

The Sabbath Sentinel

November–December 2011



**Riots in London.
Is all civility gone?**

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath Sentinel

November–December 2011 Volume 63, No. 6 Issue 552

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Our Cover:

Recent riots in London began as a protest of increases in college tuition and cuts in welfare payments. Between the 6th and 10th of August 2011, several London boroughs and districts of cities and towns across England suffered widespread rioting, looting, and arson.

At least 3,100 people were arrested, of whom more than 1,000 have been charged. There were a total 3,443 crimes across London linked to the rioting.

Five people died and at least 16 others were injured as a direct result of related violent acts. An estimated £200 (about \$320) million worth of property damage was incurred.

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In Pursuit of Excellence



"When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: 'If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right.' It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: 'If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?' And, whenever the answer has been 'No' for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something."

Those words were spoken by a man who changed the world, Steve Jobs, of Apple Computer. Jobs was speaking to the graduating class at Stanford University in 2005. The ironic thing about this speech was that Steve Jobs was a college dropout. He didn't even finish one semester of college. He quit to pursue his passion, the fledgling computer industry.

To any who may have missed the news, Steve Jobs died on September 5 of pancreatic cancer. Jobs' speech to the graduating students of Stanford University came about a year after he was initially diagnosed with the life-threatening disease. There were several other comments that Jobs made during that speech that should strike a chord with every Christian.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

Jobs puts his finger on something that seems to plague every Christian, fear of embarrassment or failure. If we could somehow put that fear aside, there is no limit to what we could accomplish for God and His kingdom.

There are two more poignant paragraphs from Jobs' speech that I would like to add:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

Better words were never spoken from the pulpit. We have the "inner voice" of God's Spirit, yet we often ignore it by letting the opinions of others drown it out. As a Christian your heart and intuition are God's Spirit nudging you to follow His voice and not the opinions of men.

Incredible Human Potential

Just consider how one man, Steve Jobs, has changed the world we live in. Who ever heard of an MP3 player in 2000? In October of 2001 Jobs presented to the world the first iPod, an MP3 player that has revolutionized the music industry. The iPod has made records, tapes, and CDs obsolete. Now music is downloaded from the Internet to a pocket-sized device that can hold and play thousands of songs in high fidelity and clarity.

Jobs stated many years ago that the future of computer would be in hand-held devices. We are now seeing in the marketplace the fruit of what Steve Jobs saw in his mind's eye. We have the iPhone that is able to stream movies to your phone, the iPad that can download entire books from the Internet so that you can read them on this device. Most of these hand-held devices have high-resolution cameras fore and aft so that the user can take still pictures or videos of his surroundings and transmit them via e-mail to anyone in the world. With the cameras in these devices you can make video telephone calls to any place in the world putting you in immediate touch with a friend in Australia or India.

Jobs was also a pioneer in computer animation for movies. In 1986 he became one of the co-founders

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Waiting for the City Foursquare

by Kenneth Westby



Now we wait...and hope. We wait for the arrival of God's judgment and the bursting forth of the everlasting Kingdom of God. We also seek...and we endure. We, like Abraham, have in our minds a picture of a beautiful, shiny city coming from heaven to earth. It is to that city we seek our never-ending future in the presence of our Father and his Son. From the New Jerusalem a voice calls to us, "Come, lay down your burdens, sing for joy, and inherit the Kingdom prepared for you." Soon the waiting will be over. Then what?

We wait for what we know is coming. We don't wait for what we know won't be coming. We don't wait for what can't possibly happen. (One doesn't wait for an ocean liner to pick one up in Arizona.) We can wait patiently if we know for sure the Kingdom of God is coming to earth, that Jesus is coming and his reward is with him. We can be sanely sure of it since God promises he is going to inaugurate his kingdom on earth and create all things new. Jesus promised that he would return as king in that kingdom. Are there more sure words than those from the Maker of the universe and his Son?

Our faith is a solid belief in the promises made by the Rulers of the cosmos. That faith imparts strength to "endure/overcome to the end."^[i] Waiting takes patience...patience grounded in the strength of the promise by God that his Kingdom is sure to come. The vigorously faithful prophet Habakkuk, a contemporary of Jeremiah, received these words directly from God:

...The revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it;
It will certainly come and will not delay.
...The righteous will live by faithfulness (Hab. 2:2-4).

Waiting makes sense given *who* made the promises and *who* tells us to wait patiently. We are wise to wait and wise use the waiting time to prepare for the inevitable arrival of God's Kingdom. When it does burst forth upon the earth all God's sons and daughters can expect to be fully occupied in new royalty roles as rulers, leaders, and teachers. Among the first orders will be to let the inhabitants of earth know who God is and what he is doing. We will be about our Father's business to fill the earth with "the knowledge of Yahovah

as the waters cover the sea."^[ii] There will be work to be done.

What is it that God is doing? What is he planning? What is earth's future...our future?

These are big thoughts. We need to be asking the big questions and thinking big thoughts. Where are the answers to be found? In science? It seems science likes to play answer man to the big cosmic riddles. Nobel Laureate Sir Peter Medawar says science, however, is mute when it comes to the really big questions of beginnings, endings, and purpose.

The existence of a limit to science is, however, made clear by its inability to answer childlike elementary questions having to do with first and last things—questions such as "How did everything begin?"; "What are we all here for?"; "What is the point of living?"^[iii]

Turtles All the Way Down

Man has always had ideas of how our world is. Primitive pagan cosmologies (the theory of the universe as a whole, its origin, its parts, its laws^[iv]) and modern evolutionary cosmologies are not that different from each other.

The First Cosmology:

The world is not flat, as it appears, but round, like a ball.
Then what holds the world up?
The great god Atlas holds the world on his shoulders.
But what does Atlas stand on?
He stands on a huge island.
But on what does the island rest?
It rests on the back of a giant turtle.
But what...
No need to ask further. It's turtles all the way down!^[v]

Our faith is a solid belief in the promises made by the Rulers of the cosmos. That faith imparts strength to "endure/overcome to the end."

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Post-Christian Chaos

by *Brian Knowles*

If Britain's barbaric youths had been raised with the Judeo-Christian ethic, they probably wouldn't have rioted. The problem in England is not politics, race, youth, or even class — it's values. The world in general is facing a values crisis. Values, or the lack of them, drive everything in the chaotic modern world.

Destroying property, stealing, looting, arson, assault and the manifestation of the mob mentality reflect a paucity of values. Values override the concerns of class warfare, partisan politics and self-interest. When properly positioned in one's life, values trump everything. They represent a governor on behavior that determines what one will, or will not do. People who have internalized high values exercise noble character even under duress, or when no one is watching. People with low or ignoble values give in to their animal instincts under the least provocation.

A headline in *Mail Online* (August 10, 2011) identified one of the major influences in creating the kind of people who commit such horrors: "Years of liberal dogma have spawned a generation of amoral, uneducated, welfare dependent, brutalized youngsters." A female looter told a reporter that her looting showed the "rich" and the police that "we can do what we want."

What they wanted was the random destruction of property, the burning of vehicles and the terrorizing of neighborhoods and communities. Why did they want to do such irresponsible, destructive things? To relieve their boredom, create excitement and wield some sort of power. Max Hastings, in the aforementioned *Mail* article describes Britain's rioters as having "no moral compass that would make them susceptible to guilt or shame." Like I said, it's a matter of values or the lack thereof. Continues Hastings, "Most have no jobs to go to or exams they might pass. They know no family role models, for most live in homes in which the father is unemployed, or from which he has decamped."

"They are," says Hastings, "essentially wild beasts." They are rabid wolf packs roaming once civilized streets in a nation that was known for its advanced social development. Too borrow a phrase from the Bible, "Destruction and misery are in their ways" (Romans 3:16). They know nothing about responsible living.

How did this happen?

Hastings cites "liberal dogma" as a major cause. It is such dogma that has created the welfare state. In earlier times, Britain dealt with its troublesome underclass with capital punishment and deportation to the colonies (like Australia). Today it is subsidized by "the dole."

Furthermore, there are no governors on feral behavior. No measures are in place that would effectively deter this wanton barbarism. Like the girl cited above said, "We can do what we want." Authorities, including schools, the police, the judiciary and even Parliament, according to Hastings, all too often take the part of the perpetrators instead of the victims.

What's to be done?

Writes Hastings, "Only education — together with politicians, judges, policemen and teachers with the courage to force feral humans to obey rules the rest of us have accepted all our lives - can provide a way forward and a way out for these people." These young barbarians need incentives for good behavior and swift punishment for bad. They need the restoration of moral authority in their lives. A verse from the Bible applies here: "...the fact that the sentence imposed for evil deeds is not executed swiftly...is why men are emboldened to do evil..." Ecclesiastes 8:11, JT.

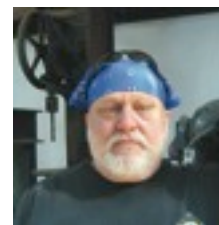
Fear of punishment is a motivator for good behavior. Appeasement, molycoddling and the subsidization of sloth has the opposite effect. Writes Dennis Prager, "...the human desire to reject the primacy of values is deep. The reason? As soon as we hold values responsible for human conduct, we must hold people, ourselves included, responsible for the bad that we do," *Think A Second Time*, page 158.

