

MAY 1985

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



'Blood, Sweat and Tears'

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Why So Many
Denominations?
See Page 14

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24

**What Do You Mean —
“In Jesus’ Name”?**
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COVER: Historical photo shows Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong making an early *World Tomorrow* radio broadcast. From the smallest beginnings, God’s work has grown to international scope, largely through the support of our co-workers. See Mr. Armstrong’s “Personal” beginning on page 1. Good News photo.

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PERSONAL FROM

Robert H. Armstrong

'Blood, Sweat and Tears'

This is a "blood, sweat and tears" talk with our readers — with apologies to the late Winston Churchill.

At Britain's darkest hour of World War II, Prime Minister Churchill's "blood, sweat and tears" speech saved the nation. It struck through to the hearts of the British people. It moved their emotions. Like an electric shock it gave them hope. It stirred their determination, aroused a willingness to suffer any sacrifice or privation, that their country might survive.

Today, as surely as Britain faced the question of survival then, all humanity faces the question of SURVIVAL now — the survival of the human race!

We don't like to think about it. We shrink from facing up to the facts. I know that well! But there is a story to be told about that, and I propose to tell it now.

Fifty-one years ago a tiny handful of financially poor but sober people did face up to it. They volunteered to join me in a "blood, sweat and tears" sacrifice to do something about it. As time went on, others caught the vision, volunteered to join with them.

Now, in humanity's darkest hour — with most of humanity lethargically refusing to face up to it — our deliverance is near. Glorious victory is in sight; humanity will be saved alive. The peaceful, happy, prosperous, joyful WORLD TOMORROW is soon to dawn.

The world little realizes now,

but soon it will come to astonished awareness of the fact that these volunteers have had something vital to do with it.

Their unselfish sacrifice has gone too long unnoticed. I feel it is high time that I give full acknowledgment and pay full tribute to those to whom tribute is due. They have made possible a very remarkable thing — something never done before! It is something that concerns every reader of this magazine.

This magazine now has a vast readership of nearly two million people. Before this vast audience I want now to give public recognition for the loving service, often at great personal sacrifice, given by a comparatively small army

who have made possible the world's most powerful, most-listened-to broadcast — *The World Tomorrow*. This program, 51 years on radio, and now on television in nations around the world, has a weekly audience of multiple millions.

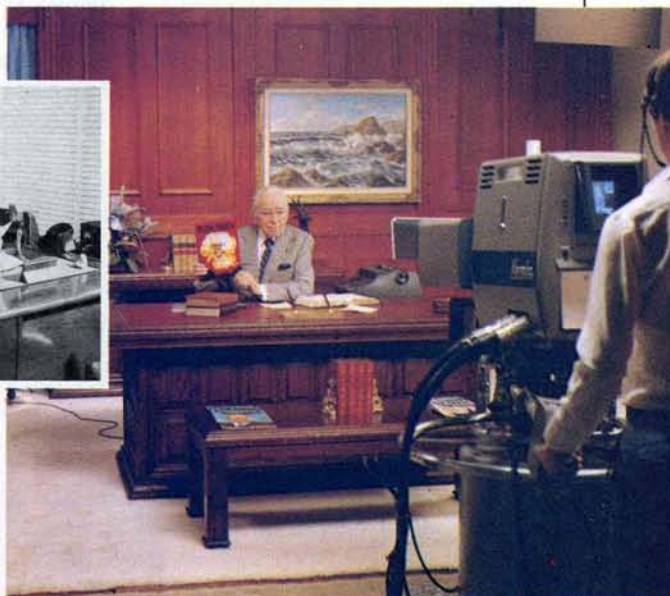
These same self-sacrificing volunteers have made possible Ambassador College, with its two campuses of tone and character.

People often ask: "How can you do it? How can you publish such quality magazines of such tremendous circulation, without advertising revenue, and without subscription price?"

So, since we receive such ques-



God's work started small and grew large! Left, the Armstrongs do an early radio broadcast. Right, Mr. Armstrong tapes a recent television program; *The World Tomorrow* is seen around the world.



of volunteers. They have made it possible for YOU to hold this fine-quality magazine in your hands just now. They have also done far more.

These are the loyal co-workers

tions from many subscribers, it seems fitting that the tribute I wish to pay to this small army of volunteers should, at the same time, answer that very question.

When I say you *cannot* pay for

your own subscription — it has already been paid — I do so because I do not like to use the word *free*. In the strictest sense nothing is free. That is why we say, "Your subscription price *has been paid*."

Of course, SOMEONE had to pay for it. Yet we never charge YOU — the reader. You CANNOT pay for your own. Our mail-opening staff is instructed to return your money if you try.

This fact bewilders people. No ONE ever did anything this way before.

Do we then, some ask, refuse to accept contributions? The frank answer is NO! But we DO refuse to ask the public for contributions. That tiny little family of volunteer co-workers has grown through the years. And candidly I do tell *them* about financial needs. BUT — WE EMPHATICALLY DO REFUSE TO SOLICIT OR REQUEST PEOPLE TO *BECOME* CO-WORKERS. Our expanding family of co-workers became so VOLUNTARILY.

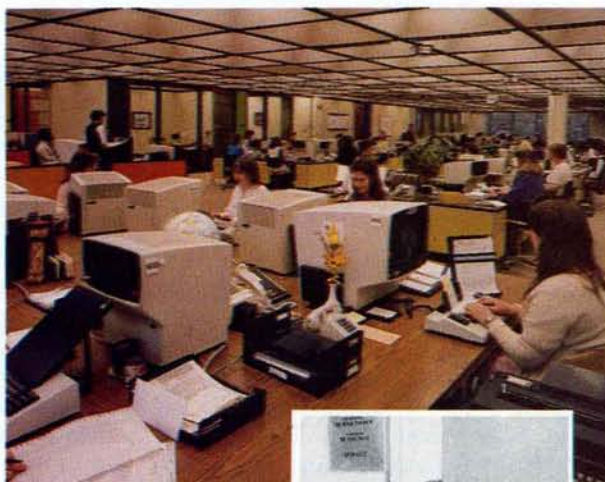
So I repeat — though no one, even a co-worker, can pay for his own subscription to this magazine, it did cost something to produce and put into readers' hands. Your subscription price HAS BEEN PAID — by these co-workers who became co-workers VOLUNTARILY, by their own choice!

Their tithes and freewill offerings make possible an astonishing activity serving and helping multiple millions of people all around the world!

Let me be really personal, and tell you how this month's "Personal" talk came with such impact to my mind.

I was taking an important businessman on a tour of our Pasadena campus. He seemed quite impressed with everything. People usually are. He said, "Mr.

Armstrong, you have done wonders!" I tried to tell him I had done nothing of the sort. But I couldn't convince him. All he could see was simply that I had



The unselfish sacrifice of co-workers has helped make this great work possible. Right, mail outside early office in Eugene, Ore. Above, Mail Processing Center is a huge operation today.



accomplished it. The unseen hands that made it possible were not visible to his eyes. Too many people have been giving me credit for accomplishment over entirely too long a time. So it flashed to my mind that I must make this public acknowledgment, and give this public recognition where it is due. No — not just due — far too long overdue!

Some time ago a leading news-magazine made a statement to the general effect that our only hope for the survival of human life now lies in the power of "a strong hand from someplace." That is 100 percent true. But very few realize it.

You see, they were talking about an UNSEEN hand from someplace. What people cannot see, they usually cannot believe. People see *me*, and give me all the credit.

Fifty-eight years ago, my eyes were opened to a good many serious, sobering things. I saw the way humanity is drifting. I saw, even then, the threat to human

existence. I read advance news reports, *proved* to be reliable, of the world's condition and trends. I read also of the coming SOLUTION of world problems, by and through this *unseen* strong hand from someplace. I came to "SEE" this "unseen hand." And I was given to "SEE" the challenge to awaken millions to the urgency of the world crisis — and to the glorious GOOD NEWS of the happier world of peace just beyond.

A very small handful of personal acquaintances also recognized the challenge and the call to become instruments of that "unseen hand." That "unseen hand" has proved to be a very steady, strong and powerful hand.

This small number of personal acquaintances were poor in this world's goods, but rich in the true values.

In a sense, they, with me, felt "drafted" into this service — yet they willingly VOLUNTEERED.

That was some 51 years ago, early 1934. Seven years before, early 1927, I had envisioned the idea of the *Plain Truth* magazine. At the time, I was living in Portland, Ore. I even engaged a professional letter-artist to design a dummy front cover for a magazine called *The Plain Truth*. I wrote three or four articles — never actually published, I believe, save one. But it was not until seven years later that I was able to produce Volume I, Number 1 of *The Plain Truth*. That was the February, 1934, issue. It was a "homemade magazine" done on a borrowed mimeograph. The stencils were cut on a borrowed typewriter.

On January 6, 1934, due to the volunteered help of these few co-workers, I was able to go on the air with what became the *World Tomorrow* program. It was a little 100-watt radio station in Eugene, Ore. The charge for time — \$2.50 per half-hour program. The station owner had set a price lower than his operating cost for the half hour. Our tiny handful of co-workers were able, then, to contribute only about \$1.38 per

week between them. I plunged ahead, taking the rest on faith. The program then was only once a week. On the first four broadcasts, I offered *The Plain Truth*, free, subscription already paid. How paid? By these few volunteer co-workers.

Gradually others caught the vision. It was then in the very depth of the Great Depression. Money was a scarce commodity. To even issue a handmade mimeographed "magazine" and pay \$2.50 per week for broadcast time meant a real "blood, sweat and tears" sacrifice.

But we had a MISSION! There was a tremendous PURPOSE! We were sure we saw THE WAY to do it — no set subscription price for *The Plain Truth* — no request for contributions over the air. All had to be given WITHOUT PRICE!

Somehow those few self-sacrificing co-workers began to prosper. Even though they made serious self-sacrifice financially, their economic condition gradually improved. It was almost as if *it paid them* to have a part in this work!

In those early years, this work faced a constant struggle for survival. But gradually it grew — and grew — and multiplied in power and scope. By 1942 we were being heard nationally in the United States. In 1947 Ambassa-

dor College was born. But not without birth pangs. For two years it was a fight for existence. Then a few people volunteered to send in their life savings to help. Those people prospered financially thereafter.

Gradually, as more and more people have come to recognize the challenge — to realize this great work offers them an opportunity to have a *part* in changing, and in the end actually saving, the world — the number who have volunteered to become co-workers has increased.

But there is a rather amazing factor here. Virtually every phase of our operations increased substantially each year — save one factor. That is the number of co-workers who make it possible.

It costs money to conduct this work — more money each year. And of course that means the income for the work from these co-workers has increased each year — for we do pay our bills and therefore our financial standing today is quite strong.

But — the incredible thing is, the increase in the *number* of co-workers helping voluntarily with us each year *is less than the increase in expenditures*.

How can we account for an increase each year in tithes and contributions received with only a small increase in the number con-

tributing? The answer is surprising indeed! Those who volunteer to have part in this great work *do* find that it *PAYS* — their personal incomes, on the whole, increase! I do not mean in every case — but as a whole!

How can we account for that?

Well, there is that strong hand from someplace. If that unseen hand does not exist, humanity will not survive on earth another 25 years! I know whereof I speak, for no organization on earth has a more knowledgeable grasp and understanding of world conditions, trends and causes than ours. We know where this confused world is heading. It is simply NOT finding any workable solutions for its major problems.

But there *is* that unseen STRONG HAND! There will be supernatural intervention to save humanity alive. And the revelation given mankind by the Supreme Personage that wields that strong hand explains WHY such a small increase in supporting co-workers can account for the large increases in what they provide.

Listen to a few excerpts from the revealed explanation: To our own nations, He says: "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.

But ye said, Wherein shall we return?" And He answers the questioners: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, AND POUR YOU OUT A BLESSING, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:7-10, Authorized Version).

