

Welcome to the Word

- Understanding Sabbath (p. 4)
- Life choice: adoption (p. 12)
- Happy 400th, KJV! (p. 18)

2011: Year of the Bible

ARTICLES




- 4 **The Sabbath: Duty or Freedom?** | Richard Jensen
- 8 **The Poor Cousin** | David Kidd
- 10 **A Place in the Son** | Michael Todd Barrett
- 11 **The Faith and Works of George Washington Carver** | Sherri Langton
- 12 **Adoption Option** | CoG7 families and members
- 16 **The Bible: Great Diversity, Greater Unity**
- 20 **Warming by His Holy Fire** | Bob Putman
- 22 **Confessions of a Christian Pacifist** | Jael Banda Hamilton



Have you seen the BA on Facebook yet? Look us up and join the community!

If you want to ask questions about this issue's content and discuss it with others online, visit the new CoG7 Community at <http://cog7.org>. The forum is open; anyone can join and post.

 When you see this symbol, visit www.BAonline.org for additional material.

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 **First Word** — The King's Bible
- 7 **Questions & Answers**
- 24 **Local Snapshot** — Passaic, New Jersey
- 25 **Mail Bag**
- 30 **International Tour** — IMC
- 31 **Last Word** — Protestants

CoG7 IN ACTION

- 27 **NAWM, SWORD, and more**

Scripture quotations

Unless otherwise noted, scripture taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2010 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture marked NASB is taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, *New Living Translation*, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.



A publication of the
Church of God (Seventh Day)

This magazine is published to advocate the Bible, represent the Church, and glorify the God of grace and truth.

Volume 145 • Number 1

© Copyright 2011 by the Church of God
(Seventh Day)

All material in this issue is subject to U.S. and international copyright laws and may not be reproduced without prior written approval. Permission may be obtained by writing the editor.

The BIBLE ADVOCATE (ISSN 0746-0104) is published bimonthly by Bible Advocate Press, 330 W. 152nd Ave., Broomfield, CO 80023. Periodicals postage is paid at Broomfield, CO, and at additional offices. Subscription is free to any who ask. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Bible Advocate Press, Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233-0677.

Bible Advocate Press

Calvin Burrell: Editor

Sherri Langton: Associate Editor

Keith Michalak: Director of Publications, graphics

Sylvia Corral, Raul González: Translation, proofing

LeRoy and Hope Dais, Linda Michalak: Correspondence, proofing, clerical

Subscriptions and Orders

Bible Advocate Press
P.O. Box 33677
Denver, CO 80233-0677
phone: 303/452-7973
fax: 303/452-0657
e-mail: bibleadvocate@cog7.org
orders: bap.orders@cog7.org

Notice: Send all address changes and other correspondence to the address above.

Publications Agreement No. 40042428

The Bible Advocate Online appears at www.BAonline.org.

Cover photo: Jerusalem Temple Mount @ Jhdt Stock Images LLC—Dreamstime.com

The King's Bible

The years 1445, 1492, 1517, 1611, 1776. Recognize these from history class? The second and last dates on the list are prominent in American history; the third and fourth are major mile-markers in the Christian church.

But what about AD 1445? In that year publishing made a quantum leap from copy by hand to mechanized press. A German named Johannes could now print more in a day than most men could copy in a year. Books quickly proliferated; learning catapulted to new levels; Bibles multiplied. Because his invention so greatly changed the course of history, *Time Magazine* (December 31, 1999) named Johannes Gutenberg in its top ten list of greatest people of the millennium.

In 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenberg church door, thus launching the Protestant Reformation (expect more on this in the decade ahead, as Reformation approaches its 500th birth year). Less than 100 years after Luther defied Rome in Germany, the King James Version of the Bible was completed in England. The year was 1611. This year is that Bible's 400th birthday.

The events of 1517 and 1611 may have closer relation than we think. Historians often connect the late Middle Ages (AD 1200-1500) with the modern world, like this: Renaissance . . . printing press . . . Reformation . . . Bible translation to the vernacular; Bible distribution to common people . . . Enlightenment . . . increased knowledge . . . Industrial Revolution . . . spread of world missions, democracy, and basic human rights . . . accelerating technology. . .

Though it doesn't reflect the startling problems of the present age, this compacted version of history serves to demonstrate the key role that the Bible and its advocates have had in the past 500 years of progress, most of it rooted in Christian faith and learning. No Bible in any language has had quite the impact on people and nations as the English version that was handed to King James I 400 years ago this year.

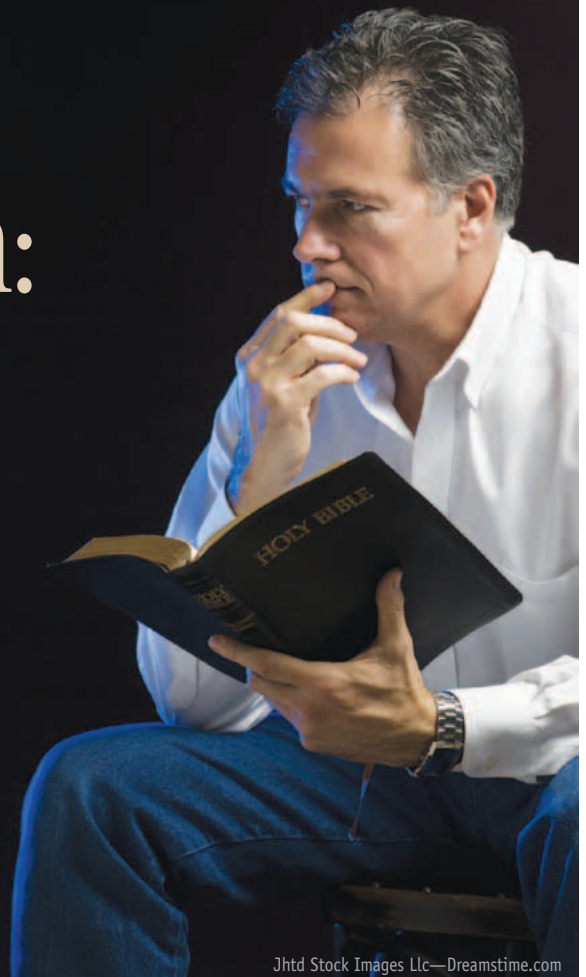
In this BA (pp. 16-19) and through 2011, we'll point readers to the Book that no man could have written if he would have, nor would have written if he could. The Bible is perfectly good for its purpose: to guide the faith and conduct of God's people for abundant life today and eternal life tomorrow — in Jesus the Lord!

— Calvin Burrell



The Sabbath: Duty or Freedom?

Understanding CoG7's position
on the fourth commandment.
by **Richard Jensen**



Jhtd Stock Images LLC—Dreamstime.com

Are we duty-bound to keep the law, or do we have freedom in Christ?

This duty vs. freedom dichotomy can be stated in various ways: legalism vs. grace, law vs. relationship, and obeying vs. loving. These are just some of the ways we hear people define the apparently opposing positions.

Somehow, and perhaps we got this from our anti-Sabbatarian

critics, we have come to fear the words *duty* and *obedience*, as though anybody caring to obey God's commandments is necessarily a legalist. Notice the first recasting of the dichotomy: legalism vs. grace. Most of the Christian world trumpets the phrase "We are not under the law; we are under grace." And then avoiding talk of lawkeeping becomes synonymous with "the

gospel." Somehow the gospel has widely become opposed to law.

Thus the position we take on the question of how to keep the Sabbath actually defines whether or not we are a "grace-based" or "legalistic" denomination. And that true dichotomy between grace and legalism must not become synonymous with a false dichotomy between grace and law. The Bible does not ask us to choose between grace and law, between relationship and obedience, or between freedom and duty. The two sides of these false dichotomies are actually two sides of the same coin, and we

Editor's note: Upon reading the answer proposed to a question of specifics in Sabbath observance (July-August BA, p. 7), many readers responded either seeking or providing assurance of the Church's position. This article, perhaps, provides the best broad coverage of such matters, without lapsing into a list of Sabbath "do's and don'ts" — a man-made list for which Jesus chided the Pharisees of His day.

must understand the distinction between lawkeeping and legalism in order to have a correct position on Sabbathkeeping.

Lawkeeping vs. legalism

So what is the difference between lawkeeping and legalism? Legalism is the view that good works (or lawkeeping) contribute anything to salvation, or that good works somehow offset sins in some divine equation (“Was Joe’s life more righteous than sinful?”). The Bible is crystal clear that lawkeeping counts for nothing in salvation; salvation is all of grace, or it is all of good works, and our good works are as “filthy rags,” with a value of exactly zero in any equation offsetting our sins. The minute we try to add any of our filthy rags to the robe of Christ’s righteousness, that wedding garment is rejected!¹ Instead, we must be willing to have our filthy rags exchanged for the robe of Christ’s righteousness.

Many passages in the Bible indicate how distorted and futile legalism is, the clearest being perhaps Ephesians 2. This single chapter is the entire gospel succinctly stated, and it is replete with phrases like “You were dead in your trespasses and sins” and “God . . . even when we were dead . . . made us alive . . . by grace you have been saved” and “By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”² So we must be clear that our good works cannot contribute to our salvation; the gospel of grace is diametrically opposed to legalism.

“Walking in” good works

As the false dichotomies indicate, the danger is that as we reject legalism, we will take an antinomian attitude. So how can we have a legitimate attitude of submissive obedience to God without being legalists?

Ephesians 2:10 provides the answer. We must recognize that God himself has planned all sorts of good works that He wants us to “walk in.” The original Greek word is *peripateo*, which paints a beautiful picture of what “walk in” means. It means to “explore” or to “walk all around in,” to be “occupied with” as a man walked all around in a newly purchased field. It is, literally, to “take ownership” of that field. What a privilege to realize that our obedience to God is something that He prepared for us to “walk all around in” and to take ownership of. He purchased that field

of good works and then gives it to us. What a terrible distortion to suggest that we cannot take ownership of the field He legally gave us because we imagine that accepting the grant of deed would be legalism!

The purpose of the gospel is not just to grant us forgiveness and then leave us powerless and enslaved in sin. Jesus made this perfectly clear in John 8:34-36, where He said that those who sin are slaves to sin but that He came to set people free. When we accept the righteousness of Christ, we are forgiven of our past sins, our filthy garments are removed (Zechariah 3:3-5), and we are not then left naked. Instead, we are empowered to live out Christ’s life because He lives through us (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:2-5; Romans 6:6-14). Obedience to God’s law comes from the power of the same

Sabbath Principles

It is true that our Lord rejected the typical Jewish rules of His day for keeping Sabbath and made no effort to substitute His own. It is also true that Scripture offers general guidelines for Sabbath observance, including the example and teaching of Jesus. They are . . .

