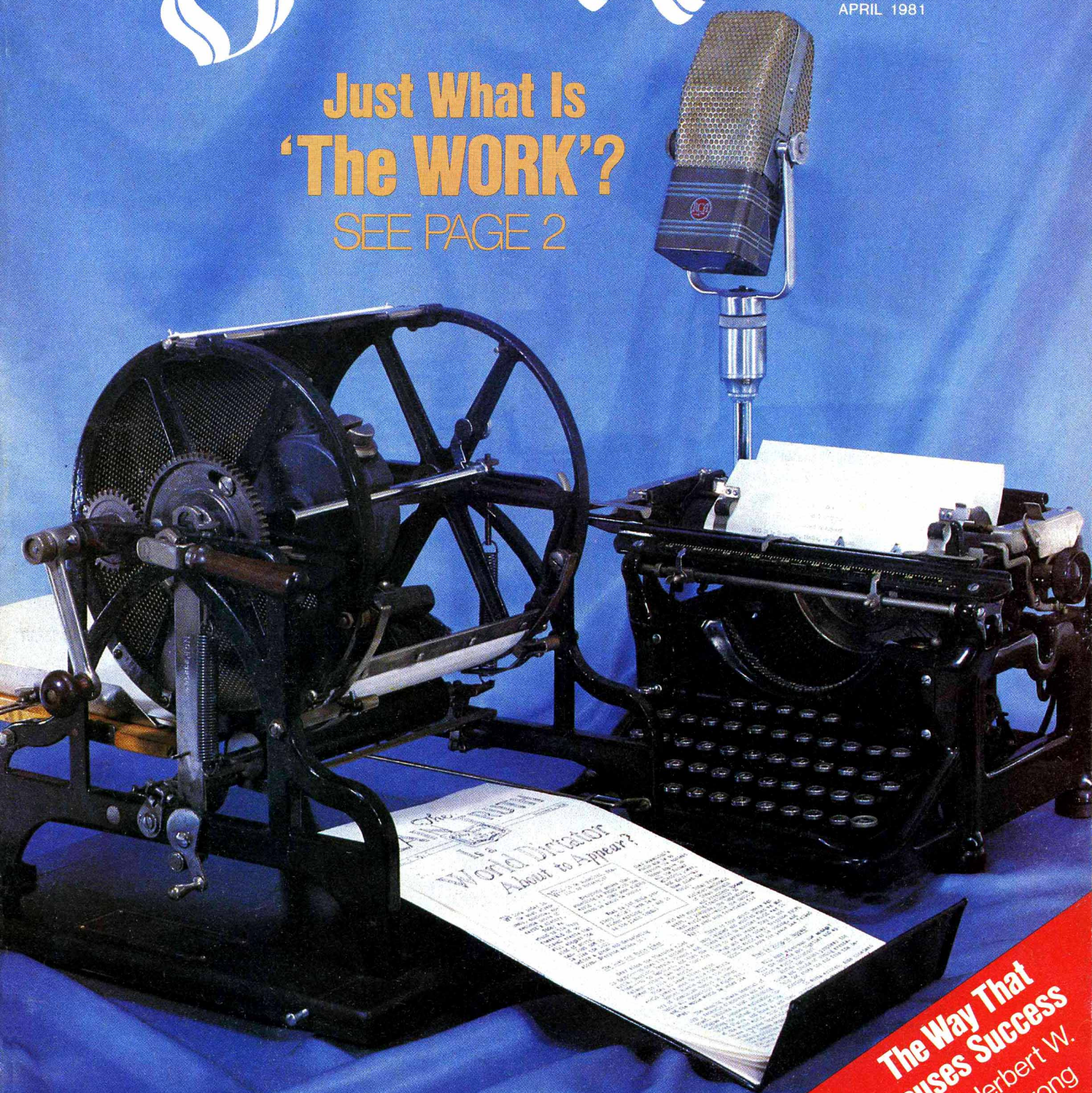


The Good News

APRIL 1981

Just What Is
'The WORK'?
SEE PAGE 2



**The Way That
Causes Success**
By Herbert W.
Armstrong

The Good News

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COVER: The Neostyle, the radio microphone and the typewriter — God's end-time Work of reaching the world with the Gospel began with these tools in 1934. Read "Just What Is 'the Work'?", beginning on page 2. Photo by Scott Smith.

Letters

"Proof of the Bible" Special

I am going through the December issue of *The Good News* for the second time. Not only am I reading it for the second time, but I am now in the process of reading all the scriptures in the articles and marking them in my Bible.

I believe that there is more meat in these articles than I have ever read before, and in the past almost two years, the articles in . . . *The Good News* have been really improving very fast. We need all of these articles we can get as time draws near the close of this age.

Roy M. Manley
Bonanza, Ore.

Wise men not biblical?

Regarding Shirley Johnson's story — third paragraph, page 27 (January), I would submit this note:

"Many people know about the shepherds who found the baby Jesus lying in a manger" — this is per the Bible — "and the wise men of the east who came bearing gifts" — which is not biblical!

Would someone care to comment?

Joe V. Brooks
Palmdale, Calif.

The wise men from the East are indeed biblical (Matt. 2:1). They learned that the infant Christ was living with His parents in a house in Bethlehem, and traveled there to worship Him. They presented Jesus with gifts of "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (verse 11). Mrs. Johnson described this visit of the wise men in the February installment.

Only member in Japan writes

I want to thank you very sincerely for all you do for us every day and for keeping this Work going and hurrying it toward the end goal. I am behind you and praying for you daily. Thank you for always keeping me informed about the Work by sending me your newsletters and *WN*, also the *PT* and *GN*. I am still the only resident member in this country as far as I know, so I very much appreciate all the literature and information. It helps me moreover to pray better.

Catherine Okano
Abiko, Japan

Information included with a map in the February issue (pp. 14-15) was in error. Total Plain Truth circulation is approximately 2.5 million, of which 1.5 million copies are sent to subscribers. One million are distributed on newsstands.

Personal from



The Way of Life That CAUSES Success

I WAS REMINISCING with two of our executives on the high estimate I placed on myself in earlier life — in my twenties. “I was a very important individual in my own eyes then,” I mused. “You have no idea how far I’ve skidded backward since then.”

They laughed. “Well,” exclaimed one, “I wish you’d give us the formula of how to go backward like that!”

Reflecting on this bit of banter later, I decided seriously it *would* be profitable to write that formula for all our readers. For it is the formula for the only kind of success that is real and satisfying and lasting.

For as long as I was important in my own eyes, I was actually of no more importance than a paper bag filled with air. True, I was ambitious. I worked hard, studied hard, drove myself on relentlessly to achieve what I then viewed as SUCCESS. But actually, as I know now, it was a striving after wind — pure vanity — a swelled-up self-exaltation that was like a toy balloon that will burst when pricked with a pin.

The skidding backward began with the flash depression of 1920, which sent numerous big corporations, among which were my main customers, to the wall. It was a national flash catastrophe over which I had no control. It left me, by 1922, a deflated, near-frustrated young man of 30. But not for long. I said: “I’ll bound back. You can’t keep a good man down.” Self-confidence returned. I began

developing another business.

But by 1926, just when my new advertising business was beginning to accelerate, another nationwide occurrence, not of my making — or even my knowledge, at the time — wiped out that business.

Once again the SELF was deflated. The ego was punctured. I took a new look at myself. And what I now saw was pretty humiliating. I called myself a burned-out “hunk of junk.” I felt unworthy to be cast onto a junk pile. At this point a soul-jarring experience and a new self-appraisal resulted in a total about-face. A jolt changed the direction of my life.

Events and experiences of earlier years now played their part in shaping a new life from this point on. The inflated ego and self-assured ambition had been aroused at age 16. But as far back as memory extends I had a passion for UNDERSTANDING.

I have written elsewhere of the experience, when 22, as the “idea man” for the editorial department of the country’s largest trade journal. In continual travel throughout the United States, I was assigned not only to search out successful sales ideas and business management techniques, but also seek out the reasons for the success of the few, and the failure of the many.

On this assignment I pioneered in making surveys, based on the law-of-average principle, sampling public opinion, attitudes, consumer buying habits, facts about life — about failure and success — about mental states of happiness or depression, about life itself as people lived it.

Now as I reflected back, I realized that the most “successful” people I

had interviewed were the least happy. Bank accounts were full but lives were empty.

Now, having taken the count twice as a result of nationwide occurrences not of my making — now reduced to actual economic poverty — it became clear at last that, truly, it is more blessed to *give* than to receive.

This whole world, it became painfully clear, was operating on the “GET” philosophy. The philosophy of “I love *ME*, and I care nothing about *you*.” The way of competition, strife, taking, acquiring, amassing — of *being served* rather than serving. Actually, in economic poverty I found rest from the nerve-shattering *driving, striving* after that which NEVER SATISFIED when acquired! I began to see that LOVE is not spelled “l-u-s-t” but rather is pointed in the opposite direction — LOVE is an *out-going concern* for the one loved.

It became crystal clear that there are two overall philosophies or *WAYS* of life. One is the SELF-centered way. It is simply VANITY. It loves self only (which, as I had learned from a text on advertising psychology, *includes* that which you call *YOURS* — your wife and family, your club, your political party, your football team, your country in time of war). It includes not only love and greed toward SELF, but envy, jealousy and even hatred toward others.

I could see why so many marriages break up — or, at least, are unhappy. One confuses “falling in love” with the sex attraction that stimulates DESIRE — toward SELF. And when one does not GET what is wanted *from* the mate, resentment sets in.

(Continued on page 27)

Just What Is 'The WORK'?

*And what was it, and how organized, in 1933,
and from A.D. 31-70?*

By Herbert W. Armstrong

The Work of God, and the organization and government of the Church of God, underwent radical changes from A.D. 31-70 to 1933, and also from 1933 to the present.

We need now to stop and get our perspective. Was it as it should have been in 1933? Is it TODAY?

Radical and significant changes have occurred in the world during these intervals. Yet the same Church of God has continued — not, in the years 1927-33, as it should have been. Yet it was the only body of believers on earth that had the true name — the “commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

WHY the Church? — its PURPOSE

The PURPOSE for which Christ built the Church exemplifies its WORK — its activities. And Christ, through the New Testament, gives us the pattern by which it, as a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM (not a human or worldly organization), should be organized to carry on its WORK.

The PURPOSE, like most things in God's PLAN, is dual: 1) To ANNOUNCE for a witness to the world the coming Kingdom of God (the true Gospel), to prepare the way for Christ's coming.

2) To prepare the people whom God adds to the Church to become the Bride of Christ. To “feed the flock” on spiritual food. The Church must overcome Satan, grow in grace and spiritual character and spiritual knowledge to become immortal, divine GOD PERSONS — ruling under Christ as kings and priests spiritually.

The CHURCH shall be built to be the spiritual TEMPLE to which Christ shall come (Mal. 3:1). Yet this Malachi prophecy is speaking primarily of preparing for Christ's *Second Coming*, as verses 2-5 clearly show.

John the Baptist's preparing the way before Jesus' first, *human coming* was therefore a TYPE foreshadowing one in the same power and spirit preparing the way for His coming as KING of kings and LORD of lords to RULE ALL NATIONS. John the Baptist put emphasis on the LAW (or way) of God, and calling to REPENTANCE. So the apostle leading today's Church must explain world evils caused by transgressing God's law of “GIVE” (outflowing LOVE) by living the way of “GET” — calling to repentance and announcing the world tomorrow under the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, by the KINGDOM OF GOD.

What was “the WORK,” and how organized, A.D. 31-70?

In those early apostolic days, beginning A.D. 31, the Gospel was proclaimed to the world solely by the

apostles and evangelists — no radio, TV, print or such modern facilities as we have today. Those proclaiming it went forth by foot, donkey or horse, rowboat or sailboat. No means of communication existed except hand-written letters carried afoot or by slow boat.

How organized? How “feed the flock”? The form of organization is outlined in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 primarily. GOD, not man or the world, set the pattern of Church organization, government and operation of its WORK — first apostles, then evangelists, pastors, elders. Some of these were preaching, others nonpreaching, elders, and there were deacons and deaconesses helping with the more physical matters.

Only five prophets are mentioned in the New Testament and none of these contributed to Church doctrine, beliefs or teaching — or administrative or executive functions. But Old Testament prophets' writings were a source of Church doctrines and teachings.

Beginning A.D. 31 Christ was HEAD of the Church, Peter was chief apostle. After some years Peter and most of the original 12 seem to disappear from view. Jesus apparently had sent them to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” then in Western Europe and Britain (Matt. 10:6, 15:24). They were “lost” in identity and spiritually. They had lost their

Hebrew language. After some years of Church existence, the apostle Paul seems to be the chief apostle in the Middle East and Rome. He was *in authority* (II Cor. 11:28, I Cor. 5:3-5, 4:20-21).

The WORK was not complex then as today. The Gospel traveled slowly. There were no modern or mechanical facilities. Paul and others often spoke to small groups (Acts 16:12-13).

But about A.D. 53 the Gospel of the Kingdom of God was being SUPPRESSED, supplanted by another that was *not* the true Gospel (Gal. 1:6-7).

By A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was overrun by the Roman armies, the proclaiming of the true Gospel to the world had virtually or completely ceased. The name of Christ was preached, and even grace — but grace turned to license to disobey (Jude 4). They took the NAME of Christ, calling themselves “Christians” — proclaimed Jesus was CHRIST, yet DECEIVED the world (Matt. 24:5), as Jesus prophesied. But the KINGDOM OF GOD was not proclaimed. The “law was done away.” For 100 time cycles the Gospel Christ proclaimed was SUPPRESSED! The true Church continued, persecuted, often or mostly meeting secretly.

