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Roland Sampson - Good News

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The Good News

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WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT SIN?

by Charles F. Hunting
and David R. Ord

Why does God classify some actions as wrong and others as right? Why is it wrong to commit sin?

Did God just arbitrarily decide that some actions would be classed as sin? Did He say to Himself: "We've got to have some things that are wrong, so I'll just choose some nice, tantalizing, exciting things and they can be sin. Then anyone who gets caught doing those things can be put to death"?

Is that how sin came to be sin? Is it only sin because God says so? And could it be that these things we call sin are actually *good* for us, but God somehow doesn't want us to have them?

It simply is not rational to believe that a God who created this earth with all its beauty and harmony, and with laws which have a clear cause-and-effect relationship, would institute spiritual laws merely as some type of mental exercise.

If sin is so bad as to warrant the death penalty, then the reason ought to be revealed in the Scriptures. There ought to be an obvious, cause-and-effect relationship, between sin and death.

Notice what one of the most important "sin" scriptures teaches us. It states that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Wages are something we *earn*. In this passage wages are contrasted with God's *gift*, which is eternal life. One thing we *earn*, the other we are given. The *effect* — what we *earn* as our wages — is *death*. The cause is sin. No

arbitrary penalty for sin is so much as hinted at in this scripture.

Take a look at another well-known passage — Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man *soweth*, that shall he also *reap*. For he that *soweth* to his flesh shall of the flesh reap *corruption* . . ." Again, a simple cause-and-effect relationship! What you sow grows until it finally brings forth what you reap.

James, a leader in God's Work and brother of Jesus Christ, reveals this same relationship between sin and death. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15).

In the same way that sin is an automatic result of dwelling on lust, death is the end product of sin. The one *brings about* the other. If you entertain lust long enough, it will well up in you to the point that you will not be able to keep yourself from sinning. Then death is the next step along the way — the automatic result of sin.

But why is death the result of sin? The answer to this question is actually the answer to why sin is so bad.

Despite all the confusion about what constitutes sin, the Bible gives this concise definition: ". . . Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

But what law is it sin to transgress? The Apostle Paul explains: "Nay, I had not known sin, but by

the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said; *Thou shalt not covet*" (Rom. 7:7).

He is speaking of the Ten Commandments. These are the laws which *define* sin. "Only if there were no laws to break," he says, "would there be no sinning" (verse 8, *The Living Bible*).

To discover why sin is wrong — why it nets the death penalty — we need to find out *why* God gave these laws in the first place.

Let's look at a specific law of God: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." What's wrong with adultery? Why did God tell us not to get involved in illicit sex?

Swinging — or adultery by consent — is definitely the "in" thing today. Sociologists estimate that as many as 14 million Americans are involved in wife swapping.

Obviously those who are involved believe that this kind of relationship will not harm them. Young teen-agers who engage in premarital sex or married couples who swap partners apparently do so because they see nothing wrong with it.

But the Bible says *don't do it!* It says that the result will be *death*. Not merely a penalty arbitrarily imposed, but an automatic result.

Can God back up His law concerning adultery with logic? Or is He seeking to deny us pleasure?

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil," says God "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:15; 19).

God says His laws are for our own good. He says they result in *life* and every good thing. He warns that adultery will bring only curses — unhappiness, wretchedness, and ultimately death. He says that He isn't denying us something good. God is only trying to keep us from a way which will bring wrong results. As our Father, He doesn't want us to hurt ourselves. So He gave us laws for our protection.

In the book of Proverbs we find another father warning his son about potential dangers in the area of sex. Did he want to deny his son something good? Or was he concerned for his welfare?

"When wisdom entereth into thine heart," wrote Solomon, "and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall *preserve* thee, understanding shall *keep* thee . . . to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which

flattereth with her words; which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house *inclineth unto death*, and her paths *unto the dead*. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life" (Prov. 2:10, 11, 16-19).

Solomon is talking about an experience that actually *destroys* a man spiritually. He says that those who commit this kind of sin bring about a change in their lives which prevents them from really *living*. Even though they are alive, it's as if they were *dead*.

Is this merely "spiritual" language? Is it just a religious type of idea — nebulous Bible semantics? Or is Solomon talking about something that is affecting the lives of adulterers right now?

Notice the 9th chapter of Proverbs: "Stolen waters are sweet," the adulteress assures her prey, "and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (verse 17). Isn't this what we are hearing more and more today? It's tantalizing, exciting! It isn't going to hurt you.

But what is the eventual result of this and any other illicit sexual relationship? "But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell [the grave]" (verse 18).

When we put the weight of scriptural evidence together, it becomes plain that Solomon is not warning his son of some "religious" consequence to adultery. He is talking about something which happens to a man's *mind* when he sins (especially over a period of time). Continually practicing sin causes its participants to become *spiritually dead*.

The world talks about "living it up." They talk about "really living." Yet, strange as it may seem, most people don't know what living really is.

The Apostle Paul talked about a woman who lives in wantonness. He said, "But she that liveth in pleasure is *dead while she yet liveth*" (1 Tim. 5:6). How can a person be dead, and yet still alive?

Paul is talking about a way of life. It's one thing to exist — to merely live out your seventy-odd years — and it's another to *really live*.

Christ described this kind of life when He said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*." (John 10:10). This kind of life isn't just an existence. It is actually beginning to sample the type of life that God wants us to experience eternally in His Kingdom.

The Bible talks about two opposite ways of life. It explains that "to be carnally minded is death;

but to be spiritually minded is life" (Rom. 8:6).

At creation God revealed these two opposite ways of life to our first parents. They were represented by two trees — the tree of life and the tree of knowledge.

God had told Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). But the serpent (Satan) told them that they would continue to live (Gen. 3:4); and implied they would actually experience a richer, fuller life.

What is life? A scientist would tell you that "life" is a chemical process. But this process is going on in a snail. The slug is also alive. So are bacteria. So are plants.

There is more to life than just a chemical process. It involves a quality of existence. When Adam and Eve ate of that forbidden fruit, they cut themselves off from the continuous abundant life that God intended.

The third chapter of Genesis explains it. "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden . . . So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (verses 22-24).

Adam no longer had access to God's Spirit at that time.

When Christ called a young man to follow Him, the young man replied that he wanted to bury his father first. "And Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60).

The man's father had not died. It was a custom in Israel to bury the dead the same day. The man would not have been with Christ on this occasion, but would have been making preparations for the burial had his father died.

He wanted to spend the remaining years with his father until his death. But Christ told him to leave that to the "dead." He referred to living human beings as dead men, spiritually speaking.

In Ephesians 2:1 the Apostle Paul writes: "And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins." John wrote: "We know that we have passed from death unto life,

because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14).

All through the Bible we read of people who are alive and yet dead! They are existing, but they aren't experiencing *the quality of life* that God intended. They are on a path of life which is slowly, but surely, *killing* them.

God reveals that the world is spiritually dead. It isn't really enjoying life — it is existing on temporary thrills and kicks, but it's not really living.

Why are people merely existing? Because they are cut off from the real source of life. They are transgressing *living laws* and reaping the automatic penalties.

Let's understand what occurs when a person breaks God's law.

God warns, "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. 11:3).

Does perverseness — living contrary to God's law — destroy people because God inflicts a penalty, or is it an *automatic, built-in* result?

Listen to what the Apostle Paul has to say: "And the men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze (burned out, consumed) with lust for one another, men committing shameful acts with men and suffering in their own bodies and personalities *the inevitable consequences* and penalty of their wrong doing and going astray which was [their] fitting retribution" (Rom. 1:27, *The Amplified Bible*).

Perversions bring an automatic penalty! It isn't wrong because God arbitrarily decreed that it is; it's wrong because it will hurt you! It will do irreparable damage to your ability to enjoy the fulfillment of right family life — the engendering and raising of children through a balanced father-mother relationship.

Speaking of those who are primarily motivated by their carnal minds, Paul wrote: "This I say therefore . . . that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being *alienated from the life of God* through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being *past feeling* have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:17-18).

These people, because of their perverted practices, have rendered themselves totally incapable of right emotions and feelings. They don't understand that this is no arbitrary code of morals — they don't know that it is a living law that you can't break without paying an awesome penalty. They have gone in a way of life, in a pattern of

existence, which has gradually dulled their ability to enjoy right relationships.

Why is adultery a sin? Because it harms the human mind — the most finely tuned instrument that exists. It robs the individual of the ability to enjoy sex in the way God intended. Somehow, wholesome relationships in marriage become dull — a man's wife no longer really attracts him in the way that she used to.

Oh, it may not happen overnight — "swingers" may seem like they are having fun for a time. But when they embark on these illicit experiences they are little by little destroying their capacity to experience true joy in marriage. It's a path that leads only to frustration, heartache, and ultimately death.

Is sin enjoyable? You bet it is! That's why people engage in it. That's why temptation is so alluring.

Adultery is physically and mentally pleasurable. And the kids who smoke pot are getting a kick out of it. The forbidden fruit tasted good to Adam and Eve.

No one denies the short-term enjoyment of sin. Hebrews 11:25 says Moses chose to suffer affliction with God's people rather "than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." But sin's short-term pleasures automatically bring a long-term penalty. Adam and Eve lived to see one of their own dearly beloved boys brutally murdered by the other. They finally witnessed the entire earth filled with violence, and they eventually died instead of enjoying the eternal life God had offered.

The Bible actually shows that those who insistently engage in sin are, spiritually speaking, already dead. It likens them to a corpse.

A corpse has no feeling. It's dead — dead as a doornail. It is insensitive. And those who damage their minds by continually breaking God's laws are no longer really living. Nothing satisfies. Life lacks fulfillment. The excitement and interest has somehow disappeared.

No one, not even God, needs to know that you have broken His law for the penalty to be exacted. God's law doesn't act like human laws — getting caught isn't the criterion. Breaking God's law will eventually break you.

God pursues a way of life which results in happiness. He wants to share that quality of life with humans, not merely now, but for all eternity.

What kind of life does He hold out to us? "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is

fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

God lives the abundant life. He offers an eternity of fulfillment and joy. But before He will give us that eternal life, He expects us to prove that we will live in the way that produces every right result.

If we refuse to sample that kind of life now — if we persist in continuing in the way that brings unhappiness, suffering and grief, not only to ourselves but to others as well — then a merciful God will have no alternative but to put us out of our misery.

It isn't that God wants to deprive us of the thrills in life. He only wants to protect us from that which is going to hurt us. His law isn't the reason that sin is wrong — it isn't wrong because God decided that there ought to be a penalty for some actions and a reward for others. The law merely defines sin, setting out in a codified manner that which is bad for us.

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" asks God. "And not that he should return from his ways, and live?" (Ezek. 18:23.)

Does God want to inflict the ultimate punishment upon people? Does He take pleasure in seeing that they are only half alive, and does He look forward to putting them out of their misery?

"Repent," says God, "and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed... for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth... wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (verses 30-32).

The broad majority of human beings are cut off from God and from the source of real life. They are analogous to dead men, daily destroying their capacity for really living as they continually break God's law and bring automatic penalties upon themselves.

But we can turn to God and ask Him to supernaturally remove those penalties for us, and to set our feet on the path of life. We can, if we just will, receive total forgiveness for our wretchedness in the past.

Sin can be overcome. We can begin to really live, to sample the life which will grow until it blossoms out into all the fullness and joy that God Himself experiences!

Write for our free reprint articles "This Is the Life — Real Abundant Living" and "How to Be an Overcomer." Discover the truly abundant life that God intends us to live throughout all eternity! □

WILL GOD FORGIVE YOU?

"I'll never forgive you," shouts an enraged husband haranguing at his harassed wife. "You've gone too far; that's the last straw. I've had it with you!"

Would God ever talk that way?

Many have pictured Him as a harsh hanging judge just looking for an excuse to unleash His fury against a helpless, trapped human being.

