

LA VERNE TOLBERT, PhD

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LEADERSHIP: NON-PROFIT AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Founder, CEO/President, Teaching Like Jesus Ministries, Inc.

(2001–Present)—Equipping leaders in the local church through books, seminars, conferences and workshops with effective ways to enhance educational ministries for children to adults; consultant to pastors and CE directors. In 2008, in conjunction with the Department of Children and Family Services, launched the program, “Covenants for Kids: Churches Helping Children in Foster Care.” Pastors invited congregants to volunteer to drive children who are living in foster care to church. In 2023, TLJM accepted the three-year Nurturing Children grant invitation from Lilly Endowment Inc. in partnership with the Urban Outreach Foundation. www.teachinglikejesus.org

President/Chair, Society for Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives renamed Children’s Spirituality Summit (2009–2015)

—Served as a board member prior to election as President/Chair; provided leadership to regain non-profit status; hosted the 2012 triennial conference to examines factors contributing to the spiritual development of children/youth with attendees from 44 churches, 34 universities, 10 mission/ministry organizations, 6 publishing houses, 21 states, and 9 countries; edited *Exploring and Engaging Spirituality for Today’s Children* (2014, Wipf and Stock) which features research from scholars who presented at the conference. www.childrenspiritualitysummit.org

Director of Christian Education, Crenshaw Christian Center (2000–2007)

—Trained and recruited Sunday School/Bible study teachers for children and youth; redesigned the children’s facilities; provided leadership to the 200-plus youth ministry with a select team of staff and volunteers; launched on-site foster care events; authored *How to STUDY and Understand the Bible in 5 Simple Steps Without Learning Hebrew or Greek* (etaworld.org).

Pastor of Christian Education, Faithful Central Bible Church, Inglewood, CA (1989–2000)—Launched, designed the interactive curriculum, and taught the mid-week Bible study; established over 20 ministries including Rites of Passage www.irvingtolbert.com; recruited, trained and supervised leaders and teachers; redesigned children’s/youth/adult area and classrooms; wrote the Sunday School curriculum and trained staff to teach the lessons (preschool through high school); authored *Teaching Like Jesus: A Practical Guide to Christian Education In Your Church* (Zondervan, 2000).

EXPERIENCE

Host, UMI’s Sunday School Made Simple (2018–2023)—For five seasons, designed and authored the content to teach the upcoming Sunday School lesson to up to 20,000 weekly YouTube viewers—teachers and students—based on UMI’s *Precepts for Living Commentary*; wrote teaching tips for *Precepts* subscribers.

Vice President Editorial, UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.), IL (2015–Present)—Edited the COGIC commentary; developed Bible study curriculum, teacher’s resources and training events; recruited and trained editors for all levels of curriculum development. www.urbanministries.com.

Consultant to Provost, Biola University (2014–2015)—Networked with inner-city pastors and introduced them to the university; hosted two city-wide “Prayer for Los Angeles” events, the first at Biola University, November 2014, where we bused pastors to the campus; the second at the Fred Jordan Mission, April, 2015.

Adjunct Professor, Haggard Graduate School of Theology/Azusa Pacific University (2000–2011)—Taught graduate Christian education and Bible courses; developed the first online course for the CE department on Spiritual Formation.

Adjunct Professor, Biola University (2006–2008)—Taught required Christian education and Inductive Bible Study to undergraduates.

Adjunct Professor, La Verne University (2002–2004)—Taught required CE courses and Bible to graduate students.

Assistant Professor, Talbot School of Theology (1994–1998)
Taught required CE and Bible—Foundations of Christian Education, Inductive Bible Study, and Principles of Curriculum Development. Twice nominated by students for Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers.

Ethnic Student Advisor, Talbot School of Theology (1989–1994)

Mentored students in the undergraduate African-American student union to support their vision; interfaced with faculty and staff to enhance a welcoming climate for students of color.

EARLY CAREER

Promotion Director, Black American Response to the African Crisis (BARAC), World Vision International, Monrovia, CA

(1984–1986)—Designed publicity materials for Black churches to solicit donations to support the work of World Vision.

