

THE Sabbath Sentinel

May–June 2004



**What Should
We Eat?**

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

"...the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."

The Sabbath Sentinel

May–June 2004 Volume 56, No. 2 Issue 507

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Cover Photo: Source: *Webshots.com*.
Farmers’ Market in Seattle, Washington USA

Cover Bible Quote: *Proverbs 23:2, “And put a
knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.”*

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My Thoughts on "The Passion of the Christ"



This movie received more press coverage before its release than any movie I can ever remember, and most of it was hostile. Reviewers and commentators were coming out of the woodwork to take shots at Mel Gibson and his "The Passion of the Christ" long before it was ever viewed by anyone. Everybody had an opinion about a movie that none had seen. Charges of anti-Semitism and profiteering on blood were hurled at Gibson.

Well, now that the movie has been in theaters for a while, it is still getting press. Although some of those who initially panned the movie changed their opinions after viewing it, hostility and cynicism toward the film and Mel Gibson continue to be the opinion of others. As some see it, Mel Gibson's "Passion" ranks right up there with the resurrection of Adolph Hitler.

After seeing the movie, it is now my turn to offer an opinion. Mind you, it was not a movie that I relished seeing. I already knew of the graphic depictions of the brutality suffered by Jesus during his final hours, and that, in itself, was repelling. Nevertheless, buy a ticket I did, and here is my opinion of the movie and of Gibson's effort to depict the passion of the Christ.

I would like to begin by dispelling a couple of very hostile criticisms of Mr. Gibson and his movie. From the start there were cries of anti-Semitism against this cinematic portrayal of the last hours of Christ. I found nothing in the movie to support this epithet, nor have I seen it in any of the numerous interviews that Mr. Gibson has given. These outcries started during the filming of the movie, long before anyone had viewed it. I can only say that it sounds to me like the wailings of people who wanted to prevent any movie that might draw attention to Christ. Those objecting the loudest seem to have based their view on the fact that Mr. Gibson made it known from the beginning that he intended to stick to the Gospels as closely as possible. If the Gospels are anti-Semitic, then the movie is anti-Semitic. But, this is impossible since the hero, Jesus, and his followers were Jewish. The movie was not about race; it was about the price Jesus paid for the sins of both Jews and gentiles.

Other detractors say that Mel Gibson "did it for the money." They contend that being aware of the

public's appetite for blood, he knew he would reap a huge financial windfall if he made the movie as bloody as possible. Of course, if this logic were true, then "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" or Van Damme's "The Quest" would be two of the biggest box office hits in the history of cinema. In actual fact, Gibson did not know whether his film would ever play in theaters. The usual Hollywood financial backers would not touch the film with a ten-foot pole. Gibson finally shelled out \$30 million from his own pocket just to make the movie. Then his contracted film distributor backed out of the project. So, he was left with a huge out-of-pocket expense and no one to distribute the film. Eventually he was able to find a distributor, but still had to spend another \$15 million of his own money marketing the film.

Mel Gibson has never been secretive about why he made "The Passion." Having tasted all the fame and fortune that the world can give, he was still empty inside. It was at the depth of his despair that he turned back to his religious roots and began to find some meaning for his life. He felt grateful for the sacrifice that Jesus made to save him and wanted the world to know that he had changed and what had changed him. It is no more complicated than that. There have been many rich and famous people who have been brought to their knees by the emptiness of their lives, and Mel Gibson is just another example. Spending much of his life in making films, he wanted to use this God-given gift to say something to the world about his own gratefulness for the sacrifice of Christ.

Before I tell you how the film affected me personally, let me cover one more objection to the movie. Some have said that the film itself is a violation of the second commandment. Its depiction of Christ, who is in heaven, does violence the spirit of the commandment not to make graven images.

As the argument goes, the film creates an object of worship in our minds and hearts and that we will tend to think of the actor, Jim Caviezel, when we think of our heavenly Savior. If you object to the movie on this basis, then I would say, don't see it. This argument

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Should Christians Eat like Jews?

By Sidney L. Davis, Jr., ND

In Mark 7:14-20 we read:

"And when he had called all the people [unto him], he said unto them, Harken unto me every one [of you], and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, [it] cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man." KJV

"...since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on? (Thus he declared all foods clean.)" RSV

"Food doesn't come in contact with your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then comes out again.' (By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable.)" NLT

"...because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?' ([Thus He] declared all foods clean.)" NASB

"And He said to them, 'Then are you also unintelligent and dull and without understanding? Do you not discern and see that whatever goes into a man from the outside cannot make him unhallowed or unclean, since it does not reach and enter his heart but [only his] digestive tract, and so passes on [into the place designed to receive waste]?' Thus He was making and declaring all foods [ceremonially] clean [that is, abolishing the ceremonial distinctions of the Levitical Law]." Mark 7:18-20 Amplified Bible

This story from the life of Jesus is often cited as a passage in which He declared the dietary (kosher) laws

invalid. What is ignored in the understanding of this passage is the context. In what context does Jesus declare "all foods clean"? We must first have an understanding from the Judaic mind of what food is. A familiar and simple parable of Jesus illustrates just what "food" is.

In Matthew 13:47-48 Jesus related this parable: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

Christians focus on the spiritual significance of this parable while ignoring the practicality upon which the spiritual teaching is based. What made the good fish "good," and what made the bad fish "bad?" The fish that were "good" were gathered into vessels, but they "cast the bad away." Note that they did not cast the bad fish back into the sea. They did not want to catch them in their nets again. They cast them "away" as garbage. Obviously the good fish were edible and the bad were not edible. Edible means fit

to eat or "food." Inedible was not considered food at all, not even "bad" food. Bad fish in the Jewish mind, in the mind of Jesus was not fit to eat at all, i.e. not food.

Now the question is, what makes a good fish "good" or "food" and what makes a bad fish not in the food category at all or a non-food?

We find in Leviticus 11 how God defines "good" fish, making it "food" that is good to eat, and we also read of how He defines "bad" fish, that is, "non-food," which is bad to eat. The difference between "good" and "bad" (or the difference between "food" and "non-food") is what is known as the kosher food laws. So when Jesus "declared all foods clean," he was not referring to "non-foods," but rather to "food" eaten with unwashed hands.



Should we as Christians eat whatever we want?

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My Sweet Struggle

by Esther M. Herriott

My name is Esther, and I am a sugarholic.

Some people are addicted to food, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, drugs, or sex, but I am addicted to sugar. As far back as I can remember, I loved candy, cookies, doughnuts, ice cream, and just about anything that was sweet-except mincemeat and rhubarb pies.

I distinctly remember my eighth birthday when Mother asked me what I would like for my birthday present. "A banana split," I replied. Banana splits cost 25 cents in those days, and my father's meager income as a minister did not allow for such luxuries very often. We went to the ice cream parlor, and I savored every delicious spoonful of the huge banana split, thankful I didn't have to share any of it with my four brothers.



As you might suspect, I was a chubby child-not obese, but chubby. As I became a teenager, "chubby" was not what I desired to be. I envied my slender friends and hated being referred to as "plump," but I couldn't give up my sugar.

Finally at age 18, I determined to lose weight and within a few months lost 25 pounds. Ah! Success at last.

When I looked in the mirror, I liked what I saw. I wasn't "plump" anymore.

Through the years the pounds crept up again. I tried all kinds of diets, diet pills, and even fasting. None of them worked for long, and many days I didn't feel well. I was tired and often depressed.

Finally at age 47 I was diagnosed as hypoglycemic. I was so desperate to feel well again by this time that I was willing to go on the sugar-free diet the doctor prescribed. But once I started feeling better, I would cheat and eat sweets again. I thought I could control my hypoglycemia by eating sweets occasionally until I started feeling bad and then abstain until I felt well again. I was a human yo-yo, up one week and down the next. I bought every artificially sweetened cookie, cake, muffin, or candy available. So, although I was

not eating much sugar, I was consuming a lot of calories, and my weight began to soar.

The Vacation Trap

A few years later, my husband and I took a cross-country vacation, visiting many friends and relatives. Since we were guests in people's homes, I justified eating desserts by rationalizing that I did not want to offend our hosts. However, I have since found out that sugar is addictive, and the more I ate, the more I wanted. When we ate in restaurants during the trip, I also ate desserts, plus a sweet roll whenever we stopped for coffee, and an occasional candy bar in between meals.

Toward the end of the trip, I started suffering from severe fatigue and depression. On the last night of our vacation, I had a dream. In my dream, I could hear God telling me that my body was the temple of the Holy Spirit, and I was abusing it. He also said, "If you want me to use you in ministry, you must take care of your body." I knew exactly what He meant. No more sugar. I wish I could say that from that moment on I never ate sugar again, but I can't.