The “Work” — and how Church organized — 1927-33

I came to know of the true Church of God, fall of 1926, and as it continued to about 1940. Headquarters in 1926 were at Stanberry, Mo. After my original six months in-depth study and research into evolution as a basic approach to all knowledge, and of the Bible that to me proved to be that approach and God’s revealed knowl-

edge, I wondered, “Where is the *true* Church?” They were so impotent spiritually (Rev. 3:1), and even in biblical knowledge, yet what they did have was more biblical TRUTH than any other church my researches revealed. They had “the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus,” and the right name — and no other church had. But they were so *small* — so pitifully weak. They were not proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, but “the third angel’s message.”

But of what did their “Work” consist, and how organized? They were organized on congregational (democratic) government as a “biannual general conference.” To the best of my knowledge they had less than a thousand members and an uneducated ministry — that is, not college educated. The editor of their church organ, *The Bible Advocate*, seemed their leader. Five members could form a local church, and each church had one vote. Their ministers, who knew the Bible well so far as their limited doctrines extended, went out holding meetings in members’ homes, in tiny tents and such means. I inquired of older members, but none knew of a single conversion resulting from the preaching of any minister.

In 1931 the Oregon members split. The half my wife and I had fellowshiped with (never joining) formed a new church corporation as “The Oregon

Conference of the Church of God.” I was ordained by this “Oregon Conference.” I preached for them from ordination, June, 1931, through November, 1931, then again from February, 1933, to August, 1933.

The “Philadelphia Era” born

In July, 1933, I started a six-nights-a-week series of meetings for six weeks in a 36-seat country schoolhouse — the Jeans school — eight miles west of Eugene, Ore. Result: 11 new baptized members plus eight of us already baptized — total: 19. It was just over 100 19-year time cycles after the very first Church was founded by Jesus Christ. I had been ordained precisely, to the month, 100 time cycles after the first apostles were ordained, June, 1931.

On forming of the new little parent church, I ceased working under jurisdiction of the Oregon Conference, although I continued voluntarily as their pastor. The Worldwide Church of God was a newborn fledgling that Christ, the HEAD of the Church, was conducting solely by me, known beginning 1934 as the Radio Church of God. It became the Worldwide Church of God in 1968.

What IS the Work, and how organized TODAY?

As stated above, the WORK of proclaiming the Gospel Jesus brought from GOD was suppressed beginning about A.D. 53, and not proclaimed to the world after A.D. 70, for 100 time cycles.

In our day, 20th century, the churches of “Christianity” proclaim merely *their* message about Jesus. They proclaim that Jesus was the Christ. But they say “the law of GOD is done away,” and therefore preach no real repentance. The “Kingdom” has become either “the Church” or some ethereal nothingness “set up in men’s hearts.” The Gospel of the KINGDOM



Beginning with the tools pictured at right, God’s Work in this era has used modern mass communication to give the Gospel to the world.

Photo by Scott Smith

OF GOD was not preached. It was not proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists, one of whose cardinal doctrines was the "investigative judgment," which had the resurrected saints a thousand years with Christ IN HEAVEN. The Church of God, Seventh Day, of Stanberry, Mo., proclaimed a "third angel's message." The true GOSPEL had not been proclaimed to the world for 1,900 years! — 100 time cycles!

Please do not misunderstand. "Time cycles" are definitely NOT a Church doctrine. But the sun, earth and moon do come into almost exact conjunction once every 19 years. God uses the relation of the sun and moon to the earth as HIS means of marking off points in TIME. We do not make a "doctrine" out of a "day" measured by the sunsets, the month measured by the new moons as seen from earth or by the lunar year, or the solar year.

But a century of time cycles *is* a definite measure of TIME. And a century of time cycles after the first birth of the Church was a TIME that God *DID USE* as a time to start a REBIRTH of His Church, when once again just before the close of the 6,000-year duration of the "day of man," and the ushering in of the day of the LORD, His Gospel of the Kingdom would be proclaimed worldwide (Matt. 24:14).

At this point we need to understand a PRINCIPLE by which God always has worked through humans. He has always worked through *ONE MAN* at a time. He worked through Abraham. He worked through Moses, through Joshua, through one "judge" at a time, through Samuel, through David, through Solomon. He worked through Peter and when Peter had left the Middle East, through Paul. These men had, in greater or lesser number, staff assistants under them, but God's WORK was through the *ONE MAN AT A TIME*!

THIS IS THE "WORK OF GOD" — and *not* a humanly organized institution, operation or organization on the worldly corporate type of organization, function and procedure.

Too many have viewed the Worldwide Church of God, and what we

call the WORK, as a secular, man-devised ORGANIZATION, with its board of directors, its vice presidents, department heads and positions of AUTHORITY, some of whom have tried to pull political or corporate business tactics of rug-jerking to elevate *themselves*, and grab for POWER. They have forgotten that the divine, supernatural JESUS CHRIST — the LIVING Christ — is the HEAD, running this Work HIS way, not the way of this world's corporate enterprises or institutions. To them GOD IS NOT IN THE PICTURE.

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We must RESTRUCTURE this entire WORK in our own minds and realize it is THE WORK OF GOD, through Jesus Christ who is ALIVE and active, and, on earth, through HIS APOSTLE, whom *HE* specially trained, prepared and chose, and now DIRECTS, EMPOWERS AND USES!

How Christ started today's Work

It was the living CHRIST who opened the door to radio in the fall of 1933 before His chosen apostle whom He already had specially trained and prepared. After a preliminary superintense study and in-depth research into evolution (this world's concept and approach to all knowledge) and God's Word, His chosen servant was converted — CHANGED — from carnal mindedness to Spirit mindedness.

In that introductory, initial in-depth biblical study, the living Christ had revealed the BASICS to me that the professing "Christian" churches did not possess. I had gone through seven years of deep spiritual experience. Through me Christ had healed the sick, cast out demons, working supernatural spiritual miracles *besides* opening my mind to His spiritual TRUTHS, even such as no church on earth was proclaiming. It was a spiritual and knowledgeable experience such as none has today.

The living Christ started me in the smallest manner. He always starts things the very smallest through humans, like the illustration of the grain of mustard seed. A free 15-minute morning "devotional period" for one week was opened to me on radio KORE, Eugene.

The first Sunday in 1934 the full half-hour *World Tomorrow* program went on the air, then under the name *Radio Church of God*.

Feb. 1, *The Plain Truth*, Vol. 1, No. 1, made its humble bow. A mimeographed *Bulletin* was the fledgling pioneer of *The Good News*.

I continued personal campaigns speaking in schoolhouses, a tent seating some 400 and whatever halls or auditoriums I could rent.

My first office was a room in the old Masonic Temple in Eugene. I had engaged the hall for meetings for the public three nights a week at \$10 per month. The room that made an office came with it. Later I rented an inside office, a skylight, no outside windows or ventilation of any kind, at \$5 per month.

I could not afford a stenographer or secretary. My wife was my sole staff. However, this was the 20th century. I was beginning to use the modern facilities of our materially advanced civilization. *The Plain Truth* had started on a borrowed mimeograph. The local A.B. Dick Co. mimeograph dealer allowed me to use his mimeograph for that first 250-copy edition of *The Plain Truth*. However, he didn't want that to continue every month. He found an old ancestor to the mimeograph — a
(Continued on page 24)

The Hebrew Calendar— Authoritative for God's Church Today!

By Herman L. Hoeh

Why is it that millions call the Bible the Word of God but are not willing to do what it commands?

Why is it that many of these same millions call God the Author of time but are not willing to keep holy the days God made holy time?

And why is it that even among the now numerous sects — usually miniscule by this world's standards — that do acknowledge God's Sabbath and His annual Holy Days, so few are willing to submit to the authority of the calendar God authorizes to measure time?

A changed world since 1930

A half century ago, almost no one, apart from Jewish communities, ever thought of keeping holy the annual festivals God gave His people. Oh yes, there were Sabbath keepers. But hardly any human being, apart from the Jews, was willing to acknowledge God's command to His Church today to keep holy seven annual festivals He made holy time. Hardly any, that is, except Herbert W. and Loma D. Armstrong. For seven years — 1927 to 1933 — they had to observe God's festivals alone — by themselves as a family — even while fellowshiping with the little remnant of God's people in the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

Not until 1934 were others,

brought to conversion by their ministry, willing to keep God's festivals with them. This little group in Eugene, Ore., became the mother church of what today is the Worldwide Church of God.

Gradually the word spread. A few others already associated with the scattered remnants of God's Church listened.

Among them was a man of some

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prominence. Unfortunately he jumped the track spiritually. He invented the false teaching that one must speak only Hebrew when using the names and titles of God and of Jesus Christ. The divinely inspired Greek New Testament teaches no such thing!

But this man did set in motion a movement among the scattered remnants of God's people. That movement, itself now terribly divided, claims to observe God's annual Holy Days. But almost none of them has been willing to acknowledge the authority of the calendar God authorized to measure time — the Hebrew calendar.

Isn't it strange — or is it? — that at the very time some people's eyes are opened to what God commands on one point, the devil comes along and sows seeds of error in their minds on another point? They become unwilling to use the Hebrew calendar God makes authoritative, while they accept the error that one must use only Hebrew names in referring to

God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ!

The result is they are not annually keeping holy the time God authorized to be kept holy. They are deceived. And they have taken authority to themselves that God reserves for Himself!

Herbert W. Armstrong addressed this problem head-on in the *Good News Letter* of 1940. The man

referred to above had published earlier that year the date March 22 as Passover. The Stanberry,

Mo., and Salem, W.Va., organizations (of the Church of God, Seventh Day) published the date as April 21 (each meaning the night at the end of the day, of course). Mr. Armstrong wrote that "many of the brethren are in doubt and want the facts." And he gave them facts — in detail. Then he added:

"In conclusion, unless God has preserved His sacred calendar through the Jews, then we do not know how to figure Passover or any of the Holy Days this year. For there is no authority for any other way. There is no Bible authority whatsoever for figuring the first day of the first month from the new moon nearest the spring equinox.

"As soon as I learned," Mr. Armstrong continued, "of [the man's] published dates for the festivals this year, I sent him a telegram asking his authority for his dates. His reply is that he bases his method of figuring on certain statements of profane history found in encyclopedias. He replies, 'In some Bible dictionary, or

encyclopedia, or Jewish encyclopedia, I read something like this: "The ancient reckoning of Passover was from the actual sight of the new moon nearest the vernal equinox." "

After quoting various views from sources then extant, Mr. Armstrong concluded: "Surely we can see that profane history only contradicts itself, is inaccurate, cannot be depended upon and has no authority whatsoever. There is no Bible authority for any of it.

"God did not commit His oracles, or the preservation of His times, to profane history. . . . they have been preserved by the Jews.

"After thorough study of the Bible, of the Hebrew calendar, of history and every angle — after going into the matter with all the Eugene brethren and other brethren who have made a special study of this question, we have unanimously agreed that the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews."

The Worldwide Church of God has followed this authoritative decision ever since. Others can go their own way — till the judgment!

Forty years have passed since this controversy came and went. Most of those in God's Church at that time are fallen asleep in Christ. Tens of thousands of new brethren have been added to God's Church around the world. Two generations have grown to maturity. It is now the 1980s and most people have had little instruction from God's Word on the authority of the Hebrew calendar, its history and preservation. It is every whit as intriguing as the story of the copying and preservation of the written Word of God, the Bible.

An uncommon year

What prompts this article is the fact that the Passover this year, 1981, is the eve of April 18. It falls on the eve of a Sabbath. It is not common for the Passover to occur Friday night. Or to have the Festival of Unleavened Bread correspond to a natural week. Or to have the autumn festival season begin on a Tuesday. In fact, it has occurred only nine times this century. It will occur this year

and once more — in 1994. It is much more usual for the Passover to be the eve of Monday, or Wednesday, or Friday.

Why do God's festivals fall when they do? Have we ever asked why Passover does not fall on the eve of Sunday, Tuesday or Thursday? Or why the fast of the Day of Atonement does not occur on Friday or Sunday? Or why the seventh day of the Festival of Tabernacles does not fall on the weekly Sabbath — but the eighth day commonly does?

These are all curious features of the calendar God caused the Jewish

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people to preserve *for us*. These features are lost among those who invent their own rules for their own calendars. They are lost because people have lost sight of God's authority over time.

Parallel with the Bible

To understand this authority, it is necessary to see how God has worked through history. In preserving the written Word, the Bible (in Hebrew and Greek), God has done something very similar to what has occurred with the development and preservation of the Hebrew calendar.

The Bible is the public literature of a people. That people was ancient Israel. It was organized as God's nation and church. To that people were committed the oracles of God — God's revelation to man of essential knowledge. The martyr Stephen, in speaking of Moses, said: "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey" (Acts 7:38-39).

Paul continues the thought in Romans 3: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God. For what if some were without faith? [Remember Stephen's words: "our fathers would not obey"] shall their want of faith

make of none effect the faithfulness of God? God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar. . . . But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (verses 1-4, 7, Revised Version).

Paul is here reasoning with Greek converts. The Jews, he tells them, have the advantage of being intrusted with the oracles, or divine revelation, of God. The ancient Greeks were always impressed with their oracles that came from demons!

But what if the people to whom the oracles were committed sinned — rebelled against God's authority? Did that mean God would not preserve His revelation through them? Not at all. He simply pruned off those who refused to preserve His revelation for men. That is one reason the 10 tribes of Israel were cut off and sent into exile.

The Jews of the house of Judah alone retained the oracles. And even though some of them have become atheists and liars about that revelation and refuse to obey it, does that mean the oracles are not true, that God has failed to have His revelation to man providentially preserved through the Jews in a public way? Not at all!

