

Pastor Kent's Miller Avenue Church Newsletter for June 2023

Dear Church Family,

First just a brief report on what the Philpott's, Kent and Katie, are up to. Two books out this month, *The Darkness of Contemporary Spiritualities*, first of all—a real project, two- and one-half years in the initial writing, and now Katie is plowing through with editing and adding new material. We both will be the authors, especially since more women than men are so engaged.

Then a second book, *Why I Decided Not to Kill Myself*. It is really short, a booklet really, and will be one of our 'Little Books.' Some time ago I was struck by the suicide statistics, especially among young people. The rates of mental illness, various forms of drug addiction, and other social and political factors have produced an alarming trend. So, the booklet, and there is an outreach that will go along with it.

In the last little chapter of the booklet there is an invitation to talk with someone. A reader would email me, give me their contact information, and then I will assign this contact to be made by folks in our congregation here in the county or by others who are part of our Church for those Without a Church, or CWC. No money will be involved.

Having someone to talk to is key. If anyone reading this would like to be a part of this ministry, please email and let me know. I will conduct a training session on how to do this work. Quite simple really, and you don't have to be a trained therapist.

Now hang on, but I am going to use Tik Tok to reach out to a broad audience. Yesterday I wrote four pieces, about 20 seconds each in length, and in them I will be speaking to the issues that go along with suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Right now, I have no football at the high school, last practice this past Monday. I am one of five coaches for the junior varsity team, and I am the special teams coordinator for JV—that is the kicking game, and it is very complicated. It is a stretch for me, but here I am, and I cannot walk away, though I feel like it sometimes. And as always it will be a witness to some, proven often when someone comes up to me and says, "Hey coach, I saw you on TV."

One of the reasons I coach is because of two coaches at Verdugo Hills High School, the JV and Varsity baseball coaches. I will never forget them, and my old buddies, Bill and Richard, and I speak of them often. There are all kinds

of ways to coach kids, and mine is often called “encouragement coaching.” It is exhausting, standing under the sun or freezing in dark weather, no sitting down, moving all the time, and for this old dude, well, it is a challenge. But I cannot give it up, so onward I go. Thanks for the prayers.

I intend to put pieces of the *Memoirs of a Jesus Freak*, second edition, up on my blog and on Facebook. The topic of the Jesus People Movement is hot right now, and I am hoping to speak to it. Larry Eskridge, who wrote *God’s Forever Family*, a super best seller, wrote an intro for the book. It is over 325 pages long and has 321 chapters, all short, on the big names and so on. So, I’m looking forward to this. The publishing and television work is not easy but important.