When we returned home from our trip and I saw some of the pictures of me taken on the trip, I immediately joined Weight Watchers. By then I was definitely "plump" again. I avoided sugar for a while, but pretty soon I started eating it again. My favorites were Milky Way candy bars, miniature pecan pies, and honey buns. When I'd buy a Milky Way or a pecan pie at the checkout stand of a grocery store, I'd hurry out to the car to gobble it down where no one could see me, not thinking about the all-seeing eye of God that misses nothing.

One day while grocery shopping, I bought a box of frozen honey buns. I reasoned with myself that I'd put them in the freezer and once in a while for a special treat I'd thaw one and eat it. All the way to the car I thought about those honey buns, and by the time I put the groceries in the trunk, I was like an alcoholic looking for a bottle of booze. I dug into the bag, found the honey buns, and put them on the seat beside me. By the time I arrived home, I had eaten all four frozen honey buns.

Too much sugar makes a hypoglycemic weak and depressed, so I knew I'd be in for at least a couple of

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The Deception of “Heartburn”

What Your Doctor or Pharmacy Won’t Tell You

by David L. Antion, Ph.D.

Have you noticed the number of antacids, acid blockers, and aids for indigestion on your local over the counter medicine shelf? They range from Tums to Roloids, from Pepcid-AC to Tagamet, from Mylanta to Pepto-Bismol.

Americans are having a devil of a time with indigestion it appears. And why? Mostly because people eat “dead” foods. What do I mean by “dead foods”? Let’s take the example of an apple. Place it on your kitchen counter and in a few days it will begin to digest itself or spoil or rot. Why? Because it has living enzymes in it that cause it to ripen or digest itself.

By contrast, place some bleached white flour on the kitchen shelf. It can remain unchanged almost indefinitely because all the enzymes have been removed. Therefore, when it is consumed, your body has to supply additional enzymes to digest it. And, because it has no bran, it becomes very difficult to eliminate from the body causing some constipation.

What Is Heartburn?

Heartburn is defined as the “burning feeling in the esophagus” when the hydrochloric acid (HCL) of the stomach is splashed into the esophagus. What causes “heartburn”? First let’s ask what the stomach does and what the role of hydrochloric acid is.

The stomach’s main job is to receive chewed food and to coat it all with HCL. But, as we get older we produce less and less HCL. It is estimated that by age 50 the average person produces only half the HCL they did at age 15! Thus the stomach has a more difficult job in coating all its contents. In order to do this, the stomach flips and churns the food in order to coat it all with HCL. In this process some of it bumps against the valve that leads to the esophagus and spills onto the esophagus. Only a little acid can cause severe burning.

When that happens, an antacid such as Tums or Roloids or just plain baking soda will relieve the discomfort. But then, people get to thinking that their entire problem is caused by too much acid. They then reach for even stronger medicine.

Enter The Pharmaceuticals

The drug companies have figured it out! They realize that there is an enormous market to be tapped.

They have come out with two different drugs that prevent the stomach from manufacturing acid. One type is the histamine H2 receptor antagonist — Axid, Pepcid, Zantac, etc. These cause the stomach to secrete less acid. But there are side effects such as dizziness, headache, diarrhea, diminished sex drive, and hair loss. Some rare side effects include confusion, rash, sore throat, fever, irregular heartbeat, unusual bleeding or bruising, fatigue, weakness and constipation.

The other type is the proton pump inhibitors — Nexium, Prevacid, Prilosec, Protonix, etc. These have common side effects such as diarrhea and stomach pain. Infrequent side effects include nausea, loss of appetite, headache, heartburn (the very thing it is supposed to prevent!), muscle pain, skin rash, and drowsiness. The rare side effects are: weakness, unusual tiredness, sore throat, fever, sores in the mouth, bruising, bloody urine, difficult and frequent or painful urination.

Then, of course, there are the straight antacids like Tums, Roloids, etc. which neutralize some of the hydrochloric acid in the stomach rendering it ineffective. It also neutralizes any HCL that splashes into the esophagus.

Why do we need HCL? What does it do?

Without HCL, people will lose a taste for meat, will tend to have excess intestinal gas shortly after consuming proteins, bloating, bad breath, body odor, anemia, and have low mineral amounts in their blood. HCL helps in the absorption of calcium and iron plus many other minerals.

HCL also is the first line of defense when things enter the mouth. By having sufficient stomach acid we are defended against germs entering the system through the mouth and even stops the development of parasites. People with insufficient hydrochloric acid (HCL) are often protein deficient which can lead to a lowering of the immune system.

The Wrong Direction

Notice what is happening. People are beginning to think that any form of indigestion can be cured with an antacid, a histamine H2 antagonist or a proton pump inhibitor. Many who, shortly after eating, experience a

bloating sensation reach immediately for an antacid like Tums. But, if you are over 50 you already have lower amounts of HCL being produced. Taking an antacid or a drug that stops the production of HCL will only create more problems. Now the stomach is churning the food in order to coat it but there isn't enough acid so more flipping of the food takes place and sooner or later some of the little bit of acid splashes into the lower part of the esophagus causing some burning. We are then convinced that our problems are coming from too much acid. It's just the opposite! There is too little acid!

Many older adults are creating health nightmares for themselves. They often do not feel well. They get insufficient protein, they absorb insufficient calcium and iron leading often to increased anemia and increased risks for osteoporosis.

Why Does Acid Bother Some?

It is true that when people are under severe stress they may secrete more acid and eventually cause themselves some problems. But few doctors or laymen are aware of the assault on the stomach from alcohol, caffeine, as well as aspirin, ibuprofen and other nonsteroidal pain relievers. In fact, most medicines and drugs are very hard on the stomach lining.

After the stomach lining is assaulted by these drugs, normal production of HCL will often burn the unprotected part of the stomach and may cause an ulcer. For those who have experienced this pain, they blame HCL. But the truth is that hydrochloric acid is needed and essential for digestive function.

What I Do

I take HCL with at least one meal per day and generally two. Whenever I have a meal containing

meat, I will usually take two hydrochloric acid tablets. Rather than causing indigestion the HCL actually helps me digest my food better and get better absorption of protein, calcium, iron and other trace minerals. In addition it keeps the intestinal tract healthy by maintaining a healthy acid balance. The chlorides are important for easy and proper elimination.

Realizing that after 50 I produce only half as much acid as I did when 15 (and I don't recall having digestion problems in my teens, do you?) it makes sense that I would need more not less acid!

Because I take the HCL with or following my meals, I experience almost no indigestion. I feel good as a result.

People are not told the whole truth about digestion, how food is digested and what the stomach does. They are being allowed to assume that all their problems come from too much acid when the truth in most cases is that they don't have enough acid.

At Guardian Ministries we try to guard the truth in every facet of life that promotes spiritual growth and understanding, a closer relationship with God and Jesus Christ, better health, better family and social relationships.

It is with this hope and intent in mind that we present this article. May God help you to see, understand and act on the truth.

David L. Antion, Ph.D. is a certified Nutrition Consultant. He has studied clinical nutrition for over 40 years. Dr. Antion is also the founder and director of Guardian Ministries, www.guardian-ministries.org.

Church in Michigan in Desperate Need of Help and a Pastor

Dear Sabbath Sentinel,

Is there anyone who feels led to help a dying church revive? We have not had a minister since 1995.

The Detroit Church of God (7th Day) was organized in 1923. My mother Pearl (Merriam) Walkby started having meetings in our home, then rented many store buildings until we got our first church in 1937. We had many different ministers come to Detroit for revival services. A.N. Dugger, C.E. Groshans, O.R. Osman, R.A. Barnes, W.W. McMicken, Hostetler, K.H. Freeman, Lidell, Heywood, and more.

We bought our first church in 1937,

and just a while back our fourth church was sold. We have over \$—— after giving \$100,000 to Spring Vale Academy in Owosso, Michigan, and \$10,000 to The Lights program in Stanberry, Missouri, plus paying over \$3,000 for the last year's Michigan youth camp.

Some are just ready to give up an 81 year church heritage while some of us would still like to have a church in the Detroit area. Most of us are in the near suburbs of Detroit, but we still have Spanish-speaking people in Detroit.

Our last church was in Ferndale, Michigan. We are about 90 miles from

Spring Vale Academy.

Is there any help for us, or is this wounded group going to die?

The Michigan district and the General Conference have not or do not seem to care about us.

We are going to have a meeting in the near future as to what to do with the funds. Put us on your prayer list, and hopefully someone will put legs on our prayers. I hope and pray that we will still be working until Jesus comes.

