand in need of a reminder that life is not supposed to be filled with violence or injustice, life is not supposed to be filled with working to the point that we lose our selves and our souls, life is not meant to be lived in a constant comparison to our favorite social media celebrities.

Christmas comes as a reminder to us that the world and our lives is not all that it ought to be. Christmas is a reminder that the world is full of weariness and brokenness and yet there is more to life than that. God has come in an unexpected way to restore our world and us, as it should be.

<sup>1</sup> Cotter, Joseph S. "Supplication, by Joseph S. Cotter, Jr." *The Book of American Negro Poetry*. Ed. James Weldon Johnson. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922. *Supplication, by Joseph S. Cotter, Jr.* Web. 15 Dec. 2016.

The shepherds in Luke 2 are unlikely characters for an announcement of good news. Theologian Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder writes, "Shepherds were considered unclean, dishonest, lower-class persons of ill repute."<sup>2</sup> The shepherds are chosen despite all that is stacked against them to be visited by angels with the good news that the Savior has come. Despite, all that is stacked against us, despite all the chaos that is in our lives, despite all the weariness and tiredness we may have, we have been chosen to hear the message of good news.

In our tiredness, in our fear, in our exhaustion we must find the space to rest, reflect, and listen with child-like ears to the message of the angels. "Do not be afraid... born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." In the center of the storms of our lives and the hectic pace of day-to-day life may we take the time to pause. May we listen with open hearts to these words of the angels, declaring to us good news of comfort, rest, reassurance, and strength! "Do not be afraid... the Savior is here." May we find in this good news the angels bring the hope, the peace, the reassurance, and strength, our hearts long for. The Savior has come and He loves you more than you know, cares for you more than you can imagine, knows you more intimately than you can dream. The angels have declared it, we belong to God and that's good enough news for me.

- *Merry Christmas!*  
*Rev. Brandon Harris*  
*Protestant Chaplain*  
*Georgetown University Law Center and*  
*Main Campus* ■

<sup>2</sup> Crowder, Stephanie Buckhanon. "Luke." *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*. By Brian K. Blount, Cain Hope. Felder, Clarice Jannette Martin, and Emerson B. Powery. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007. 162



**GPGT MAGAZINE PROUDLY CONGRATULATES**

*Rev. Brandon Harris &*

*Tiffany Daniels*

**ON THEIR RECENT ENGAGEMENT!**



PHOTO CREDIT: Wasaba Sidibay  
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# She is Free

By Candace Green

*Heavy, Heavy*

You got so heavy baby, not  
from all those cakes and  
cookies we like to eat,

But from the whispers of our  
doubts, fears and  
insecurities

*Heavy, Heavy*

Is the purse she stuffs every  
morning with the  
unrepented sins of yesterday

Fresh ammo for the enemies  
dart gun aimed right at the  
target of her heart

He hits. Bullseye

*Heavy, Heavy*

Is the coffee cup she fills  
every morning with 1 part  
unforgiveness, 1 part  
impatience, a dash of  
jealousy, and garnished with  
doubt

She drinks it quickly as she  
heads out the door.

*Heavy, Heavy*

In the car her heart filled  
with prayers she feels  
unworthy to pray...

Can anybody hear me? The  
silence is deafening. Why do  
you feel so far away...God?

*Heavy, Heavy*

Is the unopened Bible that  
sits on the coffee table.  
She's been so busy. I'll read  
tomorrow.

*Heavy, Heavy*

Are the tears she cries at the  
altar. She tries to cast her  
cares on him, because he  
cares for me...right?

*Heavy, Heavy*

But then a song came in her  
heart. Glory, Glory,  
Hallelujah, since I laid my  
burdens down

And that she did. Finally.

Her sins in the sand, washed  
away by the sea of  
forgetfulness

She was finally free.

Whom the son sets free is  
free indeed

Oh yes, she is free indeed

*Candace Green is a Program  
Coordinator at the University of Alabama  
at Birmingham's Division of Clinical  
Immunology and Rheumatology ■*





**1) What piqued your interest in entrepreneurship?**

**Altimese:** I actually had an entrepreneurial spirit at a very early age. In 2nd grade, I asked my Mom to buy me thread and I would make friendship bracelets and sell them in my class. It went dormant for some time after grade school and it ignited again in my mid-twenties when I began realizing that true wealth cannot be obtained simply from a 9-5 career. To become wealthy and shift the direction of my family financially, I would have to go above and beyond by creating residual income.

