

# UNIVERSAL NEWS



SCAN ME

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## Family:

### The structure of society

“Drugs were the main reason for the fights.”  
*(Read full story on page 7)*



Many modern habits have taken people's attention away from relationships within the home, and this separation affects the present and future of parents and children. *(More details in this edition)*

## Are you tired?



If you are going through difficulties and see no way out, ask for God's help. Write down your problems and take this request to the Universal Church closest to you.

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Come and receive the Water that Bishops blessed on Mount Sinai.

SUNDAY Page 3  
at the nearest Universal Church



Page 2

**Bishop Edir Macedo**

Faith and Sacrifice



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**NOT TO BE SOLD**

## | IN THIS EDITION |

### Family: the structure of society

The Family unit plays a vital role in shaping our society. It serves as a building block to provide structure and stability. Strong family units contribute to a stable social foundation, which is essential for a community's overall functioning and cohesiveness.

Family values were of utmost importance in the past, reflecting the family as a unit. Over the years, values such as family time, respect, loyalty, honesty, faith, love, responsibility, etc., have slowly been thrown out the window and seen with little importance. As a result of being without these values, many families today lack structure and have become dysfunctional.

Modern habits have also contributed to the dysfunction of families today and have taken attention away from healthy relationships within the home, such as excessive cell phone/internet use and excessive working. However, other factors also put a strain on family units, such as addictions, betrayal, miscommunication, financial hardship, depression, etc. This harsh reality has caused many homes pain, frustration, and anguish. No one desires a broken family structure or asks for bad things to happen, but you can fight back what has harmed your family unit. Continue reading and learn how to build a better family structure and regain what has been lost. Happy reading!

## | BEATING DEPRESSION |

Depression is a sadness felt in the deepest part of one's soul. It causes a sense of hopelessness and exhaustion so great that a person loses the motivation to do anything, and some lose the desire to live at all. It is an illness of the soul. But who can heal the soul? No other than the Savior of Souls, the Lord Jesus, can heal a soul that is sick.

On Fridays, at every Universal Church, we have a service for Deliverance from Depression. Visit a branch near you today. Make a Chain of Prayer by attending a prayer meeting near you for seven consecutive weeks. You will receive practical steps, counseling, and spiritual help through prayers to beat depression once and for all.

There are thousands of testimonials worldwide that prove a Chain of Prayer works. You won't regret it. You, too, CAN defeat depression!



Call 1.888.332.4141  
Text 1.888.312.4141  
For more information  
SEE PAGE 12 FOR LOCATIONS



### Bishop Edir Macedo

### Faith and Sacrifice



**G**od is not a magician. Yet, most Christians insist on thinking, believing, and expecting Him to transform their lives overnight magically.

Usually, they expect to do the minimum amount of effort in exchange for all of God's blessings. They can maintain this illusion for some time, but they become discouraged when the results are not as expected. Hence, many so-called Christians have fallen away, disappointed with God.

Few understand that for a miracle to happen, a joint process must occur between the Creator and the creation. None of the miracles written in the Bible happened solely because of God's doing. If we look carefully, we can see that each miracle had the participation of man and God.

For example, for Noah and his family to be saved from the flood, he had to obey God's command and build the ark. The same happened with Abraham. To be the father of a great nation, he had first to sacrifice his will and obey God's Word by leaving his land, the home of his parents, and his relatives.

For the Lord Jesus to heal the blind man, he had to cry out to Him. Before Lazarus could be resurrected, the disciples had to remove the stone from the tomb. Now, we can conclude, without a doubt, that the miracle we hope to receive in our lives depends on our action of faith in God.

If you are tired of suffering and want to change your life around, then you must call out to God. This change is only possible if you act by faith. That is, completely surrender your life by faith to the Lord Jesus.

#### The miracle we hope to receive in our lives depends on our attitude of faith towards God.

New life won't spring forth until your life is totally surrendered on the altar. It's impossible to have a new life and try to maintain the old one simultaneously. Hence, there is an urgent need for a sacrifice



of faith. Like the Lord said: "Turn to Me with all your heart ..." (Joel 2:12).

The miracle of the new birth or new life takes place in two stages:

First: humankind's attitude toward God – No one can be born of God without first turning from or abandoning their sins. Conversion requires a change in behavior towards Him. Lying, stealing, adultery, prostitution, and all the works of the flesh must be abandoned. Galatians 5:19. That is true conversion.

