

JANUARY 1975

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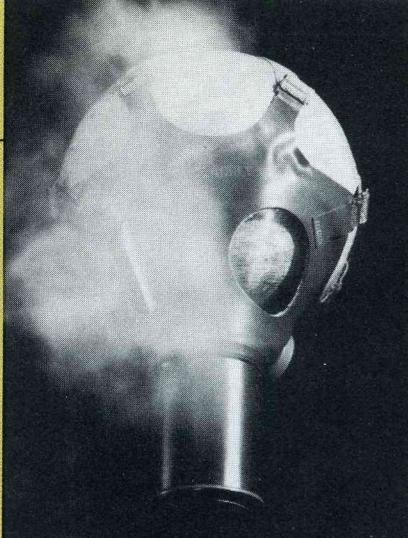
The Good News



WHAT
TO
DO UNTIL
THE
KINGDOM
COMES

WORLD
CRISIS
IN
LEADERSHIP

COMING!
THE
TRANSFORMATION
OF PLANET EARTH



ABOUT OUR COVER

Gas mask on a globe graphically pictures man's self-made ecological problems. The primary cause of pollution, as well as the only ultimate cure, is explained beginning on page 21.

Warren Watson — GN

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The Good News

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January 1975

Volume XXIV

Number 1

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

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

LOOK AT the darkened superstitions around you. In the modern world, we seemingly take for granted the various bizarre "doctrines" and "beliefs" of the many religions. We're not even especially alarmed at the almost fantastic varieties of "belief" held by the average passersby on the streets of our modern cities.

A Plethora of Paganism

Some believe in "going to heaven." Others believe there is no God — that evolution is true. Still others believe in various interpretations of pantheism, polytheism, deism, dualism, theistic evolution, and, give or take a few hundred, about a thousand more shades and colorings of "belief."

Fast friends in many social circles believe widely different things about religion.

Sitting across from each other at the bridge table may be one person fully expecting to be "rap-tured" away secretly some day — while another believes there is no living Christ. One thinks only his body dies, and his "soul" goes off to heaven, while another believes he will reappear in the form of a gnat, or a mosquito.

Still another believes he isn't even there! He is only a transitory thought, progressively coming into cosmic consciousness, or some other empty, totally meaningless phraseology.

The true Church of God *firmly believes* God when He says: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9). God's Church shows that *Satan* is the god of this present world: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which

PROOF

3

THE TRUTH ABOUT PAGAN DOCTRINES

by Garner Ted Armstrong

We have already seen two great proofs of the true Church of God. The first proof is one of the greatest principles of the Bible — that God is the Ruler in heaven and in earth, and that He actually rules in His own Church. We saw the threefold second point of the great sign God made between Himself and His own people — the sign of His name, and of His weekly and annual Sabbaths. Now you need to study and carefully prove to yourself the third major proof of the true Church of the only true God.

believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4).

All nations *have* been deceived. They are in spiritual *darkness*. God said, through Isaiah: "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Eternal hath poured out upon you the spirit of *deep sleep*, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men de-

liver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed" (Isa. 29:9-11).

The great *false* religion, the great whore of Revelation, described in the 17th and 18th chapters, has made the nations spiritually drunk on false religious doctrines. "... The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine [false doctrines] of her fornication And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" (Rev. 17:2, 5).

Think, for a moment, of the almost fantastic superstitions so many in this spiritually darkened world believe.

Many believe they have a soul that is immortal, and that they are destined to go to an ever-burning hell because of Adam's sin. Many probably think of God as a vague, nebulous sort of "Trinity" way off somewhere — not much concerned about the here and now on this earth!

Some believe they might someday go to "heaven" and sprout wings — to shuffle endlessly through pipe organ music, or play

SEVEN PROOFS OF GOD'S CHURCH

on a harp, as they stroll down streets of gold and silver!

To them the devil has horns and a pitchfork, Adam "fell," angels have halos, and all "good" Christians go to church on Sunday.

Christmas and Easter are two of the most important "holidays" (watered down from *holy*-days).

Does it sound familiar?

And yet when you really come to understand them — how confusing, how utterly empty and senseless, are the pagan "doctrines" held to be true by the blinded peoples of this present world.

The third great proof of the true Church of God is knowing the *truth*. Knowing the truth about the *pagan* origins of the "doctrines" of this world — and knowing the real truth of God.

What Is a "Doctrine"?

Do people actually *learn* anything from the various "doctrines" they believe? Is there any actual sense, any continuity, any theme or plan to them? Do people learn something vitally important about their own salvation, for example, at Christmas time? Do they understand thoroughly and deeply about the definite, provable, practical, workable *solutions* to this world's problems?

Do they really *know* what the world will be like in the twenty hundreds, in Century Twenty-One? Do they really understand what man is, why he is, where he is going?

Are they taught the *truth* about the very nature of man — the *purpose* in that nature — and its ultimate *destiny*?

No! They certainly are not.

A *doctrine* is just one more point of truth about the purpose and plan of God.

A "doctrine" is not an utterly disconnected "idea" or philosophy about some completely irrelevant and vague-sounding sanctimonious something!

A doctrine is not a cherished *ar-*

gument — a *weapon* one uses with which to fight against some other doctrine!

A doctrine is a simple *truth* from *God's Word*.

It is a *fact*, a *truth*, which further explains the whole purpose of God, and the great plan He is using to work out that purpose here below!

John wrote: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the *doctrine* of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the *doctrine* of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (II John 9-10).

"This doctrine" is the doctrine of Christ; it is *not* various doctrines *about* Christ — quaint little "stories" and traditions about His birth, or sentimental teachings using His name for window dressing — but the very *truth* which *He* brought!

Christ is the *Word*. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . . by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2).

He *is* the Bible, personified.

