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## July 2010

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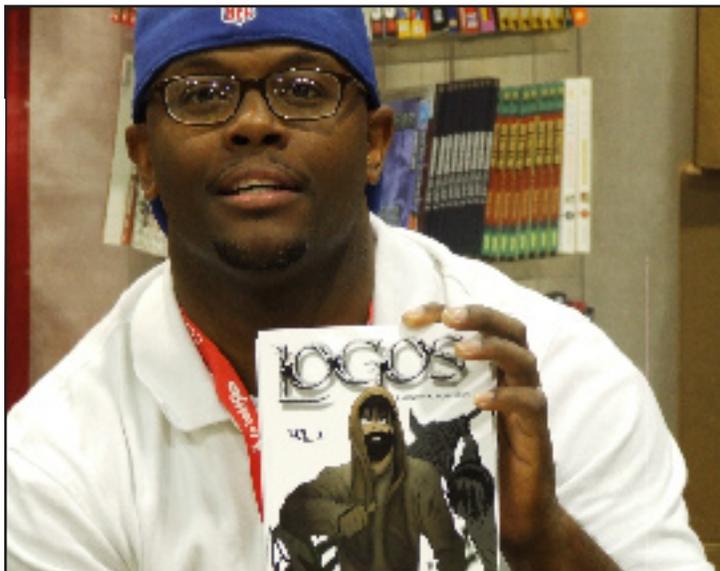
**TABLE ACTION**



**COSTUMES**



**CHRISTIAN COMICS**



LEFT: Bryan Kilgore with his *Logos* comics adaptation of selected portions of the Gospels and Revelation.  
RIGHT: Joey Lee Cabral with his *Kause of Death* spiritual warfare comic.





**SPIRITUAL THEMES PANEL:** (Left to Right) Don Ensign, Daniel Bradford, Tom Hall, Ralph Miley, and Joe King. Ralph and Don co-moderated the panel.



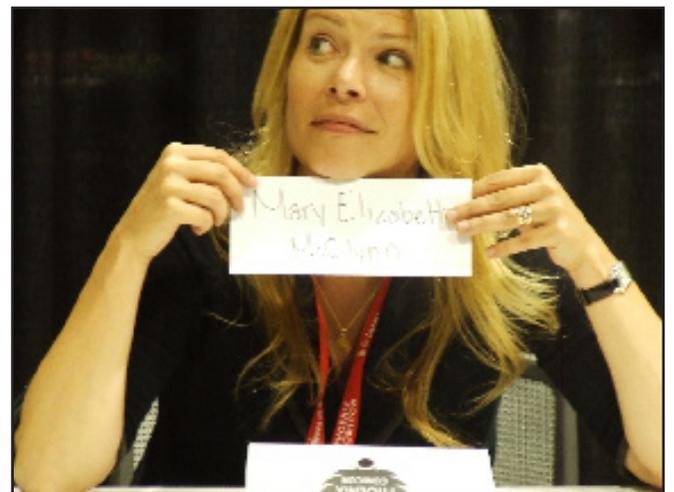
**TALES OF WATCHMAN:** Pepe Melan, artist and Co-creator of *Tales of Watchman* "Blood & Fire".



**PERSONALITIES**



**STAN LEE:** 87-year-old Stan "The Man" Lee paid a visit to the Phoenix Con. He was in fine form. Fielding lots of questions. Excelsior! John-Schneider (Jonathan Kent of Smallville) also did a presentation.



**ACROSS THE AISLE:** Voice actress Mary Elizabeth McGlynn sit across from the CCAS table signing autographs. She has done a lot of Anime voice work.