Second: God's attitude toward man – When the Holy Spirit sees your effort in trying to replace your will with the will of God, He comes down upon you and transforms your life, thus concluding His participation in the miracle of the new birth.

Whatever the miracle, the process remains the same. First, the creation must take action towards the Creator; then, the Creator acts accordingly towards His creation. As you can see, this process has no magic; on the contrary, it results from a personal relationship between humankind and God. May God bless you abundantly.



Sebastián was the owner of four successful businesses, but his addictions were his downfall, which cost him everything. All that he earned from his company, he spent on his addictions.

"I used cocaine, marijuana, pills, alcohol, and smoked cigarettes. All the money I earned I used to support my addictions, and as a result, I lost my family and four businesses. I began living under stress and lost even the will to live. All I could think about was drugs, and I was an addict for more than fifteen years, three of which I was homeless."

### "I lost my family and my four businesses."

He also had spiritual problems: "I couldn't sleep; I had insomnia, nightmares, and I heard voices. Since I couldn't sleep, I started using drugs every day. I weighed 44 pounds because I didn't eat.

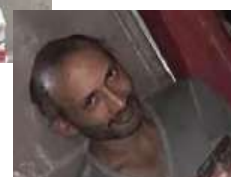
"There are two situations that cause people to immerse themselves in addictions: 1) They have problems, 2) Because they like it. I liked it, so I didn't see drugs as a problem in the beginning. But when I realized I wasn't going to be able to stop using, I had the first of four suicide attempts. After that, I started going out at night. I would steal to pay for my habit because my companies no longer had money."

"When I first arrived at the church, I had no shoes; I was dirty and hungry. I listened to what was being said and understood that my problem was spiritual and that I had to fight

with spiritual weapons. I considered every word, began to put them into practice, and used my faith. Today, I am free from the addictions, and I am very happy. I now have an air conditioning restoration company and am working on a project to build apartments. I decided to win and thank God for everything that hadn't worked out for me before. Today, I am prosperous. I have a new life because, through God and the power of faith, addictions can be cured."



Before



# Mount Sinai Water from the Rock

**“Free from a varicose ulcer.”**



In 2021, my life took an unexpected turn; at this challenging time, I made a crucial decision to unite medicine with my faith.

I was barely able to put my foot on the ground and ended up being diagnosed with a varicose ulcer. I was at risk of having my leg amputated.



I had endured that wound for about three long years, but today, I'm free-Emerson



**“I am free from a 20-year addiction to marijuana.”**

I spent 20 years of my life being addicted to marijuana. It led to me having problems in my family, and I struggled to sleep at night.

By drinking the Blessed Water by faith, I overcame the addiction to marijuana, and I finally stopped smoking. Now, my family and I are blessed. -Kera Washington



**“Healed from a hernia and ulcers.”**

There was a problem in my esophagus; I was feeling a burning in my stomach, and after the endoscopy, the doctors found a hernia. I also had ulcers. I drank the Blessed Water for my healing. When I went to the doctor for a colonoscopy, the doctor said my esophagus was clean and healed after seeing the results! -Estella



**“Overcame multiple sclerosis and breast cancer.”**

I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and breast cancer. I was taking medications, and I was also doing chemotherapy, which resulted in me losing my hair.

After drinking the Blessed Water, the doctor was preparing to send me for surgery, and he saw on my test results that the cancer had disappeared. The doctor said it was a miracle, and I was completely healed.-Carol



**RECEIVE A BOTTLE OF  
THE BLESSED WATER  
CONSECRATED ON  
MOUNT SINAI THIS  
SUNDAY**

at your nearest  
Universal Church



## |Message|

### BISHOP JOSHUA

#### FIGHT THE PROBLEM, NOT THE PERSON



When someone's fight is pointless, it's called 'beating the wind.' Who can beat the wind? No one. We cannot see or touch the wind, so it is a futile fight; it will bring no results and change nothing. That is how many have been reacting in the battle for a change in their family.

The Word of God teaches us a very wise lesson:

**"And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand."**

**Mark 3:25**

Perhaps this word speaks to you because you can see the signs. You have been trying to hold your divided house together, but it has been falling apart.

No one speaks to each other

Your children have rebelled against you

Your marriage has been struck by infidelity

Your happy home has become a nightmare

Your home may be divided, but the solution will not come from being angry at those in your home; you should direct your anger toward the actual problem. Fight against the problem with faith. It only takes one person to fight in prayer for change to occur in your family; if you are tired of family problems, then I am sure God has chosen you to be that one. Stop beating the air and use your faith to solve the real problem. God is with you.