But is God really so unmerciful, unreachable, unapproachable and lacking in compassion?

A thousand times, NO! Our God is most merciful. Mercy mirrors His very character. God is truly a *forgiving Father!*

Every man and woman who has ever lived has racked up an enormous debt of sin to God Almighty. Comprehending this, King David cried out: "Mine iniquities [sins] have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me" (Ps. 40:12).

And since "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), the payoff for what we owe God is eternal extinction.

But God, in His great mercy, sent Jesus Christ of Nazareth to annul — to abrogate — to completely cancel out this enormous debt. He suffered a brutal, excruciating death at the hands of an angry mob to wipe the slate clean.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "And you, being dead in your sins [transgressions of God's law — I John 3:4], hath he quickened [made alive] together with him, *having forgiven you all trespasses*" (Col. 2:13).

It matters not how many or how few your sins. God will forgive them.

matters not how many times you've committed the same sin. God will forgive! It matters not how heinous or hideous your sins have been. God will forgive!

No sin — no matter how ugly, how sordid — will ever be held against you if you repent of it toward your Creator.

But real repentance is a vital and necessary precondition to God's total forgiveness.

Repentance simply means change. If you truly repent, you will turn from sin as a practice. You will quit sinning and begin keeping the Ten Commandments — *all of them.*

Make no mistake about it. *God stands ready to forgive all your sins!* But that forgiveness is conditioned upon your making a 180-degree turn in the road.

It is beyond the scope of this brief article to give a detailed description of true repentance with all of the attendant ramifications. We suggest that you write for our free booklet titled *What Is a Real Christian?* Its second chapter is captioned "What Is Real Repentance?" It will fill in what this article leaves out.

Suffice it to say that salvation hinges on having "the real article" when it comes to repentance. Fool's gold will not do!

But once you really do repent, there are no longer any contingencies or conditions — no if's and's or but's. God then absolutely binds Himself to forgive you. It is sure!

Can we believe the Apostle John when he said: "If we confess our sins [truly repent], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

You can count on God. He will not withhold his forgiveness. The instant you really repent, you are at that very moment forgiven.

Remember, you have a most merciful and compassionate heavenly Father. He is literally filled with the spirit of forgiveness (Ps. 86:5). He is eager and anxious to forgive sinners. He sent Jesus to this earth to mercifully call sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13).

And God's true ministers, though not perfect, mirror a portion of God's very character in this very important respect.

God's true ministers are warm, friendly and balanced. Like the Head of God's Church, Jesus Christ, they are literally filled with forgiveness, compassion and mercy. They do not condone sin, but they won't condemn the sinner, either.

A true minister of God will show you how to turn from your sins. He will show you the way out of sin.

Ministers of the Worldwide Church of God reside in many cities of the United States and in many other parts of the world. They are available, if invited, to answer your questions, to advise and counsel with you, and to help you in any way they can. They won't try to pressure you into conversion. But they will assist as only the ministers of Christ can do.

Please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. We, at the Headquarters of this great Work, will be more than happy to arrange a personal meeting. See the inside front cover of this magazine for the address of our office nearest you.

John R. Schroeder

The world is in a crisis of government. Despotic communism, dictatorships, parliamentary democracies, autocracies, limited monarchies, republicanisms, tyrannies, majority rule — in whatever form of human government, crises threaten, and governments topple, collapse, decay, disintegrate, or are overthrown. Never have so many governments been in so much difficulty. And overriding every national governmental crisis is the most important international crisis: the lack of a world-governing authority which really could bring this world "peace with justice."

by Garner Ted Armstrong

THE worst thing that can happen to an anarchist, plotting to overthrow a government and thus change the "status quo," is to succeed.

Our anarchist, who loudly decried abuses of corrupt government to gain his following, emotionally polarize his lieutenants, and sweep himself into power over the bodies of those already in power, now becomes the proprietor of a new "status quo." Eventually, the tiresome evolution of man's inferior human governments, the inevitable inertias of governmental senility, loss of communication with its people, isolation and increasing self-deception due to original sensational successes, renders it helpless before yet another self-styled ruler who desires to overthrow the new "status quo."

Who Will Govern?

History reeks with the stench of rotting government corpses, thrown aside when the bright young deliv-

DPA Photo

GOVERNMENT IN

ers promised grand new horizons of peace and plenty to frustrated, impoverished, disease-ridden masses. From Nebuchadnezzar to Nero; from Atilla to Hitler; from Alexander the Great to Otto the Great; from Ghengis Khan to Mussolini; from Ivan the Terrible to Tojo — the would-be rulers of the world. Statesmen, musicians, politicians, generals, murderers, perverts, strategists, empire builders, liars, historians, sadists, emancipators, criminals, orators, demon-possessed persons, literati, homosexuals, religionists — all have dreamed the dream of world government — of beneficent, wise, merciful, progressive, just, perfect government — with themselves, of course, clearly visible at the absolute pinnacle of power.

Make no mistake about history's revolutionaries — whether those names daily remembered from high-school history lessons or the would-be leaders of a neo-American revolution of the 60s — it isn't "government" they're against. It's only a question of "whose?"

Today, governments topple almost weekly. Within only a few months, the governments of Afghanistan, Argentina, Greece,

Chile, Belgium, Thailand, etc., have either been overthrown or the head of state has been forced to resign, voted out of office, or murdered in office — or otherwise gone the way of so many heads of human governments in the past.

In the United States, a very real crisis of government is under full swing. With the Vice-President's resignation (after being placed under criminal indictment, which quite possibly could have meant a jail term) on top of Watergate and the credibility gap, it was perhaps only the Mideast emergency and the energy crisis that stalled effective impeachment proceedings — at least for a few months.

Struggles over who will govern are as old as the universe, as ancient as the garden of Eden, and as human as human nature itself.

The "Missing Dimension" in Government

The study of government (a tiresome business at best!) is necessarily a study of human nature. But for all our vaunted scientific and technological knowledge, there remains a monumental amount of confusion about what we are, why we are, and "why?" — we are just what human nature is.

Quite literally, thousands of volumes have been written down through the bloody history of the

human race probing the vagaries of the human mind. Still, whether the mystical or spiritual is emphasized, or strictly the evolutionary (and therefore purely physical) approach is used, there is no clear cut unanimity on just what man is.

If we are, as evolution implies, only "animals" whose admittedly advanced civilization can be compared to ants, bees, lemmings or elephants; then the study of our "nature" precludes admission of any spiritual content in our brains — or any spiritual purpose in our being.

But if we are not merely "animals," but the apex of God's physical creation — endowed not only with a brain but also with a spiritual essence added to that brain that makes the superb difference between animal and human — then any understanding of human nature must include a full understanding of how we came to be, as well as what we are.

You can prove, and prove by the laws and requirements of science, that God does exist! (Write for our free booklet *Does God Exist?*) You



CRISIS **17** **?**

can prove, too, that the Creator God has not left man without a *handbook*, the Bible, explaining who, and what, and why, we are! The Bible, the Word of God, reveals to God's creation its reasons for being.

God Is the Ruler

God is the RULER — not only Creator and Originator of all things, but the present *Sustainer* — the One who continually *governs* and oversees the fulfillment of His purpose here below.

As Supreme Ruler of all the universe, the Almighty God has set down certain inexorable laws. All law, meaning the known laws of science, is *spiritual* in origin and nature. While science can seek to *define* laws, it did not bring them into being — is powerless to alter them. The laws of physics are beyond real human comprehension, no matter how technically we try to define them. And, even though we may be discussing *physical* properties of a material creation — such as laws governing energy, heat, light, motion, radiation, or inertia — our minds cannot really fathom how those laws *came to be* or *why* they work exactly as they do.

God's Word reveals God's divine authority over all His creation, not only through the continual operation of specific, human-limiting laws, but as the RULER, who created mankind, who called His own people, establishing a *government* on this earth, and who is working out a great purpose which will eventually bring about a *world ruling government* over all mankind.

A Book About Government

The Bible is a book about GOVERNMENT. It is a book about obedience and disobedience, about good and evil, about life and death. When God originally called His people out of Egypt, establishing human leaders over them and giving them a complete set of laws by which they should be governed, He knew there was a *missing dimension* in that original government of God.

Not that His law was imperfect, or incomplete, but that there was a vital ingredient which made perfect obedience to those laws, and the *blessings* resulting from that obedience, impossible!

The Bible reveals what that missing ingredient was: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deut. 5:29.)

The Nature of Man

They didn't have the *nature* to obey. Human, carnal nature is "naturally" *disobedient* to law. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

The law God gave His Ten Commandments was a *perfect* law. Had it been perfectly *obeyed*, that new nation would have been totally *free* from all sins, which means in short every conceivable *evil* which plagues any human society, including even physical diseases and material poverty. They would have risen to be come literally Utopia in their own time.

But only if they had the "heart" and the nature to obey. Human nature is the *opposite* from an obedient nature. God's Word reveals there is another "law" or a *principle* at work in our flesh and in our minds like a magnetic pulling or tugging of the senses and the mind itself which *automatically pulls us the wrong way*.

"For the good that I want to do I don't do, but the evil I don't want to do I do. Now if I do that which I don't want to do it isn't me that is doing it, but an *inner force* in me. I know I really rejoice in the law of God in my mind, I see another law in my body struggling against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which lives inside of me! O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:15-25.)

God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with my body, the law of sin" (Rom. 7:19-25, paraphrased).

Why Government Failed

God's government failed, then, *not* because the government or the laws by which it ruled or the Governor were inferior, but because there was a "missing dimension" — a missing ingredient!

Speaking of that first government over the nation of Israel, Paul writes about the "second" (a *spiritual*) government, through God's Church, under the terms and conditions of a NEW covenant or better promise.

"But now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry [compared with Moses and Aaron] by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant [as Moses was mediator of the first one], which was established upon better promises [spiritual and eternal] in place of physical and temporal. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — after those days saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:6-10).

Notice the "fault" in that former government is the wilderness was *not* with God or His laws — but "with them," as the Bible simply explains.

They simply lacked the *nature* to obey. Having carnal, physical, human nature — they just "naturally" did not want to obey God, or keep His laws. The Prophet Jeremiah said of the nature of man: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked [wicked] — straight who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9.)

(Continued on page 33)

the GOD FAMILY

"We are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; HEIRS OF GOD." Human potential is higher than most people think — enormously higher! God created man to enter His divine family!

finally Like the last great crescendo of a gigantic symphony, after nearly 6000 years of man's history, the Creator of the universe is proclaiming to all mankind the ultimate purpose of human life.

Now, just before the close of man's age, God is revealing why He created the universe and why He designed human beings. Although known by some individuals in the Old Testament period and preached by Jesus and the apostles in the early New Testament period, this astounding, fundamental truth has never before been made available to all nations on such a massive scale.

It's no accident! There's no coincidence. The time is now. We are living in a unique moment of the history of the universe. Our generation will see it all put together. And our generation will have to understand why.

We are now ready to approach the ultimate purpose of — and for — human life. It involves our spirit, the

spirit in man.* And it also involves the Spirit of God. More precisely, the fundamental purpose of human life involves the *union* of these two spirit essences — and the resulting new creation which then emerges. Paul epitomizes the overwhelming significance of the entire process with breathtaking succinctness: "... *The Spirit of God joins with our spirit in testifying that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God...*" (Rom. 8:16-17, *The New English Bible with KJV*).

the key word is *heir* — because we are "heirs of God."

First, define the word: An *heir* is a person who is entitled to, and assured of, the acquisition and possession of specified riches, properties, offices, titles and/or responsibilities — to be received at a given time or at a particular event in the future. Now since we human beings are "heirs of God," whatever the name "God" stands for, we are entitled to, and assured, of the acquisition and possession of it.

