



The *Calvary Connection*  
Spring 2008

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*Trusting God  
To Do  
A New Thing*

# What is Anti-American?

The recent controversy caused by the Rev. Jeremiah Wright's comments in selected sermons has raised a question within me: "Is it anti-American to critique and criticize America?" Over the past several weeks many of us heard brief excerpts from various sermons preached by Rev. Wright in which he criticizes America for its historic racism, militarism and its own contribution to terrorism. It would be nice to hear the entire sermons from which these excerpts were taken in order to obtain some sense of context. We haven't been afforded that opportunity! Be that as it may, Wright's comments received extra attention because he is the retired pastor of the church where Senator Barack Obama is a member in Chicago, Illinois.

Rev. Wright's comments were called "anti-American" by some people inside and outside of the media. The relevant question is: "Is it anti-American to confront or criticize America?" Some may consider it so, but I do not believe that it is anti-American to critique this country. It is true that this is a "great country." It is true that this country affords citizens unparalleled freedoms. It is true that people from other countries find opportunities here that they cannot find anywhere else. However, there are some other things about this country that are not so great. This is a country with some serious flaws. Some of those flaws were correctly delineated in the sermons of Rev. Wright. I might not have used some of the wording employed by Wright. However, his bold denunciations of some of the historic and contemporary inconsistencies of this country are appropriate.

The church of Jesus Christ would fall short of its role in the world if it did not "stand over and against" this present age. The church is not meant to simply validate the status quo. The prophets of the Old Testament spoke against their nations when those nations fell short of what God required. The cry of the prophet was, "but let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24). The Lord – on more than one occasion – said through His prophet to the nation, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell your solemn assemblies" (Amos 5:21). As a preacher-prophet, Jeremiah Wright

stood in the rightful place to speak against this nation's practices. The body of Christ is called to do this.

In addition, Wright has a right to criticize this country. Throughout history the Black church has stood as a prophetic voice that holds America accountable. The Black church, and Black people in general, have a right to do so because of the investment our people have made throughout history. African Americans are not outsiders who criticize from a distance. African Americans are insiders who have bled and sweat for this country, and therefore have every right to "say what we see." When you invest, you have a right to critique.

To speak against some of the policies and practices of this nation is not "anti-American." In fact, it can be "pro-American." Criticism can be a manifestation of care and concern. In order for this country to be what it can be, we have to be honest about: racism, classism, economic exploitation of the poor, misuse of the environment and militarism. Throughout the history of this nation, dissenting voices have expressed their passion for this nation by being passionate about what they saw in this nation. When Jesus denounced some of the practices in the synagogue and in the institutional religion of his day, it was not because he was anti-synagogue. To the contrary; He was very much "pro-synagogue." This is what motivated him to "say what he saw."

What some people fail to realize is that it is possible to love this country and at the same time point out its obvious inadequacies. To gloss over our issues with a façade of blind patriotism would be dishonest and ultimately destructive. To see flaws in this country and not say anything would be "anti-American."



– *Pastor Jerry M. Carter, Jr.*

# Working Out a New Thing

As we observe the plethora of self-help books that have flooded the marketplace in recent years, we find that much of what is touted as new is actually grounded in biblical principles that are thousands of years old. Whether you are trying to grasp the seven habits of highly effective people, or master the five secrets of management success, much of what is purveyed comes directly or indirectly from sound teachings found throughout the Bible. As Calvary moves forward in its 2008 journey of introducing and implementing new ways of doing things, we should be mindful that working out a new thing can be done most effectively by relying upon directions from the scriptures.

God's word is living, active and presented to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. When we attend obediently to Scripture, we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. When we answer the call to "do a new thing," the best way to set expectations and attain guidance for success is to allow ourselves to be led by God in: (1) setting the parameters for our vision; (2) orchestrating the resources necessary to accomplish the objectives; (3) opening ourselves to correction and reorientation when we lose focus or stray from the task at hand, and; (4) leaning and depending upon the Lord to overcome obstacles and setbacks.

Even the structure and format of the New Testament provide us with a paradigm for working out a new thing: – the Gospels, packed with examples of Jesus challenging tradition and established order in fashioning innovative solutions; the Acts of the Apostles, presenting us with historical accounts of how early Christians adopted those new ways of doing things to advance the Kingdom-building that Jesus initiated; and the epistles, demonstrating how the church should correct its course and remain on task in employing the appropriate spiritual means to achieve God's spiritual ends.

As we forge ahead this year with big hopes, goals and visions, we can take comfort in the fact that the pattern of the cross has already been delivered to us as the paradigm of service and sacrifice in ministry. This valuable model can not only help us maintain balance and continuity as we do our "new" things, but keep us grounded in our ultimate mission as a church in finding, nurturing, and empowering new disciples.