Our Creator and Ruler of
(Continued on page 12)

The Plain Truth, one of the world's finest and largest-circulation magazines, is free to all who request it. The first Plain Truth was printed on a borrowed mimeograph, below. Right, Mr. Armstrong inspects 50th-anniversary issue.





What Does Pentecost Mean to You?

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Do you know what is the most universally believed *false* doctrine in the Christian world?

That universally believed false doctrine is that all humanity is LOST — consigned to an eternally burning hell — unless they “get saved” by

accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior *NOW!*

They say that we, NOW, are in the ONLY day of salvation — that when Christ returns to earth the door to salvation will be CLOSED! Unless you are “saved” NOW, you are LOST!

I once heard the world’s most famous evangelist tell a massive

audience (on television) that we, now, are in the ONLY day of salvation — that tomorrow may be too late. Many are frightened into “making their decision for Christ.”

That false belief implies that when Jesus Christ returns in supreme POWER and GLORY, He will be helpless to save you! On

God's Holy Days are based on the agricultural seasons in Palestine. Pentecost, in early summer, pictures the first, small harvest of those few being called by God at this time — God's firstfruits.

the contrary, God's Word says Jesus is coming 1) to restore the government of God, setting up the KINGDOM OF GOD, and 2) to call ALL people still living to salvation and eternal life.

What is the TRUTH?

God's *annual* Sabbaths were given to keep the true Church in the true knowledge of our Maker's master plan.

The one original, yet persecuted Church of God stands alone in keeping these annual festivals. And it *alone* has that basic UNDERSTANDING.

What, then, is the TRUTH that the annual day of Pentecost, or Feast of Firstfruits, is given to teach us?

It teaches us the very opposite of what this world's "Christianity" believes.

It teaches us that we of the TRUE Church are the "FIRST-FRUIT" *ONLY* — the FIRST to receive salvation through Christ. It teaches us that *all others* are NOT YET CALLED. It teaches us that, as Jesus said, "NO ONE CAN come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44).

But isn't God the Father desperately trying to draw *all* humans NOW? Emphatically *no!* — *not yet!* Was God unjust? NO! Never!

Notice what God did, right after our first parents rejected God as their RULER, their Revealer of knowledge and as their Savior with the gift of everlasting life.

"Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' — therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a

flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3:22-24).

Thus, ALL MANKIND was BARRED from access to God or receiving eternal life — all but the comparative FEW God would *specially* call for some performance leading to the Kingdom of God.

In effect, God said to MANKIND through Adam and Eve:

"You have made your own decision. You have rejected me as your God and your Ruler, Revealer of knowledge and Savior. Therefore I have cut you and the whole world that will spring from you off from all contact with me. Go and *form your own governments, your own religions, your own production and dissemination of knowledge.* However, I shall reserve the prerogative to specially call into my service such as I shall choose, *for a part in preparing for the Kingdom of God.*

"Otherwise, the world that will develop from you is CUT OFF from all contact with me for 6,000 years, when the Kingdom of God shall be established, ruling ALL NATIONS!"

Far from trying to get every human saved spiritually during the 6,000 years, God CUT OFF all humanity — save the comparative FEW He would specially call.

THAT IS WHY Jesus said "No one can come to Me" during this 6,000-year period *except God the Father specially calls them* (John 6:44) — and He has called this very few *not just* for salvation, but for a special service preparing for the coming Kingdom of God, as well.

After that 6,000 years expires, Jesus Christ will come again to earth, this time in SUPREME POWER AND GLORY, to set up GOD'S GOVERNMENT on earth.

Satan shall be banished. Then, during the seventh thousand years, God will call EVERYBODY then living.

And after the seventh millennium, God will resurrect to mortal life all the billions of people

who had not been called for spiritual salvation.

Is God discriminating?

Those who *have been* called have had to overcome Satan. Those called later shall not.

WHY this difference? We might reason: Is God discriminating against us, who have to resist and overcome Satan, when all converted during the Millennium will not?

But there is no injustice with God. Yet there is a DIFFERENCE!

THINK ON THIS! God is calling *ONLY* a comparative FEW now. Is that an evil or a blessing? It is a tremendous blessing, for, referring to God's Church for this Church dispensation *ONLY*, Jesus says: "And he that overcometh [overcomes Satan and self and the world], and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 2:26-27, Authorized Version), and, "To him who overcomes [Satan, the world and self] I will grant to sit with Me on My throne" (Revelation 3:21).

Those promises pertain *only* to those called before Christ's return. So some wanting to accuse God might ask: "Isn't this UNFAIR to those not called now? They have no chance to know, now, the joys of God's Holy Spirit. And they have no promise of exalted position or power when they are 'saved' later!"

Absolutely NO! There is no injustice with God. I'm sure those NOT now called do not feel they are discriminated against. They *don't want* to be called. And as for high and glorified position, that is a responsibility, and I do not know of anyone uncalled who has any sense whatever of dissatisfaction because he may not have such exalted position in the world TOMORROW, ruled by the Kingdom of God.

But nevertheless, this is an interesting point. Those called now do have Satan, Satan's world and their own human nature to overcome — and that requires effort, self-denial and willpower,

which most humans would not want to pay.

Highest positions already allotted

But what about those who *shall be* called for the first time, and converted, after Christ returns? Shall they not have any opportunity to inherit a high and lofty position?

Probably the highest and most lofty positions in both Church and State in the world to come already have been allotted.

We know that each of the orig-

years, population (human) will increase and new positions in government and in spiritual administration will increase. Also, in the Great White Throne Judgment later.

Called to more than salvation

But for us now, it is imperative that we understand that those CALLED and inducted by God into His Church NOW have been called for MORE THAN JUST SPIRITUAL SALVATION AND THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. We are called,

HAVE NOT ATTAINED FULLY TO THAT HOLY STATURE AS YET.

And our work is not finished until we do allow God to bring us unitedly to that state — ready to leave this world of flesh and blood and to enter an entirely NEW WORLD — the Church made immortal, composed of SPIRIT! Our job to which God has called us is far from finished!

God's Church made ready

I know God called me to re-establish on earth His GOVERNMENT and to proclaim worldwide the GREAT COMMISSION — the announcement of the now imminent KINGDOM OF GOD.

All that has been my job since conversion in 1927 — and that job is not yet finished.

(Although we have no way of knowing HOW FAR we must reach people in all parts of the world, God does not expect us to reach *every* human on earth with His message, and we may be much closer to accomplishing what He expects than we think.)

But my efforts as Christ's apostle have also been heavily devoted to preparing God's Church — the spiritual Temple to which Christ will come.

The living Christ as HEAD of this Church has been using His chosen apostle to set HIS CHURCH on GOD's track!

I could write much more along this line, but I want to leave that thought with you now.

As we come to God's Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost) — May 26 this year — let us bear forcibly in mind we in God's Church must be MADE READY — for Jesus Christ is coming SOON — and we are NOT YET FULLY READY to be instantly changed and caught up to meet our Lord as He comes in clouds!

You need the important information in our free booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* It explains in detail all of God's annual festivals, what they mean and how to keep them. For your copy of this booklet, mail the literature request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you. □

Photo by Greg S. Smith



inal 12 apostles will be ruler over one of the 12 nations springing from the 12 tribes of Israel. We know that David will be king over them and those under them. We may well assume that Abraham will have even a higher position. Those are not only the highest honors — but they are likewise the highest and most demanding responsibilities.

Probably the chief seats of authority in the world tomorrow ruled by the KINGDOM OF GOD will be already filled at Christ's coming. But, during the thousand

every one of us, for a PART in preparing for the Kingdom of God!

For our part now, in this present "Philadelphia era," each of you is called for the mission of *loyally backing up* the GREAT COMMISSION of proclaiming the true Gospel to the whole world — and one important thing more: When Jesus comes to RULE, His wife THE CHURCH will have made herself ready — to be holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And we in the Church as a whole

Pentecost in God's Master Plan

By Jerold W. Aust

Pentecost, the Feast of Firstfruits, one of God's seven annual Holy Days, pictures an important step in God's master plan of salvation!

This Holy Day helps explain the different *times* when salvation will be offered to different segments of mankind.

God's two harvests

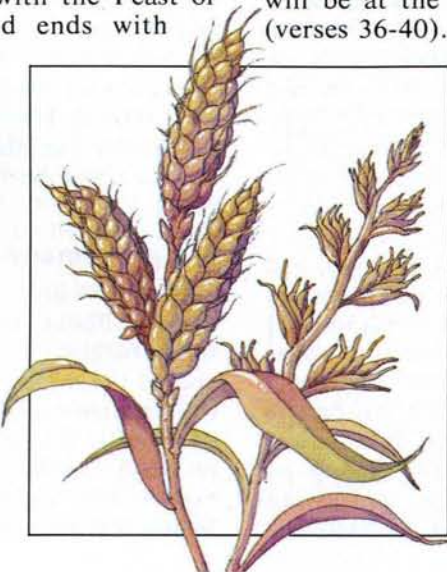
God's annual Holy Days are laid out according to the seasons in Palestine. And God uses two harvests of Palestine to symbolize His *two separate harvests* of all human lives. The earlier, much smaller harvest begins with Pentecost, and the latter, much larger harvest begins with the Feast of Tabernacles and ends with the Last Great Day.

You need to be concerned with this earlier harvest. It is being planted right now. We'll use one of Jesus' parables to help explain: "Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is

like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way' " (Matthew 13:24-25).

In this parable Jesus likens God's plan of salvation to a physical harvest of grain or wheat.

"His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.' He answered and said to them: 'He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age' " (verses 36-40). God is in the process of planting good seed now. He is calling thousands through this work that is presently being done through the Worldwide Church of God. And thousands are responding



Wheat (left) and tares (right). God's wheat will be revealed at Christ's return.

to that calling. He may be planting in you.

But Satan is not idle. He, too, is planting his tares among the wheat in God's field — this world. It's critical to determine whether we are wheat or tares.

Tares look like wheat. A tare is shaped like a wheat stock and head, but its content is dwarfed at best or nonexistent. When tares sprout with wheat, they look similar. Even after they are both grown, from a short distance it is difficult to distinguish between them. But to the discerning eye, the difference is obvious.

God always knows the difference between his "wheat" and the "tares" of Satan's world. God's people are known by their good fruits (Matthew 7:16, 20).

Many called, but few chosen

Jesus Christ said that many are called but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14). God's earlier, smaller harvest will be made up of the relatively few people who are truly submitting to God today.

The vast majority of people who have ever lived will have their chance for salvation during the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment, symbolized by the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. This will be the great fall harvest.

To most of the world, the day of Pentecost remains a mystery. But you are being given the chance to understand now. This day of Pentecost represents your turn in God's master plan of harvesting all human lives. You, too, can help declare to a blinded world the truth of God.

Notice the fantastic meaning the day of Pentecost has for those called now: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they [of the early harvest, symbolized by Pentecost today] shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

The amazing meaning of Pentecost is now revealed to you. What is your next move going to be? □

What Was Jesus Like as a Human?

Don't be too sure you know! Here is an accurate description, straight from the Bible.

By Clayton D. Steep

It may come as a surprise to some that the sad, long-haired, weak-looking Jesus portrayed in most pictures with a white robe and a halo is not the Jesus of the Bible!

The pictures and statues depict "another Jesus" (II Corinthians 11:4)!

There is no single passage of Scripture giving a complete description of Jesus the man. But many scattered verses allow us glimpses of Him as He really was. Here are some of them.

Be sure to look these verses up in your own Bible. Analyze them and ask yourself if you have envisioned Jesus as He really was.

Jesus the man

Jesus was not especially handsome (Isaiah 53:2). He could walk right through a crowd without being recognized (Luke 4:30). Judas had to point Him out with a kiss (Matthew 26:48-49). His hair was short (see accompanying box), but there is a possibil-

ity He had a beard (Isaiah 50:6).

Jesus was the elder brother to several younger brothers and sisters (Matthew 13:55-56). As a child He was exceptionally bright (Luke 2:46-47); as an adult He amazed the scholars of His day (John 7:15).