Later, of course, the New Testament in Greek, which the Jews officially rejected at Jabneh, in Judea, in public session around A.D. 90, would be providentially preserved by the Greeks in a public way. And they too, like the Jews, do not as a whole follow what is written in the oracles committed to them!

But what were the oracles committed in a public way to the Jews? The Hebrew Bible only? By no means! The Hebrew calendar also! For without the calendar, it would be impossible to fulfill correctly what is written in the Hebrew Bible about hallowed annual times. And not only the Bible and calendar, but the week also.

These three — Bible, calendar and week — are all part of the oracles committed to the Jews for all mankind.

They have been committed in a public way, not secretly. They have not therefore been subject to private tampering away from public scrutiny.

Men indeed have lied, saying the week has been lost — that time has been lost. That the public keeping of the knowledge of the Sabbath by Jews has no meaning. Or that Jesus' agreement with and keeping of it have no meaning. As Paul wrote, "let God be found true, but every man a liar"!

The kind of evidence men demand to prove that the Hebrew Bible — and for that matter the Greek New Testament, too — has been preserved accurately does not exist. There are no original autographs extant for men to peer at and criticize. God lets them criticize copies, while they lose sight of what is written in them, through disobedience.

And the kind of evidence men demand so as to prove the authoritativeness of the Hebrew calendar does not exist. God has seen to that also — so critics would have their chance to invent their own calendars. And think themselves wiser than God for having invented a calendar more accurate than what God committed to Israel as His own!

Men live by *human reason*. They want the original sources to criticize. They do not want secondary evidence — that is, copies of an original that have passed through the hands of men. Yet that is exactly what God has chosen to provide them.

By *faith* we know we have copies, providentially preserved, of the original Word of God. By *faith* we know that the leadership in the Jewish courts did preserve the rules of the calendar God committed to them — even though they themselves have not wanted to follow those rules at all times.

It is all a question of government — whether God is capable of ruling. Whether God can intervene in the affairs of His people to correct their errors — no men are perfect. And that is a matter of faith.

Throughout history people have wanted to correct, by using their own human reason, what God may allow. They have not waited to have God lead and guide and direct those whom He has set in authority among His people. They too often want to exercise that authority for themselves.

Thus we have critics of the text of the Bible who see it as their responsibility

to determine what is the written Word of God. They are paid to find fault with the way the scribes copied the Hebrew Bible.

Though Jesus said very plainly: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not. Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger" (Matt. 23:2-4, Revised Version).

The scribes — copying of the text

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of the Hebrew Bible was one of their duties — were in authority. Jesus said so. They sat on Moses' seat. They, not their jealous critics among modern and ancient scholars, determined for us the manner in which the Bible's text should be preserved.

And the Pharisees, too, sat on Moses' seat. It was their court that determined the Hebrew calendar. It was their court's decision that determined which day was the beginning of each month. Once that was determined it was the people's responsibility to keep holy the days God made holy — according to the dates on the Hebrew calendar, not on some other calendar.

Were the scribes perfect men, without sin? Were the Pharisees perfect men, without sin? By no means! Jesus made that plain. Yet He also made it plain that they had a responsibility *under God* to preserve the written Word of God, the week and the calendar. It was not somebody else's responsibility!

Could they make mistakes in executing their responsibility under God? Of course! Did the leadership in the Worldwide Church of God for years mistakenly appoint Monday, rather than Sunday, as the day of the week on which Pentecost should fall? Yes. Did God correct the matter? Indeed!

Did the Jews who were in authority under God over the oracles — the scribes and Pharisees — at times err

in determining the calendar? Yes. Did God correct the matter?

Indeed — as we shall now see!

God corrects those in authority under Him

Remember what Jesus said of the Pharisees? "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders" (Matt. 23:4).

The later Pharisees and their rabbinic successors did exactly that for centuries when it came to determining when the Day of Atonement was to fall.

You will remember that I asked above how many readers were aware that the Day of Atonement on the Hebrew calendar does not fall on a Friday — the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath.

Do you know why this occurs? And what rule of the calendar determines this?

Think for a moment what it would be like for housewives to prepare food for the Sabbath on a Friday that is a fast day! Of course the Day of Atonement is so important a fast that no food is to be prepared that day at all. So housewives would have to prepare food on a Thursday for the weekly Sabbath. That would be burdensome.

The scripture plainly says: "Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement . . . And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement. . . . For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye keep your sabbath" (Lev. 23:26-32, Revised Version).

If Atonement were to fall on Friday, housewives would have to prepare food for the weekly Sabbath on a
(Continued on page 28)

Meditation — What Is Its Role In Your Life?

*Here is what the Bible teaches about a subject
vital to Christian development.*

By Clayton Steep

“Meditation” — what is it? Perhaps the mere mention of the word brings to your mind terms such as *guru, yoga, cosmic awareness, transcendental, Zen, mantra* and *maharishi*.

To many, meditation means some form of mental gymnastics, often referring to sessions of deep concentration in an eyes-closed, legs-crossed, hands-folded position.

To others it represents a dull period of religious contemplation during which there is more than an even chance of falling asleep.

Such sporadic occasions of meaningless reflection are not what the Bible speaks of as meditation at all!

David wrote that he meditated “day and night” (Ps. 1:2). He did not confine meditation to a 20-minute period or to a once-a-week walk out in the hills somewhere. It was a constant process.

He obeyed God’s instruction as given in Joshua 1:8: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.” David exclaimed, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Ps. 119:97).

In the Bible *meditate* means “to think about.” What fills your mind is what you are meditating about.

Whether or not you are going to meditate is not the question. As long as your brain is functioning you are going to meditate! The question is — on what?

Because it is so easy to meditate on — to think about — the wrong things, David prayed for help: “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:14). “Search me, O God,” he asked, “and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24).

A penny for your thoughts

There are times when any of us would be embarrassed to tears if people next to us could read our exact thoughts. Fortunately, they are unable to do so. But we can’t hide our thoughts from God, for whether we ask Him to or not, “the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts” (I Chron. 28:9).

What we think about reflects what we really are. As a person “thinketh in his heart, so is he” is the way Solomon expressed it (Prov. 23:7). That’s why Jesus, commenting on the same principle, said it is out of the heart that evil thoughts proceed (Matt. 15:19).

We all were once totally carnal. And we thought carnally 100 percent

of the time, “For they that are after the flesh [that is, everyone who is not converted] do mind the things of the flesh” (Rom. 8:5) — “earthly things” (Phil. 3:19). But conversion is a process — a process during which there is a change of heart and mind. And consequently, a change of what thoughts fill the mind.

Speaking of the unconverted state, God says: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:7-9).

As a Christian becomes more and more converted, he thinks about — meditates on — more of what pleases God and less of what is carnal. He forsakes his own thoughts and fills his mind instead with God’s thoughts.

A different mind

Do you know what the difference is between the Old Covenant made with physical Israel and the New Covenant made with the Church? It is important to understand the difference because it has everything to do with making your meditation acceptable to God!

The people of physical Israel, without the Holy Spirit, did not have God’s laws written in their hearts and minds. God told them, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Deut.

6:6). But the people quickly turned their attention away from God and His ways and filled their minds with covetousness (Ezek. 33:31).

Without the Holy Spirit they were not able to keep God's laws uppermost in their hearts and minds. They were unable to think about — to meditate upon — God's laws, because the carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7).

With us it is different. We are commanded to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

How so? How can we have the same mind, the same thoughts — meditation — Jesus had?

The answer is given in I Corinthians 2:11, 16, where we read that "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. . . we have the mind of Christ." By having the Holy Spirit we have the mind of Christ constantly abiding in us. This means our thoughts should be pure regarding all things. We ought to mentally analyze everything — our goals, way of worship, occupation, styles, music, humor, food, entertainment, family and social relations — from God's point of view as expressed in His Word. It requires constant effort. It is a process of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

"The thoughts [all of them!] of the righteous are right" (Prov. 12:5). That is the kind of meditation God wants us to develop.

Getting "away from it all"

Though our thinking — our meditation — ought to be centered on God and His ways all day long, as David showed, it is also essential at times to get away from our normal routine and find a quiet place where we can devote ourselves to some especially deep thought about where we are going in life.

Satan has designed our modern society to keep people distracted. He does not want us to find an occasion when we can be mentally free from the confused din and clamor of "civilization." And yet such occasions must be found — must be made — in order to keep on the right track.

Even in Isaac's day, it was not always easy to "get away from it all." In order to find a little solitude, Isaac

"went out to meditate in the field at the eventide" (Gen. 24:63). And what happened? He was interrupted by a group of people riding camels! (In this case, however, he was probably glad for the interruption, since the arriving party included his bride-to-be.)

If it was slightly difficult in Isaac's time, today it is nearly impossible in many areas to find a secluded place within a reasonable distance where one can go to just think. At home there are other people in the house. Or there is the jangle of the phone or the gong of the doorbell. Or the neighbor's TV or stereo or dog. The parks are crowded — no privacy there. Maybe by driving many miles outside the city one can find a solitary place. But even there a good part of one's mental effort must be diverted into staying alert for the robbers and murderers who oftentimes victimize people in such places.

We often must be really resourceful in order to have a few minutes alone to gather our thoughts. An automobile, windows rolled up, doors locked, parked in the shade on a quiet street, provides perhaps one of the more easily attainable places for a little private contemplation. If you can locate a quiet street. If you can find a parking place. And if someone doesn't report to the police a "suspicious person sitting in a car."

David must have had some problems getting away from his officers, royal staff and official duties and activities of the day to find some peace and quiet. Maybe it was only at night that he could find a suitable occasion and, being determined, gladly sacrificed sleep. "I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches," he prayed (Ps. 63:6). "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still," was his recommendation (Ps. 4:4, see also 119:55, 148).

David constantly examined how he was living. He sought to quickly set himself "back on the track" whenever he went astray. "I thought on my ways, and [as a result] turned my feet unto thy testimonies" (Ps. 119:59). The fact that David made time to meditate deeply on God and His laws is one of the reasons

God could testify that David was "a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22).

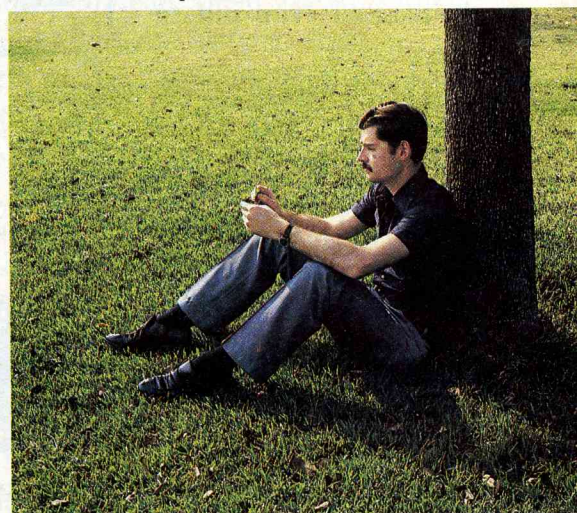
What to think about

"I can't keep the wrong thoughts out of my mind," some complain. They may not be attacking the problem from the right direction. The law of physical science that "nature abhors a vacuum" applies on the mental level too. It is not sufficient to just put the wrong thoughts out. That leaves a vacuum (compare Matt. 12:43-45). The mind must be filled with the right thoughts.

As Paul explained, "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:8, Revised Standard Version). Then there will be no room for wrong thoughts.

Meditation is, on the mental level, what digestion of food is on the physical level. If we eat "junk" food, that's what we digest — that's what we become. If we eat good food, we have good food to digest and to become part of us.

In order to be able to meditate on God and His ways, we must "eat" His Word — a lot of it — and often. How is it possible throughout the day



to "be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (II Pet. 3:2) if we don't assimilate and drink them in in

(Continued on page 27)

Photo by Scott Smith

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter 4

The Messiah Is Identified

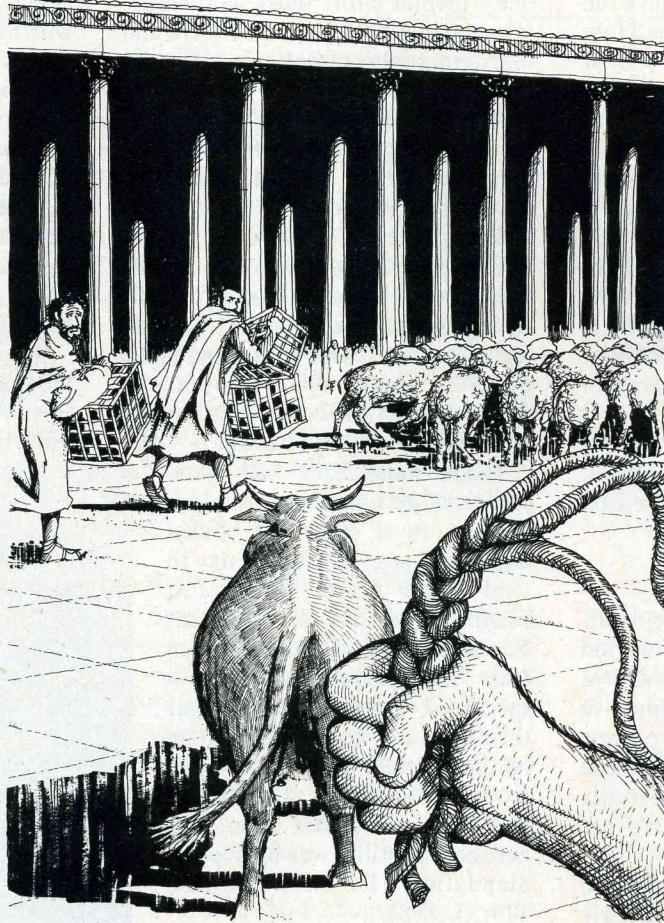
By Shirley King Johnson

When Jesus was sufficiently recovered from His long fast, He returned to the Jordan River where John was baptizing. Jesus stayed at the outer fringes of the crowd that had gathered, but His cousin caught sight of Him and immediately pointed Him out to the people.

