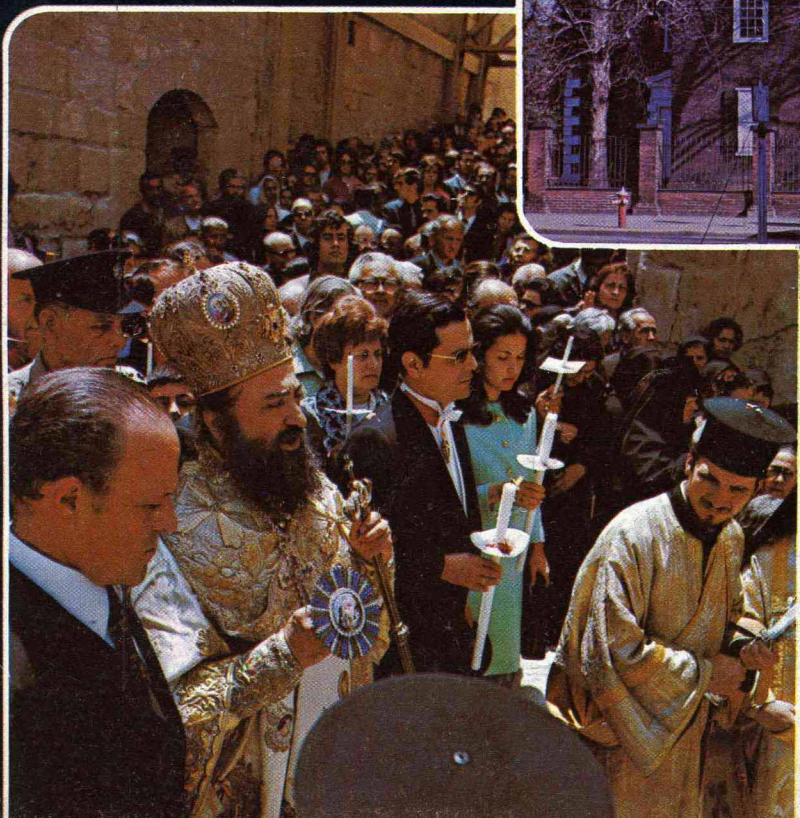
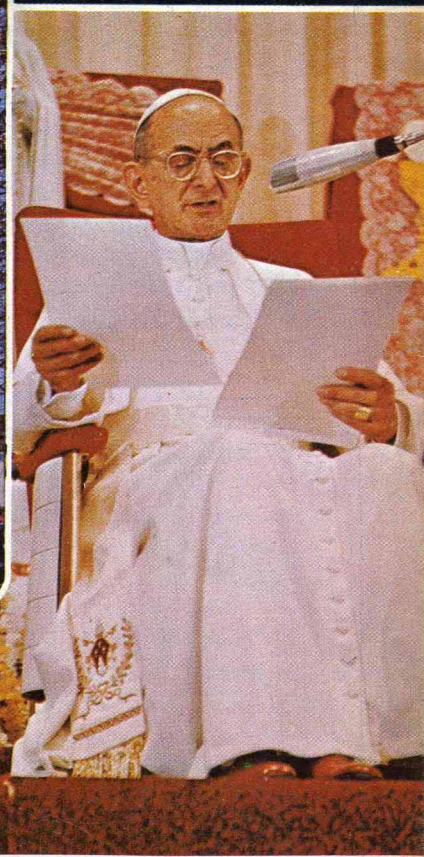
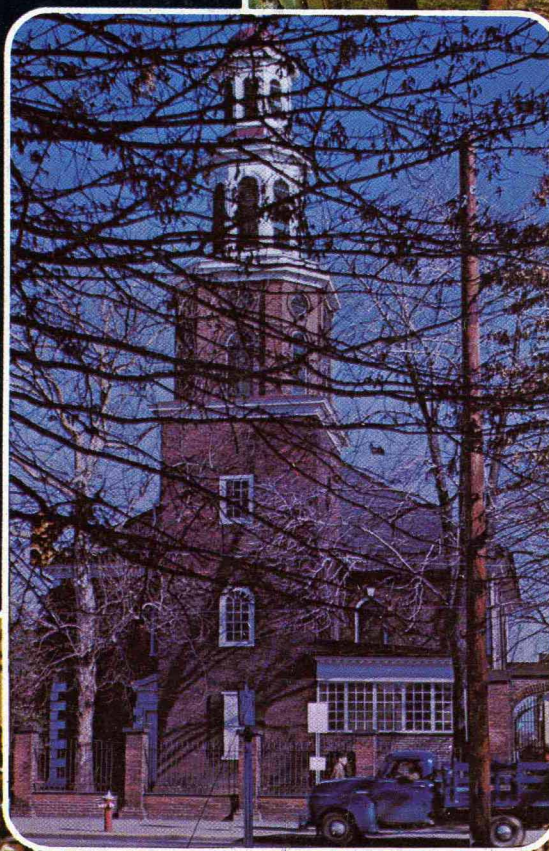
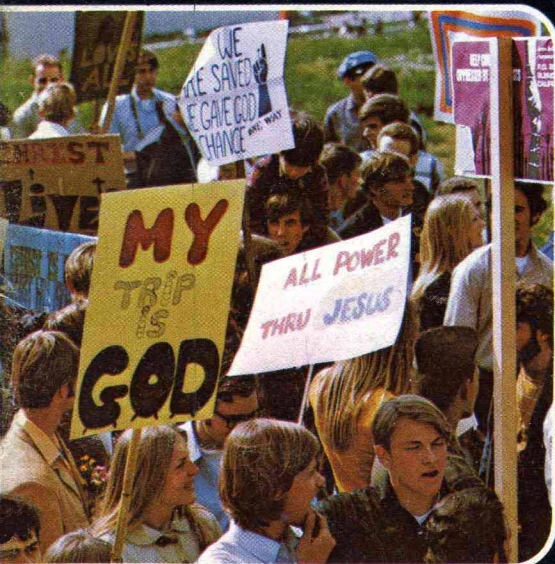
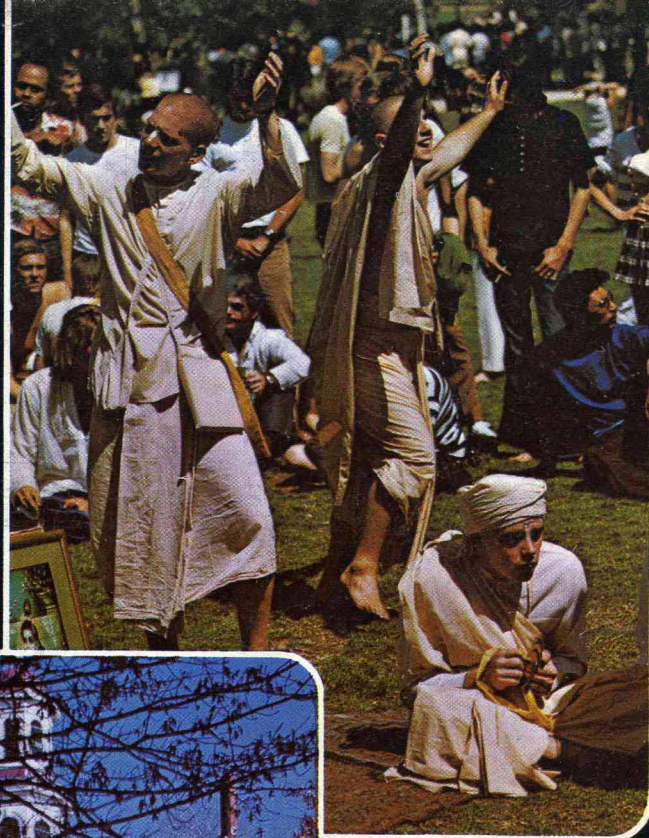


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The Good News



WHATEVER
HAPPENED
TO BASIC
CHRISTIANITY?

FEBRUARY 1975

GN

The Good News

Vol. XXIV No. 2

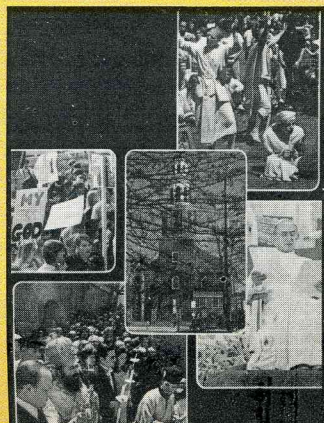
February 1975

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Has organized Christianity, in the shuffle of inter-church politics and theological rhetoric, lost the simple, yet profound, faith of the early Church? In the article beginning on page 20 we ask this question, and examine just what is "basic" Christianity.

Center: E. T. Jauch. Clockwise from top right: John Kilburn; UPI; Garo; Dave Conn.

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Second-class postage paid at Pasadena, California. Reentered as second-class matter at the Manila Central Post Office on January 18, 1974.

Published monthly by the Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, Calif. 91123

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE GOOD NEWS OFFICE NEAREST YOU.

- United States: P. O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123
- Canada: P. O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver 1, B.C.
- Mexico: Institución Ambassador, Apartado Postal 5-595, México 5, D.F.
- United Kingdom, Europe, India, Africa and the West Indies: P. O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England
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SEVEN PROOFS OF GOD'S CHURCH

WITH A throaty roar, like the deep rumble of several locomotives, the giant 747 Boeing jet thundered down the runway. I felt a surge of power as I was literally pushed back into the seat by the full force of those four huge fan-jet engines turned up to maximum power. Almost instantaneously, it seemed, the giant metal bird was thundering into the skies over Los Angeles.

That's power!

Many times in many parts of the world, I've experienced the thrill of takeoff of a giant jet airplane. I'm still not so blasé about jet travel that the takeoff of a giant jet fails to impress me.

When I personally witnessed the huge Saturn 5 at Cape Kennedy, I couldn't help but be awed by the surging power of those huge rockets as they soared straight up into the blue sky like gargantuan bullets.

That's real power!

My brother, Richard D. Armstrong, went to Las Vegas many years ago, while still a student at Ambassador College, and was able to witness with his own eyes (though through heavy, special dark glasses) the explosion of an atomic bomb.

He described it to me. With a brilliant flash, brighter than the morning sun, an awesome, mushrooming cloud began to form, instantly rising several thousands of feet above the Nevada desert floor. Then, moments later, a huge rumbling, ear-splitting shock struck the onlookers with actual physical force, just like a blow from some super-human hand.

This atom bomb blast was only a tiny bomb, a mere "pip" compared to the giant multimegaton hydrogen bombs of today. Actually, it takes the explosive force of an atom bomb to set off a hydrogen bomb.

An atom bomb is just a "match" to ignite a hydrogen bomb.

PROOF

4

GOD'S POWER

by Garner Ted Armstrong

God Almighty has vast power which He shares with Jesus Christ. Jesus gave of that power to His disciples, and it is that same power which sustains the Church of God today.

Air Force planners have considered developing a "Trilloton" H-bomb, named for being equivalent in destructive force to one trillion tons of TNT.

Do you grasp what a trillion tons of TNT really is? One million is a thousand thousand. But it takes one thousand million to make a billion. A trillion is one thousand billion!

If one hundred ten-ton trucks had been laboring mightily, dumping their maximum load of TNT once each minute since the time of the birth of Jesus Christ, over 1900 years ago, there would still not be a pile of TNT big enough to represent the destructive force contained in just this one bomb.

If all the tractors, trucks, loaders and earthmovers on earth were to labor together for the next century, they couldn't amass a pile of earth big enough to represent a mound of TNT weighing a trillion tons.

But that's just the beginning. Compared to even smaller, unnoticed storms on the surface of our sun — even this destructive force is almost *nothing* in comparison.

And our sun is but a dwarf when compared to other great "suns" or stars in the great universe.

That's real power!

But all this man-made power is nothing compared to the awesome, giant, all-encompassing, unlimited,

irresistible, magnitudinous, gargantuan, overwhelming, supreme, absolute power of God!... *Our* God, the God who rules this

Church, who sustains it, who listens to your personal, private prayers.

Think of it. What a fantastic amount of power God has. In the first of these seven great proofs of the true Church of God, we saw how God is the great Ruler of all.

And God maintains and guards His great position of Ruler by means of His great power.

The power of God is the force by which God made all things. It is the power by which He made the universe. It is the force, the energy, the unlimited power by which He *sustains* and *upholds* all things.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his [a] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the *brightness* of his *glory*, and the express image of his person, and *upholding all things by the word of his POWER*, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high..." (Heb. 1:1-3).

That is a glimpse of the power of God.

And that power is available to you. That power is in this Church. That power is another of the great proofs of the true Church of God.

Piquant Signs and Wonders

People want a sign. They desire a piquant "wonder."

But Jesus said: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a *sign*; and there shall *no sign be given* unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. 16:4).

Yes — the world seeks a sign.

God says: "When thou art come into the land which the Eternal thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth *divination*, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an *abomination* unto the Eternal..." (Deut. 18:9-12).

Charlatans parade before deceived people, claiming great healing powers, or claiming power to produce special signs. These "signs," however, are always in the realm of witchery, of divination, of familiar spirits!

This is *not* the power of God!

Your Bible predicted there would be *many* false prophets, and that they would "shew *great signs and wonders*; insomuch that, *if* it were possible, they shall deceive the *very elect*" (Matt. 24:24).

Simon Magus was reputed to be the "great power of God" (Acts 8:10). Yet his was the power of the devil and his demons. Simon kept his followers deceived by thrilling piquant signs and wonders. "And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had *bewitched* them with *sorceries*" (Acts 8:11).

Make no mistake about it. The false claims about the power of God are perhaps going to be some of the

greatest events to yet affect your life. The false miracles — the false signs and wonders of the future — and some of them in the very near future — would deceive even the very elect, if God would permit it.

Don't be deceived. This great proof of the true Church of God is not by any means a minor point you can afford to take lightly. Rather, it is vitally important — whether or not you really, deeply, and thoroughly understand it could affect your eternity.

What Is God's Power?

Being human — we are impressed with *human* power. We see the swelling muscles of a weight lifter, the straining efforts of a pole vaulter, the terrific dexterity of a gymnast, or the smashing right of a boxer — and we're impressed.

