



# The G.E.M.

Volume 2 Edition 12

The Grace Electronic Magazine

December 2008

## TIME TO REJOICE

Christmas is an exciting time of the year. A time when families, friends and communities join together to fellowship with one another and have fun. But more than that, it is a time to remember the birth of our Saviour two-thousand years ago, and the life He lived so that we might be brought back into a right relationship with our Heavenly Father.

This Christmas season will be somewhat different to most. The current financial situation of the global markets and all the political and health troubles around, people may not be as positive about this festive season as usual. Let us encourage and remind them of the reason for the season.

Why not pay us a visit over the last few weeks before Christmas and purchase that special gift to encourage and inspire your loved ones.

If you are not sure what to buy them, why not bless them with a Grace Media gift voucher that they can redeem anytime.

In this month's edition of The G.E.M. we look at what the Bible means when it calls Jesus our redeemer. There are a couple of exciting products reviews of two great movies, and not to forget the ever popular Fun Page.

Until next time, God bless and have a blessed Christmas and New Year.

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6). †*

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## CHRISTMAS 2008



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Christmas DVD



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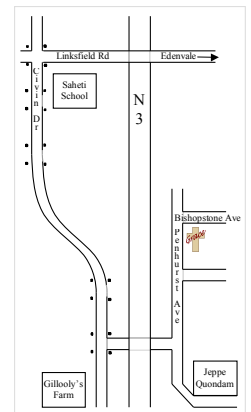
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### SHOP TRADING HOURS:

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**Directions:** From the N3, take the Linksfield Rd off ramp. Turn right up hill. Stay in left lane. Turn left into Civin Dr. At 4th set of lights, turn left under bridge. At t-junction turn left. Through the boom. We are ± 200m on the right hand side. Entrance is in Penhurst Ave.



## 10/40 SPOTLIGHT

### Benin Republic of Benin



**Capital:** Porto-Novo

**Official Language:** French

**Currency:** West African CFA Franc

**Population:** 8,439,000

**Government:** Multiparty democracy

**Religions:** Traditional 47.7%, Christianity 31.8%, Islam 20%, Other 0.5%

**% of People in Poverty:** 37.4%

#### Location:

Benin, is stretched between the Niger River in the north-east and the Bight of Benin in the south. Benin's elevation is about the same for the entire country. Most of the population lives in the southern coastal plains, where Benin's largest cities are also located, including Porto Novo and Cotonou. The north of the country consists mostly of savannah and semi-arid highlands. Running southerly, down the middle of the country is the Oueme River.

The climate in Benin is hot and humid with relatively little rain compared to other West African countries, although there are two rainy seasons (April-July and September-November). In the winter the dust winds can make the nights rather cold.

#### Religion:

Benin has Africa's highest percentage of followers of traditional religions and is the least evangelised non-Muslim country in Africa south of the Sahara. Only a handful of peoples have a Christian majority, and just five are more than 5% Evangelical. Islam was introduced by the Songhai Empire and Hausa merchants.

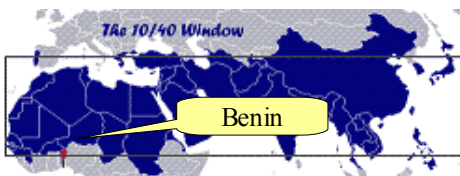
Indigenous religions are followed by a majority of the people. They include local animistic religions in the Atakora (Atakora and Donga provinces) and Vodun among the Yoruba and Tado peoples in the center and south of the country.

The town of Ouidah on the central coast is the spiritual center of Beninese vodun.

#### Challenges for Christians:

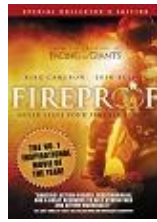
More people follow traditional ethnic religions in Benin than in any other African nation. Voodoo has its origins in the ethnic religion of the Fon peoples and many are tied up in fear and superstition. Most Christians continue to hold Vodun beliefs and have incorporated into Christianity the pantheon of Vodun.