Sincerely,

Ruby (Book) Barrow

(Phone: 586-447-0912. Address: 25214 Gratiot Ave. #52, Roseville, MI 48066)

A Sea of Iniquity

by Daniel Botkin



Picture a dry ocean bed, a deep but empty inland sea. From the deepest point in the center of this empty sea, a thick wooden post rises up almost to the top - just about to sea level if the sea were full of water. At the top of the post is a flat board about the size of a door, attached horizontally to the post like a tabletop on a pedestal. A man is lying on his back, tied to the tabletop.

All around the edge of this dry sea, multitudes of people come from all directions with containers of water in their hands. Some bring big heavy barrels and buckets; some carry bowls or cups; some just bring spoons or eyedroppers with small amounts of water. As each individual reaches the edge, he pours his water into the empty sea. Millions and millions of people come and contribute their measure of water.

Slowly the water level begins to rise. Eventually the water reaches the man tied to the board at the top of the post. More people empty their containers into the sea, and the water begins to cover the man. Soon only his nostrils stick out of the water. He strains his neck and struggles to breathe. Finally, the last container is emptied into the sea. The water covers the man's nostrils and he drowns.

Who killed this man? The last person, the one whose water covered his nostrils? Or the first person, who set the example for all the others to follow? The fact is that all of those who participated in dumping water into this sea bear some of the blame.

Most gospel tracts teach that the first step toward salvation is admitting you are a sinner. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). We certainly need to admit that we are guilty of committing sins, but we also need to see what our sins did. Our sins put the sinless Son of God to death on the Cross. Just as everyone in our story who dumped water into the sea shares part of the blame for the victim's death, so everyone who has ever committed a sin shares part of the blame for the Messiah's death.

"But I've never committed any big, serious sins, only a few minor ones." That's commendable. Nevertheless, you need to see that you are still partly responsible for killing Him, just like the people who only had teaspoons or eyedroppers in our story. Imagine yourself in this story. Even if you had only contributed a few drops of water, how would you feel when you

learned that the man tied to the table was Jesus of Nazareth?

The reality of Jesus' death is far worse than the death of the man in our story, though. The man in our story only experienced a physical drowning in water. Yeshua's death was a spiritual drowning in a sea of iniquity. He bore the punishment for every sin ever committed throughout human history. At His Crucifixion He was drowned in a sea of iniquity so that we can be forgiven.

I doubt that any of us can fully comprehend the depth of His suffering. In this life, we "see through a glass darkly" and "see in part," Paul said. In the age to come, we shall know even as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12). I am sometimes haunted by this. I picture myself meeting the Lord in the age to come. I look around. Paradise is wonderful, but with it comes the full knowledge of the agony that the Lord endured. I know even as I am known. I hear myself say something like this: "Lord, it's wonderful to be here, more wonderful than I ever imagined. But now that I really see what it cost you to get me here, how can I bear it? How can I enjoy Paradise, now that I see the full extent of the suffering You had to go through to bring me here?" Perhaps this is when the Lord will wipe away all tears from our eyes. What other reason would there be for us to weep in heaven, except over the full revelation of what He had to go through to get us there?

Isaiah 53 makes it clear that it was our sins that killed Him. We can get so caught up in showing Isaiah 53 to Jews, to prove that Yeshua is the Messiah, yet fail to see ourselves and our sins mentioned in this chapter. Our sins—not just the sins of the Jews who yelled, "Crucify him!"; not just the sins of Pontius Pilate who condemned Him; not just the sins of the Roman soldiers who nailed Him to the tree. Our sins—yours and mine. By our sins, we all participated in the murder of the Son of God.

When you understand that your sins, whether many or few, whether serious or minor, contributed to His suffering and death, it makes it a whole lot easier to do the will of God. When you realize that you were one of the people who poured water into the sea of iniquity, when you realize what you have done and to

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Book Review

Under the Influence, How Christianity Transformed Civilization, by Alvin J. Schmidt, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 2001, 423 pages.

Until I read *Under the Influence*, I did not clearly understand several important scriptures. Psalm 103:2 says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and *forget not all His benefits.*" What are some of those benefits? Do we have to wait until Christ returns to enjoy those benefits? Because of Abraham's faithful obedience, the Eternal blessed and multiplied the seed of Abraham, "And in thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be *blessed*; because thou hast obeyed My voice," Genesis 22:18. The seed of Abraham came to its ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah. How are the nations of the earth blessed because of the Messiah? Again, must the nations wait until the Millennium to be blessed? I have had such questions for some time.

This book answers these questions. God's promises through Christ are greatly blessing all nations

on the face of the earth, NOW! Almost every page of this book is an inspiration to the loving kindness of God. Secular humanists today have duped many people into believing that Christianity has produced no benefits to our society. These atheists are attempting to remove all references to God from our government, educational institutions, media, and public square. The truth is that in almost every facet of today's life, the religion of Jesus Christ, albeit even in a watered down, corrupted form, has nevertheless delivered astounding benefits to society as a whole.

The Roman and Greek cultures had a low view of human life, epitomized by gladiators in the Coliseum of Rome. Infanticide, killing of newborn infants, was a universal practice in the days of Jesus. Infants were routinely abandoned, tossed away, to die. Abortion

"For Seven Days Present Offerings Made to the LORD by Fire"

When was the last Feast of Tabernacles that you saw "any fire"? Fire in the messages, Fire in the worship? Do you want more out of the Feast than a mere vacation. It is good to have fun at the Feast, and we will. But, the main focus of the Feast of Tabernacles should be the Joy of the Lord and our Joy in the Lord. There is far more Joy at the Feast when there is an offering made by FIRE to the Lord. *Hungry Hearts Ministries* is offering a Feast of Tabernacles where there will be Fire in the Worship and Fire in the Sermons. Come to the Feast of Tabernacles and present your offering of FIRE to God our Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ! Experience the Joy of the Lord's Presence during worship. Experience the Joy of hearing the Greatest Message of Hope on Planet Earth presented by serious, on Fire, Ministers of God. Messages Like:

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was advocated by Roman philosophers. Gladiatorial shows sacrificed multitudes of human beings and animals, for the lust of the fans. Suicide was condoned, often advocated, sometimes extolled by poets and leaders, committed by the elite and the general populace. The pagan custom of cremation was the norm. From the first century onward, Christians have utterly opposed such practices, and when they eventually gained ascendancy, initiated laws against such practices.

In sexual matters, Romans and Greeks were very "modern," advocating fornication, adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, pedophilia, lesbianism, group sex, and even bestiality. There was no moral stigma regarding such perverse practices. Christians elevated sex to a loving, lifelong relationship between a man and a woman, and declared sexual promiscuity sinful. Society, until recently, has greatly benefited by restrictions against unlawful sex.

Messiah's teaching elevated the status of women to a level unknown in most ancient societies. If women's liberation advocates today had an inkling of what it was like to be a woman in ancient cultures, they would bless the Eternal their God for the truly liberating influence of the Gospel! Christian colonizers virtually eliminated the practice of *clitoridectomy* (falsely called female circumcision) in Africa and the Middle East, *foot binding* in China, and *suttee* (burning of the widow at her husband's funeral) in India. If this was the only area where Christianity has benefited the world, the benefits of God's ways would still be incalculable. Did you know that in ancient Greece, the practice of *hetaera* allowed any man to have a legal mistress, in addition to his wife? The *burka* still remains in fundamentalist Islam cultures today, waiting for the liberation of the Gospel.

I have merely scratched the surface of the abundance of benefits bestowed on the world as the direct result of the teachings of Jesus, as outlined in *Under the Influence*. This is the most inspiring book that I have read in a long time.

Roman giving was called *liberalitas*, which meant giving to please the recipient so that he would later bestow a favor on the giver. In stark contrast, the practice of Christian giving is called *caritas*, giving to relieve the recipient's economic or physical distress without expecting anything in return. That is the "giving and sharing way." Romans did not have compassion on the poor, the handicapped, or the elderly. Neither did modern twentieth-century Romans, the Nazis. Child labor laws, orphanages, soup

kitchens, and the like, are examples of Christian charity (love) in action.

Christianity's imprint on education is astounding. As you may know, most of the universities in America were founded by churches to train ministers. Christians want everyone educated, so they will be able to study the Bible and come to the knowledge of salvation.

A Benedictine proverb says, "To work is to pray." In Roman, Greek, Islam, Hindu, etc., society, work was done by lowly slaves and servants, and the wealthy were indolent. Labor had no dignity in pagan society. Based on the Bible, the Christian work ethic has powered our society to its current state of unprecedented wealth for more people than ever before.