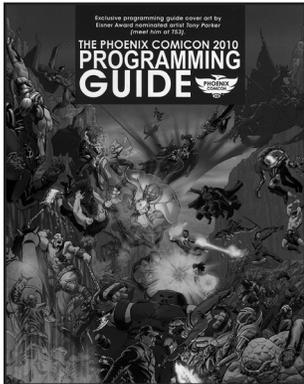


**MORE COSTUMES**



# 2010 Phoenix Comic Con

The 2010 Phoenix Comic Con was simply amazing. Brent Hofsta and I started out from Green Valley Thursday afternoon and met Ralph Miley at the Phoenix Convention Center and helped with the setting up



of the CCAS table. The crowds were like San Diego. Wall-to-wall people. An early estimate was 10,000 to 12,000. I believe it easily exceeded those numbers. The Phoenix Con has graduated from a dealers convention to a full fledged Con with many panels and other events. It reminded me of San Diego maybe 20 years ago when it was the old S.D. Convention Center. (The official attendance for this year's Phoenix Con was 13,988. The San Diego Con had 13,000 attendance in 1990 with its 21st convention). The Convention administration was very gracious, coming around every day to find out how we were doing and offering us cold water and so on. We were able to pay (and then some) for the cost of the small press table through sales of comics and graphic novels. We met many, many Christian Convention goers who were very pleased to see us there. This was a very unexpected, but pleasant and blessed surprise. We met a number of young Christian creatives who expressed interest in networking. There was one couple that are leaders in their church who volunteered to host a local Phoenix CCAS meeting. We did get their contact information. This opens up the pos-

sibility of having a local CCAS group do the convention. Lots of opportunities for ministry. We handed out a lot of the comic tracts as well a good sales for the comics. We had dinner Friday night with Brent, a professional level Christian artist, who was very eager for fellowship. There were at least three of other Christian comics vendors there. One was Bryan Kilgore who had done *Logos* — some manga-ish adaptations of parts of the life of Christ and educational comics. Also was Pepe Melon who is the artist on *Tales of Watchman*. We also met Joey Lee Cabral the writer/artist of *Kause of Death*. Tom Hall and Daniel Bradford of Blacklist Studios also had a booth selling their *R13* and *The King* comics. Tom Hall really wants us to do a Spiritual Themes panel at the New York Comic Con. The Spiritual Themes panel went well. We had Joe King, Tom Hall and Daniel Bradford on the panel that was moderated by Ralph and myself. We had an audience of around 20-25 who were very interested in what we were talking about. After intros and general discussion we had audience questions which went up to the end of the hour and we had to cut the discussion off. I spoke with an LDS man who attended. I offered to have an Mormon rep be on the panel next year. He said he would contact some of his artists friends. Also the next day I started chatting with a Star Wars devotee who was very knowledgeable about the Buddhist roots of Star Wars. She is a book reviewer. I gave her my e-mail address for having her on the panel next year. Overall the Phoenix Comic Con was a very positive experience. Lots of prayers answered. Also lots of sharing opportunities with the people who came to the table. We met Howard Salmon, a reform Jew, who was selling his *Comic Book Siddur For Shabbat Morning Services*. This graphic album presents the Jewish

perspective on how an observant Jew prepares himself for Siddur. On Thursday night a 16 year girl came up to the table without her glasses and chatted with us. The next day she was back (with glasses) and Ralph, Brent and I had a prolonged talk with her. I found it amazing she wanted to share about her life with three strangers. Pray for Jessica a very intelligent young lady.

An attractive 35-ish woman came to the table on Saturday who was puzzled about the meaning of the Comic Con [answer: fantasy & imagination]. She was obviously a Christian and didn't really connect with this aspect of youth culture. She is typical of the lack of understanding many people in the institutional church have concerning popular culture. \*

Here are some artwork samples from some the folks who had spiritual-related comics at the Phoenix Con.



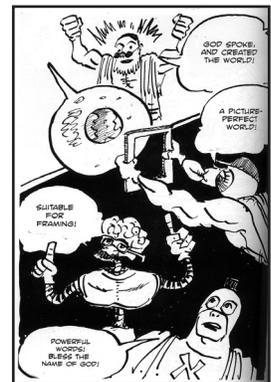
Panel from *R13* by Tom Hall and Daniel Bradford.



