

## **Episode 00. "Where Have All The Christians Gone?"**

**Tuesday, December 29, 2020. 44 Minutes Long.**

*Radio and TV host Manwell Grady interviews the co-hosts of "Saving Christianity." He asks about their careers, educations, and families, and asks why they created such a challenging podcast. The interview is blunt and honest about today's Christian crisis, with clear advice for Christians feeling overwhelmed by today's hostile world.*

### **Manwell (00:00):**

Manwell Grady opens the interview by saying:

### **Manwell (00:13):**

Hello, friends! I'm Manwell Grady. Today, I'm in Greensboro, North Carolina, with the Christian Family Online in America organization. I'm here to report on a new podcast that Christian Family Online is launching. It has the intriguing name, "Saving Christianity." I'm here to interview the co-hosts of this unusual podcast. Their names are Owen Allen and John Shields. They're here with me now in the studio. So let's start by greeting them. Hello, Owen and John! Good to be with you this morning! How are you guys doing?

### **Owen (00:45):**

Oh, thank you, Manwell. It's a joy to be here.

### **John (00:47):**

Yeah, I'm excited that we can be together.

### **Manwell (00:48):**

Well, welcome to you both! Now, let's start at the beginning. The name of your new podcast is, "Saving Christianity." So why do you think Christianity even needs saving? And Owen, why don't you start? Then John, you jump in when Owen's finished.

### **Owen (01:07):**

That's a perfect question, Manwell. That's the title of my new book, "Saving Christianity." Many people may see it in the bookstore or somewhere and think, well, I didn't realize Christianity needed saving. But when you stop and think about it, in the Bible, both in Hebrew of the Old Testament, and in the Greek of the New Testament; and even in the English translation of those two ancient languages, the word "saving" means the same thing: It means to preserve. It means to restore. It means to keep for future use. It means to deliver from judgment. It has many

similar meanings. Now, I've studied Christian history and the Christian denominations most of my life. And I know we've talked about this off-camera. But actually, with Christianity, you can measure it a couple of different ways. Number one, as far as worship attendance on the Lord's Day, that has been steadily dropping since 1950. Most people don't realize that.

**Owen (02:19):**

The most recent attendance figure was that only 16% of the American population is now attending in-person worship. And of course, I personally believe that now with the horrible 2020 we've seen with the Covid-19 crisis, I feel sure that's at 10% or less now. And here's the kicker. Those people will probably never come back. Surveys show that most of them will either drop out of Christianity completely, or they'll join some other religion, such the New Age or whatever. But finally, another thing we can measure is the decreased influence that Christianity has on America. We know that in the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s, church buildings and the Christian experience were central to communities. Many times, the so-called "church building" doubled as a classroom and a community center for communities. But beyond all of that, you can tell by the change in the morality of the American culture, or what I call the coarsening of the American culture.

**Owen (03:41):**

I mean, I hear things, comments, and words being used on network TV and radio today by news commentators that would have caused them to be cut off the air 40 or 50 years ago. But now, that kind of language, that kind of slang, is accepted. And so for all those reasons, I thought that somebody has got to do something about this crisis. And with John's encouragement, sitting here beside me, I wrote this book. It was published in February of 2020. And we're very excited, because we think we have some of the answers to this terrible crisis.

**John (04:21):**

Yeah, for sure. For me Manwell, it's a ditto to everything Owen just said. But a couple things really stand out for me. One is the disparity between what Christianity is in its essence, according to not only what the Bible has to say, but how it's actually lived out. When you lay that template over our culture, you see a wide gap between what the Bible says, and how people are living. Everywhere we look, there are people struggling and hurting. And at the end of the day, our only hope is in the message of Christianity. It's the Good News that we all talk about, but many people never really experienced. And that's not because Christianity has failed. It's because we have failed to understand Christianity for what it truly is. So in some measure, we're trying to get back to original Christianity to make a difference, a real difference, in people's everyday lives -- including our own lives.

**Manwell (05:40):**

Yeah, absolutely. And, you know, the way we look at it, this could be somewhat of a bleak outlook. But as you said, this is the Good News. It's not filled yet. But perhaps we can fill it. So, Owen, I understand that the idea for the podcast came from your latest book, Saving Christianity,

which was published this year by Seymour press. Now, tell us why you wrote the book, and what the book is all about.