Facing down evil takes moral courage. Evil unopposed grows. Unless we resist it now — unless we repeal the "liberal dogma" that is behind it — we will surely succumb to it. Our Western cultures need a values revolution, a return to the Judeo-Christian ethic that helped build the most civilized nations in history.

Brian Knowles is a professional artist and writer and is a former magazine editor. Brian is an avid student of the Bible and a frequent contributor to the Association for Christian Development website (www.godward.org)

Christ and the Hebrew Scriptures

by Terrell Perkins



It is a historical fact that most of the first Christians were Jews. (Those who practiced the religion of Judea.) We often hear why most early Jews rejected Christ as the first coming of the messiah. We don't often hear why those Jews that did accept Christ as the Messiah did so. Those early Jewish Christians recognized the teachings of Christ and later His disciples as extensions of things they understood well from the Hebrew scripture. Scholars often point to the many scriptures that prophesy about Christ but there are more, perhaps more subtle, things in the Hebrew scriptures that point to Christ.

1) Why did the early Jews see the baptism that John the Baptist, and later the early Christians, practiced as a logical extension of what they understood?

Baptism is symbolized by the children of Israel coming out of Egypt through the Red Sea. Egypt was well understood to be a type of sin and coming through the Red Sea was symbolic of leaving sin behind, i.e. Repentance.

2) Why did the early Jews see the tongues of fire over the heads of the followers of Christ on the Day of Pentecost as a logical extension of what they understood?

They understood the power of God to be manifested in the pillar of fire and cloud of smoke their ancestors followed in leaving Egypt. The pillar of fire they followed through the wilderness was a sign of God's power leading the nation of Israel. This time, on the day of Pentecost after Christ's death and resurrection, the power of God was leading individuals.

3) Why did the early Jews see Christ entering Jerusalem for Passover on the back of an ass and throw palm branches down in front of him as a logical extension of what they understood?

Without knowing or understanding it they knew that God was going to "tabernacle with men." The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated by using palm branches to make temporary dwellings. They became symbolic of God residing with men.

4) Why did the early Jews see Christ feeding the multitude with two loaves and five fishes as a logical extension of what they understood?

They knew God could miraculously feed them as He did in the wilderness of Sinai with manna. To many this was a proof of who Christ was.

5) Why did the early Jews see the sacrificial and priestly aspects of Christ in His gospel as a logical extension of what they understood?

They knew they needed a sacrifice to atone to God. They understood that sin demanded a life. That is how grievous sin was to God. A sacrifice was *the vehicle* of their approach to God. They saw in Christ the fulfillment of the five major kinds of sacrifices that were outlined in Leviticus as well as fulfilling the symbolism of their Passover lamb.

They recognized they needed a High Priest. He was *the facilitator* of their approach to God. They saw the resurrected Christ as fulfilling that role at the right hand of God the Father.

These things being fulfilled by Christ made the old sacrificial system with its temple, priesthood, and animal sacrifices no longer necessary.

6) Why did the early Jews recognize the gospel of Christ as an extension of what they understood?

They recognized in the gospel of Christ what they were taught by the tabernacle in the wilderness...*the place* of their approach to God. It was the template for the design of the temple of David built later. Here are just a few observations about the Tabernacle in the wilderness:

- There was only one tabernacle, only one way to approach the one God.
- Only priests were allowed to enter the tabernacle. These were men sanctified, set apart for a special function, to serve God and their fellow man.
- The tabernacle was laid out in only one way. It was very specifically to be constructed to lay East-West. One entered facing West, the opposite of what pagans did in worshipping the rising sun.
- The narrow way laid out by the tabernacle pointed towards God. There is only one way to God the Father. It was not the way most of humanity would assume.

- Once entered, the first thing one encountered was the sacrificial altar. One had to accept the sacrifice before continuing. One who had accepted this sacrifice was set apart from the rest of the people.
- While not all who accepted the sacrifice went on to enter the Holy Place, all who accepted the sacrifice were set apart. An 'innumerable multitude' could reside there.
- The next thing one encountered was the brass laver where one was ritually cleansed before entering the Holy Place. Like baptism it was symbolic of repentance. One had to be cleansed by repentance before entering the Holy Place.
- The tabernacle was ONE structure made up of TWO separate enclosures. There was only one way to enter, through the Holy Place. The Holy Place represented the Body of Christ...the other, the Holy of Holies, represented the presence of God the father. There was no Trinity represented.
- To be inside the Holy Place was to be symbolically in the Body of Christ.
- Once inside the Holy Place one saw the menorah on the left. It was ONE candlestick with seven distinct channels of light within the Body of Christ. Whether they represented seven eras of the church or seven attitudes of Christians or something else is debatable. The fact is they were seven separate lights coming from one source.
- On the right was the table of showbread. It symbolized the Body of Christ that we are to partake of. Christ is the bread of life. We must partake of the Body of Christ to be in the Body of Christ.
- Directly ahead, upon entering the Holy Place, was the altar of incense that was to be filled with finely chopped incense and burned so the smoke of it wafted up through the curtain into the Holy of Holies. This symbolized the prayers of the righteous.
- Next, the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was to be crossed only once a year so that the Holy of Holies was entered only once a year and only by the High Priest. This was the forerunner of the curtain in the temple of David that was torn in half, from the top down, upon Christ's death. Symbolic of the fact that anyone could now go directly to God the Father through Christ.



The Tabernacle in the Wilderness (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible, Public Domain)

- In the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant. It contained the tables of stone upon which the commandments were written.
- From the Holy of Holies emanated the law of God. It was a perfect cube...one of only two mentioned in the scriptures. The other is the New Jerusalem. This was the ultimate destination for one entering the tabernacle.
- The plan of God for mankind was symbolized in this structure.

The children of Israel would have recognized the symbols and the substance of Christ's gospel as fulfilling what they had been taught all of their lives. Without an understanding of the Hebrew scripture these things would be lost on modern Christians.

God used symbols that we can understand to teach us lessons about spiritual truths. Sometimes we don't make the connections between things that may seem mundane, like the details of the construction of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, and the truths they point to but everything in Gods word is there for a reason whether we understand it or not.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Terrell Perkins graduated from Ambassador College in 1981, and has been a Sabbath keeper for about 35 years. Terrell lives in Capitan, New Mexico, and works as an artist-blacksmith hand forging metal sculptures and architectural hardware and furniture. Terrell has been a freelance writer for over 20 years.

Sabbath Keepers in Government

By *Bill Lussenheide*



Currently the newswires and the media are abuzz about the Presidential election in the United States to be held in 2012. Speculation abounds about who will be running and what will be their platforms. As Christians serving as God's ambassadors, we face interesting questions in regards to what level of participation we should have in regards to political activity, voting, and serving in office.

Should Sabbatarians be serving in civil government? It is a question that many seventh day observing groups have attempted to tackle over the last century, with differing opinions on the appropriateness of doing so. The issue has been debated down to the point of whether or not Christians should even vote.

This article will take an overview of Sabbatarians who have served in office, or have been involved in politics over history. We will discover that seventh day observers have a long history of serving in a Godly fashion in secular government, and in being very effective in doing so.

Political Service in The Bible

Early in the Bible we can take note of Lot. In Genesis 19:1 we can see that Lot is sitting at the city gates. This was a position of honor and rulership according to most commentators. We can take note of Proverbs 31:23 for insight on this. It reads "Her husband is known in the gates, where he sits among the elders of the land". Lot is regarded as "righteous Lot" in 2 Peter 2:7. Although Sodom itself was wicked, there is no evil report of Lot serving in a civil capacity from scripture.

Joseph rose to be in virtual power over the leading state of its era, Egypt. Joseph considered his position in Egypt's government to be a direct result of God's will. As he tried to calm his brothers' fears after their father's death, he said to them, "God hath made me lord of all Egypt" (Gen. 45:9). He "[sent] me before you to preserve life" (verse 5). Obviously God can, and does work through righteous Sabbath observers in political office.

Likewise, Moses was a chief prince in Egypt as well.

Daniel and his three Hebrew companions were selected from among captives in Babylon for training in government. There is no inference of them refusing this task, or being reluctant about it.

After Daniel was promoted to "ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon," he asked that his three

friends might be "set ... over the affairs of the province of Babylon," and Daniel's request was granted (Dan. 2:48, 49). He volunteered for the task! The three companions were promoted again after going through the amazing trial of the fiery furnace (chap. 3:30). Again, they did not refuse to serve.

When Belshazzar became ruler of Babylon, he made Daniel an important ruler after he interpreted the handwriting on the banquet wall, and just hours before Belshazzar was defeated by Darius (chap. 5:29). Darius, the Mede, recognized leadership in Daniel and made him first of three rulers of the whole kingdom (chap. 6:2).

Even after Daniel's ordeal in the lions' den, and his meeting of this test successfully, he "prospered in the reign of Darius" (verse 28). Yet again, Daniel did not refuse civil responsibility when he was called upon to serve.

The book of Esther contains the story of Mordecai the Jew, who "sat in the king's gate" and was one of King Ahasuerus' "servants" (Esther 2:19; 3:3). The king's gate was a place where the affairs and business of the kingdom was carried on. When Haman was hanged, Mordecai did not refuse the chance to replace him. In Esther 10:3 we see that Mordecai was placed right next to the king in power.