**Nicole:** I became interested in entrepreneurship at an early age while watching my father start and grow his own business. The spark didn't really grow until I reached college and took an entrepreneurship course. One of our last assignments was to interview an entrepreneur and I chose my Dad. Hearing that he started his business for his family really inspired me. Having residual income is very important to me, and one day I would like to become my own boss.

**2) How did you form your partnership?**

**Altimese:** Nicole and I have been friends for years. We have been through many different transitions in life and have truly gone through them together. The actual vision of our boutique came through our husbands. They both individually (unknowingly) brought up the idea and Nicole and I immediately decided to make the vision a reality.

**3) How do you balance family and work life?**

**Altimese:** Initially, if I'm honest, I didn't have a healthy balance and I learned the hard way how this can impact the core of family and priorities.

Now, I center my attention on my marriage and family - then center everything around the areas in my life that matter most. It's not perfect but it has helped me be present for my family and still pursue all of my goals.

**Nicole:** I am still learning to balance it all. Having a very active toddler requires a lot of my time and attention so I try to stick to a routine so I can give him what he needs, without neglecting my husband, and still fulfill my dreams. I find that disconnecting, at times, helps a lot.

#### **4) Are you women of faith, if so tell us about it?**

**Altimese:** I am very much a woman of faith. Everything in my life is because of Christ and all that I am is a reflection of His presence, work, and grace in my life. I always pray that my actions toward others speak more about my relationship with God than my words.

**Nicole:** I am a woman of faith. I find that my faith gives me the strength to be able to do all the things from wife, mother and career. I lean on that faith to guide and direct me in my life decisions.

#### **5) Do you believe you have identified your God-given purpose? If so, are you operating in it?**

**Altimese:** I believe that I am tapping into what God has called me to be, but I am also well aware that I must surrender my plan to His-- because it could change in any moment if I lose sight of Him. This year has truly taught me to let go and just flow with His will (like the birds in the sky).

**Nicole:** I believe that God is still leading me to His purpose. I know that I was put on this earth to help people and I want to fulfill His will. So I am continuing to allow God to take reign over my life so I can live out His purpose.

#### **6) What do you consider to be your greatest success and greatest failure thus far? What have they taught you?**

**Altimese:** I would say my greatest success so far has been my marriage. Not because of the role but because, together, we have faced generational curses and allowed God to use us for family healing. It has not been easy at all, but with lots of prayer and the grace of God, it has been worth it. Failure is perception. Things that I thought were failures turned out to be my greatest blessings.

**Nicole:** My greatest success is my family, husband and son. I have had a pretty blessed life and do not think I've experienced my greatest failure yet.

#### **7) What do you say to other women who aspire to be entrepreneurs?**

**Altimese:** Find your "why" and rely on God to make it happen, and never lose your "why" while going after your goals. If your "why" is to change the direction of your family, it would be counterproductive and out of the will of God to risk your family due to a lack of balance. So once you find your "why," rest in knowing God has you and it's okay to step away from your demands to take care of what matters most in your life.

**Nicole:** I agree with Altimese, you must know your "Why". Without it, a goal/dream is just that. Knowing your "Why" will get you through the peaks and valleys that will come while on the pursuit. I would also tell them not to be afraid to try. If they have an ideal dream, make it a reality. Yes, failure is a possibility, but you will never know without first trying. Don't let fear hold you back!

#### **8) Why branding and fashion?**

**Altimese:** For me, branding has been my career background and something that has been very natural for me. Nicole and I have always been fearless when it came to fashion, so we have always had that in common.

**Nicole:** Branding is still new to me but fashion has always been a part of me. I developed my love for fashion while in college when I discovered my own

## Fashion Forward

personal style. I remember when I moved from Virginia to Ohio, my brother told me that he liked my style and that I dressed different from the girls that he was used to seeing.

Upon graduating from Grad school, I had the opportunity to intern with the corporate office of a retail fashion company as Tech Support. Eventually, I got hired in full-time and was able to see everything that goes on behind the scenes. From shipping and distribution, to ordering designs and samples, and the selection process of the items that were going to be in the stores. I was able to gain a wealth of knowledge in all aspects of that industry.

### 9) What keeps you going when you believe you want to quit?

**Alfimese:** What keeps me going, is my husband and family. They are my "why." Within the first year of marriage I learned that goals and your family should never compete with one another; when God is in it, they should complement one another. So, when home is out of balance, it becomes an indication for me to ensure my priorities are in order-- placing my relationship with God and my husband in the forefront. When those relationships are well, all other relationships and areas revolved around them in harmony.