He was no physical weakling. Since Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), His hands must have been calloused and His shoulders big. As there were no electric tools back then, sawing and drilling were done by hand. This was hard work. A physically weak person could not survive the Roman scourge (Mark 15:15), or fast for 40 days and then go on to win the most decisive battle of all time, with Satan himself (Matthew 4:1-11).

The Bible indicates Jesus had His own house in Capernaum (Mark 2:1, Matthew 13:36, 57) — He was not a destitute vagabond. And His house was large enough to hold quite a few people (the fact that Jesus' family was "outside" means the group of people that He was addressing was *inside* the house — Matthew

12:46, 13:1). Being a carpenter, He could have built it Himself.

Jesus was familiar with the ways of wild animals and plants (Matthew 6:26-30), as well as the principles of agriculture (Matthew 13:1-43) and caring for domestic animals (John 10:1-5, Luke 13:15, 14:5). By observing the elements, He knew what kind of weather to expect (Matthew 16:2-3).

Tanned by the Judean sun, Jesus was accustomed to walking long distances until He was sweaty and thirsty and weary (John 4:6-7). There were no doubt times when it was necessary during His travels to sleep out under the stars or wherever shelter could be found (Matthew 8:20).

A man of many facets

Those who imagine only a "gentle Jesus, meek and mild" have forgotten how He twice chased the money changers out of the Temple (John 2:13-17, Mark 11:15-17). Dumping their money on the floor, He pushed over their tables and upset their chairs. While the flabbergasted money

changers scrambled to get out of His way, Jesus used a small whip to drive out the frightened oxen and bleating sheep.

The same eyes in which the money changers saw the fire of righteous anger flash (John 2:17) overflowed on other occasions with tears of tenderness and sorrow (John 11:35, Isaiah 53:3). Jesus was full of compassion (Matthew 9:36).

He was fond of children (Mark 10:15-16), and children were fond of Him (Matthew 21:15). He loved to be with people (Mark 6:34, Luke 9:11) and to serve them (Acts 10:38). But He always managed to get away by Himself so He could maintain contact with His Father in heaven (Matthew 14:22-23).

Jesus understood the poor (Luke 21:1-4) and the rich (Luke 12:13-34). He comprehended the problems of the laborer as well as the employer (Matthew 20:1-16). He knew the true principles of economics and how to handle wealth (Matthew 23:23, Luke 19:12-26). And He paid taxes, too (Matthew 17:24-25, 22:17-21). Jesus ate with publicans and sinners (Matthew 9:10-11) and with Pharisees (Luke 7:36). He knew how to conduct Himself in any social situation. He dressed well. His clothing was of such value that Roman soldiers gambled for it (Matthew 27:35).

It was at a wedding celebration of a well-to-do family that Jesus performed His first miracle. They had drunk all the wine. So Jesus changed water into more wine — perhaps 100 to 150 gallons of it (John 2:1-11). Jesus enjoyed good food and good drink (Luke 7:33-34). But He always exercised perfect self-control.

Jesus had a powerful, loud voice that could be heard by multitudes long before microphones were invented (Matthew 15:10). When it was appropriate He spoke with a note of humor (Luke 13:32, Mark 3:17).

Jesus loved life and lived it abundantly. But He never let anything or anybody interfere with proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and doing

His Father's will (Matthew 6:33, John 15:10).

A dynamic example for us

Jesus of Nazareth — God in the flesh — a teacher, a dependable friend, a warm, well-balanced, dynamic person.

Priests, harlots, businessmen,

lepers, children, Roman soldiers, Jews, Samaritans, widows, rulers of the synagogue, sinners — He was loved by some, hated by some, feared by some, respected by all. In every circumstance of His varied life He obeyed the laws of His Father, setting an example for us to follow. □

Did Jesus Have Long Hair?

Short hair for men has been with us far longer than most realize. It was the dominant, accepted mode for men in the time of Jesus Christ.

Pick up any good, illustrated history book on the period and you will see the evidence: All statues of Roman legionnaires show them with closely cropped hair. A Roman with long hair was an oddity.

All the Roman emperors before, during and after the time of Christ, from Julius Caesar to Trajan, wore short hair. And the emperor set the pattern in style and mode of dress for the whole empire.

Before the coming of the Romans, the Hellenistic Greek culture dominated the eastern Mediterranean area, and Judea by no means escaped. Even in Christ's day, a large segment of the Jewish population was Greek-speaking and Hellenistic in outlook (John 12:20, Acts 6:1). The Greek Hellenistic style for men was to wear the hair short.

What about the non-Hellenistic Jews? The Jewish *Talmud*, which is anti-Hellenistic, states that all priests should have their hair cut once every 30 days. These Jews were aware of the statement in Ezekiel 44:20: "Nor shall they shave their heads, nor let their hair grow long."

Statues and other reproductions of Jewish men from Christ's period again point to short hair as the style.

Some have mistakenly assumed that Christ was under a Nazirite vow. This was not the case.

Jesus Christ came from *Nazareth*. The early Christians were sometimes called *Nazarenes*. But neither of

these words has anything to do with a *Nazirite* vow. Notice that Jesus drank wine (Matthew 11:19). He also, on occasion, touched a dead body (Matthew 9:25). Both these actions were forbidden to anyone under a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:3, 6).

Now I Corinthians 11:14 becomes clear: "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?"



Roman emperors Caesar Augustus (left) and Trajan (right) both wore short hair, and they set the standard in personal appearance for the empire. The Bible says it is a shame for a man to have long hair.

Those under a Nazirite vow let their hair grow long as a token of humiliation. It was a shame. Notice, too, that as soon as the time period of the Nazirite vow was over, the one who undertook the vow was to shave his head (Numbers 6:18)!

No, Jesus did not have long hair. He looked like any other normal Jew of His day. On a number of occasions He was able to pass through crowds because He looked just like anyone else (Luke 4:30, John 8:59, 10:39). Judas had to use a special sign, a kiss, to point out to Jesus' enemies which one He was (Matthew 26:48-49). Judas would not have had to do this if Jesus had looked any different from the average Jew of His day. □

What Do You Mean 'In Jesus' Name'?

Jesus gave His followers the special privilege of using His name, and we must use it properly!

By John A. Halford

"In Jesus' name." You've seen that often — probably too often. It is one of the most overused — and misunderstood — of the religious-sounding phrases that are so casually used today.

Sometimes people writing in to one of our offices requesting literature will sign their letters "in Jesus' name." Others put it on greeting cards or other casual correspondence. They mean no harm, of course. They probably think that they are demonstrating their faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

But stop and think about it a moment. What does "in Jesus' name" mean?

What's in a name?

When you do anything in someone else's name, you're doing it in his stead, or by his authority.

For instance, I had to send my passport to an embassy in Washington, D.C. to obtain a visa. I was not able to pick it up personally. But a passport is an important document, and the embassy was not about to hand it over to just anyone who asked for it.

So I had to give a friend a letter giving him permission to pick up the passport "in my name" — that is, in my stead, but with my authority.

A name, then, is very important. And God's name is the most

important name of all. The third of the 10 great commandments warns that we must never take the name of God in vain (Exodus 20:7).

Strange, isn't it, how television and film censors who insist that certain four-letter words are removed from scripts don't blink an eye when the names of God and Jesus Christ are bandied about as expletives?

A Christian, of course, would not make that mistake. That kind of blasphemy belongs firmly in the past. But even Christians can be guilty of taking the Lord's name in vain (that is, for no good purpose) if they get into the habit of using it too casually.

When you write to a friend, or even write to us for free literature, are you really doing it in Jesus' name? No. It is in your own name, on your behalf and on your own authority. You don't need Jesus' permission to do it.

A letter truly representing Jesus Christ, coming from one who has the office and authority to write it, is a different matter. Paul wrote his epistles "in Jesus' name." These letters from an apostle to the Church had the full authority of God — they were to be taken seriously. They weren't casual correspondence. On the

other hand, there is little cause for the average person to write "in Jesus' name" — most of our regular correspondence just does



not need to carry that weight of authority.

"Well, OK," you might say, "but what about Colossians 3:17?" There Paul wrote, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Paul obviously didn't mean that everything you do and everything you say had to literally be labeled "in Jesus' name." That would become ridiculous. So what did he mean?

Ambassadors for Christ

Paul understood that when God calls someone out of this world to prepare in thought, word

Photo by Nathan Faulkner

and deed for life in the world tomorrow, that person has a heavy responsibility. He must no longer live the way he previously lived, according to the customs and life-styles of this world. He must now set an example — by following the example of Christ. In a very real sense, God's people represent Him.

Paul showed that a Christian is an ambassador for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20). That carries a responsibility. An ambassador represents his government in a foreign country. He must represent the values, standards, policies, politics and attitudes of his country. It is the same with an ambassador for Christ.

When Jesus Christ was on earth He did not just represent Himself. "I have come in My Father's name," He explained (John 5:43).

When people asked Jesus what God was like, He replied, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). He was not saying that He was physically identical to His Father in heaven. He meant: "If you have seen the way I act, watched the way I do things, observed the laws I keep and the way I handle my life, then you have seen what God is like." It was a massive responsibility Jesus took seriously.

It is now a responsibility that Jesus Christ has given to those called to follow Him. He told His disciples, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:23).

Jesus said He would commit Himself to helping someone who had accepted the responsibility to live by the Word of God. It was another way of saying that He would live in or through them.

They would not necessarily have to go out preaching the Gospel, feeding 5,000, walking on water, healing lepers or the other things that Jesus literally did. God has not called most of His people to do that at this time. Most live fairly ordinary lives. But whatever sort of life you live, you must live it as if Jesus Christ

were living it. You must represent the laws and attitudes of God in your daily life.

What a tragedy that so many millions who claim to be Christians represent Christ by killing, stealing, cheating and lying. In Northern Ireland two peoples, both claiming to believe in Jesus Christ, bomb, kill and maim each other. In the Middle East Christian groups commit acts of terrorism. In many countries political parties put the word *Christian* into their names, but then proceed to wheel and deal, politic and fight just as dirty as anyone else. And all "in Jesus' name."

But a true Christian must really represent Jesus Christ and the standards and values of the Kingdom of God, of which Christ is the soon-coming King. That is why Paul instructed us, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). It is not a responsibility to take lightly.

How you should use Jesus' name

There is one way we all should use the name of Jesus Christ regularly — when we pray.

Just before Jesus was crucified, He gave His true followers a special privilege.

Jesus had a special link with God. When He needed something, whether it was a small coin to pay the Temple tax or enough bread to feed a multitude, all He had to do was to ask, and God supplied what was needed. He didn't need to make long, ritualistic prayers like the religious leaders of the day did. He just asked. So the disciples came to depend upon Jesus Christ's contact with heaven. But now He was going away.

So He explained to them that they, too, could have that same contact with God. "Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you," He stated (John 16:23-24).

Think what this means. You might be a nobody, but if you had a letter from the leader of your country giving you authority to use his name, it would gain you

access to some of the most important and powerful men on earth.

Jesus Christ has given you the privilege of using His name. Next to the name of the Father Himself, Jesus' name is the most important name in all the universe (Philippians 2:9). Jesus has immediate access to the Father. He can, so to speak, "get in to see Him" anytime. The great Being who rules this universe always has time to listen to Jesus Christ.

Jesus gave His people permission to use His name so that they could also go and talk to the Father.

You will be heard

God does not hear every prayer. He does not waste time listening to halfhearted, empty, vain repetitions or endless formal chants. He is not impressed with pious-sounding but empty phrases. He is not going to have His mind swayed by massed choirs or a babble of tongues. He can't be forced to act by people beating themselves with whips or risking their lives handling serpents or dancing on hot coals, as some seem to think.

But the quiet, sincere, fervent, unselfish prayer of a humble person who comes to Him confidently in Jesus' name — *that* God will listen to.

You can't see God or Jesus Christ — yet. But they are alive. And when you kneel before God's throne it is as if Jesus Christ, sitting at His right hand, nods approvingly. He knows who you are. And He has given you the right to ask whatever you want in His name.