And just as surely as all the heirs of the wealthy Ford, Rockefeller, or Rothschild families are absolutely

*The spirit in man can be defined as the nonphysical component of the human mind which differentiates it from animal brain. The spirit in man is not an immortal soul — rather it is simply a spirit essence which imparts the power of self-conscious intellect to the human brain, thereby governing the human mind.

guaranteed the treasures, rights, privileges and opportunities which are certified and secured by their physical fathers' family names, all human beings can be absolutely guaranteed the enormously more spectacular treasures, rights, privileges and opportunities which are certified and secured by our Creator and spiritual Father's family name — *God*.

So we go to the next step: *What is God?* What can we be heirs of? The answer to this question simultaneously answers the most fundamental question of human life: "What is man?"

Because mankind was created to become literally sons of God. That's the purpose of human life — plain and simple. That's why we were created. That's why the entire universe was created.

But this is such an incredible concept that most people will not comprehend it. Why? Is it too complex? No. It's too *simple* — too simple for minds nurtured by, and accustomed to, the tortuously tangled religious systems and dogmas of this world. So we will repeat it: All human beings — you — were created to literally join the God family. And become God.

How can that be?

Because God is a family.

More accurately, "God" is the family *name* of the eternally creating class of beings who have designed, are sustaining and will forever rule *all reality* — spiritual and physical reality, known and unknown reality, reality that does exist and reality that does not yet exist.

That's what we are heir to. The family of God! *Everything! Forever!*

The concept that God is a family is as bold as it is thrilling. It is almost a "revolution." To state that God is a family seems like outright heresy compared to the twisted maze of pagan doctrines which have established themselves as the respectable religious systems of this world.

Nevertheless, it is true — *God is a*

family. Because, as incredible as it appears to our materialistically hardened eyes, the Bible explicitly teaches that God is a family — and that the purpose of every human life is to join that "very family circle of God" (Rom. 8:15, Phillips).

The God family can and will comprise an almost infinite number of individual distinct sons. Ephesians 3:14-15 proclaims that the whole *family* in heaven and earth is named after God the Father. Or, in other words, the whole family is named the *God family*.

at the present time — today — there are only *two* beings in the God family:

1) God the Father — the *Possessor* of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19; Isa. 66:1; John 5:19) — the Father of Jesus Christ.

2) The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — the active *Creator* of heaven and earth — the One who became Jesus Christ.

The Jesus Christ of the New Testament is *identically* the very same Being who appeared as the God of the Old Testament.

How does one demonstrate this crucial point? With surprising ease. Read the appropriate New Testament verses: John 1:3, 10; Ephesians 3:9; 1 Corinthians 10:4 and Hebrews 1:2.

the Bible further shows that the purpose of human life — the ultimate goal for all human beings — is to eventually become equal with the Creator of the universe!

Equal with God?

Shocking? Undoubtedly! But this remarkable fact is surprisingly easy to prove. There is no difficult exegesis (scriptural analysis) involved. Complex philosophical arguments are not needed. Hebrew can even be "Greek" to you — and you can still understand this simple, beautiful truth.

In one sense, all that is required is a four-step process:

1) The Creator of the universe is the One who became Jesus Christ.

2) Jesus Christ is equal with God, (John 5:18; Phil. 2:6).

3) We are joint heirs with Christ, and as a result, we will be glorified together with Him (Rom. 8:17).

4) Whatever glory God the Father had given Christ — the position of Creator — Christ will eventually give to us (John 17:11, 22). In other words, every converted individual will eventually enjoy the same relationship to Christ — God the Creator — as Christ presently enjoys with God the Father.

Christ knew He had had before His human birth — identically the same glorious level of God-plane existence as had God the Father. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5)

Consequently, Christ knew full well what He was saying — and what He was doing — when He gave precisely this same glory to His human followers. He was adding new members to God's growing family. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them that they may be one, even as we are one" (verse 22).

In another sense, all that is required is a simple, word-by-word *reading* — without interpretation — of Genesis 1:26. Here God succinctly gives the purpose of human life: Whereas animals reproduce after the animal kind, man reproduces after the God kind! Or, more properly phrased, human beings are the instruments through which God is reproducing Himself (See box on page 12 for a full explanation.)

It cannot be repeated too often:

We were born for the express purpose of literally becoming equal with the Creator of the universe — members in the same eternally ruling God-family Kingdom.

But what will we be like? Like God! Exactly! Exactly like God! We will do what God does. We will feel,

act, enjoy and experience at precisely the same incomprehensible level of awareness at which God feels, acts, enjoys and experiences.

A point of clarification here: We are *not* saying that human beings will become God the Father or become Jesus Christ. That would be utterly ridiculous. God the Father is God the Father and Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ. And nobody else can "become" them.

Furthermore, neither are we saying that those who will be born into God's family will ever have the same power or authority as the Father or Christ does. Of course *not*.

What we *are* saying, is that human beings will become members of the same God family — composed of the same Spirit, doing the same Work and living the same level of life as are God the Father and Jesus Christ.

but we will not lose our unique awareness and our individual personalities. We will not be diffused into any "cosmic consciousness," we will not be absorbed by any "infinite intelligence"; and we will not be swallowed up by any "universal love."

All of these philosophies have one point in common: They preach the utter dissolution of the individual human personality. You are to be diffused into the "cosmic consciousness," absorbed by the "infinite intelligence" and swallowed up by "universal love" — much like a drop of yellow paint which becomes completely diffused after being dropped into the ocean, or like a decaying human body which becomes totally absorbed into the surrounding soil after many years in its grave, or perhaps like those hapless human minds which were swallowed up by the invading monster brains which terrified us in the science-fiction movies of the 1950s.

The Bible absolutely repudiates all such attempts to destroy the dignity of each distinctive human

mind. Human beings will always retain their individuality — we will become *individual personalities* in the Father's God family.

the members of God's family in tomorrow's world will be *more distinct* from one another than members of the human family are distinct from one another in today's world. All will have their own individually specific memories, abilities, personality traits, jobs, responsibilities, preferences and ideas. But there won't be any competition or conflict, because the old culprit — self-centered human nature — will have long since been eliminated.

We will generate our own unique ideas, create our own original thoughts, enjoy our own preferential activities, fulfill our own personal responsibilities, and on and on.

When mankind is promised to be made "equal with God," that, of course, means that individual human beings will eventually become *qualitatively* equal with God and obviously does *not* mean that individual human beings will eventually become *quantitatively* equal with either God the Father or Jesus Christ. Being "equal with God" only means that we will be in the same God family as the Father and Christ are in — and has nothing to do with an equality of power, authority, intelligence, etc., *within* the God family.

In other words those people who will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52) will share the same exact *qualities* of life which today are only possessed by God the Father and Jesus Christ.

For example, one of God's *qualities* is that He has inherent life — He generates *eternal life intrinsically within Himself*. Because *God is life*. "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself..." (John 5:26). Consequently, since the two original Beings in the God family created all mankind to grow to become *qualita-*

tively like themselves, when we individual human beings are changed into new, individual *God-Beings*, we, too, will generate eternal life *intrinsically* within ourselves (John 7:38; 4:14; 3:16; 6:47; etc.).

But, *quantitatively*, man will never equal God the Creator; just as surely as *God the Spokesman* (Jesus Christ) will Himself never, quantitatively, equal God the Father (John 14:28). These two original Beings in the God family will always remain in overall command. Their absolute authority will never be in question — although they will delight in sharing progressively more of their responsibilities with their offspring as the God family continues to expand throughout space and time.

a practical analogy will help us to more fully comprehend the wonders of God's magnificent purpose and the majesty of our individual calling.

Picture the model of a large family corporation (the Rothschilds of Europe are perhaps the best example): The "patriarch" father founded the company "from nothing" many years ago. He labored long, by himself to build the business. When he had sons, he desired to prepare them for the time when they could become an integral part of his organization. He nurtured them and he trained them. And so, after receiving all the proper education and experience, his sons matured into able, dedicated men.

Their father now took great pleasure in turning over much administrative responsibility and governing authority to his sons. Each son was placed in charge of one major division — in addition to occupying a seat on the board of directors.

As a direct result, the business was able to expand enormously in many directions at once. The father, of course, still presided over and ran the whole operation — yet it was the collective strength of his sons which

Genesis 1:26

In one short, most remarkable statement, God sums up the whole purpose of human life — the primary, underlying reason why God created all physical reality. This declaration gives the all-encompassing reason: "... Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" This is the first biblical reference to man — and with it God announces His firm intention to begin to reproduce "after His kind."

Prior to this verse, the basic life-principle "after its kind" (literally from the Hebrew "to, or for, its appointed division") is repeatedly stressed as God's guiding design for the reproduction and purpose of all life. And so, just as God had created the plants and the animals "after their kind," He created man after His own kind — after the God kind.

Why is the phrase "after its kind" never applied to man — even though it is consistently applied to all other life? The answer: Because the purpose of

human life is *not* to physically reproduce after the human kind — but to be *spiritually reproduced after the God kind!*

In the same manner as a newborn spider, a bird, or whale was designed to grow up to become exactly like its family and parents, every human being was designed to grow up to become exactly like his spiritual family and parent — *exactly like God, exactly like the Father and exactly like Christ.* Because just as the animals had begun to reproduce themselves, God had begun to reproduce Himself.

Over the centuries men have devoted multiple tens of thousands of volumes in search of "the plan," "the purpose," and "the answer" to mankind's existence. All to no avail!

In striking contrast, *God reveals all three* — He spells out in precise detail the *exact* plan, the *full* purpose, and the *ultimate* answer for each human life. He does it in *just four* original He-

brew words (ten in English): "Let us [the God family] make man in our [the God family's] image, after our [the God family's] likeness."

How much clearer could one state that the God family — comprising, at the present time, only two Beings, God the Father and God the Son — created man for the purpose of joining them as literal members in the eternally ruling God family?

Genesis 1:26 is the critical verse which presents the foundational purpose of human life. It informs us that the God family created us in their *image* and after their *likeness*.

Many have heard Genesis 1:26 recited often — and familiarity has bred contempt. So, quite unintentionally, we water it down — so that "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" is interpreted as "representational," or as a metaphor, or a figure of speech — anything but the simple meaning of the words themselves.

Psalms 17:15

In this psalm, David stated that he looked forward to the time when he would awake from death and bear the likeness of

The Hebrew word here translated "likeness" (*temunah*) is nowhere used to directly represent God Himself (Num. 12:8; Isa. 4:12, 15, where "appearance" is the translation); but it is completely different Hebrew from the fleshly (*gashmi*) "likeness" of God. If human beings were to bear the likeness of God,

Revelation 3:9; 19:10; 22:8-9

Revelation 3:9 states that physical humans living under the soon-coming government of God will worship before the feet of God's present-day human servants.

But Revelation 19:10 and 22:8-9 state that human beings must worship before the feet of *only* the greatest angelic beings (and *not* certainly not before other human beings). We are commanded to worship God alone.

There is only one logical way these two statements can be in diametric contrast — and the way to that

1 John 3:1-2

These two remarkable verses do not need any explanation.

Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called "children of God" — and that is not just what we are called, but what we are: Our heredity on the Godward side is no mere figure of speech . . . We don't know what we shall become [we cannot comprehend how we shall appear] in the future. We only know that reality were to break through, we should reflect his likeness — we shall be like him. . . .

quade the family corporation grow great.

The sons, of course, enjoyed the same quality of life as did their father - intellectually and financially - but the father would always remain somewhat richer in all areas. The sons counseled and advised their father on all decisions - but the father would always be the boss. His word would always be final. Everyone thoroughly loved his work - and his life. A family atmosphere prevailed. And when each son would have his own sons, the ruling family would geometrically increase, causing the family corporation to continually grow.

So it will be when human beings become sons in the eternally ruling God family.

After being nurtured and trained in this physical life, after receiving all the proper education and experience, we will be able to assume the positions of enormous responsibility and authority which Almighty God will take great pleasure in sharing with us.

