

The Sabbath Sentinel

July–August 2009



**Strong Fathers,
Strong Daughters**

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

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

The Sabbath Sentinel

July–August 2009 Volume 61, No. 4 Issue 538

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Our Cover: Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters
taken from the title of the book by Meg Meeker.
Meg says, "Be the man you want her to marry."
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Editor: Kenneth Ryland, tss_editor@mac.com.

Associate Editors: Julia Benson & Shirley Nickels

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BSA Worldwide Web Site: <http://www.biblesabbath.com>.

Correspondence and manuscript submissions: Address all inquiries to: Kenneth Ryland, c/o *The Sabbath Sentinel*, 802 N. W. 21st Ave., Battle Ground, WA 98604. Phone: (888) 687-5191, E-mail: tss_editor@mac.com.

International addresses:

Australia: Bible Sabbath Associates, Walter & Cindy Steensby, P.O. Box 4305, Hawker ACT 2614, Australia. E-mail: steensby@netspeed.com.au

Sierra Leone: The Bible Sabbath Association Sierra Leone, 326 Bai Bureh Road, Calabar, Town, P.O.BOX 289, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Philippines: Enrique M. Gabuyo, 398 Kinville Subdivision, Calamba Laguna 4027, Philippines, cogemg007@yahoo.com

Nigeria: Bassey Akpan, Nigeria BSA, P. O. Box 1277, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. E-mail: ycog1@yahoo.com

Address Service Requested

Our Mailing Address

Bible Sabbath Association
802 N.W. 21st Ave.
Battle Ground, WA 98604.

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Where Have All the Leaders Gone?

Christianity in the United States and throughout the West is floundering badly. We are like a ship without a rudder. We are fast losing influence in our Western culture and seem unable to speak with a coherent, single voice on moral and ethical issues assaulting our culture.

Twenty or 30 years ago we looked to the moral leadership of people like Jerry Falwell, D. James Kennedy, Billy Graham, John R. W. Stott, and Francis Schaeffer. Only Billy Graham and John Stott are left, and their ministries are behind them. Whether you agreed with any of these men theologically, they stood the moral high ground and refused to give it up, regardless of the assaults against them by their secularist enemies. Their thoughts, their ideas, and their appeal to our society to seek a good public morality was what friends and foes alike were talking about. Their comments about the need for a moral and God-fearing culture were always before the public.

Right now there appears to be no one in our society calling on our citizens to follow a godly, moral path. For years many of us have listened to the counsel of people like James Dobson to help us raise our children to be upright and godly. Now James Dobson has resigned his last decision-making position at Focus on the Family. Dr. Dobson has attempted to ensure a smooth transition in the leadership of Focus on the Family so that the organization can continue to provide the kind of help that families need. However, in time, James Dobson's voice like that of Francis Schaeffer and others before him will cease.

The question I keep asking myself is, where will the next generation of Christian leaders come from? There appears to be no one on the horizon to take up moral leadership and who speaks with a decidedly Christian voice. And I believe this is the primary reason why the Church in the United States and other Western countries is adrift.

The next generation of Christian leaders is going to have to possess some unique qualifications. Obviously they will have to come from the ranks of younger Christians. Beyond being young, they will have to possess the qualities of incorruptibility and a deep fear of God. I don't know which of these is more important. It may be that one cannot exist without the other. They must have the tenacity and uncompromising ferocity of a pit bull. Such leaders are society's watchdogs (the Bible calls them "watchmen" [see Ezekiel 33]). Their duty is to tell the people (both Christian and secular) their sins so that they will repent and avoid God's judgment.

I have waited a long time to see Sabbath keepers among the "keepers of the flame" of righteousness in our Western nations. I wonder, will it always be the

province of the Baptists or other Protestants who are on fire for Christ to be God's watchdogs over the moral climate of society? Speaking up about our culture's corruption will often bring immediate condemnation and derision from the secular media and others who want to push the very thought of God out of the public's consciousness. Nevertheless, a good watchdog will hardly notice the slights, the insults, and the slander. He just locks his jaws onto the seat of the perpetrator's pants and refuses to let go until the offender submits.

There was a time in the 1960's when the leaders of the Worldwide Church of God achieved a level of respect for their moral leadership in the U.S. and other countries around the world. They spoke and religious and nonreligious people alike listened. Presidents and prime ministers sought their counsel. Then their passion for God turned to a desire for the approval of men and the comfort of riches. The vanity and arrogance they railed against became their own stock-in-trade. The fear of God vanished—replaced by a desire for worldly prestige. Financial and moral corruption at high levels in the church became front-page news. Their mission for God came to an ignominious end. Today there is no Worldwide Church of God, and the organization that was spawned from its dying embers has abandoned the Commandments of God.

The story of the rise and fall of the Worldwide Church of God reminds me of the life of King Saul. When Saul spared the life of Agag, king of the Amalekites, God said to Samuel, "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed my commandments" (1 Samuel 15:11). Samuel later said to Saul, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?" (v. 17). Notice carefully Saul's admission of his sin, "I have sinned ... because I feared the people and obeyed their voice" (v. 24). When the fear of people enters, the fear of God leaves, and rebellion and sin follow.

Though this editorial may seem like a lament, it is not. It is a call for young men and women to step forward and dedicate themselves without reservation to the call of God. Such people must be fearless when dealing with the opinions of men, and always in reverent fear of the Eternal Judge of the Universe. They must be and always remain "little in their own eyes." No other formula can possibly work. Any who will take up this challenge will have our constant prayers and our eternal gratitude. God speed!

—Kenneth Ryland

Making Yourself Sick

By Kenneth Westby



Ever since Norman Cousins wrote his book, *Anatomy of an Illness*,¹ some 35 years ago there has been a general awareness that laughter and a happy spirit are good for your health. *Readers Digest's* popular feature, "Laughter is the Best Medicine," has been around as long as I can remember. The feature's title is a take off of the biblical proverb,

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."²

But how common is a cheerful heart? It's probably safe to say most of us don't laugh enough. I guess there's just too much heavy stuff out there. Occasions for genuine laughter are rare. When we're of a glum, negative, overly serious spirit, humor doesn't easily arise in our heart. It may pop up here or there but evaporates quickly. And watching inane sitcoms won't fill our need for mirth—minus real humor the canned laugh-track does the laughing for us.

Most of us would like to be happier than we are. So why aren't we? What robs us of the positive joy of life? Why are our steps so heavy? Why is the sweetness of laughter so rare? We can find answers.

Changing Your Worldview

The way we look at life determines our experience. It really does. And such a simple insight presents us with a golden opportunity to make big changes in our lives. "The only limits are the ones we create," so says Barry Neil Kaufman in his helpful little book, *Happiness is a Choice*.³

We are the architect of our own attitude and experience. God may be in charge of "everything," but we are in charge of the gate to our own mind. We decide what goes in, what stays, and what comes out in word and action. Because this exchange is continuous we don't give it much thought. In saying we decide what goes into our mind I do not infer that we carefully screen all data before letting it into the gate. Were it so!

Unfortunately, many of us have simply decided to leave the gate wide open to what ever information may be flying around from TV, radio, newspapers, novels, movies, chatter, and etcetera. This natural though haphazard method of handling information leaves us open to being unduly influenced by "the

around," by the loudest voices, trends, fads, spin, propaganda, current jabber, and more ominously, evil itself.

Pop culture, news, and "the around" can give us a distorted picture of reality. This skewed picture then becomes our worldview, our understanding of what the world is all about and how we fit into it. This skewed view is typically negative, the result of bogus or incomplete information dumped upon our unguarded mind. We trust others to give us a true picture of "the way it is," without considering their prejudices or motivation. We assume too much. Mainstream news sources and street opinion are frequently far off the mark of objective truth; it is bad information in that it's so incomplete and unbalanced that it distorts reality. Call it "junk information," or if you like, the evening news.

We may not even be aware that our "reality" is a construct of our worldview. We choose those things of life and the world around us from which to form our worldview. A negative person has picked and chosen a lot of negative things about his life and situation (failed marriage(s), business, health, finances or betrayals or loneliness, etc.) from which to build his attitude. He likely will also do the same with the world around him—focusing on the "bad" things in society, politics and world affairs.

It's all too easy to find yourself hanging out with the gloom-and-doom crowd. These are probably fine, responsible people who hold good moral values. But they are negative because they are constantly chewing on bad news—the latest drought, conspiracy, kidnapping, or other events signaling "signs of the end." They see politicians as crooked liars, businessmen as cheats, youth corrupted, human nature rotten, and society in the toilet. They've let themselves become cynical, and you'll join them if you buy into their tortured worldview.

Bad News Bearers

Of course there are elements of truth to their worldview, but it omits too many facts to be an accurate picture of reality. To illustrate, consider the daily non-stop flow of local, national, and world news. This fare shouldn't be called "news," it should be called "bad news" – "The Evening Bad News with

Brian Williams." Newscasters replay over and over again a fatal plane crash captured on video tape, or more recently, the latest explosion of a terrorist's bomb in Pakistan, but rarely depict the tenderness of a mother nurturing her newborn infant. Such nurturing occurs millions of times daily around the world. Isn't this also part of how the world is?

How many millions of concerned, loving visits are made daily by children to their aged parents? How many millions of parents every day lovingly feed, clothe, and care for their children? Can we count the masses who work hard and honestly at their jobs every day? Can we know the myriad good words spoken in kindness between ordinary people every day? Can we know the countless helping hands and sacrifices that are offered among souls of every race on every continent every day?

