

**EPISODE 154**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:03] MB:** *I lost all my friends. I didn't have any friends. People said, Michael had freaked out on Jesus. I go home and the wind is blowing. My neighbor's house has a weather vane. The wind is blowing, so it's point in the direction of the wind. I was saying, "God, if this means what I think it means, it's something to do with my destiny." I'm trying to get some language like, what does this mean? I want that weather vane to point in my direction if this means what I think it means. Before I can finish, the weather vane turned and point right at me. I just started sobbing like a baby and I surrendered my life to the presence of God. Never looked back.*

*Now, the funny thing about this is I was followed for a number of months by police. They went to so many spiritual communities. They went to so many retreats. They went to so many – they must have grown spiritually, because I went to Paramahansa Yogananda. I went there to meditate. I went to hear every guru that came in town. My whole life was just totally about anything about the spirit.*

**[0:01:06] LW:** Hello, friends, and welcome back to the Light Watkins Show, where I interview ordinary folks just like you and me who've taken extraordinary leaps of faith in the direction of their path, their purpose, or what they've identified with as their mission. In doing so, they've been able to positively impact and inspire the lives of many other people who've either heard about their story, or who witnessed them in action, or who directly benefited from their work.

This week on the show, I'm in conversation with one of my biggest life inspirations and mentors, Reverend Michael Bernard Beckwith. Reverend Beckwith is the Founder and Spiritual Director of Agape International Spiritual Center, which is located in Los Angeles, California. It has a congregation of over 9,000 souls a week. He was one of the thought leaders that was featured in that film and the book called *The Secret*, which I'm sure many of you saw. That was a documentary about the law of attraction.

After listening to this interview, you're going to understand why Reverend Beckwith's clips from *The Secret* went viral along with Dr. Joe Dispenza's. Reverend Beckwith facilitates retreats and

workshops and seminars around the world. He has written best-selling books, such as *Spiritual Liberation* and *A Manifesto of Peace*. He has been featured all over the Oprah Winfrey Network. He's been on her podcast. I started attending Agape in 2002, and it literally changed my life, as well as my relationship with church. Granted, I was never a very religious person, but I did grow up in Alabama.

What I experienced at Agape was so different and refreshing from what I was exposed to growing up down in the Bible Belt of America, I used to drive around Los Angeles in my old Chevrolet Lumina, listening to CDs that I purchased Agape of Reverend Beckwith's sermons. I would just listen to them over and over and over, because again, it was so powerful and impactful in my life. In this episode, we're going to talk about how Reverend Beckwith began having metaphysical experiences at a very young age and how his parents' dynamic. His dad was a probate officer who became a judge. His mom had some psychic powers and how that influenced young Michael and how later as a teenager, he started practicing atheism. He went out of his way to try to convert other Christians to become atheists, so that was a funny little story.

We talk about how he found his calling after a surprising run-in with the law and his whole superhero origin story of how he created Agape and what those early days were like, and what he learned from the early days that he was able to apply later. Agape has been around for 36-something years at this point. We talk about the anatomy of affirmative prayer, which is one of the foundational principles of Agape, and why affirmative prayer can be more beneficial than the conventional approach to prayer.

We talk about the Reverend's wonderful new podcast, which is called Take Back Your Mind, and that's designed to guide you back to your mind and away from worry, doubt, and fear, so that whatever's trying to emerge through you, which could be a sense of success, or creativity, or your real authentic purpose, can come through a lot easier.

You're really going to need to put your seat belts on for this conversation. It was truly amazing. I would say, it's one of the top three that I've done since I started this podcast out of all 150-something episodes. I'm just honored that Reverend Beckwith made the time to come and have

this conversation. Without further ado, let's get to it, introducing you to my friend, my mentor, my inspiration, Reverend Michael Bernard Beckwith.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:05:16] LW:** Reverend Beckwith, it is an honor and a pleasure to have you on my podcast. This is a long-time coming for me. When I started my show back in 2020, you were definitely on the short list of people that I envisioned having on the show, and I've been a fan of your work for a very long time, starting in 2002 when I began attending Agape.

**[0:05:37] MB:** Well, it's my joy to be with you, and obviously, I follow your work, and I appreciate it and I appreciate your depth, your nuance, and things that you speak about that can only come from practice. Good job, Light. Good job.

**[0:05:50] LW:** Thank you, man. You've definitely been an inspiration in all of those regards. It was fascinating to go back and do the deep research in your life, and you've done so much and you've talked about so much. We can't possibly get to it all, but I would like to just touch on a few things that stood out for me that I haven't heard you speak to in terms of your upbringing.

You mentioned that your mother was a psychic, or had psychic abilities, or I'm not sure exactly the extent of it. Your dad was this stern task master probation officer turned lawyer, turned judge.

**[0:06:30] MB:** Yes.

**[0:06:31] LW:** I'm curious, thinking back to little Michael growing up, and you were observing that dynamic between those two, did your dad buy into your mom's psychic work, or did he believe in the occult and those kinds of things? Or was he an eye roller whenever she started speaking about that kind of stuff?

**[0:06:52] MB:** He wasn't an eye roller. He was stoic, and he was a man of his word. He said, he was going to do something, he did something. He had the ability to read people very well in an instant. He knew of a person was in integrity with what they were saying, or not. He just

wasn't into it the way my mother was, but he didn't put it down. It was just something that it was just in the atmosphere, and later on in life, when I was deeply into my spiritual practice and my spiritual awareness, he just chalked it up all to faith. He had a faith, but he wasn't religious, if that makes sense. He's felt that if you walked right, things would work out for you well. That's how he lived.

Now my mom, she was the one in the family that, for instance, if somebody – we knew from DC originally. I was born in Bethesda, Maryland. Live in DC for a few years until my father moved us out to Los Angeles. To most of my relatives, we're in DC. We would go back for the summer to see the family. Whenever somebody made their transition, my mother would leave and escort them to the other side. Then they would say, "Alice, it's not your time. You have to go back." Then she would wake us up and say, "Aunt so and so just passed. Cousin so and so just passed." Then the phone would ring and it'd be our relatives from Washington DC saying Aunt so and so just passed, or cousin, so and so just passed."

We grew up knowing that there was something else happening. That there was another world beyond this one that life didn't end at the death of the body temple. That was a part of the dynamic. Interestingly enough, my mother was slightly afraid of it. Not frightened, but it was things that would happen. She didn't pursue it till later on in life when I had my spiritual awakening and began to really go full force in this direction.

Then she picked everything back up and she started going into deeper practice of meditation and prayer and study, going to metaphysical churches and things like that. It was interesting how my awakening then jumpstart her natural ability that she had from a very young age.

**[0:09:06] LW:** What were some of the first breadcrumbs that you recall as a younger person that you were going to have an awakening one day? I remember one time, I got hit in the head with a baseball bat when I was playing catcher with my brother. I was probably eight-years-old. He was nine. He swung the bat and he let it go and it hit me right here, right in my third eye. I have this knot still here to this day from then. Looking back now, I figured that was my way of unlocking all of that, in a very quick way.

**[0:09:38] MB:** Something got opened up.

**[0:09:39] LW:** Yeah, something got opened up back then. Because I'm different from my other brothers. They're all sweet people. They're wonderful. I'm definitely the one that was more curious and the one that the religion thing didn't really make a lot of sense to me. What was your experience as a younger person before you had – you actually seeing words light up on pages and those kind of thing?

**[0:09:58] MB:** There's a couple of experiences I had. One, I was – well, and now I just thought of another one just getting ready to tell you this one. Both of them were around the same age. I was in the fifth or sixth grade. One, I can remember the teacher's name. Her name was Miss X. She used to wear a little X to help us remember her name. We planted gardens at the school. Then for a homework assignment, we had to have a niche in our backyard. We had to grow our own garden. She gave us seeds and at school taught us how to plant them and take care of them, the whole deal, which was trying to connect us with nature.