A Sabbath Keeping American Founding Father

Samuel Ward was born in Newport, Rhode Island, May 27, 1725. Newport Rhode Island is the location of the first Sabbatarian church in America, which was founded by Stephen Mumford in 1671. Both of Ward's parents were keepers of the Seventh Day Sabbath, and his father was governor of Rhode Island and a descendant of Roger Williams through both his paternal and maternal family lines. He also can lay claim in his lineage to John Ward, a Calvary officer in the service of Oliver Cromwell, who fought against the tyranny of the English crown. On his parent's tombstones is carved the testimony of their faith to the Sabbath day.

The lineage of Samuel Ward, through Roger Williams gives another strong clue into who he was. Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, was a maverick pioneer of religious freedom in America to whom we owe much. He was one of the first advocates of the concept of "separation of church and state" and for religious freedom. An Anabaptist, Williams can be thanked for cre-

ating the first colony that practiced religious freedom. The first Jewish synagogue in America can also trace its history to Newport Rhode Island and only existed because of the freedoms found there.

With this rich bloodline of faith, Samuel Ward served in many political offices in Rhode Island and like his father, was elected to the office of governor in 1762. These were pivotal times for America, and in 1765 the infamous *Stamp Act* tax was thrust upon the colonies. Of all the governors in the colonies, there was only one who had the courage to refuse an oath to enforce and sustain this law. Samuel Ward, a man of conviction of the scriptures, was also a man of conviction in the secular world. He refused to swear an allegiance to either the crown, nor to enforce the stamp act, at great personal peril to himself.

Through the early 1770's, Ward was a key man in the organization of the Continental Congress. In fact the first delegates to the Continental Congress came from fellow Rhode Islander Stephen Hopkins and Ward himself. Yes, a Sabbath keeper can lay claim to being a "Founding" – "Founding Father" of the greatest nation in human history!

He had many works to help forge the freest country in the history of the world. Only in America could God find a place where the Sabbath could find free practice and blossom and to be an exporter of that truth to the world. Samuel Ward was the one who nominated George Washington to be the Commander of the Continental Army. Before Ward's untimely death in 1776, he helped collaborate with Thomas Jefferson in the writing of the "Declaration of Independence."

His legacy and influence includes his son Samuel Ward Jr., who was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Revolutionary army, a grandson who was the President of the New York stock exchange and his great granddaughter, Julia Ward Howe, who was the composer of the well known, historic and beloved "*Battle Hymn of the Republic*" in 1862. Like many Sabbatarians of that era, she was a staunch anti-slavery abolitionist. In later years, she was instrumental in creating the first "Mothers Day" as a reaction to the carnage of both the Civil War and the Franco-Prussian war.

Sabbath Observers Who Have Held Political Office

Many believers of the seventh day Sabbath have held political office. Here is a short list of recent office holders who are associated with the Seventh Day Adventist Church...

- Sir Patrick Allen – Governor-General of Jamaica (2009 –)
- Roscoe Bartlett – 6th district representative from Maryland
- Percival Austin Bramble Former – Chief Minister of Montserrat British West Indies (1970–1978)

- William Henry Bramble First – Chief Minister of Montserrat British West Indies
- Sir James Carlisle – Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda (1993–2007)
- Nelson Castro – New York State Assemblyman, 86th District, 2008-Present
- Sheila Jackson Lee – U.S. Representative, 18th congressional district of Texas (Houston)
- Sherman McNichols - Chief Magistrate, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Floyd Morris – Jamaican senator and minister of state
- Sam Ongeru – Kenyan Minister for Education
- Desley Scott – Australian politician
- John F. Street – Mayor of the City of Philadelphia (2000–2008)
- Marianne Thieme – A Parliamentary leader in the Dutch House of Representatives
- Jorge Talbot Zavala – Ecuadorian Representative and Secretary of the Cámara de Diputados, Quito, Ecuador, 1950-1955.

The Seventh Day Baptists, besides the historic service of Samuel Ward mentioned above, also can lay claim to the service of Jennings Randolph. Born in Salem WV, in 1902, and a descendant of colonist William Randolph, both his grandfather and father were mayors of Salem. His family line can claim many famous relatives including Robert E. Lee.

Jennings Randolph served in Congress for six consecutive terms from 1933 to 1947. At his death in 1998, he was the last surviving House member from the infamous "100 days" of the first Franklin Roosevelt administration. His legislation includes a bill, which advocated for and provided jobs for the blind, the creation of the Civil Air Patrol, and a bill proposing the creation of a "Department of Peace" after the conclusion of World War II.

The Churches of God from the Armstrong heritage have historically been averse to service in political office. In spite of this, there have been a few who have served as alderman, city council members, and a couple who have served as Mayors.

In 2010, this article's author, Bill Lussenheide, a long time Church of God member from those traditions, was a candidate for US Congress in the 45th District of California. He received the highest percentage vote for a third party candidate for any office in the nation for the Constitution Party, while serving on the Executive Committee Board of that party nationwide. His platform was one of Pro-Life, Pro-Traditional marriage, Faith/Family and Freedom. Lussenheide is the first candidate for major office from his religious heritage.

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Westby: "The City Foursquare..." cont. from page 4.

Modern scientific cosmology has discovered several new turtles in the chain, for which achievement it is very proud of itself. But what if there is no Atlas, no island, no turtles? What if our modern materialist's Atlas—the Big Bang and undirected random evolution—are also silly myths? Are they any closer to understanding how and why man and the universe exist? What of the childlike questions about which Sir Medawar says science is silent. Has the cat got their tongues? Or is it that science self-limits itself to strictly materialistic possibilities? How can material create itself, bring forth ordered systems, create energy, life, and all that is our cosmos—seen and unseen?

Science and Scripture are not enemies nor are they incompatible. Science marvelously describes, in part, a universe of things, of laws, and the workings of life on earth, yet candidly admits that it knows little of what's truly "out there" but is busy discovering new information every day. But remains silent on the big questions. The Bible specializes in explaining the big things.

The Bible is not a science book, it is more. The great Jewish rabbi, sage and Torah teacher Maimonides (12th century) said: "The account of the beginning [Genesis 1] is natural science but so profound that it is cloaked in parables....Study astronomy and physics if you desire to comprehend the relation between the world and God's management of it." The more one understands God's revelation in Scripture the more perfect the symmetry becomes between design and Designer, between creation and Creator. God has some amazing things waiting to be revealed at the moment of his choosing. What might they be?

God's Secret Wisdom

Paul expands on words from Isaiah in this inspirational message to the Corinthians:

Eye has not seen,
nor ear has heard,
no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him.
(1 Cor. 2:9)

In the same chapter Paul directs to "the mature" profound comments concerning elements of "God's secret wisdom." He taught that the hidden wisdom of God is being revealed to the mature by God's spirit and via His Word—a wisdom far above the limits of scientific inquiry. Paul speaks of the need for spiritual understanding to search "the deep things of God." Further, he cautions, "no one knows the thoughts of God" except through God's spirit guiding them.

He appeals to Christians to seek "spiritual truths" that give understanding of what God is actively preparing for his people, but stipulates that "they are spiritually discerned." That is, mature seekers of God's wisdom will humbly incline themselves to look deeply into God's word, to see the marvels of design, the symbolism and parallels, and thus glean insight into the mind of God.

God himself pointed us in this direction:

For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart...I will be found by you (Jer. 29:11-14).

The key words for us to note, if we want to find God and his plans for us, are the words "seek" and "with all your heart." This means not stopping with a casual surface study of Scripture, but mining it for all the diamonds below the surface. We're talking about serious study and meditation, real effort and time. I liken the Word of God to an expertly cut diamond, shine a light source over it and behold it coruscating upon various facets each reflecting different jewel-like colors. Then move your viewing angle and you see yet different light reflections and new colors. So it is with this amazing book called *Scripture*.

Eden, the Sabbath, New Jerusalem—the Golden Cube

Last time we considered the Grand Plan of God exploring parallels between the earthly Eden of Genesis and the heavenly Eden pictured in the closing chapters of Revelation, the New Jerusalem, the city Foursquare coming down to earth. The first three chapters and last three chapters of Scripture (Genesis and Revelation) are most important to understanding God's plan and beginnings and ends. We also considered the symbolism of the perfect cube that was the Holiest of Holies in the tabernacle, overlaid in gold, with the perfect cube city coming down from heaven with streets of pure gold. The element in common: the Presence of Yahovah^[vi], the Creator and Father of all mankind. And at his side, a glorified High Priest, his Son, Jesus, firstborn son and firstborn from the dead, and crowned King of Kings.

The Sabbath is central to the Grand Plan of God as it pictures that never-ending Kingdom of God, the final rest from sin, wars, want, and death—all that have caused tears to flow for as long as man has followed the evil path. The Sabbath is perfectly fulfilled when "The dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God" (Rev. 21:3). The world will rest in peace and prosperity with its Maker. Biblical symbols like Eden, the Sabbath, the Golden Cube of the Holiest of Holies and New Jerusalem, are the keys to

unlock the secrets of the meta-story, the blueprint of what God is doing.

