

# The Faithful Word

Winter 2004

“Let Jesus Fix It For You”

Special Edition

## \*Join Us For Service\*

### Sunday Services

Sunday School: 9:45 A.M.  
Morning Worship: 11:15 A.M.  
Pastoral Teaching: 6:00 P.M.  
Evening Worship: 7:00 P.M.

### Tuesday Service

Prayer & Bible Band 10:00 A.M.

### Wednesday Rehearsals

Youth Choir: 6:00 P.M.  
Inspirational Choir: 7:30 P.M.

### Thursday Services

Y.P.W.W.: 6:30 P.M.  
Youth Service: 7:30 P.M.

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## Greater Victory C.O.G.I.C.

253 West Mill Street  
San Bernardino, CA 92408  
(909) 889-7205



[www.greatervictoryonline.org](http://www.greatervictoryonline.org)



Pastor, George A. Martin

## From the Pastor's Desk

### “Renunciation of Curses”

As a child of God purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus, I hereby and now renounce and repudiate all the sins of my ancestry. As one who has been delivered from the powers of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. I cancel out all demonic workings that have been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified with Jesus Christ and raised to walk in newness of life, I cancel every curse that may have been put upon me. I announce to Satan and every demonic spirit that Jesus became a curse for me and hung on the cross. As one who has been crucified with Christ and now sits with Him in heavenly places. I renounce every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare my self to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. All this I do in the name of and authority of Jesus Christ. God will curse any that try to curse me, for no one can curse whom God has blessed. I am redeemed from the curse. Any that curse me shall be cursed. As Pharaoh tried to curse the first born of Israel that same curse shall return unto him and curse the Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

### “All Hands on Deck”

#### Ministry: A Family Affair

Greetings Greater Victory Family,

Once again, our hearts are full with great joy because of the goodness of the Lord. Year 2004 has been wonderfully productive and has proven the “We can do all things through Christ, which strengthens us.”

Thanks for all of your prayers, hard work, and support. We encourage each of you to keep up the excellent work. Year 2005 has great promise as we expectantly trust God to bless us with his abundance.

Let us continue to keep all hands on deck in 2005 and remember that ministry is “A family affair” and we are family.

Be encouraged. The blessings of the Lord be upon you. We bless you in the name of the Lord. (Ps. 129:8)

Yours in Christ,

Pastor and Sister Martin

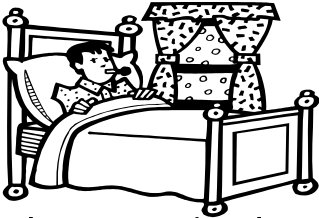
## Leadership Conference Highlights



### December

Pastor George Martin  
Dea. Develon Whitfield  
Bro. Develon Whitfield  
Bro. William Schuler  
Sis. Angelica Curtis  
Bro. Dameon Sims

### \*\*\*Sick and Shut-In\*\*\*



Please remember those who are sick and shut-in. Keep them in your prayers.

Sometimes a kind word, a phone call, or even a smile can make a world of difference.

### Message From the Sunday School

\*\*\*If you know your Bible, the Sunday School needs you. If you don't know your Bible, you need to come to Sunday School each Sunday morning at 9:45am. Sis Stephanie Harris - Sunday School Supt.

Greater Victory held its Sixth Annual Leadership Conference Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the conference was to help members develop their leadership skills and prepare them for the upcoming year. The conference theme, "Ministry: A Family Affair," promotes teamwork among families in the work of the Lord.

### Daily Highlights

#### Sunday, Nov. 28, 2004 (Family Night)

\*Greater Victory kicked off their annual leadership conference with the viewing of Bishop, T.D. Jakes' *Spellbreaker* DVD. The video focused on being freed from bad seeds harvested due to generational curses. Members were encouraged to use their God given power to deliver our families from the sins of our ancestors.

#### Monday, Nov. 29, 2004 (Women's Department)

\*The Women's Department gathered to discuss proper etiquette and conduct for women of holiness. Information regarding the process of becoming a missionary was also reviewed. All women are encouraged to do some level of mission work (e.g. Hospitality, Deaconess, Evangelist, etc.)

#### Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2004 (General Church Assembly)

\*Officers were introduced during this assembly along with an explanation of duties for each department/auxiliary.

#### Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2004 (Church Events Calendar)

\*Auxiliary leaders coordinated with the secretarial staff to schedule events for the upcoming year. The new church calendar will be printed later this year.

#### Friday, Dec. 3, 2004 (Embassy Suites - Santa Ana, CA)

\*The Greater Victory family gathered at the beautiful Embassy Suites for an evening of worship, fun, and games. Game time allowed members to work in teams in order to reach one common goal. Prizes for the winning teams were distributed.

#### Saturday, Dec. 4, 2004 (Embassy Suites - Santa Ana, CA)

\*Seminar Topics for adults consisted of "Faithfulness Is the Price" (Rev. 2:10), "Honoring the Lord with Your Substance" (Pro. 3:9), "The Wisdom of Networking" (Acts 2:42-47), "Teamwork: A Family Affair" (Mark 3:25), "The Power of Unity" (I Thess. 5:12-14), "The Family That Prays Together" (Prov. 12:7), and "Getting My House In Order (II King 20:1).

\*Seminar Topics for children consisted of "How to Love Your Church" and "How to Love Your Leaders."



Pastor, George A. Martin speaks to conference attendees on Friday night.



Greater Victory youth pose for a picture on Friday night.

### Judging Gay Marriages

by Sis Savannah VanKummer

As you can imagine, there are tons of new e-humors regarding our re-elected president just revving up to make their circuit around cyberspace for the next four years. One political joke in particular that I recently received poked fun at those with conservative views for not supporting gay marriages - - although this view certainly could have applied to the belief systems of some liberals as well as other political parties.

In any case, this raised an eyebrow with me because there does seem to be a spirit of surrender among some Christians when it comes to this controversial topic. When I replied to the sender of the email regarding their position on gay marriages, they replied that at first they were against it, but had had a change of heart after considering who were they to judge homosexual couples who have been together for several years, and simply want access to the same rights and privileges as hetero couples? They finalized their stance by saying that ultimately, they are not responsible for how other adults live their lives, and have chosen not to be homophobic about the matter.

My reply was this: No, we are not responsible for how others live their lives, but like Paul said in Philippians 1:7 and 17, we are accountable to the Word and defending its principles, interpretations and standards. To ask, "Who am I to judge gay couples?" is a common misinterpretation of Matthew 7:1-5 and what it means to "judge."

*Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*

This Scripture has nothing to do with being homophobic (which implies fear), and you have every right if you are a true Christian to judge homosexuality on all counts. When interpreted correctly, this passage does not support judging

people's motives - - because only God can read the heart. We also should not judge by appearance or judge people over matters that are neither right nor wrong. Also, judging does not give anyone the right to assassinate character.

However, there are certain areas in which Christians must judge. We must judge whether people are true Christians, otherwise we could never recognize an unequal yoke, an unqualified overseer of our children, or an inappropriate church leader (Luke 6 and II Corinthians 6:14).

To judge the right way means to line EVERYTHING up with the Word of God by "*casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" ( II Corinthians 10:5).

This means that the idea of same sex unions, civil unions, gay marriage, same sex marriage, homosexuality, etc. are all in direct violation of the Word no matter how far up the legislative chain it goes, and it is unacceptable no matter how trendy and popular it becomes. The fact that gays and lesbians have to fight for the same rights and privileges as heterosexuals is not "oppression," it is called "consequences," and the two should not be confused.

