

Independent Evangelist

LE it's happening



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*The day is ending,
The night is descending;
The river dead.
The marsh is frozen,*

*Through clouds like ashes
The red sun flashes
On village windows
That glimmer red.*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Afternoon in February*

Welcome to the February issue of the Independent Evangelist. This is the shortest and by far the weirdest month of the year. The weather can vary from the 60's to heavy snow and cold, often within days. Maybe the groundhog will give us some hope for an early spring.

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS

*[Seek him] that maketh the seven stars and Orion,
and turneth the shadow of death into the morning,
and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for
the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon
the face of the earth: The Lord [is] his name:
Amos 5:8*

I and my wife are amateur astronomers. We were hooked when we toured the Yerkes observatory, when it was still in operation. They let us view Saturn through their big scope and we were able to see the rings and great detail on the surface. The thought of seeing another planet in motion that wasn't on TV or in a movie was truly amazing.

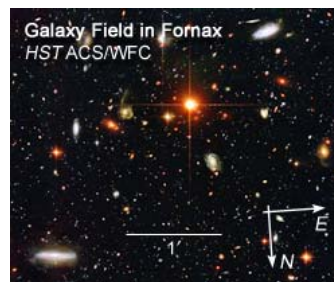
Soon after, we bought a telescope and joined an astronomy club. The club has a "dark sky site", a place away from the city with very little light pollution. We met other enthusiasts with varying degrees of knowledge of astronomy and **they loved sharing what they had learned** and were more than willing and patient to help out newcomers.

One time, after we were comfortable with the scope, we took a trip to an area outside Chadron, Nebraska where the night sky was breath-taking. We set up on a very empty dirt road to view an amazing blast of stars; more than the mind could grasp and certainly more than city dwellers ever get to see.

Coyotes, wild turkeys and many other animals were curious

about the odd sight before them. There were two people that weren't out to kill or destroy any of them or anything in their environment. They were just staring in that scope all night long. We must have been very strange in their eyes.

It's hard to describe the thrill of looking at the planets or some of the more exotic night objects. I've always been fascinated by the observations people made throughout history. They named constellations and saw planets before the discovery of telescopes. They built places on Earth to exactly coincide with equinoxes and made calendars by observing the sky.



Astronomers had to tread lightly as far as the Church was concerned in the early days of the science. Galileo and his contemporaries nearly died for the facts they revealed to the public.

Now, this is the part that I find most fascinating; a science that thrives only on fact, not faith, in my eyes, has provided proof of **Genesis** with the **Big Bang Theory**. They all concur that everything we see and have around us has been made from the energy of a blast from a single source. They just have been told to keep things on a liberal non-religious level so scientists will never say that single source was God, even though they know. They know because the "ancients" told them.

It seems that the more we know, the less we believe. I'll still watch the stars because God put them there and they sure make the night sky beautiful.

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light...16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also. 17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that [it was] good.

Genesis

PASS ON THAT WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED

O' Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me!

**I am small and weak, I need your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.**

Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy, Myself.

**Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.
So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.**

-Chief Dan George who was born, Tes-wah-no, a tribal chief forced to change his name because his people were forbidden to speak their native language.-

As a kid, I would see Native Americans portrayed in movies as vicious savages and if they prayed, they prayed to many different gods and film makers made it seem laughable. They turned their backs on the beauty of those cultures.

Native Americans did believe individual gods governed different aspects of their lives. That's common in all tribal cultures worldwide. The striking thing is that many became Christians and believed in one God by the end of the 1800's.

I cannot think that we are useless or God would not have created us. There is one God looking down on us all. We are all the children of one God. The sun, the darkness, the winds are all listening to what we have to say.
Geronimo – Apache

Last year, I wrote an article that asked if Jesus visited them after His resurrection. Since then, I keep coming back to their beliefs and customs on various websites.

They are amazing at passing on what they have learned. They keep records from generation to generation through huge odds. After all, they didn't have a written language until recent generations and as their ancestors were conquered, many tribes faced extinction. Yet, they passed on what they learned and taught their children well, all with the entire world striving to choke out their existence.

