

## CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION<sup>®</sup>

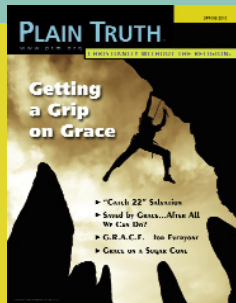
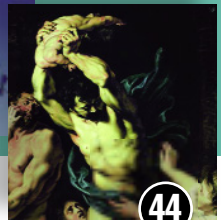
### Features

- 19 Good Little Christian Girl** *What happens when you're never good enough?*
- 27 If You Had Only Known...** *Life in Christ is lived in the valley of the shadow...*
- 33 Feeling Forsaken** *Easter may find us in despair, but there is Light at the end!*
- 36 Beyond Sunday Church** *Looking beyond the paradigm of "going to" church.*
- 38 Saved from a "Come-to-Jesus" Gala** *Legalism intertwines church with Jesus.*
- 41 Kite-String Christian** *It can be painful to take off the mask of perfection.*
- 44 Does the Bible Really Say That?** *Jesus has life—not paper and ink.*



### Departments

- 17 Commentary** *Greg Albrecht*
- 31 He Asked Me to Remind You** *Steve Brown*
- 40 Tender Mercies** *Ruth A. Tucker*
- 47 Growing Places** *Susan Reedy*



### Cover Story

5

Plain Truth contributing

writers share their insights about God's amazing grace in these four articles: "Catch 22 Salvation" by Glen Moyer, "Saved by Grace..." by Carol Harper, "G.R.A.C.E. for Everyone," by Richard Kidd and "Grace on a Sugar Cone" by Susan Reedy.

COVER PHOTO BY GREG EPPERSON—ISTOCKPHOTO

### Inside This Issue

I was taught *The Book of Mormon* quote in 2nd Nephi 25:23 "...for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (emphasis added). This doctrine summarizes grace as thus: Do everything you can first, then God will make up the difference. *Saved by Grace...* 9

I have learned that with my Savior, I am always safe—safe to bear my deepest sins and free to fly from that old man-made prison I used to live in. *Good Little Christian Girl* 22

Real life in Christ is life lived in the trenches. It's life lived in the valley of the shadow of death, a valley we don't walk through alone, for he is with us. But, we all still walk through the valley. *If You Had Only Known...* 29

For those Christians who are presently experiencing sorrow, doubt and despair, the agony of Good Friday may be more of a fitting symbol of the Easter season than the flowers and fanfare of Easter Sunday. *Feeling Forsaken* 33

Almost everything about our institutions...aims to draw people to a central location on Sunday. We need to see that what works for some doesn't work for others. *Beyond Sunday Church* 37

## MISSION STATEMENT

Plain Truth Ministries proclaims authentic Christianity without the religion. Our work is Christ-centered, based on God's amazing grace, giving hope to those burned out by legalistic religion.

## HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

**For an introductory one-year subscription in the U.S.A. or Canada**, call toll free 1-800-309-4466, or visit [www.ptm.org](http://www.ptm.org). Single copies or back issues: U.S. \$4.

**Initial, one-year subscriptions outside of the U.S.A. and Canada** are U.S. \$29.95 a year; credit card orders only.

Following initial one-year introductory subscriptions, *Plain Truth* is an automatic benefit for ongoing PTM contributors.

## TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

Be sure to notify us immediately of any change in your address by calling us at 1-800-309-4466, visiting our website at [www.ptm.org/change](http://www.ptm.org/change) (please have your old mailing label available for reference) or writing us at *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129 (please include your old mailing label and your new address). U.S. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129.

## TO SEND A LETTER OR E-MAIL

Write us at Letters to the Editor, *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129, email us at [managing.editor@ptm.org](mailto:managing.editor@ptm.org) or fax us at Letters to the Editor at 626-358-4846.

The editors reserve the right to print or not print comments so addressed, in whole or in part, as deemed in the public interest, and to print your name and edit the letter for clarity and space.