The real truth, then, the *true* doctrine of Christ, is the truth which He reveals through His *Word* — *not* a pagan superstition, ancient tradition, or "idea" about Christ or the Bible manufactured by men.

God says: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, *one faith* . . ." (Eph. 4:4-5).

One faith — meaning one body of beliefs, one set of doctrines, one perfectly harmonious truth believed and practiced by the true Church of God. Unless a point of truth you may believe fits perfectly and harmoniously into the whole of the doctrine of Christ — unless each truth you have learned only

further serves to elucidate, clarify and further explain the whole of the plan of God — then it may *not* be a "truth," but error.

The Truth About the Pagan Doctrines

The great third proof of the true Church of God is knowing the truth about the pagan doctrines masquerading as truth in this world, and knowing the real truth about the true doctrine of Christ.

This proof is a *huge* proof — embodying every scrap and shred, every bit and fiber of understanding concerning the rank paganism that has crept into every nook and cranny of false religion.

Look at the *major* doctrines of the professing Christian world.

Millions fully expect to "get to heaven" someday. Having been told about heaven as the reward of the saved since they were little children, they have come, without any shred of real proof whatever, to really *believe* this pagan doctrine. Perhaps they actually saw and heard a "deathbed repentance" of a departed loved one. Perhaps, just as their grandmother died, she claimed to have seen a "vision" of heaven. And, whether they had ever seen any real biblical proof or not, thousands of deceived human beings would take such an experience as this as absolute proof positive that the loved one "went to heaven."

Notice how professing Christians cling to this vague hope of heaven with a fervent tenacity — just as Satan the devil became finally obsessed with the same idea. Lucifer, the great archangel who had been given *this earth* to rule, wasn't willing to "settle" for just this earth. He wanted to get to heaven! He wanted to *leave* this earth, and get up to heaven — usurping the very throne of God.

Satan's desire was a *selfish desire* to *get* for the self. He has instilled this same tenacious, grasping, selfish desire to "get to heaven" in the minds of millions of people.

One independent preacher wrote at the end of a pamphlet, "Dear Reader: Are you willing to settle for earth?" This minister was trying to attack the plain truth about *this earth* being the inheritance promised to all Christians.

Do you see? Do you understand his attitude? Millions of people who think they are "Christian" are absolutely filled with the selfish concept of *getting* for the self. They have a belligerent, set-jawed, steely eyed determination to have their own way — in spite of what God says in the Bible!

But heaven is not the reward of the saved! God's truth is that the saints shall *reign on the earth* (Rev. 5:10) and shall rule here below, with Christ, for one thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the *earth*" (Matt. 5:5). He said those who are overcomers will rule the nations on this earth with Him (Rev. 2:26; 3:21).

And these are only a small few of the literally dozens of plain scriptures, and sometimes whole chapters, in the sacred Word of God which absolutely *prove* that the "get-to-heaven" idea of this darkened and pagan world is of purely Satanic origin. If you have not read the booklets *What Is the Reward of the Saved?* and *Where Are Enoch and Elijah?*, then you need to write for them. You need to really prove God's truth — and prove the error of the pagan doctrines of this world.

The Trinity

God's true Church knows the fact of the *duality* of the Godhead.

But the world believes in the Trinity. So deliberate has been the

pagan attempt to foist this doctrine upon the world that a copyist in the eighth century A.D. inserted totally and completely spurious words into the Bible, attempting to "prove" this major doctrine of paganism.

Turn, in your own Bible (King James Authorized Version), to I John 5:7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

But do you know not a *one* of

Is God a Trinity? explains in detail.

Who was a member of a great "Trinity"? Lucifer — who became Satan the devil! There are only three great archangels mentioned in the Bible: Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel. *Lucifer fell* (Luke 10:18), not Adam.

But God is *dual*! There is the Father and the Son. In all creation, God made *pairs* of humans, pairs of sexes. A man has two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two hands, two feet, two legs, two arms.

There was the first man Adam, and the second man Adam (or Christ). There is the Old Covenant and the New Covenant; the Old Testament and the New Testament; the former prophets and the latter prophets. Prophecy is often *dual*. God is *one*, in two persons — not three.

Jesus said, "I and my Father [just the two of us!] are one" (John 10:30).

The Soul

God's true Church knows the real truth about the physical, mortal, fleshly, material soul.

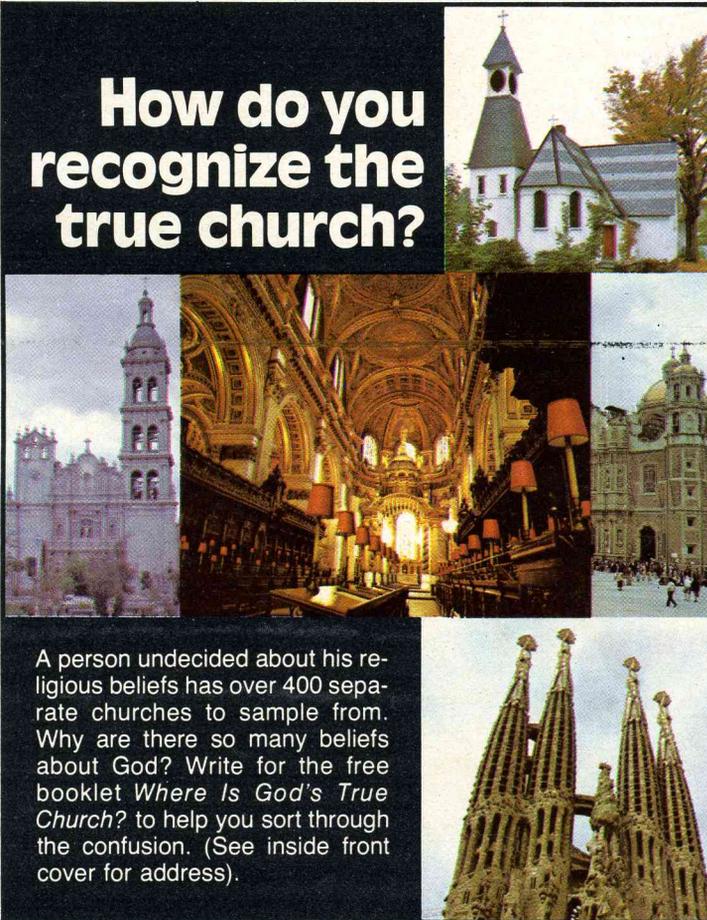
God says: "... The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20).

