

The

# Good News

*International Magazine of The Church of God*



INSIDE BLACK AFRICA

MARCH-APRIL 1972



## More About Our Cover...

*The continent of Africa is a land of many moods. Our photographer captures the sun's last rays as it settles behind the African bush, and as a family of farm laborers gathers around a fire to eat their evening meal. Two of God's ministers visited just such places on their baptizing tour of the "dark continent" last fall. Read about some of their experiences in the first installment of Mr. Jackson's diary.*

Ambassador College Photo

## What our READERS SAY...

### GOOD NEWS Really "Good News"

Each month you receive hundreds of letters from the readership of *The GOOD NEWS* saying, "I know this issue was written especially for me." Well, you may add *this* letter to that growing file of grateful readers. Thank you for the November-December GOOD NEWS!

Mr. Knowles, thank you for plunging into the very heart of my "prayer problem." Your succinct article about praying for the Work clearly defines my difficulty and gives workable solutions. And, Mr. Dart, your "Answers to Questions" section goes hand-in-hand with the article on prayer. It's so easy to become UNconcerned — UNinvolved — with the brethren in the Foreign Work and to lose the vision of Matt. 24:14. Hence, Mr. Sharp, your corrective article on "Indifference" was an ideal follow-up with inspired guidelines for restoring personal sacrifice and involvement in this end-time Work! Finally, Mr. Wilson's crisp metaphorical parable of our spiritual "Tide Bout" — giving much needed spiritual "coaching" to thousands — rounded out the truly inspired editorial content!

I was in Pasadena recently. I toured Ambassador Press, the editorial offices, art studios, bindery operations, and the mail rooms. I KNOW firsthand what a massive undertaking it is for all of you at headquarters to get this vital information into our hands — and MINDS. And we are grateful, not only to you, but to our Heavenly Father who is the *real source* of it all! With each issue of *The GOOD NEWS* we come closer to the profound realization that He is so cognizant, so alert, so aware of our individual spiritual needs that He directly inspires each new (and oh so timely) article. And that really IS "good news."

M. M., Battle Creek, Michigan

### Thanks for "Triple-header"

I want to pass on a few comments about the November-December issue of *The GOOD NEWS*. My heartfelt and grateful thank-yous to Mr. Knowles, Mr. Sharp and Mr. H. Wilson for the inspired "triple-header" they delivered in this issue. Never have three articles been more timely in my life!

Mr. Knowles helped me to have a deeper insight on how to be more effectual

in "How Should I Pray for the Work?"

Then examination of myself on the seven points that Mr. Sharp laid out in "The Sin of Indifference" caught me short several places and revealed some soiled edges in character, attitude and mental outlook. Thus — I'm scrubbing up!!!

Mr. H. Wilson's "Fight of the Century" was the clincher. It was the added incentive to "punch my way out" of the paper bag that I, somehow have gotten bundled up in. One sentence, especially concerning the three "uglies," really struck me — "They never plan to retire while you're alive!"

So, with all these things in mind, I intend to strive to not again become lax, in any way, no matter how slight — for it surely is a matter of life or death; and when or if I go down I want it to be fighting — NOT for the count!

Also, please thank Mr. Dart for the wonderful article on the Foreign Work. I hadn't realized that the PT and TW were reaching so many countries. Thank you also for the pictures of the directors and the areas they serve. Please pass on my thanks to these men and all who have a part in this wonderful magazine. It is a privilege to receive it!

Shirley R., Glen Burnie, Maryland

### Had the "Blahs"

I have just finished reading the latest issue of *The GOOD NEWS*. I found each article full of the knowledge I have been looking for and needed. I have been wondering (of late especially) how the Work is progressing worldwide, what exactly we were doing in Japan and its effect, and how our brethren in the Philippines are doing. Also I was wondering how to pray more for the Work and the ministers.

I have been guilty of the sin of indifference, only I didn't know quite what it was, so I called it the "blahs." Thanks to the article on this subject I now see the problem for what it is and know how to overcome it. I also understand more fully the fight we are all engaged in and how to "win."

Mrs. P. S., Albion, Michigan

Thank you for the November-December 1971 GOOD NEWS. Never has any one

(Continued on page 7)

# The Good News

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ministering to its members  
scattered abroad

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change in your address. Please include both old  
and new address. IMPORTANT!

# DIARY of the AFRICAN BAPTIZING TOUR

For the second consecutive year God has made it possible for a team of His ministers to tour Africa and reach those few people He is calling on the "dark continent." This year Mr. Harold Jackson and Mr. Robert Morton traveled twenty-five thousand miles, reaching the capitals of sixteen different countries throughout Africa and the Mediterranean!

Not all who requested visits, however, were contacted. In many places transport runs only weekly — maybe. Even letters take weeks, and sometimes months, to reach their destination. Some live hundreds of miles from the towns where they were to be met. And it takes a long time in Africa to save enough money to cover a journey of hundreds of miles and back.

Yet it is sobering to realize the great personal sacrifice some were willing to make in order to meet with two of Mr. Armstrong's representatives. Some even sold their possessions to raise enough money to make the journey to meet God's ministers.

In the following DIARY, Mr. Harold Jackson gives us a vivid, descriptive, picturesque and sobering account of the African baptizing tour.

by Harold L. Jackson

September 5, 1971:

**I** LEFT International Airport in Los Angeles for London, supposedly a polar flight, but aerial disaster of a previous flight a few days before caused a change in the flight path.

We crossed the United States to Detroit, then flew northeast across Canada, and after eleven hours in the air non-stop reached the British Isles and London Airport.

We became aware of trouble when the plane circled the field for twenty minutes after arrival. We were finally told we were going in. On landing the brakes seemed not to hold, but somehow we stopped. Fire engines were waiting and ran alongside the plane until we came to a stop. Then we were told we would await a tow-tractor to pull us into the terminal.

I left the plane, cleared customs and rushed to the home of Mr. Bob Morton. Then I made a hasty trip to the bank to change currency, and went on to Ambassador College at Bricket Wood for a brief tour before returning to the air-

port for our flight across the Channel to Paris.

September 7:

After staying in a side-street hotel in a room with seventeenth century furnishings and a pub below, we went out to the airport to await the flight to Douala, Camerouns.

I'd like to forget that stop except for the people we met. Accommodations were good, but service left much to be desired. Everyone it seemed was out to "take us."

On inquiring about a rent-a-car agency, we were told there was none. But as we sat down to eat at a sidewalk cafe the following morning, to our amazement we found ourselves staring at a rent-a-car sign directly across the street!

Five people met with us the first day, giving us a good start. Two were teachers. Next morning a married couple met us. He is an ecology professor at a wildlife reservation, with a master's degree, and she is an elementary school teacher. Upon learning that our next visitor was French-speaking, she volun-

teered to interpret for us if needed. Sure enough she was needed, and handled the situation very well. The prospective member turned out to be an industrial chemist in an aluminum plant.

September 10-17:

Off to Ghana and the capital city of Accra, a sprawling metropolis. We arrived at the airport, cleared customs and made necessary exchange in currency. This is a beautiful airport.

We went to the Continental Hotel where international flavor is strong. Then we spent the day touring the city, a mixture of ultramodern buildings amidst old dilapidated and deteriorated ones.

There are three major problems here: (1) economics, (2) health and welfare, and (3) education.

The gigantic indebtedness inherited from former regimes will burden the children's children of Accra.

Filth and squalor are a constant concern. A health inspector stated, "Dope, VD and leprosy run rampant throughout the city of Accra."

Between prospective member visits, we visited the Superintendent of the Ministry of Agriculture in Accra. One of our members works in his department. The Superintendent is a highly educated person and was curious to learn our business. He was in Oklahoma and Kansas last year, and liked our country very much. Also visiting him in his office was a local magistrate who gave me his number and asked me to correspond on my return to the states.

We also visited the Parliament House, enshrined in its pomp and dignity. The Prime Minister was not present, but everyone else was. After securing passes, we were ushered to a balcony where all can look down on the proceedings, which were much like those one sees in all governments — debates, lengthy speeches, but strict protocol.

Seventeen miles west of Accra, on the east side of a mountain range overlooking the city, stands the palatial residence of the Prime Minister of Ghana. Built by the former leader Kwame Nkrumah, it is an ever-present reminder of those days of lavish spending and good times and gargantuan economic mistakes. Still we could not but admire this beautiful edifice — a citadel of pomp and splendor. Guards dressed in red and black uniforms stood erect with rifles at attention, seeming to reflect the strict discipline of the mansion's occupant over those whom he governs.

September 11 was to be a big day. Mr. Morton had previously notified several in Nigeria of our inability to get visas, so they were asked to meet us in Accra. We had reserved a room for a Bible study and question and answer session. Others in the local area were also invited. We eagerly awaited their arrival, but none came. So while we waited, we spent the time learning something about the proverbs of that country.