At that time each individual son will have precisely the same relationship with God the Father in administering the entire universe as human sons have today with their physical father when they help administer their large family corporation. And, in the very same analogous manner, we, as sons of God, will enjoy the same quality of life that God the Father enjoys.

Furthermore, as strange as it sounds, we will counsel and advise our Creator Father - we will have suggestions and opinions which will actually help God the Father administer the whole universe; suggestions and opinions which will be original and unique.

Life will be scintillating. Eternity could never get boring: "... In thy [God's] presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11). And the God family will forever expand beyond all the bounds which our restricted human imaginations have erected.

What will we look like & sons in God's family? There's only one way to find out. What does Jesus Christ look like today?

How will that help? Jesus Christ is our elder brother in the God family - the pioneer of our salvation (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10, 5:9). What He looks like today is what we will look like in the resurrection. Because Christ has promised to give to us just exactly the same quality of glorified body which God the Father has given to Him. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them [all of Christ's disciples]." (John. 17:22).

And Christ did more than "just" promise. He swore to Himself (Gen. 22:16; Heb. 6:13) and He fulfilled it by an oath (Heb. 6:17). This means that God and Christ are putting their own names on the line. They are staking their eternal reputations, risking everything for man.

Let's read the present-day description of Jesus Christ as described by John in the book of Revelation: "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head

and his hair were white like wool as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flaming fire, and his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shingeth in his strength. And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last. (Rev. 1:13,17)

What you have just read is a prophetic description of what you can look like in a very few years. You can go further. Read about your potential future environment. Read about the indescribable majesty of the throne of God the Father in the fourth chapter of Revelation. Read about the fantastically beautiful "portable" throne of God the Creator in chapters 1 and 10 of Ezekiel. Finally - and the most mind-expanding of all - read through the 21st and 22nd chapters of Revelation. Discover the "imagination-defying, incomprehensible, new heaven" and "new earth".

And it all can be yours - everything - forever - because you can be an heir of God!

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open door through **BLACK AFRICA**

"... Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it..." said Jesus Christ concerning the Church of God (Rev. 3:8).

On November 2, 1973, Mr. Harold Jackson and I completed the fourth annual African baptizing tour. Lasting three months and covering over 30,000 miles, the tour included ten countries. Also visited were the Canary Islands, just off the west coast of the African continent.

For three months the second largest continent in the world became our home away from home. A land of stark contrasts, varied cultures, multiple tribes and sub-tribes, Africa has warm and sincere people, gorgeous natural scenic beauty of verdant rain-forests, shimmering waterfalls and lush countryside — as well as the depressing sights of squalor, poverty, sickness and disease.

Tour Logistics

Many months of planning and organization went into the tour from the Bricket Wood campus. After the requests had been analyzed and plotted in terms of location, Harold Jackson, Robert Morton and their assistants sent letters to our members and co-workers who had requested per-

sonal counsel from a representative of Ambassador College or the Worldwide Church of God. We then informed them that our representatives would be visiting their country on a particular date, arranging an appointment at a set time and location. In this way we were able to organize an appropriate number of visits per day.

Because most of our responses are from our English-language publications, foreign languages and various African dialects presented no major problem. Also, the vast majority of those we visited had studied our Correspondence Course and already had a working knowledge of the doctrines of God's Church.

An average day of visiting would begin at 8:00 a.m. with about fifteen people scheduled to meet with us in our hotel suite or meeting room.

We would begin by going through the pronunciation of those long African names. I must admit we did get better as the months went by. We can now handle with relative ease such beautiful "structures" as Mr. Dede-Dwanena, Mr. and Mrs. Agyemang-Duah and Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Imifiabomon.

After the introductions we would answer questions about

John Kilburn - GN



Roland Sampson — GN

Members at Feast of Tabernacles at Victoria Falls, Rhodesia (above). Right: The spectacular falls, 355 feet high and over a mile wide.

news of the Work, the College, new publications and the Bible. Then there would be a short lecture followed by private personal counseling.

After a full day of these activities, often the phone would ring at 9 or 10 p.m. Someone who had traveled a great distance would want personal counsel. Of course he or she was welcomed at any hour.

This year we visited 18 cities. Of the 348 people counseled, 43 were baptized. We missed 171 who were scheduled for visits — partially because many letters were lost in the mail. Another factor was that with the six-day work week, many felt they could not take the necessary time from a work day to travel and visit with us and still observe the Sabbath.

The First Stop

Our first stop was Casablanca, Morocco, in North Africa. Here we were greeted by the smiling faces of the entire congregation — all three members of the Church of God! After a good meal together and a Bible study on the Sabbath, we were on our way to our next stop — Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. Here we had one visit scheduled, but were unable to make contact.

The next day we returned to the continent, landing in Monrovia, Liberia, at 2:00 p.m. With a visit scheduled at 3:00 p.m., we arrived about the same time as our visitors — a married couple.

The man is a university student studying in Monrovia. His wife lives at his home 300 miles away. His

wife had traveled that 300 miles to join her husband to meet God's ministers. This was the second year the man had met with us, and this time he was ready for baptism. This was as much a joy for us as for the two of them — the first baptism of the tour.

Ghana

Upon leaving Monrovia, we flew to Accra, Ghana, where we spent the next ten days. The visits were profitable as well as rewarding, especially with those whom we had met the year before.

After leaving Accra, we drove 160 miles northwest to Kumasi to spend an additional five days. The drive proved very helpful to us in getting an overall view of the landscape, enabled us to converse with the



people and to see many of the outlying villages and towns away from the hustle and bustle of the big cities.

Our driver, Abraham, was invaluable as an interpreter. Even though he spoke English fluently as well as a few dialects, some of the dialects outside his locale were difficult for him to speak, even though he could understand them.

After arriving in Kumasi and spending a Sabbath with our members, they prepared a 100% African dinner for us. Phonetically speaking, it is called Fu-Fu. It consisted of pounded yams or cassava served with a very richly seasoned soup made of goat meat, beef or fish (and sometimes all three). It was very tasty.

After driving back to Accra,

we then flew over to Douala, Cameroon. Douala is basically a French-speaking town, but thankfully we had no language problem because we visited with a couple from the university who majored in French and English, and they proved very helpful in assisting us with any language difficulties.

Nigeria

At last we were off to Nigeria, where we spent 28 days and visited six major cities—Port Harcourt, Enugu, Benin City, Lagos, Ibadan and Kano.

This year was only the second time we have been granted visas into Nigeria. However, it was quite

evident that God wanted His members visited and His prospectives counseled.

Upon leaving London we had entry visas granting us permission to stay only 14 days, and yet we had a schedule of visits for 28 days. As we entered the country, we asked for an extension of a little over two weeks.

After finding we were from Ambassador Collège, which publishes *The Plain Truth* magazine, the customs and immigration officer gladly extended permission for an *extra two months*. It certainly was encouraging to find favor in the eyes of the authorities and get comments like "Keep that magazine coming."

With over 29,000 copies of the English *Plain Truth* going into this

BLACK AFRICA *Continued*

country, the Work in Nigeria is growing.

Lack of hygiene is just one of the many major problems facing Nigeria. Thousands of years ago God told ancient Israel, when bringing them out of Egypt (like Nigeria, a land filled with its customs, cure-alls and traditions): "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex. 15:26).

Nationwide obedience to God's laws would bring what all people desire: radiant health, prosperity and happiness. This is the ultimate answer to Africa's problems.

As would be expected, the health and welfare of our Nigerian members and co-workers is very good, due to obedience to God's laws. They have experienced many miracles of healing and other blessings.

One Nigerian man from Benin City lost a good teaching job because of refusing to work on God's Sabbath. This posed no undue hardship, because he has now started his own primary school and has been able to employ some of the Worldwide Church of God members.

Despite a few bookings on cancelled flights (which we were able to adjust in time), hotel accommodation mix-ups and reckless taxi drivers, we fared well in Nigeria.

South Africa and Rhodesia

We left Nigeria from the city of Kano to go to Johannesburg, South Africa.

From there Mr. Jackson went to Mossel Bay in South Africa to conduct the Feast of Tabernacles for over 100 Africans.

I observed the Feast in Victoria Falls, Rhodesia, where over 70 members attended. At Victoria Falls, responsibilities were shared

by the managers of our office in Rhodesia — the first half by Mr. Peter Nathan and the last half by Mr. John White.

Victoria Falls presents an ideal millennial setting for the Feast. The awe-inspiring falls are 355 feet high and 5,580 feet wide, and the mighty sounds produced seem to continually praise God.

While visiting in Rhodesia, I stopped at a village school 100 miles from the city of Salisbury. I was the first American these young primary students had ever seen. Their English was very good, but they thought my accent was "funny." When asked if they knew where America was, no hands went up. But when asked if they wanted to go there, *all hands went up!* Although the school was not well equipped (by our standards not equipped at all), the discipline was remarkably outstanding.

Zambia

After the Feast of Tabernacles, Mr. Jackson and I met again in order to continue the tour into Zambia. Though only a few short miles separated our Zambian members from Victoria Falls, they were unable to attend the Feast due to political border closings between Zambia and Rhodesia. Similarly, we were unable to visit members in Uganda because that country's borders were closed to American tourists.

Our Zambian members were very much encouraged by our visit. Even in the face of missing the opportunity of attending the Feast of Tabernacles, they knew God would continually bless them if they did their part (see Rom. 8:28).

From Zambia we went to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where we stayed two days. Here our visits were few, but very rewarding. One visit was with a man who was contacted in 1971 and missed in 1972. After traveling all night, he met us at 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning. After two

years of obeying God and diligently studying his Bible, the Correspondence Course and other literature, he was baptized and encouraged to continue serving God.

From Dar es Salaam we flew to our final stop in Africa — Nairobi, Kenya.

Since Kenya still maintains its wildlife, we spent part of one day on safari, taking pictures and enjoying the beauty of God's creation. Our visits in Kenya were very encouraging, including one with a lady whose husband managed a 40,000-acre ranch.

God's Work in Africa

The Work of God continues to grow in this area of the world. The twofold commission of God's Church — preaching and publishing the gospel as a warning and a witness to the world (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20), plus feeding the flock (John 21:15, 17) — is truly being fulfilled on the African continent. A vital aspect of the baptizing tour is the opportunity to visit with our members and prospectives in remote areas. As one member wrote me: "The inspiration drawn from the personal accounts of your experiences in God's Church is indeed immeasurable. We pray that God will establish us more firmly in His faith in these parts in times to come."

Those select few who are called today (in Africa and the rest of the world), and who continue to overcome, will be pillars in the government of God as kings, rulers, teachers and priests: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26).

Today, Africa is beset by much sickness, disease, pain and suffering. But soon it, along with the entire world, will enjoy Utopian happiness and rich blessings through obedience to God's laws. God speed the wonderful World Tomorrow!

— Roland Sampson

UPDATE

SOUTH AMERICAN AWAKENING FOR A NORTH AMERICAN

★ santiago

My husband, Dr. Charles Dorothy of the Spanish Department in Pasadena, California; our oldest daughter Charlye Ann and I were in Santiago, Chile, prior to traveling to a convention at the beach village of El Tabo. (We arrived in Santiago on October 5, 1973.) Since September 11th and the death of President Allende, Chile was in a state of siege. The military took over the government by force. The military was law. A military *junta* (which simply means "group") now rules Chile. It is headed by General Pinochet of the army, in company with heads of the air force, navy and police force.

For the first three days of the military takeover, a 24-hour-a-day curfew was imposed. No one was to leave his home. During the three days of the takeover, the people were forced to eat whatever food they had on hand. Those who left their homes to venture onto the streets were assumed to be the ones who wanted to fight it out—the military versus the Communists and extremists. Then the 24-hour curfew was shortened from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., unless changed by a radio announcement in the afternoon.