Solomon wrote: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing

befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast..." (Eccl. 3:19). God's true Church knows that the wages of sin is *death* (Rom. 6:23) — *not* eternal life in a different location — an ever-burning hell. Satan is immortal — and will be *tormented forever*. (See the booklet *Did God Create a Devil?*) But he has the world believing doctrines *about himself*.

Belief in the "immortality" of the

How do you recognize the true church?



A person undecided about his religious beliefs has over 400 separate churches to sample from. Why are there so many beliefs about God? Write for the free booklet *Where Is God's True Church?* to help you sort through the confusion. (See inside front cover for address).

these words is in *any* of the original manuscripts? Did you know not one of these words ever appeared in the manuscripts until after the invention of printing?

Comparison with many of the more modern texts and simple research will absolutely prove this important point to you. Verse seven should be the last half of verse six. The seventh verse of I John 5 *originally* read: "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Our free booklet entitled

soul is one of the basic and *beginning* errors of all modern professing Christianity. Have you really proved the truth about the soul to yourself? Do you have many proof texts on this subject carefully marked in your own Bible? Could you prove it to someone else? We have a comprehensive booklet on the subject. Write for your free copy of *Do You Have an Immortal Soul?*

God's true Church also knows the truth about the Gehenna fire of the Bible — the one of which Jesus Christ solemnly warned. He said: "... Fear him which is able to destroy *both* soul and body in hell [Greek, *Gehenna*]" (Matt. 10:28).

The incorrigible sinner shall be *burnt up* (Mal. 4:1), and shall become *ashes* under the feet of the righteous (Mal. 4:3).

Totally ignoring the many plain scriptures of the Bible, which even become quite specifically detailed (such as those in Malachi which I just mentioned, describing how human beings when burnt become as ashes), the pagan philosophers have seized upon a vague (to them) parable in Luke the sixteenth chapter.

Undoubtedly, thousands of lurid, frightening, raving and shouting sermons have been based on the account of Lazarus and the rich man.

God's Church knows the real truth about God's punishment for the wicked — and about a hellfire which is a lot hotter than the pagan concepts of this world. This, too, is something you should have carefully proved to yourself — and have thoroughly marked and noted in your Bible. If you have not carefully studied our booklet *Is There a Real Hell Fire?*, then write for it immediately.

And Dozens More

God's true Church knows the truth about creation, about the *purpose* of God, and the great *plan* by which He is working out that

purpose. God's true Church knows the real truth about the nature of God, of angels, and of man.

God has revealed the almost incomprehensible truth of just what salvation is to His true Church — while the world simply doesn't know. They don't know what it is, how to get it, why they need it.

God has called us out of the same spiritual darkness that still grips this world. We did not study to uncover these wonderful truths for ourselves — God *gave* them to us.

We are not any "better" than other people as a result of God having given us understanding of His precious truth.

But Jesus Christ said: "*Ye shall know* the truth, and the *truth* shall make you free" (John 8:32).

He promised to send the Holy Spirit which would lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

Truth Mixed With Error

Don't forget that every religion — whether the "modern" ideas of the "no-God theologian," the comic-like ideas of certain "Christian" sects, the science-fiction doctrines of books purported to be additions to the Bible, or the witchery of spiritism — every religion could have *some* small part truth — but mixed with a gargantuan amount of error.

Some churches appear to be just a "little bit closer" to the truth than others. But don't be deceived.

There is *no* church on the face of this earth that is *anywhere near* the real truth of God as believed and practiced by His true Church! There is a great, inseparable, yawning, huge, bottomless maw — a gaping pit — a great gulf — between the one true Church of God, and *all* pagan organizations of men.

You need to be so thoroughly grounded and rooted in these great truths that you have not only proved them to yourself — but you can completely and irrevocably *prove* them to others. □

How your Good News subscription has been paid

Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached [and published — Mark 13:10] in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matt. 24:14) at this time, just before the end of this age. A price must be paid for this magazine, the Correspondence Course, booklets and other literature.

But how? Christ forbids us to sell it to those who receive it: "Freely ye have received, freely *give*," said Jesus to His disciples whom He was sending to proclaim His gospel. "It is more blessed to *give*," He said, "than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

God's way is the way of love — and that is the way of giving. God expects every child of His to give freewill offerings and to tithe, as His means of paying the costs of carrying the gospel to others.

We, therefore, simply trust the Living Christ to stir the minds and hearts of His followers to give generously, thus paying the cost of putting this precious gospel truth in the hands of others.

The faithful, tithe-paying members of the Worldwide Church of God and our ever-growing family of co-workers gladly give of their incomes that we may give this precious gospel to an ever-widening number of readers.

The living, dynamic Christ Himself enables us to send you this *Good News* magazine without charging a price. God's way is right — the way of giving to others.



WORLD CRISIS IN LEADERSHIP

by Raymond F. McNair

THERE IS a crisis of leadership, worldwide! Where are the modern Churchills, Eisenhowers, DeGaulles or Adenauers? Where are today's Davids, Elijahs, Abrahams? Where can today's nations find men with the ability and quality of character to take over the reins of government?