Family Life Educator, Redeemer Alternative School, Compton, CA

(1981–1983)—Designed abstinence education curriculum.

Beauty and Health Editor, Bride’s Magazine, NYC (1976–1980)—

First African American beauty editor of a major publishing house. Authored *The Black Woman’s Beauty Book* (Doubleday).

Editor-Reporter, Family Circle Magazine, NYC (1970–1976)—

Copy editor’s administrative assistant; promoted to editor-in-chief’s administrative assistant; promoted to an editor to write the column, “Living Black,” a first for a major women’s magazine.

EDUCATION

PhD in Christian Education, Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, CA, 1996—Dissertation: *Condom Availability through School-Based Clinics and Teenagers’ Attitudes Regarding Premarital Sexual Activity*

MA in Christian Education, Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, CA, 1990—Member, Kappa Tau Epsilon Honor Society

BA Hunter College, New York, NY, 1970—Major: Theater/English

Postgraduate Study: UCLA Extension, 2000—Creative Writing: Drama with Simon Levy (4 n/c units)

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Committee on the Uniform Lesson Series, 2015–2022; Scope and Sequence Chair, 2019–2022.

Together LA Board Member, 2019–Present

National Black Pro-life Coalition, 2008–Present

Spokesperson, Protect Marriage Coalition, Los Angeles, 2008-2011
African American Church Initiative, Christian Alliance for Orphans,
2014-2019
Society for Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, 2006-2015.
North American Professors of Christian Education (NAPCE), 1994-1998
President, Black Californians for Life, 1982-1988
Board of Directors, Planned Parenthood, New York City, 1975-1980
Board of Directors, YWCA, New York, 1975-1980

AWARDS AND HONORS

Distinguished Christian Educator's Award, West Angeles Church Of
God In Christ, presented by Bishop Charles E. Blake, Presiding
Bishop and Dr. Oscar Owens, Director of Christian Education, May
2019, Bible College Graduation
Priscilla Award for Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring, Biola
University, National Women's History Month, March, 2013
Commendation from the County of Los Angeles and the Department of
Children and Family Services for promoting positive permanency
(adoption) for older youth in the foster care system, National
Adoption Month, 2011
Berean Baptist Church Award for writing *The Black Woman's Beauty
Book*, New York City, 1979

PUBLICATIONS

A. Books

*Rites of Passage: Nurturing Boys Into Godly Young Men (A How-to
Manual)* by Irving Tolbert (ghost-writer 2023, Westbow Press)
www.irvingtolbert.com
I Serve You Just as My Mother Did: The Woman Who Discipled a King
(2022, Xlibris)
*How to Study and Understand the Bible in 5 Simple Steps Without
Learning Hebrew or Greek* (Second Edition 2019, Evangelical
Training Association) www.etaworld.org
*Exploring and Engaging Spirituality for Today's Children: A Holistic
Approach*, La Verne Tolbert (Ed) (2014, Wipf and Stock).

Life At All Costs: Anthology of 21st Century Black Pro-life Leaders, La Verne Tolbert and Dr. Alveda King (Eds), (2012, Xlibris)

Keeping You & Your Kids Sexually Pure: A How-To Guide for Parents, Pastors, Youth Workers and Teachers (2007, Xlibris). Originally published by Zondervan, 2002-2005. Endorsed by Focus on the Family and featured in Michelle' Burford's cover story, "Girls and Sex: You Won't Believe What's Going On" (November 2002), *O the Oprah Magazine* (pp. 212-215).

Enseñemos Como Jesús: Una Guía Práctica Para la Educación Cristiana en su Iglesia. (Miami: Vida, 2004).

Teaching Like Jesus: A Practical Guide to Christian Education in Your Church, (2000, Grand Rapids: Zondervan—15 plus printings)

Beauty from the Inside Out: A Guide for Black Women by La Verne Powlis (1983, New York: Doubleday). As spokesperson for Avon, toured 10 major cities.

The Black Woman's Beauty Book: A Complete Guide to Great Looks, by La Verne Powlis (1979, New York: Doubleday). As spokesperson for L'Oreal, toured 13 major cities.

