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# RELIGION

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## Pastor Foster Uses \$500,000 Initiative to Assist Students in SoCal and Africa

BY XENNIA HAMILTON  
Contributing Writer

Pastor John-Paul C. Foster has a tremendous vision for SoCal youth and youth beyond. He wants to see children grow and thrive.

To that end, Pastor Foster is reaching out to the community for assistance in raising \$500,000 to help local youth and struggling kids in Kenya. In doing so, he feels this dream, along with community support and efforts, will allow it to become a reality.

As the pastor of Faithful Central Bible Church, Pastor Foster is no stranger to assisting young people to guidance and to a better life.

“Locally, I think it’s important for the church to serve their people,” he said.

“It’s the family community engagement and outreach and when you look at the community that there are churches who do local missions and global missions.”

He has held backpack giveaways for over 6,000 children and even held summer camps for kids in the community.

Globally, his missions include working with I Can Fly, an organization



FILE PHOTO  
Pastor John-Paul C. Foster

to assist young girls in Kenya with various things such as funding for school.

“We work with an organization, who’s a sister of the church, who I say is the daughter of the church, but one of my sisters,” Foster said.

“Those young girls, 10 of them, were graduating. So, we gave them scholarships to help them to go to a university after graduating.”

Currently, he is still a big help to the Kenyan organization to bring an important resource of life to villages in East Watini as well.

“So right now we’re still working with them. They’re doing some things in the village areas to assess the village to bring clean water there.”

The pastor feels it is

not only his mission that compels him to take on such a large task but the fact that Americans have an advantage that we don’t think about everyday.

“Sometimes I think we take for granted the things that we have here. We take for granted running water,” Pastor Foster explained.

“We let water run and we just run away from it, it’s just running. We’ll go do something and come back and it’s just running and there’s areas in the world that they want water.”

Pastor Foster noted that in some of these areas, the only access to water is walking far and filling up at a local pond. Yet, he also feels that students here at home need help as well. The water also helps them to be financially able on their own also.

“Bringing clean water to them changes everything. It changed their economy drastically,” said the pastor.

“To have clean water, they’re able to grow healthy crops, they grow crops, they can sell them. They have clean water, they can also have cattle and then, they can eat their own food and they can sell cattle.”

The pastor talks about how in the past, he and his



COURTESY PHOTO

Faithful Central Bible Church members gave more than 6,000 backpacks to children.

church has also given some local students a new opportunity to obtain the education he feels they deserve.

“For us, being able to pour into the next generation, their education, that changes our community. They change their lives immediately. And so we came up with an initiative to give away scholarship money.”

Although Pastor Foster says the idea is fairly new, he does plan to keep the program going as it helps students to branch out to colleges they love.

“Last year, I think was our first year doing this, but we’ve done it for a year. Last year and this year we gave over \$200,000 of scholarship money for our youth to go to school. That’s from HBCUs, that’s Ivy League schools, trade schools. We want to make education accessible to everybody,” he said.

The pastor truly believes that the future of the children inspires him to help the next generation. “We have to invest in our children. As the community

we have to, you want to pour into a generation. If you want to impact the community it starts with the children,” Pastor Foster said.

He also feels the Word of God is a main factor in what he does and what we all should do.

“When God blesses us, we need to be a blessing to other people,” Pastor Foster said. “That’s the hands and the feet of the gospel.”

To learn more, visit [faithfulcentral.com](http://faithfulcentral.com) or call (310) 330-8000

## Pastor Nisan C. Stewart Merges Music and Ministry

BY NATHAN J. LEE  
Contributing Writer

Pastor Nisan C. Stewart, lead pastor of Greater Emmanuel Temple Church in Lynwood, has an extraordinary story that unites the worlds of music and ministry.

A two-time Grammy-nominated record producer, songwriter, and musician, Stewart’s journey is a testament to the power of faith, family, and a calling that would transform his life.

Born and raised in Inglewood, California, Stewart grew up immersed in music and spirituality. His father was a saxophonist, his mother a pianist, and his siblings played various instruments.

“I grew up playing the drums since I was five years old,” Stewart recalls, a passion that would follow him throughout his life.

His parents, who founded Greater Emmanuel Temple (G.E.T.) in 1965, were the earliest influencers in his dual passions. Despite his love for music, Stewart never saw himself as a pastor. Instead, he pursued a career in music.

As a young musician, Stewart helped shape the soundtracks of the late 1990s and early 2000s by collaborating with iconic names in the industry. From working with Timbaland on Nelly Furtado’s “No Hay Igual” to producing tracks for Missy Elliott’s “Under Construction” album and co-writing

Fantasia’s “Free Yourself,” to serving as musical director for Jamie Foxx, Stewart became a highly respected figure in R&B and hip hop. His work spanned touring, producing records, and mentoring young artists.

