

# Independent Evangelist

LE it's happening



Follow the Leader

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**Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.**  
- Alfred Lord Tennyson

Welcome to the January issue of the Independent Evangelist. I trust everyone had a good Christmas. Any day you're alive to praise God is a good day, I always say.

## *New year's Resolution*

Many people often say that they want to read the Bible, cover to cover. Those same people often fail because they get overwhelmed or give up because they can't deal with the archaic language. Mostly though, they just get overwhelmed.

The thing most people don't realize is that there isn't an issue in today's world that isn't addressed in the Bible. There isn't enough room in this newsletter to include entire quotes but here are a few examples, A-Z, to look up. Give it a try!

Addiction: *1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

Bankruptcy: *Proverbs 22:7*

Comfort: *John 14:18*

Drugs: *Proverbs 25:28*

Elderly: *1 Timothy 5:1*

Friendship: *Proverbs 18:24*

Gifts of the Spirit: *Romans 6:23*

Handicapped: *Leviticus 19:14*

Integrity: *Proverbs 11:3*

Jealousy: *Proverbs 6:34-35*

Kidnapping: *Exodus 21:16*

Enjoying Life: *Ecclesiastes 2:24*



Punishment of Murderers: *Leviticus 24:17*

Neighbors: *Galatians 6:10*

Oppression: *Psalms 9:9*

Peace: *Job 22:21*

Quarreling: *Proverbs 10:12*

Reward: *Isaiah 3:10*

Spirit of man: *Job 32:8*

Tattoos: *Leviticus 19:28*

Unity: *Romans 12:4-5*

Vengeance: *Proverbs 20:22*

Worrying: *Psalms 37:5*

Youth: *Ecclesiastes 12:1*

Zeal: *1 Corinthians 14:12*



I admit I left out the letter, "X", only because of my lack of creativity, so if anybody can find a reference starting with "X", let me know. Still, you get my point; the Bible has a reference to anything you can think of.

When I was a kid, maybe about 14, my pastor suggested I read a chapter, then move to another section of the book to get comfortable with reading it. Soon, I found myself coming back to certain books as if that section called out to me. In a short time, I could tell people about favorite parts of the Bible. It became apparent that even a teenager of the 60's could get comfortably acquainted with the Bible.

Make it your New Year's Resolution to get acquainted with the Bible. It truly is a "Good Book".

***The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.***

*Isaiah 40:8*

***There is no mistaking a real book when one meets it. It is like falling in love.*** Christopher Morley

*US author & journalist (1890 - 1957)*

## ***NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION, PART 2***

This one may sound a little odd but hear me out. Visit another church, occasionally. I'm not telling anybody to switch churches but when you visit another church you get a new outlook on the world around you.

In my life, I've been to Missouri Synod Lutheran and Evangelical Lutheran Churches and many protestant denominations as well as several Catholic Churches and a Buddhist Temple in Vung Tau, Vietnam. I've seen every size except a mega church.



*My first church; Mt. Greenwood Lutheran*

My wife has seen the same Lutheran Churches and she had the opportunity to see the famous, huge Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City as well as other Catholic churches and Jewish Synagogues. For her, the Mormon Temple could count as a mega church.

The thing is, you get to know your neighbors. They may dress differently, live in a different part of town, speak a different language or have a different skin color. Their services may be louder or more traditional than you are used to but you'll be worshipping, side by side. **You'll all be worshipping God and for that moment no one will be debating denominational differences.**

I like to see which church members are easy to talk with and whether or not they have someone they consider a "greeter". I wonder if they even notice a visitor. It's not a problem in a small church; newcomers stick out like a sore thumb. The medium and large churches have a harder time catching anyone new. Fill out their guest register so they know you care enough to say "Hi".

***Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.***  
*Deuteronomy 10:19*

A funny thing happens in many churches. People usually have a favorite place to sit and if a stranger is sitting there, they feel somewhat uneasy. It's a comfort zone and **very few of us are okay with intrusions of our comfort zone.** It's not a bad thing; it's just a part of human nature.