One of the things that we grew were carrots and radishes. I always had this experience where I remember growing radishes. Then one day, I went to backyard and I pulled the radish out of the ground and I looked at it and I bit into it. When I bit into this radish, suddenly – now, this is the language now. It wasn't the language as a fifth-year-old, but this is the experience. I suddenly realized that biting into this radish, I was connecting to the entire universe, that everything was in the radish.

I ran into the house and I was trying to explain to my mother that I bit this radish and the radish was everything. I didn't have the language. I remember her just looking at me quizzily. "What are you talking about, Michael? Is the radish good?" I said, "Yeah, the radish is good, but everything is in it." I didn't have the language for the fact that all of the presence is in everything, you see. I can remember that moment was very distinct in my mind.

Then the next year, I was in the sixth grade. I think the teacher's name is Miss Adler. Interesting how I'm remembering these teachers' names. I went to the restroom. I came back and my name was on the blackboard to run for the treasurer of the school. I said, "No, no. I decline." I was very shy. I didn't want to be involved in anything like that. Miss Adler said, "No, you can't decline. The class nominated you. You can't decline. You have to run for this office." I was not really

happy about this. We had to do two things. One, we had to go to different classrooms and give these little mini speeches as to why we should be elected.

Then it culminated with an assembly where the whole school came in the auditorium and you gave a speech in front of the whole school. Now, I was dreading this. I did the little speeches. You had little signs up, bank with, back with. That type of thing. I remember getting up to speak and suddenly, something took over. I began to speak about excellence and being an excellent student and rising into your field of excellence to serve. All of this was just pouring out of me.

I sat down and the audience was stunned at what had happened. They didn't know what the – all of this pour out of me. I was sitting there like, I didn't know what had happened. Then it went into this applause and the teacher looked at me and says, "Wow, Michael." One on one, I was good. But in a group, that wasn't really my thing. All that week, I remember trying to get back into the little paradigm of Michael. That wasn't me up there. I don't know what happened. I don't know what that was, but this is the real me. I was trying to get my agreement back with mediocrity. That was one little experience.

Prior to both those experiences, I was in my backyard and I was watering the lawn. I remember having this thought, the lawn was brown and I remember having this thought that I wanted the lawn to be green. I was watering it to be green. I closed my eyes. I opened my eyes, the patch had turned green. It shocked me. It was green. I ran in the house. "Mom, the grass is green. The grass is green." She came out and looked at it and she said, "Yes." I said, "No, no, no. It's only green right here. If the whole lawn is brown, I was watering right here. I had this thought that I wanted the grass to be green and it became green."

She just said, "Okay, Michael. That's beautiful. It's sweet." I know for a fact, as a kid, that grass was brown. Then I watered it for a long time and then had this awareness that the grass was green. There was little pinpricks of the other, little pinpricks have expanded awareness that I quite couldn't understand, but I know they happened. I know they happened.

**[0:14:26] LW:** You brush shoulders with Martin Luther King, Jr. at one point as a child. Did that inform your decision to go to Morehouse?

**[0:14:32] MB:** It did. It did. I got accepted to Brown University. They wanted me to run track there, some other places. I wanted to go to Morehouse. I wanted to be around other African-Americans and Dr. King had gone there. He was the alumnus of Morehouse. That's where I decided to go. I met Dr. King when I was 11, I think. 11 or 12. He was at the Holman's Methodist Church on a West Coast Swing to raise money for SCLC. My mother took me. He spoke, obviously. I shook his hand. His hand was really soft. He said some words to me. "Thank you for coming up to see me, young man," and some things.

I remember saying to my mom, "His hands are really soft." She said, "He does a different work, baby." Like that. Yeah, I met him. Then coincidentally – well, not coincidentally, but his daughter, Yolanda, became a member of Agape. She was a member. I'll tell you this little story. A friend of mine wanted me to go see this psychic. His name was Dead Larry. They didn't call him that to his face. His name was Lawrence, but he channeled dead people. Stevie kept saying, "I want you to go see Dead Larry." I said, "Man, I don't need to go see anybody." I have a connection. I don't need to go see anybody. Plus, I have friends that are very intuitive. He said, "You need to go see him. You're going to really like this." I said, "I'm not going, Steve." He said, "I'll pay for it." I said, "Okay, I'll go."

It was \$200. It was a number of years ago. I go in to see Lawrence. The first thing he says to me is, my grandmother comes through and says, "Where's that ruby ring that my husband gave you?" I said, "You know what happened to the ruby ring. Your son was jealous that his dad passed him up and gave the ring to me and took it while I was washing my hands." She says, "I know. I just wanted you to know this was me." Like that. I rushed out of the house that day. I didn't do my morning meditation to where I normally did. She said, "Practice what you preach. You didn't do your full meditation today." I said, "I know, grandma. I'm just trying to get here on time."

Anyway, long story short. As we go through these readings of different relatives coming through, he says, "I have somebody that's not a member of your physical family, but he really wants to speak to you." I said, "Okay." His name is Martin Luther King, Jr. I said, "Really?" Dr. King comes through and he starts to tell me that when I'm teaching these universal principles was where he was heading, but the civil and human rights movement had pulled him in that direction, which was very necessary. This was the path that he was on as well, plotted me for

the work I had done and would do. Then he said this to me. "Thank you for changing my daughter's life." He said, "Yolanda."

At the time, Light, I had not met her yet. I said, "I've never met her." Then his head twisted to the right really fast and back. He says, "Oh, I'm looking into the future." Then next Sunday, Yolanda comes to Agape, ends up going to Egypt with me and going to Egypt, the land of Kemet changed her whole life when she realized that that was the birthplace of all the major religions. Then her father, grandfather, great grandfather were all Baptist ministers. When she went to Egypt with me, everything opened up for her.

Then she joined Agape and her whole mind opened up. That reading with that psychic said, "Yeah, thank you." She became a very dear friend until she passed over. Then her mother, Coretta Scott King, flies in to see what her daughter's up to, because they were Baptist. Family was Baptist. What was she joining? What is this thing? Well, Rosa Parks had already come. It's shared with Coretta. This is a really good place. Coretta came and she sat in the front row looking at me listening to every word I had to say. At the end of the service, she says, "This was quite profound. This is very beautiful. It sounds like exactly what my husband would appreciate."

Then later on, she wrote me a letter stating that what I was building was where her husband lived and ultimately gave his life for. Thank you for taking care of my daughter. Then now, when Martin Luther King III came, he sat in the same seat his mother sat in, coincidentally. Now I'm really good friends with both him, his wife, and the mentor for their daughter, Dr. King's granddaughter. It's like this whole dynamic of connection to the King family.

**[0:19:21] LW:** That's beautiful. Thank you for sharing that. Wow. I'm from Montgomery, Alabama, and I grew up on Rosa Parks Avenue, which is just, they changed the name from Cleveland Avenue to Rosa Parks. Cleveland Avenue. Cleveland Avenue bus was the one that she took. It started the whole thing and Dexter Avenue Baptist Church was King's Church. It was my dad's church, so he was my dad's preacher and Sunday school teacher. It's just really interesting full circle moment right now. That's beautiful.

**[0:19:45] MB:** Absolutely.



**[0:19:46] LW:** Well, you don't hear a lot of people leaving Morehouse and going to USC. It's usually the other way around. What was the impetus for that?

**[0:19:54] MB:** I had a child and my girlfriend lived in Los Angeles. After a couple of years at Morehouse, I thought it best to go back to Los Angeles and be with my kid. Then at Morehouse was also – I love Morehouse. I still feel like a Morehouse man, you know what I mean? I go back to speak at their ground forums and I just had a conversation yesterday with Lawrence Carter, the archivist and the director of the Martin Luther King chapel there. I'm still connected to Morehouse.

When I went to Morehouse, coming from Los Angeles, the teachings in LA were more expansive. When I went back to the south at that time, some of the classes were trying to make me think a certain way, not just teach me how to think, but they wanted me to think a certain way. I always remember having this history class and we had to write about the Vietnam War. I remember articulating my point of view on it. The teacher disagreed with me and gave me a C. I remember saying, "I'm not here to agree with you. I'm here to articulate my ideas, back up the facts with my particular research. You can't grade me down, because I don't disagree. The Vietnam War was an unjust war. We were on the wrong side of history."