Rest and Remember. As we cease the routine labor and commerce of six workdays, our attention turns to celebrating God’s glory in the created order and His image in the human family, of which each seventh day is a memorial (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Nehemiah 13:15-22; Mark 2:27, 28).

Adore and Aid. Sabbath is standard Bible time for assembly with God’s people to gladly worship Him and rehearse His Word. Christ’s works of mercy present Sabbath also as prime time for good works toward hurting humanity (Leviticus 23:3a; Isaiah 58:13, 14; Luke 4:16; 6:1-10; Acts 13:14, 42-44; Matthew 12:12b).

— Calvin Burrell

grace that forgives us.

Thus, there is no dichotomy between law and grace. Grace makes us lawkeepers, and relationship produces obedience. The “coin” mentioned is the gospel, and the false dichotomies are false because they are really two sides of the same coin.

Church’s stand

It might appear that we have drifted far afield from our original question. So it is time to bring the threads together and explain our position on Sabbathkeeping.

The question is whether or not the Church has a position or stand regarding how to keep the Sabbath. The discussion invariably revolves around various dichotomies, all but one of which are false. Legalism really is opposed to grace, but there is no dichotomy between law and grace, between obeying and loving, or between duty and freedom. So we can legitimately emphasize lawkeeping in the spirit of Ephesians 2:10 without being legalists; grace empowers and motivates lawkeeping.

Thus the Church has no Mishna-like³ stand about the particulars of Sabbathkeeping, but we do have a stand about

the principle of Sabbathkeeping. Our Statement of Faith says that the Ten Commandments “constitute the basic moral code for humanity and are obeyed to demonstrate the believer’s love for God and his fellowman.” God expects us to obey the fourth commandment in the same way my wife expects me to obey the seventh: motivated by love (see John 14:15).

The line between legalism and antinomianism is indeed a narrow way, “and few are those who find it.” But the Bible is clear enough for those who are seeking with their whole heart to serve God. Let us be careful lest our Sabbathkeeping amounts to a cross-less, convenient lip-service that is not actual obedience at all. Conversely, let us not impose specific tests upon others in Mishna-like fashion. We must be very charitable of each other as the Spirit leads us into a fuller and fuller unity of the faith, but we do honor God by expecting obedience to His law.

My purpose in this article has been to demonstrate that the false dichotomies are actually two sides of the same gospel coin, that legalism can be avoided while one strives to obey God’s law motivated by a loving

relationship with the Lawgiver. The whole purpose of the gospel is to bring us again into harmony with the great Lawgiver and to give us victory over sin, which is transgression of the law. With this victory comes the deepest sense of freedom and peace, which is the “rest” Christ talks about in Matthew 11:28. And that rest, the rest of victory in and through the righteousness of Christ, is symbolized by the Sabbath, as we see in Hebrews 4.

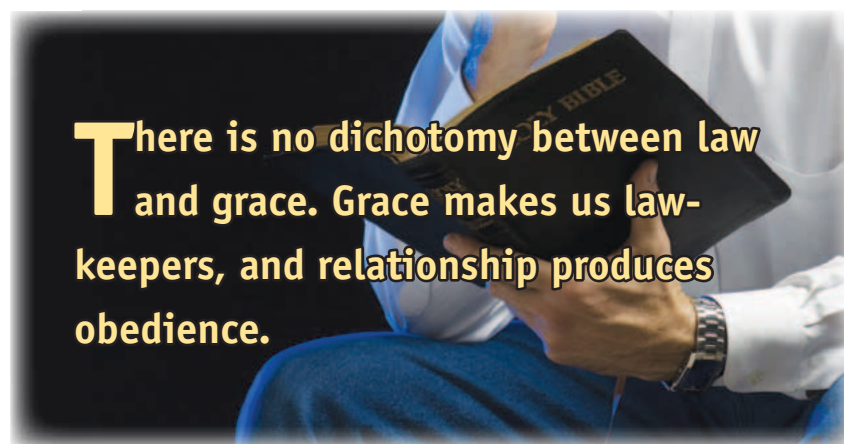
Such rest makes us lawkeepers rather than law breakers. We joyfully take up our cross to follow Him, counting the burden light, as we revel in the privilege of “walking all around in” the field of good works He has prepared for us. Thus let us truly keep the Sabbath. **BA**

Richard Jensen is executive director of the General Conference and lives in Denver, CO, with his wife, Dana. Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*.



Endnotes

1. Compare Matthew 22:1-14 with Zechariah 3:1-7 for further consideration of what these garments symbolize.
2. See also Titus 3:3-7; Romans 5:8, 9; and Galatians 2:16-18.
3. The Mishna, or Mishnah, was a set of detailed rules passed along by rabbis as oral tradition during the time of Christ and later codified in written form. One section of it concerns the specifics of “proper” Sabbathkeeping. The prohibition against labor, for example, became so specific that one could not write any two letters on Sabbath such that both could be viewed at the same time from any vantage point (see Shabbat 12:4).



Explain the contradiction between Paul's statements that support God's law and those that oppose it. Didn't Paul teach that Christians have been released from law and its penalty, like being released from jail?

Objections to God's law by Christians often arise from Paul's letters. All the texts on this topic lead to biblical balance and a richer perspective than the no-law view your question implies. Assuming unity and equilibrium in Scripture, we need not conclude that the diversity in Paul's epistles equates to real contradiction.

It is true that Paul can speak of law negatively, stating what it cannot do. Many texts support the gospel truth that law cannot justify (i.e., forgive, acquit) folks from sinful states or actions (see Rom. 3:20a, 28; 4:15a; 5:20; 6:14, 15; 7:1-6, 8-11; 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:1-16; Gal. 2:15-21; 3:1-14; 4:22-31; 5:3, 4, 18; Eph. 2:4-9, 15; Phil. 3:3-14).

Paul's theme in these texts is that law can never be the ground for sinners to stand right before a holy God. Indeed, it never had that purpose — not even for Israel. From the need to find salvation by deeds of the law, these verses say, we have been delivered by the death and resurrection of Christ!

It is also true that Paul's epistles contain positive statements about God's law with its righteous commands for Christian life (see Rom. 2:13; 3:1, 20b; 7:7, 12; 8:4; 13:9; 1 Cor. 7:19; Eph. 2:10; 6:2; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14).

These two lists of texts illustrate why Paul's teaching can be seen as contradictory. How can we reconcile the apostle's contrasting attitudes to the deeds of the law? Shall we argue, as some have, that his positive statements about law refer to the Decalogue but that his negative comments have the Mosaic, or ceremonial, law in mind?

The texts themselves give a better explanation. The contrast in Paul's "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" attitudes toward law is more easily grasped in light of the different roles that law might play in one's faith and practice:

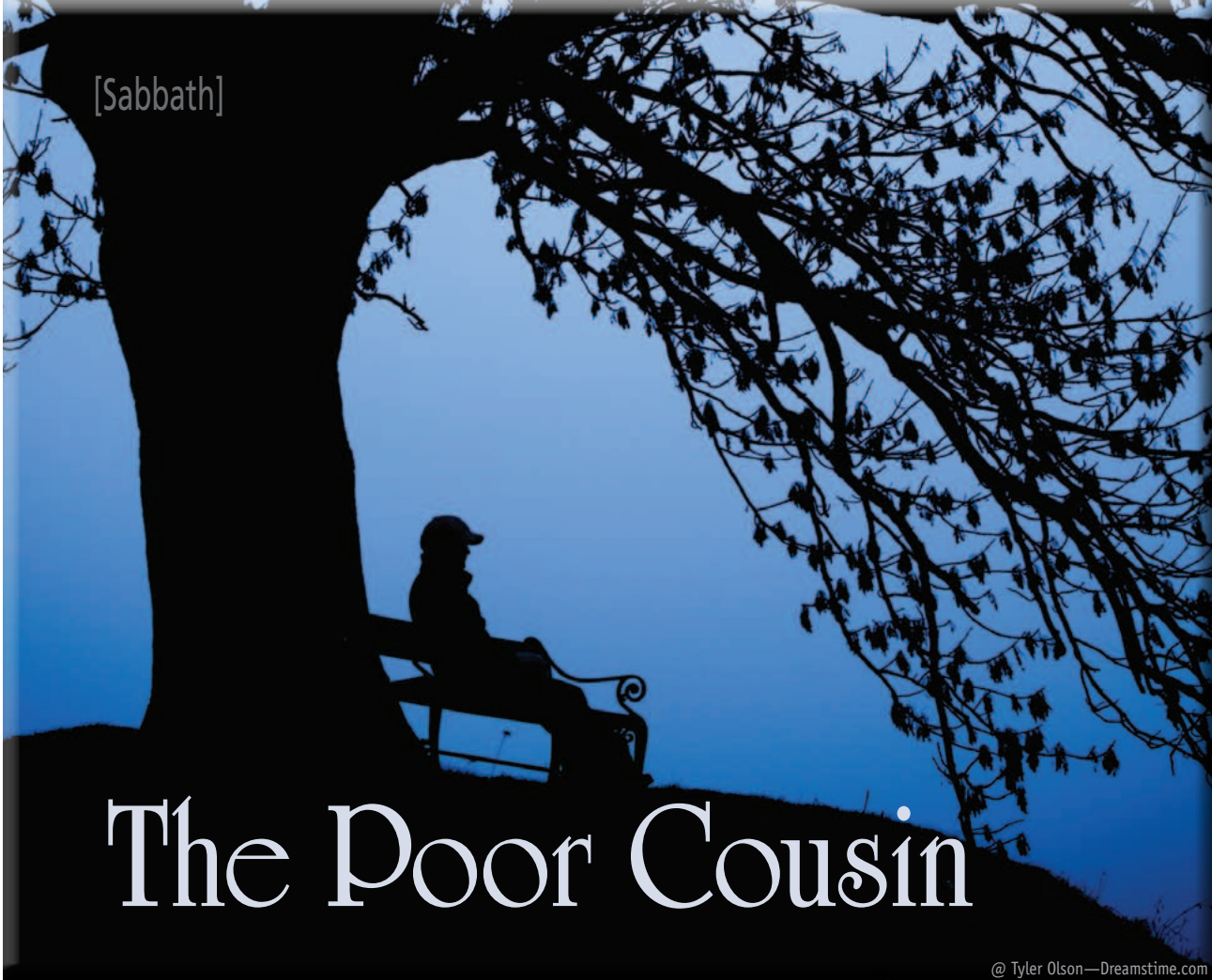
- Addressing the matter of people becoming Christians and standing right before God, justified every moment along the way, Paul renounces use of the law. Obedience and good works are never the means to salvation or a sufficient reason to boast.
- Addressing the matter of Christian conduct and walking right before God, sanctified in this present world, Paul recommends God's law. Together with Christ's example, the Spirit's presence, and love's power, moral law is another holy influence that guides and corrects God's people.