Today's evolutionists would have you believe the lie that scientific advancement has come from those who disbelieve in the existence of God. Quite the contrary, most discoveries and advances in science have come through men and women who believed in God. In fact, their religious belief caused them to seek to advance and improve society through technological inventions, in fulfilling the command of God to Adam, to "dress and keep" the garden of God. Science truly has a multitude of Christian connections.

Our legal system, until its present defilement, has stood as a bastion against injustice and oppression. No, it has never been perfect, but human laws based on Bible Law, have greatly benefited mankind. Through professing Christians like the British man Wilberforce, slavery was abolished in western society, although slavery still exists in Islamic countries.

Even art, architecture, literature, music, and our language itself, have been greatly influenced by Christian teaching. If this book does not inspire you, you are hopeless!

Before all these godly benefits are lost, we would do well to appreciate and relish the many good things God has done for us. Whether you live in Africa, Asia, Europe, or the Americas, you have been the recipient of many of God's blessings to Abraham. It is astounding to realize that the quality of our lives has been greatly enhanced by the blessings of the Almighty. Forces are at work to take away God's blessings and benefits. In the World Tomorrow, God's benefits and blessings will not be impinged and watered down: they will fill the earth like the waters cover the seas!

Let us bless the Lord, and forget not all His benefits!

— by Richard C. Nickels

The Chinese Christian Crusades

Dr. Jack Wheeler

Let's play fill-in-the-blanks. In general, Americans and Europeans are Christians. Arabs are Moslems. Indians are Hindus. Chinese are _____?

If you have trouble filling in the last blank, it's because the answer is blank. From time immemorial, the Chinese have been the least religious of any of history's major civilizations. Daoism, Confucianism, Chinese Buddhism are rationalistic quasi-religions lacking any personal relationship with a transcendent deity or deities. The ancestor- and spirit-worship of Chinese folk religion is individualized to families only.

This is one reason why China has periodically endured spasms of murderous cultural insanity. In the middle of the 19th Century, a fellow from Guangdong Province named Hong Xiuquan read a Christian missionary tract and decided he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ, called upon by Jehovah to establish a Taiping Kingdom (taiping means "heavenly peace") by cleansing China of Ching Dynasty corruption through divine slaughter.

From 1850 to 1864, Hong's "Society of God Worshipers" killed over 20 million people before the Taiping Rebellion was finally suppressed.

Often, these spasms become homicidally xenophobic. The Yihequan, or "Society of Righteous Fists" — known in the West as the Boxers — initiated a terrorist movement in 1899 dedicated to beating up or killing "foreign devils" and their perceived sympathizers. The Boxers laid siege to the diplomatic quarter of Peking (as it was called then), requiring a force of 20,000 British, American, and Japanese soldiers to rescue their citizens and take the entire city in August of 1900.

The most lethally insane spasm in all Chinese history, of course, was that launched by Mao Tse-Tung, who is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the greatest mass murderer in the annals of mankind. Mao's secular religion of Chinese Communism caused the deaths of over 60 million human beings.

The causal connection here is that the lack of spiritual fulfillment builds up a frustration in the Chinese soul until it bursts out in a psychic explosion of deadly irrational fervor.

Could there be, then, a source of spiritual fulfillment that would satisfy the souls of hundreds of millions of Chinese, dissolving the frustration and enabling them to create a China that is truly free, truly democratic, truly peaceful, and in harmony with America and the world?

It's too soon to say yes, but not too early to say possibly. That possibility is called Christianity.

To grasp just how possible, I suggest you read David Aikman's new book, *Jesus in Beijing* (Regnery, 2003). As a journalist who speaks Chinese and has covered China for over 30 years, Aikman estimates there are currently over 80 million practicing Christian believers in China, and predicts that within three decades this number will quintuple to embrace fully one-third of China's population. This in spite of incredible persecution by the Chinese Communist Government.

In other words, the underground "Christian house church" movement is about to reach critical mass. By 2033, China will have the largest Christian population in the world, with 400 million Christian Chinese.

"China is in the process of becoming Christianized," Aikman maintains. This means that "a Christian view of the world will be the dominant worldview within China's political and cultural establishment." Such a view entails for Aikman an "Augustinian sense of restraint, justice, and order in the wielding of state power." He sees the Christianization of China as happening concurrently with China's becoming a global power, such that it will exercise that power as responsibly and benevolently as has the United States.

Given China's spasm-ridden past, however, there remains the grave danger that an economic collapse or military adventure over, say, Taiwan, could trigger "a dangerous and vengeful nationalism."

I'd like to focus, however, on one particular geopolitical ramification of the Christian movement in China, and that is the role it will play in extinguishing Moslem terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism throughout the world.

Wrap this one around yourselves, folks: The next Christian Crusades will be conducted by the Chinese.

This even has a formal name: The Back To Jerusalem Movement. It is being organized by the leaders of the Protestant evangelical Chinese Christian churches with the stated intention of sending out a minimum of 100,000 Chinese Christian missionaries over the next 10-20 years to the "10/40" window: the latitudinal band around the world between 40° North and 10° South that encompasses the majority of Moslem populations.

That's right: Chinese Christians intend to evangelize the world's Moslems. Zhang Rongliang, leader of the Fangcheng

Christian Fellowship and the single most influential Christian leader in all China, states it very clearly: “The Moslem religion is the biggest obstacle on the road back to Jerusalem.”

Further, the Chinese Christian Crusade has already started. Missionary-training seminaries all over China are training missionaries specifically for the Islamic world, many of whom are learning Arabic and Farsi. There are thousands of Chinese workers already in the Middle East as engineers, technicians, ordinary laborers — and many of them are missionaries on the side.

The “Vision Statement” of the movement notes that Moslem countries “are paranoid and on guard against Christianity coming from America. They have sealed their front doors as tightly shut as they can against Christianity, and they closely monitor every activity of Westerners who come to their country. While they spend all their energy guarding their front doors, maybe the Chinese Christians will quietly slip in the back door with the Gospel!”

You can find this statement on their website: www.backtojerusalem.com. Yes, the Chinese Christian Crusade has its own website — and an office in Jerusalem. Yet that is for symbolic purposes — for “back to Jerusalem” means for the Gospel to travel from China through the lands of the Silk Road to its land of origin. It emphatically does not mean any attempt to evangelize Jews. In fact, Aikman has found “an overwhelming pro-Israel feeling among China’s Christians... (many of whom) prayed strongly for a U.S. victory in the war against Iraq.”

The Chinese Christian intention to evangelize Moslems is the greatest threat the religion of Islam has ever faced. The first Christian Crusades of the 11th and 12th Centuries were attempts to re-conquer Christian and Jewish lands that had been conquered by Arab armies. The Arabs claim to be eternally traumatized by the Crusades, never asking themselves by what right did they have to swarm out of Arabian deserts and militarily subjugate nations and peoples that had been Christians and Jews for centuries?

It was the Arabs who conducted the original Crusades in the Middle East, just as they continue to do so today. After all, “Crusade” in Arabic is “Jihad.” Now, finally, the tables are being turned. There has never been a concerted and massive spiritual assault on Islam in its 1400-year history. A tidal wave of Christian missionaries is about to wash over Islam. The sheer force and size of it will stop the growth of Islam in its tracks (that is, it can forget about claiming to be “the fastest growing religion on earth) and cause countless Moslems to abandon their faith. It is cosmically ironic that Osama bin Laden’s worst nightmare will not be American, but Chinese.

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A Tribute to Fathers

While he was still a long way off his father saw him, and his heart went out to him. He ran to meet him, flung his arms around him, and kissed him. Luke 15:20, N.E.B.

The most common figure in the New Testament for God is that of a father. Not just any kind of father, but one full of love and compassion, one who combines the contrasting qualities of justice and mercy. In the parable of the prodigal son, God is portrayed for the first and only time in the Bible as running—running to meet and welcome His errant but now repentant son.

I have many happy memories of my father. Not once in all the years I knew him did I ever see him lose his patience or act unkind toward anyone. He seemed to combine justice and mercy in just the right proportions at just the right times. If he was a good father it was not because he came from an ideal home. His parents were divorced when he was less than a year old. At the age of 13 his mother died and he went to live with his father. A couple of years later he ran away from home and left the church. For ten years he had few thoughts about God or religion. Then one day, in the summer of 1914, he picked up a newspaper that carried the one word Armageddon emblazoned across the top. Through that one word the Holy Spirit was able to reach his heart. He quit his job in a cigar store and returned to the church.

