

The Good News

How to Better
Watch World Events
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Prepare Your
Children for School

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The Good News

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COVER: Your child's school years can be exciting and rewarding — or they can be a nightmare for you both! Will your child be able to successfully handle such problems as pagan holidays and taking off for the feasts? He will if you prepare now. Read "Your Child's First Year in School — Are YOU Prepared?", beginning on page 14. Photo by Roland Rees.

Letters

Children in church

While reading Mr. Richard David Armstrong's article, "How You Must Teach Your Children to Behave in Church" [May], I could not help but cry. Here I sit, 34 years old, and a man who died when I was in the fifth grade has resoundingly corrected me with stunning results in my perception of this matter.

How very grateful I am to him for his deep dedication and for his great courage to speak out as his father has for so many years. I am anxiously looking forward to thanking him in the very near future for helping me to get back on the right track with our 4 year old.

Kathy Williams
Dallas, Tex.

Teaching children

Today we received our *Good News* magazine and read your fine article, "Don't Assume Your Children Understand" [April]. I, too, was shocked to read how little our children understand.

But I would also like to let you know that not all children are that uninformed — some do understand a lot, and I would like to applaud those parents who do spend quality time with their children, teaching them. Children are able to learn much more than we give them credit for . . . it is possible for very young children to learn much, and much more can be added as the child grows.

Joan Jacques
Brevard, N.C.

"An Open Letter"

Every issue of *The Good News* seems to be better than the last, although how that is possible I don't know. Your "Open Letter to Newly Begotten Members" in the March issue is tremendous. It pictures the whole Christian life in a nutshell. It would be impossible to mention every article in every issue that especially impressed me.

Lorraine Frederick
Tremont, Ill.

"Good, strong meat"

Thank you for the good, strong meat in . . . *The Good News*. I've been in the Church for six years, and some of these things I've never heard before. It seems our local ministers are also "fired up." They have sure been preaching powerful sermons. I thank God for the privilege of being a part of His Work.

Patsy S. Pruett
Midwest City, Okla.



A UNITED STATES senator preached a sermon in a Methodist pulpit in Los Angeles, Calif.

Of all things, imagine a well-known senator saying that *patriotism* is a false god to many people! And he was right.

"Love of country can transcend the love of God," he said, "and we must, in time of stress, avoid making patriotism a religion."

He said a number of other things I could have said, myself. Among the idols professing Christians worship, he cited *prosperity, science, patriotism, peace* — and some people actually make an idol of the Bible, strange as that may sound. Some, he said, worship the Bible for *itself*, NOT as containing TRUTHS necessary for salvation, and, I add, as a GUIDE to a WAY OF LIFE.

What is *your* idol? What are YOU really dedicated to? Is it earning a living — making money? What absorbs your mind, your thoughts, your time — what are you really devoted to?

Is it GOD — above all else? Or is it your hobby, your wife or husband, your children, your home, your sports — or amusements and entertainments?

What do you keep your MIND on most of the time? What most occupies your INTEREST? Is it friends — society? Is it PEOPLE — or is it THINGS?

It surely couldn't be GOD, could it?

Probably not. And, if not, then it is an IDOL. You are breaking the First Commandment. You have this other god *before* Him.

Just WHAT IS RELIGION?

Is it merely an incidental interest, secondary to *many* other things, such as earning a living, your home, your family, your friends, hobbies, sports,

entertainments? Possibly secondary to television or movies?

Religion is your CONNECTION WITH GOD — your relationship with Him.

Religion is realizing the PURPOSE of your life — the reason why God had you to be born — the reason you draw the breath of air and exist — the PURPOSE or end GOAL of your life, and HOW to live that life so as to arrive there.

I have written of the *seven laws of SUCCESS*. You may have the free booklet on *The Seven Laws of Success* by writing our office nearest you. They are really the seven laws of LIFE. They are the seven laws of RELIGION. Yet most people do not know or practice or apply a single one of them.

The first is to have the RIGHT GOAL.

That GOAL — God's PURPOSE for having put the breath of life in you — is that you be born of GOD, to share with Him the GLORY of creation, to inherit His divine NATURE, to be LIKE HIM — to do what He does, to accomplish what He accomplishes, enjoy what He ENJOYS — peace, happiness, joy, resplendent GLORY in LIFE EVERLASTING.

No other goal could be as great. It is superlative.

But what are *you, now*? Just a mass of matter, put together like a machine. Your present existence has to be constantly SUSTAINED. You have to keep drawing a breath of air into your lungs about every four or five seconds. You have to eat food on the average of at least three times every day. You have to take care of eliminating the impurities from food, and of bathing and cleansing your body.

Maybe you don't *really* have to "brush your teeth after every meal" as a certain toothpaste TV commercial keeps repeating like a phonograph record that got stuck.

But you *do* have to maintain and sustain your physical anatomy to keep on existing — and even then you are aging and degenerating every day and every year — and the most certain thing in this existence we call "life" is that this machine process is going to run down — YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.

Actually, we have to simply *keep pumping life into* ourselves constantly — daily — to continue existing — to continue consciousness.

Yet most people keep on, day after day, year after year, pumping that existence into themselves, with NO MORE PURPOSE than to try to be comfortable, free from pain, and to be pleasing the five senses — with their minds on the passing physical and material things of the moment — things that are not lasting, and are soon gone.

Unless God's own CHARACTER is being formed and developed in your mind and your life, replacing the carnality that is there now, you shall have missed your GOAL.

God's PURPOSE is to CREATE within you, during this life, a new and perfect CHARACTER, so that you may be *given* eternal life — self-containing, inherent life.

If you are converted — that is, if you do once establish actual *contact* with God — He supernaturally puts within you His HOLY SPIRIT. This impregnates you with His LIFE — begets you as His child, actually yet unborn.

Actually, what many professing Christians call "being born again" *should* be termed "being begotten."

Technically, to be "born of God" means to be changed in composition from flesh and blood matter to SPIRIT — no longer mortal, no longer human.

But it does put within you a NEW NATURE, entirely opposite to HUMAN

NATURE with which you were first born.

You are, as Scripture says, given "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE" (II Pet. 1:4). Of course the old human nature *remains*, and *your mind* makes the continual decisions whether to yield to the downward pull and appetites and established habits of human nature, or to resist it by yielding to the new divine nature — to BE LED BY GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT.

This, then, BECOMES *your very life!*

You can only succeed if your GOAL is kept constantly — continually — before your eyes.

When you drive a car, if you take your eyes and attention off what is in front of you (and sometimes coming from the side or behind) even for two or three seconds, you may find yourself "coming to" in a hospital, dying and saying "It all happened *so suddenly!*"

Driving *carefully* means BEING ALERT — being DILIGENT every second — KEEPING YOUR EYE and your mind and attention on the matter of DRIVING — not on conversation or other things.

In the same manner, if you let other interests, material pursuits, steal first place in your mind and heart and *interest*, even for a few days, you are in danger of a SPIRITUAL SMASHUP that will let you wake up being plunged into the LAKE OF FIRE, which will mean eternal DEATH.

That's why God doesn't want you to have these other gods BEFORE Him.

For your own sake — in your own interest — you must keep Him enthroned and enshrined constantly ABOVE ALL.

You must study HIS WORD in order to be *instructed* by Him.

Instructed in what? Instructed in true KNOWLEDGE — knowledge of God's PURPOSE for you — knowledge of and about GOD — and knowledge of HOW TO LIVE. Jesus Christ said you must actually LIVE BY the words of the Bible. It is your GUIDE TO LIVING — your INSTRUCTION BOOK the Maker sent along to instruct you HOW to

OPERATE this mechanism that is YOU.

More, you must study His Word — your BIBLE — to find what you now believe that is wrong, and what you are now DOING that is wrong — to be CORRECTED and reproved by it. You must study it to let it INSTRUCT you in the ways of God's RIGHTEOUSNESS — His WAY OF LIFE. And then you must *devote* yourself to LIVING IT!

Still, without regular and constant PRAYER, you cannot maintain CONTACT with God. And when that *contact* is broken, you are CUT OFF from Him — and His spiritual LIFE, LOVE and very NATURE cease flowing into you.

For, understand, these divine attributes of His Spirit DO FLOW! They are IN MOTION. They do not stagnate.

You either GROW spiritually — in knowledge — in grace — in God's character — or you deteriorate back toward becoming a mere physical animal, to die in ETERNAL PUNISHMENT in the lake of fire!

But if God, and the things of God — His revealed knowledge — His law — His love — His WAY for you to live — are constantly *foremost* in your mind, your thoughts, your interest, then you are PRAYING ALWAYS — that is, in a constant SPIRIT OF PRAYER — a constant MENTAL ATTITUDE of prayer.

The contact with God must be *perpetual!*

This kind of Christian life — the only kind that truly is Christian — requires, as the Bible emphasizes repeatedly, zealous DILIGENCE. You must CONCENTRATE on it. You must be DEDICATED to it. It requires utter CONSECRATION. It requires total EARNESTNESS.

Yes, it requires the application of the other six laws of SUCCESS — education, in which the Bible is the main textbook; good physical health; DRIVE, or concentrated DILIGENCE and EFFORT; resourcefulness; sticking to it — enduring; and continual contact with, and the guidance, help and power of, GOD.

True spiritual mindedness is *not* a sticky sentimentalism. It is NOT a certain emotional mood. It is *not* the use of a certain religious phraseology, saying constantly,

"Praise the Lord," or, "Glory, hallelujah."

I have known many people whose TALK is so very "spiritual" — but whose hearts were as far from God as the prophet Isaiah described (Isa. 29:13).

Jesus Christ was a perfectly SPIRITUAL man. But He did not go about using such mushy language.

He was *not* a girlish, effeminate, sentimental or emotional weakling. He was a strong, virile, masterful, yet kind and gentle, MAN.

He possessed LEADERSHIP, STRENGTH, PURPOSE, SUPREME STRONG WILL — and yet these masculine qualities of strength and power were perfectly blended with wisdom, judgment, knowledge, understanding, justice and also patience, compassion and mercy. He was filled with PEACE, LOVE, FAITH.

And His WILL, strong as it was, was totally yielded and obedient to GOD. All this was the character of GOD.

He is our PATTERN. We must imitate Him — copy Him.

Look at the men of God in the Old Testament — Abraham, Noah, Joseph, David, Daniel, Elijah. They were all different from Christ in one respect — in which you and I must also be different — they had human weaknesses, and all did sin, yet these men all repented and strove to overcome.

But they were all men of strong PURPOSE, strong WILL guided by God; all possessed leadership, but also love and faith and a consecrated OBEDIENCE to the will of GOD. But they were not effeminate, sentimental men indulging in an affected, put-on, religious-sounding way of talking.

Look at the apostles Peter and Paul. They were the same. You don't find any of this pseudo "spirituality" in them — yet they were truly SPIRITUAL men, devoted to obeying God and serving the needs of the people.

But one thing to watch and guard against every second, in the way of attitude, is resentment, bitterness, hatred.

Don't let ANYTHING, no matter how unjust, make you sour and bitter.

(Continued on page 25)



Living Abundantly With Nonmember Mates

*Has God called you but not your husband or wife?
Has it caused problems in your Christian life?
Here's how to make the most of your situation.*

By Neil Earle

It is a familiar sight in God's Church: a woman sitting in the audience during services, valiantly supervising one, two, three or more young children.

Her husband is not an usher or

a deacon. He isn't up taking attendance. He isn't even in the hall. He doesn't attend services in the Worldwide Church of God. He is not a member.

Familiar as well to God's ministers is the one-on-one visit with a man struggling to explain to his wife why

he has to pay three full tithes or why he would like his teenagers to attend a YOU activity.

He, like many men reading this article, is married to a woman who is not a member of the Worldwide Church of God. God has not called the member's mate, and this

strains their family relationship.

Are there any principles that can help us ease the tensions in this touchy situation? Yes, once we gain God's perspective on the matter.

One young woman wrote *The Good News*: "Please, please, PLEASE spell out the rules for women with nonmember mates. When should we obey our husbands instead of God? Am I excused from keeping the Feast and Holy Days? Am I allowed to celebrate Christmas, Easter, Halloween and birthdays just because my husband wants me to?"

"My husband would love it if I'd forget about the Bible and God. Should I make him *that* happy? Somewhere, somehow, I feel like I'm missing a page of instructions."

While one article can't answer every question in detail or cover all the countless, awkward problems that arise in this area, we can drink in the basic guidelines from God's Word.

Christian life a struggle

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (I Pet. 4:12).

Let's get our bearings as we approach this important subject. As Christians we are up against the satanic system of this world (Rom. 12:1-2). Paul plainly described the Christian life as a fight — a struggle (I Tim. 6:12).

Jesus said that only those who are violent with themselves — with their attitudes, with their past way of viewing things, with their former attachments to this society — will drive through to the Kingdom (Matt. 11:12). God is our invincible Ally if we diligently seek Him.

It was not an easy undertaking we bargained for when we gave our old selves to symbolically perish in the waters of baptism (Rom. 6:3-6). That simple but sublime ceremony drew upon us the full fire of Satan's wrath (I Pet. 5:8).

But take heart!

God called you, and He *never* makes a mistake (John 6:44). If He drew you to Him and convicted you by His Spirit, you can make it (John 10:27-28).

Furthermore, God knew our total

backgrounds when He called us and, in His supreme wisdom, He decided, in some cases, not to call our mates. Paul referred to this when He said: "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. . . . Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (I Cor. 7:18, 20).

God has decided He will not call some of our mates, at least not yet. But stop and think! Our wonderful Creator never does anything except for our very best interests in the long run (Rom. 8:28). Think about that next time you're tempted to say, Oh, how I wish God would call my mate.

The simple truth is that the Christian life is a struggle for everyone. We should be happy warriors (Eph. 6:10-11).

One of Satan's favorite tactics is to unsettle, upset and confuse people through their intimate personal relationships. That is where he struck in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6). That is where he often strikes today, and even those families with both husband and wife in the Church are not spared.