God will hear. The answer to your prayer may not be an immediate "yes." Sometimes the answer is "wait." Sometimes the answer even has to be "no." But God will listen. Your prayer will not be ignored, and you will have the right to go back before that throne of power and grace to seek God's help at any time.

That is the very special privilege of those who have been permitted to use the name of Jesus Christ.

Guard it carefully. □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 3)

the universe CHALLENGES us to PROVE HIM — He makes a promise! He says put Him to the test! He PROMISES to prosper those who tithe to His work.

Again, Jesus' words: "GIVE, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over" (Luke 6:38).

And further, the apostle Paul: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work" (II Corinthians 9:6-8).

We know that we have been given a very great mission. That mission is to awaken a drowsy, lethargic humanity to the fact its WRONG WAYS are leading all humanity into a crisis that would mean the extinction of human life if the almighty God did not come to our rescue.

We have been called to proclaim to the world, as a witness, THE FACT that the Creator is ALSO THE RULER OVER HIS CREATION — that humanity as a whole has transgressed His laws and therefore brought on itself all the accumulated evils that now exist in this world. We have been assigned to proclaim the very IMMINENT coming of the great Messiah in TOTAL supernatural POWER and GLORY to set up THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD over all nations, and to bring this unhappy world PEACE at last!

I have said these co-workers volunteered. In a technical sense, if one understands, that is not entirely true. That is, it is not ALL of the truth!

For the whole truth is, that "unseen strong hand" is, literally, the living Jesus Christ who gave His life's blood to pay the penalty of the transgressions of the world,

and who was raised from the dead — and is alive, in POWER, eternally. It is HE who guides and directs this great work.

Of that fact, we who *know* the facts have seen so much evidence over the years that it is no longer a question.

And this same Jesus, during His human lifetime, said of His disciples, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). In a sense, those having a part in this great work with and under the living Christ have been *drafted*. But it is not a compulsory draft. Except for a full-time special mission, each individual makes his own decision. "And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

Therefore, our co-workers, of their own free will, made their own decision, unasked, unsolicited, by me or any in this work. Even though called and chosen by that unseen strong hand, which they may not have realized, they did volunteer to accept, to *have a part* in changing and saving the world, under the living Christ!

We know that we are merely poor human instruments in the work of the almighty God, preparing the way! Even now, this work is *changing* the lives of thousands every year. Soon, under the world-ruling government of God, it will finally result in not only CHANGING THE WORLD, but also in SAVING THE WORLD!

And THAT is why this work had to start so small! Whatever God does through humans must *start* the very smallest, and then *grow* BIG! THAT is why it has grown so surely and steadily to worldwide impact and power! THAT is why a relatively small annual increase of co-workers have been prospered so that their contributions have increased so enormously!

It was truly a "blood, sweat and tears" struggle in the early years. It still is, today. But willingness of co-workers to suffer sacrifice was rewarded not only financially, but spiritually, socially and in other ways.

I cannot, in this "Personal"

article, give acknowledgment and credit by naming those I wish to honor. They have grown from a mere dozen into thousands. Only a tiny percentage of those who enjoy reading *The Plain Truth* pay the entire production cost. And they do far more — they finance the *World Tomorrow* program — they pay the operating costs of the campuses of Ambassador College and all the other GOOD THINGS being done through this work.

This work, worldwide though it has grown, has never been able to quit struggling for survival. It still is a daily struggle that the income meet the needs. We have to struggle constantly with the budget. We dare not let it exceed income. We have to struggle to find new ways to make every dollar go further — to give greater SERVICE to larger numbers of people.

I have intended this month's "Personal" to be an acknowledgment and a tribute to our co-workers.

At the same time I have meant it to be a frank, yet simple and straightforward EXPLANATION to all other *Good News* readers.

It is *NOT* intended as a solicitation. We want NO ONE to feel obligated. Rather, that YOU favor US, and we are indebted to YOU, when you allow us to *give* and to *serve*. For then *ours* is the greater blessing, for Jesus said, "It is more blessed to GIVE than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Yet to say that we would not welcome other volunteers who wish to have a part with our family of co-workers would be untrue. We would not deny any that privilege, but rejoice in welcoming them with open arms.

Paradoxically, as this work struggles to survive — and to GROW in scope and power — it does so to WARN a world whose greatest problem is SURVIVAL — yet we are the only voice on earth with the GOOD NEWS of *HOW* THIS WORLD WILL SURVIVE — AND OF THE HAPPY WORLD TOMORROW! Our co-workers and I *THANK YOU* for allowing us to serve and GIVE! □

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

There doesn't seem to be any reference to baptism in the Old Testament. Where did John the Baptist get the ceremony of baptism?

One of the greatest miracles of the Old Testament was a forerunner and type of what true baptism pictures today. It was the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt.

In I Corinthians 10:11, God reveals that these Old Testament events occurred to be examples to Christians. Now read verses 1-2: "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, and were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

The word here translated "baptized" means "immersed" or "plunged into." Let's understand the full meaning of this event.

Israel had just come out of captivity in Egypt. God said that He was going to bring them up out of that land of oppression — that pagan land of strange customs and evil ways. So God sent Moses to deliver them from their bondage in that land of sin.

Israel was in sin, living the wrong way. And God set His hand to deliver them.

After Israel's Exodus from Egypt, God brought them to encamp "beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon" (Exodus 14:9). To Israel's amazement, they found themselves trapped, with the Egyptians closing in on them. The only way of escape was through the Red Sea.

When Israel saw Pharaoh's army pursuing them, they became filled with fear (verse 10). But Moses assured them, saying: "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. . . ." Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back . . . and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea"

(Exodus 14:13, 21-22). This type of "immersion" was a veritable grave, and Pharaoh and his men all perished in it. For Pharaoh was still in sin and therefore was doomed (Romans 6:23).

Israel went through the Red Sea, picturing the death of that former way of life — then, coming up out of that grave by God's grace, they were to enter a new way of life, a promised land.

And so in the New Testament God also requires Christians to crucify the old man, the former way, and to come up out of a watery grave and into a better way of life (Colossians 2:12).

Israel's baptism was only a type. That baptism was under the Old Covenant, a physical agreement with physical ordinances and material rewards. But notice what God says about the New Covenant: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them" (Hebrews 10:16).

But what about John? Where did he get his authority? How did he know and understand the principle of baptism?

Answer: John had been taught those examples from childhood, for his parents were righteous before God (Luke 1:6). God, through the power of His Spirit, revealed to John the principle of baptism — that a people had to be prepared to hear the message of the soon-coming Messiah.

Repentant sinners needed to prove their repentance by an outward sign, as Israel did under Moses. That's why John saw in Scripture that the original crossing of the Red Sea by a whole nation was a type of what each individual ought to do — be immersed, or baptized, in water.

In I Samuel 15:3, God commanded Saul to "go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill

both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." Why did God have to deal so harshly with these people?

God said: "All who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God. Remember what Amalek did to you [Israel] on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God" (Deuteronomy 25:16-18).

Notice how harsh and unfair the Amalekites were. They waited until their enemy was extremely weak, and even then, they attacked from behind, killing the laggards one by one.

But why did God slay all of the Amalekites? Surely some must have been righteous. If so, why didn't God spare them?

Let's take another example, that of Sodom and Gomorrah. In Genesis 18:23-32, Abraham asked God if He would spare those sinful cities if as few as 10 righteous people could be found in them. God said yes.

The same principle applies to the Amalekites. God may have spared the Amalekites if there had been even 10 among them who were righteous. But there wasn't one innocent person among them!

But understand God's plan. Are these people lost forever? No!

They will be resurrected to mortal flesh and given a chance to live under God's government (Revelation 20:12). If they then repent and obey God, they will be given eternal life as members of His Family. God put these people out of their misery, realizing that He would later resurrect them and give them their first real chance for salvation.

How merciful is God (Psalm 103:1-18)! □

*Is Christ divided?
There are hundreds of
denominations in
Christendom — and
many other little
groups and sects. Why?
When did this
confusion originate?*

By Herman L. Hoeh

It's hard to believe, but it's true! The facts of history — both biblical and secular — are utterly astonishing.

It's time we looked behind this curtain. It's time you knew how, when and where all this religious confusion started.

Every thinking person — every denomination — realizes that, at some time in history, there has been a great apostasy or falling away from original truth.

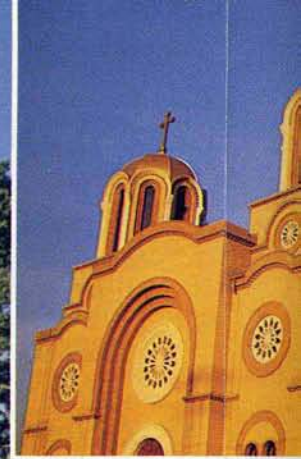
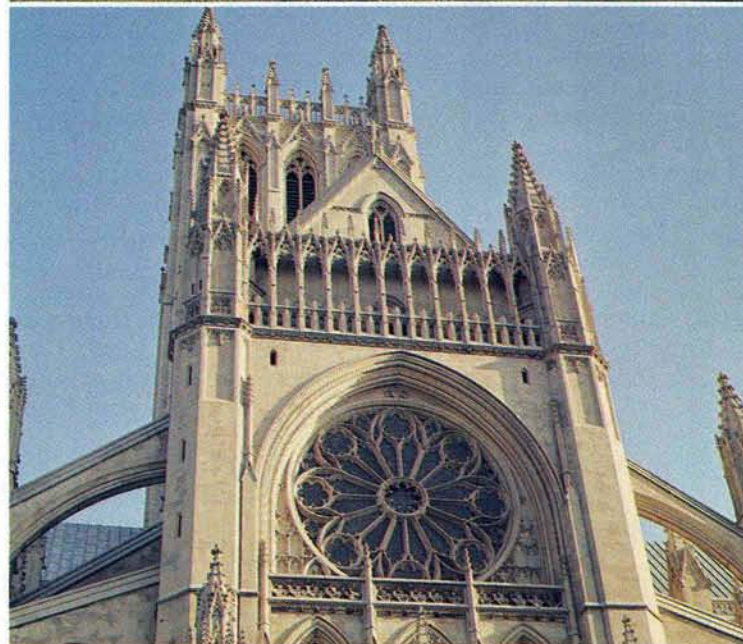
Only one Church

Jesus Christ did not found many denominations. Christ said, "I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18). He did build it — one Church, commissioned to preach and to publish His Gospel — the very message He brought from God — to all the world.

But what do we find today? Hundreds of different and disagreeing churches, all founded by men, each professing to teach the truth, yet contradicting and disagreeing with all the others.

The Church in prophecy

While most people today suppose that the true Church was rapidly to grow big, to become a powerful organization, exerting powerful influence on the world, making this a better world, becoming the stabilizing influence of the world's civilization, actually Christ founded His

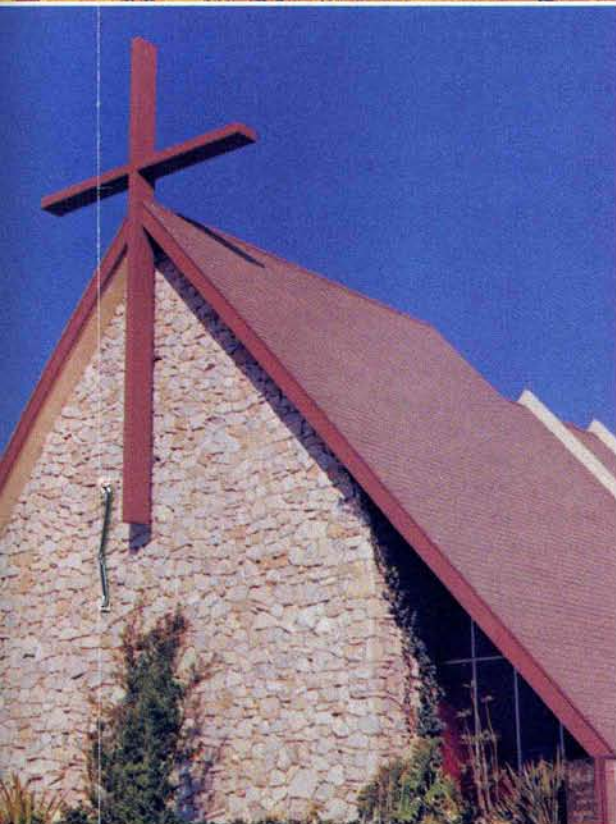


Why So Many Denominations

Church for no such purpose. In His final prayer for His one Church, Jesus prayed:

"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world . . . Holy Father,

keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. . . I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because



Many ations?

they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil

one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (John 17:9-16).

