

MARCH 1975

# GN

The Good News

**DON'T  
PASS OVER  
THE  
PASSOVER**

Neglected Keys  
to a  
**JOYOUS  
MARRIAGE**

**WHY  
DID CHRIST  
HAVE  
TO DIE?**

**YOUR BEST  
INVESTMENT**

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Vol. XXIV No. 3

March 1975

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*Why do so many marriages lack deep fulfillment, joy and happiness? Why the pathetic lack of communication between marital partners? The article "Neglected Keys to a Joyous Marriage" (page 6) shows how to build love and understanding in your home.*

Gary George — GN

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# SEVEN PROOFS OF GOD'S CHURCH

**S**URE, I'm a Christian, but I'm not working at it very hard," said the businessman in casual cocktail conversation.

"Pray for us, brother Armstrong. We're Christians, but we're backsliders, having a hard time of it," was the plaintive plea of a letter recently received.

Millions upon millions of people feel they are "Christians." That is, they are believers in the "Christian religion," as opposed to the beliefs of Islam, Buddha or Orthodox Judaism.

But once beyond the vague label of "Christian," all similarity stops. "Christians," it seems, come in every conceivable size, shape and ideal. One can claim the name of Christ while believing and practicing the very antithesis of another who claims the same name.

"Christianity," having undergone an evolution in meaning from the first century to the maze of confusing, conflicting beliefs and practices claiming the same title today, is an increasingly difficult word to define. Hundreds upon hundreds of organizations claim the title "Christian" — yet they may be so diametrically opposed to one another, not only in theology and theory, but in active internecine warfare, as to constitute the bitterest of enemies.

## In Search of Christians

Today, as "belief in the Bible" seems to be gaining ground, dozens of the more bizarre among all so-called "Christian" groups have emerged. Some are ultramilitant, actively attempting to defy existing institutions or even other "Christian" organizations, while others are pacifistic, isolationist and prefer to live a secluded communal life.

But suppose you were to conduct an experiment. By using the *Bible*

## PROOF

# 5

## A BALANCED WAY OF LIFE

by Garner Ted Armstrong

***God's true Church knows the right way of living — the balanced, abundant life. The right way of life with solid, balanced truth about diet, exercise, foods, finances, marriage. This way of life is another vital proof of the true Church of God.***

definition of "Christian" — meaning the plain, simple, impossible-to-be-misunderstood scriptures clearly defining just what is *meant* by the name — suppose you embarked on a search to find such people; to find, literally, the Church of which Jesus Christ is living Head.

How would you do it?

Where would you look?

Should such a search begin in the large, multimillion-member organi-

zations whose steepled edifices dot the land? Among tiny, struggling missionary groups? Among the various newly organized youth groups claiming to be God's own children? Where?

How would you select the country of your research? Among which races, nationalities, political or religious persuasions would you search?

Would you begin looking in health food stores, at sports events, at communal settlements tucked away in secluded hills, among primitive tribes, or in busy offices on Wall Street?

To the Pharisees of Jesus' day, such a search for a true "Christian"

(though the pharisaical religion never acknowledged Christ and was most certainly not "Christian") would be simple.

Any yardstick, ruler or other measuring device would do. Simply compare the breadth of the

phylacteries. Take a look at all the religious deeds noted thereon. Check to find out whether the man indeed fasted "twice in the week," carefully tithed of mint, anise, and cummin (Luke 18:12; Matt. 23:23), and most especially, looked with utter contempt and disdain upon people of lowly status in life whose righteousness was of an inferior brand.

During the Middle Ages, the search for a true Christian would have been equally simple. Look for the sign of the cross, the flashing blade of a blood-soaked sword catching the glint of the dying sun as it was dismembering the body of yet another "infidel." Look into the dungeons of medieval "Christianity," where hapless victims were put to death on the rack or burned at the stake. The true "Christians" of that day could be found ringing a town square of a tiny village hamlet, their eyes protruding in sadistic

delight at the death cries of an alleged "witch," as the hooded executioner tossed his blazing torch into the pile of branches at her feet.

### Yardstick Religion

All down through history it has been the same.

True believers? True "Christians"? Where to find them — how to search — where to begin?

Simple. You do it with calipers, measuring tape, a yardstick, a stopwatch, or with binoculars — or so it would appear, if you were to listen to some militant voices.

Find a "true Christian"? Simple. Check his diet. Notice the clothing. Pay special attention to the sideburns, hair length and facial hair.

Peep curiously into the creases around the eyelids to see if there is the faintest touch of makeup there.

Search pantries, closets and kitchen shelves.

See if you can find any "pagan abominations," like soda crackers, potato chips (which may have been fried in hydrogenated oil — ugh!) or a bottle of Alka-Seltzer.

Searching for a "true Christian"? Simple.

Take time out for several dozen plane flights back and forth across the country. Notice carefully the passengers. Wait until you find one who, after takeoff and the "No Smoking" sign has gone out, whips out a well-marked Bible, adjusts his reading glasses and begins to read studiously, all the while making obvious red-and-blue marks with a flourish. Obviously, this fellow never has time to study his Bible at home, or in church services, or in private Bible study in his motel room when he travels; and even more obviously, he would not be found dead with such pagan literature as up-to-the-moment news magazines, or even a novel, in his possession — and so, in order to be a proper "light" to the world, he tries desperately to create the impression that he is a religious fanatic.

Some "true believers" are identified by shaved heads and long

robes, while others are identified by huge beards, flat-brimmed hats, square-toed shoes and a rejection of all twentieth-century life.

### A Balanced Christian Life

Unfortunately, it seems one of the most truly difficult tasks confronting members of God's true Church during this modern age is living a *balanced* Christian life.

But, difficult or not, that balanced *way of life* is, according to your Bible, one of the most powerful single *proofs* of God's true Church!

Jesus plainly warned, "Ye shall know them *by their fruits*"! In condemning the pharisaical self-righteousness of a group of bigoted hypocrites who plotted his own murder, Jesus continually pointed to the *fruit* of the pharisaical *way of life*, as well as the false *doctrine* of the Pharisees.

They were the epitome of "outward righteousness" during Jesus' day. While Jesus Himself was accused by the self-righteous Pharisees of being a "gluttonous man and a winebibber," simply because he attended banquets and did enjoy a glass of wine now and then, Christ plainly showed the supercilious snobbery of the egomaniacal Pharisee was nothing but a hollow gong, a clanging cymbal, the braying of a jackass in the wind for all his hollow ceremony, pretentious dignity and ostentatious alms-doing. Jesus continually showed the Pharisees to be a pack of snivelling curs, a snarling mongrel group of hate-filled, murder-plotting hypocrites who loved to *appear* righteous in their daily postures, but who refused to *live* a righteous way of life!

But Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who promised to lead His people into all truth, also fully intended that a true Christian should be a wise, sound, fully balanced and *mature* person emotionally, mentally, psychologically and spiritually!

The Apostle Paul told Timothy: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7).

### A Fine Line

Balance is a knife's edge. In a chaotic world of conflicting ideals, rapidly changing moral values, and chaotic disarray of standards, it becomes all the more difficult for a sincere person who is striving to live a truly Christian life to maintain that precarious equilibrium!

But God's true Church will be learning the lesson that you cannot "measure yourself" by careful comparison with the personal lives of others — that you do not enter into God's Kingdom by judiciously drinking apple juice, taking a shot of rose-hip tea now and then, avoiding white crackers at all costs, chewing twenty times before swallowing, and feeling driven, haunted and guilty if you do not "meditate" at least an hour a day!

God's true Church will know, and will *practice*, the soundly based biblical *truths* about correct diet, balance and soundness in right amounts of exercise and recreation, a wholesome and loving attitude toward people in the world who are "sinners," maintaining the balance that is loving a sinner without condoning his sin!

God's true Church will understand the right approach to marriage and the whole panorama of how to live a happy, full, abundant, yet spiritually dedicated life! Jesus said that He came that we might have life and have it *more abundantly*!

Many scriptures fully explain Jesus did not mean this to be interpreted in the amount of material goods or physical abundance — but the full, rounded, exciting and happy life (yes, a Christian is commanded even to rejoice in tribulation!) that the New Testament clearly teaches.

### Christianity a Way of Life

Believe it or not, Christianity is a *full-time job*! It's a *profession*, not just a "belief." It's what you *do* — all the time, not what you do now and then, or when the mood strikes

you, or when the social pressures build to the point of unbearable degree, thus sending you off "to church" once or twice a year, or to "confession" for a fresh shot of righteousness to replace the faded, dulled coating you're presently wearing.

Strange, that millions of professing "Christians" do not seem to know that Christianity is a way of life! It's a way of thinking, breathing, acting, talking, walking, dressing, working, playing, loving — a way of doing!

The true Church of God, the Church of which Jesus Christ is Head, *living* Head, will be living that way of life which Jesus brought!

### The Shocking Sermon on the Mount

Christ's teachings concerning love of enemies, "turning the other cheek," and the precepts of the "Golden Rule" are so well known they seem a commonplace, almost casually repeated part of modern-day "Christianity."

Millions of professing Christians hear sermons preached from the famous "Beatitudes" of Matthew the fifth chapter. They are inspired, encouraged, perhaps a little chagrined now and then, as they listen to beautifully delivered, carefully phrased, sanctimoniously pronounced dissertations about the "poor in spirit," or "blessed are the merciful" or the "pure in heart."

But Jesus Christ *knew* His teachings would be watered down, spiritualized away and trampled underfoot in a maze of confusion. He *knew*, and forewarned, that men would *profess* His name — would *claim* to be "Christian," but would *adamantly refuse* to OBEY what He said!

"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" asked Jesus (Luke 6:46). He said: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias [Isaiah] prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me *with their mouth* ['amen, and amen,' 'hal-

lelujah' a few times, and 'praise the Lord, man'], and honoureth me with their lips; but their HEART is far from me" (Matt. 15:7, 8).

Jesus knew people would "believe on Him," that they would adore His person, and *pervert* or *ignore* His message! "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:4, 5).

Continually, God's Word shows there is a huge, unbridgeable gap between those who *profess* the name "Christian" and those who are willing to *live* a Christian life!

### Christ Spoke With Authority

When Jesus Christ first spoke the words recorded in Matthew's 5th,

**Believe it or not, Christianity is a full-time job! It's a profession, not just a "belief." It's what you do — all the time, not what you do now and then, or when the mood strikes you.**

6th and 7th chapters, people were *shocked* by what He said! It seemed the very antithesis of all previous religious teaching — yes, even the teachings of Moses, and most specifically the *added* plethora of rules and regulations which constituted the "Judaism" of Christ's day.

His message of mercy, love, forgiveness — of turning the other cheek, going the extra mile, and knowing, in your heart, that even *hating* another person constitutes *murder* in God's sight was *shockingly* different to the Pharisees and other sectarian leaders.

Christ's teachings were not intended as platitudes or mealy-mouthed pabulum for prettily spoken poetry and empty "sermons" of the inner-good qualities of human nature!

Rather: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were *astonished* at his doctrine: for he taught them as *one having authority*, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28, 29).

A true Christian is a member of God's true Church! He *must* be a "member of the body" to be a true Christian! "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30).

There is only *one name* given under heaven whereby men must be saved (Acts 4:12). Your Bible plainly says: "Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is *none of his*" (Rom. 8:9).

"But ye are not in the flesh, but *in the Spirit* [and as such, you will truly be 'His' — a *member* of His own body], IF so be that the Spirit of God *dwell in you*" (Rom. 8:9).

Paul said: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:27).

### Is Today's "Christianity" Really Christian?

The disciples were first called "Christians" at Antioch (Acts 11:26).

The word "Christian," as applied to these men, meant something *shockingly different* than it means to the millions today! If you could know how utterly, totally, completely and absolutely different they really were, it would boggle your mind!

They kept customs almost universally *abhorred* by so-called "Christians" today! Their entire "lifestyle" was different! They kept God's true Sabbath — the seventh day of the week — proved both by many scriptures in the book of Acts, and throughout Paul's writings, and attested to by profane history! They observed God's true HOLY days, the ANNUAL Sabbaths. They dedicated their lives to doing the WORK of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness to the dying civilization of their time.

History proves there was a *total*

change in what "Christian" meant at Antioch, and what it came to be called by the third century! It took bloodbaths to change some of it — to *force* people, as the years went by, to abandon the customs Christ had taught, and that the early apostles had kept and taught others to keep!

Study into the "Quartodeciman" controversy sometime. See how it finally required pressure from the state to *force* people to quit keeping the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, just as Jesus Christ had set for an example, and exactly as the Apostle Paul had urged Gentile Christians!

Even before the close of the New Testament writings, Jude had to write: "... It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the *grace* of our God into *lasciviousness*, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3, 4).