With this kind of background, he could hardly be expected to become a good father, much less an ideal one, but such he became, and I thank God he did. This transformation came about through no goodness of his own, and he would be the first to admit this. It came about because one day he determined by God’s amazing grace to do His will—nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else.

Not all fathers are ideal, of course. This is the tragedy of sin. In many instances the wicked actions of fathers are inspired by Satan. But this does not excuse us, their children, from showing them honor and respect in spite of their human failings. After all, “the first commandment with promise” does not say, “Honour thy father if he is good”: it simply says, “Honour thy father” (Eph. 6:2; Ex. 20:12). And who knows, as we honor these less-than-ideal fathers and think of them as they might become by God’s grace perhaps God may be able to use us as the means of realizing His ideal for them.

So today, while I pay tribute to the memory of my father, I would, above all, pay tribute to my heavenly Father, who is able to make every father what he ought to be.

Reprinted from New Every Morning, p. 177. Author: Donald Ernest Mansell. Publisher: Review and Herald Publishing, 1981.

Ways to Distribute BSA Tracts

Although “Hand to Hand” witnessing is a great way to share your faith, you will not always be in a position to do so. Listed below are some other fruitful ways to use tracts. Please remember to always pray before sharing God’s Word. We want others to see and hear God’s plan for salvation as that will lead them to eternal life. May the Lord bless as you step into this mission field and we pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your every move. Here are some exciting ways to use tracts:

- While visiting a relative put in kitchen and bathroom drawers. (Never open their personal drawers.)
- Put inside the cover of rented videos when returning to the store.
- Leave in restrooms both public and those of your family and friends.
- Leave in phone booths.
- Leave on benches at shopping malls.
- Leave on tables at doctor’s offices.
- Leave at tables and phone booths while visiting at hospitals.
- Pin to bulletin boards.
- Put in pockets of used clothing at thrift stores.
- Leave in clothing store dressing rooms.
- Hand out at parades, festivals, special events, sporting events.
- Leave at funeral homes.
- Leave in newspaper machines.
- Leave in Laundromats.
- Give to attendants at parking garages, etc.
- Leave in motel rooms (in the drawers, telephone book, etc.).
- Pass out to fellow campers.
- Leave in returned library books.
- Put in magazines in waiting rooms.
- Leave with a good tip in restaurants.
- Leave on seats of public transportation.
- Leave in lockers at health clubs.
- Pass out on busy street corners.
- Leave in cafeteria at work and school.
- Put in bags at yard sales.
- Put in airport lounges, bus terminals, etc.
- Put in bills, credit card payments, birthday and holiday cards, letters to family and friends etc.

— submitted by Marsha Basner

Notice: Please do not put pamphlets in mail boxes. This could result in a fine from the U.S. Postal Service.

BSA Tracts to Distribute

Single copies free; P208S and P214S are in Spanish.

Multiples

___	P203	.20	“Roman Catholic and Protestant Confessions about Sunday,” 12 pp. (Packet of 100 for \$17.00). Our most popular tract! Perfect gift for your Sunday-keeping friends!
___	P204	.15	“Bible Sabbath — Seventh Day or First Day?” 6 pp. (100 for \$12.00).
___	P205	.20	“Why the Seventh-day Sabbath?” 10 pp. (100 for \$17.00).
___	P207	.10	“Whatever Happened to the Sabbath?” 2 pp. (100 for \$8.00).
___	P208	.20	“Why Do You Observe Sunday?” (**P208S Spanish) 16 pp. (100 for \$18.00).
___	P209	.40	“Has Time Been Lost?” 18 pp. (100 for \$35.00).
___	P212	.15	“Why the Protestant Reformation Failed!” 8 pp. (100 for \$13.00).
___	P213	.10	“What Would Jesus Do on the Weekend?” 6 pp. (100 for \$9.00).
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Understanding in Three Tiers

by Brian Knowles



Within what we broadly call “The Church,” there are three tiers or layers of understanding: the scholarly, the pastoral and the lay. Each of these layers would answer differently the question, “What does it mean to be a Christian?” Or, if you were to ask someone at all three levels a question of biblical interpretation, you might again get multiple answers. The reason for these gaps or differences in understanding is that all three kinds of people operate in different thought worlds.

There is a great gulf fixed between the scholar and the rank and file Christian. Between them, in the gap, stands the pastoral gatekeeper. He has access to the thought world above him (the scholarly) and the one that is below him (the average church member). It is rare for a scholar to address a congregation. It is even more rare for a church member to read a scholarly publication.

Each layer or group operates according to its interests. That which does not serve those interests is screened out. Scholars speak mainly to each other in

the code-bound language of Academia. They often use what is called the “historical-critical” method of studying the text. This method yields up the kind of conclusions that would seriously shake the faith of lay members, were they exposed to them. Yet, as Michael D. Coogan writes, “...this understanding has had remarkably little effect on the way most people in our culture, whether religious or not, think of the Bible...The intellectual revolution that can be summed up in the phrase ‘historical-critical method’ has had virtually no impact; most people today view the Bible not very differently from the way scholars and laity alike viewed it before the Enlightenment – naively and precritically” (*Bible Review*, “The Great Gulf Between Scholars and the Pew,” June 1994, p. 47).

At both pastoral and lay levels, people pick and choose which parts of Scripture they will interpret and apply in ways that serve their interests. Coogan expresses it this way: “Thus, within institutional Christianity, we can discern a selective approach toward bib-

The Bible Sabbath Association Presenting Divine Rest for a Restless World

Why is there such a prevailing skepticism about God being the Creator of an originally perfect world? Why do many persons today have greater faith in the theory of spontaneous generation than in an original divine and perfect creation? Is it possible that the widespread abandonment of the seventh-day Sabbath—the reminder of God’s perfect creation—has facilitated such prevailing skepticism?

The Bible Sabbath Association (BSA) exists to encourage Christians to reclaim the Sabbath—the universal day of rest—as a day of spiritual and personal renewal, enabling them to impact their communities with the Gospel.

The Bible Sabbath Association was founded in 1945. Since then, the BSA has been the one national organization whose sole purpose is to maintain and cultivate the seventh day of the week as a time for rest, worship, Christian education and spiritual renewal.

The BSA is has worked toward the goal of preserving and protecting worker’s rights to time away from work responsibilities to worship and honor the Lord. Today, the Bible Sabbath Association stands on the edge of a great opportunity to proclaim the message of the Sabbath—a message of spiritual renewal and personal well-being—in our fast-paced, 24/7, 21st century American culture.

The BSA is committed to providing our readers and supporters with the best possible resources and materials for understanding the Sabbath as well as spiritual development, both theologically and historically.

Our plan to accomplish this goal is two-fold. First, books and articles dealing with these important issues are available for purchase. Second, the BSA provides reviews of books that we feel will be beneficial and of high quality for our readers in achieving our objectives.

— by Sidney L. Davis, BSA Board Member

lical texts, as well as a resistance to texts motivated by at least an unconscious fear of the implications of the historical-critical method. That method is correctly perceived as calling into question not just the authority of the Bible, but also the authority derived from the Bible" (ibid.).

In other words, ideas that are widely accepted within certain scholarly circles have not yet penetrated to the lay level of the Church. Ministers who seek to popularize these ideas are almost instant labeled as "liberals," subversives, heretics and worse. The more common approach is to insulate lay members from these "subversive" ideas and to reinforce popular approaches to Scripture.

Even Bible translations sometimes reflect reluctance on the part of scholars to share their findings with the laity. Writes Coogan: "One area especially lacking in courage is Bible translation. Many translations do not convey exactly what the original biblical languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek – say. In this way translators avoid shocking people by making the Bible seem like one book with internal consistency, rather than an anthology exhibiting development of doctrines and a concomitant inconsistency" (ibid.).

The net result of dishonest translation has been disastrous to doctrine. Synoptic scholars Bivin and Blizzard explain the extent of this disaster: "The Gospels are rife with mistranslations...had the Church been provided with a proper Hebraic understanding of the words of Jesus, most theological controversies would never have arisen in the first place" (*Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, p. 67).

Ideally, theology is supposed to be "reasoned discourse about God," but much of the discourse we see is anything but reasoned. Rather, it is angry, politicized, and competitive. It produces the ugly spectacle of Christian against Christian, with rounds of shunning, name-calling, marking, disfellowshipping and worse. For many, "reasoned discourse" is out of the question. It's Truth versus error, the faithful against the heretics, Us versus Them.

Pastoral gatekeepers find themselves caught between the upper and lower tiers of the intellectual life of the Church. If they buy into the output of scholars, and preach it to their congregations, they would wind up as "faith busters." Above all, they want stable, settled, tithe-paying congregations. No pastor in his right mind wants to make waves and destabilize his congregation.

