Randy Frazee:

You're listening to the Bible Roots Podcast with Pastor Randy Frazee. If you're a church leader looking for creative ideas to help your church engage more deeply with the Bible, this podcast is for you. Now, for today's episode.

Randy Frazee:

Welcome everybody to the Bible Roots Podcast. I'm Randy Frazee, the host of this awesome brand new podcast. It is devoted to the topic of Bible engagement. Why? Because Bible engagement is the number one catalyst for spiritual growth with no close second. I encourage you to check out episode one where we lay out the case for this discovery. If you're a pastor or responsible for leading people spiritually, this podcast is for you. We encourage you, if you like it, to share with other people you know.

Randy Frazee:

Today, I am so excited. I have been waiting for this, to have a conversation with my good friend, Dr. Nicole Martin from the American Bible Society. Welcome, Nicole.

Nicole Martin:

Thank you, Randy. So great to be on with you today.

Randy Frazee:

It is so exciting. You got the coolest smile on the planet.

Nicole Martin:

Oh, you're so great.

Randy Frazee:

We have so much fun together. Hey, tell us a little bit about yourself, your journey and what ultimately led you to American Bible Society. Let everyone get to know you a little bit better who doesn't.

Nicole Martin:

Sure. Again, thank you so much. I am excited to be on this podcast with you. Just being here reminds me of my very first podcast, which was with Eric Rochester in Kansas City.

Randy Frazee:

Is that right?

Nicole Martin:

This brings back sweet memories for me. I got started with American Bible Society in 2016. At that time, I was serving as a Charlotte mobilizer, where we started working with bringing churches together in the city and then after that, God opened the doors for me to serve more fully at American Bible Society, serving our US ministry strategy and then our trauma healing ministry. Now currently serving as the senior vice president of ministry impact. In this place, I get to oversee all of the wonderful things that God is doing through ministry impact at ABA, the armed services, our faith and liberty Bible distribution, trauma healing, and our digital Bible lab. But more importantly, I have a six and an eight year old who are amazing, and I have been married for 11 years to this great man of God, Mark Martin. And I love Jesus and that's what matters. That's what matters.

Randy Frazee:

You have a busy, busy life. Man, I didn't realize just since 2016. Wow, you've just over the course of these few years, you've just rocketed into this space.

Nicole Martin:

Yeah, by the grace of God. That's right.

Randy Frazee:

Yeah, as a matter of fact, when we set this out, you had shifted from working with cities to trauma healing, and I didn't even realize that you had made this next move, so we're going to expand our conversation. This would be a seven hour podcast for people to listen as they drive across America. No, we'll keep it going. But we have so much to talk about. I want to start with the topic of Bible engagement because when we first met, I remember in one of the first talks you gave, you gave your idea of what we mean by Bible engagement. You had an idea. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Nicole Martin:

Absolutely. Around, let's see, probably around 2017, early '18, our ministry intelligence unit began to work with other Bible engagement partners to figure out what exactly do we mean, how do you measure scripture engagement? They came out after conversations with many partners, with three core areas. Bible engagement is defined as around frequency, centrality and morality. Bible engagement is defined as how frequently we read the Bible, how central the Bible is to the choices that we make, and how the Bible shapes our moral choices in relationships. Frequency, centrality, morality, which essentially means how frequently, how it affects our choices and how it affects our relationships.

Randy Frazee:

Yeah, because Bible engagement just to make you smarter isn't really the goal of this thing, right?

Nicole Martin:

Exactly.

Randy Frazee:

You got to measure how it's changing your character, how it's moving you.

Nicole Martin:

That's right.

Randy Frazee:

Well, when we first met, which was in Kansas City, you were doing a lot of city stuff. I know you'd worked in Charlotte and that's where you started working with Eric Rochester from The Sending Project. I was rolling into town March of 2018.

Nicole Martin:

That's right.

Randy Frazee:

I was just getting into town, Kansas City, for the first time and got to be at several gatherings with you specifically. I remember that as you were doing this work in the city, which I want you to tell more about what you were trying to do in the city of Kansas City, and then specifically talk about the state of the Bible back then, which was done on Kansas City specifically because it had a great impact on me. What were you doing in cities and tell us about that state of the Bible in Kansas City.