B. Curricula

My Body, God's Property, Sexual Integrity Curriculum for Cook Publishing (2013 and taught in countries around the world).

Living the LIFE! Curriculum © for preschool–sixth grade, a three-year spiral curriculum for children and youth

The Road Ahead Abstinence 'Til Marriage Health and Character Education Curriculum for Middle and High School Students, CHOICES/Teen Awareness, Orange County, CA (2003)

Power Connections Character Education Curriculum with Shelly Cunningham, PhD., Medical Institute for Sexual Health (1998)

I've Got the Power Abstinence Curriculum with Shelly Cunningham for the A. C. Green Foundation (1996)

Family Life Education Curriculum for Elementary Grades Kindergarten through Six, Funded by the Department of Health Services Office of Family Planning, Sacramento, CA, Contract # 81-77171 for Redeemer Alternative School, CA (1982)

C. Published in Professional Journals

- “The Problem with Black Boys: Race, Gender, and Discipline in Christian and Private Elementary Schools,” Sharoni Little, Ph.D. and La Verne Tolbert, Ph.D. *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry*, Sage Journals (December 2018)
- “The Relationship Between Fatherless Children and Their Concept of the Fatherhood of God,” *Lutheran Education*, Vol 139/No.3, (pp. 190-212) (2004, River Forest, Ill)

D. Scholarly Papers and Presentations

- “Engaging with the Bible for the First Time (All Over Again)” Panel at the Calvin Symposium on Worship in Grand Rapids with Amanda Benckhuysen, Dennis R. Edwards, and La Verne Tolbert, moderated by John D. Witvliet (January 2020)
- “No More Sex in the City: Abstinence Education vs. School-Based Clinics,” Ministry Model, Children’s Spirituality Conference: Christian Perspectives, Concordia University, Illinois, June 2012.
- “A Qualitative Analysis of Female Students Enrolled in School-Based Clinics,” Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference, Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH, June 3 and 4, 2011.
- “Orphans Among Us: Evaluating the Ministry Needs of African American Children in Foster Care,” Plenary Speaker, Children’s Spirituality Conference: Christian Perspectives, Concordia University, Illinois, June 2009.
- “The African American Church and its Role in Nurturing the Spiritual Development of Children,” Ministry Model, Children’s Spirituality Conference: Christian Perspectives, Concordia University, Illinois, June 2006.
- “Fatherless Children and Their Concept of the Fatherhood of God,” North American Professors of Christian Education (NAPCE), 2004.
- “The Relationship Between Fatherless Children and Their Concept of the Fatherhood of God,” Ministry Model, Children’s Spirituality Conference: Christian Perspectives, Concordia University, Illinois, June 2003.

E. Chapters and Articles in Books/Encyclopedias

“No More Sex in the City: Abstinence Education for Middle School Girls” in *Exploring and Engaging Spirituality for Today’s Children: A Holistic Approach*, La Verne Tolbert (Ed), 2014, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock.

“Orphans Among Us: Evaluating the Ministry Needs of African American Children in Foster Care.” In *Understanding Children’s Spirituality: Theology, Research, and Practice*, Kevin Lawson, (Ed.), 2012, Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, (pp. 357-372).

“The African American Church and its Role in Nurturing the Spiritual Development of Children.” In *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, Holly Allen (Ed.), 2008, Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, (pp. 320-338).

“But No One asked Me,” “Did I Say That?” “Being Friendly,” “What Was God Thinking?” in *Beauty is Soul deep: 180 Devotions for Growing a Meaningful Inner Life*. June Hetzel and Michelle Lee (Eds.) 2003, Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Books.