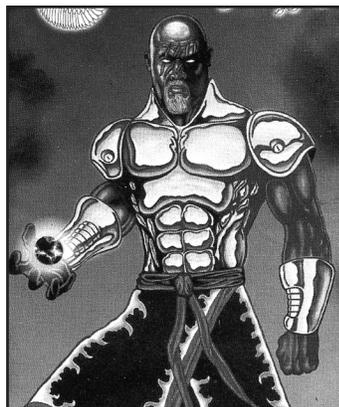
Panel from *Logos* by Bryan Kilgore.



This is an example a cartoon by Joe King for the creation ministry of Russ Miller.



Page from *Comic Book Siddur* by Howard Salmon.



Art from *Tales of Watchman* by Pepe Melan.



Panel from *Kause of Death* by Joey Lee Cabral.

**Frank Humphris**

Referring back to your mention of it in AO #147 I recently got and have read the book *Pagan Christianity*. The tone of the book I found surprisingly well balance but hard hitting. While the writers (George Barna & Frank Viola) make a very good case that the way we “do church” in our institutional churches is not the way the first century Christians did church— the institutional church will probably survive by inertia and bedrock tradition. It seems as if house churches ( organic churches) appear in times of extreme persecution like in China. Even in China, however, faithful Christians construct church buildings and sometimes those buildings get knocked down by the communist government. In India and Nigeria we have many reports of burning of church buildings. Perhaps God is trying to tell us something by the actions of our persecutors. However it does seem as if there is something within the nature of man to build special structures for worship. Perhaps that is something in our fallenness that we need to resist and deal with. Violet and Barna explains the history of way this came about (not just the church buildings). At this point I am reading reviews of the book both pro and con and exploring House church web sites. Perhaps their major contention that institutional churches do no foster “the priesthood of all believers” by splitting the body of Christ into clergy and laity castes. I have also read one of Viola’s follow-up books called *Re-imagining Church* which goes into some detail concerning the “Organic Church” concept which is only touched on brief in the *Pagan Christianity* volume . I found many insightful things in this book. These book are challenging my thinking on how we do church.

Thanks for including the Bibleman samples. Nice work. Also I appreciated your comments

on the time travel question. Yes, I do take naps. Actually power naps whether in a darkened or non-darkened room. My napping abilities don’t discriminate on physical location.

**Rob Marsh**

Wow where do you start on your rant!?! Why do Christians like Neil Gaiman and Alan Moore’s writing. I guess I’ve been shut away in some extra dimensional closet somewhere but I wasn’t aware of that. If you are correct on this my only guess is that Christians who like their work like it for the technical excellence these writers provide. I have read very little Neil Gaiman (don’t care for his dark occultic subject matter). I primarily have read Moore’s *Watchmen* when it came out and some of his more recent America’s Greatest Comics line. Nope I wasn’t thrilled with his deconstruction of the super hero genre (Here Frank Miller is an equal partner in crime) but the literary quality of his work is very good. Perhaps Christian readers liked the quality of Moore’s story telling but not what he was doing morally or spiritually with the characters or the genre. The problem with Moore (and perhaps Gaiman) is that their work has been so influential as to darken the entire super hero comics genre. Many movie critics fall into this trap. They don’t care about the moral or spiritual quality of the motion pictures as long as good or superior cinematic story telling values are present.

I’m kind of glad the Reformed Theological Fruit are going to stay in the great blender in the ground. I honestly wondered what you were going to say through them that you already haven’t said before.

You have so much in your rant its difficult to know where to start or end in commenting. Thanks for your honesty in sharing your heart and feelings. That is very important and I think most of us can understand. Comics can

**AO Forum: Is the concept of time travel compatible with Christianity?**

I have expressly not read other peoples comments on the topic before writing this so as not to be influenced by their thoughts. First off I don’t think time travel is possible. About the only Christian (creation) scientist I’m aware of that even fringes on this topic is Russell Humphreys and his Time Dilution theories based on General Relativity.