There are millions of daily good acts that total in the billions by each month's end. Virtually none of this will be noted or reported. But we will hear news aplenty of bad weather, bad economy, bad air, bad politicians, and of course the nightly parade of news of the latest robbers, deviant murderers, child molesters, demented dictators, and degenerate Hollywood types. Continually listening to and reading about rottenness and disaster will convince us this is the true picture of what's out there. But is it? Negative news overwhelms good news and displaces awareness of all the positive thoughts and actions of good and normal people. Is it any wonder that our worldview can become distorted?

Simple acts of love, safe arrivals, and peaceful cooperation between nations are noteworthy events that take place every minute. But these are not "news." The media has a bias toward sensationalism and an appetite for violence. They selectively pick "the news" and so distort an accurate view of the true state of affairs. They cater to blood, controversy, sex and sensationalism. There is no balance. We must not let our minds feed on such pessimistic gruel. A steady diet of such mental junk food produces a negative worldview and spreads a gloomy pall over our state of mind. We can make ourselves emotionally and spiritually sick.

Our good God would prefer we think on good things. I don't suggest a Pollyanna escape from "reality," rather a truthful, balanced acknowledgment of the "real world." That real world includes, most importantly, God. Unfortunately, because of poor religious training, some of us may have absorbed a skewed view of God. We may see God as a dour, bad-news deity preoccupied with mankind's sin and evil. Yet God's justifiable disgust with sin is only a small part of the composite picture of the heart of God. What is God's worldview?

God's Worldview

I can't speak with authority for God, but I can get a good idea what his outlook might be from his many statements and actions. Even in matters dealing with repentance for human sins, we see the good hand of God reaching toward us in merciful judgment. Paul wrote,

"Or despise you the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"⁴

God's word begins with his constant refrain following each day's creative acts, "and God saw that it was good." Then after he made man he declared, "It was very good." He likes all his creation—but especially man and woman. God made us a beautiful earth to enjoy and put it a-spinning in a brilliant universe of glory, mystery and power. He has artfully and marvelously made us, body and soul. Most importantly, he's given us his greatest gift: to be made in his image—sons and daughters of his majesty, Yahweh!

The poet Keats asks,

*Wherein lies happiness?
In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence.*⁵

Has not our good God given us a mind and senses to enjoy everything good? Has not he placed adventure and curiosity in our hearts? Truly, he has given us the joy of human love to savor with our mates, children, family, friends, and even pets. He has given us great hope beyond the flesh; a soaring hope of resurrected life, and an even more beautiful world to eternally enjoy—the Kingdom of God. The good gifts God has already given us are beyond measuring, and those yet future are beyond our most fantastic imagination.

There is however an unsightly scar upon this pleasant picture...sin. Its inventor, Satan, has used sin to deprive man of God's good gifts and to darken our understanding of the Holy One. But Satan has had only mixed success in his evil venture. The unstoppable Kingdom advances; the Church of God continues to grow and the defeated kingdom of evil is waging its last wars. The evil one's days are numbered and so is the sin he introduced. This is good news—the ultimate victory of good over evil is nigh upon us.

Unfortunately, man has suffered loss of the good life God intended by the degree to which he, of his own volition, sins. Man has sin but he still lives on God's good green earth. From Eden God has given mankind free choice. We can choose The Way that

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The Fear of the Lord

by Daniel Botkin



“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” (Acts 9:31)

It was the winter of 1973-74, just two years after I had made my decision to follow Jesus and be a disciple. I was living alone in the country, about twenty miles from town, in an old dilapidated house that I rented for \$35 a month.

(That might sound like a bargain, but if you had seen the house, you probably wouldn't think so.) The Christians with whom I fellowshiped met on Friday nights and Saturday nights, so every Friday afternoon I drove to Peoria and stayed with some other single brothers for the weekend. I got my fellowship on Friday and Saturday evenings, and went to my third-shift job in Peoria on Saturday and Sunday nights from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. I worked just sixteen hours a week and earned around \$65 a week after taxes, which enabled me to live quite comfortably in my primitive country villa during the weekdays.

Each week from Monday to Friday, I stayed holed up in my house with no company except my dog. I spent much of that winter wrapped up in a blanket, sitting at the kitchen table with my Bible, my *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, and a notebook. I spent most of my waking hours studying the Bible and praying. During this season of seeking the Lord, Acts 9:31 sent me on an in-depth study of the fear of the Lord.

In Acts 9:31 I noticed some things that I longed to see, both in my personal walk with the Lord and in the Body of Christ as a whole: rest, edification, comfort, and multiplication. There was something else I noticed in this verse. The churches that experienced rest, edification, comfort, and multiplication were churches that were walking in the fear of the Lord. I realized that these things I longed to see would not come about without walking in the fear of the Lord. So I set out to learn what it means to walk in the fear of the Lord. I took the instructions in Proverbs 2:1-5 to heart:

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to

understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”

To understand the fear of the Lord, I used my Bible as my road map and the Holy Spirit as my guide. Using my *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, I wrote down every verse of the Bible that spoke about fear, or even remotely suggested fear, words like *afraid, affrighten, awe, dread, dreadful, fear, feared, fearful, fearfully, fright, frighten, horror, quake, scare, shake, terrible, terrify, terror, tremble*, etc. I looked up hundreds of verses and wrote them all down by hand. I wrote out the entire verses, not just the chapter-and-verse reference numbers. Then I spent time reading, rereading, and prayerfully meditating on all these verses I had compiled.

After some time, I began to see some common threads, themes that would make it possible to place these many verses into specific categories. I ended up with a 4-point outline: I. Definition: verses that define what the fear of the Lord is; II. Reasons: verses that explain why we should fear the Lord; III. Instructions: verses that tell us how to fear the Lord; IV. Results: verses that describe some effects of the fear of the Lord.

Using this outline, I was able to place each verse under at least one of these four headings. So I re-wrote all the verses, this time writing each verse under one or more of the outline's four headings. I ended up with 43+ handwritten pages, which I bound together in a three-ring notebook. I know there were at least 43 pages, because I still have the cover page, which has a note about something on “page 43.” Unfortunately, I no longer have anything other than the cover page of my in-depth study of the fear of the Lord, because a friend of mine wanted to borrow it and read it. He borrowed it and I never saw it again. If I had known he was going to lose it, I would have made a photocopy of the study.

The paper-and-ink content of my in-depth study is gone, but the important things I learned about the fear of the Lord that winter of 35 years ago are not gone. I want to share some of those things that I learned.

First of all, what does the Bible mean when it speaks about the fear of the Lord? The Scriptures of God must define the fear of God.

If we want to understand what the fear of the Lord is, we need to make sure that we are not letting it be defined by the precept of men. God says of false teachers, "their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men" (Isa. 29:13).

When the fear of God is defined by the precept of men, it is usually watered down and made to sound less scary. When men speak of the fear of God, many prefer to substitute words like "awe," "reverence," or, as the Scofield Bible defines it in a footnote, "reverential trust with hatred of evil." All of these terms can be correctly thought of as things that relate to the fear of God, but if used as alternative terms to replace the scary word "fear," they water down the intensity (and the scariness) of the fear of the Lord.

The word "awe" might have been a suitable synonym many years ago, but not anymore. While once limited to describing things that were truly awe-inspiring, the term "awesome" is now used to describe things as mundane as good food, as in "This pizza is awesome!" (The same thing has happened to the Hebrew word *norah* [נֹרָא], a word used in the Bible to describe God's awesomeness, as in Psalm 47:2, "For the Lord most high is terrible," and as in Exodus 15:11, "fearful in praises." Some Israelis now use *norah* as slang for "awfully [good]," as in "This pizza is *norah*!")

The word "reverence" is an unsuitable synonym for the fear of the Lord, because most people do not understand the full meaning of the word. Webster's dictionary defines the verb *revere* as "to regard with mingled fear, respect, and affection." The problem with the word "reverence" is that most people think that respect and affection for God qualifies as reverence. They do not know that

respect and affection must be mingled with fear to qualify as reverence.

What then does it mean to fear the Lord? Does it actually mean to literally fear Him? Yes, absolutely. Yahweh is a God to be loved, but He is first a God to be feared. The Hebrew and Greek words that speak about fearing God are the same words that speak about fearing other things, so the fear of God is actual fear. You do not even need to know Hebrew and Greek to see this; you can use a *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* to see how the words are used throughout the Bible.

The fear of the Lord involves genuine fear. Its immediate effect is often an unexpected, terrible awareness of one's sinfulness. This awareness of sinfulness makes a person very uncomfortable in the presence of the holy.

"Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Peter said after witnessing a Yeshua-directed miraculous catch of fish.

"Fear not," Yeshua replied. "From henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Luke 5:8-10).

Many passages in the Bible repeat this same pattern, in which the fear of God is immediately followed by a comforting "Fear not." Just about every encounter with an angel brought first of all fear, then the comforting words, "Fear not." It seems as though the Scriptures command us to fear God, and then when we do it, the Lord in effect says, "Okay, you did it. You showed some fear of Me. Now fear not." This pattern of fear followed by comfort is seen in Acts 9:31, when the churches were "walk-

ing in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Fear is balanced by comfort in other verses, like Psalm 130:4, "But there is for-giveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared," and Psalm 2:11, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." After Yeshua's Resurrection, the women "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy" (Matt. 28:8). In all these examples, the comfort, forgiveness, rejoicing, and great joy were real, but the accompanying fear was no less real. So don't let anyone tell you that the fear of the Lord does not include genuine fear.