Anyway, I remember going to the dean to get my grade rescinded and the dean's told me to play along. Now at 18-years-old, I didn't know how to play along. It was like, "No, I'm not going to play along." Anyway, I loved Morehouse. But eventually, I left and I went to USC. That's an interesting story if you want to hear that, too.

**[0:21:32] LW:** I'd love to. Yeah. Cause it was also your atheist years as well, right? In Morehouse.

**[0:21:37] MB:** Yeah. At Morehouse, I helped start what was called the Harriet Tubman Prison Committee. We were working to make sure that the prisoners were getting just pay for the work that they were doing while in prison and being treated like human beings. We had rallies at City Hall. I was a part of the Black Workers Congress. I was very activist, revolutionary. Subsequently, when I come back to Los Angeles, I'm still a part of these groups. I'm sitting in a meeting. We're going to change the world by any means necessary. I'm in this meeting. I hear

somebody behind me say, "If you were to take over the world tomorrow," not just me personally, but the group, "would the world be any different?"

I looked around to see who was there. There was nobody standing there. We went on with the meeting and then it said it again, but it was coming from inside of me. If you were to take over the world tomorrow, would the world be any different? I looked around the room. I could see the pathology of the people in the room. This person was territorial. This person was run by his ego. This person always had to be right. I could see all the little things. I said to myself, "Well, the world would be different." We have an ideology, a revolutionary ideology to change the world. The world would be exactly the same because everyone, this person has to be right. This person's power hungry. This person wants –

I said, "Wow." I mean, it just hit me. I never went back to that meeting. The next week in that meeting, somebody shot somebody. An argument. Somebody pulled out a gun and shot somebody. I wasn't there to be a part of the whole legal thing that went down. I didn't have anything to put in that space of activism. Anyway, I was out half a semester. I decided and enrolled at USC. Then as I enrolled in USC, the spiritual experiences started to really become more intense, until I actually thought for a period of time that what I was going on inside of me was pathological. Transpersonal psychology had not really come into full sway at that time. I thought I was going crazy.

**[0:23:51] LW:** You were a psycho biology major, too, so you were reading about stuff like this, right?

**[0:23:55] MB:** Yeah. Right. This was all pathological, where I was going through hearing voices, seeing things. I was doing a lot of astral traveling at the time, but I hadn't studied any of that, so I didn't know what it was. I do remember testing it out. I'd get this ringing in my ear and I would leave and go to my mom's house and see her cooking and I'd call her. "Do you have on a blue dress?" "Yes." "Are you cooking chicken right now?" "Yes." I knew the experience was authentic, but I didn't have any context as to what was happening to me. I knew something was going on, but I didn't have any –

I left the church at the age of 16, because I couldn't get with the Christian theology the way it was being taught. Anyway, after this period of time, it burst into an awakening that forever changed the trajectory of my life.

**[0:24:52] LW:** You had a new baby that you were helping to support. How are you making money at the time?

**[0:24:57] MB:** I was working in a store and I was dealing marijuana.

**[0:25:01] LW:** You knew where I was going with that.

**[0:25:05] MB:** I had a job and I had a job. I had a job and I had a hustle.

**[0:25:13] LW:** I mean, it seems like, you've studied in the elite schools with people and obviously, you knew better than selling marijuana or that could – did you have a system like, as long as I don't do X, Y and Z, I'm going to be fine and –

**[0:25:27] MB:** Well, I actually started –

**[0:25:28] LW:** - I'll be under the radar.

**[0:25:29] MB:** Yeah. I actually started out, it was really small, just for a few people, but it kept growing. It grew to the point where I had people working for me in Nashville and Atlanta and LA, different places. It became a really powerful industry.

**[0:25:49] LW:** Yeah. You became Avon Barksdale from the wire.

**[0:25:53] MB:** Before it was legal. I used to, on the back of my car, I'd have my books in my car, my books for USC. I had on the back of my car, I had this double-sided tape, "Support your local police on my bumper." Sometimes these fake studious glasses. I look way other than a lot of the rappers or whatever, wearing all these chains, or people advertising that they're involved in some shenanigans. I looked the other, like a student. I was trying to be under the radar totally. I knew that wasn't my destiny, which is grew to the point where I paid USC in cash money.

**[0:26:35] LW:** Were you still thinking you would be a doctor one day?

**[0:26:37] MB:** Yeah. I was still in that path. I was on that path all the way up until I had the awakening, the first adult awakening.

**[0:26:46] LW:** That was the dream.

**[0:26:48] MB:** Yeah, that was the dream that the lucid dream in which I was killed. That was painful emotionally and psychologically. I was stabbed in the heart and I died. When I woke up from it, I could see the beauty of the presence that's indescribable everywhere. I sometimes say, even in a piece of lint, even in garbage, even the things you don't think the divine is, divine is everywhere. The love that penetrated my being was beyond any description of love. It was just a total love. I just remember being in this state, and I could see fall dimensionally. Because I wasn't seeing with my eyes. I could just see with consciousness.

Then my life changed to discover what had happened to me. I needed to know what was this. That's when I began to research and bump back into the mystical teachings of Jesus and the Bhagavad Gita and the Apn Shabds and Walter Russell, which is a great mystic that came out of America. Then I was able to appreciate Dr. Thurman, who I met at Morehouse. I heard him speak at Morehouse and it did affect me. I had a chance to have a conversation with him and other teachers George Washington Carver, who was a great mystic.

I began to just go full bore into this. Nothing was important to me. Nothing else was important, other than my connection with this presence that was more real to me than anything else in the world. I can remember thinking, people are running around here and they're trying to make money. They're trying to get this. They don't understand. That's child's play. There's a whole reality here that people aren't even participating in. I can remember these thoughts in my awareness and hours and hours of meditation, fasting. I lost all my friends. I didn't have any friends. People said, "Michael had freaked out on Jesus." I didn't get high anymore. I didn't drink. I didn't do anything like that.

**[0:29:04] LW:** Well, you did have that one last delivery that you had to get rid of.

**[0:29:08] MB:** That one last one. Yeah, that's the one that really gave me a great miracle. That was, I can see it right now in my living room. It's my last dope deal. Now, interestingly enough, I was already moving out of it before the experience, before the arrest, before everything was – This was not my destiny. I'm having these experiences, etc., etc. I'm sitting and this is the last dope. It's the only time I ever had contraband in my house, because I had a person that worked for me and they had a stash house. Whenever there was a delivery, we generally be delivered there and then I had a distribution network.

This one time, because he was out of town, I had it delivered to my house. Anyway, long story short, the police came in. They actually took me from the street and brought me to the house where the marijuana was. Everything they did was illegal, but it doesn't matter. They brought me to the house and asked me, was this mine. I said, “No, I don't live here.” I had a different address on my license. They subsequently took me to the police station, handcuffed me, went and got a search warrant, then came back, uncuffed me, took me to the house and arrested me as if they had gotten a search warrant and came into the house. They did everything wrong.

This is all little details that don't matter at this point, but I hire Harry Weiss as my attorney. Now the inner voice told me, I was walking totally free. It already said, “This is not your destiny. Don't even worry about it.” That's when everybody thought I was crazy.

**[0:30:45] LW:** Yeah. You were sitting in the court reading spiritual books.

**[0:30:49] MB:** I was reading. Listen, I was reading a pamphlet by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh called *Chaotic Meditations*, when it was just a pamphlet. He didn't have all these books. I'm reading that book and reading a couple of other books. I'm paying attention to what's happening in the courtroom, but I'm meditating and I'm reading, because I've already been told I'm walking. I don't know how I'm going to walk, but I've already been told I'm going to walk. Everybody's saying Michael's freaked out on Jesus. He's crazy. They're telling, you should leave the country. Once the locals get to you for all that marijuana, the feds want you, because they found all those guns in your house. I said, “No, I'm not even going to have a record.” Now, everybody just thinks I'm nuts.