May the God of the Bible bless you!

**February Bible Study**  
*Beginning 2024 With God's Wisdom*

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				Nehemiah 1 ✓	Nehemiah 2 ✓	Nehemiah 3 ✓
Nehemiah 4 ✓	Nehemiah 5 ✓	Nehemiah 6 ✓	Nehemiah 7 ✓	Nehemiah 8 ✓	Nehemiah 9 ✓	Nehemiah 10 ✓
Nehemiah 11 ✓	Nehemiah 12 ✓	Nehemiah 13 ✓	Esther 1 ✓	Esther 2 ✓	Esther 3 ✓	Esther 4 ✓
Esther 5 ✓	Esther 6 ✓	Esther 7 ✓	Esther 8 ✓	Esther 9 ✓	Esther 10 ✓	Galatians 1
Galatians 2	Galatians 3	Galatians 4	Galatians 5	Galatians 6		

❤️

## TROUBLED TEEN

I grew up in the church following my mother, but after some time, in my teenage years, I decided to leave the church and experience life outside; I told my mother that she could not tell me what to do. I started to go out and met a guy who I got involved in. When I got into this relationship, my life began to go down because everything I did was to try to get his love. He told me that if I wanted to impress him, I had to go out with other men to gain experience. Because I wanted his love so much, I would do what he told me to do and then return to him. Doing this made me feel so frustrated that I started doing things I never thought I could do to get his attention, but still, nothing I did was enough; I still was not happy, and I could not even recognize myself anymore.



I started dressing in a way to show my body and get the attention of men; I even got into a relationship with a woman to please my boyfriend. After some time, he told me that if I loved him, I had to get drugs for him. Even though I wouldn't say I liked the idea, I did it anyway, thinking this would make him love me. Still, I wasn't happy in my relationship and had no peace. I was on a path to success in my education. Still, this relationship started to distract me because everything I could think of was to please him, so I decided to take a break from school. It was like all my efforts were only concentrated on my love life, to find love in this guy. With



time, as I got my kids, I told myself that I should continue on this path and get his love.

The relationship with my parents started to get sour; my mother did not give up on me; she kept praying for me and invited me back to church, but I told her that I did not have time for God and that I didn't trust God anymore. I started blaming God for my suffering; why did He allow me to turn out this way when I grew up in the church? Today, I realize that even though I grew up hearing the Word of God, I did not know Him personally, so I left the church and did what I did. God was always there for me. He never

left me, but I wanted things my way; I didn't want to listen to Him and faced the consequences of my choices.

I tried so much to get back on track and pick up the pieces to have my life back, but the more I tried, the more frustrated I became. I thought there was no way out for me, and my void grew. I then started thinking of ending my life, even though I knew at the back of my mind that this was wrong; I tried it twice but was unsuccessful.

I then reached a point where I told myself there was no other way and that the only way was to return to church and give God a chance. The beginning was hard; I still didn't want to commit myself fully to God, and because of this, my life remained the same until one day, after hearing the counseling of the pastor, I decided to surrender my life to God completely. I decided to sacrifice everything; I stopped living the wrong life. I had to choose who I wanted to serve: God or myself. I kept hearing about the Holy Spirit and decided to seek the Spirit of God inside of me, knowing that only He could honestly give me a new life. When I surrendered my all to God, I became a new person. God restored the peace and joy inside of me. I am now happy; I am no longer suicidal, and I no longer live to get the attention of men because God fulfills me. God gave me what money or the outside world could provide me. I advise the youths facing the same problems I had to give God a chance; He is the Only One who can fulfill you.



# What's happening at the Universal Church

## "The Doctors said there was nothing they could do."

thing else."

"I didn't want to hear about the chances and asked how they would proceed. The doctor suggested trying dialysis; he started to lose weight. All medical treatment continued, but Mary Ellen also turned to faith both to help with the treatment and to strengthen herself so she could accompany her son. She already knew about Universal and knew that she would have to use the supernatural power of faith to reverse the situation. "I was in prayer all the time; I took the blessed water at the Universal Church services, put it on a cotton pad, and anointed him. I made a chain or prayer on behalf of my son and made vows at the Altar", she says.

Mary Marques turned to faith to reverse the situation of her son, Maxwell, who suffered from a cardiorespiratory arrest and organ failure.