Paul's teaching about the law cannot be captured in one simple sentence. Yes, he says, we are released from the law's curse and penalty by the grace of Christ's gospel (see the first text list above). And no, he insists, we are not released from the counsel and practice of God's commands as an expression of love and gratitude for His salvation (see the second list).

How can the law be both valid and invalid at the same time? Simply because law may be conceived as having more than one function. As a way to earn God's eternal favor, it is never valid! As a definition for sin and standard for righteousness, it is always valid!

Treating Paul's competing statements in this manner, we avoid "contradiction" and allow both sets of texts to convey important truths. Those truths both release us from the law's penalty (our jail, or death) and provide much incentive to avoid repeat offenses.

— Elder Calvin Burrell



[Sabbath]

The Poor Cousin

@ Tyler Olson—Dreamstime.com

Not all the Decalogue was created equal, it seems.

by David Kidd

Ever had a relative who was not the family favorite for some reason? He wasn't treated the same as Uncle Bill or an affable aunt. He may have been excluded from family functions to avoid embarrassment. Colloquially, we call him the "poor cousin."

The Sabbath has become like that, in a way — the poor cousin of all God's commands. Here's how.

Breaking and neglecting

The Sabbath is the only commandment that some Christians

say Jesus broke. They cite His Sabbath healings as proof. Jesus corrected their mistaken view, teaching that it was right and lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Jesus certainly questioned the way people were keeping Sabbath, but never their need to keep it (Mark 2:27, 28; Luke 4:16).

The allegation of Jesus' Sabbath-breaking is serious. If He sinned against God's moral law, He could not be the unblemished Lamb of God who redeemed us from our sins. If He missed the mark of God's perfect will for the Sabbath day, He himself would need forgiveness and redemption.

Another way the Sabbath has become the poor cousin, especially of the Ten, is seen in how the church usually handles

its neglect. If a member is an obvious thief or adulterer, he will most likely be counseled and corrected. But discipline for those who violate the Sabbath is rare indeed.

Which command of the Decalogue are Christians most likely to compromise when under some temptation or pressure? Try to imagine a Christian deciding to murder or steal just for a little while, under duress. It's much easier to imagine one who decides to work on the Sabbath. Again, it's the poor cousin who is ill treated.

The Sabbath is also the only one of the Ten that "seems" OK to ask others to break for our benefit. Ironically it is the only command that tells us specifically not to do this: "In it you shall do no work: you, *nor your*

son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant . . . nor your stranger who is within your gates" (Exodus 20:8-10). Christians, however, will often ask others to work for them on the Sabbath when there is no emergency or pressing need to do so. Note, though, that Jesus modeled a Sabbath that was not neglectful of urgent human needs (Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6; Luke 14:1-6).

Other changes

Our Sabbath cousin seems all the poorer when we recognize that it is the main one of the Ten to be widely modified, spiritualized, or abandoned. The original command in Exodus 20 specifies "seventh day," yet many choose the first or no day instead.

Other Christians insist that, since we are not under the old covenant (which is true), we need not keep the Sabbath anymore. But wait! Can a Christian murder, steal, dishonor parents, or blaspheme God's name because we are now living in new covenant times? God forbid! Are any other of the commandments spiritualized so that their literal meaning is nullified?

At the same time, it should be stressed that adherents to the Sabbath should be careful not to let man-made rules and regulations detract from the intended blessing of the Sabbath.

It is a well-established fact that the change from Sabbath to Sunday (or any day) had not yet occurred in the first century. In that early era, Christians were still keeping Sabbath, not according to the misguided strictures of the Pharisees but in the compassionate way Christ demonstrated. This confirms

what many scholars recognize, that Colossians 2:16 and Romans 14:1-5 were providing instruction on controversial, doubtful, or heretical practices, not established principles like Sabbath observance according to the fourth commandment, beautifully modeled by Jesus. Thus it would be misguided to nullify the Sabbath on the basis of Colossians and Romans as many do.

It is especially strange that Christians treat the Sabbath commandment like a shunned relative when it and the fifth (honoring parents) are the only two explicitly associated with great blessing. Getting much-needed rest, finding special time to worship God and learn more of Him and His ways, and being together with our brethren and families are important blessings we share on the Sabbath.

We may think of this issue primarily in terms of relationships, not mere rules. But consider this irony: Christians often rightly emphasize relationship with God above keeping rules. However, they also tend to depreciate the one command of the Ten that best cultivates relationship with God and others: the fourth.

Falling short

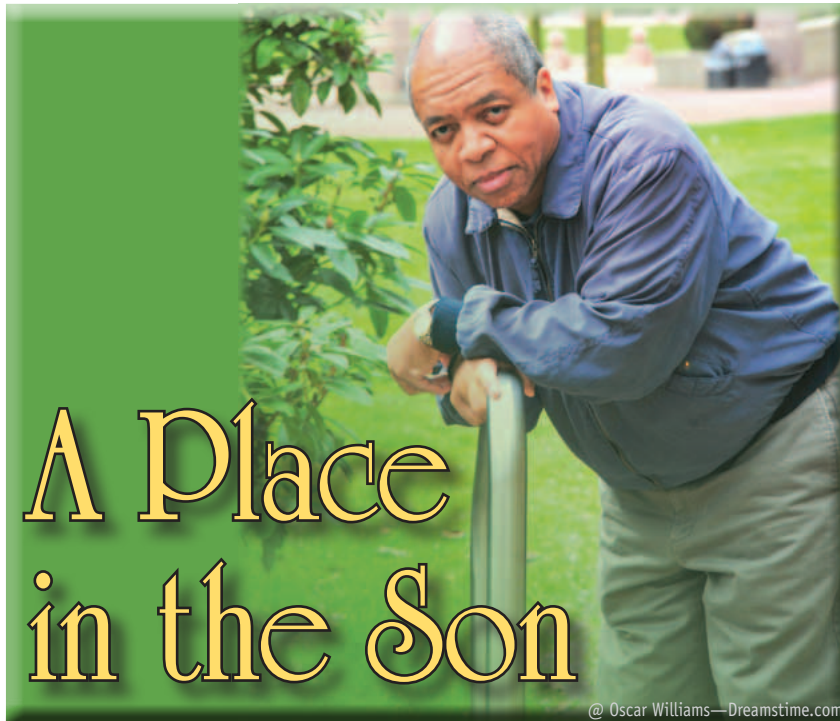
It's not my place, nor anyone's, to point at Christians who disregard or reinterpret the Sabbath day; I am not their judge. They may be obedient to God in other ways that I have neglected. My church and I may be teaching other things in error, so who are we to point fingers at them? As we judge them, the same measure of judgment will be used on us (Matthew 7:2). Many in Sabbath churches (including me) fail by treating the Sabbath like a poor cousin from time to time. All Christians in all churches fall short of God's glory in our imperfect knowledge and conduct before Him.

Treating the Sabbath like a poor relative is just one evidence that our relationship with God is not all that it could be. Only in a close connection with the Lord will we find both the desire and the strength to obey Him more fully. **BA**

David and Angella Kidd attend and serve the Adelaide church in South Australia.



**Can a Christian murder,
steal, dishonor parents, or
blaspheme God's name because
we are now living in new
covenant times? God forbid!**



by Michael Todd Barrett

I was proud to call E. J. my friend. Gentle and soft-spoken, he was a wide-faced bear of a man. He wasn't tall, but the first time we shook hands, mine disappeared in his. Some said that E. J. had been angry and rebellious as a young black man. I only knew the gentle spirit with a slight hint of gray around the edges.

It would be hard not to like E. J. In all the times I heard him sing "Amazing Grace," I don't remember ever seeing him finish without tears coming to his eyes. He had an easy way with words when he prayed, and he reminded me of a little boy talking to his daddy. When E. J. prayed, you just knew the Lord was listening.

But it was his way of addressing God that first amused me. Later, as I came to know the man, it made me question my own view of God. It humbled

me a little. E. J. always addressed God as "Master."

Over the years I knew of several incidences in which race played a role in E. J.'s life. He and his wife came home to their mostly white neighborhood one night and found their dog lying dead in the yard, a gunshot wound to its torso. Another time someone at their mostly white church asked E. J. and his wife why they didn't go to church with "their own kind." E. J. responded softly, "My kind is Christian."

I remember once E. J. and I were talking about race and how the divisions of race have no place in Christ's kingdom. I told him about my grandfather, a staunch Southerner who grew up in post-Civil War Louisiana. When I was a little boy, my Grandfather told me fascinating stories of being chased by alligators and catching water moccasins with his bare hands.

His stories always included the almost prideful acknowledgment that as a boy, he had known ex-slaves. But he always followed it with the caveat, a reflection of the times, that "I have nothing against blacks as long as they stay in their place."

I'll never forget E. J.'s response. His eyes met the floor as he said softly, "I'm still trying to figure out what my place is." I was sorry I told him that story. I wouldn't have hurt him for the world, but his dark expression told me I had.

E. J. died a few years ago, with his wife, family, and a host of friends — white and black — around him. He was loved because he was kind and good. With his last breath, he praised God for all He had done for him. Worship was E. J.'s passion right to the end, and I sometimes wonder if, at that moment in time when he left this earth, he even noticed the change.

Today, Western culture has been seduced by narcissism, a vice that has no place in the church. Pep-talk messages and self-help programs are replacing biblical exposition, on-your-knees repentance, and humble worship. What the new century holds for the church, only God knows. But I do know this. E. J. was wrong about himself: He did know his place. He knew it better than most. In this age of pop-culture services and self-help preaching, it could be that those of us who don't think of Jesus as "Master" don't know our place. **BA**

Michael Todd Barrett writes from Dobbins, CA.



The Faith and Works of George Washington Carver

In July 1864 George Washington Carver was born near Diamond Grove, Missouri, to slave parents. He grew up poor and, because of his race, was denied education. But Carver persevered and finished high school. At age 30 he became the first black student at what is now Iowa State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural science. After Carver completed a master's degree in bacterial botany and agriculture, Booker T. Washington invited him to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a trade school for blacks.