Problems Without Solutions

We live in a world of mind-boggling problems — problems which seemingly defy solutions. How can the world stop nuclear proliferation? And how can mankind ensure that the ever-growing club of nuclear nations doesn't become trigger happy?

Can the world find a way to clothe and feed its "hungry millions" — which could soon become its "hungry billions"? How can we check the population explosion?

And now most industrial nations are vainly grappling with the problem of spiraling *inflation*. How can this inflationary malaise afflicting all technologically advanced nations be cured? Some already think it is too late to avert another worldwide nightmarish depression.

But that is not all. Can mankind find a way to prevent or even cure such frightening scourges as cancer, heart disease, mental illness?

Then there is the ever-increasing reality of crime and terrorism — much of it senseless and with no apparent motive. How to prevent or at least cope with crime is by itself a huge headache for the world's leaders. And there are many other problems: juvenile delinquency, marital breakups, immorality, racial strife, drugs, drunkenness.

These are just a few of the many world headaches which refuse to go away. But where can we find the leaders to cope with these colossal problems? Are today's youth being effectively trained to take the helms of big governments and grapple successfully with

these and other problems confronting mankind?

Many believe that given enough time man will find solutions to all his problems. Man is a born optimist. But all too often men believe that they, totally apart from God, have all the answers.

There are, however, those who say that man, with his present nature, does not have the solutions to any of the really big problems. They not only doubt man's ability to solve his own problems without bringing apocalyptic upheavals among the nations, but many of these same pessimists also doubt the very existence of God. Or if they believe in God, they think He has gone way off and left man to solve his own problems to the best of his limited ability.

Failure of Home, School and Church

There are *causes* for all effects — reasons for everything. What are some of the reasons for today's lack of leadership? We need to look at 1) modern home life, 2) education, 3) religion.

First of all, look at modern family life. More and more families are breaking up. But why? In great measure because the husband and father fails to supply the wise leadership needed to guide the home. More mothers are having to take over the reins of the home because of absent or derelict fathers. The denigration of fatherhood is having an adverse effect on the youth of today — and will ultimately affect their ability to be able to take the lead in a world badly lacking in solid leadership.

A young man who is brought up in a home where there is no father, or where the father has abdicated his leadership role as head of the family, will be a confused adult, utterly lacking in the ability to fulfill his God-given role as leader in tomorrow's home.

Secondly, look at the training of our youth in the schools and colleges. Most of today's teachers are

admittedly lacking in the ability to give the students under their charge the inspiration and the answers which they are seeking. More and more, students are being *turned off*. All too often, their teachers tell them they must reconcile themselves to living in a hostile and confused world with huge, *unsolvable* problems.

Is it any wonder today's students are not receiving the proper training necessary for dynamic leadership in tomorrow's world?

Thirdly, what are the churches doing to supply the leadership which will be needed so badly?

Again, as in the home and in the institutions of learning, the churches are failing to give today's youth the leadership training which will make them capable of coping with tomorrow's crushing problems.

One might ask: "But surely the churches, those who know God and His Word, ought to be able to point the way for today's youth?" Yes, the churches ought to be able, but they aren't.

Why? The blunt truth is that the many hundreds of religious bodies are themselves too divided to speak with a united voice. How can they fail to confuse others when they themselves are in confusion?

The veritable babylon of doctrines, often contradicting one another, is enough to thoroughly confuse any honest inquirer. Thousands have asked: "Which of these religions is right? Which religion possesses the real truth? Don't they get their beliefs and practices out of the Bible? Then why can't they agree?"

How is it that the churches can't even agree on the proper "moral code" which we are supposed to follow?

Thus we see that today's potential world leaders aren't being taught real, positive, dynamic leadership in the homes, schools and colleges, and — sad to say — not even in the churches. Why is this so?

Why have the basic institutions of this world been unable to point out,

with clarion voice, the true path which today's youth should follow? How come they are unable to teach the principles of true leadership to these potential world leaders?

The simple truth is, few really know what leadership qualities they should be developing in today's young people. How can they teach the right qualities of true leadership when they themselves haven't learned them?

A prominent educator voiced his concern about the lack of leadership in the world today. Derek Bok, president of Harvard, said: "There is a very obvious dearth of people who seem able to supply convincing answers, or even point to directions toward solutions."

Not only in the United States but around the world, leaders are daily frustrated by their inability to get a handle on such world problems as nuclear proliferation, the population explosion, ever-increasing sickness and disease, shortages of food and energy, rampant crime and economic crises (especially inflation).

Pointing the Way

The real dynamics of leadership are found in the world's most widely distributed and read book — the Bible. Only here are to be found the real answers to the problems of the world. Permanent solutions to the big problems are not contained in the uninspired writings of mortal men.

It is only in the Bible that mankind is shown *the way* he should properly order his life. Only in this Best Seller can parents, teachers and religious leaders learn the way to develop true leadership.

But since the world has rejected God's way as revealed in this Book, it continues groping — stumbling along trying out its own human-devised philosophies and methods of inculcating leadership.

The Bible, then, tells us what kind of character traits we must develop if we want to learn how to be leaders. But the world overlooks or to-

tally ignores what this Book says.

This world often looks upon men who have exercised great military or political power over other men as great leaders. "Might makes right!" they think. But were men like Hitler, Napoleon, Charlemagne and Alexander the Great really great men in God's eyes?

Men are often called "great" who were conquerors of vast amounts of real estate. Many of the world's "greats" were butchers of thousands and even millions of people.

But what is the true criterion of greatness? It is high time we looked into biblical revelation to find what God says are the character traits which we should be developing in ourselves and teaching our children.