Yet, undoubtedly, the fact that a mate is not a member does present some peculiar challenges. To really come to grips with these challenges requires another look at the very bedrock of our commitment to God. Notice Jesus' definitive statement:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:34-38).

Jesus Christ, who knew human nature intimately (John 2:25), candidly warned us about the hazards in the Christian life. He wants us to accept our particular "cross" in life as something to be borne gracefully,

rather than have us make a shallow commitment that crumbles at the first shocks of persecution.

We are promised trouble and tribulation (Job 5:7, Acts 14:22). We can thank Christ that He inspired a whole book, the Holy Bible, to help us learn how to shoulder it.

Wouldn't it be relatively simple for the great God to convert your mate? He humbled the obstinate pharaoh and the strutting Nebuchadnezzar. In God's hands, Saul the destroyer became Paul the apostle.

There is hope! "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (I Cor. 7:16).

A mate's conversion, however, should not be our main hope, because we should resolve to remain steadfast Christians no matter what (Job 13:15). "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches" (I Cor. 7:17).

The point is that the all-powerful, all-knowing God could have called your mate (Gen. 18:14). But He didn't. Why not?

Blessing in disguise

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4).

God is more concerned about our character than our comfort! His purpose is to mold us, like clay models, into the very image of Jesus Christ Himself (Jer. 18:6). The awkward, sometimes frustrating and exasperating experiences of living with a life partner who is not in the Church could be a great blessing in disguise.

Every close human relationship, including marriage, has its stresses and strains (Amos 3:3). But then, rose bushes have thorns. When a husband or wife is not in the Church, a member has an even more urgent prod to develop wisdom.

James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and

upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Living with potential hostility or periodic alienation forces a Christian to examine himself regularly (II Cor. 13:5). Thus the human clay God is fashioning becomes a little more malleable.

Are you as a Christian striving to be a more effective peacemaker? Do you overreact? Do you automatically expect the worst and enter delicate situations bristling with pride and plain old self-righteousness?

Oh, how we all fall down from time to time (Eccl. 7:20)! The good news is that God is more willing to give us wisdom than we are to ask Him for it (Deut. 5:29).

The tragedy is that many people stumble heedlessly through life—discourteous, tactless, unteachable. Then they lament their terrible lack of success in human relationships (Prov. 5:11-13). Wisdom is the art of saying the right thing at the right time in just the right tone of voice and with just enough words to make the point (Prov. 10:32, 12:23, 25:11).

Yes, the sometimes thorny relationships between true Christians and their nonmember mates provide incentive in the lifelong pursuit of wisdom. Tact, diplomacy, strategy, timing—members with antagonistic mates should cultivate all these attributes; they lead to shining success in life.

Listen to these beautiful words: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (Jas. 3:17-18).

The onus is clearly upon us as members to weed out destructive anger (Prov. 29:22). The carnal, almost irresistible pleasure of striking back, retaliating by word or deed, is not worth the price paid in severed relationships.

It's so hard to resist preaching to or lecturing our mates. But it is better (Prov. 25:8) to develop that "meek and quiet spirit" the Bible prizes so highly (I Pet. 3:4).

Disengage yourself from situations where you feel resentment and bitter-

ness bubbling to the surface (Prov. 17:14). God warns that a brother offended is harder to be won than a fortified city (Prov. 18:19). Allow people to "save face" whenever possible. Treat your partner as you would like to be treated in a similar circumstance (Luke 6:31).

These are basic Christian principles, simpler to read over than to actually put into practice. They do work, however, and the results are well worth the effort. Remember Paul's counsel: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

Family government

Nothing written above, however, justifies cruelty or mishandling by antagonistic mates. God doesn't expect women, for example, to suffer under despicable examples of manhood who beat them, threaten their lives or attempt to suffocate them spiritually. "God hath called us to peace," Paul stated (I Cor. 7:15).

True, Christian women are required to honor their husbands and to submit to them (I Cor. 11:3). Yet God also says in Colossians 3:18, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as it is fit in the Lord.*"

God requires His converted children, male and female, to appear before Him on the Sabbath (Lev. 23:3, Heb. 10:25). Danger to life and limb, or slow spiritual strangulation by husbands who make it impossible for their wives to obey God's clear commands, needs to be brought to the ministry (Heb. 13:17).

Wives are to submit, yes, but "as it is fit in the Lord." A Christian woman owes allegiance to an authority even higher than her husband—to the One who instituted the husband's authority in the first place, the almighty, eternal God (Prov. 29:25).

Acts 5:29 plainly teaches, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Applying this principle is often one of the greatest crosses a true Christian woman with an antagonistic husband has to bear. Seek plenty of qualified help and advice from God's ministry in this matter.

But remember, God did not write Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18

as the "Male Chauvinist Bill of Rights."

No scripture justifies the cruel, ironfisted rule of a man who forces a converted woman to infringe on God's spiritual law. The wife is told to "submit herself," not to get sledgehammered into slavery. The phrase "submit yourself" is no license for the female's exploitation.

At the same time, converted women will not seize on any picky areas to excuse dumping husbands they would selfishly like to get rid of. This is a difficult area for many women in God's Church, especially, but the overall principles are clear.

There is nothing in God's Word requiring us to participate in Christmas, Easter, Halloween or other worldly holidays because of a husband's commands. But neither should we become hurt or resentful if the husband chooses this route. Don't criticize. Don't condemn. God isn't judging the world yet, but He is certainly judging us (I Pet. 4:17). Often tact and resourcefulness can work wonders (Prov. 21:23).

Be resourceful

Notice God's encouragement: "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands" (Prov. 14:1). "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Prov. 31:26).

Dozens of young people are studying at Ambassador College because of the determined, wise example set for them by courageous mothers and fathers who walked with God every day in a sometimes tedious struggle to serve Him without offending their mates.

Countless quiet, meek men and women have found untapped reserves of leadership, tact and strategy once they determined to obey God fully (Prov. 28:1). There is never an excuse for rebellion against a husband, of course, but we owe God our total allegiance. It is a matter of obeying the One in greater authority.

One woman had reasoned that she should never attend any activities except Sabbath services. Her excuse? She felt she should spend all her free

time with her nonmember husband and children.

But she began to realize that her family's depressing personal problems were undermining her attitude and cutting her off from the abundant life God's people enjoy in wholesome social activities. Her minister agreed.

She responded to her pastor's suggestions. She joined the church ladies' bowling league and the chorale, volunteered for a job responsibility in the congregation and is generally enjoying life much more.

No wonder. She is living the great commandment (Matt. 22:37), and God is blessing her. She now has the quiet conviction that the Head of this Church is looking after her family and will call them to the truth at the best possible time. Meanwhile, she has work to do with God's people, and sets a fine example for all.

Husbands with nonmember, antagonistic wives should zealously take the lead in their families to plan uplifting, enjoyable activities within God's law.

Instead of allowing the sources of friction to dominate your family relations, why not plunge wholeheartedly into activities that build unity? The best defense is a good offense!

If Christmas, Easter and birthdays are sore spots, make up for these antagonisms by planning outstanding events for Thanksgiving, graduations, anniversaries and vacations. Involve your wife's family where possible. Be watchful. Know your wife's interests and enjoyments. If they are within God's law, make the most of them.

Be wise. Be resourceful. Appreciate any opportunity to set a balanced example of God's way. God could use your wife's nonmember status as a vehicle to spread His truth into more and more lives. Be a light (Matt. 5:14). But remember, a light doesn't preach. A light only makes a noise when it is defective.

Claim God's promise: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7).

Abigail's amazing example

"I just can't see how it would work in my case," some will protest. "I've

tried everything, and it just gets worse." Well, remember, the impossible is God's specialty. Let's study an amazing case history recorded to illustrate this very point.

In the days when King David was a rugged guerrilla leader, there was a woman named Abigail, "a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance" (1 Sam. 25:3). Abigail had married a man who, though a financial success, was an abject failure as a human being. The Bible, with marvelous irony, records that his name was *Nabal*, meaning "a fool" or "worthless fellow" (verses 3, 25).

This ornery individual became involved in a semicomical episode that literally sizzles with the dynamics of human relationships. It is vital that we today understand such episodes (Rom. 15:4).

God's ministers meet many Nabals. Sometimes people forget that the Nabals of this world reap what they sow, eventually (Gal. 6:7). Being a Nabal, an unhappy ingrate, is punishment enough, but sooner or later such a person goes too far (Prov. 11:17, 15:18). A Nabal's habit of "shooting from the hip," often fortified by terrorizing a wife, inevitably leads to a showdown.

This happened. Nabal's spiteful refusal to supply David's small army with provisions caught the Jewish giant killer at the wrong time. David saw red! He'd risked his life defending Nabal's property and all southern Judah from hostiles. In full fury, David set out to punish this snide reprobate (1 Sam. 25:13). The irresistible force was headed for a very movable object, Nabal and his whole family. What did Abigail do? What would you do?

Abigail's "good understanding" rallied. You couldn't live with a viper like Nabal without growing at least a little in wisdom. "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man [or woman] will pacify it" (Prov. 16:14). Swiftly Abigail prepared a sumptuous meal (1 Sam. 25:18).

Then she herself set out to meet David after he had first sampled the delectable food, a true "peace offering." This was the adroit strategy of a forceful, capable woman facing a life-and-death test.

It worked. Her sound, forthright approach completely melted David's anger (verses 23-31). What a study in feminine leadership interposing itself skillfully and diplomatically at just the right time!

David was forever glad he had listened to this woman, an unsurpassed example of strength blended with submission. Abigail did all of this without compromising the government principle in the home.

God Himself upheld this stout-hearted woman who possessed a delicate blend of dignity, nobility and tact. God reciprocated her loyal submission to her obstreperous husband with wisdom to handle her life's crises. More than merely "coping," she ended up as the wife of David (verse 40).

Benefit from the opportunity

Sweet indeed can be the uses of adversity! What a merciful God we serve, who allows us to build character and learn valuable lessons from our most awkward and embarrassing life situations.

Don't lament and bemoan your situation. If your mate is truly "pleased to dwell" with you, rejoice and make the most of the opportunity to be a quiet, tactful witness of God's way (1 Cor. 7:12-13).

Remember, God does not make mistakes. When He called you into His glorious truth and did not open the mind of your husband or wife, He knew what He was doing. Trust Him. Whatever He does is for your good, ultimately.

Above all, do nothing that will stand in the way of your mate responding to God's call. Strive to set the very finest example. Your minister will have other pertinent suggestions. The best thing any of us can do to serve God is to be as involved and interested in His Work as possible (Matt. 6:33).

God is not unfair. He knew what He was doing when He called only one member of your family. One day we will learn that His ways truly are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9).

"For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off" (Prov. 23:18). □

'Judge Not...'

By Philip Stevens

Here was a golden opportunity — a chance for the scribes and Pharisees to show up that fraud Jesus for what He really was. And a large crowd was even on hand to witness their victory.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" (John 8:3-5).

But Jesus chose to ignore them. In fact, He had the nerve to stoop down in front of this illustrious company and write in the sand.

They looked at each other in bewilderment. Then one of their leaders came forward and repeated their charge against the forlorn woman at the center of their plot. There was little doubt of her guilt — she had been caught committing the sin.

Jesus waited for the repeated accusations to cease, then stood up.

"He that is without sin among you," He said, scanning His pious audience, "let him first cast a stone at her" (verse 7). He paused a moment to let His words sink in, then stooped and continued writing in the dirt.

Several minutes later He looked up to see only the woman remaining in His company.

"Woman, where are those thine accusers?" He asked. "Hath no man condemned thee?"

She said, "No man, Lord."

Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (verses 10-11).

It is all too easy for us to point the finger at another member of God's

Church and say, "Well, look what he's doing." But when we attempt to judge the actions of another person, we are taking to ourselves a prerogative that belongs to God.

"And he [God] shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Ps. 9:8). God tells us that in order to judge we must be completely righteous. That's the message Christ gave those who accused the adulterous woman.

As human beings, we can form conclusions only about what we see or hear. Yet Christ told us not to judge by these physical considerations: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

Righteous judgment means looking deep into a person's heart to perceive his innermost motives. Achieving that insight is beyond the power of human beings, no matter how righteous we consider ourselves.

Prophecy about the future Savior, Isaiah wrote, "And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor" (Isa. 11:3-4).

Righteous judgment is beyond the reach of mortal man. It is the reserved domain of the eternal God.

"He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver [God], who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (Jas. 4:11-12).

Jesus explained that it is easy for us to perceive in others the very faults of which we, ourselves, are most guilty (Matt. 7:3-5). When we are tempted to criticize a fellow human being, it is good to examine our own actions and see that we are not treading the same ground (Rom. 2:1-3).

Try pointing a finger at someone

and then look at your own hand — there will be three fingers pointing back at you.

We know God chose not to heal Paul's "thorn in the flesh." People of Paul's day may have judged him as lacking in faith. Yet we know now that it was to God's glory that the affliction remained (II Cor. 12:7-9). Any who judged Paul were wrong.

So apply the same principle today. When you are tempted to judge the behavior of others, remember that you have no idea what God has in mind for that person. A stronger Son of God may be produced from a continued affliction or financial reverse.

Often we do not even know all the circumstances that work together to cause a person to act a particular way. And we have no appreciation of the tremendous battle someone may be waging to overcome.

Christ must have seen something in the adulterous woman who stood before Him, something the accusers could not perceive. Although she was guilty, Jesus could see she abhorred the act she had committed. He could appreciate that she had repented, and He forgave her.

If He had looked merely at the physical evidence, He would have seen only guilt. However, with divine insight, Christ was able to render His decision based on the renewed motives of her heart.

We might speculate, too, about the words Christ wrote on the ground. Did He spell out names and dates and couple them with sins the accusers themselves had committed?

The Bible doesn't tell us. But if Jesus were able to assess the woman's repentant attitude, He could just as readily have discerned the motives of her accusers.