As we prepare for another four years of our president re-elect, let us all be mindful of Philippians 1:27, which states:

*"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."*

Never think for a minute that the unsaved around you look the other way when you bad-mouth leadership. They simply add it to their list of reasons not to

### \*\*\*Message Board\*\*\*

#### "Building Fund Rally Day!"

Congratulations to the Tribe of Ephraim for raising the most money in the month of November toward our Building Fund. Thank you everyone for contributing because everyone is a winner when giving unto God.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### A Message From the YPWW President:

\*Come and be blessed. Study to show thyself approved unto God.\*

Every Thursday Night at 6:30pm

Attention: Brothers for Christ

\*Please be sure to pay your 2004 dues and Walk-a-thon pledges as soon as possible to Min. Parker, Dea. Brown, or Dea. Shields

\*\*\*\*\*

(Gay Marriages con't)

change while confirming that Christians are no different.

If your attitude is that God has lost control of the White House and the future of America, what are unbelievers supposed to think?

In closing, when the Pharisees asked Jesus if it was right to pay Caesar what seemed to be unfair taxes in Matthew 22:17, Jesus said,

*"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."*

Jesus' reply showed that even though Believers have dual citizenship, we are responsible to obey and financially support human government and not speak evil of its rulers; nor are we to work to overthrow government. If there is ever a conflict between God and Caesar (government), our first loyalty is to God while continuing to pray for those in authority (Acts 5:29, BBC 1287/ Mat 22:21).

\*\*\*\*\*

**ATTENTION: ALL MEMBERS!!!**  
WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPRESS YOURSELF WITH YOUR OWN COLUMN?  
THE FAITHFUL WORD NEWSLETTER  
STAFF IS SEEKING TO EXPAND!



\*If you have an interest in writing editorials, teen-scene, church fashion, etiquette, music or restaurant reviews, member highlights, testimonials, messages, poetry, job announcements, food give-a-ways, etc., join our staff.

\*Free style art and comic strips are also welcome.

\*All submissions must be submitted to Sis. Shields by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month via email or in the Faithful Word Newsletter Drop Box (coming soon). **REMEMBER...**



Catch the Vision and Stir Up Your Gifts...

...This is "Ministry: A Family Affair"

## Inspirational Thought:



*“Faith...brings into  
our...hearts a spiritual force  
greater than our circumstance.”*

– Charles Capps

**Reference Scripture:** *“Truly,  
truly, I say to you, he who  
believes in Me, the works that I  
do shall he do also; and greater  
works than these shall he do;  
because I go to the  
Father.”(John 14:12 NAS)*

\*\*\*Newsletter Staff\*\*\*

**Editor in Chief:**

Jessika Shields

**Assistant Editor:**

Savannah VanKummer

**Reporters:**

Sis. Evelyn Tahiru

Dea. Robert Shields

## MERRY CHRISTMAS



## Health Wise: Holiday Health

[www.checkyourhealth.org](http://www.checkyourhealth.org)

To help women make healthy choices over the holidays and reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke, the American Heart Association suggests that women:

- Use the holidays to create quality family time. Turn off the television and go bike riding or sledding with the kids.
- Don't starve themselves the day of the party so they can fill up on food that evening. If you eat normally throughout the day, you're much less likely to overeat at the party.
- Survey the entire buffet before you fill your plate. This will help you select only the foods that you want.
- Present food in various locations to encourage activities and mingling as well as eating.

### **EAT-SMART ADVICE:**

#### **Stick with healthy habits.**

Keep to a regular schedule of healthy fare, and include exercise during the holidays. It will keep your energy up during these busy times.

#### **Load up with color.**

Keep your holiday plate healthy by filling it with low-calorie, nutrient-packed vegetables and fruits.

#### **Find your treat.**

Don't deny yourself your favorite dessert. Figure out what you really want, and forgo lesser indulgences along the way.

## Dining Out With the

Last month we celebrated Dea. Shields' 27<sup>th</sup> birthday at the New York Grill right outside of the Ontario Mills Mall.

