

Faith, Humor & Reviving America's Legacy

Featuring Eric Metaxas

Featuring Eric Metaxas

November 18, 2025

TRANSCRIPT

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Welcome to the Wisdom and Influence podcast here at Cornerstone University. And today I have a very, very, very special guest and a great friend of our university, Mr. Eric Metaxas. Eric, thank you for being a part of our podcast.

Eric Metaxas: It's my privilege. Thanks for having me.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: And thank you for being at the university, at Cornerstone University. You're a distinguished president's fellow. I'm so grateful, Eric, that you're here with us and you're participating in our mission and being here today and tomorrow. Thank you, Eric.

Eric Metaxas: Well, listen, I'm thrilled Cornerstone exists, and you guys have this mission. Like, it thrills me, and that's why I say it's a privilege to be part of it. This is very important, unfortunately rare, to have a college that gets it the way Cornerstone gets it. So thanks for doing it and including me in what you're doing.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Well, you know, for years, I used to say, "When I grow up, when I wanna, when I grow up, I wanna be like Eric." Like Eric. I've seen you and read your works, and just a beautiful work, by the way. First of all, thank you for all that you do for the faith and for the kingdom and our country. And so many things to talk about, but I wanna start to talk about something most folks don't know about, which is you've written a lot of humor pieces. Will you talk to us a little bit about that? And maybe the funniest one you've put on paper.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah. Well, I'll tell you, it's kind of a weird thing. People know me — some people know me from my books, so they think I'm some kind of serious intellectual or something, or some people know me from Socrates in the City. But actually, if you know me from Socrates in the City, usually my introductions of those events have been just me being, like, a total goofball, joking around, introducing. I think I remember when I introduced Chuck Colson, the whole conceit of my introduction was to explain to people, "Now, I don't want you to get Chuck Colson confused with Chaka Khan." And I wanna be real clear, this is Chuck, a whole different guy, and Chaka Khan was a singer for Rufus, and Chuck Colson founded Prison Fellow— you know, so stupid. And so people know Socrates in the City, they know that side of me, but a lot of people don't. And how did it start?

Well, I would say, first of all, this is kinda crazy. My mom, who is 91 years old, from Germany, and people don't know this, but she's from the part of Germany that Luther was from, which is the east part,

right? And my whole family, my grandmother, they were, like, riotously funny, joking around, and I just thought that was normal. So I grew up with this culture of laughing and making fun of stuff. That was just part of growing up. And when I was a kid, I gravitated — I was always watching the Dean Martin Roasts and different comedy stuff, whatever. When I got to Yale, I became the head of the humor magazine, because I just thought, "I wanna do this." I was the editor of the humor magazine at Yale. When I graduated college, I wrote humor for The Atlantic Monthly, for The New York Times. I wanted to follow in the footsteps of, you know, Woody Allen wrote humor pieces for The New Yorker in the '60s, '70s. It's a genre that most people are not familiar with. But I just wanted to write humor, to write comedy. And so I have written comedy. If people go to my website, ericmetaxas.com, there's humor pieces and stuff there. But a lot of people don't know that side of me. But I feel that it's just part of how God made me, to have fun, to joke around, and sometimes it backfires, but usually not. It's just part of who I am.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: It's interesting when I think about humor and comedy, and he will start getting to some serious things, I think. You think about the whole woke situation for years, how and cancel culture, which you talk about in your latest book as being from Satan, right?

Eric Metaxas: Oh, listen, it is utterly humorless. But how to cancel humor, right? I mean, it is utterly humorless. It's pro humor, right. If you go to any glassy-eyed lunatic cult, there's not gonna be any sense of humor. If you wanna hang around with the people around Stalin, the people around Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution, there is no humor. Humor is a sign of health, joy, openness, honesty, and it's very, very important. In fact, when I graduated college, I wanted to be a writer for Letterman. I could have. It's kind of funny because my life kind of — but I was getting encouragement along those lines. Same thing with Seinfeld. I knew Larry David back when, and so that's a big part of who I am, and I think there's something important there. And it's also important in terms of communicating that you're real, that you have the ability to joke. There's something serious about humor, you know?