With deep fear and reverence for God, Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son, Isaac. (Gustave Doré)

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Is There Any Hope?



by Rev. Terril Littrell, Ph.D.

Fear. Panic. Anxiety. These words capture well the state of mind of many in America today. Recently, the American Psychological Association released the findings of a survey they conducted of 7,000 American households. The study noted that eighty percent of Americans were stressed about the economy and their personal finances. Half were worried about their ability to provide for their family's basic needs. Fifty-six percent were concerned about their own job stability. Sixty percent of respondents reported feeling angry and irritable, and more than half reported lying awake at night worried about this. The report concluded that, "The declining state of the nation's economy is taking a physical and emotional toll on people nationwide."

Paul Krugman, professor of economics at Princeton University and winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in economics, offered a prescient assessment of the nation's financial condition earlier this year. He noted that the U.S. economy is suffering from a "crisis of faith." He meant by this, a growing lack of trust in our economic institutions and the securities that have backed much of our debt.

At the center of this crisis is the use of, and problems surrounding, the extension of credit. It is worth noting that "credit" is a word that is a part of the language of faith. It comes from the latin *credere*—to believe or to trust. The present active form of this word opens the Apostle's Creed, *credo*—"I believe." In the case of credit, belief or trust is placed in the borrower and his or her willingness and ability to repay. Our current economic crisis is in part about misplaced trust or faith between debtors and lenders.

Neither a \$700 billion bailout package, nor a Federal Reserve interest rate cut, nor presidential calls for calm seem to speak adequately to the underlying issues that precipitated this crisis of faith. This is a moment when the Bible and people of faith have both the timely word that can calm fears and the most accurate assessment of the underlying issues that led to the current economic debacle.

John Wesley on Economic Initiative

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Movement, wrote a letter to the *Lloyd's Evening Post* (a London

Newspaper), in December 1772 explaining the reasons for the problem-laden economy in his day. Perhaps some of his reasoning will apply to our own world economic, and will give some answers on how to improve our economic situation.

Employing a rhetorical approach similar to his preaching style, Mr. Wesley laid out his case regarding the economic ills of the day in precept-upon-precept fashion: "Why have [so many in England] nothing to eat? Because they have nothing to do. They have no meat, because they have no work. But why have they no work? Because the person who used to employ them cannot afford to do it any longer. Many, who employed fifty men, now scarce employ ten. Those, who employed twenty, now employ one, or none at all."

Why was unemployment high? Because businesses had "no vent for their goods." Why was that? Because food prices were so high "that the generality of people are hardly able to buy anything else," he wrote.

But why were food prices so high? A key reason, Mr. Wesley argued, was that immense quantities of "breadcorn" were being "consumed by distilling" alcoholic beverages. He noted that the abundance of land used to grow wheat for distillation had reduced the acreage available for other crops (while also driving up prices for many other wheat-based products).

Next, Mr. Wesley decried the government's unwillingness, for financial reasons, to discourage the consumption of alcohol. He noted that sales of that "deadly poison" were bringing in "large [tax] revenue to the king." Indeed, the government's overwhelming desire for tax revenue was having perverse effects *throughout* the economy, he observed.

"Why is it, that not only provisions and land, but well-nigh everything else is so dear [i.e., expensive]? Because of the enormous taxes which are laid on almost everything that can be named. Not only abundant taxes raised from earth and fire and water; but, in England, the ingenious statesmen have found a way to tax the very light!"

Never one to diagnose a problem without offering a solution, Mr. Wesley put forth a series of “plain and direct” suggestions for improving the economic health of the nation. He hinged his argument on the need to drive down agricultural-commodity prices. Resultant lower food costs would increase discretionary income and stimulate appropriate consumption of other consumer goods, thus creating economic growth and increasing employment.

The key to driving down commodity prices, and setting in motion these other positive economic results, was “prohibiting forever that bane of health, that destroyer of strength, of life, and of virtue, distilling. Perhaps this alone will answer the whole design,” Mr. Wesley wrote. (In another part of the letter, he argued that more family farms and fewer farm “monopolies” would help drive down food costs as well.)

In general, John Wesley urged eventual tax reductions, conceding, however, that servicing the nation’s large national debt made the continuation of certain taxes a necessity. As for tax increases, he suggested that the government could make up revenue lost from prohibiting distilling with an additional tariff of 10 pounds on “every horse exported to France” and a hike in the property tax on horses in England used to draw “gentlemen’s carriages.” (He also believed these particular taxes would reduce the number of horses being raised, thus driving down the cost of oat.)

While Mr. Wesley did decry “the amazing waste” of food by some wealthy people (which contributed to food scarcity problems for others), there is nothing in his letter that suggests that he believed most of the economic problems of the day were caused by a growing disparity between the rich and the poor.

Mr. Wesley saw income disparity as a result of a problem-laden economy, not the cause. Improve the economy, he argued in his 1772 letter to the *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, and the lot of the poor would improve along with it.

The underlying causes of the current economic crisis are not financial, but spiritual. At least five of the seven deadly sins came into play: gluttony, greed, sloth, envy, and ultimately pride all came before the fall. These led to absurd economic practices that bordered on criminal. It was not simply the CEO’s and Wall Street types who danced to this tune. It was every one of us whose 401K’s prospered by their efforts. And ultimately none of this would be possible without all who abandoned wisdom and prudence and borrowed beyond their capacity to buy houses, cars, and whatever their hearts desired without the ability to repay.

As we face the consequences of the current economic downturn, and as we reflect upon the spiritual causes that contributed to the fall, we find comfort and truth in the words of Jesus, “One’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Luke 12: 15). Thank God for that! And may the truth of these words guide us to a different future.

It is crucial that we invite people to put their hope in God, and offer them the assurance that comes from faith in Him. The Bible’s chronicler wrote Israel and Judah’s history, both to offer hope for a future for the people whose nation had been destroyed, and to point out Judah’s sins so that she might repent. In the same way the Christian must not only offer hope, but also an accurate assessment of the ultimate causes for this present crisis, issuing a call to repentance.

The gospel message needed today is a call to hope in the God who will not abandon us, and a call to repentance before a God who forgives and heals us. And, ultimately it is an invitation to choose *credere* in the midst of economic meltdown.

Hope In God

The word of hope is found in the words spoken to people in adversity and even in exile throughout the Bible. There are the words of the prophets spoken to the Israelites living in exile after losing everything. To them God spoke profound words of promise: “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). The psalmists, too, during periods of adversity wrote: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.” (Psalm 46:1–2).

Jesus seems to speak directly to our situation in the Sermon on the Mount when he said to first century peasants, “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well” (Matthew 6:25, 33).

As we watch the Dow Jones Industrial Average drop over 1,800 points in one week, and the waves of fear and the winds of panic sweep over our collective souls, it is easy to identify with the disciples straining at their oars, being battered by the wind and waves in the fourth watch of the night as they wondered where Jesus was when they really needed him. What comfort we find in his words of greeting as he came walking on water towards them, unshaken by the storm: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid” (Matthew 14:27).

A few chapters ahead in the New Testament we come to Paul sitting in his prison cell writing his epistle to the Philippians. He is awaiting the outcome of a trial that could see him executed, yet he has the faith to write, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

And how timeless are those words written to Timothy—instructions for what he was to preach to the people of Ephesus: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God" (1 Timothy 6:17).

The credit crisis serves to point to the inadequacy of any ultimate credo whose object is anything but God. God is our refuge and strength. And God's sustaining powers not tied to the Dow.

Don't Fear the future

Since the garden of Eden the enemy has used fear, tied to lack of provision, to make us strive for self-sufficiency. Satan convinced Adam and Eve that God wasn't really going to come through and that they should take matters into their own hands.

Fear is a powerful emotion. The fear of financial ruin, failure in a relationship or job, fear of sickness or death, or just fear of not being accepted can lead our emotions down a path that makes us believe that certain doom is near.

We don't have to accept this as our destiny if we understand how to combat and rise above it. We must understand that a great spiritual battle is taking place between faith, trusting God as our source of provision, and fear, trusting humankind as our source of provision. Human economic institutions, even money itself, will fail us. But God will never fail us. We can trust God.

The negative news media attempt to make the average American believe we are on the brink of total disaster. Some economists are predicting a "super crash" worse than the Great Depression of the 1930's. Christians, who read the newspaper or watch television more than they read the Word of God or trust the promises of God, are being affected.

Long before the late president Franklin D. Roosevelt in his 1933 inaugural address said in reference to the depressed economic condition of our nation, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," Yahweh Himself had given the people of God the admonition not to fear. He said through the prophet Isaiah, "fear not, for I have redeemed you ... when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they

shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you ... Since you are precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I love you" (Isaiah 43:2-4).

This incredible promise from God assures us that He will lead us into victory when we follow His Word and are obedient to His Commandments. So right now we have two basic choices: Allow the fear of our future to ruin us or else trust God, even when the situation seems hopeless.

It is a natural reaction to pull back during times of adversity and lack. But in order to achieve victory God's way, we must, by the grace of God, face our fears head on, and go in the opposite direction. God does not call us to be careless, but He does call us to be radical. If we are going to demonstrate His love in radical ways to the world, then we must realize that the time is right to plant radically, sow radically, and give with radical generosity to the Lord.