A million people live in Benin's cities and Christians have grown from a few hundred to over 30% of the population. There is still a need for Christians to reach out to the Muslim urban population (20%).



## PRODUCT REVIEWS

### FIREPROOF DVD



From the producers who brought you *Facing the Giants* and *Flywheel* comes a movie full of drama, love, comedy and suspense that will keep you glued to your seat.

*Fireproof* is an action-packed love story about a firefighter, his wife, and a marriage worth rescuing! At work, Capt. Caleb Holt (Kirk Cameron) lives by the firefighter's oath: "Never leave your partner behind". At home things are different. Now Caleb has to face his toughest job ever, rescuing his wife's heart and making a life-long change.

Heart wrenching and excellent to watch on date night, with your small group, part of a marriage course, or as a church. Every person who watches it will be faced with the truth that marriage is not a contract between two people, but rather a covenant between two people and God.

Complete with study guides and short clips for use with your small group, this movie is a must for every married couple's and marriage counsellors DVD library.

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THE RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE**

**DUE FOR RELEASE IN JANUARY.**

### PRINCE CASPIAN DVD



Following on from the success of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, this C.S. Lewis classic is set to enthral children of all ages for generations to come.

Based on the book by the same name, this movie continues the adventures of Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy as they are taken back to the land of Narnia to once again save the day.

What started as another boring trip back to boarding school, turns out to be an awesome adventure that any young child will only dream of.

This time as the Pevensie children are whisked away to help their old friends, they are faced with new challenges, new dangers and new enemies.

With the help of Aslan and the good armies of Narnia, the siblings have to help restore the land back to the rightful king, Prince Caspian.

This movie will keep children, and many of their parents, entertained during the Christmas holidays. †

## DIARY OF EVENTS

### Children's Ministry Conference

21 March 2009  
Bryanston Methodist Church

### Mighty Men's Conference

24-26 April 2009  
Shalom Farm, Greytown

### Beauty for Ashes Women's Conference

22-24 May 2009  
Rivers Church, Sandton

### Preparing the Church for 2010 Conference

22-27 June 2009  
SA Theological Seminary

Visit our website for more info on these and other exciting Christian events.

## Top 25 Must Reads

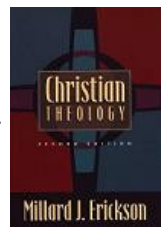
### Christian Theology by Millard J. Erickson

Written from a conservative, evangelical, Baptist perspective, *Christian Theology* is a technical/semi-technical work, requiring knowledge of Hebrew and Greek.

It is designed for use in seminaries, but is accessible to educated lay-readers as well. Scriptural quotations are generally from the NIV, though Erickson defers to the original languages.

With over 1300 pages, *Christian Theology* offers incredible depth of detail. Its meticulous analysis of the major issues in theology will prove helpful to all theology students, and the chapter summaries and study questions easily lend themselves to the classroom setting.

*Christian Theology* is an indispensable tool for pastors, students and church leaders.



**R 470**

## OUR REDEEMER

**P**raise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. - Luke 1:68

We see the above verse in the prayer of Zechariah shortly after the birth of John the Baptist, roughly three months before the birth of Jesus. In a number of verses in the New Testament we read of Jesus being the redeemer (e.g. Galatians 3:13-14).

But what does it mean that He is our Redeemer? In order to understand this principle fully, we need to turn back to the Old Testament, particularly to the book of Ruth.

### Brief Background

When a famine strikes Israel, the family of Elimelech and Naomi move to Moab. In violation of Mosaic Law, their two sons marry Moabite women. While there, Elimelech and the two sons die. Later Naomi hears that the LORD is again blessing Israel, and she decides to return to her home town of Bethlehem. One daughter-in-law, Ruth, refuses to be left behind and makes a firm commitment to Naomi - "*Your people will be my people and your God my God*" (Ruth 1:16).