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Well, I mean, you see it's refreshing. It's come back now in some ways.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah. I mean, people are much more open. And there's a sense of real humanity. There's a sense of humility. We don't take ourselves too seriously. But for four or five years, it was dark. Very dark. It was very, very dark. Very, very dark. And you really, really couldn't laugh, and I would meet people here in West Michigan or in Virginia where I was, and they would talk to you in almost hushed tone.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Our culture has begun to shift. Well, thank God. So, and continue, but tell us why you think the shift has happened.

Eric Metaxas: Well, I mean, I think the shortest answer is it's God's will to deliver us from where we were going, and where we were going was down that Marxist path to death and slavery. That's the short version of it. We were — and what's creepy is to see, people would often ask me when I wrote the Bonhoeffer book, people would say, "How did that happen? How did that happen in Germany, in this civilized country? How did that —" And I said, "Well, it happened exactly as it's happening now in America." Slowly, but we are just as fallen as the Germans in Germany, and we are just as susceptible to groupthink. Why? Because of cowardice, because of selfishness. I wanna keep my job. I don't wanna — I'm just gonna — tell me what I need to say or not say just so I can get along and not get picked off as one of the troublemakers. That's cowardice, and you need enough people to do that, and then it makes it harder and harder for anybody to speak truth.

In my book, Letter to the American Church, I think there's a chapter I write, I got this title from Chuck Colson, who got it from a German sociologist writing about Germany in the '30s, calling it the spiral of

silence, that when people start saying, "Oh, I better — I'm not gonna say that I don't think same-sex marriage is a good idea because that might cost me something." "Well, do you believe it?" "Well, yeah, but I don't wanna say it, so that's gonna make it harder for my neighbor to say it. My neighbor thinks it's a crazy idea, but we don't wanna talk about that. That's hateful. We don't talk about that." And it gets worse and worse and worse. And pretty much you are then being told what to say and what not to say. So today, that's the issue. Tomorrow, the issue is that God created us in his image, male and female. Well, you can't really say that.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: No.

Eric Metaxas: And before you know it, they're gonna demand that you say one plus one equals three, and if you don't, you're trouble because we need you to say that. That's kinda where we were going. I mean, whether it's with the vaccine or whether — don't ask questions. You're like, "Wait, wait, wait, wait. I should be able to ask any question I want, talk about anything I want. Patriots have died so that we could have free speech and have real liberty, and you're telling me, 'No, shut up.' Like, 'Don't ruffle any feathers. You're gonna —'" That's what happened in Germany. That led to death camps. That led to millions being murdered, is normal people keeping their mouth shut. And so it's a chilling thing, but it's a wonderful thing that God in His mercy is delivering us from that.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: By the way, that spiral of silence, that's a very real thing. My first journal article as an academic was on the spiral of silence. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann had written that book. I have never met anybody who knew who wrote that book.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah. Leave it to you. That's incredible.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: No, I mean, they wrote that book and actually did a study on it, a survey, and you realize there is data and evidence for that frame.

Eric Metaxas: Oh, of course. It really exists. Well, it's human nature. It's human nature that — "Oh, I don't want any trouble." It's like, okay, well, God made you for trouble, but you don't want any trouble, you're gonna cause some real trouble, you know?

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: As I think about your recent book, *Letters to the American Church*, a republic, if you can keep it, those conversations, you think about what people call mission drift, right?

Eric Metaxas: Yeah. Or cultural drift. You know, as a president of a university, you can look at American history in institutions of higher education and see how they've drifted, and it takes decades and decades and decades. It takes time. When you realize it's almost too late.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Yes, that's right. It's almost too late. So let's talk a bit about our country. You've been writing about this for quite a while.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah, yeah.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Drift is happening.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah. It has happened.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Hopefully it's not too late.

Eric Metaxas: It is not too late. I can say by the grace of God.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Tell us what you think when it started in your mind.