**Nicole:** My faith and family keep me going. They are my "Why". All that I do is for them. Keeping God in the forefront, I want to build a legacy that will be talked about well after I am gone.

### 10) Anything else you want our readers to know?

**Alfimese:** With God, all things are possible. There is truly nothing off limits and if you have a desire in your heart to do something, your Creator not only placed that dream inside of you but He has also equipped you to fulfill that dream.

**Nicole:** I know that God is my strength and salvation and He should direct and guide me through all aspects of my life. I know that through Him my family will be blessed and that I will fulfill His purpose. ■

By: Valencya Thompson

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## COVER FEATURE



**1) Do you believe that you have identified your purpose? If so, what is it?** This is a tricky question... I am coming to a belief that you are ever evolving; that each season of life carries its own purpose. What was my purpose as a child equaled what I could handle at that stage, but it is morphing as I experience different things along the way. As a child, I thought my purpose was to become a doctor, a physician who could help others to simply live. Now don't get me wrong, I still find a sense of purpose in doing that, in being the physician I always told my mom I would be, but now I understand life is more than just *physically* living. For instance, if I can give you someone's heart, wake you up, and you are still yourself, then what does that mean? If I can transplant your liver, pancreas, kidneys, and after the anesthesia wears off you return to your same state of awareness, then do these things define *who* you are? In fact, you are so much of an energy source that I literally use electrodes to monitor the electrical patterns of your heart throughout the time that I anesthetize you. I can measure your brain waves, the energy it emits, to determine just how deep of a level of anesthesia I have obtained. You are more than just a physical shell. At your core, you are pure energy.

# MEDICINE WOMAN: Dr. Ebony Jade Hilton-Buchholz





*“So the question is, what are you going to do with that energy? That power? How will you use it to shape the world?”*

So the question is, what are you going to do with that energy? That power? How will you use it to shape the world?

God allowing me to see this phenomenon in life every single day in the hospital has given me the understanding of the greatness of our individual spirits and the unlimited potential it carries. Now, I feel that my purpose is helping others to realize this about themselves as young as possible and hopefully before their physical shell becomes worn. Bearing witness to this is freeing because it brings validity to the fact that we were made in His image. God is an all powerful, all knowing energy of pure love. Therefore, I have nothing to fear. This sense of fearlessness has allowed me to experience the absolute beauty of life.

**2) What did you want to be when you were a little girl?** I am the middle daughter of three girls, or so I thought. At the age of 8 I was told for the first time that I actually had a brother; he would have been the eldest of our bunch. He unfortunately was born prematurely and passed away at the tender age of 3 days old. My mother and father never had the chance to see him, to hold him, or even attend his funeral. Times were different then, and as a young grieving couple they were told “it” was best left unseen...It, as in my brother. As an 8 year old, I remember my mother telling us this story after my youngest sister asked her why she only had daughters and not a son... “why was it only us girls?” She was only 6 years old and didn't understand the heaviness of her question, what reliving this moment carried for our mother. In all honesty I didn't fully appreciate the depth, but I do recall it was the first time I ever remember my mother crying. It was at that moment I determined I was going to be a doctor. In my naïve mind I was going to ward the world of tears... make it so that no other mother would have to cry over her child.

**3) What drew you to your current field?** Quite honestly, I had no clue what I was getting into when I entered medical school. My idea of medicine was based off of “Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman.”



A kind of all specialty, all knowing, type of physician. But, what I found is that medicine is extremely specialized and so I wanted to choose a field that was as diverse as the community around me. I wanted to take care of women, men, and children alike. Every specialty has its own personality and anesthesia is definitely one that keeps you on your toes. You have to be ready to treat every disease process - if someone's heart stops or an individual can no longer breathe, the room literally looks to you. You are the specialist. Most people outside of medicine think we just watch you as you sleep, and to be honest I once thought the same. What we actually do is quite fascinating! If I can cause you to sleep so deeply that you are unaware that someone is operating on your leg, then how powerful are the drugs we use to anesthetize? If it is silencing your brain, then what is it doing to your heart, kidneys, lungs, liver? Yes, it is my job to understand these things - to keep you alive, to keep your organs functioning, and to return you to your family in the same condition as before you “went to sleep.” Every case is different and it keeps you constantly studying medicine.

**4) When did you understand that you could be a doctor? Who put the audacity in you for you to believe such a thing being a Black woman from South Carolina?** As oddly as it may sound I had zero doubts that I not only could be, but that I would become a physician. Now this is almost laughable, the level of confidence I had - given that society had labeled me high risk since birth.