*Give [instruction] to a wise [man], and he will be yet wiser:
teach a just [man], and he will increase in learning.
Proverbs 9:9*

Now, whether or not Jesus ever visited them, they held on to values and practices we consider unique to Christianity. I took the following passages from Sioux, Navaho, and the Apache and I'm finding they are shared by all Native American tribes. I hope you enjoy them.

**When I pray, I pray for all living things.
When I thank, I thank for everything.**

**Of all the teachings we receive this one is the most important:
Nothing belongs to you
of what there is,
of what you take,
you must share.**

THANKS:

TO MY FATHER

For he gave me skill, stamina and the knowledge of my past.

TO MY MOTHER

For she gave me the love for life and taught me to respect it.

TO MY WIFE

Because she shared my burden when it threatened to slow my pace and kept by my side when we travelled lightly.

TO MY CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN

Because in their eyes I have seen myself.

THIS IS GOOD!

My People's Memory Reaches into the Beginning of All Things
Chief Dan George

I'm amazed when I consider the fact that a conquered race never lost their faith and beliefs. I pray that future generations will say the same about free American Christians. We are not yet conquered but we have a knack for giving our faith away without a fight. We fear praying openly because of the ACLU and the most ridiculous of all reasons; we don't want to look "uncool" in front of peers.

Don't neglect to pass on that which you have learned; faith, values and the power of prayer. I don't know about you, but when my life fades, as the fading sunset, I want my spirit to come before God without shame.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.
Galatians 6:6

**When a man does what needs to be done,
he does not know the meaning of time. – Lakota -**

MOVIE CORNER

I saw a really different movie the other night. Though it wasn't on a list of Christian movies, it is however a heartwarming film.

Checking Out, starring Peter Falk is the story of Morris Applebaum, who has decided to "check out" on his 90th birthday. Yes, the title implies he intends suicide and to make the movie seem even darker, he invites his family to his birthday sendoff.



In his youth, Morris was a successful actor as was his wife who died years earlier. He thinks that since all of his friends are gone and he lived a very full life, it had become time to join his beloved wife. He declares his intentions in letters to his children and he sets the stage for his last birthday party.

There's only one problem he never considered. Just like the movie, It's a Wonderful Life, Morris finds out just how many lives each life touches. His three estranged children also come to realize that, even in old age, the importance of one individual should never be underestimated.

David Paymer, Laura San Giacomo, and Judge Reinhold co-star in the one comedy that proves you're never too old to stir up a bit of mischief and never too old to learn..

Another more noteworthy movie recently released is **Amazing Grace**. One man's role in the long battle to outlaw slavery in the United Kingdom sets the stage for this historical drama.



In 1784, 21-year-old William Wilberforce was elected to the British House of Commons, and soon established himself as a politician with a conscience.

Several years later, his close friend William Pitt became prime minister, and together they made a bold plan to introduce a bill banning slavery before the English legislature.

As expected, he has a lot of powerful opposition and the human nature of the man wants to give up but a beautiful young woman encourages his progress towards his goals. It does take a second campaign to end slavery but the right man can make a huge difference.

I won't reveal how the song, Amazing Grace fits in; that's my favorite part. The movie made its debut at the Toronto 2006 film fest and I wish it had stayed in theaters longer so more people could see it on the large screen but it's still visually stunning and the story is an inspiration for all generations.

Today in sports...

The headline read;

Resolution reached over Urlacher's son

Linebacker happy with plan giving him more time with son

I'm a lifelong Bears fan and when I was a kid I played football. Middle linebacker was my favorite position and being a Bears fan, I've seen the best linebackers ever to play the game. I always thought how great it would be to spend even a few minutes in a Bears uniform and have a chance to be on the same field with those great players.

I'm sure that while growing up, Brian Urlacher dreamed of the day he would put on a jersey for any professional team and bust some heads. The sad thing is that fame takes over and great players become fodder for the paparazzi.

I wasn't there to see exactly how his marriage deteriorated so I would never judge their actions and even though I will never meet either party, I feel sorry for them and more so for their child. It's ironic that an old cripple who will never have one percent of his money or physical prowess should feel sorry for a multi-millionaire Bears player, but I do.

First, the press, like vultures tearing at a carcass, rips him apart because he has back pains and they don't think he's as good a player anymore. Then his marital problems surface and the vultures go into a feeding frenzy.