Nicole Martin:

Absolutely. I totally remember that meeting because it was one of the first meetings I had outside of Charlotte. I remember thinking, "This guy is brand new to the city and already he's doing unity movements." You were doing the one campaign and you were pulling people together and you were an early adopter for Bible engagement. At that time we were working through a set of research. We were testing a set of research against the church to see does this make sense? It was around Bible search terms, Bible engagement trends, and in Kansas City in particular, I remember we were looking at what are the most searched terms or subjects or questions that people were asking about the Bible in Kansas City? I distinctly remember that dinosaurs was one of the top searches in Kansas City and people were wondering.

Nicole Martin:

It caused us to lean in. Well, what is prompting this exploration of the Bible and dinosaurs? How do we shape curriculum and tools to give to the church so that this can be a relevant form of Bible engagement? Through our look inside campaign at that time, and now as we fast forward to church engagement, the goal is still the same. How do we engage people in the Bible? And we have this crazy goal, we want to see 100 million Americans engaged in the Bible by 2033. It's crazy, the studies show that there are approximately on any given day, approximately 60 to 65 million Americans in the pathway of scripture engagement, lined someplace from midway engaged to Bible centered. We're really talking about 40 million Americans are in what we call the moveable middle. Any given day, they can decide with a friend, by an invitation from a pastor, 40 million Americans on any given day can say, "Yeah, I think I'll lean in and read the Bible." Or they can say, "I'm becoming Bible disengaged. I'm becoming a Bible skeptic. I've seen enough, I've heard enough. I'm done with that book."

Randy Frazee:

Yeah, that's an amazing goal and I'm so excited about that. I'm assuming it's connected to 2033 because of the desire to have the Bible, at least a portion of the Bible in every language on the planet. It's connected.

Nicole Martin:

Absolutely.

Randy Frazee:

We don't just have the word of God whether in written or audio form, but we also have a movement that causes people to engage it. I think that's really important because a lot of people are not sure what to do just with the Bible. When I was a young kid and my grandmother got me a King James version of the Bible, I knew it was a special book, but by myself, I didn't have any idea what to do with it. I'd open up and read it and had no idea what I was reading. We need to help.

Randy Frazee:

Oh, by the way, I wanted mention the thing on dinosaurs if I could for a second. The reason I think that's so fascinating that you mention that is because oftentimes that would be the last thing that I would teach on as a pastor. I'm like, "I'm not going to teach on dinosaurs. I'm just not going to do it." But that's what the people are most interested in and I think that's the beauty of this research.

Nicole Martin:

That's exactly right and when you think about where people are and where the church is, sometimes there's an unintentional disconnect. What the research is showing us now, people will get their answers. Christians want to get their answers from the church. But if the pastor isn't preaching on tattoos, if nobody in the church is talking about dinosaurs, they're going to go to Google and let's pray that whatever comes up is theologically accurate and Biblically sound. Nine times out of 10, it's probably not.

Randy Frazee:

I think that's fascinating. A good takeaway, particularly if you're a Kansas City pastor, probably would work in other cities as well, is work up a 2022 series on what the Bible says about dinosaurs.

Nicole Martin:

There you go.

Randy Frazee:

The kids are going to love it.

Nicole Martin:

Perfect.

Randy Frazee:

Now, one of the things I remember in the study is that it showed that there's a lot of people that desire to engage the Bible, but the number one obstacle for them was simply margin and time.

Nicole Martin:

There you go.

Randy Frazee:

It wasn't rocket science, they just said, "It's not that we are disinterested in the Bible, we are just trying to get through the day and the day's all used up and we're exhausted before the end of it." That led us as a church in my first year here to say, "If Bible engagement's the number one catalyst for spiritual growth and the number one obstacle according to the study that you guys did, American Bible Society, in Kansas City is a margin issue, then we need to speak to this margin issue." As you know, we did a financial piece, as well as a time margin in partnership with Dave Ramsey and the results were phenomenal. But my initial spark to lead 110 churches in that effort was reading that study that you guys did on something as simple as margin.