You've found a good church when someone sees you looking for a seat and invites you to take their place. You will find yourself doing the same when you come back to your own church the next Sunday. **You will realize that just being in**

**the church sanctuary is the only real comfort zone you were seeking.**

Another thing I always notice is whether or not the minister notices you or if they do, do they make the effort to talk to you? I don't expect it in a large church but in the smaller churches it's the same for them as it is for the congregation; you are new and they should at least take notice of newcomers even though they are busy. A quick handshake and a friendly, "Good morning" goes a long way.

We have Korean services in another part of our church building and I've been tempted to ask them if I may join one of their services. I feel intimidated by the language barrier and the issue of "comfort zone" creeps up; theirs as well as mine. Still, to be worshipping God, saying the same words, only in different languages would make me feel closer to my neighbors.

***The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.***  
*1 Corinthians 16:19-20*

If you don't have a church, try different ones of all sizes and discover your "comfort zone". It's a beautiful feeling to arrive a little early and sit quietly in the sanctuary. Watch the choir set up and technicians go through sound checks. Look around at the architecture and get relaxed. Then close your eyes and take in all of the sounds; families arriving and friends greeting each other, in their handshakes saying, "I love you".

Just beware, you may feel the presence of God and decide that "This church is where I belong". Your Sunday morning will be forever changed, but you soon won't notice the change; the Church will become your new comfort zone.

For those with strong ties in a church, visiting another church once in a while makes you feel closer with your neighbors. They may do a few things differently but that just adds a feeling of adventure and tests individual tolerance. When you return to your own church, the following Sunday, you will be able to share what you've learned and maybe be able to offer new ideas. **Regardless of where you worship, God is there.**

***This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.***  
*John 15:12*

**We've been to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor.**

***My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind.***

*Albert Einstein*  
*US (German-born) physicist (1879 - 1955)*

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION, PART 3

I found out long ago that those lengthy lists of “do’s and don’ts” either get lost or are forgotten. Chalk it up to experience. So make it simple and just make a few you can keep.

I’ve mentioned two so far; familiarizing yourself with the Bible and visiting a different church occasionally. Maybe you do those things already; then what?

How about doing the last thing on your personal list. Those lists usually start out with losing weight or learning a new language. Adventurous ones resolve to learn an extreme sport or journey to a far off land they’ve only dreamed about. Reach down for the last item, the one that gets overlooked because the whole list was thrown out.

What if today was the day you were heading to Heaven? Is there anything you’d regret not having done? Is there anyone you can’t look in the eye because of something in your past? It could be a friend, relative, someone in your distant past or even yourself or even God.

Maybe you need to make an apology to a neighbor or a past friend because of a petty quarrel that kept you at odds. It doesn’t matter who started what. A simple, “I’m sorry” can go a long way to healing old wounds.

Maybe you need to pay a long neglected debt. It doesn’t have to be just a monetary debt. It could be a thank you for something someone did.

Offer forgiveness to someone, even if they did something seemingly unforgivable. To forgive is the toughest act but it has to happen before you can move on. Sometimes you have to forgive yourself. That’s tougher to recognize and deal with.

**Maybe what you need to do most is completely give your heart to the One who has prepared a special place in Heaven just for you.** If you have not yet embarked on a personal relationship with God through His son, Jesus Christ, then this is your moment. Don’t let another moment pass and certainly don’t put it off for the next “New Year’s resolution” to reach out and take the hand of the Savior.

He gave His only son to die for your sins. He took upon Himself the entire responsibility for every unholy and unrighteous thought you’ve ever thought, deed you’ve ever done and word ever spoken. Then He took it all to the cross where he received the punishment reserved for the worst criminals and paid the ultimate price for your sins.

Now Jesus longs to bring you to the Father, to introduce you to His Love and Grace. The Bible says He stands at the door of your heart. Don’t wait until next year; open the door and allow Him to be part of your life.

## Auld Lang Syne

The poem Auld Land Syne by Robert Burns has been immortalized by the tradition of singing the lyrics to Auld Lang Syne at Christmas and New Year parties. Auld Lang Syne is also sung on Burns Night, the 25th of January to celebrate the life and works of Robert Burns.

The musical version of Auld Lang Syne usually consists of the first verse and the chorus. Auld Lang Syne was written in 1788 and the words 'Auld Lang Syne' literally translates from old Scottish dialect meaning 'Old Long Ago' and is about love and friendship in times past. The words in the poem Auld Lang Syne referring to 'We'll take a Cup of Kindness yet' relate to a drink shared by men and women to symbolize friendship. **Happy New Year!!!**

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,  
And surely I'll be mine!  
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne.

