

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Mike Sides

Interviewee: Mike Sides

Interviewer: Speaker 1

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Abstract: Mike Sides talks about how his faith and beliefs have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also talks extensively about the changes made to his interactions with his religious communities due to the pandemic. The topic of community service is also briefly touched on.

Speaker 1 0:00

Say your name.

Mike Sides 0:01

My name is Mark Side.

Speaker 1 0:02

And what do you do? Or-

Mike Sides 0:04

I am a junior web designer for a company called ConnectWise.

Speaker 1 0:08

Alright. And you are, are you based out of Tampa, right?

Mike Sides 0:12

We are based out of Tampa.

Speaker 1 0:19

Alright, I'm just going to get to the questions, right? So, the first question is: how has COVID-19 affected your faith and beliefs?

Mike Sides 0:24

The way it affected my faith and my beliefs is think I, far as that first the pandemic to me, at first, what that was like it could have been minimized a bit for is like with kind of restrictions in place but, I realized that like as the cases kept going higher and higher I felt more inclined to press, to press into God and press into the Lord. Even my, my anxiety and stress growing higher and higher because of the fact that I kept thinking "I might have it, I might have it" but I did not have it, at all really.

Speaker 1 1:05

Like, was that just randomly, you were like, "Oh, I might have it," or something?

Mike Sides 1:07

I had a cold, and I had a cold when I got back from New York and I was waiting for it, the symptoms get worse, but it didn't get worse. It turned into just like a cough, a hacking cough and I had congestion up here. And that was it. So, I had a cold and, but I felt that overwhelmed as far as just my, my parents with be older too. And that so and also, I adopted a dog over the weekend, that experience kind of press me into the lord, press me to my faith, like I'll deal with stress and anxiety, felt overwhelmed by what's going on around the world. And so, it kind of led me to kind of press into God and even like more like, this experiences like more pressed me in to, like, build toward relationship with the Lord more and more and more and be more like more invested compared to when I was just, thinking everyday go, everyday life is more just like wake up, take a shower, pray in the bathroom and not really consider spending time in the Word whatsoever.

Speaker 1 2:15

Yeah, I was gonna ask you what do you, what did you mean by like, pressing in, I guess?

Mike Sides 2:19

Spend time in the Word and just kind of redevelop the habit to press into the Word. Just more like as far as like press into the Word and just like going through and like reading the Bible spend time in the Bible.

Speaker 1 2:34

Okay, the Bible. All right. Second question. So, is your religious community still gathering currently? And like how has, and if so how has COVID-19, well, it how has COVID-19 affected participation in your religious community?

Mike Sides 2:55

We are gathering but it's more, like, through online, through Zoom calls. We're gathering still, but like, we're meeting through Zoom calls. And, like, as far as just, like, we who are gathering in person would be like, have dinner, chat and just like having a question and just kind of chat and we get into worship and the message, but now it's just like, we don't have dinner anymore. You, makes you have-

Speaker 1 3:19

BYOD?

Mike Sides 3:21

Pretty much. So, I miss like the family aspect far as just like coming together, but we're still meeting through online in Zoom and that's been helpful, just to see their faces and to talk to them virtually compared to just not talking to them at all.

Speaker 1 3:36

Yeah.

Mike Sides 3:37

Has been very helpful. And we still gather, but like the way is probably less it's just like, it's forced us all to be more virtual.

Speaker 1 3:45

Okay. Cool, cool. So, this religion, the religious community that you're a part of, are you guys engaged in any kind of community service and trying to help alleviate like, you know, the issues during pandemic? And if so, what are those efforts?

Mike Sides 4:05

Um, I'm sure people are I just don't know, but I'm not worry about it. You know, just not too aware of that they are helping out or not. People in the community do different things and, so, I'm sure they are, be, trying to be helpful, but at the same time be more health mindful, health conscious, be mindful of the health or might have kids to, as far as to homeschooling, and help them out with their homework and assignments.

Speaker 1 4:40

Cool.

Mike Sides 4:41

Yeah.

Speaker 1 4:42

Well, yeah, that was it man. There's three questions.

Mike Sides 4:45

Oh, I thought there was four.

Speaker 1 4:47

No, there's three.

Mike Sides 4:48

Okay.

Speaker 1 4:49

Yeah, three.

Mike Sides 4:49

Three questions.

Speaker 1 4:50

Yeah. Yeah, that was it.

Mike Sides 4:52

Okay.

Speaker 1 4:53

Appreciate it man.

Mike Sides 4:54

You're welcome man. You are welcome.