Nicole Martin:

Yes. Well, that is exactly what we're hoping to do. We just want to provide resources for pastors to know how to navigate through this. Our state of the Bible research is what I keep referring to, what you and I are talking about. We did one for 2021 and it found some of the same types of trends and a few different ones. One trend was, you're right, the number one barrier to Bible engagement is time, followed by I don't understand it. Why don't people read the Bible? Because they don't make time and I'm careful to say make time, because we have the same amount of time, we just don't make it. Then the second part is I don't understand it. This gets into translations, this gets into application of the Bible. How do we help the average person who's in that Bible center, that middle ground, the movable middle? How do we help them to see that the Bible is relevant? And the research shows it depends on the generation.

Randy Frazee:

Really?

Nicole Martin:

Younger generations want to see the Bible relevant in issues that affect them every day. They want to see the Bible speaking to what's happening with issues of justice, they want to see the Bible speaking to what's happening with the racial divides in this country. Older generations want to see the Bible as relevant for how to leave a legacy, how to steward your money, how to do more of the individual life. The research shows us, we've got to spread a very wide tent of relevance so that every generation can at the end of the day say, "This book is for me." That's the key because the number one reason why people do read the Bible is because it draws them closer to God.

Randy Frazee:

Yeah, once they get into it. But they're a little bit overwhelmed with it, aren't they?

Nicole Martin:

Absolutely.

Randy Frazee:

I think that's really helpful. As a pastor, I have both of those generations sitting in front of me and I have to speak to both of them. That's really fascinating. Maybe sometimes the answer is not just your sermon because a lot of times as a lead pastor, we're thinking it's all about your sermon, but there's just so many other ways to engage the Bible that's really more targeted to the particular generation you're talking to.

Nicole Martin:

Well said.

Randy Frazee:

Yeah, good stuff. Okay, that's helpful, way helpful. Okay, I'm already getting some new ideas here.

Nicole Martin:

So great.

Randy Frazee:

This is great when you benefit from the conversation. I was like, "Yeah, this is like a counseling session."

Nicole Martin:

That's really great.

Randy Frazee:

Consulting session for sure. Hey, let's talk a little bit about trauma healing because that may be a new category for a lot of people. It was a very new category for me when I stepped into Kansas City and first met you and the trauma healing work that's going on here. Tell us a little bit about what trauma healing and Bible engagement have to do with each other?

Nicole Martin:

Man, I'm so glad you asked that question. We get that question all the time. Why is a Bible society engaging in trauma healing? Well, two main truths. Number one: trauma is a barrier to engaging in God's word. And number two: at times, if God can use us to create the atmosphere well, trauma can be one of the main catalysts to Bible engagement. Again, back to this movable middle. The majority of people who are not engaging with God's word have had some incident, some situation, some trauma that they have endured that's caused them to believe that God was not there. At the same time, those who are deeply clinging to the word of God have had some experience where they realized if it wasn't for God, I would have nothing left.

Nicole Martin:

This for me is deeply theological because our faith is wrapped around trauma. The trauma of the cross is what draws all of us together. It's what makes us realize that we're broken people. It's Paul calling out in Romans seven, "Who shall save me from this life of sin?” But then resurrection comes and says, It's Christ who saves and not just saves, but it's Christ who heals. So trauma healing becomes a beautiful accompaniment, for example, to translation. Once a Bible is translated in a language that people can understand, it now needs to be accompanied by a healing mechanism. It is a beautiful agent in the US. I was looking at an article just today, Randy. It was a New York Times article about, I think the headline, I'm looking at it now, it said, "Why 1,320 therapists are worried about mental health in America right now." They are saying that the demand for mental health resources in the US is exceeding the capacity.

Randy Frazee:

Hi, this is Randy Frazee, host of the Bible Roots podcast, which is brought to you by my friends at Harper Christian Resources. Harper Christian Resources equips you to understand the scriptures, cultivate spiritual growth and disciple your people with Bible study resources from today's most trusted voices.

Nicole Martin:

Well, here's the church, we have the word of healing. We know the balm in Gilead. We have the resources to help lead someone to healing waters so that they can see a counselor and trauma healing strives to do that. To help people to see that there is healing available in God's word.