### Turning Grace Into License

From the very days of Christ until now, the continual movement to turn grace (forgiveness, unmerited pardon, mercy upon repentance) into *lasciviousness* (license — permission to *do evil*) has continued.

Today, millions of professing "Christians" seem to *hate* God's laws! Thousands of their ministers continually cry out against obedience to Christ's commands!

They say there is nothing you must *DO*, therefore calling Christ a liar when He said: "... If thou wilt enter into life, keep the *commandments*" (Matt. 19:17).

God's Word makes it clear that to be a Christian you must repent of having broken God's law! *All* have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

Christ paid that penalty by shedding His life's blood in *our*

*place*. But acceptance of His shed blood for forgiveness of sins does not mean license, permission, to live in iniquity! "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*" (Acts 3:26).

Iniquity means *lawlessness*. Sin is the breaking of God's law (I John 3:4), and is the breaking of that law (in all of its points, as Christ *magnified* it and made it much more binding in the "sermon on the mount") for which we must repent! Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

By receiving the Holy Spirit you *become* a true Christian. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13).

Becoming a member of that body makes you a member of God's true Church! (I Cor. 12:18, 27.)

### A Christian Must Be an Overcomer

Once having repented of breaking God's law, the true Christian will be striving daily, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to become perfect in character. "Be [become, Greek] ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). "Him that *overcometh* will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also *overcame*, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). To LIVE the life of a true Christian, Jesus Christ said you must be *OVERCOMING*!

And while *WORKS* — works of *whatever* kind, physical, material, mental, spiritual (even keeping all the Ten Commandments perfectly) — cannot ever earn salvation, you must, nevertheless, overcome your own human nature — and that means bearing fruit in your private life; it means *DOING*, not just professing with the mouth!

James explains it: "So speak ye, and so *DO*, as they that shall be *JUDGED* by the *LAW OF LIBERTY*. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:12, 13).

"Showing mercy" is no hollow emotion — it is an *act* of life: whether giving of material goods to those that have need; helping accident victims, the aged, feeble, or sick; or granting instant forgiveness when wronged.

James goes on to say: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not *WORKS*? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not *WORKS*, is *dead*, being alone" (verses 14-17).

James seemed to *know* endless arguments would arise between those who would seemingly be "willingly ignorant" of these simple truths — that they would argue for either faith alone or works alone!

He said: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (verse 18).

"Faith without works is *DEAD*" (verse 20), says your Bible.

Will a true Christian be producing *works* in his own private life?

Either he will be doing so — zealously growing, overcoming, giving, sharing, studying, praying, helping others — or he is simply not a true Christian!

### A Christian's Trademark

This living of a balanced, wholesome, zestful, happy, busy Christian life was intended to be a virtual *trademark* of God's true Church on this earth! John said: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that

saith, I know him [which Jesus prophesied they would say: 'Oh, what a joy to know the lord', ad infinitum], and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him . . . He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk [live — a *way of life*], even as he [Christ] walked" (I John 2:3-6).

Peter, too, urges *good works!*

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation [conduct] honest among the Gentiles [nations]: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your *good works*, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Pet. 2:11-12).

One of the great *proofs* of God's true Church is the fact that its members are *living their religion* — FULL TIME!

### Walk Worthy of Your Calling

God calls it a profession! Like a chosen occupation of highly technical, skilled, intelligent expertise, Christ wants His true servants to be actively *living* by what He said!

Paul wrote: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye *walk worthy* of the vocation [profession, *job!*] wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one body* [and ONLY one!], and one Spirit, even as ye are called in *one hope* of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:1-6).

That way of life which Jesus came to live as an example, and to teach to His disciples, is required for a true Christian! Does it make any sense to believe a person may *argue* against his own Saviour, rebel and *resist* the Word of God, *fight* to have his "own way" as opposed to God's way, and still claim the name "Christian"?

Does it make sense to claim *worship* for Christ, and resist His plain and simple commands?

Does it sound intelligent, or even rational, to appropriate the name "Christian," yet trample underfoot the whole way of life which Christ Himself lived and taught, and urged His true disciples to keep?

### A Different Life-Style

Continually, the persecutors, both from the ultra right (Pharisees) and from the ultra left (Sadducees and, later, followers of Simon Magus) of the religious spectrum of Christ's time, tried to convince their followers that the *way of life* the disciples taught was wrong!

It was the different "life-style" that caused such objections (Acts 19:9) and brought about such persecution! Are you careful to eat a balanced diet, without going into food faddism and vitamin fanaticism? Chances are you will be persecuted for it!

Want to live a *balanced* life in recreation, exercise, sleep and peace of mind — and, more importantly, *do you have a Bible reason for it?* Chances are you will be evil spoken of as a result!

If someone is taking advantage of you financially, cheating you, short-changing you, or falsely suing you in the courts, and you choose to not only *allow* such mistreatment, but even offer him more, what do you suppose the comments will be?

If someone speaks horrible, incredible, distorted lies about you, and you choose to follow Christ's example and "answer them not a word" — choosing not to even dignify such slop with an answer — don't you realize the whole world will interpret your nonresponse as tacit admission of guilt?

If you search for Bible principles by which to conduct your business, work on the job, handle your personal finances, rear your children, conduct your marriage — people will *persecute* you for it!

But so what?

Didn't Jesus Christ say, "Woe be

unto you, when all men speak *well* of you?" And doesn't the Bible command us to "rejoice in tribulation," and say, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous?" (Ps. 34:19.)

### Spiritual Growth and Development

God's true Church will be on a continual search for growth, development, maturity, improvement! God's Word says the ministry is for that very *purpose* in each local congregation. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* [mature, margin] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . speaking the truth in love, may *grow up* into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:11-15).

"But *grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," said the Apostle Peter (II Pet. 3:18).

Even as each individual member is commanded to *grow*, to develop, overcome, change, mature, *so must the entire Church* be growing, developing, overcoming, changing where proved wrong, and maturing!

This *WAY* of living, striving daily to OVERCOME — not only in the individual life of each member, but in the whole Church collectively, is a great proof of the true Church of God, of which Jesus Christ is the LIVING Head!

Jesus Christ promised He would build His Church (Matt. 16:18), remain at the helm of it (Eph. 1:22; 2:20; Matt. 28:20), and gave it a great *reason for being*, a great *job* to do.

Next month, we'll see, in proof number six, the entire picture of how Christ governs and rules His Church, and *why* He established such a way of government! □

**Neglected Keys  
to a  
JOYOUS  
MARRIAGE**





## **Why does the honeymoon end so suddenly for many couples? Who do so many married partners simply "coexist" in the same house, but without the deep fulfillment they desire?**

by Roderick C. Meredith

**H**ER eyes flooded with tears, the woman before me began to shake and sob. Bending over with her face in her hands, she quietly moaned as she cried — finally catching herself, sitting upright and wiping her eyes. "I have always realized how empty my marriage was," she blurted out. "But hearing you describe in your talk today what marriage ought to be like makes me realize that I've just got to do better in my marriage!"

"What's wrong?" I inquired, asking the question in several different ways.

### **The Cause of Utter Despair**

There were, of course, a number of things wrong. But obviously the deepest and most pathetic problem of all had nothing to do with sex, money or other widely publicized stumbling blocks to a happy marriage.

"My husband just won't talk to me," she said again and again. "I am lonely and frustrated. I don't even really know the man I married. I feel like I'm living with a stranger."

This case is typical of literally millions of marriages. Often, at least one of the partners *thinks* that they communicate. But the other partner, normally the woman, knows that they do not and feels alone and frustrated. She senses that she and her husband are simply coexisting in the same house. They do not necessarily fight and hurt each other physically or even verbally. But there is not the openness, the closeness, the total sharing of two lives, the love that there should be.

One authority on the subject

quoted a woman discussing her ten-year-old marriage: "It's heart-breaking. Before I was married, I used to go out to restaurants and just by looking around the room I could tell who was married and who wasn't. Either the married couples were eating in dead silence, or the woman was gabbling away while the man ate and pretended she wasn't there. I swore that this would never happen to me — but it has."

Why such cases as the above? Why don't husbands and wives, of all people, communicate more fully to one another?

### **Hindrances to Total Sharing**

Newly marrieds often work hard at learning and adjusting to each other's attitudes and preferences. They take pleasure in exchanging opinions on almost everything. After a few months, however, the opinions are all exchanged, the attitudes seemingly understood and the interest and excitement of "getting to know you" is over.

As the marriage continues and children come along, the wife's interest and talk is increasingly about her children and a myriad of domestic details which usually hold little or no interest for the husband. The couple often take for granted each other's attitudes on certain topics rather than even bothering to discuss them.

Most husbands care to hear only good news about their children, and are either irritated or bored if the wife confides in them the detailed problems involved in rearing their family. Wives usually miss their husbands most when the children are small. Having no adult in the house to talk to all day, such wives feel an urgent necessity to talk with their spouse at night. But many husbands retreat behind their paper or quietly turn on the TV rather than endure what they feel is a boring "rehash" of household frustrations.

All of this sounds very natural and normal. Do you see anything *wrong* with it?

Perhaps not.

And the reason is because we have failed utterly in our modern society to teach the real purpose and meaning of marriage.

### **What Marriage Ought to Mean**

A few years ago a popular and beautiful song expressed the thought "No man is an island."

That is exactly right.

Man without a mate, man without a life partner, is incomplete. Although many individuals — whether through necessity, ignorance or choice — go through life deprived of this relationship, their lives lack a vital element.

In the beginning of the Bible God says: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help suitable for him."

Man, throughout the Bible, means all humans. And *all* human beings need a partner with whom they can share their triumphs and sorrows, their laughter and their tears, their appreciation of a beautiful sunset — or the toothless grin of their firstborn child. They need to share — in fact, to be complete they *must* share — their plans, their hopes, their dreams.

Marriage presents a challenging confrontation where man must go beyond himself and develop in many ways. He then becomes a more mature and understanding human being. If a marriage is reduced to two people merely coexisting, living under the same roof while remaining *separated* in their deepest hopes, feelings and aspirations, then that marriage has completely missed its goal.

### **Concept of Family Kingdom**

Another important element in marriage is that of children. The family is the building block, the foundation of all decent society. And the strongest link in many a family is often its smallest member.

There is an old saying: "A man's home is his castle." This analogy should apply to his entire family,

where he is the *king*; his wife, the beloved *queen*; and his children, the royal princes and princesses who need *training* to fulfill their future responsibilities. So the parents enthusiastically work *together* to ensure that these future leaders are carefully nurtured, guided, disciplined and trained for the important roles they must play in years to come.

The intelligent and joyous blending of these two concepts in marriage — the open and loving union of the bodies, hearts and minds of the married couple, and the creation of the vital “family kingdom” — such a blending can and should produce an opportunity and an atmosphere where men and women can find complete fulfillment.

This fulfillment is pictured by the Psalmist: “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways . . . Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table” (Ps. 128:1, 3).

### Put These Concepts to Work

Once you fully grasp these concepts relating to the meaning and purpose of marriage, why not set about building your marriage and your home around them?

Instead of the husband and wife being bored and disinterested in sharing each other's thoughts, both should be vitally interested in the miniature “family kingdom” which, *together*, they are energetically building. There should be a purposeful common interest in teaching and training their children, in improving their home and their financial position and in planning for the future. *Their* future.

For in a truly happy marriage, it is not “my house,” “my car,” or even “my paycheck.” Rather, whether expressed in words or in total attitude, it *should* be “*our* house, *our* car, *our* income, *our* future.”

And so the mutual attitude should constantly be forward-look-

ing and planning for improvements in your “castle,” your home. The wife's feelings, and her understanding and expertise in home decorating, landscaping, appliances, etc., should always be taken into account. Every major purchase such as a home or car should be a *family project* — affording the opportunity and benefit of a sharing experience between husband and wife.

Nothing to talk about?

No, *everything* to talk about and share. That is the correct answer.

Without being silly or unrealistic about it, husbands and wives should think of themselves as “partners” in a great adventure — in building a career, a business, a life, *together*. They should talk over details regarding their mutual allies — their friends, business associates and relatives. With the wife entering wholly into the discussion, they should plan their mutual strategy and discuss in detail what each can contribute to bring their goals in life closer to reality.

Then there are the children. What an area of discussion, planning, mutual problem solving and heartfelt sharing of hopes and dreams they provide!

My wife and I have four children — three of them teenagers. How many *hundreds* of hours have we spent enthusiastically discussing their future!

Each child is different. Yet their mother and I identify *totally* with each personality which our love has produced. Our marriage is strengthened as we discuss the abilities and shortcomings of each of our children and how we can guide them, nurture them and help prepare them for full and successful lives.