Since all of us at this time lack the ability to judge righteously, let us follow Christ's words in Matthew 7:1: "Judge not"! □

How to Better Watch World Events

By Gene H. Hogberg

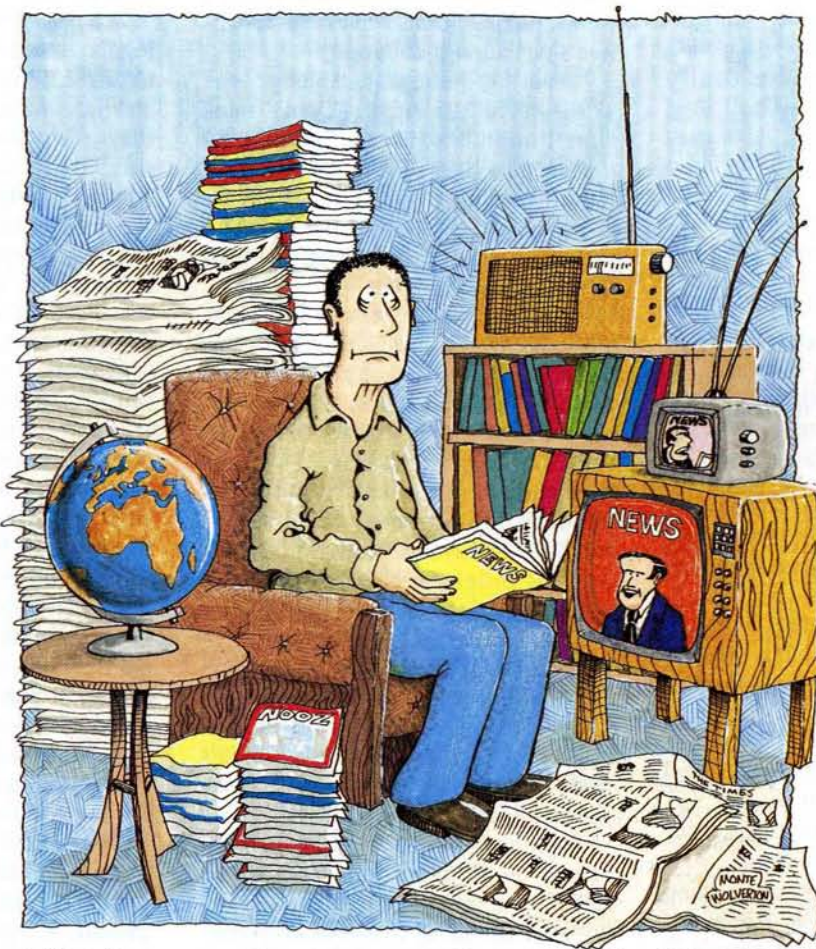
Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong reported to a congress of leading ministers of God's Church earlier this year that world conditions are once again fast accelerating, indicating, he said, that we are in "the very last of the last days."

How, then, can we as lay members get a better grasp of this fast-paced world of ours? What events and trends in the world are of significance and hence bear our watching?

Most importantly, for the purposes of this article, which news sources are most beneficial and reliable? What's the best way to judge the value of a newspaper? What about television news? And what is the overall approach of the news media in analyzing current events?

The correct perspective

First of all, when studying world events from the viewpoint of Bible prophecy, one must know *what* to look for. We have not been left without guideposts in this vital area.



Mr. Armstrong has stressed repeatedly that the 24th chapter of Matthew constitutes one of the most important prophetic passages in the New Testament. This chapter details the signs of Christ's Second Coming and the end of this age.

Hallmarks of the end time, we have been taught, would be religious deception (verses 4-5, 11), "wars and rumours of wars" (verse 6), famines, pestilences, earthquakes (verse 7) and religious persecution and martyrdom for some (verse 9).

Through it all, the true Gospel of God would be proclaimed with ever-

increasing power till — before the end — it would have a powerful impact upon all nations (verse 14).

We need not go into detail at this point to show how these prophesied end-time conditions grip this world *right now*.

The Plain Truth magazine continually devotes considerable space to these very trends.

In addition to focusing our attention on the broad outline of Matthew 24, we have been instructed to watch events in Europe (especially Germany and the Common Market), the Middle East (especially Jerusalem) and the growing

influence of the Papacy.

Plummeting morals, the decay of family life and environmental destruction show we are near the end of man's profligate ways.

Identity of America, Britain

There is another extremely important area that opens our eyes to what to look for.

Mr. Armstrong has remarked on a number of occasions recently that more preachers are preaching prophecy now. But they all lack the key, he says, to unlock the understanding of Bible prophecy. This key is the iden-

tity of the United States and the British people today.

This understanding is so vital in comprehending world events today that without it we are left prophetically rudderless.

But with this understanding, we can readily grasp the portent behind one of the single most significant trends in the world over the past two decades — the decline of American and British power and prestige and the corresponding rise in the military might of the Soviet Union.

This major trend affects nearly everything in the world today, from the changed power relationships in the Middle East to chaos in the global economic structure to the need for Europe to unite.

Approach of news media

No news analysts, aside from those in the Church of God, are going to look at the world from the above perspectives of Bible prophecy.

But some analysts are definitely better than others in helping us watch world events. Such analysts belong to what has been called the *realistic* school of international relations.

Generally speaking, such realists look at the world the way it really is. They are not blinded to political and moral evils in this world. They can plainly see the various power struggles among the nations, the principal one being the East-West ideological conflict centered in Moscow and Washington.

They believe that major aggressive powers, such as the Soviet Union, act the way they do because of historical precedence and national character and are not likely to “change their spots” and moderate their policies.

Realists understand that in the world today — which we know is not God’s world — lofty, abstract principles such as “social justice” and “human rights” are unattainable, even if all men and nations knew what these concepts really meant. To the realist, the “lesser evil” is preferable to some human-defined absolute “good.”

The second broad approach toward the world and society, taken by many political leaders and the majority of news analysts of the popular press of the Western world, is the *idealistic*, also called the *utopian* or *liberal*, approach.

Basically speaking, the idealistic school of thought holds that human nature is inherently good and has “infinite malleability.”

An outgrowth of humanism, this philosophical approach believes man has the power to make society better and better according to constantly changing (supposedly improving) human standards. Former President Jimmy Carter, for example, was said to believe in the “essential perfectibility” of human nature (source: *First Line Report*, a CBS radio program, Jan. 22, 1980).

Regarding the moral basis of society, the idealistic or liberal school rests on a shifting ground. According to this school, new knowledge can easily upset so-called traditional values. The results of this “enlightened” approach, cut off from biblically based or influenced tradition, are all too obvious: the New Morality, teenage sex, “living together,” feminism and the drive to “de-sex” society — even the Bible.

Concerning the international arena, the idealistic viewpoint prefers a “globalist” approach to one concerned about national interests. Ideological conflicts are trivialized; terms such as “balance of power” or “struggle for power” are treated as relics of the past.

The vast differences separating the world’s peoples in matters of history, religion, race, morality and political and economic development are minimized. The role of the United Nations — the supposed “conscience of mankind” — is elevated beyond its importance and the hostility generated there is played down.

Choosing a newspaper

Knowing the two broad approaches to current events analysis should help us better select from the news sources available to us.

For some of our brethren, of course, this is rather difficult, especially if they live in more closed societies. In these instances, choices of news sources are limited. Newspapers, radio and television are often either government controlled or heavily supervised to reflect official government positions.

In pluralistic Western societies, on the other hand, a wider selection of newspapers, magazines and electronic media is available.

In Britain and other countries in Europe, entire newspapers generally reflect a certain philosophy. The *Daily Telegraph*, for example — an excellent news source for the Work’s News Bureau — is conservative in tone, in both presentation of news and commentary. The *Guardian*, on the other hand, reflects a definite left-of-center, politically pro-Labor Party viewpoint.

The *Times* of London is pretty much in the middle of the road. The *Times* is widely regarded as the best-written, most informative newspaper in the English language.

Throughout Europe, another excellent news source is the *International Herald Tribune*, an American-style newspaper jointly operated by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

For their own experience, brethren in the United States should scan copies of the *Times* of London or the *Daily Telegraph* in their nearest big-city local library, if for no other reason but to realize what they are missing on a daily basis in their local newspapers. Reading the *Times* each day is an education.

Choosing a newspaper in the United States presents more of a problem. The United States does not have “national newspapers” as does Britain, with the exception of the small-circulation *Christian Science Monitor* (an excellent source of world and national news) and the specialized *Wall Street Journal*.

Americans are limited to local or regional newspapers, and far fewer of them exist now than before the advent of television. Television and nightly television news have all but destroyed the afternoon newspaper in America. Many cities are now one-newspaper towns.

When a choice between one or more newspapers is available, the prime consideration in deciding which paper to subscribe to should revolve around the stable of columnists who appear on the newspaper’s editorial-opinion pages.

Newspapers of the same size will vary little concerning the hard news of the day. Most generally subscribe to one or more newswires (such as Associated Press or United Press International) plus some supplemental or feature news services. The difference will

usually show up on the opinion page. Notice how many syndicated realist columnists appear regularly.

Who are some journalists of the realist school? Here are a few notable names in the United States to watch for: William Safire, George F. Will, the team of Evans and Novak, Patrick J. Buchanan, James J. Kilpatrick, Norman Podhoretz, Phyllis Schlafly and Georgie Ann Geyer.

We may not agree with everything these people write, but more often than not they present topics worth reading from a sensible perspective.

Attention should be drawn to another journalist who brings a great deal of knowledge, historical background and personal experience to his columns. This gentleman is Joseph C. Harsch of *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Beneficial magazines

It also helps, one's budget permitting, to read a weekly newsmagazine in addition to a newspaper.

The magazine *U.S. News & World Report* has always provided the News Bureau with important information every week. *U.S. News* concentrates on essential facts and figures, with extremely helpful and readily understandable charts and graphs.

Regarding *Time* and *Newsweek*, personal preference is the key. These magazines are helpful in covering major stories in depth.

Time is best for reporting on the Papacy. *Newsweek's* format emphasizes more columns, separating, as its editors once advertised, "fact from opinion."

It has been our experience in the News Bureau that the various international editions of these two weeklies are in some respects superior to the North American versions. Extraneous material of interest only to North America is removed with material pertinent to the European, Australasian and other editorial regions substituted.

These two news sources can be helpful to brethren in parts of the world where other English-language news sources are not readily available. The overall slant, of course, remains American and liberal, especially in *Time*.

Unfamiliar to many Americans but respected around the world is Britain's *Economist*, probably the most

comprehensive newsweekly published anywhere, usually containing in every issue important news items that escape American eyes.

Business Week is another fine publication with a good "International Outlook" section on world affairs and excellent occasional in-depth reports. However, as a business magazine, it ranks below the fortnightly *Fortune*.

It is also important to be aware of several excellent "thinking-piece" periodicals that are available, especially in North America.

One such supplemental news source worth mentioning is *Commentary*, a monthly published by the American Jewish Committee. *Commentary* is one of the most influential journals in America today.

Regarding other supplemental news sources, *Harper's* periodically has articles of considerable social import. And the weekly *National Review*, while essentially political in tone, often has articles of broad social significance.

A person may not wish to subscribe to any of the magazines mentioned above. But I would recommend that brethren scan the selection of newspapers and periodicals available at their local libraries.

One might come across other very informative English-language newsmagazines, such as *Maclean's* from Canada, *The Bulletin* from Australia and *Asiaweek* from Hong Kong (which covers the whole gamut of Asian affairs).

An excellent source covering events in Europe, especially the Common Market countries, is *Europe*. It is published every other month by the European Economic Community Commission's office in Washington, D.C. Similar magazines are available in all member countries of the Common Market.

Also take a look at *World Press Review*, a supplemental American news source that reprints news articles and editorials from the international press, representing a wide spectrum of viewpoints.

Articles of interest — for Spokesman Club research, for example — can usually be photocopied. Why not make a trip to the library a monthly or semimonthly habit?

Remember that time is precious — we are counseled to "redeem" it (Eph. 5:16). Don't waste time on the scandal

tabloids sold in grocery stores, nor on most of the many popular "personality" magazines (*People* is probably the best of the generally poor lot).

Avoid contrary explanations

One last area needs to be addressed, specifically because it affects a few brethren in God's Church: This is the fascination with certain theories that purport to explain world events from the point of view of a grand "conspiracy."

There are variants of the conspiracy theory of history, but they nearly all revolve around an elite cabal of bankers, financiers and wealthy capitalists who are said to be manipulating events internationally with the goal of subjugating the United States and Western nations to the control of a totalitarian, one-world government. The conspirators, it is claimed, not only manipulate Western-world leaders like puppets, but secretly control the governments of the Soviet Union and mainland China.

For example, last January an article in an issue of *Spotlight*, a popular conspiracy-oriented tabloid, asserted that the fate of the American hostages in Iran was all up to David Rockefeller, chairman of the board of Chase Manhattan Bank. The Rockefeller family is particularly vilified in conspiracy theory literature, which is, in general, very negative, accusatory and often anti-Semitic.

In conspiracy publications, Mr. Rockefeller is branded as a "sociopath" and a "mattoid" — the latter word meaning "a borderline psychopath." The sources of such character assassinations inevitably hide behind anonymity.

There is undeniable evidence of *similarity of thinking* (internationalist, moderately left-of-center) on the part of the majority of members of certain organizations blamed for being part of the conspiracy, such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission.

There is no doubt, furthermore, that the CFR and TLC exercise enormous influence, out of proportion to membership, upon the economic and political policies adopted in the United States, and therefore bear part of the responsibility for recent failures in these arenas.

Yet the fact that such organiza-

tions exist and that the viewpoints of most of their members are similar does not of itself prove deliberate, calculated conspiratorial intent.

Furthermore, knowing the fruits of the flesh — “strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit” (Gal. 5:20) — it is illogical to believe that the alleged conspirators could pursue such a unified, single-minded course of action for any length of time.