Operating on the premise that time travel is not possible in reality we are left with the realm of fiction to play out this idea. Since it is a make believe concept we as Christians can use it within our fictional stories or universes. The larger question is— can time travelers change God ordained past (or future) events? The short answer here is since God is sovereign--No —time traveler(s) can’t change past or future events. God’s divine will be accomplished.

I like the idea of having modern people interacting with people and events in the past. Some years ago I did a comic called *Futurepast* which dealt with time travel into the past where an evolutionist was confronted with the reality of Adam and Eve and a recent creation. This was a fun exercise in weaving biblical theology within a science fiction context. This comic was published in AO #45, 46, 47, 50-(1992-93) and as a separate pub. Some of you long-timers may remember it. This story placed contemporary individuals in primeval Biblical times but did nothing to alter the historical events. I’m working on a Golden Protector story that involves time travel. Nosing around the internet there are some sites that deal with the “Laws” of Time Travel. One such site is (<http://www.xibalba.demon.co.uk/jbr/chrono.html>). It has four types of time travel. As a Christian I’m most comfortable with “The Deterministic (AKA Permanent) Time Line. Strict version: History is utterly immutable. Attempts to “ad lib” always turn out to have been scripted all along.”\*

become a very pervasive and consuming passion. And yes so much of it is dark and sinister.

It is important to present a wholesome and spiritual edifying alternative. Everything has a season and perhaps you work, for example, on December Sun is coming to a close—at least for now. Nice cover for AO #152.

**Geoff Strout**

You did a great job inking Eric’s Grom from the Space Hill. My only suggestion would be to spot some more blacks into the panels. Pages 5 and 8 would have been more effective with more blacks. Really liked your illo for Kingdom Found. Nice perspective of a school hallway lined with lockers with a girl from a wooded fantasy world bursting in. Wets your appetite to

find out what’s going on. Great entrance.

**Eric Jansen**

I liked your mini-reviews of the current comics that you are reading. My only comment is it would be nice if you could go into more detail on why you like these books. It does seem as if bit sized reviews at in vogue. I’ve been reading the *Comics Buyer’s Guide* of the past couple of years (I got a gift sub) and they are big on mini-reviews. There is a place for these brief essays but there is a place for more in depth writings--if the comics/graphic novels actually merit a longer analysis. I have read the first couple of issues of *First Wave* and Rags Morales is one of the better comic book storytellers out there. He has come a long

## **AO Forum: *Compromise: How far should we take it?***

A compromised person (Communist Christian super hero, Christian Darwinist paleontologist)— Is such a creature possible? Actually these ideas could be developed into great stories. When you have two spiritual/ideological concepts that are by nature mutually exclusive jostling around in the heart and mind of an individual you have a great source of (and for) conflict. This presents “a man against himself” conflict which can spill over into “man against man” and “man against nature”. A person who is a communist basically believes that the structures of class and society are barriers to attaining human perfection or utopia. The idea of God (or religion) is just one more shackle to be cast off for the betterment of mankind. Yet if a person believes there is a God (and Christ) and yet believes in Marxist solutions there will be a deep internal conflict which can have outward manifestations. One says that man is ultimately perfectible by human efforts alone (change social structures) and the other say no that man needs to reconcile with his Creator and Judge. A Christian Darwinist paleontologist is in much the same position. Darwinism posits the origin for plants, animals and people (as well as the inorganic realm) came through matter and random chance alone. It is basically a cruel, unintelligent process. As a Christian he realizes that Christ was concerned about his creation (“Not a sparrow falls...”) and that God/Christ is the creator and sustainer. The God of the Bible, unlike evolution, is very personally involved in his creation. How can these things be reconciled? Either you have to come up with a compromise position or you just don’t think about it. However unresolved thoughts have a tendency of asserting themselves over a period of time. They cry out for resolution. Your main protagonist(s) would take these positions (Communist and Darwinist) and the other cast of characters would represent those who are atheist communist/atheist evolutionists as well as committed Christians with social conservative/free market ideas and other loving and gracious Christians who are strong creationists. Place him in circumstances that show him the folly of his double mindedness. Using compromised characters to reflect the truth can be very effective if done well. These stories should be done as visually a possible. They could very easily be turned into a talking heads lecture that doesn’t use the comics medium at its best. ✱

way from doing the Lou Fine inspired *Black Condor* for DC back in the early 1990s.