We will protect the confidentiality of correspondence that we deem to be of a personal nature. Correspondence published by Plain Truth Ministries does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Plain Truth Ministries.

## EDITORIAL STAFF

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Greg Albrecht

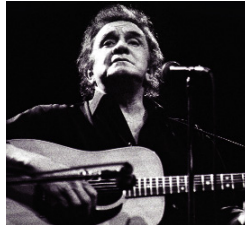
**MANAGING EDITOR:** Monte Wolverton

**ART DIRECTION AND PRODUCTION:** Marv Wegner

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR:** Laura Urista

**CIRCULATION DIRECTOR:** Skip Dunn

**THEOLOGICAL CONSULTANT:** Jim Fowler



## The Man in Black Found the Light

I wanted to take a minute and let you know I received my Winter 2009 *Plain Truth* yesterday. WOW! I knew *Plain Truth* was cool, but Johnny Cash on the cover? I didn't know ya'll were *that* cool (LOL)! I have been a huge Johnny Cash fan since I was young enough to recognize music. I can't wait to get into the rest of the magazine.

Florida

I thought "The Man in Black" story by Patrick Durek was amazing—very powerful. It's one of the best magazine stories I've ever read, and I'm a journalist.

California

I love the *Plain Truth*. "The Man in Black" article was truly interesting. Four issues per year is plenty! One for Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter is just right. Keep up the great work you are doing.

Mississippi

I've been a Johnny Cash fan since 1956. Imagine my shock and pleasure to find the cover story about him in your Winter 2009 issue of *Plain Truth*. There's no doubt in my mind that God used my "connection" with Johnny to mold and shape my mind and enhance my relationship with God through his Spirit.

Thanks to PTM and Patrick Durek for that insightful article. It should inspire many more people to keep struggling with whatever plagues them.

Tennessee



## Mixed Messages of Modesty

Thanks to Rachel Ramer for writing this important and helpful article. I've

suffered with low self-esteem all my life, mostly because of strict modesty rules imposed on me by parents and the legalistic church culture I was raised in.

This statement in Rachel's article brought me to tears: "...distorted modesty teachings contribute to sexual difficulty in marriage...this deeply internalized conditioning does not evaporate at the wedding, nor does it leave the female personality unharmed."

Boy did she hit the nail on the head! It took me many years to realize and begin to deal with that sad reality. I hope this article will be read by women all around the world—young and old!

California



## Immanuel—God Comes to Us

I just wanted to write and tell you I think you are doing a GREAT job with *The Plain Truth*. The Winter 2009 issue was wonderful. Martin Davis' article on Immanuel was incredible. Keep up the good work!

Alabama



## "Bah Humbug!"

Jim Fowler clearly missed the "plain truth" mark with his "Bah-Humbug" article in the Winter 2009 *Plain Truth*. Here are a few points Mr. Fowler apparently did not consider:

Telling people "Don't be a scrooge" because they don't follow Christmas traditions is just as bad as telling people that they should not celebrate Christmas in the traditional manner. These are two sides of the same coin. If we apply the principles found in Romans 14 (which apply to this situation), this becomes evident.

There may be valid reasons why

someone does not want to spend the time, effort and money required to have all the trappings of a traditional Christmas. For example, one might not have done very much in the way of supporting the poor or the church, and for reasons of conscience would not feel right in spending the money.

The real scrooges are people who do not exhibit the love of Jesus towards others—not those who opt out of the Christmas traditions.

**New Jersey**



## How to Escape the Millennial Maze

The Winter 2009 *Plain Truth* was great! Especially Tal Brooke's article "How to Escape the Millennial Maze." There was so much in that article I could relate to. The one problem with a maze is that unless you know the way out, you *can't* get out. Thank God that He led me out.

**New York**

The article "Millennial Maze," it doesn't make sense at all. I like Greg Albrecht's sermons, but not his ideas of end-times prophecy.