While serving on the faculty at Tuskegee, Carver racked up a list of impressive accomplishments and inventions. He developed crop rotation, revolutionizing southern agriculture. He derived more than three hundred products from peanuts (such as paint, cooking oil, and peanut butter) and more than one hundred products from sweet potatoes, including vinegar, flour, rubber, plywood, dye, and the glue used on postage stamps.

Volumes have been written about Carver's achievements, for which he received many awards before and after his death. But greater than his notoriety as a botanist was his commitment as a Christian. In his mind, the creation evidenced the Creator. Carver once said, "Never since have I been without this con-

sciousness of the Creator speaking to me through flowers, rocks, animals, plants, and all other aspects of His creation."

Carver credited the true Source, not himself, for his inventions. "I never have to grope for methods," he said. "The method is revealed at the moment I am inspired to create something new. . . . Without God to draw aside the curtain I would be helpless."

Believing that he should share his products freely with human-

ity, Carver never profited from them, nor did he patent them. He once said of his ideas, "God gave them to me. How can I sell them to someone else?"

On January 5, 1943, at the age of 79, George Washington Carver died, full of years and faith, having contributed so much to humanity and owing so much to His Lord and Savior.

— Sherri Langton **BA**

Sources: *About.com*, *CBN.com*, *www.lib.iastate.edu*, *blackmissouri.com*, *www.biography.com*

BA Recommends 'The Least Among You'

Synopsis: Following his false arrest during the 1965 Watts riots, Richard Kelly (Cedric Sanders) must serve a two-semester probation at an all-white racist seminary. The school's first black student is welcomed by its progressive president Alan Beckett (William Devane). But Richard soon learns that the school wants black followers, not leaders. Even former missionary Kate Allison (Lauren Holly) rejects him. Facing a decision that will land him in prison, Richard meets Samuel Benton (Louis Gossett Jr.), an elderly janitor who lives in the basement of Richard's dormitory. As Samuel guides Richard through the trials of racism and his personal demons, Richard has to choose between his dreams and his destiny.

Inspired by a true story, *The Least Among You* is available on DVD, Digital Download, and On Demand. View the trailer at www.theleastamongyou.com.





Adoption Option

@ Vlntrn—Dreamstime.com

In the social unit called “home,” you became a “child” of the family either by the natural ways and means of childbirth or by the legal process of adoption. Both are biblically legitimate; comparisons can be instructive.

Childbirth may result from an act of love or from selfish passion. It occurs about forty weeks after two persons of opposite gender merge sexually and one of his seeds serendipitously unites with her egg. It can be “planned” by the parents or be an “accident.”

Between the times a child is conceived and birthed, the growing human life is precious and vulnerable. Its greatest threat is the potential parental choice to end that life through an act of violence: abortion.

Childbirth is the only and universal method of adding to the human family; there is no alternative. Even when followed by adoption, childbirth is a must — first. In the Bible, marriage is the

institution that no one planning childbirth should be without.

Adoption, meanwhile, is a valid Christian option for unmarried adults as well as married couples. Adoption allows for deliberate choice to be a parent and a firm commitment to the new child, thus reducing (at least theoretically) the number of “unwanted” offspring in the world.

Childbirth remains the most popular method for adding to a family, but the legal option of adoption has one advantage over the old-fashioned way: It can provide for any child whose conception, birth, or growth to maturity is “problematic” to one family, to be welcomed into another family better equipped for the task.

That all “problematic” cases suggest human failure is not the child’s fault! Rather, recognition of the problem and willingness to improve on it can be the child’s salvation — in more ways than one.

The Bible says that God looked beyond our failure (sin),

saw our problem (no heavenly parent or home), and legally adopted us into His faith family, making us His heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. Abba, Father (Romans 8:15-17)!

God-adoption is no accident or random union of seed and egg, but the deliberate act of a loving Parent who chose us in Him according to the good pleasure of His will. Praise His glorious grace (Ephesians 1:3-6)!

In God’s family, adoption saves lives — from the everlasting loss faced by sinners. Being adopted by Him means nothing less than eternal salvation.

In human families, adoption saves lives — some from abortion, some from abuse, some from neglect and deprivation. Being adopted by qualified individuals or couples who care can bring a measure of salvation to adoptees now. It can also introduce them to a better Father who adopts them forever.

— Calvin Burrell

To increase awareness of this topic, BA asked several families and members what they've felt and learned through adoption.

BA: Tell your experience with adoption or foster care and its impact on you and your family.

I was adopted at three days; my birth mother was only sixteen years old. If abortion had been legal then, I might not be alive now. I'm glad she gave me up to a loving family. My only regret is not knowing my national and health history.

My adoptive parents always told me the truth. Those who learn about their adoption later tend to resent it, so I think it's a mistake to conceal it.

— Dean Schlenker
Yakima, WA

Unable to have children naturally, we looked into foreign adoptions, chose Korea, and were blessed with three beautiful children in three years. Later we did foster care, with no intention of adopting again. When a baby boy with special needs (including a mommy and daddy) was placed with us, we adopted our fourth beautiful child. After a long break, we're now fostering teen mothers and their babies.

— Karen Hendershott
Westminster, CO

My mother gave me up for adoption when I was three days old because she was in college. Back then, the mother was sent away, and no one was told so as not to embarrass the family.

— Daniel Schlenker
Zillah, WA

I adopted my second cousin's child. Since closer relatives than

I could have taken Jazmine, I believe God intended us to be a family. The first time I saw her was when she came to live with me, at seventeen months. She is now seven.

Jazmine has been an extraordinary gift from God. I first thought I was doing the family a favor but soon found the biggest favor was mine. When she came, my grandparents lived with us, too, as their health declined. Their daily interaction with this precious child brightened their lives

— Charla Collins
Gilbert, AZ

Kim had wanted to adopt since she was fourteen years old, and Gordon shared the interest. From 2001 to '07, we adopted three infant boys from the US, then three toddler girls and a ten-year-old girl — all from Haiti.

International adoption is not for the faint of heart. The rewards far outweigh the problems, so we are strong advocates for adoption. Going from childless to parents of seven has totally changed our lives. These are *our* children, not our adopted children.

— Gordon and Kim Williams
Nampa, ID

After years of infertility, seeking God, and pondering His plan, we began a three-year process with a local adoption agency. An extensive home study and parenting classes followed. We were visiting in Branson when the long-awaited call came. We didn't sleep that night but hurried back to Kansas City to meet our daughter.

What an exciting time! Emily has brought much joy and gratitude to our hearts and home.

We sense God's love and faithfulness in direct answer to prayer. As if to demonstrate that this was truly God's plan, Emily falls neatly into family patterns — the fourth granddaughter born in October, each two years apart. And my written prayer request was answered: a daughter with curly reddish-blond hair. It's beautiful!

As an adolescent, Emily wondered about her birth family. As an adult, she has not wanted to pursue searching, saying she is thankful to be ours.

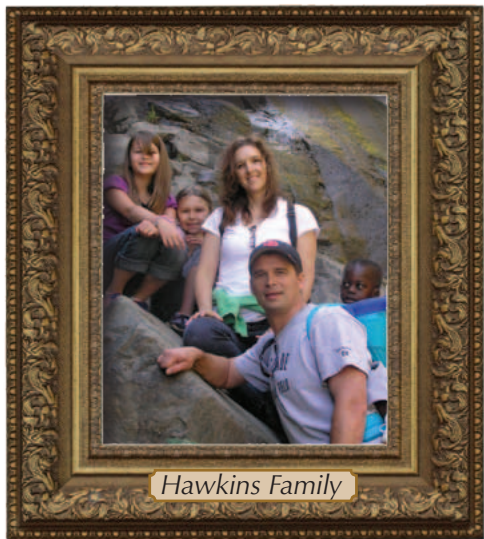
— Ron and Janice Smith
Lees Summit, MO

Our hearts were broken when a planned adoption fell through, but God brought us healing and joy through Josiah Jamal, a Miami newborn. Our faith grew as we learned that God delights in answering our prayers, not always as we expect.

Craig and I have become more compassionate for those on the other side of adoption. Most birth mothers love their babies and find it hard to give them up, but do so because



Williams Family



of difficult situations. They are desperate and want something better for them. We've learned to empathize rather than judge birth-moms for not keeping their babies.

— Debbie Hawkins
Turner, OR

BA: What insights about God and His family have you gained through adoption? What Scripture truths have been confirmed?

My adoptive parents' (Gideon and Leona Schlenker) greatest impact on me is the godly principles they taught. I ran from God awhile but have studied the Bible and Church beliefs for the last ten years. What I've found brought me closer and taught me we all should get back to basics: God's love and commandments, the Golden Rule, etc. Family units should always be built around God and love. The most memorable moments were when my father and mother sat and read Bible stories to my brother Dan and me.

— Dean Schlenker

Acceptance. We've had different nationalities and handicaps,

so our family has looked different. Whether adopted or foster care, each has been accepted by our church family like we're all accepted by God through Christ, no matter our looks, our national origins, or even our sins. He loves us all the same!

Knowing how I feel about my children, as though I gave them birth, I can better relate to Romans 8:15: "So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father'" (NLT).

Jesus wanted children to be close to Him, even holding them. That's often what foster children need most — to be held and loved.

— Karen Hendershott

I want to thank my birth mother for giving me up for adoption. I thank the Lord for giving me parents (both now deceased) that loved me, took me to church, and were spiritual role models. They taught me that Christ died for me, a sinner who came into the world from sins I had no control over.

— Daniel Schlenker

Most comforting to me as an older mom is that God will give strength to accomplish whatever He asks. At first I worried that I wouldn't be able to love Jazmine as much as she deserved — like a biological parent would. God answered my prayer by filling my heart with love for

this child. His love passes understanding.

God watches over us with our best interest in mind, not always as we might choose. If we trust and follow His lead, extraordinary things happen. To those considering it, I highly recommend adoption.

— Charla Collins

We had waited months to be chosen by a birth mother. When one finally chose us, we waited months longer for the baby to be born. Just before the birth, that mother changed her mind — a very difficult time. Kim told Ella Benight about the disappointment; Ella made the unspoken request at a ladies prayer meeting. Though Kim had been told by the agency that they had no babies, five days later we got a call for our first baby — one whose birth parents had already surrendered parental rights.