Proverbs 11:25 says: "A generous person will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." As we reach out to others through giving and investing in their lives, God will always be faithful to meet our own needs as well. To the measure that we do it to others, God will do in return for us (Luke 6:38).

I believe that people who have no relationship with the Lord will be driven to seek Him and find Him through these tough times. The old adage that says "there are no atheists in a foxhole" tells me that in time of crisis people come to God for help.

Christians should continue in faith to reach out to the lost, offering them Christ, helping them to understand that we must always look to the Lord, who is our true source and supply, and not to the stocks we own or to the economic systems of this world for provision. Perhaps we have learned the lesson that Jesus taught 2000 years ago, not to lay up treasures on earth, but rather lay up treasures in heaven.

As we face some tough times ahead, prayerfully consider what God can do through you. Live through a lens of faith, not fear. Look for opportunities to make God known through your generous and sacrificial giving and living. As this happens, prepare to be blessed beyond measure in your life over time. Remember Psalms 126:6, "He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, should doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Dr. Terril D. Littrell is a retired pastor with over forty years of experience in teaching and ministry. He and his wife Chloe live in Cleveland, Tennessee. Terril is currently undergoing treatment for cancer and is asking all of our readers for their prayers. Thank you.

Time & Chance

by Brian Knowles



Just the other day, 228 people boarded an Air France flight from Brazil to Paris. They never arrived at their destination. As far as anyone knows, they are two miles down on the ocean floor in the crushed wreckage of an Airbus A330. The reason for the devastating crash is unknown. It could have been weather, an electrical failure or even terrorism. We may never know.

In Paris, friends and relatives of the deceased waited without much hope for word on what had happened to their loved ones. Interviews indicate that the passengers were ordinary people going about their business in normal ways. Most were French or Brazilian. The list included a 60-year old American geologist and his wife, a possible member of the Brazilian royal family (out of power since 1889), the head of Thyssen-Krupp steel in Brazil, and the head of Michelin in Latin America. All share a watery grave at the bottom of the Atlantic.

Somewhere in the world, this type of thing happens every day. Good, normal people, minding their own business, are suddenly killed in unforeseen accidents, or by terrorist bombs, or weather disasters. In the latter, thousands may die. Millions can be affected. Immediately children are cut off from parents, old people lose their sons and daughters, wives lose their husbands. There's no answering the question, "Why Maria?" or "Why my children? Were they so evil that they had to die like this?" The heartache of loss lasts for years, sometimes for a whole lifetime.

Solomon's Take

Because there is nothing new under the sun, Solomon who lived in the tenth century BC, was confronted with the same realities we face. He wrote, "I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all," (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

The people we expect to win don't always win. In the War of Independence the weaker force defeated the stronger. There are brilliant scholars who live in relative poverty and wealthy folks who are malnourished. The world doesn't always reward or appreciate its most noble people. We are all victims of happenstance—of being in the right, or wrong, place at the right or wrong time. We can be here today, gone tomorrow—for no good reason.

Solomon continued his observation: "Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught

in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them," (Ecclesiastes 9:12). Evil times fell upon the 228 passengers and crew of the Air France flight.

Incidents in Jerusalem

In Jesus' day, there were two terrible incidents in Jerusalem, upon which our Lord commented. The first involved an act of sadistic wickedness on the part of Pontius Pilate. Apparently some Galileans had journeyed down to Jerusalem to sacrifice in the temple. For some reason, the evil Pilate chose to kill them and mingle their blood with that of their sacrifices. This wonton act of barbarism had no rhyme or reason. Pilate's victims may have been chosen at random - to "make a statement."

The second incident involved the sudden collapse of a siege tower near Siloam. Eighteen people lost their lives in the accident. They were like the "birds taken in a snare." They were in the wrong place at the wrong time. The nearby group asked Jesus about the first incident (Luke 13:1). Jesus responded, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? (Verse 2)."

It is natural to assume that bad things happen to bad people. Sometimes that is true. People can experience the natural results of disobedience (Deuteronomy 27:9-26; 28:15-45). The curses that beset people are not usually without cause (Proverbs 26:2). It was commonly believed in those days that disasters were the result of sin (John 9:2). Yet in many cases, unsuspecting people are merely victims of time and chance. What happened to them could have happened to anyone who was in the same place at that time.

Jesus uses these two incidents to make some spiritual points. "Do you think," he asked, "that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish," (Luke 13:2-5).

What does Jesus mean by "you too will all perish"? The King James Version uses the word "likewise" here. Does he mean death at the hands of the Romans, like the Galileans? Does he mean that a tower would fall on them? Clearly Jesus is not talking about the precise manner of death here. So far as we know, these were unrepeatable, one-time incidents.

In the Bible, universal sinfulness is taken for granted (1 John 1:8, 10; Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 9:3b; etc.). That being a given, what matters next is repentance. As commentator Leon Morris writes, "Perhaps the thought is that the manner of the death of the Galileans gave them no time to repent. Jesus' unrepentant sinners were setting themselves on a course which meant unrepentant death in due course," (*Luke* by Leon Morris, p. 242). If Morris is right, then what matters is dying in a repentant state. Since death can come unexpectedly, we should all live in a state of perpetual repentance.

This morning, we heard of two women in San Bernardino County who died suddenly in lightning strikes. One made the mistake of standing under a tree that was hit. The other stood beneath a tree branch that was struck. It broke off and fell on her. What was the state of their relationship with God? We have no way of knowing. But this seems to be the kind of thing Jesus was talking about: sudden, unforeseen, unexpected death. It could happen to any of us. Time and chance happens to all.

Flusser's View

The late Professor David Flusser of Hebrew University saw Jesus' statements as a call to Israel: "Repent or perish!" Flusser continues, "He illustrated this call for a national repentance by the following parable of the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9). Later on, being in Jerusalem he saw the imminent catastrophe as almost inevitable (Luke 19:40-44). The future destruction of Jerusalem could have been avoided, if it has chosen the way of peace and repentance," *Jesus* by David Flusser, p. 102.

National repentance begins with individual repentance. Since sin "so easily besets us," we must view repentance as a steady state. Overcoming means actively fighting sin in our lives on an ongoing basis. Sooner or later, we're all going to die (Hebrews 9:27). That's inevitable. Some of us will die prematurely in accidents, through illness or by acts of violence. Others of us will live out normal life spans. As Paul wrote, "If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord (Romans 14:8)." If we die "in Christ" our place in the world to come is secure. Ongoing repentance is the key to overcoming. Jesus promised, "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:21-22).

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) and The Sabbath Sentinel.

The Faith of a Blind Man

by Donald Mansell

And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. Luke 18:37, 38.

It happened near Jericho during Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem. Bartimaeus, the blind man, had evidently heard of Jesus' power to restore sight. He believed Jesus could heal him but, because he could not see, it was impossible for him to come to Jesus unassisted, and apparently no one offered to conduct him to the Great Healer. Blindness also compelled him to earn his living by begging.

Passover was approaching. Pilgrim bands were wending their way across the Jordan valley toward Jerusalem. As Bartimaeus sat beside the Jericho road with palm outstretched he noticed something different about one particular group of pilgrims. Perhaps it was the unusual volume of voices. More likely it was a snatch of conversation. But whatever it was, Bartimaeus "asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by" (Luke 18:36, 37). Could it really be true?

"Is Jesus of Nazareth passing this way?" asked the blind man with mounting excitement. This might be his last opportunity. "He began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:47).

Some of those in the forefront of the crowd chided Bartimaeus, commanding him to "hold his peace" (Luke 18:39)-the Master had more important things to do than to attend to a blind beggar's needs. But Bartimaeus would not be repressed, rather "he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:48).

He who sees the sparrow fall heard that cry above the hubbub of voices. Stopping where He was, Jesus "commanded him to be called." The fickle crowd, changing like a weathervane, now assured the blind man, "Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee" (verse 49).

"What would you have me do to you?" Jesus asks tenderly.

At the sound of these words, Bartimaeus flung aside his tattered cloak, quickly stood, and tremblingly groped his way toward the voice, crying, "Lord, that I may receive my sight" (Luke 18:41).

Jesus said to him, "Receive thy sight" (verse 42); "thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mark 10:52). Instantly the blind man "received his sight, and followed" Jesus, "glorifying God" (Luke 18:43).

We need to be reminded that, no matter how long we may have been Christians, every one of us needs healing from spiritual blindness, which obscures our hidden weaknesses. Today, this morning, even now, Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

Donald Mansell, New Every Morning, page 98. Review & Herald Publishing Ass'n. 1981.

Come out of Laodicea

by Kelly McDonald



In Revelation 3:14–22 we read, “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm- neither hot nor cold- I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (NIV).

In the book of Revelation, John the Apostle is taken in the Spirit to the Day of the Lord or the Lord’s Day (which is a reference to prophecies given in Isaiah 2:12–23 and Joel Chapter 2). While in the Spirit, Jesus tells John to write seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor. Because the book of Revelation is prophetic of the end times or last days, these seven churches represent seven types of Christians in the end times and seven types of churches in the end times.