Ghana is an interesting nation, with proverbs and Biblical slogans evidenced everywhere — on trucks, highways, clothing and what-have-you. There were nineteen figures similar to Egyptian hieroglyphics mounted atop scepters carved in a wall, each symbolic of a proverb or principle. We could not understand the significance of some, but we learned that the figures act out the

proverb. A man with a lighted cigar in mouth and a keg of gunpowder on his head meant: "A fool is as a fool does." Another one — a man with an egg falling from his hand — exemplified the principle that "Life is like an egg, when you die there is no more." Another — a man holding a snake's head firmly by the neck: "The snake or man is harmless when his head is controlled." Another — a proud and colorful parrot atop a scepter: "A new king — new laws." Unfortunately, we could not find the interpretation of them all.

After we had retired, near midnight, the desk clerk called to say that three men from Nigeria were in the lobby

desiring to see us. So we rolled out of bed, got dressed, and brought them up to our room for counseling.

We learned that eight had left together to come to see us. Four borders had to be crossed. Five of the eight turned back at the first border, having forgotten to bring the letter sent to them by Mr. Morton. Three continued by bus, though encountering many obstacles which would have discouraged most.

They could only travel during the day, because of robbers on the roads at night. Lodging in hotels, they were continually harassed by room bandits, who gained entrance by putting a small person through the transom. They also

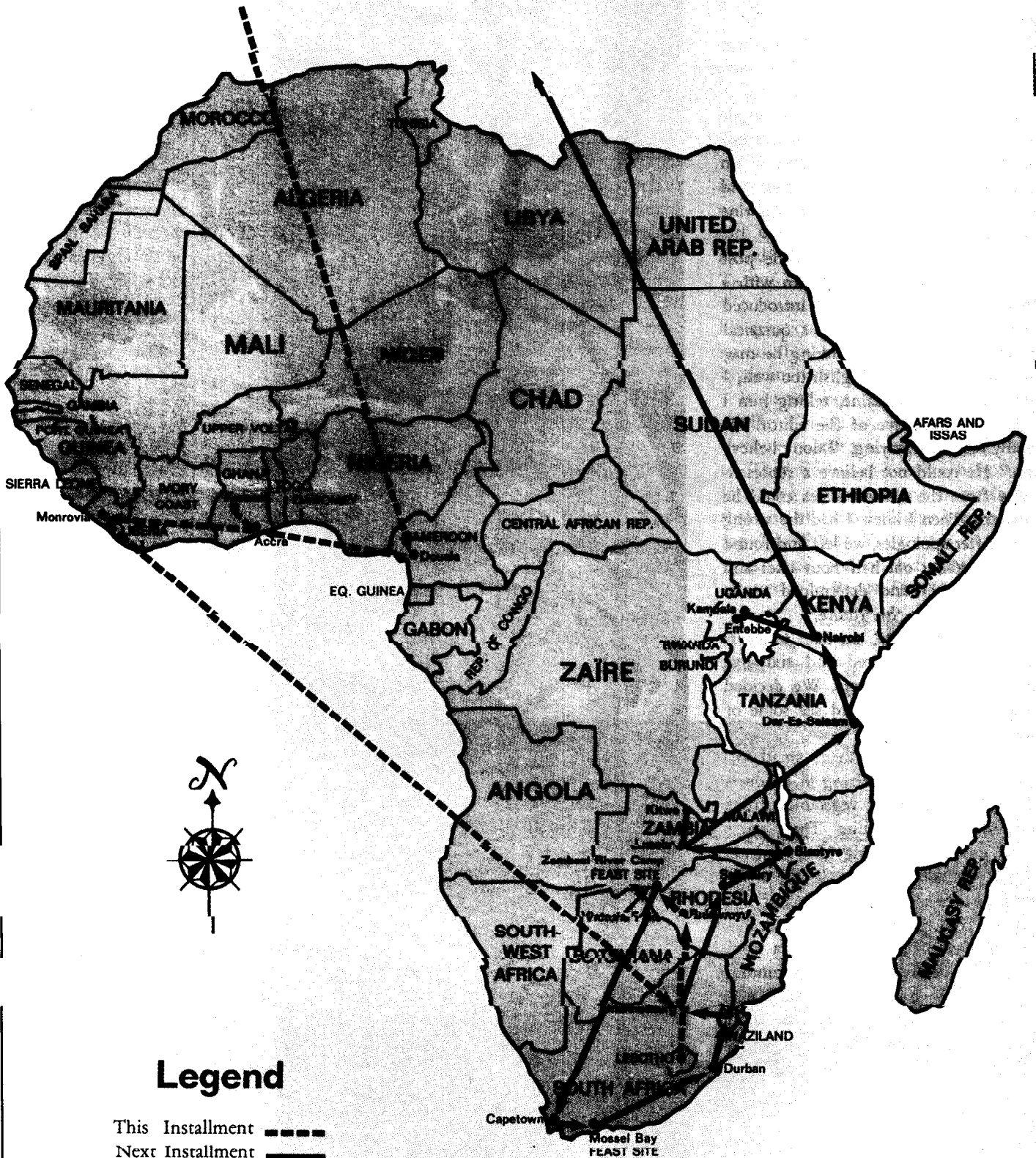
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**INTREPID TRIO** — Three zealous Nigerian school teachers surmounted many obstacles to reach Mr. Harold Jackson (second from left) in Accra, Ghana, to counsel about baptism.

Morton — Ambassador College



# ITINERARY OF AFRICAN TOUR



had immigration problems. Nigeria does not permit free crossing of its borders. It is reported that one must have a tax receipt showing that his taxes are paid to date before being permitted to leave the country.

But these three men were determined, and make it they did! The three were baptized. All three are teachers.

By letter we had arranged a simple way to recognize those who had asked for counsel: They were to meet us on the steps of the local post office, and were to have a PLAIN TRUTH magazine in hand as identification.

One morning I walked to the post office and, seeing a young man with a PLAIN TRUTH displayed, I introduced myself. But I received only a quizzical expression in return. Thinking he may not have understood English too well, I pointed to the magazine, telling him I was a representative of the editor. He finally recovered, saying, "I don't believe you." He could not believe a representative from the United States could be in Accra. Then I knew I had the wrong man. After apologies, we left and found our man about one-half hour later and departed wiser and determined to be more cautious in the future.

On September 17, we had to go to Kumasi, some hundred and sixty-five miles northwest of Accra. We decided to go by car so we could see some of the villages en route.

We passed through many small villages, each one specializing in products of some kind, such as vegetables, fruits and meats for marketing. Their wares were on display along the roadside. Others included colorful locally hand-woven baskets, artwork and pottery.

Their colorful dress was very attractive. Women's hair styles were a work of art, braided in long braids running from front to back, and wrapped with hair instead of strings. Others had short braids about two inches in length, standing straight up from the head and wrapped in an unusual pattern or embossed design.

Villages generally are families grouped together under one leader who has formed a governing body to assist him, composed mainly of the more prosperous men. There is a communal life to which all contribute and all benefit.



Above, Kilburn; right, Jackson — Ambassador College  
Above: Rhodesian lady cheerfully displays her market produce for photographer. Right: Proverbs and slogans are seen on vehicles and other places throughout the country of Ghana.

The laws are highly respected. The people also recognize the authority of their leaders, as they are taught from childhood, and see the example of their elders.

In religion, which plays a major part in village life, Christo-pagan tribal customs predominate. The mixture is quite apparent in black Africa, although there are strong ties with the major denominations who have sent missionaries into the area.

The laws of marriage are of long standing. For example, parents promise their eight or nine-year-old daughter to a teen-age boy, and he will wait for her until she becomes of age, or until he has the price of her dowry. Then, according to custom, he can claim her. However, in many cases he selects another girl with whom he lives until the one promised develops into womanhood. Then he makes the change.

On arriving at Kumasi, we found it smaller than Accra, but more up to date. It has wider streets, shopping centers are much cleaner and more inviting, and we found the people more friendly and more direct in a positive way.

One man was baptized there — he was deaf, so we had to write out whatever we wanted to say and what we were going to do and place it before him to read. After he understood what

we were asking him, he would nod his approval, then we would proceed to the next sentence. This process was continued until he fully understood; then he was baptized.

We look forward to more baptisms in Kumasi next year.

We later baptized a woman in her seventies who could neither speak nor understand English. Her nephew, a baptized young man age 22, had to interpret for her. We would tell him what to ask her, and he would speak to her in her dialect and she would answer, after which he would interpret. She was in a hurry to be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, wanting to ban the preliminaries and get on with the job! I believe these people are more zealous in a way because they have to go through much more than we do, even for the simplest things of life.

Fortunately, this woman is able to read the Bible in her native tongue, and her nephew translates articles and booklets for her.

September 19:

Back once more in Accra, we had a number of people scheduled to see us at 8:00 a.m. They began arriving shortly afterward for a question and answer period, after which those desiring to be counseled for baptism were counseled privately.