"There He is!" John exclaimed. "The Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world is standing over there!" (John 1:36). A murmur went up from the people and curious eyes turned to see.

Taking advantage of the large gathering, John asked Jesus to explain to them about the coming Kingdom of God.

Joining John on the high bank that overlooked the area, Jesus addressed the people. He preached the good news that God's government would be brought to the earth to enforce God's way of life and cause worldwide



happiness and well-being. He explained that men had been put on earth to learn to discern good from evil and to choose to live the right way in spite of selfish desires and temptations.

When He finished, He turned away and began to leave the area. Several dozen interested spectators followed Him, and from them Jesus began to choose young men to train as His disciples. Fisherman Andrew joined Him first. Andrew then brought his brother Simon to Jesus.

Guided by God's Holy Spirit, Jesus gave Simon another name. "You are Peter," He said. *Peter* means "rock" (verses 41-42).

Philip and Nathanael also were called at this time. When Jesus started back for His home in

Using a whip made of short rope, Jesus drove the livestock and money changers out of the Temple.

Galilee, these four disciples accompanied Him.

The first miracle

Jesus was a great favorite at Holy Day gatherings in Jerusalem and at other festive occasions. Perfectly balanced in character and personality, He was warm, outgoing, calm, dignified and thoughtful toward everyone around Him.

Joseph must have died before Jesus began His public ministry, because he is not mentioned as being present with Mary and Jesus and His disciples at a wedding they attended in Cana (John 2). We find no reference to Joseph again in Scripture.

During the wedding festivities in Cana, the host expressed embarrassment when he discovered that the servants had poured the last of the wine. Seeing the host's consternation, Mary walked over to Jesus as He stood with His disciples and brothers. "More people came today than they were expecting. They're out of wine."

Jesus glanced toward the serving tables and gave a slight shake of His head. "It's unfortunate, but what can I do at this time?"

Positive in her own mind that Jesus could remedy the situation, Mary spoke to the servants and brought them to Jesus. "My son will tell you what to do," she said firmly and then looked up into His face with a confident nod (verse 5).

Because of His love and deep respect for her, Jesus made a quick decision. "Fill those jars with water," He told the servants, pointing to six stone jars that stood in the back of the courtyard. They were there to be used for ceremonial washings (verses 6-7).

The servants scurried about and brought in water to fill the jars to the brims.

"Now," Jesus went on, "take them to the man in charge."

The servants carried the jars one by one through the milling guests to the refreshment tables. The man in charge gave a pleased exclamation. "Young man!" he called to the bridegroom. "You have reversed the usual order. Your best wine has been saved for the last part of the day!"

The festivities continued with most of the guests not realizing that a miracle had

occurred. They raised their cups in another toast to the couple's happiness and sipped the fine wine with expressions of pleasure.

Cleansing the Temple

Jesus owned in Capernaum a house that He probably built with His own hands. After the wedding He took His mother there. His disciples and other relatives went along for a short visit (verse 12).

When it was time to keep the Passover, Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem. Jesus went directly to the Temple. As He mounted the steps, the sound of bleating sheep came to His ears and He smelled the stench of animals and fowl. The court was a scene of confusion. Merchants had set up stalls and tables and were buying and selling animals and pigeons for sacrificial offerings. They also exchanged foreign coins and made a good profit doing it (verse 14).

Striding in, Jesus began to overturn tables in anger. "Get out!" He ordered the merchants, His face flushed with indignation. "Take all of your money-making schemes out of here! You've made my Father's house a common shop!" (verse 16).

A few of the merchants began to gather up their coins and bird cages and took hold of the animals' bridles to lead them away. Others merely looked at Jesus in astonishment.

"Take them out of here!" Jesus ordered the owners of oxen. They stared in disbelief.

Stooping, Jesus gathered up three strands of short rope, braided them into a whip and cracked it toward the oxen. "Out! Get these animals out of here!" The oxen began to move. He drove out the cattle after the oxen and the sheep followed behind. The owners of the livestock began to hurry after them.

Turning back, Jesus overturned the remaining tables. When the place was emptied, He went out onto the Temple steps and kept the animals and their owners moving on.

As they watched the developing turmoil, Jesus' disciples talked among themselves about the zeal He had for the building that He called "my Father's house" (verse 17).

Meanwhile, someone had alerted the Temple

officers and guards and they began to pour into the area. "What's the meaning of this?" demanded a centurion as he saw Jesus standing at the top of the steps with the whip in His hand.

Tossing down the whip, Jesus explained that the Temple was a house of prayer, and the merchants were guilty of transgressing God's law by profaning God's Temple. Warning Jesus that he wanted no more such disturbances, the officer turned away and led the guards back to pursuing their own interests.

But the excited crowd grew larger. Rumors of a "riot" spread. Instead of a riot, the onlookers saw a well-built young Jewish man speaking about the coming of a Kingdom of God. He paused during His talk to reach down and lay His hands on a crippled boy's head. Healed, the boy straightened his legs and began leaping up and down. A man with a bent back reached imploringly to Jesus and touched His hand, and his back was instantly straightened.

The crowd saw Jesus do miracle after miracle. More people were attracted to the Temple steps, and they pressed upon Him until He could no longer speak to them concerning God's plan for mankind. He moved down the steps through the throng, healing all who called out to Him for help (verse 23).

Standing at the edge of the crowd, the Jewish elders, rabbis and priests watched with wonder. When they observed the faces of the people who milled around Jesus, they saw adoration. Jesus was becoming popular. The religious leaders began to grow uneasy.

The night visitor

During the closing days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, while Jesus was still in Jerusalem, a religious man of high standing in the Jewish council came to question Him (John 3:1-2).

Resting at night with His disciples on the housetop of their temporary lodging place, Jesus did not hesitate to receive the late caller. His disciples stayed in the background so Nicodemus could have a private conversation with Him. In the light of the torches flickering in the courtyard below, the two studied each other's face.

"Master," Nicodemus began carefully, "I've seen you do miracles of healing and I know that God is with you."

"I'm glad you came," Jesus said. "I'm here to announce the coming Kingdom of God. A man cannot see the Kingdom unless he is born again."

Nicodemus looked puzzled. His eyebrows went up. "Born again? Can a man be born a second time from his mother? Impossible!"

"I'm not speaking of a physical birth. Flesh is flesh. To become a spirit being, one must be born of spirit. Let's sit down and I'll explain it further." Jesus motioned to a couch that stood near the railing at the edge of the roof, and they seated themselves.

Jesus raised His hand to the midnight breeze that drifted over the rooftops of the city. "The Spirit of God can be compared to the wind. We hear the wind, but we don't see it or know where it comes from or goes to. One who is born of spirit is like the wind. The Kingdom of God is something that may be entered into only after one becomes a spirit being. We must be composed of spirit, no longer made of flesh and blood" (verses 5-8).

"I'm sorry. I still can't seem to understand this talk about spirits," Nicodemus admitted when Jesus paused.

Jesus shook His head. "We have teachers and rulers in Israel who are ignorant of spiritual things. I've just begun to explain about the difference between physical and spiritual matter, but you're lost already. What if I go on to heavenly things? What if I told you that no one has ascended up to heaven except one person, the Son of man who came down from heaven? Furthermore, this Son will be lifted up in the way that Moses lifted up the serpent on a stake when Israel was in the wilderness" (verses 10-14).

Jesus went on to tell Nicodemus about His Father's love for every human being. He also discussed man's evil nature and where man gets that nature.

It was very late when Nicodemus left the rooftop. The disciples had gone below and were sleeping. Jesus listened to Nicodemus' footsteps retreating down the stairs. Then He knelt to pray. □

How Pure Is YOUR Religion?

Your conversion is measured in part by how you respond to the needs of less fortunate brethren in God's Church.

By Norman Shoaf

Most members of God's Church can repeat from memory the definition of pure religion. It is found in James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." This verse gives one of the major criteria by which we can measure our conversion — our dedication to God's way of life.

But how well are we fulfilling this criterion personally?

Many in God's Church are, for one reason or another, not as fortunate as are others. They are the elderly who are unable to get around as they would like or to take care of themselves without help. They are the handicapped, whose opportunities in life are restricted by blindness, arthritis or some other crippling illness or accident. They are the widowed and orphaned — both physically and spiritually — who are cut off from the normal family ties in which most find encouragement and emotional support.

The definition of pure religion takes into account all these less fortunate people. We can measure our conversion in part by how well we respond to others' needs in

warm, unselfish concern and compassion.

All one Body

Are those Church members who are not physically blessed as much as others any less important? No. God miraculously called every one of us individually, and is preparing each of us for a specific position in His coming Kingdom. He is in control of the circumstances in which we each find ourselves, and is working with us to make us what He wants us to be. But He wants us to be concerned for one another! Developing such godly love is a basic and supreme requirement in qualifying to be a Member of His Family.

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

"And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the

same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12:18-26).

God wants everyone He has called to be part of one, unified Body. He wants us to "have the same care one for another." When one of us suffers or meets with unfortunate circumstances, all of us should feel it and respond with positive action. When one of us is honored, we can all share in the happiness and satisfaction.

And God wants us to bestow honor on those parts of the Body that, carnally, might seem to be less important or less honorable! He wants us to be giving and outgoing toward each other and to serve cheerfully. We are to take on God's very nature — we must *want* to be this way.

God's way of life, as Herbert W. Armstrong, Christ's apostle, has explained, can be described in one word: *give*. The way of give is diametrically opposite to the way most of this world lives: the way of *get*. Giving is outgoing concern, caring, cooperating, sharing, thinking of the other person instead of the self. The give way is the way the Bible teaches:

"Let none seek his own advantage but rather that of his neighbor" (I Cor. 10:24, Modern Language Bible).

"Neither must each be looking out only for his own interests but also for those of others" (Phil. 2:5, Modern Language Bible).

God loves those who live His way of life with zeal — those who give cheerfully (II Cor. 9:7). "Give, and it

shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

Look for opportunities

As you grow older spiritually, are you becoming more aware of the needs of your brethren? You need to come to the point where you are constantly looking for opportunities to help others. Giving to others — loving them as you love yourself — should become one of the very central purposes of your life.

What about the elderly or handicapped people in your congregation? How do you serve them? These people don't necessarily need your expressions of sympathy, and they have little desire to be treated as special cases. Many of them, especially the widowed, may feel a profound sense of loneliness or isolation from everyone else. One of their major needs is simple companionship — the chance to be accepted as part of the group — to feel needed and liked.

Are you in the habit of asking the widows and widowers out with the rest of your friends after Sabbath services? Is the Sabbath the only time you ever make overtures to them? Do you feel it is a burden to converse with them sincerely and be really interested in what they would like to say? Would you rather stick with your own little group week after week? Don't leave it up to anyone else to express outgoing concern — show it yourself! God is right now judging you according to how much of His character you are developing.

What about visiting those who are ill or who can't always make it to Sabbath services? If the distance is really too far to drive, why not call once in a while and show that you really care about someone who may be about to give up the hope that lies in us because he or she feels unneeded and unwanted?

Don't forget those whose mates are not in the Church and may even be hostile to it. This special group of people includes many who need attention and affection given in real Christian love. Many "spiritual widows" and "spiritual widowers"

are facing some real trials in their personal lives. Is it too much to ask to just listen to them before or after Sabbath services? Perhaps they would really appreciate talking to someone who genuinely cares and tries to understand. Make them feel like they are welcome to participate in your picnics, special dinners or parties if they so desire.

There are some young people, whose parents are not in the Church, who have come into fellowship with God's people at the expense of actually being kicked out of their homes. But

**Jesus Christ puts Himself
in the place of the
elderly, the handicapped,
the poor, the lonely,
the widows and
the orphans! When we
serve them, we are
actually doing it
to our Master and
Savior, and He remembers
it. On the other
hand, failure to
open our hearts to
such brethren is equivalent
to openly rebuking
Jesus Christ — He
remembers that as well!**

Christ promises that "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

One of the most moving experiences I ever had at a Feast of Tabernacles occurred as a result of just such a case. It seems a young man had come to realize the necessity of keeping God's Holy Days and had

told his father, who wasn't in the Church, that he was going to attend this Feast. His father flew into a rage and announced that if he attended the Feast, he would not be allowed to return home. The young man decided to come anyway.

When one of the ministers learned about what had happened, he announced it in services, reassuring the young man that he had not really lost his family. "Look around you," the minister said. "Look at all the fathers, mothers, grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and cousins you have here in this auditorium [there were 7,000 to 8,000 people present]. We all love you and are glad to welcome you into our family." The very next day it was announced in services that dozens of offers had come to the ministry from families willing to take him in and care for him as one of their own.

While the Church handles such cases on an individual basis, this is the type of love we all are to have for each other as God's people. This is pure religion.

You will benefit

But don't think that giving your time, attention, friendship and even needed physical help to less fortunate brethren will be an entirely magnanimous act on your part. You are going to reap several rewards. Just as the seemingly "less-honorable" parts of our physical bodies serve vital functions, these brethren offer a needed dimension in the Church of God.

Older people, for instance, have years of life experiences under their belts and can offer you much wisdom and advice for living a successful life. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31). Converted older people are an indispensable part of the Body of Christ.

By looking at life from the viewpoint of handicapped brethren, the rest of us can see how truly blessed we really are. Their handicaps, while helping them build the character God wants them to have, make us appreciate our strengths, just as Paul, through physical weaknesses, became strong spiritually (II Cor. 12:9). And these people's trials provide us with opportunity to pour ourselves out in heartrending prayer that God will



Are you constantly looking for opportunities to serve others? Giving should be the central purpose of your life.

and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

“When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:34-40).