**Owen (06:05):**

Well, we've really been touching on that already, Manwell. But what I have discovered in my life, frankly, since childhood, is that it's like an old saying a friend of mine used to use. He'd say, "Don't you think God is bigger than what you see on Sunday morning?" In other words, God is bigger than the traditional denominational worship services that we see. And I'm sure we'll get into some more of this as we go along.

**Owen (06:37):**

But the point is, that they bear no resemblance to the kind of worship experiences the first Christians had. The people I call the "original" Christians in the first three centuries of Christianity. So I made it my business years ago to study and find out what it was that they did. Why were they so different from Christians today? Where did their Spiritual power come from? Where did the healings, and the visions, and the other wonderful experiences come from? I began to study all that, and I feel that I found some of the answers. And I wrote the book to put those answers on paper, so other people could see them and read them. So, essentially, what's the book all about? It's about what Christianity was originally, and how we can we get back to that today. It's all about what I call the "Early Christian Lifestyle." John has already touched on that. There's a little motto I use. It says, "If we do what they did, we'll have what they had." And that's the theme of the book.

**John (07:46):**

Well, let me jump in and say this. You don't know what you don't know. What we've seen in many people is that they're not engaged. They have some level of faith in Christ. They haven't really rejected Him. They know some of what God's Word says. But they've rejected today's distorted, confused, generic part of what authentic faith really is. And so what we're hoping through the book, and the podcast, is that God will allow is to help people to come back, and to see the original template, or the original blueprint, of Christianity. Or at least, to be able to make a decision based on that. A decision that's accurate.

**Manwell (08:43):**

That's good. You know, I learned many years ago from one of my mentors, that you have to piggyback on others. None of us know all there is to know. And we're seeing from your statement that people often haven't rejected the Person of Jesus. They've rejected our presentation of Him, one that has been in error. Our lives inform us of our world, and why we get involved in what we get involved in, and it shakes our world view, and even our view of Christ. But now, Owen, on a personal note, tell us a little bit about your background. Where you're from, do you have children, and what's your career and educational background?

**Owen (09:19):**

Well, let me just tuck in something sideways here, something that should be evident from all that we're saying. And it's this. There are many, many religions on earth. Many people have never stopped to think about that. Some sources say there are 400 major religions on the planet. Some say there are many more. But, of all of those religions, and all those religious experiences, Christianity is the most amazing, powerful, rewarding, and exciting religion on the face of the earth. And we want more people, even professing Christians, who are not experiencing that, to start experiencing it! Now, about me, I don't like to talk about myself much. But as one of my editors used to say, "I'm the oldest horse in the barn." Joanna and I have four children and 12 grandchildren. And so far, we have eight great-grandchildren. So we have a fairly big family.

**Owen (10:26):**

But I'm a Floridian. My parents lived in Jacksonville when I was born. And then, when I was eight or nine or 10, I don't remember the age, we moved to Tampa. So I grew up in Tampa, and it was a wonderful experience. We were on a ranch there, and there are many things I could talk about. But at the age of 17, I joined the Marines, and left Florida when I was 18, and never went back, except for vacations. I've lived all over the country: St. Louis, New York, Chicago, and different places. As far as my career, when I was in my thirties, I started my own consulting company, and ran it until recently. It was an international consulting and training practice, in which I taught problem-solving, decision-making, and problem-prevention to major companies. I'm sure we'll come back to that in a few minutes. But educationally, I guess I'm what they call a "professional student." I started in the 1950s, and I still study today. But my doctoral degree is in Organizational Behavior.

**Owen (11:26):**

We'll probably mention this again, but it finally occurred to me: Why shouldn't I take the principles that I was using in team-building, for example, with my clients -- which were companies like general electric, John Deere, and Hilton hotels -- and why didn't I apply those principles back to Christianity? Because it gradually dawned on me that the small groups the Christians had in the First, Second, Third Centuries were really what we call "teams" today in "team-building." So that's where all of this folded into my book. We just put a Christian spin or application on it. I've been a Christian since I was 11. But I've been disillusioned most of those years. So that's a little about me.