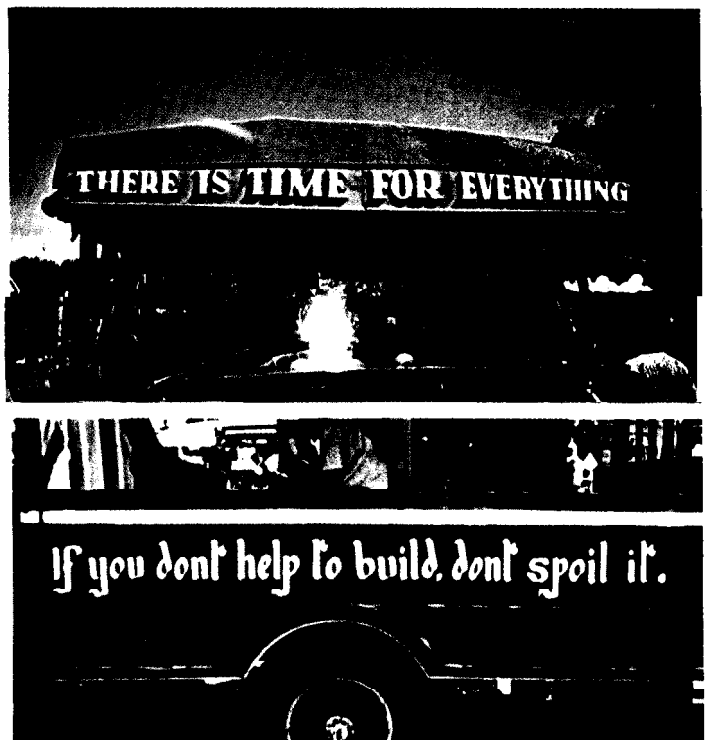
After about two hours, we called an intermission. Shortly after we had reconvened in the large room, the door opened, but I could not see who came in. However, about twenty minutes later, as we finished answering questions on the Sabbath and Holy Days, the armed policeman who normally guards the bank upstairs stepped from seclusion in the shadows of the door and walked out.

Later, when the meeting broke up, he took the first opportunity to engage us in conversation, and asked: "What sort of meeting is this? Can anybody attend? You mentioned *The PLAIN TRUTH* — are you representatives?" We smiled and did our best to answer his questions in a way that would raise no hostility, praying God would give us favor in his eyes.

It turned out that he had been receiving *The PLAIN TRUTH* for nearly three years and was very happy to meet us. Then we had quite a laugh, because in talking to those serving us, we found that one of them had also been receiving *The PLAIN TRUTH* for over two years. And one of his relatives had referred *The PLAIN TRUTH* to him.

September 20 — The Feast of Trumpets:

We spent the Feast of Trumpets quietly studying, and discussing the people with whom we had visited,







Kilburn — Ambassador College

# Faces of Africa

evaluating their situations and trying to determine the future course of growth and development of these people. Their plight is a most unusual one — what with Christo-paganism and heathenistic tribal customs. The African that God calls today is one who has been exposed to opportunities not generally accessible to the majority of his fellowmen.

After sundown we went down to have dinner in the beautiful dining room of our hotel. After a light meal, we retired for the evening.

## September 21:

On to Monrovia, Liberia. A curving peninsular shore of the South Atlantic provides a beautiful, breath-taking location for the city.

Liberia's late president, Mr. Tubman, had died in July. The city was still in mourning. His policies, which invited foreign investments, had stimulated the economy. This was well illustrated by the hotel in which we stayed. It was beautiful, a one and one-half million dollar super establishment built on the

highest point in the city. Providing its daily services creates regular income for many of the local people.

However, not three hundred yards away, between the hotel and the clear sandy beach, are wood and tin shacks — hovels — housing the poor of the city. Taxis cruise the area, picking up and discharging passengers between the hotel and the shacks.

## September 22:

We felt some apprehension about the next leg of our trip — Johannesburg, Union of South Africa. We knew of the *apartheid* system which has called forth much adverse criticism, both national and international. A black man from another country was hardly wanted! But we had an assignment, a visa had been secured, and well-formulated plans were in action on our arrival.

The flight took ten and one-half hours. We were very tired when we arrived about 9:00 p.m. Immigration authorities, as we expected, took about

twenty minutes to check my visa.

Everything being in order, we asked to extend our stay about two weeks, for we wished to take some side trips. I was told to go to the local police station for this service. We traveled to Germiston not far from Johannesburg and received favor from the police sergeant, who accorded us a stay for one month. I had to send my visa to Pretoria for confirmation. But I was given a receipt for the visa and papers stating the circumstances, also the assurance that I could 'travel' throughout the Republic without any trouble.

But in the meantime we made a trip to Lesotho. Lesotho is a black-ruled country, one of two located inside the larger country of South Africa. Upon returning to the border of South Africa, as you may guess, I could not get back across, being without the visa itself. Apologies were given, but no exception was made. Finally, we induced them to send a telex message to confirm what I said, and after a three and one-half hour delay, I was re-admitted.



One gets a bleak picture and feels completely forsaken when cut off from all outside communications. However, we knew all would work out and it did.

When we had first checked into the beautiful Intercontinental Hotel in Johannesburg, there had been some raised eyebrows. After a good night's rest, we went down the next morning to the dining room for breakfast. Immediately as I entered the door, three blacks rushed up with the obvious intention of putting me out. The assistant manager, sitting at a table a short distance away, rushed from his seat to my aid, and assured them I could enter. There were puzzled faces at the tables, but an International Hotel is intended to accommodate *all* peoples of *all* races.

After order was restored, we got our meal. While eating I suggested that the management instruct the employees that blacks coming into the hotel should be accorded the same treatment as others. And to please inform them of my residence there. I was assured that would be done. We proceeded back to our room feeling better in one way, but worse in another.

On the trip to Lesotho, I was accompanied by Mr. Sydney Hull, head of the mailing department of Ambassador College Agency in Johannesburg. He was reared in this country. We had a visit with the Minister of Education, and he told us about the country's economic and commercial interests and its residential areas.

We made an appointment to see the Prime Minister about three o'clock that afternoon. But because he had not returned, we were ushered in to see the Minister of Education, who spoke with us until the Prime Minister arrived about forty-five minutes later.

The Prime Minister was very tired, so we only stayed one-half hour. He told us that Lesotho is friendly with South Africa, whereas the other black countries are not. Since Lesotho is located completely within the boundaries of South Africa, there is extensive trade between the two countries. We discussed various other aspects of government, and the relationship of Lesotho with the other black nations. Both ministers stated their desires to receive *The PLAIN TRUTH* and the Prime Minister re-

quested a copy of the *ENVOY*, but we did not have one to present at the time.

The Prime Minister made an appointment to see us again. He was very congenial, a wise man, one who knows his country well. He is aware of its potential, yet at the same time, he recognizes that education is a very essential thing for his people.

September 29 — The Day of Atonement:

Mr. Fahey, the head of our South African office in Johannesburg, had arranged a meeting with all our blacks in the Johannesburg area for the afternoon of the Day of Atonement. We had rented a conference room on the main floor of the hotel and facilities were set up to conduct a study.

By about 1:00 p.m. everyone had arrived. Since this was my first meeting with blacks of South Africa, the one thing that struck me was their shyness. Soft voices and a sincere humility struck me as being very extraordinary. Then I realized they were awed by *my* presence!

After introductions, the first question asked was concerning the welfare of the American blacks. Their interest runs high, but after a short time I realized they were laboring under a misconception of long standing. They were judging all foreign blacks by the standards of the American black *entertainers* booked in the country.

Their enthusiasm was so great that they kept us until 6:00 p.m. They were indeed thirsty for the Word of God! Answers were given to the many questions that they had. They all were deeply grateful for the service that we were able to render.

After a dinner held that evening for all the area ministers and their wives, we all retired to the suite of Mr. Gerald Waterhouse to discuss the various Feast sites to which we would be going. We all departed the following morning.

I met Mr. Russel Johnson, our minister in Salisbury, at the airport. We flew to Bulawayo, Rhodesia, arriving at 12:30 p.m., secured a car and proceeded to drive 275 miles to Victoria Falls, the Zambezi River camp site for the first Feast of Tabernacles in Rhodesian history!

(to be continued)

## Reader's Say . . .

(Continued from inside front cover)

of *The GOOD NEWS* magazines we've received in the past (that I recall) been so strong and helpful in personal overcoming and praying for this Work. I sat down to read it, deciding to mark the "important" points in each article in red. When I finished it looked like I'd painted EVERY page!

Mr. & Mrs. N. F.,  
Long Beach, Calif.

### Answered Their Questions

I haven't ever written in about *The GOOD NEWS* magazine before, but this time I really felt I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the November-December issue.

The whole issue was fantastic, but I wanted to say thank you for the article on the Foreign Work by Mr. Dart. We really don't get to hear much in this area and I learned a lot and hope you continue it. Also would like something on what's happening at Headquarters. Things like this really make us feel a closer part in God's Work.

Louis A., Affton, Missouri

For the time in which I have been associated with this great Work, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that God is using this Work mightily to carry forth His Gospel of truth to the world. I am indeed privileged to be associated with the very Work of God. Thank you so very much for informing us of the tremendous scope of the Foreign Work in the last issue of *The GOOD NEWS*. It really revealed the extent to which God's Gospel is going to the world.

Mr. G. H., Bronx, New York

I want to thank you for the last issue of *The GOOD NEWS*. It was really an answer to my prayer to learn more about the Work and how to pray more effectively. I didn't realize the vastness of our magazine circulation and to what extent they reached the world. Thank you so much.