It is important to consider the Genesis 2 terminology the author used of the Sabbath for it points toward an ultimate destiny and condition for mankind. John H. Walton offers an excellent treatment of the Sabbath rest in his new book, *The Lost World of Genesis One—Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*.^[vii] The Hebrew verb *sabat* (Gen 2:2) from which our term Sabbath comes basically means “ceasing” (cf. Josh 5:12; Job 32:1). But this cessation leads into a new state which is described by another set of words having to do with entering a place of divine rest. The verb *nuha* and its associated noun, *menuha* involve entering a position of safety, security or stability and the noun describes the place where that is found. The verb *sabat* describes a transition into the activity or inactivity of *nuha*. We know that when God rests (ceases, *sabat*) on the seventh day in Genesis 2, he also transitions into the condition of stability (*nuha*) in a beautiful garden paradise with his image bearers, because that is the terminology used in Exodus 20:11. God’s “ceasing” in Gen 2:2 leads to his “rest” which is located in his “resting place” (*menuha*) in Psalm 132.

Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool—“arise, O Lord, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.” For the Lord has chosen Zion [Jerusalem=New Jerusalem], he has desired it for his dwelling: “This is my resting place [*menuha*] for ever and ever; here will I sit enthroned, for I have desired it.” (Ps. 132:7-8, 13-14)

The footstool is paralleled by the ark, and the temple (“dwelling place”) is paralleled with “resting place” (*menuha*).

Eden pictured God’s resting place, his temple. The City Foursquare pictures God’s resting place with mankind. Divine rest is in a temple, the place of God’s presence. So it was in Eden so it will be in the New Jerusalem. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that there is a coming Sabbath rest in God’s resting place, his temple, his kingdom.^[viii]

Flowers and the Bible

Everything God has made is both simple and complex. Take a flower, for example. There are thousands of them in the field, all yellow daffodils during springtime in the Skagit River valley in Washington State. Simple yellow flowers that look pretty with their long green stems and become spectacular when they are tens of thousands in fields as far as one can see. Just simple flowers that one can appreciate at a glance and thus receive a bit satisfying mental nourishment from their beauty. Yet when one pauses to look at them more closely, at how their peddles are arranged to form a trumpet shape and discover the other colors

inside the yellow trumpet, even more beauty is enjoyed by appreciating the daffodil’s unique structure and design. How did this all come forth from a homely dry-looking bulb put in the ground? But the investigation of the lowly but comely little daffodil is just beginning.

With the help of powerful scientific tools one can actually see the marvelously complex inner universe of this flower, its cells, its pigments, its systems of growth and nutrition. Going even deeper in the complexities of what makes a daffodil work one enters the micro, sub-micro and nano-world of atoms, protons, electrons, invisible particles, and into the genetic material that contains the discrete information that directs living material to form into such a bright yellow flower; a life energy that can push the cold earth away and announce the snows are over and spring has come.

The genome of a daffodil is only partly understood, but the hidden instructions contained therein could fill libraries. A simple flower that can be understood and appreciated on the surface of things, but that simple flower is anything but simple when its workings and complex design are considered. It is a product of the mind of a Creator whose handiwork is amazing, almost beyond comprehension. The Bible is like that daffodil.

The Bible is a Depth of Wisdom in Layers of Understanding

There are solid and obvious truths to be understood from reading Scripture. These are spiritual and common moral truths that can guide the learned and unlearned alike. The Bible can and does speak plainly in its essential guidelines for living a Godly life. These are clearly visible at a surface, literal reading and will be heeded and followed by the wise.

But as with all things God has made in the cosmos, there is a depth and complexity to be explored which offers marvels hidden below what the naked eye can see. This is true of celestial bodies, of butterflies, of the human body, of daffodils, and especially true of the Word of God. It is essential to realize that there are meanings to the Bible that are not apparent from a casual reading. Genesis 1 is ancient cosmology profoundly constructed by God himself. It cries out for understanding, but it demands much from the reader. The search for meaning expands on the literal text, not by whim, but upon history and insights of Godly men and women led by God Spirit.

A literal reading of the Bible reveals only a part of the wealth of information held within the text. Some of the Bible is of a poetic structure with meanings that go well beyond the literal text and include subtleties held within the words and even the form. “Maimonides taught in regard to Proverbs 25:11, ‘A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a filigree vessel of silver’—the vessel (the literal meaning of the text) is beautiful and valuable, but the golden apples held within the vessel (the inner meanings of the text) are

even more beautiful and valuable."^[ix] There is a depth and complexity to Scripture to keep us in discovering wonderment until our last breath.

Like the packaging reads on a piece of expensive and complex electronics: "Some skill and tools may be required for proper assembly"; perhaps publishers should consider labeling the box containing a new Bible with an advisory: "Wisdom, tools, and spiritual guidance needed for proper understanding—*The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.*"

Expanding Limits

There was a time not long ago when no one knew what a cell looked like, much less that the human genome, just 3 percent of our DNA, is an information code of 3.5 billion letters and could fill a whole library. Think how much information God packed into each of our body's 10 trillion cells. Each cell has this information tightly coiled within, which if uncoiled to its actual length the DNA would be roughly 2 meters (about 80 inches). Since there are about 10 trillion (up to 100 trillion, size counts) cells in the human body the total length of DNA is a mind-boggling 20 trillion meters (there are about 1600 meters in a mile—how many miles is 20 trillion meters!). Each of the trillions of cells in our bodies has a data base larger than the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Think how much information our Creator has intelligently designed and packed into each cell. Should we be surprised that the Bible is also information-rich and unlimited in its power to teach?

It used to be assumed that light propagated instantaneously throughout the universe. Later it was discovered that light is fast, but not that fast. For much of my lifetime it was assumed that the speed of light is the terminal velocity—186,000 miles per second or 8.3 minutes for the sun's light to reach earth. That was the max speed limit for anything. Science settled on that as the limit. Recent discoveries, however, require that we throw away that old limit of light speed and open up our understanding to yet faster things. Gravitation, for one, has been discovered to be almost "instantaneous" with its influence on a sea of agent "particles," such as C-graviton, causing speeds exceeding 10^{10} times the speed of light! But even at these hyper-velocities it takes gravitation 1.5 years to move across the observable universe—a mere infinitesimal portion of the full universe.^[x]

Things in God's spirit-world may travel at truly instantaneous speeds. The spirit world of God is a totally new frontier, one not restricted by limits which in reality may not be limits.

We tend to believe in limits and then believe that the yet new limits are now truly *limits*. When considering what God is planning for infinity, we must not limit our imagination to just what we see or have experienced.

What was that heavenly city like in Abraham's mind that so motivated him to remain faithful and keep moving Godward? I speculate his vision was a fantastically attractive scene of heavenly glory with Yahovah at its center. Whatever it was it was beyond the limits of our physical world—it was other-worldly.

"Coming Down from Heaven"

God gave to John, not to you or me, a vision of the Holy City—the place from which His Majesty reigns. That vision was carefully recorded and preserved to be shared with the faithful, including you and me. It was intended to become a teleological image to which we in awe are drawn. Moses and the seventy elders of Israel saw the sapphire pavement below God's throne.^[xi] In visions Isaiah and Ezekiel saw spirit machinery, awesome angelic creatures, God on his throne, and such overwhelming power displays Isaiah believed he might not survive.^[xii] Read of these manifestations and put your imagination to work, build pictures in your mind.

Release your God-given imagination to embrace what is perhaps its ultimate use—picturing the Glory of God and his Kingdom. John, even before his vision in Revelation, seems to have this ultimate reality as the object of his affections. He characterizes the grand plan of God as "the love the Father has lavished on us." His words to fellow believers are just as relevant now as then—and we live two thousand years closer to the event he describes:

Dear friends, now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. (1Jn 3:1-3)

Before my mother left her native Norway as a 19-year old for the shores of America, she had a detailed dream. Margit Ludvigsen had read all she could about this big, beautiful and unique land of opportunity. Her vision of America inspired her to overcome considerable difficulties that may have discouraged others. With tears flowing she beheld the Statue of Liberty as her ship, the Stavangerfjord, pulled into New York's harbor. Here at last, the place of her dreams. Well, dreams are often dashed by a reality that doesn't quite match. The Great Depression hit three years after she arrived and life became full of struggles, yet she retained her youthful dream of America, the greatest country on God's green earth. That love for this country endured to her death at age 93. A goal can be a dream in color. America beckoned, she came, and her children are forever grateful.

Usually, reality doesn't match the dream. Usually, there is a measure of unreality in the dream itself that insures disappointment. The miners who came for California gold in 1849 were led by dreams of easy picking,

as were those who braved extreme hardships in the Alaska gold rush. Most were disappointed with the pickings. But that the power of vision to give strength to overcome great privation cannot be doubted.

A Suggestion

I fear many of us are too comfortable with the status quo, satisfied practicing easy religion, and lacking the passion to seek after the visionary goal God has put before us. We can do something about that, which is the purpose of this article.

The dream God offers us and encourages us to make our own is guaranteed not to disappoint. In fact, our picture of the Holy City and the New Earth, no matter how exquisite in beauty and glory, is guaranteed to be exceeded by the coming reality of the Kingdom of God. Isn't that how Paul characterized the secret, deep things of God prepared for those who love him—spectacular things far beyond the glories our mind's eye can conjure. Yet, God wants us to seek Him and make as our dream His future for us and our world. We must put thought and effort into constructing such a dream, a dream that motivates us to wait, to overcome all obstacles, and to endure to the end. Such was the dream that moved Abraham Godward for over 100 years. As he walked the dry hills of the Middle East, he saw ahead a shiny city "whose architect and builder is God."^[xiii]

The City Foursquare is something we *can* picture. Like the symbolic picture of the wolf and the lamb, and the leopard and the goat lying down together in peace, and a child safely leading a lion about.^[xiv] These word pictures need inscribing into the mind's eye. New Jerusalem anticipates human existence as we have never known it—life abundant and fully satisfying. God's blueprint is for the whole earth to become a temple city filled with people who are holy, as God is holy.