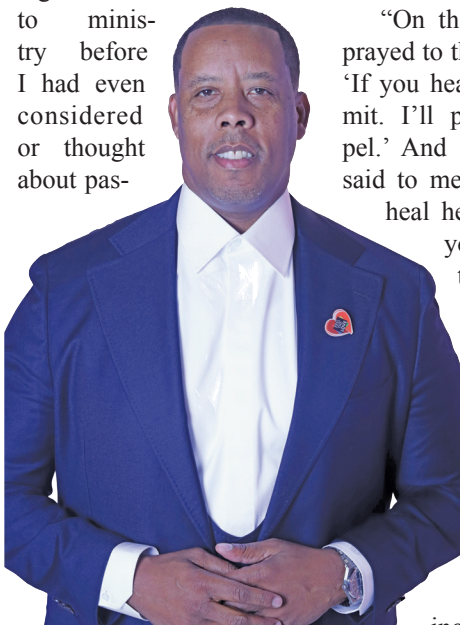
“It was all about creativity,” he explains of his work with Timbaland and Missy.

“Let’s do something that nobody else is doing, and a sound that nobody else had.” These collaborations cemented his career and instilled a commitment to originality, a principle he would carry into his ministry.

After years of touring, producing, and songwriting, Stewart experienced a pivotal shift in 2004. “My mother was transitioning,”

he explains, “and I felt the tug of the call

to ministry before I had even considered or thought about pas-



Pastor Nisan C. Stewart

toring.”

Reflecting on that moment, he shares, “I tell this story of how I was on a plane, leaving from working in the studio in Miami with Missy.” His siblings had urged him, “You need to get home. Mom is sick. We can’t get her to go to the hospital.”

During the flight, Stewart grappled with the weight of the situation. “I was crying, thinking, my mom’s probably going to transition because we knew

something was wrong,” he recalls.

“On that plane ride, I prayed to the Lord, saying, ‘If you heal her, I’ll commit. I’ll preach the gospel.’ And the Holy Spirit said to me, ‘I’m going to heal her my way, and you’re still going to preach the gospel.’” This marked the beginning of his path to ministry.

When his father, Bishop Carl W. Stewart, was preparing for retirement, he spoke to Nisan

about his future with the church, saying, “I’m thinking about you as pastor.” Initially hesitant, Nisan eventually accepted the role and was officially ordained as the successor to lead Greater Emmanuel Temple in 2012.

Since his ordination, Pastor Nisan C. Stewart has transformed G.E.T. into a vital community hub, focusing on holistic support for local residents. Every Tuesday the church provides families with free

groceries, highlighting the church’s efforts to address food insecurity.

Stewart is launching a mental health initiative called “Healing Tables,” which will offer free group counseling sessions every Thursday. G.E.T. also runs a business advisory group, providing guidance and resources to individuals looking to launch or grow their own businesses.

Today, Pastor Stewart continues to inspire both in and beyond the church walls, embodying a rare blend of faith and artistry. As a “semi-retired” musician, Stellar Gospel Music Award-winning pastor, husband, and father of three, he remains devoted to guiding younger generations and fostering a safe haven for artists and worshippers alike at Greater Emmanuel Temple.

Join Pastor Nisan C. Stewart and the Greater Emmanuel Temple Church for Sunday worship at 10 a.m. at 3740 E. Imperial Highway in Lynwood.

Stay connected by visiting [my-get.org](http://my-get.org) or following @getfamilynow on Instagram and Facebook.



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# Greater New Unity Baptist Church Plans Two Special Services

By CORA JACKSON FOSSETT  
Religion Editor

The members of the Greater New Unity Baptist Church are planning two very special services in the sanctuary located at 9719 S. Avalon Blvd., in Los Angeles.

On Sunday, Oct. 20, Annual Women's Day will be held at the 10:45 a.m. worship. According to Mother Dorothy Monroe, program chair, the theme is "Christian Women Walking By Faith" based on 2 Corinthians 5:7. The guest



COURTESY PHOTO  
Minister Eric Andrus

preacher will be Minister Redelia Fowler of Life Ministries Church in Fullerton.

An Ordination Service takes place for Minister Eric Andrus on Saturday, Oct. 26, at 10 a.m., at Greater New Unity. The ordination ceremony will be conducted and sponsored by the Providence District Baptist Association of Los Angeles where the Rev. William Dandridge, pastor of Holy Light Baptist Church, serves as moderator and will be the officiating minister.

The service also includes the Rev. Dr. J.W. Brown, pastor of Welcome Baptist Church, as the chief catechizer.