### When Tragedy Strikes

Of course all is not peaches and cream in *any* marriage. The husband may lose his job. One of the children may be seriously injured. Somehow, tragedy seems to strike all of us in one way or another in the course of a normal life.

If they meet tragedy *together*,

man and wife will be drawn even closer. Often, a real setback will spark communication and a sense of sharing that may have been previously lacking. A couple need each other more than ever at such a time.

The willingness of each partner to sympathize and truly seek to *understand* his mate is paramount. Anything that can break down the barriers of pride, selfishness, insensitivity and coldness is serving a good purpose.

For a marriage without deep and heartfelt *communication* is no marriage at all.

Those who are thoughtless and selfish can easily find duties or distractions to avoid a heart-to-heart talk with their mate. Many married people fear this type of communication. They are somehow afraid of opening up in depth. They are always “too busy.” They never find the time to truly explore the heart and mind, the hopes and dreams of the very one to whom they are united for life — one who may be practically bursting with desire to be included in the life and thoughts of her beloved.

Even when on vacation such individuals find distractions. And at home they may cultivate a circle of charming friends, friends who help fill in the time and enable them gracefully to avoid a long, completely candid, heartfelt talk with their mate.

In such cases, perhaps only a tragedy is enough to shock the insensitive partner into an awareness of his responsibilities. And, ironically, all too often it takes the tragedy of threatened divorce to bring the message home.

### Why Married Partners Neglect Communication

A complete revealing of one's self requires a great deal of courage. People fear unveiling their inner selves and opening up to another human being, even to their mate, their doubts and fears as well as their hopes and dreams.

Why? They fear to be misunder-

stood. They fear ridicule, criticism or censure.

Until a solid relationship has been slowly and painstakingly built over a period of months and years, even married people avoid "telling all" to one another.

Yet, until this lack is rectified they can never truly be "one." There will always be an inner yearning for "someone" to whom they can truly unburden themselves and know that they will not be quickly or easily misunderstood.

Men are often more proud than women. They have greater difficulty in admitting that they are afraid.

By a harsh word or growl, a man may cut short his wife and terminate a conversation which he fears. A conversation which might unveil part of his true nature if it were pursued.

Why?

We all fear being judged, being criticized, being misunderstood.

And many of us fear receiving unwanted and ill thought-out advice. Especially advice from a loved one, one who can hurt us deeply.

A husband may be experiencing a complicated problem in his work or profession. He hesitantly starts to share this deepest anxiety with his wife, something he has thought about and analyzed for months. Immediately she blurts out: "You should stand up for yourself like a man and take thus and such action . . ."

Her husband lowers his eyes and feels sick inside. "She didn't even wait to hear the whole problem!" he thinks. He feels that she treats him like a little boy with her ready-made answers regarding something she knows nothing about!

He is crushed and defeated in his desire to find mature help and understanding regarding what may now be the biggest problem of his entire career.

But he is forced to withdraw, to change the subject, or to leave the room. His wife meant well, but she did not know how to listen.

To understand deeply another human being, we must learn to *listen*, and not reply. We must listen well — attempting to perceive the emotional colorings of the words as well as the words themselves. We must *take time* to allow our mate to unburden his or her heart to us, again and again. We must not offer criticism or judgment during this learning process.

We must fervently seek *to understand*.

There is a very close link between love and understanding. Because the very nature of true love is outgoing concern, true lovers always seek to understand, to encourage, to share the depths of their beings with one another.

### What To Do

To all who would practice the art of total communication, of understanding, of love as outlined in this article, I have some suggestions which I give here in summary.

First, build a deep interest in the growth and fulfillment of your mate as a *person*. Some of the last quoted words of Jesus Christ found in the Bible are these: "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

There is no greater opportunity afforded on this earth to give, to share, to inspire joy and a sense of fulfillment in another person, than the opportunity of marriage. If each partner thinks, "How much can I give toward the joy and fulfillment of my mate?" — what a recipe for paradise!

Teach yourself to share and to communicate on the highest level. Take time for long talks together — perhaps including walking, hiking or cycling together over the countryside if you can. Plan to take short overnight or business trips *together* occasionally — leaving small children with *competent* family friends or relatives. Such trips should become "second honeymoons" and put new zest into your marriage.

Take holiday or vacation trips *together*. Do things that you can truly *share* and enjoy with one another.

At home, develop mutual interests and hobbies that you can share — gardening, stamp or coin collecting, concert going, or a collection of classical recordings.

It matters not what it is as long as you *share* it by the hour with one another. As long as it is a vehicle to stimulate a deeper closeness and understanding between you and the most precious individual on the face of the earth — your mate.

### You Should Dream and Work Together

In your walks and talks and laughter and tears, go back in retrospect, *together*, and relive the thoughts of a young boy who sat on a hillside, looking at the sky, and dreaming of the future. Discuss and analyze those dreams lovingly and understandingly with one another. Then work and pray together to make them come true.

In like manner, relive the hopes and aspirations of a young girl who often walked alone at sunset across her father's fields — dreaming of a husband and home of her own someday, of children, security, warmth, laughter and joy. Be sure you work *together* to make *her* dreams come true.

Learn to *respond* to one another — openly and lovingly. Have no secrets. Bear no grudges. This is your only life, your only mate, your only love. Learn to think and feel in unison, solving all your problems *together* as a team. The mutual encouragement and stimulus you'll feel, the added warmth and love you'll experience, will add an extra dimension of understanding and purpose and joy to your life that cannot be obtained in any other way.

Truly, "it is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). □



**P**ASSOVER. It's a strange word. It sounds strange. It sounds archaic. And it sounds *Jewish*.

It belongs in an unfamiliar class of words — words foreign to most of our ears: *Chanukah* — *Rosh Hashanah* — *Yom Kippur* — *Bar Mitzvah* — *Unleavened Bread*.

To most of us, it's merely a strange custom held over from "B.C." A little-understood rite that has its roots in the escape of an ancient race of people from bondage in a land called Egypt. A custom perpetuated by bearded rabbis — curiously and secretly observed by the faithful of Judaism, whether yesteryear in the ghettos of medieval Europe or today in the Jewish suburbs of New York and Chicago.

Yes, a curious custom. And certainly to the average professing Christian of today this ancient practice — the Passover — bears little more relevance to his religious life than does the Chinese New Year.

No religious ceremony has ever been born of more bizarre and traumatic circumstances.

The Passover was born in Egypt. And to the Israelites Egypt was the "New World." It was the patriarchal "land of opportunity." The tremendous success and wealth enjoyed by Joseph and his brothers — who had come to Egypt about 1700 B.C. — had prompted the majority of succeeding generations of Israelites to remain in Egypt — basking in the prosperity of their labor and enjoying the favor of the Egyptian government.

They resided principally in the land of Goshen, which comprised the eastern half of the Nile Delta. In a short 200 years, following the death of Joseph, the population of the Israelites mushroomed to between two and three million. What had begun as merely a foreign labor force gradually evolved into an increasingly influential and powerful nation within a nation.

Unfortunately, times change. And so do rulers. After 1500 a new

# DON'T PASS OVER THE PASSOVER

by Bob Ellsworth

Pharaoh came on the scene in Egypt. His name was Pepi II. And unlike his predecessors, he was not nearly so inclined to show favor to this industrious and ambitious group of "foreigners." The memory of Joseph and his brilliant policies, which had saved Egypt from economic and agricultural collapse, had all but faded.

Slowly, a bizarre and terrifying metamorphosis began to take place. Fearing the possibility of a potentially subversive group of Israelites overthrowing the government through alliance with his enemies, Pepi II implemented gradual and subtle steps to reduce the status and influence of the Hebrews. Like European Jewry under Hitler, the Israelites saw the well-being, harmony and respect they had always enjoyed suddenly deteriorate.

## Israel in Bondage

They became "second-class" citizens. Restrictions were imposed. Privileges were diminished or eliminated. As a final and crushing step, fearing the loss of this vast pool of labor upon which the economy of Egypt now heavily relied, the new Pharaoh organized the Israelites into a vast and tightly controlled labor force — a state barely above complete slavery and privation.

Yet, surprisingly, even under this state of repression and semi-slavery, they continued to grow in numbers.

As the growth of the Hebrew population continued unchecked, Pharaoh realized he had painted himself into a corner. Any uprising

by the now greatly dissatisfied labor pool would be more than his forces could control. Fearing the worst — the specter of outright uncontrolled rebellion — Pharaoh instituted a drastic measure — a "final solution" to check Israelitish expansion. It was history's first recorded policy of genocide. All male babies were to be exterminated.

From a state of freedom and prosperity, the Hebrews had come face to face with the eventual prospect of total annihilation.

It was into this bleak and oppressed society that Moses was born. And it was in the midst of the subsequent events — the dramatic confrontation with the Pharaoh by Moses and Aaron, the plagues and the human calamities — that the Passover was born.

For the sake of space, let's skip ahead in our story. Past Moses' flight to Midian. Past the horrible plagues. Past the miraculous, stupefying events before the actual Exodus. The complex weaving of circumstances has brought us to the night of the 14th of Abib, 1487 B.C. Pharaoh has been warned by Moses of one final death-dealing plague that will come upon his people unless the Israelites are released.

Although broken and bitter, his nation in a state of devastation and economic ruin, Pharaoh stubbornly refuses. On this same night, Israel secretly prepares for its flight. It is the night of the first Passover.

## What the Passover Pictures

So vital and cogent were the events of this night to God's overall plan that He instructs His true followers down through history — forever — to keep a memorial of its occurrence. Like the intricate plot of a fascinating novel, Almighty God uses the circumstances and symbolism of this night, and the ensuing Exodus, to guide not only ancient Israel, but *true Christians*.

The Passover is more than a ceremony. It tells you *how* to become a

Christian — God's first "installment" in the salvation story.

Notice again the circumstances. The Israelites were enslaved in an alien land — Egypt. They were subject to its influence, its corruption, its pagan polytheistic religion. In fact, God calls Egypt a *type* of sin. If it was wrong or immoral, chances are you could find it in Cairo, Raamses, or Succoth.

Now, what about you, a member of our modern, twentieth-century society? Where do you find yourself lately? Enslaved, right? You bet you are. We all are. To society, to our passions and desires, or to the "system."

Our "cruel taskmasters" are indeed more subtle — and often appealing — than they were to the Israelites 3500 years ago, but every bit as real. Very few of us indeed can claim to be the masters of our own destiny. Looking back, usually we find our lot in life has been determined capriciously, whimsically.

You, like the Israelites, were born into it. You, as they, had nothing to do with it and don't necessarily like it. But there's little any of us seem to be able to do — it's still the status quo. And chances are pretty good that you, too, are mighty dissatisfied with your little "Egypt." You know — the assembly line, the rat race, the monotony. The lack of challenge and purpose. The shaky marriage. The hundreds of unfulfilled hopes, plans, dreams and ambitions. If any generation has ever echoed the words of Thoreau that "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation," it is ours today.

It's as if some unknown force has set up roadblocks at every avenue of your life. Yes, to one degree or another, you're *trapped*. You are, as respectable as your state may be, a virtual slave. You're in a twentieth-century Egypt.

Some would do anything to get out respectably. For many in our beleaguered society, a convenient "exodus" would be refreshing. A

soiree or escape into some "wilderness" to redirect and reestablish our misguided and unguided lives. A simple vacation from our lot in life to ponder and muse on our existence.

### For Our Day

*Why* did God establish the Passover ceremony to be commemorated for all time by His followers? Notice Exodus 13:3, 9: "... Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand *the Eternal brought you out* . . . . And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Eternal's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Eternal brought thee out of Egypt."

God enjoins Christians to keep the Passover so we may remember that He is our Lawgiver and Creator and Deliverer.

The New Testament contains almost as many references to the Passover as the Old. Luke 2:41 shows us that Christ, then still with His parents, kept the Passover. Several long chapters in the Gospels are devoted to the events surrounding the institution of the New Testament Passover.

And there is much more to the story of the Passover. The parallels and lessons God intends us to draw are almost unending: The blood of a young lamb splattered on the doorpost — foreshadowing the sacrifice of Christ. The flight out of Egypt — showing we as Christians must take *action*, we must initiate our "exodus" from sin.

The pursuit by Pharaoh and his armies — signifying that Christians are indeed pursued by a very real and active spiritual force, the devil and his legions. The crossing through the Red Sea — the baptism of the Israelites, foreshadowing the rite to be commanded for all Christians upon their flight from sin.

If you would like more information on the Passover, please write for our booklets entitled *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holydays — Which?* and *How Often Should We Observe the Lord's Supper?*

Or you may want to contact a minister directly (see box below).