Take a quiet moment alone, soon, to slowly read Revelation 21 and 22. Let your imagination convert the symbols and colors into a picture. Then picture life in that garden city with its crystal clear river and fruitful trees. Hear the music, the singing, the laughter, the celebrating. See the joy and smiles on the faces of a happy, safe and secure people. Imagine the abundant wealth, glorious jewels, translucent gold—everything so clean and brilliant. Don't hesitate to make your dream specific. Rainbows are full of color, yet they are discrete, arranged in a beautiful arching shape, not just a blob of color. The city is so described to give us material upon which build our picture, to imagine how it will be. Take the next step and see yourself in it, walking its streets, and celebrating with family and friends. It will be your home for the next quintillion years and into infinity. Let's get used to the idea that this is the place of our citizenship.

The greatest glory of the City Foursquare is the presence of God Almighty and the Lamb. We will finally enter God's rest. We shout with David, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him."^[xv] A never-ending Sabbath Rest awaits the citizens of the City Foursquare. Lift up your eyes as you wait for the heavenly kingdom. "Rest in Yahovah and wait patiently for him."^[xvi]

End Notes:

- [i] Rev. 2:7, 11, 26; 3:5, 12, 21
- [ii] Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14
- [iii] Quoted by John C. Lennox in his book *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* P. 42. The quote is from Sir Medawar's book *Advice to a Young Scientist*.
- [iv] "Cosmology is the study of the general nature of the universe in space and time—what it is now, what it was in the past and what it is likely to be in the future."—*Scientific American*
- [v] Flandern, Tom Van, *Dark Matter, Missing Planets and New Comets*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, 1993, intro.
- [vi] *Yahovah* is one of several attempts, perhaps the best, to vocalize with vowels the Hebrew Tetragrammaton (four consonants) YHVH or YHWH, the sacred name of the Creator God appearing almost 7000 times in the Old Testament. *Yahweh* and *Jehovah* are other popular transliterated pronunciations from the Hebrew YHVH. *Yehovah* and the others take up seven spaces when the vowels are added. "Why seven spaces to spell the name of God? The number 7 occupies a special place in the Torah. The Sabbath is the 7th day of the week, the 1st day made holy in the Bible. Traditionally, the Sabbath is a sign acknowledging that God created the universe...a subtle form of information transfer."(from Schroeder's book, *Genesis and the Big Bang*, p. 183)
- [vii] Walton, John H., *The Lost World of Genesis One—Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*, IVP, 2009, pp. 71-74.
- [viii] Heb. 4:4-11
- [ix] Schroeder, Gerald L., *Genesis and the Big Bang, the Discovery of Harmony between Modern Science and the Bible*, Bantam Books, 1990, p 20-21.
- [x] Flandern, pp. 31-44
- [xi] Exo. 24:9-11
- [xii] See Isa. 6 and Ezk. chapters 1 & 10.
- [xiii] Heb. 11:10
- [xiv] Isa. 11:6-8; 65:25
- [xv] Ps. 62:1, 5
- [xvi] Ps. 37:7

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Lussendeide: "Sabbatarians in Politics" cont. from page 9.

From The Church of God 7th Day, in a statement received from Calvin Burrell, editor of the church's magazine, *The Bible Advocate* and the President of the North American ministerial counsel wrote "I'm happy to assure you that 99% of us in CoG7 have no scruples against public service, including running for and holding elective office. In fact, we recommend it!"

Sabbath Keeping Ministerial Influence in the United States Senate

The Chaplain of the United States Senate opens each session of the United States Senate with a prayer, and provides and coordinates religious programs and pastoral care support for Senators, their staffs, and their families. The Chaplain is appointed by a majority vote of the members of the Senate on a resolution nominating an individual for the position. This position was created on the advice of Benjamin Franklin and has existed since 1789.

Chaplain Barry C. Black, a *Seventh Day Adventist*, is the current Chaplain of the Senate. Prior to his appointment, Black served as Chief Chaplain for the United States Navy, and also served as a Rear Admiral. As Rear Admiral, his personal decorations included the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal (two medals), Meritorious Service Medals (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals (two awards), and numerous unit awards, campaign, and service medals.

The Sabbath in the Supreme Court

There are minimally 14 depictions of the 10 commandments to be found in the Supreme Court building. Several are depicted as in hand with Moses, and others as just the tablets alone. Minimally, it can be stated that the Fourth Commandment is also to be found in the Judicial Branch of government of the United States in the Supreme Court!

Conclusion

Sabbath keepers can take proper pride in the fact that throughout our history they have served with character, integrity and faith at many levels of government. They have contributed in civic duty to their communities and nations. In the saga of America we also see the hand of commandment keeping, Sabbath observing Christians contributing to its rich history.

Bill Lussendeide has been a first generation Sabbath keeper for 38 years. He and his wife, Terri, reside in Menifee, CA.

Surviving Divorce **(From Tragedy to Triumph)**

by Lori Godfrey

There are events that come into our lives which we are totally oblivious to until it slap us in the face. Never coming in the form of a billboard advertising adversity, but rather the calamities of life as we know them have a peculiar way of making their way into our lives. Divorce is just one of life's unfortunate tragedies.

The divorce rate among unbelievers is 50% whereas the percentage rate for church members is 42%. No wonder divorce is at an all-time high. For whatever reason a couple gives for divorcing, the Bible is still adamant in its views. The biblical reasons to dissolve "a union of two" is still adultery and abandonment, no matter how much society would like to change God's Word.

Is there life after divorce? Yes there is. I know because I have been through the tribulations of divorce and a tragedy can result in triumph, but only if you are willing to give it to God. He is able and willing to bring beauty from ashes, if we really allow him to.

I have often heard that sometimes divorce is the best solution for someone's life. I use to think that was an odd statement to make especially if the person making it was not walking in my shoes, even though my son and I had to relocate to another state and make a new life I still came to realize it was for the best.

I wouldn't have changed anything. God knew what he was doing and he knew the plan He had for us, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future" Jeremiah 29:11. Divorce is an ugly word and by no means do I condone it. God hates divorce and if there is a way to repair a marriage, I am all for it, but on the other hand, if a marriage is irrevocably broken because a spouse chooses to go his or her way, then God will not intervene. Why? Because we have free wills. My marriage ended because my spouse no longer wanted to be married to a Christian wife; hence, a divorce was inevitable because of free will.

For those of you who are in the midst of a divorce or previously divorced, I want you to know that God is with you, and He will never abandon you. Man will leave, but God never leaves.

He promises to be a husband to the widow and a father to the fatherless. I know that rings true because he has proven His Word time and again. He is the God who never fails.

Lori Godfrey is a Christian freelance author, reaching out to those who are searching for godly answers to life's problems. Lori lives with her two sons in the southern U.S. You can e-mail Lori at www.writermom777@yahoo.com.

Jesus — the God-Man

by Terril D. Littrell, Ph.D.

“The Word was made flesh.”



These words, found in John 1:14, declare to us one of the fundamental truths of our most hold faith. As we consider them, through the energy of the Holy Spirit, they will stir up our hearts to lively gratitude and adoring admiration. I believe they state four great points:

1. The dignity and pre-existent glory of the Word

In the preceding context John gave a decisive testimony: “The Word was God.” If this were the solitary declaration of the Lord’s divinity, it might be explained away. But it does not stand alone. Its plain and obvious meaning is confirmed by the repeated testimony of the Spirit. The prophets and apostles unite in assuring us that He was and is “God over all, blessed for ever.”

Yahweh is the name specially belonging to the true God (Ps. 83:18). In Psalm 97 it is of Yahweh that the Spirit speaks when the command is uttered, “Worship Him all ye gods.” Yet the writer of Hebrews asserts that these words refer to Christ when He came into the world (Heb. 1:6).

The divine nature resident in the man Christ Jesus claims the adoration of the angelic host!

2. The reality of His humanity

In ancient times angels often assumed the form of human beings. In some instances, our Lord Himself appeared to the fathers under the resemblance of a man (Gen. 18:1-33; Josh. 5:13-15).

But His coming in Flesh was altogether different from any such appearances. The words of our text imply that He really *became man* (1 John 4:2-3).

He partook of flesh and blood as truly as you or I. He had a human body which advanced through the stanges of infancy, youth, and maturity (Luke 2:52). His body was sustained by food, and it rendered Him susceptible to pain when He fasted in the wilderness (Luke 4:2). He came down to our very condition of being!

3. The sinlessness of His humanity

In regard to this truth, the Scriptures are remarkably clear. There is no passage that even remotely challenges it. He could silence His bitterest enemies with the question, “Who of you can convict Me of sin?” (John 8:46).