Those of His Church are described as being strangers and foreigners in this world — ambassadors for Christ — which is foreign to this world — yet never being of the world.

This true Church of God was to be persecuted — scattered. "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," said Jesus to His disciples (John 15:20). "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (11 Timothy 3:12).

On the night Jesus was seized to be crucified, He said, "It is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered'" (Mark 14:27). After He, the Shepherd, was crucified, the "sheep" — His Church — were to become scattered.

Previously that same evening, Jesus had said to His disciples, "You will be scattered" (John 16:32).

This persecution and scattering began early. Notice Acts 8:1: "At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

Nowhere is there any prophecy that the one true Church should become great and powerful, exerting influence in this world. Rather, Jesus called it the "little flock" (Luke 12:32). Despised, persecuted, scattered by the world — separate from the world. Scattered, but never divided. Always one Church, speaking the same thing — never many differing sects.

You haven't read much of the history of that Church. Even the historians have never known where to look for the true Church — for they do not know what the true Church is.

Broad majority deceived

On the other hand, in the world, all the prophecies foretold apostasy, deception and division.

Jesus foretold the very first event to come on the world —

great deception — climaxing, in our day now just ahead, in great tribulation.

"Take heed," He said, "that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5, Authorized Version).

Notice carefully: It was not the *few* who were to be deceived, but the *many*. It was the *few* who were to become true Christians!

Jesus pictured this same condition when He said: "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

That isn't what the world believes, is it? Probably that isn't what you have heard and come to assume. But it's what Christ said. How deceived this world has become!

Satan is pictured in the Bible as the god of this world. He appears, not as a devil, but as a god — as an angel of light. And in Revelation 12:9, you read of "Satan, who deceives the whole world."

Yes, the many would come in Jesus' name, proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ — yes, preaching Christ to the world. And yet, without realizing it, deceiving the world.

Apostles knew what would happen

The apostles, instructed directly by Jesus Christ Himself, warned the Church about the departure from the faith that would begin to occur at the close of their ministry.

Scarcely 20 years after the crucifixion of Jesus, the apostle Paul, in one of his first inspired letters, cautioned Christians not to be deceived by false preaching or by false letters purporting to be from the apostles: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [the time of God's intervention in human affairs, when Jesus Christ will return to rule the nations] will not come unless the falling

away comes first" (II Thessalonians 2:3).

In Acts 20:29-30, the teacher of the gentiles explains how the apostasy would begin. He gathered the elders (ministers) of the Church at Ephesus to deliver them a final message concerning their responsibility over the local congregations. "For," said Paul,

thy 4:2-4). This was in the days of the apostles and evangelists. Many who fellowshipped in the local congregations of the early Church, after about two generations, did not endure sound doctrine because they had not really repented and therefore had never received the Holy Spirit. They followed teachers who, for the

epistles, he had this sad note to include about those who at first crept in unnoticed: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us" (I John 2:19).

Although these numerous deceivers, called Gnostics, left the true Church, drawing away disciples after them, their following did not last for more than a few centuries.

There was, however, an even more dangerous apostasy that infiltrated the true Church.

True Christians forced out

Peter warned the churches that many would be misled. There were false teachers among Christians who would bring in heresies, "and many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of the truth will be blasphemed" (II Peter 2:2).

The letters of Paul were twisted to give another meaning than intended (II Peter 3:15-16). But instead of leaving the local congregations and forming their own sects, as others had done at first, these false preachers remained within the congregations and soon began to expel the true Christians.

In the letter of the apostle John to Gaius, we read: "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church" (III John 9-10).

The true Christians, who alone comprised the true Church, were being put out of the visible, organized congregations!

These were the scattered ones of whom John said, "Therefore the world does not know us" (I John 3:1).

The name *Christian* was being borne away by leaders who crept

(Continued on page 22)

Satan, the god of this world, appears, not as the devil, but as an angel of light. Jesus said many would come in His name, proclaiming that He was the Christ — and yet, without realizing it, deceiving the whole world.

"I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things." Why? "To draw away the disciples after themselves." To gain a personal following for themselves. To start new denominations!

Do you catch the full significance of these two verses? The elders or ministers were especially assembled because, immediately after Paul would leave Ephesus, there would come within the local church congregations false ministers, wolves in sheep's clothing, to make a prey of Christians. And even from those elders already in the church congregations some would pervert the doctrine of Jesus to secure a following for themselves.

In instructing the evangelist Timothy, Paul instructed him to "convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires" — wanting to do what they please — "... they will heap up for themselves teachers" — encourage ministers who will preach what they want to hear — "and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (II Timo-

sake of money, pleased their wishes by preaching fables — the enticing fables of mysticism and sun worship that were engulfing the Roman Empire.

When Paul wrote his second letter to the gentile-born Thessalonians, he instructed them about the "mystery of iniquity" that "doth already work" (II Thessalonians 2:7, AV). Notice: Teachings of lawlessness were at work in Paul's day. The Roman world was filled with mystery religions that stemmed from the old sun-worshipping mysteries.

Many of them found that by including the name of Jesus their following increased.

Jude had to include in his letter the admonition that every Christian should "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit" (Jude 3-4, 19). They taught penance, not repentance.

Jude says these preachers separated their followers from the body of believers.

By the time John wrote his

Why We Need God's Holy Spirit

Recall from the previous ministudy that God offered His Holy Spirit to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Had they eaten of the fruit of the tree of life, they would have received God's Spirit. Instead, the first humans listened to the devil and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They partook of the tree of death. Thus they cut themselves off from God, and God cut them off from His Spirit.

But why did God offer His Spirit to Adam and Eve in the first place? Why was it so vital? What would it have done for them had they received it? And what can it do for you? It is extremely important that you understand the truth about this subject.

The Bible reveals that we were born for a tremendous purpose. But few really grasp the magnitude of the awesome future God offers mankind.

To understand God's incredible purpose for humanity, and what God's Holy Spirit has to do with it, let's start this study in the first chapter of Genesis.

1. What do the very first words of the Bible tell us about God? Genesis 1:1.

The original Hebrew word translated "God" in verse 1 is *Elohim*. *Elohim* is a plural noun. Like the words *church*, *family* and *kingdom*, *Elohim* stands for two or more individuals. *Elohim* actually is the God Kingdom or Family!

2. Who are the divine beings now composing the God Family? John 1:1-2. Was it the Word who created all things? Verse 3. What did the Word later become? Verse 14. Who, then, is the Word? Ephesians 3:9. And who is the other divine member of the God Family? I Corinthians 8:6.

The verses we have studied thus far show that God is now in the process of expanding His universe-ruling Family. And you can become a member of that eternal, spirit-composed Family! See how this marvelous truth unfolds in your Bible.

3. After whose "image" and "likeness" was man created? Genesis 1:26-27.

In God's pattern for all life, kind reproduces like kind. Just as each form of plant or animal life reproduces after its own kind, so humans

reproduce humans. But unlike any of the animals, man was created in God's own image and likeness. God made man like Himself — same form and shape. The astounding truth is that God's purpose is to create mankind after the God kind!

Notice again in Genesis 1:26 what God said: "Let Us make man in Our *image*." The original Hebrew indicates far more than merely God's outward appearance. "Image" also refers to mind and character. God intended for man to develop the very mind and character of God. God has purposed that we develop His character during this mortal life.

Simply stated, God is reproducing Himself. All human beings have the awesome potential of becoming God's literal children — members of God's own divine Family.

4. Does God plainly show it is His purpose to increase His divine Family by bringing many sons into it? Hebrews 2:9-10, Revelation 21:7. Isn't Jesus Christ actually the first of many sons of God? Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:18.

To be conformed to the image of Christ means to become like Him — to be glorified as He is glorified — to be part of the divine Family of God as much as Christ now is.

5. But what must happen to flesh-and-blood human beings before they can enter God's Family? I Corinthians 15:49-53, John 3:3-8.

Jesus said we must be "born again" — changed into spirit. Yes, born again — this time born of the Spirit of God as divine children in the Family of God!

6. However, are true Christians already, during this mortal life, God's children? I John 3:1-2. Are they inheritors of God's Kingdom, or only "heirs" to it? Romans 8:14-17.

Although they are now the children of God, Christians are only heirs — ones who shall, in the future, inherit the glory of God's Family with Jesus Christ. Why only heirs? Because they are now only Spirit-begotten children (I Peter 1:3). They are unborn children of God. It is when they are born of God that they become inheritors of God's Kingdom — divine members of the Family of God.

7. Must the Spirit-begotten children of God

grow spiritually before being born of God, much like a newly begotten human must grow physically in its mother's womb until it is born? II Peter 3:18, I Peter 2:1-2.

Human reproduction pictures the process by which God is reproducing Himself. Recall that Jesus told Nicodemus we must be "born again" to enter the Kingdom of God as actual members of God's Family.

Before the second phase of our creation — our spiritual creation — can begin, God the Father must first beget each of us by placing His Holy Spirit within our minds. Thus our minds can be compared to an egg or ovum, and the Holy Spirit to an impregnating seed or germ of eternal life.

Receiving God's Spirit is the begetting of the spiritual life of God within our minds. And much as a newly begotten physical embryo begins to grow in its mother's womb, we must begin to grow in God's spiritual character after we are begotten by His Spirit (Ephesians 4:11-15). This growth comes through Bible study, prayer and walking with God in obedience to Him as we are empowered by His Holy Spirit within us.

Had Adam and Eve eaten of the fruit of the tree of life, they would have been similarly begotten by God's Holy Spirit, and they would have been taught directly by their Creator.

8. Are the Spirit-begotten children of God clearly being fashioned by God for a specific purpose? Ephesians 2:10.

"We" in New Testament language usually refers to God's Spirit-begotten children, as Paul intended in verse 10. God's begotten children are His workmanship. They are being "created in Christ Jesus for good works."

God, through the power of the Holy Spirit He has put into His children (after their repentance and baptism), is forming in His people His holy, righteous character. With their obedient cooperation, He is creating in them His own character-image. He is creating them to be the supreme masterpiece of all His creation — individuals who will be capable of exercising the awesome powers of the God Family.

And so man, the material creation, is only the first phase of this creative process. The clay model has to be fashioned by experience, with the aid of God's Holy Spirit, into the finished spiritual masterpiece possessing the very character of God.

9. When will the spiritual birth of Christians take place? I Corinthians 15:52. When will the resurrection occur? I Thessalonians 4:15-17. Will they be changed to spirit at the resurrection? I Corinthians 15:42-49. Will those who are thus resurrected be like God? Philippians 3:20-21, I John 3:2. Of what is God composed?

John 4:24. By what power will this miraculous change be accomplished? Romans 8:11.

When Jesus Christ returns to earth, the Spirit-begotten children of God who have died through the ages will be resurrected to spirit life by the Spirit of God, and those still alive will be instantly changed into spirit beings. At that moment, they will be "born again," this time as members of God's own Family.

And God's own offspring will then have eternal life inherent within themselves — just like Jesus Christ their elder brother.

10. Was Jesus "glorified" again after His resurrection? John 17:4-5, Hebrews 2:9. Had He previously given three of His disciples a fleeting glimpse of this glorified condition? Matthew 17:1-2. How does Christ's glorified spirit body appear today? Revelation 1:13-16.

To be "glorified" means to be given great power and brightness.