But most importantly, we challenge you to "break out." We challenge you to conform, not to a system that enslaves, but to that way (Acts 18:26; 19:9, 23) which will bring you purpose, refreshment and hope.

You *can* begin a new life. You can come out of your "Egypt." □

## Festival Counsel

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (ordained ministers) in most communities in the United States and British Commonwealth, and in many other areas of the world. These men of God can visit you, *if invited*, directly in your own home.

So if you do have questions

about how and when to observe God's annual festivals, please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses are on the inside front cover.

Or if you would prefer faster service, please dial this toll-free number in the *continental* United States: 800-423-4444. (Readers in California, Nevada, Alaska and Hawaii should call 213-577-5225 collect.)

Remember, this service is absolutely *free* and without personal obligation.

**W**AS CHRIST'S death really necessary?

Jesus Himself told the story of the creditor who had two debtors. Between them they owed a great sum of money and neither had the wherewithal to pay. But the creditor, when they couldn't pay, "frankly forgave them both" and wiped out the debt (Luke 7:41-42).

Why couldn't God forgive *sin* that way? If God is really all-powerful, couldn't He simply say, "I forgive you"?

Was it really necessary for the very One who created the whole, vast universe to actually die?

Surely a loving and merciful God could forgive sin without such a tragedy having to take place. Why must God be so exacting, so punitive — even legalistic, some might say? Isn't He *big enough* to overlook what we have done? Why make such a "big deal" out of sin?

You've probably heard about the parable of the "prodigal son" recorded in Luke 15. This son wasted away his entire inheritance on riotous living. He had "sown his wild oats" until he was in a state of abject poverty.

But when he "came to himself," this tragic specimen returned home to his father to seek help. And "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (verse 20). All was immediately forgiven!

Why couldn't God just write off our sins like the prodigal son's father? Was the murder of God's own Son really necessary to make possible the forgiveness of sin?

### Nothing Is Free

You've probably heard that forgiveness is free. Millions believe that it is. Now, you can't earn forgiveness. But neither is it free! Is that a contradiction?

Consider. Is there *anything* that is really free? You've heard the expression, "Free as the air we

# WHY DID CHRIST HAVE TO DIE?

by Richard Plache and David R. Ord

breathe." But even fresh air doesn't come for nothing. It takes work — even though involuntary — to breathe.

Nothing is free in the strictest sense. You simply can't get "something for nothing." We must pay in some way for everything. And forgiveness is no exception. It may come to us as a gift, but it is not free. It cost a tremendous price.

It is because millions believe forgiveness is free that they have overlooked the real purpose for Christ's death!

### The Debt of Sin

Sin is a debt.

To sin is to "miss the mark" — to come short of God's required standard, breaking God's perfect law (I John 3:4). That's something we've all done. As Paul put it: "All have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

As a result, we owe God a debt, and the debt we have incurred will cost us our very lives, for the penalty of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). If we personally pay that debt, we will perish forever!

Fortunately, we don't have to suffer eternal death. Since Jesus Christ is responsible for the existence of every human being who ever walked the face of this earth, His life is worth far more than all our lives put together. He is the One who created Adam from the dust of the earth. He could pay the debt in our stead — and be resurrected to life again because He lived a sinless life.

So He put up the ransom price for

us — His own life. "... All come short of the glory of God, but they are justified for nothing by his grace through the *ransom* provided in Christ Jesus..." (Rom. 3:23-24, Moffatt translation).

Forgiveness comes to us freely in that there is nothing we can do to "earn" it, but it is not really free in the strictest sense because Christ paid the debt of sin in our stead with His life.

But why did anyone need to pay it? Couldn't God just excuse the debt without someone dying for us?

### The Law-Abiding Universe

God set in motion laws which exact a penalty if they are broken. These laws are inexorable. The penalty is automatic.

God has physical laws to guarantee order in His universe. They continually operate the same way without fluctuation. If God weren't that way, if His laws governing motion and matter in the universe were flimsy, uncertain, or indefinite, the whole universe would fall apart! There would be no orderly universe, no solar system, and no human life if God's laws were not inexorable. We would have chaos. And God is not a God of confusion (I Cor. 14:33).

God's spiritual laws are no different. There's only one way to produce order, peace, happiness; and God's law defines that way. You can't be completely and continuously happy any other way.

God's way — the way which results in every good thing — is the way of love, the way of giving, serving, sharing and helping. Love is outgoing concern — doing to others as you would have them do to you. This philosophy of life is expressed in God's law. Indeed, it is the whole aim of the law (Matt. 7:12; 22:37-40).

When we go in the direction of death, breaking God's laws, we shall eventually arrive at the destination toward which we have been travel-

ing. God doesn't somehow mysteriously step in to bring the penalty of lawbreaking upon us whenever we sin. The penalty of sin — the result of the way we have been traveling — is automatic.

If you take a plane to New York from Los Angeles, you end up in New York. If you travel down the road that leads to every form of misery and wretchedness, that's where you end up. If you go in the way which leads to death, God will oblige and eventually put us to death. "For the wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom. 6:23).

When you break the law and go in a different direction, the inevitable result is going to be unhappiness. Any "kicks" that come from breaking God's laws are only temporary (Heb. 11:25) and will lead to undesirable "kickbacks."

#### **Every Book Must Balance**

God by His very nature and in His supreme wisdom has determined that the books must be balanced — every debt must be reconciled. For forgiveness to be possible — for us to continue to live — someone had to pay the debt we have incurred. Someone had to suffer the penalty of death in our place.

Consider again the parable of the creditor who forgave the two debtors. They got off "scot free" — or did they?

No, someone had to pay! The creditor himself met the price of their debt, and it cost him a great sum of money.

The father of the prodigal son forgave his son's foolishness — but there was no longer an inheritance by which the son could have a living. The father had to pay for his sustenance. So, sin always exacts a price. And the person who forgives must balance the books at his own expense.

Sin is too serious to be just "shrugged off" — the debt must be settled, and the books balanced.

And Jesus Christ settled the debt

for us. God was willing to allow the life of His own Son to be sacrificed to pay the debt that no human being could ever afford to pay. Christ died because God's character is so consistent that there could be no other way for Him to extend mercy to us.

God had a way to extend mercy to every human being who ever sinned — and still not compromise His holy, righteous, perfect character.

#### **Be Ye Perfect**

God is perfect — He hates imperfection. Christ said that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, or we will never enter His Kingdom (Matt. 5:20). The Pharisees strove to keep the physical aspects of the law, but Christ taught we must keep the law in its full *spiritual intent*.

The letter of the law said don't commit adultery. Christ said we shouldn't even look upon a woman in a lustful way (Matt. 5:27-28).

The letter of the law said don't murder. But New Testament Christians are told that hatred is the spirit of murder (verses 21-24).

What does God require? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as [to the same extent as] your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (verse 48).

#### **Forgiveness — An Investment in the Future**

Forgiveness is not just an end in itself. It's a means to an end. David wrote: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 103:13-14).

God recognizes we are human, subject to all of the pulls and weaknesses of human nature. He knows that we can't become perfect overnight. Building righteous, godly character is a lifetime project. He understands that we will stumble along the way. When we do, Christ's sacrifice enables the Father to ex-

tend His mercy to us so that we may get up and try again.

God's mercy — His forgiveness — is an investment in future growth and progress.

It is through Christ's resurrection, not merely His death, that we have hope of eternal life — "We shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). It is the *resurrected* Christ who gives us the power to strive for perfection — and so make His forgiveness bear fruit.

Clearly then, Christ's shed blood does not excuse sin — it doesn't allow us to continue on in the same rut of disobedience to God's law. God expects us to overcome human weaknesses, and to grow toward perfection (Rev. 2:26; II Pet. 3:18).

Like the Apostle Paul, we must press toward the high standard God has set. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," Paul wrote, "but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded . . ." (Phil. 3:13-15).

Are you striving for perfection, growing spiritually, keeping God's law more completely and wholeheartedly as Paul did?

Christ died not just to pay for our past imperfection. Nor did He die so that we could continue to live in sin. He died to give us time and help to change. His death is an investment in our future growth.

Let us never forget the enormous investment Christ has made in our lives. If you would like help and encouragement in using God's grace to conquer sin, write for the article "How To Be an Overcomer." Also ask for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's inspiring booklet *Just What Do You Mean . . . Conversion?* This material has helped thousands lead more Christlike lives. Of course, they will be sent to you free of charge. □

## Part Two

# YOUR BEST INVESTMENT

***In the February issue we showed that money is not the root of all evil. We explained what money really is, how it originated and how our whole banking system developed. In this concluding installment, you will discover who is the true source of wealth and what is your best investment.***

by David Jon Hill

**O**N ONE side of a five-dollar bill I have in my hand, it says: "In God we trust." It is through a great deal of controversy that this statement has remained on our money. But what does *this* mean? Unfortunately, I'm afraid it doesn't mean much more than the hollow circular reasoning behind the expression "Federal Reserve Note," which was explained in the previous installment.

In fact, when you understand what money is, it seems that there must have been a typographical error in the printing of this currency and it should read, "In *this* God we trust." Surely you have heard the expression, "the *Almighty dollar*!"

Because we do literally trust in that physical piece of paper to bring us our needs — to supply us with goods and services of our choice at the time of our choice. Our trust is in the money itself and in what stands behind the money — the economy of the nation.

There is a deeper hypocrisy in bringing God into the picture than might be supposed. Let's read again that verse from the Phillips translation mentioned last month. "Tell those who are rich in this present world not to be contemptuous of others, and *not to rest the weight of*

*their confidence* on the transitory power of wealth but on the *living God*, who generously gives us *everything* for our enjoyment" (I Tim. 6:17).

God's message clearly throughout the Bible is that we should put our trust in Him, not in princes or governments or land or money or people or institutions, but in Him! This does not mean that the land and the resources on that land, and the money and everything else that is freely given to us from God, is evil of itself or should not be *used* freely; but that in the use of it we should always maintain our ultimate trust and faith and confidence in God and not in any of these *things*! It's all too easy to focus on the physical.

### Source of Our Wealth

Let's understand where the wealth comes from in the first place — the real wealth! The Eternal God is the Possessor of the heavens and the earth as well as being its Creator. It is He that made the earth habitable for mankind in the first place. It is that great God who put the abundance of wealth into the earth for man to dig it out. It was a loving Creator that covered the millions of square miles of the surface of this globe with riches beyond imagining in the natural resources we not only take for granted, but greedily destroy beyond measure as we use them.

That same great God made a covenant with a man called Abraham and promised that man that if he would serve Him unswervingly, if he would put his absolute and total and complete trust and confidence in the living God, no matter what, that He in turn would share as a co-owner with Abraham this entire

earth and indeed even the entire universe! And you share in that promise if you are Christ's and heirs to that promise made to Abraham (Gal. 3:29).

That promise God made to Abraham was dual: part of the promise showed that Abraham was to have that inheritance from God *forever*. In order for that to happen, Abraham had to have offered to him eternal life as well as all of those great possessions, or else the sad and cynical truth would come to pass that Christ mentioned in the New Testament: If a man gain the whole world and lose his life, what has he got? (Matt. 16:26.)

### In Which God Do We Trust?

So the great God who *gave* all the wealth is rather upset when He sees Himself denied by that wealth and yet sees His name mockingly printed on the nation's money!

In Hosea that God says: "Little she knew it was I who had given her the grain and oil and wine, who had heaped on her silver and gold [they devoted it to Baal]. So now I recall my grain in its season, my wine in its month; I reclaim my wool and my flax, that went to cover her nakedness; and I leave her all bare to the eyes of her lovers [international allies and trading partners]" (Hosea 2:8-10, Moffatt translation).

This principle applies to *any* nation, because God is the Creator of the whole earth. "Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots [that is, automobiles and mobile weapons of war in modern language]: Their land also is full of idols; *they worship the work of their own hands*, that which their own fin-



gers have made [they trust and have confidence in their own ability to produce a prodigious economy]" (Isa. 2:7-8).

Since the great nations came to affluence, they have steadily departed from even a semblance of godliness. They have been absorbed in their own affluence. They worship their own economies and forms of government. They are hell-bent on a toboggan slide to the depths of immorality. They have trust and faith and confidence in what their economies can produce and *not* in the God who gave them the resources from His earth to produce those manufactured goods. The mocking statement, "In God we trust," is printed blasphemy!

### The God of Abraham Lives

That same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, disowned and unrecognized by modern peoples, is right now in the process of *taking away* the great wealth that He gave to us — because of our blatant and total rebellion. Actually the main way God takes these things away from us is merely by letting the natural laws He set in motion take their toll. To *permit* the greedy nature which has led us into the economic chaos in which we live destroy us. To *allow* us to fall into the pits we have dug for ourselves.