**Illinois**

I enjoyed Tal Brooke's article in the Winter 2009 *Plain Truth* magazine. I agree with him, and when I have tried telling people this over the past several years they think I'm nuts!

**Florida**

Tal Brooke's article about the Millennial Maze and how so many folks follow those nutcases has been my feeling for so long now.

Most folks are easily distracted by so many nutcases, and fewer read God's Word. Tal's last paragraph is incredible!

And oh, how I loved Bruce Bickel and Stan Jantz' great comments in the article, "Christians Who Obsess About the End of the World"!

They made me laugh and giggle at just the right time (but I had tears, too, since so many people fall for so much nonsense).

I could go on and on. You all are a true blessing to me.

**New Mexico**



## Christianity Without the Religion

I want to thank God for each and every one of you at PTM. His enabling power is truly awesome, and I pray he increases each of you powerfully in his work and word of grace. Thank you also for the sermon tapes and printed materials you have sent us, and it is truly a joy to be partners and friends with PTM and *CWR* for many years. May God protect, guide and provide for all of you abundantly in every aspect of his truth in love.

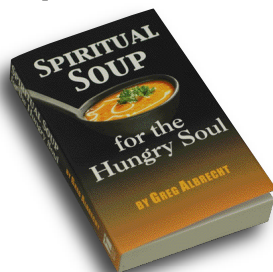
**California**

I really enjoy all your insights about Christianity. I, too, am tired of the religious treadmill (or roller coaster, as I call it). Thanks for all your hard work.

**North Carolina**

Just a note to let you know how much I appreciate the *CWR* tapes you send each month. Due to the health of my husband, I do not attend services anymore. I fear to leave him alone. If he falls, he is unable to get up by himself. Your messages have helped me understand God's Word better and helped me draw closer to our Savior.

**Florida**



## Soup for Breakfast

Thank you for the new book by Greg Albrecht. Each morning at breakfast I enjoy a helping of *Spiritual Soup for the Hungry Soul*. It is delicious and truly enriching. My cat, Nellie, also seems to enjoy this book that her human reads. She puts her paw up on the page as I read along and she seems to agree. Keep up the great service you provide us escapees of religion and those who feel lost and unwanted.

**Pennsylvania**

• See back cover to order your copy of *Spiritual Soup for the Hungry Soul*.

## COPYRIGHT & POSTAL INFORMATION

*The Plain Truth* is published quarterly by Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129. Copyright © 2010 Plain Truth Ministries. Printed in U.S.A. All rights reserved. Standard flats postage paid at Pasadena, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Volume 75, Number 1: Spring 2010. Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. *The Plain Truth*® is a U.S. trademark.

## CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

Join us, 24/7, at *Christianity Without the Religion*® for Christ-centered teaching. A grace-based message is available right now at [www.ptm.org](http://www.ptm.org). *Christianity Without the Religion*® is a U.S. trademark.

## OUR WEBSITE

Visit our website at [www.ptm.org](http://www.ptm.org) to browse *Plain Truth* archives for past articles, to find out more about Plain Truth Ministries and our other resources, to subscribe and to update your address.

## SUBMISSIONS

*The Plain Truth* rarely publishes unsolicited manuscripts. Please review our writers guidelines at our website ([www.ptm.org](http://www.ptm.org)) before submitting queries. Include SASE with query. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited artwork, photographs or manuscripts.

## PLAIN TRUTH MINISTRIES

*The Plain Truth* is published by Plain Truth Ministries (PTM). If you are interested in learning more about PTM, please request a copy of *Plain Truth Ministries...Helping Change Lives Around the World* by calling us at 1-800-309-4466, visiting our website at [www.ptm.org](http://www.ptm.org) or writing us at Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Plain Truth Ministries gratefully accepts tax deductible contributions to further the ongoing work of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. We accept contributions in U.S. funds by check or credit card. Call us at 1-800-309-4466, or write us at Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129.

twitter

facebook



PLAIN TRUTH MINISTRIES

MEMBER  EVANGELICAL PRESS ASSOCIATION