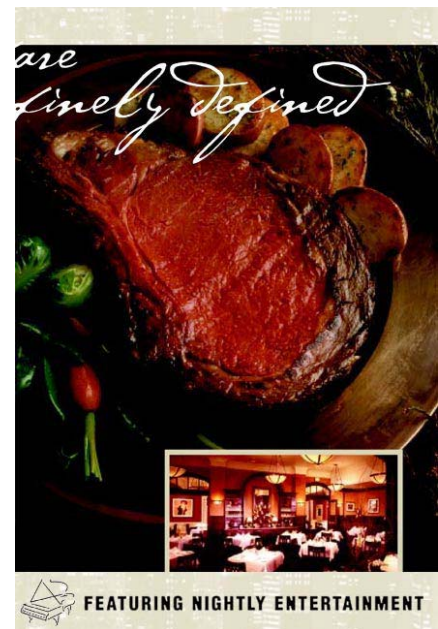
Here are some tips to get the most out of your experience at the New York Grill:

- Dress for women is classy (e.g. long elegant black dress with pearls, black high healed shoes...dress to impress.)
- Dress for men is dressy/casual (e.g. shirt and tie, black suit, etc.)
- Make a reservation
- Practice your etiquette skills prior to your reservation
- Bring your appetite

When we first arrived, the valet attendants parked our car at no cost. As we walked in our ears were greeted with the sound of a live grand piano. We automatically noticed the restaurant ambiance. The atmosphere presented an upscale Manhattan type feel with dimmed lights, candles, and a classy, elegant wait staff.

Most impressive aspects:

- \*The elevator to the second floor (more live piano)
- \*Excellent food
- \*Great service
- \*Overall ambiance (Like the dinner scenes from romance movies.)



We highly recommend the New York Grill for dating purposes or just for the overall experience.

Meal price ranges: \$ 15.00 - \$60.00 per entrée.

New York Grill  
950 Ontario Mills Drive  
Phone: (909) 987-1928

Calendar Events



December Events:

- 9<sup>th</sup>- Pastor Martin's B-day
- 11<sup>th</sup> – Women for Christ Holistic Day (Meet at 8am)
- 11<sup>th</sup>- Ministers' Wives Black & White Dinner
- 16<sup>th</sup> – Youth Christmas Party (Home of the Hawleys) 6pm
- 17<sup>th</sup> – Singles' Christmas Party 6:30p
- 18<sup>th</sup>- Couples' Christmas Party 7p
- 19<sup>th</sup> – Church Christmas Party
- 25<sup>th</sup>- MERRY CHRISTMAS

January Events:

- 5th – 7<sup>th</sup> – State Worker Mtg
- 8<sup>th</sup> – Missionary Lic. Class 8a-12p
- 15<sup>th</sup> – Couples Mtg. 7p
- 21<sup>st</sup> – Singles Mtg. 6:30p
- 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> – Choir Work Shop (6-9p)
- 29<sup>th</sup> – Keep Pace w/ Pastor 8a



Something To Think About

- The most destructive habit.....Worry
- The greatest Joy.....Giving
- The greatest loss.....Loss of self-respect
  
- The most satisfying work.....Helping others
- The ugliest personality trait.....Selfishness
- The most endangered species.....Dedicated leaders
  
- Our greatest natural resource.....Our youth
- The greatest "shot in the arm".....Encouragement
- The greatest problem to overcome.....Fear
  
- The most effective sleeping pill.....Peace of mind
- The most crippling failure disease.....Excuses
- The most powerful force in life.....Love
  
- The most dangerous pariah.....A gossip
- The world's most incredible computer.....The brain
- The worst thing to be without.... Hope
  
- The deadliest weapon.....The tongue
- The two most power-filled words....."I Can"
- The greatest asset.....Faith
  
- The most worthless emotion.....Self-pity
- The most beautiful attire.....SMILE!
- The most prized possession.....Integrity
  
- The most powerful channel of communication.....Prayer
- The most contagious spirit.....Enthusiasm

The True Meaning of Christmas

Submitted by Dea. Robert Shields  
www.reedheustis.com

Christmas is not about reindeer, snowmen, candy canes and a winter wonderland. It is not about commercialism and materialism. It is not even about white beards, red suits and sugar plums...

Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ, the ultimate gift for sinners. Without Christ's life, death and resurrection, there is no hope for sinners to avoid the awaiting eternal wrath of an all-righteous God.