Passersby stop to gawk at a giant crane swinging a huge steel ball to smash buildings, or a huge bulldozer shoving tons of material, or the giant bites of earth a huge scoop shovel devours as it excavates for a new building. Seeing these man-made machines, humans are impressed.

But what really *should* be impressive is the manifestation of God's power.

Compare, in your own mind, the soaring might of a giant Sequoia or Redwood tree to a tiny man. Compare, for a moment, the thundering roar of Niagara, or Victoria on the Zambezi, to a mere man.

Compare the majesty of mighty mountains — the sweep and scope of this vast earth — the surging, tossing expanse of the ageless sea.

And then realize that this whole earth is but a tiny speck when compared to our sun, and to other stars in the milky way, or our own galaxy.

But that's only the remotest beginning. Our sun, the only star of our solar system, is but a "white dwarf" star in comparison to some of the other huge stars of awesome proportions. Betelgeuse, the super-giant of Orion (as the pagans

dubbed one of the distant constellations) is fully five hundred and thirty times larger than our sun — and yet our sun is so gigantic in comparison to the earth so as to defy our powers of comprehension.

For example, of the total composition of the entire solar system — that is, the sun, all the nine planets, their thirty-one moons, thousands of asteroids, billions of comets and all other matter in the solar system — the sun comprises nearly 99.9 percent!

Our sun, which, remember, is but a dwarf in comparison to many stars in many galaxies, is 864,000 miles in diameter. "Sunspots," or solar storms and eruptions, appear as dark, sculptured holes in the "skin" of the sun — and are from five hundred to as much as fifty thousand miles wide!

Other disturbances on the surface take the form of huge, spiraling loops, or solar prominences and arches. Often these arches reach to a height of thirty thousand miles, and bridge a span of more than one hundred twenty-five thousand miles — half the distance separating the earth from the moon.

Leaping, fiery tornadoes — tongues of fiery hydrogen — shoot up as far as one hundred thousand miles into space! An eruptive arch, one of the largest solar explosions ever recorded, was actually photographed in June of 1946. It remained visible for over two hours — and stretched more than a million miles into space before it disappeared!

But to your human eye these unusual features of the sun's surface remain obscured behind super-brilliance you can't look at without special, heavy dark lenses. These prominences must be photographed by the means of huge, specially constructed solar telescopes.

Think of it! Our sun, operating on the exact same principle as the hydrogen bomb, is fantastically *huge* beside our earth.

Yet, the sun is but a dwarf star in comparison to others.

Look at the fathomless, limitless universe. That's power.
That's real power!

The Power of Christ

Jesus Christ was the Word (John 1:1) who *did* wield all this vast power of creation. "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his [a] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his *power*, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high . . ." (Heb. 1:1-3).

Jesus made Betelgeuse, the spiral andromeda, the vastness of the limitless universe, with the billions upon billions of blazing suns and stars. He made this earth, with the huge mountains, the surging seas, the vast prairies and deserts.

But, even possessing this awesome power, He emptied Himself of every bit of it — and came down to this earth — to be born as a totally helpless little child. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God [counted not equality with God a thing to be grasped at, clung to, or jealously and tenaciously held]: but made himself of no reputation [emptied Himself], and took upon him the form of a *servant*, and was made in the likeness of men . . ." (Phil. 2:6, 7).

Then, as a human being, Jesus Christ showed us how utterly and totally *powerless* He was.

He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30). He was utterly unable, so far as any physical strength or ability is concerned, to accomplish the great Work God had sent Him to do.

He was powerless.

He said, "The Son can *do nothing* of himself . . ." (John 5:19). Yet Jesus had tremendous power. He conquered Satan the devil — He turned the water into wine, healed thousands, cast out demons, fed the

thousands, withered the fig tree, paid taxes with a coin from the mouth of a fish.

He walked on water, calmed storms, performed hundreds and hundreds of miracles.

But these signs Jesus performed were only a part of the great works to which He pointed. Notice: "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do *hear* and *see*: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the *gospel* preached to them" (Matt. 11:2-5).

Notice — Jesus said the *gospel* was being preached. The preaching of the message He brought, to even a few hundred, or a few thousand, was one of the great works which Christ said directly proved His Messiahship.

But He did nothing by Himself!

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10).

There was the source of Jesus' great power. The Father in heaven worked through Jesus as a human instrument.

Jesus Gave Power — But Why?

Jesus Christ not only demonstrated the tremendous power source He had, but also gave that power to others. "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them *power and authority* over all devils [demons], and to cure diseases" (Luke 9:1).

But was this power only for healing — and for casting out of demons?

Notice: "And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (verse 2).

When Jesus said the works He performed bore witness of Him, He emphasized the gospel He brought — the truth of God.

After His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). He told them that great power He had possessed was now His to wield.

Now He was no longer human — no longer weak, physically able to do nothing of Himself — now He was a veritable power source — a dynamo of spiritual power. Now He had the same power that molded the fantastic sun, that compacted the awesome forces into the universe — the power that hurled the giant stars into the blackness of endless trillions of miles of space! Now Jesus was power personified.

What was the big job He intended to accomplish through this power?

"Go ye therefore [in the light of this tremendous power I now have], and *teach* . . ." (Matt. 28:19). His first command was to teach, to preach (Mark 16:15) the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

He said: "... *Teach all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever* I have *commanded you*: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Jesus said His great power would always be there — dependable power, constant power, sane, safe, guided, directed power — to accomplish the great commission He was giving His true Church.

You can *depend* on the rising of the sun — and you know you can. You can depend on the vastness of the power of this gargantuan universe — just as the common, everyday forces, the energies we take for granted are dependable. You depend on inertia, on the law of gravity, on heat, light, and the myriad laws that Christ upholds by the Word of His power.

He said His Church would be imbued with this same power. We can depend on it.

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive *power* [not an empty, meaningless, emotional "sensation," or some satanic counterfeit, designed to conceal the great meaning of the real power of God], after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:4-8).

Notice — the power was so they could carry His message to the uttermost parts of the earth — not as a sensual thrill to decorate their own persons.

Jesus said we, today, would be accomplishing even greater works than He accomplished through that great power He supplies.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and *greater* works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

Jesus was able to reach only a few thousands at any one time, at the most, with the truth of the gospel. But through the power He supplies (and He does supply it — it depends on His power, the miraculous power of the transmission of electrical force and energy, bouncing electrical impulses off the mantle of the ionosphere) Christ uses twenty-five million watts of power to preach His gospel to the world today.

But that power is only the beginning.

You Are to Inherit Power

The reason you live is to learn to use power — and use it rightly.

When you first begin to become

educated to the powers of this modern, electronic, machine, jet, space age — you learn the dangers of misguided power.

There are safety precautions to be observed. Every child must be taught the dangers of fire, of gas, of moving automobiles, of falling, or of colliding with objects.

Much of all scientific endeavor — and, as a matter of fact, practically all of it — is either a study of, or learning how to harness power, force, energy.

Science knows how to store power in a battery, to convert atomic energy to useful purposes — but science does not know how to control the greatest potential power of all — the human mind.

You are a potential dynamo.

You are a potential power.

You can come to be sheer force — compacted together into huge, limitless, driving, surging, energizing, irresistible, immovable, *omnipotent power*.

You can become God.

The four living creatures around the throne of God said: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). John said he heard every creature in earth and in heaven saying in unison: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (verse 13).

Jesus Christ is going to share this limitless power with us. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I *give power* over the nations: and he shall *rule* them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26-27).

The universe belongs to God. He is going to give it to His children — when they qualify to control its powers.

It defies our limited minds to comprehend the height, the length, the breadth, the scope of God's power. We can only understand but

a small fraction of the immensity of God. And yet, that very power is in *this Church*.

Thousands of lives are being changed. Families are being restored — children's hearts turned to their parents. Many are being healed. Some write of cancers disappearing; deafness being cured; demons being cast out.

But the greatest evidence of God's power in His Church today is that multiple millions are hearing the very same gospel Jesus preached.

Think of the veritable sea of humanity hearing every *World Tomorrow* program. Of the several millions reading the *Plain Truth*. Truly, greater works are being done. This really is the one true Church of the great, living God.

God says to each of you: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest [even though it would have frightened and awed you, had you seen it], and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words . . . but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem [the Church], and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant Whose voice then *shook the earth*: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which *cannot be shaken may remain*. Wherefore *we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved*, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: *for our God is a consuming fire*" (Heb. 12:18-28).

And that, readers of *The Good News*, is power! □

Q&A

Q **UESTION:** "Mr. Armstrong constantly says the way of the world is the way of get, and the way of God is the way of give. He says the definition of love is outgoing concern. Christ said to love yourself (Luke 10:27). Here is the question: Can a person have outgoing concern for himself?"

Foster C.,
Sparta, North Carolina

A **NSWER:** The Greek word used in Luke 10:27 is *agape*. The best Greek-English lexicons define its meaning as simply "love." It is used most often of the kind of love that is expressed toward God and neighbor. Thus it is basically an outgoing concern. Self-love — respect and affection for the self — is universally practiced by all of us. As Paul put it: "No man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Eph. 5:29).

Christ was merely teaching that the way to express love toward others was to consider first how one treats the self. Do we deliberately cause ourselves pain and suffering? Do we drink poison or eat ground glass in a balanced state of mind? Do we not feed the self, pamper the self, entertain the self, keep the self warm and clothed? If we cut ourselves do we not take steps to stop the bleeding and ease the pain?

We do all of these things by nature. Those who love others will be willing also to do the same for their neighbors. We should try to make others feel as comfortable, loved and cared for as we make ourselves feel.

We should sense the same needs in others that we find in ourselves — and seek to fill them. This is loving others as we love ourselves!

Q: "In your article 'You Need God's

Holy Spirit,' you claim there are two baptisms. How do you reconcile this with Ephesians 4:5?"

Bob W.,
Dallas, Texas

A: The Bible does definitely and technically refer to plural baptisms. Note that Hebrews 6:2 mentions "... the doctrine of baptisms [plural]...."

Also, Matthew 3:11 describes two different baptisms or immersions that a Christian must experience: "I indeed baptize you with water [that's one] unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit [a second baptism], and with fire [a third type]."

The last two baptisms John the Baptist referred to are not in water. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is explained in I Corinthians 12:13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The baptism of fire refers to the final punishment of the incorrigibly wicked.

Now how do these biblical facts reconcile with Ephesians 4:5? Begin with verse 4: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, *one baptism*."

What is perhaps primarily meant here is that there is only one valid, authorized form of water baptism — not dozens of different modes or methods. Today there is everything from dry cleaning to sprinkling to pouring. But true water baptism is by total immersion in water followed by the laying on of hands.

Also there is another way to view this apparent enigma. The beginning steps to conversion are repentance,

followed by water baptism, the laying on of hands and the receipt of God's Spirit. All of these steps *together* — the initial ones in the whole salvation process — may be viewed *collectively* as the *one baptism* into the true Church.

Technically, as shown by other scriptures, this whole process is broken down into more finite parts — including two different baptisms for the real Christian who endures to the end — and another for the unrepentant, incorrigible sinner.

Additional information on this subject may be obtained by writing for our free booklets entitled *What Is a Real Christian?*, *Just What Do You Mean — Conversion?* and *All About Water Baptism*.

Q: "Could you straighten me out on this point? Since there is only one true Church set up by Jesus during His ministry, what is the meaning of Revelation 1:20?"

John N.,
Orlando, Florida

A: The essential meaning of Revelation 1:20 is, first of all, a biblical definition of the symbolic seven stars and seven golden candlesticks (meaning angels and churches respectively). The fact that seven churches (plural) are mentioned in no way means that God's Church is divided. "There is *one body* [the Church, Eph. 1:22-23]... *one faith*..." (Eph. 4:4-5).

Revelation was originally written to be circulated among seven local congregations (plural in number — churches) of the Church of God in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:4). Although separated *geographically*, these seven churches were all groups of the *one* true Church which Jesus founded (Matt. 16:18). (Write for our free booklet entitled *Where Is God's True Church Today?*) □

Is money the "root of all evil"? What is money anyway? Where did the idea originate? What about interest rates and "paper gold"? Does the Bible condemn wealth and riches? Where does wealth come from in the first place? Most important of all, what will happen to that wealth within your lifetime? What is the true source of wealth? What is your best investment?

by David Jon Hill

MONEY MATTERS!

Walk into a bank and your whole manner changes. An aura of awe makes people use hushed tones in the marbled mausoleums of Mighty Money! The building itself exudes an atmosphere of absolute confidence — if not the confidence of solid stone, brick, marble, polished thick oak, high-ceilinged basilicas of the old-fashioned banks, then it is the modern confidence of concrete, steel and glass with clinical and controlled luxury displayed in plush carpets and pieces of modern art.

As a customer you are treated with friendliness, warmth and sincerity — but always with a certain austere reserve, a certain understandable and fully expected distrust on the part of the moneyholder toward the money-needer. It's something we take for granted.

You have confidence that the bank is adequate to supply your need. You hope the bank will have enough confidence in you to risk supplying your need. You know certain securities will have to be produced to bolster the bank's confidence in your ability to repay — your land, your home, your life insurance, your auto, your ability as a wage earner... *all* will be freely open to scrutiny, and of course your past record of bill paying — your credit rating.

It's not that debt is not re-



YOUR BEST INVESTMENT

GN
|
Chuck Buschmann

spectable. Debt is demanded. It is a red ink society from the impossible national debt to individual insolvency.

Everybody does it!

It's hard — no, difficult, if not near impossible — to make ends meet, to live within your means. But that's all right. Nobody else can either. In fact, since the early thirties, when the government decided it would be better to mortgage the future than to pay for the present, a climate was created in which it is uncomfortable *not* to be in debt.

Nationally speaking, that mortgage on the future is just about due to be paid — and when all the notes come due at once we're going to discover a fantastic and horrible truth: *the richest nations on earth are bankrupt!* But that comes later in this article: let's get back to you.

Does God Condemn Money?

Despite some *misquote* you may have heard from the Bible about money being the root of all evil, let's prove unequivocally at the outset that neither God nor His Word, the Bible, condemns money. There is nothing unholy or inherently evil in money or a bank. As with all things, God's principle is: it is not the thing which is evil, but what is *done* with the thing, the attitude toward the thing.