I'm sitting in court and the trials going on with continuances. It's not really a trial. We haven't even got totally past arraignment, but continuance, continuance. Then at one point, the prosecutor is interviewing a policeman, a motorcycle cop that wasn't even on the scene. He wasn't even there, but he said he was. They're interviewing him. They said, "Why did you go to Mr. Beckwith's house?" He says, "Well, an informant told us that a big drug deal was going down. We went and got a search warrant and then we staked out the house. Then when we saw the drugs being delivered, we went in with our search warrant and we arrested Mr. Beckwith, blah, blah, blah." None of this is true, obviously.

The assistant attorney jumps up and says, "That's hearsay evidence. We demand that the informant stand in front of the accused and identify him, or we demand that the case be thrown out of court." The judge says, "Everybody come up." Defense attorneys, prosecutor, and says to them, "I need the informant here within three days, or I'm going to have to let Mr. Beckwith go."

We come back to court three days later and the prosecutor says, "Your honor, the informant is afraid for his life. He will not come." The judge said, "Mr. Beckwith, I have no other recourse but to set you free. You may go. I hope I never see you in my courtroom again." I said, "Your honor, you never will." I walked out totally free, no record, nothing. I'm free. I go home and the wind is blowing. My neighbor's house has a weather vane. The wind is blowing at those point in the direction of the wind. I was saying, "God, if this means what I think it means, is something to do with my destiny."

I'm trying to get some language like, "What does this mean? I want that weather vane to point in my direction if this means what I think it means." Before I can finish, the weather vane turned and point right at me. I just started crying. I'm just sobbing like a baby. I surrendered my life to the presence of God and never looked back. Now, the funny thing about this is I was followed for a number of months by police.

They went to so many spiritual communities. They went to so many retreats. They went to so many – They must have grown spiritually. Because I went to Paramahansa Yogananda. I went there to meditate. I went to hear every guru that came in town. My whole life was just totally about anything about the spirit. Then let me share you with one of the little miracle that

happened. We're back in the house now, me and my wife, my kid, and a fire breaks out in the kitchen, in our kitchen. Flames are coming out of the kitchen.

We grab the kid and a few things. We run out of the house. Fire department comes and puts the fire out. A few days later, the insurance company, so they had it all taped up. At the time, I had to stay with my parents. It's all taped up. Can't get in because of the fire damage. The insurance company comes, we have to meet the insurance company there to go over the assessment of how much we'll get to rebuild and paint and blah, blah. The insurance assessor could not find where there was a fire. Nothing was burned. Nothing. The only damage was the water from the fire department.

Now we know flames were coming out of the kitchen. We know flames were all on the wall. It was smoke. I mean, there was smoke damage, but no fire damage. What that did was it allowed us to have a complete remake of the – we stayed in the duplex, a complete remake of the duplex. New rug, new paint, new everything. It was a new house. While I was staying at my parents' house. When my old friends were trying to come by, all they saw was a tape and figured I had moved.

When we finally moved back into the duplex, it was brand new, had no old visitors coming to see me to get anything and new life started. I always remember that, there was the fire that didn't burn anything.

**[0:35:44] LW:** Take us through a little montage now, because now you're starting to recognize that your path is going to be something to do with this love, beauty presence that you were identifying it as. This is like an inflection point, I believe, for a lot of people who feel some spiritual calling like, "Do I monetize it? How do I make money with this? Do I help people? Do people come to me and ask me to help them?" Take us through meeting Reginald, aka Nirvana Gayle and having that conversation to do something a little bit bigger.

**[0:36:14] MB:** Well, I knew Nirvana. I knew him as Reggie. We grew up on the same block.

**[0:36:19] LW:** That was your only friend you had left, right?

**[0:36:22] MB:** Yeah. What happened was when I had this experience and I had certain people that I knew, I went back and told them. I said, because we were all atheists together. Atheist/agnostic, revolutionaries. We're going to change the world. Religion is the opiate of the people. He was the last person I went to see to say, "Listen, all this stuff we were talking before, it's not real. There's a presence that's a part – a love is an intelligence backup everything."

Anyway, everybody else's thought I was crazy. They were through with me. I go to Reggie's house. His name is Reggie at the time. His girlfriend is Debbie. They live together. I walk in and Debbie's in the living room. I said, "I just came to tell you, I've had these visions and life is eternal and there is a presence. We don't have to call it God necessarily." I'm just speaking. I said, "This is where my life is heading. I have to go deep into this connection." Reggie is walking down the hallway and he hears me talking to Debbie. He pipes up and says, "I believe you." He says, "I believe what you're saying." He said, "I'm starting to think along those lines myself."

Then that's when we, together, went on this adventure of discovery of the metaphysical teachings and the practices of meditation and all of that. We were heaven bent. That was the most important thing. Now I had somebody to travel with, because before I was alone. He's gone. He's made his transition now. Interestingly enough, his wife is working with my university here at Agape. He's a great, great being and a great practitioner as well.

**[0:37:57] LW:** Was he going out to the beach with you when you were doing that? Or is this before that period of time?

**[0:38:02] MB:** When I was going out and when I was working with the mayor?

**[0:38:05] LW:** When you were taking your shoes off and just feeling that presence.

**[0:38:08] MB:** No. That was generally a solo trip. When I'd go out to the beach. You were talking about making money. The story behind that is I remember sitting in my living room and I didn't have a job now, but I'm soaring in the presence. I'm thinking, "Okay, God. What do you want me to do?" The phone rang. There was a woman on the phone who I went to high school with. She says, "Is this Michael Beckwith?" I said, "Yes, it is." She said, "I was looking at your picture in our



high school annual and I saw your phone number. I decided to call you, because God told me that you could help me." I said, "Really?"

Now, at this particular stage, I don't have any licenses. I had no therapy license. Nothing. I'm just Michael. I just expanded awareness. She said, "Yeah." I start to counsel her over the phone. She starts to send me donations. She starts to tell other people, "You should call this guy if you're having issues." People are calling, sending me donations, etc. One night I go to this restaurant and she's in line. I hadn't seen this lady since the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Okay. It's been four or five, six years. I see her in line. I call her name. She looks at me and she leaves, because she was so embarrassed that she had given me all these deep dark secrets of her life and her regrets and mistakes she had made and the way she was judging herself.

She looked at me and thought I was judging her for the stuff that she had done with her life. I had no judgment. I was in prayer for her. Then I go home and I think about what just happened. She never called me again. Never heard from her again all these years. Then I realized something. One, I didn't have that phone number in high school. It couldn't have been on my annual, because I've moved. I'm an adult. I don't live in with parents. I have my own phone number. Two, the phone number is unlisted. She was either lying about seeing it under my picture in the album, or she got it some kind of way. But my phone number was not out there. It was totally unlisted. I didn't get my phone number out to anyone.

It made me be on my path towards being a spiritual practitioner, spiritual therapist. People would come and seek assistance from me. Then what happened was my mother and a family friend by the name of Lissa Sprinkles, they were attending Founders Church of Religious Science and they were attending the Guidance Church of Religious Science. They were trying to get me to go. I'll say, "I'm not going to anybody's church. I don't need to do a church. It's not too much truth happening in church." They said, "No, this is different. You need to come. It's not like the regular Christian churches, where they're damning you to hell and it's saying they're the only way to get to heaven. It's not any of that. Please come."

It behest my mom, unless I go, I go to the Guidance Church of Religious Science. The Founder was Dr. Daniel L. Morgan. I come in, in my early twenties. I come in a little late. He's already, sorry, speaking. I come walking in and I hear him say, "Heaven and hell aren't really places.

They're states of consciousness." I say, "He's right. What? This is going on in church." I mean, I was I was excited. What? I said, "He's right." Everybody turns to look at this young boy walking down the aisle saying, "Dr. Dan is right."

I sat down and I listened. I couldn't find any holes in what he was saying. It was all pure metaphysical principles. That was a Sunday. Monday, he had a 15-week class on metaphysics. I show up and it was week seven. He says, "What is your name?" Sir, I said, "Michael Beckwith." He says, "Mr. Beckwith, this is a 15-week class. You've arrived at week seven. I would appreciate it if you would leave and come back when we start over." I said, "With all due respect, Dr. Dan. I'm going to stay. Finish. When it starts over, I'm going to start over and take the whole thing again." He looked at me. He says, "Okay, you can stay," like that.