**Manwell (12:20):**

Okay. Now let's get back into a subject matter here. Because the question comes to mind: "If things are so bad in Christianity, then how do we explain the growth of the "mega-churches"? I mean, I know of mega-churches that have two or three thousand members and more. And so I'd be willing to wager that their pastors don't see a "problem" with Christianity. Because the nickels and noses -- the money and the attendance -- and things like that, may in some people's minds reflect a certain degree of success, and even favor from God. So John, speak to that.

**John (12:55):**

Yeah. I would say to that: It all gets back to how you actually measure success, right? If you're measuring it by attendance numbers, then for sure, those pastors wouldn't see a "problem." But if you look beyond the attendance numbers, and look at the Spirituality of the people ...

**Manwell (13:14):**

That's a good book title! "Look Beyond The Numbers." (Laughter.)

**John (13:19):**

... and it how they're actually living their lives. What are they actually experiencing in their daily walk? And what influence -- or the lack thereof -- are they having on our communities, and on our culture at large? Then you don't have to go very far to see that, "Houston, we have a problem!"

**Manwell (13:42):**

Absolutely. Owen, you fill in on that. All the numbers, and the buildings.

**Owen (13:47):**

Yeah. And there's another way to look at that. Because back some years ago, there were only five or six mega-churches in America. Mega-churches are defined as having a minimum of 2000 worshipers every Lord's Day. Now, there are, at the last figure I saw, about 1,500. So they jumped from six or seven, to over a thousand. So people say, "Hot dog! Look at that. There's no problem in Christianity." And many pastors will say that on radio and TV. They don't see a problem. But let's stop and think a second. Why are the mega-churches growing? Where are those people coming from? Actually, we know that the pool, the overall pool of Christianity -- I'm sorry to say -- is shrinking. We know that several decades ago, 91% of the American population professed to be Christians. Today, only 71% do. And that number is continuing to drop. Well, if that's happening, then where is the growth in the mega-churches coming from?

**Owen (14:56):**

What analysis shows is that, as the smaller churches fail and close -- and we'll probably come back to this thought -- the survivors are looking for somewhere to go. Half of them stay home. But the other half look for another church. Not so much, mind you, for the spirituality. But for the excitement of the programs. The Scouts, and the concerts, and all the hoopla that the mega churches can offer. That's what attracts people. So, what the pastors of the mega-churches -- many of whom I know personally -- don't realize, is that they're getting the survivors of a disaster. The growth of their church in attendance is not an indication that Christianity is successful and growing.

**Manwell (15:45):**

Right. And so that becomes a cannibalization of the church, a kind of feeding off itself in parasitic way. There was a pastor who told me something years ago. He said, basically, that the

mega-churches "swallow up" -- that was his term -- the smaller churches. And then you have this. I want to be delicate here. But this is "inbreeding," for the lack of a better term. We're not really winning people to Christ. We're just shuffling the people back and forth. And so, based on this, when I think about the numbers of questions we're dealing with, John, there are a lot of things that are big. Years ago, I had some swelling in my arm, and it looked great! (Laughter.) It was about two years ago, and I was maybe 160 pounds back then. And it looked great on the outside. It was like a muscle. But it was a swelling. And the Lord spoke to me and said, "Swelling is not growth." So there are a lot of things that might be swollen and large. But they're not necessarily growth. So, when we look at this, if this is true, let me ask you this. Can either of you give our listeners an example of a church building closing? Because to be honest, I haven't seen any church buildings closing in my neighborhood!

**Owen (17:04):**

Let me take a shot at that before John. Statistics show that several thousand church buildings are being abandoned each and every year nationwide. For example, where we live in the State of North Carolina, in the past three or four years, real estate records show that 40 church buildings have been abandoned. And then in the County in which I live, in the past couple of years, 10 have been abandoned. So that's telling you that the pool of Christians is shrinking because nobody's attending. So they close up the buildings.

**Manwell (17:45):**

You said the past couple of years! So we can't blame this on the Covid-19 Pandemic. Correct?

