

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

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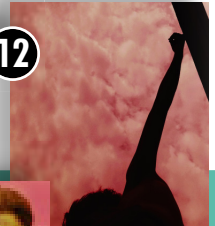
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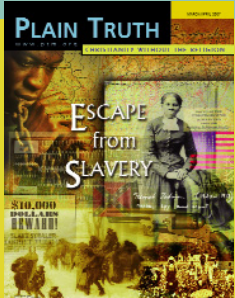
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Cover Story

Just as Harriet Tubman helped to free countless slaves during the Civil War, Christians can be instrumental in helping others escape the spiritual bondage of religious legalism by reflecting the light and grace of Jesus Christ.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MARV WEGNER—PTM.

About This Issue

Spring is a time for savoring freedom. Maybe it's because those of us in the Northern Hemisphere are emerging from our winter hibernation into the freedom of the great outdoors. Maybe it's because things are starting to grow. Maybe it's the Easter celebration, when our thoughts turn to the freedom that Jesus bought for us. In any case, our Spring issue is all about freedom.

Our cover article features the story of Harriet Tubman, who was instrumental in freeing countless slaves before and during the American Civil War. Bob Hostetler ("Do You Feel Expensive?") and Sheri Del Core ("His Blood Runs Warm") both bring rich food for thought concerning our redemption by Jesus. Greg Albrecht and Wayne Jacobsen focus on the freedom from religion that Jesus brings in "I Kissed Religion Goodbye" and "Why I Don't Go to Church Anymore," respectively.

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Ruth A. Tucker as a regular columnist. Ruth is former professor of missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and former visiting professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. She has authored seventeen books, including *God Talk*, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, *Another Gospel*, *Women in the Maze* and *Walking Away from Faith*. Residing in Michigan with her husband, John Worst, Ruth's interests vary from theology, politics, music, poetry, art, literature and international affairs to the environment—and let's not forget her four grandkids! Ruth brings this rich background of education, experience and expertise to her new column titled, "Tender Mercies," which debuts in this issue.

—Monte Wolverton, Managing editor



MISSION STATEMENT

Plain Truth Ministries proclaims authentic Christianity without the religion. We:

- Center our teaching on Jesus Christ and God's amazing grace
- Give hope to those burned out by religion
- Warn about and describe religious devices and detours, potholes and pitfalls that can lead us away from God
- Combat the deadly virus of legalism
- Base our ministry upon the essential, main and plain core teachings of historic Christianity

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Christians and Superstition

You guys consistently hit home runs with each issue of the *PT*. "Christians and Superstition" in the Jan-Feb 2007 *Plain Truth* is excellent. My wife and I love Ron Benson's sense of humor and the great lesson he draws in his article about "superstitious fishing." "Jesus Junk" by Phil Cooke is absolutely on the mark regarding so much "Christian" media and "A Cause for Every Effect" by Monte Wolverton was very thought-provoking. Keep it up—when we receive our *PT* we usually read it within two or three days. Too bad you can't publish more often!

Texas



Christian "Nice Guys"

I've heard Paul Coughlin on the radio, so what a treat it was to read "Christian 'Nice Guys'" in the Jan-Feb 2007 issue of *Plain Truth*. The idea that Christian men can still be men—not a bunch of soft, feminized geeks—is a message that is desperately needed in many churches I have attended and been a member of. Those kinds of churches are in my past—not my present walk with the Lord. It's funny, in my experience, the tougher the rules and the more hard-line a church is, the more insipid the men become. Paul Coughlin helped to reinforce what I discovered several years ago—my Jesus is not a powder-puff religious goody-two-shoes. Thanks for printing this article.

Oregon

I thoroughly enjoyed Paul Coughlin's insightful examination of the makeup of Christian "nice guys." But the sad reality

is, that while the wives and girlfriends of these men will immediately recognize the characteristics of a "CNG," the majority of the men will remain clueless, and the cycle will continue. I look forward to reading more from the Coughlins in future *Plain Truth* issues.

Email



Religion: The Lie... the Truth

I just wanted to say thanks for the wonderful article, Religion: The Lie ... The Truth" by Ken Armstrong in the Jan-Feb 2007 *Plain Truth*. I am a recovering legalist, and I was a little hesitant at first to read it, but because it was in the *Plain Truth* under Greg Albrecht's leadership, I knew it would be edifying.