Laurie L.,  
Santa Barbara, Calif.

The latest *GOOD NEWS* is the best yet. Would like to see an article like the one by Mr. Dart in every issue. I had wondered about many of those things.

Mrs. L. N., Panama City, Florida

### "Fight of the Century"

I would like to comment on a particular article in the November-December issue of *The GOOD NEWS*. The article, "Fight of the Century," by Hugh E. Wilson was extremely vivid, and I especially like the way it was written. I have heard Mr. Wilson give a sermon at Sabbath services and as I read this article, I could almost hear him giving it. I certainly can apply this article to my life because it was a real "eye-opener." The comparisons in this article were fantastic and let me add — I've read the article three times!

Mary S., Augusta, Georgia

# False Religion— CURSE of BLACK AFRICA

by Robert C. Morron

THE greatest SINGLE factor that holds much of black Africa back is *false religion*. False religion is the major cause of Africa's problems, even as it is the cause of *most* of the world's problems today.

The Bantus (the black Africans south of the Sudan) worship two things: Their gods and their ancestors. All their gods, except two, are regarded as evil and are usually pictured as white. Thus the Bantus believed the white men were gods when they landed in Africa. Even in modern times, one South African tribe worshipped the Prime Minister! And in many areas whites are *still* considered to be gods, illustrating the pitiful ignorance of many of these people.

What accounts for such gross misconceptions? False religion and false education. For the African Bantu a god had at least two prerogatives: First, innovation and, second, beauty.

Only the gods could invent anything new. Said one author, himself a Bantu from Natal of the Zulu tribe: "Their [the Bantus'] creed is, and always has been, as rigidly inflexible as the shaft of the lance; it demands blind, unquestioning obedience, and its influence extends to all fields of human action. It is also a religion which resists change of any sort, especially to itself.

"One of the chief tenets of this faith is that any man or woman who tries to invent something new is assuming powers that only God can possess. Such inventions must be destroyed no matter how useful they might be to the community, as they breed irreverence for the holy creations of God, and encourage spiritual pride in their inventors and users" (Credo Vusa'mazulu Mutwa, *My People*, p. 177).



"It was this stubborn resistance to new ideas which caused the ancient Bantu to kill men and women who dared invent things that could have made their life less rigorous" (*ibid.*, p. 108).

So only the gods (which seems to include the white man in some cases) have the prerogative of inventing new things! As a result African society remained extremely primitive until the whites arrived. "... the Bantu depended on alien invaders to show them, first, how to use firearms... when the Portuguese arrived in our country only a matter of seven hundred years ago, we had still not discovered the wheel. It certainly cannot be denied that the Bantu have shown little mechanical ability" (*ibid.*, p. 173).

The second prerogative of the gods—beauty—likewise had great influence on the life of the Bantu. For centuries the Western world has believed that deep scarring, which can sometimes cover the entire torso, was the African's attempt to make the body more beautiful. In actual fact, the opposite is the case. Only the gods could be beautiful and, tragically, in order not to appear to be in competition with the gods, African tribes in some areas deliberately horribly disfigure their bodies so no one will ever think them beautiful.

There is yet another reason for some disfigurements. Some tribes put discs in the upper and lower lips of their women. These discs can sometimes be as wide as the span of a man's hand or even more. The reason for this is that the Arab slave traders considered the women in these tribes particularly beautiful. After the tribes began disfiguring their women in this way, the slave traders didn't bother them anymore.

### Ancestor Worship

The African system of ancestor worship covers two main fields. First, many believe in a continuous cycle of reincarnation of the "soul" from grass to trees, then to reptiles, birds and, finally, to the stars—then back again.

Special tribal markings (in addition to those designed deliberately to disfigure) are deeply rooted in this belief. It is essential that a "soul" be able to recognize the tribe it once belonged to,

because for the "soul" of a great leader or chief to be reincarnated into an enemy tribe would be disastrous!

The second aspect of ancestor worship is the "feeding" of the spirits of the dead. Once the individual has died and the "soul" has passed on into a reptile (a supposedly "higher" form of life) his "spirit" lives on, always hovering around the tribe, and can be consulted through a medium for advice or to intercede with the gods on behalf of the tribe. However, these "spirits" must be fed, because no "food" exists in the spirit world. Without regular sacrifices to their dead ancestors, the Bantu believe the spirits of the dead would cease to exist and the tribe itself would die out.

Ancestor worship causes one of Africa's most serious problems—the ever-burgeoning population. The Bantu believes his highest duty is to beget children, that he merely lives "to link his ancestors with his descendants." The begetting of children is not only a moral obligation, it is the means of eternal survival. You can never convince a Bantu to use birth control methods when he believes he must beget enough descendants to "feed" his spirit after his death.

For this reason, polygamy is rife in Africa. The king of Swaziland has more than 50 wives! One man from Nigeria told me his father has fourteen wives and he himself has fifty-three brothers and sisters. For a man to have one hundred children is not unusual, and for a woman to give birth to twenty children is considered to be a great honor in the fulfillment of her duty toward her tribe and her dead ancestors.

Socially, ancestor worship keeps the tribe together. No tribal member wants to be too far from or to lose contact with his ancestors. To be ostracized by one's tribe not only can mean losing one's physical livelihood and home—it can mean death forever according to their religion.

Another major aspect of tribalism and ancestor worship is the unwritten law of revenge. If someone in your tribe or family (or even race in some cases) is murdered, you and your descendants must not rest until the crime has been avenged. For this reason, blood feuds

rage all over Africa: Zulus feud with Basutus in South Africa; Zulus fight Shanganes in Portuguese East Africa—this feud has raged for over one hundred years. The Baluba have been settling old scores with their neighbors for nearly six hundred years. In Kenya, a revenge war between the Masai and the Wakambi is in its tenth century. The Bahutu-Watutsi feud, which resulted in the deaths of about one hundred thousand Watutsis in 1963, has been going on for over one thousand years!

During the slave raids into the Congo, writes Vusa'mazulu Mutwa, Zulu witch-doctor, a small figure of a human being in chains was carved for every man, woman and child taken into slavery. These in turn have been passed down from generation to generation as a reminder of the score to be settled. By these figures every growing child is made to swear an oath of revenge for the lives of fellow tribe members.

Clearly, it is impossible for peace, prosperity and real progress to come to black Africa as long as false religion shackles the ignorant masses. Such peoples are the unhappy victims of circumstance—born into the wrong religion and taught superstition from childhood.

They, as well as all others who have not had their eyes opened to God's truth, are "destroyed [margin, cut off] for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6). As Paul wrote to the ancient Romans of his time, we could say of black Africa as well: "Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the WAY OF PEACE have they not known" (Rom. 3:16-17). They need the knowledge of God's Law, which would free them (James 2:12). They desperately need an opportunity to learn the truth which will make them "free" (John 8:32).

We can all be thankful that soon the shackles of superstition and ignorance will be loosened, the bonds of false religion will be snapped—that Christ will soon return and rescue the impoverished Bantu and all peoples of Africa from the curse of false religion. Soon "...the earth shall be[come] FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). Dark superstition and ignorance all over the world will be replaced by the shining light of God's truth. □

# in South Africa

*Many have wondered what is transpiring in the Work of God in South Africa. Here is a report from our Regional Director.*

by Robert E. Fahey



Johannesburg, South Africa  
Kirch — Ambassador College

### Johannesburg, South Africa

**M**OST people think of Africa as a land of steaming jungles, vine-bedecked trees, weird wild animals, black men beating drums and white men only on safari. Some of that picture does exist — but not in the Republic of South Africa! South Africa is as modern as today, with high-rise cities, burgeoning industries, plush restaurants, motorways — and traffic congestion enough to do any British or American city proud!

And — *God* is working here!

### A Wealthy Nation

South Africa is a wealthy country. Three-quarters of the free world's gold output comes from beneath South African ground. The world's largest reserves of platinum are also found in South Africa — in 1969 she mined two-thirds of the world's supply. South Africa also possesses three-quarters of the world's known chromium reserves and one-third of the world's known uranium reserves.

In 1970, she unearthed 7.7 million carats of diamonds — 20 percent of the world's total. The Congo produced slightly more, but 40 percent of South Africa's diamond production was gem quality, compared to only 3 percent of the Congo's. Added to this, South Africa mines coal, iron ore, manganese, antimony, zinc, vanadium and copper.

South Africa sits midway on the Cape route from the Far East to Europe (see map on page 3), a location of vastly increased importance since the Suez Canal was blocked in 1967. Presently, 2,270 ships pass by the Cape of Good Hope every month — 75 every day.

All these factors combined have made South Africa far wealthier than most realize. And the whites are not the only ones to enjoy it. South African blacks have the highest average annual income and are the best educated in Africa. Although much remains to be done, black progress has been much greater than is generally realized.

### "The Work" In South Africa

Radio Lourenço Marques, located just across the border in the tip of Moçambique, has carried the WORLD

TOMORROW radio program since the early 1950s. For the first several years, listeners were advised to send their letters to our office in London, England. But as the volume of mail began to increase, it became obvious we should have an office in South Africa.