*“ I never had any doubts. I knew I could become a physician because all along she told me I was already one. ”*

“You are from a single parent household; you are high risk.” “You are poor; you are high risk.” “Your parents only graduated from high school; you are high risk.” You are Black; you are high risk.” But, what those school officials couldn't see, what wasn't written in my file, was that God blessed me with a mother who spoke life into me before I knew how to speak over myself. She saw me for who I would become, and not as the 8 year old who stood before her when I said I wanted to be a doctor. So from that day forward she called me, Dr. Hilton. She signed all of my birthday cards and made my Christmas gifts out to Dr. Hilton. She introduced me to people, any and everybody, as Dr. Hilton. Haha! Looking back is hilarious because I would literally shake those adult hands like, “Yep, that's me. Dr. Hilton”. So all throughout my training there was no plan B. I never had any doubts. I knew I could become a physician because all along she told me I was already one.

**5) How did your upbringing prepare you to be the woman that you are today?** Oh, isn't God good for taking our flawed lives and creating masterpieces? Looking back, I don't know how my mother did it. Here she was, a single mother of three with a high school education trying to make it in the world.

Watching her make the absolute best of the hand she was dealt, shaped me in ways unimaginable! My father joined the Army when I was really young so he was over seas serving his country and protecting his family during my childhood. I am proud of the time we have re-claimed during my adulthood.

Everything that has happened in my life, and I do mean EVERYTHING, has shaped my purpose, and I appreciate the good things as well as the bad. Having experienced “the struggle” allows me to relate to my patients in my own way, and it has taught me to truly appreciate the beauty of life. There's something about hardships that make you lean on people. It creates bonds. It fuels love. Though my birth family lacked monetary wealth during my childhood, I see now we were abundantly wealthy in other ways.

**6) You are a newlywed. Were there ever days on your journey to becoming a doctor that you wondered if you would miss your opportunity for marriage?** I would be lying if I said, “no”. This was a hard internal struggle because I knew what God had told me, I knew what He showed me, but fear gets the best of us - even when we strive for better understanding. I always knew I wanted to BE a doctor, but I felt like I was CREATED to be a wife and mother.





Being in the medical field is not an overnight journey, but one that has demanded my attention literally from the moment I decided I wanted to be a physician. You must have the best grades in middle and high school to get accepted in a favorable college.

Once there, I obtained three degrees (BS - Biochemistry, BS - Molecular Biology and BA - Inorganic Chemistry) within four years in order to make sure that there was no doubt of my acceptance into medical school. And that was the easy part. Then comes medical school and residency where the legal, standard workweek is 80 hours. In fact, once you complete residency, there are no charted hours as a medical doctor - you work until the work is done. So along the way I wondered, is this it? Will I have not only enough time, but also enough of me left to give to someone else? And when, between all the work hours, will I find him? But, that's the funny thing about life and God. He will always find you exactly where you are and exactly when you are ready... you just have to be as confident in His plan as you are in the fact that you will take your next breath.

**7) How has your transition to a new state and a new place of employment been since marriage? I**

sometimes wonder when will my life ever follow a "normal" path? Haha! This year was supposed to be my husband Avery's final year of residency, his research year. And with that was supposed to come less work hours and more free time... basically the absolute best time in all 7 years of his residency to get married. Well, life is funny. He was offered an enfolded fellowship, a training program that is usually added AFTER you graduate, but he was able to apply BEFORE actual graduation. So, what did this mean? No more research year, no more light work hours, and NO MORE LIVING IN SOUTH CAROLINA. Yes, he would move to Virginia for the year. So that left us not only commuting back and forth between SC and VA, but also PLANNING A WEDDING. Talk about stressful, but that's the beauty of it all. Marriage is about loving through the unlovable moments knowing that they will be temporary.

**8) What keeps you going on days when you want to quit? Quite honestly, the kids keep me going.**

When I think about quitting, I literally think of how many little girls are depending on me to live out my life's purpose. I have two nieces and a nephew whom I adore. Growing up, I didn't know of any physicians. They didn't live in my neighborhood. They didn't go to my church. All I had to base my dreams on was TV. Well now I can be that example for the children I come in contact with, and be the voice in their lives that my mother was for me.

**9) You had a historical moment at your former place of employment? Tell us about it? You were the first \_\_\_? It's a bittersweet achievement, but I**

am the first African American female anesthesiologist to ever be hired by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) since it's opening in 1824. I say bittersweet because I KNOW there were several more qualified nearly a century before me. Time has evolved us as a practice and us as a people. When I heard this fact I told my chairman, "I may be the first, but I refuse to be the last" and I have made an active campaign to recruit other highly qualified African American females. Our department and our world is better when diverse.