All people are conceived in sin, the wages of such is death, and therefore deserve eternal separation from God. There is salvation in none other than Jesus Christ: "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." ([Acts 4:12](#))

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, that whosoever would believe on Him would not perish but have everlasting life. Christ, the spotless lamb who knew no sin, willingly bore the sins of God's redeemed elect when He was tortured, beaten, mocked, ridiculed and crucified in shame on the cross at Calvary. In passion He suffered the punishment that all sinners rightfully deserve, and in glory He rose again from the dead and now sits at the right hand of God the Father.

Thankfully, a chosen remnant is pardoned to the praise of God's glorious mercy, and will enjoy everlasting life with Christ in eternity. While the sins of the elect were imputed to the crucified Christ, His perfect righteousness was imputed to the elect - those who repent and believe on His name - so that the price for redemption is paid in full.

We can do nothing to earn salvation by ourselves because there is no righteousness found in any of us. All other religions lead man to a Christless eternity to the praise of God's glorious justice. Only through God's merciful grace are believers - and believers only - saved. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." ([Eph. 2:8](#)).

What a gift! The perfect gift, a gift eternal! We celebrate Christmas out of gratitude for the gift of Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished for us.  
**Merry Christmas!**

COGIC NEWS (Nov. 20, 2004)

Black church sticks to Bible, not religious right

by Woodard Baird  
Associated Press

MEMPHIS - Like other evangelical Christians, leaders of the Church of God in Christ want to limit abortion and bar same-sex marriage. But that doesn't mean the predominantly black Pentecostal denomination considers itself part of the "religious right" or supporters of the Republican Party.

"I've seen the tone of the religious right," said G.E. Patterson, the church's presiding bishop. "It seemingly was born out of the fact that African Americans were making too many gains." Patterson's church, often referred to simply as COGIC, reports having more than 6 million members across the United States and in 57 countries.

While COGIC agrees with white evangelicals that the Bible is the primary source of spiritual authority, its ideas on government social programs and protecting the rights of minorities differ, Patterson said.

"Every law that has anything to do with leveling the playing field for blacks, they are against it," he said.

COGIC also disagreed with President Bush on the war in Iraq. The church's top leaders wrote the president before the war started urging him to resist sending in the military. For the entire article go to

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/living/religion/10220938.htm?1c>

## Kids Korner: Baking for the Holidays

\*What better way to spend time during the holidays than making easy and delicious desserts. Spend time together as a family while baking these special Betty Crocker holiday treats.

### Double Rocky Road Bars



www.bettycrocker.com

#### Double Rocky Road Bars

Serving dessert is smooth sailing when you can use a cookie mix to make rocky road bars.

1 pouch Betty Crocker® double chocolate chunk cookie mix  
 1/4 cup vegetable oil  
 2 tablespoons water  
 1 egg  
 1/2 tub (16-ounce size) Betty Crocker® Rich & Creamy chocolate ready-to-spread frosting (1 cup)  
 1/3 cup miniature marshmallow  
 1 tablespoon chopped peanuts, if desired

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Stir cookie mix, oil, water and egg in medium bowl with spoon until dough forms. Press in ungreased square pan, 8x8x2 inches.
2. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or just until set. Cool completely, about 30 minutes.
3. Stir together frosting and marshmallows; spread over bars. Sprinkle with peanuts. For 16 bars, cut into 4 rows by 4 rows. Store tightly covered.

#### Jolly Snowman Cookies

Cut and paste! Shoestring licorice turns into a magical snowman's top hat on these sugar cookies. Gather even your littlest helpers because there are tasks even toddlers can do.

1 pouch Betty Crocker® sugar cookie mix  
 1/2 cup margarine or butter, melted  
 1 egg  
 1 tub Betty Crocker® Whipped vanilla ready-to-spread frosting  
 Black shoestring licorice  
 1/3 cup raisins  
 1/4 cup red cinnamon candies

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Stir cookie mix, melted margarine and egg in medium bowl until soft dough forms. Drop dough by rounded teaspoonfuls 3 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten drops of dough until 1/4 inch thick and 2 inches across.
2. Bake 7 to 9 minutes or until edges are light golden brown. Cool 1 minute; remove from cookie sheet to wire rack. Cool completely, about 30 minutes.
3. Frost and decorate one cookie at a time. Spread frosting on 1 cookie. Add licorice across top third of cookie for hat, 3 raisins for eyes and nose and 5 candies for mouth. Repeat with remaining cookies.