These quotes came from a poorly written article; poorly written because it was obviously hurried to meet a deadline.

"It was a great day in court," Urlacher said in a phone interview Thursday evening. "I achieved what I wanted to achieve, and that was to see my son more. That was the goal from the beginning. **All she wanted was money and fame.**"

For much of their son's life, Urlacher and Robertson have been in court disputes over child support, co-parenting time and other custody-related issues. The most recent court hearings have centered around who would drive the boy back and forth between his mother's house near Bolingbrook and his father's home in Lake Forest.

The saga of their broken marriage was continued monthly in the papers. There so were many hateful stories out of the parent's mouths and a child had to pay the price. Suddenly, this crippled old man seemed to walk taller and feel much richer than the esteemed middle linebacker.

He can keep the money and fame. From all of the spiteful things his ex had to say, I'm sure the saga will continue. Success and happiness is a point of view.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

Faith Talk Lands Sarkozy in Hot Water

CBN News

January 18, 2008

CBNNews.com - French President Nicolas Sarkozy is drawing criticism from opponents for his frequent talk of God and faith.



Many French believe Sarkozy broke a taboo when he emphasized France's Christian roots at a speech in Rome.

His critics say his speeches ignore a French law separating church and state, *Reuters* reports.

They say faith is a personal affair and speaking about it publicly is politically incorrect. But Sarkozy wants to change that.

He's even talking about providing state subsidies for faith-based groups.

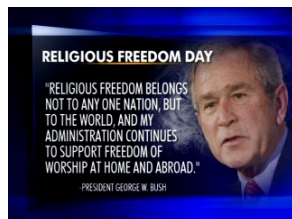
The twice-divorced Sarkozy is an infrequent churchgoer and calls himself a "cultural catholic," but **"someone who believes is someone who hopes."**

Bush Makes Jan. 16 'Religious Freedom Day'

CBN News

January 16, 2008

CBNNews.com - President Bush is declared January 16 "Religious Freedom Day."



The proclamation was released by the White House while the president was visiting Saudi Arabia, a country which has historically cracked down on Christians.

In recent years, the book *Operation World* listed Saudi Arabia as the nation with the worst religious persecution on the planet.

The president is touring through the Middle East this week, promoting peace and democracy.

His proclamation states, **"religious freedom belongs not to any one nation, but to the world, and my administration continues to support freedom of worship at home and abroad."**

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty.
2 Corinthians 3:17

And blessed is [he], whosoever shall not be offended in me.
Matthew 11:6

Iowa Legislature Opens with Muslim Prayer

CBN News

January 25, 2008

CBNNews.com - When the Iowa legislature convened last week, many became outraged over the session's opening prayer given by a Muslim imam.



Imam Muhammed Khan of Des Moines spoke in both Arabic and English during his four-minute prayer. He prayed for "victory over those who disbelieve," and "protection from the great Satan," a move many believe was more of a political statement.

Pastor Steve Smith of the Evangelical Free Church in Albert City, Iowa, was among those concerned about the prayer. He protested that the statement "those who disbelieve" included all non-Muslims.

"This is a request in the Iowa legislature for God to grant the Muslims victory over every non-muslim, not a request for salvation," Smith said.

He added that the term "Great Satan" has often been used by radical Muslims to describe America. Some thought using the phrase was a push, considering the recent wars in the Middle East.

Khan made no specific mention of Iraq or the war on terror during his blessing.

"I'm not concerned about a Muslim imam opening the legislature in prayer," Smith explained. "But it concerns me with the statements that were made. He interpreted this prayer from his understanding of Islam."

Another Representative agreed with Smith and said he addressed his concerns to the proper authorities.

Khan was the guest of State Representative Ako Abdul Samad of Des Moines, who is also a local Muslim leader.

The Iowa Senate began their session with prayer by a Catholic priest.

From day one in our country's history, the Author of freedom was not the state, nor even the Founding Fathers. Our basic human rights and freedoms, which have been the spark for all of America's accomplishments and greatness, were, and **are, "Creator-endowed."** We are a Christian nation, but here we go again, giving away our faith.

There is no attack on American culture more deadly and more historically dishonest than the secular effort to drive God out of America's public life. We are told where and when and how to pray so as not to disturb others and now in the halls of our Founding Fathers, we give the floor over to Muslim prayer and have them call us the great Satan.