One of these churches, the church in Laodicea, is in a particularly bad situation spiritually. The church in Laodicea is described by Jesus as a church that has accumulated much material wealth, but has very little spiritual wealth. Jesus describes them as being neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. In other words, they have lip service to God, but they have not obeyed the word of God with their deeds. They are giving the appearance of being Christian but they have not decided to completely surrender their lives to Christ. The calling of a Christian is to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Christ. The church of Laodicea did not deny themselves to follow Christ. They were attempting to hold onto selfish desires and still pursue Christ. Much like the fig tree in Mark 11 that had leaves but no figs or fruit, they are professing to have Christ with their mouths but with their works they are falling short of the calling of Christ.

If the church in Laodicea is often considered to be a picture of one type of end-time believers and their churches. Is this not the picture of American Christians? In America we have all the material wealth that any person on earth could ever imagine, from nice cars to beautiful homes with a TV in every room and a pool in the back yard. While having these material things is not necessarily a bad thing, we have, unfortunately, allowed these earthly blessings to come between us and God. We concentrate on things such as sports, television shows, or gadgets more than we

concentrate on prayer, living according to God’s Word, and serving the needs of others. Material comforts have consumed us to the point that we no longer have the time to properly serve God or our fellow man. Just like Laodicea we often allow our material goods to become more important than the God who made them possible.

Many of our churches are also acting in ways that are much like Laodicea. Many of our churches are caught up with material things such as bigger buildings and more offerings rather than righteous living and serving the needs of the community. Like Laodicea, we are lukewarm. We serve God and others when it is convenient, not when it is urgent. Where is the passion for God in our churches and in ourselves today? Our brothers and sisters in Kenya sometimes walk for days just to hear a single message about Jesus Christ. These people are also starving because their main source of food, farming, has not produced sufficient crops this past year. Despite their difficulties, they remain faithful and have a burning desire to hear the Word of God. Christians in India serve God despite severe persecution. For instance, if Christians in India are caught baptizing someone in a public water source, they will be put to death. The brethren in India and Kenya have little material wealth or political freedom, but they do have one thing we often lack: a burning fire in their hearts for God. We as Christians have to stir the stagnant water in our own souls and in our churches. We have to set an example by living a red-hot passionate life for Jesus Christ, reading His Word, and praying daily to our Heavenly Father. Remember that Jesus said, “inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me” (Matthew 25:40).

We as believers can shave some unnecessary costs and unnecessary time from our lives to better serve God and better serve the brethren, whether it is going

out to eat less, buying less luxuries, watching less T.V., or going to less sporting events. We do these things to see that the material needs of our brothers and sisters down the block or halfway around the world are met. Do we want Christ to return and find us lukewarm, or do we want Him to return and see that we are red-hot on fire for Him? To solve the problems in Laodicea, Jesus counsels the believers to buy three things: gold refined in the fire to become rich, white clothes to wear, and healing salve to put on their eyes so they can see. Gold refined in the fire is the gold of God's character being refined in us as we endure fiery trials for Him. As we step out to serve Christ in new ways, we will face persecution and rejection from others, but by doing so we are blessed (Matthew 5:10) and gain the spiritual wealth that comes from God's character (1 Timothy 4:8). The second thing Jesus asks the Laodiceans to buy is white clothes to cover their shameful nakedness. Revelation 19:8 explains that white or fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints, which comes through living in obedience to God's commandments (Revelation 14:12). As we live by God's laws, we become arrayed or clothed in righteous deeds performed for His name. The last thing Christ instructs us to buy is healing salve for our eyes. We as Christians have been blinded by material things so that we cannot see the needs of the Kingdom of God or our own spiritual needs. We have been blinded to our own sinful nature and our need to repent of sin. This means confessing and forsaking our disobedience to God's law (1 John 3:4-6). Once our eyes receive Christ's healing, our spiritual eyes will be opened to see the needs of the Kingdom of God and our own spiritual needs.

Each of us has gifts, talents, and abilities given to us by God. The love of Christ in us must compel us to use what we have to help others and further the work of God's Kingdom. We may not have the greatest gift in our own eyes, but in the eyes of God those who work are the ones who are rewarded (Matthew 25:14-30). We can leave Laodicea today if we will live by God's law while at the same time forsaking our own selfish desires. If we believers and our churches do not come out of Laodicea, we will certainly be spit out of His mouth. I do not know about you, but I certainly *do not* want to find out what that is like.

Kelly McDonald, Jr. is an ordained 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. Despite numerous academic and athletic achievements, Kelly considers the work of the Kingdom of God to be the single most important goal to which his life is dedicated.

It's Now "Sir Patrick," as Queen Elizabeth Honors Jamaica's Adventist Governor-General during Buckingham Palace Audience

By Michael Ireland

Chief Correspondent, ASSIST News Service

LONDON, UK (ANS)— A Seventh-Day Adventist pastor, who became Governor-General of Jamaica, has been knighted by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II.



According to an article by Mark A. Kellner, News Editor of the Adventist World (www.adventistreview.com), the first Seventh-day Adventist pastor to serve as governor-general of Jamaica is now a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II knighted governor-general of Jamaica, Sir Patrick Allen, accompanied by his wife, Lady Patricia Allen, when he was presented his credentials during a private audience in Buckingham Palace.

Sir Patrick Linton Allen, ON, DC, the immediate past president of the West Indies Union of Seventh-day Adventists, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II on June 12 in a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

Kellner says that Allen became Jamaica's sixth governor-general, since independence, on February 26, 2009, shortly after stepping down as union president.

"He was elected president of the West Indies Union in 2000, and began his pastoral service in the church in 1981, after a decade of working for the Jamaican government," Kellner writes.

In an exclusive interview with Adventist World magazine, Sir Patrick said that while he missed church work, "I am sure and confident that this is what the Lord wants me to do now," Kellner writes.

Sir Patrick said, "As much as I miss it, I am aware that my service is in a broader scope...Where I work [now], I have a vast and comprehensive universe in the nation."

Westby: "Making yourself Sick," continued from page 5.

leads to happiness and everlasting life. We can choose to enjoy the goodness and adventure of human life. We can choose to obey or disobey. We can choose to be negative thinkers or positive thinkers. God has made us free to be miserable or happy.

Sin and its evil product cannot be ignored. Sin must be acknowledged and dealt with on a personal level. But we must also acknowledge that sin's very existence is an aberration in the plan of God. Sin is doomed to obsolescence; its days are numbered and its evil author slated for extinction. Given this reality, we should not be obsessing on sin or its effects upon mankind. Acknowledge its presence for sure, cut the cancerous tumor out, and then get busy living a happy, positive, victorious life that will make our Father in heaven proud.

Inspire or Scare Yourself—Which?

Why not inspire ourselves rather than scare ourselves? Let God take care of the devil and his evil. For if we let evil snatch away our optimistic spirit and leave in its place a pessimistic one, who is ruling our life? C. S. Lewis observed there are twin dangers people fall prey to concerning the Devil; either one thinks too much about evil and is diverted from goodness and godliness, or one doesn't believe the devil exists in which case one becomes defenseless to the enemy. The Bible counsels us to draw near to God—filling our minds with His joy—and resist the Evil One, putting him to flight⁶.

Jesus warns against the human propensity for "stinking thinking." This is the worldview of worry, worry, and worry.⁷ Worry about this and that, and if all is going well, worry that evil is just around the corner. This sky-is-falling attitude is addictive and many unhappy people seem to "thrive" on it, if that's possible. Jesus says all such negative thinking is a waste of time and destructive toward the great positive activity of seeking his kingdom and his righteousness. After all, each day may bring its own dose of trouble without adding to it our troublesome worries, real or imagined.

Worrying is how we scare ourselves. It is how we make ourselves sick and unhappy. Particularly silly is to worry about perceived "evils" in the world over which we have absolutely no control. It is part of the constellation of negativity that steals away our happiness. Being a worrywart is something we choose to be. It is also symptomatic of faithlessness.

Good Thoughts = Good Life

Intrinsic to happiness itself is the element of peace. It is hard to be happy with peace absent. In fact, the most peaceful picture God gives us is that of his com-

ing kingdom. It is the exulting time of universal peace, a world filled with good news and the knowledge of God, the lion and lamb resting together, a time of unparalleled prosperity and happiness.

The weekly Sabbath foreshadows that world of peace, joyful rest, and good news. It is this picture that should shape our worldview. It is the ultimate reality because it is given us by God himself. This worldview will cure what ails us and bring us newness of life. Foolish as it is to say, we may excuse those without the Christian hope for making themselves miserable with bad news. But we who know better should live better, and be happier because of it.

Why make yourself unhappy with a diet of negative thinking and a dwelling on evil? Paul advises Christians, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."⁸

He further exhorts that the best way to guard your mind is to think upon, "whatever is true, ...honorable, ...right, ...pure, ...lovely, ...of good repute, ...any excellence, ...anything worthy of praise—dwell on these things."⁹

Our Lord and Savior invites us, "Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,"¹⁰

Making God's worldview your worldview can heal mental and spiritual negativity and produce personal happiness—it is also the way things really are!

End Notes:

1. Norman Cousins chronicles his novel self-treatment of a life-threatening illness employing a change of attitude and large doses of humor. Since his work medical science has confirmed his thesis that happiness is like a medicine.
2. Proverbs 17:22
3. Ballantine Books, 1991, p. 35
4. Romans 2:4
5. *John Keats*, *Endymion*, 1.777
6. James 4:7-8
7. Mt 6:25-34
8. Phil 4:7
9. Phil 4:8
10. Mt 11:28-30

Ken Westby is the founder and director of The Association for Christian Development (ACD) and is a director emeritus of the BSA. The ACD Web site is located at www.godward.org.