Eric Metaxas: Well, listen, how far do you wanna go back? Start in the Garden of Eden. You can skip ahead to the Enlightenment. You can go to the Romantic movement. There are these things that are

happening, and there's good and bad in every kind of movement. There's always gonna be some truth, even in a big lie. And so there's no moment — I mean, because you realize that first of all, it always happens with the cultural elites first. It's kinda like the trickle-down theory of culture. So it was already happening in the 19th century. You have Matthew Arnold writing his poem, "Dover Beach," about how faith is receding and how it's kinda sad, but that's just the way it is, that we all were beginning to sense that there's no meaning in the universe. That's only the intellectuals start there, right? And then Darwin gives them the excuse based on his garbage theory, I will say it boldly. You can be an intellectually respectable atheist because we've now figured out the mechanism that created everything, which is complete baloney, but people love that narrative. They jumped on it. So next thing you know, all of the intelligentsia have bought into this idea, never really being honest about them doing the math. What does that mean? If there is no God, if now all the intellectuals know in the late 19th century, "Okay, we've kinda figured it out. There's no God." Well, the common people don't know that, but we know that. What are the results of that idea? The results of that idea are pretty simple. There's no good or evil. Because if there's no God, we evolved out of the primordial soup by accident, total accident. Our lives therefore actually have no meaning. Now, who can face that? Nobody. Nobody. It's preposterous, but they kinda claim this idea. So it leads to the idea that if I determine that through evolution some groups are more highly evolved than others — I think that the white Aryans, the Norse, this is what the Nazis said, are more highly evolved than the darker races, than the Slavic races. So guess what? Why not kill or subjugate those other races? It only follows logically, because I don't believe there's a God that says we're all equal, made in God's image. So they lived that out. The Nazis lived that out. They had the courage of their convictions, right? That's unfortunate, right?

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Well, I mean, yes and no, and I guess my point is that if that's what you really believe, but what you have happening after that, after you see the death camps, you have all these people saying, "Oh, that's bad." And you go, "Well, tell me why that's bad. Please explain to me why is it bad that millions of people were murdered. So you believe in good and evil? You believe that the people murdered are created in God's image? What do you believe?" And the fact is they didn't quite know what they believe, so they kind of fudged it. And so those bad ideas continued past the Holocaust and continued and continued. And so it kind of spiders into all these different directions because you have a number of bad narratives.

Eric Metaxas: One of them is, okay, there's no God. That's one. Which leads us to what I've just said. Life has no meaning. There's no good or evil. We're not gonna actually say that 'cause that won't sell well, but we kinda know. And the cultural intellectuals believed that stuff. You see that in the 1920s, which was a very decadent season. We forget. We think it was the '60s. The '20s was very decadent. The Weimar Republic was very decadent. Very, very decadent, and sexual, and the films, the pre-code films, very sexual, very dark. Okay, then World War II happens. And in America, it kind of — it's a little different because America has been more Christian, so it took more time. It was really the '60s where these ideas came more to light. In Europe, it was after World War I that these nihilistic ideas come in, and the authority of the government or the authority of the church was undermined, and it's a big free-for-all, and what it didn't lead to American-style self-government. But in this country, we look at it, it's really the '60s where it kind of caught hold, and this is why I wrote my book, *Is Atheism Dead?*, because I realized in the '60s was when the intellectuals decided, "Okay, now it's time to put these ugly ideas in your living room." Time Magazine comes to your living room, to your coffee table, and it says, "Is God dead?" So that idea is first explicitly announced in the culture that, well, the smart people kind of figured out that there's probably no God. But you know what? We'll figure out a way to get through it. There's no way through it. But those ideas trickled into the culture, the idea that America is not a special beautiful idea for God's purposes in history. We're now gonna only focus on the negatives, and it was Watergate and Vietnam that kind of corroded things in the culture. And so we've been dealing with this. And it's a