We had made plans to eat dinner the first evening with our representative in Santiago, Señor Filador Illesca (a retired policeman of 30 years' service), and his wife Edith. But late in the afternoon, Señora Illesca called to say the curfew had been changed to eight o'clock. Our dinner date had to be postponed. She warned us not to look outside if we heard any shooting. If snipers were at work, the military might shoot at any movement from surrounding windows. Promptly at eight in the evening the hustle of the big city changed like magic into the quiet of the countryside. From our window we could hear the roar of a rushing river. Before the takeover it was most

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unusual for anyone in the capital city to hear the great Mapocho River — even from a short distance. The noise of the traffic was far greater. But afterwards there was not a soul in the park across the street, nor a car in sight. At the hour of curfew twelve million Chileans were shut in their homes.

That night a battery of shooting woke us several times. And as if that weren't enough, there was an earthquake that reached 5.5 on the Richter Scale. There were 25 tremors during the night (though no damage anywhere); but from the ninth floor of our apartment, we suddenly learned that the higher you are, the more force quakes have. We were shaken, in more ways than one.

Food for Thought

Earlier that day the Señora had put a cooked chicken (which she had raised), a dozen fresh eggs, a head of lettuce, a loaf of bread and a can of peaches in the refrigerator. She also selected for us a hard-to-find bottle of the highest quality Chilean wine.

In a brief shopping trip in the afternoon, my husband could not find any oil, mayonnaise or butter. Neither did he see any bread — which explained why the Señora had apologized that her loaf was three days old. He was, however, able to buy some cheese and fruit.

Mark Harris GN

For the first few days the people in Santiago stood for hours in long lines in order to receive a set portion of bread. And then many were turned away empty-handed when the bread ran out.

When we arrived the price of a loaf went from 11 to 40 escudos — and was expected to reach 100. Many decided to do without until the economy stabilized itself.

So, with shades drawn that first night in Chile, we ate our dinner alone, serenaded by the musical murmur of the river. We had chicken, lettuce, dry rye bread, cheese and red wine. And we were thankful.

A Nation Forced Indoors

At first I wondered how it was possible that a whole nation could obediently be in their homes by a set hour — and not a minute later.

After more shooting the next evening, and discovering that several bodies a night are dumped in the Mapocho River (some of them landed ashore in front of our apartment just a block away), I began to understand why they stayed indoors. We heard that a 15-year-old boy who ran in fear after the curfew had begun was immediately shot to death — without even being questioned.

There is a phrase printed on buildings and walls there: *pa' es*

fuerza — “peace is power.” The people feared for their lives if they were not obedient! We also conformed with respect — and *with time to spare!*

Peace of Mind

As for fear, we were not afraid as long as we obeyed the rules. During the day the people ran about at as fast a pace as ever. They even smiled at the presidential palace, which was defaced by bullets and gutted by bombs. The majority were happy to be free of the Socialist government of Allende, which was really a burden on them.

The total inner destruction of such a fine public building was appalling. But the solid frame remained and repair, financed by donations and grants from a patriotic people, was soon under way.

The people hope to restore the palace to even greater splendor than before.

But despite the smiles there was an inner uneasiness. We were warned not to leave valuables in plain sight in our room, in case the military might enter and be tempted to confiscate them.

An unusual thing happened the last night of our convention (95 in attendance) at El Tabo, Chile. For some unknown reason, for one night only the curfew was changed to 12:30 a.m. This was a real blessing



Recreation at the Feast in Argentina; Mrs. Dorothy (second from left) and Dr. Dorothy (third from right).

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to us because it was the night of the local fun show.

And what a show the Chileans put on! All the entertainment was intertwined in a play with a country *huaso* (Chilean cowboy) theme. The owner of the *estancia* (ranch) was dressed in a festive costume. He was played by Sr. Santiago Garcia, one of the leading men in the area. He and his "family" entertained an American tourist (Ken Ryland of Pasadena) who humorously butchered the Spanish language with a *gringo* accent.

The show featured young children as well as the older generation, colorful costumes, typical songs and dances. All lines and acts were performed with a professional and natural air. We have never seen a fun show to surpass it!

Have Time, Will Travel

Next, we traveled to Sierra de la Ventana, Argentina. It took us a full 24-hour day by car, plane, taxi and train. A crowd of people met us at the train, which was within walking distance of our hotel. Nestled in the mountains of this country town, 72 were gathered for the eight-day convention (called the Feast of Tabernacles).

It was pleasant and peaceful there, but not having to be in by 10 o'clock seemed very strange.

Leaving Sierra de la Ventana, we

visited Bahia Blanca, where we have a congregation of 60 Church members. Mr. Robert Flores serves this group regularly; and about once a month or so he goes to the church in Santiago, where we have 70 members. Also, he occasionally visits various other groups in Chile and Uruguay.

On the way home we visited several people interested in this Work. The most thrilling and touching of these visits was in Ecuador. Here we met Sr. Eduardo Mendoza and his fine family. (We had previously met his oldest daughter, Maria Clementina, when she came to the United States.) Sr. Mendoza is president of the Dale Carnegie Institute in Ecuador.

This was an historic visit and an emotional one for us. Sr. Mendoza became the first member of the Worldwide Church of God in Ecuador. He is well educated and has a large library in a fine home. We hope we can use his leadership abilities in the future.

A Rude Awakening

Leaving Ecuador, we arrived late in Lima, Peru, with the prospect of only three and a half hours of sleep in order to make our flight connections. Exhausted, we fell asleep only to be awakened at three in the morning. The still of the night was invaded by blasts that sounded like

more than bullets, but less than bombs.

I woke up thinking we must be back in Chile or in the midst of some kind of skirmish or civil war. I decided the safest place was under my covers, and fell back to sleep. But before the alarm went off at 5:30 a.m., the blasting occurred two more times.

In the morning we discovered it was rockets that had filled the air. But there was no war — just part of a celebration honoring the dead saints. It seemed ironic to me that in worshiping the dead, not even the living could have any peace!

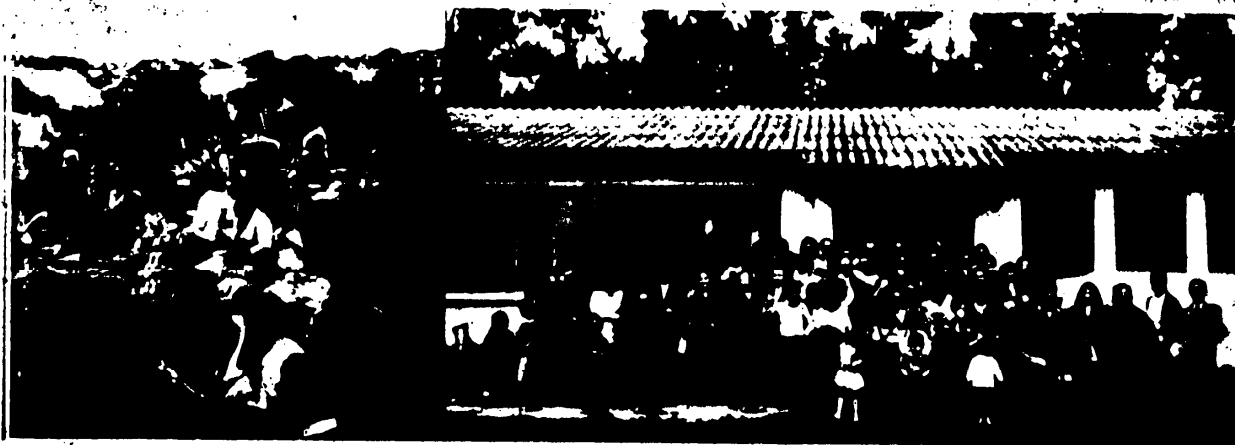
We learned that ten people were killed that night, trampled to death by a mob in a religious procession.

Land of Contrasts

When I traveled to South America, I had an awakening. I saw a rich and beautiful continent filled with active, intelligent people. But I also saw, paradoxically, a lack of modern conveniences, a lack of abundance for the majority, and political upheaval more severe than in our own country.

The trip made me realize the extent of my own personal and our national blessings and made me even more thankful and grateful for them all.

In Ann Dorothy



Feast of Tabernacles, El Tabo, Chile. Members outside meeting hall (above) and at barbecue picnic (middle).

UPDATE

CAMPAIGN SEATTLE

The site of the 1962 World Fair in Seattle, Washington, was the location for the thirteenth Personal Appearance conducted by Garner Ted Armstrong.

In spite of inclement weather, Mr. Armstrong's three-night lecture series produced capacity crowds. In fact, overflow audiences jammed the auditorium all three nights to produce a total attendance of over 10,000.

Evening Topics

The first night of the series, Mr. Ted Armstrong spoke about the continuing world crisis in terms of energy, the Middle East and potential nuclear war. He related today's problems to the very relevant gospel of Jesus Christ.

The subject of the second night was about the real Jesus and how we, in this world, desperately need His help to reorder our lives.

On the third night, Mr. Armstrong spoke about this being the end time, together with each individual's need for real repentance.

Bible Study

In addition to the 83 new people who attended the first follow-up Bible study, Fred Brogaard (local minister of the Worldwide Church of God) reported that he also received over 30 phone calls requesting private visits to counsel about baptism or pertaining to other personal matters. (If you are desirous of such

personal counsel, it is not necessary to wait for a campaign to come to your town. Simply write to *The Good News*'s office nearest you, requesting a personal appointment with one of our ministers.

Your adults of the Worldwide Church of God in Seattle served as ushers and usherettes. They also manned the literature displays to handle the many booklet requests inspired by the evening's message.

Taping for Television

Ambassador College Television production videotaped all three nights of the campaign. These tapes will be aired as television specials throughout the United States and Canada this summer. The auditorium, used by the Seattle Opera and Symphony Companies, provided an excellent facility for the taping session.

Joe Clavin — GN

Although the audience had to endure the temporary discomfort of distracting bright lights and equipment, millions more will eventually be able to view these powerful campaign lectures via television in their own homes. Be sure to watch for announcements in *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News* for the dates this "special" will be aired locally in your area.

Truly the gospel of the Kingdom of God is being preached and proclaimed in many major population centers in this tragically sick and dying world. □



QUESTION: "It seems of late I have been blessed with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Your television program set me going along these lines many months ago. My wife and I are mainstream Christians. We accept that these must be the end times; but where do we go for salvation? How do we join God's true Church? By that I mean - logical though your fine articles are - how do we know that mainstream Christianity is at fault and that yours is right? Could it not be that yours is the false church spoken of as misleading people in the end times?"

"Please don't be offended by these questions. They are sincere and we are sincerely trying to find the truth. I hope you will have some material available that can ease our minds. It seems to me that what you report is correct, but what if you are wrong and I am misled? That's what I can't get out of my mind. It is important to myself, but what about my family? I believe that God will lead me in the right direction, but surely He expects me to do some work towards uncovering the truth. This letter comes from the heart."

Mr. M. J. R. G.,
Rexdale, Ontario, Canada

ANSWER: Our answer is from the heart to some very fair and logical questions, and we are certainly not offended.

You specifically asked "How do we join God's true Church?"

The answer is one cannot decide to join the body of Christ. It is something God must put you into. We are instructed by the Apostle Paul that "... now hath God set the members every

Q & A

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18; also see Rom. 12:4-5).

It is God alone who decides who will compose the body of Christ. It is God who adds to the Church those whom He chooses to be saved: "... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

How, then, does God add a member to the Church? Is it a matter of signing on some dotted line? What is it that signifies membership in the Church of God?

Paul informs us: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

It is the Holy Spirit - which is the power of Christ (Acts 1:8) - which puts us into the body of Christ. We are immersed or plunged into the Church by the receipt of God's Spirit (Write for our free article entitled "How You Can Be Imbued

With the Power of God." Also request our free booklet titled *All About Water Baptism.*)

One cannot put himself into the Church by "deciding to join." When he becomes a son of God, by having and being led by the Holy Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14), then God has put him into the Church.