What the Bible does say is, "For the *love of money* is the root of all evil..." (I Tim. 6:10). Even this is poorly translated in the King James Version and is better understood as rendered by J. B. Phillips — "For *loving* money leads to all kinds of evil, and some men in the struggle to be rich have lost their faith and caused themselves untold agonies of mind."

No, God is not against money of itself. Abraham, the father of the faithful, the friend of God (James 2:23), was a very rich man (Gen. 13:2) and was familiar with the use of money (Gen. 23). David, a man after

God's own heart (Acts 13:22), during his lifetime gathered up *tons* of gold and silver, precious stones and costly jewels (I Chron. 29). Though there were many poor men God used in the history of this world, there were just as many, if not *more*, rich men in His service — if that surprises you, check your Bible and prove this truth.

The paradox of the problem of riches is solved by the principle mentioned in the same sixth chapter of Timothy quoted above. Most of the chapter talks about *how* to be rich. It does not condemn the wealth itself. Again in the Phillips translation, beginning in verse 17, let's read a summary of the principle: "Tell those who are rich in this present world not to be contemptuous of others, and not to rest the weight of their confidence on the transitory power of wealth but on the living God, who generously gives us everything for our enjoyment."

Remember that in the same example Jesus gave to the disciples to explain the difficulties a rich man would have in gaining the Kingdom, He also said that "with God *all things are possible*" (Matt. 19:23-26).

Why All the Mystery?

Money is mysterious to many. It's simple enough to see that if you have enough of it you can buy anything (almost) that you want. But what is money? Why do some people have more than others? Just how complicated is the system? What's the history of the mystery?

As with nearly every major facet of our society — medicine, education, law, farming, government — banking finds its recorded beginnings in Babylon, inextricably entwined with religion because *Priest-Kings* ruled in ancient times.

In an agricultural economy, barter was sufficient as a means of exchange. As men gathered themselves into cities and began to deal with one another in many capacities, they no longer raised flocks, herds and crops. So they needed

something to represent wealth — something portable, precious, protectable.

Gold and silver quickly came to *represent*, in certain weights, a given number of cows, sheep, donkeys, etc. Words you may be familiar with such as "capital," "capitalism," "fee," "rupee" are all words which derive from "cattle," or a cow-standard society. Many other forms of representation have been used — salt, feathers, dog's teeth, fishhooks.

In today's modern world we may enjoy a laugh at someone who would think salt was money (are you worth your salt?), until we would try to convince him that a

ering it with ashes so it won't all burn up while you sleep. Then when you want to start the fire in the morning you remove the covering — you make a withdrawal from your fire bank. Sometimes we become ashamed of the humble beginnings of our dignified institutions — why?

These private banks (holes in the ground) were not as safe as desired. People didn't respect each other's private property, but being a superstitious lot they feared their many gods and wouldn't think of violating the temples. So, for a price, the local high priest would allow the storage of the representative wealth (money) in his temple treasury to

"When all the notes come due at once we're going to discover a fantastic and horrible truth: the richest nations on earth are bankrupt!"

column of figures in the electronic memory of our local bank's computer was what represented our true wealth!

Back to the Beginning

As people gathered into cities and their horde of *representative* wealth (gold and silver) became larger, protecting it became a problem. Many a house had a secret chamber for the master's money — perhaps in a hole dug into the floor, perhaps a secret hiding place behind a tree, under a hedge, three feet deep in the earth of the little walled garden to the rear. At any rate, it was secreted in as safe a place as the master could think of — you can bank on that!

BANK?

Right, you guessed it! Look up the word in the big dictionary of the local library sometime. A *bank* is a mound or rise of earth. One basic meaning of the word is also "to cover" — you bank a fire by cov-

ensure its "safety." In fact, the very word "money" derives from the Latin and comes from the Roman mythology that Juno *invented* money.

The truth of the matter is that *both* Juno, with his panoply of gods and goddesses, *and* the invention of money came from Babylon! The Romans continued the temple-money practice in the temple of Juno *moneta*: so what was coined became called "money" and the *place* where it was coined was called the "mint"!

Back to Babylon

In order to portray graphically how this whole banking syndrome developed in history, consider the following pseudo-historic but wholly possible scenario of the past.

As the gold or other representative wealth began to accumulate in the private coffers and under the protective custody of the high priest in the temple, the Priest-King (let's



call him Baal Nimrud — Rude for short) put together an interesting plan (about 2200 B.C.). He noticed that at no one time did everyone call for the wealth sequestered in the safety of the temple vaults. He also noticed that intelligent and capable men who had real property (land, cattle, houses, slaves) often lacked the cold gold to finance a venture that would turn them from middle class into rich men.

Putting these two factors together, he became a banker. He called the men aside (those whom he had first checked out to be sure of their securities) and told them the deal he had in mind for them. If they would pledge their property in lieu of the repayment of the gold he would lend them (should their venture fail), Rude would finance their plans. Rude arbitrarily picked thirty percent as the yearly amount of interest that should be paid to him for the use of the gold.

The first farmer took the gold from Rude. After pledging his property in lieu of repayment at the stipulated terms, he took the gold to a local businessman contracting to have an irrigation system built and enough seed supplied to plant a crop. That businessman took the gold to the temple for safekeeping.

Rude then offered the same chunk of gold on the same terms to another farmer who wanted a house built. The builder brought the gold to the temple for safekeeping! Rude then offered the same piece of gold to a local merchant, on the same terms, so he could pick up enough camels to form a caravan to Egypt. The camel dealer brought the gold bar to the temple and deposited it in the safety of the sanctuary.

By this time Rude added another idea to his plan. Since the gold was

heavy, cumbersome to carry, even dangerous to transport — Rude convinced his next customer (sticking to the same terms for the loan) that it would be safer for all concerned if he just issued a clay tablet receipt for the amount of worth that the gold represented. The clay was easier to carry. It bore the imprint of the high priest's own signet ring and would be accepted as if it were gold by all local businessmen.

So Rude's convinced customer took his clay (which represented gold, which represented wealth) receipt to the boat builder and had ten barges built. The boat builder accepted the receipt, gave it to a lumber supplier and in addition went to Rude and requested a loan, for expansion of his operation, of an equal amount (also indicated by a clay tablet receipt) and put his business in hock for security.

Nimrud's Pound Gained

To make a long story short, Baal Nimrud found that within the year he was able to lend the same bar of gold ten times. Let's say it was a ten-pound bar. At the end of the year Rude was still in possession of the original gold bar itself. In addition he owned one farm and a half interest in a caravansary (two of his debtors didn't make it). In addition to that he had been paid eighty pounds of gold by the eight debtors who succeeded with the help of the loan, plus of course the twenty-four pounds of gold in interest.

Rude's ten pounds had gained him one hundred four — not bad! Of course the original ten-pound bar was not really his — it was only left there for "safekeeping" by a merchant from Ur, but he hadn't called for it in the course of the year. And if that merchant ever did call for his bar, Rude figured he could talk him into taking a clay receipt for it, leaving the actual bar in safekeeping (?) in the temple!

The ten ten-pound bars (plus a little) that Rude now actually owned, were not worth just ten times the original bar he had specu-

lated with — to Rude they were worth *much* more! He had already learned by observation that only about one out of ten of the people who had money in the temple for safekeeping ever actually requested to have their gold back at any one time. This meant he could use nine-tenths of the money at any one time any way he wanted.

And now that the idea of accepting clay receipts was catching on, there was no way to tell how far he could bluff his way. As long as the people had confidence in the clay receipts, he could continue to amass great wealth at very little actual risk or expenditure.

Good for the Economy

Rude even got himself into thinking he was performing a real public service in the process of gathering all the real wealth of the people into his own coffers. There were more jobs. Every type of shop and industry had been given a shot in the arm. There was bustling activity everywhere.

Rude began to see that he could control the entire economy. If his system began to destroy itself because people couldn't any longer sustain the exorbitant interest rate of 30%, he could postpone the ultimate day of reckoning by lowering the rate, say to 20%!

Baal Nimrud realized, of course, that sooner or later the ultimate would happen. The economy would collapse. In order to pay their debts the society as a whole would become sellers, and there would unfortunately be no buyers. They would storm the temple in angry protest when the word leaked out that the clay receipts couldn't be redeemed for gold, that they weren't worth the mud they were written on. The people would lose their confidence, their faith in him (or his sons or grandsons), in the clay money, in the temple. But if he exercised just a little caution he could make it work during *his* lifetime — and that is what counted to him!

History shows plainly what did

happen. Not just to Nimrud's economy, but to all those who followed in his footsteps. Usually the economy collapsed in 100 to 150 years. The economy slipped from gold-backed to silver-backed to lead-backed money. Whatever metal was the backing was hoarded until there was not enough of it available to conduct the economy (tight money). So a cheaper, more available metal or medium of exchange (easy money) would be substituted, etc., etc. until ultimate collapse.

Babylon went this way. Assyria, the Greeks in their time, and the Romans all trod the same road. Numberless other economies: ditto.

The key to the downfall was the exorbitant (though exhilarating at the time) interest rate.

Confidence

According to the Federal Reserve Bank: "Money is the confidence people have that they will be able to exchange such money for *real* goods and services whenever they choose to do so." This is why money becomes a god to many people — money becomes that in which they have their trust, their confidence. It's really very simple: *money is confidence*. This is why the words "trust" and "fidelity" are often used as part of the very names of banks!

Money is what people mutually agree it is at a given time. If they all agree that it is gold, then money is gold! Gold is certainly the dominant money idol in the pages of history. Many is the man, or whole society

of men, who has striven greedily and died for the sake of gold! But the gold is not to blame. Just as much suffering has gone on in the process of the greedy getting of stones and bones, silver and lead. It doesn't make much difference whether you call it "Federal Reserve Note" or "rusty nails" (which have been used for exchange purposes) — whether you term it "Special Drawing Rights" (the "paper

bankrupt. Confidence is the important key!

There are two schools of thought at the extremes of money thinking. One feels that only a solid (which word comes from a Latin coin, *Solidus*) gold-backed monetary system can bring stability to the financial world. Their confidence is in gold. At the other pole of thought is the basic thesis upon which the Western world has its confidence — the pro-

ductive capacity of the society itself. This school has been followed diligently since the early thirties.

A fellow by the name of Keynes (pronounced Cain's) put this theory into words in an essay entitled *Auri Sacra Fames*: "Almost throughout the world, gold has been withdrawn from circulation. It no longer passes from hand to hand, and the touch of the metal has been taken away from men's greedy palms. The little household gods, who dwelt in purses and stockings and tin boxes have been swallowed up by a single golden image in each country, which lives

underground and is not seen. Gold is out of sight — gone back into the soil. But when gods are no longer seen in a yellow panoply walking the earth, we begin to rationalize them; and it is not long before there is nothing left."

While succinctly pointing out the fallacy of trusting in and worshipping gold as the money god of the past, Keynes didn't seem to realize that he was substituting a new god

The National Debt

1 By the end of 1973 there was over \$2½ trillion of total debt (both public and private) or roughly \$12,000 for every man, woman and child in the United States.

2 From 1969 to 1974 the amount of outstanding credit from credit card purchases multiplied almost 3½ times.

3 During the first half of 1974, installment credit grew by more than \$22 million a day.

4 There was no national debt in 1840, only \$1 billion in 1915, \$16 billion in 1930, but over \$480 billion today.

5 It took 60 years and 11 presidents to spend our first billion; now the government spends a billion (on the average) every 33 hours.

6 Interest on the national debt is the third largest government expenditure behind defense and social security.

7 Currently, the Federal Government must spend, on the average, approximately \$3.3 million an hour just to keep up with the *interest* on the national debt.

gold" currently being used to settle international debts) or whether you agreed to settle for elephant tails as they readily did in the past in Portuguese West Africa.

As long as the people you do business with agree to accept your "money" it doesn't matter what it is. And equally important, when the people you trade with no longer have confidence in your medium of exchange, you can become a "rich



for the old god! And so today's money worshippers bow down before the image of nothing, whereas their opposites bow down to the image of gold!

Since the Keynesian theory is what we are living under, let's examine it briefly, a little more thoroughly. Perhaps the key is provided by the highly respected international advisor on finances, Dr. Harry Schultz. In his circular letter of October 30, 1969 he states: "Once man introduced money he introduced speculation." In other words, while man remained on a barter system, speculation was nearly impossible. If you had ten head of cattle, you had ten head of cattle, and there was no way to make ten head of cattle *appear to be* a hundred head!

But a piece of metal was substituted as a representation of the real wealth. A piece of metal was acknowledged as being worth so many head of cattle. Speculators could then "play the market" with the metal, since the decision as to *how many* head of cattle it was worth was arbitrary and decided by men in common agreement. Men could agree at a *different worth* for it at one time than at another: *this is speculation!*

At each stage of the money game you get further away from a total grasp of *real* wealth. "It becomes more and more abstract, until it reaches the highly sophisticated form of our money, which consists primarily of numbers on the ledgers of the banks that maintain our checking accounts. Although we still use some currency (worth, in reality, no more than the paper it is printed on) and some coins, most of the money we spend moves from buyer to seller through the checks that order the banks to debit one account

on their books and to credit another. Thus most of our money has no real value and no tangible existence: we can't see it or feel it or smell it. This is one of the reasons why its quantity is so difficult to regulate" (*A Primer on Money, Banking and Gold*, by Peter L. Bernstein).

The crude manipulations that Baal Nimrud went through to augment his wealth are multiplied in the many devious and mysterious imaginations of a modern market which has many diversified representations of true wealth: coin, currency, gold in Ft. Knox and the Federal Reserve vaults in New York, demand deposits which back up our checking accounts, time deposits which exist only as figures on a ledger, bonds, stocks, mortgage papers, ad infinitum.

Funny Money

So we find ourselves in a rather ludicrous situation. If you have any money in your pocket, please take it out and take a look at it. Since American currency is the hinge of international financing, let's see what it says on the American money. On the top of one side of the paper money you will notice that it says, "Federal Reserve Note." I am now looking at the face of what we call a five-dollar bill. It also says, "This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private."

But what does that *mean*?