**10) Tell us about your faith? My faith is unshakeable. When I look back over my life I am amazed by God. Truly amazed! He has allowed me to literally travel this world practicing medicine...helping people...doing what I love.**

How amazing is that? The life He has blessed me with is beyond anything I think I deserve and I'm not just talking about my adult life, but everything He allowed me to experience as a child, both good and bad. His foresight as to how those paths would lead me to here is simply beautiful. I see God everywhere. I hear Him in the singing of birds. I feel Him in the hug of a child. I smell Him in the freshness of rain. He talks to me in the whispers of the wind. I literally search for Him everywhere because He is everywhere.

### **11) Anything else you want our readers to know?**

I guess the main thing I would want everyone to know is that I am not unique. There is not necessarily anything special about me in regards to making me different than you. We are all created exactly the same, but we, each, are also given a set of individual choices to make. What will you do with those choices? Whenever people ask me to tell my story, I always end in saying don't be like me, but be like my mother. It's because of her and her belief in an eight - year old child's dream that I am where I am today. She chose to believe in me when I didn't know how to believe in myself. So, because of her one simple action I can now impact hundreds of thousands of lives through my work. Now what if we all did that? Choose one child to build up. Then, help that kid to realize the beauty in the energy he or she possesses. Now, imagine what that world would look like? Be like my mom, Mary Hilton, shape this world one child at a time. We will be better for it.

Images provided by Ebony Jade Hilton – Buchholz. Photo Credit: Brennan Wesley (operating room), Kristin Burke (engagement), & Josh Jones Photography (wedding) ■

By: Valencya Thompson



# NARROWING THE GAP

BY:  
JEVERTUS  
BURNETT



**“If average Black family wealth continues to grow at the same pace it has over the past three decades, it would take Black families 228 years to amass the same amount of wealth White families have today. That’s just 17 years shorter than the 245-year span of slavery in this country.”**  
–Taken From “**Bootsraps Vs. Blockades**”<sup>1</sup>

In this article Wells shares recent data from a survey of consumer finances. According to the report, *in 1983 White American households held 5.3 times more wealth than Black American households and 6.1 times more than Latino households. By 2013, those rates had increased to 7.7 times more than Black American Households and 6.7 times more than Latino Households. According to this article Black Americans and Latinos would have to see growth of over 700% to catch up with the wealth of White Americans.* The main question that we wrestle with today is simple, “How do we close the gap?” Now this question, of course, leads to so much more.

<sup>1</sup> Wells, Amber . “Bootsraps Vs. Blockades: Closing the Racial Wealth Gap When Doing the ‘Right Thing’ Doesn’t Work for Everyone.” <http://stateofthesouth.org/2016/12/09/bootstraps-vs-blockades-closing-the-growing-racial-wealth-gap-when-doing-the-right-thing-doesnt-work-for-everyone/> (accessed December 9, 2016).

Like, “Is it even possible?” “Where do we start?” “Is it worth it?” These are just a few of the questions that some of my colleagues, friends, and I wrestle with on a regular basis.

For a while, my argument has been: the “traditional” way of working hard - getting a quality education, etc. just wasn’t going to cut it. We will not even slightly move the needle when it comes to the wealth gap doing these things alone. I argue that as minorities, we have to first make, eliminating the wealth gap a goal! For many of us it isn’t even a concern. Once we make it a goal we have to realize that we may not ever personally see this “narrowing” of the wealth gap on an individual level, but still be willing to help position the next generation to run with it, by educating them first and then building legacies that we can leave to them - even if it means sacrificing some things now. There are five things I believe play a major role and are necessary for us to do if the gap is to ever be narrowed:

**(1.) The first step to solving any problem is to state the problem.** This cause, must be a common cause among the above-mentioned racial-ethnic groups. We have to actually acknowledge the problem and resolve to solve it! In many instances, we may never realize what we are fighting for, but the next generation would be able to stand on our shoulders and be better off because of the decisions we make today. Black Americans and Latino Americans must begin to organize themselves around the topic of wealth - building and focus on uniting our communities, as well as, have leaders throughout the country begin to champion this cause. Until we make this a priority in unity, this will not happen.



There are some organizations in both the Black American and Latino American communities that are working toward this end, but not nearly organized or united enough yet.