Despite being healthy and not experiencing major health concerns in early childhood, at the age of 7, he contracted the flu, and his condition worsened, resulting in him being taken to the ICU. "During this period, we went to the hospital several times and used various treatments, but his condition did not improve. The doctor saw that his oxygen saturation level was 79% when, ideally, it should be above 94%. The doctors performed pulmonary exercises to ensure his body remained oxygenated until he arrived at the ICU. There, they intubated him because he could no longer breathe," says the 38-year-old hairdresser Mary Ellen Marques, Maxwell's mother.

The first tests showed the presence of water in his lungs, known as pleural effusion, caused by inflammation of the organ's tissues. "On the same day, while in the ICU, his fever rose, and he went into respiratory arrest and then went into cardiac arrest. The doctors managed to revive him. I was in shock with everything that was happening and only had the strength to ask people I knew for prayer," she recalls.

The next day, she received more bad news: his condition progressed to kidney failure. "When I saw him, he was very swollen. I didn't even recognize him. Furthermore, the doctors told me that there was nothing more they could do and that his chance of surviving was 1%. As he could die at any moment, they suggested I call my family to say goodbye to him. I went into shock and didn't hear any-

She rejected the words of death that came from the medical team and believed that a miracle could happen. "I was always attached to the Word and the things of God. I prayed and stood firm. One day, he coughed and then showed other signs that his lungs were starting to work again, as well as other organs," she states.

The stability of his health condition was a sign that we had won the first war. The next battle was to eliminate the possibility of sequelae. "All the doctors said he would have some problem, which led me to use my faith in God again. He underwent treatment and recovered completely, which amazed the doctors," says Mary Ellen.

Today, Maxwell lives an everyday life for a teenager his age; he has not suffered any sequelae and does not need specialist follow-ups. "God has healed him completely, and he has no limitations. I saw God's supernatural power, and I can say that I became stronger, independent of people, and more dependent on God," she concludes.



## "I was too young for cancer."



Pamela received an unexpected diagnosis. However, through her family and friends' spiritual support, she was able to overcome cancer.

"In January last year, I noticed a slight change in the shape of my breast and felt a lump. I immediately went to see my primary care doctor, and it was confirmed that I had a lump about the size of a golf ball in my breast."

A week later, Pamela had an emergency mammogram and biopsy. She was told the results would take three days to arrive. She describes these three days as the longest three days of her life.

When the results came back, her world came crashing down – the doctor told her the four words no one ever wants to hear: 'You have breast cancer.'

"I was in denial at first; I was told that if I didn't get treated, I could die. It was a huge shock, especially as there was no history of breast cancer in my family. Not only that, but I didn't feel sick when I found the lump. I asked the doctor if he was sure. I was too young; I told them they had made a mistake."

Unfortunately, it wasn't a mistake. Pamela had stage 2 breast cancer and would have to undergo chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgery.

"I have been a member of the Universal Church for 15 years. Even when I felt very sick after the chemo sessions, I would attend the services, and God always made me stronger. I prayed, fasted, and said to God, 'Let Your will be done and not mine!' I didn't want to have surgery, but after speaking to one of the advisors, I was reminded of intelligent faith that I should always follow the doctor's advice. I also changed how I ate, including many more fruits and vegetables in my diet and drinking two liters of water daily."

By setting her mind on beating this disease, she fought with all she could while remaining active within the church community during her illness. She was attending the chain of prayers for her healing.

"After seven rounds of chemotherapy, my doctors said the tumor had shrunk to 2 cm. However, they said I would need more chemo after surgery. The thought of that made me adamant that I didn't want more chemo, so I sought God's help for total healing. I kept helping and volunteering at the church whenever I could. My friends and family were also a fundamental pillar during my illness."

Thankfully, with a strong mindset and faith, Pamela was told she wouldn't need a second round of chemo and would need just three weeks of radiotherapy after surgery. Today, she is cancer-free and is a living testimony.

"The cancer treatment didn't stop me from being active in my faith. If I can overcome it, so can you. Never give up."

Before



## "My faith saved our daughter."

ly stable first. "We were delighted when we found out that my wife was pregnant. Coincidentally, the whole family was home, so we told everyone as soon as we found out."

The couple couldn't be happier. Everything seemed to be going well until they received devastating news: the baby wasn't growing as expected. There was an almost 100% chance that Susan would have a premature birth and she would need to have a cesarean section. Doctors also said there was a very high chance the baby would not survive. The parents-to-be were devastated by the news and the possibility that they could lose their baby even before it was born. In that situation, they turned to God to guide them.