This office was opened by Mr. Gerald Waterhouse in March 1963. The location chosen was Johannesburg (population: 1,364,000), largest city in the Republic. Later developments have shown that the choice of this site for our office was correct, since most of the responses to the broadcast and the business contacts necessary to carry on the Work required us to be near this industrial and financial hub of South Africa.

"Jo'burg" is a city set on a hill — perched on the Witwatersrand (or simply "the Rand") 6,200 feet above sea level, an area about fifty-six miles long and sixteen miles wide which rises out of the surrounding hills of the Transvaal.

Mr. Waterhouse set up the basic pattern of the Johannesburg office, following the example of the systems used in Pasadena. He also acquired our present mailing address, Box 1060, Johannesburg.

In late 1965, Mr. Waterhouse, an American citizen, left South Africa because of visa difficulties. At his departure Mr. Ernest Williams, a South African citizen and graduate of Ambassador College, California, was put in charge. He served four years in this capacity.

In August 1969, Mr. Williams was transferred to the Ambassador College faculty in Big Sandy, and I was sent from Melbourne, Australia to supervise the office in Johannesburg. Before leaving Australia, I was granted a one year's business visa in South Africa. I have since been granted a permanent residence visa, but still retain my American citizenship and travel on an American passport.

### Steady Growth

Over a period of eight and one-half years, "steady growth" sums up the Work of God in South Africa.

In addition to broadcasting over Radio Lourenço Marques, in 1965 we

began advertising in nationwide magazines. Many responded to these ads, requesting Ambassador College literature. This, of course, resulted in the necessity of hiring additional staff to help cope with the additional mail, typing, posting operations and personal contact with those who requested it. It also necessitated a change of offices to the present quarters in the Netherlands Insurance Building on North Eloff Street.

As time went on, we expanded our ads to various national media, including national newspapers. This campaign has proved very successful. Today we are using regional newspapers throughout South Africa. Our staff of fifteen is kept busy, catching up on the backlog of mail resulting from the regional advertisements.

The Work in South Africa has been built largely as a result of the printed word in the form of ads. South Africans of all races have responded to them and many have gone further in desiring to help others in receiving the vital knowledge they themselves have found profitable.

Presently, the 54,000 PLAIN TRUTH and the 22,000 TOMORROW'S WORLD magazines distributed in South Africa are printed and posted from our plant in Radlett, England. Our other literature is printed overseas also, but then shipped to us, and posted directly from Johannesburg.

The Johannesburg office serves not only South Africa, but also Rhodesia. We have recently sent an Ambassador College graduate, Mr. Russell Johnson, to process the mail in that country. We also handle the mail from Southwest Africa, Moçambique, the black states of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Swaziland, as well as from the island of Mauritius over 2,000 miles east of Jo'burg in the Indian Ocean.

### Some of the Problems

One problem we have is language. South Africa itself has two *official* languages, English and Afrikaans. The latter is used mostly by the descendants of Dutch settlers who first arrived in South Africa in 1652. We now advertise in both languages. The Bantu have several tongues as well,



though most speak English or Afrikaans.

Mr. Dan Botha, representing Ambassador College in the Durban area, speaks three languages: English, Afrikaans and Zulu! He would be a hard man to replace since he uses these three languages in visiting!

Mauritians speak French and English, but they prefer a mixture of the two, called Creole, that has been influenced by a variety of Eastern languages as well. Mr. Johnson, our representative in Rhodesia, also speaks French, so he is able to help in Mauritius when needed.

A growing number of Rhodesians and South Africans see the value of the spiritual knowledge disseminated by Ambassador College. Many have contributed financially to help others receive this same priceless knowledge, to the extent that the South African office is able to pay all of its own operating expenses.

Although we *can afford* it, we are not allowed to pay completely for the literature that we receive from overseas, because of government regulations on currency exchanges. But we are able to pay for our full-color, double-page ads in the South African edition of *Reader's Digest*, and all other ads run in South Africa, as well as for all our broadcast time on Radio Lourenço Marques. We were able to pick up most of the tab when Mr. Ted Armstrong and the television crew came to South Africa to do the three programs on Rhodesia. Travel costs for the African baptizing tour, covering many East and West African nations, were also met by the South African office.

Most important of all, people of all races in Southern Africa are coming to find THE WAY to peace and harmony, THE WAY that most people in the world are so far from today. And that's what the Work of God and Ambassador College are all about — helping people, *all people*, find THE WAY! □

Kirch — Ambassador College

#### **OUR OFFICE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The Netherlands Insurance Building in Johannesburg (just below inset photo of our Regional Director, Mr. Robert Fahey) houses our staff of fifteen employees who are helping to carry on God's Work in Southern Africa.

# SPIRITUAL “Thalidomide”

**There is a potent spiritual “drug” with horrible effects. It can warp, twist and DESTROY your spiritual life! That drug is SIN. God’s people need to realize the DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF ALL SIN — especially as the Days of Unleavened Bread draw near!**

by Keith Crouch

**M**ANY of us don’t really grasp the all-encompassing seriousness of all that God calls *sin*. It’s easy for us, even in God’s Church, to fall into the error of thinking “little sins” are not all that bad. It’s easy to become calloused as the result of contact with the prevailing attitude of a society indifferent to God’s way, in rebellion toward God’s Laws.

Each sin has a cumulative effect, weakening and stunting one’s spiritual growth. Each time we sin, it becomes a little bit easier to sin the next time — especially if we fail to repent deeply. Very soon we can become hardened to a particular sin, begin to think nothing of committing it again, and become lulled into a feeling of comfortable co-existence with it — forgetting the devastating effects of all sin!

## From Embryo to Baby

The cumulative effect of sin on our spiritual development can be well visualized in terms of the analogy God uses — comparing our spiritual life as a *Christian to the bagatta* and growth of a human baby.

A tiny human embryo grows from an unbelievably small cell into a wonderfully organized, expertly designed baby, looking in most every respect like its parents. Similarly, on the spiritual plane, we also develop from a small beginning, with the potential to be born into God’s Family as His spiritual sons — in the image of our spiritual Father!

Have you seen, or ever been, an expectant father? Remember the excitement, the thrill, the exhilarating antici-

pation of the imminent birth of an heir?

Our God is an expectant Father. He is anticipating our spiritual birth into His family-kingdom. He also is excited.

One of the primary concerns of a human father at his child’s birth is the question of deformity. Expectant parents wonder, “will our child be a whole, perfect, well-formed baby?” When the child is born most parents carefully check to see that all fingers, toes, etc. are there. For a growing number will come the anguished discovery of a physical lack or deformity!

Every year a quarter million babies, in the United States alone, are born with abnormalities which may range from slight to such gross malformations as the flipper-like appendages instead of arms of the so-called “thalidomide babies.”

Some abnormalities in newborn children appear to be hereditary. But many must be attributed to adverse factors in their prenatal environment, which interfered with the execution of an otherwise perfectly designed plan of development. Many deformities are clearly the result of the prenatal influence of DRUGS. And thalidomide is just one example.

The tiny developing fetus is well protected against extremes of heat and cold, and buffered against physical injury. But it is totally dependent for food, water, minerals and vitamins found in the body of its mother.

If the mother carelessly or ignorantly fails to provide the essential amino acids, vitamins, or even iron, in her diet,

abnormal development could result. On the other hand, the blood stream may also permit harmful — even poisonous substances, including drugs, to pass through the placenta, drastically affecting the unborn child. The poisoning effects of such factors can dramatically alter the development of the embryo, producing the horrifying, twisted results so many anguished parents are experiencing today.

## The Spiritually Begotten Child

As God’s spiritually begotten children, we are also subject to external influences which — if we allow them — will definitely have a deforming effect on us spiritually. But God is eagerly expecting and awaiting the birth of spiritually *perfect* sons. “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect [that is, grow into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity]” (Matt. 5:48, *Amplified Bible*). It is our job to *become perfect* God’s way.

The big difference between a physical embryo and an unborn spiritual child of God, is that the spiritual child has the ability to *determine its own development* — while a physical embryo is completely subject to its environment. It cannot choose and determine whether deleterious substances will reach it through the blood stream. It has no opportunity to act or counteract — no knowledge, wisdom or decision-making ability. The physical embryo has no control over its end result. But despite the fact that we are spiritually yet un-



born, we do have, as begotten sons of God, the ability (if we will) to shape our pre-birth development, and *personally* determine the external influences that mold us.

We are dealing now, not with the physical formation of limbs and organs, but with the spiritual formation of *character*. God intends that we *grow* in mind and character — that we mature in godliness. This is a *responsibility* God has given us as His spiritually begotten sons.

However, brethren, there is a tremendous power working through a myriad of external sources to ensnare and trap us. Satan has seduced and deceived all humanity (Rev. 12:9). In these end times there is nothing he enjoys more than to get into his clutches a potential son of God, and to bend, twist, pervert and DEFORM him!

### The Deforming Effects of SIN!

*Sin deforms!*

If we allow ourselves to sin and to become increasingly indifferent to God's commands, then we contribute to a spiritual deformity.