"But Daniel, what about 1 John 4:18? John wrote 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment.' That sounds like we're just supposed to love God, not fear Him. How can we love God if we fear Him?"

A better question is, How can you love Him if you do not know Him, and how can you claim to know Him if you do not fear Him, because to truly know Him is to fear Him? We love Him only after His perfect love casts out the tormenting fear that we feel in His presence because of our sinfulness. The Apostle John who said that there is no fear in love is the same man who fell like a dead man at the feet of Yeshua when he saw Him in His glory on the isle of Patmos. When John saw Yeshua as the risen, glorified Son of God, he did not say, "Hey, it's my old fishin' buddy, Jesus! Praise the Lord, Jesus, it's great to see you looking so glorious!" When John saw the Lord, he fell at His feet with so much fear that he became as a dead man. "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not..." (Rev. 1:17).

Peter and John were not the only holy men who felt unholy in the presence of the Holy One. When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne, high and lifted up, with the seraphim above it, he cried out, "Woe is me! For I am undone [or, as we might say in modern English, "I'm done for!"]; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts" (Isa. 6:5).

Jeremiah said, "I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of Yahweh, and because of the words of His holiness" (Jer. 23:9). Ezekiel seems to have fallen upon his face every time he beheld the glory of God. (See Ezk. 1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 11:13; 43:3; 44:4.)

The Prophet Daniel experienced real fear. When Gabriel approached him, Daniel said, "I was afraid, and fell upon my face" (Dan. 8:17). Another vision caused Daniel to experience trembling, loss of strength, loss of breath, loss of consciousness, and dumbness. In the presence of the holy, Daniel's high opinion of himself underwent a change which he described by saying "my comeliness was turned in me into corruption" (Dan. 10:8). Even Daniel's good qualities, his "comeliness," looked rotten to him in the light of God's holy presence.

Moses experienced the fear of God so intensely that he was literally frightened out of his wits. That's the definition Strong's gives ("to be frightened out of one's wits") for the Greek word in He-

brews 12:21, where Moses is quoted as saying, "I exceedingly fear and quake." The phrase "exceedingly fear" is a translation of *ekphobos* [εκφοβος], a word formed by attaching the prefix *ek* (the same as *ex-*, "out of; beyond," the source of English *exit*, *excel*, etc.) to the stem *phobos* ("fear," the source of English *phobia*). Hebrews 12:21 is a quote of Deuteronomy 9:19 in the Greek Septuagint version. The same Greek verb *ekphobeo* [εκφοβεω], translated "exceedingly fear" in Hebrews 12:21, is used a few other places in the Septuagint.

Job 7:14 speaks of God sending dreams and visions that frighten Job "out of" his wits: "Then Thou scarest me [*ekphobeis me*, εκφοβεις με] with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions."

Habakkuk describes the effect that the fear of God had on him:

"When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered my bones, and I trembled in myself" (Hab. 3:16).

But all these examples are from the Old Testament. By the time of the New Testament, God had mellowed out, hadn't He? He wasn't into scaring people anymore, was He? If you believe that, here are a few things in the New Testament for you to consider.

Get a *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and look up the word *fear*. You will find around ten places where there is a direct commandment to fear God, and several other places where fearing God is presented as the normal response to an encounter with God's holiness. In the New Testament you will see that fear fell upon Zachariah when he saw an angel; the disciples fell on their faces and were "sore afraid" at Yeshua's transformation; great fear came upon all who heard about Ananias and Sapphira dropping dead in church; Saul on the road to Damascus trembled, was astonished, and could not eat or drink for three days.

"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy." So says the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb in Revelation 15:4. "Thou, even Thou, art to be feared," wrote the psalmist Asaph, "and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?" (Ps. 76:7).

Fearing God is not a negative thing. It is a positive thing, because "Yahweh taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (Ps. 147:11). When I compiled my in-depth study of the fear of the Lord 35 years ago, I found and listed 96 blessings that are promised to those who fear the Lord. I no longer have the list, but several of the blessings are listed in Psalm 112. This

psalm begins with the words "Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments." Then the remainder of the psalm lists the different types of blessings that such a man will receive. These blessings in Psalm 112 are not promised to just anyone and everyone; they are promised specifically to those who fear the Lord and delight greatly in His commandments.

The fear of the Lord brings the presence and blessing of the Lord. Job said, "For the thing that I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me" (Job 3:25). Job was speaking about the tragedies that had come upon him. I have heard this verse quoted by "word of faith" preachers for the purpose of criticizing Job for his alleged "lack of faith." There is a more positive and useful lesson that can be gleaned from this verse, though. If, as some preachers suggest, greatly fearing tragedies will cause tragedies to come upon you, then greatly fearing the Lord will cause the Lord to come upon you. So greatly fear the Lord, and let His Holy Spirit come upon you with the blessings that are promised to the man that feareth the Lord and delighteth greatly in His commandments.

I hope that everyone reading this fears the Lord and delights greatly in His commandments, because I want everyone to experience God's blessings. Perhaps someone reading this is saying, "I can't really say that I fear the Lord and delight greatly in His commandments, but I *want* to." That's good. A desire to fear God is a start. When Nehemiah prayed at the start of his work, he referred to himself and his generation as servants "who desire to fear Thy name" (Neh. 1:11).

Fearing the Lord is something that you choose to do or not do. Proverbs 1:29 talks about people who "hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord," so fearing God is definitely something you can choose to do. God is pro-choice when it comes to fearing Him. Proverbs 2:1-5, quoted near the beginning of this article, tells you what you have to do to understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Psalm 34:11 is another verse that tells you how you can learn the fear of the Lord. "Come, ye children, hearken unto me," David said, "I will teach you the fear of the Lord." David was a man after God's own heart, the Bible says (1 Sam. 13:14). If we come to David and hearken unto him, he can teach us the fear of the Lord. But David is dead. How can we come to David and hearken unto him? Simple. By reading David's psalms and prayerfully meditating on them.

Through his psalms, David can teach us the fear of the Lord. It's all right there in the psalms. As Bob Dylan once said when questioned about his religious beliefs, "It's all right there in my music," so the same can be said of David's heart. It's all right there in the psalms. If you want to see the heart of a man who was after the heart of God, you can see it in the psalms of David.

David saw the glory of God expressed in two different ways in two different vessels: majestically in the natural creation, and linguistically in the written Scriptures. Throughout his psalms, David wrote about the glory of God as it is manifested in nature — in the sky, in the seas, in the mountains, in the rivers, and even in the plant and animal kingdoms. David also wrote about the glory of God as it is manifested in God's Torah — in His commandments, in His judgments, in His testimonies, in His statutes, in His precepts. This dual manifestation of God's glory in both nature and Scripture can be seen in many psalms. It is especially clear in Psalm 19. The first half of Psalm 19 speaks about the glory of God that is revealed in nature: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork," etc.

Then the second half of the psalm speaks about the glory of God as it is revealed in the written Scriptures: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," etc. Those who understand the fear of the Lord know that the revelation of the written Scriptures is just as necessary as the revelation of God's glory that is evident in nature. The glory of God that we see in the creation can fill us with awe and wonder and inspire us to fear and worship the Creator. The creation can inspire us, but it cannot by itself inform us how the Creator wants us to live. For that information, we need the testimony of the written Scriptures. The glory of God's creation cannot convert us, but "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7).

We need the written Scriptures to understand how to fear and worship the Lord. However, if we just mechanically follow written instructions without experiencing inspiration, it can soon turn into dull drudgery. For inspiration, David tells us to look at the wonders of God's glorious creation. "I meditate on all Thy works," David said. "I muse on the work of Thy hands" (Ps. 143:5). "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:3f).

I'm no tree-hugging environmentalist nature boy, but I can get very inspired to worship the

Creator when I behold the glory of His creation. I was once moved to tears by noticing the colors on a redwinged blackbird that flew past me. Sometimes I think that secular poets are more aware of the wonders of creation than many Christians are. Emily Dickinson, who evidently was no church-goer ("Some keep the Sabbath going to church; I keep it staying at home," she wrote) penned lines like "Inebriate of air am I, and debauchee of dew." William Blake wrote about seeing "a universe in a grain of sand." Edna St. Vincent Millay, who was no saint in her later years, celebrated the glorious wonders of creation in her poems, writing things like the following from "God's World:"

*Thy winds, thy wide gray skies!
Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with color! ...*

*Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world
too beautiful this year ...*

Even though David urges us to consider the wonders of nature to learn the fear of the Lord, I don't remember hearing any sermons telling people to meditate on the creation to learn the fear of the Lord. Most preachers who tell you to fear God will tell you to do it because God will send you to hell if you don't repent. While it is true that the unrepentant will go into everlasting fire (Matt. 25:41), if you have repented and made your peace with God, you can learn to fear Him like David did, by meditating on the glory of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures and as it is revealed in creation.

I could write more about the fear of the Lord, but this article must come to a conclusion sometime, so: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecc. 12:13f). And that alone is a very good reason to fear the Lord.

