It isn’t in the Bible

In late October 2011, the United States Congress passed a resolution affirming “In God We Trust” as the nation’s motto while failing to pass a jobs bill that would put more Americans back to work. White House Press Secretary Jay Carney commented, “I believe the phrase from the Bible is, “The Lord helps those who help themselves.” Back in 2000, pollster George Barna found that 75 percent of the people he surveyed believed the famous proverb is biblical. And when Comedian Jay Leno asked passersby to name one of the Ten Commandments, most said, “God helps those who help themselves.” However, this famous proverb is not in the Bible. It most likely originated with Benjamin Franklin.—Christian Century

Home Bible study illegal

Back in January 2010, Chuck Fromm and his wife, Stephanie, began holding a Thursday evening Bible study at their home in San Juan Capistrano, California, and in June they started a Sunday morning meeting as well. Attendance at both meetings ranged from 6 to 40 people, all of whom were able to park on the Fromm’s property. Nevertheless, when someone complained, the city slapped them with $300 in fines for failure to have a Conditional Use Permit. The city’s code prohibits gatherings of “religious, fraternal, or nonprofit organizations” of more than three people in a residential neighborhood without the permit. The Pacific Justice Institute defended the Fromms in court, and the city has agreed to refund the $300 and reassess the controversial regulation.—Crosswalk.com

Public evangelism illegal

In December 2010, Peter Scott was sharing his faith and handing out religious literature at the “Bentleyville Tour of Lights” near Duluth, Minnesota, when a police officer asked him to leave. When Scott explained his First Amendment right to free speech to one of the organizers of the event, the official accused him of trying to impose on other people’s religious beliefs. He said, “They don’t want to hear religious proselytizing.” The city maintained that the “Tour of Lights” was sponsored by a private nonprofit organization, which had a right to restrict what happened at their event. However, the Alliance Defense Fund, which is defending Scott, said that the city cannot ban free speech during an event that is open to the public and held in a public park.—Christian Post Reporter

Muslim face coverings in Canada

Canadian Immigration Minister Jason Kenney has announced that Muslim women who wear face coverings will have to remove them when taking the oath of citizenship. The requirement comes in the wake of numerous complaints from citizenship judges who claim that it is difficult to tell whether a veiled woman is in fact taking the
oath. Muslim critics argue that the ruling forces women to choose between their religious convictions and Canadian citizenship. Kenney disagreed, pointing out that Muslim women who take a pilgrimage to Mecca are required to show their faces. On the other hand, the Muslim Canadian Congress not only welcomed the new regulation but urged the government to ban burqas in public locations throughout the country.—*The Vancouver Sun*

**Christianity in the Middle East**

Leonard Leo, the chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, says the prospects are grim for Christians who live in Middle Eastern countries, especially Iraq, Afghanistan, and Egypt. By some estimates, half or more of the 800,000 Christians who lived in Iraq prior to the American invasion in 2003 have fled the country. The cause of the exodus is violent Islamic extremists, who are determined to rid the country of all non-Muslim religions. Since the fall of Mubarak, violent attacks on Egypt’s 8 million Coptic Christians have increased, with law enforcement agencies doing very little to prevent it or prosecute it. And the constitution in Afghanistan is written in a way that gives lip service to religious freedom but also states that all laws must conform to Sharia principles.—*cnsnews.com*

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**As Quoted**

“Imposing a heavy-handed permit requirement on a home Bible study is outrageous.”

*Pacific Justice Institute president Brad Dacus, commenting on a fine imposed on a California couple for hosting a weekly Bible study with friends in their home.*

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