Have sound-minded approach

Mr. Armstrong has pointed out the true cause-and-effect relationships responsible for the evils of this world. The *get* way of life that all mankind, cut off from God, living under the influence of Satan, has chosen is

at the root of all man's suffering.

America and Britain are going down not because of the willful machination of unseen manipulators but for a compendium of national sins spelled out in Isaiah 1:4-6:

“Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward... the whole head [government] is sick, and the whole heart [national morale and morality] faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head [meaning the entire society and all its components] there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.”

For 47 years, the pages of *The Plain Truth* have pinpointed mankind's problems as being a direct result of sin and lack of the knowledge of God and His laws (Hos. 4:1). The English-speaking world is suffering the national curses of disobedience (Lev. 26, Deut. 28).

Let's keep a sound-minded approach (II Tim. 1:7). Above all, let's adhere to the teachings of God's Church. And let's never think that we are privy to information important to salvation beyond what God has revealed to the Church through His apostle.

In this way, and by using the steps outlined in this article, we'll know better what to look for — and how to look — as prophecy unfolds before our eyes. □

Television As a News Source

Television can be a very informative supplement to your “news diet,” providing that the newscasts are selected properly.

Unfortunately, however, many people waste hours each day looking at what they *think* is news, and rarely watch those newscasts and special programs that could really help.

This is especially true in the United States, because of the dominance of commercial television. It's a pity that Americans cannot view Britain's high-quality BBC news or similar first-class, noncommercial newscasts in other parts of the world.

In the United States, the most worthwhile regularly scheduled commercial newscasts on world and national affairs are the nightly 30-minute (24 minutes of news plus commercials) ABC, CBS and NBC network programs. Mr. Armstrong regularly watches the network news. Also seen in many areas is the so-called fourth network news program known as *International Network News*, or INN.

There are, in addition, supplemental television programs of val-

ue, such as Public Television's *MacNeil/Lehrer Report* (which concentrates on a single news topic each evening) as well as specially scheduled programs. In these cases, let the *TV Guide* be your guide.

Be cautious, however, of the local newscasts in your area. They can be time wasters. All too often a local newscast is only entertainment disguised as news!

Local newscasts, such as the 5 to 6 o'clock or 6 to 7 o'clock “news hours” are big business in America, generating from a third to a half of a local television station's income.

The ratings wars between the channels during these time slots are fierce. To stay at the top of the market, a station will do anything to make its local “news” juicier: scandals, exposés — anything to hook the unwary viewer.

Worst of all, the on-screen anchorpersons (“news readers” to our British readers) are hired more for their good looks than for their journalistic ability! And such anchorpersons have become modern-day news carpetbaggers, bouncing from city to city in

search of better jobs at fatter salaries. As local newscasters they often know little even about the cities in which they find themselves at the moment and are supposedly serving.

The local news game is now so ludicrous that TV news executives, frantic in their search for new talent, resort to high-powered consulting agencies (called “news doctors” in the trade) who maintain thousands of videotapes of prospective “news stars.”

Are your ratings slumping? Is your present “news star” getting a little gray at the temples? Has he (or she) lost his (or her) sex appeal? Go to the “news doctor” and find a new “pretty face”!

Knowing that this is the way TV news functions, concentrate on those newscasts that present world and national affairs and take local television “news” with a huge dose of salt.

Remember also that network news executives and reporters have their biases. Television can inform, but it can also distort the news in a powerful manner. —
By Gene H. Hogberg □

Stay Out of the Gray Areas!

By John Halford

When the Mekong River rounds the bend at Chiang Khong in northern Thailand, it still has many hundreds of miles to go before it reaches the sea. But it is already nearly half a mile wide.

On a Sabbath morning late last year, I stood on the Mekong's banks with 12 Ambassador College students who had come to Thailand to teach Indochinese refugees.

At our feet, the river's brown-gray waters swirled by, driven by fierce currents from floodwaters from the mountains of China.

On the opposite bank we could see a little town sleeping peacefully in the hot morning sun.

A few fishing boats lay quietly at anchor. Wooden houses rose from the water's edge and followed the twist-

ing streets to the banana plantations on the hills beyond. The sun glinted on the gold spire of the Buddhist temple. We heard the sound of a dog barking, of geese cackling as they glided across the river.

Through my telephoto lens I could clearly see women washing clothes at the water's edge and a lone fisherman mending his nets. Here was Southeast Asia at its best, tranquil and inviting. We might have been tempted to borrow one of the little boats tied up on our side of the river and row leisurely across the Mekong to see this charming village at close quarters.

But if we had done so, *we might never have come back!*

You see, the Mekong River at Chiang Khong marks the border between Thailand and communist Laos. And the peaceful village was part of an alien land ruled by belligerent, ruthless men, agents of a repressive and godless regime.

A young Buddhist monk came down from the Thai temple behind us. "Don't be deceived," he said. "It looks peaceful, but it is no longer safe to go over there. They shoot at our fishermen. So we have closed the border. Most of us don't even go in the river now."

At this point a long, narrow fishing boat came around the bend, hugging the bank. A Thai flag was tied to its short mast.

The monk explained: "He has to be careful. He must stay on our side of the river. But the current is strong. If it should carry him over to their side, the communists might shoot at him."

"You mean there are soldiers over there right now?" I asked. I remembered the stories we had heard of refugees being shot as they tried to swim across the Mekong to escape.

"Yes, yes, of course, soldiers."

Suddenly the quiet village didn't seem so peaceful.

"He is quite safe if he stays on our side," the monk continued, pointing to the fisherman. "But if he should get caught in the current, he might be shot. Please be careful on the river," he cautioned.

"OK," I told the students. "Rule No. 1 on this expedition is: Stay off the river. Let's not take any risks. Don't swim in it, sail in it or even dip your feet in it."

The students replied with enthusiasm, "Yes, sir!"

Actually, it was one rule I didn't need to make. No one in his right mind would voluntarily go on the Mekong.

Maybe it was safe on our side. But where did our side end and theirs begin? You were still in Thailand if you stayed close to the shore. But what if the current carried you out into the "gray area" in the middle? Would a trigger-happy guard, itching to take a shot at you, even if (or perhaps, especially if) you were flying a Thai flag, agree with you on the line of demarcation?

Later that afternoon, we sat around the table in an informal Bible study and discussed the wider implications of the lesson we had learned. Simply stated, it is this: Stay out of the gray areas.

The lure of Satan's world

Satan is a deceiver. He makes his way look good. Like the little Lao town across the Mekong, Satan often puts up a good front. Even though this world is doomed, it can seem like a pleasant place at times.

Never before have people had so much to choose from — varieties of food, fashions, entertainment, appliances, furnishings and even lifestyles. Most of us do not yet have to beseech God for our daily bread.

Some of this variety is good. God is the Author of variety. His creation abounds with different sizes, shapes, colors and sounds. But we must be careful, for not all variety and opportunity are from God.

Paul warned the prosperous Corinthian church that it was sometimes difficult to recognize Satan's true colors, for he was transformed into an "angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). In the same way, Satan's world may also appear wonderful and entertaining. Sometimes we can fail

to clearly see the real Satan and the insane, ferocious resentment, hatred and anger he feels for every potential Member of God's Family, whether in the Church or not yet called.

Those in Nazi Germany felt it. And there have been no holds barred in Cambodia since 1975. Soon, the whole world will feel Satan's wrath as he brings his civilization crashing down about our ears.

The devil plans to turn this world into one vast refugee camp, betraying every last human being who served his systems and trusted his governments. His only motive for dealing with man is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

"Clean escaped"

Satan, said the apostle John, has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Only a very few have ever "clean escaped from them who live in error" wrote Peter (II Pet. 2:18). These few include those God has called to be a part of His Church today, to work behind His 20th-century apostle in preparing for that better, honest, undecieving environment we call the world tomorrow.

"Clean escaped" — what a graphic phrase Peter used! Have you ever thought of yourself as a former prisoner of war, "clean escaped" from Satan's system, now making your way through hostile enemy territory to the Kingdom of God?

That's how Satan regards you. He has a special hatred for those who dare to escape his system.

Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong has continually warned that as Satan's last years run out, he is increasing his efforts to subvert and undermine God's people.

This perverted but incredibly powerful and intelligent superbeing will do his best to get you back into his clutches along with the rest of the human race. Christ warned that if it were possible, Satan would deceive even the very elect (Matt. 24:24).

Paul said we need not be ignorant of Satan's devices (II Cor. 2:11). His tactics are those of a lion on the prowl (I Pet. 5:8), stealthily watching and waiting to pounce on a zebra who wanders too far from the herd.

Christ's apostles at both ends of the Christian era have called out to God's people to be sober and vigilant

— aware of the danger (I Pet. 5:8, Jas. 4:7, Eph. 4:27). These apostles — special targets of Satan's wrath — knew and know the danger as no other men can (Luke 22:31). And so they warn us to stay out of Satan's way!

Hold to the trunk of the tree

I remember a ministerial conference I attended several years ago.

Mr. Armstrong called and said he would be late that morning, and asked that the conference start without him. The meeting was temporarily conducted by one of the senior ministers. The ministers were discussing a question on some aspect of Christian living, but somehow got bogged down in a quagmire of "what if" questions.

After about an hour Mr. Armstrong arrived and, of course, the temporary chairman immediately handed control over to him. Mr. Armstrong settled himself behind the desk and then asked, "Now, what are you fellows discussing?"

The ex-chairman explained and then said, honestly: "But we were not getting anywhere. It's one of those gray areas."

"Well," said Mr. Armstrong, "what are we doing in the gray areas? Stick to the trunk of the tree. Then we can see clearly."

We did, and soon the problem was resolved.

It was a good lesson. Too often we wander into those gray areas. Most of us don't leap suddenly and deliberately into Satan's darkness. We edge away from the light. Not too far at first. We think we are safe, because we can still see the light.

But how close can you get to Satan's world, with its false glitter and deceitful allure, and still be safe?

How close can you get to lying, cheating, stealing, lusting and fornicating, for instance? How much prayer can you miss without suffering a lethal underdose?

How long can you go without opening a Bible, keeping second tithe, participating in a church activity, correcting a child, reading co-worker letters or praying for the sick?

How much dissident literature can

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Your Child's First Year in School - Are YOU Prepared?

*Your child is ready for school. But are you?
How well have you prepared your youngster?*

By Selmer L. Hegvold

An enormous challenge faces you and your child as school begins! Many parents are not prepared. You should be.

Up until this time, while your child has been at home with you, "training him or her up" in the way he or she should go (Prov. 22:6) has been relatively simple. Your influence has been profound.

But now a schoolteacher will begin shaping your child's mind five days a week. The world you came out of will soon arouse conflict in your child's life.

Will school negate your parental influence? Can you preserve your youngster's training? Will the teacher appreciate your involvement? A delicate confrontation faces you.

Have you laid the groundwork for an effective relationship between you, the teacher and your child? If not, that relationship could become a nightmare for all concerned! And it could prevent your child from developing a right approach to education.

School should be a rewarding, inspiring, worthwhile adventure for your young family. But you must take the initiative — right steps taken now will promote future happiness and fulfillment for your child.

A real challenge

Why should school pose threats to families in God's Church? The

threats are unintentional. Church members stand alone in a society steeped in the false education of evolution, paganism and the way of *get*. Church members are actually escapees from a world whose practices God condemns.

Public schools use holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Easter as teaching tools to develop reading, writing, arithmetic, music, drama and other skills in young students.

These special, seasonal days capture the children's imagination. School staff members and teachers are unaware that your child has been taught that keeping them is wrong. Your duty is to ease the shock.

In addition, school personnel are not familiar with God's Holy Days and His requirements, such as taking several days off, away from classes, for the spring and fall festivals.

How well have you prepared to cope with this challenge?

Will you create a scene like one ill-prepared couple did? They bluntly informed the teacher that their child would not be allowed to remain in any classroom in which pagan holiday activities took place! After several uncomfortable minutes of talk, the incredulous teacher exploded:

"Sixty-two unruly, undisciplined students in this classroom, out for a frolic and not an education, and you expect me to alter my teaching methods for your one child? Impossible!"

The burden was too heavy for this

harassed teacher. The parents offered no compensating alternative. Don't make that mistake.

Some have erred. They and their children are still paying the price. Some have assumed a call to convert relatives, friends and school officials and teachers. They were mistaken.

Christ's revelation is clear, and should be remembered: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Only God the Father in heaven can call people and open their minds to His truth. Believe Him, and spare yourself embarrassment and grief.

You cannot convince school officials that worldly holidays are wrong. Don't try. There is a way, however, to deal with the situation.

Prepare your child

Jesus Christ prepares the way before His servants. He gives the faithful grace and favor. "I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind" (John 9:39). While instructors cannot see God, they will grant you favor for your purposes.

Prepare as soon as possible. Pray. The stakes are higher than you realize. Your child's attitude toward the process of learning in school will be heavily affected by the introduction — proper or improper — he or she receives during the first few weeks of school.

Help your child look forward to the opportunity to learn new skills.

Show him, well in advance, what a joyous experience school and its challenges should be. Fill his young heart with a desire to learn. Impress upon him that to learn he must be constantly attentive, obedient and zealous in doing his schoolwork.

Most of the threat from this world's schools to your child is erased if you have done *your* homework well.

Work with the teacher

How well do you represent Jesus Christ before others? Are you picky? Suspicious? Always on the defensive? Analyze yourself.

Before meeting your child's teacher, determine that you will be friendly and pleasant. Most teachers will be striving to make friends with you and your child. Realize how challenging a teacher's work really is. Be sympathetic. The instructor will appreciate your understanding. Your friendship will be treasured.

Except in the most extreme cases, teachers will willingly cooperate to resolve the difficulties that arise from your particular religious observances. The teacher will need your help, so be prepared to give it.