Writes Coogan: "...a modern, critical study of the Bible can be discomfiting...[it] may lead to disbelief..." (ibid. p. 48). Rather than trouble the multitudes with the esoteric findings of critical scholarship, some scholars have created what is known as "accessible scholarship." This they leave to "the pious and the ig-

norant." Says Coogan, "For the latter the Bible is too often little more than an anthology of quotations to be sampled and drawn on as argument or emotion requires" (ibid. p. 48).

Sadly, this picture is all too valid in many religious circles. The unfortunate technique of "proof texting" is used somewhat indiscriminately in the less sophisticated cults of personality. What is doctrine or dogma is all too often decided subjectively and on the basis of emotion, tradition or politics. This is of course what leads skeptics to say, "You can prove anything by the Bible."

Purpose of the Ministry

The apostle Paul described various ministerial roles – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers – as "grace gifts" from Christ (Ephesians 4:7-8). Each of these roles represents a specialized function of ministry. The collective purpose of all of them is *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive..."* (Ephesians 4:12-14 KJV).

It is the Christ-given duty of the ministry to produce in the lay level of the Church a process of spiritual perfecting, the result of which is a well-constructed, healthy, Body of Christ. The ideal fruit of this effort is unity, knowledge of Christ, and spiritual maturity in Christ (vs. 12-13). Under right guidance from the ministry, the church should be "no more children" easily manipulated by those who bring exciting new doctrines to titillate the intellect (verse 14). In other words, the ministry should be able to help the laity to discern between someone who is attempting to deceive and one who is genuine.

Verse 15 lists an important qualifier: *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ..."* The Body must edify itself in love (verse 16b). Two things stand out: truth and love.

Truth, to be truth, must be objective. Simply defending a denomination's doctrinal status quo for its own sake is not good enough. Doctrines should be adjusted to accommodate truth, not visa versa. Unity in error is not acceptable. Truth without love is empty. If the goal of a denominational, or congregational, leader is merely power over the group and its tithes, that motive is ignoble, for it is not founded in love. The apostle Paul taught that every Christian should have love as his or her overarching motivation in life (I Corinthians 14:1).

Assuming that love is in place, we are left with the issue of how to apprehend truth. Anyone who has studied the history of the Church from the time of the apostles to the present ought to know that truth is a sometime thing with Christians. The founding community of believers "...continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

The apostles, in turn, had received their doctrine from Jesus himself who had instructed them: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:19,20 excerpts).

Truth is what Jesus taught. Truth is what the original apostles taught and lived. It is "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3b).

Sadly, much of what was delivered has been lost in transit. Churches today have cobbled together eclectic packages of Old Testament, New Testament, and post-biblical doctrines some of which are a far cry from the original teachings of the first believing community. It is unlikely that the first apostles would recognize much of what today is taught as "orthodoxy." The gulf between scholarship and laity, with pastors as mid-level gatekeepers, hasn't helped. Too much has been politicized and commercialized. In the Salvation Supermarket, there is something for everyone. Western Christianity has taken a Semitic book and interpreted it through Hellenistic eyes. In the process, many of its Hebraisms have been lost in the shuffle. Looking at doctrine today is like looking at one's reflection in a "Hall of Mirrors" at the local carnival. Just about everything is distorted.

To get back to the original faith, the Church must learn to appreciate its Jewish roots, and those scholars who are working honestly and diligently to recapture the authentic teachings of Jesus and his first disciples. The gap between scholars, pastors and lay members must be closed. All of the Church must gain access to the best of scholarship. Scholars, like pastors and lay members, come in different sizes, shapes and degrees of integrity. Some are faith-builders, other are faith-busters. Personally I prefer the former – but only if they are intellectually honest and motivated by a love for God and the Church.

Recommended Reading:

- *Our Father Abraham* by Marvin Wilson
- *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard Jr.
- *Paul the Jewish Theologian* by Brad Young
- *Jesus Rabbi & Lord* by Robert Lindsey

Reprinted from the "Out-of-the-Box" column (3/1/04) of the website of The Association for Christian Development, www.godward.org).

"Sea of Iniquity" continued from Page 8.

whom you did it, and when you realize you have been forgiven for your wicked deeds, then doing the will of God does not seem like an unreasonable response to such amazing grace. On the contrary, it is the only reasonable response.

He endured the Cross "for the joy that was set before Him" (Heb. 12:2). What was this joy that gave Him the strength and resolve to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities? His joy came from the knowledge that some of those who dumped their sins on Him would repent and serve Him, and that the Holy Spirit would mold these repentant ones together into a Bride for Him.

What is the joy set before us? I do not know what it is for others, but I can tell you about the joy that is set before me. I know that a measure of Yeshua's suffering was caused by my sins. Even if my sins account for only a small fraction of His pain, I still share part of the blame. Nothing can change that. All I can do is accept His forgiveness and serve Him out of gratitude for His amazing grace. The joy set before me is the knowledge that I have been given a second chance. I can now serve Him and bring Him joy instead of grief. I can trust that the service I now render to Him will make the pain He endured for my sins worthwhile - that He will someday say to me, "The joy you brought Me after your repentance was worth the measure of pain that your sins caused." This is the hope and the joy that is set before me that enables me to endure.

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Love and Law

by Tommy Willis

We should get to know and teach God's law, but what also needs to be kept in mind is that law without love is pharisaical.

Our Bible study should teach us to love God and our fellowman. If not, then we fail to grasp what God is trying to teach us.

We should not try to teach that the law is done away. Jesus said: "Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus said: "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). And in verse 21 He says: "He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me...." We need to see the connection between love and law.

We must hold fast to the truths that God has taught us.

Some church organizations can have an institutional unity that has nothing to do with the spiritual unity we should have. We may grow to learn all of the doctrine and agree that the law is binding, but if we fail to apply it and the love that's intended to be with it, then we suffer loss.

Vital doctrines are important, and we enter dangerous ground by trying to water them down. And some settle for a religion of emotionalism or ritual. There are many imbalances we can get into—one of which is that we can learn all of the laws and doctrines and be able to quote the Bible from cover to cover, but at the same time fail to allow the Holy Spirit lead us to grow in the love of Jesus Christ. We talk about balancing our checkbook, and balancing this or that, and there's no place it is more important than in spiritual matters.

"God is love..." (1 Jn 4:16). "If a man say I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that doesn't love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 Jn 4:20). I believe that a good gauge of how much we love God is how much we love other people. I used to be selective on whom I would love. It's easy to justify this kind of behavior.

As we study Psalms 119, we see how the psalmist loves God's law.

And in Psalm 1:2-3 it tells us: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper."

God did intend that we meditate on His laws and ways, and that we would get to know Him as we apply what we learn. "He who does not love does not know God: for God is love" (1 Jn 4:8 RSV).

The connection between love and law should be learned; "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal 5:14-15 RSV).

We can see the connection between love and law with the above scripture. Without love the law does not yield the results that God intended. We can wind up destroying one another.

The more time passes and the more God teaches me, the more I see how important the love of God is, and how it will keep our lives in focus as we allow Him to put His love inside of us.

The law was not abolished. To the contrary, as we learn and grow in the love of God, we fulfill its true purpose.

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Food eaten with unwashed hands was considered ceremonially impure or unclean. To eat bad fish with unwashed hands did not make bad fish clean or fit to eat or put them in the category of "food." Although eating ceremonially impure "food" might render the eater ceremonially impure, it was not a "sin" (even from a Levitical point of view), nor did it necessarily make the eater "spiritually" impure. This is Jesus' point. Eating good fish without washing hands will not make anyone "spiritually" impure. In other words, ceremonial impurity is not the same as "spiritual impurity." On the other hand, if one were to eat bad fish, it would make him unclean—ceremonially, physically, and spiritually impure, whether one washed his hands or not. Eating "bad fish" would be an actual violation of Torah, or a "sin." Sin is an idea, expressed in thought, word, or deed, that makes one spiritually impure or unclean. Jesus' words from the point of view of a Jew or from the Torah itself do not alter or do away with the ceremonial or Levitical law at all. The faulty hermeneutics that turns the translations of Mark 7:14-20 into an abolition of kosher laws for Christians is completely erroneous. Such an interpretation can result only when one voids the mind as well as the passage of its native Jewishness. This opens our consideration to the whole issue of the kosher food laws in the Bible. Should a Christian should eat like Jesus (or like a Jew) and how or what does the Bible define as "food," that is, what is edible, fit to eat and what is "non food" and not good to eat? The kosher laws of the Bible state that:

- One must not eat blood: The Lord states in Genesis 9:4, "But flesh with the life thereof, [which is] the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."
- One must not eat animal fat: In Leviticus 3:17 it states, "[It shall be] a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood."
- One must not eat the fat of any animal or its blood: Leviticus 7:23-27 says, "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use: but ye shall in no wise eat of it. For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the soul



Passover Italian Almond Cake

that eateth [it] shall be cut off from his people. Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, [whether it be] of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul [it be] that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people."