Jesus Christ puts Himself in the place of the elderly, the handicapped, the poor, the lonely, the widows and the orphans! When we serve them, we are actually doing it to our Master and Savior, and He remembers it. On the other hand, failure to open our hearts to such brethren is equivalent to openly rebuking Jesus Christ — He remembers that as well!

Practice pure religion

True Christians should be looking for chances to serve and help each other as brethren. As Peter said, “Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (I Pet. 3:8-9). It is a blessing to be able to serve other members of God’s Church!

Christ warned that in the end time the lack of compassion and concern for others, so rampant in this dying world, would afflict even some of God’s people: “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matt. 24:12).

Don’t let this happen to you. To whom much is given, much will be required (Luke 12:48), and we in God’s Church have been given much.

Help those brethren in need. Work to become stronger spiritually, so your brethren can lean on you and rely on you. Then God can use you as a conductor for His Holy Spirit. His love can flow through you to others and be a blessing to them. Look for opportunities to serve and practice pure religion. □

help them and intervene soon in this world to abolish all suffering.

Those brethren who seem somewhat aloof are in many cases shy or self-conscious, or they feel inferior for some reason. And they may actually be desperately lonely. Befriend these people! Use humility, sincere concern and discretion, and you will make new friends, develop godly traits and provide them with the acceptance they are crying out for. Once you bring them out, you may find they have fascinating backgrounds and tremendous talents waiting to be tapped.

These “less fortunate brethren” are one of the Church’s richest natural resources, if only we will realize this and begin to mine this gold.

By serving in this way we will reap spiritual blessings we may not readily see.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison,

Photo by Roland Rees

Experience the Joy of Godly Confidence!

*Do you suffer from feelings of inferiority?
They can inhibit your growth toward God's Kingdom!
Here's how to overcome these feelings.*

By George Kackos

Do you feel inferior or inadequate? Do you shrink back from growth opportunities because you are afraid of failure? Do you feel uncomfortable around people who are in the habit of accomplishing worthwhile goals? Do you look at new opportunities as threats rather than challenges?

Be honest with yourself. It is easy to be victimized by feelings of inferiority.

We have been called into God's Church to grow in character and ability. God desires that we bear much fruit, "some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matt. 13:23). But feelings of inadequacy can severely inhibit this growth.

The man who was given one talent was a victim of this attitude. He became fearful. He wouldn't step out in faith. Instead, he hid his talent in the earth and incurred his master's displeasure. His master called this man wicked and lazy, and took away his talent (Matt. 25:24-28)!

Do you suffer from this attitude —

and are you in danger of losing your reward because of it?

Why feelings of inferiority?

Most people in the society around us have been conditioned to feel inferior, some more so than others. Attitudes like "What's the use? I can't succeed," "I'm no good" or "I just don't fit in" are not limited to any one age group, intelligence level, race, sex or social standing. Even great men like Moses (Ex. 3:11, 4:1, 10) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6) let feelings of inferiority temporarily inhibit their personal growth. But why?

Satan's society is based on wrong competition at every level. And what is the result of this competition? Yes, it produces some winners — but it produces many losers as well, and losers are made to feel useless and less important than others.

Consider how this happens, even from birth in some cases. Perhaps a child is not really wanted by his parents. How does that affect him? His needs for parental attention, approval and guidance are unfulfilled. It makes him feel inadequate.

Then he faces his peers in school. Children can be very cruel, and he

might be put down, shunned or overlooked.

Then there is the working world. What is it like? In most cases there is a frantic race to see who can get to the top, and it doesn't matter what means are used to get there. Gossip, slander, ridicule, backstabbing and corporate power plays are all accepted by people in Satan's society as legitimate means of getting what they want. Frustrated by the struggle to overcome these adversities, a person is prone to simply give up.

What a tragic defeat of the potential of human beings is brought about by the world's warped system!

God's way of life is different! It seeks to build up, to strengthen. Right competition develops and sharpens character rather than hurting people (Prov. 27:17). God has begun a work in us that will last until the return of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). God is not finished with us yet, and none of us needs to feel frustrated or inadequate when we realize this.

Another danger we all face is failing to accept our individuality. In a world that reduces human identity and significance to a mere number or hole in a computer card, it is easy to

understand why few people understand who they are.

Yet our elder brother Jesus Christ knew exactly who He was, what His purpose was, when He needed to be on earth, where His Work was to take place, why He was necessary and how to accomplish His goals! And we are told to follow His example (1 Pet. 2:21).

Just as Christ understood His role, we need to recognize our roles and realize that each of us is different. By reason of inherited genetic traits and social, school, work and family environments, we all have different abilities. We each excel in some areas, while we have limited ability in others. God knows that.

But God honors individuality. He describes His Church as a Body having different parts, each with a different job (1 Cor. 12:14-18). God has called many together, each with varied abilities to serve the Body as a whole. Though the foot doesn't serve the same purpose or work in the same manner as the eye, they both are essential to the body.

We need to deeply understand this message of 1 Corinthians 12. We don't all have the same abilities and shouldn't compare ourselves to anyone except Jesus Christ. Next to Him, we all fall short.

It really boils down to what you choose to think about yourself. No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. You can stop the plague of self-doubt and go to God for His power. You don't need the approval of anyone except God.

Face the fact that you're not going to be great at everything, and don't try to be something you're not. Identify your weaknesses and try to strengthen yourself in those areas, but don't be overwhelmed by them. To feel inferior is not to be humble. Humble people have the highest degree of confidence in God (Luke 14:11, 1 Pet. 5:6).

Look to God for confidence

Answering our calling involves making the transition from feelings of inferiority or self-confidence to *godly confidence*. God wants us to look to Him for strength.

The apostle Paul made this transition. He no longer valued confidence in himself (Phil. 3:4-7), but

looked to God for His power.

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:11-13). It was Christ who strengthened Paul. Christ gave him the power to face whatever circumstances arose in his life.

How precious is godly confidence!

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How reassuring it is to know that the mind of Christ can help you face any situation positively. Paul exhorts us to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Having Christ's mind is essential to overcome feelings of inferiority or reliance on self-confidence — confidence that excludes God.

But how do we build the mind of Christ, so we will have godly confidence?

The mind of Christ is a product of God's Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9). The Holy Spirit is given to us upon repentance, believing God's truth and baptism (Acts 2:38). Then we have the mind of Christ.

But that mind must be developed,

just as the natural mind must be educated to become knowledgeable. The spiritual mind goes through a process to become spiritually mature. We do not attain full character development instantaneously.

Christians can lack godly confidence because they fail to develop their spiritual minds. Certain experiences are needed to develop the mind of Christ. New ways of thinking must replace the old ways. A mind filled with godly confidence views life with a special positivity. It is a viewpoint attained through contact with God, right experiences and acknowledging truth.

A primary requirement is seeing the truth about ourselves. People often develop a false picture of themselves as they grow up. Some become filled with an inflated sense of their abilities. Others deny their self-worth. Have you ever been around a person who won't accept a compliment? That person may not believe what he is being told. He thinks differently about himself and therefore rejects the compliment. On the other hand, some people reject deserved criticism because they refuse to see themselves as they really are.

Without a true picture of ourselves, we will have trouble developing godly confidence. Satan wants us to have a distorted picture of ourselves so that we ignore our awesome potentials.

What are you truly like? Are you really what you've always believed? Assess yourself. The mind of Christ is a mind of truth, not deception (John 14:17). Have you asked God to allow you to see yourself as He sees you? Be honest with Him in all ways and you'll attain a deeper state of conversion.

We must also understand the power of God working in us. The mind of Christ removes a lot of human limitations. Christ's disciples were startled to hear about the requirements for salvation. They felt humans were inadequate to be saved. But Christ revealed God's power: "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

Experience the power of God

You must go beyond merely seeing the truth about yourself and acknowl-

edging the power of God. You must begin experiencing it! This is where many fail. They won't step out in faith. They hold back, fearing failure, not realizing they have already failed by not trying. You make the transition to godly confidence when you surrender to God. Then God's power will flow through you.

Look at David. His confidence was built by slaying a lion and a bear. This gave him the courage to face Goliath. David's confidence was further enhanced by defeating Goliath. Eventually he had the confidence to rule a nation. Understand, it was not his confidence, but confidence that came from God by living through faith. Our confidence can grow this way. We can grow in the confidence of God to someday help Christ rule the world.

Consider Peter. He was a fisherman by trade. Speaking before a crowd was probably a frightening experience. Serving Christ was difficult at one point in his life. As a result, he rejected Christ three times (Matt. 26:75). But look how the Spirit of God — the mind of Christ — transformed Peter on the day of Pentecost. What happened? Peter spoke boldly to the multitude. Three thousand were converted by the power of his message (Acts 2:14-41). That is an inspiring example of the confidence that can be generated in us.

Cry out to God in heartfelt prayers, intense Bible study, meditation and fasting for the needed strength to live your Christian life. With this strength you can step out in faith and achieve worthwhile goals. The basis of Christianity is overcoming (Rev. 3:5). It is a way of life that builds confidence because we experience the power of God working in us, helping us to push back our former limitations.

Accept God's love

One of the most powerful ways to eliminate feelings of inadequacy is to accept the love of God. Realize how strong God's love for us is! Consider our remarkable calling. The vast majority of mankind throughout history has never had the opportunity to know God's way. We are indeed a special group to God.

Our calling and the hope of eternal life ought to overshadow *any* other conditions we are experiencing now, because these experiences are only temporary. Even poor health or poverty should not create feelings of inferiority in us. God may be allowing these conditions to fulfill an important purpose in our lives.

We need to keep the negative factors in our lives in proper perspective. Many times our sufferings engender feelings of inferiority in us. But notice how Paul said negative conditions are to be viewed, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present

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time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

This is God's viewpoint. This is the mind of Christ. It is the mind we need!

Too often we fail to properly value the privilege of our calling into God's Church and Work. Instead, we worry about how our physical conditions compare with those of others. When we do that, we set ourselves up to be victims of pride or inferiority or both. And we may be guilty of making wrong assessments about other people.

Christ pointed His disciples to the fantastic honor of having their names written in heaven (Luke 10:19-20).

Having your name written in heaven means you qualify to be in God's Family. That ought to give a person great confidence!

When we lose sight of our human destiny, we weaken ourselves. We place confidence in this uncertain, temporary life. We lose the power of God. Our partnership with God is dependent on our confidence in the hope of eternal life (Heb. 3:6). When we feel of value to God, the most important Being in the universe, it becomes easy to value ourselves. Nothing can stand in the way of our maintaining confidence because we have the most important thing in life — contact with God.

Temporary setbacks or losses do not destroy us. We do not give up like people in the world who have nothing to live for when their physical lives are disrupted. Instead, we are thankful for the experiences that show us how important the things of God are.

The power of godly confidence

Nothing can shake truly godly confidence. If we have this confidence, nothing will discourage us or make us feel inferior or inadequate. The power of our relationship with God is seen in the words of Paul:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

We who are not cut off from God need to capitalize on this relationship with Him so that it builds and sustains our confidence. We need not be victims. We can be survivors of this world's system. Our lives can be filled with something different. If we work to build into ourselves the mind of Christ, we will be able to experience the joy of godly confidence. □

Who Was the 'Judas' of the Old Testament?

By Carol Miller

"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me" (John 13:18).

The speaker? Jesus Christ. The subject? Judas Iscariot, Christ's betrayer, the classic example of a traitor, and yet, at one time, one of Christ's closest disciples and one of the original apostles.

But Christ was quoting, almost word for word, Psalm 41:9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

What did Psalm 41:9 mean in its original context? To whom was David referring when he wrote this verse? Do you know the identity of the "Judas" of this Old Testament passage?

Who was this man who ate at David's table, and who later turned against him? He was David's counselor, his adviser, his friend. David wrote of him: "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me: then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company" (Ps. 55:12-14).

Who was this friend and equal of the king in David's eyes? His name was Ahithophel, and his story is quite intriguing. Ahithophel was highly honored in David's court. Ahithophel was the father of Eliam, who was the father of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (II Sam. 23:34, 11:3). Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather.

Have you ever wondered why Bathsheba lived close to the king's palace? Who was Eliam, her father? Who was Uriah — simply an

unknown soldier in David's army, a man David could send to his death without a second thought? No. Eliam and Uriah were numbered among the top 30 valiant men in David's army and were part of the palace guard (II Sam. 23:23, 34, 39).

When David sent Uriah to his death, he murdered a valiant soldier and a trusted, intimate friend. This crime was heinous in God's sight.

But why did Ahithophel turn against David? The Bible does not say. But there is the possibility — knowing human behavior — that he may have induced Bathsheba to take a bath on a rooftop, just at the right time to be seen by the king. If David were to be seduced to marry Bathsheba, Ahithophel would become part of the royal family.

After he saw David's repentance for his sin with Bathsheba, Ahithophel threw in his lot with Absalom. Perhaps he felt he could manipulate Absalom and thus be the actual ruler over Israel. This, of course, is speculation, but it is indicative of how some humans reason.

Absalom, David's son, conspired to kick David off his throne: "And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom" (II Sam. 15:12). Absalom had stolen the hearts of the people, probably with the advice of Ahithophel (verse 6). When Absalom moved against Jerusalem with an army, David fled for his life (verses 13-14).

The story continues in verse 31: "And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." (Ahithophel's name means "foolishness.")

As David fled Jerusalem, however,

the king came in contact with another trusted friend and adviser. For years this man stood loyally by David. His name was Hushai. He met David as the king was fleeing to the wilderness, and wanted to go with him (II Sam. 15:32).

Instead of allowing him to flee with the others, David asked Hushai to return to Jerusalem. Why? "But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel" (verse 34).