Halloween is the first major crisis of the school year. But after the first few weeks of school, the teacher and child should have developed rapport. Allow for this relationship to develop before broaching the differences that must be resolved. Then make your appointment.

Be frank in explaining your beliefs. Don't fall back on the Church. They're *your* beliefs! You have proved and accepted what God has revealed in the Bible. God's Word is your strength.

Your sincerity and cooperative attitude will prove unchallengeable. Once you have prayerfully explained your position, the next question with which all will concern themselves is *how* parents and teachers can cooperate amicably and successfully.

Propose workable alternatives to the classroom assignments that prove objectionable or contrary to the religious standards you believe in. As long as these alternatives are workable, most teachers will accept and cooperate with them.

Use your imagination. Put yourself in the teacher's place. Propose nothing

that would distract your child's classmates — the suggestions are for *your* child.

Alternatives to Halloween, with its ghosts, goblins, black cats and witches? The Halloween season provides children with abundant opportunities to use their imaginations for projects in artwork, decorations, music and drama. How can you provide equally challenging substitutes that enable the teacher to evaluate your youngster in those skills? That is the challenge for your imagination!

Is it wrong to draw, paint or decorate with real things in nature? What's wrong with working up a colorful fall arrangement of leaves, trees and ducks and geese swimming or flying, for example?

God is clearly seen, said the apostle Paul, in the things He has created (Rom. 1:19-20). Without disrupting

arming to the school staff, but will draw your family together in working out school projects.

The same approach works for every other seasonal activity in the school schedule. Teachers will usually end up admiring you and your family for your energetic endeavors. Your child will have no reason for getting bad grades, nor will he or she feel ostracized because of family religious beliefs! The contrary, in fact, should prove true.

What about the Holy Days?

There are positive ways to encourage school acceptance of the number of days your child will be absent to enjoy God's Holy Days.

First and most important is that you should teach your child the plan of God! It is never too early to explain how God wants him in His divine Family.



the rest of the class, you can inspire and help your child to bring the true God and His created marvels into the classroom.

Your enthusiastic and obviously deeply concerned help, advice and suggestions will not only prove dis-

Point out the meaning of each Holy Day and festival and help him develop enthusiasm. Ask him to explain back to you, for it is certain the teacher will ask him, if only out of curiosity. Your child should be able
(Continued on page 25)

Coming-Your Birth Into God's Family!

*God had a great purpose for creating you.
He is reproducing Himself! What will life
be like when you are born into God's Family?*

By George Kackos

The birth of a human baby is an exciting event.

After long months of anticipation, we human parents experience a special exhilaration as our new son or daughter — sometimes more than one! — comes into the world.

We enjoy seeing the new life that has come from us, and we look forward to watching our child grow and mature in the years to come. We want him or her to enjoy life and to have every possible opportunity for success.

However, humanity almost totally overlooks an even greater birth process. That birth process was created by God, and will result in literal Children being born into His Family! Unbelievable? The world thinks so.

Much of mankind believes that after death, the souls of human beings go flitting off into the universe somewhere to sit at Jesus' feet for eternity, or perhaps even to enter into another life as an animal or another person. Other people wonder if a Creator exists at all and, if He does, so



what? Others totally deny the existence of a God and live materialistic lives.

But the truth is plain. God plans to bring more Members into His Family, which today consists of God the Father and Jesus Christ. God states

His purpose for mankind in Genesis 1:26:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Compare this statement with the pattern established in verses 20 through 25. A startling truth emerges — just as members of the plant and animal kingdoms procreate after their own kinds, the God Family is reproducing itself after its own kind, through man!

Fulfilling this awesome purpose requires more than the creation of a human being. Man is composed from the dust (elements) of the ground (Gen. 2:7). Becoming a Member of the God Family requires a resurrection to life as a spirit, like God (John 4:24). The Bible describes this resurrection to spirit life as a birth process.

Nicodemus, a leader among the Jews during Christ's earthly ministry, found this difficult to understand (John 3:1-5). Likewise, many today cannot comprehend it. Yet Christ said, "Marvel not that I said unto

thee, Ye must be born again" (verse 7).

Born as spirit beings

God desires that we be given eternal life through Jesus Christ (verse 16). Christ is the "firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29); our birth will follow.

We are to inherit the characteristics of the God Family, just as a baby inherits the characteristics of his parents through genetic transfer. God's Holy Spirit impregnates the spirit in man with the "spiritual genes" (God's character — Gal. 5:22-23) of our heavenly Father!

This process begins when we are called by God (John 6:44) and are led to repentance and baptism. When God's true ministers lay hands upon us, God impregnates us with the seed of His Holy Spirit.

From then on, we are fed the spiritual food we need by God's true Church, which holds the keys to salvation. Through a lifetime of growing in the character of God, we are made ready for literal spiritual birth into His Family.

In order to become Gods, a transformation has to take place. This is why Jesus had to be resurrected from the grave. For our birth, we must be resurrected at Jesus' Second Coming (I Cor. 15:51-53). At that point we become Gods — Members of the God Family, serving under God the Father and Jesus Christ (I John 3:1-2)!

Mankind now limited

It is difficult for man to comprehend his potential — we need to put ourselves into perspective. Man is far superior to animals. We are not limited by instinct, which guides animals. We can think, reason, plan and build in ways animals cannot. Clearly, mankind exists on a much higher level.

But for now man is, of necessity, limited in comparison to Members of the God Family.

There are several ways the flesh limits us. Even a productive person finds that life is filled with sorrows (Eccl. 2:22-23). These sorrows ought to motivate us to want our inheritance in the God Family.

Unfortunately, many do not have the vision to see beyond their sorrows to the glories of God's Kingdom. But this hope of a better life can help us endure the chemical existence we have as humans.

Therefore, we need a picture of what it will be like when we enter the God Family. Envision yourself functioning in the expanse of eternity, ruling with other Gods in the Kingdom of God (Rev. 20:4). You'll be helping fulfill God's will and carrying out duties your mind is not yet able to contain (I Cor. 2:9).

What will life be like when our human limitations are removed? How will we function in God's government? What incredible potentials lie before us? Let's consider some of our present limitations, and what it will be like when those restrictions are removed.

Mobility

In the 20th century man has become more mobile. No longer are the oceans such difficult barriers to cross. A few men have even had the opportunity to explore space.

Yet, most people must live their lives with only a limited amount of travel. Even those who do travel often find it tiresome and are relieved to return home.

As Members of the God Family, we will find travel an easy, enjoyable experience. How fast can a spirit travel? Instantaneously, at the speed of thought? Perhaps.

After Christ rose from the grave, He told Mary not to touch Him, since He had not yet ascended to His Father (John 20:17). But later the same day, Christ allowed His disciples to touch Him (Luke 24:39). We don't know how far the throne of God is from this earth. Yet Christ made the trip and returned on the same day!

We will also have the amazing ability to manifest ourselves even through solid objects (Luke 24:36, John 20:19, 26).

With this capacity to travel, we will not be limited to a small geographical area. We will eventually be able to travel to the far reaches of the universe, since we are to inherit all things (Rev. 21:7). And we will be

able to quickly return to our place of departure.

Thus the Family of God need not be separated by distance. We will be able to enjoy each other's company and the vastness of the universe at will.

Time

Time imposes a lot of limitations on us. One human life span is very limited compared to eternity (Ps. 90:10). How often do you find yourself frustrated by a lack of time? There are so many things to do, but not enough hours in the day.

Eternal life will end this problem. Time will be unlimited! God inhabits eternity and so will we (Isa. 57:15). Not only will there be plenty of time, but plenty of worthwhile and exciting things to do with our time.

There will be rulership over cities during the first 1,000 years of Christ's rule (Luke 19:17). After that we will deal with those who were uncalled in this age, who will be given renewed physical life (Rev. 20:5).

Afterward the new heavens and new earth will be established, giving us even greater responsibilities in the Family of God (Rev. 21-22). These jobs will be a source of great pleasure, since they will be stimulating and helpful to others.

Eternity will be full of enjoyable activities. Surely God enjoys a host of fine things: the clothes He wears, the singing He enjoys and the marriage supper to be held for the resurrected saints (Rev. 1:13, 14:1-3, 19:7-9).

The spiritual world can be understood by the things of this life (Rom. 1:20). Thus we can conclude that there are spiritual parallels for many of this life's activities.

Energy

The human body suffers from a lack of energy even when healthy. We are reminded of our limitations after a period of exertion. All of us need periods of rest, and many cannot function well even when rested because of sickness.

How different spirit life will be! We will literally radiate energy as Jesus Christ does:

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I

saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

"And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (Rev. 1:12-16).

No longer will we complain of being too tired. How comforting this must be to those who are elderly or sick. How pleasurable it will be for a quadriplegic to inherit a spirit body!

Mental capacity

Scientists tell us that humans never use more than 10 percent of their mental ability. This is certainly restrictive in a world of so much knowledge.

But more damaging is the lack of godly character we sometimes exhibit even if truly called and converted. Many of us don't properly control and apply the abilities we do have. Intelligence is one thing, but the ability to act on something we understand is another.

Spirit life will wipe away these problems. We will have more than just a portion of God's mind — we will have all of it!

God's incredible memory enables Him to name each of the billions of stars (Ps. 147:4) and number every hair on our heads (Matt. 10:30). Imagine having that kind of mental capacity. But most importantly, we will exhibit the totality of God's character. Imagine yourself filled with wisdom, understanding, counsel, proper knowledge, love and judgment as was Jesus Christ (Isa. 11:1-4).

Though

we'll share godly attributes, we will maintain our individuality. But the curse of comparing ourselves with others to exalt the self will be removed. We'll learn to appreciate our individuality and that of others as well. To prepare, we should now hold others in higher esteem than ourselves (Phil. 2:3).

How wonderful life will be when we have the mind of God — no more headaches, disastrous decisions or bad attitudes. We will have a well-functioning mind that will serve us and others for eternity.

Environment

Mankind's sins have ruined our surroundings. Polluted waters, poison-laden air, overcrowded and decaying cities, slums, loss of natural habitats, litter everywhere — you name it.

People themselves contribute heavily to life's unpleasantness. They often flaunt sin before others (Isa. 3:9). We are affected — we become victims of rebellious people, dishonest salesmen, strife on the job and the lures of sin as portrayed in the media.

Because of others, life can become a source of misery. Oppression from sinful men can be so bad that we cry out for deliverance as David did:

"Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold" (Ps. 59:1-4).

We need not be overburdened by this world's evils

— God promises us deliverance from them. Look ahead to the restitution of God's government at the return of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:20-21). Man's very nature will be changed in the Millennium, and our environment will be restored to purity and beauty.

Under these conditions, today's miseries will disappear. The God Family will be free from the anguish caused by sin:

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men [then made literal God Beings], and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).

God awaits our birth

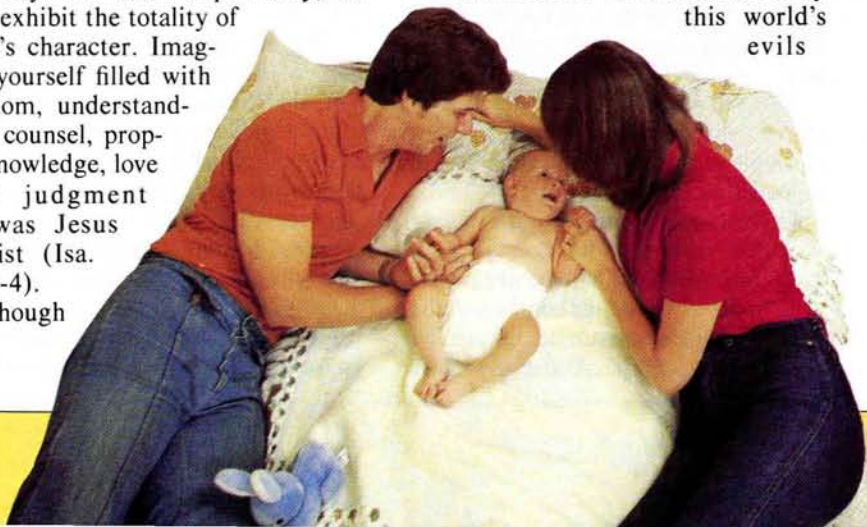
We have seen but a glimpse of our future lives as Members of the God Family. Just as a baby experiences growth, we will go through a spiritual development process and grow up so we can enjoy fuller lives in the Family of God (Mal. 4:1-2).

Life will be filled to the brim with happiness: "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

Like an anxiously expectant young father, God is anticipating our birth into His Family. He reveals Himself as a God of love who wants to share His joy with us (Matt. 25:21). He has not created us to be limited to this flesh. All people will have the opportunity to be saved and share His glory together (II Pet. 3:9).

That includes you. God wants you in His glorious, majestic Family for eternity.

What about right now? Are you preparing for your birth? Can God see in your life the changes required (Rev. 2:26, 3:21)? Are you eating the spiritual food the Church is giving you? If so, you are awaiting — and are assured of — the greatest birth ever, into the Family of God! □



Can You Explain It?

Seventh-day Adventists know what certain Bible prophecies say, yet they don't believe them!

By Herman L. Hoeh

Why do Seventh-day Adventists believe the 1,000-year reign of Christ will be *in heaven*? And that the earth will be desolate and uninhabited by humans?

That Satan and his demons will be the sole inhabitants of the earth during the 1,000 years? And that Jesus' feet will not stand on the Mount of Olives until *after* the 1,000 years?

Whereas the Bible plainly says the saints shall reign *on the earth* (Rev. 5:10) and that "men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (Zech. 14:11).

That Satan and his demons are to be shut away from humans — bound as prisoners — so that Satan "should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:3).

And that when Jesus Christ returns to set up the Kingdom of God for 1,000 years, "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives . . . And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem . . . And the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:4, 8-9).

For decades we took for granted that Seventh-day Adventists somehow did not know what the Bible prophecies say. That if we only made

the Bible plainer and clearer they would be brought face-to-face with the meaning of Bible prophecies and the good news — Gospel — of the coming Kingdom of God over all the earth for 1,000 years.