Randy Frazee:

Man, that is so, so powerful. So well said and it so matches up with my 30 plus years of pastoring. To be honest with you, I sometimes almost wish upon some people to have a trauma or issue in their life because it's the greatest opportunity. I said, "If I could orchestrate and not go to jail, I would orchestrate a trial in your life because it makes you the most receptible to the word of God." Or, like you say, or it could actually turn you the other way. Can you give an example, because I have an example in my own personal life of trauma and Bible engagement. I mean, you have a specific example of somebody? What the trauma was and how the Bible helped them?

Nicole Martin:

Yes.

Nicole Martin:

It doesn't have to be a specific person, but just an example.

Nicole Martin:

Absolutely. Two bits of research here, one is the trauma monograph, which is available on Barna Access. ABS sponsored the trauma monograph in 2019. Little did we know we were coming into a trauma pandemic, but that talks a little bit about what are the top traumas that people face. I'm thinking of Henry Blackaby, that crossroad where you have to decide or one thing that creates a crisis of a loved one. The second, interestingly enough, betrayal. That comes with all kinds of betrayal. Wrapped into that is what people would say is betrayal by a leader, a pastor or a church. Then the three, four and five examples were around abuse. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, child abuse, and all of the categories they're in.

Nicole Martin:

It's not the event itself that's traumatic, it's the effect of the event. It's the effect of the trauma, how it keeps you up at night, how it makes you feel nervous or triggered by something else. That's what the research says. But personally I think of two examples that we have one internationally and one domestically. Just very briefly, our trauma healing ministry has been around for 11 years, it's been around for 21 years internationally. We've got 20,000 facilitators, one of our strongest cities for trauma healing facilitators is Kansas City. I am so, so proud of that, go Kansas City!

Randy Frazee:

Yes. Go Chiefs, go trauma healing.

Nicole Martin:

Exactly right. But I can think about there were some partners in Kansas City who went to get trained in Charlotte about five years ago. Five years ago, Eric Rochester took a few people to be trained in Charlotte on trauma healing. The reason why is because as they were doing some church engagement and mission work, they wanted a tool to bring to their mission work, but they also wanted a tool to connect the church. That's why people getting trained led to now 80 facilitators across churches in Kansas City in a movement to bring healing to the city. When there were issues with race, when there were political divides, they were able to bring in resources like generational trauma healing and lead healing groups about race or lead healing groups in loss with those who've lost loved ones in COVID. It's a beautiful way to see this is a tool that helps equip the church bring healing.

Nicole Martin:

Internationally, I'll never forget the story of healing group and I want to say it was in Uganda. We've got about 65 Bible societies around the world who are doing trauma healing. We've always seen trauma healing as a resource for believers. Once you believe in Christ, you may have a barrier to engaging in God's word, this can help; healing group. He's a lawyer and he wasn't a Christian, was a Muslim, but he wasn't a Christian. And at the end of the healing group, he said, "Tell me about this Jesus, because I've never experienced anything like this before."

Nicole Martin:

This is a resource that helps people to see Jesus, whether they have walked with him for years and years and have faced a trauma or whether they've never known Jesus for themselves. It's a resource to see the healer and I think it's a very, very powerful thing, especially now.

Randy Frazee:

I was thinking how brilliant it was that you got involved in trauma healing right before a global pandemic.

Nicole Martin:

Oh, my gosh. Seriously.

Randy Frazee:

Okay, there is a God. He is really superseding and putting you in this spot where you're thinking, "Okay, God. I know for sure you want me to do this." I have to tell you, Nicole, I mean, I think we are years away from understanding how devastating these last 24 months have been.

Nicole Martin:

Absolutely right.

Randy Frazee:

Don't you think so?

Nicole Martin:

Absolutely, absolutely.

Randy Frazee:

Go ahead.

Nicole Martin:

No, no, just amen to that.

Randy Frazee:

It's overwhelming. When you say a resource, is there a possibility that someone listening, their church could tap in to becoming facilitators? Is there curriculum? What does it involve?

Nicole Martin:

All of that, yes, yes, yes. Traumahealinginstitute.org is our website and this website will allow you to do several things. First, if you go to the events page, you can join a healing group. That is the first step to training. Anyone who wants to be trained should join a group and that healing group lasts anywhere from six to eight weeks. You get a book, the book is right here next to me, it is a book on healing the wounds of trauma. It's just an easy book that was written by missionaries who have come together to really dig into how God's word helps us to bring our pain to the cross and be reconciled with each other. That's the first thing.