Hushai returned to Jerusalem as David directed. He did give counsel contrary to Ahithophel's and Absalom followed Hushai's counsel. This saved David's life and ultimately paved the way for David to be restored as God's appointed king over Israel. You can read the account in II Samuel 17 through 19.

When Ahithophel found that his counsel was rejected, he realized Absalom would be defeated and he went home and hanged himself (II Sam. 17:23). Ahithophel realized a delay in attacking David would allow David to regroup his forces and win back his throne.

When this occurred, Ahithophel would be revealed as a traitor. He could not stand the thought of the punishment that would come upon him and the disgrace and ignominy that would come upon his family. In his state of depression he, like Judas Iscariot, committed suicide.

So here is the story of the man David was talking about when he wrote the scripture Christ later quoted in referring prophetically to Judas. And here, too, is the story of a *true* friend and counselor of David, Hushai, a man who remained loyal to him, just as the other apostles remained loyal to Christ. □

→ Closing ← The Generation Gap

God's concern for us as His children is tremendous. Do we have this same concern for our teenagers?

By Doug Horchak

“I don't know my own child anymore! Ever since he started high school, he has been off with his friends, doing his own thing. I wish I knew how to get through to him.”

Does this sound like you? Thoughts like these have gone through the minds of many parents of teens in God's Church.

The tragedy is that all too many of these parents become frustrated and conclude that there is no way to close the gap between them and their teens.

Some parents come up with some choice excuses for divorcing themselves from their teenagers' lives and interests. Here are but a few:

“My teens don't want me there. They want to be by themselves.”

“We just don't have the same interests.”

“I have to work hard all year long. I'm not going to spend my time during the Feast with my teen.”

“I have more important things I need to be doing. I can't bother with these juvenile matters.”

“That's why my kids are enrolled in school — it's the school's job to provide for them.”

“That's the job of the pastor and the Church. I thought YOU [Youth Opportunities United] was established to take care of these needs.”

The list goes on. Some parents will even hold back until 75 percent of the other parents in the Church get involved before they will volunteer to sponsor or provide transportation to any youth activities. They feel they don't have to get involved unless everyone else does, too.

The “generation gap”

Involvement, time and effort are all essential in nurturing wholesome, healthy, growing relationships between parents and teens. Yet, some parents in God's Church neglect these key ingredients and add to their own family's “generation gap.”

In Proverbs 22:6 God promises that if we “Train up a child in the way he should go . . . when he is old, he will not depart from it.” God is talking directly to us, the parents, showing the integral part we play in giving proper direction to our teens as they mature to adulthood.

In this verse the Hebrew word for “train” is *chanak*. This word's root meaning is “to narrow.” God is showing that training our children involves narrowing the choices they have to make from the vast array of deceptive, negative lifestyles this world has to offer (Matt. 7:13-14).

All too often parents give up on their sons or daughters, virtually turning them over to this society. “After all, they're carnal” or “They are responsible for their own decisions,” these parents say. The truth is

that they want to wash their hands of involving themselves in the lives of their teens in a viable, loving way.

Church teens in different category

As Jesus Christ revealed to His Church through His apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong, I Corinthians 7:14 shows that the unconverted children of Church members are set apart — holy. That includes the teenagers.

Knowing about the spirit in man and that our children have access to God's spiritual values is the key to successful child rearing in God's Church. Therefore, God expects even parents of teenagers to take advantage of the tremendous opportunity to positively influence their children about God's way of life.

The Church's dynamic thrust to strengthen the family, initiated by Christ through Mr. Armstrong, includes countless opportunities for parents and children to be actively involved in functions provided by God's Church: YOU activities, group outings, family socials and many others.

Teens need parental involvement

No one can take the place of a parent. The bonding that is experienced between a newborn baby and its parents is a beautiful and necessary process, and years later the need still remains for parents to love and guide their teens. Psalm 127:3-5 tells

us that our children are really a blessing to us. They are described as arrows in a parent's quiver, and truly, they are arrows that need to be shot in the right direction. Skill and effort

are needed to guide and provide for our sons and daughters as they grow up.

are needed to guide and provide for our sons and daughters as they grow up.

It's all too easy to excuse ourselves from spending time with our children. But no parent has a valid excuse not to be actively involved in the life of his or her children as they grow from infancy through the teen years into adulthood.

Although the individual interests of teenagers can vary as widely as they do with adults, taking the time to show a true interest in your teenager's friends and concerns will show your son or daughter that you really do care.

Sure, it takes time to learn about photography or skiing. Roller skating with your kids or going with them to an amusement park may not be the most fun thing you ever do. But putting forth the energy to involve yourself in a realistic way can benefit you, the parent, in building bridges between you and your children. This type of bond cannot be bought with money.

An ideal way to create this bond is to develop interests and hobbies as a family — these can offer areas of mutual interest when your children reach their teenage years. The point is that parents should strive to share in the interests of their children, regardless of their ages.

For instance, many parents are concerned about teen dating — when to allow it and under what conditions. But parents are the very ones who can do the most to develop right dating attitudes and habits in their children. Sponsoring quality group activities for your young people can do a lot to defuse the premature pairing off and going steady that can take place when your kids are forced to constantly find their own social outlets.

Right parental involvement

Over the years, many have assumed that only a young adult — one not too far removed from the

teens in age, one who knows their language and likes their music — should supervise or lead the teens. Subsequently, some parents have also used that same philosophy in their

personal approach to their teens. They sometimes water down their conduct and standards to an unacceptable level, all in the name of "communicating" with their teenagers.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians there was a time to put away the childish approach and be mature: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I

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became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11). The point is that parents need to be mature yet understanding examples to their children.

Another caution is that parents shouldn't overdo it. We can go from one extreme to another, not realistically "counting the cost" before we start getting involved (Luke 14:28-30). Be sure your priorities are well established — don't spend so much time with one member of your family that you neglect the others.

Also, when stirred to action we often "overkill." Don't try to overcompensate for your past lack of interest in your teens in a short period of time. You may experience burn-out as a parent and then not offer the consistent support your kids really need over the years.

Some parents feel that the Church doesn't understand teenagers — that

we involve adults too much in teen activities — that we force ourselves on them.

But parental involvement is necessary for teens to properly develop

socially. If parent-teen interaction is not present, teens are prone to seek recognition outside the Church and home. Parents should provide and aid in group activities for teens in the Church to promote their social development.

We as God's children

One of the most beautiful and encouraging truths in God's Word is that God is interested in seeing all His potential Sons come to repentance and salvation (II Pet. 3:9). In John 3:16 we find that God loved all of us enough to give His only begotten Son so that we may all have a chance to experience spiritual life in His Family.

God's plan is pictured by this physical life. Think about it for a moment. In our spiritual infancy in God's Church — when we were first being called — we knew God was involved and interested in our growth and development. We had to believe that as a requirement for baptism (Acts 2:38-39).

As time goes on in our spiritual lives, we sometimes act like teenagers do physically. We may think we know it all and can take care of ourselves. But does God cease to actively involve Himself in our lives then? No! God's interest and care for His spiritual children never diminishes. He continues to work with us as we mature spiritually.

Romans 8:28-31 tells us that God called all of us for a purpose — that He does care. Paul ends with the statement, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Are you *for* your sons and daughters? Are you interested enough to get involved in their lives during one of their most crucial and potentially traumatic periods of development?

Let's be sure we understand our parental responsibilities. Let's set the godly example of caring about our teens by knowing them and being involved with them. That's the way to close the generation gap. □

Don't Assume Your Children Understand

How well are you as a parent fulfilling your responsibility of teaching your children about God's way?

By Gerald E. Weston

Two Church members were discussing how much their children really got out of Church services and Bible studies. One said to the other: "Don't kid yourself. Your children hear more than you think. Take mine, for example. Recently our minister was talking in Bible study about Jesus returning on a white horse. I didn't think my 3 year old was listening at all, but that night in her prayers she implored God to 'please help Jesus not fall off His horse when He returns!'"

Humorous? Yes. But just how much *do* your children pick up from sermons? Do they really have one ear open while hunched over their drawing tablets? Does the story of David lodge in the recesses of their subconscious somewhere among the tales in their storybooks? Does the meaning of the Holy Days register over the notes passed between smiling teens?

For many years I thought so. I



heard all the humorous stories told by parents who had overheard their offspring commenting on minor points covered in sermons. Certainly if the kids picked up on these smaller matters, the major lessons were sinking in. I figured by the sheer number of hours spent in Church services, the average Church youth had to know volumes more than a young person lacking such exposure.

One father of six expressed this same view when he said: "If my kids

mess up, it won't be because they didn't know better. They've been sitting in services all their lives. I've made sure of that. If they leave, it won't be my fault."

But does this line of reasoning square with the facts?

You may be surprised.

I was. I was surprised the first time I organized a game of charades with a group of Church teens and found that not a single one out of 25 remembered ever hearing about the "valley of dry bones." I was surprised during last year's Feast of Tabernacles when the first four teens who were asked at a Bible baseball game didn't know what it meant to "afflict your soul."

Yes, I have been surprised — perhaps shocked would be more accurate — about what our children *don't*

know.

Recently I gave a test to all the teens in my two churches. The results astounded many parents. Most parents were at least mildly embarrassed.

The questions on the exam were not unreasonable. One 19 year old who had come to services for only one year proved this by scoring 90 percent. That was, by the way, the only 90 percent score and was the highest.

Most teens didn't do that well. In one church every teen present had

attended services since the age of 2 or under. One managed to get 40 percent right. All the others scored 20 percent or less! In the other church the scores were somewhat higher, but the average was still well below 50 percent. And I don't believe we can blithely assume these poor results are merely an isolated example.

A clear instruction

Through Moses, God said: "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons . . . that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children" (Deut. 4:9-10).

Moses specifically instructed the Israelites to teach their children the commandments that were given at Mt. Sinai.

After repeating the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, God again emphasized the crucial importance of teaching them to our children: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt *teach them diligently* unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:6-7).

Merely teaching the Ten Commandments would be a good start for those who have neglected that responsibility, but God does not let us off that easy. "And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?" (verse 20). This clearly states that the testimonies, statutes and judgments are to be taught. Why else would your son ask you about them?

It is clear from these verses that parents are to teach their children, from a positive perspective, the reasons for keeping God's commandments, statutes and judgments. In addition, we are to show how God has personally intervened and blessed us, and that keeping His commandments is for our good (verses 21-25).

God is very specific about certain things He wants us to teach our children. The history and meaning of the

Feasts is clearly obligatory (Ex. 12:26-27). You may, like many parents, be resting confidently, thinking your kids know all about them. Don't be too sure. Unless you have actively, and recently, discussed the history and meaning of these days with them, you may be in for a rude awakening.

More importantly, many parents may be in for a surprise when they realize just how important it is to diligently teach their children. Do we fail to grasp how urgent it is to keep this command of God, and what God thinks of those who don't?

There are sins of omission as well as sins of commission. When we fail to obey a direct command from God, it is pure and simple rebellion.

Saul's bitter lesson

Notice the example of Saul and how he rebelled against God. Can you find a parallel in it for yourself?

God, through Samuel, commanded Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites (I Sam. 15:3). But what did Saul do? "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly" (verse 9).

Saul reported to Samuel that he had carried out God's instructions. But Samuel was unimpressed. His reply was swift and biting: "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (verse 14).

Saul had disobeyed a direct command from God. His act amounted to open rebellion. The result? Samuel told him: "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (verse 23).

Is it possible that you, without realizing it, have fallen into the same trap as Saul? Have you rebelled against God by neglecting to keep one of the clearest commands of the Bible, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children"?

Some have been afraid they will "turn their children off" if they diligently teach them. They reason

that such teaching is just not the thing to do nowadays. They don't know how to reach or communicate with their kids. Just as Saul was afraid of the people and thought he had a better way of doing things, some today are afraid also. Just like Saul, they rationalize that their way is best.

But the facts are clear: The ignorance of God's laws among our youths cries out louder than the Amalekite sheep!

It's time for parents to stand up and be counted. It's time for parents to patiently, lovingly obey God's command, not out of a spirit of duty alone, but because they eagerly desire to lead the next generation in the right way of life.

Of course, there is always the danger of going overboard in anything, and this subject is no exception. Some *have* "turned off" their offspring by the harsh approach they take in teaching God's ways. There is a right and a wrong way to teach. But God's command is that parents teach their children!

So why not grade your own performance — right now if possible? Give your children the accompanying test. Then grade the test according to the instructions. Remember, however, the score your children get is really yours. If they score poorly, don't blame them. The responsibility is on your shoulders — God put it there! □

TEST YOURSELF BY TESTING YOUR TEENS

- 1) List the seven annual Feasts of God in order.
- 2) List the Ten Commandments in order.
- 3) Who was Jacob's grandfather?
- 4) Who was Jacob's son who was sold into slavery?
- 5) List the first five books of the Bible.
- 6) List the first five books of the New Testament.
- 7) Name one significant event that took place on the first Passover.
- 8) Name one significant event that took place on a Passover during the New Testament.
- 9) What does it mean to "afflict your soul"?
- 10) What does the Last Great Day picture?

Answers on page 29

"The Work"?

(Continued from page 4)

hand-cranked Neostyle, which he sold me for \$10. The first edition stencils were cut on a borrowed typewriter. I also managed to obtain a secondhand typewriter for \$10 for the second month.

So already I was using modern radio — though the smallest in power — a 100-watt station. And now a typewriter and a mimeograph.

But we live in a far, far different world than that of apostles Peter and Paul.

The word *apostle* means "one sent forth" with Christ's Gospel message — the same message Jesus brought from God.