If physical parents are horrified at deformities in their children, what about God? God's family is eternal. His mercy and justice will not allow spiritual *mistakes* in that family who would be an eternal liability — both to themselves or to others. Those who allow themselves to be twisted and perverted into spiritual "monsters" are simply not going to be born into that family! They will be spiritual miscarriages.

In Revelation 21:7-8, God explains that the *overcomers* will be His sons, but the defectives will be annihilated for all eternity: "He who is *victorious* shall in-

herit all these things, and I will be God to him and he shall be My son. But as for the cowards and the ignoble and the contemptible and the cravenly lacking in courage and the cowardly submissive; and as for the unbelieving and faithless; and as for the *depraved* and *defiled with abominations*; and as for murderers and the lewd and adulterous and the practitioners of magic arts and the idolaters [those who gave supreme devotion to anyone or anything other than God] and all *liars* [those who knowingly convey untruth by word or deed, all of these shall have] their part in the lake that blazes with fire and brimstone. This is the second death" (*Amplified Bible*).

This is the long-term effect of sin. But do we keep the long-term effect in mind continually?

As members of God's Church, God has given us the understanding of how best to shape our developing spiritual lives to resist Satan's wiles and not be plunged into even "little sins" with their spiritually deforming results. God has lovingly given us His royal law to protect us against the destructive external influences that can so readily twist us out of shape by poisoning our minds. But it is so *easy* to allow one sin after another to pervert us, in spite of God's warning that "the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them" (Prov. 11:3).

The harm and heartache of deformed children is only too real when presented to us in the tangible form of grotesquely malformed limbs and flesh. Regrettably, the impact does not seem as great when we think in spiritual terms.

For God's people, however, the impact *should* be even greater!

### Guard Your Mind

James was inspired of God to write: "Every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desire [lust, passions]. Then the evil desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully matured brings forth death" (James 1:14-15, *Amplified Bible*).

There is a plain warning! Our minds are subject to enticement through evil desire. The sin which begins in our minds, unless resisted, can lead to our *death*.

And don't kid yourself! God's people are not immune to the barrage of





Wide World Photos

**"THALIDOMIDE BABIES"** — Nearly ten years ago, thousands of deformed babies were born to European mothers who had taken a tranquilizer-type drug called "thalidomide." On opposite page, armless sixteen-month-old boy picks up toys with his feet. Above, three-year-old armless girl learns to use power-driven artificial arms.

influences from society that daily pummels our minds. You have human nature. You have desires. These pulls and passions, under Satanic worldly influence, will lead you if you give them the slightest leeway. If you refuse to realize that you *can* sin, and neglect to guard against it, then you're on the threshold of trouble — and the fate of a spiritual simpleton.

Your mind is priceless! Combined with God's Spirit, it becomes the embryonic beginning of a unique, eternal,

spirit being in God's family. You have the power to direct that mind, to open or close its doors to whatever you will. Is your mind guarded in a manner befitting the priceless treasure it is? "Keep thy heart [mind] with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

#### "As It Was In The Days of Noah"

It takes an urgent, strong, driving effort to control your mind — it is not

easy. At this time, of all times, our minds need diligent, wholehearted persistent protection.

In the days of Noah, God saw "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination and intention of all human thinking was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5, *Amplified Bible*). Our day, again — as prophesied (Matt. 24:37-39) — is just such a time when the human mind, as an instrument capable of conceiving and communicating unimaginable torrents of totally demented Satanic filth, is giving itself over to such. Society is being inundated and saturated with it. Precious little can be labeled "godly." Stealing, lying, cheating, hating, violence and all types of sexual looseness are condoned. People say what they like, write what they like and do what they like.

This is just what Satan wants. He knows that once sin has started to deform a mind, its hold is so tenacious, its call so appealing, its short-term "benefits" and attractions so exciting, that even a once-converted mind can *rapidly degenerate* into the mire of this world and lose all concern for a God-plane relationship and eternal future with our Creator!

"The wicked man is doomed by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him" (Prov. 5:23, *Living Psalms and Proverbs*). To the mind devoid of God's judgment, stolen waters are the sweetest (Prov. 9:17). There is an illicit attraction in things known to be wrong, yet appearing to be pleasing or thrilling.

#### God's Law Protects

By their actions, words and thoughts, some in God's Church appear to be saying they *want* to become twisted, deformed spiritual embryos. But how ironic. The very ones who seek the thrills, the "fun," the kicks, are the ones who receive the kick-backs, the headaches, the "mornings after the nights before." **THEY REAP THE PENALTY FOR GOING THE WRONG WAY!**

As our spiritual Father, God has wrapped us in a protective environment delineated by His Law. As a spiritual parent He is concerned about keeping us from all harm, wrong emotions,

degenerative tendencies. David thrilled to this knowledge of God's Law:

"The law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are *right*, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is *pure*, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is *clean*, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are *true* and righteous *altogether*. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant *warned*: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Ps. 19:7-11).

God's laws, revealed to us in their spiritual intent, provide us with an effective Early Warning System. Written in our minds, they clearly delineate the limits of right and wrong, and cry out a warning when we carelessly get too close to the edge!

How concerned most of us are when we have a physical unborn baby to protect and nourish! How industriously and thoughtfully we restrict the intake of anything that may be even remotely harmful. How particular we are about observing all the rules and regulations designed for the protection and healthy development of that tiny child.

But when it comes to the protection and care of ourselves as unborn spiritual babies, is there the same diligent caution?

### DO YOU REALLY HATE Sin?

God *hates* evil because He realizes its deforming effects on our spiritual character. If we are to remain unmarred by the evil influences gripping this society, we too must *hate* the wrong and flee its clutches.

If we are close to God we will hate what God hates. We will be developing the mind and attitude of our Father. "If anyone respects and fears God, he will hate evil. For wisdom hates pride, arrogance, corruption and deceit of every kind" (Prov. 8:13, *Living Psalms and Proverbs*). But do you, as a member of God's Church, have such awe and fear of God, and consequently such hate and

abhorrence of all evil ways and influences?

Or are you easily tempted, easily attracted by that which you *know* is wrong, yet somehow just can't resist? Have you found that certain things you would not have done earlier in your Christian life don't appear so bad now? Have you gradually come to feel that gossip, lust, coveting, lying and other "little sins" aren't too bad after all?

If you *have* so foolishly tolerated such permissiveness and complacency in your Christian life, then **WAKE UP!** God says, "The foolishness of man *perverteth* his way" (Prov. 19:3). If you compromise with sin, you are allowing, in spite of God's *warning*, your spiritual shape to be twisted and distorted, your embryonic spiritual character to become malformed, unfit to be born into God's glorious kingdom!

Joseph hated the illicit sexual suggestions proposed by Potiphar's wife because he knew God designated this as evil. Under stress of temptation, he was able to say, "How then can I do this *great wickedness* and SIN against God?" (Gen. 39:9.) For him, to submit to evil became a direct affront to God.

Does the same hold true for *you*? Do you successfully *resist temptation*, even in areas of particular weakness because, for God's and your sake, you want to be a clean, pure, spiritually well-formed son in His Kingdom?

Notice once more David's attitude toward sin and evil. See how God's Law provided the warning system and barricade against character-deforming influences. David declared: "Since only your rules can give me wisdom and understanding, no wonder I hate every false teaching. . . . Every law of God is right, whatever it concerns. *I hate every other way*. . . . How I hate all falsehood, but how *I love your laws*" (Ps. 119:104, 128, 163, *Living Psalms and Proverbs*).

God's standards are the only ones which will provide the type of environment needed for spiritual perfection. If we *work* at steeping ourselves in God's Word, learning His Law, asking for wisdom to apply it, and accepting correction from it, then we will be

purposely creating the spiritual surroundings needed to develop a perfect spiritual son of God. Remember, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction in righteousness*: that the man of God *may be perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Any evil, any sin, "big" or "little," will separate you from God (Isa. 59:1-2). The stakes are high — far higher than the desire for a physically perfect baby. By submitting to sin, and playing with tantalizing temptations, you are meddling with eternal life. You are tampering with the one characteristic that is destined to live forever — your spiritual *character*!

### EXAMINE YOUR LIFE

So, brethren, let's EXAMINE our lives carefully at this season of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Do you *hate* evil as Joseph and David did? Are you *allowing* evil to pervert and destroy your most precious possession — your mind? Is the effect of sin on your character *real* to you?

For some, the reality will never fully dawn until the moment they are to become spiritual miscarriages — disposed of for all eternity.

God as a Father is deeply concerned: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). But it is *your* responsibility to yield to God's calling and be purged of your sins!

"But *if* we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son *cleanseth* us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we *confess* our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (I John 1:7-9).