"The trick in the Federal Reserve Notes is that the Federal Reserve Banks lose no cash when they pay out this currency to the member banks. Federal Reserve Notes are *not redeemable* in anything except what the government calls 'legal tender' — that is, money that a creditor must be willing to accept from a debtor in payment of sums owed him. But since all Federal Reserve Notes are themselves declared by law to be legal money, they are really redeemable only in themselves! To put it briefly, they are an *irredeemable* obligation issued by the Federal Reserve Banks" (*A Primer on Money, Banking and Gold*).

A few more quotes from this basic book will help us understand the money we use a little better. "In short, the money we use every day, the money that we are all happy to accept in payment for goods sold, services rendered, and debts incurred, is *intrinsically worthless*: It has no tangible backing, in the strict sense of the word" (p. 105).

"When we look back over the ground that we have covered and ask what the dollar is really based upon, we would have to say that it exists essentially on *promises and bookkeeping machines*" (p. 107).

"These trends have had another curious corollary. Whereas the public has been feeling more liquid, the banks have actually been moving into an increasingly illiquid condition . . . This partially reflects sufficient *confidence* on the part of the bank officers that the American economy is now so stable that wholesale withdrawals of cash from the banking system, as happened in the 1930's, are highly unlikely. But it also reflects the belief of bankers that most of the money in time deposits will stay there instead of moving into demand deposits where the odds are much greater that it will soon be withdrawn . . . Of course, none of these trends need lead to difficulty *so long as current patterns prevail*. They suggest, however, that a reversal of current patterns, prompted, perhaps, by rising demand for money occasioned by an inflationary cycle, could *ultimately cause a monetary crisis as intense as anything witnessed in our earlier history*" (p. 154).

"To return to the point from which we have started: money and gold have no use or value in themselves. On the contrary, their value derives only from what we can buy with them" (p. 166).

And today your hard-earned dollar or pound is buying precious little by comparison. The concluding installment of this article will show you *your best investment* in this era of shrinking currencies. □

(To Be Continued)

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON “TONGUES”

A “tongues movement” is sweeping the religious world. Once confined to a few “fundamentalist sects,” it now finds adherents in almost every denomination, including some of those considered the most staid and traditionalist. Is glossolalia a real manifestation of the Holy Spirit as in the days of the apostles? Here is the answer from both biblical and linguistic research.

by Lester L. Grabbe

GLOSSOLALIA — coined from the Greek words meaning “tongue-speech” — was once confined to the scattered, small, usually emotion-charged meetings of “Pentecostal” groups. But the last few years have changed that picture entirely. From Catholic to Lutheran, Baptist to Presbyterian to Episcopalian, one finds enthusiastic believers in the “gift of tongues.” Laymen and clergy alike participate.

There are still many who oppose “speaking in tongues.” But the number of those who actually experience the phenomenon is growing constantly, while the total of non-participants who favor tongue speaking also continues to swell.

Is this a sign that the Holy Spirit is sweeping the religious world? Are we truly seeing a return to the faith of the Apostolic Church? Or is this only a devilish counterfeit being palmed off on naive people? This is

not merely an academic question. The answer could concern your spiritual life.

One of the views taken by many nonreligionists — but also by some religious people — is that “tongues” both in the Bible and elsewhere is “ecstatic speech” — the incoherent ramblings of someone in a state of ecstasy. One theologian writes: “Paul goes to great lengths to hold before the church of Corinth the fact that their ‘tongues’ are not intelligible speech, only ecstatic babbling.”

Furthermore, *The New English Bible* uses the expressions “gift of ecstatic utterance,” “language of ecstasy,” “tongues of ecstasy,” etc., for the Greek word (*glossa*, normally translated “language” or “tongue”).

Some tongue speakers feel that glossolalia is not any particular language, though they might not agree that it is “ecstatic speech.” But others adamantly insist that “tongues” are really actual languages of human beings — whether ancient or modern. Still others see them as a “Holy Ghost language” — the “tongues of angels.”

The only way to find the truth is to examine the Bible and then compare its message with the objective studies done on modern glossolalia by skilled impartial researchers.

The first experience of “speaking in tongues” is described in Acts 2. The disciples were gathered together on the day of Pentecost. This was not a “tarry meeting” or some particular experience the disciples

had. They were meeting to observe one of the annual holy days, the Feast of Weeks, described in Leviticus 23:15-21 and elsewhere in the Old Testament. “Pentecost” was the Greek name for this festival.

The Holy Spirit suddenly came to them while they were assembled, just as Christ had promised, “and [they] began to speak with other languages [*glossa*], as the Spirit inspired them” (Acts 2:4). The word spread and Jews from many different areas came to listen in surprise and wonderment.

The common vernacular language of Palestine at that time was Aramaic. But Greek was the *lingua franca* of the entire Roman Empire. Many Jews, especially in Judaea, were also conversant with Hebrew. If the disciples had spoken in one of these three languages, it would probably not have caused too much excitement — it wasn’t that unusual (see “The Language Milieu of First-Century Palestine,” R. H. Gundry, *Journal of Biblical Literature* lxxxiii, 1964, pp. 404-408).

But notice what happened. Instead of hearing one of these common languages, the Jewish pilgrims were startled by the vernaculars *from their own local areas*. Those celebrating the Feast of Pentecost had come from many different areas: Mesopotamia and adjacent areas in the modern countries of Iraq and Iran; “Judaea,” not the area in Canaan but another area in northern Syria (see Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Ancient Near East*, third

edition, p. 219); various places in Asia Minor; countries in North Africa; and even from Rome.

Almost all these people could speak Greek and many knew Aramaic. But that was not what they heard. Rather, the disciples were speaking the various local dialects from their native areas: Persian, Lydian, Arabic, Latin, Coptic, etc. No native of Judaea, much less of Galilee, was likely to know these languages. No wonder the visiting Jews were completely flabbergasted and could hardly believe their ears.

There can be no doubt that the “tongues” of Acts 2 were real, intelligible foreign languages. Even a cursory reading of the chapter shows this. Furthermore, a careful reading of the chapter in Greek adds additional evidence. Notice the key words in the Greek text.

The disciples “began to speak with other languages [*glossa*],” so that “because of this sound [*phone*] the crowd came together and were astounded [*sugcheo*].” These same root words are found in the Septuagint version (Greek translation) of the Old Testament in Genesis 11 — the account of the confusion of languages at Babel! According to the Septuagint, in Genesis 11 God said: “Come, we will go down and confuse [*sugcheo*] their language [*glossa*] so that they will not understand one another’s speech [*phone*].”

Is this only coincidental? Luke, the author of Acts, has the confusion at Babel in mind and deliberately chooses words used in the Septuagint account of Babel in Genesis 11. Scholars have long recognized that Luke was greatly influenced by the language and wording of the Septuagint. Luke obviously regards the phenomenon on Pentecost as a reversal of the curse at Babel. They were *human* languages at Babel — they were also *human* languages at Pentecost.

But what about other references to “tongues speaking” in the New Testament? In Acts 10, we find the account of Peter’s baptizing Corn-

elius, the Roman centurion, and others of his household. Just before they were baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in “tongues” (verses 44-46).

Was this a different phenomenon from that of Acts 2? Not in their speaking! “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, *as on us at the beginning*” (Acts 11:15). As in Acts 2, Cornelius and those with him spoke in genuine foreign languages — languages understood by the Jewish Christians present (10:46).

In each case, the Greek word used is *glossa*. Elsewhere in the New Testament (and in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament), this word always refers to genuine human speech.

I Corinthians 14 also deals with “tongues” in detail. Yet the very same Greek word (*glossa*) is still used. There is absolutely no indication that something different is intended by Paul. As one investigator wrote: “The attempt to make a difference between the tongues of Corinthians and those of Acts is wholly artificial” (E. J. G. Titterton, “The Gift of Tongues,” *Faith and Thought* 90, 1958, p. 65).

New Testament scholar J. G. Davies made a study of the accounts in Acts 2 and I Corinthians 14, especially in connection with the Greek word *hermeneuo* (meaning “translate” or “interpret”). He concluded: “There seems, therefore, to be no adequate reason for denying that St. Paul understood glossolalia to be speaking in foreign languages. Consequently there is no conflict between his description and the account in Acts 2, which is a unity.” (“Pentecost and Glossolalia,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 3, 1952, p. 231. See also the article by R. H. Gundry in same journal, vol. XVII, 1966, pp. 299, 307.)

Without a doubt, genuine languages are referred to in I Corinthians 14 as well as Acts 2. We will examine I Corinthians 14 in greater detail a little later in this article. But

first, let’s see what the scientific investigation of modern glossolalia has uncovered.

The claim is made by some “tongue speakers” that theirs is a genuine foreign language. A stereotyped story is usually told as evidence. The stories vary in specific details, but they generally follow a consistent pattern. A person speaks in tongues at a group gathering. Among the group is someone having knowledge of an exotic language. He astounds (or maybe they expected it all along) the group by telling them that the glossolalist spoke this particular strange, foreign language “fluently.”

These stories are quite common and appear in many accounts of glossolalia, including those in newspapers and magazines. But in most cases, the story is second-, third-, or fourth-hand. Usually the story gives no *positive* identification of the tongue with a real language. Many such accounts mention identification of *only one word* — hardly compelling evidence of a real human language. Others carry such vague descriptions as it “sounded like” so and so or “I thought I heard a few words” of such and such a language.

Professional linguists have investigated modern glossolalia, yet have found *no evidence* that it *ever* consists of actual speech. The scientists doing this work are seldom hostile toward glossolalists. Most are neutral observers; a few are actually sympathetic. But they are unanimous in finding *no human language* among the massive and growing library of recorded “tongue speech.”

A further discussion of the linguistic studies of glossolalia can be found in the box that appears on the next page.

We are now ready for one of the major passages of the New Testament on speaking in tongues — I Corinthians 14. What does the Apostle Paul say about the subject? Do modern speakers measure up to his requirements?

Linguistic Study of Glossolalia

In recent years a good deal of scientific linguistic study has been done on glossolalia. One qualified researcher who has worked a great deal with tongue-speakers is William J. Samarin. His recent "Tongues of Men and Angels" is currently the most definitive treatment of linguistic analysis of speaking in tongues.

Dr. Samarin has had to conclude from his extensive study that there are just no known examples of glossolalists speaking an actual foreign language. In one article he commented that though speaking in real languages "is claimed by Christian charismatists to be part of the tongue-speaking experience, they would be unable to provide a case that would stand up to scientific investigation" ("Hartford Quarterly" viii, 1968, pp. 52-55).

He later discussed the question of stories claiming the identification of real languages in his previously cited book: "Any time one attempts to verify them he finds that the stories have been greatly distorted or that the 'witnesses' turn out to be incompetent or unreliable from a linguistic point of view" (pp. 112-113).

Linguists who have studied recordings of tongue-speech point out that it is not gibberish in the linguistic sense of the word. That is, when passages of gibberish have been

inserted into tapes of glossolalia, linguists have had no trouble distinguishing between the two. But there are a number of significant differences between features of glossolalia and real intelligible speech.

Anthropologist Felicitas D. Goodman reported on a specific study of his in the "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" (vii, 1969, "Phonetic Analysis of Glossolalia in Four Cultural Settings," pp. 227-239). He listed six specific ways in which glossolalia differs from human language.

Dr. Eugene A. Nida, of the American Bible Society Translations Department, has also studied tapes of glossolalia. Although he has not published his findings formally, he has read unpublished papers in scholarly meetings and has made available certain unpublished findings. He similarly concludes that there are distinct contrasts between glossolalia and real language.

Dr. Samarin concluded in his article in the "Hartford Quarterly": "In the foregoing we have seen that glossas ['tongues'] are not natural languages, and they are unlike natural languages in very significant ways even though features are shared" (p. 65).

One of the major characteristics of real language is the correspondence between form (grammar, syntax, sound,

etc.) and meaning. A particular phrase carries a specific meaning. This is not true in glossolalia. Speakers may give a general description of what they thought they were saying. But they never try to interpret individual phrases or segments of the speech. The same applies to the "interpretation" practiced among many groups. Any translation of a real language will show a regular and systematic correspondence to the original. But in glossolalia there is no correlation between "tongue" and "interpretation."

In one case an experiment was conducted in which a tape of glossolalia was played to several individuals claiming to have the "gift of interpretation." The interpretations were quite general in most cases. But even then the various interpretations of the same material varied widely from one another. Of course, there was no linguistic correspondence between the tapes and any interpretation given.

More could be written on the subject. But those interested can read the reports of researchers themselves, especially in professor Samarin's book. The important thing is that modern tongue-speech is not real language. But that of the Bible can be nothing else. Modern glossolalia is only a poor counterfeit of the real thing. □

Certain minor points of this chapter are not crystal clear because we are not given the specific situation in detail. But the overall implications are quite distinct, and these we intend to concentrate on. We are not, of course, trying to provide an exhaustive commentary on the chapter. (The translation is directly from the Greek text, though a similar rendering can be found in most of the major modern English translations.)

Verses 1-3: Pursue love, seek after the spiritual gifts, but especially that you might speak with inspiration. For the one speaking in a language does not speak to men but to God, because no one understands him — instead he speaks mysteries in the spirit. However, the inspired speaker talks to men of edification, comfort and encouragement.

Speaking in a language, although one of God's gifts, is one of the lesser ones. It is not as important as speaking or preaching under inspiration (the Greek word *propheteuo* means "inspired speaking," which can — but does not have to — refer to predictions of the future). If a person speaks a language unknown to most of his audience, he has benefited himself, but no one else. God alone understands him unless there happens to be someone else present who knows that language.

Verses 4-5: The one speaking in another language edifies himself, while the inspired speaker builds up the whole church. I wish all of you could speak in languages, but more that you spoke under inspiration. This latter is better than speaking in a language, unless someone translates so the church will be uplifted.

Paul wishes all those at Corinth had the gift of speaking in other languages. But he would far rather see them with the ability to speak God's Word with inspiration. As it was, those with the gift of language were not benefiting anyone. Only if someone translated was the message of any use to others in the meeting.