This is explained further in our free booklet *Where Is God's True Church Today?*

Chapter one ("The Salvation Supermarket") of this publication examines the panorama of pre-packaged Christianity. Chapter two ("Why So Many Denominations?") shows how, when and where this religious babylon of multiple denominations got started.

Chapter three ("What Is the Church?") shows what constitutes the Church. It explains that the Church is not a building, but the members of the body of Christ.

Finally, chapter four ("How to Find the True Church") gives several biblical qualifications identifying the true Church. It lists the twelve places in the New Testament where the true Church is actually named.

We suggest that you write for *Where Is God's True Church Today?* Then do as the Bereans did - search the Scriptures (in this case especially

Warren Watson GN

those quoted in this booklet), whether these things be so (see Acts 17:11).

If you do, we are confident that you will come to the same exact conclusion that the Bereans did. "Therefore [as a result of their diligent checking and searching] many of them believed..." (verse 12).



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JUST WHAT IS "STRONG MEAT"?

Since we have expanded the circulation of The Good News to include sending over 200,000 copies into the homes of those interested in and who support this Work of Almighty God, some few members of the Worldwide Church of God have expressed concern that they would no longer be able to read the "strong meat" they need for their spiritual growth. (The Good News was once exclusively for the Church membership.) Actually, only a few such negative comments have been received compared to the avalanche of fine letters expressing sincere appreciation for this magazine.

It is our intention to publish the truth of Scripture straight from the shoulder, challenging and thought provoking, but not offensively so. We believe The Good News contains "strong meat" when this expression is clearly understood. I have asked Mr. Brian Knowles, the managing editor, to write an article clearly revealing the meaning of the term "strong meat." Here is his article.

*C. Wayne Cole
Executive Editor*

by Brian Knowles

"Strong meat," asserted the Apostle Paul, "belongeth to them that are of full age..." (Heb. 5:14). But what is strong meat? Is it to be equated with ranting, shouting, apologetic hellfire and brimstone sermons? Does strong meat refer to "powerful" correction and rebuking? Or is it something else?

Many Christians have mistakenly assumed that "strong meat" and loud noise are synonymous. They have measured a sermon's strength by the volume of the speaker's voice. They have associated a bulge-veined, foam-flecked, threat-filled delivery with the strong meat of God's Word.

"My that was a powerful sermon!" exclaimed the little old lady as the perspiration-drenched minister left the speaker's platform. And perhaps a great deal of power had been expended — but that doesn't mean the sermon contained "strong meat"!

Let me explain:

It's a mistake to associate noise, volume and decibel level with profundity. A loud sermon is not necessarily a strong one. The minister may have been making a very simple and straightforward point. He may have made it loudly and perhaps effectively. But we should not assume that the sermon constituted the kind of "strong meat" Paul had in mind.

Hitler's Speeches

Adolf Hitler was a powerful speaker. He had the ability to move audiences — in fact, to move a nation. He could rant by the hour and somehow hold the attention of tens of thousands of mesmerized Germans. He raged with unbridled emotional energy — and shouted the glories of the Aryan peoples. Millions were stirred to follow his twisted leadership — to national oblivion!

Adolf Hitler believed — as did his propaganda minister — that if you told the people a lie enough times, and with sufficient conviction, they

would eventually swallow it. And he was right.

His speeches were heady wine to the post-Depression German. But they were *not* strong meat!

Hitler mouthed meaningless slogans, hollow blatherings and capitalized on national vanity to gain a vast following. But the blind led the blind to national ignominy and defeat at the hands of the Allies.

Why?

Because inside the hollow shell of Adolf Schicklgruber was a hollow shell of a man. He believed, without foundation, that he had a divine mandate to plunder, kill, destroy and commit genocide. His foam-flecked mouthings agitated the populace to shout "Heil Hitler!" and "Sieg Heil." Millions stood enraptured by his power, his charismatic ability to stir and manipulate the minds and emotions of a nation.

But Adolf Hitler was a shallow, narrow-minded, morally defunct, irresponsible despot. His speeches were redundant and hollow. His ideas were trite and even downright silly at times. He was a mindless pawn in the hands of a higher — yet *not* divine — power. His demoniacal delivery showed no real depth or insight. His philosophy had little form and no real substance. He was

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee. . . ."

Hosae 4:6

a little man in every sense of the word.

Yet he stirred millions to follow his insane leadership! How? By power, by force of personality, by "charisma."

But those who dared to think and to reason knew better. They knew Hitler for what he was — a mindless madman. They recognized his lack of depth — his superficial slogans. Truly, he was a prisoner of his own slogans.

All of this illustrates a very important point. To borrow a thought

from Shakespeare, a sermon can be "full of sound and fury" and yet signify *nothing!* And an article or book can be loaded with rhetoric and verbosity, and yet can be a meaningless collection of misarranged words. Of course, this is not to say that a speech cannot be both audibly powerful and deeply profound (or an article very well written in terms of verbiage) and at the same time be extremely stimulating and thought-provoking.

The True Meaning of Strong Meat

When the Apostle Paul spoke of "strong meat," he meant *depth*. He meant *profundity*. He was referring to spiritual principles which are more difficult to grasp, harder to wrap one's mind around.

Let's prove that!

One of the first rules of Bible study is to check the context. Let's look at the context of Paul's originally quoted statement.

Paul had been explaining to the Hebrews about the *priesthood of Christ*. He was describing Christ's compassion for sinners and His experience as a physical human being. He referred to Christ's role as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

He wanted to tell them more about Jesus Christ: "Of whom we have many things to say, and *hard* [difficult] to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:11).

The attitude of the Hebrews limited their capacity to comprehend deeper spiritual truths concerning Christ. Paul was correcting them very sternly, even *powerfully* for their attitude. Yet that correction did *not* constitute strong meat!

The problem with the readers of Paul's epistle was that they had never built anything on the *foundation* of the basic doctrines. In fact, their knowledge of even those basic principles had atrophied as a result of their spiritual lethargy and stubbornness. They now needed to go back and relearn the fundamentals.

"For when for the time ye ought

to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and *not of strong meat*" (verse 12).

Paul's correction did *not* constitute strong meat!

The Hebrews were suffering from lethargy. They had lost their love

"The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge."

Proverbs 18:15

for study. They were not probing any deeper into the profound spiritual truths of God's Word. Paul described their problem in verse 13:

"For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe."

The Corinthian church found itself in the same unenviable position. Paul said he "could not speak unto you [the Corinthian brethren] as unto spiritual [mature Christians], but as unto carnal [brethren still enmeshed in schisms, strifes, and divisions], even as unto *babes in Christ*. I have fed you with milk, and *not with meat*: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able [because they were still babes in Christ]" (1 Cor. 3:1-2).

Again, Paul's correction (throughout the whole book) did *not* constitute strong meat. He told the Corinthians that he was *restrained* from giving them any because they simply couldn't bear it.

Strong meat has to do with being *skillful* in the Word of God! It has to do with understanding the *deeper* things of God. But these deep things can only be understood when the foundation is properly laid. The deeper understanding is then *built* upon these axiomatic fundamentals.

Should We Relay the Foundation?

Constantly relaying the foundation is an exercise in futility! The Christian must *once* lay that foundation of basic understanding and

then *build on it*—attaining real spiritual *maturity*.

Granted, a little maintenance work may be needed now and then, but if the foundation has to be constantly rebuilt from "scratch," then it probably was not built right in the first place!

It is those who are of "FULL age"—those who are spiritually mature and grown—who need strong meat. Does it seem sensible that a full-grown, mature Christian would constantly need to be corrected and shouted at all the time?

Absurd!

Let's lay to rest the myth that strong meat is to be equated with correction and voice level. Let's bury the old notions which die so hard, and press on to greater things—deeper things.

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

An experienced Christian is not going to have great difficulty determining what is evil and what is not. He does not have to be threatened into obeying Christ. He does not have to be warned of the consequences of sin over and over again, ad nauseam.

Rather, he has been making choices for a long time. He knows and recognizes evil and good. He is on the road to eternal life—he walks with God.

But this does not mean that even a mature Christian will not occasionally need strong correction—both from God and the pulpit. (See

Hebrews 12:5-13. The Apostle Paul rebuked the Apostle Peter in front of the Syrian congregation (Gal. 2:11, 14)). We need to maintain the *proper balance*.

How the Mature Christian Grows

Becoming a mature Christian is, however, primarily a *learning* process. The mature Christian should grow in grace and in knowledge. He should probe ever deeper and thrill to the revelation of the great mysteries of God's magnificent plan. He can become wise beyond normal human capacity by exercising the Spirit of God (Ps. 119:99-100). He should strive to plumb the depths of the mysteries of God. The mature Christian should build an ever-deeper rapport with his God—a



Going to College?

Are you a college student or a high school senior thinking about college? Are you satisfied with college or wondering which college to attend? Are you searching for a missing dimension in your education? If so, you may want to know about Ambassador.

At Ambassador College students learn the real purpose of human life. They learn to recapture true values, lasting values, values that make life truly happy, fulfilling and worthwhile. Ambassador College teaches students how to live, not merely how to earn a living. The empty void, so often felt at other institutions, is filled at Ambassador College.

There are three Ambassador College campuses: one in Pasadena, California; one in Big

Sandy, Texas; one at Bricket Wood, England. If you are presently surveying the college scene and would like to know more about Ambassador College and how to apply, write to the Office of Admissions of one of the campuses. Ask for the current college catalog and an application for undergraduate admission.

For the Pasadena campus write to the Office of Admissions, Ambassador College, 300 West Green Street, Pasadena, California 91123. For the Texas campus write to the Office of Admissions, Ambassador College, Big Sandy, Texas 75755. For the campus in England write to the Office of Admissions, Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, St. Albans, Herts., England.

closer and closer relationship with his heavenly Father.

He should continue to search the Scriptures and seek knowledge of prophecy. He should page back and forth through the Maker's Instruction Book correlating, comparing and probing.

He can look into the spiritual mirror of the Word of God and see more and more of himself *and receive correction*. "For if we would judge ourselves [by reading and heeding the admonitions in God's Word], we should not be judged [corrected, chastened directly by God]" (I Cor. 11:31). But if we will not receive correction as mature Christians by the relatively gentle admonitions of God's Word, then God judges (corrects or chastens) us in a more direct manner so "that we should not be condemned with the world" (verse 32).

What human being in any one lifetime could really embrace all the depth and breadth of the written Word of God? Even the greatest prophets of antiquity desired to look into things of God that we can now understand. Should we then continue to drink milk and consume Pabulum? How would a grown adult look wearing a diaper and with a baby bottle in his mouth? Yet this is the manner in which some supposedly mature Christians are content to exist! In their spiritual infancy they misunderstand the true meaning of the term "strong meat."

What Peter Really Said

Some have used a statement made by the Apostle Peter to justify relaying the foundation over and over again. Let's examine it and see what it really says.

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth" (II Pet. 1:12).

Was Peter here justifying a constant rehash of the basics? Was he saying that one should re-explain again and again the fundamental principles concerning baptism, lay-

The Good News magazine is sent to an audience comprised of many levels of biblical understanding. Most of you are relatively new to the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God. Yet there are thousands of Church members who have known of many of these truths for some years.

We try to provide a *balanced diet* of "milk" and "meat" in the pages of *The Good News*. Future issues will contain basic articles

explaining foundational doctrines and teaching. But those who are older in the faith will also find many articles of a more profound nature. There will be some instruction, some exhortation and correction, much encouragement and help.

We hope to improve with each issue and we invite your comments and suggestions.

Thanks for reading *The Good News!*

ing on of hands, repentance from dead works and other foundational doctrines? Was he referring to the same thing Paul had referred to in the fifth and sixth chapters of the book of Hebrews?