"We panicked because it was our first child. We didn't know what to think when the doctor told us everything that could happen. We didn't know what to do and decided to fast for God's intervention. It was the first idea that came up. Clearly, that direction came from God. It was perfect because as

we fasted, we moved away from worldly information and focused on the baby and our spiritual life. We used faith while following the doctors' advice, and after about two weeks, the doctors were astonished. In just two weeks, our baby had abnormal growth."

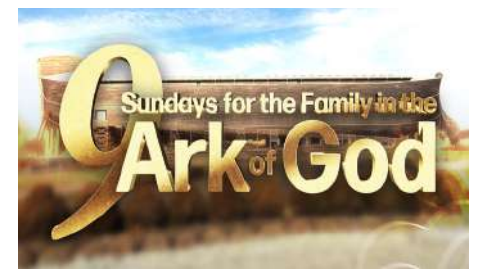
Suzana and Herlander's little daughter was born at 41 weeks on April 30th, 2022, with a healthy weight of 5.2 pounds. The discharge paper stated: 'The baby is active and feeding well (...). There are no worrying signs or sepsis.'

While many may not see fasting as something that can help, Herlander's faith has never been shaken. One stands out of all the teachings he learned in his life: God's faithfulness to us does not depend on whether we deserve it, for in reality, none of us deserves anything from Him. His faithfulness depends on our belief in His Word. We can move mountains if we believe wholeheartedly in the Name of His Son. Herlander and

Suzana's daughter are living proof of this.

Is your home no longer a home? Has your family come to shambles due to addictions, miscommunication, betrayal, or sudden illness? Don't lose hope! Through the power of faith, your family can be restored and transformed. You don't give up on your dream of a happy family!

Join us this Sunday at 10 AM at a Universal Church near you to place your family in the Ark of Salvation.



Herlander met Suzana in Luanda, the capital of Angola, when they were both 21 years old. The couple started dating in 2017 and is in a happy union. "We became best friends with each other; our love grew day by day. We depended on each other and God. We're both problem solvers, so a mutual trust emerged amid day-to-day battles. One has always helped the other.

Herlander and Suzana decided to get married in 2018 at 22. However, they waited a few years to increase their family, as they were still young and wanted to get financial-

## FAMILY



## THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

**A**round the world, researchers have noticed a silent epidemic related to family estrangement. In the United States, a study published in 2020 found that more than one in four Americans said they had distanced themselves from a family member. In the United Kingdom, another survey had similar results. There, one in five individuals has experienced a division with a relative. The same scenario was also observed in Australia and Canada.

Research on the subject is still limited, but it suggests some reasons that increase the distance between parents and children, such as abuse from the father or mother at some period of life, whether physical, verbal, or emotional; parental divorce; and the difference in moral values. But it is necessary to understand that separation does not erase the past or solve problems; it simply "hides" them. As a result, they will always exist in the

thoughts of those involved. "The family has the function of providing emotional support to the child. So, the father and mother must give attention and love, have conversations, act respectfully, and establish limits; in other words, they provide a secure bond. And with this structure, this child will probably be an emotionally healthy adult", explains psychologist Camila Galhego.

Without this support network, the consequences are negative. "When we are missing a home, we see adults becoming ill because of a sick childhood. This adult is more likely to have depression, personality disorders, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. All of these disorders have a dysfunctional family environment behind them," she points out.

Today's world has offered many distractions that have distanced those who

live in the same house, such as technology, created to speed up processes to save time, which is actually consuming most people's days. Without realizing it, precious minutes with the family are lost due to social networks, games, or even series and movies. This new habit has even changed the family culture. The table, for example, has been used less and less to share meals.

"This excess of technology has removed the connection to the real world. And so, there is no time for conversation for the child to feel cared for. We have seen that children tend to isolate themselves because the parents are setting this example and not giving the child the necessary attention", comments the psychologist.

"Today, we see a family deconstruction and an appeal for people to invest in their career, in material things, in professional advancement, as if this would bring a solution to their lives. We favor your

personal growth, but there is no point in investing in your career and becoming a selfish, cold, aggressive, and depressed professional with nothing to offer society besides money and work. And the human being is more than money and work," he explained.

Recently, the news has been filled with announcements of famous people's divorces. And unfortunately, this type of breakup even affects how people think about relationships. Many come to believe that they weren't made to last. In practice, attacking the institution of "marriage" is imploding the family, as it is through this union that the family bond is born.

"People are discredited in the family; they are more individualistic, more selfish, and, unfortunately, they pay a high price for this too," commented Bishop Renato, who highlighted the large number of tragedies that occur among family members:

"They are people who do not have the knowledge to deal with problems within the home itself, and thus we see domestic and sexual violence, suicide, homicide."