I say "took for granted" because that is what we did in our articles and in our personal correspondence. We assumed that knowledgeable Seventh-day Adventists did not know what the Bible says about the Second Coming of Christ to establish the Kingdom of God. We were wrong. Seventh-day Adventists, as a denomination, know what the Bible prophecies say about the establishment of the Kingdom of God. They simply *do not believe them!* Why?

It should not come as a surprise that Seventh-day Adventists, as a group, know what the Bible says. They do observe the Sabbath. And more than 120 years ago they had fellowship with the people of God, whom we know later in history as the Church of God (Seventh Day). It was with the Oregon Conference of these Church of God people in the late 1920s and early 1930s that Herbert W. and Loma D. Armstrong had fellowship, and out of which the Worldwide Church of God has grown.

Unlike Seventh-day Adventists, the Worldwide Church of God knows and *believes* the prophecies of the Bible — and *teaches them* (Rev. 3:8, 10). Why, then, do knowledgeable Seventh-day Adventists not

believe what they know the Scriptures say?

One very dear friend and an elder in the Seventh-day Adventist Church explained it this way to me more than 15 years ago, "If what you teach comes to pass, I will believe it!" Why do Seventh-day Adventists not believe it now?

To find the answer to this question, we must turn time back 150 years.

The great Adventist movement

The year was 1831. Excitement was in the air, both in Britain and the United States. It was generated by expectations of the Second Coming of Christ and an ensuing 1,000 years of peace.

This excitement was related, for the most part, to the preaching of ministers who had come to believe the proclamation then being made, beginning 1831, by a prosperous New York farmer, William Miller. That year, it should be observed, was 18 centuries, exactly, after the founding of the New Testament Church of God in A.D. 31.

William Miller thought the Kingdom of God would come and the 1,000 years of peace — the Millennium — would begin not later than 1844. He was wrong about the date (based on a misunderstanding of Daniel 8). But his proclamation about the establishment of the Kingdom of God and a thousand years of peace among nations was true. Tens of

thousands came to believe William Miller's proclamation. The world called them Millerites or Adventists (the word *Advent* was used in English in that day, whereas we today use *Coming* to express the thought of the Second Advent or Second Coming of Christ). But the people who believed William Miller called themselves the "people of God," the "Israel of God" and the "Church of Christ" and the "Church of God." They were a scattered people, not formally organized.

These "people of God" believed in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth for 1,000 years. However dimly perceived, they *knew* what the Bible says about a Millennium of peace on earth among nations. Thus the Advent Movement, as it was called, believed what the Worldwide Church of God today announces, and not what Seventh-day Adventists teach about Satan and his demons residing on earth for 1,000 years while the saints reign in heaven.

But 1844 was a great disappointment for many. Christ did not come. William Miller had been wrong in his understanding of the times. And he admitted it. But there were those who did not want to admit it. It hurt their spiritual pride. Instead of acknowledging that the time for the close of this age and the Second Coming of Jesus had not yet arrived because the Gospel of the Kingdom of God had yet to be announced to the world as a whole — radio and television, air travel and satellite communication had not yet been invented to make that final announcement possible — and instead of giving up the error of 1844 completely, there were individuals whose minds dwelt on the date. They let slip the proclamation — the good news — of the 1,000 years of peace on earth among nations. We shall now meet one of them.

Enter: Ellen Harmon

Among those who heard William Miller's proclamation was a young girl, Ellen Harmon. "At the age of 11," she wrote, "I was converted, and when 12 years old was baptized, and joined the Methodist Church." (All this was before she heard the procla-

mation of the Kingdom of God by William Miller.)

"At the age of 13 I heard Brother Miller deliver his second course of lectures in Portland, Maine. I felt that I was not holy, not ready to see Jesus. And when the invitation was given for church members and sinners to come forward for prayers, I embraced the first opportunity, for I knew that I must have a great work done for me to fit me for heaven," she wrote some years later in *Second Advent Review*, Vol. II, No. 1.

During 1842 Ellen Harmon constantly attended meetings with the people of God. She was now 15 years old "and fully believed the Lord was coming."

Note that she says nothing about the 1,000 years of peace on earth among nations. She speaks only of the coming of the Lord and of being fit for heaven. These ideas she inherited from the Methodists. Ellen Harmon apparently never really understood Miller's proclamation.

Having thought she was converted, Ellen Harmon "went before the Lord in secret prayer" only to find herself struggling, as she put it, "for full salvation," which eluded her. Out of her feelings of spiritual inferiority, she later wrote, "I ceased to pray, and settled down in a melancholy state, and finally in deep despair." She told no one of her state of mind.

She continued, "In this state of mind I remained for three weeks, with not one ray of light to pierce the thick clouds of darkness around me. I then had two dreams which gave me a faint ray of light and hope."

Sometime later, Ellen Harmon prayed and the gloom suddenly dissipated, to be followed by a remarkable experience. "Wave after wave of glory rolled over me until my body grew stiff. Everything was shut out from me but Jesus and glory, and I knew nothing of what was passing around me.

"I remained," she continued, "in this state of body and mind a long time, and when I realized what was around me, everything seemed changed. . . . I was then willing to confess Jesus everywhere."

Ellen Harmon and her father's family were cast out of the Methodist Church. Then came the disappoint-

ment of 1844. In December of that year, when she was 17 years old, a disillusioned Ellen Harmon had a vision. In it she "seemed to be rising higher and higher from the earth" and traveled toward "the Holy City." She believed the vision was of God.

In 1847 she had another in a series of visions. She wrote about it in 1851, four years after the event:

"I saw an angel swiftly flying to me. He quickly carried me from the earth to the Holy City. In the city I saw a temple, which I entered. I passed through a door before I came to the first veil. This veil was raised, and I passed into the Holy Place. Here I saw the altar of incense, the candlestick with seven lamps, and the table on which was the shewbread. After viewing the glory of the Holy, Jesus raised the second veil, and I passed into the Holy of Holies.

"In the Holiest I saw an ark. . . . In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded. . . ."

These visions caused great controversy among God's people. The visions were tested and questioned by some, taken for granted by others.

The wrong heaven?

The only source of knowledge God's people had of God's throne and of the holy city was the Bible. Those who tested the visions found that the third heaven where God dwells is so vast a place that the holy city is contained in it.

"And I saw," John said, "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:2, Revised, Standard Version). So the holy city now must be in heaven. In heaven is also the throne of God, the Temple, where God dwells (Rev. 11:19, 7:15). But the Temple is not in the holy city!

"And I saw," wrote John, "no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (Rev. 21:22, RSV). Whatever the heaven was in Ellen Harmon's vision, it was not the heaven of the Bible! In her heaven the Temple was in the holy city!

Remember, up to this point the people who listened to and believed William Miller knew that Bible prophecy foretold the establishment

of the Kingdom of God on this earth for 1,000 years.

But now they were divided in opinion. All admitted something had gone wrong in their understanding. A minority in the churches of God held to the view that the date 1844 was simply wrong. They had misunderstood Daniel 8. The prophecy was not a 2,300-year period beginning in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (457 B.C.) and ending in A.D. 1844.

They believed, however, the proclamation of the 1,000 years of peace on earth that William Miller and other ministers had announced. They believed in a judgment to come.

The majority in the churches of God had their minds so set on 1844 that they could not give up the date. They looked for some new explanation. What, they asked themselves, really happened in 1844?

They thought they found the answer in the visions of Ellen Harmon. The visions seemed so spiritual.

Only one problem. Ellen Harmon's visions said nothing about the proclamation of the Kingdom of God being set up on this earth for the 1,000 years. Her visions, in fact, were revealing something altogether different. That salvation for the world closed in October, 1844. That everyone who, up to that point, had lived and died was judged by that date. And since 1844 *all* who are living *are being judged*. There would, therefore, be no need for the Kingdom of God to be established and the nations to be judged during the 1,000 years.

God, the majority began to conclude, must have changed His plan of salvation as revealed through the prophets.

The prophets indeed foretold a time when "in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from

Jerusalem. And he 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" (Mic. 4:1-3).

No matter what this and other scriptures say, the majority in the churches of God in the last century concluded these prophecies were not to be believed. God had changed His plan. Israel had failed to do its part; now God could not do His part as planned. Utter nonsense!

Isaiah the prophet declared, "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old" — the former failures and sins. "Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me . . . because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; *they shall shew forth my praise*" (Isa. 43:18-21).

Israel and Judah haven't been willing yet, but God *will* convert them and they shall show forth God's praise. It is a divine promise! It will happen! This is not a prophecy for the new earth, but for the time when God's government will be restored in the 1,000 years. Will you believe it, as did William Miller and as does God's Church today? Or will you knowingly disbelieve it?

And so it was that the majority who fellowshiped in the churches of God in the middle of the last century focused their minds on the Sabbath and the Second Advent (Second Coming) of Jesus Christ, but got their minds off the announcement of the Kingdom of God and on the visions of Ellen (Harmon) White.

The visions continue

Back to the story of the visions that split "God's people" asunder.

On March 24, 1849, Ellen — now Ellen G. White after her marriage to James White, a minister and publisher for the scattered churches of God — had a vision. In it, she claimed,

Jesus testified to her that He had been mediating for the salvation of the world from A.D. 31 till 1844. "Our work for the world closed in 1844." Then, for the first time, according to the visions of Ellen White, was the door in heaven opened to the Holy of Holies and Jesus entered into the presence of God the Father.

Ellen White put her vision into these words: "This door was not opened, until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the Holy Place of the Sanctuary in 1844. Then, Jesus rose up, and shut the door in the Holy Place, and opened the door in the Most Holy, and passed within the second veil, where he now stands by the ark. . . .

"I saw," she concluded, "that Jesus had shut the door in the Holy Place, and no man can open it; and that he had opened the door in the Most Holy, and no man can shut it: (See Rev. iii: 7, 8)."

In a salvo against those who had questioned the source of her visions, she wrote in the August, 1849, issue of *The Present Truth*: "I saw that the enemies of the present truth have been trying to open the door of the Holy Place, that Jesus has shut; and to close the door of the Most Holy Place, which he opened in 1844."

What she meant was that the minority 130 years ago who understood the Gospel — good news — of the Kingdom of God were attempting to reopen the door of salvation for those who had lived and died in ignorance. Her visions declared their opportunity was past. Their judgment was completed.

There would be no Millennium in which the nations would learn the ways of God and live in peace. There would be no second resurrection, according to her visions, after the 1,000 years, in which all who lived and died in ignorance — the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, Nineveh, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Queen of the south and Israel and Judah — would rise in the judgment to be judged and to be offered spiritual salvation for the first time.

Jesus said these people would rise in the judgment (read it for yourself in Matthew 10:15, 11:22, 24, 12:41-

42, Mark 6:11, Luke 10:14, 11:31-32 and Ezekiel 16:53-55). But Ellen White's visions quoted a Jesus who claimed to have changed the plan of God and nullified the prophecies of the Bible.

Ellen White, in her August, 1849, salvo against those who questioned her visions, also meant that the minority 130 years ago in the churches of God were teaching that this is not the only day of salvation for all those now living.

She claimed that the Jesus of her visions had entered the Holy of Holies in 1844 and was *now judging all* who remained on earth. The Jesus who spoke to her claimed this is the only day of salvation. That the nations living at the Second Coming of Jesus will all be destroyed. No mortal human beings will be left alive, she was told in vision. God has changed His plan. The prophets foretold what could have happened, not what will happen.

Furthermore, Ellen White claimed that Revelation 3:7-8 was a reference to what was fulfilled, according to her vision, in 1844. This passage is found in the prophetic letter to the "church in Philadelphia." Those who believed her visions concluded that the end of the Philadelphia church occurred in 1844 and that since that day Laodicea is extant.

The visions Ellen White received were the ultimate cause of the split that developed during the 1850s and culminated in 1860. In that year those who accepted her visions organized themselves under the name Seventh-day Adventists.

The remainder continued to call themselves by the name "Church of God." They had a name that declared they were spiritually alive; they were *God's Church*. But they were spiritually dead (Rev. 3:1). Only a few individuals (verse 4) among them were righteous. The works of that church were not perfect before God (verse 2).

These verses clearly indicate that the state of the Church of God in the last century was prophetically characterized by the message to the church in Sardis. Verses 1, 3 and 4 are all part of the message to Sardis. Philadelphia (verses 7 through 13)

was yet to come. And so, too, Laodicea (verses 14-22).

Thus the Jesus who communed with Ellen White in her visions misapplied the message to the church at Philadelphia to the year 1844. In addition, that Jesus who appeared to her in vision misapplied the message to the church of Laodicea to the Seventh-day Adventists. Her visions claimed that the Seventh-day Adventists are a Laodicean Church of God. They could not be such, because they rejected the name "Church of God" in 1860 and, further, because the Laodicean period of the Church of God had not then arrived.

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good news. Its author
... was another Jesus!
A false one!

Who, then, was the Jesus who appeared to Ellen (Harmon) White? Who were the angels that appeared to her? What spirit manifested itself in her visions? How did the Church of God know to reject her visions in the last century?

"Another Jesus" — "another spirit"

The apostle Paul dealt with a problem at the Greek church in Corinth that paralleled the crisis that beset the churches of God in the last century.

"I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband. But I am afraid that as the

serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if some one comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough" (II Cor. 11:2-4, RSV).

Both the Greeks and the brethren in the last century accepted readily a different gospel! And therefore a different spirit and a different Jesus!

"And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (verses 14-15).

And in Galatians 1:6-8, RSV, we read: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel — not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, *or an angel from heaven*, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed."

Paul's Gospel announced the Kingdom of God (Acts 28:31). The Gospel of Jesus announced the good news of world peace (Acts 10:36), declared Peter. Mark said Jesus proclaimed "the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:15). Over the centuries this same message was announced in limited areas of the world. William Miller announced it.