Your success in becoming a well-formed spiritual son of God depends on the seriousness and depth of your view of sin. See sin as *God sees it*. Thank God that He will pardon sin, and clean you up when you falter. Purge your life of all sins, brethren, and strive to walk pleasing before God! □



Ambassador College Photo

**GOLGOTHA** — Hillock in Jerusalem where Christ died for our sins.

**The significance of the Passover almost transcends human understanding! Therefore, as this most solemn observance of the year approaches once again, we should review the meaning of the Passover, and consider the tremendous price Christ paid — FOR US — so we can partake of the Passover "in a worthy manner," and with a sense of deep appreciation.**

by William F. Dankenbring

**T**O most of the Jews, He was just another rabble-rouser — a religious fanatic who disrupted society.

To the Pharisees, He was an archrival, a competitor, a dangerous ringleader of a new "cult," a threat to their authority over the people. To the Romans, He was just another Jewish troublemaker — a popular "magician" who deceived people and stirred up discontent. To Pilate, He seemed "harmless" — but since the Jewish leaders wanted Him put to death, and to avoid a seditious riot, Pilate gave in to their request.

But what is Christ Jesus to you?

Those of us in God's Church know the truth. We know, as Peter declared, that Jesus Christ *is* the Son of God — the Messiah — our Savior!

#### Importance of the Passover

Every year as the Passover season approaches, God's people stop to examine themselves and their relationship to Jesus Christ, our "Passover Lamb" who

was sacrificed for us (I Cor. 5:7). The Passover is the most solemn occasion of the whole year, a time when we review in our minds the meaning of human life, and how Christ made salvation possible for us.

The Passover marks the BEGINNING of God's Plan — the first step toward salvation. Christ made salvation *possible* by giving His life for us. For this reason the Apostle Paul wrote: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But *made himself of NO reputation* ["emptied" Himself], and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient

unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).

We need to think deeply about the price Christ paid, and consider the example He set—for we are commanded by God to have the same attitude toward each other that Christ had toward us—one of self-sacrifice and outgoing love.

#### Our Savior Was Human

We read in John 1:14 that the Word, the *Logos* of God, actually "WAS MADE FLESH." So Christ most definitely was not a remote, unreachable, isolated, non-human "God-being" who could not be hurt or afflicted by anything physical, fleshly or earthly. He divested Himself of His primordial divinity. He literally became a man!

Says the Apostle Paul: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same . . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him [the nature of] the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:14-16). Christ was *human*—just as you and I are human. He had to struggle against Satan and his world just as we do. He also had to resist temptation and fight against the lusts of the flesh.

As Paul continued, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (verse 18).

Hebrews 4, verse 15 explains further: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was *in all points tempted like as we are*, yet without sin."

How plain it is that Christ went through all the human temptations which are natural to man. But there was one great difference—He never gave in. *He never SINNED!* Yet considering the fact that Christ was in excellent health, and lived a vigorous masculine life, and considering the sufferings and trials He had to go through; no doubt He was tempted far more than any other man who has ever lived.

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with *strong crying and tears* unto him that was able to save him

from death, and was heard in that he *feared*; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he *suffered*; and being MADE PERFECT, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:7-9).

Christ, the Son of God, the *Logos* made flesh, was *acutely* human. But He rose above His humanity. He lived a perfect, sinless life. He struggled against temptation. And in so doing, He became our Savior. He, God in the flesh, died for us—took our place on death row—so that we might live forever with Him!

The Passover is God's yearly memorial of that fact.

But just how much was Christ tempted? Just what did He have to go through for us? Is there any way in which we can begin to grasp just what He did for us, as individuals?

Let's review the events leading up to the crucifixion and death of Christ, and think deeply about those final hours in His life as His earthly ministry came to a close.

#### That Fateful Evening

The last day of Christ's human life probably began much as any other day—with one difference: It was the celebration of the annual Passover when the people of Israel killed the Passover lamb, in remembrance of the first Passover kept in Egypt when the firstborn children of Israel were spared.

But Christ knew, as that Passover approached, that it would be His last one on earth at that time. At that last Passover dinner Christ told His disciples: "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall *betray me*" (Matt. 26:21). He added: "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me" (verse 23).

One of the twelve apostles—Judas Iscariot—was the one who betrayed Him. One of Christ's closest friends—a person with whom He had spent many hours during the past three and one-half years. Christ felt as David wrote in the Psalms: "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Ps. 41:9, RSV).

Can you imagine what it would be

like for one of your closest friends and confidants to *betray* you? What must it be like to know that a close and loved friend is about to cause you to be put to death?

After partaking of the Passover supper and changing the emblems of the Passover to the bread and wine, typifying Christ's broken body and shed blood for our sins, Christ Jesus gathered with His disciples for a final hymn (Mark 14:26).

Late that same evening Jesus took His disciples, as was His custom, to the Mount of Olives—that mountain to which He is soon going to return (Zech. 14:4). They came to a garden nearby called Gethsemane, meaning "an oil press," probably a small olive grove. Jesus then took with Him James, Peter and John, "and began to be greatly distressed and troubled" (Mark 14:33, RSV). He was no doubt thinking about His impending death and crucifixion. Knowing that He would soon die—the first and only time that *God* has ever DIED!—and that His death would be preceded by extreme pain, suffering and humiliation—Christ was human enough not to want to go through with it, if there were any other way.

"And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:35-36).

The outpouring of deep emotion prior to such a traumatic ordeal was a natural reaction. But notice that even in the midst of such inner torment and mental suffering, Christ was perfectly submissive to the Father's will. He did not beg, whine, or wheedle for His own way. His request was earnest, heart-rending and heartfelt—just the way *we* should pray.

But there was no alternative to be found. There was only one way mankind could be saved. A life more precious than that of all men put together would have to be sacrificed to pay the penalty for man's sins. Only one life could do that—the life of *God*. So Christ had no option; there was no other course.

Even in the midst of this tremendous personal suffering, Christ did not falter. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). But the disciples, during this fervent prayer, fell asleep (Matt. 26:40-45). Immediately after that, Judas came to betray Him.

### The Arrest and Trial of Jesus

Christ, very God in the flesh, the Creator of mankind (Col. 1:13-18), was hunted down like a common criminal — a man with a "reward" on His head. A band of soldiers, an armed posse with swords and clubs led by the traitor Judas, searched for Him. Judas, to whom Christ had given every opportunity for greatness, despised and rejected His promises, and came to Him saying, "Rabbi," and betrayed Him with a kiss (Mark 14:44-45).

"And they laid their hands on him and took him" (verse 46). They took the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Savior — their very Creator — into custody, arresting Him at the instigation of the chief priests and Jewish authorities who looked upon Him as a menace and a dire threat to the establishment.

Jesus was brusquely seized, and His hands were tied (John 18:12). He was hauled away to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year (John 18:13), and then to Caiaphas himself (verse 24).

Then Caiaphas began to question Him about His disciples and His teachings, even though Christ had taught nothing in secret — His teachings were well known (verses 19-20). When Jesus reminded Caiaphas of this fact, one of the officers standing nearby smashed Him across the face.

The high priest and the whole council sought witnesses against Jesus so they could legally put Him to death, but their witnesses disagreed among themselves (Mark 14:56-59). The testimony was false and self-contradictory. Frustrated, the high priest stood up and demanded of Jesus, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" (Matt. 26:62.) But Jesus didn't reply.

In obvious anger, the high priest

then exclaimed, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26:63).

When Jesus then answered, and told him the TRUTH, the high priest became livid with fury. He ripped his clothes and shouted, "He hath spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?" (verse 65.)

All those around nodded their heads and replied: "He deserves death" (verse 66, RSV).

This was without a doubt the most staged, biased, contrived, unlawful court procedure in history — the original "kangaroo court." There was no evidence to condemn Christ — so He was railroaded, framed!

"And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him, 'Prophesy!' And the guards received him with BLOWS" (Mark 14:65, RSV).

"And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him" (Luke 22:63-65).

And this was only the beginning.

### The Daylight Hours

As soon as the sun rose that morning, the chief priests, elders, scribes and the whole council gathered together to decide how to put Jesus to death. They tied Him up again and led Him away to Pilate the governor (Mark 15:1-5). Pilate, asking Him what He had done, and if He were the king of the Jews (John 18:33-35), marveled that Christ did not bother to dispute all the false testimony of the Jews who railed against Him (Mark 15:5). He told the assembled Jewish leaders, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4).

At that unexpected setback, the chief priests became vehement, and cried, "He stirreth up the people" (verse 5). Pilate, upon learning that Jesus was from Galilee, sent him to Herod who had jurisdiction over the land of Galilee (verses 6-7).

Herod had heard of Jesus' miracles and had wanted to see Him perform some "trick." The chief priests and scribes accused Him before Herod, but Jesus answered nothing. "And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate" (verse 11). Christ was further humiliated, mistreated, and abused.

Pilate, by this time, perceived that the chief priests had delivered Christ to him out of envy and malice (Mark 15:10). He was therefore ready to release Jesus from custody since it was the custom at that time for a prisoner to be released on the day of the Passover (Mark 15:6).

But the chief priests and elders swayed the multitude of people to demand that Christ be put to death! And they cried out, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas" (Luke 23:18). Pilate asked them, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matt. 27:22.) And the mob cried out:

"Let him be CRUCIFIED!"

"Why, what evil hath he done?" Pilate asked.

But the mob screamed, "Let him be CRUCIFIED"! (Matt. 27:22-23.)