### Jolly Snowman Cookies



www.bettycrocker.com



**Going Back In Time: 100 Years Ago**

Submitted by Sis. E. Tahiru

The Year is 1904

What a difference a century makes! Here are some of the US statistics for 1904:

- The average life expectancy in the US: 47 years.
- Only 14% of the homes in the US had a bathtub.
- Only 8% of the homes had a telephone.
- A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost \$11.00
- There were only 8,000 cars in the US, and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. With a mere 1.4 million residents, California was only the 21st most populous state in the Union.
- The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.
- The average wage in the US was 22 cents an hour.
- The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.
- A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year.
- A veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year.
- A mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year.
- More than 95 percent of all births in the US took place at home.
- Ninety percent of all US physicians had no college education. Instead, they attended medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."
- Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee was fifteen cents a pound.

- Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- Canada passed a law prohibiting poor people from entering the country for any reason.
- The five leading causes of death in the US were:
  1. Pneumonia and influenza
  2. Tuberculosis
  3. Diarrhea
  4. Heart disease
  5. Stroke



- The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.
- The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30!
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented.
- There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.
- Two of 10 US adults couldn't read or write. Only 6 % of all Americans had graduated high school.
- Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner drugstores. According to one pharmacist, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health." (Shocking!)
- Eighteen percent of households in the US had at least one full-time servant or domestic.
- There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire US.

\*\*\*Try to imagine what it may be like in another 100 years ... it staggers the mind.

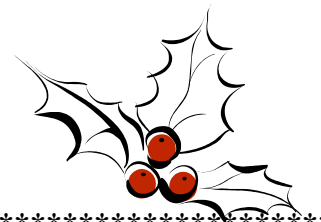
**Response to "Going Back In Time"**  
by Dea. Robert Shields

It is amazing to me how things have changed over the past century. However, no matter how much gas prices may rise, we know that "there is no new thing under the sun" according to Ecclesiastes 1:9. The situation that we deal with today also existed during Old Testament times and during the days of the early Church.

The Word of God teaches us about God's nature. By reading the Word of God, we can see how God dealt mercifully with his chosen people and how he gave us the ultimate gift of Love, which is Christ Jesus.

The Word of God will always remain. It has been here since the beginning of time. John 1:1 says "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We can always depend on the Word of God no matter what era we may be living in.

In these last days, we must keep our focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 26:3 tells us that "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." No matter how things may change throughout time we know that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)



\*\*\*\*\*

**\*\*\*JOB POSTINGS\*\*\***

(Submit job information to Sis. Shields via email or newsletter drop box.)

**California Baptist University**

**Director of Internet Marketing**

This position is responsible for creating and maintaining general information pages and other aspects of the University's World Wide Web presence and assisting various groups within the Institution with Web use and presentation by performing the following duties. A 40 Hour/12 Month; Exempt position.

**EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE:**

Bachelor's degree from accredited four-year college or university; or three years related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

**WATCH NIGHT**  
(Original Poem)

*"The Lord will watch over your coming and going,  
both now and forevermore."  
Psalm 121:8*

**i.**  
We gather with quiet invocations and fervent shouts  
in prayer houses built by our ancestors.  
it is the anniversary of freedom's eve,  
the beginning of a new year;  
and our voices ache with jubilee songs  
our feet moving, our bodies possessed  
our spirits remembering.

It was on new year's day  
long ago when enslaved Africans,  
their children, and their children's children  
became irrevocably free.

*"On the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863,  
all persons held as slaves within any State  
or designated part of a State the people whereof  
shall then be in rebellion . . ."*

The freedom words  
that were woven into sweet-grass baskets,  
hidden in the words of negro spirituals,  
preached aloud at campground meetings,  
sung to black babies in sleepy-time songs,  
would become the law of the land.