God is going to allow us to fall into *total collapse* in the near future. A collapse in every sense of the word — and a final, *actual* physical captivity! A financial collapse, a moral collapse, a collapse in the health and even the daily sustenance of food on our plates, a collapse of our great cities in nuclear holocaust, a total collapse of the entire nation and economy in which we trust and have our confidence —

that which our money is based upon — our *god*: our manufacturing capacity!

Not until the remaining few left alive, who are in captivity, come to *see* their mistake and *recognize* who their God is, will He intervene and restore to them, not only the riches they had before but those far beyond our ken in the wonderful world tomorrow.

### Beware the Golden Calf

Although last month we showed the key role of gold and silver in international finances and monetary history, we by no means advocate the buying or hoarding of gold and silver as your best investment.

This series of articles is neither pro- nor anti-gold, neither right- nor left-wing. Rather it is third-dimensional, revealing to you the best *long-range* investment.

If you wish to invest in this world's securities, be sure to consult experts in the field. Trust neither the "underground" investment letters, nor the established "name" stockbrokers, but seek a *multitude* of wise counsel, from all financial viewpoints, before investing.

Christians, above all, should avoid making an *idol* out of any investment, as the Israelites worshipped the golden calf of Aaron (Exodus 32). Instead, use your investment capital as a tool toward your *best* investment, as Christ showed in Luke 19:12-27, which is to do the *will* of God, support His Work on earth, and inherit eternal life.

It is not wrong to invest in this world. Jesus Christ said: "Make to yourselves *friends* of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faith-

ful in that which is least is faithful also in much..." (Luke 16:9, 10). But He also said: "... Be ye therefore *wise* as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). Be extremely cautious with your investments.

Unfortunately, the tradition of men in regard to money has all too often made money take on a role God reserves for Himself.

At that moment when the great God of heaven and earth decides to intervene in mankind's affairs, and particularly in the affairs of the descendants of His friend Abraham, people will begin to recognize that there is only *one* source of true confidence, the *most* reliable "non-human Governor" who will establish His desperately needed discipline (Heb. 12:6), one secure hope for eternal prosperity: God Himself!

"In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship [whatever you have trust and faith and confidence in, whatever you worship, is your god], to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. *Cease ye from man*, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:20-22.)

God is returning to take over the governments of this world, to establish the economy of the world tomorrow, to put down all war and see to it that people do not learn to make war anymore. The Creator God is coming to restore this polluted planet to its intended beauty by teaching man how to *use* the great blessings He gives.

All men everywhere are going to

discover that whatever they trusted in before, whatever they had confidence in before, is no longer of any worth or value. Everyone will discover that of his own hand, of what he can manufacture or make, of a gold or silver or paper representation of wealth — that he cannot even supply the simple necessities of food, clothing and shelter for himself but *must in all things rely on God.*

### Expanding World Economy

When man's society, drunk on its own apparent success, sees that God of heaven and earth intervening, a great cry of *lament* goes up: "And the merchants of the earth shall *weep* and *mourn* over her [the end-time Babylon which controls the world at the return of Christ]; for no man *buyeth* their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyne wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, *which were made rich by her*, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! *For in one hour so great riches is come to nought . . .*"! (Rev. 18:11-17.)

### God's Economy

Along with all her other monstrous debts, public and private, the United States of America has a debt

to its Creator God! This past year alone that debt amounts to a figure in excess of 120 billion dollars! "How can that be?" you say. That can be, because that figure is roughly one tenth or ten percent of our gross national income for this year. One tenth of that which we worship *as a god* instead of giving it to God.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for *ye have robbed me*, even this whole nation" (Mal. 3:8, 9).

Yes, any nation, forgetting its God, wandering godless in a godless world, refusing to recognize its debt to its Creator is guilty in the light of this scripture.

This nation spends on its defense alone, an amount *billions* greater than its tithe would be! It trusts in its manufacturing ability and armies to preserve it in the face of enemies; it trusts in its economy to sustain it financially. It trusts in its technological know-how to continue to produce a giant volume of goods from the good earth — *rather* than trusting in the *Creator* of the good earth!

Let's notice just briefly, in contrast to the world's way of doing business, what God's way of doing business is. Instead of God *loaning* us some hard piece of metal which we would agree with Him represents wealth, God *gives* us the earth! Out of that earth by His generous laws, sustained by His might every second, come the untold riches God designed to be ours in the first place: that is *ONE HUNDRED percent of everything we have!*

Instead of requiring us to pay back that 100 percent to Him every year plus 30 percent, or 20, or any other figure we might pick (from where we would *get* that percent I don't know!), God gives us the full 100 percent and requests that we return to Him *ten* percent!

It's *all* His!

But He tells us that if we have our faith and trust and confidence in

Him, then we will return to Him that which is His anyway. But He only requires *one tenth* of all the 100 percent He has *given us freely in the first place!*

If we put our trust in Him rather than in the manufactured goods or the cold metal that comes from the earth, then His promise is that He will pour us out such a blessing that there will not be room to receive it! That the crops of the next years will exceed those of the years before. That our health, our well-being, our safety will be ensured — this promise applies to every individual as well as to every nation! (See Mal. 3:8-12.)

### Things Money Can't Buy

As you well know, happiness cannot be purchased with money. True love cannot be purchased with money. Health cannot be purchased with money. Safety from our many enemies cannot be purchased with money and certainly eternal life cannot be purchased with money! Salvation, forgiveness of sin, sonship in the Kingdom of God cannot be purchased with money. Not even by the faithful paying of tithes and offerings!

Let's notice an unusual statement made by God in the book of Isaiah — "For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and *ye shall be redeemed without money*" (Isa. 52:3).

That's good news!

To think that very soon, the great God who made everything is going to set His hand to save the world! To think that God is not going to require payment of any kind but gives freely all those things which cannot be purchased is good news!

The purpose of this Work of God is to see that as many people as possible realize that the time of God's intervention is at hand. That it is time for all of us to check our securities, to examine our true wealth, to find out what it is we have our faith in and how confident we are in the true and everlasting values of good character as described by our Maker!

And so as it goes on to say in verse 7 of this same chapter in Isaiah: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! The watchman shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (verses 7-8).

### Use Money God's Way

No, money of itself is not evil — it is how we think about it or what we do with it that is either evil or good. So those of us who know and believe this truth from the innermost part of our beings *have put* our confidence and faith and trust in God and His promises. To prove this, in every way we endeavor and strive to *do* what God says, whether it is with our time, our effort and energy, or our money. Jesus Christ put it very aptly in the New Testament when He said: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21).

If we trust in money, whatever its substance, to solve our problems, give us health, protect us, heal and help us, then we have our trust in money and we are worshippers of that god called Mammon about which the Creator God has a great deal to say.

He uses many analogies regarding money, such as the parable of the talents, which shows that we should *use* everything that we have been given by God to serve Him and to increase — with the power of His Spirit and according to His laws — those gifts that He has given to each and every one of us (Matt. 25:14-30). He warns us very sternly not to put our trust and confidence in physical representations of wealth that we have laid up where "moth and rust" — and He might well have added "inflation and collapse of an economy" — corrupt, but to make for ourselves treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19, 20).

That is not just an ecclesiastical phrase. It is not just a gimmick to get the clergy supported. It is a statement from your Savior endeavoring to get across the important point that your total trust, your absolute confidence, must be in God who made all things, and not in any physical representation of wealth dictated and stipulated by your fellow mankind — that you do not trust in *things* but in the Creator of all things!

Our Creator goes on to command of us that we be good stewards of the physical things that we find in our hands (Luke 16:1-13). That is, that we use the money, the property, the abundance that comes from the soil, to serve and to worship God and not to worship that abundance itself as a god.

God wants us to be business partners of His. We establish that partnership, we prove our trust and faith in Him by returning to Him one tenth of what He gives to us. A very simple token and a small one, as physical and monetary proof of our belief.

Those of us who have so dedicated our hearts and treasures in complete trust and confidence into the hand of Almighty God will come with confidence to that place in human history when all the economies of all nations dissolve into nothingness. At that time the great treasure which God has in heaven will be brought with Him *from* heaven to this earth and given freely, abundantly, overflowing in the currency of *true wealth* — in the *sharing and possessing of the heavens and the earth as a SON OF GOD!*

### Truth Is Free

Truth should be given freely. "Freely ye have received, *freely give*" (Matt. 10:8). Let's see some inspiring things that God has to say about the spiritual truth of the purpose of life and the reason for His creation of mankind — "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come,

buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with *you*, even the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:1-3).

This is talking about that soon-coming time when God will be ruling this earth. The good news of Tomorrow's World! It does not mean that money or gold or banks will not be used. It means that the trust and faith and confidence will be in God and not in things.

In so warning us ahead of time, God urges us to recognize what our true source of wealth is and so He says: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked *forsake* his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him *return* unto the Lord, and *he will have mercy upon him*; and to our God, for *he will abundantly pardon*" (Isa. 55:6, 7).

Make your investment an eternal investment. Make God *your* partner! Put your heart into the Work that God is doing in this end age — the Work of warning the world of the immediately impending troubles soon to come — the Work that is publishing the message of the good news of the world tomorrow — a world at last at peace living under the loving auspices of our Creator God.

Let this verse be a prophecy in God's Word concerning you — "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchman shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (Isa. 52:7-8). □

# BEWARE THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

*That was the warning Jesus Christ gave to His disciples in the twelfth chapter of Luke. Why did He single out the Pharisees for special attention? What was so bad about their "leaven"? And why devote so much space in the four Gospels to this relatively small religious group? Was all this written merely to satisfy the curiosity of New Testament history buffs? Or does it have important significance for today's Christian?*

by George Ritter

**A** story usually has a central figure and this one is no exception. Our particular man of the hour is a person of some distinction. For lack of a better name, we'll call him Joe Pharisee.

Now when it comes to religion, Joe is no ordinary run-of-the-mill religionist. And he's acutely aware of this fact. To make matters worse, Joe knows all the right ways to advertise his distinctive qualities.

Joe is not all that different from a lot of people in this respect. In fact, his behavior follows a time-honored tradition spoken of in the eighteenth chapter of Luke. Joe's prototype way back then was also a unique individual — at least in his own eyes. Notice his superspiritual prayer in verse 11: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

Today we'd probably suspect that Joe's spiritual ancestor was a wee bit pompous. But our friend Joe knows this too. So he's not about to make the same blatant mistake — at least outwardly. Joe goes about his trum-

pet-blowing in a much more subtle manner. He'd never stoop to making such an obvious comparison between himself and some miserable sinner. Instead, he uses a much more devious form of expression, such as: "Did you hear about old Bill Publican? Well, I think you ought to know he has a drinking problem."

Joe has learned an important lesson. Using this indirect method of condemning someone else, his own relative worth and importance grows accordingly... or at least so he thinks.

## The Power of Ritual

But Joe Pharisee doesn't stop with spiritual one-upmanship. He has another device to reinforce his self-esteem. It's called Religious Ritual. Again in the eighteenth chapter of Luke, Joe's prototype is quoted as saying: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (verse 12). Undoubtedly he was very fastidious in his prayer habits as well.

Now none of these things are wrong in themselves, but the way Joe's prototype self-righteously parades them about is certainly suspect. Joe's predecessor allowed prayer, fasting and tithing to become ends in themselves. Instead of viewing them as a means to accomplish some desired end, they took on the aura of a talisman, a fetish, or a string of rosary beads.

But Joe fervently believes that this type of religious exercise will stand *him* in good stead with God. He approaches each of these activities with a certain amount of inner formalism and fear. Joe doesn't really trust in God, but rather in his self-imposed ritual.

This type of religious hypocrisy

wouldn't be too much of a problem if it were confined to Joe Pharisee's private life. Unfortunately, the "leaven of the Pharisees" (Luke 12:1) spreads out a lot further.

Joe not only fools himself into thinking he's super-righteous, but a lot of other people as well. And sooner or later plain old Joe turns into Dr. Joseph Pharisee, or Joseph Pharisee, D.D. He's no longer the solitary figure that diligently did his daily laps around the beads. Now he has power and prestige — especially in the realm of spiritual matters.

Dr. Pharisee feels he has a special mission in life. He can now impose his form of worship on others.

There's nothing really fancy about how he does this. He simply insists that *his* statutes and judgments are binding on the rest of his congregation. Dr. Pharisee might emphasize a number of rigorous physical requirements concerning what one should or should not do. Lest anyone take these injunctions too lightly, he quickly follows up with dire warnings about the consequences of failure to observe these rituals.

The result of this shock treatment is duly "rewarding." His people are so mesmerized, pulverized and traumatized that they are utterly stifled by "fear religion."