Fearing God

Nearly three thousand years ago, God anointed a man to be king over Israel who really understood the essence of true leadership. King David, who proved himself to be an able administrator, was loved by his own peoples and feared by the surrounding nations.

David wrote: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the *fear of God*" (II Sam. 23:3).

Few realize just how much truth is contained in that statement. Those who fail to grasp this important truth (that God is to be *revered* with godly fear) are missing one of the most important points of leadership.

None who deny the very existence of God can possibly lead their peoples in the right direction: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity..." (Ps. 53:1).

As an example of atheistic leadership, look at Communist Russia and China. Scores of millions died violently in various purges, pogroms and civil wars as Communism took over and its atheistic leaders began forcing their anti-god, communistic beliefs down the throats of their subjects.

Even certain Russian leaders later

repudiated their former "great" leader, Joseph Stalin. Following Stalin's death, a wide de-Stalinization program was initiated for the purpose of obliterating from the minds of the Russian people as much of the ideas and memory of Stalin as possible. And this same thing will be repeated in other countries when their leaders die — unless those leaders have really had the welfare of their peoples at heart.

What is the essence of a good leader? Some say that a leader is one who can "persuade" others to follow him. But there are good and bad persuasive leaders. Countless millions blindly followed a persuasive Hitler to their shame and destruction.

Leaders Should Be Servants

Jesus Christ, the greatest leader of all time, revealed what constitutes true leadership — at least in the eyes of God. Christ said: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles *lord it over them*, and their great men *overbear them*: not so with you. Whoever wants to be the great man among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all; just as the Son of man has not come to be served but to *serve*, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28, Moffatt translation).

In the eyes of God Almighty, what makes one great is his ability to *serve* others. Who is the greatest Being in all the universe? God is! But why? Because He is the greatest servant.

If a man wants to assume an "office" or a "position" simply because of the benefits or the prestige and glory which he will receive from holding that office, then he is not qualified to rule others.

Nearly four thousand years ago, a very able leader and administrator named Moses appeared among men. To this very day he is acclaimed as one of the greatest legislators and administrators of all time. (Actually, the laws which Moses gave came from God.)

Moses came to understand the essence of true leadership: "Moreover," said Moses' father-in-law, "thou shalt provide out of all the people *able men*, such as *fear God*, *men of truth*, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons..." (Ex. 18:21, 22).

Leaders should be able men, men who fear God, men of truth, and they must resist corruption through bribes — "hating covetousness." Any city or nation which has such men for its leaders will be wisely governed.

One of the greatest leadership traits is that of honesty. During the recent "Watergate mess," America experienced lying, deceit and downright dishonesty in high offices. Watergate only underscored the importance of leaders always being open and honest. But it is doubtful that we have really learned this lesson.

Honesty

A true leader will establish his office or his administration on *truth*; he will abhor deceit and lies; he will cultivate honesty and faithfulness.

Jesus Christ once said: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).

Former U. S. President Harry S. Truman reportedly always refused to use Government stationery or stamps for strictly private matters. Would to God that we had more men in high office who were faithful in such matters — shunning all favors and bribes, and refusing to take so much as a postage stamp that didn't belong to them.

America's tragic Watergate episode has taught the world that deceit and hypocrisy (and outright lying) in government can only be bad for the individual and for the nation.

Jesus Christ was a frank, open,

honest person at all times, "who did no sin, neither was guile [deceit] found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:21, 22).

Humility

Another character trait of a real leader is that of humility. Notice how this was emphasized by Christ: "But he that is *greatest* among you shall be your *servant*. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall *humble* himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:11, 12).

Remember, a true leader is there to *serve* and *assist* his subjects — not to lord it over them in an arrogant or haughty manner, as some of this world's leaders so often do. Everyone hates conceit — at least in others. "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life" (Prov. 22:4).

No man can long bear rule unless he learns to be very assiduous. He must be alert, and must work hard. In short, he must be *diligent*. King Solomon wrote: "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute" (Prov. 12:24). And, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men" (Prov. 22:29).

Seeking Wise Counsel

Another most important leadership characteristic is that of learning to always seek wise counsel. No man knows everything. To make wise decisions, we need to learn to get sound, broadly based counsel.

Read the wisdom of Solomon, as recorded in the book of Proverbs, about obtaining wise counsel. "... In the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (11:14). "... He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (12:15). "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established" (15:22). "Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war" (20:18).

Today's potential leaders must be

taught the importance of seeking "wise counsel" — of getting all the input possible on every important matter *before* coming to a decision (Prov. 24:6).

Why is it that so many parents, educators and even ministers seemingly throw up their hands in despair, saying, "I just don't have the answers"?

If we will look reverently to the Word of God, we will see that it gives us the answers to the really big problems which confront modern man.

Ten Commandments Point to Solutions

Biblical revelation gives the sound, practical answers to all of man's woes. The Bible tells man how to be at peace with himself and how to live with his neighbor. The Ten Commandments reveal God's basic way of life for man. If they were obeyed by all nations, then we would have no wars, no strife, no headaches and heartaches to wrack and distort our lives.

Only when man begins to look to God and His Word for the answers and solutions to all his problems will he begin to find the way out from under his mountain of woe and misery. Then man will come to understand who he is, why he was put on this earth and what his ultimate destiny (his thrilling inheritance) really is!

Man must quit worshipping the false gods of "science" and materialism; and he must look to his Creator for the guidance that only God can give. Only man's Designer and Maker understands what really makes man "tick" — what man must do to be happy, healthy and successful.

Where Are We Going?

Only the Creator God can reveal to man his true life's purpose.

Shortly after his flight to the moon, Neil Armstrong addressed the U. S. Congress. He said: "In the next 20 centuries... humanity may begin to understand its most baffling mystery — where are we going? ... Man must understand his

universe in order to understand his destiny."