The two women have no means of support, so Ruth goes into the fields during the harvest time to glean. Boaz notices the young woman and is later introduced to her by an unnamed servant. Naomi encourages Ruth to return to the fields, and later to approach Boaz directly at the threshing floor, not only because of her good fortune, but also because Boaz is a relative of the family and is thus a potential "kinsman-redeemer". When Ruth appeals to Boaz for him to marry her, he is willing but there is a nearer relative. This relative however, is not willing to take her, so Boaz then becomes eligible. Boaz and Ruth marry and their first son, Obed, later becomes the grandfather of King David.

### Context

In order to fully understand this story, we need to understand some of the laws in operation from the Torah and other cultural aspects during that time period.

### The Law of Gleaning

According to Mosaic law, the harvesters were only permitted to reap on one pass. What was missed, or left behind, was available to be "gleaned" (collected) by the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows (see Deuteronomy 24:19-21).

### The Threshing Floor

Along with harvesting goes the activity of winnowing at a threshing floor. This is a piece of ground where there is a prevailing wind. The grain is tossed into the air and the grain falls downwind a small distance, while the chaff, being lighter, is carried further downwind. The grain would be then taken and sold at the market, while the chaff is burned up.

In those times the owners would typically sleep at the area of the threshing floor at

night in order to protect the grain from theft or from being eaten by the animals. Naomi instructed Ruth to privately approach Boaz here. What follows is an action and line that is unfamiliar to our western minds - Ruth uncovers Boaz's feet and lies down. Later when he awakens to find her there she says to him, "*Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer*" (Ruth 3:9). The skirt, or hem, was the emblem of rank or authority in Israel, similar to the stripes that appear on a soldier's sleeve today. What Ruth was doing therefore was asking Boaz to place the authority of his house over her.

### The Kinsman Redeemer

We see that Boaz was not the closest relative, and he takes it upon himself to confront this nearer kinsman, in front of the city council, to force the issue. There were two issues at stake here:

(1) The taking Ruth to be his wife. According to Mosaic Law, if a widow had no son, she could request the next of kin to take her to be his wife. The first born son of that relationship would be counted as the son of the dead husband, so the family line would be preserved.

(2) The redeeming of the land for Naomi. Today, when property is sold, the title passes over completely to the buyer. However, in Biblical times Israel's land was to be retained within the family, as it was land that had been granted to the tribes during the time of Joshua (one of the reasons why genealogies in the Bible are so important). If someone ever "sold" their property, the transaction was what we would view today as a lease, and there were provisions for the land to be returned to the family (see Leviticus 25:23-34). A "title deed" would include the terms that a relative of the family could perform in order to "redeem" the land back to the family.

The nearer kinsman was willing to redeem the land, but not to take Ruth as his wife. So the nearer kinsman gives Boaz his shoe, a symbol of disgrace, thereby freeing Boaz to take Ruth as his wife (see Deuteronomy 25:5-10).

### A Closer Look

This charming love story is a classic tale that has been copied by many a romance author and Hollywood screen-writer. But if we look closer at it we see that it is far more than that. Entwined within this story is God's plan hidden in the colourful symbols and roles. Throughout Scripture we see symbols, models or types that present to us pictures of God and His plan or dealings with mankind. Each one teaches us something awesome about the God we serve, and this story is no different.

As we examine the role of Boaz as the kinsman-redeemer, we can easily see how he is a picture of our own kinsman-redeemer, Jesus. Through his act of redemption, Boaz returns Naomi to her land, and also takes Ruth (a Gentile) as his bride. This suggests the parallel that

through Christ, the Jews will be returned to their land and the church will be taken as His gentile bride.

It is interesting to note who first introduces Boaz to Ruth; an unnamed servant (Ruth 2:5). This is suggestive of the role of the Holy Spirit, and it is fascinating that in every example in Scripture the Holy Spirit is viewed in such a role. One other example is when Abraham, as the father, sent out an unnamed servant to find a bride for his son

Isaac (Genesis 24). This unnamed servant was the oldest servant and, as was the tradition, if there were no sons, one's inheritance would go to this servant. If it is the same servant, which it seems to be, he is named in Genesis 15:2 as Eliezer, which means Comforter, a name that Jesus used to refer to the Holy Spirit in John 14 (KJV).