He came not in the *flesh of sin*, but only in the *likeness* of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3). Peter declares that “He

did no sin” (1 Peter 2:22). Paul asserts that “He knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). John joins his fellow apostles in testifying that “sin has no existence in Him” (1 John 3:5). The writer to the Hebrews, who goes farther than any of the others in opening up the reality of His relationship to His people, guards his statement with the express exception, “yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Jesus had a human will which He subordinated to the Father as an act of human obedience.

In His humanity Jesus possessed experiential knowledge, yet He always had the consciousness of who He really was.

To affirm that Jesus did not know He was divine until sometime late in life is to deny the truth of the Gospels, the Word of God. In His human nature He could cry out on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Matt. 27:46). But, as He said in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:39).

Jesus was aware of His relationship with the father when He was 12 years old in the Temple. His sonship was revealed by the Father at His baptism. The clearest statement made by Jesus of His divinity is found in His reply to the Pharisees, “before Abraham came to be, I AM” (John 8:58). This is the name God revealed as His own in replying to Moses.

The fact of His being in our nature inspires us with feelings of holy nearness and familiarity; the fact that, in that nature, He alone lived upon earth without sin, fills our hearts with veneration and admiring awe.

In the characters of even the best of men, blemishes are found, and these become hindrances to our love. But no such hindrances exist in Jesus. The full tide of our affections can flow forth upon Him! He is the Holy and True One. You cannot err in loving Him too deeply. He is human, yet you may worship Him without idolatry. He is divine, yet you may lean fully on Him and open to Him your heart—without fear of being repulsed.

4. When He became man, He didn’t cease to be God

This is important. It is quite possible that one creature might be turned into another, and thus lose the qualities of its first condition. Thus the body of Lot’s wife, when miraculously turned into a pillar of salt, was no longer flesh and blood.

But the Word did not cease to be God by becoming man. His godhead was veiled, but not merged or lost in His manhood. In Acts 20:28 Paul states that the Church was purchased with the blood of God!

Here is indeed a bottomless sea of wonders. Yet our inability to understand this in no way weakens its truth. To attempt to explain it would only bewilder our minds in vain speculation. Let us receive with simplicity all that is revealed.

At the Last Supper, the apostle Philip said to Jesus, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? *Whoever has seen me as seen the Father*" (John 14:8-9; emphasis added).

God the Father has brought Himself into the sharpest possible focus in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Philosophy can give rational knowledge of the Father, but the means suggested here can give us personal knowledge of Him as something — no, Someone — who is much more than a blob of nothing.

Once we begin to know God the Father through God the Son, we can begin to know the Holy Spirit. The Father loves the Son with a love that perfectly expresses all that the Father is. The Son responds to the Father with the same perfect love. That love is made personal in the Holy Spirit. **It is a marvelous display of divine humility on the part of Christ.**

Ambition is natural to us all. In our unconverted state we strive to rise higher and higher in the world, to become more distinguished. This unholy root isn't entirely destroyed at our conversion. If we no longer seek eminence in the world, we are in danger of seeking it in the church.

To rebuke this tendency, let us frequently contemplate the example of true greatness.

Jesus Himself said, "He who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matt. 23:12). His humiliation wasn't that of a complaining sort. Instead, He renounced what rightfully belonged to Him as Creator and Preserver of the universe. However low we may sink, He experienced an infinitely deeper humiliation. Our deepest plunge would be nothing in comparison to His.

Let the fact of Christ's incarnation bring back grateful love to our hearts.

The apostle Paul illustrated the love of Christ in dying for His people, by contrasting it with the greatest sacrifice of one human being for another: "Scarcely for a righteous man would one die; perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ dies for us" (Rom. 5:7-8).

That is the kind of love Jesus showed toward you and me. He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He clothed Himself with the capacity of suffering. He became a broken-hearted and sorrowful Man. He exchanged

the adoration of the heavenly hosts for the bitter reproaches of the very creatures His power had created.

Now, by His humiliation, He has secured our everlasting elevation. Based on the memories of His kind acts toward us — instead of making demands — He asks for the devoted affection of our hearts.

Let us adore His divine wisdom.

Wisdom displays itself in two ways. It may be seen in the *result* which it aims for, or it may be seen in the *way* it attempts to achieve that result.

When we consider the desired result, the incarnation of the Son of God deserves our admiration. God wanted to save an infinite number of ruined creatures. He wanted to bring back to Himself a world of lost souls.

The only way to accomplish this was utterly beyond our capability. The only possible plan involved the incarnation, obedience, sacrifice, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and dominion of the Christ of God.

We see here the strongest possible evidence of God's willingness to be reconciled to sinful humans. We see the tenderest compassion in the heart of the Divine Being, from whom we would otherwise shrink away. God spared no pains to convince the returning sinner of a gracious reception.

While we adore the wisdom that devised a plan to bring back the banished ones, let us also remember that the same wisdom has arranged and appointed every circumstance we face. Our physical illnesses, our mental trials, our depression at our unworthiness, our repeated disappointments — all permitted and managed by the very wisdom that originated our salvation.

He shall save His people from their sins! In spite of every obstacle, the promise will be kept. Sin once had total dominion over us; even now sin daily plagues us; but the day is at hand when we shall be as sinless as our Head!

Many things are possible. Some things are probable. But only a few things are certain, and this is one of them. Every struggle with our powerful adversary is an evidence of our final triumph.

Reprinted from Truth for Today, April 2009. Dr. Terril D. Littrell became a member of the Bible Sabbath Association in 1961. He served as assistant editor of The Sabbath Sentinel in 1967, and served on the BSA board from 1967-1969. He was elected president of the BSA from 1970 to 1978.

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Dr. Littrell is a retired pastor with over forty years of experience in teaching and ministry. He and his wife Chloe of 50 years live in Cleveland, Tennessee. He regularly contributes articles about Scripture, theology, church history, apologetics, and morality.

There Is Work to Be Done

by Kelly McDonald



There are traditional Sabbath activities in which we all participate. For instance, each of us rests. Rest is one of the most fundamental aspects of the Sabbath commandment because our bodies are designed to have a certain amount of downtime. We also gather together to worship on the Sabbath. One of the reasons for public assembly is that we all belong to one body. Worshipping in one place at one time on the Sabbath is an affirmation of our oneness with each other and with God. Other Sabbath activities include, but are not limited to: time with family, fellowshiping with friends, and celebrating the Sabbath with rejoicing. Amidst these Sabbath activities and our normal Sabbath routine, is it possible that we have overlooked an important aspect of the Sabbath? If there is something we are overlooking, then the perfect example for us to understand our lack is the example of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was God the Father made flesh (John 1:1-3, 14). Since Christ was both God the Father and a human simultaneously He is the bridge between earthly and heavenly things. Natural actions, such as keeping the Sabbath, are further understood by the example of Christ because He shows us the spiritual meaning. Through His example, we can understand the true way that we should keep the Sabbath. One such example of this is found in John 5. In this chapter, Jesus saw a man by the pool who was an invalid for thirty eight years. He asked the man if he wanted to be healed, and the man told Christ that he wanted to be made whole. Christ spoke to the man and said, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk" (John 5:8). The man was healed and began to walk immediately. The Pharisees became indignant. They accused Christ of breaking the Sabbath because He commanded this man to take His mat and walk. Jesus responded to their accusations by saying, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working. For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18).

The first thing to understand about this passage is that Christ did not break the Sabbath. The evidence for this is found throughout the chapter, but especially in the last few statements of Jesus. In John 5:46-47, Jesus said, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

Christ explains that the Pharisees' lack of faith in Moses' writings (the first five books of the Bible) are equal to their lack of faith in His words. He says this because His actions will not and cannot in any way be contrary to Moses writings. Moses wrote about Christ and His testimony, not contrary to them. Therefore, if Moses wrote that we should not work on the Sabbath, then Christ certainly did not do so. The writings of Moses and the testimony of Christ are one in the same. Jesus told the man to take his mat and walk not to break the Sabbath, but to testify to God's power to heal on the Sabbath.

Christ's immediate response to the Pharisees raises an interesting question concerning the Sabbath. Christ's responded by saying, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (John 5:18). Is Christ telling us that His Father works on the Sabbath? Absolutely not! What type of work is Christ speaking of in this verse? Christ does not speak of common work in this passage; He is speaking of Holy work. Christ explains in John 5 that His works are based on the works He has seen His Father doing. This means that He has seen His Father bring healing to others on the Sabbath. When the Sabbath begins, our common work ceases, but our holy work is **just beginning**.

We can better understand holy work and its significance by examining priests in the Old Testament. Priests were a group of people set apart from the rest of the Israelites. They were required to live by a higher standard of conduct than the rest of the Israelites because they were set apart to serve God in His Temple. One of the ways they served in God's temple was offering sacrifices. In Numbers 28:1-8, we learn that were required to sacrifice of one lamb in the morning and one lamb in the evening every day. These two sacrifices are known as the regular burnt offering. In verses 9-10, God gives instructions concerning sacrifices on the Sabbath. "On the Sabbath day, make an offering of two lambs a year old without defect, together with its drink offering and a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. **This is in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.**" You might expect that the priests would sacrifice fewer animals on the Sabbath since it is a day of rest. On the contrary, the priests had to offer two **more** lambs in addition to the two lambs offered on every other day of the week. This is twice as much sacrificial work!