Verses 6-9: Now, brethren, if I

come to you speaking in languages, how do I benefit you, unless I bring to you either revelation or knowledge or prophecy or instruction? In the same way, unless inanimate objects, such as a flute or harp, give a clear sound, how will we know what is being played? And if the trumpet gives an indistinct call, who is going to prepare himself for battle? The same is true with you: you must talk intelligibly or no one will know what is spoken — you will just be talking into air.

The Apostle Paul emphasized the necessity for intelligible communication. Who will go to a concert just to hear all the instruments playing the wrong notes, off-key or unclearly? Then why meet with other Christians to babble away in meaningless — to others — syllables?

Verses 10-12: There are undoubtedly a great number of different languages in the world, and not one is meaningless. But if I do not know the meaning of the language, then I will be a foreigner to the one speaking and he a foreigner to me. So you, since you are zealous for spiritual things, set edification of the whole congregation as your goal if you want to excel.

This passage nails down without question the identity of the "tongues" — they were foreign languages. Paul refers to human speech and explicitly shows that those speaking in "tongues" are just like two foreigners who do not understand one another's language. There is no change of atmosphere or wording in this passage. Paul has to be referring to actual human languages. Of course, the emphasis of the chapter — the need for communication instead of sideshow tricks — is continued.

Verses 13-17: Therefore, let the one speaking in languages pray for the ability of interpretation. For if I pray in a foreign language, my spirit prays but my understanding is unfruitful. What, then? Certainly, I will pray with the spirit but also to be understood. I will sing praises with the spirit but also with intelligence.

For if you give thanks with the spirit alone, how is the one without instruction going to respond "Amen" to your prayer when he does not know what you are talking about? You may be giving thanks quite well, but that does not help the other person.

God's Word shows that most prayer should be private — between the individual and God. In private prayer it doesn't matter what language you use because God understands. But public prayer in church services is for the edification of everyone, not just the individual praying. If someone prays in a language which most don't understand, the congregation is not benefited. How could the congregation say "Amen" — which signifies their agreement with the prayer — if they did not know what was said? Only the one single individual praying, instead of all present, would be benefited.

Verses 20-24: Brethren, do not be children in understanding. Be childlike toward evil but be full-grown in understanding. In the law it is written, "In foreign languages by the lips of others, I will speak to this people, but not even then will they obey me, says the Lord." Therefore, languages are a sign for unbelievers, not believers, while prophecy is for believers rather than unbelievers. If the congregation comes together and everyone speaks in different languages, and uninstructed people and unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are crazy? But if all speak with inspiration and such a person come in, he would be convicted by all and called to account by all....

This passage is somewhat puzzling and a great many learned attempts at exposition have been made. (For a recent discussion, see J. P. M. Sweet, *New Testament Studies* 13, pp. 240-257.) But two things are clear. First of all, tongues indeed function as a sign. This is also clear from Acts 2. But, secondly, they have the reverse effect if done in confusion and disorder. A disorderly appearance will only drive away the unbeliever.

Verses 26-28: What then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each one of you has a psalm, a teaching, a language, or an interpretation. But let everything be done for edification. If anyone talks in a language, let it be done by two or the most three, one after another, and someone must translate. But if there is no translator, let each of them be silent, speaking only to himself and God.

Notice that whenever someone speaks in a foreign language, there must be someone to translate. And even with a translator, only two or three at the most should speak.

In verses 29-33, Paul also explains about the conduct of those giving inspired messages. He emphasizes that the speakers *must also* be in control of themselves, so that everything is done without confusion.

Notice the Apostle Paul says "the spirits of the prophets are under control of the prophets" (verse 32). No "seizure by the spirit" here. No giving of one's mind up to an outside force. The person under *God's* inspiration is still able to control what he says and does. If a person can't control himself, he is plainly not being inspired by God.

Then the apostle gives instructions which many moderns seem to feel are "out of date." But Paul was giving God's inspired directions — women are to keep silent in the churches (verses 34-37). He concludes that languages were not wrong but were to be used with proper order and decorum so that all might profit from the services.

A number of points are brought up in I Corinthians 14. Compare carefully this summary of them with the practices of modern "tongue speakers":

1. *Whatever is spoken must be a real language.*

2. *Someone must translate what is said.* Some glossolalia groups claim to do this. But others do not, as I have personally witnessed. As we have already shown, even when the

tongue is "interpreted," the "interpretation" found among modern "tongues" speakers shows no real correspondence with the tongue speech.

3. *Everything must be done in order.* Only two or three at the most should speak, and they must speak one after another, not at the same time. Above all, they must be in control of themselves, not in a trance, "ecstasy" or "spiritual seizure." The true God is a God of "sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7).

4. *Women are not to participate, either as "tongue" speakers or as speakers of any kind in the service.*

5. *Those who use such a gift must realize in humility that it is one of the lesser gifts, as shown by Paul in I Corinthians 14 and his order of spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12.*

If you will carefully compare this list of essentials with the present-day glossolalia services, you will find many lacks. Most such services just do not meet the requirements of God's own Word. As we have shown, there has been no proof of a real language being used, despite claims to the contrary. Many groups make no pretense of translating. Almost all will allow several people to speak at once; also a large total number will speak during the service, instead of the limit of two or three as given by Paul.

Most groups allow women to participate actively. Certain groups emphasize the necessity of humility. But spiritual pride has unfortunately been a hallmark of glossolalists, one of the major sources of criticism from people of all views.

The modern tongue speakers just don't match the biblical standards.

Satan has his ministers and even appears as an angel of light himself (II Cor. 11:13-15). He also has his counterfeits for the gifts of God's Spirit. Because of this, God's Word plainly tells us to "believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God" (I John 4:1).

How many of those participating

in glossolalia have been told to "try the spirits"? Haven't they been told to *give themselves over* to the experience? How many are really determining whether the spirit is from God or Satan before allowing it in?

God doesn't give warnings lightly. He makes it clear that Christians must fight "against the spirits of evil" which continually threaten (Eph. 6:12). Is it possible to resist these evil spirits if the person gives himself over to the first spirit which comes his way?

Dr. John P. Kildahl, who recently finished a study of glossolalia under a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, warned of the "complete turning of oneself over to the leader" required to speak in tongues. According to one researcher, glossolalists actually go into a "trance" state very similar to *hypnosis*. This appears to be a universal trait even though experienced glossolalists may not show it. (See *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion* 8, 1969, p. 238.)

As Dr. Kildahl points out: "The follower feels at peace because he has abandoned *himself to the control of somebody else*" (emphasis ours). A person with his willpower and self-control given up is open to any suggestion — whether from another person or an evil spirit. Surely the dangers are obvious!

Too many feel this must be all right because it "feels so good" or is "such a wonderful experience." Such self-deception is dangerous! Isn't it plain that one who appears as an "angel of light" can also counterfeit a true spiritual experience? *Feeling* isn't the key. The key is *God's Word* — what does it say?

It says plainly, clearly, unmistakably: "TRY THE SPIRITS"! Anyone who must relinquish self-control and give himself over to an outside influence is *disobeying* that command. This warning cannot be too strongly expressed!

Glossolalia has sometimes been called "tongues of fire." Those who participate in it may well find they have been *playing with fire!* □

IS THE BIBLE BELIEVABLE?

ALLEGED BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS— CAN THEY BE SOLVED?

Beginning with this issue of The Good News, we are starting an exciting new series of articles under the heading "Is the Bible Believable?" For centuries this Book of books has been maligned, ridiculed, criticized and belittled by laymen and scholars alike. "The Bible," said American philosopher George Santayana, "is literature, not dogma." Is the Bible mere literature — or is it something more? This series of articles will confirm the reliability, trustworthiness, integrity and believability of this most important and fascinating of books. The Bible is a reliable account of God's dealings with His human creation. It contains records, examples, accounts, instructions, doctrine (teaching), history, and even prophecy. This series of articles will answer the charges of the critics and confirm the inspiration and integrity of the Book called the Holy Bible. Be sure to read and study each inspiring installment.

by John R. Schroeder

THE BIBLE is full of mistakes and contradictions!

"These were the words of a tall, handsome medical officer, some few years ago, in the saloon of a passenger steamer as we were gliding silently through the beautiful waters of the Mediterranean, returning home from a voyage to the East.

"I asked him, as there was so many mistakes in the Bible, would he kindly show me a few of them?

"But the only reply I could get from him was, 'It's full of them, it's full of them.'"

"I then placed my open Bible in front of him, and in presence of another passenger, said: 'If you can show me one mistake or contradiction in that Book, I will give up the whole thing'" (Sidney Collett, *All About the Bible*, p. 115, 1966 edition).

Dr. Collett was very confident of his ability to defend the Bible against any and all comers claiming supposed contradictions. Others, on the other end of the pendulum, are equally confident of their ability to poke the Bible full of holes by pointing to an endless string of contradictions.

What about it? Is the Bible believable in this regard? Are there logical, deducible, believable, credible explanations for the apparent inconsistencies within the biblical text?

We say unequivocally that there are. Please hear us out — point by point!

● Bible Is a Summary

Fundamental and basic to an understanding of alleged biblical errors and contradictions is the fact that the Bible is a summary book, or more properly, a series of related summary books. It is not always a detailed account of the history of God's intervention in the affairs of men. It often hits only the high spots in that history.

For example, our Creator devotes only six chapters to the first 1650 years of mankind — from Adam's creation to just before Noah's Flood. It follows, in this basic summary of events, that many details have simply been omitted.

A case in point: The ancient, age-old question, "Where did Cain get his wife?" has been asked by many a novice who has begun reading through the initial chapters of the book of Genesis.

This apparent problem is very simply solved by a logical deduction based on verse 4 in the genealogical table in Genesis 5. (A detailed answer is given in our free booklet titled *Answers From Genesis*.)

The Bible never pretends, at any time in any of its books, to be a totally comprehensive record of *all* the events occurring in a given time.

One significant verse proper to this point is II Kings 14:28. "Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam [the II — not the Jeroboam of Solomon's time], and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel [not the biblical books of Chronicles]?"

The Bible admittedly does *not* include a complete biography of the life and times of Jeroboam. It refers the reader to *another work*, which has undoubtedly long since perished, or perhaps was buried with the king.

The books of Samuel, Kings and

Chronicles (excepting the lives of David, Solomon and a few other notables) contain only brief accounts of the lives of the kings of Judah and Israel. If we possessed *every detail*, even in a complete secular account, we could undoubtedly show the perfect solution to each seemingly contradictory statement between Samuel, Kings and Chronicles — and particularly as to when a specific king's reign began and ended.

As it is, there are logical, believable explanations based on differing methods of reckoning reigns (civil and sacred), possible joint-reigns, overlaps, dynastic summary statements, etc.

The fact that the Bible is, generally speaking, a book of summaries is also an important key to understanding what appear to be inconsistencies between the four Gospels (or biographies) of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John — one of Christ's biographers — wrote: "This is the disciple [John himself] which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also *many other things* [not recorded for posterity] *which Jesus did . . .*" (John 21:24-25).

The four Gospels comprise the only reliable record we have of Jesus' life. If we did have all the nuances and details, written by either Himself, a single biographer, or a collaboration of biographers, then perhaps we could *perfectly* solve every single seeming inconsistency between the four accounts. As it is,

again we have one or more possible solutions to each alleged contradictory scripture.

● Biblical Chronology

Another crux point in understanding alleged inconsistencies is the nature of biblical chronology.

In general, there is a chronological thread running throughout the Bible. But the events within each book are not always recorded in chronological order.

For example, Genesis 2 (sometimes referred to as "the second account" of creation) is actually a reiteration of Genesis 1 from a *different* viewpoint. Genesis 2 emphasizes the reason and purpose behind the creation of Adam and Eve.

Some, not understanding this point, might erroneously conclude that the first two chapters of Genesis contradict each other.

Also, consider the Gospels in this connection. Luke and Mark wrote in basic chronological order (Luke 1:3). Matthew groups associated events together, but not necessarily in strict chronology. John, writing later, added necessary details to round out the picture, even mentioning many events omitted by the other Gospels.

Now let's get down to business and solve some specific supposed contradictions. Accompanying each solution we will mention additional fundamental background points.

● Numerical Problems

First, what about apparent numerical inconsistencies in the Bible?

The Plague in the Wilderness: Ancient Israel fell into gross sexual sin related to the worship of Baalpeor. As a result, God plagued them. Moses recorded: "And those that died in the plague were *twenty and four thousand*" (Num. 25:9).

The Apostle Paul wrote of the same plague: "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day *three and twenty thousand*" (I Cor. 10:8).

Explanation: Moses mentions the total number of sinners who perished; the Apostle Paul only those who died *in one day*.

In regard to biblical numerics, it is worthwhile to quote a portion of George W. DeHoff's book, *Alleged Bible Contradictions*: "A part of a year is usually — though not always — counted for a whole year. Sometimes an odd number is given in round numbers instead of the exact form. Sometimes a king ruled as co-ruler with someone else (as a son ruling with an aged father) and was then later king in his own right" (p. 277).

● Who Did What?

No less important than supposed numerical inconsistencies are alleged errors as to "Who did what?"

Just such a problem with names is found in Matthew's Gospel when compared to the book of Zechariah.

Matthew 27:9: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by *Jeremy* [Jeremiah] the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was val-

ued, whom they of the children of Israel did value."

Zechariah 11:12-13: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord."

This reference to thirty pieces of silver cannot be found in the book of Jeremiah; it is recorded only in Zechariah.

Explanation: Read the verses carefully. Matthew's Gospel records that the prophecy was *spoken* by Jeremiah — not written. Zechariah apparently *recorded* what the Prophet Jeremiah had previously spoken.

Notice Zechariah 7:7: "Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the *former prophets*, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity . . ."

Jeremiah was a former prophet, who prophesied against Jerusalem. Zechariah — a latter prophet — is recalling the *spoken* word of Jeremiah — not the written word.

This brings up another important key to resolving supposed biblical contradictions: "... The passages in question have not been studied with the individual and personal care and prayer which the Book [Bible] demands. This carelessness lies at the root of nearly all the supposed difficulties that we hear about..." (Collett, *All About the Bible*, pp. 115-116).

Often the two passages that seem to contradict do not exactly say the same thing. They are not verbatim duplicates of each other. Important key word differences will often solve the supposed contradiction.

But, in other cases, an understanding of historical aspects of the times is also necessary.