**Take a cup of kindness** with loved ones and I pray you all have a blessed **New Year**.

*No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.*

*Aesop, The Lion and the Mouse  
Greek slave & fable author (620 BC - 560 BC)*

**Celebrate!**

**And David and all Israel played before God with all [their] might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.**

*1 Chronicles 13:8*



## Surveyed Americans Believe in Biblical Truth

CBN News

December 22, 2007

CBNNews.com - Most Americans believe the stories in the Bible are true, according to new research by the Barna Group. The survey asked U.S. residents their take on some of the Bible's stories.

Here are the results:

It was found that 75 percent of adults believe that the story of Jesus being born to the virgin Mary is the literal truth.

Sixty-eight percent of adults surveyed believe that Jesus fed 5,000 with just five loaves of bread and two fish.

Barna also holds that 64 percent of adults surveyed believe in the story of Noah's Ark and the Flood that covered the entire earth.

Another survey Barna conducted questioned Americans on six other significant Bible stories.

"The story of Jesus Christ rising from the dead after being crucified and buried," the most important account in the Bible at the heart of Christianity, is believed to be true by 75 percent of adults surveyed.

About 65 percent believe in the account of Old Testament prophet Daniel surviving the lion's den.

Did Moses literally part the Red Sea? It's reported that 64 percent of Americans deem this to be true.

How about David killing the massive Palestinian warrior Goliath? Approximately 63 percent of surveyed adults believe that he hurled a stone at the giant with a sling shot - a fatal blow described in the Old Testament.

Sixty percent accept as fact that Peter walked on the water with Jesus.

The same percentage believe in the Genesis account of creation, which tells us that God created the universe in six days.

The findings of the Barna Group show that a large majority of Americans believe a large number of accounts in the Bible to be absolute truth - despite the fact that its authority is constantly challenged in today's society.

*But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

*Hebrews 11:6*

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

*Matthew 24:35*

## Israeli Scientists Inscribe Tiny Bible

JERUSALEM — Israeli scientists have inscribed the entire Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible onto a space less than half the size of a grain of sugar.

The nanotechnology experts at the Technion institute in Haifa say the book was etched on a surface that measures less than 0.01 square inch. They chose the Jewish Bible to highlight how vast quantities of information can be stored on minimum amounts of space.

"It took us about an hour to etch the 300,000 words of the Bible onto a tiny silicon surface," Ohad Zohar, the university's scientific adviser for educational programs, told the Associated Press.

The Technion's microscopic bible was created by blasting tiny particles called gallium ions at an object that then rebounded, causing an etching affect.

"When a particle beam is directed toward a point on the surface, the gold atoms bounce off and expose the silicon layer underneath just like a hammer and chisel," Zohar said.

He said the technology will in the future be used as a way to store vast amounts of data on bio-molecules and DNA. The tiny Bible appears to be the world's smallest.

The previous smallest known copy of the Bible measured 1.1 x 1.3 x 0.4 inches, weighed 0.4 ounces and contained 1,514 pages, according to Guinness World Records spokeswoman Amarilis Espinoza. The tiny text, obtained by an Indian professor in November 2001, is believed to have originated in Australia.

**I want one but they don't have them in large print.**

*God's Wheel by Shel Silverstein*

*GOD says to me with a kind of smile,  
"Hey how would you like to be God awhile  
And steer the world?"*

*"Okay," says I, "I'll give it a try.*

*Where do I set?  
How much do I get?  
What time is lunch?  
When can I quit?"*

*"Gimme back that wheel," says GOD.  
"I don't think you're quite ready YET."*



## They Call Him 'Sky Angel Cowboy'

By Wendy Griffith  
CBN News Reporter  
December 23, 2007

CBNNews.com - They call him the 'Sky Angel Cowboy'. Thirteen-year-old Logan Henderson lives on a ranch located in the middle of Nebraska.



Isolated from much of the world - he often listens to KSBJ Christian radio out of Houston, Texas. which he picks up on Sky Angel. In late October - **Logan made a call** to the station that would soon be heard around the world.