Nicole Martin:

Then after you've done a healing group, there may be some who say, "I feel called to lead a healing group." We call that an equipping session. We have an initial equipping session, they take place over a weekend. They take place maybe over two or three days and you can be trained to be a facilitator right now, there is nothing stopping you. And because of COVID, there are groups happening in person, there's a ton of them happening in Kansas City, but then they're also happening virtually. We've got partners all around the world who are offering these equipping groups.

Nicole Martin:

When I first started trauma healing, true confessions, Randy, I was just getting to know what this program was all about. I was like, "What is this?" So I did a healing group myself and at the end of the healing group, I was like, "Oh, my gosh. I have to tell my church." I mean, I work at ABS, but I wanted my local church to know about it. I am so proud to tell you, we have done our first set of four healing groups, they were maxed out. We've got a waiting list of people who want to be in healing groups for the reason you just named; the impact of this pandemic. We're just going to see it for years.

Randy Frazee:

I learned about it from you as you brought it to Kansas City, and it's brilliant because the most effective ministry I've ever seen is when you start with where a person's at, particularly their point of pain and that's what this is doing.

Nicole Martin:

That's right, absolutely right.

Randy Frazee:

Okay, we'll link to all of that you just mentioned in the show notes so people don't have to go back and rewind and listen to all of this. That's really pretty cool.

Randy Frazee:

Last thing I wanted to cover, I want to talk about Bible engagement in the African American community. Then with a few minutes, maybe some of those 100 other categories of things that you lead nationally now, if you have any highlights that you want to talk about. But I want to talk about this. I think this is a much more pertinent conversation today than it was two years ago. Not only is the African American interested in this, but I can tell you there's a lot of pastors who are white that are desperately wanting to understand this because apparently we're coming to the grips with the fact that there's just things we didn't understand.

Randy Frazee:

The first question I have, and we can go in any direction we want, but what can you tell us about Bible engagement within the African American community? I know you guys have done some research on that.

Nicole Martin:

Yes, we have and we just in 2020... No, it was this year, 2021. We completed a study with Barna on the state of the Black church. We were part of several partners that came together to do this work and it was really eye-opening. What we knew on the ABS side through the state of the Bible research is African Americans tend to be a very highly Bible engaged demographic. Over the past 11 years of our research, they tend to be very Bible engaged. When we talk about that crisis of belief, you can argue that African Americans, especially Black people in America, that the trauma and the challenges that they face have caused them to lean, to cling on the Bible as a source of life. This has been a part of, I think, the Black experience for a long time.

Nicole Martin:

This past year, the documentary came out on the Black church documentary and it was a great way to see just this progression of how Bible engagement has been a source for keeping people through several major turning points in history. But what the state of the Black church research showed us was while in other cultures, and I think predominantly white churches in general, while the trust between the pastor and the congregation tends to be going down in some cases, in the Black church it's going up.

Randy Frazee:

No kidding.

Nicole Martin:

Yes. Actually, the actual statistic here, there was a question in the research that asked, it was like, "To what extent do you agree with this statement?" And the question was the pastors of African American churches are the most important leaders within the Black community. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Younger generations, Gen Z were almost 50% in agreement that is absolutely true. When we talked to pastors about this they were like, "You got to be kidding me. I feel like I'm losing ground with the next generation."

Nicole Martin:

But this research shows no, younger generations, specifically in African American communities, are still looking to the pastor to have a word. They're looking for someone to lead the charge. They're looking for someone to stand in the midst of the battle to say, "There's a word from the Lord." It was highly encouraging in that way and it also revealed some of the same struggles that Black churches are still struggling with. Low church attendance, Black churches are still struggling with this having to navigate how do you do politics and faith and presence and pastoral presence in these challenging times? So lots to cover, but I think a lot of good insight came from that.

Randy Frazee:

No, and is that something that we can also link in the show notes is access to how to get ahold of that?

Nicole Martin:

Yes, of course. Absolutely.

Randy Frazee:

I think that would be valuable not only for again, our African American pastors and leaders that are listening, but for others to have a better understanding and also particularly what we can learn. Because it is true, you can sense this within the predominantly white communities. There's just that sense that the trust with the pastor is going down. There's been a lot of challenges in the last couple years with the celebrity pastor that is rightfully causing people to wonder what the heck is going on here?