“Learning Disorders,” (pp.415-416); “Late Childhood,” (pp. 405-406); “Sex Education,” (pp. 628-630); “Social Cognitive Theory,” (p. 647); “Socialization of the Child,” (pp. 648-649); “Ordination of Women,” (pp. 723-724). In Michael J. Anthony (Ed), *The Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*, 2001, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

F. Essay

Teaching Abstinence: Legislators Just Said ‘No’
Los Angeles Times, June 6, 1998, p. B-7

CHAPEL AND CHURCH ENGAGEMENTS

“I Serve You Just As My Mother Did.” Sunday Morning Sermon at West Angeles Church Of God In Christ, Los Angeles (November 7, 2021)
Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Pastor & First Lady Mae L. Blake

“Effective Biblical Teaching in a Present and Post-Pandemic Era,” Christian Education Virtual Workshop for Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Chicago, Rev. Gerald M. Dew, Lead Pastor (September 11, 2021)

“God Is In The Kitchen—Why Tithe,” Annual Sunday School Department Breakfast at West Angeles COGIC, LA (February, 2019)

Vacation Bible School Training, Temple Missionary Baptist Church, San Bernardino, CA (summer 2019)

Teaching Like Jesus training at Friendship Baptist Church, Yorba Linda, CA. Marilyn Daniel, Director of Christian Education (June, 2019)

Teaching Like Jesus workshop at Progressive Community Church, Stockton, CA, Khala Scott, Director of Christian Education. Over 100 teachers attended the training (April 2019)

Teaching Like Jesus workshop, Calvin Symposium on Worship, Grand Rapids, MI (2018)

Main speaker for the Annual Sunday School Rally at West Angeles Church Of God In Christ, LA, Dr. Oscar Owens, Director of Christian Education. (2018)

“Ten Principles” Main session speaker, D6 Conference; “Stay on the Wall” Workshop with La Nej Garrison (June 2018)

Teaching Like Jesus—two workshops, American Baptist Churches, Glendale, CA (2018)

“Teaching Like Jesus” guest speaker for the general session, Greensboro North Carolina with Pastor Jeff Doss (2018)

“Teaching Like Jesus” workshop, Christian Education Symposium hosted by World Impact, Los Angeles, Pastor Peter Watts, Director (2018)

TLJM’s Christian Education Symposium on the campus of the William Carey International University (February 2018)

“At Every Age and Stage,” D6 Conference (September 2016)

Teacher Training Workshop, Reid Temple, Baltimore MD (August, 2016)

Guest Speaker for Adoption Sunday, Shield of Faith, Pomona, CA (June 2016)

Presenter @ the Society of Children’s Spirituality Conference, Nashville, TN (June 2016)

UMI’s Vacation Bible School Training, Compton, CA (April 2016)

Teacher Training Seminars, American Baptist Churches, Glendale, CA (January 2016)

Friendship Baptist Church Christian Education Conference, Yorba Linda, CA, “Returning to the King” and Youth Seminar for Teachers (April, 2015)

“100 Ideas for Sunday School” and “Discipline: How to Manage Your Classroom” for American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles, the Southwest and Hawaii, Glendale, CA (February, 2015).

“Children at Risk” Breakout Session with Hank Fortener; “Culture, Theology & Race” Panel Discussion with Oscar Owens, Hyepin Im, Young Lee Hertig, Cecil Murray and Michael Mata. Planning Team Member for Together LA: A City Unbroken, West Angeles COGIC (February, 2015).

Lake View Terrace American Baptist Church – Sermon for 52nd Church Anniversary (March 2014)

American Baptist Churches Christian Education Bus Tour, Facilitator (October 2013)

Bethany Baptist Church of West Los Angeles, Chair, Thousands Missing Foster/Adoption Conference (June 2013)

Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast, Keynote Speaker, Azusa Pacific University (May 22, 2013)

Biola University Student Chapel, National Women’s History Month Speaker (March 2013)

Church of Jesus Christ Apostolic Faith Annual Christian Education Launch, (January 2013)

First Baptist Church of Westchester, Sermon, Los Angeles, (July 2012)

Society for Children’s Spirituality, Concordia University, Concordia, Illinois (May 2012)

New Hope Christian Fellowship, Sermon, Pasadena, CA (April 2012)

Christian Education Conference, Teacher-Training, St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Oklahoma City (March 2012)

Azusa Ministerial Association Covenants for Kids (foster care) Presentation (May 2011)

American Baptist Churches of LA/Congregations of the Southwest and Hawaii Annual Meeting, Teacher-Training (April 2010)

Friendship Baptist Church VBS (July 2010)