The Jesus who appeared in vision to Ellen White proclaimed as good news an empty, desolate world for 1,000 years, with Satan and his demons brooding over the utter emptiness. That is not good news. That is a perversion of the Gospel. Its author is one who transforms himself into an angel of light! He was another Jesus! A false one!

The Worldwide Church of God proclaims the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God to rule this world in peace for 1,000 years! It rejects the false testimony of another Jesus who masqueraded as Jesus in the middle of the last century to try to deceive the very elect! □

MINI STUDY

'Armageddon' - What It Really Is

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

ARMAGEDDON

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and *read in your Bible* the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Almost everyone has heard of "Armageddon." World leaders and scientists have used this biblical term when speaking of the threat of nuclear warfare and the annihilation of mankind. Yet few know what Armageddon really is.

Let's begin to understand how this term fits into Bible prophecy — especially with regard to the dramatic return of Jesus Christ.

1. In what are the future punishments of God upon rebellious, sinful mankind "filled up"? Rev. 15:1.

The seventh or last trumpet (Rev. 11:15) not only heralds the return of Christ to earth, it also announces a series of punishments from God upon a rebellious world — the terrifying "seven last plagues." (The seven last plagues, among other events prophesied yet to occur, will be covered in more detail in future ministudies.)

2. How are these plagues symbolically pictured? Rev. 15:7. Upon what will these vials be poured out? Rev. 16:1. Will they cause great plagues and suffering upon unrepentant humans? Verses 2-11.

Despite this severe but righteous punishment from God (verses 5-7), the nations will adamantly refuse to repent of their sins.

3. What will occur when the sixth symbolic vial of God's wrath is poured out? Verse 12.

The great river Euphrates, which flows for some 2,200 miles from Turkey to the Persian Gulf, will be dried up. This supernatural intervention in the ecosystem of the Mideast, performed by God's angel, is only a prelude — a setting of the stage for momentous events yet to come.

4. Meanwhile, will earth's nations be joyful that Christ has returned, or will they be angry and actually attempt to fight Him? Rev. 11:15, 18, 17:12-14. (Recall that the "Lamb" refers to Jesus Christ — John 1:36.)

5. Who will have incited the nations to fight against their Creator God? Read Revelation 16:13-14, noticing what else is to occur after the sixth vial is poured out.

The word *devils* in the King James Version ought to be rendered *demons*. There is one fallen archangel (Isa. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:12-17) called Satan the "devil," but there are many fallen angels (II Pet. 2:4, Rev. 12:7) of lesser rank called *demons* in the Bible.

Notice that these spirits directly influence the leaders of nations. They will deceive them with miracles, stirring them to a fever pitch of hatred to fight the "invaders from outer space" — Christ and His army of angels, who will by this time already be in Jerusalem with the resurrected saints.

6. Are these demons clearly responsible for gathering the armies of all nations together? Rev. 16:14, 16. (Note that the proper translation of the Greek in verse 16 should read as follows: "And *they* gathered them together." In this particular case the context must determine who is really doing the gathering. Modern translations correctly render "he" as "they.")

Satan the devil and these demons will especially work through human leaders such as the "beast," the political-military leader of the 10 nation end-time revival of the Holy Roman Empire, and also through the false prophet, the great religious leader who will have universal influence and appeal because of his satanic charisma and power. These all will work together and will

MINI STUDY

influence the world's political and military leaders to mobilize their forces in an attempt to fight Jesus Christ.

7. Exactly where do the devil's demons cause the armies of the nations to be gathered together in preparation for the great battle against Christ? Read verse 16 again for the answer.

The nations will marshal their armies at a place called "Armageddon." *Armageddon* actually comes from the Greek rendering of the Hebrew name *har Megiddo*, which simply means "the hill (or mountain) of Megiddo." This is the site of the ancient city of Megiddo, which is about 20 air miles southeast of the modern port of Haifa and approximately 55 miles north of Jerusalem.

Anciently, Megiddo was one of the royal cities of the Canaanites. The city was not fully occupied by Israelites until the time of King Solomon (I Kings 4:7, 12). Solomon fortified the city (I Kings 9:15). Megiddo and the valley of Megiddo (which is part of the larger Plain of Esdraelon) became a strategic site. Megiddo was the most important fortress city that guarded the strategic passes of the Mt. Carmel area. The other cities were Jokneam and Taanach. Megiddo, in the middle, was flanked by the other two fortresses (each about five miles apart).

For Israel, Megiddo and the Plain of Esdraelon became the battleground of the centuries. Time after time the blood of battle was shed there. Over and over again the 13-acre mound of Megiddo was refortified. Today the site is nothing more than an unoccupied, silent mound of historic rubble. Occasional tourists and archaeologists visit its rocky face, but it is not a major military site at this time.

But Megiddo is a symbol.

It is a symbol of war and human conflict. It overlooks the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel and stood at one of the great crossroads of the ancient world. And as the prophecy of Revelation 16 indicates, Megiddo and the Plain of Esdraelon will become the rallying point for the greatest concentration of military might ever assembled.

Political and military leaders from the world to the east of the river Euphrates will be supernaturally induced to direct their armies to march on modern Israel to participate in the fight against Christ. But who will compose this conglomeration of military might?

Which nations lie to the "east" of the great Euphrates valley? To the northeast lies the Soviet Union with its vast armies and great military strength. South and east of Russia, in China,

wait even more millions of infantry in constant military preparedness. Separated from China by the Himalayas lies teeming India with its starving millions and a turbulent political scene.

These "kings of the east," stirred up by the devil's demons, will lead their armies to Megiddo. With the surrounding plain as their rallying point, these armies will then be confronted by yet another great military establishment — the combined might of a united Europe!

Prophecy tells us that "ten kings" (Rev. 17:12-14) will comprise the modern, end-time revival of the ancient Holy Roman Empire, uniting in a political, military and religious alliance of incredible power. A vast and mighty army will be formed and will find its way into the Middle East — perhaps on the pretext of protecting Israel from the threat of communist domination. And oil will undoubtedly be a major factor prompting any such maneuver.

The army of this "beast" power will confront the armies of the "east." But instead of fighting each other in a battle that would end in the extinction of all life on earth, they will, ironically, unite their forces and march toward Jerusalem in an attempt to destroy their common "enemy" — Christ and His army of angels!

8. What is the name of the ensuing great, climactic battle between God and man? Rev. 16:14, last part.

You will notice the battle is not called the "Battle of Armageddon" — it is called the "battle of that great day of God Almighty"! This last great battle will involve the armies of the Lord of armies (hosts) Himself.

9. Exactly where does the Bible say this battle will take place? Joel 3:1-2, 9-14. Compare verse 13 with Revelation 14:18-20 and 19:15. Also notice Zechariah 14:1-4.

"Jehoshaphat" means "judgment of Jehovah" or, more correctly, "judgment of the Eternal." The focal point of the battle will be in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, also called the "valley of decision" in the Bible. This valley is a deep ravine having steep sides. It borders the city of Jerusalem on the east. The Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is situated between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, is now known as the Kidron Valley.

10. How is this great climactic battle pictured? Rev. 19:11-21. How does Zechariah describe the frightening manifestation of the righteous wrath and might of God in fighting against those who will oppose Him? Zech. 14:12.

This is the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" described by John in Revelation. And it could happen sooner than you might think! □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

That is the deadliest mental and spiritual POISON. We must LOVE even our enemies who perpetrate the greatest outrages — though we do not condone their evils.

If you ever think *I'M* wrong about anything, *don't get sour or bitter about it* — let GOD correct and punish me — vengeance is HIS, you know.

Resentment against me won't either punish me or benefit you, but it could consign YOU to *eternal* punishment!

Whether YOU believe it or not, I have come, by years of experience learning the HARD WAY, to have supreme faith that GOD will never neglect to correct or punish *me* whenever I deserve it! You may TRUST HIM to do it!

Remember what a GLORIOUS GOAL we have before us!

How GRATEFUL we ought to be! How our hearts ought to be FLOODED with love and gratitude to the great God for His matchless LOVE toward us.

I'm sure we don't grasp what a supreme price He paid to make it possible. He wants us to be CHANGED — to overcome and root out this debasing, rotten carnality we all have in us — and to GROW into His righteousness, that we may SHARE His GLORY.

And, you know, I believe God wants and *longs* to share the supreme GLORY that He has with YOU! Make it your supreme overall life VOCATION, and WORK HARD AT IT!

The Japanese spy who stealthily and secretly obtained all the information the Japanese needed to bomb Pearl Harbor said that he was not a very brilliant man, and learning came hard to him, BUT HE WORKED HARD AT IT, relentlessly, with zeal, and with purpose, and with diligence. He SUCCEEDED — in terrible DESTRUCTION — in plunging the United States into World War II — and, finally, in the ignominious defeat of his own nation.

Let us *work hard at our calling and mission* of being real Christians. We shall succeed, with God's help — in final and eternal GLORY! □

Gray Areas

(Continued from page 13)

you read without becoming disenchanted? Remember, it is designed to worry you, so you will have questions.

How long can you read pornographic magazines, watch violent movies, neglect your marriage, eat wrong foods? How long can you remain a "free thinker," less than totally committed to God and His Church?

How many Sabbath services is it "OK" to miss? Just how dark does Friday evening have to get before it is sundown for you?

In all these instances and in many others we could mention, there is perhaps a gray area. It may not be fatal at first. But it's only a matter of time before "longer" becomes "too long," "occasionally" becomes "often" and a "bit more" becomes "too much." Then, "seldom" becomes "never."

The gray areas are like the Mekong.

Maybe — just maybe — some of the river close to the Thai border is safe. But the farther you get out toward the middle, the stronger the current becomes. Suddenly, there is a point when you are no longer in control, although you may not realize it. But the communist soldiers know.

They are watching and waiting. They have you clearly fixed in the sights of their high-powered rifles, and their fingers are curling around the triggers.

Safe, sure ground

Not every gray area is as well-defined as the mighty Mekong. But all are potentially dangerous.

So Christ, through His servants, shows us how to be sure we stay on the safe and sure ground. It's the terra firma of sound doctrine, loyal support, unswerving commitment, humility, obedience and faith. We aren't perfect yet, and we all have our lapses — but don't let yourself stray too far.

If things start looking gray, take steps to get back *quickly*. Because out there somewhere, where the gray starts getting black, lurk Satan and his demons, waiting for you to take that one fateful step too far. □

First Year

(Continued from page 15)

to give a commendable explanation. Perhaps he will be given the opportunity to explain each Holy Day, in its season, to the class.

Next, explain to the teacher why your offspring will be going away with the family for a couple of weeks early in the fall semester. Explain your religious observances enough so their importance to you registers with the teacher.

Then, offer to bring back from the Feast site mementos that would be interesting for the entire class.

Finally, well in advance of your departure for the Feast of Tabernacles, ask for advance homework for your child. You want to keep your child current with his class during the trip.

Promote your child's education

The school staff — particularly your child's teacher — desires the approval of both you and your child. Genuinely praise those teaching methods that are right and sound. Show your appreciation for the teacher's efforts on behalf of your child — put the teacher at ease (Prov. 18:24)

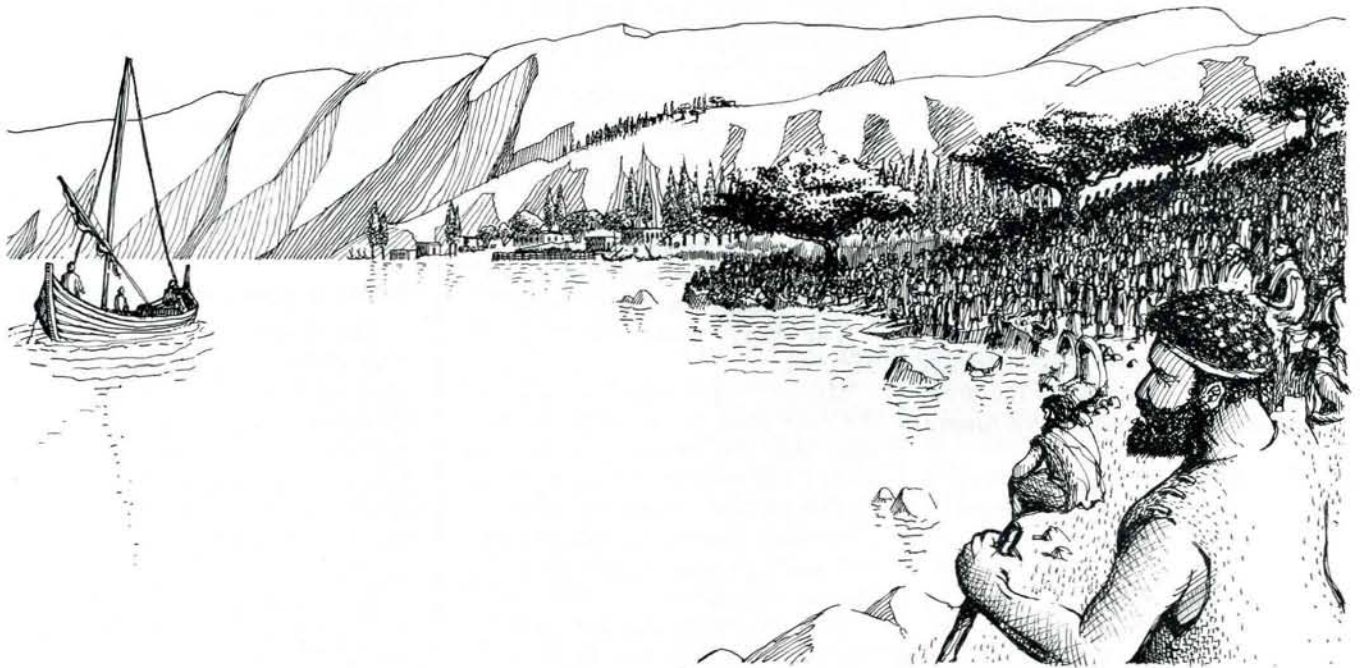
By the time the fall festivals arrive, you, your child and the teacher should be friends. Your son or daughter will be launched in a positive direction into education.