That's when I discovered that there was a license called a practitioner. The spiritual therapist. I said, well, that's what I'm doing. Subsequently, I ended up going to that spiritual community and taking all the classes. I was still doing meditation retreats. I was still doing my own thing. I was doing that. That propelled me into eventually becoming a licensed practitioner, which I did for seven years of full time. That's all I did. Seven years, saw six to eight people every single day, six days a week. I saw a lot of miracles through prayer with people.

Prior to that, I worked for the mayor's office. I worked with Tom Bradley for five years. I worked in the eighth district. I ran the senior citizen fairs of that area. Built the Golden Age Senior Citizen Resort with a guy named James Burke and Ernie Sprinkles. I'm the one who helped get the pavement in the ground, the wheelchair access is paved. I had a big movement to get that for the seniors and for people who are in wheelchairs.

Then I worked for something called Prison Preventers. There's a guy name Lyle Carlos Kawasaki, who was a part of the Japanese mafia. When he was in prison, he had an awakening. When he got out, he started Prison Preventers, which was to give pardons for criminals who needed to assimilate back into society. I was his personal assistant for a number of years.

Then eventually, I was taking my oral examination to be a practitioner. One of the guys on my panel said to me, "Wow, I really love your consciousness. I'd like for you to come work for me." I

said, who – I didn't know who he was. He said, “My name is Bob Love. I run the International Prayer Ministry. I want you to come work for me.” I said, “Okay, let me just talk about this after my –” Obviously, I'm passing the interview. You're trying to hire me. I said, “Well, when we finish, let's talk about it.”

Now I had at the time, I just finished operating the census bureau office for Compton. Up until that time, Compton would always come into second to the last place in doing the census in terms of accuracy, proficiency, etc. When I went there, I turned the office into like an ashram, non-religious ashram. I had people who had a place where people would go in and do affirmations. We would do contemplation. I couldn't call it prayer meditation, because it's the federal government. I had all of this going on. We came in second in the nation in terms of accuracy, completion for the census for Compton and changed a lot of lives.

People went back to school after being in the flow of what I was teaching. These individuals from the federal government flies out to see what I was doing, they think I'm a little odd for I have these little places where you can go close the curtain and sit in and have moments of reflection before you go out and do the census. All kinds of things that were off the beaten path. This is a long time ago.

Anyway, they offered me a job. They said, they were going to give me a car. They wanted me to go around to different federal offices and do some of these processes. The money was really nice. Then I'm offered this job at the prayer ministry. The money was not so nice.

**[0:45:32] LW:** There's not a lot of money when you are praying.

**[0:45:34] MB:** There wasn't a lot of money at the prayer ministry. But I'd already been shown by some previous miracles that my needs would be met directly from source. Not telling my wife at the time, I took the job with the lower amount of money, because I knew my destiny was with the prayer ministry. Then I took that job. Then I was a full-time licensed therapist. My full-time licensed therapist made way more money than when I was making up my job, so my needs were met. It made me realize that having to pray every single day for people, something happened.

The night before, I would meet people in my dreams that would call the next day. Before they called, I was already meeting with them, praying for them. When I would answer the phone the next day, I knew who these people were and already knew what they were going to pray for. Now, that facility amplified itself, because I was praying every day for so many people answering the phone. That's why today, I try to implore people to meditate, to pray. This is the quickest way to open up your channels.

**[0:46:48] LW:** For the listener, can you just give a brief synopsis of what affirmative prayer is? What were you actually doing that was different from what the traditional praying would be?

**[0:46:58] MB:** Well in traditional prayer, they have an accessory prayer. They have a begging an external deed to give you stuff, thanks to that particular nature. Affirmative prayer is you're putting yourself in a state, ultimately, to have a realization that what you're praying for, you already have. It's an actual moment where you're coming to an awareness that if it's abundance, if it's health, or whatever it is, it's intrinsic to your nature.

You should be on really believing that this is so – to having an inner realization that this is so. You move through a sense of gratitude. You move through a sense of recognition of the presence that's everywhere, a sense of unity with the presence, a sense of inner realization that what you're praying for is already happening, a sense of being grateful, thankful that it's happening, then you release it and go on about your business. Not trying to dig up the seed after you've planted it. Then what happens is you're expanding your awareness.

Then what I teach is prayer does not bring you the answer, but prayer is the vibrational answer. Prayer is the vibration of the answer. Then that answer condenses itself into your life of experience.

**[0:48:22] LW:** You were doing good work, but you had an intuitive hit that the work wasn't good enough. There was more that you were meant to be doing and things started falling apart. Next thing you know, you find yourself in Mexico having some vision.

**[0:48:36] MB:** You've really done your homework well. Yeah, I was working at the prayer ministry. I was the director of training at the prayer ministry. I was on the faculty of the university

there teaching, and I had my private clientele and I was doing seminars. A lot of them out of my living room, a lot of it bringing places and things like that. I was doing all of this. Part of me was like, "I'm doing well." I was doing seminars before they were popular. You know what I mean? Now it's like a thing. I knew I was being pulled to start a community, but I was resisting it. I was like, I don't really don't want to – I like my weekends.

I remember a couple of things happen. One, when I said yes, well, first of all, I had a cook in my neck that I was going to the chiropractor on a regular basis to get fixed. He put it into place, so I could turn my neck to the right. Quickly, though, after a while, it becomes sedentary, again, it becomes stuck and I couldn't have full rotation to the right. I could go to the left, but I couldn't go to the right.

When I finally said yes to establishing a spiritual community, my neck popped into place. I never had to go back to the chiropractor. That this condensation of energy was my resistance towards the destiny that was trying to come forward. I do go to Mexico, I think it was Puerto Vallarta, I think it was. I actually saw Agape. I saw, I had a vision of it. I remember coming back to Los Angeles and telling the director of the prayer ministry that I was going to be leaving. I was going to start a community. She said to me, "Where?" I said, "I've been advised to start it in Santa Monica." She says, "Why don't you start a community for your own people?" I said, "Short people." She turned red and felt embarrassed, because she was saying, "Why don't you start it in the hood? For black people.

She was so embarrassed about saying that. Eventually, I started my vision group, pulled people together in my living room, because I had three groups of people that I pulled from. There was my private clientele. They were all people are always saying, "Well, if you ever start anything, please let me know." I always said, "I'm not going to start anything. Don't worry." I was teaching a practitioner class at the time. They were always saying to me, "If you ever start anything, we're going to be right there with you." Okay. Then there was people from the seminars I was doing.

Anyway, I pooled, curated a number of people to meet in my living room. I started this vision group and Nirvana Gayle was there. I can see Deborah Johnson there. I can see Joan Steadman. I can see Bill Whirlpool. I can see Eunice [inaudible 0:51:09]. I can see all these people. I can see them all in that. Coco Stuart. They're all ministers. I started this vision group to

open up to the possibility of catching a vision for a spiritual community, then becoming the vibration of it. Number of months, number of months, just meeting every week to become the frequency of the community we wanted to birth.

It wasn't about business plans. It wasn't about linear strategy. It was about becoming the consciousness of Agape, the consciousness of love, the consciousness of connection. Then letting that determine the actions. On November the 30<sup>th</sup>, 1986, we had our very first service 36 years ago.

**[0:51:54] LW:** Was there any politics involved when you left the Guided Church of Religious Science to do your own thing?

**[0:52:00] MB:** When I left, there was a couple of things that happened. One, before I left, I mentioned everything I was doing at the time. One of my students in my practitioner class was a part of a church in Fullerton. Their minister had left and they asked me, would I come speak. I said, sure. I came and spoke. The congregation wanted me to be the minister. I said, "I don't really think this is a fit for me." I said, "I don't mind guest speaking, but I don't think I'm to be the minister of this church." They just bugged me. I said, "Okay, I'll put my hat in the ring and see what happens."