trickle-down. Every decade it gets worse. More and more of this stuff — I mean, when I was at Yale in the '80s, all of this cultural Marxism was there. We called it political correctness, right? PC. That America is bad, Reagan is bad. All that stuff was totally there. It was the zeitgeist, and I drank that Kool-Aid enough at least to say, "Well, I don't wanna be on the outs with the elites, so I'm not gonna be patriotic. I'm not gonna be a Bible-believing Christian. That's for the suckers in flyover country." So this stuff trickles down and trickles down and finally leads to disaster. So for us, what happened under the Biden administration, under COVID, when you first saw the horror of it in a way that I think woke up a lot of people. A lot of people that thought, "Well, we'll be fine," suddenly realized, "This is not fine. What is happening? What are they teaching my kids? What is going on?" So it's sort of a whole cascading through history, through the decades. Of course, I forgot the question.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: But you've mentioned something, and even this morning when we spoke at our leadership forum to students and business leaders and members of the community, you brought this up. You mentioned it again, and I wanna touch on it, the role of the elite. You know, in my discipline of political science, there was this thing called the elite theory of democracy, that elites were the best hope for democracy. They alone understood the democratic creed. They alone believed in it, could follow it.

Eric Metaxas: If that's true, we're dead.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Yeah, and everybody else just didn't get it.

Eric Metaxas: No, that's a wicked lie. And when you look at elites, I mean, you look at woke culture, it's elite-driven. Well, see, this is the whole point. If you — there's a couple of places to look, okay? William F. Buckley, who understood this very well, famously said, "I would rather be governed by the first 300 names in the Boston phone book than by the faculty of Harvard College." Why did he say that? Because he understood what Americans have understood from the founding, that the common man gets this better than the elites. Why? Because the common man is not insulated from reality. If you gotta work a real job, a hard job, you gotta pay the bills, you gotta raise your kids, you're dealing with reality, but an intellectual can be insulated from that. If all I ever did was work in a government bureaucracy, I'm a community organizer. Oh, no, I'm on the faculty of a college. I never have to deal with that stuff. So I can have these theories and these ideas. And the founders understood that for people to govern themselves means we the people, we the non-elites will govern ourselves. Now, there's always roles for elites. There's always gonna be people who are smart and who can do things that maybe a farmer can't do. But the idea that only elites can understand this is simply untrue. All of the founders knew that your average person has the ability to understand what is liberty? Who am I? What is my role? What are my rights? And in fact, I'm writing this book on revolution, it is astonishing how the common people in the colonies in the 1760s, 1770s, the literacy rate was through the roof. Common people could read, could understand the Bible, could understand the law. They knew their rights. They knew — I mean, it was an amazing season, and it comes out of The Reformation. And John Adams writes about this. In fact, there's a chapter in my book, the upcoming book on the Revolution, about John Adams. He wrote an essay in 1765. He gets no credit for this. I wanna give him credit in my book 'cause this is an amazing essay that this young man writes. He was very young at the time, and he's putting all this together, and it basically comes out of Puritan culture, right? The Reformation, all these people come to America to escape the tyranny, whether it's the tyranny of an establishment church or the tyranny of the government. They come here to govern themselves, and they put a gigantic prize on learning. So when they come over in the Arbella in 1630, within four years they establish Harvard College because they know that only if people are educated to understand this stuff can they understand what the Bible says, and we have to have grammar schools. They had grammar schools in all the towns in Massachusetts. They understood that if you wanna be governed by elites, then stay dumb. But if you wanna govern yourself, which would be God's will, then you have to educate yourself. And you don't need a PhD and you don't need an IQ of 150,

but you just have to care enough to say, "Let's get the basics." And so the founders understood, and I would say Martin Luther and the Reformers understood that your average person can get this. And when they go to church, we need to educate them. We need to preach out of the Bible. What does it mean? Don't just tell them, "Shut up. Do this, do that," but help them to participate. That is a fundamental idea, and it's anti-elite.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: It is. It is fundamentally anti-elite. And I would argue — I mean, we've been arguing it — but this is a theme that you see. Paul Johnson wrote a book called *Intellectuals*, this is maybe around 1980 or something like that, about how all of these intellectuals in history had a view that, you know, we, the elites, can understand this stuff, and their lives were a mess.