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100 Bible Facts on the Sabbath Question

WHY keep the Sabbath day? What is the object of the Sabbath? Who made it? When was it made, and for whom? Which day is the true Sabbath? Many keep the first day of the week, or Sunday. What Bible authority have they for this? Some keep the seventh day, or Saturday. What Scripture have they for that? Here are the facts about both days, as plainly stated in the Word of God:

1. After working the first six days of the week in creating this earth, the great God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3).

2. This stamped that day as God's rest day, or Sabbath day, as Sabbath day means rest day. To illustrate: When a person is born on a certain day, that day thus becomes his birthday. So when God rested upon the seventh day, that day became His rest, or Sabbath, day,

3. Therefore the seventh day must always be God's Sabbath day. Can you change your birthday from the day on which you were born to one on which you were not born? No. Neither can you change God's rest day to a day on which He did not rest. Hence the seventh day is still God's Sabbath day.

4. The Creator blessed the seventh day (Genesis 2:3).

5. He sanctified the seventh day (Exodus 20:11).

6. He made it the Sabbath day in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:1-3).

7. It was made before the fall; hence it is not a type; for types were not introduced till after the fall.

8. Jesus says it was made for man (Mark 2:27), that is, for the race, as the word man is here unlimited; hence, for the Gentile as well as for the Jew.

9. It is a memorial of creation (Exodus 20:11; 31:17). Every time we rest upon the seventh day, as God did at creation, we commemorate that grand event.

10. It was given to Adam, the head of the human race (Mark 2:27; Genesis 2:1-3).

11. Hence through him, as our representative, to all nations (Acts 17:26).

12. It is not a Jewish institution, for it was made 2,300 years before ever there was a Jew.

13. The Bible never calls it the Jewish Sabbath, but always "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Men should be cautious how they stigmatize God's holy rest day.

14. Evident reference is made to the Sabbath and the seven-day week all, through the patriarchal age (Genesis 2:1-3; 8:10,12; 29:27, 28, etc.).

15. It was a part of God's law before Sinai. (Exodus 16:4, 27-29.)

16. Then God placed it in the heart of His moral law (Exodus 20:1-17). Why did He place it there if it was not like the other nine precepts, which all admit to be immutable?

17. The seventh-day Sabbath was commanded by the voice of the living God (Deuteronomy 4:12,13).

18. Then He wrote the commandment with His own finger (Exodus 31:18).

19. He engraved it in the enduring stone, indicating its imperishable nature (Deuteronomy 5:22).

20. It was sacredly preserved in the ark in the holy of holies (Deuteronomy 10:1-5).

21. God forbade work upon the Sabbath, even in the most hurrying times (Exodus 34:21).

22. God destroyed the Israelites in the wilderness because they profaned the Sabbath (Ezekiel 20:12, 13).

23. It is the sign of the true God, by which we are to know Him from false gods (Ezekiel 20:20).

24. God promised that Jerusalem should stand forever if the Jews would keep the Sabbath (Jeremiah 17:24, 25.)

25. He sent them into the Babylonian captivity for breaking it (Nehemiah 13:18).

26. He destroyed Jerusalem for its violation (Jeremiah 17:27).

27. God has pronounced a special blessing on all the Gentiles who will keep it (Isaiah 56:6, 7).

28. This is in the prophecy, which refers wholly to the Christian dispensation. (See Isaiah 56.)

29. God has promised to bless all who keep the Sabbath (Isaiah 56:2).

30. The Lord requires us to call it "honourable" (Isaiah 58:13). Beware, ye who take delight in calling it the "old Jewish Sabbath," "a yoke of bondage," etc.

31. After the holy Sabbath has been trodden down "many generations," it is to be restored in the last days (Isaiah 58:12,13).

32. All the holy prophets kept the seventh day.

33. When the Son of God came, He kept the seventh day all His life (Luke 4:16; John 15:10). Thus He followed His Father's example at creation. Shall we not be safe in following the example of both the Father and the Son?

34. The seventh day is the Lord's Day. (See Revelation 1:10; Mark 2:28; Isaiah 58:13; Exodus 20:10.)

35. Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), that is, to love and protect it, as the husband is the lord of the wife, to love and cherish her (1 Peter 3:6).

36. He vindicated the Sabbath as a merciful institution designed for man's good (Mark 2:23-28).

37. Instead of abolishing the Sabbath, He carefully taught how it should be observed (Matthew 13:1-13).

38. He taught His disciples that they should do nothing upon the Sabbath day but what was "lawful" (Matthew 12:12).

39. He instructed His apostles that the Sabbath should be prayerfully regarded forty years after His resurrection (Matthew 24:20).

40. The pious women who had been with Jesus carefully kept the seventh day after His death (Luke 23:56).

41. Thirty years after Christ's resurrection, the Holy Spirit expressly calls it "the Sabbath day," (Acts 13:14).

42. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, called it the "Sabbath day" in A.D. 45 (Acts 13:27). Did not Paul know? Or shall we believe modern teachers, who affirm that it ceased to be the Sabbath at the resurrection of Christ?

43. Luke, the inspired Christian historian, writing as late as A.D. 62, calls it the "Sabbath day" (Acts 13:44).

44. The Gentile converts called it the Sabbath (Acts 13:42).

45. In the great Christian council, A.D. 52 in the presence of the apostles and thousands of disciples, James calls it the "Sabbath day" (Acts 15:21).

46. It was customary to hold prayer meetings upon that day (Acts 16:13).

47. Paul read the Scriptures in public meetings on that day (Acts 17:2, 3).

48. It was his custom to preach upon that day (Acts 17:2,3).

49. The Book of Acts alone gives a record of his holding eighty-four meetings upon that day (See Acts 13:14, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4-11).

50. There was never any dispute between the Christians and the Jews about the Sabbath day. This is proof that the Christians still observed the same day that the Jews did.

51. In all their accusations against Paul, they never charged him with disregarding the Sabbath day. Why did they not, if he did not keep it?

52. But Paul himself expressly declared that he had kept the law. "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all," (Acts 25:8). How could this be true if he had not kept the Sabbath?

53. The Sabbath is mentioned in the New Testament fifty-nine times, and always with respect, bearing the same title it had in the Old Testament, "the Sabbath day."

54. Not a word is said anywhere in the New Testament about the Sabbath's being abolished, done away, changed, or anything of the kind.

55. God has never given permission to any man to work upon it. Reader, by what authority do you use — the seventh day for common labor?

56. No Christian of the New Testament, either before or after the resurrection, ever did ordinary work upon the seventh day. Find one case of that kind, and we will yield the question. Why should modern Christians do differently from Bible-believing Christians?

57. There is no record that God has ever removed His blessing or sanctification from the seventh day.

58. As the Sabbath was kept in Eden before the fall, so it will be observed eternally in the new earth after the restitution (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

59. The seventh-day Sabbath was an important part of the law of God, as it came from His own mouth, and was written by His own finger upon stone at Sinai. (See Exodus 20.) When Jesus began His work, He expressly declared that He had not come to destroy the law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets" (Matthew 5:17).

60. Jesus severely condemned the Pharisees as hypocrites for pretending to love God, while at the same time they made void one of the Ten Commandments by their tradition. The keeping of Sunday is only a tradition of men.

We have now presented 60 plain Bible facts concerning the seventh day. What will you do with them?

Forty Bible Facts Concerning the First Day of the Week

1. The very first thing recorded in the Bible is work done on Sunday, the first day of the week (Genesis 1:1-5). The Creator Himself did this. If God made the earth on Sunday, can it be wicked for us to work on Sunday?

2. God commands men to work upon the first day of the week (Exodus 20:8-11). Is it wrong to obey God?

3. None of the patriarchs ever kept it.

4. None of the holy prophets ever kept it.

5. By the express command of God, His holy people used the first day of the week as a common working day for 4,000 years, at least.

6. God Himself calls it a "working" day (Ezekiel 46:1).

7. God did not rest upon it.

8. He never blessed it.

9. Christ did not rest upon it.

10. Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), and worked at His trade until He was thirty years old. He kept the Sabbath and worked six days in the week, as all admit. Hence He did many a hard day's work on Sunday.

11. The apostles worked upon it during the same time.

12. The apostles never rested upon it.

13. Christ never blessed it.

14. It has never been blessed by any divine authority.

15. It has never been sanctified.

16. No law was ever given to enforce the keeping of it, hence it is no transgression to work upon it. "Where no law is, there is no transgression," Romans 4:15. (See also 1 John 3:4.)

17. The New Testament nowhere forbids work to be done on it.

18. No penalty is provided for its violation.

19. No blessing is promised for its observance.

20. No regulation is given as to how it ought to be observed. Would this be so if the Lord wished us to keep it?

21. It is never called the Christian Sabbath.

22. It is never called the Sabbath day at all.

23. It is never called the Lord's day.

24. It is never called even a rest day.

25. No sacred title whatever is applied to it. Then why should we call it holy?

26. It is simply called "first day of the week."

27. Jesus never mentioned it in any way, never took its name upon His lips, so far as the record shows.

28. The word Sunday never occurs in the Bible at all.

29. Neither God, Christ, nor inspired men ever said one word in favor of Sunday as a holy day.

30. The first day of the week is mentioned only eight times in all the New Testament (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

31. Six of these texts refer to the same first day of the week.

32. Paul directed the saints to look over their secular affairs on that day (1 Corinthians 16:2).

33. In all the New Testament we have a record of only one religious meeting held upon that day, and even this was a night meeting (Acts 20:5-12).