**Owen (17:50):**

Exactly. And I can give you a very painful example. My wife, Joanna's, home congregation was in Greensboro, North Carolina. And several years ago, they were down to 10 or 11 attendees! Now, when she was a young woman, and a young girl, they had several hundred attendees. So they padlocked the building, with everything completely as it was. Hymn books in the pews. There were files on the pastor's desk. The library was full of books. They padlocked the building. They kept the heat and utilities on for several years. But they couldn't do anything with it. Recently -- about a year ago -- they had their final reunion. I went to it with my wife. They had a covered dish dinner, and everybody hugged and cried. And then they bulldozed the building. Today, it's a parking lot. That's not a random experience. That's a national experience. And that's why we're alarmed. That's why I wrote this book.

**John (19:00):**

Yeah. And from our studio here, Manwell, we could leave, and within a five mile radius of this place, I know for a fact that there are church buildings all around us that, week to week, have only 20 or 25 people. And no prospects for growth in any way. And so -- unfortunately -- unless God intervenes, that's going to be the story of these other congregations as well.

**Manwell (19:43):**



And that's dire. Because there are tributaries of effect of that. The collateral damage of that is more far-reaching than we have time to discuss in this episode. Because when that happens, a pastor's or leader's, self-worth comes into question. "What am I doing wrong? What's wrong with me?" Maybe some of the congregates say, "Well, only if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died." There are so many other things we see, like pastoral depression and, unfortunately, suicides. Even that's there. So I've got to confess to you guys, to be honest, I did some research before I came to the studio today. And I know that what the two of you are saying is true. There are a plethora of churches about to close.

**Manwell (20:32):**

And so, we've given this interview the title, "Where Have All The Christians Gone?" (Repeats title.) And I know some people may think that's fantastical or whatever. But actually I did find that the Christian population in America has shrunken, as we said. When you look at the statistics from 91% to 71% in recent decades, that's a 20% drop in the Christian population. So we have a real situation here. Actually, I did find that worship attendance has also fallen, from 50% of the population each Sunday -- which any kind of attendance where you get half of the population out, whether it's football ... or whatever, that would be great. From 50% each Sunday to 16% each Sunday in just a few decades. That's a 34% drop in attendance. That would shake the knees of any of your corporate clients, from Hilton to anybody, to have that kind of drop. It's a free fall. So, I see what's motivating you guys. So tell me this. What makes the two of you think that your "Saving Christianity" podcast can help in the crisis that we're facing in Christianity?

**Owen (21:43):**

Well, let me take a shot at that first. And then John can pick it up. There's a beautiful scripture in (the Bible book of) Hebrews that says, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever." And so, when you stop and think about it, the Spirituality, the Spiritual power of Christianity, is the very same today as it was in the First Century, when Christianity was founded. So the question now becomes: Well then, what's happened? Because many Christians today do not have the power -- the Spiritual power -- the Gifts and the Fruit of the Spirit that they had in ancient times. So, where did it go? God didn't go anywhere! The Holy Spirit didn't go anywhere. The Fruit and the Gifts didn't go anywhere. So what has happened? That was the question I set out to solve in my book. What happened to the power, and can we get it back? And I found both answers, and they're in that book. So that's the way I feel about it.

**John (23:02):**

And I would just add to that for both of us. Owen is a little bit older than I am. So he experienced this earlier than I did. But nevertheless, we have both experienced it. For me, it was early on in my Christian experience, in the early 1980s, where we "lived it out." Both of us did. We "lived it out" in community, just what the book is about, and what we're talking about. And quite frankly, we miss that. And that's the way we know it's real and that it's available. But we know that we've got 20 centuries of sediment to dig through. But we feel like it's worth the dig.

**Manwell (23:57):**

A little bit of "Spiritual Archaeology" going on there! So as you mentioned, you guys have been friends for over 30 years. That's worth the price of admission to a podcast that itself is related to relationships! So how did you guys meet? And how have you remained friends for all these many years?

**John (24:16):**

Well, for me, I met Owen first when I was a young Bible college student, preparing to vocationally serve as a minister. And we were just friends. Not to have a cliché, but it was just "a God thing." I don't know that he necessarily looked at (things) like I did. But particularly, I saw him as having so much more life experience than I had. Whatever I could learn from him to help me, I knew that would be beneficial. And it was just a like-mindedness from the beginning. And I saw him as Paul, and I was a Timothy. I think everybody needs a Paul and a Timothy in their life. And so, under circumstances, I moved away for a while, and then I moved back. It was just the business of life. But we were able to really get back connected in 1994. And we've been on a deep friendship, working together ever since then.