Christian Educators’ Association International Released Time Conference, Keynote Speaker for National Conference, 2003 and 2009; Azusa, CA Conference (November 2009)

Christian Ministries Training Association, “Teaching Like Jesus” (April 2009)

Youth For Christ’s Turn Your Campus, Biola University, La Mirada CA (2000-2011)

Urban Youth Workers Institute, Reload Conference, Teacher-Training (2000-2009)

Biola University Biblical Womanhood Chapel Speaker, La Mirada, CA (2008)

Atherton Baptist Church “Believing God” Women’s Conference (2008)
Lake Hills Community Church, Laguna Hills, CA—Teacher
Appreciation Dinner (2006)
Neighborhood Christian Fellowship—Parenting Seminar (2006)
Faithful Central Baccalaureate Service (2005)
UYWI Reload at Union Gospel Mission, Seattle, WA (2004)
Haggard School of Theology Christian Women in Leadership (2004)
Biola University Reconciliation Chapel (2003)
Progressive Baptist State Convention of California, Teacher-Training
(2003)
Youth Specialties Pastors Convention (2002)
American Baptist Women’s Ministries of Panorama Baptist Church
(2002)
National Pastors Convention (2002)
Dream Again Conference, Azusa Pacific University (2002)
Bay Area Church Workers Convention, Teacher-Training (2002)
St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church Annual Women’s Day (2002)
Worldwide Church of God Conference, Teacher-Training (2002)
P.S. Let’s Getaway (2002)
Christian Children’s Ministry Association (2002)
Kids’ Stuff Conference (2001)

PROLIFE AND ABSTINENCE ENGAGEMENTS (A SAMPLING 1995-2018)

Keynote Speaker and workshop leader for Wilmington for Life/Rachel’s
Vineyard, PA. (2018)
Pregnancy Care Clinic, Annual Banquet Keynote Speaker (October 2013)
Choices Women’s Resource Center, Calvary Chapel Chino Valley, Keynote
Speaker (May 2013)
The Pregnancy Help Center, Keynote Speaker for Annual Fundraising Dinner
(March 2013)
Pregnancy Help Center, Keynote Speaker (March, 2013)
Biola University Student Chapel, Pro-life Chapel Speaker, La Mirada, CA
(February 2013)

Westmont College Pro-life Chapel (September 2013)
Guadalupe Pregnancy Services Fundraising Luncheon (December 2012)
Rolling Hills Covenant Church, Keynote, Annual Sanctity of Human Life
(January 2012)
The 700 Club Interactive (June 21, 2011)
A Baby's Breath Crisis Pregnancy Center training parents and leaders (March
2011)
Rally with Dr. Alveda King, Manhattan Bible Church, New York (January
2011)
International Life Services Advanced Training Institute (July 2010)
Survivors Pro-Life Camp (2010)
Biola University, Sanctity of Life Week (2007)
Womanhood and Sexuality: What God Says About Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,
Transgender, Mountain View Church (2007)
Community Church Women's Retreat, Temecula, CA (2007)
Purity Seminar, Arrow Community Church, Covina, CA (2006)
Annual Fundraising Banquet Keynote Speaker, First Choice Pregnancy
Center, Texarkana, TX (2006)
Keeping You & Your Kids Sexually Pure, Abstinence Clearinghouse Annual
Conference (2004)
Mothers & Daughters Sexual Purity Seminar with La NeJ Garrison, Grace
Lutheran Church (2003)
Keeping Kids Sexually Pure, Million Moms Conference (toured several cities
2001-2002)
13th Annual Education Conference, School Based Clinics: Past, Present,
Future, The Right to Life League (1997)
Planned Parenthood is *Not* Your Friend, speaker with Norma Corvey (Roe v.
Wade) for the Right to Life League (1996)
Abstinence Assembly, Valley Christian High School/Student Assembly, LA
County High School of the Arts (1995)

ORDINATION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Ordained to the Gospel Ministry by Apostle Frederick K. C. Price,
Crenshaw Christian Center (2008)
Member - West Angeles Church Of God In Christ, Presiding Bishop
Charles E. Blake, Sr., Pastor, Los Angeles, CA. (2015)