The list of situations that can negatively affect a family is immense, and, in addition to all the examples mentioned above, there is also betrayal, addictions, illnesses, controversial ideologies and values, and distortion of the family created by God, among other factors. Therefore, those who love their home must take a stand to protect it.

Every Sunday, we dedicate a special moment of prayer for the families to receive God's blessings and protection. You and your family are invited to experience the peace God intends for your family.

# DRUGS WERE THE MAIN REASON FOR THE FIGHTS

Margarete's story reminds us of the importance of remaining in the Presence of God. It is because she began her journey of faith at a very young age but became enchanted by the world's offers and decided to turn her back on God. "I started to live with many friends, going to bars and nightclubs. I got into a relationship with a married man without knowing it, and when I wanted to leave him, he threatened me to the point of having to move house. A completely destroyed love life," she says.

With unresolved issues and driven by the desire to be happy, Margarete met Alexandro, her current husband. "After about a month of dating, we moved in together, and after two years, I discovered that he was a drug user, and he also grew marijuana and sold it. I was very nervous, but I didn't leave him." During

this period, she reportedly had two miscarriages until her first child was born.

Despite having "a traditional family," it had no structure for a child's development. Alexandro comments that he spent most of his time

## At the height of her despair, Margarete came towards her husband with a knife.

under the influence of drugs. "I used drugs so much that I remember little; I was constantly out of it," he explains. Drugs, therefore, were the main reason for the fights.

"When I got pregnant with my second daughter, I reached my limit. Tired of his rudeness, lack of attention, and drugs, I wanted to leave. I asked a neighbor for help to get back to my mother's house. He found out what I was going to do, became furious, and threatened to kill our son." At the height of her despair, Margarete came towards her husband with a knife, but, as she recalls: "He ran and got into the car. Even so, I punctured three tires on the vehicle and left home pregnant, with our young son, without money, aimless and hungry."

Immediate support was given precisely in a Universal Church. "I talked to the pastor, who gave us food. And we stayed there until night. At night, my husband appeared and asked to go home so the child wouldn't be left on the streets. So we went back," comments Margarete. However, attending church

opened her eyes to the need to change her life. It was then that she started fighting for her family. "First, I invested in my change, I gave my husband to the Altar, I trusted God, and He freed him," she guarantees.

Alexandro says what happened: "Her change and reactions caught my attention, and she had a different shine in her eyes. All of this made me want to change too. I started attending the Universal Church meetings with her. I removed from my life what was displeasing to God, such as addictions, bad habits, and friendships."

The family previously known



for destruction and fights has become a reference.

"We can say that we are happy and blessed. Today, my family and I are at the Altar; we depend on the Altar, and we are all involved with the things of God, including our children," concludes Margarete.



Patricia and Uemerson grew up in faith-based environments. However, even so, they went through difficult situations throughout their careers. Still, they persevered and grew closer to God instead of giving up.

"I lost my mother in April 2021, and in December of the same year, we were faced with a new health situation, this time with our youngest daughter, Rebeca. During pregnancy, it was identified that she had

an enlarged kidney. But, when she was born, we were surprised by her two enlarged kidneys and her difficulty breathing," comments Uemerson.

In total, the baby was hospitalized for 135 days in the ICU, and while fighting for her life, her parents also faced their conflicts. "She underwent two surgeries and was intubated five times, had a respiratory arrest and a hospital infection. It was a situation in which we depended on God, as not even the doctors had complete control of the situation," he says.

Another detail that affected Uemerson is that Rebeca was admitted to the same ICU where his mother died. "When I got to bed, I had several bad thoughts that I would lose Rebeca in the same way I had lost my mother. It was one of my saddest nights, but it was

## I had several bad thoughts that I would lose Rebeca in the same way I had lost my mother.

also when I asked God for strength. I remember feeling such great comfort that I had other thoughts and the strength to fight for her in the morning," he comments.

Patricia, on the other hand, faced her conflicts after having experienced a high-risk pregnancy, a complicated birth, and being discharged from the hospital without her daughter. "When I got home without Rebeca, I felt so bad; I was desperate. As much as I was firm in my faith, my emotional state was distressing. Seeing her crib empty was like a stab, then

questions came up like: 'Why am I going through this?', 'What sin did I commit?'" she recalls.