As stated above, Peter was chief apostle and human leader in the earliest years of the Church. After Peter seems to drop from sight, Paul was in charge, on the earthly, human level of the Church. Following this biblical pattern and example, Christ's apostle is human leader under Christ, and in His authority, today.

Why only one apostle today?

We live today in a far, far different world. The world's population has multiplied many times over. In the wake of the invention of the printing press and the typewriter, KNOWLEDGE has increased astoundingly not only, but also the diffusion of knowledge. Unfortunately, that knowledge is virtually 100 percent materialistic. The world is still in the darkness of *spiritual* ignorance. It has lost — or rather *never gained* — the TRUE VALUES in understanding.

But escalation of carnal, selfishly motivated diffusion of knowledge,

the advent and swift development of modern science and technology, the effects of the machine age, all have made today's world a fast-moving, complicated and complex world utterly DIFFERENT than the world of the apostles Peter and Paul.

Instead of requiring *more* apostles to go forth carrying the message, and directing the oversight of the earthly Work, it requires but ONE! Today that one can speak a message with a microphone and TV cameras before him, and by electronic magic via satellite be SEEN speaking live by vast audiences in other parts of the world. Or he can record a message to be heard and/or seen later on television or radio in any — or many — parts of the world by vast audiences. Or he can write messages on his typewriter, which are reprinted in newspapers, magazines or other means of mass-duplication, distributed and read by thousands or millions of people.

In Paul's day he could be heard by as many people as could hear a natural, unamplified voice. *It would have taken many hundreds of apostles* to convey the message to as many people then as it does today.

Today we have mechanical, organizational facilities so that one man can direct the functions of as many as hundreds of apostles could have done in the days of the Pauline ministry.

But today, these same advanced mechanical facilities necessitate certain differences in organizational functions and procedures — though basically *THE PATTERN IS THE SAME!*

As the Church grew for 35 years at the unmatched rate of 30 percent increase annually over each preceding year, the use of modern facilities increased. God continually added those He called. Ambassador College was founded in 1947, and later the colleges in Britain and Texas. Dozens, scores, hundreds of God-educated ministers were ordained. We became, by 1968, the Worldwide Church of God.

All this time, it was *the Work of Jesus Christ, through His chosen apostle*, carrying on the Church's operations, fulfilling the DUAL *spiritual* PURPOSES for the Church: 1) proclaiming to the world, for a wit-

ness, the good news of the coming Kingdom of God, and 2) feeding the flock — preparing those God called in righteous spiritual character to become the Bride of Christ, to sit with Him in His throne, and under Him to rule the nations.

The WORK consists of proclaiming the Gospel — by radio, by television, in print (booklets, books, *The Plain Truth*, messages in advertising space in magazines and newspapers, the Ambassador College Correspondence Course).

This is a *spiritual* work. Broadcasting, both radio and TV, is done by the apostle. Most booklets and books are written by the apostle. The "Personal" — most read — usually the lead article and often other articles are by the apostle. Other articles are by staff writers trained in Ambassador College as were all ministers. The Ambassador College Correspondence Course, with thousands studying it, is all the teaching of the apostle. In this Gospel-proclaiming area is the Mail Processing Center, where hundreds of thousands — even millions — of letters are received from listeners, viewers and readers. This center includes ordained ministers, trained by the apostle, who answer letters asking biblical questions and seeking spiritual counsel.

In the area of "feeding the flock," first is Ambassador College, educating and training men for the ministry, and others for various positions in the Work. The teaching is that of Christ's apostle, who is president and chancellor of the college.

The ministry, consisting of hundreds of ordained ministers teaching, as the apostle taught them, in local churches worldwide.

Serving them for the apostle is the Ministerial Services Department.

Also under the apostle and cooperating with Ministerial Services is the Festival Office, planning and arranging the annual Feast of Tabernacles attended in many festival sites around the entire world.

Feeding the flock in print is *The Good News*, monthly, and *The Worldwide News*, a tabloid, semi-monthly, besides the *Pastor General's Report*, weekly to the ministry. □

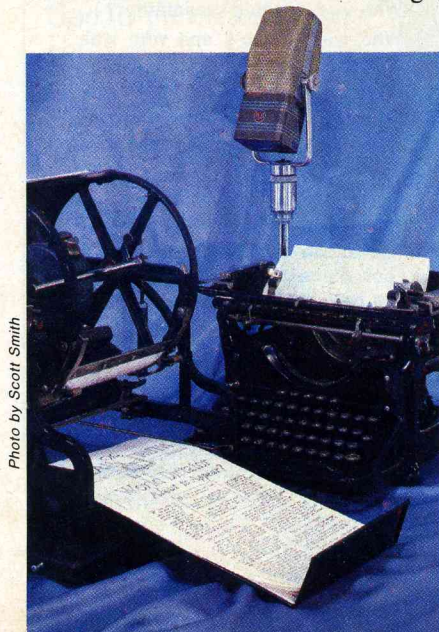


Photo by Scott Smith

MINI STUDY

God's Work Ethic

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

LABOR

God desires that Christians prosper both spiritually and materially. He wants us to enjoy life. Christ Himself said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

"I wish above all things," says God through the apostle John, "that thou mayest prosper and be in health" (III John 2). But in order to begin experiencing this kind of life, we must practice the way of life that will produce it. This includes keeping God's commandments and following the principles of Christian living and working that God reveals in His Word.

Let's look into the Bible to learn what kind of an attitude and approach God's Spirit-begotten children should have toward work.

1. When God Almighty put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, did He put man to work? Gen. 2:15. What was to be the continuing task of the human race? Gen. 1:26-28.

In the first two chapters of Genesis God reveals Himself to us as a worker. Within six days His creative work unfolded. And when He created the first human beings in His own image, He made them workers, too.

God told our progenitors to subdue the earth — to produce from, develop and care for their environment. Then when God planted the garden in Eden, He put the man into the garden in order to cultivate and beautify it.

2. Does the commandment to rest on the Sabbath have another side? Ex. 20:9.

Though many have not realized it, the Fourth Commandment also instructs mankind to labor during the rest of the week. That part of the command is just as important as the part requiring man to rest on the seventh day of the week, the day God made holy.

The Sabbath commandment actually dates back to creation week. It was given to keep man in a close spiritual relationship with his Creator, who is a worker — who created and now sustains His creation. And God intends for us to become like Him!

3. Was Jesus Christ sent to this earth to work? John 9:4. Did He reveal that the Father

is still busily engaged in His job? John 5:17.

4. How zealously should we do all of our work? Eccl. 9:10.

God works with zeal. We are to become more like God by putting the utmost of our energies into whatever we set our hands to do!

5. Did the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of God, point out that working is the way to be self-sufficient? I Thess. 4:11-12.

Notice how the Revised Standard Version renders verse 12: "so that you may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody."

6. Did Paul command manual labor for the person who wasn't used to honest work? Eph. 4:28.

7. How did Paul deal with lazy, shiftless idlers? II Thess. 3:10. Did he command them to work? Verses 11-12.

8. Will diligent effort prove its worth? Prov. 10:4-5, 13:4. Will the hard worker have the necessities of life? Prov. 20:13, 28:19.

9. Are those who refuse to work forever wishing for the things the diligent possess, but always ending up empty handed? Prov. 13:4, 21:25.

10. Does the slothful person look for all kinds of dangers to justify his lack of effort? Prov. 22:13, 26:13-15. Does he always have clever excuses or hard-luck stories about why he is unemployed — why he shouldn't work? Prov. 26:16. Is his love of sleep and lack of effort the cause of his poverty? Prov. 6:10-11.

11. Does indolence tend to become habit-forming? Prov. 19:15.

Some people use the slightest little excuse to flop down on the bed or couch — they cannot distinguish between true tiredness and just plain laziness!

12. Does it take effort, and sometimes even physical discomfort, to avoid being lazy? Prov. 20:4.

13. How does the condition of the yard, the house or the farm of the indolent person usually reveal what kind of individual he really is? Eccl. 10:18, Prov. 24:30-34.

Take a look around your property. Does your

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home and yard or farm give you away? If so, take instruction from God's words of wisdom.

God wants us to take care of what we have: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds [or whatever possessions you may have]. For riches are not for ever" (Prov. 27:23-24).

14. Is there profit in all labor? And nothing but penury in talk? Prov. 14:23.

If you happen to be unemployed, you can start profiting from this principle right now. How? By making a "job" out of getting a job. Seek advice on other types of employment if your skill is not presently in demand, or perhaps it can be adapted to some other job. And of course ask God to help you locate work. Then once you have a job, you are ready to put into action further practical instruction from the New Testament.

15. What did Paul teach regarding service to one's employer — one's boss, foreman or supervisor? Col. 3:22-24, Tit. 2:9-10.

Though Paul's instruction was specifically to Christians who were bond slaves at that time, the principles certainly apply today. Whatever your occupation may be, work at it as if your immediate boss were Jesus Christ Himself — "do it heartily, as to the Lord." Be cooperative and zealous on the job. Be alert to please your foreman or boss by doing the job his way. And show your willingness to go beyond what is required.

Remember, too, that good personal relations on the job is one of the best forms of employment insurance. But a Christian shouldn't be a flatterer or a hypocrite in any sense. Show sincere, loving concern and cooperation toward your employer, your foreman and your fellow employees in every possible way.

16. Can one expect to be paid a good salary if he is not worth it? See the principle in Mark 4:24.

The way to receive a greater reward is to be worth more! Be a valuable employee.

Don't just plod along in your job with a ho-hum, humdrum, every-day-the-same-routine attitude. Be energetic! Grow, produce! Study to improve your skills. Take some night classes and/or check out books on your line of work from the public library.

Really apply yourself and prove to your employer that you have the capacity and the will to work and to do an excellent job. Do your part and God will bless you.

17. What is a sluggard like to those who hire him? Prov. 10:26.

He simply doesn't get the job done. Therefore

he isn't paid much, if he can hold a job at all.

18. To whom is the sluggard instructed to go to study and learn about the initiative he lacks? Prov. 6:6-9.

Many have never really understood the main point of this passage. Certainly it inculcates diligence. But notice verse 7. The ant not only works, but does so with "no leader, no foreman or chief" (Moffatt version).

Ants have a built-in, programed ability to work diligently without prodding. Mankind, with the God-given ability to think and reason, should not only be able to do as well but infinitely better than these lower forms of life. A human should not have to be constantly supervised to do productive work. God is not supervised. We are to learn to be like Him.

19. Notice Proverbs 12:24. Who will become the leaders directing the rest of the workers? The "diligent"! And what will be the lot of the slothful? Same verse.

"The slothful will be put to forced labor" (Revised Standard Version). Those who must be constantly supervised will be paid less than those who require little supervision. Do your job without being told. Or do it immediately when told how. Get it right the first time.

Be the kind of person who increases his superior's production and the production of all his fellow workers. When the time comes for raises and promotions, this is the man or woman who will be remembered.

20. Will the man who is a self-starter — the man who really applies himself on his job without being prodded — find himself in the company of important people? Prov. 22:29.

21. Was Joseph an industrious young man who was given greater responsibilities? Gen. 39:2-6, 22-23, 41:40-44.

Are you willing to put forth the effort to be like Joseph? He was diligent. And though he was severely tried and tested for a time, he still obeyed God and God blessed him exceedingly. He eventually became prime minister of the entire land of Egypt, and will undoubtedly be given a high position in the soon-coming Kingdom of God (see Hebrews 11).

If you will really believe God and set yourself to follow His Word, striving to obey all of God's commandments, He promises to bless you.

The apostle Paul sums it up in Hebrews 11:6: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a *rewarder* [both spiritually and physically] of them that *diligently* seek him." □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

The mate is no longer part of one's empirical SELF. Resentment turns to bitterness, and bitterness to HATE.

Happiness is a funny thing — or is it? The more you GIVE, the more you HAVE. But the more you try to TAKE, the more miserable you become.

It became clear. One WAY of life is the SELF way — the INCOMING way — the GETTING way. The OPPOSITE WAY is the selfless way — the way of humility, getting rid of the SELF (which is your biggest enemy), the way of GIVING, serving, sharing.

In the summer of 1933 we were living in Oregon. I planned a series of lectures in and near Eugene, Ore., to share this BASIC KNOWLEDGE of this right WAY OF LIFE with others. I was without money. But a man with whom I had come in contact, believing in this WAY, happened to be a member of a country school board. He offered me the use of a one-room country schoolhouse eight miles west of Eugene. There was no rent. I walked out over the countryside, inviting neighbors to come to the series of lectures. There were only 35 seats, but attendance averaged 36 — an average of one standing.

That was a very small group of people, but the response was electric. Some of those lives became happier!

A little later an invitation came to lecture over radio. The response was entirely unexpected. There was then only one station in Eugene, KORE, owned by Frank Hill. He called me into his office, handed me a handful of letters. He suggested I plan a regular half-hour program — offering to contribute substantially by reducing the cost below cost of operation. The price was \$3 per half hour. That was the start of *The World Tomorrow* program. It could not have started smaller. The station then broadcast on only 100 watts. But it was a NEW KIND OF EDUCATION.

Education as organized in this world is restricted primarily to the physical sciences, technologies and the professions — teaching how to earn a living, but not HOW TO LIVE. I saw the need of this broader kind of education IN THE HOME. Without any request from me, radio listeners volunteered to become contributors.

That was the start. As new co-workers volunteered to join with me, other radio stations were added. Growth was small. But I never would solicit contributions over the air. The radio program started on the air the first week in 1934. I managed to put together a homemade "magazine" called *The Plain Truth*, printed on a borrowed mimeograph, ready by Feb. 1. This was offered, free, to radio listeners.

Little by little it grew. In 1947 Ambassador College was opened in Pasadena — with four students and a faculty of eight. It was a new type of campus education. We not only began teaching students how to earn a living — but also HOW TO LIVE.