Before He became a human being, Jesus Christ had a glorious, powerful spirit body like His Father's. After His resurrection, He was restored to the same power and glory. Christ's face and powerful spirit body now radiate light as the sun in full strength, with eyes blazing like flames of fire.

11. Will God also glorify all of His Spirit-begotten children at the resurrection by giving them this same great power and glory? Romans 8:17, Colossians 3:4, Daniel 12:2-3.

This is the incredible human potential! This is the awe-inspiring future God has in store for those who are begotten by His Holy Spirit and draw upon its power to grow in His character during this mortal life.

Do you have God's Spirit? Are you a Spirit-begotten child of God? How can you know? Our next ministudy on the Holy Spirit will answer these questions.

In the meantime, be sure to request our free book *The Incredible Human Potential* and our free booklet *Just What Do You Mean — Born Again?* Just use the literature request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you. □



ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE

The short study you've just completed is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the eye-opening Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the *Good News* office nearest you. See inside front cover for addresses.

LETTERS

"Conversion Is a Process!"

Mr. Armstrong, after reading your article "Conversion Is a Process!" in the February *Good News*, I felt compelled to respond in writing.

I am a very intense person and can hardly find the words to express how much this article has humbled me to see the sin of self-righteousness I have committed, not to mention the suffering I have put myself through by not being patient and letting God change me at His pace and not mine.

After being baptized eight months ago, I guess I forgot about human nature and that conversion is a process. What a torment I have put on myself! I can't express enough to others who may be newly baptized to please be careful not to try and be perfect all at once. It cannot be done.

I had become so discouraged. Because God had done so much for me by calling me to His truth and granting me repentance, forgiving me my past sins and giving me the gift of a new life, in my whole heart and mind I wanted to show Him how willing I was to change, but I've come to realize human nature is not so willing.

Thanks to your article and God's mercy, I've come to realize my mistakes in attitude, and feel deeply encouraged to continue on with a much more realistic perspective on conversion!

Reader
Columbus, Ohio

"Little Gifts of Greatness"

The Good News in our home is a real pleasure, a joy and delight to look forward to. The article "Little Gifts of Greatness" (February) is particularly enlightening and should be read by all parents and teachers and others concerned with the education of our youth.

Ruby D. Brogdon
Nashville, Ga.

Educating children

I want to praise Joan C. Bogdanchik's writing in the last two *Good News* magazines [January, February]. They are so well written and so very useful. It's a great teacher's lesson for all parents to recognize their duty to develop intelligent children. Most parents fail to realize their full responsibility until too late.

Mrs. M.J. Griffin
Brandon, S.D.

I have just completed reading your article in the February issue about the

literature of childhood. The article suggested ways to read to children, and certain books. Since my son is interested in trains, I read books about his favorite subject. I never saw such enthusiasm in my son. Thank you ever so much for printing that article.

Albert Voci, Jr.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Having just completed the article "Educating With Love" [January], I want to share it with my own children who are now adults with little ones of their own. I was elated by the solid answers provided, and I'm hoping they will be, too. At this point in their lives I am reemphasizing the importance of loving affection being shown to their offspring. My experiences have proven that it does make a difference — having it or being deprived of it.

The exercises in listening and following instructions have excellent suggestions for some really enjoyable visits with my young grands. They are at a teachable age and stage. The fun games I know one will truly love doing.

Mrs. Bogdanchik, you made my day and perhaps many more for me and some others. Thank you very much. We anxiously await the next article in the series.

L. Rice
Normal, Ala.

Grace

"Grace — Do You Really Understand It?" [January] answered a question I have pondered on for a long time. I could not understand how one could "grow in grace" (II Peter 3:18) when it was an unmerited gift from God. That article explained it perfectly. Thank Douglas G. Peitz for me.

Mrs. Eugene Lucas
Overland Park, Kan.

Like a good meal

When I picked up the January *Good News*, I did the usual thing and turned over each page, looking at the titles of the articles. With each title I felt a kind of excitement, not knowing which one to read first, after I have read Mr. Armstrong's "Personal," of course. Then at page 19 I began to feel a little bit disappointed because I had come to the end, when — wow! — after I had turned over a couple of pages, I found four more exciting articles just waiting to be read.

The Good News is just like a good meal — something tasty to start teasing

our appetites, leaving us ready for the main course, then finishing off with exciting desserts — a feast of spiritual food, lovingly prepared and served in just the right order.

Pat Rowsell
Wembley, England

"Confessions of a Busy Father"

I have never read your publication before now. My aunt gave me the January issue, and I like it.

I'm a 19-year-old black woman in my freshman year at college. It really made me feel good to get to the article "Confessions of a Busy Father" and see that a young black couple modeled for the picture. My eyes involuntarily lit up and I smiled. I guess it was the shock of seeing someone who looked like me in a Christian magazine. If it's at all possible, will you use more black models to illustrate upcoming articles?

Jacquelyn Kirk
New Orleans, La.

Whole new outlook

By all means please renew my subscription to *The Good News*. My subscriptions to *The Plain Truth*, *The Good News* and the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course have been very rewarding. I have a whole new outlook on life and religious beliefs, and all for the better. To be frank, I can hardly wait for the next issues to arrive.

Robert J. Bell
Hoopeston, Ill.

Letters are encouraging

It is so heartwarming to read the "Letters" in *The Good News*. The writers truly express feelings that others can share. Many of the letters telling of brethren extending a helping hand to other brethren and those telling of the great miracle of healing are enough to bring tears of joy to one's eyes, and they certainly do to mine. It helps me to feel closer to those brethren I don't even know, which is what we all need now in this end time. Thank you for this section in *The Good News*!

Treva Huddleston
Sarasota, Fla.

A clean magazine

Would you please send me a copy of the December, 1984 issue of *The Good News*? My 2-year-old daughter put ours in the bathtub!

Mrs. David Ward
Milton, Wash.



Do You Have Time...?

Wise time-management principles can help you fulfill all your physical and spiritual responsibilities.

By Graemme J. Marshall

Ten years ago, Geoff and Karen became baptized members of God's one true Church. Thrilled to be freed from many time-consuming but false traditions of this

world, they settled into a diligent and enthusiastic study of God's Word and God's way of life.

They breathed sighs of relief when sunset marked the beginning of God's weekly day

of rest. The Sabbath rejuvenated them physically and spiritually, and they felt refreshed and ready to begin a new week.

But as the years passed, other activities crowded in on them.

During the week and almost



every Friday evening they were either entertaining others or being invited out. The Sabbath used to be a distinct day of rest. Now sunset seemed to signal tire-some hours of entertaining.

Time for quiet reflection and worship was lost to the needs of hospitality.

Then there was the weekly Bible study conducted by the Church. It involved rushing home from work, gulping down a meal, a frustrating drive through city traffic, a battle with falling asleep during the study — and even more tiredness at work the next day.

Then Geoff joined the Church speaking club. Another rush home from work, another hastily consumed meal and impatient words with the family.

The little time for prayer was being squeezed out by activities. Personal study became little more than just reading Church literature — when there was time.

Then Geoff was invited to a Church leadership training class,

and soon he was assisting the deacons. Now there was even less time with his family, as he was too busy serving others. The little free time he did have on the Sabbath diminished even further. And almost every Sunday was spent at youth activities, church socials, service projects or fund raising.

Geoff's and Karen's health deteriorated. Their children seemed emotionally disturbed and their marriage lurched perilously close to shipwreck. Yet all this seemed in the best interests of serving others.

Wasn't it?

They simply did not have the time anymore to do all the things that crowded in on them.

Where do you find the time to be a growing Christian? Is there some great secret you haven't yet discovered? How can you find time for quality prayer, absorbing Bible study and meaningful time for your marriage and family, and to be truly refreshed on God's Sabbath?

The key to time management

The Bible holds the key to using time. Christians are admonished by the apostle Paul to use time wisely, "redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

Christian growth occurs during a time span. And every person has as much time as the next, whether paper boy or prime minister, farmer or executive, housewife or teacher. But how differently people use their 24 hours every day!

Proper management of time depends on proper management of yourself.

You either use time profitably or you let it pass you by.

You control what happens. And time let go is irretrievable.

Have you observed how quickly time passes when you are absorbed in something and how slowly it drags when you are bored?

If you do not want to do something, you will find a dozen reasons for not doing so. Yet if you really want to do something,

nothing stops you. As Christians, we are given biblical priorities, and our time must be carved out to fulfill that calling. When there is a conflict of interest, something must go. A Christian will either live genuinely by what God requires or live superficially, doing a little bit of everything but not enough of anything. And God is not amused by religious lip service.

To be quality Christians, we need to maintain three priorities above all other personal needs and desires. Let's look at these three areas.

Time with God

In this modern age, how can you consistently make time for God? Simple. You decide to. You make a commitment that God comes first in your daily allocation of 24 hours. Jesus Christ promises that if you seek God first, then the physical needs of this life will be supplied (Matthew 6:33).

In most cases it's best to decide that your first use of the day is with your Father in heaven. Begin the day with prayer. Otherwise you become quickly preoccupied with daily routine. You wash, get dressed, eat breakfast and then exclaim: "Oh, look at the time — I must rush!"

After work you come home and have a meal, do some chores, try to relax, then it's bedtime and again you say, "Oh, no, I haven't prayed yet."

This is giving God the leftovers of your day. Give Him the first part! You will feel better and have freer use of the rest of the hours for yourself.

What about Bible study? Decide that time must be set aside. First thing in the morning is ideal and some study can work as an aid to prayer. Further study can be done later when more convenient. In a rushed schedule try these suggestions:

If you commute on a train or bus, use travel time to read Church literature. If you drive your own car, take advantage of cassette tape readings from the Bible. Another idea is to write out

key scriptures on small cards, then practice committing them to memory. Carry them with you for free moments. Housewives, too, can keep scripture cards close by when washing dishes and ironing or close to their main work area. You can also listen to cassette tape readings of the Bible as you clean house.

Busy mothers with preschool children often find their time is taken up with picking up after little ones. If your children tire you out and consume your free time, then decide to change the situation. One helpful method is to sit small children down on a rug with some books or toys and command that they stay there quietly.

Discipline them lovingly but firmly for leaving the rug, until they follow your instruction. When they can stay in one place and play quietly for a while, you have some time to study, pray or use as you choose.

It can be done!

Time with family

What if your mate or family do not share your interest in God's Word? Remember that Christians are called to peace in the home and to be good examples. Avoid shutting yourself off in a room to study if other family members feel you are neglecting them.

When they wish you to spend time with them, be available. Husbands and wives are sensitive about neglect caused by an unbalanced example. Study privately. Find acceptable ways and moments to do it so that your conduct is exemplary before those who do not yet believe God's way.

One of the restored truths of this end-time work of God is the nurturing of the family. And extreme preoccupation with careers, entertaining, service to others and social clubs will not be acceptable excuses before God for having neglected your vital family responsibilities.

Paul wrote, "If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household,

he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). What does provide for them mean?

Much more than just providing financially, "providing" also means caring for emotional and physical needs. It is giving your time. Where does your family rate in these priorities?

Time for yourself

All humans need to slow down, rest and recuperate sometime. If you are a workaholic or an inveterate socialite and entertainer, evaluate whether all such pursuits are spiritually helping your relationship with God, your mate, your family or yourself.

Time is needed for quiet reflection and meditation. You must make and take personal time to be a Christian.

Questions to ask

If you find that you just don't have enough time, then ask yourself these questions:

What are you doing now that really doesn't need doing? Eliminate the unnecessary.

What are you doing that could be done just as well by someone else? Learn to delegate.

What are you doing that wastes your time or the time of others? Have you observed that often what you postpone you abandon anyway?

Whatever your difficulties with time management, God must come first. If He doesn't, then you really aren't serious about being a true Christian.

Take time for prayer — it is the source of godly power. Take time for Bible study — it gains the mind of God. Take time for family — each day is too short to let it pass without sharing with those closest to you. Take time to laugh — it lightens life's burdens. Take time to read — it's a gold mine of wisdom and experience. Take time to reflect — it unclutters the mind.