Randy Frazee:

What would be your word? I mean, I think you just already said one, maybe you have another one. What would be the word of encouragement you would have for the African American pastor and leader? Then what would be the number one thing that they could focus on or challenge for them?

Nicole Martin:

Yeah. Well, I think one thing to just keep in mind is there was a question on Black adults on church priorities. The question was around what should churches prioritize? What should predominantly Black churches prioritize? The question was, should it be social issues, should it be spiritual issues or should it be both? They polled all Black adults and then they polled all Black churchgoers. Seventy-one percent of all Black adults said it needs to be both, 79% of all Black churchgoers said it needs to be both. I would say to Black pastors, don't be afraid to lean in. You don't have to prescribe. You don't have to have all the answers, but the communities are expecting you to be present. They are expecting that you will be present when there is a tragedy. They're expecting that you will be present when it's time for hard conversations.

Nicole Martin:

I would say for pastors, regardless of their race and nationality, younger generations aren't looking for pastors to have the right answers. They're just looking for pastors to show up. They want to see you present and whatever that looks like to say, "Listen, I don't know how to show up well here, but I do know how to grieve and lament, and I'm going to show up to grieve and lament."

Randy Frazee:

With that, there's a lot of authenticity because authenticity doesn't put up a front that you have all the answers or that you have to talk pastorally. Which is really a great relief to say, "I don't have to have it all together." That's what our people are looking for. Wow! That's a pretty powerful thing, because it has been increasingly more challenging. My African American friends here in Kansas City, the church attendance thing has been a challenge for them.

Nicole Martin:

Yes it has.

Randy Frazee:

And they get a little frustrated too sometimes because they see their members going to other things.

Nicole Martin:

That's right, but not coming to church.

Randy Frazee:

Without coming to church. It's like, "You weren't all that into us, I guess," or whatever really what it was. Particularly John Brooks of Macedonia, he and I have been buddies for the whole time that I've been here and just learning from him and leaning into that balance between not being completely on the social justice side, but being gospel centric and really trying to bridge those things together has been a challenge. Which goes back to Bible engagement. He says, "I got to keep my people in the word of God, because we're never going to figure this political thing out." I think that's a real challenge. That's good stuff.

Randy Frazee:

Okay, there's two questions that I like to ask each of my guests. I'm going to give you the questions. You said this in relationship to the African American community, but what is your greatest frustration? This is where being authentic, if you could be Queen Nicole for the day, whatever you said, every church would do to the best of their ability. What's the thing, maybe your greatest frustration as you've worked with cities, you've worked with churches, you've come up all this stuff with Bible engagement, what is it we're missing? What is it that we are failing to do? Just that one thing that you said, "Wow, we probably should edit this out," but we're not going to. Just speak to us boldly. Come on, be prophet Nicole.

Nicole Martin:

Yeah. Man, I think there are a couple of things swirling in my mind. I'm trying to decide which one is the more important. But I would say in the world that I'm in, in para church world there's a tension and a frustration in para church world that says, "We deeply believe in the church." Then we get into the church engagement and we're trying to bring pastors together and we're trying to bring churches together and then in the back of your mind you're like, "This would be so much easier if I just went and worked with a corporate organization," or, "This would be so much easier if I just went with another para church organization or a Christian business or something." But I think the world, the church, the pastor would be so much better off if they deeply believed that God's calling for the church is true. God is coming back to redeem the church.

Nicole Martin:

I am not going to preach this sermon, but I do want pastors and churches to remember that despite the rise and fall, despite the mental health issues, despite the challenges and the brokenness of this world, you are still the source of healing. So if I had to choose, do you want to invest in the women's tea or do you want to invest in a time of consecration and pray over the city? Pray over the city, be the beacon of the city. Nobody else can do what you do. One hundred union organizations can do a women's tea and there's nothing wrong with women's tea, I actually have a cup of tea and I am a woman and I love women's tea. But I wish we could see that New Testament Pauline urgency in the church that says, "I have got to be about my father's business. I've got to equip this world for the coming of Jesus Christ."

Nicole Martin:

Because if the church doesn't do it, no one else can. There's so many pressures on pastors, there's so many pressures to adopt a new program or go down this new techy way or try a cool way, but at the end of the day, making disciples and nobody else can do that but the church.