### **Kevin Yong**

Thanks for your well stated comments on the time travel issue. I basically agree with your observations.

I enjoyed your “The Case of the Killer Fashion.” Silly, yes. Stereotypes. Yes. Playing to cliches. Yes. Over the top. Definitely! Funny. Very!

I also appreciate your Mary Jane

Writing Workshop. To me the best adventure story writing (at this stage in my life) is putting your protagonist in situations where the viewer or reader finds it hard to know how he is going to get out of the tight spot. Also the villains need to be a creditable enough threat to give our hero a really hard time. Some time ago a friend send me the first season of “The Rat Patrol.” The Rat Patrol was a 1960s TV series about an Allied “hit and run” team of saboteurs

operating in North Africa during World War II against Rommel’s Afrika Corps. In the episodes I’ve watched the heroes are so superior in courage, intelligence, fighting prowess and initiative that one wonders how the Germans lasted a week against the Allies much less several years. The enemy doesn’t seem credible and the heroes come through their battles without a drop of sweat much less physical wounds or battle fatigue. Even when I watched the show as a young person it was not one of my favorites. The current TV show “24” does a good job in making the villains into very credible opponents of the hero Jack Bauer. You wonder how Bauer going to get out of this one or will the villains succeed in their nefarious plots (and sometimes they do!) Bauer is also a flawed character with physical and emotional scars but he is driven by his passion to serve his country, protect its people and do what is right. This makes for compelling characters that an audience will come back to again and again to follow their adventures. Thanks for telling us why Wesley Crusher was such an annoying character. Will Wheaton was at the Phoenix Con promoting his web TV series, *The Guild*.

### **Billy Wamsley**

Wow what a physical adventure you had finding out about having blood clots. Scary and life threatening. I attended a seniors church here in Green Valley where so many of the people have serious physical issues. With advancing age it comes with the territory, because of your youth it seems unfair. However life is uncertain for all of us. None of us has a guarantee that we will be here next week. But as Christians we have the certainty that we are on this Earth for as long as God wants us to be. Sounds as if God still has things for you to do down here. I hope you can get back into your creative efforts soon--this helps us get moving

again after serious physical issues. Your artwork paper feet are great.

### **Holly Knevelbaard**

Good comments on the time travel issue. Thanks for all the mailing comments. There have been times I’ve had to catch up on them too.

### **Bob Wierdsma**

I liked you Scruffy segment. Good admonitions on false teachers.

### **Les Stebbings**

Sorry to hear about your brother. It’s very difficult to imagine that would happen to any of my three brothers. My prayers are with you. Also about your step father. I live in a retirement community and these sorts of elder issues are common, especially in the church I attend.

### **Josh Burns**

Glad to hear about your new job and new home. What a blessing and answer to prayer. I have gotten on your storyoftheweek-club website. I skimmed it and looks like a really great vehicle to express your writing and getting artists involved in illustrating some of your stories.

## **News & Notes**

**Kingstone Media:** I’ve just come across a Evangelical media provider from Fruit Land Park, Florida (just east of Orlando) who has developed a line of Christian comics. They has have produced several novels and a motion picture. Hopefully I’ll be able to review some of these comic next issue. Their comics are very well packaged and are good reads.

**Faithwalker:** I’ve had the opportunity to do some lettering for Clint Johnson’s *Faithwalker* comic. Faithwalker is a character Clint has worked on for years. He is hoping to see this printed in the not too distance future and it will be a New Creation Now title. Till next time. God bless. ✱