

Bridgeway Community Church
Series: Conversations of Hope
Interview by Dr. David Anderson with Nona Jones
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Conversations of HOPE

With Nona Jones

DA: “How did you come to know the Lord? How did that happen?”

Nona: “The way I like to describe myself: I am a statistically improbable product of grace.”

Grew up in a traumatic situation:

- physical & sexual abuse
- neglect
- mother has/had mental illness
- attempted suicide at the age of 9 & 11

A classmate invited her to church. She did NOT grow up in a Christian home and had no idea what church is.

First sermon she heard was how God is a father to the fatherless.

- Father had died just before her 2 years old birthday. She had always longed/cried for her father.
- Who is this God?!

After being discipled, a year later she accepted Jesus as the Lord of my life. “God has been the father I always wanted.”

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

DA: “Did you feel a call to ministry at a young age or did it evolve?”

Nona: “I did although I didn’t quite know what that meant.”

At 16 she felt called to preach and her pastor mentored her and was licensed at 17.

DA: “Where is that intersection of being called to ministry and at the same time you’re maturing as a person? Did you find any conflict there?”

Nona: Was on fire for God while in college. But in her second year she started to pull away from God, had joined a sorority and got into parties as fundraisers. It was part of the maturing process for her.

“It really is knowing who you believe and trust in for real...But Do you know God for real? So much so that you don’t see any other options because he is the best there is.”

DA: You also have been moved into a time of leadership development...don’t you run an institute now for that?

Nona: It’s called the Nona Jones Leadership Academy. She does what she calls “trauma informed leadership.”

- she became an executive in a Fortune 500 company at 23
- experienced seasons of feeling empty, felt worthless, didn’t matter
- had material success but not peace or joy or the fruit of the Spirit

“There was pain in my past that was showing up in my present. There were some ramifications of things I had dealt with that were having residual impact on my ability to enjoy the success that God gave me.”

“Trauma Informed Leadership is really my approach to helping people heal where success won’t help and that’s my mission.”

RESOURCE: her book: [Success from the Inside Out: Power to Rise from the Past to a Fulfilling Future](#)

“Success is not something you attain, it is something you discover.”

Her favorite verse in the Bible:

Joshua 1:7-8 NKJV

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

v. 8 - “good success” - there is a success that is NOT good! It comes with pain, frustration and resentment.

DA: You wrote another book: From Social Media to Social Ministry: A Guide to Digital Discipleship. Can you explain what “digital discipleship” means?

Nona: “Digital discipleship is taking the tools that technology offers and translating them into a relational context.”

A lot of medias that are called “social media” are NOT social media. They are “broadcast media.”

- **Social** media fosters communication between and among people - engagement, interaction, connections, create relationships
- **Broadcast** media allows you to send a message from yourself to a group of people - telling people what you want them to hear

“Discipleship is just the relational maturation of your faith.”

“Social ministry is really about helping people use technology to disciple other people.”

DA: Don't you believe that Christianity is more than just believing and having a personal relationship with God? It really is about belonging too, isn't it?

Nona: “Absolutely. The truth is that's what actually separates Christianity from other faiths.”

- her FaceBook team supports other faiths: Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, etc.
- they are very individualistic and don't require fellowship
- Christianity has at its center not forsaking fellowship

Acts 2:42

And they [the church] continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Jesus is the model of this by pulling in others and preparing them to carry on after he departs.

Jesus talks about a kingdom which implies others.

DA: What do you think of Factional Faith - not just one group in the Kingdom, but we are in groups, as race, politics, etc.?

Nona: Satan's strategy is to divide and create division. It is a spiritual tactic.

How have Christians put their politics in front of their faith - "Conservative Christians?"
- conservative first, Christian second

"If I just put a little bit of morality off in the corner, I can get power. But God has never asked us to walk in power. He has always asked us to walk in authority and authority comes from the word of God. The moment that we decide that the word of God is no longer our guide - the talking points are our guide, the senator is our guide, or even the president is our guide...we'll try to fit the Bible into what they say and that's what creates hypocrisy."

"As a church we have done generations worth of damage over the last few years."

DA: Do you think that online is a place where people can find belonging?

Nona: Yes, but with some guardrails.

"I don't think it is ever good to be in a room with people who agree with everything you say because we only grow when we're challenged."

DA: Do you think there is hope? I know we are not supposed to despair. What word of hope do you have for us?

Nona: "As long as there is Jesus, there is hope."

I have hope because I see people who realize this isn't right and will work on behalf of change.

Satan always tries to make it seem he has more power than he does - a few thousand people over run the Capitol...out of 300 million people. That doesn't mean he's won.

God ALWAYS has a remnant and that is what gives me hope even if I might feel lonely and isolated sometimes.

- Jesus hung on the cross as only PART of the story

DA: What do you think of Gracism? Multicultural ministry?

Nona: I love the posture and the thought of gracism because grace is the divine power of God to change situations. That's what we need!

- racism is so foundational to this founding of the country

She has founded an organization called Faith & Prejudice

- equipping the church to confront and dismantle systemic racism in America
- the church must lead as this issue
- politics will not solve this problem

Prejudice: is an emotional commitment to ignorance

“This is why God compels us to forsake darkness. He compels us to forsake ignorance.”

- learning to walk in the way of truth/light

People resist systemic racism because you are attacking their identity, you are saying they are not superior/biological superior.

DA: What do you say to the white brothers and sisters that want to be helpful, hear what you're saying and do something about it?

Nona: Energy is needed in the LOCAL communities.

- supporting education in predominately black communities
- local state's attorney on their policy on incarcerating black people
- support black owned businesses