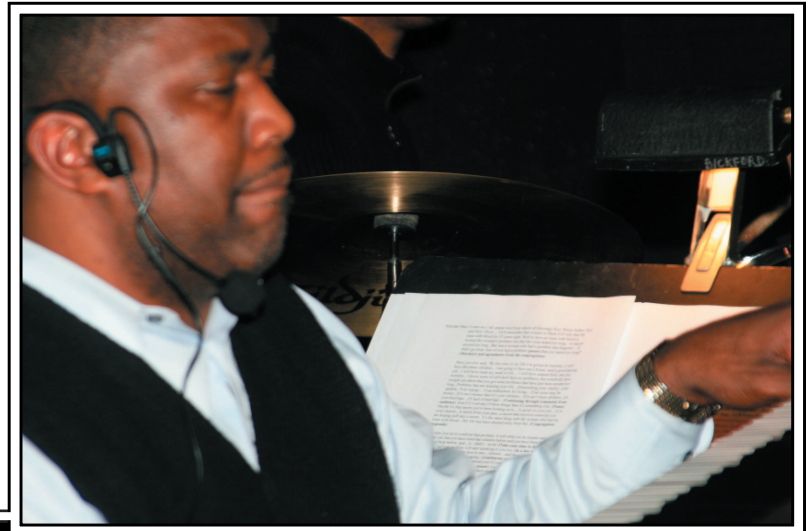
– *Min. David A. Hollowell*

*Ministry spotlight:  
The Drama Ministry*



*Where the spirit  
of the Lord is...*





*there's Liberty!*



# Speaking a New Thing

As we eagerly trust the Lord to do a new thing, we ourselves can begin to do new things, as well, starting with our speech. The words we speak are more important than we realize most of the time. We express doubt, discouragement and other negatives on a regular basis, without giving it any thought, directing them toward others and ourselves. However, we need to put just as much thought into our "self-talk" and conversations with each other as we do when we are speaking with God.

When we pray, we say things to our Lord that are real, sincere and filled with hope. God has given us the perfect example of how we should speak. In the first chapter of Genesis, He literally spoke everything into being. The words, "Let there be..." are probably among the most powerful ever spoken. Something important to note here is that God only spoke those things into existence that He truly wanted to see. We, on the other hand, talk about going crazy, being so broke that we can't afford to pay attention, hating our bodies, not being qualified, being too young or too old, and the list goes on. Fortunately, our Lord has equipped us with some guidelines so we can begin to speak a new thing.

Proverbs 8 introduces us to the characteristics of wisdom. Verses 6 – 8 specifically address the words we speak, telling us to have worthy things to say, speaking what is right and letting our lips detest wickedness. Jesus spoke life into everyone He came across, drawing from both love and wisdom. So, if we were to pretend as if everything we said began with the words, "Let there be," we would be more careful and aware to put more thought into what followed. Add to that the love and wisdom of Christ, and we will be well on our way to speaking – and doing – a new thing.

– By Anji Limón Taylor

## VISION 2010 IN MOTION CBC PROPERTIES FOR SALE

Location	Asking Price
<b>24 MLK Ave.</b> (Vacant Lot)	\$225,000
<b>13 MLK Ave.</b> (2 Family Residence)	\$535,000
<b>8 Mt. Airy Place</b> (2 Family Residence)	\$515,000

# Method for the Madness

How does a Christian make intelligent choices during this important presidential campaign season? In this 2008 race for Commander-in-Chief, it's politricks as usual. "Political Parties" - ironically appearing to be anything but parties - and their strategists have divisively and nefariously gone from face card to race card, sparking a media feeding frenzy that would easily rival the most caustic scenes in the movie "Jaws."

How do we make informed decisions when casting a vote at the polls or otherwise supporting a candidate when there are so many distractions in play? The explosive elements of race, age and gender have served to fuel talk show pundits and personalities already exploiting their on-air platforms, qualitatively and quantitatively skewing the coverage on issues that favor the candidate of their choosing, while venomously demonizing the others.

Despite the despair and overwhelmingly offensive muck and mire, I believe there is an assiduous call to consciousness that's quietly making noise. It is a call to choose right over wrong, ethics over convenience, and truth over popu-

larity. I assert this could appear a fruitless exercise, but keep in mind God is also in the decision making business, and He specializes in turning negatives – real and perceived – into positives.

Attesting to this assertion is Moses. Born into slavery, he was supposed to be executed even before he was able to speak, yet God's intervention saw to it that he became heir apparent to the White House of his day. Joseph the dreamer, whose coat of many colors was the subject of love, lust and lies, overcame, and subsequently became one of the greatest influential figures in the Bible, all because the Lord was with him. Let's also not forget Ruth, whose solemn declaration to Naomi demonstrated the resolute power of the grace of God.