## Appearance Is What Counts

Using this tried and true approach, Dr. Pharisee is gradually able to transform his flock into dyed-in-the-wool "gnat strainers" (Matt. 23:24). Their attention is drawn to such "weighty" matters as hair styles, dress codes, jewelry, how much one can drink, and so forth.

Religion becomes the art of putting one's best spiritual foot forward, of saying the right "spiritual"

words that will be sure to rightly "edify" the listener. Everybody in Dr. Pharisee's church is out to prove his or her spirituality, lest they be branded a heretic, profligate, or spiritual ne'er-do-well.

In this uptight atmosphere, Dr. Pharisee's people soon begin laboring under many spiritual upsets, traumas, personal doubts and fears. Subjectively and emotionally it becomes very difficult for them to accept the simple fact that God is their friend. In their frantic desire to figuratively "tithe of their mint, cummin and anise" (Matt. 23:23), they have completely lost sight of the "weightier matters of the law."

Obviously this is a pretty good working formula for Dr. Pharisee to follow. It gives him a deep-seated feeling of Power — with a capital "P." Unfortunately, every now and then someone comes along and exposes this spiritual con game for what it is.

Jesus Christ was onto it from the beginning. Notice what He said about it in Matthew 23:4: "For they [the scribes and Pharisees] bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

### **Ecclesiastical Vanity**

Christ also realized that these backbreaking spiritual burdens were severely limiting people's chances of entering God's Kingdom. That's why He took the Pharisees of His day to task, because they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for they neither went in themselves, nor allowed them that were entering to go in (Matt. 23:13).

However, all of this is usually lost on our Dr. Pharisee. He has more

important things to worry about. If he is going to maintain his leadership over the flock, then he thinks he has to hobnob with the people that count; namely, other Dr. Pharisees. That's why those "uppermost rooms," "chief seats" and respectful salutations (Matt. 23:6-7) are like heady wine to him. It's all a part of the whitened-sepulchre, clean-cup-and-platter routine that Christ vividly described in Matthew 23:25-27.

Yet for all his power and prestige, Dr. Pharisee seems strangely unable to find the time or energy to actually serve his fellowman. He mentally assumes his position of leadership allows him to be an overlord as well. He is loathe to accept Jesus Christ's definition of leadership as found in Matthew 23:10-12: "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Humility and service is certainly not one of his long suits. When the chips are down or opportunities for such service arise, he usually bails out like a rat on a sinking ship. (Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates his *modus operandi*.)

And deep down, Dr. Pharisee may not realize he's not man enough to act like a human being around his flock, so he does the next best thing. He hides behind ceremony and ritual.

Occasionally he may grant some poor unfortunate the opportunity to ascend the steps of his ivory tower. But woe to anyone who would dare try to puncture his imposing facade. That is a big bad no-no in Dr. Pharisee's book.

Any communication that takes place between Dr. Joseph Pharisee and one of his flock has to be done on a teacher-to-pupil basis. None of that direct man-to-man stuff. Why, that would destroy his image! Any attempt at this type of dialogue is usually met with the automatic response: "Who are *you* to tell *me* that?" or "Who do you think you are?" (See John 9:34.)

Dr. Pharisee also does not like anyone to question his actions. Nicodemus ran into this type of roadblock. On one occasion he questioned the wisdom of a particular course of action the Sanhedrin had decided upon (John 7:50, 51). But he quickly got the royal put-down, and that ended any further discussion of the matter (verses 52-53).

For the same reason, Jesus Christ was constantly on the receiving end of the Pharisees' bitterness, venom and invective. Unlike Christ, they had no heart for the human race and couldn't stomach anyone who would upset their cherished beliefs and man-made doctrines. Nor were they happy about the fact that Jesus Christ challenged their flock to *think* instead of continuing on with the endless ritual of "knee-jerk" religion.

### **A Warning for Us**

Because of the "leaven" in their hearts and minds, the Pharisees eventually conspired to have the Son of God put to death. Perhaps this one act more than all others ought to remind us of the lethal power of religious hypocrisy.

Let's make sure that we don't allow *our* minds and hearts to be filled with the "leaven of the Pharisees." □

# WHERE WILL CHRISTIANS RULE?

by Raymond F. McNair

**D**oes God's Word promise heaven as the reward of the saved? Did Jesus say believers would waft off to heaven?

What does God promise as the reward of the righteous — those who believe and obey Him? Does He promise heaven, limbo, purgatory — or will the "saved" inherit a paradise on this good earth?

Although millions of sincere people believe otherwise, the Bible says nothing about the saints going to heaven! God's Word declares: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:15).

And David was inspired to reveal that "those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Ps. 37:9, 22). Furthermore, he said: "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (verse 11).

Does this mean the meek will inherit the earth *in this life*? No, for it is often the proud, the arrogant, the wicked, the violent who inherit much of this earth during this age.

How long will the meek hold a title to this earth? "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever" (verse 29).

## Christ Promised the Earth

Some, however, argue that the Hebrew word translated as "for ever" in Psalm 37:29 does not really mean "forever."

But let us notice Christ's promise to the meek of the earth: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). Later, we shall see that this inheritance of the righteous is for *all eternity*.

But did Christ ever say the right-

eous would go to heaven or inherit heaven? Some carelessly assume that He did. What Christ actually said was: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).

Did Jesus contradict Himself — offering "heaven" in verse three, while promising the "earth" in verse five? No, what Christ meant was that the "poor in spirit" would inherit the kingdom ruled over or governed by (or from) heaven. In other words, He meant they would inherit the Kingdom of God.

Only Matthew used the expression "kingdom of heaven," while Mark, Luke and John, as well as the writers of the rest of the New Testament, consistently used the term "kingdom of God." But they both mean exactly the same thing.

The "kingdom of heaven" simply means the kingdom of that great Being whose throne is *in* heaven. God says: "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool . . ." (Acts 7:49).

This simply means that "heaven" is now the place where God's throne is located. Eventually God Himself will establish *His throne* on this earth. Christ will dwell with men during the "millennium," and then, later, even the Father will come down and also dwell with men forever. Man isn't going to heaven — God is coming to this earth!

## No Man Has Ascended to Heaven

A gentleman once told me that he believed man has an immortal soul that goes to heaven when he dies because, he said, he saw his mother's soul (like a little puff of smoke or a handful of cotton wool) leave his mother's body and waft heavenward when she died. This was the basis for his belief.

But we need to have something more solid than this as the foundation for our belief. We must base all our beliefs on the Bible; otherwise, they will come crumbling down sooner or later.

Consider Christ's plain words: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). (Some ancient manuscripts do not have the words "which is in heaven." Christ was not "in heaven" when he spoke these words, but was on earth.)

Yes, Jesus plainly said that except for Himself no human had ever gone to heaven.

On the momentous Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter, under divine inspiration, said: "For David is not ascended into the heavens . . ." (Acts 2:34).

## Reward Now Kept in Heaven

We have seen that Christ promised that the meek would "inherit the earth" — not heaven. It is true, however, that the *reward* of the righteous is now being kept or preserved *in* heaven.

Jesus told those who are reviled, falsely accused and persecuted to "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. 5:12). And He admonished His followers to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20).

Paul told the Hebrews: "... Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34).

The Apostle Peter spoke of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4).

And Paul assured the Christians at Philippi: "For our conversation

[Greek, *citizenship*] is *in heaven*; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall [at His second coming] change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body . . ." (Phil. 3:20, 21).

These and other scriptures clearly reveal that our spiritual reward, or our crown, is now being kept in heaven. But will it remain there? Will we go to heaven to receive our reward? Or, will Jesus Christ bring our reward back to this earth with Him when He comes?

The Apostle Paul wrote: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a *crown* of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:8).

It is at Christ's *appearing* that this crown will be given: "And when the chief Shepherd shall *appear*, ye shall receive a *crown* of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4).

### Christ's Second Coming

But when is this appearing? The doctrine of the "second coming" is well known, and the Bible certainly teaches it.

Notice how Paul explained this: "... And unto them that look for him shall he *appear* the *second time* without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

Remember, Christ said: "I go [to heaven] to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again* [to this earth], and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).

Some erroneously assume that since Christ was shortly going to heaven (where He would prepare the *places* or positions), He was also

going to take His disciples to heaven.

But Christ plainly told the disciples He would "come again" — back to this earth.

The disciples were well aware of Christ's plain teaching that He was coming back to this earth, else they would not have asked: "What shall be the sign of thy *coming*?" (Matt. 24:3.)

Christ likened His coming to "lightning" — "so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27).

Jesus then told His disciples that a great tribulation would be followed by heavenly signs (verses 21, 22, 29). Then, after the heavenly signs, "shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man *coming* in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (verse 30). Christ then mentions His coming six more times in this same chapter (verses 36, 39, 42, 44, 46, 48).

There can be no question that Christ plainly said He would go to heaven, but He would also *come back* to this earth to receive His saints unto Himself, then to rule all nations through them.

Christ plainly said "all the tribes of the earth" shall see him "coming" with great power and glory.

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a *trumpet*, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (verse 31).

This same momentous event is described in I Corinthians 15:51-54, I Thessalonians 4:13-17 and Zechariah 14:1-5.

Paul gave the Thessalonians a vivid description of Christ's second coming: "For this we say unto

you . . . we which are alive and remain unto the *coming* of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep [dead]. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them *in the clouds*, to meet the Lord *in the air*: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:15-17).

Notice that we are to be caught up in the "clouds" to meet the Lord "in the air."

### Back to Heaven?

But does Jesus then take the saints back to heaven?

Speaking of the second coming of Christ, when He will fight against His enemies at Jerusalem, Zechariah said: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And *his feet* shall stand in that day upon the *mount of Olives* . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and *all the saints with thee*" (Zech. 14:3-5).

This scripture reveals that Christ's feet will again stand upon the Mount of Olives, and "all the saints" will come with Him.

This same truth is also taught in the New Testament. After Christ's resurrection, He was standing on the Mount of Olives when He was taken up from the disciples into a cloud. "... While they [the disciples] beheld, he was taken up; and a *cloud* received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9).

Two dazzling angels appeared to the disciples and told them: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into *heaven*, shall so *come* in like

manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (verse 11). And they were then standing on the Mount of Olives (verse 12).

### Christ Brings Reward With Him

Christ plainly taught that He will bring His reward with Him at His second coming: "And, behold, I come quickly; and *my reward is with me*, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

But just what will that reward be? Will it be golden harps on which the saints can play heavenly music for all eternity?

Notice the reward which Christ will give to all overcomers: "But that which ye have already hold fast till I *come*. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall *rule* them with a rod of iron..." (Rev. 2:25-27).

Daniel also prophesied of the time when Christ and the saints shall rule this entire world: "...And, behold, one like the Son of man *came* with the *clouds* of heaven... And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a *kingdom*, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13, 14).

This "Son of man" will not rule this earth by Himself: "But the *saints* of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (verse 18).

This rulership will be worldwide: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (verse 27).

Truly, in that day, "the Lord [Christ] shall be *king over all the earth*" (Zech. 14:9). Christ will sit on David's throne. Where will that

throne be located? "At that time they shall call *Jerusalem* the *throne of the Lord*; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it" (Jer. 3:17).

### Saints Rule on Earth

The saints, who at that time will have been redeemed from this earth, will finally exclaim: "And [God] hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall *reign on the earth*" (Rev. 5:10). Notice that the saints will not rule in heaven, but on the earth.

One of Christ's parables reveals *where* the saints shall rule. The disciples mistakenly thought the "kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11). Christ gave the disciples a parable to show that it would be quite some time before He would *return* to this earth to set up His kingdom: "A certain nobleman [Christ] went into a far country [heaven] to receive for himself a kingdom, and to *return*. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy [utilize] till I come" (Luke 19:12, 13).

Those who were industrious and who gained a good return on their master's money were given rulership over "ten cities" (verse 17) and "five cities" (verse 19). This shows that the glorified saints in the Kingdom of God will be given *rule* or *authority* over the nations of this earth.

When Christ and His glorified saints sit on thrones governing the nations of this earth, then there will be peace, happiness and prosperity for all nations.

No man, nor man-devised government such as the League of Nations or the United Nations, will ever be able to bring real peace to this earth.

Finally, however, the "government [of the whole earth] shall be upon his [Christ's] shoulder..." (Isa. 9:6). And, "Of the increase of his *government* and *peace* there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with

judgment and with justice..." (verse 7).

### A Utopian Earth

The wonderful world tomorrow, the utopian age, will at long last dawn upon this earth. Christ will judge the world with righteousness (Isa. 11:1-5). Then wild, ravenous and deadly animals and reptiles will dwell at peace with the domesticated animals. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (verse 9). At that time, "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. 35:1). "...For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (verse 6).