Eric Metaxas: Every single one of them, their lives, their family, their kids — like a mess. And it's because I was saying they're insulated from reality so they can have these highfalutin utopianist ideas. These are all utopianist ideas, right? They don't actually work, but on paper it looks good. And so you keep seeing this, and you see this with Luther. Luther — and this is not to be anti-Catholic. This is just this idea that there was kind of a governing elite that told people, "Shut up and do what you're told." And Luther was trying to say, "Wait a minute. This leads to trouble." You know? I mean, you could go to Lord Acton, absolute power corrupts. Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely. So that when power is just with the few, it's corrupting. And so we wanna keep it as dispersed as possible, so we don't want only the elites to have power. We want all of the people to participate. So that's the long answer.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Well, you know, I remember encountering this years ago when I read Karl Mannheim, German sociologist on the left, but who wrote this book *Ideology and Utopia*. And he spoke about intellectuals as the intelligentsia who are above reality and can understand what nobody else can understand or see.

Eric Metaxas: And that's Nietzschean. That's Nietzschean. So this is the way they —

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: And I thought, "Oh my, we're in trouble."

Eric Metaxas: No, that's it. They are above all of us.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: But I'm wondering, in today's world, you see such push against populism, right? The hatred of it.

Eric Metaxas: Well, listen, populism can go wrong. And they just wanna focus on that, "Oh, it always goes wrong." No, no, no. And by the way, the founders didn't give us populism and democracy and mob rule. They created buffers, they created systems of checks and balances because they knew that the crowd can be just as wicked as the dictator. Yep, yep. Right? So you can have mob rule, which is a dictatorship by the mob, or whoever's gonna control the mob, or you can just have one dictator. But the point is, we're supposed to have checks and balances. We're supposed to have ordered liberty. We're supposed to have three branches of government and all kinds of checks and balances because we understand how it can go wrong. But this idea of populism, I mean, it was Nietzsche who said, "We've got the 20 ruling the 80%." It was always this cynical view that says the 20% are more equal than others. It's like out of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. They're really the ones that are special, and they're gonna lord it over the few. And you think, well, the founders believed that there was a way to do it this way, and they effectively proved it. And we lived it for the better part of two and a half centuries, but we began to lose it. Began to lose touch with that, and these big government ideas crept in. And it's very attractive, and I think it always leads to horrors. It always leads to horrors and real people suffering, and especially the poor suffering. And so that we understand this stuff is actually vitally, vitally important.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: It is, and you know, the elites are never gonna go away, or this way of thinking. It's always been here for decades and decades and decades, so.

Eric Metaxas: Well, since the Garden.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: What I appreciate in your book, Letter to the American Church, you're writing for everybody.

Eric Metaxas: Well, yeah.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: And so talk with us about how everyday people, what they need to be doing and continue to do that is good to get this out, to speak, to have these conversations so that it's not just the elite or the elite channels that control the conversation.

Eric Metaxas: Well, it really is — again, that elitism is kind of a form of tribalism, which is a form of racism. It's to say that some groups, listen, they just can't handle this. So we'll handle it for you. And you think, well, that's not quite right. God says we're all made in his image, and we have fundamental obligations. So it doesn't mean that everybody — I mean, even the books that I write, maybe it's not for everybody, but the point is it's for as many people as possible because people can get this stuff, you know? And the idea that, well, no, you don't need to know anything, you just milk the cow and shut up. There have been, in history, movements — and I mentioned the founding of this country — where it is astonishing how your average person understood this stuff. Now, that doesn't mean every single person will understand it, but most people got the idea of what does it mean to be free? What is self-government? What are my rights? And it is vital that we communicate that, and I guess the reason I'm doing a lot of what I'm doing right now is because I realize in my lifetime, these things have not been communicated. It's not just that schools have failed. The intellectuals that took over universities, the intellectuals that took over the teachers' unions, whatever, that's one huge part of the problem, but the media has followed. And so the view that we need to love America, that America's a good idea, the stuff that your average person in the '50s on Main Street America understood all this stuff, that's gone away, and so we need to create media. We need to communicate this everywhere. The idea, for example, I mentioned my book, *Is Atheism Dead?* — in my lifetime, this lie has been out there that, you know, we're pretty sure the intellectuals know there's probably no God, and that's kind of where we're drifting secular. That's just the way it is, and we have science to kind of back that up. That's not true. But that lie has been promulgated in my entire lifetime. I mean, you can go back to *The Ascent of Man*, a BBC miniseries, very intellectual, and then *Cosmos* with Carl Sagan in 1980. But it's been all through the media on PBS pushing this lie and making it sound very good so that your average person kind of goes, "Well, I guess that's just the way it is. I guess there's no God." And something has shifted. I mean, the reason I wrote *Is Atheism Dead?* is because the evidence from science to the existence of God has become overwhelming. Like, I don't mean, oh, there's some evidence. I mean it's become overwhelming. But what point is it to say that's true if most people don't know it? So the reason I wrote my book and the reason we're making a TV series right now based on the book is 'cause I thought people need to know this. Your average person can understand this. You don't need to be a scientist, I'm not a scientist, to understand the basics of what's the fine-tuned universe, that the way things are is the result of God fine-tuning things on a level so exquisite that it will stop your heart. It's really — I mean, right now we're breathing, okay? It's not because Cornerstone had the budget to create an atmosphere for this room. We're just breathing the air that came in from outside that's just there in our atmosphere in America. Well, you go to any place in the universe, you will not be able to breathe. What we have here is like an unbelievable creation by God of an exquisite environment. But again, most people think like, "Well, what do you mean? I've watched *Star Trek*. They just kinda come down to the planet and they breathe and everything's cool. What are you talking about?" Well, what I'm talking about is science. And you have