"We are truly excited at Greater New Unity because our church has not ordained a minister in over 25 years, since the late Pastor Randy Allison Jr. was ordained," said Community Engagement Director Arlene Andrews Andrus, the wife of Minister Andrus.

"Pastor Allison faithfully served for 17 years until God called him home on April 21, 2024. Minister

Andrus was baptized by Pastor Allison and has served on the ministerial staff for the last four years."

Described by parishioners as a humble young man, Minister Andrus has served in several capacities since unity with the church. In addition to being an associate minister, he serves as Sunday School teacher, Bible School teacher and as a member of the Bereavement Committee, King's Men as well as co-sponsor and spiritual advisor of Teens for Christ.

"Minister Andrus loves

the Word of God and exemplifies and represents Christ in his daily life. He also serves as a group facilitator for God's Property Sober Living Foundation, which assists ministers challenged by drug addiction, homelessness and other life-altering issues," added Mrs. Andrus.

"His greatest joys however are praying, studying and sharing the Word of God, and gathering with the saints at the House of God!"

The public is invited to attend both services.

## Will Smith Performs New Inspirational Music at Grammy Museum

By CHERYL ECKFORD  
Contributing writer

Fans of Will Smith were treated to a brilliant and electrifying performance on Oct. 3 at the Grammy Museum in Downtown Los Angeles.

In addition to performing his popular hip-hop hits including "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air," "Getting Jiggy With It," and "Miami," Smith revealed two new inspirational songs, "You Can Make It" and "Work of Art."

Lecrae, a Christian rapper, songwriter, record producer and actor, moderated the Q&A session following Smith's performance. Attendees were able to write down questions for Smith, which Lecrae posed to the film and TV star.

Noting that Smith's music has been a great contributor to hip hop, Lecrae asked, "What keeps you excited as a creator in the industry for decades?" Smith replied, "The opportunity to learn and grow."

Discussing his new song, "You Can Make It," Smith said he recorded it with

The Sunday Service Choir.

"The song has spiritual themes. I made a song that resonates with the experience I had in church, but I wasn't looking to make a gospel single," said the artist.

Smith said of his writing process, "I was trying to find what I wanted to say. I'm just a well of authenticity, the most honest space within me." He added that he wasn't trying to make a hit, but instead desired to be authentic.

"The song 'You Can Make It' was what was on my heart. Every single person is going through something. For me, the song is the most in tune thing you can say to someone," noted Smith.

"It's only by the grace of God that I would have to be in someone else's shoes and have to make the decision an individual would have to make. I'm learning not to judge others," he added.

Recalling another aspect of his music, Smith said, "I was 12 years old, and I had written rap songs in a composition book and

my grandmother found the book. It was then my grandmother wrote me a

music."

In 1989, Smith won a Best Rap Performance



COURTESY PHOTO

Will Smith

letter telling me intelligent people don't have to use profanity to express themselves," said Smith. "It was then I made the decision not to use profanity in my

Grammy for the hit with DJ Jazzy Jeff titled "Parents Just Don't Understand." Smith said that despite the award, he and other rappers boycotted the Grammys

that year because the show did not broadcast the Rap category.

The musician and actor help bring rap to mainstream when he starred in NBC's "Fresh Prince of Bel Air." In 1992, Smith and DJ Jazzy Jeff won a Grammy for Best Rap Performance by a duo or group for the song, "Summertime."

Six years later, Smith won another Grammy for Best Rap Solo Performance for "Men in Black." Also, the "Summertime" video premiered on NBC after the "Fresh Prince of Bel Air" and Smith recalled, "This was unheard of at the time."

Reflecting on his career, he said, "I never got the opportunity to hone my talent in music as my records usually were related to the movies I acted in. The last 20 years, I have been acting and now I am hoping to find my way as a rapper, and I want to be able to touch human hearts in the way I have been able to do in acting."

One of Smith's fans, Fercho Perez, remarked,

"When I was 13 years old, I used to watch 'Fresh Prince of Bel Air.' Will Smith saved my childhood when I was having troubles at home. Smith made me smile. I am a big fan."

The evening closed at one of Smith's most vulnerable moments as Smith shed tears reflecting on one of his songs he wrote when his first son, Trey, was born.

"It was one of the most terrifying moments knowing I would be responsible for another person," Smith said. The song he wrote was "Just the Two of Us," which was inspired by the song of the same name by Bill Withers.

As Smith gave a shout out to his son, Trey, he acknowledged that he didn't always have the answer when it comes to raising his children.

"I am discovering that as I am working on myself, my children are gravitating towards me more," Smith said.

To learn more about events at the Grammy Museum, call (213) 725-5700.

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