All the paths of the Lord [are] mercy and truth unto such as
keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Psalms 25:10

The Village that Loved Jesus

By Lucille Talusan
CBN News Reporter
January 18, 2008



CBNNews.com - Indonesia's tropical paradise, Bali, is recovering from the stigma brought on by the 2002 and 2005 terrorist bombings.

Over the past year, the number of tourists visiting the region has nearly tripled. But it's not just the sandy beaches attracting tourists.

A unique village called Blimbing Sari is drawing visitors.

Instead of painting blood on their doors as in the Passover in the Old Testament days, to signify their Christian faith, **all 250 homes in the Blimbing Sari village in Bali have a balinese cross hanging on their doors.**

The villagers there boast that the area has been 100% Christian since 1939, when their persecuted ancestors were given the land as a safe haven by the Dutch government.

"The idea was by taking all of these people, there would be no more Christian movement in the villages," explained Rev. Ketut Suyaga Ayub, head pastor of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali. "But the Christians who came here-- there were 39 families in the beginning-- they found themselves in a new exodus to **the new promised land.**"

Villagers are taught the value of hard work and rest. Every family gets two hectares of land from the government where they farm and raise cows. Even children in the orphanage are taught the value of work.

"These new Christians have a very strong spirit for their life.

They understand this is a promising land, because of their prayer. many times, this village was elected as the best village economically, spiritually, the latest one we were elected as a place free from drugs and gambling," Pastor Ayub said.

Ayub believes that another reason the villagers' faith remains strong is because they still worship in the style of their forefathers. And because the love of God is felt in the community, new settlers who are non-believers are attracted to the Christian faith.

One of them is Gimana, a former Muslim.

"I was ill and a villager helped me get a surgery," he explained. "I lived among Christian people. They are nice to me and help me a lot. I learned Christianity. I believe in Jesus Christ as my own saviour.

Ni Ketut Sudarmiasih was a former Hindu who studied at the Christian orphanage.

"When I was a Hindu, I (was) not sure about salvation, if I (would be) saved when I die. But when I believe in Jesus Christ I know I will be with Jesus in heaven," he said.

And perhaps most amazing of all, the Christian village boasts a zero percent crime rate.

Today, government and private organizations flock to Blimbing Sari to learn from its example.

But they are yet to tap the key of her success: **a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

*The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.
Psalms 145:20*

Primaries, caucuses', mud- slinging, oh my!

I must be old or out of touch but it seems to me we need a new way of electing a president. Candidates have no limit on how much money they can raise to buy the Presidency so they can say what they want on TV. Some of that money goes to cutting down a rain forest worth of trees so they can mail out junk that will just go in a land fill. How about a spending cap like the salary cap in pro football?

They are good at blaming others for all the wrong around us but they are weak at giving answers. They are experts at doubletalk and sleight-of- hand. They are circus clowns and illusionists at best. With a spending cap, they would have to stick to the issues and some trees would be saved.

They buy union votes with big promises and they buy millions worth of media advertizing. If they bought the poor a few meals instead of charging \$1000 a plate for a catered dinner, they would get my vote.

If they would build churches and housing for the homeless instead of tearing apart Christianity, they would get my vote.

We have an ex-president fighting a freshman senator so he can get his wife in office. If they would tell the truth about themselves instead of throwing hatred at their opponent I might vote for them.

Primaries and caucuses have taken on a game show atmosphere and the littlest states seem to have the biggest voices. They are nothing but a circus side show and a popularity contest with the prize going to the one with the deepest pockets.

The popularity contests are won by looks as well. Could a man in a wheelchair be elected today? Could a tall skinny man with a stove pipe hat, beard, big ears or a funny voice be elected today? Could an honest or Christian man be elected today?

I'm not writing this to sway any one. I'm just tired of politics on every TV channel. I'll vote when the smoke clears and one of them gives a straight answer to any question. It's time to rest and settle down with a Good Book and wait for that day.

*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison [is] under their lips.
Psalms 140:3*

*Since a politician never believes what he says, he is quite surprised to be taken at his word.
Charles De Gaulle(1890 - 1970)*

*Under every stone lurks a politician.
Aristophanes, (450 BC - 388 BC)*

Ability is a point of view

In 1983 I was diagnosed with cancer and told to tie up loose ends at home because I probably would never go home again. I was a patient at Hines VA hospital, where they aggressively treated me with a lot of chemotherapy.