● Historical Perspective

The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven? Matthew 3:2:

"... Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark 1:15: "... The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Explanation: Matthew uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven" for a reason. Many Jews regarded themselves as already, since Sinai, the Kingdom of God. Notice Matthew 21:43. Jesus told the Pharisees: "... The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation [the New Testament Church — I Peter 2:9] bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The literal Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of the Messiah — Christ) would be a spiritual kingdom transcending any physical kingdom or nation on this earth, then or now. Matthew wanted to be sure his Jewish audience understood this difference.

Mark, Luke and John all use the term "kingdom of God." But Matthew, in his phraseology, certainly did *not* mean the Kingdom is *in* heaven. The English expression "of" denotes ownership — not locality. The Bank of Morgan is not inside of Morgan; it belongs to Morgan. The Kingdom belongs to God who rules from heaven.

This example brings up another principle — the unique individuality of the biblical authors. It, too, is fundamental to an understanding of apparent biblical contradictions relating to the same event.

● Writers Are Unique

Every human being differs in some degree from every other human being. No two humans have the same set of fingerprints; nor the same voice prints.

The Eternal God inspired each book of the Bible in the author's own writing style, using his particular personal method of expression. Paul's epistles are distinctively Paul's; John's distinctly John's.

In recording an identical event, each writer selected those particular facts that seemed significant to him. Each may have drawn his facts from

a different source. Both authors may have omitted minor *connective* facts that would fill in the details and give us the perfect solution to an apparent contradiction.

John W. Haley writes: "Inspiration does not destroy the individuality of the writers. It deals primarily with ideas, rather than with words. It suggests ideas to the mind of the one writer, allowing him, generally, to clothe them in his own language... on this principle we account for... the occasional divergence in setting forth the same idea or in relating the same circumstance" (*Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, pp. 6, 7).

The "uniqueness of authorship" principle is also fundamental to examining supposed contradictions between the four Gospels.

Dr. Collett reminds us: "Let those who imagine they have discovered errors and contradictions in the evangelists' writings remember how easy — indeed, how natural — it is to give three or four accounts of one circumstance from different points of view..." (*Scripture of Truth*, page 140).

● The Time Factor

No less important than acceptable alternate views of the same circumstance is the time factor.

Time Differential. Genesis 1:31: "And God saw every thing that he had made [including man], and, behold, it was very good." Genesis 6:5-6: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth . . . And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Explanation: Fifteen hundred years elapsed between these chapters in Genesis. After the original human sin, the spiritual state of man had gone from bad to worse to intolerable.

Man could have remained loyal to God; he simply chose not to. He let Satan's influence gradually drive him further and further from the Creator and His ways.

Comprehension of the time factor

can help us solve other types of seemingly contradictory statements.

Speech or Silence? Proverbs 26:4: "Answer *not* a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him."

Proverbs 26:5: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."

Explanation: Time and circumstances are crucial to understanding these twin proverbs. Solomon, in his providential wisdom, wrote under inspiration: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . *a time to keep silence, and a time to speak*" (Eccl. 3:1, 7).

Both time and circumstances would indicate to the wise man when to apply Proverbs 26:4 and when to apply Proverbs 26:5. Sometimes Jesus, in the Gospel accounts, answered His foolish adversaries and sometimes He did not.

● The Translation Factor

What Swallowed Jonah? Jonah 1:17: "Now the Lord had prepared a *great fish* to swallow up Jonah."

Matthew 12:40: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the *whale's belly* . . ."

Explanation: The King James translation is the villain in this case. Most recent Bible revisions translate the word "whale" as a sea-monster or huge fish. The original Greek meaning is "great sea monster." In this instance, the King James translators (1611) assigned a wrong meaning to the original Greek word.

Discrepancies caused by errors in translation, either from the Hebrew or the Greek, may frequently be solved simply by consulting several different translations.

Doctrinal discolorations can emerge from some of these translation errors. For instance, take the word "Easter" in Acts 12:4 (KJV). Easter is a pagan holiday which was *never* observed by Christ, the original apostles or the early Church of God.

Knowing the most exact and literal meaning of the original text is

critical in this instance. The original Greek word, *pascha*, should be translated "passover" in Acts 12:4. Virtually all other translations render it correctly.

For Further Reading

We could take up this whole magazine and hundreds besides in solving the many supposed contradictions. Also, if space would allow, we could also point out many more fundamental principles on how to solve such contradictions.

Fortunately, there are a number of excellent books broaching the subject if the reader is interested in further detailed study. We, of course, do not endorse all that is said in these books, but they can many times be very helpful in solving alleged biblical inconsistencies. You can locate these books in a Bible bookstore, in your local library, or simply order them by mail. (The Worldwide Church of God has no commercial connection with the publishers.)

1) *Alleged Bible Contradictions Explained*, by George DeHoff, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

2) *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, by John W. Haley, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, Tennessee.

3) *All About the Bible*, by Sidney Collett, Fleming H. Revell Company, Westwood, New Jersey.

However, the Worldwide Church of God does publish two free booklets that will prove most helpful in this area of study. Entitled *How to Study the Bible* and *Answers From Genesis*, these vital publications state and solve several apparent biblical inconsistencies not mentioned in this article.

Your Attitude and Approach

In summary, perhaps the most important key in viewing an apparent Bible contradiction is your attitude and approach toward the Holy Scriptures themselves.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "All

scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [Why?] That the man of God may be perfect [spiritually mature], thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Perfection of character should always be the main purpose (not necessarily the sole purpose) for which we study our Bibles — *not* to find contradictions.

Your Saviour — Jesus of Nazareth — stated the same principle in different words. "Search the scriptures [study the Bible, in modern parlance]; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

The Prophet Isaiah graphically portrayed God's feeling about those who would study His Word — the Bible. "... But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor [humble in attitude] and of a contrite spirit, and *trembleth at my word*" (Isa. 66:2).

As one continues to study his Bible, he is bound to run across what seem to be inconsistencies. But if that person fears to misunderstand or mishandle God's Word (keeping the above key verses in mind), he is halfway to a solution. Many difficulties are, then, easily solvable when all the facts are discovered.

However, others may not lend themselves to so quick a solution. The Bible itself explains that some portions of Paul's epistles are "hard to be understood" (II Peter 3:16).

If a problem persists in this area, simply reserve judgment. Put the problem on the shelf for awhile. Seek counsel and pray about it. A logical answer will come!

Jeremiah cried out to God: "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). We all desperately need the spiritual guidance of God to put alleged contradictions in proper perspective with the big trunk-of-the-tree overview — the overall purpose in human life. □

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BASIC CHRISTIANITY?

Christianity in today's world is not what it was in the time of the original apostles. Times and values have changed. Ecclesiastical politics, theology, philosophy and higher criticism have all had their part in complicating the simple beliefs and practices of the original Christians. As the Apostle Jude exhorted, it is time "to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered."

by Brian Knowles

DOES A true Christian have to become a student of today's complex, often abstract theology to be saved? Must a true believer be able to wrap his or her mind around the sophisticated theology of Barth and Nietzsche to make it into the Kingdom of God?

Some scholars, enveloped in a pedantic cloud of bloated, academic self-righteousness, have presumed to call the faith of the original Christians "primitive." They have looked down upon the theology of Peter, Paul and John as being "less advanced" than the confusing, complex abstractions of today's theological thinkers.

James, according to one of the Reformers, wrote "an epistle of straw." Another scholar claimed that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all mankind, was nothing more than a pious fraud — a charlatan and a fake who plotted his own crucifixion! Still other modern thinkers have introduced such concepts as the death of God and "situation ethics." There is almost no part of the Scriptures which is not considered to be unreliable by one scholar or

another. The first eleven chapters of Genesis have been declared "myth" by a major "Christian" denomination in Canada.

A substantial majority of modern, liberal theological thinkers have embraced the idea that Isaiah wrote only the first thirty-nine chapters of the book attributed to him. The remainder of the book was supposedly written much later by a "great unknown."

The accounts of miracles in the Bible have been discounted on the basis of their scientific unprovability.

Much debate has taken place over the integrity of the existing texts or manuscripts of the Bible. Alleged contradictions and discrepancies have been cited as reason for rejecting the Scriptures as a reliable guide to living.

The vast amount of literature in the form of books, tracts, learned papers, theses and journals on theology and religion is enough to give the average Christian a mental hernia! The musty halls of cloistered monasteries echo to the footsteps of learned monks who spend whole lifetimes in a search for spiritual enlightenment. But it doesn't seem to be of much help to the American Midwest farmer who seeks to be in the Kingdom of God. It doesn't appear to assist the spiritual development of a construction worker in northwest England.

The learned debates of dignified theologians behind the paneled doors of Academia appear to provide little encouragement to the average alcoholic who is struggling to reach the hand of Christ.

Something is horribly wrong with the world of organized Christianity.

Somehow, the simple, yet profound, faith of the early Church has been lost in the shuffle of politics and theological rhetoric.

The intricacies of ecclesiastical politics and higher finance, along with the confusing complexities of theological debate, have somehow clouded the vision of *basic Christianity*.

What You Don't Need to Know

How much does any Christian need to know in order to be saved? Must each child of God become a learned theologian in his own right — able to resolve in his own mind the debates of centuries of scholarship?

Obviously not.

There are a lot of things you *don't* need to know in order to attain salvation.

You don't need to know how to resolve the problem of "Deutero-Isaiah" for example. John 12:37-41 makes it plain that the early Church believed that Isaiah wrote the *entire* book attributed to his name. John quoted from *both* "sections" of Isaiah (Isa. 53:1 and 6:10) and attributed both to his authorship. If you believe the New Testament is an accurate account of the beliefs of the early Church, then the problem should be solved.

Nor do you need to resolve the question of whether the miracles of the Old Testament and the account of the first eleven chapters of Genesis are mythological. The Apostle Paul taught that "*all* scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (II Tim. 3:16). Jesus taught that God's Word is *truth* (John 17:17).

Christ also taught that man

should live by *every* word of God (Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4) and that none of the Bible is to be rejected. He said that the "scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

If you believe the New Testament, then you *must* believe the Old. And if you don't believe the New Testament, how then can you call yourself a Christian? The New Testament is the *only* reliable record we have of the life of the Messiah, the beginnings of the Church and the beliefs and practices of early Christianity.

In the absence of updated revelation from God, we have to rely upon the New Testament — or nothing! It is the main source of knowledge and the foundation of true Christianity. To reject the New Testament — or any part of it — is to reject Christ and His teachings.

To accept the New Testament and its teachings is to accept Christ — and to *solve* many of the problems posed by critics of the Old Testament. And that takes care of a major portion of the problems with modern theological scholarship.

Granted, many sophisticated, learned thinkers of formidable stature in the world of theology would consider this view childishly simplistic — perhaps even downright simple-minded. But you've got to draw the line somewhere. Speaking to the local congregation at Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the *simplicity that is in Christ*" (II Cor. 11:3).

The relationship of Christians with Christ is not complex, complicated and confusing. It is simple,

yet profound. You and I don't have to be advanced theological thinkers to be in the Kingdom of God!

What Is Christianity?

Well, what is true Christianity? What do you have to know to be saved?

Let's look at the word "Christian" first. What does it mean? Where did it come from?

Acts 11:26 answers: "... And *the disciples* were called Christians first in Antioch." Those who were Christ's students — those who followed Christ — were given the name "Christians" by the citizens of the city of Antioch. A Christian is simply one who believes, believes in, and follows the lead and example of Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. (Peter himself later used the term [I Pet. 4:16].)

But what does such belief involve?

Christ came as a Lawgiver — like Moses. He came to fulfill and redefine those principles which involve man's relationship with his Maker and his fellow citizens of planet earth. All of the teachings of Jesus were based on one single overriding principle — *love*.

Jesus' philosophy rose above picaresque points of theological debate in His day. When asked by a lawyer (an expert in Judaic law) what the "great" commandment of the law was, Christ reduced the whole matter to one simple principle — love. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. *On*

these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

These two principles have one common denominator — love. Love in two directions — toward God and toward one's fellowman.

This is the *essence*, the heart and core, of Christianity! Jesus said that love was the greatest and most obvious way to recognize a true Christian: "*By this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one to another" (John 13:35).

The Apostle Paul later elaborated on this fundamental teaching of Christ. He taught Christians: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8).

Think about that. It's at once both simple and profound. A person who has Christ's love dwelling in his heart and mind is not going to do any evil to his neighbor. He or she is not going to steal from his neighbor — or lie to them — or murder them. A Christian who loves his neighbor is not going to covet his belongings or commit adultery with his wife. A child who loves his parents is not going to dishonor them.

A Christian, in short, *keeps* the law of God *because of* the element of love that exists within him. (After all, if you're not breaking the law, you're keeping it!) As Paul said: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). This is how Christ Himself fulfilled the law (Matt. 5:17) and thus set an example for all Christians. He laid down his very life in sacrifice in the greatest fulfillment of this central principle of love (upon which all of

God's law is based) — and he did it for you and for me!

Love is the centrality of all true Christianity.

How God's Love Is Acquired

Loving God and one's neighbor does not come naturally for most of us. The ability to express godly love is an acquired characteristic. In fact, it's a gift.

God makes the first move. Paul explained that we love God because He *first* loved us (I John 4:19). God draws us to Him by His Holy Spirit (John 6:44). He begins the process of bringing us into a relationship with Him by attracting us to His gospel.

We respond by asking the question: "What must I now *do* in the light of what I now know?" God answers: "... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Once this is done, the Christian begins to bear the fruit of the Spirit. "... The fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). Notice! The very first fruit listed is love. This is the first result God begins to produce in the life of a converted Christian.

Why?

Because it is the basis and the foundation upon which all other beliefs and practices of Christianity are based. Love is the primary characteristic God is developing in His children.

It is a most necessary prerequisite to entry into the Kingdom of God. It is more important than knowledge and understanding. It is far more important than prophecy. It transcends even faith, without

which it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). It is the very best gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul taught Christians to eagerly desire the *best* gifts (I Cor. 12:31).

He placed love in its proper relationship to all the other gifts, talents and abilities which a Christian could possess: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [Greek *agape*, love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of *prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and *all knowledge*; and though I have all *faith*, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I AM NOTHING"! (I Cor. 13:1-2.)