**(2.) We must focus on financial literacy and its importance.** Financial literacy must be shared to every minority adult and child alike. Our churches and community centers should be full all over the country as we gain understanding about our finances, credit, building wealth, leaving legacies, home ownership, investing, entrepreneurship and so much more. The Bible says that people perish because of a lack of knowledge (See Hosea 4:6). This is remarkably true when it comes to finances.

**(3.) We need Corporate Leadership. There must be more people in leadership roles of Fortune 100/500 companies.** This shows young people that this is possible and we can be successful outside of sports, rap, and movies (although nothing is wrong with any of these things). I often reflect on my time in corporate America before starting my business back in 2012. I had great success with the company I was with, however, I got to a point to where the “next” step for me seemed very far and out of reach. This was because at that time (as far as I was aware), no one who looked like me had ever held a senior position. It made me feel as if I had hit the proverbial glass ceiling and would never be able to shatter it. It is also important to have minorities in these roles because they help to shatter stereotypes.

**(4.) Next we need to build and sustain successful businesses from one generation to the next.** This will ensure that our ceiling becomes the next generation's floor and that they do not have to start over. This provides the next generation with a baseline for entrepreneurship and community leadership. In order to do this successfully we need to collectively fund more minority businesses and have successful business owners mentor newer owners, as well as, those seeking to start businesses. We also need more minority-owned banks and institutions to assist through offering funding and business support as well.

**(5.) Finally, and maybe most importantly, we must create and utilize Intentional Wealth Transfer (IWT) plans that ensure the wealth that's being built is being preserved and passed on in the most efficient way.**

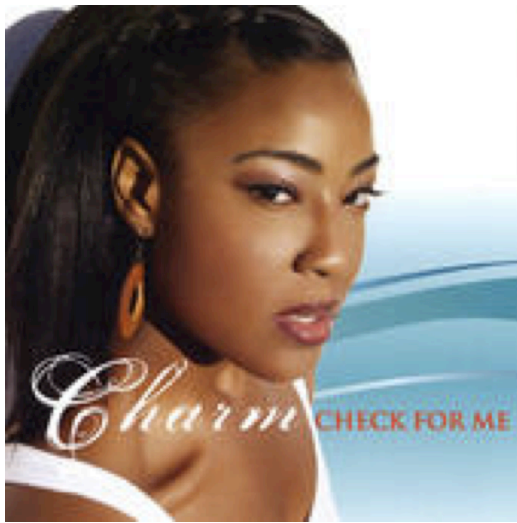
This, is vital. I sit down with very wealthy White Americans, Black Americans and Latino Americans all the time and this conversation is the conversation that my White American clients are most excited about, while my Black and Latino American clients are the most timid about. IWT plans ensure our wealth is transferred to the next generation as tax efficiently as possible, and that our wealth is handled how we desire for it to be handled. So when it comes to business succession planning, risk planning, and legacy planning my minority clients often go silent and the attitude is very often.... “I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps, they should too”.

Now let's be clear. These things won't close the gap overnight. However, if we make these five simple steps a priority I think we would be amazed at what would happen. The thing I love most about each of these steps is that you don't have to wait on anyone to get it done. Start today. Start with your family and if you need guidance or assistance we are here to help! So as we close out 2016 and prepare to embrace 2017. Let's eliminate excuses, focus on the goal ahead and ...

Let's all Build Wealth and Leave a Legacy!

***Jevertus Burnett is the co- founder of the BOLD Institute, Registered Financial Advisor, and Licensed Agent***

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(Album Cover from iTunes)

# Is Music in Danger ? ??

**GPGT**  
Entertainment Insider  
Correspondent  
@charmismusic

In an age where practically everything has gone digital, an important question is, "Is music in danger?" How does the digital world affect music? Well, let's look at it this way: The more our society advances technologically, the less humans become *involved*. I wasn't around before the typewriter, but just take this into perspective:

1) For a document to be completed before computers were widespread, a person would have to load a sheet of paper into a typewriter properly. (Don't make a mistake or your document could print diagonally.)

2) Next, precision in typing, spelling and grammar would ensure an error-free document. There was no auto-correct and the slightest slip of the finger could result in a typo, thus meaning you may have to start over or use liquid paper to manually correct the document, which often looked weird and not uniform.

3) Knowledge of document and paragraph structuring was needed. There were no templates and all of these steps took lots of time and manpower.