The nations of the earth will at last receive a "pure language" (Zeph. 3:9) and will not be cursed with the confusion of the tongues extant today. Then "the *plowman shall overtake the reaper*... and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant *vineyards*, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make *gardens*, and eat the fruit of them" (Amos 9:13, 14).

Men will not have to live in crowded, dirty, inhospitable, cursed cities where they don't even have a backyard in which their children can play. And there shall be *no more war!*

"And he [Christ] shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall *beat their swords into plowshares*, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more*. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid..." (Micah 4:3-4).

What is the reward of the saints? Rulership with Christ right here on this earth! The saints will assist Christ in governing all nations, in bringing peace, happiness, prosperity and joy supreme to all mankind. □



## the making of a campaign

**PORTLAND**

**I**N 1974, the Worldwide Church of God sponsored over 50 personal appearance programs around the globe. The final one of the year was conducted by Garner Ted Armstrong in Portland, Oregon, on December 13-14.

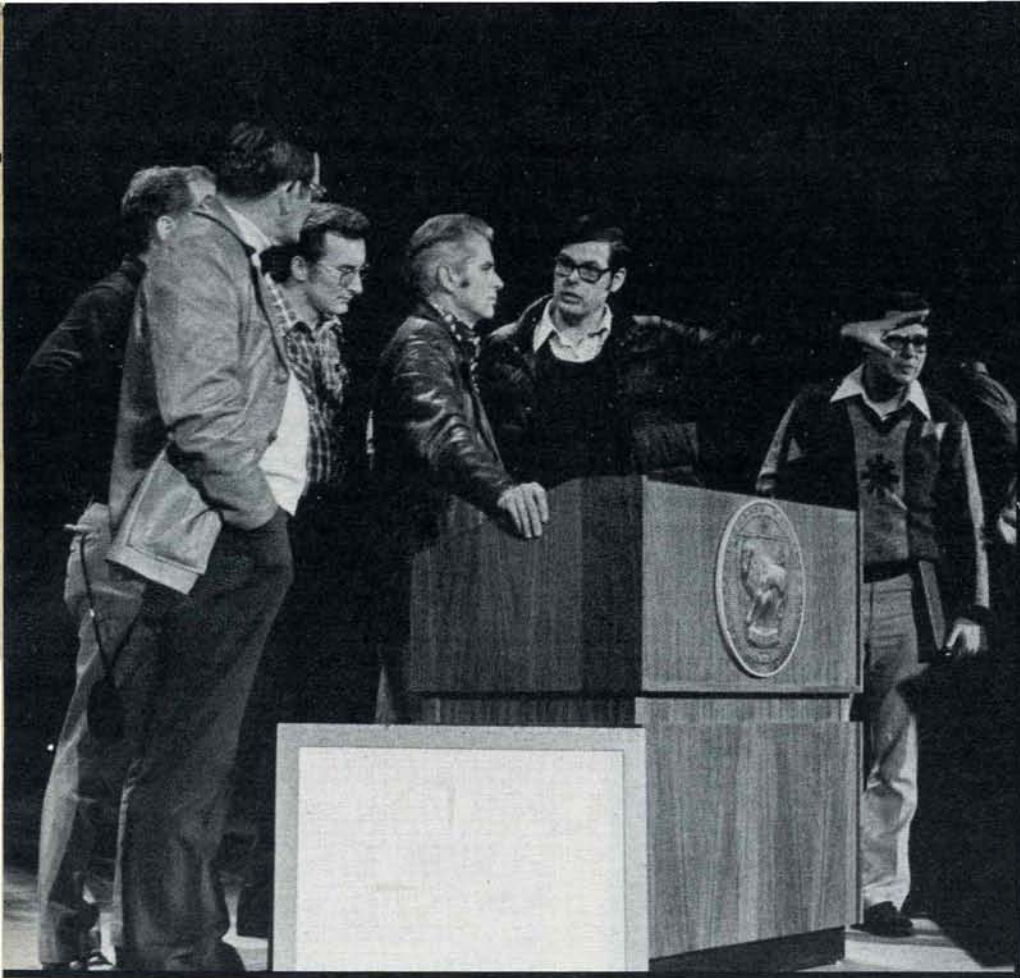
You will be able to see highlights of this campaign on nationwide TV in a series of one-hour summer specials. Here is a preview of what you will see, as well as the story of what you *won't* see — the people and preparations offstage that made what happened on stage possible.

\* \* \*

Each campaign is the culmination, the payoff, of many man-hours of advance preparation. Planning must start months — even years — ahead. In the case of Portland, the wheels started to roll in October 1973, when the city was chosen for a campaign. Immediately the civic auditorium was booked. According to Sherwin McMichael, director of the Personal Appearance Department, this was none too soon. "Many auditoriums are scheduling for 1980 right now. To book a hall six

Photos by Ken Evans — GN





months in advance is equivalent to sitting down at a gourmet restaurant and expecting a steak within two minutes. It's just impossible. Ideally, we need to schedule 3 to 5 years in advance. We've already scheduled Mr. Armstrong through most of '75 and are working on '76."

Several months after the auditorium was booked, the local congregations of the Worldwide Church of God in Portland got involved with a series of fund-raising projects to help offset campaign expenses. They held bake sales, pancake breakfasts, a spaghetti feed, a wood-cutting party, garage sales. In addition, several members gave private donations. Altogether over \$3,000 was raised for the cause.

They also held meetings to organize ushering and other support functions indispensable to the campaign's success.

Since the campaign was to be taped for television, a video tape crew was dispatched to Portland several days ahead. From early Wednesday morning (December 11) to late Thursday afternoon they positioned lights, strung out hundreds of feet of cable, and set up and checked out the four camera units to be used.

They finished their task with plenty of time to spare — right? Wrong! The auditorium had to be cleared for a concert on Friday morning. After finishing the tedious, meticulous task, they marked where everything stood and then took everything down and packed it away!

The next day was Friday, the 13th. But the camera crew is not a superstitious lot. By 3:20 p.m. when Mr. Armstrong dropped in to check out the lighting, all the equipment had been repositioned. This was the kind of smooth running that characterized the whole campaign effort. "It was certainly one of the smoothest we've had," remarked Mr. McMichael afterwards.

Meanwhile 28 musicians and singers were busy rehearsing under the leadership of Gary Prather, the



**M**r. Armstrong (top photo) discusses the setup with Dick Quincer (pointing) and other crew members a few hours before opening night. Left: Sherwin McMichael, director of the Personal Appearance Department, emceed the program. Above: Mrs. Bobby Fisher, who attended an early campaign of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's in December 1934, came 40 years later to hear his son.

choral director in Pasadena. Most of the choral members are full-time students at the two Ambassador Colleges in Pasadena, California, and Big Sandy, Texas. They willingly endure the disruption of their studies and sacrifice of time and sleep to accompany Mr. Armstrong on his campaigns. The only time they get to rehearse together is when they are reunited a couple of days before each campaign.

After performing Friday and Saturday nights, Mr. Prather and the Pasadena students flew back for Sunday night's winter chorale concert in Pasadena. Then the students from both campuses plunged back into the pressures and deadlines of the final days of the fall semester.

On Friday evening, everything came together. The stage was set, the cameras ready. At 6:40 the doors swung open to admit several hundred people waiting outside. Most of the musicians and singers were backstage by seven. Mr. Armstrong arrived at 7:18 and ten minutes later he gathered with the cast and crew in a room offstage. After a brief prayer, everyone departed for his station. By now a capacity crowd of 3600 was waiting. The lights dimmed, the music started, the curtain opened, and another program began.

### Sort Out Your Life

In his message the first night, Mr. Armstrong drove home the fact that we are living at a prophetically important juncture in history. Here are a few excerpts:

*"People ask me, 'What do you think? Is there going to be a world war?' And I say, 'I don't know, I know there's going to be one eventually.' Jesus Christ said you are living in the end of an age and that is what I want to talk about tonight.*

*"Now we like to have our excuses . . . [but] Jesus continually said, 'I'm going to come again. I'm coming back to the earth! . . . I can't apologize to all the people who don't believe that.*

*" . . . I am here to declare that the*

*signs are here that plainly show that World War III is on the way and the United States is going to come out the loser unless we do something — not something economically, not militarily, but spiritually . . . This country is never going to avert such disaster unless we turn to God . . . I'm not giving you a formula about a lot of strange things you need to believe, I'm telling you that you need to get on your knees and sort out your life . . . You've got a personal relationship with Him whether you know it or not, and you're going to sort out that relationship . . . or you will surely die."*

### Sabbath Services

At 1:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, local congregations in the Portland area and the Willamette Valley convened at the auditorium for a special service. Mr. Armstrong had mentioned the meeting in his opening remarks the night before and invited anyone who was interested to come. "We do not proselyte, nor ask people to join something," he pointed out. "We have a way of life in which we believe very deeply, very sincerely . . . We've got our problems, got our faults, but we believe we have something of tremendous value we'd like to share with the rest of the world."

After the opening hymns, and prayer, Mr. Les McCullough, director of the International Division, spoke of the growth and needs in the foreign work of the Church. He was followed by Mr. McMichael, who summarized the progress of the personal appearance programs for the year and plans for the future.

Meanwhile, 13 rows back, Mr. Armstrong was busily preparing to speak. Instead of going over his notes for a sermon, however, he was going over questions submitted by the audience. He departed from the usual sermonette/sermon format to speak candidly about the Church and its teachings. He responded to questions concerning the close of the age, the teaching of the Church about law and grace — something

frequently misrepresented in pamphlets and booklets. He also talked about issues and problems currently under discussion in the Church.

### Forty Years Later

That evening Mr. Armstrong spoke to another capacity crowd. Among those sitting in the audience was a veteran of many early campaigns, Mrs. Bobby Fisher. Forty years earlier, in December, 1934, Mrs. Fisher, then a teenager, sat in a country schoolhouse west of Eugene and heard Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong speak in one of the early evangelistic campaigns of his ministry. Convinced and convicted, she became one of the pioneer members of the Worldwide Church of God.

Things have changed a lot since those early days. From its humble beginnings the campaigns and Church have grown considerably. But one thing has remained the same — the message. Now, as then, the Kingdom of God, repentance and salvation comprise the witness of this Work.

### Be Worthy To Escape

*"God's Word has a system, a series of choices and of consequences, of hazards and benefits, of cause and effect. Obey — the blessings are huge. Disobey — the curses never leave your door. What do we have today? Do we have the blessings?"*

*" . . . Christ said, 'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass . . .' (Luke 21:36). There are two kinds of salvation God Almighty holds out to people in this last age — physical and spiritual . . . 'Escape all these things' means physically avoiding what Jesus said is surely going to happen to almost everybody else . . ."*

*"Jesus of Nazareth said there would come a time when a human being wouldn't need to die. Spiritual salvation — yes, absolutely. And also physical escape and protection . . . If you repent, you don't ever have to die. It's up to you. I pray to God that my coming here has been worth one human life."* □

**T**HE FIVE Scandinavian countries — Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland — are large in land area but small in population. About 22½ million people are scattered over half a million square miles of territory.

With no radio outlets in the region carrying *The World Tomorrow*, the main means of disseminating God's message has been through the *Plain Truth*. The subscription list stands at over 18,000 now. And another 9,000 *Plain Truths* are placed on selected newsstands (and in department stores and bookstores). The Scandinavian edition is printed in English as it is the second language in the region, with just over 50 percent of the population able to speak it fairly fluently.

Until quite recently, a visit from one of God's ministers was a very rare occurrence in Scandinavia. Previously the area came under the German office, but the vast area and the demands on the small staff in Germany meant that regular visiting was impossible. A few members living in Denmark were occasionally able to attend monthly services held in Hamburg, Germany.

In 1973 Bricket Wood was given the responsibility of the Scandinavian region. A Scandinavian department was established, headed by Stuart Powell. In May of that year, Mr. Powell visited and baptized in the region. He also surveyed the possibilities of holding a spring festival there. The very first Sabbath service was held in Oslo, Norway, in August 1973.

Since then, Mr. Powell has made monthly blitzes through three countries. There is a Friday Bible study in Stockholm for about a dozen people, followed by a

Sabbath service in Oslo and another Bible study on Sunday near Aarhus in Denmark. In Oslo and Aarhus the attendance varies between twenty and thirty members.

Mr. Powell is no stranger to international travel. While in the Royal Air Force Transport Command, he served in the Middle East, the Suez Canal Zone, Aden, and was in Kenya during the Mau Mau disturbances. After completing his period of national service, he started his own business involving the wholesale distribution of fish. Later he found out about the Worldwide Church of God and eventually attended Ambassador College in Bricket Wood, from which he graduated in 1968. In addition to his Scandinavian responsibilities, Mr. Powell visits in the East Anglican area in England and pastors the churches of Chelmsford and Norwich.