Thankfully God's decisions, unlike many of our own, are sovereign, motivated by love, for the good of all, and to His glory. It's not who you choose that will ultimately measure the quality of your decision, but rather the reason behind your choice. This election year choose to include God when making your decision. There is no better choice.

– By Joel Walker

# Taking Stock of Your Christian Walk

Speaking in between sobbing cries, Kara called her sister India, "I'm tired...I've had it with my idiot of a boss!" she said. "I'm fed up with doing everything for everybody, especially when they don't deserve it. I need a serious break; I need more money! I can't even take my kids on a real vacation!"

India listened, not knowing what to say, especially since she had just gotten off the phone expressing her own frustrations to a girlfriend. The girlfriend listened to India's complaints, gave her two cents worth of advice and ended the conversation. Unfortunately, there was no resolution for Kara or India.

Do you see yourself or know others like the fictional characters, Kara and India? Of course it is human nature to want to share our happiness and our pain with those whom we hold in high regard. And with the best of friends, it can be easy to fall into the pattern, "just needing to vent." But we run the risk of a friend overshadowing the one who not only listens to us and walks with us, but often times carries us. It may feel satisfying for the moment, but it's an example of how, when we're not paying attention to our walk with God, we can slip out of balance.

We set aside February as Black History Month and March to review wonderful women in history. Perhaps Spring is the perfect time to consider your personal history – the stories and records you are creating about your own life.

Think about your life before Christ. And what about now? What time have you committed to studying God's word in Church School, Bible Study classes, at home? Try to measure how far you've come, then think about where you are going. What good habits have you developed? Which ones, like Kara and India, do you need to break? How's the prayer life going? Do you celebrate your successes in Christ? Do you confess your failures and commit to do better?

No matter the circumstances of how you came to Jesus Christ, how far you've come is worth recognizing and celebrating. It's a life He's given you, and He wants it to be the best it can be. If you need to make some changes — and who doesn't — there is time. The history you are creating about yourself isn't over "well...until God says it's over!" But it's hard to know what to do next if you're unaware of what you've already done or haven't done — if you and God haven't talked about a plan.

Ten years ago this past February is when I decided to follow Jesus. February is my time to take stock. When is yours?

– By Renita Bourgeois

## Youth Perspective

*What students from CSI Tuesdays Youth Class-ages 8-12 think about Vision 2010:*

**Na'im** - "I want more people to come to church."

**Tyeesha** - "Cool-I guess."

**Deonte** - "I want a gym."

**Aja** - "I think it will be awesome!"

**Aubree** - "Bigger and Better."

**Sekayi** - "We should have our own youth basketball team."

**Erin** - "I think that 2010 is a great idea."

**James** - "I hope we have a big sanctuary."

**Lucy** - "I really can't wait 4 it."

**G** - "I want the gym."

**Shaun** - "A great year!!!"

**Zariah** - "I can't wait for a store."

### Scholarships Available

• **Hope Chest**

Deadline: April 30th

• **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**

Deadline: April 15th

• **Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.**

Deadline: April 18th

• **Affinity Foundation**

Deadline: April 18th

• **Syracuse University School of Architecture**

Contact: Mark Robbins, Dean,  
315-443-2255; robbinsm@syr.edu

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Submit your ideas, photos  
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(Submissions may be edited before publication)

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Sunday Morning

7:45 am and 10:45 am

CHURCH SCHOOL

9:30 am

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Tuesdays at 7:00 pm

## NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES TO NOTE

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Sis. Roselyn Bethune

[generalinfo@calvarybc.org](mailto:generalinfo@calvarybc.org)

- Deadline Tuesday at 5 p.m. •

### CALVARY YOUTH MINISTRIES

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### CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

Min. Carol Lynn Patterson

[mincpatterson@calvarybc.org](mailto:mincpatterson@calvarybc.org)

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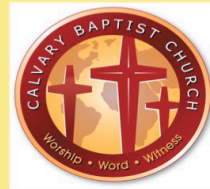
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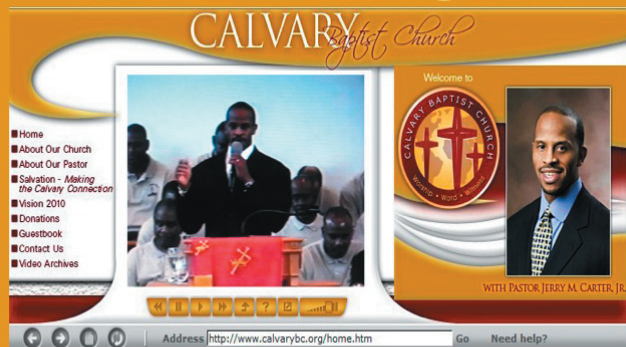


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