**Manwell (25:42):**

And from that, tell us a little bit about your background: Your wife, children, where you've worked, education?

**John (25:49):**

Well, Owen is a Floridian and I'm a Virginian.

**Manwell (25:53):**

All right! That sounds like a football rally! (Laughter.)

**John (25:54):**

Yeah, it does. But I grew up in Virginia, in small town, rural Virginia. I worked on a farm all my life growing up. I actually thought that's where I'd be born, live, and die. And that was kind of my world view. And thankfully, God had a bigger plan than that. And when I came to faith, when I was about 21 years old, I came to faith, and it's been quite an adventure since then. I'm married, and my wife's name is "Kit." We have four children that are grown and gone now.

**Manwell (26:36):**

Hallelujah! Yeah, I've got one that was gone, and she came back!

**John (26:41):**



Right, yeah! A boomerang instead of an arrow! But it's just us and the dog. I went to a Bible college. I finished Bible college and went to seminary, and graduated from seminary. And I've been pastoring vocationally for almost 30 years now.

**Manwell (27:03):**

So you have a degree in theology, correct? You went to seminary, but did any of that prepare you for what we're facing today in Christianity? (No!) Are you sure? (Laughter.) You want me to give you another shot at that?

**John (27:15):**

I don't think so! I don't have to think long and hard about that.

**Manwell (27:21):**

Okay, let me ask, as a full-time pastor, does it make you uncomfortable to be the co-host of a podcast that says Christianity is in trouble? What do your members think, your congregation, about your podcast, and these things going public? Because we're kind of talking about the "family business" now, you know. Some of the things that we used to cover, thinking almost to the point that what happens in this house stays in this house. But the house has a leak in it, correct?

**John (27:55):**

No, I'm not uncomfortable at all in it. In fact, it's a breath of fresh air for me. (Right. It's refreshing!) It's extremely refreshing. You know, it's one thing to see the problem. But it's another to be able to work towards a solution. Once, I was working during a break in ministry a few years ago, and the gentleman I worked for, every morning at our staff meeting, he would tell us that, "If you bring me a problem, then you need to bring a solution with you."

**Manwell (28:38):**

Yeah, I've heard that. Bring two or three solutions.

**John (28:41):**

So, we've been in different circles. We've been with people who see that there is a problem. They can't put their finger on what that problem is, exactly. But nevertheless, we know that there is one. And so we've been able to really identify that problem -- what we perceive it to be -- and not just talk about it. But, "Let's look for a solution!" And we believe we're on to the solution to this.

**Manwell (29:18):**

And it's so true, because the reality is that as it relates, "the emperor has no clothes." And we don't want to talk about the fact that the emperor is up there unclothed. But it is evident, and we

have hidden it behind things like, "Oh, we're in transition." "It's a shaking, a falling away." (It's a revival!) Oh, we've dressed it in so much, using religious language as an excuse so as not to deal with it. And I think it's important, because our people see it, they see when they come to church ... there is less and less passion. So, Owen. Okay, let me ask you the same question. Your education is an organizational behavior. And so you were formally, as you mentioned, a management consultant for fortune 500 companies -- John Deere, General Electric Hilton Hotels, and all of them. So, why do you think the principles of organizational behavior can help the crisis that we're in with Christianity? And first of all, for our listeners, describe what organizational behavior is, as a vocational capacity.

**Owen (30:23):**

Well, if you go to Management Schools, or Schools of Management, one of the majors that you can major in is Organizational Behavior, which we students called "OB," for short. And organizational behavior is a new discipline. It's 20 to 30 years old, compared to math and stuff, which have been around for centuries. OB is a combination discipline, actually. It includes psychology, sociology, archaeology, and anthropology, all of those are mixed together. And I had courses in all of them. I studied intently, and did a lot of work in human personality: Why people do the things that they do. Motivation, and all those areas. And so you can obviously see where that not only helped major companies that I worked with. And I tell some stories about that in the book. But also, you can see that's why you eventually swing around and focus that on Christianity and what's going on.