(From KSBJ Christian radio. The D.J.'s name is Mike)

**Logan:** Hey Mike, Can I talk to you?

**Mike:** You bet Logan, what's up?

**Logan:** Hmmm... I want to tell you something that God just told me.

**Mike:** Okay?

**Logan:** Last night, my dad was ropin' this calf, and this calf had been born from a really old cow. She didn't have really the greatest milk; she didn't have like, the vitamin C and stuff. (sniff)

**Mike:** Okay?

**Logan:** Hold on... Mom!

**Mike:** (away from the phone) So cute. I guess his mom is talking to him.

**Logan:** (away from phone) I'm talking on the phone right now. I'll be up in a second. But... sorry about that. But anyway, she broke her back...and...this morning I went out and put her down myself. (crying) I was talking to God and I was asking "Why?" She was special! And God said, "You know, Logan, my son was special but He died for a purpose." It's kind of the same thing. That calf was close to me and God's son was close to Him.

**Mike:** Logan, you're so right. It's true. (pause) Think you're going to be okay?

**Logan:** Yeah. I'll be fine but I just wanted to tell you guys that, that...it's so important... just remember when you lose a loved one or a pet, always remember that God gave His son too and He understands. He will always understand. He will...Always! Just run to Him!

**Mike:** (holding back tears) Logan, you're wiser than you know, buddy.

**Logan:** Well, sometimes I don't think I'm so wise. Trust me, I've done a lot of stupid stuff, but I've learned from it.

**Mike:** Yeah, but see, that's what makes you wise. Somebody that learns from their mistakes...

**Logan:** Oh, I just figured I better call and share with you guys. Love You.

**Mike:** Love you, too.

**Logan:** Bye.

**Mike:** Bye.

## A Cheerful Christmas in Bethlehem

CBNNews.com  
December 25, 2007

CBNNews.com - BETHLEHEM - Christians from around the world came to Bethlehem this year to celebrate Christmas in the town of Jesus' birth.



After the start of the second intifada (Palestinian armed uprising) in September 2000, most of the people milling around Manger Square on Christmas were local Arab residents. But this year, lots of Christian visitors were back.

Tiago Martins, 28, from Curitiba, Brazil, said he was excited about visiting. "The idea that it's a Christian city makes me more calm, and I think going to the West Bank [Judea and Samaria] is more comfortable since Annapolis," Martins said, referring to last month's U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace initiative in Annapolis, Maryland.

Earlier this month, Bethlehem Mayor Victor Batarseh predicted that the relative quiet would bring about 65,000 tourists to visit the place of Jesus' birth this Christmas -- four times the number during Christmas 2005.

Still, unmistakable signs of the conflict made it clear that peace was not yet at hand.

Gray concrete walls enclose Bethlehem on three sides -- part of the security barrier erected to protect Israelis from Palestinians bent on terror attacks against Israelis.

### Less Festive in Gaza

In the Gaza Strip, the mood was decidedly more somber than in Bethlehem. Festivities among the Strip's 3,000 Christians were muted. There was little outward evidence of celebration.

For decades, Christmas was marked by an enormous, lavishly decorated tree in Gaza City's main square. Colored lights were strung across the plaza, and Christmas carols rang out from loudspeakers.

Shopkeepers did a brisk business selling decorations, cards and gifts, but all the cheer evaporated with the outbreak of the second intifada. And June's bloody fighting between the two rival Palestinian factions -- Hamas and Fatah -- has not been forgotten. Gaza-based Christians face increasing persecution at the hands of the predominately Muslim population.

The grimness only deepened this year with the assassination of a Rami Ayyad in October. While the ruling Hamas faction denied involvement in Ayyad's killing, they have yet to arrest his murderers.

Early Monday, hundreds of Gaza Christians lined up at the border crossing, hoping to celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem. Many of them said they didn't plan to return.

Some 400 Christians from Gaza are celebrating Christmas in Bethlehem this year.

## *Comfort Zone*

On page 2, I mentioned the idea of a personal “**Comfort Zone**”. At that moment, I was referring to simple things that make you comfortable, such as feeling comfortable in a certain environment. In church, for example, I like to sit near the music so you’ll usually see me in a pew near that corner of the sanctuary.