And above all else, take time for God — it is life's only lasting investment!

What will you do with your next 24 hours? □

Denominations

(Continued from page 16)

into the fellowship of the Church of God, captured the local congregations and, in the name of Christ, deceived the many into following their false teachings as if it were Christ's Gospel.

The age of shadows

Following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the deaths of the apostles, a strange phenomenon is witnessed. The true Church almost disappears from history, and false churches arise!

Of this period the English historian Edward Gibbon says: "The scanty and suspicious ecclesiastical history seldom enables us to dispel the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the church" (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 15). The truth was obscured by error!

Historian Jesse Lyman Hurlbut gives us even more details in his book *The Story of the Christian Church*, page 41: "We would like to read of the later work of such helpers of St. Paul as Timothy, Apollos and Titus, but all these . . . drop out of the record at his death. For 50 years after St. Paul's life a curtain hangs over the church through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about A.D. 120, with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of Peter and Paul."

Where is the true Church?

Historians lost sight of the true Church. But it has continued to exist from the time of Christ until the present. Few know where to look for it.

For further information, request our free booklet *Where Is the True Church?* and our free reprint articles "Just What Is the Church?" and "The Church They Couldn't Destroy."

Just mail the literature request card in this issue or write to our address nearest you. □

It's Nice to Be Needed, But...

My wife's parents recently asked her to come and spend a week with them. They are getting up in years and it had been some time since we visited them.

Of course she wanted to go, but she recalled the last time

whether the laundry was done. On the third day, though, we realized how helpless we had been, when my teenage daughter fainted at high-school band practice. To our great embarrassment, it was because she had eaten practically nothing for three days!

When my wife got home she had every right to be upset. "It's nice to be needed," she groaned, "but this is ridiculous!"

We had depended on her so much we didn't bother to take care of ourselves. It wasn't because we didn't know how. It was simply too convenient to let her do all the shopping, prepare the meals, clean the house and do the wash.

She has taught the girls to do all those things and to do them well. Our two oldest daughters are married and take good care of their homes and husbands. But at our home it was too easy to depend on Mom.

So when the opportunity came to visit her parents, she was reluctant to leave. Her previous departure resulted in piles of wash and hungry children.

But we felt we had learned our lesson. We all urged Mom to go and told her we were quite capable of taking care of ourselves.

"I know you are capable," she said, "but will you?"

We said we would be OK, so she made reservations. We went

to the airport to wave good-bye. By 7 p.m. we were faced with what to do for dinner. She hadn't been in the air 30 minutes and we had already fallen into our old patterns.

Not willing to face the hostile kitchen, we stopped for pizza and assured ourselves we would get by just fine. However, we knew we had to develop a plan of action or history would repeat itself.

We can get by!

Mom would only be gone a week. So we assigned duties. The oldest would make spaghetti tomorrow night. Dad would be chef on Thursday. We would drop a hint to have one of our married daughters prepare dinner Friday night. The youngest was assigned the task of securing the invitation (it worked).

We helped with the washing and the housecleaning. We even remembered to feed the dog and water the houseplants.

No one fainted. The wash was finished. The dishwasher was empty. We picked Mom up at the airport and proudly brought her home to a sparkling-clean house with a well-fed family.

We proved we could get by. But frankly, the children and I agree we hope it is a very long time before Mom has to go away and leave us alone again.

It's so much better with her around. We really do need her. And we realize how much by the few times we had to fend for ourselves without her.

Yes, it's nice to be needed. But it's also nice to know the family can take care of themselves when they have to. □

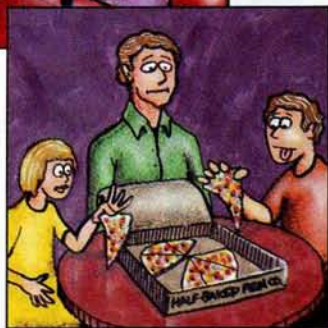


she left the family alone for a few days. It was a disaster!

Too easy to depend on Mom

When a death occurred in the family, my wife had to be away three days to attend the funeral. She left plenty of groceries and instructions for the teenage girls on cooking, cleaning house and seeing that Dad didn't starve.

I was able to eat in the cafeteria where I worked, so meals for me were no problem. But with everyone so active in personal affairs, I paid little attention to what the children were eating or





Only a few times in history has a person been born who accomplishes so much that his deeds are remembered as much or more than the person himself.

Such a man was Joshua.

Have you ever noticed that Joshua is not even named by Paul as one of the great heroes of faith in Hebrews 11? Yet far lesser known personalities such as Barak, Samson and Jephthah are cited as examples.

Why not Joshua? Joshua who took charge of Israel after the death of Moses? Joshua who gave instructions to carry the ark across the Jordan, which parted as the Red Sea had in the days of Moses? Joshua who led Israel around the city of Jericho and the walls came tumbling down? Joshua who led Israel's conquest of the promised land? Joshua who commanded and the sun stood still for one whole day?

Are there more dramatic examples of faith in the entire Bible? Why, then, did Paul leave Joshua out of Hebrews 11?

Perhaps the answer is found in the long list of Joshua's accomplishments. What he did — or, better, what God did through him — was so great that the events actually overshadow the man.

Joshua

A Man Overshadowed by His Deeds!

Here is the dramatic story of one of the truly great people of the Bible.

By Ronald D. Kelly

The first time we hear of Joshua in the Bible is during the second month of the Exodus.

Under Moses, God led Israel

out of Egypt by way of the Red Sea. After dividing the Red Sea for Israel, God killed the pursuing Egyptians in the returning



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water. The Israelites journeyed into the rugged mountains of the southern Sinai and camped in a plain called Rephidim.

At Rephidim, Israel entered into their first battle against hostile forces — the Amalekites.

You remember the story. When Moses held his staff high in the air, the Israelites were victorious. When his hands fell to his sides, the Amalekites were victorious. Finally, at the end of the day, Moses sat on a rock with his hands held up by Aaron and Hur. Israel was victorious.

And what about Joshua?

Moses had appointed Joshua the commanding officer in the field. Notice the orders: “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek...” So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek” (Exodus 17:9-10).

No doubt a lifelong lesson was

learned on that battlefield. Joshua knew victory did not come from his great military strategy and prowess. He had none. Joshua knew victory came from God. He experienced the intervention of God firsthand.

We are introduced to Joshua as he learns to trust in the powerful God of Israel.

The Ten Commandments

Everyone knows God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel at Mt. Sinai. And everyone knows how Moses went up to the summit where he received the tables of stone and the remainder of the law, statutes and judgments.

But did you know, when Moses was on the mountain, that Joshua played an important role and continued to prove himself qualified for the job he would fulfill?

After God thundered His law to all Israel at Mt. Sinai, the Lord said to Moses: “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them” (Exodus 24:12).

So Moses left the camp of Israel for nearly two months. But did he go alone? Notice: “So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God” (verse 13).

Aaron and Hur were left in charge of the camp. Moses and Joshua went up the mountain and set up a base camp. They waited there six days (verse 16). On the seventh day, God called Moses to the summit of what the Arabs now call Jebel Musa, the mountain of Moses.

Moses was there 40 days, nearly six weeks. Joshua remained at the base camp.

Meanwhile Israel, lacking faith in God, insisted on making an idol of gold — a calf after the manner of the Egyptians and other pagan nations. They entered into drunken revelry and immorality. Moses and Joshua did not know what was happening at the Israelite encampment.

Having received the law and the tables of stone, Moses started

down the mountain. At base camp he rejoined Joshua, who had been faithfully waiting.

Together they hurried down the mountain to show all Israel the tables of stone carved with the very finger of God.

As they neared the encampment, they heard faint noises in the distance. Louder and louder the voices reverberated off the stony canyon walls. Joshua said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp” (Exodus 32:17).

They broke into a run. Then they discovered the truth: “It is not the voice of those who shout in victory, nor is it the voice of those who cry out in defeat, but the voice of those who sing” (verse 18).

Finally they reached a bluff where they could overlook the camp of Israel. There, glistening in the bright sunlight in the center of the encampment, was a golden calf. Thousands of Israelites were singing and dancing, many virtually naked, most drunk. They whirled round and round and fell in worship before the golden calf.

Moses, in a rage, threw down the tables of stone. They broke into a thousand pieces.

Placing trust in Joshua

Moses and Joshua rushed to the mound where the calf was set up. Moses ordered a fire built, immediately melted the calf, ground the metal into powder, mixed it into the drinking water and made the children of Israel drink the mixture (verse 20).

Moses then demanded an explanation from Aaron. Unfortunately Aaron had weakened and permitted the idolatrous, drunken orgy.

Then Moses removed the tabernacle of worship from the center of camp to an outer extremity; if the people wanted to repent and worship God, they would have to make an effort to get to it. Even Aaron the high priest had polluted himself.

Who was trustworthy and faithful to be placed in charge of the safety of the tabernacle?

Joshua! Notice it in Exodus

33:11: "The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle."

Of course, Joshua was not perfect. He had lessons to learn as we all do. One such lesson came a little later when God instructed Moses to convene the elders of Israel at the tabernacle. You can read the story in Numbers 11.

God chose this occasion to perform a special miracle. He took of the Spirit that led Moses and gave it to the elders of Israel. They began to prophesy — God gave them miraculous thoughts and words. But this was a special gift to the elders who assisted Moses. Joshua, as a younger servant, apparently did not receive the gift.

Then a runner came from camp. Two other elders who had not come to the tabernacle also were giving prophetic utterances. Joshua exclaimed, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" (Numbers 11:28).

It seems Joshua had an important lesson to learn.

Moses, perceiving Joshua may have been a little hurt, even jealous, since he had not been given the gift of prophecy, said to Joshua: "Are you jealous for my sake? [Or are you jealous for your sake?] I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" (verse 29, New International Version).

Joshua must have gotten the point.

Selected to spy

Israel had been gone from Egypt nearly six months when Moses sent a group to spy out the land of Canaan. He wanted a report on the condition of the land, the weather, the crops. He also wanted to know who lived in the land, how strong they were, how their cities were fortified.

Twelve men were selected, one from each of the tribes of Israel. The representative from Ephraim was Joshua. Caleb represented

Judah. Each of the other 10 tribes selected a man.

This story is told in Numbers 13.

God said He would lead Israel



For nearly a quarter of a century Joshua led Israel as they settled into the promised land.

There probably was no comparable 25 years in Israel's history when God's laws were more applied.

to a land flowing with milk and honey. The spies probably arrived in Canaan in September. The grapes were ripe for harvesting. The pomegranates and figs and other autumn produce were in abundance. The verdant pastureland could support all their cattle, sheep and goats. It was almost too good to be true.

They gathered some of the fruit. A cluster of grapes was so succulent and large that Joshua and Caleb had to put one cluster on a pole to carry it back to the Israelites.

After spying out the land for 40 days, the spies returned. Joshua and Caleb reported, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30).

But the other 10 spies said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. . . . The land through which we have gone as spies is a

land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. . . . we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" (verses 31-33).

Almost all of the Israelites wanted to return to Egypt. They feared entering the promised land. Joshua, Caleb, Moses and a few others were shocked. They had learned the lesson of faith. They knew God would be with them — they were His people. But all Israel refused to go. Some even wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb.

After that God had to teach all Israel a lesson. They refused to go into the land God prepared for them, so God made them spend 40 years in that parched, barren, desolate wilderness of Sinai — one year for each day the spies were in the promised land.

So for 40 years they wandered in the desert. All those who had been 20 years of age or older at the time of the Exodus grew old and died in the wilderness. They were not allowed to enter the promised land.

Even Moses, who had his own lessons to learn, died on the east side of the Jordan River. He was permitted to see the promised land from afar, but not to enter it himself.

Joshua appointed leader

Joshua continued faithful to God throughout the 40 years wandering. Trained at Moses' side, he really was the only one of the older generation who was qualified to lead Israel (Caleb would have been the only other possible consideration).