been sold these lies. And so to me, these are fundamental ideas that have been obscured, that have been pushed away, and I think we have to reassert the truth and say to people, "No, if you think there's a God, guess what? There is. If you think that the glories of nature are not an accident, guess what? They're not." There's a lot to talk about. We don't have to agree on everything, but the point is these basic ideas which humanity believed since time immemorial, it's only in our lifetimes that these have been so rudely and roughly shoved aside, and we need to reassert it and say no. And by the way, the evidence for this is overwhelming. It's not just like, "Well, I wanna believe there's a God." No, no, no. The evidence, if you are open-minded, you will be stunned. And I think that we have kind of a duty to get this out, and that's why I write what I do, and now producing TV series and things because people want hope, people want truth. Where do they get it? Well, we've been living in a culture that's been pushing the secular leftist narrative for a long, long time, and it's why there is so much hopelessness, why there's nihilism, why there are young people so confused and nihilistic and broken.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Eric, I've had a number of students be so grateful and excited that you're here on our campus, I will tell you, looking forward, they're looking forward to seeing you. And one of the things that was really gratifying or rewarding to me when we first started speaking about this opportunity, you shared with me you were really caring now about legacy, legacy building, legacy. So you're here on our campus. You're speaking to students today, mentoring some, speaking in a class tomorrow and chapel. Thank you for all that.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah, yeah.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: But talk with us about the legacy piece. It's connected to what you've been saying, but you have young people now who are excited about what you're saying and doing and looking up to you.

Eric Metaxas: Well, that's a little frightening, but I'll, since the Lord is with me, I'll assume it'll be fine. I think — 'cause it's always shocking when you're suddenly old enough to be, you know, young people looking up. I was that young person 10 minutes ago looking up at, you know, whether it was Chuck Colson or whoever. But I think the point is that we're all just doing our job. We all have an assignment. It doesn't matter what your assignment is. God's given you assignment, do the assignment with joy, and he will use you. But I think it's funny. I don't really think so much about my legacy as I think about the fact that there are young people — there's an army of amazing young people, many of whom have been homeschooled or whatever, and they're rising up. And the world is not ready. The world is gonna be shocked that there are all these mature, grounded young people who believe in God and who love America and who are kind and gracious. The media, which is run by the cultural elites, they don't know that those people exist. And so something is happening, that when these young people are getting married and having families and running for school boards and running for office and other ways — that to me is the real hope of the future, and that's not some Pollyanna, "I wish." It is happening, and I think that the secular left elites have zero ability to comprehend what is happening and what is gonna happen.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: You know, next year it's a big year, the 250th. I want you to tell our listeners a story you told this morning, which is an incredible story of what God put on your heart and what's happening. But please share with our listeners this incredible story.