Kim had only just begun attending church and was trying to believe the Bible and unlearn evolution. God's intervention was tangible evidence of what He could do and gave tremendous support to her developing faith.

With complex agency rules and timing, some of our adoptions were difficult. Once we



were told we couldn't adopt domestically unless we backed out of the international process already begun. In amazing and direct ways, God intervened. We learned that if He wanted us to adopt, we would need help. He always came through.

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate (Psalm 127:3-5, NASB).

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow (Isaiah 1:17, NIV)

— Gordon and Kim Williams

Fourteen months after adopting, our son Jonathan joined the family by birth. Our unlimited love for both Emily and him reinforces the truth that God loves all His children, regardless of how they come to Him or what background they bring.

Adoption is a unique experience, bonding so tightly that we know Emily as our child and she knows us as her parents! The moment she first nestled into my hands, the most amazing conversion happened: I became a parent. I committed to devote whatever would be necessary for her security and well being. She was my heir and I, her dad.

Our experience with adoption illustrates why Jesus said that we need a child's faith to enter the kingdom. We are told that He knew us and committed Himself to us even before we were born. We sense the pride that God

must have in His adopted children who come to Him vulnerable and with uncertain future, needing redemption and nurture under the good influence of His love.

Much like when God adopts us, our daughter received "glorious liberty" — in this case, to grow from a child to maturity and independence. So we receive the spirit of adoption with God — not of bondage but of freedom. He commits to us whatever it takes for us to become what He envisions for us.

— Ron and Janice Smith

Adoption has helped us live more tangibly the verse that says true religion is caring for orphans and widows (James 1:27). We now understand better what God has done by adopting us as His children. We love Josiah as intensely as we love our birth children. God loves us even more!

Adopting an African-American



Hendershott Family

baby, we are now less immersed in a white, middle-class lifestyle. The tendency to judge by outward appearance, something we all struggle with, can be hurtful to others, and thus to our Lord. We are all unique parts of God's family according to His creative genius, but loved equally. In salvation, God sees neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female. We can do the same by loving and living together in peace.

— Debbie Hawkins BA

Foster Care

My wife always had a calling for children. When one of the church ladies got into foster care, Adelina did not hesitate to get involved, too. I was pleased with the idea of her having these babies in our home, but not fully convinced. We started working with kids from badly broken homes — abuse, drugs, prostitution, neglect — and parents who could not break these vicious cycles. So much training, meetings, and home visits were required.

My activity was limited at the start. I didn't want these kids to depend on me. They started calling me Dad; that felt good. As I came to see the true nature of this ministry, I wanted to be there for them. They loved and wanted Daddy. Anglo children learned Spanish in our home. Now I thank God for the opportunity to be Dad to about twenty children. Our daughter Anani is working for Child Protective Services (CPS), with twenty-two children under her wing. God bless them.

— Gus Salcido, Mansfield, TX

The Bible: Great Diversity

Conservative Christians have long maintained the trustworthiness of Scripture. *Infallible* and *inerrant* are terms that underscore the accuracy and reliability of the original text. In the Holy Bible we have a perfectly good book for its purpose: to serve as an authoritative guide for the faith and conduct of God's people in Christ.

To say it another way, the Bible is the one written source of ultimate integrity. The word *integrity* says that something is fully integrated, or unified. It is *one* thing, not many discordant things, at its essence. Integrity comes from the word *integer*, which means a whole number, not fragments or pieces of numbers.

Students of Scripture often marvel at the unity, the

integrity, of its message. From its first verse to its last, the Bible tells of a God who made it all and who loves people so much that He gave everything necessary to restore those who trust and obey Him from their sinful condition into right relationship with Him for time and eternity. That's the *one* thing at the Bible's essence.

Those who dig deeply and determinedly into God's Word find that its unity, however, is often a complex matter, not a simple one. The Bible is a unified book *not* because it deals with simple issues at an elementary level where tough questions are never raised nor different views expressed.

Rather, the Bible deals with many and diverse issues, at several levels. Winding its way through multiple mazes of life and human existence, still it retains a single core message throughout. This fact is cause for our wonder and praise.

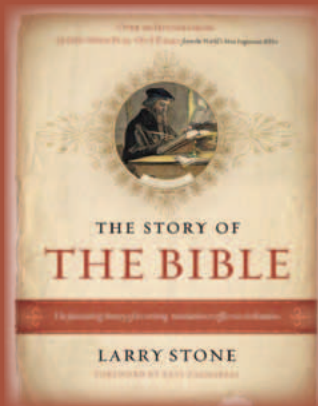
The essential unity that triumphs over the diversity of the Bible's parts may be recognized in these topics:

- **Its authors.** Thirty or more human authors of varied background and temperament wrote the sixty-six books over more than a millennium, but their finished works coalesce, cohere, and blend into a remarkably unified, one-volume library. Sixty-six books = one Bible.

- **Its sections.** No diversity in Scripture is more obvious than that of its Hebrew and Greek sections: the Old and New Testaments, sometimes summarized as law and grace. For those who seek and find it, the common grace and truth of both sections far exceed the many variations in their literary-historical expression. Two testaments = one Bible.

- **Its Almighty.** The most profound paradox in Scripture is its revelation of a uni-plural God. The most remarkable example of unity in diversity is that one Lord shows Himself to be Father and Son, by the Holy Spirit.

A complimentary copy of this handsome 9-½ x 12-inch, 95-page hardback collector's edition, with over 90 illustrations and 23 pull-out pages from the world's most treasured Bibles, will be sent to the BA reader who submits a most-worthy-of-publication essay titled "What the Bible Means to Me." Others who submit essays on the topic will receive copies of the 60-page BAP booklet *How We Got the Bible*, by former BA editor Jerry Griffin. Essays should be e-mailed to the Editor (bibleadvocate@cog7.org) and should be from 200 to 600 words long.



ersity, Greater Unity

- **Its secondary teachings.** One entire Bible chapter — the 14th of Romans — is given over to the apostle's plea for unity among brethren in the face of the early church's diverse opinion and practice on things doubtful (i.e., eating meats, drinking wine, observing days beyond the weekly Sabbath). The list of doubtful disputes may be different now, but the first century principle stands: When truth is uncertain and diversity exists, Christian unity must be preserved.

- **Its spiritual gifts.** As snowflakes of infinite variety fly from one Snowmaker, so does a limitless kaleidoscope of aptitudes, emphases, interests, and ministry gifts proceed from one Spirit as unfolded in one Book (1 Corinthians 12:4, 11; 1 Peter 4:10).

- **Its times and circumstances.** Not all human choices are dictated by divine command; some must be guided by godly analysis of person, place, and time (Proverbs 26:4, 5; Ecclesiastes 3:1-14). Rather than an endorsement of shifting morality or situation ethics, this affirms that many choices require reflection and wisdom beyond a written code. Amid life's puzzling diversity, love for God and others leads on toward perfect unity.

- **Its translations.** Hundreds of languages and their changes over time guarantee that no single Bible translation can accurately serve all readers, all centuries, with God's unchanging Word. Still, we may trust that most, if not all, earnest efforts to translate it succeed in extending the message of Christ's grace and truth beyond previous limits.

A Unique Book

No book in history has been so studied, so used, so abused as the Holy Bible. Millions across history have staked their lives on it. Destiny-defining trust has been placed in it. Graveside hope has been based on it. The charters of nations have been built on it.

Others with equal intensity have sought to expel it. Extraordinary good has been spread because of it. Wrongheaded zeal has caused untold evil in the name of it.

But above all, its message stands or falls on its authenticity. Is there truth for all of us within its pages, or is it only for those with superstitious and unsuspecting minds? Is the Bible mere fantasy, or is it fantastically true? Is this indeed the Word from God to us, or is it the fraudulent work of a few who claimed divine superintendence?

— *Ravi Zacharias, The Story of the Bible,*
by Larry Stone, p. 5

How We Got It

We moderns easily take for granted the neat collection of sixty six books into a single volume "Bible" in our own language. The writing, circulation, collection, recognition, and preservation of sacred writings constitute a complex process stretching back nearly 3,500 years to Moses' time and extending to the fourth century AD. This process peaked in *canonization*, the identification of certain writings as unique, authoritative, God-given Scripture to the exclusion of other writings.

The Old Testament came into written form between 1500 BC and 400 BC. While the Hebrew canon was not closed until around AD 250, Jews in Jesus' day



generally agreed that the writings of our Old Testament were authoritative and God-given.

The New Testament was written between AD 50 and AD 100. Very soon the early church recognized the unique nature of these writings, and most portions of the New Testament were being circulated and read by believers throughout the Roman Empire by the mid-second century.

In response to heretical teachings and the introduction of questionable writings, the early church began to identify an official canon in accordance with rigorous criteria. A list of writings widely recognized as inspired, of apostolic origin, and normative for Christian faith and practice was gradually assembled and agreed upon. By the close of the fourth century AD, church leaders affirmed as canonical the thirty-nine Old Testament and twenty-seven New Testament books widely accepted today. We affirm the historic Protestant position in excluding the Apocryphal writings from the biblical canon.

— Adapted from Chapter 1 of manuscript in final preparation for a book on Church doctrine, slated for public release later in 2011. A more complete booklet on this topic, *How We Got the Bible*, is available from Bible Advocate Press for \$5, postage paid.

The King Behind the Bible

How much do you know about King James, the man? Many know the Bible with his name attached to it, but did you know that Stuart King of England (James I) could dazzle and charm with his polished rhetoric one minute and speak in vulgarities the next? He had both sparkle and grime, smut and brilliance. David Teems' new book *Majestie: The King Behind the King James Bible* (Thomas Nelson, October 2010) brings this royal paradox to life with pictures, charts, amusing and informative sidebars, footnotes, and bibliography.



King James and His “Authorized” Version

- Along with the desire for an improved translation of Holy Scripture in seventeenth century England, King James I and his advisors were also influenced by personal prejudice and national politics.

- Forty-seven scholars worked for thirty-three months, serving on one of six committees. Each committee had a Bible section to translate.

- Committees did not set out to make a new translation from Hebrew and Greek texts, but were instructed to select from preexisting English translations like the Bishops', Geneva, and Coverdale Bibles and others to make “out of many good ones, one principal good one.”

- Translators chose to use *thou* and *thee* in place of *you*, even though such had passed out of common usage in England during the previous century.

- Though commonly called the “Authorized Version,” the KJV was never formally authorized by any official action of the Parliament, the Church of England, or any other Christian body.