Another Sabbath activity the priests were expected to carry out on the Sabbath was to set out the bread of the presence. In Leviticus 24:5-9, God tells the Israelites that they are to make twelve loaves of bread and place them on the table of the showbread or the table of the presence. Each of these loaves has four quarts (one gallon) of flour in it. Each loaf probably weighed between 7 and 10 pounds. This was definitely not an easy task. It took work to make these loaves. This bread, also known as the showbread or the bread of the presence, had to be replenished *every* Sabbath.

Those who were especially set apart for God's service had to do much more holy work on the Sabbath than any other day of the week. As Christians we are both God's temple and we are His priests. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, our body becomes the Temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). This is because our vessel houses the Holy Spirit just as God's Temple in the Old Testament housed His Spirit. We are also called to be priests. In Revelation 1:6, the Apostle John wrote that we are called to be "...a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father..." Priests in the Old Testament are examples for our conduct as priests in the Kingdom of God. Thus, we are both priests and God's temple; this means that the sacrifices we make are not of animals. The sacrifices we present to God are with our own bodies. In Romans 12:1-2, Paul writes, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship." Our reasonable or spiritual act of worship is to present our bodies to God as living sacrifices.

Every day we should make spiritual sacrifices to God. Whenever we read our Bible, pray, teach others, etc., we are making a spiritual sacrifice to God. We are sacrificing our time to obey God and draw closer to Him. Through the example of the priests we can see that we should be making twice as many spiritual sacrifices on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not a call to inaction; it is a call to action. When we come together, we should be more involved in the work of God than during the week. Someone must lead the music service. Someone must lead prayer at church. Someone must preach the sermon. Someone must teach the Sabbath school classes. Do not forget that we should continually encourage and admonish one another in love. Each of these things is holy work and each of them must be done. God the Father is continuing His holy work on the Sabbath and so should we.

I am a teacher, preacher, and deacon in God's church. I can tell you that teaching and preaching is work. I often am quite fatigued after preaching or teaching a group of people. But this is holy work that must be done to spread the gospel of Christ. Our church rents the basement of a building so that we can have Sabbath services. We do not get to set up our

equipment for services before the Sabbath because the building is in use at that time. We have to set up our equipment before service on Sabbath morning. Sabbath service requires time and effort.

God's work can sometimes seem burdensome. The priests probably thought at times that their Sabbath work was burdensome, especially for a day of rest. We must remember that the purpose for holy work is Jesus Christ. One of the deeper meanings of the Sabbath sacrifice has to do with our understanding as Christ as the Lamb of God (John 1:29). There were twice as many lambs sacrificed on the Sabbath than any other day of the week. This means that holy work done on the Sabbath has twice as much to do with the Lamb of God than our holy work done during the week. This also should remind us of the self-sacrificial mindset of Christ's sacrifice. Christ, the Lamb of God, died for others, not for Himself. Therefore, our work on the Sabbath should be done in service to others. One of the chief callings of a Christian is to lead someone else into a closer relationship to God. What better day to do that than the Sabbath? This is the day God set aside for us to have a relationship with Him. Our Sabbath service should be done with the sacrificial attitude of Christ and not with selfish intentions. The Sabbath is the weekly convocation in which we worship God together. If each of us would spend time helping others, then our needs would be met as well.

The importance of Sabbath service is further emphasized because the Sabbath is a representation of the Millennial reign of Christ. In Bible prophecy, time can be reckoned so that one day is equal to one thousand years. This comes from the scripture Psalm 90:4, which reads, "For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night." There are six days in the week for common work. In the same way man has ruled this world for roughly six thousand years. This means that the seventh-day Sabbath represents the seventh millennium, which will be ruled by Christ. Man will cease from his works and Christ will rule. There will be rest from war and peace, harmony, and joy will be rife. These are the exact same things we enjoy on the Sabbath: rest from the struggle of work, peace and harmony with the brethren, and joy in the Lord. In Mark 9, there was a dispute among His disciples concerning who was the greatest. Christ responded by saying, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35). If we want to be great in God's Kingdom, we must be servants. There is no better day to do this than His Sabbath day, which is the weekly taste of His Kingdom.

Christ said, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). Christ taught, preached, prayed for people, and publicly read the Scriptures on the Sabbath. There are en-

tire chapters in the Gospels devoted to Christ's holy work on the Sabbath. The Father is performing holy work on the Sabbath. He is using our gifts and talents to sharpen the entire body of Christ. He is working things out in our lives through our obedience to His Sabbath. There is work that needs to be done, and we are the people He has called to do it.

Kelly McDonald, Jr. is a deacon and featured speaker at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, Tennessee. Kelly recently graduated summa cum laude from Lambuth University in Jackson, Tennessee, where he earned a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Political Science and Sociology and a minor in Legal Studies. Kelly considers the work of the Kingdom of God to be the single most important goal to which his life is dedicated.



Candidates for the BSA Board

This is the last call for candidates to the BSA board of directors.

If you are a BSA member in good standing and would like to run for a seat of the board, please let us know as soon as possible. We will be mailing out ballots soon to all BSA members, so if you want to run for the board, please e-mail a photo and a short biography (between 75 and 100 words) to Shirley Nickels at our BSA office or to me, the editor. Check the inside front cover (page 2) for our e-mail addresses.

A Rabbi and a Tax Collector Walk into the Temple

by Lenny Cacchio

"A rabbi and a priest walk into a bar." Ever hear a story begin like that? If you have, you are probably waiting for a laugh line about now. I wonder what Jesus' listeners were thinking when he opened his act with, "a rabbi and a tax collector walk into the temple." I wonder if they were looking for a laugh line too. So let's put the story into the vernacular and maybe hear what the listeners heard and how they heard it. You'll find the original version in Luke 18:9-14.

A Pharisee and a tax collector walk into the temple.

The Pharisee goes right up to God and says, "Hey, Lord! Look at me! Aren't I a great guy? I don't steal, I don't cheat, I don't run around on my wife. I do all the stuff I'm supposed to do. I fast and I pray. I'm not like that Internal Revenue Service agent over there. I pay tithes instead of taking them. I can't wait to get up in the morning and look at myself in the mirror, and every day I can't resist giving myself a great big squeeze."

God says nothing because there is nothing to say.

The tax collector waits in the back. "What a mess I am! God, forgive my debts!"

So God forgives his debts.

Maybe there's not a laugh line here, but I do wonder if the people listening to this little story didn't get a little giggle from the Pharisee's prayer. In the Talmud is a prayer that sounds very much like that of the parable's Pharisee:

"I give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast set my portion with those who sit in the seat of learning and Thou hast not set my portion with those who sit in street corners, for I rise early and they rise early, but I rise early for words of Torah and they rise early for frivolous talk; I labor and they labor, but I labor and receive a reward and they labor and do not receive a reward; I run and they run, but I run to the life of the future world and they run to the pit of destruction." (*Babylonian Talmud, Berakoth 28b*)

Personally, I get a little suspicious whenever someone attempts a Bernie Madoff and tells me how good he is. The parable's Pharisee saw himself as pretty hot stuff and likely expended a great deal of effort letting his neighbors know about it. Living next door to a guy who makes himself the subject of every conversation would be either an exercise in patience or a personal daily comedy show, depending on one's mood that morning, but frankly, that lowly tax collector would have been a better guy to share the back fence with.

The point is, beware of people who like to talk about themselves and all their wonderful talents, and be just as cautious around those who look down on others and share their disgust with everyone else in the sandbox. In the words of the parable, they despise others (verse 9). These "friends" are toxic people, and you deserve better than that.

—Lenny Cacchio

You can catch all of Lenny's latest commentaries on <http://morningcompanion.blogspot.com>.

Does Luke 16:16 Do Away with God's law?



by Ken Murray

What is the meaning of Luke 16:16? Some people who believe that we don't need to keep God's law today, or we don't need to keep God's Holy Days anymore, cite Luke 16:16: "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it." Is Jesus saying in this verse that God's law was required to be kept and the prophets respected until John the Baptist, but now the law has perished or failed, and is no longer necessary to keep? Was Jesus saying that the teachings of the inspired prophets of God, prior to John the Baptist do not need to be heeded anymore? The very next verse contains the spoken words of Jesus Christ, which show very clearly that the law of God is not done away.

The law of God is consistent and will always be. Luke 16:17 states, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail." Have the starry heavens or the planet earth passed away? Jesus said it would be easier for them to perish or be destroyed than even for one tiny part of God's law to pass away or to perish. Just before Luke 16:16, Jesus quotes the 10th commandment and corrects the Pharisees for their covetousness. After Luke 16:16 Jesus quotes the 7th commandment and gives detailed instruction about not committing adultery. Hardly, doing away with God's law, wouldn't you say?

On another occasion mentioned in Matthew 19:17 Jesus told a young man, seeking the way to eternal life, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." How clear that God's holy law is still in existence. So, what can we learn from Luke 16:16? What is the message Christ is delivering?

What did Jesus mean by the statement, "The law and the prophets were until John?" When Jesus spoke of the "law and the prophets," He was referring to the Old Testament. The first five books of the Bible, written by Moses, are known as the law; the books of Joshua through Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 minor prophets comprise the "prophets."