If you have tackled the school challenge properly, you need never fear that your child will be swept off into false beliefs. Your genuine concern, imaginative alternatives and proper training will pay enormous dividends.

Your child will successfully rise to the challenge of each day's class assignments. He will develop confidence and be better able to cope with life's challenges as well!

Further, he will never lack a warm circle of admiring classroom friends. And who knows? Perhaps the greatest joy in the end will be that a teacher, a classmate or another parent might tune in to the *World Tomorrow* broadcast. All because you correctly introduced your child to his first year in school! □

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT



Chapter 6

The Fishermen of Galilee

By Shirley King Johnson

Capernaum was a prosperous city on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Since the city was on a busy trade route, it was a convenient place to collect taxes and a tax office was located there.

The sweet, sparkling waters of the lake helped fishing flourish, and Capernaum's shores were busy with fishermen and their boats, merchants, buyers and sellers.

As soon as Jesus arrived home with His dis-

ciples, word traveled that He had returned and a stream of people gathered at His door. They brought their sick, blind, deaf, crippled and diseased to be healed.

The disciples scatter

Back in familiar surroundings, the disciples returned to their former pursuits. Nathanael

Speaking from Peter's boat to the multitude gathered on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Christ announced the coming Kingdom of God.

Peter suddenly realized that Jesus had performed a miracle. And this one was for Peter's own benefit. . . . "Don't be afraid, Peter," Jesus replied. "From now on your catch will be men."

went back to Cana and Philip to nearby Bethsaida. Peter and Andrew hurried down to the seashore to see if James and John and their father Zebedee had come in with their night's catch. They found them washing their nets in shallow water near the docks.

White-haired Zebedee was seated in their beached boat, watching as his two hired servants helped James and John clean weeds from the nets.

Pleased to see that Peter and Andrew were back, Zebedee asked if they were ready to go back to fishing.

"Not us," Peter replied without hesitation. "As soon as Jesus goes out again to preach the Gospel in other towns, we're going with Him."

"Then He's here in Capernaum?" Zebedee asked quickly.

"He sure is. We just got in from Nazareth."

"I know you're hungry," Zebedee said. "Andrew, will you and Peter have breakfast with us? You can tell us about your experiences while we're eating. It must have been an interesting tour with Jesus."

The two travelers rejoined their partners. As they enjoyed their meal, they discussed Jesus' character, temperament, personality and religious views. They slept through the afternoon and early evening, and went out fishing together that night. Their catch was a good one and the fishing became better with each night's work. They began to make plans to buy another boat.

Days passed. They saw Jesus in the synagogue on the Sabbaths, but a crowd always surrounded Him as He left the building and the fishermen had no opportunity to speak to Him.

One morning Jesus rose from prayer while it was still dark, broke a chunk of bread from a

loaf and left His house. He followed the dusty, winding street down to the lake. Turning, He strolled along the beach, taking deep breaths of the fresh sea air.

The purple haze that hung over the lake glowed red in the east. The sun broke through in sudden splendor, and the waves lapping the shore turned to gold.

Eating the bread as He walked, Jesus watched the seashore waken to life. Voices and laughter drifted across the water and He heard oars splashing around the next bend. Fishermen were coming to land. He hoped they would not recognize Him because He wanted to find four certain fishermen.

A morning meeting

He kept walking and farther along saw two boats beached. A man was standing knee-deep in the cold water, washing a net. Other men were seated in one of the boats, mending nets (Matt. 4:18, Luke 5:1-2). As He strode nearer He recognized Peter in the water. "Hello!" He called. "How are you, Peter?"

Peter turned. Recognizing Jesus, he waved. "Hello! This is a surprise."

"How's the fishing?" Jesus asked.

"It's not very good," replied Peter. "We can't figure it out. We've been doing very well, but tonight we came in empty-handed. It's as if there aren't any fish left in this whole lake."

Andrew climbed out of his boat and splashed up to Jesus. "Hello! Do you remember our partners James and John? They're there with their father, Zebedee of Bethsaida."

James, John and Zebedee gave their nets to their two servants, stepped over the side of their boat and splashed up to Jesus.

The men stood talking for half an hour. Zebedee especially asked many questions about John the Baptizer, and about the healing miracles. Did the people stay healed? But

It was the last fishing that Peter, Andrew, James and John would do for a while. When they brought their boats back to the shore, Jesus asked them to become His disciples.

their conversation was interrupted. Jesus had been seen and His whereabouts were reported to others.

Men, women and children began to gather along the seashore. Soon the crowd grew into a multitude that pressed in on three sides.

"Peter, may I use your boat?" Jesus asked. "If we row out a few yards I can sit in it and talk to these people" (Luke 5:3).

"Certainly, sir," Peter responded. "You're welcome to use it anytime."

Preaching from a boat

Stowing their nets along one side, Andrew and Peter pushed the boat off the sand into shallow water and steadied it as Jesus waded out. He swung aboard and the two fishermen leaped in themselves and took up the oars. A short distance offshore they stopped and Jesus waited for the crowd to settle itself. James, John and their father had joined their hired men in their boat and they rowed to a place nearby.

"Good morning," Jesus said, and the murmuring among the crowd along the shore stopped entirely.

"I have an announcement to make," He began. "The Kingdom of God is coming to this earth!"

In a voice that carried easily across the water, He talked to them about the good news of the coming government of God.

Christ performs a miracle

When His sermon was finished, Jesus turned to Peter. "My friend, if you'll row out into deeper water and put down your nets, you'll have a good catch" (verse 4).

Peter shook his head. "We just came in from a long night of work and caught nothing. There aren't any fish out there."

Peter paused. Jesus was smiling and there

was a twinkle in His eyes. "All right," Peter sighed. "Because you say so, we'll give it another try."

He took up the oars and Andrew joined in without comment.

The brothers rowed steadily over the water while Jesus relaxed with His back to the sun, watching Zebedee's boat as it followed in their wake. After a time Jesus offered to help row, but they insisted that they were not tired.

Finally Jesus raised a hand. "Put out your nets here, please."

"But this is where we fished last night!" Peter protested. "But if you say so . . ." He decided to do as Jesus asked, even though it meant going through all the work of flinging the nets out and hauling them back in.

But the tiredness left the fishermen's arms a few minutes later when they saw their nets begin to enclose a shoal of fish. The bulging nets began to break and Peter called to James and John for help. Their partners took fish aboard their boat until Zebedee called out that they must stop or sink the boat (verse 7).

Peter suddenly realized that Jesus had performed a miracle. And this one was for Peter's own benefit. He flung himself on his knees before Jesus. "Leave me alone! You don't know how sinful I am!"

"Don't be afraid, Peter," Jesus replied. "From now on your catch will be men" (verse 10).

The fishermen leave their nets

It was the last fishing that Peter, Andrew, James and John would do for a while. When they brought their boats back to the shore, Jesus asked them to become His disciples.

Leaving behind their loved ones, their goals and ambitions, Peter, Andrew, James and John left their boats with Zebedee and followed Jesus (verse 11). □

It's incredible! True Christians are linked with God in a unique relationship.

When God calls us, He begins to dramatically intervene in our lives, showing us our purpose and leading us to fulfill that purpose.

And now, as part of the special relationship we have with God, we can communicate directly with Him, something no one else can do. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Ps. 34:15).

It gives God pleasure for us to talk to Him, and God enjoys answering us! "The prayer of the righteous is his delight" (Prov. 15:8). "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22).

We must never forget the importance of prayer.

In this end time God has raised up this great Work to announce to the world the good news of His coming Kingdom. Every member of His Church in this time has been called, foremost, to support Christ's apostle for this time as he fulfills the great commission (Matt. 24:14). We do this by paying God's tithes and giving generous offerings, through personal service to the Church and through the example we set for the world around us. But the most effective way every one of us, from the greatest to the least, can support God's Work is through the power of prayer.

Christ promised, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22).

Christ's apostle today has asked for fervent prayer for God's Work. Notice these statements from one of Herbert W. Armstrong's recent letters:

"This is the ***MOST SERIOUS*** year of the Work of God so far. ***GOD'S TIME HAS COME TO SPEED UP HIS WORK WITH DYNAMIC AND TREMENDOUS POWER!*** Time for completing the ***GREAT COMMISSION OF GOD*** in this dying world is fast running out . . .

"Let's now set our hearts and whole interest on the ***SOON-coming KINGDOM OF GOD***, when we shall shine as the sun in brightness and find happiness ***FOREVER!*** . . .

*"I am pushing myself forward as never before. **BACK ME UP!** Thou-*

"With gratitude I send a message of thanks to you, for all the love and kindness you devote to us . . .

"I pray for you, and . . . endeavor to stand back of you 100 percent as you lead us on to

Something to Pray About

sands of you have sent me messages ***YOU ARE BACK OF ME 100 PERCENT!*** God's time has come to ***DO IT!***"

And indeed letters continue to pour in expressing support for Mr. Armstrong and God's Work in this end time:

"I am thrilled with the fantastic growth and progress in the Work lately, and the plans to move ahead now in a revitalized, energized surge forward in this end time. . . .

"I am praying for this dynamic growth . . . We are with you in all this, Mr. Armstrong, and praying for you daily."

J.C.

Cleveland, Ohio

"Mr. Armstrong, as this world disintegrates, even to the point where world leaders state publicly that survival is fast becoming *the* world issue, I just want to let you know how much you are in our prayers. The only solution to this great problem facing world leaders is contained within the message you take to them. . . . We know you pray for us, Mr. Armstrong, and we . . . want you to know how much we pray for you. Go forward and do the Work; we're walking with you all the way."

J.E.

Pasco, Wash. .

finish the Work of God in this Philadelphia era."

J.M.

Cumbria, England

"It is a wonderful and inspirational thing to see and hear God working through His chosen apostle in such a dynamic way . . .

"God help us all to follow your example and to be more diligent in doing the jobs God has assigned to each of us involved in this great commission by our tithes and offerings and by praying and fasting for the Work.

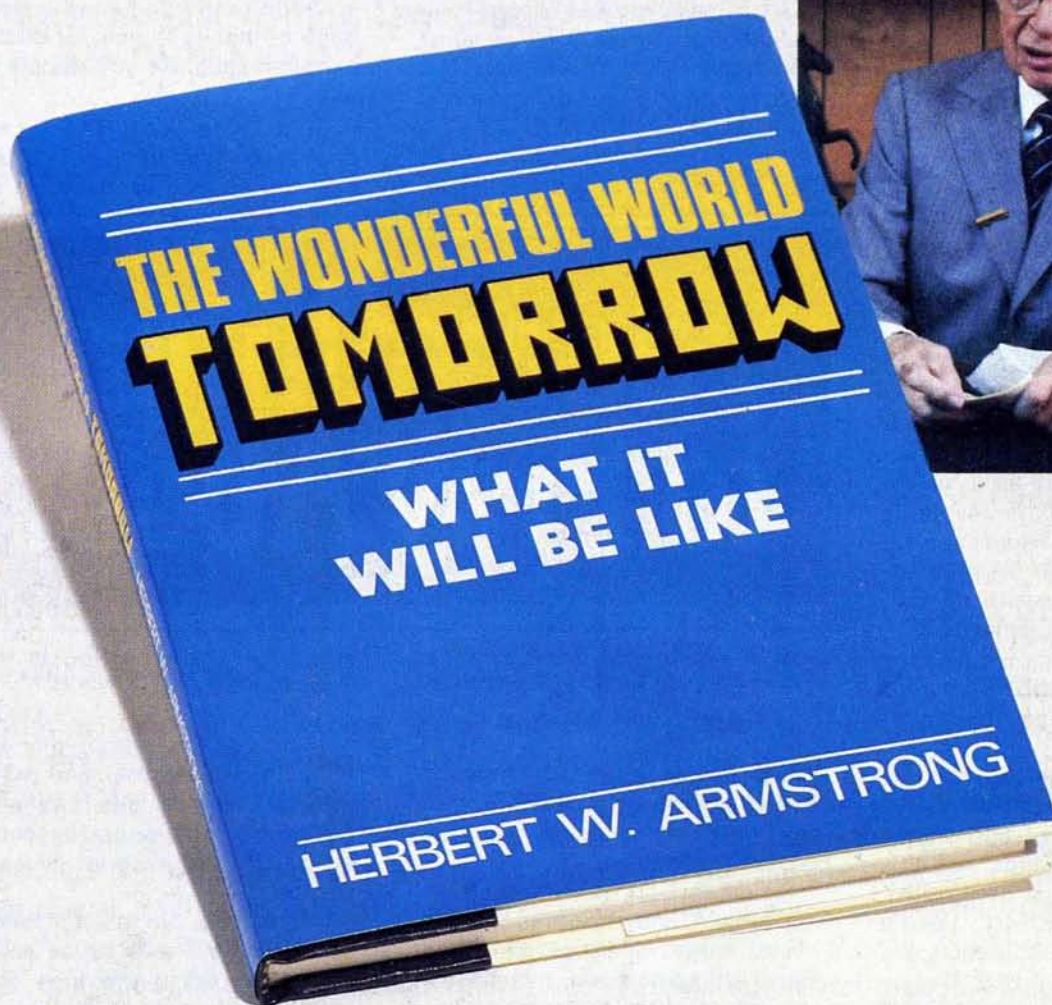
"May God continue to bless and lead you and inspire you to get His message across to the nations of this decaying age . . . We pray for you and the Work constantly."

D.B.

Shelby, Ohio

Mr. Armstrong's final directive in his letter was: "***PRAY*** as never before! Fast and pray!"

Are you deeply involved in this final thrust of God's end-time Work through heartrending *prayer*? God promises that "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). This Work can accomplish its goal of warning this world in a powerful way if we will support it through prayer. — *Good News staff* □



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