Now, with document templates, auto-correct, document scanning, etc., people are less involved than ever. Likewise, with music, gone are the days of tapes and CDs. I was amazed when my new car failed to include a CD player! When was the last time that you knew an artist's album was being released? Did you buy it? This lack of involvement between musicians, the audience and the commercial world has lessened with the digital age and technology. Not only did people start stealing music with the creation of Napster (yeah I said it), but in sharing music (think Dropbox). with streamina and automated

services (YouTube, Pandora, etc), and more, people have figured out ways to listen to the songs of their choice without paying for it. This creates an interesting place for music. If buyer-ship of music is down, and record labels are practically extinct, where does that leave music? I will admit that a great thing about this digital age is that independent artists and underground musicians can build a solid and devoted fan base without the help of a major label. Everything is at your fingertips...just clicks away.

Marketing and promoting can be aligned with Facebook and Instagram to run ads, email lists collected through websites and purchases can be combined to push email blasts to fans, and digital download cards can be sold at performances. On the flip side, unless a musician entered the business prior to 2010, it is improbable that few will reach major stardom like Britney Spears, Beyoncé, Justin Bieber or Adele.

The lifespan of a musician who enters the industry in 2016 is at most questionable. Record labels do less marketing now because the return is low. Artists must tour more and perform shows to stay afloat and it's harder to keep the attention of fans more than ever.

What does that mean for you? Well, as a fan, if you like a musician and/or their work, support it! Don't steal it, stream it or Pandora-it, buy it! As a musician, if you're going to make a living with music as a career, diversify your portfolio! (I'll let that marinate.) Music is an escape, it's present for weddings and funerals, birthdays and holidays!

Let's keep music alive!

Charissa Mobley





*Chasity Broughton*

Available for Bookings.

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Photo by Kelian Scott @photoguyk





PAGEANTRY

RAYING

FORWARD

O<sup>OTAYMAH</sup>  
BONDS

*Constantly serving others and reigning with purpose!*

Otaymah Bonds is the owner and CEO of Eternal Women Inc, a non-profit organization for the uplifting of women and girls focusing on self-esteem building through education, counseling, and the arts. She is also the creator and CEO of Queenin, an innovation pageantry resource and apparel company.

Bonds is a beauty, fashion, and lifestyle expert. She is an influencer who frequently writes for Fashion Mingle, Fashion Decode, Estelle Magazine, Examiner, and other publications, and has been featured in Essence Magazine, Street Candids NYC, and LoveBrownSugar at New York Fashion Week.

She has held the titles of Ms. Heart of Global United (GU), Ms. Michigan Heart of GU, Ms. Michigan Ameriqueen, and is the current reigning Ms. StarJewel Supreme, Ms. StarJewel Supreme Fall Festival, Overall Community Service Queen, and American Royal Beauties Ms. Detroit.

*Otaymah is the inaugural Ms. Detroit - representing her hometown!*

Otaymah Bonds has been featured by Black Girls Reign twice for being "a pageant vet" who embraces her love of pageantry and earning/reigning so many titles, in a short amount of time! She was also recognized for "constantly serving others and reigning with purpose." Bonds story has been also shared in *Pageants News*, for being "an inspiring individual in pageantry and life" and for letting the world know that "beauty queens are much more than just a pretty face," while being

acknowledged for her immense community service efforts. Otaymah is also a spotlighted community leader who has been selected to be on Crown Talk live radio show: “honored live on the air for her extraordinary merits,” and due to record - breaking audience volume she was asked to return on the show for a special holiday edition. Bonds has also had the select honor of being a guest speaker on the television broadcast Pageantry Now, where she discussed all things positive in pageantry, and the lack of and need for diversity in the field.

Ms. Bonds wholeheartedly believes in community service and giving back. She is the president of three service platforms within her community: 1. Superb Seniors - an outreach group for senior citizens, 2. Sunday's Hope - an organization working to end animal abuse, and 3. Aunties Love a Big Brother, Big Sister Program for children with incarcerated parents. Otaymah Bonds also frequently volunteers for various churches like: Community Church of Christ, Greater St Matthews Baptist Church, Bailey Cathedral COGIC, St Peters Missionary Baptist Church, and the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. She has also performed great community outreach with the University of Michigan, Hug Detroit, Yankee Museum/Rosie the Riveter Organization, Rosie the Riveter Association, Safehouse Domestic Violence Helpcenter, Southfield Jayhawks and PAL Cheerleading League, Detroit Unity in the Community, Fluffy Full and Fabulous Plus Size Women's Acceptance Organization, the Girl Scouts of America, Detroit Public Library, Jewish Vocational Service disabilities programs, Experiencia cultural tolerance programs, Natural Muse Agency, Focus Hope, Forgotten Harvest, and Eastern Market.