Randy Frazee:

Yeah. What I'm hearing you say is be courageous because you've got the blood of Jesus on your side. You've got all of this on your side, don't back down. Because I think we've lost a little confidence, Nicole. We've lost a little confidence and what you're telling us, you lack your confidence but you got a God who gave his son for this thing called his bride.

Nicole Martin:

Yes, amen.

Randy Frazee:

What would be your biggest encouragement? When you look at churches, particularly in America and you can go international as well. Because obviously you wake up every day and you work with a lot of wonderful organizations, but you also work with the church, what's the thing that says, "Wow, this is pretty encouraging." What do you see?

Nicole Martin:

Yeah. I have seen so much encouragement in the way that pastors and churches have been able to pivot over these last two years. I have seen pastors who would never do Zoom, buy tripods and put a phone in the middle of the little ring light and preach the gospel. I have seen my grandmother learn how to get on a streaming service so that she could be in church online. I have seen pastors who are used to a call and response, used to preaching and hearing back, adapt to preaching on a screen where nobody says, "Amen," and you don't know if this sermon is getting anywhere. I think this adaptability shows that we recognize the sign of the times. We recognize that there's no such thing as church as usual. Every day, every month, every generation is going to call us to pivot and I have been so encouraged by churches who are standing up to that challenge.

Randy Frazee:

That's a great word of encouragement and we need to hear from someone like you who sees the whole picture, that concept, the truth that the message has stayed the same, but the methods can pivot. As long as we keep that in mind, we don't change the core of what the Bible's telling us, but the methods we keep adapting and the church will flourish. We know in the end we win, so we should walk around like we're winners for sure.

Nicole Martin:

That's right, that's right. I agree.

Randy Frazee:

Nicole, there's a lot of other areas you work in or just anything that we didn't talk about or anything you want to tell us about before we wrap up?

Nicole Martin:

Oh, my gosh. So many things, but I think the biggest thing is I want to extend an invitation. I would love to personally host you and any of your listeners at our Faith and Liberty Discovery Center in Philadelphia. We have invested in this advocacy effort to help shine a light on the Bible's role in our country. The good things and the challenging aspects, the ways that we have been forging ahead in some beautiful ways and the ways that maybe we've misstepped. But the point is the Bible is there and I would be so honored to have you there. We have a website, we'll make sure you have that, Faith and Liberty Discovery Center. But we want to see people come and experience [inaudible 00:35:32].

Randy Frazee:

Is that a specific event or is it just something you can come to at any time?

Nicole Martin:

You can come to at any time. You can bring family and friends, it is open all year long. We just opened our doors in July of this past year, which is crazy in a pandemic. Who would do that? But sometimes you just got to go where God is calling and we felt called to make this happen. Anytime we'd love to have you there.

Randy Frazee:

Thank you, Nicole. Well, we'll put that in the show notes as well. Well, thank you so much for being with me today, Nicole. I knew before we even scheduled this, if I could just get Nicole, you will fire the audience up. I remember the first time I heard you speak. It was actually a prayer with The Sending Project and we all had five minutes or three minutes and I'd done my thing. Then you got up and you said one of the closing prayers and I turned to my wife and I said, "Okay, that gal, she's got it going on." You just prayed and inspired us. Every time you speak, Nicole, God's hand is on you.

Randy Frazee:

Congratulations for just the new role that you have. I can't think of a better person to be in this spot. Thank you for being with us. I can't wait for everybody to hear this conversation about Bible engagement and all that you brought to it.

Nicole Martin:

Awesome, thank you for having me.

Randy Frazee:

Well, everybody, that's a wrap for today. Everyone's listening and watching this episode with Dr. Nicole Martin and if you've enjoyed it, can I ask you to write a review and share it with a friend? See you the next time on Bible Roots, God bless.

Randy Frazee:

Thanks for listening to the Bible Roots podcast. We hope you were encouraged and energized by our discussion today. If you enjoyed this episode, we'd love for you to leave a review. This small gesture will help more church leaders discover our conversations around Bible engagement. Don't forget, like and subscribe to our podcast so you'll never miss a new episode. Now, may your faith be strengthened through God's word today and every day.