I began to speak the congregation. They filled out a poll and 99.9% of people wanted me to be the minister. It was a small group of people that was controlling the board, was called the selection committee, would not turn my name in, because they were saying things like, "We can't have a black man as a minister in Orange County. The property values are going to go down. There's going to be trash on the lawn." They've got all these stereotypes about black people. They're going to drive their lawns and they're going to put their cars on the front lawn.

Unbeknownst to these people is that my students, two of them were on that board. They thought that these people were thinking like them. They were getting these so-called private rooms and they just be talking about me. We can't let this in be minister of the church. How are we going to stop this? I've graduated now, obviously from the school of ministry. My first ministerial meeting, I'm walking across the campus, a big-time minister who I had much respect for was speaking. I

could hear him through the window. He was saying there's a travesty happening. We have to pray to stop it.

I wonder what that is. He said, there's this black guy that's trying to become the minister at this church. We've got to stop it. They're talking about me. I'm thinking, "Wow, this metaphysical movement. We're still having cleaned out the skeletons of racism." I walk into the room and I sat right in front of him, front row and just looked at him and he changes the subject. Okay. Long story short, I pull out of that. I just said, this is not for me. I never was going to allow anything outside of myself to determine my destiny, which quickened me to start my own thing.

I wasn't going to put myself into a position where a human being was going to choose me. Subsequently, that church and they had that big earthquake back then, split down the middle and was uninhabitable for a long period of time. They had to meet somewhere else. The woman that they hired had to move in really quick, so they can say that they were diverse and everything. They hired a woman really quick. She ended up pilfering a lot of the money and leaving. All the things they were worried about happened. It was very interesting.

A few years later, they came to Agape and apologized. They felt very sheepish and humble and just really felt bad. That particular experience took me to the depth of forgiveness, because I would not allow them to birth resentment, or animosity in my soul. I wouldn't allow it. I didn't care. They said all kinds of things about me. I never graduated from the school. I had the top in terms of taking the test, I had the top ever in history. I didn't graduate. They started all these lies about me, but I wouldn't allow it to infiltrate my mind.

I taught my students, because they were mad what they were saying about me and what they were saying about black people. I said, "No, we're not going to go down that path. We're going to bubble up. Love them. Forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. We're going to move forward," which is what we did.

**[0:55:48] LW:** Obviously, Agape grew into this massive movement. In the early days, did you have some imposter syndrome getting up there talking, or trying to find loans to finance buildings and all of these kinds of things?

**[0:56:04] MB:** Would you call it the imposter?

**[0:56:06] LW:** Yeah, the imposter –

**[0:56:08] MB:** Imposter syndrome. What is that? Well, we had a couple of things that happened. When we moved from Santa Monica to Culver City, they sold the building in Santa Monica.

**[0:56:24] LW:** That was that women's building, right?

**[0:56:28] MB:** The Santa Monica Bay Women's Club was the first place we met. We only met there for a month, because we grew so fast that they got nervous, because unbeknownst to me at the time, that place was used as a sign to my church many years ago. The organ was still there from the previous church. I remember talking about it in a sermon one day and they got nervous that maybe I was trying to take over the building or something. I don't know. We grew so fast that they didn't want us there anymore.

We moved to the Miramar Sheraton Hotel and we started to grow from the basement to the Wedgwick room to the Starlight Ballroom, to the biggest room they had and we had all these extra rooms for the youth ministry. It grew quickly. Then, so we've got our own building over on Olympic and Santa Nella in Culver City. Eventually, took over another building that Barbara Angela's had. She let that go. We had a nice little campus going on. Then it was sold. It was all very fast. We didn't know it was being sold, because we may have been wanting to be in the running to get it. Anyway, that's neither here nor there.

We're meeting in hotel rooms. People had to call a hotline to find out where we're going to meet week to week. It's like, "Where are we going to meet?" Obviously, doing this time. We finally find the place at Buckingham. We have a conditional use permit. The politics behind that was this particular area was never to be used for a non-profit, particularly a church. There were some people on the city council that really loved our work. We had enough votes to get the conditional use permit. The other people put in a couple of obstacles.



We had to have it rebuilt in a certain way, according to certain standards. Two, we had to have it completed by a certain period of time, or we would lose the conditional permit. Here I have a staff. I'm paying rent on a building and I'm paying construction workers to complete the sanctuary. All this is going on. I'm really trying not to let go of the staff as well. The money is dwindling. I mean, linearly, logically, rationally, this is not going to happen. I call a board meeting on a Saturday. I also invite the main contractor and a couple of his guys into the board meeting.

We're sitting in my office. We talk about what we have to do and how much money we have to raise by a certain period of time. People are just really sad about it, because it doesn't look like it's going to happen. I said, listen, it's a big guy named Jerry. Jerry, sit in the chair at the door of my office. I said, "Nobody's leaving. Jerry, don't let anybody leave. We're going to stay." I went around in a circle. I said, is it possible for us to raise the money and have this sanctuary completed? We didn't have to have everything completed. But we had to have the sanctuary portion completed with the choir loft, everything to code so that a choir could stand on it, pass the code, the whole thing.

They said, "No, it's doubtful, but it's possible." I would say, hold the possibility. We went around the whole circle. I got from everybody, it's possible. I said, all I want you to do is just hold the possibility. Don't let your mind go into how we're going to do this. Just hold the field that it's possible. Just hold it for the next week. It's all I want you to do. We prayed and everybody go. That was a Saturday. That Monday or Tuesday, we had applied for a loan. We didn't have any collateral. Obviously, we were a young church. One of the owners of the bank was going by the guy who had our portfolio and he looked over his shoulder and says, "What are you doing?" He says, "Oh, it's Agape. They went to borrow a few hundred thousand dollars. They don't have any collateral."

The owner says, "Is that Beckwith?" He says, "Yeah, Michael Beckwith." He said, "Give them the money." He said, "What?" He says, "They don't have any collateral at all. They just want the money. They don't have any collateral to give." He says, "Is that Beckwith?" "Yes." "Give them the money." In a couple of days, we had the money. Then the contractor calls and says, "You know what? I was so moved by that meeting on Saturday, I'm going to double up my crew. I'm going to pay for it out of my own pocket, because I know you guys are good for the money. We

will complete this thing by this particular deadline.” Within a few days, we had the money, we had the crew working day and night and it was completed.

As a photograph of me, when we opened, I'm jumping up and I'm higher than the podium. I just jumped up really high, going, “Yeah, I got it.” It was all about possibility, because linearly, rationally, it shouldn't have happened. If you hold the field of possibility with God consciousness, all things are possible. That became a rallying point for a lot of things. Whenever things get dire and economies dipping and whatever is going on, what's the possibility here? What's the possibility here? What's the possibility here?

**[1:01:37] LW:** In these 36 years, what are some of the biggest challenges that would surprise people about operating something like an Agape?

**[1:01:45] MB:** Well, there's always financial. Not at this moment, but this is financial. 2008, when the economy tank based on the nefarious mortgage that people were being given by the thieves in the banks, because that whole downward turn. It was pretty big. It was the only time that I had to actually let go of a few staff members based on finances, because you're in constant fundraising all the time. You have ministries, you have staff, you have equipment, you have this and that. I would probably say that the best thing about community are the people. The worst thing about the community are people. It's the same thing. Because you have every state and stage of – just like the world. You have every state and stage of consciousness there.

You have people there that are very unconscious, saying and doing things. You have people that are very conscious that are holding a space. Fortunately, the highest vibration always wins. The people who are holding the high space always have a much more powerful vibration than people who are having issues, who have not healed their trauma, or dramas in their life, or emotional and psychological issues, whatever they might be. That's a continual thing.

**[1:03:05] LW:** Imagine over time, like in the early days, maybe you were the one dealing with a lot of these things and you had to learn to insulate yourself a little bit more, so you could be fully available and present for being the leader and being on stage and delivering the word and things like that. Was that an easy lesson for you, or did you learn the hard way?