Moses was 120 years old when Israel reached the Jordan. In Deuteronomy 31 you can read the story of how God selected Joshua to replace Moses: "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him" (verse 14).

And God said to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of

Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you" (verse 23).

Joshua was 85 years old when he took command of Israel. He was thoroughly trained for the job. He had proved for some 40 years that he would faithfully lead the people in the way of God. It was at last time to enter the promised land.

A series of miracles

We can now pick up the story in the book of Joshua. Perhaps now when you read this exciting book, you will understand how this man came to the position of leadership we find him holding.

On the command of Joshua, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant walked out into the Jordan. Just as the waters of the Red Sea parted 40 years before, the waters of the Jordan parted so Israel could cross into the promised land. God performed through Joshua a similar miracle as through Moses. The people could confidently know God had selected Joshua to lead them.

All the male Israelites were circumcised (this had not been done in the 40 years wandering) and Israel kept the Passover on the 14th of Nisan. The next day, the manna that had fed the Israelites for 40 years stopped, and they could live off the produce of the land.

They marched westward to Jericho, the first settlement Israel was to possess. Jericho was a heavily fortified city. The inhabitants were not overly concerned with the motley crew of Israelites camped on the plain.

For six days the troops of Israel marched round the city walls. Nothing happened. The people of Jericho must have laughed at what they thought were half-crazed soldiers who had been driven mad by the desert sun.

On the seventh day the band of "crazy" soldiers marched round and round the city — seven times. What was going on? At Joshua's command, the priests sounded the trumpets and the people let out a shout!

At that instant the walls of Jer-

icho came crashing to the ground. The shocked inhabitants were easily routed by the Israelites.

Even though Joshua is not named in Hebrews 11, his example of faith is: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days" (verse 30).

From Jericho Israel marched on. The king of Jerusalem, hearing Israel was coming his way and that the Israelites had made a treaty with the nearby Gibeonites, decided to attack at Gibeon. With allies from four surrounding city-states, the Jebusites stormed Gibeon.

Upon hearing of the attack, Joshua marched the Israelite army all night and surprised the enemy at Gibeon. In disarray, the Jebusites fled out the Beth Horon pass into the valley of Ajalon.

Here, two more great miracles of the Bible take place. First, God, who promised to go before the armies of Israel, caused great hailstones to fall from heaven. More enemy troops were killed by the stones than by the battle.

Yet another well-known Bible miracle took place. Upon the command of Joshua, the sun and moon stood still in the valley of Ajalon (Joshua 10:12-14). This is the story of Joshua's long day.

In a series of continuing victories, Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, conquered the southern portion of the land from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza. They moved northward to Hazor and on to Mt. Hermon. Six nations and 31 kings were conquered during the next six years. The land was then divided for the tribes of Israel.

Joshua's legacy

For nearly a quarter of a century Joshua continued to lead Israel as they settled into the promised land. There probably was no comparable 25 years in the history of ancient Israel when God's laws were more applied than during this period.

Finally, at the age of 110, Joshua was old and growing physically weak. Knowing he was about to die, he assembled the elders of

Israel where he delivered perhaps his most famous speech. He concluded with the memorable words, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

How much impact can one man have to lead a people? Joshua shows. The Bible says of his time, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua" (verse 31).

Not only that, the influence of this man lived on beyond his physical lifetime. Verse 31 continues, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel." So for perhaps another 25 years Israel continued to obey the laws of God.

But slowly, gradually, Israel slipped into idolatry and immorality. For some 400 years they were governed by judges, some more zealous than others, but none led them as Joshua had. Then for 400 more years they were ruled by the kings of Israel and Judah. Their wickedness and sins increased until finally, by 585 B.C., Israel and Judah had gone into captivity.

After the Babylonian captivity, God led a number of Jews back to the promised land under Ezra and Nehemiah. They began to rebuild Jerusalem, the city walls and the Temple. They discovered, to their amazement, that God has instructed, through Moses, the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles for eight days. Nehemiah reinstituted the festival.

It is recorded: "For since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so [observed the festival in that manner]. And there was very great gladness" (Nehemiah 8:17).

You can see how much impact proper leadership can have on an entire nation. Few leaders have ever had the ability to motivate the way Joshua did.

The story of Joshua is one of the most inspiring in all the Bible. But it should not be viewed as just a story. It is the real-life saga of a great man of God. □

PROVE ALL THINGS

What and Why the Church?

“I will build My Church,” proclaimed Jesus Christ to His disciples (Matthew 16:18).

Many have believed Christ’s promise and seen the profound need to find that true Church.

Yet, strangely, almost no one has sought to understand the other important questions about the Church — such as why Christ built the Church, what that Church really is, how it is organized and governed and how one becomes a part of it.

The basic doctrine

Briefly, the Church is that group of persons, led by Christ through an organized structure and ministry, in whom dwells the Holy Spirit of God. It exists to preach God’s message to the world as a witness, and to nurture and teach its own members with the knowledge of salvation.

The usual teachings of this world

At first glance nothing seems earth shattering or controversial in those statements. Yet upon examination, it is obvious these truths differ markedly from concepts held by most professing Christians.

Most people, for example, consider a church to be a building, or at least those persons who have “joined” a certain organization by registering on its official rolls. Some think the purpose of a church is merely to perpetuate itself and do little more than provide social events for its mem-

bers. Others take an almost opposite approach and become virtually obnoxious by trying to proselytize and force people to believe as they do and join with them.

Many at least give tacit approval to the contradictory concept that the true Church consists of everyone everywhere who is at least trying to obey his own conscience or moral code, in spite of the fact that others’ beliefs may violently oppose his own.

Certainly, the Bible supports none of these false yet common misconceptions.

The Bible teaching

Various analogies are used in the Bible to help us understand the function and purpose of the Church — it is described as a body, a family, a bride and even a temple. But the word translated “church” in the Bible is just the Greek word *ekklesia*. It is a common noun meaning simply “a group, crowd or assembly.”

Upon this group God has stamped the only true name and title of His Church, “The Church of God” (I Corinthians 1:2 and many other verses). No other name, no matter how derived or

well-intentioned, is authorized by God’s Word.

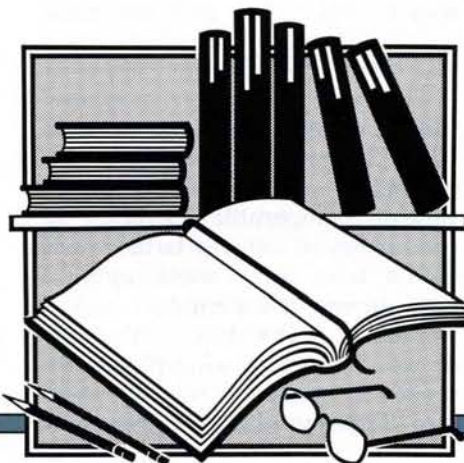
In spite of common misconceptions to the contrary, one does not become a member of the Church of God by merely deciding to “join” or register on the Church’s rolls. The process of finding and uniting with God’s Church begins not with the individual convert, but with God (John 6:44). However, once a person is called by God and after he responds to that call with repentance and belief, he will be baptized in accordance with the scriptural admonition (Acts 2:38). At that time he will be begotten by the Holy Spirit of God through the laying-on-of-hands ceremony that accompanies baptism (Acts 19:5-6).

It is the receipt of this Holy Spirit that places the convert into the Church, and it is this same Spirit that is his “card of membership” in the Church (I Corinthians 12:13, Romans 8:9)!

Hence, the Church is not a building or a computer listing of registered believers, but a spiritual organism or group composed of those who have in truth been called by God, baptized and received the Holy Spirit.

This is not to say, however, that the Church is some amorphous collection of believers of different faiths or creeds, without organization or unity. Jesus said He would build His Church (singular), not churches (plural). Thus, the Bible reveals there is only one true Church (Ephesians 4:4-5). The true Church is not divided into schisms or divisions (I Corinthians 1:10-13).

Some may recoil at the suggestion that there is only one true



Church. Yet all churches by their very existence proclaim themselves different from others, and if different, then uniquely correct (certainly not wrong!). But their self-proclamations do not make them the true Church. For the Church is that genuine body of believers in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, a Spirit not given to everyone, no matter how sincere, but to those who repent and obey God (Acts 5:32).

Even God's true Church, although in the final analysis a spiritual organism, is not without physical organization. The Bible reveals a structure and government for God's Church that is faithfully followed. That structure consists of two main parts — the membership in general and the ministry.

Membership, as has been shown, comes from the calling of God through baptism and receipt of the Holy Spirit. Many verses show the authority of the Church to decide who is or is not a valid member of the Church and hence who may or may not fellowship as a member with it (Romans 16:17).

To administer the government of the Church and to serve and teach its members, God has provided an ordained ministry. It is composed of those whom God has specifically called to the role, rather than the laity or volunteers or those who merely wish to choose the ministry as a career (Hebrews 5:1-4, I Timothy 3:1-7). Those who show proof of such calling by displaying the fruits in their lives are ordained to the role rather than elected.

Church government is from the top down (a pyramidal hierarchy). At the very control of the universe and all things is God the Father. Under Him, with direct and complete responsibility to the Church, is Jesus Christ, who "is head of the church" (Ephesians 5:23). Under Christ are the ministers, beginning with the rank of

apostle (Ephesians 2:20), with the other ranks of the ministry such as pastors and elders, along with unordained administrative helps, following down in authority and responsibility as their abilities and calling permit (I Corinthians 12:27-28).

To govern the Church, Christ has given to it certain authority and responsibilities, such as the power to baptize, ordain further ministers, decide matters of administration (Matthew 16:19), decide disputes between members (Matthew 18:15-17), determine who is a valid member and discipline members if necessary, even with excommunication if need be (Romans 16:17).

In our modern society the financing of the Church is of supreme importance. The Church has not been commissioned to finance itself through the sale of the Gospel, and is indeed forbidden to do so (Matthew 10:8). Nor has it been relegated the undignified chore of begging or asking the public for money by broadcast, mail or on a street corner.

God instead has commanded all who would obey Him to faithfully tithe their increase and give offerings of their substance. To support the Church, God has given it the right to collect these tithes and offerings due God under His law.

God has not left His Church without a specific duty or purpose. Its primary purpose is to preach and publish the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world, not to proselytize, convince or convert, but merely as a witness (Matthew 24:14). This true Gospel message is decidedly not the message taught by this world's churches, either in subject or purpose. Our free booklet *What Is the True Gospel?* explains further. Write for it today!

The second purpose of the Church is to baptize and teach those whom God calls into His Church (Matthew 28:19-20). To

this end the Church is like a mother who nurtures and teaches her children until they graduate into life.

The ministry fulfills this purpose as directed by Scripture (II Timothy 4:2) and holds weekly meetings on the Sabbath for such instruction, in accord with Hebrews 10:25, biblical examples and the meaning of the Sabbath itself, which is said to be a "holy convocation" — a holy assembly or meeting time (Leviticus 23:3).

In addition, the various spiritual needs of the congregation are met with youth groups, Bible studies and a host of activities designed to promote unity and fellowship. At no time, however, is the Church allowed to drift from its primary purpose of selflessly preaching the Gospel and so degenerate into a local social club that exists merely to entertain or further itself.

Key verses

The biblical doctrine concerning the Church is so important that it makes sense to remember some key verses about the subject. Some are:

Matthew 16:18 — Jesus said He would build His Church; Acts 2 — the Church was founded on the day of Pentecost with receipt of God's Spirit; I Corinthians 12:13 — we are placed into the Church (a spiritual body) by receipt of God's Spirit; Ephesians 2:20 — Christ is the head of the Church; I Corinthians 12:4-5, 28 — the Church has a government and is administrated by ministers and lay helpers under them; Matthew 16:19, 18:15-19 — the Church has authority to make binding decisions.

Jesus Christ's promise to build His Church has not gone unfulfilled. But only those who truly understand the purpose, role, identity and function of the Church can fully understand the purpose and plan of God. □

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