The third major section of the Old Testament was known as the "writings" or "psalms." Notice Luke

24:27-45. Jesus was simply stating a fact, that the Old Testament scriptures alone were preached until the coming of John the Baptist. They were the only writings and information that they had. The New Testament had not been written yet. When John came on the scene, he was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, preparing the way before Him, the "voice crying in the wilderness" (Mark 1:2-8). John had to deal with the Pharisees, just as Christ was dealing with them, here in these verses surrounding Luke 16:16. John thundered to the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and all the people of his day, "Repent you, for the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

John began to proclaim the Gospel or good news, preparing the way for Christ Himself. But, what Gospel — good news — did Christ preach? "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, 'the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent you, and believe the gospel'" (Mark 1:14-15). So, we see plainly, that Jesus Christ preached the same Gospel — good news — that John did. This is why Jesus said in Luke 16:16 that from the time of John the Baptist, the Gospel, or good news, of God's coming Kingdom or Government on this earth, was being proclaimed.

Jesus spoke later in Luke 16 of the importance of following God's inspired word and laws in the Bible. He states in Luke 16:31, "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

Do we heed these words of Jesus today, or are we dead of hearing like the Pharisees? Do we heed the words of Moses and the prophets, and live God's Way of life now in this life, as we seek to develop the character and mind of Jesus (Philippians 2:5), lovingly keeping God's commandments (1 John 5:3), as we prepare now to participate in Christ's Government of God on this earth?

Ken Murray lives in Australia and does missionary work in Shri Lanka and India.

Editorial: "In Pursuit of Excellence" cont. from page 3.

of Pixar Animation Studios. Pixar became well known in 1995 with the release of the highly successful movie "Toy Story." This movie led to a series of similar, animated movies that have revolutionized the movie industry.

The subject of human potential is a fascinating one. When humans still had but one language and set about to build the Tower of Babel, God made an interesting observation regarding mankind, "But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:5-9).

Mankind's Creator knew the capabilities He had built into human beings. He gave them almost limitless creative capacity. He also knew that men, apart from His rules for living, were capable of immense destruction as well as creativity.

It is my firm belief that God desired for the apex of his creation, human kind, to make full use of all of that inborn creative capacity. Every once in a while we see people who are unrestrained by the possibility of embarrassment or fear, like Steve Jobs, who throw aside the conventional dogmas of society and reach for the stars. And, in a free society such as that of the U.S., more people have the opportunity to explore their human potential.

When Christ Rules on Earth

Let me give you my scenario for the millennial Kingdom of God on earth. We have often heard that Christ will rule the nations with a "rod of iron." That is certainly true — initially. When Jesus appears descending from the heavens as the Conquering Messiah, nations will marshal their armies and seek to defeat Him in Jerusalem. Those armies will be conquered, and the nations of the world will be subdued by force. His government will be the only government; His laws will be the only laws; and His religion will be the only religion. Jesus with His resurrected saints will rule all nations. (See Psalm 2:8-12 and Revelation 19:11-16.)

However, after the nations are subdued and the earth is finally at peace, what will the world look like? How will the nations react to the rule of Christ and His saints? The prophet Micah gives us a glimpse into that world: "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken" (Micah 4:1-4).

This is when "Eden" makes its reappearance and all mankind will be able to explore and achieve their full human potential, just as our Creator intended from the very beginning. Our God placed within each of us creative genes because we are made in His image. As the apostle John said in **1 John 3:2**, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." All the creativity, the inventiveness, and the love of beauty that poured forth from the throne of God at Creation will fill the earth and inspire human beings to accomplishments in music, art, architecture, and science such as the world has never seen before. There will be no need to confuse the languages of mankind because the people will seek to learn the ways of God and walk in His paths.

I believe that in fact as people learn the ways of God, they will need less and less to be governed and told what is right and wrong. There will never be a time when human beings cannot be taught new ways of looking at life and relating to Christ and the Father, but there will probably come a time during the millennial reign of Christ when there no longer a need for the rod of iron, except for the incorrigibly rebellious. In an environment where fear is removed, creativity will abound. That is exactly how God made us. Just picture a world in which there are millions of people with the creative genius of Steve Jobs, Leonardo da Vinci, or Albert Einstein and the humility of Jesus Christ. That will be an awesome combination in a world that we will see with our own eyes.

—Kenneth Ryland

California Couple Fined \$300 for Holding Home Bible Studies

A southern California family has been fined for holding regular Bible studies at their home because it violates a city zoning code, The Los Angeles *Times* reported Wednesday.

The city of San Juan Capistrano, in Orange County, fined Charles and Stephanie Fromm \$300 for having as many as 50 people assembled at their home twice a week, the *Times* reported. City officials also warned the couple that subsequent fines could increase if they continued to host the Bible studies without obtaining a special permit.

A religious legal non-profit group, the Pacific Justice Institute (PJI), has taken up the case saying the fine was a violation of religious freedom.

A spokeswoman for the city of San Juan Capistrano stressed that local authorities were not trying to prohibit home Bible study.

Instead, she said the city fined the Fromms for transforming a residential area into a place where people regularly assemble.

"The Fromm case further involves regular meetings on Sunday mornings and Thursday afternoons with up to 50 persons, with impacts on the residential neighborhood on street access and parking," spokeswoman Cathy Salcedo said in an email to The Los Angeles *Times*.

Brad Dacus, an attorney for the Public Justice Institute, said the Fromms live in a semi-rural area and have not caused any parking problems for neighbors.

The city "needed some kind of rational basis to justify their rigid intolerance towards this family for having a Bible study in their home," Dacus told the *Times*.

He said the Fromms should have their money returned, adding that PJI intends to defend "this family's home Bible study all the way to the US Supreme Court, if necessary."

Iranian Christian Pays for Faith with 105 Days in Evin Prison



Mehdi Forootan (Photo: Compass Direct)

Convert from Islam reflects on the Cost of following Christ.

ISTANBUL, September 6 (Compass Direct News) – It was early in the morning the day after Christmas. It was cold. Mehdi Forootan sat in the back seat of an undercover police car in front of his house in Tehran, Iran. An officer pointed a camcorder at him. "Do you know why you were arrested?" the officer asked him. "No," Forootan said. The officer turned off the camera and looked Forootan in the eyes. "I can beat you until blood is coming out of your mouth and every part of you. The next time I turn on the camera, you tell me why we are taking you," the officer said and turned the camera back on.

Forootan spoke of his faith in Christ, and he spent the next 105 days in Iran's harshest prison. On Dec. 26, 2010, authorities had arrested Forootan in a wave of persecution against Iran's underground church; more than three months later, he was one of a few who had not been released. During one interrogation, an officer turned on a camcorder and pointed it toward him, demanding that Forootan tell him about his "crime." Forootan began to tell him how he had struggled with substance abuse as a teenager, "and how when I was in university I found Jesus and He saved me, and I have been free ever since. But he became angry and turned off the camera. He said: 'I asked you to tell about your crime, not evangelize us.'" After months of trying to get him to write statements confessing a crime, authorities inexplicably released him. Forootan said his first month out of prison was one of the worst of his life.

He couldn't speak to anyone of his prison experience for fear that authorities were watching and would re-arrest him. His parents had given the deed of their house to authorities as bail. He and his fiancée decided it was best for him to leave Iran and go to Turkey as a refugee. For Forootan, this meant an illegal escape through the mountains, because authorities had confiscated his passport.

Notices and Advertisements

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by Taylor G. Bunch, 152 pages.



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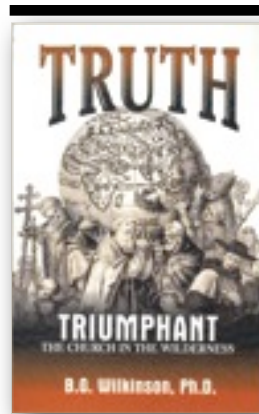
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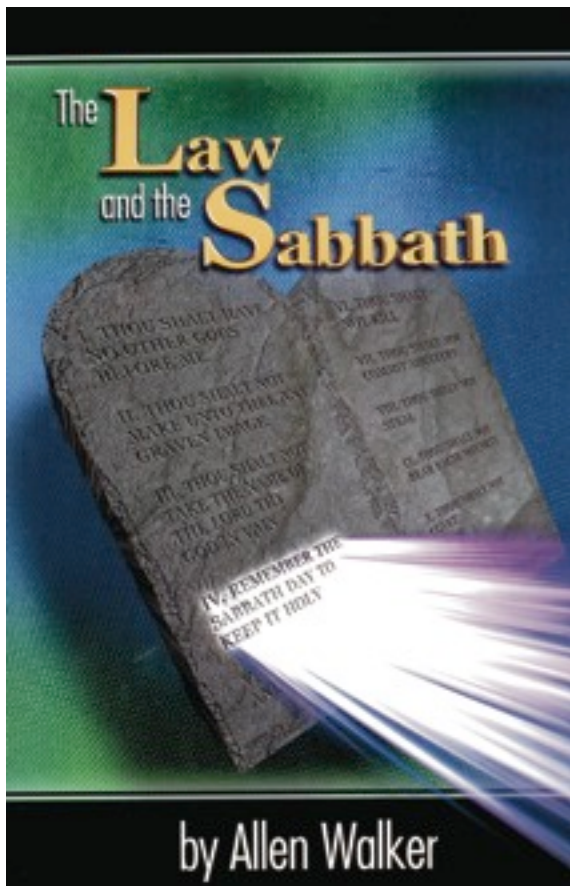
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