A year and a half ago, Danish-born Richard Sprotte was transferred from Pasadena to help Mr. Powell as office manager and ministerial assistant. Mr. Sprotte grew up in Denmark and studied structural engineering at the Copenhagen Technical College. At the age of 30 he emigrated to the United States and settled in California where, in 1968, he began translating for the Worldwide Church of God.

Another construction engineer called to help build God's Church is Norwegian deacon Diedrik Zernichow. He helps part time by handling personal correspondence in the Norwegian and Swedish languages. He also assists Mr. Sprotte with translating and has the responsibility of making all the arrangements in connection with the festivals.

by Peter Shenton

# THE CHURCH IN Scand



# inavia

Mr. Zernichow was formerly managing director of one of the larger construction firms in Norway. In 1961 he was appointed to the Royal Norwegian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and was head of the building materials division until leaving Norway in 1970 to come to Bricket Wood.

Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Sprotte and Mr. Zernichow, all twelve lessons of the Correspondence Course have been translated into Danish and currently there are more than 1700 people studying it. However, as the second language in all these countries is English, there are a further 1000 students taking the course in English.

In October 1974, the first Feast of Tabernacles was held in Scandinavia — a major milestone. The beautiful setting was the Norwegian fell country at Sanderstølen.

Some 140 people, including children and visitors from Britain and North America, attended. The warmth and friendliness in this small group of people created a family atmosphere that was a real foretaste of what all people, everywhere, will eventually enjoy.

The Hotel Sanderstølen provided all that one could wish. Indoor swimming pool, saunas, game rooms and a “trim room” — or gymnasium — that was very much needed after partaking of the traditional breakfast and lunch smørgaasbord! At night a superb candlelit dinner was served with such entrees as smoked salmon and reindeer meat.

The Holy Days offer the only opportunity for all the brethren in Scandinavia to meet together. This spring, during the Passover season, we are arranging for them to get together again. Future plans are also being made for evangelistic campaigns.

Like the proverbial mustard seed, the Scandinavian work is small but has great potential for growth. The harvest will be great — it's only a matter of providing the funds and manpower to do the job. □



**T**he site of the first Feast of Tabernacles to be held in Scandinavia was the beautiful fell country at Sanderstølen, Norway. Eleven countries were represented among the one-hundred forty brethren who attended. In the group photograph above, Stuart Powell, director of the Scandinavian work and pastor of the churches at Chelmsford and Norwich, England, is shown at extreme left. Second from right on front row is Sidney Hegvold, minister of the church in Dublin, Ireland. To the immediate left (second row) of Mr. Hegvold is Richard Sprotte, Danish translator, mentioned in the article. Right: Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Powell. Below: Room used for services at the Hotel Sanderstølen.



Response to the Sabbath article in the October GN was very gratifying to our editorial staff. Excerpts from some of the letters from our readers are published here. Answers to questions are proffered where appropriate.

## "The Sabbath Was Made for Man"

I am so happy that I got *The Good News* magazine that I can't believe it. In it is Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong speaking on the subject of "God's Holy Days Are Up To Date in the Space Age," and "The Sabbath Was Made for Man" by Brian Knowles. Both have opened up my eyes to how the Sabbath should be kept. Since I have been studying I have been keeping the Sabbath alone in my home, but now I have learned more about it. Thank you all so very much.

Mrs. Thelma J.,  
Orlando, Florida

After reading most of my first issue of *The Good News*, I am convinced that no finer and more valuable magazine is to be found. My special thanks and congratulations go to Brian Knowles for "The Sabbath Was Made for Man." Up until reading this, I found the Sabbath the hardest of all Christian encounters. I looked and waited and hoped for sunset on Saturday. I read his article on Friday evening and enjoyed the Sabbath and was refreshed. Not only that, but it gave me added faith in God's wish for man to be happy.

Bruce C.,  
Taft, California

Since I see much logic in your magazine presentation that the Sabbath is the present Saturday (although I presume that all theologians are not yet convinced of its authenticity), is it possible to go to other great ministers of the gospel, get together, and thunder this message to us from all sides?

Elaine K.,  
Brockway, Pennsylvania

• *Relatively few ministers in the Western world would teach that the Sabbath should be observed on the seventh day of the week.*

In the October issue of *The Good News* (page 11, "The Sabbath Was Made for Man"), you wrote a very interesting article. However, on page 15 you made the statement that it is "not wrong to indulge in mild physical activity." Now this is a vague statement and can mean many things to different people. I deeply wish you would clarify this statement.

John V.,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

• *Defining strict guidelines led to some of the abuses of the Pharisees. The Judaic adherents of Christ's day believed that it was wrong to travel more than 3/5 of a mile (a "sabbath day's journey") on the Sabbath. This was an arbitrary figure arrived at as a result of feeling that it was necessary to de-*

*fine just how much work could be done on that day. But God's is not a "yardstick" religion of endless arbitrary line drawings. It is a balanced way of life.*

*Some things are obvious and others must be discerned on the basis of the leading of God's Spirit. It is readily apparent that major construction, heavy household or gardening chores, long-distance swimming or running, marathon bicycle riding, etc., would be strenuous and inappropriate for God's rest day. Yet a certain amount of mild physical activity is necessary to wash dishes, make beds or clean up spilled coffee. Usually, these are minor tasks taking up very little time and using little energy.*

*Each person has to use a certain amount of personal judgment in discerning which activities would violate the Sabbath. Each person's situation is somewhat different. A long list of Sabbath dos and don'ts can open a Pandora's box of problems. Jesus taught against such Pharisaic self-righteousness (Matt. 23).*

I was previously going to write concerning your refreshing and enlightening article in the October GN regarding the Sabbath. I can't tell you how thankful I am for the understanding of the spiritual intent revealed in your explanation of the Sabbath.

Mrs. Judith G.,  
Norwich, Connecticut

I read the article "The Sabbath Was Made for Man" by Brian Knowles. I have had this same view for years. You are such good company.

Fred P.,  
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

I was very happy to read the article in *The Good News* about the Sabbath. It answered a lot of questions that were in my mind.

Alice R.,  
Honesdale, Pennsylvania

I was reading your article "The Sabbath Was Made for Man." In it the Essenes were criticized for not lighting fires on the Sabbath. It also said in another part of the article that "it is not wrong to cook" on God's holy days.

I agree that the Sabbath shouldn't be a burden, but in Exodus 35:3 it says: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the sabbath day." And in Exodus 16:23: "Tomorrow is... the holy sabbath... bake that which ye will bake today, and boil that which ye will boil..." It seems that these rules for keeping the Sabbath should be in effect today as much as the Sabbath. A person who heats with firewood could keep a fire going instead of kindling a new one and fix all food on Friday.

Ray B.,  
Wirt, Minnesota

• *Read the general context of Exodus 35:3. The Israelites were building the tabernacle*

*(chapters 25 through 31 — interrupted by the golden calf incident, chapters 32 through 34), and needed a fire large enough to work metal. They were so zealous about this work that Moses had to tell them to stop bringing unneeded materials for its construction.*

The instruction in Exodus 35:3 concerns an industrial fire. Notice from the *Critical and Experimental Commentary*: "The Sabbath was not a fast day. The Israelites cooked their victuals on that day, for which, of course, a fire would be necessary; and this view of the institution is supported by the conduct of our Lord (Luke xiv. 1). But in early times the Israelites, while sojourning in the wilderness and subsisting on manna, received a double supply on the sixth day, which they cooked also on that day (see on ch. xvi. 23), so that a fire for culinary purposes was entirely unnecessary on the Sabbath day. As the kindling of a fire, therefore, could only be for secular purposes, the insertion of the prohibition in connection with the work of the tabernacle makes it highly probable that it was intended chiefly for the mechanics who were to be employees in that erection; and as some of them might have supposed it was allowable to ply their trade in the furtherance of a structure to be dedicated to religious worship, it was calculated to prevent all such ideas, by absolutely forbidding any fire for the sharpening of tools, for the melting of metals, or any other material purpose bearing on the sanctuary" (vol. 1, p. 419).

As far as cooking is concerned, Exodus 16:23-25 does definitely show (in principle) that we should normally do our heavy cooking, roasting, etc., on the preparation day (Friday). However, the Sabbath is one of the festivals of Leviticus 23. God would certainly not be displeased if we warmed up a previously cooked roast or fried an egg on His holy day.

## If You'd Like to Know More

Any readers who would like further information on the Sabbath itself may write for our free booklets on the subject. The titles are *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*, *Which Day Is the Sabbath of the New Testament?* and *Has Time Been Lost?* (Another free booklet, *Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days — Which?*, explains about the seven annual Sabbaths.)

Additionally, the Worldwide Church of God provides further services for any who may have other questions on how to keep the Sabbath day holy. Ordained ministers are available in most communities to visit with interested readers in their own homes. For a private appointment please write to the address of our office nearest you (see inside front cover).

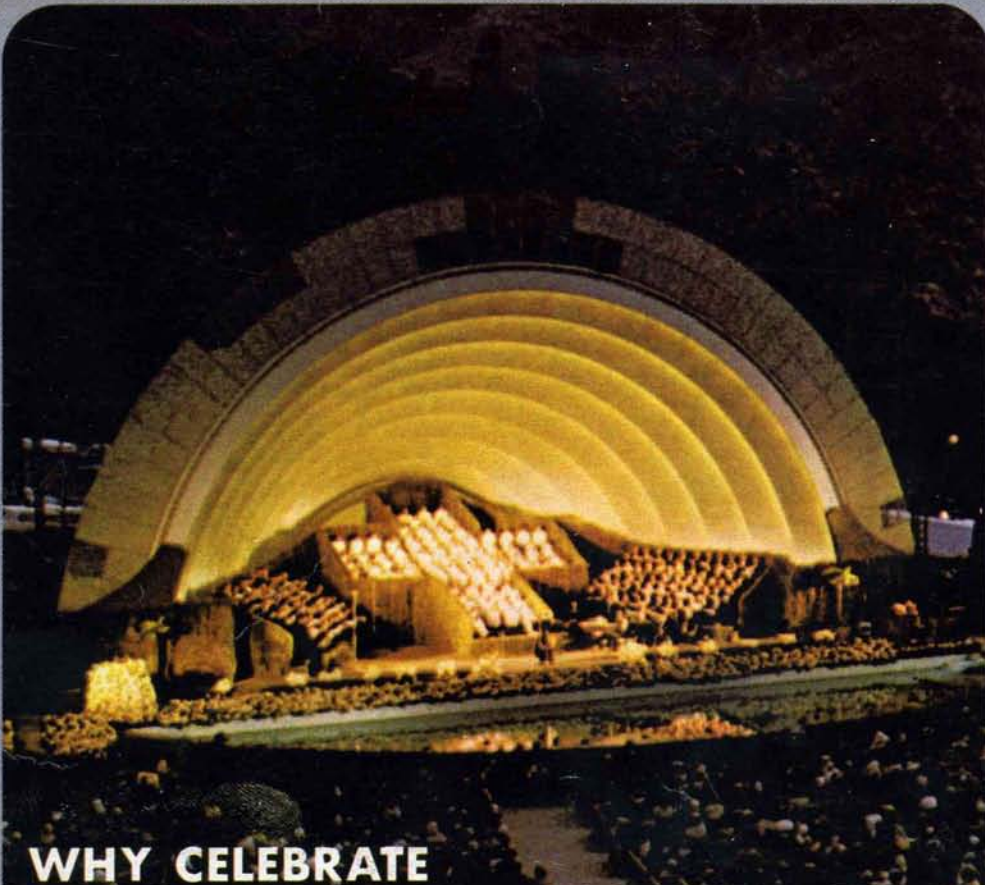
Or if you would prefer faster service, please dial this toll-free number in the continental United States: 800-423-4444. (Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.) This service is absolutely free and without personal obligation.

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WHY CELEBRATE

# EASTER?

Easter is universally accepted as chief of the Christian holidays. But is Easter based on the Bible or mere pagan tradition? Does the Bible teach observance of Lent, Good Friday or Easter sunrise?

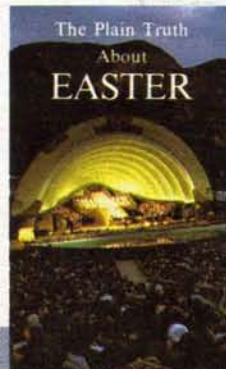
It matters a lot to God which days you observe. His Word – the Bible – mentions a God-ordained festival which is intended to be kept.

Do you know what it is? Can you prove it from the Bible? Write for our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Easter* for the answers.

Just send your request to:

**The Good News**  
Pasadena, California 91123

If you live outside the United States, refer to the inside front cover for the address of our office nearest you.



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