- Several later versions of KJV have been issued to correct printers' errors and reflect changes in spelling and word usage over the years. Revisions in 1762 and 1769 have become the standard King James Version in use today. For more, read “Why Revise?,” taken from *How We Got the Bible*, at www.baonline.org.org.

- The KJV was the first English Bible printed in America. It is no longer under copyright protection in most of the world; in the United Kingdom, however, it can only be printed by license from the king or queen.

Wherever in the world there are English readers, there are copies. In the story of the earth we live on, its influence cannot be calculated. Its words have been found to have a unique quality, of being able both to lift up a dedicated soul higher than had been thought, and to reach even below the lowest depths of human experience. . . . Sometimes the translation is wrong, or clumsy, or baffling. KJV's readings of the base texts are in hundreds of places now superseded by greater knowledge, or just better texts. Its older English can confuse the tongue. In particulars, it is not perfect. But the great love it has received is justified by its master of the craft of the declaration of an incarnate God.

— David Daniell, quoted by Larry Stone in *The Story of the Bible*, p. 78

BA

Compiled by BA editorial staff

Year of the Bible Declaration

Renouncing the biblical illiteracy of our age, the compromise of the call to preach and teach God's Word, and the post-modern spirit whereby Christian churches exchange entertainment for exposition, popular opinion for scriptural authority, and feel-good theology for Bible truth; and

Recognizing that "as the pulpit goes, so goes the church," that history's greatest eras of spiritual awakening and revival are linked to the rediscovery and faithful exposition of God's Word; and

Recalling that defining moment in the mid-1800's, when his conviction concerning the authority and sufficiency of Scripture inspired Church pioneer Gilbert Cranmer to declare, "My Bible and my Bible alone";

The leadership of the Church of God (Seventh Day) hereby reaffirms the commitment of our Michigan pioneers by declaring 2011 "The Year of the Bible" and encouraging Church-wide participation in this emphasis by

1. Daily reading and regularly memorizing God's Word.
2. Promoting Christian education at all Church levels; supporting General Conference efforts to produce Bible-based curriculum for children and youth; and responding to the need for writers, editors, finances, and prayers.
3. Supporting denominational focus on leadership and LifeSpring School of Ministry.
4. Recognizing and encouraging the gift of teaching, determined that every Sabbath class in every local church be taught by a gifted and well-prepared teacher.
5. Urging greater student participation in every church's Sabbath school program.
6. Making the Bible central to Sabbath worship by reading it publicly, reverently.
7. Ensuring that pastors heed Paul's charge to "Preach the Word . . ." (2 Timothy 4:2-4) and commit themselves to faithful exposition of the Scriptures through preaching and teaching.

— Calvin Burrell
Ministerial Council President

— Whaid G. Rose
General Conference President

This document highlights the term *Bible-based* in the CoG7 Vision Statement; declares 2011 the Year of the Bible; complements the BA's year-long emphasis; and calls the Church to renewed zeal for the Scriptures, making the Bible central in personal and corporate life.

To mark this emphasis, a commemorative Bible will be placed in the General Conference archives. Throughout the year, this Bible is made available to local churches, upon request, for public reading. Additionally, you may "sign" the declaration above by sending an e-mail of support to yearofthebible@cog7.org, including your name and location in the message.

Lists will be kept of congregations and individuals who respond.

Warming at His Holy Fire



What does it mean to live for the glory of God?
by Bob Putman

@ Bbbrrn—Dreamstime.com

Think back to the last time you sat gazing into a fire of blazing logs.

The flames jump and flicker in an endless dynamic of dancing light. The smell of burning pine, hickory, or maple assaults your nostrils and carries your mind to long-forgotten or newly imagined things. The wood pops and sputters, shooting an occasional cinder, collapsing into red-hot coals. Dancing light plays on faces and immediate surroundings. Heat radiates upon your hands and face. Surrounded by loved ones or friends, you sit alone in a solitary fascination as your mind seeks to comprehend the flames. It is

good to be enrapt by this experience. It recalls your sense of the adventure of living.

This log fire is a metaphor for what it means to live for the glory of God. To sit enrapt in His radiance — warmed, solitary, yet beloved, endlessly fascinated, fully alive — then to radiate it to those He places along your path.

Divine blaze

On the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus reveals a bit of His radiance, the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). In the presence of Peter, James, and John, Jesus' "face shone like the sun, and his

clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17:2b). This is Jesus as He now appears, further described as "the radiance of [the Father's] glory and the exact representation of His nature . . ." (Hebrews 1:3, NASB).

We also see the divine glory when we see Jesus healing bodies and pronouncing forgiveness of sin, calming the storm, writing in the sand, partying with Levi, condemning self-righteous temple leaders, holding a child on His knee, carrying the cross, and ascending to the Father's right hand.

Jesus' goal for your life and mine is to "glorify God by joyfully loving him."¹ We love the One who first loved us when we focus on His divine radiance that we find in Scripture. So how do we feed the fire to feel and reflect God's glory?

Feed your head

In *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer says that the most important thing about us is what we think about God. Loving God with our mind means bonding up on the character, nature, and grace of God. Where do we begin?

Reading the works of great Christian thinkers, who have done the heavy lifting and found words I can understand, enriches my understanding of and appreciation for who God is. Three excellent examples are Arthur Pink's *The Attributes of God*, Tozer's *The Knowledge of the Holy*, and John Owen's *The Glory of Christ* (Banner of Truth Trust abridged edition).

There are many great Web sites to feed your mind with God-centered teaching, like *desiring*

god.org or enjoyinggodministries.com.

Immerse yourself in the heart of the gospel. Study and seek the wisdom of others in order to grasp God's gracious means of making guilty rebels acceptable in His holy presence.

God graciously pursues reconciliation, though we're the ones who need it. He calls whom He pleases to join His family, according to His purpose and love (Ephesians 1:4b, 5).

God excels in mercy and justice toward us. Our acceptance comes only as a result of His mercy and justice, founded upon the punishment of His Son as our worthy replacement (2 Corinthians 5:21).

God perseveres in His calling and keeping us. His calling of us cannot be thwarted, even by our disobedience (Romans 8:29, 30).

Feed your heart

The pursuit of God's glory doesn't end with the mind; it also consumes the heart. There are several ways to feed your heart on His love and truth.

Listen to His voice. Consider upgrading the music you listen to, with lyrics that are full of God rather than self, that exalt Him rather than speak solely of what I feel, that help fix my eyes on Him (Hebrews 12:2). Whatever music style you prefer, seek content that focuses on God, not self.

Lean your head against the Savior's chest as John did at the Last Supper (John 13:25). But how do we do this when Jesus' physical body resides in heaven? By practicing God's presence. Brother Lawrence instructs:

... act with God in the

greatest simplicity, speaking to Him frankly and plainly, and imploring His assistance in our affairs, just as they happen. . . . in this conversation with God we are also employed in praising, adoring, and loving Him incessantly, for His infinite goodness and perfection.²

Remember how far God has brought you. In 1 Timothy 1:13 the apostle Paul recalls that he "was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man" (be specific, as Paul was). Then he remembers the grace of the Lord poured on him (v. 14). This sin/grace combo leads to praise (v. 17) that warms the heart.

Reflect the radiance

So how do we reflect the radiance of God's glory?

We're comfortable talking about Him in prescribed religious settings, such as Bible class or small group, but what about in the foyer, the parking lot, and the world of our weekday lives? Simple questions can launch such conversations: "What are you learning from Jesus these days?" "What is God doing in your life?" "What are you grateful to Jesus for today?" We need to talk about Jesus.

We reflect God's radiance

when we live the Beatitudes and learn to love. Charles Spurgeon said, "If a man walks in Christ, then he so acts as Christ would act. . . . men say of that man, 'He is like his Master; he lives like Jesus Christ'"³

We reflect God's glory when we invite others to join us near the fire. We need to talk about Christ to those who do not know Him. Jesus' goal for our lives is that we will glorify God by joyfully loving Him and by reflecting the radiance of His love to those He sets before us.

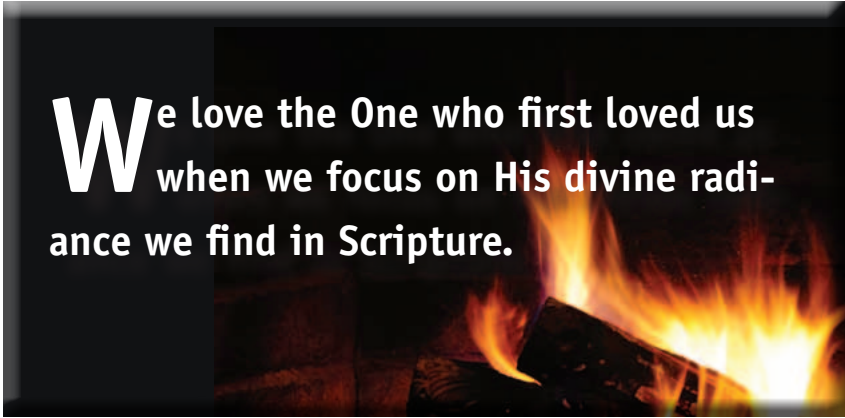
In John 17:24 Jesus told the Father, "I want those you have given me to *be with me* where I am, and to *see my glory*. . . ." That is a prayer the Father is delighted to answer. Come, sit close to the fire and be warmed. **BA**

Bob Putman is editor of *Point*. Scriptures are taken from the *New International Version*.



Endnotes

1. Lee Botzet, *A Heart for God's Glory*, p. 42
2. Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, pp. 19, 25
3. Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, p. 630



**We love the One who first loved us
when we focus on His divine radi-
ance we find in Scripture.**

Confessions of a Christian Pacifist

A member struggles to better reflect the Prince of Peace.

by Jael Banda Hamilton



Every year, more and more CoG7 young people sign up for military service. I ask myself why. Has the Church been slack? Have I been lax about my own conviction?

I feel compelled to make my confession known: I am a Christian pacifist. I have been one since late 2001, when I studied the Church's doctrines after the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

Personal rage

Anyone who knows me knows the temper I struggle with. I was so angry at what occurred back then. I joined in the nation's outrage and found myself saying, "Bomb them!" — even out loud. At our Conference president's request, I prayed and studied God's Word to know the proper response to these brutal acts.

As youth teacher in our congregation, I worked on a Bible study regarding 9/11 and our

stand as believers. I was sure I could find some indication that it was OK to respond to the attack on America with retaliation and war. After all, we must defend our country.