Pilate, wishing to calm down the roaring, tumultuous crowd and prevent a riot, had Jesus scourged and sent Him to be crucified (Matt. 27:26). The soldiers led Him away to the court called the Praetorium. They clothed Him with purple, jammed a crown of thorns down on His head, and mocked Him. They struck His head with a reed, spat upon Him and beat Him severely.

What did it mean to be "scourged"? A scourge was an instrument made of cords or thongs of leather fastened to a handle. Usually there were three of these thongs in each scourge, and they were often reinforced with bits of metal which tore the skin and flesh. Thus Jesus literally had flesh ripped from His body under the lashing and whipping of the Roman soldiers.

Isaiah described Christ's disfigurement in prophetic language: "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa.

52:14). Christ was whipped to within an inch of His life! His body was a mass of welts, bruises, raw open cuts, bloody lacerations and jagged wounds.

And then, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the soldiers led Him away to be crucified. He was so weak from fatigue and loss of blood that He could only carry His own cross a short distance (compare John 19:16-17 with Luke 23:26).

Why was Christ beaten, bloodied and scourged before His final crucifixion? There is a very important reason which we must understand as we observe the Passover. The Apostle Peter put it plainly: "Who 'n his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: *by whose stripes ye were healed*" (I Peter 2:24).

The Prophet Isaiah elaborated: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; *and with his stripes [or bruise, margin] we are HEALED*" (Isa. 53:5).

Christ suffered physical beating and torture to pay the penalty of our *physical* sins — that we might be HEALED of our physical illnesses, sicknesses and diseases. For He Himself had clearly explained that such sickness is the result of sin, and that healing is the *forgiveness* of that sin (Matt. 9:17).

And so Jesus not only paid the penalty of our spiritual sins by dying for us, but He also paid the penalty of our physical sins by allowing Himself to be beaten and His flesh ripped open. Therefore, when we are sick, God commands us to call on the elders of the Church for prayer and anointing, and promises to HEAL us (James 5:14-15).

### Death by Crucifixion

"And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him" (Luke 23:22, RSV).

According to historians, crucifixion was a punishment inflicted by Egyptians (Gen. 40:19), Carthaginians, Persians (Esther 7:10), Assyrians, Scythians, Indians, Germans, Greeks and Romans. It was unanimously considered the most horrible form of death — the degradation was part of the inflicted punish-

ment. Only the vilest of criminals were generally crucified among the Romans.

The one to be crucified was stripped naked and laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross beam, if any, or together over the head if not, and at the center of the open palms the end of a huge iron nail was placed; the nail was then driven through the hands into the wood of the beam by a hammer. Similarly, an iron nail was driven through the feet, as they were placed one over the other.

To prevent the hands and feet from being torn away by the weight of the body hanging from the stake, there was a wooden projection near the center of the stake strong enough to support part of the weight of the body.

Then the upper end of the stake was heaved upward, the bottom jarring into a hole in the ground prepared to receive it.

There, in the sight of all the people, Christ was pilloried — abused, denounced, sneered at, taunted and mocked with hoots of derision and scorn. The very *CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE* suffered the derisive taunts and ridicule of the very ones He had created!

As His lacerated nerves throbbed, and His inflamed wounds ached with pain, as His muscles cramped and His head felt dizzy, He suffered the taunts and reproach of those who villified Him. From noon until three in the afternoon, He hung on the stake, the object of obloquy and shame, the endurer of indescribable agony.

### "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM!"

And yet, while experiencing the most horrible form of suffering known to man, Jesus still was most concerned with something greater than His own personal pain. While life was ebbing away, He cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

"Father, forgive them" — think about those selfless words. It wasn't just the chief priests, elders and scribes among the Jews who were responsible for Christ's death; nor was it the common people who had cried out "Crucify Him!" Nor was it only the Roman

soldiers who nailed Him to the stake.

It was OUR SINS — *YOURS AND MINE* — that caused the DEATH of our Savior, our Creator, the Messiah!

*YOU* were responsible! *I* was responsible! *We* were guilty of the blood of the Son of God. When we were yet unconverted, we, with those who lived then, would have cried out, "CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!"

But thank God for His priceless mercy and forgiveness and pardon! Thank God that Christ was willing to pray, while under extreme duress, "Father, forgive them." Thank God that we can confess our sins and still receive mercy (I John 1:9). As David wrote: "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:11-12).

### Christ BECAME Sin

In the midst of such incredible, unparalleled suffering, Christ cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) — for truly the Father had turned His back on Him. Christ had become SIN for us — He was paying the penalty for OUR transgressions — and therefore the Father had to disregard His very own Son and let Him die — *FOR US* (see II Cor. 5:21).

Christ went through extreme suffering for all mankind. But consider also the enormous grief and pain the Father must have gone through, seeing His only begotten Son die an excruciating, shameful, horrible death.

Yet, as the Apostle John wrote, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins" (I John 4:9-10).

Consider the great all-encompassing scope of that supreme LOVE!

Yes, brethren, *God loves you*. He loves ALL MANKIND! Otherwise He surely wouldn't have allowed Christ to go through with the awesome ordeal



He experienced! *Don't ever forget* that supreme LOVE which God has for *you*.

### Christ Died for OUR Sins!

About three o'clock in the afternoon, the end of the agony came. "Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this he breathed his last" (Luke 23:46-47, RSV).

Christ had been stabbed in the side with a spear, and His blood gushed out of the wound, running down onto and over the ground (John 19:33-34). His precious blood was shed for your sins and mine — to reconcile us to God.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were *reconciled to God by the DEATH of his Son*, much more, being *reconciled, we shall be saved BY HIS LIFE*" (Rom. 5:8-10).

So now we can have peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). We now have access to the Throne of God in heaven (Heb. 10:19-22). We need no longer be CUT OFF from God because of our sins (Isa. 59:1-2). God now promises to HEAR US when we cry out to Him in prayer and supplication (John 16:23-24). Because of the sacrifice of Christ, and our repentance from sin, God now gives us His Holy Spirit to enable us to KEEP His commandments in the spirit (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:1-2; Phil. 4:13). With God's help and inspiration, we are now on the ROAD TO ETERNAL LIFE AND SALVATION! But brethren, it was all made possible ONLY because Jesus Christ was willing to *die* for us, suffering the miserable death of crucifixion. It was only possible because God the Father was willing to let His precious Son die for us, because He loved us so much!

Notice what the Apostle Paul was inspired by God to write: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that

justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that *DIED*, yea rather, that is *RISEN AGAIN*, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:31-34).

Christ now LIVES! And He is seated at God's right hand in heaven, to intercede for us when we sin — when we fall short of the mark — so that we can be forgiven and continue to press forward in the Christian faith, overcoming and growing in grace and knowledge of Christ until we become spiritually mature and are ready to be born into God's Kingdom! (See Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25; Phil. 3:12-14.)

### The MEANING of the Passover

Thus the whole plan of God revolves around the sacrifice of Jesus Christ — our Passover Lamb, "Christ our passover [who] is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7). The Passover is most assuredly of PARAMOUNT importance in God's sight, something we must not take lightly! As we partake of the Passover symbols this year, and remember the sufferings and death of our Savior, let's do so with a profound sense of gratitude, appreciation and thanks.

As we partake of the broken bread, symbolizing the beaten, whipped body of Christ, by whose stripes we are HEALED (I Pet. 2:24), and as we drink of the cup of wine, symbolizing His shed blood on behalf of our spiritual transgressions, let us do so with incisive awareness, with renewed faith, with penetrating understanding and a thorough comprehension of the REALITY which these symbols represent!

"... The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is BROKEN FOR YOU: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the *new testament in my blood*: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:23-26).

Remember the gruesome ordeal Jesus Christ went through — for *you*. Keep

in mind His humility and attitude of service when you wash the feet of your brother or sister and partake of the Passover. Be renewed and inspired in *faith* as you commemorate His death in *reconciling you to God*, imparting to you a NEW lease on life!

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, *unworthily* [without being in a repentant attitude and without fully understanding or appreciating the significance of the Passover], shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man EXAMINE himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [judgment] to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (verses 27-30).

When we partake of the cup, symbolizing the shed blood of Christ for our spiritual sins, let's be deeply aware of the price He paid for us. And when we partake of the bread, symbolizing His beaten, bruised, whipped body, let's realize that He suffered such punishment on our behalf so we might be *healed* of our physical infirmities, sicknesses and disease. The Corinthians did not fully grasp the significance of the broken body of Christ, represented by the broken bread — therefore many of them were weak, sickly and had died.

Brethren, let's take the Passover this year — *worthily*. Let's take it fully understanding its total meaning, being in a humble, sincerely repentant attitude, and deeply appreciating the Passover's awesome significance as a memorial of the day *Christ — GOD in the flesh* — suffered and died — FOR US!

As the solemn occasion of the Passover approaches, examine yourself, scrutinize your attitude, look over your life during the past year, and determine with vigorous zeal to overcome weaknesses, sins and shortcomings that still plague you. And let's go forward in the faith of Christ with renewed zeal, energy, dedication and inspiration to DO THE WORK of God! Let's draw closer to God, imbued with FAITH, and *draw up* the Spirit which He has given us so His Work can be accomplished with DYNAMIC POWER! □

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The ENVOY is coming!



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