The Bible reveals that man's ultimate destiny is to achieve sonship in the divine family of God. Men are destined to become co-inheritors of the entire universe, joint-heirs of "all things" along with Jesus Christ. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7).

Man's ultimate destiny is mind-boggling — really too great for our puny minds to fully comprehend.

Fallible, corruptible, mortal man is to be made immortal, incorruptible, infallible (1 Cor. 15:42-44). God will bequeath on those who overcome sin the gift of eternal life in the endless ages of eternity. Man is actually destined to become a "son" in the great spirit-composed God family. Only then shall man inherit all things.

At that time, the then-made-immortal sons of God (former fallible humans) will be able to flash through the universe at the speed of thought. Man could never really explore his universe with mere physical tools. He needs to take on a new dimension. Man must receive *immortality!* Only then will he be qualified to rule wisely.

Real leadership is learning to think and act like God. This means learning to love instead of hate. It means humility instead of pride and vanity; faith and hope instead of doubt and despair; the fear of God instead of ignorance of God; a desire to serve instead of always being served; honesty and truthfulness instead of deceit, hypocrisy and lying; impartiality instead of being a respecter of persons; diligence and not indolence.

These are the real leadership traits which God is seeking in man. This is the essence of true leadership.

Leaders with the real *answers* and *solutions* to life's big questions and problems can only be developed when they are taught those Godlike traits of character which will endure for all eternity. □

3 Ways You Can Help in This Work

Never before in history have so many Christians combined their efforts in an organized manner to get Christ's own gospel to a troubled world. Great progress has been made — but there is yet much more to accomplish. Millions have never yet heard so much as a whisper about God's great master plan of salvation. Many don't even know who Jesus Christ is! The vast majority of mankind has no idea that God may soon intervene in the affairs of men and bring about a Utopia of peace and universal harmony. That's good news — and you can have a vital part in bringing it to this sick and dying world!

by Brian Knowles

SPEAKING of true Christians, Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. *Let your light so shine before men*, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

Jesus taught that Christians have

a *responsibility* to the world out of which they are called. They are to be — like Christ Himself — a light that "shineth in a dark place."

Jesus did not expect us to have a self-centered, self-serving religion. Rather, true Christianity involves an *outgoing* concern for all of mankind. God did not call Christians to be an isolated community of withdrawn religious hobbyists. He called us out of this world's *sins* — but not out of the world itself! Jesus, in the true "Lord's prayer," speaking of Christians, prayed to God the Father: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15).

Christians separate themselves from the ways of this world — from its evil and its sin. But God does not wish us to physically separate ourselves from society. We must still function within the mainstream of life as a *light* and an *example* to this world. Jesus said: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them *into* the world" (John 17:18).

And what was His object in doing so? Verse 20 of the same chapter tells us: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for *them also which shall believe on me through their word.*"

Christ sent Christians into the world to be a light in order that *others* might also believe on

Him! And how? "Through their word . . ."

Jesus was speaking here of the light of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is the greatest gift Christians can bestow upon this suffering, pain-wracked world!

It is a light that Satan the devil would love to snuff out. He hates the light of Christ's gospel and has attempted to thwart the preaching of that message from the very day Jesus set foot on this earth.

The Apostle Paul, writing around the middle of the first century A.D., said: "The god of this age [Satan] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see *the light of the gospel* of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (II Cor. 4:4, *The New International Version*).

The King James translators rendered the above-mentioned verse ". . . lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them." And truly that gospel is light — and it is glorious! It is the burning, glowing, white-hot light you and I have been charged to bring to this darkened earth!

It is a gospel of hope and of salvation — both physical and spiritual. It is a message of peace. It is at once a plea and an announcement. It has Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, at its very heart and center. It is a call to repentance and a warning against sin.

We have been called, collectively, to be ambassadors for Christ — to advertise to this society a way of life which, if followed perfectly, would bring about universal peace, happiness and ultimate salvation. That is the duty and the responsibility of all Christians.

Satan would like to convince you that this is not the responsibility of Christians. He would like you to focus your attention on *yourself* — your needs, your wants and desires. He likes to introduce you to an orgy of self-indulgence and sensual satiation. He would like you to find fault with the Work of God — so much so that you would become disenchanted with it.

If you're looking for faults, you'll have no difficulty finding them. God is working through *human* instruments just like you and me. We *all* have our faults, don't we? We all make mistakes. We all sin. Even the great prophet Elijah was a man of "like passions as we are" (James 5:17).

If the devil can focus your attention on the faults of men, then the glorious light of the gospel can easily be snuffed out. Fix your attention rather on the *message* of salvation and hope. Think about the incredible profundity of the truth of God — of His great plan of salvation. Think about Christ and His coming Kingdom. As Paul put it: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

Consider the enormous responsibility borne by each child of God. We have a *gospel* to preach.

You Have an Important Part

There are many ways that each of us can effectively have a part in preaching the gospel and fulfilling our responsibility to this world. Notice the words of the Apostle Paul: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body [the Church], as it hath pleased him" (I Cor. 12:18).

Each of us has been called for a purpose. We each have a part to play in spreading God's message and way of life to this earth.

God has given the ministry special abilities in preaching, knowledge and wisdom, faith and other gifts (I Cor. 12:8-9).

But each member of the Body of Christ has something to contribute also. Sometimes we may think that because we do not have a conspicuous public role to play that we are unimportant. Nothing could be less true. God tells us: "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are *necessary*" (I Cor. 12:22).

God does not call someone unless they are important to the function-

ing of the Body of Christ. Every person who has a part in this great Work is necessary to God. That thought should be tremendously encouraging.

Let's consider now some specific ways by which each of us can play an important part in fulfilling the Church's responsibility to be a light to the world.