**Owen (31:32):**

For example, Gallup polls are extremely interesting, and most people know what a Gallup poll is. I knew George Gallop personally. He's deceased now. But one night, we were having dinner in Washington and talking about it. He, by the way, was a strong Christian. He was very concerned about it, and he used to speak on TV about the problem that we're talking about. So, we were talking about how when he does Gallup polls of Christians, and asks them behavioral questions, like, "How do you feel about morning worship," for example. Or, "How do you feel about the congregation of which you're a member," or "of which you just dropped out recently?" (Laughter.) And the answers were always the same. And have been for decades. Imagine this now. Fasten your seatbelt. Because the Gallup polls show that most Christians, even those who are active attendees -- think about that a second -- will tell a pollster privately that they feel that their congregation is hypocritical. That their congregation is irrelevant. That their congregation really has no impact on their life at all.

**Owen (32:53):**

So you say, "Well, why do you attend then?" And they say, "What choice do I have? It's either that, or stay home and read a book." It's horrible. It makes you want to tear your hair out. So, to answer your question: How does organizational behavior fit the picture? I touched on it earlier. But I did a tremendous amount of training in what we call "teams" and "team-work," right, for these major companies for years. And it would completely revolutionize their production, their productivity. You say, "Well, who cares about that?" Well, wait a minute. Shouldn't Christians be productive?

**Owen (33:41):**

Shouldn't Christians be concerned with productivity? The only difference is, we're not producing lawnmowers. We're trying to produce Spiritual people. Whereas, many people today, of course, are not Spiritual, or they're unspiritual, if you want to use that word. So, I believe that the principles that worked in my business career as a consultant, and as a trainer, and as a business writer -- I wrote a number of business books before I wrote this Christian book -- they apply just as well. Because behavior, motivation, and human nature, are the same everywhere you go. Whether it's at John Deere, or whether it's at your local Christian congregation. And there's an old saying in management that, "Recognizing that a problem exists, is half of the solution." And I recognized that a big problem exists. And so now we're trying to craft a solution.

**Manwell (34:50):**

That's good. You know, in my pastorate, many years ago, we would have the state of the union address by the president. And I would do the state of our church address. And one of the things I did, that a lot of pastors thought perhaps wasn't a good idea, is what you recommended. I would put out a survey, and among those questions, it would be like, "What do you not enjoy?" Like you said, we're all so hypocritical. It's whatever. But it helped me. And it helped me to tune up myself. And I think a lot of leaders don't want to self-evaluate. And if you don't self-evaluate, you end up doing the "autopsy" of your ministry. (Laughter.) So it's better to go to the doctor -- the natural and the Spiritual!

**Manwell (35:38):**

Well, gentlemen, let's summarize our discussion to this point, so our listeners can get a good overview of what we've been discussing here. So, given all that we've said today, let's ask this question: Don't you think that people today are too educated, too technical, perhaps too busy, to be bothered with a deeper walk in Christianity? And Owen, you go first, then John. You know, one of the things we have on Sunday morning, it used to be that it was unthinkable when you were children to (not go to church). I'm only about 10 or 15 years younger than you gentlemen. But to wake up on Sunday morning, and if you were a Christian household, to not go to church. Now we wake up, and we're making up our mind: Are we going to church? Are we going to golf? Are we going to brunch? I would want to go to Cracker Barrel. (Laughter.) The options that we have leveled against worship are a little bit disturbing to me. So John, we start with you. Are we too technical, too educated?

**John (36:29):**

Well, the answer to that is: That is a hindrance. No question about that. We recognize that. But that being said, the other side of that is "No." We also recognize the masses. You know, God has a heart for the masses. But we also know that the masses have not, and will not, respond. So we believe there is -- I don't know what the percentage is -- but we believe there's a fairly large percentage of people out there who are, despite the distractions, are searching. They're actually searching. And they, and their life -- if they were judgment day honest -- are empty. And they

feel that emptiness. And now they try to fill it, of course, in a thousand different ways. But at the end of the day, it's empty.

**John (37:36):**

And yeah, we definitely believe ... you know, we're not arrogant. As the Bible says, we don't think too highly of ourselves, to think that we're the only two people that have figured out the problem. But nevertheless, we do believe that this is of God, and this is of the Spirit, and so we're following His leading. It's just not Owen and me. It's not just a good idea we came up with. So therefore, we're trying to do our due diligence. And the results are going to be ... we're "swinging for the fence!" (We have to!) And so the results ... we're going to just trust to Him.