At one point (about a year) the therapy made me so weak that I was totally bed ridden and slipped into a coma. I only weighed 98 pounds at that time. When I came to, a priest was reading last rights over me. They really didn't expect me to live and thought it was a miracle when I started to finally recover.

One day during that time, I was scheduled for a test in a part of the building that would be far away if not for a short cut through a building with paraplegics. I thought I was feeling well enough that day to walk there by myself and I took the short cut.

In one hallway, there were three other vets around my age. I figured they were Nam vets and by the looks of them, they had seen too much combat. Two were in a wheel chairs and one was on his belly on one of those flat carts they use to transport patients in hospitals. They all were missing limbs and had other injuries from the war but they seemed to be in good spirit because they were enjoying each other's company.

I walked by the three vets thinking I was looking okay and feeling somewhat stronger. I made eye contact with the three guys and said "Hi" as I passed by, wheeling my IV stand. As I passed them I heard one of them say, "I'm glad I'm not him". Apparently, I looked that bad to them.

I was crushed thinking they would rather be struggling without limbs than to be me, sick with cancer but with hope for recovery. I thought I was having a good day until then. It would take a lot of therapy to get over that incident.

Ten years later after I had a stroke, I would observe the different levels of damage the human body will endure from accidents and strokes or whatever diseases could cause the damage I saw to other patients. I had plenty of time for observation in that rehab hospital.

With a stroke, for instance, there are as many variables as there are people. I saw people with, what they called, "mini strokes" and they would have many over time and they needed just a little therapy each time to recover. With most of them you would never know anything was wrong.

I've seen stroke victims that may never talk again or walk properly and some have droopy faces and slurred speech. They all have one thing in common that only those with an affliction have; they always think the other guy has it worse.

I think it's a way to cope with the loss of abilities. It's neither

right nor wrong and nobody is making light of someone else's situation as they say about them, "I'm glad I'm not him". They rarely say, "I want to be like him" because that would cause envy and anxiety if therapy didn't take them that far.

The thing is, people that appear to be suffering usually make the best of their situation and don't see themselves as crippled. I can't walk well and will never run again but I cope with what I can do and *that* becomes my normal life. I could wish to be like a stroke patient that no longer wears a leg brace, but that person has a droopy face and they can't write or have something else unseen by others.

The guy in the wheelchair could wish to be like me so he can drive a car without extensive handicap controls on his vehicle. However, I will never play basketball like he does with others he has met, all in wheelchairs.

The most remarkable people I have seen are Stephen Hawking and Christopher Reeve. They accomplished more in wheelchairs than they did before their afflictions happened.

Stephen Hawking ranks among the greatest minds of all time. From his wheelchair he lectures and teaches and his theories in physics rival those of Einstein and Newton even though he can't talk or move because he is dying of Lou Gehrig's disease.

Christopher Reeve had the spinal cord injury that eventually took his life but he became an activist. He dedicated his life to helping others with spinal cord injuries. He also worked from a custom wheel chair and with great difficulty. He never wanted to be Stephen Hawking or the guys in wheelchairs playing basketball. That was his "normal" life and he did well.

They could look at a guy like me and say, "I wish I had his abilities" but they are happy where they are. I could look at them and wish I had their abilities but I probably wouldn't serve the world the way they do. I'd just waste their talent because I'm in my shoes for a reason. I have to pass on what I've learned just as they did.

The biggest observation I've made is that whatever abilities we have, they are useless if we wish to be like others. In all the years I've spent in hospitals, I've found a common bond with patients that survive. They never lose faith, they never give up and they learn that some will love them and others will leave. The one's that stay by their sides do it out of love, whether it's a family member or a nursing home staff member.

The worst thing a person with all their abilities intact can do is waste their talents and not pass on what they've learned.

Abilities are just a point of view. Ask yourself what you can do rather than dwell on what you can't.

*Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I [am] the Lord.
Leviticus 19:14*

The Lighter Side



Be there for your children



Teach them to reach out to others



Don't let them make stupid choices



Give them something to smile about