A Christian who does not have the love which comes as the result of the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit is *nothing*, spiritually speaking. He is no Christian at all. If you don't believe that, then you don't believe the Christian Bible!

All of the vaunted scholarship, all the knowledge and learned arguments, the higher criticism and the lower cynicism, the endless words, the sound and fury of violent theological arguments, are all meaningless — an exercise in futility in the absence of godly love.

Love batters down all barriers. Yet it is not militant. The Christian is patient and kind. He is not self-seeking because he seeks the welfare of others before that of himself. Vanity and jealousy have no place in the makeup of a Christian. The converted mind does not delight in scandal and the knowledge of evil and sin in others (compare I Cor. 13:4-6). All of these characteristics are the *result* of that indwelling love which is the product of the Holy Spirit.

A Christian who loves God deeply and sincerely is not going to

erect an idol. Nor is he going to loosely or carelessly use the name of God. He will respect that name and use it in reverence and esteem. He will have no other gods before the true God. Nor will he run roughshod over the Sabbath day which commemorates the creation and the beginning of the great plan of salvation. He will set God apart in his heart and mind *every* day — not just on the Sabbath.

The truly converted Christian enters into a relationship with God which is based upon and motivated by love. It is a response to the incredible compassion exhibited by God when He took the first step and forgave every rotten, heinous, sinful act and thought you and I ever committed.

Love Is the Motivation for the Gospel

Every Christian who has been granted the priceless gift of conversion is going to want to share his understanding, his way of life, his knowledge of God with others. He will be "moved with compassion," as was — and is — Jesus Christ (cf., Mark 1:41; 6:34 and 8:2), when he surveys the contemporary human condition. He will have the same loving attitude Christ exhibited when He cried with deep emotion: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37.)

"That's a lot of religious sentimentality and mush," you may be thinking. No. You're wrong. What you are reading about is *basic Christianity*! If you reject love as mere religious emotionalism, then you are

rejecting Christ and the very essence of true Christianity!

Jesus Christ of Nazareth was not ashamed to openly express the very depths of His emotions in public. He wept openly on one occasion over the lack of faith of some of His contemporaries (John 11:35).

Jesus was particularly close to the Apostle John, who used the word "love" more than any other single writer of Scripture (John 21:20). (Just for your own edification, why not take your concordance and look up the word "love" and see just *how many* times it occurs in both the Gospel and the letters of John?)

The Apostle John, writing toward the end of the first century (after all the other original apostles were martyred), wrote: "For *this is the message* that ye heard from the beginning, *that we should love one another*" (I John 3:11).

Love is at the heart of the gospel message. It is a message of outgoing concern; it is the Church's gift to the world; it is an expression of love. The gospel of the Kingdom tells of a better way of life, a way of peace and harmony, and of a better world to come. It is a message of hope; it is a burning, white-hot light that shines in a darkened world.

The Apostle Paul, speaking of his own nation Israel, wrote: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

He was so filled with a loving desire for the welfare of the people that he said with deep emotion and feeling: "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel" (Rom. 9:2-4, *The New International Version*).

Paul was willing to sacrifice himself if that's what it took to bring about the salvation of Israel. Moses, many centuries earlier, had much the same attitude about the nation of Israel (compare Exodus 32:32).

Should not Christians have a similar attitude toward all society? Can we look at the intense agony and suffering of humankind — at the general wretchedness of the human condition — and fail to be moved to at least *communicate* with that world? Can we not earnestly desire that the world be granted *both* physical and spiritual salvation? After all, isn't that what the gospel is all about?

To Summarize

All of the arguments of Christian theology crumble into a meaningless jumble of hollow words in the face of godly love which is the basis of real Christianity. Love transcends all rhetoric and all of scholarship. You are a Christian if you have received God's Holy Spirit and

are now bearing its fruits in your life.

Paul summed it all up quite succinctly in Ephesians 1:13-14: "... Ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom [Christ] also after that ye believed, *ye were sealed* with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest [pledge or downpayment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

You are even now reading the words of that gospel. Believe it. Repent and be baptized and you will be granted the priceless gift of God's Holy Spirit, by which you will be sealed and preserved to eternal life! You will be assured of your place in eternity — in God's Kingdom.

And, if you are already baptized, examine yourself. Are you bearing the fruits of God's Spirit? Are you motivated by love toward God and your neighbor?

Are you living and experiencing *basic Christianity*? □

Donation Information

Many faithful co-workers have requested information on how best to make a gift to the Worldwide Church of God either during their lifetime or upon death, through wills, trusts or other means.

If you are desirous of receiving information regarding such gifts, the Legal Department of the Church is available to advise and serve without cost or obligation. Merely write: Worldwide Church of God, c/o Ralph K. Helge — Attorney at Law, P.O. Box 111,

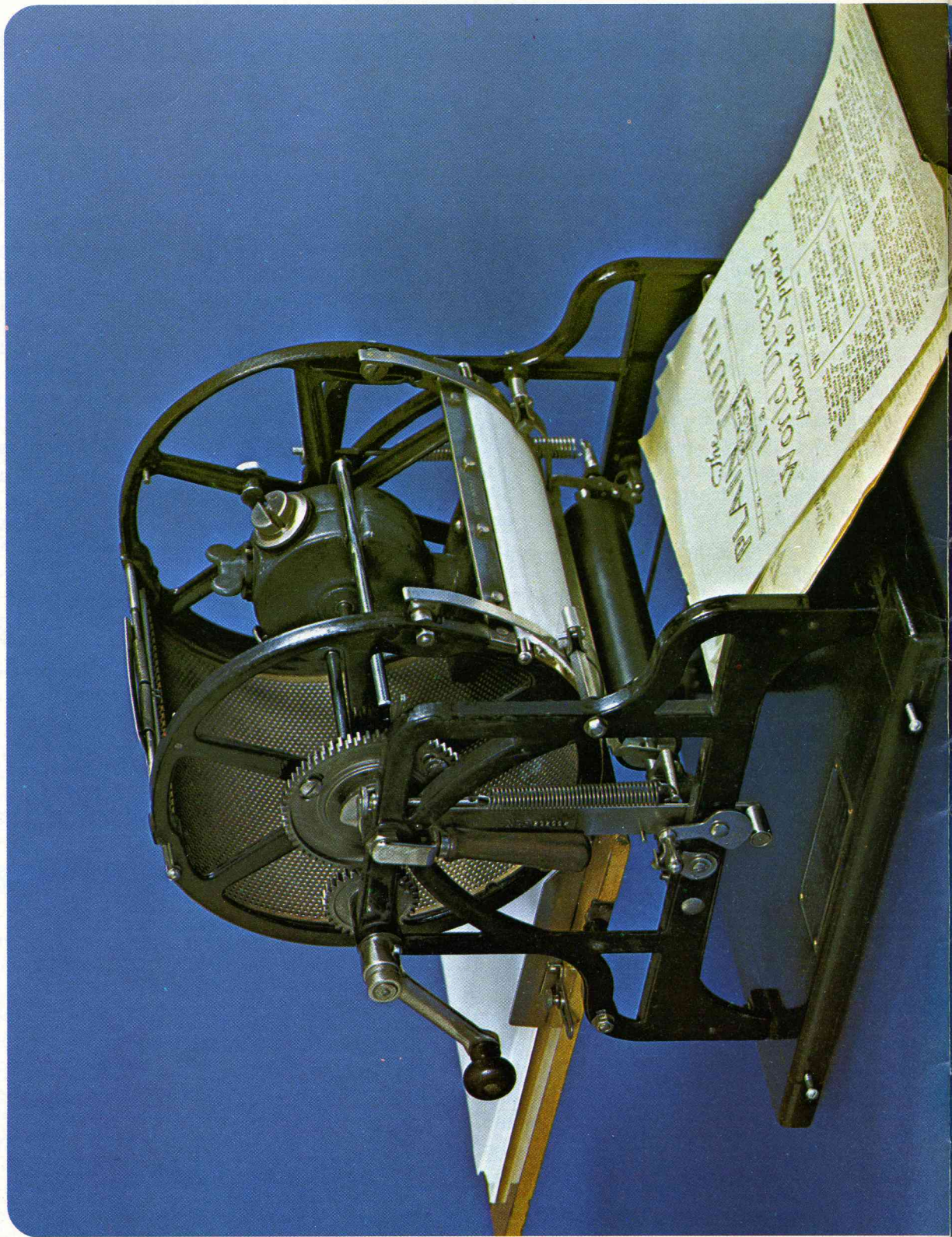
Pasadena, California 91123.

This should not be taken as a request for donations, but only as a notice that such information is available for those who are desirous of receiving it.

We regret that, due to the variance in laws of other countries, such legal information is only applicable to residents of the United States and Canada. However, in such cases we will be pleased to furnish whatever limited information we may have available.

**UPDATE
UPDATE
UPDATE**

plain truth



41 years old - and NEW!

This month marks two important milestones for the *Plain Truth* magazine.

First, the magazine is 41 years old. From its humble origin in February 1934 — when a few hundred copies were run off a Neostyle (similar to the one pictured above) — the magazine has grown in circulation, scope and quality. Today it has a circulation of over 2,700,000 and reaches an audience of millions throughout the world.

Second, the *Plain Truth* is 41 years NEW! It has a new format — a new look. A 16-page biweekly journal in tabloid format succeeds the previous magazine format published once a month.

The new format and frequency of publication was adopted for several reasons:

1) By coming out 22 times a year — instead of 10 — we will be able to report more quickly on news events.

The editorial content will be more timely and meaningful to the reader. This allows for an immediacy that is difficult to capture in a monthly magazine format. The lag time from a newsworthy “happening” to when it is reported and analyzed will be considerably reduced.

2) Readers will receive *twice* as much information per month to keep them informed on world events, prophetic trends and conditions — as well as strong, helpful commentary on Christian living. Each 16-page issue of the tabloid format will contain slightly more information than the old 32-page magazine format. And there will generally be two issues per month instead of one.

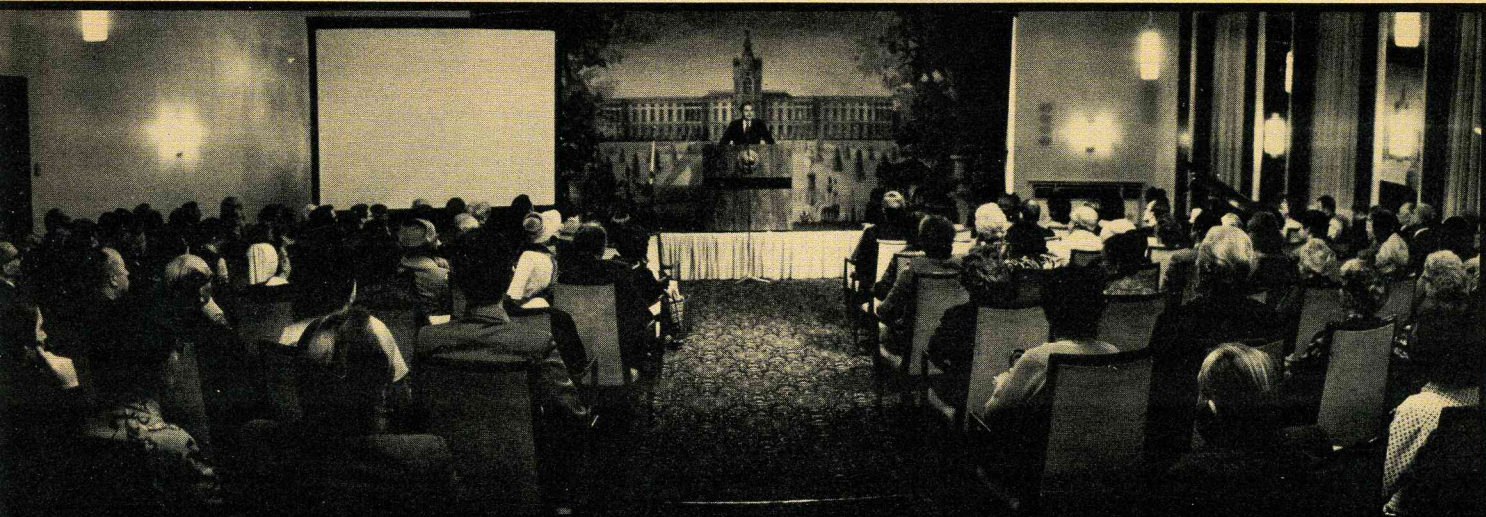
3) The new format will enable us to expand circulation and increase the printed impact of Christ's gospel at no additional cost.

Like all other publications, we

have had to deal with the problem of inflation. Printing costs have soared in the past 12 months.

The tabloid format enables us to do a better job editorially, while providing the impetus to make an end run around the inflation juggernaut. By shifting to other kinds of paper and ink, we can produce a quality product with *more* information, at about a third of the cost per issue. This means we will have a more effective publication and will increase circulation considerably without spending one penny more this year than we did last year — quite a feat in these inflationary times.

It all adds up to a greater impact and expanded readership worldwide. As our business manager, Frank Brown, put it: “The ability to say more with more punch, more regularly for less cost is certainly a very exciting combination!” □



Alfred Henning — GN

FIRST GERMAN EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGN

September 8 and 9 were landmark dates for the Worldwide Church of God in West Germany, as the first evangelistic campaign in the German lan-

guage was held in Düsseldorf. The campaign was conducted by Frank Schnee, regional director of the German Work.

The first night, 584 people turned out to hear Herr Schnee speak on the subject, "Is This the End Time?" The following evening, he spoke on the coming Kingdom of God before an audience of 507.

The two-night campaign was followed up a week later with a lecture. Over 200 interested readers of *Klar und Wahr* (the German *Plain Truth*) attended.

Staff members were kept quite busy for up to an hour and a half after the meetings answering questions about the Bible and the Church. The discussion was quite animated and at times controversial, as members of the audience thoroughly discussed the topic of the lecture and forcefully exchanged ideas. Scoffers and defenders openly and vigorously expressed their opinions.

The literature tables did a brisk business as more than 1,800 pieces of free literature were taken. □

South America

BUMPER CROP IN BOGOTA

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matt. 9:37). This analogy of Christ has often described the growth of the Worldwide Church of God. A current case in point is the growth of the Church in the South American country of Colombia.