34. There is no intimation that they ever held a meeting upon it, before or after that.

35. It was not their custom to meet on that day.

36. There was no requirement to break bread on that day.

37. We have an account of only one instance in which it was done (Acts 20:7).

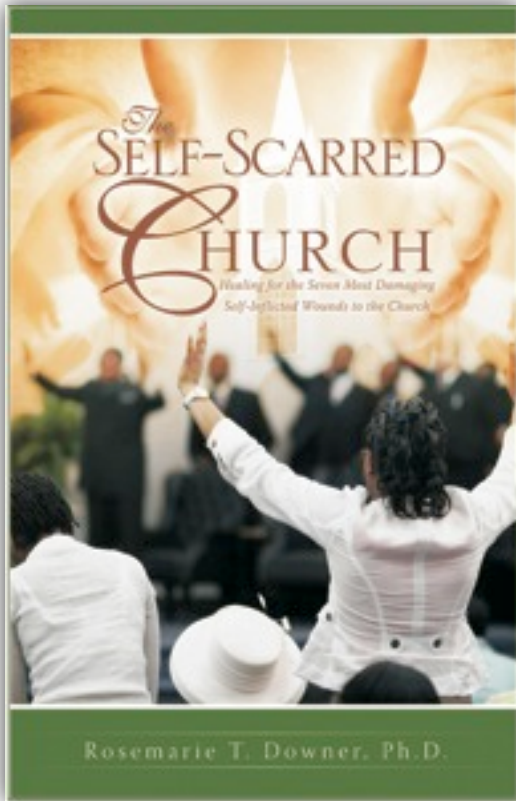
38. That was done in the night-after midnight (verses 7-11). Jesus celebrated it on Thursday evening (Luke 22), and the disciples sometimes did it every day (Acts 2:42-46).

39. The Bible nowhere says that the first day of the week commemorates the resurrection of Christ. This is a tradition of men, which contradicts the law of God (Matthew 15:1-9). Baptism commemorates the burial and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-5).

40. Finally, the New Testament is totally silent with regard to any change of the Sabbath day or any sacredness for the first day.

Here are 100 plain Bible facts upon this question, showing conclusively that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord in both the Old and New Testaments.

If you would like to have this article in pamphlet form, order pamphlet number T214. The cost is 15¢ for single copies or \$13.00 for 100 copies. Also available in Spanish (number T214S) for the same price. Just write to our address listed on the back cover of this magazine.



This book calls attention to the problems facing the church; it offers practical and biblically-based solutions. It's been said that the church is always only one generation away from extinction. That is to say that all it takes to put the church out of business is for one generation of its members to drop the proverbial ball. On the other hand, the church's future is most secure when its members awakened to the issues confronting it, and rise to the occasion with clear vision and bold conviction. If you've been burdened for the church — you've felt there has to be more, but haven't known what to do about it, practical help is now at your fingertips.

Pastor Whaid G. Rose,
Denver, Colorado

Dr. Downer has identified how the enemy blinds and hinders us from walking in the fullness of His resurrected power. With God-given boldness and courage she has taken the cover off and released the knowledge that can cause the Church to arise and shine in a greater measure in these last days.

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Religious Freedom Festival in Peru Receives National Endorsement

Supreme Court president, minister of defense
address 40,000 at National Stadium

15 Jun 2009, Lima, Peru
by Ansel Oliver/ANN

Several of Peru's national leaders praised the country's commitment to religious freedom during a world religious liberty festival that drew some 40,000 supporters, organizers estimated.

The festival was the latest and largest in a series of similar festivals held to thank countries that support religious freedom. Event co-sponsors include the Adventist Church and the International Religious Liberty Association, the world's largest forum on religious freedom.

During his keynote address in Lima Saturday evening, John Graz, director of the Adventist Church's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department, said many experts estimate 300 million people around the world are persecuted for their faith. He charged the crowd to defend people who believe differently from them.

For Erton Kohler, president for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America, and a team of church leaders who were involved with the organization of the event, the Lima festival was the latest in a series of initiatives promoting religious liberty across the continent.

(Source: Adventist News Network)

Should Christians conduct business on the Sabbath?

Is it possible that many have lost sight of the real purpose pictured by the Sabbath? Has this holy day simply become a time for our personal comfort and convenience? Is it a day to enjoy our own pleasures disguised as spiritual activities? Have we somehow transformed God's day into our day? Just how serious are we when it comes to this profound commandment? It is time to take a serious look at this question and be sure.

A Sabbath Test presents seven biblical reasons why we must not do business on the Sabbath, and also offers the answers to seven arguments advanced by those who do. This is a book that every member of God's Church should read. Offered free of charge and available in both English and Spanish.



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The Church in the World

ICC Orphanage In Burma Attacked by Burmese Government Forces

By Dan Wooding
Founder of ASSIST Ministries

WASHINGTON, DC (ANS) — International Christian Concern (ICC) says that it has just learned that Burmese government forces attacked two internally displaced people's camps along the Thai border last night in a heightened effort to defeat the Karen. According to our initial reports, there were at least 400 people who were being sheltered between the two camps, including 200 children. Deaths have been reported, but full details are still being confirmed.

"Soldiers attacked the first camp during the middle of the night, crossed the river into Thailand, then returned and attacked the second camp from the Thai side of the border," said an ICC spokesperson. "We have received reports that all of the Karen soldiers who were guarding the children were killed. The children were trapped and could not flee into Burma because of land mines that were placed around their camp, so they were forced to attempt to swim the river into Thailand in the middle of the night. Many of the children were very small and could not swim, but initial reports indicate that most have survived."

ICC had recently finished construction of an orphanage (dorms, a school, and church building) in one of the camps that was attacked. In addition to the orphans, ICC had recently taken in another 60 persecuted and war-traumatized Karen children at the orphanage.

"We are anxiously awaiting further news from our representatives on the ground who are in transit to the affected areas to assess the situation. The victims' immediate needs are rice, clothing, blankets, and sheets of plastic to help shelter them from the rain," added the ICC spokesperson.

"Because Thailand will sometimes send refugees back into the war zones they have fled, we would like to ask you to contact the Thai embassy in your own country, alert them to this situation, and politely request that they allow these refugees to be resettled in Thailand."

ICC President Jeff King said, "This latest attack is part of the Burmese government's attempt at a final push at victory over the Karen people. The mode and brutality of these attacks is tragic yet unfortunately all too familiar. Rape and the killing of civilians and

children seem to be their favorite methods of subduing the populace."

"Please also pray for the protection of those affected. Because we know that the Burmese soldiers were already willing to go into Thailand and attack one of the camps from the Thai border, we are not confident that the children are safe where they currently are," concluded the spokesperson.

They are in urgent need of dry clothing and shelter as this is the rainy season in Burma and Thailand. If you would like to help with funds for these needs and others that may arise as we try to find the best solution for these children, you can go to: <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/donation.php> (please put in a note that it is for Burma).



Christian Karen Women

Note: ICC is a Washington-DC based human rights organization that exists to help persecuted Christians worldwide. ICC provides Awareness, Advocacy, and Assistance to the worldwide persecuted Church. For additional information or for an interview, contact ICC at 800-422-5441. Their web site is: www.persecution.org.

Dan Wooding, 68, is an award winning British journalist now living in Southern California with his wife Norma of 45 years. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times) and the ASSIST News Service (ANS); and US Bureau Chief for the Missionaries News Service (www.missionariesnews.tv) and Safe Worlds IPTV's Faith, Hope and Charity channel. He was, for ten years, a commentator, on the UPI Radio Network in Washington, DC., and now hosts the weekly "Front Page Radio" show on KWVE in Southern California and which is also carried on the Calvary Radio Network throughout the United States.

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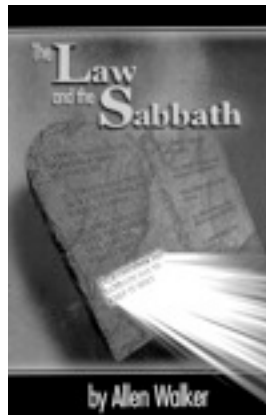
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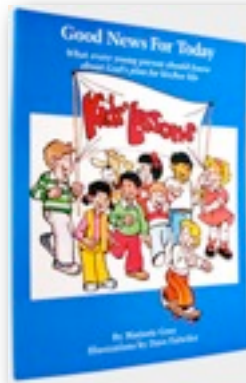
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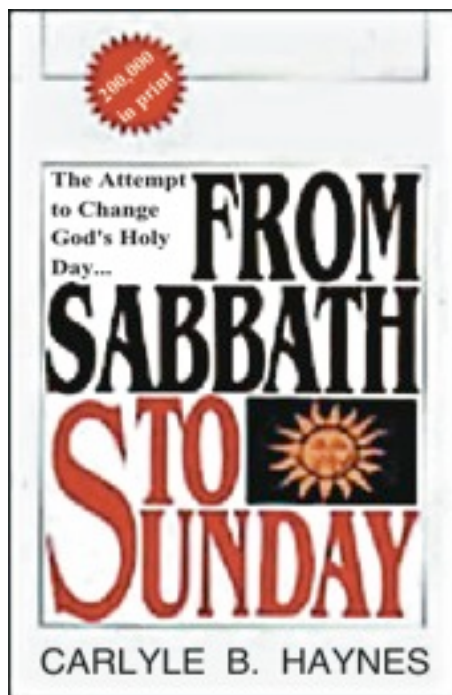
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