Deuteronomy 12:23 states, "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood [is] the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."

- One must not eat a dying or sick animal or one that has died of itself: In Deuteronomy 14:21 we read, "Ye shall not eat [of] any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that [is] in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk."
- One must not eat any limb taken from a living animal; A torn or mauled animal is forbidden for consumption: Exodus 22:31 states, "And ye shall

be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat [any] flesh [that is] torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs."

But aren't these kosher laws Jewish ceremonial laws that were "nailed to the cross?" Haven't these been "done away?" Do such laws apply to "Christians?" What kind of food should a Christian eat?

After being filled with the Spirit and converted, we read how Peter viewed God's laws regarding food in Acts 10:14:

"Peter said, 'Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.'" KJV

"'Never, Lord,' Peter declared. 'I have never in all my life eaten anything forbidden by our Jewish laws.'" NLT

"But Peter said, 'By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.'" NASB

I will not take the time to analyze this commonly misunderstood text, but suffice it to say that it does not nullify the prohibition of eating "common or unclean" food. But just as with Jesus' "declaring all foods clean" statement, Christians misinterpret this text in a manner that voids the kosher food laws. But what we will now see is that the apostle Peter's edict upholds kosher food laws for gentiles "upon whom my name is called" in a manner that the majority of Christians do not allow.

In Acts 15:16-21 we read: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek

after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and [from] fornication, and [from] things strangled, and [from] blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day."

The phrase "from things strangled and from blood" includes all of the kosher laws applying to the slaughter and eating of animals. It is my opinion that this is to be understood halakally or according to Judaic tradition. The Bible does not spell out how to kill an animal so as to ensure the complete drainage of blood. This is understood and practiced according to Halakah. The word "halakah" is usually translated as "Jewish Law," although a more literal translation might be "the path that one walks." The word is derived from the Hebrew root "heh-lamed-kaf," meaning to go, to walk, or to travel. It means how one must walk the way. Some non-Jews and nonobservant Jews criticize this legalistic aspect of traditional Judaism, saying that it reduces the religion to a set of rituals devoid of spirituality. While there are certainly some Jews who observe Halakah in this way, that is not the intention of Halakah, and it is not even the correct way to observe Halakah.

For instance, it is forbidden for a Jew to hunt, though this is not explicit in scripture. Why? Because hunting an animal disallows or violates the manner for how an animal must be slaughtered as to allow its blood to completely drain from its body or the proper "koshering" of an animal. This is considered "strangled" meat. Strangled meat is not "unclean" but still it is not fit to eat; that is, it is not considered "food." It would be considered "profaned," "unholy," or "common" food. All animal carcasses sold in supermarkets or sold over fast food counters are "common" because the manner of their slaughter is halakally not kosher. Is this "common" food (though allowed for a non-Christian gentile) prohibited by or included in the apostolic edict to gentile Christians of Acts 15? Those "upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord" in order to be "obedient to the faith," ought to eat from sources that are known to be kosher or from a kosher markets in accordance with Judaic law. This is a provision that Christians need to consider seriously as we examine the issue of common food verses kosher food.

When one ponders the dilemma of the food industry concerning cow aids, mad cow disease, chicken flu, and whatever comes up next affecting the human food chain, we see how unnatural it is to feed rendered protein (or animal protein) to cows, chickens and

other livestock. It is not "kosher" to feed rendered cows back to cows as "animal protein." It is simply not "kosher" to feed chicken manure to cows or back to chicken themselves. Might it be unkosher to eat such animals or to use their by products, milk, cheese eggs, etc.? It would probably be better not to eat these unkosher "common" products if you cannot find kosher sources for these "foods" fit to eat for those "upon whom my name is called." Not only is feeding animal protein and chicken manure to vegetarian animals not kosher, it is unnatural. Have you ever heard the phrase "It is not nice to fool Mother Nature?"

Some of you may recall a kosher product that commercially advertises "no byproducts or additives used because we have to answer to a higher authority." Government authority cannot guarantee the safety of the animal food supply from epidemic outbreaks of E-coli contamination. Only "higher authority" can do that. We are living in a day in which the animal feeding and slaughtering practices of the food industry can be well documented. It takes little research to verify the unkosher conditions under which animals are raised, fed, slaughtered, inoculated, and eaten by unthinking Christians today. Cooking and eating in a halakic kosher kitchen or restaurant or shopping in a halakic kosher market, bakery or deli has something more to do with whether it is required for "Christians" or not (my reading of the New Testament indicates it is). There are moral as well as practical reasons as to why it may be not only spiritually advantageous to comply with the Jerusalem decree, but also a matter of healthful living, perhaps even life and death. As a naturopathic physician I recommend kosher eating practices if for no other reason than that Christians ought to comply with the halakic kosher laws the same way as those who followed the Jerusalem decree and were "obedient to the faith" for spiritual and well as health reasons. So many claim to be those whom the apostolic decree identifies and are the ones "upon whom my name is called." Yet they are sick and suffering from diseases of animal origin.

God promises that if we follow his kosher health laws, he will protect us from the diseases of those who do not follow his ways. "And [the LORD] said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). Meditate carefully on Acts 15:21. Consider it a "Sabbath" prescription.

Sidney Davis is a former president of the BSA and is a current board member.

frames the movie in terms of personal faith and conviction about the spiritual intent of the second commandment. I can certainly understand a person's objection to the film on this basis. I do not, however, share that conviction. When I see Jim Caviezel depicted as Christ in his human suffering, I don't think of the resurrected and glorified Christ in heaven. The movie is about the one who emptied himself of his heavenly glory and did not grasp onto his equality with God, but became human like me in order to take away my sins through his suffering and death.

Also, if the premise that any impersonation of Christ during his earthly ministry is a violation of the second commandment, then so are all dramas and movies that depict his life. So is Veggie Tales in its portrayal of Christ as a vegetable. Yet, the "Jesus" film and many other dramatized descriptions of his life and teachings have been used over the centuries to bring tens of thousands of people to salvation. And, what about the biblical descriptions of Christ? For example, in Revelation 1:14, Jesus is described in this manner: "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire." That certainly paints a mental image of Christ in heaven. Is it a violation of the second commandment also?

"The Passion of the Christ" left me with one major impression: My sins cost my Savior much more suffering than I ever imagined. After seeing on screen the severity of his affliction, I can never again take lightly his payment for my sins. Over the years Hollywood has whitewashed the suffering of Jesus. This one movie puts it all into perspective. This film is probably the most accurate portrayal of the suffering and death of Christ that has ever been put on screen. Overall, it follows the story of the Gospels. There were some obvious Catholic overtones to the movie—elements added to narrative that are not in the Gospels. They were obvious, but not overly distracting. There is much attention to Mary and the other women who surrounded Jesus. There are other subplots that come from Catholic tradition. Apart from these added elements, Gibson has done an excellent job in giving the viewer the truth about the suffering and death of Christ. Yes, it is bloody, and I don't recommend it for the squeemish. Isaiah prophesies that Jesus would be beaten and afflicted beyond human recognition. Seeing the movie brings the truth of that prophecy clearly into focus. As the prophet Isaiah says:

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our

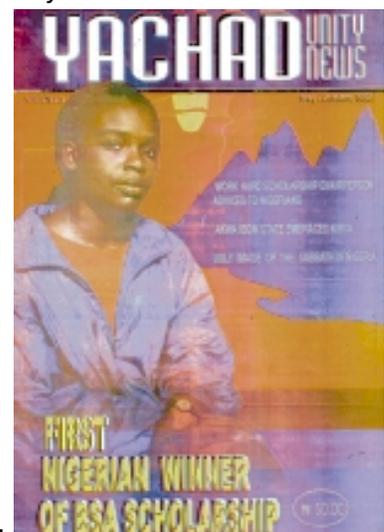
transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities" (53:4-11).

—Kenneth Ryland

Nigeria BSA Makes Inroads

Thanks to the tireless work of dedicated servants like pastors Bassey Akpan and Bosco Udom, and evangelist Saturday Noah, the Nigeria Bible Sabbath Association (NIBSA) has taken root and begun to grow in this country of 134 million people. The NIBSA currently has two offices in the country and is working to establish branches throughout the land. The NIBSA also publishes a bimonthly newsletter called "YACHAD Unity News."