However, even in a delicate moment, Patricia understood that she could not give in to her feelings but needed to express her faith. "I said a very difficult prayer, asking God to restore her health or take her away because I didn't want her to suffer. We went to the ICU with the armor of faith, even going against the doctors, but we did not accept any limitations. Until she came home, and we had to set up a hospital structure in the first few months. But there we started to use faith more, and God performed the miracle throughout the first year of her life", says Patricia.

According to doctors, the child would not develop, as she did not have coordination in breathing to suck and swallow, causing malnutrition and

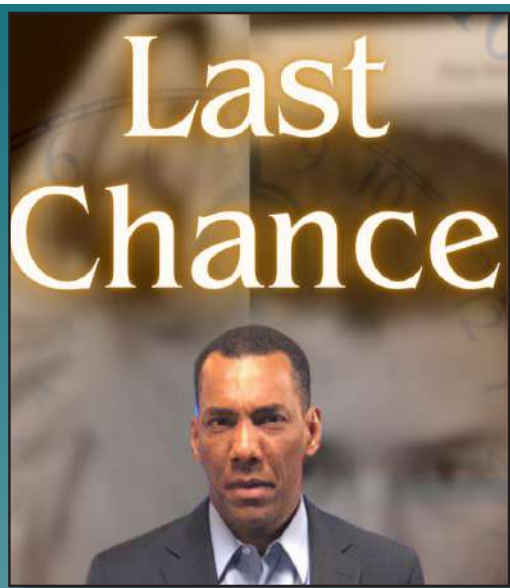
various neurological problems. "Faith made us go through things that for medicine are crazy, but today, Rebeca feeds through her mouth, has gained weight, learned to sit, crawl, walk, and roll over, can already speak a few words, and no longer needs the hospital structure we had at home. She came out of an apathetic situation and is now smart. The doctors accompanying her are surprised by her growth", says Patricia.

No one is exempt from difficulties, but those with God's protection know His Will is the best. "Having the Holy Spirit with us in this process was fundamental, as He made us see what no one else saw and to have hope. We were clear about what to do, how to act, and how to have strength. Only with God are we truly safe," says Uemerson.



# UNIVERSAL BEYOND BARS

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## THE U.L.E. IN ACTION!



UNIVERSAL IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

In January, the ULE (the Universal in Law Enforcement) dedicated that month to bringing together the officers from different precincts. The auxiliary officers are regular citizens of society who dedicate themselves to giving back to the community through their service. They do not have a weapon, but they serve as auxiliaries or assistants to the officers.

They were also invited to be a part of this movement to show them that we have noticed their sacrifice as well and appreciate them. The ULE distributed the Study Bibles to those that were present.



These auxiliary officers have voluntarily dedicated their service and time for more than ten years, which means they are not paid to do what they do, and they have done it with great joy to serve their community.



The ULE also connected with precinct 78, which got us into the local middle school. The YPG, together with the ULE, were able to go into the middle school and speak also to the youths there about bullying.

We had our Auxiliary Pastor talk to the youths and share his experience of how his life on the street and linked this with the topic of bullying. How many youths do wrong because of peer pressure?

How many youths get into gang violence because of being bullied?

The objective of the ULE is to connect the community we are in and bring everyone together.



We have associated with the precincts and the schools and united them with the church to receive God's word.



The ULE has expanded with more volunteers, so we can cater to more precincts and freely give the officers what we have also received. The smiles on the volunteers' faces are evidence of the joy it brings to serve and give back to others.



**"AND THE KING WILL ANSWER AND SAY TO THEM, 'ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, INASMUCH AS YOU DID IT TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YOU DID IT TO ME.'"**  
**MATTHEW 25:40**





## “ I THOUGHT THE SOLUTION WAS TO END IT ALL...”

**B**usinessman David Silva, 40 years old, arrived at Universal with his mother because they were experiencing family problems. “My mother listened to church programs a lot, and because she had a very troubled marriage, she started to attend meetings and took us,” he says.

I participated in meetings at Universal from 13 to 17 years old. Still, after that, David says he “revolted against God” due to disappointment and problems with his love life. “I met a girl from the church, I got along with her, and we married. However, it wasn’t easy. We fought a lot and broke up after three years together,” he recalls.

“Because of this frustration, I abandoned everything, including my faith, and began living without limits. “I went to try to fill that void I had in the world. I started to get involved with drugs and used cocaine, marijuana, and ecstasy pills.”