As I put the rest of this newsletter together, I’ve been thinking of how easily our confidence can be shaken and our knees can quake when we are the least little distance from our comfort zone. Think of times when you’ve been expected to speak in front of a large crowd. Even if they are all your friends and you know your lines perfectly, you may feel dry throat and wobbly knees.

Have you ever stepped out of your *comfort zone* to help a stranger or do something you ordinarily wouldn’t do? And, if you did, did you have friends tell you, “You’re crazy”? If you do, sometimes things work out okay; it just takes faith.

I’m often accused of being “nuts” because I tend to do things first and think about it later. Yeah, I’m crazy but I sure have fun when I leave my *comfort zone*.

One such example still makes me laugh. It happened last summer on an extremely hot day. I had just finished grocery shopping and was anxious to get everything home before the heat got to it; especially the ice cream.

As I was closing the trunk lid, I saw a young Black man looking lost. He was way out his own *comfort zone* and neighborhood and he was approaching everyone who would pass him in the parking lot. He seemed desperate and was offering money for a ride to where ever it was he needed to be.

I watched him as people hurried by him as if he had a knife in his hand instead of money. I just wanted to get my groceries home and hoped he didn’t see me, but just my luck, we made eye contact.

He had to get to a place that was 5 miles away and rush hour traffic had started. Five miles down 75<sup>th</sup> Street at that time of day would feel like an all day journey. His story seemed ridiculous but not impossible but I kept thinking about how my groceries would be garbage if I made the trip.

He seemed to be nearly in tears but I was ready to leave him there. As I got behind the wheel, my mind said, “Get lost” but the words came out, “Get in”. As he slid in to the passenger seat, I thought, “What am I, Nuts!”

He introduced himself and kept insisting I take money for the ride. Money wasn’t the issue, time was. So, I wondered how I was going to make up time in that traffic. Would I get pulled over for speeding? Would there be enough room to speed? How do I get in messes like this?

As we made a turn down 75<sup>th</sup>, he mentioned that he was a Gospel singer and his mother was a minister. I was ignoring him at first as I looked ahead at the traffic, then he started singing. The radio wasn’t on and there was no apparent

reason for singing but there he was; a total stranger, sitting next to me in my car, singing. He just threw my *comfort zone* out of the window.

Now, most people would have felt uneasy or embarrassed but he had a remarkable voice that created a brand new comfort zone. He paused at times to explain some arrangements he was working on but for most of the drive he sang Gospel songs in a remarkably beautiful voice.

Some of the songs I had heard before and some were new to me but they were all comforting. I kept looking at this kid, all sweaty and disheveled and looking like a reject from a prison film and I couldn’t help feeling lucky. I was lucky because so many others in the parking lot left him stranded.

When we arrived, I looked at the clock on the face of the radio and realized we had made great time. He kept insisting I take his money but I said, “Your songs are more than enough payment”. He looked calm and said, “Bless you” as he disappeared into the building.

On the way home, I didn’t feel so rushed and I made all the lights, which is just weird for that stretch of road at that time of day. I gathered the groceries inside the house and thought I’d have to throw out the ice cream and other items by now.

Then the strangest thing happened. I grabbed the container of ice cream and it was hard as a rock. It hadn’t even thought of melting yet. As I unpacked the rest of it, everything was just as fresh as it was on the shelves in the store.

When my wife came home from work, I was trying to tell her what just happened. Her first reaction was that I got myself in another mess. She’s used to me reacting without thinking.

The quick round trip and the lack of damage to the groceries didn’t make sense but I wouldn’t have cared if all the food was trashed if I could just hear that young man sing one more time.

Now, I don’t suggest picking up crazed looking strangers or jumping into crazy situations, but when you feel strong in your faith, God looks out for you. Somehow, things work out and He sets up a new “**Comfort Zone**” just for you.

That day has been playing over and over in my mind since then. It seems like I dreamed it but it really happened. I still don’t know if there’s a lesson to be had or if it’s worth passing on but it’s one of those things in life you get caught up in. You don’t think of stories on the news of car-jacking’s or anything bad happening; you just move ahead until the incident is over and you’re home in your *comfort zone* again.

***Blessed [be] God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.***

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

***Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [art] with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.***

*Psalms 23:4*

*THE LIGHTER SIDE*

It's January...



Fast flying bird!



Watch for confusing signs!



New moon landing!