**Manwell (38:32):**

The stakes are too high to "bunt" right now. We've got a swing for the fence. And not to be overly dramatic, but you know, at one point, the Lord said, "I've got 7,000 more." That's about the need, when someone thought that maybe they were out there by themselves. And the fact that I'm at this table with you gentlemen in the studio, I think is symbolic of the many like-minded men and women who have a true concern for this, and maybe have not found a platform. I'm so excited about the podcast. But same question to you, Owen. As we look at people's busyness, their education, the technical acumen that we have, that perhaps the ego ... E-G-0 ... has edged us out.

**Owen (39:10):**

Well, you know, we've sort of answered that in a roundabout way through several of our questions. But we said that the Holy Spirit has not changed since the First Century. And if you think about it -- neither have people! And a lot of times, we don't realize that until we read their letters, and read the history, read the diaries that they left behind, that the people in the First Century, the people that I call the original Christians, were exactly the same as we are. They were very busy for one thing. Many of them worked, as the old farmer said, "from can't to can't." They "can't see" when they get up, and they "can't see" when they go to bed. You know, from dark to dark. Many of them were extremely busy. Many of them were extremely intelligent. Paul for example, had the equivalent of a doctorate of his day, and was a very brilliant, educated man.

**Owen (40:14):**

So, when you think about it, they were as busy as we are. And there's another thing, one other real quick thing, that people don't realize. Israel, in those days was an enemy occupied country. In the same way, for example, that maybe the Nazis occupied France and our time. The Roman army had conquered Israel, and installed a Roman governor from Rome over the country. Soldiers dominated everything. And you had to do what they said. If a soldier stopped you on the street and said, "Carry my luggage!" You had to carry it. Those types of things. And then, of course, there were terrible abuses. And so think about it now: Here are these Early Christians. They're living in an enemy occupied country. They're surrounded by enemy soldiers. They're working from dark to dark. Many of them were highly educated. Of course, many were not. In those days, the average person couldn't read or write. But, they were still bright.

**Owen (41:18):**

They were humans. And they had all the feelings that we have now. Then, if they were driven, and motivated, and compelled, to become Christians, there had to be a reason. And that's why I don't call Christianity a "religion." I call it an "experience." And then that "experience" goes deeper, and deeper, and deeper. And so, you said you named this segment, this episode, "Where Have All The Christians Gone?" Well, I would say -- why did they go somewhere? Why didn't they stay where they were worshipping? Or why did they never worship at all? You know, there are many, many professing Christians who don't worship anywhere. As we've already said, from the statistics. So, there's much that we could say there. But let me say this: When you've experienced the deeper walk of Christianity, you're different forever ... and you hunger for it forever ... and you want more of it forever. And this is what we want everybody we know -- and that we can contact -- to experience. And this is why we're starting this new podcast, and I'm published this new book.

**Manwell (42:43):**

Absolutely. And you will know them by their love. It is an evolving, life-changing experience. And so, friends, there you have it! This concludes today's interview with the co-hosts of Christian Family Online's new podcast, "Saving Christianity." And this is a fascinating new podcast, based on Spiritual principles in this amazing new book, "Saving Christianity." I think all of you out there listening to us will agree that this has been an unusual, and an interesting interview. I've read the book, "Saving Christianity" myself, and I was just involved with it in its reading. So I'm looking forward to subscribing to the "Saving Christianity, podcast, so I can hear its unique episodes. I hope you'll join me, and subscribe to it as well. Just pull up your favorite podcast app, or open your favorite podcast directory, and click on the yellow logo with the sign of the fish in it.

**Manwell (43:37):**

And by the way, while you're on the internet, go to Amazon books, or to the Barnes and noble books website, and order a copy of this book, "Saving Christianity." It's one of the most inspiring books you will ever read. I personally have recommended it, and sent links to so many of my friends. And best of all, you can use your copy to read along with Owen and John, as they discuss the amazing facts in the book during the episodes of the podcast. And now, until our next interview together, this is Manwell Grady, signing off for myself, Owen Allen, and John Shields. Goodbye from the three of us. And we pray that in the future, each of your days will be more Spiritual than the day that came before it.

**Manwell (44:16):**

Manwell Grady ends the interview.