Last October, 7,652 subscribers in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, were informed that a minister of the Worldwide Church of God, Pablo Gonzalez, was visiting the city once a month. They were invited to request a visit if they desired further information about the Church and its teachings.

To everyone's pleasant surprise, over 700 requests for visits came in within a month. "We wanted to have enough visits to keep a minister busy, but we didn't expect such an avalanche of requests!" exclaimed Mr. Walter Dickinson, director of the Spanish Department.

To reap the harvest God has provided, we are now registering with the government. This will

permit us to obtain resident visas for personnel to be established in the country.

In the meantime Señor Gonzalez continues his monthly trips to Bogota from San Juan, Puerto Rico. He spends 10 days to two weeks visiting with prospective members, and conducting Bible studies and Sabbath services.

All the costs of traveling to Colombia and working with the people are financed by funds made available by the co-workers and tithe-paying members of the Worldwide Church of God in Colombia.

"Our present goal," says Mr. Dickinson, is to establish a church of 35 to 40 baptized members in the Bogota area, after which we can send in a resident

minister to serve that church and baptize people in other cities.”

If the requests for visits in the Bogota area is any indication, the minister will be very busy. Nearly 40,000 people in Colombia subscribe to *La Pura Verdad* (the Spanish edition of the *Plain Truth*). Although radio coverage or advertising of our literature in

the country has not occurred since June of 1969, 1800-2500 readers are added to the subscription list each month. This growth comes from a very inexpensive and effective advertising technique — word of mouth and sharing of *La Pura Verdad*.

The demand for knowledge is also strong. In the last subscrip-

tion renewal program, the Correspondence Course was offered to readers of the magazine. In three months 20,000 people requested the lessons — tripling the number of people on the course.

In future issues we will report on the progress in Colombia, as well as the spiritual harvest in other Latin American countries. □

African Diary

FIRST FEAST IN WEST AFRICA

The latest baptizing tour in West Africa began September 6, 1974, and culminated with the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles in Nigeria and Ghana. Harold Jackson, director of the West African region, again headed the tour. This time he was assisted by Abner Washington, a minister who normally serves in Atlanta, Georgia. Here is Mr. Washington's firsthand account of his experiences and impressions of the tour.

* * *

This tour was an anxious first for me and as such I thought many of you would like to know what it is like to travel through Africa. What are the people like? What were some of the things we encountered? What was an average day like?

Before we even got to Africa a

vast amount of preparation and preplanning by the African Department at Bricket Wood was necessary to make the tours run as smoothly as possible. Hundreds of letters were written, giving dates, times, and meeting places to those who requested a visit by our representatives. Plane and hotel-motel reservations had to be made in advance. Passports, health cards, appointment schedules, suitcases, film for the camera, etc., etc., had to be taken care of before the departure date.

On the day we left, I excitedly cleared passenger flight inspection, boarded a jumbo jet and winged toward our destination with heart pounding. Upon landing at Accra, Ghana, we passed through customs and I had to strain a little to understand the accented English of the immigration officer. This was my

AFRICAN BRETHREN listen to sermon during Feast of Tabernacles in Ikaja, Nigeria.

GN Photo

first taste of what I would hear for weeks to come.

The taxi cabs do not have meters, so we had to convince the driver that we didn't have as much money as he thought we had. Sometimes we were successful, sometimes not. On the way to the hotel, I noticed that most drivers used their car horns to express their feelings as well as to warn other cars to get out of the way. Finally we reached the hotel and settled down to prepare for the first visitors.

As we progressed on the tour, I realized several things. First of all, after making several trips through customs, I wished I had brought only half as much paraphernalia. I also came to the real-



THE CHURCH IN ACTION

ization that when you leave the United States you have left a way of life that is not duplicated in any other place on earth.

You very quickly begin to miss the conveniences and luxuries, especially in underdeveloped countries. Not that everything is bad, but things are not as plentiful, not as automated, and truly not as convenient.

You can no longer pick up the telephone and always get through to the intended party. In one city, we were not able to call outside of the hotel. In fact, no one was able to call outside the city for eight days. We could receive in-coming calls, however.

Probably because of fuel prices, some hotels didn't furnish continuous hot water. It was hot in the evening and early morning, but other times it was only tepid. Even everyday items such as toothpicks are hard to come by in some places. One night after dinner we asked the waiter for toothpicks. He didn't know what they were. After some gestures of sign language, he finally brought us two tubes of toothpaste. We gave up.

In spite of all our planning, there were times when our schedule went awry. On our way to Nigeria from Ghana we flew with a song and dance group from the University of Ghana. They were on their way to Russia to perform in Moscow. This made for a full flight; we almost lost our seats. When we arrived in Lagos we found that our connecting flight which was to leave at 1:00 p.m. (according to the agency) had departed at 8:05 a.m. We had an unexpected five-hour layover.

When we finally did arrive at our destination, we found our accommodations to be just a little lacking. There had been very heavy rain and some water was seeping into our cottage. The carpet in Mr. Jackson's room was soaking wet. My room air conditioner sounded like a cement mixer truck with no muffler. A variety of lizards and flying and creeping insects were all there to greet us.

I swatted, stomped and shooed until I thought they were all gone and then went to dinner. The meal had no unpleasant surprises. In fact, we found the food in all places where we ate to be tasty and satisfying.

The next day was a very good day. We counseled 17 people from every walk of life — a farmer, a village chief, doctors, lawyers, schoolteachers, engineers, hotel managers, civil servants, students, and a taxi driver.

Although the vast majority of the people are nonprofessionals, the professionals are increasing in both countries. The development of a middle class is enabling some to move into areas where they can buy homes and enjoy some of the luxuries of life — things we in the States would take for granted and feel we couldn't do without. Like running water, indoor plumbing, wooden floors, electric lights and appliances.

We worry about getting that larger refrigerator or a second car. They worry about just a refrigerator or a used car. We worry about a college education for our children; they worry about a primary education for theirs. We worry about a building being air conditioned; they worry about finances for a building.

Whatever the hardship, whatever the inconveniences of traveling, they all melted into insignificance when we opened the door and greeted the people God has called. These people have a desire for God's truth that is very inspiring. They came from miles away, from the north, south, east and west to see a representative of the true God.

One young fellow, aged 22, single and a trader by occupation, came over 300 miles for counseling. That could be equivalent to 600-1000 miles in the States as far as length of time it takes to travel the distance. He traveled five hours on the Niger River in a canoe and the remainder of the trip by land. The trip took two days. He was one of the twenty baptized.

I would like to insert an excerpt from a letter that sums up the feel-

ings of God's people in West Africa as it was expressed to us wherever we went:

"The opportunity to counsel privately with the ministers who conducted the festival; to meet and fellowship with others of like faith, like problems and trials, and like goals; and to listen with them to Christ's ministers expound God's truths — these were indeed a spiritually uplifting experience and a great blessing to me.

"Little did I expect there to be a congregation of the size that turned up for the festival. It was simply thrilling to get to know each other and exchange addresses with one another! Many of us had all along been thinking we were *alone*, a very few in this part of the world — who had been called to God's Work and received His offer of salvation. And it was a pleasant surprise to us all to meet one another and to know that we were not alone in our struggles against self and the world around us. We were thus encouraged by one another to increase in the knowledge of our God and grow in His grace and Spirit.

"One thing remains to be said — a prayer: that the Almighty Eternal hasten the planting of His Holy Name and the organization of congregations in this region of Africa, to worship Him in spirit and in truth."

For the Feast of Tabernacles we had 126 in Lagos, Nigeria and 83 in Accra, Ghana. This is the first time in modern history that the Feast of Tabernacles was formally observed in West Africa. It was a tremendous Feast; the brethren were very pleased to hear the Word preached and to have the opportunity to observe their first Feast of Tabernacles. Altogether we have approximately 200 prospective members in Nigeria and 125 in Ghana.

After five years of baptizing tours in this area, the fruits of God's Holy Spirit are made manifest and the harvesting of the crop is a delight and pleasure in which we can all rejoice. □

Letters

Holy Days Up to Date

I read the October issue of *The Good News* in its entirety, and the article Garner Ted wrote ("Yes, God's Holy Days Are Up to Date in the Space Age") was very, very interesting. I want to learn more about the festivals, and many other things too. I'm very interested and concerned about the work Mr. Herbert Armstrong is doing. I marvel at his endurance and the pace at which he goes. God indeed is with him as he carries on such wonderful work.

Mrs. C. H.,
Arvin, California

- *More information about the holy days may be obtained by writing for our free booklet "Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days — Which?"*

We are not using the term "good news" as to last October's issue, because of the scriptural errors in it. Garner Ted does a good job in making readers believe the true Church, the body of Christ — Acts 15:14 — are to keep the "festivals." He does not see Colossians 2:16 as for today.

N. M. S.,
Seattle, Washington

- *There was a box explaining the true meaning of Colossians 2:16 accompanying the article. Check pages four and five of the October issue.*

The Fig Tree

The parable of the fig tree has puzzled me for a long time and now the article in *The Good News* by Lawson Briggs has finally cleared it up for me.

Mrs. M. B. T.,
Dixon, Illinois

You are doing a wonderful job with *The Good News*. However, I have one suggestion: Approach with caution such articles as that on page 10 of the October issue ("Why Christ Cursed the Fig Tree"). Those are the type of articles Protestant literature is full of. I grew up reading that type of article in my Sunday school books. More specifically, man's reason is applied to the unobvious or seemingly contradictory to explain. The reason given in the article may well be true, but can it be proved from God's Word? Do members of the Church have the right to "fill in the blanks?"

Darwin F.,
Erlanger, Kentucky

- *Since the Bible is not a textbook on horticulture, yet speaks from a standpoint of true knowledge of and actual experience with fig trees, it is necessary that a Christian go to the appropriate sources outside of the scriptural revelation in order to understand the Bible's message.*

Prophecy

How increasingly clear it is becoming that Jesus Christ's words of Matthew 24 are sure. Yesterday Secretary of State Kissinger, in addressing the U.N. General Assembly, used such terms as "disaster,"

"depression," "worldwide holocaust" in giving one of the most depressing speeches for the immediate future of the world. Last week the New York Times reported that scientists are increasingly coming to feel that an atomic war between the super-powers might also wipe out the food-plant chain, besides destroying "all flesh."

Things are looking gloomier all the time. Yet, I am hopeful and tremendously excited about the future. Not too many are. And so many just don't seem to care; they care only about immediate problems, pleasures and needs. How absolutely thankful I now am that I have been drawn to this Work with you.

Pat G.,
Trenton, New Jersey

Update

Reading the article "Newsstands — Getting the Gospel to Europe" reminded me of the time I was with the *Detroit Free Press*. My first assignment was to "sample" an area in the city of Grand Rapids. This means that I selected a residential area, hired a few boys to deliver the morning newspaper to each home in that particular area and then supervised the operation.

A subscription card was enclosed in the first paper delivered, which stated that they would receive a free six-day delivery of the newspaper and that there would be a route started in their area if enough people were interested in subscribing. At the end of the sixth day the office would wait for the subscriptions to come in.

In Mr. Martin's article he stated: "In our first trial distribution, we planted a 'mustard seed' in Britain — only 399 magazines. But 7.5% of those who picked up the magazine wrote in for a one-year, free subscription. The next month, an 8.8% response came from 1,100 magazines."

To the average person reading this, these percentages may not seem like much, but to someone familiar with this type of operation this is a very high percentage of subscriptions. I don't remember what our percentage was with the newspaper trial, but I know it was nowhere near this. In fact, as I recall, this pilot program of newspaper "sampling" didn't last too long because of poor results.

Lloyd L.,
Zeeland, Michigan

Reads This First

I have just received our GN for October. I always read "What Our Readers Say" before anything else. I just love reading of people's lives who are as rich and full as mine. We're all human and have logs that need removing. With patience and obedience to God's laws we'll all be able to make it into the world tomorrow.

Mrs. Noralee G.,
Conyers, Georgia

Co-Worker Letter

I received your letter yesterday (dated Oct. 24) and was I inspired. Your exhorta-

tions to the brethren to continue on are a great encouragement, and are greatly appreciated. I think all too many of us allow ourselves to become discouraged by this world, and mundane cares can get our eyes off the goal God has set before us. Yet I feel that many of the brethren desire to "Keep the home fires burning," as you put it recently.

Unfortunately, the world's sick economy is shared by America's sick economy. Today the Labor Department announced that unemployment now stands at 6%; predictions are that it will be up to at least 7% by the end of next year. Among black males the figure is already reportedly at 10%.

The coming year is going to be one of sacrifice for many brethren; yet, I'm confident that God who directs this Work will see to it that you reach these governments. I feel the large offering at the Feast this year demonstrates that many of the brethren feel as you do that time is fast running out. I hope that sense of urgency will not depart from us. Thankfully, even those whom God has not enabled to contribute much can still pray fervently.

John M.,
New York, New York

Just got your letter to the co-workers with Christ and have finished reading it. Your letter was very inspiring and really gave us an awareness of how bad things really are and our responsibility in getting the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the nations of this world. We know our responsibilities, but have the tendency of losing sight of them. Your letter adds more zeal and throws more spiritual light on things.

Your letters about how the Work is progressing raises a thrill in us and really encourages us to further our efforts in helping this great Work. We are praying for you and this Work constantly and are going to give and help it all we can. I wish again to say we are behind you and Garner Ted and this Work 100%.

Michael J.,
Carter, Oklahoma

Concerned for Others

I have had the privilege to read a vast amount of your literature, which I at first received from a friend and later directly from you. To me it has meant, and always will mean, a lot. It has opened my eyes to the wrong beliefs I have followed blindly since childhood. Although I find it difficult to break away completely, I trust that God will make me fit to be one of His fold and become a true Christian.

As I have benefited so much from your services, which I never will be able to repay, I want to help others to experience what I have. That is why I am making this small contribution to your work. I can assure you that this will not be the last. I hope that it will be of benefit to you.

Mr. E. P.,
Athlone Cape,
South Africa



The Good News

P. O. Box 111

Pasadena, California 91123

Printed in U.S.A.

740306-0688-8 31 G025

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