**GRADUALLY, DAVID’S LIFE WORSENERD, AND WHEN HE REALIZED IT, HE WAS ALREADY INVOLVED IN CRIME. “I STARTED STEALING AND JOINED ROBBERY GANGS. AS TIME PASSED, I JOINED ORGANIZED CRIME, WHICH ROBBED CARGO AND HOUSES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.”**

Along with partners in crime, David frequented houses of prostitution, which served as a place

of refuge for the group. “Since I lived with my mother, I didn’t want to cause problems for her, so my partners and I slept in a brothel. There, we slept with the girls and used a lot of drugs. I was arrested in 2005.



“The arrest was a reality check. I was imprisoned for a year. When I left there, I went to the country’s Northeast, found someone, married them, and then returned to my old City.”

What, until then, seemed like an opportunity to write a new story became another stage of wrong choices. “As I still had contact with people from my past, when I realized it, I was in crime again, but in a worse way. After all, I even became a manager of drug trafficking. In 2018, I was arrested again for cargo theft in my City and imprisoned for another year.”

David says that this period was his rock bottom, as he began to wish for death. “I thought God didn’t want me anymore, so I wanted to give up everything. I even looked at the prison windows and thought of hanging a rope and hanging myself”, he says, referring to the cell windows.



**DAVID BEFORE**

While David was in prison, his wife attended Universal and offered resolutions.

**And prayers for his transformation. After a year, he got his freedom and understood that he needed to return to God. “I received an invitation, through a video on Facebook, to a vigil. I arrived at the Temple to decide my life, and, at that moment, I received the embrace of Jesus, and everything changed.”**

Since then, David has always been different. “All my past is behind me. I freed myself from addictions, traumas, and emptiness and received the Holy Spirit. I have a full and happy life, a family, and a fulfilled financial life. Today, I bring the Word of God to people like I was one day”, he concludes.



**DAVID AFTER**

“I’m tired of it here, I wish it would end, all of it...”

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- First/Last Name, Inmate ID Number
- Facility, City/State/Zip Code

## STAY ENCOURAGED WITH DAILY PROGRAMS

Genesis follows the lives of Adam and Eve, Noah and his family, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob (who God renamed as Israel), to Joseph, who was taken from slavery to become ruler of Egypt. (9pm ET)



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 2pm with Pastor Edwin

**BREAKING THE SILENCE | 3pm**

**FIGHTING THE UNSEEN ENEMY**  
 4pm with Bishop David

**MOSES & THE TEN**  
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**GENESIS | 9pm**

**THE RICH AND LAZARUS | 11pm**

**LET THERE BE LIGHT**  
 12am with Pastor Samuel



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# WHAT DO YOU DO TO PURSUE YOUR GOALS AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

SEE WHAT IT TAKES TO STAY FOCUSED AND MAKE YOUR PLANS COME TRUE.

FIND OUT HOW...

**G**isele Rocha, 41 years old and a lawyer, is an example of someone who persevered to achieve her goals. But, to have this understanding, she went through some setbacks. “I arrived at the Universal Church counting pennies and depending on family. I can’t remember going into a store and buying an outfit for my son when he was little because I didn’t have money,” she says.

Gisele reveals that she had a job at a company in the sales area, but it was not her dream job. “I was studying Law and concluded that I would have to invest in this area to be happy. I resigned from the job I had been working for ten years and went to work in my mother’s office. I learned the Law, graduated and passed the ninth exam of the Bar Association. I was among the 7% approved in the country. Then, with the death of my mother, I took over the office, but I began to doubt that I would be capable of running the enterprise. I thought about selling everything and going back to work as an employee. Still, in the “Strong Nation” meetings, I realized that I couldn’t waste the chance God gave me,” she says.

Gisele accepted the challenge of keeping her mother’s clients and gaining new ones through discipline and



and pursuing her goals. She and her husband, Marcelo, are partners and guarantee that the family’s life has changed. “He takes care of the administrative side, and I take care of the legal side. We have two lawyers and two interns who work with us. Marcelo is also a broker; therefore, we are structuring ourselves to open our real estate agency soon,” she plans.

promised. The positive reward will motivate you to do what you proposed initially. And don’t forget that it’s important to learn to make choices. Let go of what is not essential.



#### Tips to start your own business:

Start with simple and practical goals to gain self-confidence, such as punctuality. Don’t leave specific day-to-day tasks for later. If your goal is to have new behaviors, such as being organized or seeking new customers, choose an example to follow. Observe other people’s actions and try to imitate what you admire in them. Each day you waste is a step backward. So, don’t give laziness a chance. Commit to your goals. You will gain more respect and admiration if you do what you

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