**[1:03:23] MB:** The first three, four, five years, you learn to develop a fixed skin and transcend a lot of that. You really learn to take nothing personal. After a while, because you start to realize that people are projecting their unhealed areas on to you. They're projecting their unhealed areas and they're rejecting their own undeveloped powers on you. You're the screen for, "Oh, he's magnificent." Because they're not only their own magnificence. Or he's this and he's that. After a while, you don't take any of that personal.

Like I said in the book, *Spiritual Liberation*, you're able to transcend the two impostors, criticism and praise. You don't run from criticism and you don't run to praise. You're not there for – it's just a part of life. Your connection is to the presence, staying true to your mission. When criticism or stuff comes up, you use it to go within to see where you need to shift your own perception, where you need to heal, where you need to shift. You don't put it back onto anyone else. You say, "Let me look at that."

I think that when you are a leader like that, you get the first fruits of the teaching. You also get the first fruits of the growing edge. You're like growing in the public's eye. With other professions, the plumber's not growing in the public's eye necessarily. He may be growing through whatever, but you're not knowing, he's coming to fix your pipes. You know what I'm saying? Other people may not have that within the public's eye and growing at the same time.

When you are a spiritual teacher, or leader, or somebody public, you're actually in the public's eye and growing at the same time. You have to learn very quickly not to take things personally, how to discern what's yours and what's not yours, to deal with what yours and not take on what's not yours. All of that becomes a part of your spiritual practice.

**[1:05:28] LW:** Do you have a strangest moment on stage story in these three decades of being up there three times a day on Sundays?

**[1:05:36] MB:** I have a couple of them. The two that popped in my mind was one. I was speaking on a Wednesday night service and it was a deep moment of coherence. As I was moved into prayer, it was a very transcendent moment. This guy in the back of the sanctuary starts screaming. "You're a black man. You're a black man." Like that. I didn't know what this was, but he was at the top of his lungs. Then Kathy Mac was there. She had red hair. She's just,

“Kathy Mac has red hair. Kathy Mac has red hair.” We don't know whether this man's on drugs. We don't know what's going on. He starts to run to the front of where we are. Some of the security is a little like, “What what's going on? What's going on?” He stops. He has a cane. He was blind and suddenly got his sight back. That's when he started screaming out. “You're a black man. Kathy Mac has red hair.” He had never seen us.

**[1:06:28] LW:** Wow.

**[1:06:30] MB:** He had never even thought about whether I was black, white, green, red, whatever. He had never seen Kathy Mac. I said, “What are you saying?” He said, “I was blind. I've been blind. Here's my cane. I've been blind for years. I sit in the back. When you started praying, my sight came back. You're a black man.” He said, “I'm not racist, but I'm excited.” I always remind out. That was a very funny.

Then there was a moment, I have to go to the original story that I can go to the Wednesday night service where this happened. When I was 27, I think it was about 26, 27-years-old, I was still embracing what my destiny would be. I hadn't at that point committed to starting any kind of community. I was working with people and things like that. I was driving to the valley to speak at a senior citizen center. Someone had suggested that I could come speak to the seniors. I agreed. I said, “Yeah, I'll come speak.”

It had been raining. When I'm driving to the valley and I go up, it's so crystal clear. I mean, you know how LA is after it rains. It was just pristine. I had this tremendous vision of my life. It just caught me. I saw myself in the future. Myself in the future said to me, “You're on the right path. Keep doing what you're doing. Keep doing what you're doing. It's going to be okay. I'm here. I'm here.” Something like that. I went on to speak and it was a nice talk and everything. I always remember that.

Fast forward, now I'm at Agape. This is years later, I'm at agape. I'm speaking on a Wednesday night and I go into this beautiful, very expanded state. I'm driving home. I'm crying, because I was so moved by the state I'm in. I'm pulling up to my garage. Suddenly, I see Michael at 27. Michael's wondering about his destiny. I say to him, “Don't worry, I am here. You did all right. I'm with you now.” I had the perspective of when I said it at 27 and I came and spoke to me. Then I

had the perspective of me speaking to my 27-year-old and telling him, “I'm here. Keep doing what you're doing. We're here.” Then that precise moment, there was something over here to my right, another aspect of myself saying, “There's more.”

It's always a very pivotal moment in my life. Allows me to lean into whatever I'm going through. I'm leaning into an awareness at my core that everything is all right and everything's going to be okay, even if I can't physically see it. It's just that experience just magnifies that feeling.

**[1:09:26] LW:** I remember going to Agape and yeah, I would study you. I would watch you up on stage. Notice your eyes were closed a lot. I'm wondering if after hearing all this, I'm wondering if you were doing the same thing you did in that fifth-grade class, how much is it channeled and how much is pre-prepared what you're going to be talking about, or how you're going to be talking about?

**[1:09:47] MB:** There's not a lot pre-prepared, but in the first days, my eyes were closed all the time. Pretty much closed. I would catch the message. It was different techniques that I would use. Then as I matured, I became more of the message. It wasn't channeling. It was more like me. It was more like, this is me speaking, but it was – you could say my higher self, can use different language. The younger version of me is like, I'm channeling energy. The more mature version of me, it's actually more integrated into me. Because if I spoke on a Sunday back in those days, then whatever I spoke about became my personal lesson of embodiment in terms of meditation, in terms of prayer, in terms of just taking it on, you see, until that was integrated into me.

Now when I get up to speak, then I had to train myself to keep my eyes open. I remember somebody telling me, I was being rude by speaking with my eyes closed. I didn't even take it as being rude, but I started to train myself to actually be able to keep my eyes open and hear the message, catch the message, be the message, be the frequency of the message, you see.

Now, yeah, I'll tell you the thing that used to happen sometime. I would be speaking and say, I'm speaking about something. I don't know where I'm going when I get to the end of the sentence. I just know, I'm going — I know when I get to the end of the sentence, what I need is going to be there. I'm going, going, going, going. It used to be these balloons, like here, for lack of a better

word, little bubbles. I could pop one. When I would pop one, then this information would flow. That would be right in sync with what I just said. I could pop any one of them, and they would flow with what I just said. That used to facilitate me a lot.

Now, I just throw myself open. I have a theme. I don't have a topic for this week yet. I have a theme. I don't have the topic. Topic will come today or tomorrow. When I do it, when I go to sleep at night, I'll open myself up to whatever the message is supposed to be. I might just get a sentence. It's a sentence, but the sentence will take me through a corridor of transformational knowledge, just a sentence. I'll speak and then I'll say, here's the topic. Here's the sentence. Then I'll roll with it and then it'll take me into where it's supposed to go based on the congregation, often.

Now, years ago, I did three services and all three were basically different. What began to happen was people wouldn't leave, because they knew I was going to say something different the next service. I trained myself to, I would speak, like I speak now on 9.00. It's not like memorization, but it's like, I'll speak. Then when I go into 11.00 service, I throw myself into the spiritual abyss. I can catch the pattern of everything I already said, even though it might be a little different. It might be a little focused based on who's there. I eliminate people just waiting and coming for three services, because I'm going to say something different.

**[1:13:06] LW:** Do you feel more connected, or is there a pattern that you noticed? Because you've done this again, many, many Sundays, where one service is like the one that is the most original, or less contrived, or whatever, however you define that –

**[1:13:18] MB:** Yeah. First two, the first one is the Way of Meditation service. I teach on meditation, then we meditate. Then the second one at 9.00, that one for the most part is like, I hear it the first time. The second one is good. For me, that one is like, “Ooh, that was good. I got to remember that.” It used to be in the old days, the second one was always better, because I was getting revved up, or getting open or something. Now it's like, because I don't leave anything on the playing field. When I speak, I'm not holding anything back. Whatever needs to come out, comes out. It's like, I've given it. Boom. Then I got to do it again at 11. It's still very good. Wonderful. That first one has the – has a little bit more sauce on it for me.

**[1:14:10] LW:** You have so many, I don't know what you call Michael-isms, or Beckwith-isms, but things like, "Don't listen to what I'm saying. Listen to what I'm listening to." I remember you saying that in church one Sunday, years and years and years ago and always remembered that. Do those often come through you and you're like, "That was great. I'm going to write that down and include it in my next book."