If you would like to write a note of encouragement to the people at the NIBSA, direct your correspondence to Bassey Akpan (CJ), P. O. Box 1277, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, or you may e-mail pastor Akpan at ycog1@yahoo.com.



bad days. As soon as I got home, I ate a lot of protein to counteract the sugar, but it didn't help. Although I was depressed, I tried to be cheerful around my husband so he wouldn't know I had eaten four honey buns.

Commitment in My Diary

I began to think again about the dream in which God spoke to me about my body being the temple of the Holy Spirit. Finally, on March 8, 1990 (I know the exact day because I wrote it in my journal), I made a commitment to God to give up all desserts made with refined sugar—especially Milky Way candy bars, pecan pies, and honey buns. I underlined the commitment in my journal and put stars all over the page so I would always remember that day.

That was 13 years ago, and I've kept my commitment.

Today I'm 71 years old. I'm in great health and never suffer depression. When God spoke to me in that dream long ago, He was showing me that He cared about both my physical and spiritual well-being. The apostle Paul's words continually encourage me: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

I know I will always be tempted by sugar, but with God's help whenever I'm offered a sugar-laden dessert, I simply smile and say, "No thank you." I want to glorify God in both my body and my spirit.

*This article is reprinted with permission from **Signs of the Times**, March 2004, p. 26. Esther M. Herriott writes from Lee's Summit, Missouri.*

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BSA Reps Visit "Down Under"

Two officers of the Bible Sabbath Association and their wives recently visited brethren in Australia. BSA Treasurer Bryan Burrell and his wife Sue accompanied board member Calvin Burrell and his wife Barbara on the Australian excursion. The trip was planned mostly as a personal vacation, but it also served as a good-will mission among Sabbatarians in three different areas of the country.

Starting in Sydney, the Burrells made presentations at an April 1st evening meeting coordinated by Australian BSA representative Craig White, and hosted by Intercontinental Church of God members, Peter and Vivieene Ellis. Other Sabbath-keeping groups were represented in that meeting, such as long-time Seventh Day Baptist leaders and friends of many, Stefan and Vicky Kube.

In Adelaide the Burrells attended Sabbath services and the annual Lord's Supper service (April 3 and 4) with the local Church of God (Seventh Day), pastored by Elder Phil Kordahi.

Moving to Tasmania for the heart of their "vacation," the Burrells were hosted by Gray and Leslie Hodge, in whose home the Church of God (Seventh Day) met on April 10. Also on "Tassie," they visited a Seventh Day Adventist home and in the clinic of an independent Sabbath-keeping Doctor of Naturopathy who uses the Sacred Names. They report an encouraging visit initiated by United Church of God elder on Tasmania—Rod McQueen and his wife Martha.

While there seem to many scattered Sabbath-keeping Christians in Australia, the only Church to report significant membership is the S.D.A. The Burrells hope that their trip served in some way to increase the recognition and respect among them all.

—Report by Calvin Burrell

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship."

—Patrick Henry, one of America's founders

Pastor arrested, church building destroyed in Zhejiang, China

April 16, 2004

A 100-year-old building that housed an unregistered Chinese house church was badly damaged on March 11, then completely destroyed March 31. The church was located in Dong Gang Xi village, Beilun District, Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province. This congregation included about 300 members, and had existed for the past 20 years. Liu Fuen, 50, pastored the church throughout its history.

The pastor's home where church meetings were held had already been declared the site of "illegal religious meetings." On March 8 members of the congregation met to do some work on the building in order to make it better suited for church meetings.

Three days later, 300 Public Security Bureau (PSB), paramilitary police and government workers converged on the building, badly damaging it during a half-hour rampage. The group was led by Wang Tao, the Director of the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) for Beilun District. Seeing the destruction, four neighbors who were not Christians complained to Wang, saying, "How can you arbitrarily destroy someone's house?"

Wang ordered the four neighbors—Mu Jingou, Li Youfu, Li Liangfang and Zhang Weilong—arrested and held on Administrative Detention for 15 days.

Christians at the church were able to repair some of the damage to the house, and continued meeting in the building until March 31. On that day, Wang led a group that arrived at the church in 28 different vehicles. Four PSB officers entered the building and evicted 10 Christians who were praying inside. Then, police and other officials completely destroyed the building, leaving only piles of rubble. Officials hung posters on surrounding buildings announcing that this was

the site of illegal religious activity and was being destroyed for that reason. A loudspeaker also announced that message as the destruction went on.

Pastor Liu Fuen went into hiding after his home was destroyed, but was arrested April 9 by six PSB officers at the home of his youngest son, Liu Yongsheng.

The family has been given "Criminal Detention" paperwork for both Pastor Liu and for Liu Mingliang. While Administrative Detention signifies 15 days of incarceration, a "criminal detention" will last an indefinite period of time.

"China's government wants to control the church," said Todd Nettleton, a spokesman for The Voice of the Martyrs. "These are not troublemakers or criminals, they are simply Christian believers who gather to worship God and learn more about Him."

(Source: Voice of the Martyrs)

Pakistani pastor shot and killed

April 6, 2004

The pastor of a small church in Pakistan was shot and killed last Friday in the village of Manawala, near Lahore, Pakistan.

George Masih, aged 42, was the leader of a small village church which met in his home. He and his wife, Aniata, were active in reaching out to other villagers in the primarily Muslim village in order to share the gospel with them.

Masih had worked previously as an elder in a Church of Pakistan congregation in Lahore. He and his wife relocated the family two years ago to Manawala and were working to plant a church there. They were known in the village for the worship songs that could be heard coming from their house, and for ministering house to house reaching out to neighbors and praying for those who were sick—even if they were Muslims. There is only one other Christian family in the village.

The Christian work of George Masih and his family drew the anger of a Muslim neighbor named Shokat Ali. Ali was irritated by the Christian meetings in Masih's home, and urged the landlord to kick the family out. On more than one occasion Ali threatened to kill Masih if he continued preaching, according to VOM (Voice of the Martyrs) sources in Pakistan.

Last Friday around noon, Masih, his wife and four children were watching the JESUS film in their home. When the movie finished, Aniata got up to go out of the house. When she opened the door, two masked attackers burst in. One grabbed Aniata and covered her mouth, threatening her with death if she tried to cry out for help.

The other attacker fired a shotgun point blank at George Masih's face. As the Christian man lay dying, the assailant hit him in the head with the butt of the gun. Then both men fled.

Hearing the cries of Aniata, many neighbors gathered. One neighbor who did not show up was Shokat Ali.

About 300 people gathered in the home of George's brother for the funeral, including many Muslims who had been blessed by his ministry. Pastor Mukhtar, the pastor who led George to Christ, called the martyred Christian "a true and passionate believer" and said, "he always tried to win the souls with his preaching."

The Voice of the Martyrs' contacts who visited the family offered prayers and encouragement to the widow and her three sons (ages 8, 4 and 2) and daughter (age 1).

"At present we are helpless," Aniata told VOM. "I need the prayers of my brothers and sisters that I may be strengthened by the Lord our God to bear this loss."

The Voice of the Martyrs urges Christians around the world to pray for this young family, and for other Christians in Pakistan.

(Source: Voice of the Martyrs)

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Nigeria BSA Needs Help

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To help them out, please send funds designated specifically for the Nigerian Bible Sabbath Association to: BSA, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718.

"I do not believe human society, including not merely a few persons in any state, but whole masses of men, ever have attained, or ever can attain, a high state of intelligence, virtue, security, liberty, or happiness without the Holy Scriptures; even the whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of the Bible." —William Henry Seward, U.S. Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln

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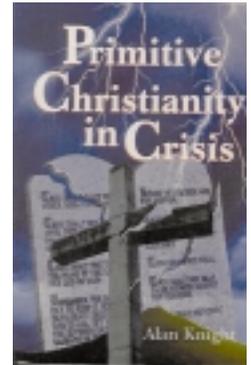
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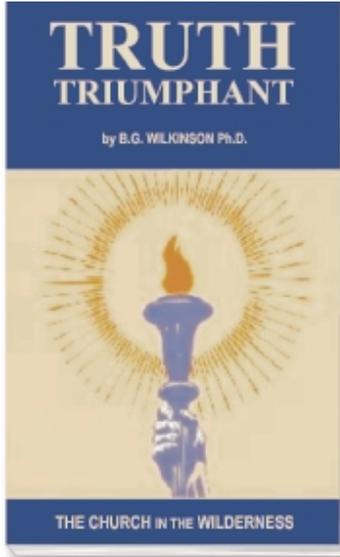
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