The Spirit used Ken Armstrong to melt any resistance I had like butter in an oven. Thanks for the comfort and teaching. I do not attend a church—too much damned religion in them. But I read and reread articles in the *Plain Truth*.

I am thick headed, after being in religious legalism for so long. It takes a loving explanation to eventually show me the light of my life, the gospel of Jesus and Him crucified. I am a rebel—I rebel strongly against those who would transplant themselves between me and my Lord. Thank God that PTM doesn't do that, and thanks for printing this article by Ken Armstrong.

Email

I just read "Religion: The Lie...the Truth" in the Jan-Feb 2007 *Plain Truth*. Ken Armstrong sure hit the nail on the head for this "Nazacatholibapticoastal" survivor, now a children's minister here in New Mexico. I was born in San Francisco and lived in a family that eventually made me the "head of the family" at the age of 12, having to help with our family income at that time. I escaped by joining the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. I have been serving in children's ministry for 30 years.

New Mexico



Women in the Pulpit

Thank you so much for providing a balanced look at the subject of gender. This article came at a really good time for me, as I recently left a church “building” called the Church of Christ. After seeing so many of the veiled women in the Middle East and reading about how patriarchal and demanding men are in the Middle East, I realized that treating women as “lesser equals” is not what Jesus taught at all.

In the church I had attended, *men-only* can serve communion, *men-only* can pray aloud, *men-only* can give sermons (women are only allowed to teach children), among other *men-only* restrictions. I believe the church was wrong in using Scripture to condone slavery and demean women. The church needs to uplift women and embrace their godly gifts.

North Carolina



The Incarnation—God Is With Us

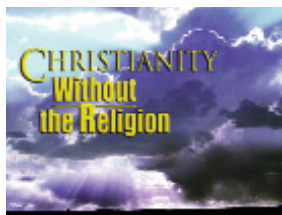
Thank you so much for the article “The Incarnation—God Is With Us” by Martin Davis in the Nov-Dec 2006 *Plain Truth*. It was faith-building and really meant a lot to me. I am praying that God will continue to bless Plain Truth Ministries.

Missouri

Martin Davis’ article in the Nov-Dec 2006 *Plain Truth* was a tremendous reassurance of the Jesus that I have experienced and that you have described so well.

It doesn’t seem that there is any pain, loss, tragedy or rejection we can plunge into that can trump what Jesus has already endured. He’s been there/done that way ahead of us. Thank God for such an encompassing gift to us, and thanks to you for describing it so meaningfully.

Arkansas



Christianity Without the Religion

I want to thank you for the online worship services you are providing at *Christianity Without the Religion (CWR)*. I don’t know fully the type of feedback you’ve received, but I praise God for you taking the gospel out of the four walls of a church building and making it accessible to so many people who are burned out on religion, tired or hurt for some reason. I am a pastor, and I very much appreciate the work you are doing.

Florida

I can’t tell you how much you’ve helped me to break out of the legalism that I was once trapped in. I have both of your books (*Bad News Religion* and *Revelation Revolution*), and I just gave a copy to a coworker of mine. I’m thankful for all your resources and materials—including *Plain Truth* magazine, *Christianity Without the Religion* online church services, *Plain Truth* radio, etc.

It really helps me to realize that God is not angry with me. When I read the gospels and see how Jesus reacted to sinners, I find comfort, since he represented the Father. I’m not rich, but I’ll be making regular contributions to PTM in 2007. I just know it’s very important for others to get out of the bondage that still, occasionally, tries to re-shackle me. Greg, I regard you as one of my pastors. As we say in the “hood,” you are “The Man!” Keep up the great work!

Email

Ever since being led to your website, listening to your programs, joining in your *CWR* worship services and reading past *PT* articles, I have had difficulty putting into words the feeling of love I now have toward Jesus Christ. Now this is a Jesus I can spend eternity with! This revelation makes me WANT to do “good works”—knowing they could never save me, nor do my works contribute towards my salvation. But they are a mere reflection of Jesus Christ working and living in me! The works are done out of appreciation of what has been done for me, and all that has been forgiven of me with no strings attached! What relief! What a motivation! Thanks, and I pray for continued blessings upon your ministry!

Ohio

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