Eric Metaxas: This is something that I made up, but it's not made up. This is a true story. This is a true story. Well, I grew up — you know, I remember the bicentennial, the 200th anniversary, and I remember everybody saying, "It's our bicentennial. It's the bicentennial. We're celebrating our bicentennial. It's America's bicentennial." And it was a happy, glorious, celebratory year. And when we came up toward this 250th, I thought, "What is that called?" Right? 'Cause the bicentennial's just a great term. It's our

bicentennial. It's America's bicentennial. We had, you know, on, I think on CBS or something every night, they'd have a bicentennial minute, you know, and stuff. And the term for the 250th is an unwieldy term. It's the semiquincentennial, right? So half of 500. And I thought, "Nobody's gonna say that. Nobody's gonna remember it. Nobody is saying it." So everybody says America 250. I thought, "We should have a term that everybody can adopt that is kind of a happy celebratory, it is our, you know, whatever." And I came up with the idea that we should call it the supercentennial, and just by fiat, kinda like, "We're just gonna call this the Gulf of America, and that's the end of it." We're just gonna say it's the supercentennial. It's America's supercentennial, right? And when I got the idea that we should call it the supercentennial, I thought, "I think God gave me this idea for President Trump and for the nation, that we can celebrate our supercentennial and have a term and whatever." And I thought, "Well, if that's true — 'cause a lot of people like to say God said, but if it's true — it's not just something in your mind, then God has to open the door for me to share this idea with President Trump, and God has to make President Trump like the idea." You know, the odds of that are not high.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: It's like a major fleece, like a big fleece, right?

Eric Metaxas: Well, it's — that I was gonna say. But I mean, you know, we've gotta be real. If God is real, and if God — I mean, if God said something, it's like, well, you can test it. Like, if it actually happens, okay, that was God. And if not, that was just my emotions. Or I ate too much pizza. So basically, I was named to the President's Commission on Religious Liberty, and we have a meeting every six weeks or something like that. Now, the president doesn't come to these. The first one I couldn't even go to. I had some speaking engagement. So the second one I thought, "Okay, I'll be there." Four days before, they say, "Oh, the president's gonna be there." I said, "Whoa, okay. He's gonna be there." And he's gonna give a speech. Fox News is gonna cover the speech on religious liberty and stuff. I don't like to strive in the flesh, as we Christians call it. So I don't have some mandate, oh, I gotta sell him on some idea. It's like, no, if God wants him to adopt this idea, then God just has to make it easy and simple. So long story short, backstage, the president got a photo with the 11 commissioners, and then he wanted a photo with each of us. And suddenly I get a few seconds to share this idea with him. And I don't know what I said. I just said, you know, 40 seconds of blah, blah, blah. "This is — I think that 250 is not exciting enough. We need to have a term, like bicentennial, like supercentennial, and da, da, da, da, da, da." He clearly liked the idea. But then I thought to myself, "Hey, you know, he's just being polite. What's he gonna say? The president's not gonna say, 'Nah, no, thanks.'" 20 minutes later, he gets out in front of the cameras. He is introducing the members of the commission, kinda going down, you know, and saying, "Oh, we have Franklin Graham is here, and Ben Carson's here, Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, and Eric Metaxas, the author Eric Metaxas." And he says, "I watch Eric's show every week." Every time I have bumped into the president, he says to me he watches my show on TBN every week, and I don't believe it. I'm like, "Come on, you're just being nice. You don't watch my show." He insists, right? So he says in front of the cameras — I was like, my daughter was there. I was, like, pinching myself. Is this real? He's saying, "I watch Eric's show all the time. It's a terrific show, but Eric doesn't believe me," he says. He goes, "Eric, you need to have more confidence." Like, he's teasing me in front of everybody, right? And then he says, "And Eric thinks we should call our 250th the supercentennial." He — and now, 20 minutes before, I shared this with him, he says this. And he says, "And I think that's a good idea." And he says, "We're gonna make that change. We're gonna call it supercentennial." He just announces it to the — and then he says to his staff, who are scattered around, he goes, "To all my staff in the room, make that change. We're gonna make that change supercentennial." I looked at my daughter like, "Are we dreaming? Are we dreaming this?" right? Like he just announces this. So that actually happened, and so it proves that, look, God gave me that idea. I cannot take credit for that, and that God has a purpose. But I think the ultimate purpose is that God wants to bless this nation. We've gone through a hard time. We've had a hard season. This is, you know, going way back to the '60s like we were talking about. We're in a season of