Remember, Paul had told the Hebrews to "go on unto perfection; NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION..." (Heb. 6:1). If Peter had been saying "relay the foundation again and again," he would have been contradicting Paul. But God's Word is not self-contradictory.

Peter was talking about something else and in a different context.

Peter was near the time when he would die. He was *summing up* what he wanted the Church to adhere to and remember. He said: "Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (II Peter 1:15).

What are "these things" Peter is talking about? All we have to do is to check the context and find out. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith *virtue*; and to virtue *knowledge*; and to knowledge *temperance*; and to temperance *patience*; and to patience *godliness*; and to godliness *brotherly kindness*; and to brotherly kindness *charity* [love]. For if *these things* be in you,

and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh *these things* is blind, and cannot see afar off..." (verses 5-9).

Peter is clearly *not* talking about the basic doctrines of Hebrews 6:1. Rather, he is talking about certain attributes of Christian *character* which will aid the Christian in *growing* in knowledge -- in *building on* that foundation of basic doctrines. One of the very things Peter was advocating was the addition of *knowledge*.

Growing in Knowledge

It was the same Peter who said: "But *grow* in grace, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). And it was that very knowledge -- concerning Christ -- that Paul had said he couldn't get across to the Hebrews because they couldn't comprehend it yet!

And it was the same Peter who had stated that those who were "unlearned [uninstructed]" wrested and twisted Paul's writing (II Pet. 3:15-16).

Peter was one of the Bible's greatest advocates of *growing in knowledge*. Peter did not wish Christians to be merely rehashing the basics

over and over like children reciting simple nursery rhymes by rote memory. Peter did not contradict Paul by encouraging a constant rebuilding of the foundational doctrines — which every Christian should know and be thoroughly schooled in.

It is only they who *themselves* refuse to study and grow in knowledge who would twist Peter's writing to mean that they should be spiritual sticks-in-the-mud!

Those who have attained a certain amount of spiritual maturity have a need for *deeper* and *more profound* spiritual food than do "babes" in Christ. They must probe deeper into the mysteries of God's revelation and seek greater insights into His will. But they must be careful that they build this new-found knowledge properly and correctly on the basic fundamentals — lest they be sidetracked into false doctrines.

If all a mature Christian ever hears and reads are the "basics," he will soon stagnate in boredom. He will perhaps become contemptuous of even those truths which once created great joy and enthusiasm in his life. He will lose his zeal for Christianity! God has built in each human individual a need for progress and growth. We crave advancement. We yearn for deeper things. And God does not deny them to us if we will search, dig and study!

Is it intellectual vanity to want to grow in one's knowledge of the truth — or anything for that matter? Is it vain to desire more profound preaching and teaching?

Not according to your Bible!

The Maker's Instruction Book is filled with encouragement to grow in knowledge, to seek wisdom and understanding.

Seek Godly Wisdom

God instructs us to *exalt* wisdom — and it in turn will exalt us. We should crave and desire new and deeper understanding of God and His divine will. The prophets of old

"inquired and searched diligently" concerning the truths of God and His plan of salvation (I Peter 1:10-11).

The human mind is the pinnacle of God's physical creation. He does not expect us to allow it to become a vestigial organ. He does not expect us to "check our minds at the door" when we come into His Church. Rather, we should learn to use our minds more than ever! We are given God's Holy Spirit to *enhance* the function of our minds — *to lead us into all truth.*

God's Spirit, added to the spirit of man which is in him, increases our capacity to understand and probe deeper spiritual truths. We are then given great ability to evaluate worldly wisdom and place it in its correct perspective. We then realize that worldly wisdom must be *replaced* with godly wisdom — not lack of knowledge! "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (I Cor. 3:18).

To negate the Word of God by human philosophy is intellectual vanity. The philosophers of this world often philosophize God out of the picture. This is why Paul warned: "Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the *tradition of men*, after the rudiments of *the world*, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Not that *all* the knowledge and wisdom of the world is evil and wrong. Even the Apostle Paul borrowed from the scholarship of this world. He quoted Greek poets. He borrowed from lists of qualifications for civic officials to frame the minimal prerequisites for ordination. He was familiar with the existing philosophy of his day. Paul was not ignorant of the Roman political machinery or the people's love — which he shared — for Olympic sports events. Paul was well-informed and educated. He was no crude fool. He had studied at the feet of one of the great scholars of his day Gamaliel.

Paul was, without question, an intellectual person — but he was not

vainly so! He had a mind and he was not ashamed of it or reluctant to use it. The apostle probed and understood many of the deep things of God.

However, he did *not* fall victim to the Athenian's problem of spending all his time either telling or hearing some *new* thing (see Acts 17:21). Neither should we. Bible study should not be a constant exercise in discovering some new, picky, piquant point.

The Holy Spirit's Role

The world does not generally understand what God is really doing here below. But the people of God *can* come to understand some of the deeper things — the true strong meat of God's Word — by means of the Holy Spirit.

... As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*" (I Cor. 2:9-10).

It is these "deep things" which constitute the "strong meat" of God's Word. It is the more profound truths of God which compose the *solid food* of the Bible. It is these things which those who are spiritually more mature should seek. God does *not* require laying the foundation of basic doctrines over and over again, and never building anything upon that foundation!

But once that foundation of basic understanding is built, it should never be forgotten! It should never be set aside. It *should* occasionally be reviewed and reinforced. It should always provide the basis for further growth and understanding.

And yet it need not become an obsession, a preoccupation. Once laid, it should be built upon. The Christian should go on to greater understanding and spiritual maturity, not remain a "babe" forever.

Strong meat indeed belongs to them that are of *full age*. □

THE SECOND RESURRECTION

by Raymond F. McNair

4
PART

Comparatively few will be privileged to take part in the first resurrection to immortality. But untold billions will be surprised to find themselves rising up in a resurrection to mortality. Why would God resurrect countless billions back to a mortal life?

FORMER Prime Minister Winston Churchill once said before the American Congress: "He must indeed have a blind soul who cannot see that *some great purpose and design* is being worked out here below . . ."

What is that purpose which the Creator is working out on this earth among here mortals?

We have seen in previous articles in this series that man's only hope is the resurrection. Also, we saw biblical proof that man is mortal — not immortal — and that he can only receive immortality as a gift from God by a resurrection from the dead.

Furthermore, we saw that the Bible clearly reveals there is to be more than one resurrection. There is an orderly plan whereby different ones are to be resurrected at different times. "But every man [will be resurrected] in his own order . . ." (1 Cor. 15:23).

There will be a proper "order" or succession of resurrections.

The true, faithful Christians will be the first raised to life, and they will be resurrected to immortality at the second coming of Christ (see 1 Cor. 15:49-53; 1 Thes. 4:14-17).

Resurrection of the Unjust

But what about all those who are *not* resurrected at the second coming of Jesus? Will they remain forever dead, or will God also resurrect them at a later date? And will they be raised back to life merely to be flung into the lake of fire? What about all the unsaved multitudes reared under Communistic atheism, who have no Bibles, and have never heard the name of Christ or understood the gospel?

Some say these multitudes will have a *second* chance. But have they really ever had a first chance to know Jesus Christ as Saviour?

Revelation 20:5 begins to give the answer. "But the *rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

The expression "this is the first resurrection" is parenthetical and refers back to those in verse four who are raised to immortality at Christ's coming to become rulers with Him as kings and priests on the earth during the millennium.

Many have made the mistake of thinking there will be only *one* resurrection — when both wicked and

righteous will rise in judgment to be either rewarded or punished. But Revelation 20:5 plainly brands this an error. As a matter of fact, *nowhere* does the Bible say that God will resurrect all the dead in the same resurrection.

True, the Apostle Paul affirmed "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the *just* and *unjust*" (Acts 24:15).

And Jesus Christ said: "... For the hour is coming, in the which *all* that are in the *graves* shall hear his voice, and shall *come forth*; they that have done *good*, unto the resurrection of *life* [eternal]; and they that have done *evil*, unto the resurrection of *damnation* [or, better translated, *judgment*]" (John 5:28, 29).

Therefore, not thinking deeply, "Most Christians believe that on the last day of the world all the dead will *come to life*. They call the day Judgment Day, because God will judge everyone" (*World Book Encyclopedia*, 1972 edition).

But let us not fall into the common error of assuming that Paul and Christ meant the "just" and the "unjust" would be resurrected at the same time.

We have seen that the Apostle John wrote of a "first resurrection" and a "second resurrection." So where does that leave us?

Since all the "just" or righteous dead are resurrected at the second coming of Christ, leaving the "unjust" dead in their graves, are all these *unjust* dead eternally lost — without any *hope* of ever having an opportunity to live again and obtain immortality?

A Resurrection of Mortals

Are the unjust ones merely to be resurrected so God can fling them into the lake of fire to be burned up? What did Christ mean when He said that "they that have *done evil* [will be resurrected], unto the resurrection of *judgment*"? (John 5:29.)

Who are the "unjust" ones mentioned by Paul in Acts 24:15? Are those who died in sin really fully

accountable for their actions in their "first life"? Have they ever had a chance for eternal salvation?

Astounding as it may seem to people who do not really know the scriptural teaching regarding the resurrections, countless billions are yet to be brought back to a *mortal life* to have their "first chance" to receive salvation.

Think for a moment. Could the untold billions who have lived and died possibly have received salvation? Have the vast majority ever had a chance to understand the Bible? Have they, then, really rejected salvation? No! Many individuals have lived their entire lifetimes without ever seeing a Bible or even hearing the name of Jesus Christ.

Are they forever doomed simply because they did not have the Word of God, and did not know that Christ is the Saviour of all mankind? What nonsense!

What Constitutes a "Chance"?

Could countless billions of Hindus, Buddhists, Confucianists, Taoists, animists and others who have not known about Christ and salvation be held *guilty* or accountable to God for not having received that vital knowledge?

Or is it possible that they could receive salvation through some other person, or by a *different way*? The Apostle Peter emphatically answers: "Neither is there *salvation in any other*: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Human beings can only be saved if and when they learn of Jesus Christ as their Saviour who died for them, and then accept that supreme sacrifice in payment for their personal sins.

Christ said: "I am the *door*: by me if any man enter in, he shall be *saved*, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). He made it abundantly clear that anyone who "entereth" not by the door [Christ] into the sheepfold, but climbeth up

some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (verse, 1).

There is no other "door" by which we can enter the Kingdom of God.

Can You Have a Second Chance?

Someone will ask: "Do you mean to say that God will resurrect men back to a mortal life, and give them a *second chance*?" No, this is not what the Bible teaches at all.

But the scriptures plainly reveal that the time is coming when God will raise the "unjust" dead — those who through no fault of their own were deceived and never understood the way of salvation — and will at that time reveal His plan of salvation to them.

Don't forget this basic truth: It is "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). And "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35); therefore, whatever God promises in His Word, He will do.

God's Word plainly says: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, *not willing that any should perish*, but that *all should come to repentance*" (II Pet. 3:9).

It is not God's will that heathen animists, pagan idolators or other sincere people who may practice a false religion, should perish. A loving Creator wills that "all should come to repentance" — in *His own time and way*.

The Apostle Paul was also inspired to write that God our Saviour "will have *all men to be saved*, and to come unto the *knowledge of the truth*" (I Tim. 2:4). He then went on to show that "there is one God, and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in *due time*" (verses 5, 6).

It is God's responsibility to grant people the knowledge of the truth. The vast majority who have ever lived and died were, through no fault of their own, deprived of this knowledge which could have made salvation possible in their *first life*—

time. It therefore becomes imperative that God give them their *first real chance* to hear, understand and follow God's way of salvation. But how? By raising them from the dead to renewed physical life in a second resurrection.

But millions of Christians erroneously believe that when one dies in sin he is lost forever. Many feel under a burden to see that Christ is preached to the heathen in Africa, Asia and other parts of the earth — because they think that if these pagans die in sin, they will miss out on salvation forever.