**Otaymah has also had the honor of receiving the Vanguard Award from Rosie the Riveter Organization “in recognition of her efforts on the front lines to promote awareness of the heroic contributions of African Americans in WWII.”**



She has also received the Talent America outstanding vocal artist award, three Detroit Spirit Awards for enriching the Detroit community and being an outstanding leader within the community. Additionally, she received the StarJewel Community Service Queendom award for donating and gathering a whopping 26 boxes and over 463 items at a charity pageant. Otaymah has also proudly received the Vision Award for being “the most inspirational and uplifting person who truly means the love and energy she promotes... and touches the heart.”

This accomplished Queen has been the recipient of the Mega Megaphone Award (PAL League/Southfield Jayhawks) for child volunteer work and excellence in coaching. Bonds coached not one, but two squads: Junior Varsity and Varsity. She proudly led them to place 2nd AND 3rd in states and nationals, respectively! As if doing good causes weren't enough, Otaymah has also won Enchanting Lovelies Best Outfit and Best Hair Winter Lovelies 2015 ■

*Images in order of appearance - TMoney Photography, IG: @chris\_hawks, & Enigma Graphics*

By: Valencya Thompson





# ETERNAL *Women* ENTERPRISES

is a not for profit company, working as a public good, to bring female empowerment, motivational speaking, and theater (drama, dance) workshops to the metropolitan Detroit area for girls ages 5-18.  
**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

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Please donate any amount to Eternal Women  
eternalwomeninc@gmail.com 313. 318. 0700 by March 31st.  
Make payments via PayPal to EternalWomenInc or, directly to  
Eternal Women Inc in the form of check, cash, or money order.

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Donations go toward the up and coming events on May 5, 2017. Please  
email us regarding event and workshops registration and participation.

[www.eternalwomenenterprises.org](http://www.eternalwomenenterprises.org)



# hello BEAUTIFUL!

By: Charlemagne Stallings

Photo provided by: Charlemagne Stallings



Well, tis the season...for the flu. Is it just me or is it that everywhere you go someone is trying to give away flu shots? I go to Target and the shelves for congestion and cough essential oils are bare. I so desperately need them for my two - year old. Are people using these for stocking stuffers or something? I'm just saying keep your sanitizer and Lysol spray close and use liberally. Nobody is safe!

I've been starring in the lead role of *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman* for the last week or so trying to keep the runny nose, congestion and cough at bay with my son. Where is the manual on how to teach a two - year old how to blow his nose? Poor guy has been having a few restless nights trying to breathe with all of the phlegm stuck in there. It has been a struggle for him to breathe and causing him to cough with every breath. Being the trendiest mother I can be, I go buy the best nose suction money can buy. You know the one...with the straw on the end. I will spare you the details, but just know that this apparatus and a two - year old just don't mix. All I want to do is help him and he is putting up a world class, no holds barred, knock out, drag-out fight!

He doesn't even realize that it would be over in a second if only he would just be still. Yeah, it's a little uncomfortable. He would prefer if there were another less invasive way to get it done. He would readily comply, but not like this, not today Ma'am. No, thank you. I will just tough it out until another way comes along.

After he surrendered to my uninvited help, I wondered how often we do this with God. He wants to help us. He even wants to answer our long desired prayers, but because it didn't look the way we wanted, it didn't feel as good as we envisioned it and it came at the most inconvenient time, we resist. How often do we resist God because of momentary discomfort?

We live in a culture full of convenience, short cuts, loop holes and life hacks. When we must eventually submit to the process of hard work, self-discipline, laying down our pride, and sacrificing our time, we would rather wait for an easier and more comfortable way.

As we celebrate in this Christmas season, consider how uncomfortable of a process it was for Jesus to come into this world. A virgin had to tell her husband she was pregnant. He had to hear from an angel in order not to choose to divorce her. King Herod had a bounty on unborn Jesus' head and Mary gave birth to him in a stable. But in the end, we were the recipients of the great reward of the one and only Savior. So don't resist your momentary discomfort or you may miss your great reward.

Lord, thank you so much for sending your son to save me from my reckless heart and my sin. I pray that my heart will be inclined to you as you lead me in the right direction. You are my strength and my portion forever. Amen.

--  
Best Regards,  
Charlemagne Stallings

*Charlemagne is a resident of the metro-Atlanta area, a school counselor, wife, and mother. To keep up with Charlemagne, follow her on IG @helloworldbeautifulgpgt*



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