**"Jesus purchased and redeemed us through His life work here on earth."**

But why would the Holy Spirit be the unnamed servant? Simply because the role of the Holy Spirit is to point the church to Christ and not to himself. He reminds us of the things of God, and does not receive any glory for himself.

It is interesting that no matter how much Boaz wanted Ruth, there was nothing he could do until she declared herself to him. It was her move. In the same way, no matter how much Jesus loves us, He waits for our response.

What does the nearer kinsman symbolise? Most scholars agree that he represents the law. What the law could not do, Jesus has already done for us. It is also interesting to note that approaching the nearer kinsman was Ruth's responsibility, but Boaz stood in her place and took the entire burden upon himself. Jesus has done the same for us.

This Christmas season let us remember that just as Boaz redeemed his gentile bride and her mother, Jesus has redeemed us through His life work here on earth. He stood in our position in order to redeem our inheritance back to us. He has also provided the Holy Spirit to introduce us to Him. Let us respond the way Ruth did and ask God to place us fully under His authority. †

**"Entwined within this story is the plan of God."**

## New Louie Giglio DVD

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"If God loves me, why am I suffering," we cry. "Where is God when it hurts?"

Learning from the lives of Joseph, Paul and Silas, we see that God is always painting on a canvas much larger than we can imagine. As a result, we can cling to faith in the midst of darkness, believing that God is working in every situation to glorify His name.



**R 60**

## WORD SEARCH

## THE MASTER'S CARD

## THAT'S IN THE BIBLE?

S N A I P P I L I H P N M T R Y P  
 N S X X R S E T J E H H A H R A M  
 O U Y C B V D V L J O O T E O N H  
 M T Q I Y M L P U J B J T S S K L  
 E I J Z R H H D J S N A H S T E O  
 L T I X O L E I V J F M E A T X Q  
 I V M R O M A N S H C K W L I J P  
 H L I X M E T V W O K M K O M I P  
 P M H Q V K H N R R R I R N O C E  
 L U F P J E G I A Z B E D I T D L  
 J U E D B W N M C B V N I A H M R  
 D C K R S T H S O E O V A N Y O H  
 L U E E H N T N L S D A P S T Q G  
 I W Z I W Q A A O Y W B Y S H O F  
 S H A X Y I T I S S I E R E M Z  
 D N J F F I T T S J T M Q E D C F  
 S G S W O C V A I E A C K T S B U  
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### How well do you know the Good Book?

- Jesus in Hebrew (Jeshua) means?
  - Immanuel
  - God our Salvation
  - God is with us
  - Son of Joseph
- Only four women are mentioned in Matthew's genealogy of Christ. Who is not one of them?
  - Sarah
  - Rahab
  - Tamar
  - Ruth
- The first person Jesus raised from the dead was?
  - Jairus' daughter
  - Peter's mother-in-law
  - Lazarus
  - The widow's son
- Jesus gave Simon the nickname Cephas, which means?
  - Strong-headed
  - Rock
  - Cornerstone
  - Rash
- When Herod heard about the fame of Jesus, he said that Jesus must be?
  - Elijah
  - John the Baptist
  - A demon
  - Elisha
- Pilate was warned to have nothing to do with Jesus' death by?
  - His centurion
  - His legal adviser
  - His prophets
  - His wife
- When Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to be presented at the temple, they offered a sacrifice of?
  - A newborn lamb
  - An ephah of flour
  - Two turtle doves
  - A log of oil
- According to Mark, Jesus was first recognised as the Christ by?
  - Mary
  - A Leper
  - Peter
  - A demon

Answers in the Next Edition

## IN CLOSING

### WHAT DENOMINATION?

A woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas Cards. "What denomination?" asked the clerk.

"Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?" said the woman. "Well, give me 30 Methodist, 10 Baptist ones, 20 Lutheran, and 40 Presbyterian."

Merry Christmas