One scripture often quoted to prove that a person who dies in sin is forever doomed is Ecclesiastes 11:3. "... If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." This scripture, referring in context to certain instructions Solomon was giving with regard to the importance of making the most out of an uncertain and relatively short human lifetime, has *nothing* to do with any resurrection. Solomon does *not* say that if one, through no fault of his own, dies in sin, he will never have a chance to repent and receive salvation.

What Is Judgment?

In John 5:29, Jesus Christ spoke of "the resurrection of *damnation*." Nearly all modern translations correctly render this last word as "judgment" rather than "damnation."

But what does it mean to be resurrected to *judgment*? Most Christians so fully misunderstand. They think of "judgment" as only a time when a *sentence* is passed — rewarding the righteous or condemning the guilty. But that is a false concept.

Notice what the Apostle Peter wrote: "For the time [beginning nearly 2,000 years ago] is come that *judgment* must begin at the house of God..." (I Pet. 4:17). What did he mean? He did not mean just *condemnation* had begun at God's house, the Church.

Rather he referred to the fact that

God is now *judging* Christians. We are now having our chance, and we will never have another. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?" (Heb. 2:3.) See also Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29. God holds every Christian strictly accountable for his actions. He is *now* judging every believer according to His Word. But the vast majority of mankind, to this very day, do not understand or believe the truth of God. They have been deceived by the devil (Rev. 12:9). And it is God's responsibility to someday see that these deceived billions become *undeceived* and are given their chance for salvation — for He is *not* willing that any perish!

When Christ said some would come forth in a resurrection to "judgment," he meant they would be raised up from their graves to a time when they would learn the truth and have their opportunity to walk in it. Then God will render a decision — a verdict — for each, on the basis of how they do.

Judgment of Unjust Sodom

Some are amazed to learn that Jesus made a number of statements in which he said that the peoples of Sodom, Gomorrah, Tyre, Sidon, Nineveh and those living in Christ's day will all *rise up* in the judgment together. Mercy will be shown to all, but the Gentile cities will find their judgment period more bearable than those who personally heard the teachings of Jesus Christ and yet rejected Him and His gospel.

Christ solemnly affirmed: "Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the *day of judgment*, than for that city [which rejected His teachings]" (Matt. 10:15).

To those cities who saw His miracles, Christ said: "But I say unto you [people of Bethsaida and Chorazin], it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the *day of judgment*, than for you" (Matt. 11:21, 22).

Then Jesus warned Capernaum that if the mighty works done by Him in that city had been done in

Sodom, Sodom would have existed to that very day. "But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the *day of judgment*, than for thee" (verse 24).

Furthermore, Christ made a similar pronouncement regarding Nineveh: "The men of Nineveh shall *rise in judgment with this generation*, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. 12:41).

Jesus then explained that "The queen of the south [Queen of Sheba] shall *rise up in the judgment with this generation*, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (verse 42).

What did Jesus mean? Just this. The Queen of Sheba, the peoples of Nineveh, Tyre, Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah will find repentance easier in their "day of judgment" than will those who rejected Christ and His gospel message.

Resurrected Israel's Judgment

Jesus Christ was not preaching a "new doctrine" when He spoke of the resurrection of the peoples of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was clearly indicated, if the people only had eyes to see, in the 16th chapter of the book of Ezekiel.

Much of the chapter relates to the people of Jerusalem (verse 2). It details their abominations, calling *Samarita* the "elder sister" of Jerusalem, and Sodom her "younger sister" (verse 46). Then God points out that the sins the people of Jerusalem had committed were more abominable than those of her sisters — Sodom and Samaria.

Finally, Ezekiel prophesies of the time when the Sodomites, Samaritans and the people of Jerusalem will all be brought up out of their *captivity in death* and will finally receive salvation.

"When I shall bring again their *captivity*, the captivity of Sodom and

her daughters, and the captivity of *Samaria* and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them" (verse 53).

The peoples of Sodom and Gomorrah have been held captive in the grave for nearly four thousand years. But through Christ's death and resurrection all of those held captive in the grave will be released.

"... When he [Christ] ascended up on high [at His resurrection], he led *captivity* [death] captive..." (Eph. 4:8). Christ was held *captive* in the grave for three days and nights, but at His resurrection He "led *captivity* captive." He will do the same for all mankind in due time by resurrecting "all that are in the graves."

• When God *resurrects* the peoples of ancient Sodom, Samaria and Jerusalem, they will "return to their *former estate*" — meaning that God will place them in the land where they once lived (Ezek. 16:55).

Ezekiel also prophesied elsewhere of a coming resurrection of all the dead Israelites of past centuries.

The prophet first sees them as long dead in a "valley of dry bones" (Ezek. 37:1-10). "Then he [God] said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the *whole house of Israel*... Behold, O my people, I will *open your graves*, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the *land of Israel*. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have *opened your graves*, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves" (verses 11-13).

Then God promises He will put His Spirit in them (giving them the prerequisite for salvation) and will place them in their "own land" (verse 14).

Mercy Upon All

Even the Apostle Paul prophesied of a coming resurrection for carnal Israel.

Paul wrote: "God hath *not* cast away his people [Israel] which he foreknew" (Rom. 11:2).

Paul explains that the majority of Israel are spiritually blinded (verse 7). And who is responsible? "... God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear..." (verse 8). Why?

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world" — it makes possible the salvation of the *Gentiles*! — "what shall the receiving of them be, but *life from the dead*?" (Verse 15.) Yes, they are to be raised from the dead and given life by the God who loves them and all humanity.

Paul calls this a "mystery" — "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the *Gentiles* be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved..." (verses 25, 26).

What Paul is saying is simply this: God has determined to call and choose only a limited number from *Israel* in this age. He is not trying to save *all Israel* now! He therefore calls those Israelites whom He wills, but allows the rest to remain blinded so that He can call a number of *Gentiles* to fulfill His purpose.

"For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their [Israel's] unbelief. Even so have these [unbelieving Israelites] also now *not* believed, that *through your mercy they also may obtain mercy*. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have *mercy upon all*" (verses 30-32).

When the Apostle Paul understood the mystery of God's great master plan, he was filled with praise: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable, are his *judgments*, and his ways past finding out!" (Verse 33)

God is not trying to save the whole world now! Rather, He has allowed Satan to deceive the world with his false teaching (Rev. 12:9). He must prove to Satan and to man that Satan's way produces bad results!

Great White Throne Judgment

Just what is the Great White Throne Judgment? "The resurrection of the righteous will take place at the coming of Christ (I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:53), [the resurrection] of the unsaved at the Great White Throne Judgment after the Kingdom Age (Rev. 20:11-15)." (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 1966 ed., article, "Resurrection.")

God is great, merciful, loving, not willing that *any* should perish. He wills that all come to the knowledge of the truth and to true repentance. But He knows it is better that most people come to this knowledge of the truth in a better world than ours. That is why these people will be raised up in the *second resurrection* — a resurrection to a mortal, fleshly, earthly existence.

Here is how it is depicted in the 20th chapter of Revelation. "And I saw a *great white throne*, and him that sat on it... And I saw the *dead*, small and great, *stand before God*..." (Rev. 20:11, 12).

"The books [Greek, *biblos* — books or Bible] were opened" (verse 12). This means that those raised up at that time will have the books of the Bible opened to their knowledge and understanding. And also the "book of life" will be open so their names can be written in it when each repents of his sins, accepts Christ as personal Saviour, and receives God's Holy Spirit.

Then they will be judged "according to their works" (verse 12).

Thus we see the "rest of the dead" raised to life, *standing before God* to be *judged* — but not to be *condemned*, as so many falsely assume. God will then judge those "unjust" dead, who are at that time raised to life, just as He now judges His own house — His Church (I Pet. 4:17). The book of life will be opened so they can all receive eternal life, if they will!

How thrilling to understand God's master plan which He is working out here below among mortal men. □

(Continued from page 8)

Jeremiah had earlier cried out: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is *not* in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

While there is a "spiritual essence" (Job 32:8; Heb. 12:23) in man's brain which *makes* it "mind" and not just physical brain — man's mind is *carnal* in the sense of being materially oriented, physically directed, sensual, "having not the Spirit" (Jude 19).

The Holy Spirit

The "missing dimension" in government is God's Holy Spirit! It is only through repentance (see Acts 2:38) and *receiving* the Spirit of God that *perfect government* can ever be possible.

No wonder human governments — utterly cut off from God and displaying the very epitomization of avarice, cunning, suspicion, jealousy, hatred, greed, ambition, selfishness and vanity — are *doomed to failure before they start!*

God's Holy Spirit, both within the governed and those doing the governing, would *replace* all the base human emotions with God's spiritual qualities. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Believe it or not, God has a *representative* form of government *on this earth today!* But it is not a government of or by *man*. It is the government of God, *through His Spirit*. That government, while not *now* in any position of authority the *governed do not voluntarily and specifically allow*, is God's government; and in and through *human agencies*, led of His Holy Spirit, is constituted for performing a great *purpose* on this earth — and doing the very Work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ instituted it; He originated it; He called and trained, *personally*, its very first leaders. And He never for an instant quit ruling over

them, just as He has never quit ruling over that group (which is His Church) all down through history!

Jesus absolutely guaranteed that His Church — the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23) — would continue unabated throughout all ages. He would *never* abandon it or let it die!

Jesus had promised: "... I am with you *always*], even unto the end of the world [age]" (Matt. 28:20). The Apostle Paul later reminded the Hebrews of this ironclad, absolutely binding guarantee: "... For he [Christ] hath said; *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" (Heb. 13:5).

A Giant Commission

Jesus entrusted His Church — the little flock (Luke 12:32) — with a *giant commission*, especially *now* in the latter part of this super-complex, fast-moving 20th century.

It is to preach and proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God — as a warning and a witness — to this sin-sick and dying world, just *prior* to the end of this chaotic age. It is to announce the ushering in of a new era in man's governmental experience — the *wonderful world tomorrow* — God's rule on this earth.

Can you imagine God using human instruments to perform such a gigantic task *without* any government — or a weak, loosely organized conglomeration of individuals seemingly going in all different directions? Of course not! That would be utterly ridiculous and contrary to all sensible logic!

Church Government and the Gospel

Wouldn't it seem a little odd for God's chosen human agents to proclaim a gospel of rulership, of government, of laws, of law enforcement, of rule "with a rod of iron"; and then have *no governmental rule* but near anarchy in His true Church today? Doesn't make any sense, does it?

No, the gospel could not be sounded abroad through the length and breadth of this entire earth

without effective government. And God does *not* want His gospel trumpeted around this globe with a weak, "uncertain sound" (1 Cor. 14:8).

The Work of God today is a globe-girdling, worldwide enterprise with offices dotting every hemisphere and every continent. Such a large organization made up of thousands of employes around the world demands a well-organized, viable, flexible governmental structure functioning like a well-oiled machine.

Church Government in God's Word

God amply provided in His Word — the Holy Bible — the very basis for government in His Church today.

The New Testament is literally replete with scriptures about who is the Head of His Church, governmental authority, how to settle disputes between brethren, binding and loosing, disfellowshipping and reinstatement, and myriads of other governmental principles extant in His true Church today.

The complete picture of why God's government is so necessary in the Church, what it is like, and what are its basic principles and concepts, is too lengthy and requires far too much in-depth expounding of the many dozens of scriptures to do the subject justice in this introductory article.

So be sure to read the next installment in this series about Church government and how God's rule, with Christ at the head (Eph. 5:23), is found in His true Church today.

Did Christ institute Church organization? How? Why? Find out in a soon-coming issue. □

CORRECTION

We goofed! On page 15 of the November GN, last paragraph, third column, it should read:

"In September of 1963, Dr. Ernest L. Martin, then Dean of the Faculty, Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, introduced Mr. Armstrong to the possibility of involving the College in an archeological excavation in Israel."



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