*"Alleluia.  
Praise the Lord."*

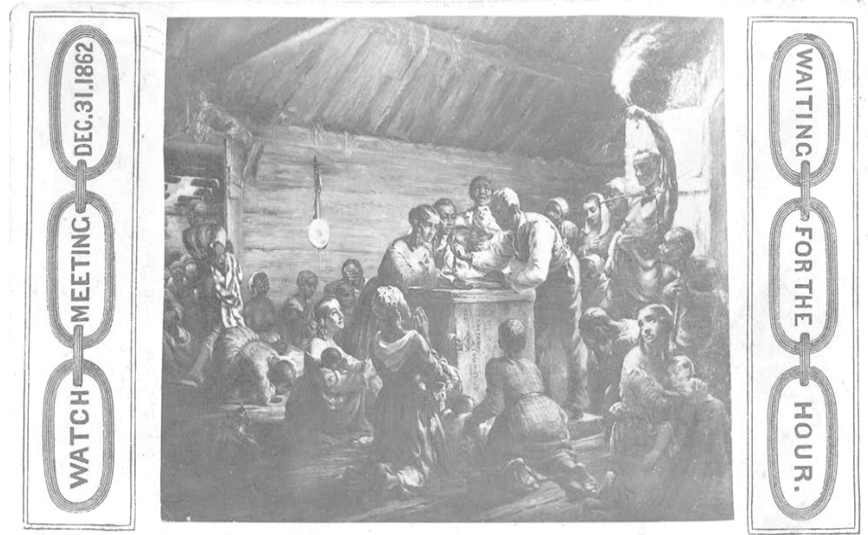
**ii.**  
Then freedom's eve became freedom's day  
(after 100 days of waiting,  
three years of a bloody civil war,  
more than two centuries of servitude)  
as an answer to the petitioner's plea:

*"How long, my Lord, how long?"*

Truly there was a reason why,  
so many were gathered  
on that new year's eve in 1862:  
skins dark as the midnight sky,  
and pale as the sand on a sea island beach.

Truly there was a reason why,  
embraced by traditions from across the seas,  
our ancestors had the griots  
tell those wonderful stories of home.

Truly there was a reason why,  
they created drum sounds with their feet,  
their hand-claps, and their rhythm sticks;  
spoke of a future free of shackles,  
waited and watched till the morning came.



Ent'd according to Act of Congress, A. D. 1863, by W. T. Carlton, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Mass.

They trusted the words of Lincoln:  
*"Shall be then, thenceforward,  
and forever free."*

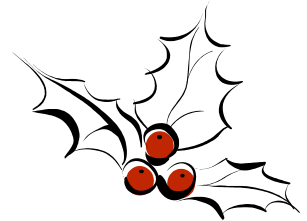
They believed the words of Leviticus:  
*"It shall be a Jubilee for you  
and each of you shall return to his  
possession, and each of you shall return to his  
family."*

But could they really have faith  
(this time)  
that the righteous would truly be blessed?  
For the comings and goings of life  
can never be foretold.

*"How long, my Lord, how long?"*

**iii.**  
There was no word at midnight,  
nor at daybreak.  
but past dusk on new year's day came a  
message:  
tapped across telegraph wires,  
spoken at great mass meetings.  
the proclamation had been signed.  
emancipation was forever.  
God's chosen would be free.

It was written:  
*". . . upon this act,  
sincerely believed to be an act of justice  
warranted by the Constitution  
upon military necessity  
I invoke  
the considerate judgment of mankind  
and the gracious favor of Almighty God."*



**iv.**  
Now, more than a century later,  
in churches and chapels and  
houses of prayer,  
on the anniversary of freedom's  
eve,  
on watch night:  
we gather  
to welcome yet another year;  
to bring in the jubilee.

Waiting anew for the midnight  
hour  
with whispers and shouts,  
singing and silence,  
libations and thanksgiving.

Remembering that we were not  
always  
*free.*