And now, after another nearly 34 years, I look back on a life that has been filled with happiness — because it has been devoted to SHARING this WAY TO REAL SUCCESS with, first, about three dozen, then hundreds, then thousands and today into the HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of people.

From that high estimate I placed on myself during my late teens and twenties, seeking STATUS and a recognition of IMPORTANCE, I skidded backward — all the way DOWN to self-abasement in economic poverty. In financial poverty I found THE WAY to true SUCCESS. I learned that setting one's heart on money, material possessions or status only brings a CURSE. Financial success is seldom true success, because it is sought for its own sake.

There is a CAUSE for every effect. TRUE success may, and perhaps usually should, include financial success. Money is power, but usually it is used to CAUSE curses, not blessings and happiness. Money is good or evil depending on how it is used. If money is the end you seek, it will wreck you in the end. Self-centeredness, self-seeking — the GETTING, grasping way of vanity, jealousy, envy and greed — is a CAUSE that always produces a most UNHAPPY effect.

To HUMBLE the self, to be little in your own eyes, to be honestly and sincerely concerned for others — to get on the GIVING, helping, serving, sharing way — that is the WAY OF LIFE that CAUSES real success!

To have the SELF brought down to that junk pile was a painful experience. But not for long. Yes, I'm glad I skidded backward from self-esteem, ego and vanity and self-seeking. □

Meditation

(Continued from page 9)

the first place? It is *not* possible.

The Bible gives many subjects of meditation, such as: The works of God's hands, His creation (Ps. 8:3, 143:5). (This is an especially appropriate subject whenever you do find a scenic view, or when you observe some amazing thing in nature.) God's past works in your life (Ps. 77:5-6, 10-12). His strength (Isa. 17:10). His covenant with His people and with you personally (I Chron. 16:15). Your Christian calling and duties (I Tim. 4:13-15). Our High Priest, Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:1). God's statutes and laws (Ps. 119:48). His wonders (Neh. 9:17).

Can't think of anything to meditate about? This is enough to keep you awake all night!

Positive results

Meditating brings positive results. Researchers have compiled reports about people in the world who spend a few minutes each day "meditating." By "meditating" they mean only brief periods of relaxing, withdrawing from involvements and pursuits and getting reoriented. Even for these halfway measures, the reports indicate a lessening of stress, blood pressure and oxygen consumption and purport a wide range of beneficial changes in health, personality, intelligence and performance.

Meditating on God's way produces any positive results the world's way of meditation can produce, plus a whole lot more! It brings life — eternal life (Rom. 8:6), great blessings (Ps. 1), prosperity and success (Josh. 1:8), gladness (Ps. 104:34), hope (Lam. 3:19-24, RSV), wisdom and understanding (Ps. 119:98-99), endurance and perseverance (Heb. 12:3), strength in the face of persecution (Ps. 119:23-24). Keeping your mind filled with the goal God has set before you will prevent you from slipping back into the world you came out of (Heb. 11:15-16).

Isaiah summed up the whole subject of meditation when he exclaimed to God, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3). □

Calendar

(Continued from page 7)

Thursday. And that is exactly what the Pharisees anciently required be done!

The Pharisees put major emphasis on precise visual observation of the first faint crescent of the new moon. They overlooked Leviticus 23:26-32. So whenever the first faint crescent of the seventh new moon of the year was seen just above the western horizon after sunset on Tuesday evening, for example, they declared that day, Wednesday (which begins the previous evening), to be the new moon.

Consequently that new moon became the first day of the month and the Day of Trumpets. The result was the 10th day of the month — Atonement — would fall on a Friday in such a year.

They were more concerned with the visual appearance of the moon's first crescent than they were with the spiritual requirements of the Day of Atonement.

God, of course, had to correct that — and He did!

The Romans finally put an end to visual observation of the new moons by the Jews. The Jews' chief leader, Hillel II, whose responsibility it was to regulate the calendar, was forced to issue a decree for the year A.D. 358-359 to (re)institute the authority of the fixed calendar we know today as the Hebrew calendar. And one of the rules of that calendar is based on Leviticus 23:26-32.

Hillel II realized that these verses require that the Day of Atonement should not fall on Friday, the preparation day of the Sabbath.

The rule, therefore, is that if the new moon of a seventh month could occur on a Wednesday (beginning the previous evening), that day is not to be declared the new moon. It is to be postponed. But the day following is to be declared the new moon.

That is, a Thursday (beginning the previous evening) is the first day of the seventh month. That Thursday is consequently the Feast of Trumpets, since the Festival falls on the *first* day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:23-25). And the Day of Atonement, which is the *10th* day of the month,

falls in such a year on the weekly Sabbath.

The year 1927, the year that Herbert W. and Loma D. Armstrong began keeping God's Holy Days, is an example of this very postponement. That year the new moon of the seventh month, by the normal rule of the Hebrew calendar, could have occurred on a Wednesday. But that day was not to be declared the first day because of the special rule based on Leviticus 23.

By authority of the Hebrew court that long ago governed the calendar, that new moon in 1927 was deter-

שבת שבט אדר

mined in advance to be a Thursday and the first day of the seventh month. The Armstrongs consequently celebrated their first fast of Atonement, the 10th day of the month, on the weekly Sabbath, not a Friday.

By authority of Scripture one cannot change the dates of the month that are holy once the month is determined. God hallowed the first and the 10th day of the seventh month — as also the 15th and the 22nd days. There are no others made holy. But God empowered men to examine all the scriptures and to declare first which is to be the day of the new moon. Once that is declared, the month is determined. And since a new moon begins a month (see Numbers 10:10, 28:11, I Samuel 20:5, 24-27 and I Chronicles 23:31 for proof that the new moon begins the month), we know how to number successive days of a month.

What those today who want to establish their own calendars and their own authority overlook is that we live on a round earth. One would have thought they knew that!

A round earth requires an international dateline — one that is universally recognized and established by authority. As it happens any dateline will cut across some major body of land or island grouping.

The one dateline that has been chosen and is authoritative is in the mid-Pacific. Since it would cut through Alaska and the kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific, an arbitrary decision had to be made. The

islands of Alaska to the west are incorporated into the day that lies to the east. And, in contrast, the islands of the eastern part of the kingdom of Tonga are incorporated into the day that begins to the west of the international dateline.

So we have members of God's Church in Tonga in the Southern Hemisphere who begin their Sabbaths and Holy Days one day before brethren who live to the *west* of them in the Aleutian Islands in the Northern Hemisphere. They keep holy the time that comes to them as it has been authoritatively established for a round earth.

God intended the earth to present just such problems so that authoritative decisions would have to be

made — and people tested to see whether they are willing to come under authority of those empowered to make just such decisions.

So which day is declared a new moon is not a private matter that can override sensible requirements of the Bible. The Pharisees misjudged the matter when they allowed Atonement to occur on a Friday merely to establish a new moon in its "proper time."

They should have realized that if in Jerusalem the first faint crescent is barely seen after sunset in the west before it slips over the horizon, all people living to the east from Jordan to Japan and the Philippines won't see the new moon until the first crescent in their western skies until the next day anyway.

So in most instances it is not even possible for all nations to see the first faint crescent on the same day!

It is not required that the first faint crescent visible in Jerusalem always be declared the new moon. What is important is that the authority to declare it arises from Jerusalem!

The authority of Jerusalem in the person of Hillel II did speak in A.D. 358-359 to authorize the present Hebrew calendar throughout the future until such time as a new court sitting in Moses' seat be reestablished in Jerusalem.

When is the first day of Abib?

The Bible makes plain that the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread must fall in the month

of Abib, the first month of the Hebrew calendar (Ex. 12:2, Deut. 16:1). The month Abib has been known, since the Babylonian Captivity, as Nisan, a word derived from the Semitic root *nesu*, meaning "to start." It starts the months of the year. Abib is derived from *aviv*, meaning "ears" or "green ears of grain." The first month is the month in which green ears of grain begin to ripen — barley first, then winter wheat, which is usually still in green ears when barley ripens.

Are we free to decide for ourselves when we think the month Abib — the month of green ears — should occur? Are we to decide the matter on the basis of the state of the harvest in the Holy Land today? Some sects who refuse to use the words *God* and *Jesus Christ* claim so. They have taken upon themselves the authority to determine the calendar for themselves. God lets them do so, but He has given them no authority in this matter.

Who has that authority? Did Jesus give authority to the New Testament Church to preserve God's calendar? Most certainly not! Nor did the Church ever preserve it. Nor did the Church preserve the Hebrew Bible. We *use* both. We have *authority* to teach and preach from the Bible (usually in translation), but God's Church has been given no authority to preserve the Bible in either Hebrew or Greek. Nor have we been called to determine the rules of God's calendar. That is a matter He has left to the Jews — hence it is proper to call it the Hebrew calendar, just as we speak of the Hebrew Bible.

How, then, is the month Abib or Nisan determined?

It has already been determined! The matter was decided by Hillel II and his court in the fourth century A.D.

Abib is determined by the rules of the permanent calendar. For example, this year, 1981, the new moon of the seventh month is Tuesday, Sept. 29, beginning the evening before. It is this new moon that determines the character of the preceding months of the year. The new moon of Abib does not determine the character of the year.

The rules of the permanent calendar call for each of the first six

months of the year to be alternately 30 and 29 days long.

Since the Bible does not declare which months have either 30 or 29 days, it is an arbitrary decision, enacted by those who are in authority over God's calendar. God has left it to them to keep it simple.

If He had not liked their decision He would have caused them to change it. But since each month is slightly more than 29½ days long, the decision of the court, or Beth Din, is reasonable.

That means the first half of the year is always 177 days long (three months with 30 days plus three months with 29 days equals 177 days).

And if the first day of the seventh month is on Tuesday, the first of Abib is 177 days earlier, and on a Sunday. (These first six months are always 25 weeks and two days long. And two days before a Tuesday is a Sunday.)

When Nisan begins on a Sunday, the 14th day is a Sabbath, as it is this year. That is, whenever the Feast of Trumpets and the first and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles season fall on Tuesday, as they do this year, the Passover will be a Sabbath — more specifically, Friday evening. God has not left the matter to each person to decide for himself. God is not the author of confusion. The devil is!

So if someone were to ask, But couldn't the month of Abib this year be one month earlier according to the Bible? We answer *no!* on two counts.

First, a change in the calendar lacks biblical authorization. The Hebrew perpetual calendar is the sole authority for the Church of God today.

Second, even if it were permissible to have Passover as early as March 20 — the very beginning day of spring — the Festival of Tabernacles would fall too early.

Did you ever notice that the Bible requires the Feast of Tabernacles, commemorating the second and great harvest of human beings, to at least reach the beginning of autumn? In Exodus 34:22 we read from the English translation of the Hebrew Bible:

"Thou shalt observe . . . the feast

of ingathering at the turn of the year" (Jewish Publication Society translation).

What is the "turn of the year"? The Hebrew word translated "turn" is *tequfah*, meaning "revolution, circuit or end." It is used specifically for the equinoxes or solstices.

It is here specifically referring to the autumnal equinox — when day and night approach equal length. It normally falls on Sept. 23 this century.

But if the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles were one month earlier this year the Festival would fall on Sept. 14-20. And that is wholly in summer and plainly contrary to Exodus 34:22.

So before thinking the Hebrew calendar needs your input, think first how much you need God's input from His written Word! He does reveal in the Bible more than you may be aware about His calendar. □

ANSWERS TO "TEST YOURSELF BY TESTING YOUR TEENS," PAGE 23

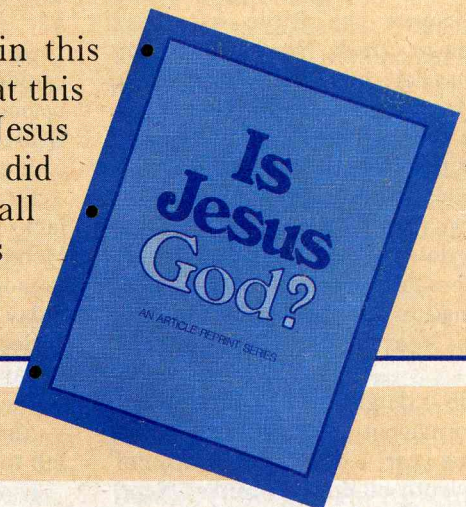
- 1) See Leviticus 23.
- 2) See Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5.
- 3) Abraham.
- 4) Joseph.
- 5) Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
- 6) Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts.
- 7) Death angel passed over, first-born slain, Passover lamb killed, etc.
- 8) Christ crucified, Passover symbols changed to bread and wine, foot-washing ceremony, etc.
- 9) To fast, or humble yourself through fasting.
- 10) The time when everyone who has lived and never had an opportunity to know the truth will have a chance for salvation.

Note: Score 10 points for each correct answer. Each answer should be entirely correct, or no credit should be given. For example, the Ten Commandments and Feasts must be in correct order and all of them listed. If your teen scores 100 points, congratulate yourself on obeying God's command to teach your children diligently. 80 or 90 points means you must be doing something right. 60 or 70 means you need to be a bit more diligent. 50 or below means you need to reread this article. Don't assume your children understand!

IF Jesus Was God...

- WHY did He have to be born as a human?
- WHY was He called the “Son of man”?
- HOW could He have been tempted to sin (Heb. 4:15)?
- DID He really have human nature?
- WHO was the “Father” to whom He referred (John 5:17)?
- WHO were His “brethren,” His “sisters” and His “mother” (Matt. 13:55-56)?

The spirit of antichrist is working in this world right now! Do you know what this spirit is and how to resist it? Who was Jesus Christ, what was His purpose and how did He accomplish it? These questions are all answered in our *new* reprint, “Is Jesus God?” It’s absolutely free.



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