**[1:14:29] MB:** Yeah. They'll come through, or just in the moment, a certain way of saying something will come through. Kathy Mac, who sits next to me at service, she oftentimes would take notes and then give it to me. It's like, "Do you realize you said this, this, this and this?" I said, "Oh, let me have that, because I want to say that again. I want to say that again in the next service." What happens is, like yesterday, she was here with Jason and they go through my talk. That's where they pull the affirmations from. They actually take my sentences and that I'm teaching more, and turn them into affirmations. When we're doing those affirmations on Sunday, they're actually curated from a talk in that month.

**[1:15:13] LW:** How do you feel when you see yourself talking? How do you feel?

**[1:15:21] MB:** I very rarely watch myself. When I do, I'm always surprised. It's like, I'll see myself do certain things and sometimes a little embarrassed, but sometimes it's like, "What did I do? Did I jump up like that? What? I did that?" Because I'm not aware I'm doing that in the moment. I'm just in the flow of energy. Now, I'll look at him and I'll say, you know what? If I had to go to a spiritual community, I would go and listen to that guy.

**[1:15:47] LW:** Let's talk about Take Back Your Mind, because we're winding down here. Why now? Why did you decide after all these years, everyone has a podcast of one of their mother, why did you decide, okay, now it's time for me to have a podcast? What are you bringing to the podcast world?

**[1:16:03] MB:** I wanted to do two things. I wanted to bring the message out in a different way. I'm aware that people are listening to podcasts. Podcasts are one of the last territories for free thinking. Where you can have a conversation. You're not going to be cut off by the powers that be with what you say yet. I wanted to have the freedom to do that, even more so than on the

pulpit, where I have an audience and you have to be in a certain framework of spiritual worship with the podcast. We can go into deeper questions, deeper dialogue.

I just wanted to be a part of a growing movement of individuals who are seeking to have people take back their mind. I mean, reality is curated for people on the news. It's a very curated bit of reality. A lot of it's not true. A lot of it's just a narrative that society, the government, big tech, pharm, big pharma, whatever wants you to have. I wanted to be a part of a growing voice of something outside of that curated narrative that may or may not even be true. Or it's a limited version of truth. Then have people come on. I might have you come on. Have just people come on, and we have dialogue about spiritual growth development and unfoldment, or whatever is happening in the world from a different perspective.

**[1:17:23] LW:** Yeah, I was going to say, I listened to some of the episodes because I know a lot of the people on there. It seems very conversational. It's not like, question, answer, question, answer, question, answer. Mostly, just you all just sitting almost at a kitchen table, or over a tea or something talking. Is that intentional?

**[1:17:39] MB:** Yes, absolutely. Just because as you say, most people, I know these people. These are my friends. These are like lot Hollywood friends, you know what I mean? I know these folks. I wanted to lean into their latest insights, what's coming up and pepper the audience with different ways of understanding truth, whether it's Bruce Lipton with science, whether it's Sean Stevenson in the research he does, or whoever, whoever it is.

**[1:18:07] LW:** What's the vision? I know you've visioned this, so can you give us a little glimpse into where this is going for you?

**[1:18:13] MB:** Well, there's a lot happening behind the scenes, but we do want the podcast to capture a lot of people. I want to be able to eventually say some things that it's not going to be allowed on the news. I want to be able to tell people that which is eternally true. Then I want to tell people, actually, that's a lie that you just heard on Channel 4, whatever the case may be. That's not truth. I want to wake up people. It's fun to wake up people.



We've come out of a very intense period of time, where polarization has been at an all-time high and people are disliking each other, because they don't agree. I want to be a voice of unity and harmony and truth teaching.

**[1:19:01] LW:** You are by far the person that has had the most metaphysical experiences, esoteric experiences that I've ever met before. I'm curious, have you ever met anybody who's had as many as you have? Like, obvious —

**[1:19:16] MB:** I have a couple of friends, gurus though. You know what I mean?

**[1:19:18] LW:** Yeah. Non-guru people, I'm talking about.

**[1:19:23] MB:** Well, yeah. There's a couple of my friends, but they're also like, what they do for a living is they're a medium, you know what I mean? They have those gifts. I think people are having these experiences, but they quickly close down to them. I think for me, I was hard-headed, because I was an atheist. I had a lot of dramatic experiences that I probably needed to have.

Howard Thurman calls certain people once born souls, whereas they came in with a certain openness and availability and a surrender to the presence. They may not have needed to have any dramatic experience, because they came in available. I didn't come in like that. I mean, as a kid, yes, but I closed myself off to become normal. I had a lot of dramatic experiences, but those dramatic realizations and experiences really feed me. Because as I said earlier, it allows me to lean into this awareness of everything is all right and everything's going to be okay. I have that built in. My dad had it from another perspective. My mother had it from another perspective. I think I got the best of both of them combined with the spiritual awakening.

**[1:20:37] LW:** Well, thank you so much for making the time and again, being so generous in your sharings and storytelling.

**[1:20:43] MB:** You pulled it out, man, because normally we don't go into stuff like this.

**[1:20:48] LW:** Again, I'm honored. I'm honored to be able to have this conversation. I look forward to getting a chance to see you again, hopefully when I get back to LA. Are you guys are still doing the lives? Have you started back?

**[1:20:59] MB:** Absolutely, Agape is live in person at 11AM. for the meditation and the 11.30 for the worship celebration fellowship service. All three services are live-streamed on our Facebook page, on agapelive.com and on our YouTube page.

**[1:21:15] LW:** Beautiful. What day are you publishing your new episodes for your podcast?

**[1:21:18] MB:** It drops every Wednesday.

**[1:21:21] LW:** Okay. Fantastic. We'll put everything in the show notes and just sending you lots of love and light and just grateful that you're out in the world still and I get to be here on this plane of existence to experience it for this sliver of time.

**[1:21:33] MB:** Well, thank you, brother, Light Watkins. I appreciate you. I appreciate the work you're doing. You're honored, man. I watch people. This is what I see, because I can see people who know about it and people who know it. You're one of those people who know it. You have a real meditation practice. You have a thing that is very real and authentic, so I've always appreciated that.

And we have the same barber. I appreciate that.

**[1:21:59] LW:** You're new to the barber though, relatively speaking.

**[1:22:02] MB:** Well, it's a few years. I went to Egypt. A few years ago and I was having a rebirth. I said, "I'm going to cut off my hair". I was going to cut it off in the King's chamber, but there was no electricity, there's no light. I just waited till I got back to the States. As soon as I arrived back to United States, I had it shaved off and been that way ever since. Yeah.

**[1:22:22] LW:** Cool, man.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[1:22:25] LW:** Thank you so much for listening to my interview with Reverend Michael Beckwith. For more inspiration, you absolutely want to follow the rev on all of the socials @MichaelBBeckwith. Beckwith is spelled B-E-C-K-W-I-T-H. Of course, I'll put links to everything that the Rev and I discussed in the show notes on my website, which is [lightwattkins.com/show](http://lightwattkins.com/show).

If this is your first time listening to the Light Watkins Show, we've got an incredible archive of past interviews with other luminaries who have also shared their superhero origin story. You can search interviews by subject matter, if you didn't know that. If you only want to hear interviews about people who've taken these massive leaps of faith, or people who've overcome financial struggles, or people who've navigated health challenges, you can get a list of those specific episodes at [lightwattkins.com/show](http://lightwattkins.com/show).

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Finally, to help me bring you the best guests possible, it would go a long way if you can just take 10 seconds to rate this podcast. All you got to do is glance down at your screen, click on the name of the podcast, scroll down past the seven or eight previous episodes. You'll see a space with five blank stars. If you like what we're doing, click the star all the way on the right and you have left us at five-star rating. That's great. Thank you so much for that. If you want to go the extra mile and leave a review, just write one line about what you loved about this podcast, or which episode you think a new listener should start the podcast by listening to, whatever you can do is great. Thank you so much for that in advance.

I look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with another story about someone just like you taking leaps of faith in the direction of their purpose. Until then, keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart, keep taking your leaps of faith. If no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you so much and have a great day.

[END]