As I studied and prayed, God broke my heart with the truth of Jesus. Above all other Scripture, Christ's words were clear. And they were highlighted in red, as if to call me to them. Jesus showed me a new way to respond to violence and persecution.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:43, 44).

To be His follower, I must deny my own way and accept His as mine. Loving Jesus, I chose to obey Him, though it was ex-

ceedingly hard. I suppressed my opinionated, full-of-rage personality and affirmed our Lord's teaching on retaliation. And I e-mailed my conclusions to President Rose, as requested.

Differing opinions

I know that other opinions exist on this issue. I'm not trying to cause controversy. I'm sure that the stand my brethren make opposed to mine is also derived from study, meditation, and prayer. The reason for my confession is to bring light to who I am. In "head" theology, I've been a Christian pacifist for nine years, but not in fully active, verbal terms.

Despite my views, I do honor the soldier who is willing to die for a cause. A soldier also kills for a cause, however; as Christ's follower, I cannot partake in that.

Many believe that some wars are justified and that pacifists al-

low acts of injustice to continue by being passive to them. This is a misconception of Christian pacifism, which is not passivity. Passivity requires no response; let it pass. Christian pacifism, on the other hand, offers a response, activating the ways of Jesus to pacify the violence around us.

If it were up to my natural personality and temperament, I could not be a pacifist. It is only because of Christ that I am. Therefore I am a *Christian* pacifist. I do not believe in violence in any form, even as defense or retaliation. Christians should not be passive either, but active in the ways of Christ.

As I type this description of who I am, Satan reminds me of the times I've wanted to punch someone or have thrown things in a rant. Perhaps my failures in this stem from the fact that I hadn't, until now, confessed to being a Christian pacifist. After all, if you don't know what I believe, how can you hold me to it?

So I remind myself daily of who I am: I am Jesus' disciple, a Christian pacifist. Every day I must deny myself, pick up the cross, and follow on to be like Him. I choose God, not guns, because in Him is real power and strength beyond this world.

Christ's methodology

In the office lunchroom, a co-worker asked the question all pacifists face sooner or later: "What if someone breaks into your house and threatens your children?"

This reminds me of a similar question that pro-life people are often asked: "What if a woman is raped?" Neither question addresses the theology of life and

attacks upon it, by abortion or by warfare. Both merely raise an issue in methodology of living truth in a broken world.

For me, the answer is clear. Christ has the methodology for us: love, through which we carry out all His commands. Often mistaken for a feeling, love is defined by Jesus as an act – laying down one's life for his friends (John 15:13). Love is not self-satisfying but self-sacrificing for the benefit of others. Love is our method.

Enacting the ways of Christ may result in earthly death, as it did for many early Christians. Their persecution was unjust. Taught directly by Jesus or His apostles, however, they did not fight back – even in defense or retaliation. The Scriptures affirm that dying is not the worst thing that can happen to us. The worst thing is to be outside the will of God: disobedience.

New kingdom

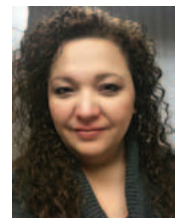
Christ was not disobedient to the will of God. He submitted to it, a hard cup to swallow (Matthew 26:39). He could have defended Himself with an angel military (v. 53), a legion of angels

(v. 53), a military term meaning a thousand soldiers, but He chose the will of God instead and laid down His life freely. Because of this obedient activity, not passivity, we have eternal peace with God – wonderful peace!

Jesus' obedience, difficult and painful, brought God's kingdom to Earth. He is the new and living way, the new world order. As His followers, we are signed up to be citizens of His new nation on earth (John 18:36).

This is the kingdom I signed up for and the nation I'm a citizen of. The flag I wave is red for the blood Christ shed and for the spoken Word He is. I am a Christian pacifist. **BA**

Jael Banda Hamilton, mother of three, lives in Houston, TX, and attends church in Galena Park.



Editor's note: The CoG7 Statement of Faith says we "regard participation in physical warfare as contrary to a Christian's humanitarian calling." Readers are invited to post comments on this article at <http://cog7.org/>.

" . . . nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time — the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression. . . . man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love." — Martin Luther King, Jr., Nobel Prize acceptance speech, December 11, 1964 (www.famous-speeches-and-speech-topics.info/martin-luther-king-speeches/).

Ministry to Immigrants

Established in 2001, the Passaic, New Jersey, church (Victor Mendez, pastor) has been blessed by those whom God raised to work in this place. In these ten years, the church has grown in numbers and matured spiritually and organizationally. The Lord has touched the hearts of many who serve as leaders here and in other congregations of the Northeastern District.

We would like to mention a few brothers who were formed and consolidated through this ministry: Josias Hernandez, pastor from Elizabeth, New Jersey; Raul Cruz, leader in Danbury, Connecticut; and Johnny Solarzano, pastor in Stanford, Connecticut, and area representative.

These are only three of many men who began their studies in the Passaic classroom.

In addition to the pastor and council (board), the church is organized by departments: infants, youth, men's and women's ministries, workers, pro-temple (temple foundation), charity, worship, literature, and evangelism. Among the evangelistic activities that have given good results are family gatherings, evangelistic campaigns, the program "Win

a Friend for Jesus," and pastoral visits that the elders keep written records of. The pastor follows up these visits.

Ours is more than evangelistic activity; what really works is the sincere effect and genuine interest we demonstrate to all who attend (see testimonies in boxes).

One of our major challenges in Passaic is to reach the hearts of Hispanic immigrants who often suffer loneliness, economic hardship, and a profound need for God in their lives. These people look for the American Dream, but we offer them the eternal happiness in Christ.

The Word of God has reached hundreds of people through this ministry. We have baptized and disciplined at least thirty. Still, we



Upon entering this church, I can feel God's love — the special warmth of my brethren. Since I came here, the Lord began to restore my life. I quit drugs and other vices I depended on for more than thirty years. Also I suffered from loneliness and co-dependency. When I began a new life in Christ, old friends abandoned me. Now my life is completely different, and I can attest that with Jesus we have all and can do anything.

— Lourdez Guzman
Visitor for many months

are not focused on filling the church but on spreading the Word.

The church is composed of immigrant members who often do not last a long time in one place. This pressures us to work quickly and efficiently with them. The phenomenon of transience means that membership may not grow as needed to satisfy financial requirements of the ministry, but we are confident that God will supply our needs according to His purposes.

Our vision is to consolidate more leaders for God's service through training and so be efficient in evangelism and discipleship. We may not see the full results of our labor because, even if one plants and another waters, growth comes only from God.

We came to Passaic from Atlanta, Georgia. My family and I did not attend any church formally. I did not understand what was spoken in church and did not take God seriously.

When my father died from cancer, we moved and found a true family here at Passaic, New Jersey, church. Even though I miss my father greatly, I thank God because I now understand His Word and purposes for my life. I enjoy and feel at home in this church.

— Gerson Rivera
15-year-old member



Insights on Islam

It's difficult to speak about Islam without fear and misconceptions; you did well [November-December '10]. I have some friends (yes, friends) and relatives who are Muslims. Islam is a cult, but Muslims are human and should be respected. Love, not fear, is the Christlike answer to Islam. Thank you for the well-tempered issue.

D. D.
Manitoba, Canada

I implore people who enjoy freedom to read the book *They Must Be Stopped*, by Brigitte Gabriel. You will do yourself a great disservice if you don't become informed of this real and dangerous threat [Islam] to our way of life.

S. W.
Cleveland, TN

Consider the cruel and harmful imprisonment that spiritual ignorance, poverty, subservience to corrupt governments, and the tendency toward murderous intolerance impose upon most subjects of the Islamic empire. They are more cursed by it than we objects of its jihad (holy war).

Some Christian "soldiers" have fought back against the aggressors the only way Christians can successfully fight: by showing godly

love for those who seek to oppress ("convert") them. Some have ministered with medical care, sanitation, water, food, shelter, and rebuilding assistance to Muslims devastated by natural disasters that their cultures were unprepared to remedy. The rescuers have not worn big crosses around their necks, lest they immediately turn those they wanted to help against them. Yet they've had the faith and courage not to hide the source of their helpful attitudes.

Ministering to Muslims is risky and much work, but Christians cannot preserve their lifestyles by hiding in corners. As secularism grows more aggressive, we all have opportunities to show God's love to the godless halfway around the world and next door. Most folk can't afford to be first responders, but churches can sponsor them and reports can be given to keep the needs of the world on members' minds.

J. H.
Hartly, DE

I read BA from cover to cover when it arrives, and enjoy it. Keep up the good work. I appreciated your and Jason Overman's articles about Islam. You both did a great job.

M. W.
Eugene, OR

This issue is offensive to us. Christianity and Islam *do not* worship the same God. Please cancel our subscription.

C. J.
Hot Springs, AR

Editor's reply: Neither article regarding Islam stated that Christians and Muslims worship the same God. We did point out beliefs shared by the two faiths, as well as serious differences between them. Can you identify factual errors in the articles?

A romantic couple is silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. They are walking along a sandy beach, with the ocean waves visible in the background. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and red, reflecting on the water. The couple's figures are dark against the bright background, creating a peaceful and intimate scene.

Sabbath Rest

Life increasingly demands
We run and fetch at her commands.
Go! And Come! But do not sit.
We hear the whip and feel the bit.

Take a rest? I can't, I've found.
I'm filled with guilt; I've tamped it down.
Slowly, sweetly comes His voice.
It's time to rest, to still the noise.

Quiet waters, grasses green . . .
It's there we're led in paths unseen.
With the dawn of a new day,
Old burdens fairly slip away.

God is good. I've breathed it in.
To work! To work! Once more begin.
Burdens lighter, God knew best.
Remember, take the time to rest.

Carolyn Caines

[G. C. Ministries
Emphases]

NAWM



Grace Sanchez

SWORD



*Christy Lang, Director
See page 29*

North American Women's Ministry

Grace Sanchez, Director

I have not felt this responsible nor experienced this mixture of sheer joy and panic since my first baby arrived in my lap years ago. Then, my prayer went "Lord, help me provide *Your* child with every tool needed to succeed for Your honor and glory." Or something like that!

The same mix of feelings returned when the responsibility to lead the North American Women's Ministries landed in my lap in 2009. The prayer of years ago remains the same: "Lord, I need Your help with *Your* ministry."

I'm gathering historical data to learn the dream and efforts of those faithful women who met to form this ministry seventy years ago. I've received a beautiful handwritten manuscript and neatly kept ledgers with interesting entries. Among the documents are the minutes from the August 1939 meeting in which the women's ministry was formed. The officers' names and their first rules of operation are included.