blessing. Again, that's not Pollyanna nonsense. I think it is true. I think we're in a moment that we're going through an existential crisis. We could have lost the nation. Everything was leaning toward it's over. But God said no. And, listen, there's a holy remnant that's been praying and praying and praying and praying. Let's be honest.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Absolutely. There's a holy remnant that's been praying for the nation, praying for the president, praying for honesty and transparency and justice and clarity and real elections and all the stuff that we need to have if you're gonna have an America.

Eric Metaxas: And I really believe that God has said, "No, I wanna bless the nation." So I believe next year, the supercentennial will be a year of blessing for the nation, and that we are going to be in the middle of revival. And that that's what it's all about. It's about revival, and it's about bringing the nation back to its Christian roots. Why? To bless people. Not to create a theocracy, 'cause Christians should be against theocracy. But to bless the poor, to bless the working people, to bless people in this nation that they can in turn be a blessing, and we can have families that are thriving. And so I really believe next year, the supercentennial will be the beginning of great blessings in the country, on many, many levels. And just like I said with the supercentennial, like, hey, if that's true, then we will see. It's all in God's hands.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Eric, there are a lot of people listening, will be listening to this podcast, homeschool moms and dads, homeschool families, students, faculty, staff members in the community. What word of advice would you give to them to prepare for next year? How do they prepare their hearts, their minds, their communities for next year? Because I agree with you. It's an incredible opportunity that we have.

Eric Metaxas: Well, the easiest thing I could say, whenever you're an author, you realize, like — the reason I wrote my book, *If You Can Keep It*, is to communicate exactly this, and it's an easy book to read, and I would say if you haven't read it, it will bless you and it will explain the details of what I've been talking about. Because I wish I could just give that book to every American because I think when you understand what I put in that book, and when you understand these ideas of what is America really, how do faith and freedom link intellectually, not just like people who love America, love the flag, love the Bible, but why are these things intellectually intertwined? The founders understood that if you have people of great faith, you will have people of virtue, and only people of virtue can be free. So when you begin to understand this stuff, that God wants us to love our country, and really get that, you cannot help but be excited about it. And that's what happened to me. I mean, I got the ideas from my friend Os Guinness. I was reading of his book, and when this kind of exploded in my brain, I thought, "This is amazing, and I haven't known this. I wanna tell everybody." So that's why I wrote *If You Can Keep It*, because I said these ideas need to be communicated. We used to communicate these ideas in past decades, but something has happened in our lifetime. These ideas about who we are and what God's role is for this country, these ideas have not been communicated. And so I feel like if you can get excited about that, you will, then you just say, "Lord, guide me because I wanna be a part of what you're doing." And the Lord is doing a lot, but it all has to do really with knowing our history. And so the book I'm writing on the Revolution will tell the whole story. But the short part of it is in *If You Can Keep It*, which is a short book, and when you get that, you just can't help but be excited. And then you think like, "How have I not known this? This is exciting. I wanna tell my kids, I wanna tell my neighbors." And it really talks about what does it mean to keep the republic, that we all have a job to do. And then you say, "Okay, I wanna be a part of that."

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Eric, on behalf of our board of trustees and the entire university, thank you.

Eric Metaxas: Thanks for having me. Thank you for all you do.

Gerson Moreno-Riaño: Thank you for being here at Cornerstone. Thank you for being a distinguished presence, what means a great deal to me personally, but to our community. Eric, thank you, and thank you for being on our podcast.

Eric Metaxas: Praise the Lord. It's been great to have you here. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

TRANSCRIPT NOTICE

This transcript was generated using automated speech-to-text technology and may contain small transcription errors, including inaccuracies in wording, punctuation, or speaker identification. While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, the transcript should not be considered a verbatim record of the podcast. For the most accurate representation of the conversation, please refer to the original audio recording.