I feel privileged to simply handle the documents, but mostly I'm inspired by the progressive thinking. Today's methods may be different than theirs, but the vision remains unchanged: to promote the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Work has begun to piece together a pictorial history of this ministry, in honor of those who've gone before and those yet to come.

The NAWM board and I aspire to promote this work in the year ahead via a Women's Ministry Day, a new logo, and a national retreat in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A new program called "The Ties That Bind" will soon be available.

I encourage you to continue supporting your local women's ministry, the place where it all happens.





NAMC Report

More than 110 ministers and lay pastors, with 50 or more wives and other observers, attended the biennial ministerial council session near Colorado Springs, October 18-23.

Amid the terrific natural beauty of the Glen Eyrie campus, the ministers transacted the following business:

- Approved publication of the CoG7 "book on doctrines" after all ministers have further opportunity to suggest improvements.
- Approved slight revisions to improve content and style of Statements of Faith #3 (Man, Satan, Sin, Death) and #6 (Baptism, Lord's Supper).
- Approved revision of the "Lay Pastor Certificate" document to require, for most applicants, a Certificate of Biblical Studies (24 credits) from LifeSpring School of Ministry prior to issuance of the certificate, as well as ongoing education.
- Affirmed the Church's historic

declination to observe the Feast Days of Leviticus 23, while also embracing ministers and congregations who locally celebrate these annual festivals but do not insist on them as essential to salvation or as a test of fellowship, and whose promotions clarify that these celebrations do not reflect the Church's historic position.

- Elected Calvin Burrell, Raul Lopez, and Kenneth Knoll as its officers for another two years, with Ken Lawson (chairman) and Steve Kyner, Dale Lawson, Raul Lopez, Max Morrow, Don Rodgers, and Heber Vega serving as its License and Credentials Committee.

Serving Him in Nations Everywhere

SHINE will hold Ecuadorian clinics in June 2011.

SHINE's Medical and Dental mission team is dedicated to helping heal the body and nurture the soul through the gospel of Jesus Christ. We offer free medical and dental clinics, give free medications (\$20,000-\$30,000 per mission), follow up a few special needs cases, and conduct evangelism.

Fundraising and contributions pay for each mission. SHINE needs support for the summer project in Ecuador. In addition to your donations, we earnestly solicit your prayers.

Donations may be sent to either

CoG7 SHINE Medical/Dental Ministry, General Conference of CoG7, P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233-0677; or to

Missions Abroad (*specify "for SHINE ministry"*), P.O. Box 387, Wilton, CA 95693.

Make checks payable to CoG7 SHINE Ministry. For information and mission team applications, visit the SHINE Web site: <http://cog7sac.org/missions/>. Contact: Pastor Ruben Frausto (916-832-4982 or 916-832-4982; ruben308@yahoo.com).





Still Having and Holding

- Congratulations to Jesus and Reyna Diaz, who celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary on June 27, 2010. They attend the Waukegan, Illinois, church.
- Congratulations to Ernie and Romula (Gallegos) Bergman of San Antonio, Texas (Willard St. Church), who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 18.
- Congratulations to Ben and Delora (Straub) Dais of Lodi, California, who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on November 14, 2010. They first met in the nursery cribs of the Eureka, South Dakota, church.

Important Dates for 2011

- The annual Lord's Supper service, a memorial of Jesus' death and resurrection, will be held in every congregation on Sunday evening, April 17.
- A Church-wide initiative of prayer and fasting will be January 15 - February 5, 2011. Watch and listen for details.



Christy Lang, Director

Did you notice the new SWORD logo above? While the previous one had served well, we held a contest in 2010 to create a new SWORD logo. The winning entry was designed by Jessica Severance of Albany, Oregon.

This year the SWORD Web site is being redesigned to better serve young adults. Check out <http://sword.cog7.org> to see the changes that have already been made. Then submit your suggestions for additional changes to sword@cog7.org.

In addition to SWORD retreats in 2011, we'll have a program for the 2011 convention at Pheasant Run Resort, near Chicago, including workshops, times for worship and socializing, and prizes for young adults in attendance. Go ahead — preview our convention schedule on the SWORD site. Then look for our table after you check in at Pheasant Run next July 18 or 19.

About twenty SWORD-aged adults of the Northwest region met November 12-14, 2010, in Goldendale, Washington, for the annual young adult retreat. The theme was leadership. Speaker Bryan Cleeton challenged young adults to find areas in their churches to act as servant-leaders. Everyone who attended was blessed with wonderful teaching, speaking, discussion, fellowship, food, and fun!





International Ministerial Congress (IMC)

With God's blessing, the next session of the IMC will take place August 25-29, 2012, at Kents Hill Park Conference Center, Milton-Keynes, Buckinghamshire, UK – on the outskirts of London.

Under the new organizational structure approved in Overland Park, Kansas (July 2007), each IMC member-country will have one primary delegate in all deliberations and one substitute, instead of the multiple delegates many countries had previously. When each country has appointed its representative delegate and substitute, it should notify the IMC Executive Committee of the names for recognition in the next session. Delegates will be asked to study through the IMC Statement of Faith and its statutes, the tools we work with in all congress sessions.

In 2012 the congress will approach several theological subjects, important and urgent. As the Church has obligation to respond to God's call within our historical context, so we must orient believers in how to live the Christian faith in these postmodern times of contradiction and evil influence. We will not attempt to construct a separate world but will transform by the power of the gospel this dehumanized, incredulous, and perverse reality that surrounds us.

We must also work with a focus inside the Church. Our presence in all continents with diverse cultures, languages, and histories challenges us to maintain our unity without destroying the diversity that enriches us. We can see God acting in much the same way in the differing realities that all humans inhabit.

The congress will also address requests for permanent membership that have arisen since 2007. Besides the forty member states at present, we dialogue with twenty-six more countries and have limited contact with others that bring the total to about one hundred countries. Thank God for His blessings!



Preparing for the 2012 session

1. Ask God to give us faith, understanding of our responsibility, and wisdom to meet the challenges of this congress.
2. Appoint delegates and notify the IMC Executive Committee.
3. Save funds so that the economic demands of attending congress will not be an impediment.
4. Plan travel in advance in order to obtain the best prices.
5. Read the IMC Statement of Faith and Bylaws to be familiar with these subjects.
6. Practice your English a little. Although we have translators for the sessions, there's not a better opportunity to improve use of the international language.
7. Inform all our faith communities about this event, asking their support in prayer to build broader consciousness in agreement with the universality of the gospel.

— Ramon Ruiz Garza
IMC President

Protestants

The most repeated line from the Gettysburg Address was not original with Lincoln. Rather, it was borrowed from an inscription in the fly-leaf of the first English Bible, dated in 1382: “This Bible is translated and shall make possible a Government of people, by people, and for people.”¹

Its author, John Wycliffe, was first in a long line of Protestants — people who protested corruptions of the Roman Church. A Catholic priest and Oxford professor, he became increasingly aware of a “polluted mixture of piety, politics and greed” marking the church. Papacy corrupted, priesthood intoxicated by self-indulgence, and the Bible in a dead language and chained to the pulpit — thus inaccessible to the common people — fanned Wycliffe’s passion to translate the Latin Vulgate into English.

For this deed he was labeled “heretic,” stripped of his credentials, and forbidden to preach. Thirty years after his death, by papal command, his bones were exhumed and burned and his ashes cast into a river.

By then, preaching and teaching openly from the Scriptures, reading from the English translation, and endorsing Wycliffe’s work were deemed acts of heresy. But this only fueled the cause, eloquently defended by John Hus, Catholic priest and head of Prague’s National Cathedral. Using his pulpit as a platform, Hus attacked the church’s abuses and scandals. When confronted, he declared:

Let it be understood that I call apostolic orders the teachings of the Apostles of Christ. When the pope’s orders are in agreement with these I am ready to listen to them; when they are contrary I refuse to obey them even if you were to kindle before my very eyes the fire in which my body was to be burned.²

True to his conviction and prophecy, Hus was burned at the stake and his ashes dumped into the Rhine. His dying words: “Today you will roast a lean goose . . . but a hundred years from now you will hear a swan sing. Him you will leave unroasted. No trap or net will catch him for you!”³

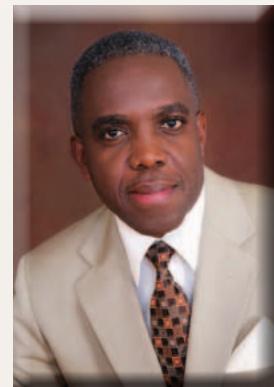
A hundred years bring us to a monastery in Erfert, Germany, where a young monk, Martin Luther, pours penance upon penance to find peace of soul but remains in misery — until his heart and life were supernaturally unshackled while reading Romans 1:16, 17. He later nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg (1517), then declared at the Diet of Worms (1521):

Unless I am convicted by the testimony of Scripture . . . or by evident reason — for . . . my conscience is captive by the Word of God Therefore I cannot and will not recant, since it is difficult, unprofitable and dangerous indeed to do anything against one’s conscience.⁴

Wycliffe could not have anticipated the full impact of what he began, his scattered ashes symbolic of worldwide Bible dispersion. Those who followed his footsteps — Hus, Luther, and others — were men of unsurpassed courage, hungry for a walk with Christ based on the truths of God’s Word and free of ecclesiastical dogma and control. So when reading the Bible in your native language, don’t forget the sacrifices of these original Protestants, men “of whom the world was not worthy” (Hebrews 11:38).

The cause continues. Increasing biblical illiteracy and the substitution of feel-good theology for Bible truth are reasons to protest, to object, to “earnestly contend for the faith.”

— Whaid Guscott Rose



1. Wycliffe, quoted by Fosdick in *Great Voices of the Reformation*, p.7.

2. Garver, *Our Christian Heritage*, p. 51.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

4. <http://www.specialtyinterests.net/lutherwords.html>
Endnotes 1-3 quoted in *Can One Person Make a Difference?* by Charles R. Swindoll, pp. 3-5

Bible Advocate
(USPS 054-160)
P.O. Box 33677
Denver, CO 80233-0677
USA

Periodicals
Postage Paid
at Broomfield,
Colorado and
additional offices



General Conference Convention

July 18-23, 2011

St. Charles, Illinois



Join as we gather in fellowship, in service,
and in praise of the Father's love for us.

Registration begins January 5, 2011.

Visit convention.cog7.org for more information.