1

Ambassadors for Christ

Speaking of Christians, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth: "Now then *we are ambassadors for Christ* . . ." (II Cor. 5:20).

This is not only true of the ministry, but of all Christians. Each individual is a one-man embassy representing the Kingdom of God! Paul stated that we represent another government — another kingdom. In a sense, Christians have *dual* citizenship. The Apostle Paul used his Roman citizenship to advantage when it was necessary (Acts 22:25-26). But he also wrote: "But *our citizenship is in heaven*. And we eagerly await a Savior *from* there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20, NIV).

We are now registered as citizens of God's Kingdom in heaven, as well as with the governments of this world. Jesus Christ will return to this earth and bring that Kingdom with Him. That is why Christians pray: "Thy kingdom come . . ."

As advance representatives of God's way of life on earth, we have an important responsibility. We must be certain to set the right example of Christian conduct and behavior.

Paul gave specific instructions to the Church at Colosse on just how they should conduct themselves toward non-Christians: "Walk in wis-

dom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be alway with grace [graciousness], seasoned with salt [i.e., interesting], that ye may know how you ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:5-6).

Christ does not want you to cram your beliefs down other people's unwilling throats! Rather, he said that Christians ought to use *wisdom* in dealing with those who do not yet believe. He spoke of *answering* others — not preaching at them. Preaching is primarily the job of the ministry.

Each individual should not take it upon himself to assume the role of preacher — God knows whom He has placed in the Body to fulfill those responsibilities. Some have actually been turned away from the truth by overzealous but unwise Christians who have been too forceful in wanting to share the truth with others. No one can come to Christ unless God specifically calls them and draws them (John 6:44).

Peter elaborated on the point made by Paul about knowing how to answer others: "But sanctify [set apart] the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15).

When your good example and way of life arouses the curiosity of another, he or she just might ask you for an explanation. A Christian is always prepared to explain his beliefs and practices to those who ask — but in a spirit of meekness and humility.

God's people should study their Bibles regularly and be familiar with the Book which shows the way to salvation and eternal life. Never before has there been a greater need for earnest, searching Bible study among the people of God. If you will study your Bible diligently — daily — you will begin to find the answers! And having them is part of being a good ambassador for Christ.

Your language, manners and dress also play a big part in creating

the right image of Christianity. Can a person be attracted to God or to the gospel by the foul-mouthed cursing of a whiskey-breathed sot drunk? Obviously not. Does crass, boorish, loudmouthed discourtesy in public places do anything for the cause of Christ's message? Not at all.

Christians should practice what they preach.

Paul wrote to the Church at Rome: "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" (Rom. 2:23.) Violating God's laws brings dishonor on God and on His Church. A good ambassador *lives* the way of God! Strive at all times to bring honor upon the Church and Work of God, and — in due time — God will honor you!

2

Pray for God's Work

Undoubtedly, this is the most important thing anyone can ever do for the Work of God.

The Apostle James wrote that the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Don't sell yourself short in this vital area.

Paul constantly reminded the churches to pray for the work he and his companions were doing in spreading the gospel to the world of that day: "*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak*" (Col. 4:2-4).

Nothing could be more important at this critical juncture in history than that God would open more and more doors for the preaching of

the true gospel! Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong has been experiencing just such door-opening in his contacts with leaders in Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. The potential for preaching the gospel is tremendous in these areas.

This world needs a powerful witness before the earth-shattering return of Jesus Christ to usher in the Kingdom of God! Millions in Britain, Canada and the United States have not yet heard Christ's own gospel. And what about the atheistic nations of Communist China and Russia? Hundreds of millions of human beings on this earth — created in the very image of God — have no idea who Jesus Christ even *is!* How great the need for the preaching of the gospel to grow and expand and blanket this earth with the most powerful and meaningful message it has ever heard!

Your earnest, faithful prayers for this great Work can make all the difference in the world! The prayers of God's people are like sweet incense rising before the throne of God (cf., Rev. 8:3-4) — they bring *powerful results!* You can add your fervent and faithful prayers to the thousands of others which rise before the throne of God daily for the successful preaching of Christ's own gospel.

Nothing could help the Work of God more.

3

Financial Support

At the present time we are living in a time of traumatic worldwide economic crisis and possible collapse. Some 51% of the people in the United States believe we will experience another 1930s-type depression in the near future, according to a recent Gallup Poll. Inflation is running rampant all over the eco-

nomic face of the earth. Nation after nation is attempting to find some economic cure-all which will revitalize the national economy — but to little or no avail.

In the meantime, the Work of God must go on. The gospel must be preached. We say — in the spirit of the Apostle Paul — “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Cor. 9:16.)

Soaring Costs

The costs of paper and printing equipment continue to rise along with all other costs. Everyone is pinched by the viselike grip of rising costs. Unions continue to strike for higher and higher wages, pushing the costs of almost all manufactured products up. Easy credit continues to take its toll on the national pocketbook. The price of oil rises steadily as the oil-producing nations exercise their newly recognized economic power. The price of meat rises as the cost of feed and other grains soar. Every household in the Western world feels the pinch of inflation. The experts are divided (as usual) when it comes to finding tangible and quick solutions to the economic ills of a financially sick world.

But the gospel must still be preached! The Word must get out while there is still time. Yet the cost of good radio and television time is rising along with the price of everything else.

The Church of God has a worldwide ministry which serves tens of thousands of brethren in hundreds of local church congregations. Personal appearance campaigns are now being conducted worldwide by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong and many other evangelists and ministers of the Worldwide Church of God. The Big Push in reaching this world is now well under way.

We *cannot* allow the Work to flounder and falter at this critical point! The people of God must rally around the Work and support the preaching of the gospel in every

possible way — including financially.

The Apostle Paul showed the Church that he and the other apostles had the right or authority to function *full time* in the service of God at the expense of the Church. He said: “This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don’t we have the right to food and drink? Don’t we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas [Peter]? Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?”

“Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn’t the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: ‘Do not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain’” (I Cor. 9:3-9, NIV).

In verse 12 Paul says: “If others have this right of support from you, shouldn’t we have it all the more?”

Here is plain evidence that the Work of preaching the gospel was to be supported materially and financially by the membership of the Church in the days of the early apostles.

It is the same today. For over four decades now a tithe-paying membership, and tens of thousands of zealous co-workers, have supported this Work of God.

Following a practice which may be traced back to patriarchal times (Gen. 14:20-22; 28:20-22), members of the Worldwide Church of God have set aside *a tenth* of their incomes for the monetary support of God’s Work. As God consistently blessed the ancient Israelites for giving, so God has poured out His blessings on those New Testament Christians who have voluntarily chosen to practice this God-given principle.

This Work started out very small — like a grain of mustard seed — but today the message of God’s coming

Kingdom and of eternal salvation is going out on *millions* of watts of radio and television power.

The *Plain Truth* and *Good News* are reaching several million readers each and every month with strong, information-packed articles. Plans call for more and more personal appearance campaigns around the world in the months and years to come. The Correspondence Course is now reaching tens of thousands of people around the world in several languages. More baptizing tours in Africa, India and Southeast Asia are even now being planned. Hundreds of local church congregations have been raised up around the world with several hundred full-time elders serving the ever-growing needs of these dedicated and converted brethren.

The Work of God is now a major, globe-girdling undertaking. But, in a sense, we’ve only just begun. So much is left to do. *Millions* must hear that message before it’s too late!

We cannot sell the truth of God — but we must pay to preach it! This is made possible by the thousands of loyal co-workers and members who have tirelessly supported the Work for many years now. Many have made great personal sacrifices to assist God’s Work — and God will not forget it. We are informed by Paul that “. . . God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10).

That’s a promise from the living God!

Those who support the Work of God — the Church of God — by whatever means (prayers, physical service, example, financial support, etc.), will be abundantly rewarded by God Himself in due time.

Now it is more critical than ever that true Christians everywhere rally around this last-ditch effort — the crusade for sanity — and support, aid and help the Work of God!

Now — *more than ever.* □

TWO THOUSAND years ago, the cross didn't inspire religious awe or thoughts of the Messiah's atoning sacrifice. Instead, the cross inspired sheer *terror*. A crucifixion was a gruesome, torturous, and shameful way of dying — the lowest form of execution, reserved for traitors and hardened criminals.

The Romans adopted this gruesome form of death from the Phoenicians, who actually *impaled* their victims on a straight, upright post. From this cruel practice came the Greek word *stauros*, which means an upright stake. However, the Romans used a cross (Latin, *crux*) with crossbeams.

Either way it was a slow and agonizing means of death — reserved for traitors, slaves and in general the *scum* of the Roman world.

But the process of crucifixion involved more than the shame of a brief public hanging. First, the victim was mercilessly scourged with spiked whips, sticks and all manner of physical and verbal abuse. Then the victim was forced to *carry* his own heavy cross to the site of the crucifixion. Afterwards came the painful process of nailing his hands and feet to the cross. Finally, this slow, agonizing death was aggravated by taunts, threats and buffeting from the crowd.

Christ's Forebodings of Crucifixion

The terror of the cross — like the anticipation of a public hanging — is heightened by the victim's fear of the event. Most criminals were crucified immediately after their trial because the forebodings of pain were more than most mortals could handle. The crucifixion of Jesus was typical in this respect — He was crucified on the same day he was convicted.

But this death sentence was no sudden surprise to Jesus. He anticipated His death by the cross throughout His three-and-one-half-year ministry. As a young man growing up in Galilee, He undoubtedly witnessed a number of the Roman crucifixions.

DO YOU GLORY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST ?

The Apostle Paul wrote that the preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness. He spoke of "enemies of the cross of Christ," "the offence of the cross" and the "shame of the cross," but he himself gloried in the cross of Christ. What is the right Christian attitude toward the cross of Christ?

by David L. Antion

He was probably aware of His coming death for an even longer period of time — from long before He divested Himself of spirit life. For 4,000 years prior to His human birth, Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament (cf., John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-3; I Corinthians 10:4 and many other scriptures).

The Apostle Paul referred to the deity and the incarnation of Christ in his letter to the Philippians. "... Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but *made himself of no reputation*, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the cross*" (Phil. 2:5-8).

Early in His ministry, Jesus began preparing His disciples for this *shameful* death He was to suffer. He continually referred to His coming death, and urged the disciples to "take up *his cross*" (Matt. 10:38; 16:21; Luke 9:23; 14:27), but His disciples simply didn't "get it" until the very end.

During the last week of His life, Jesus became more blunt about the manner of His death. He gave the twelve disciples the complete step-by-step advance details of His upcoming brutal murder. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to *crucify* him: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt. 20:18-19).

Each of the four Gospels focuses in heavily on this detailed account of Christ's death. Over ninety percent of the Gospel accounts focus on His 3½-year ministry, and about one-third of that covers the last week of His life, His death, burial and resurrection.

Therefore, it would be impossible to summarize all the Gospel accounts regarding the crucifixion in this article, much less the mountain

of tradition which has grown out of the event. Let's consider, instead, the *effect* of Christ's crucifixion on others.

The Shame of the Cross

How would you consider the value of a dead man hanging on a cross? How could you think of him as a savior, a great man, or the son of God? Wouldn't he be more representative of a failure, a criminal, or a "loser"?

The Jewish tradition of the day said, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." The very idea of publicly displaying a dead (or dying) man was the worst sort of degradation he could suffer. In this way, Jesus became "accursed" for us.

Jesus was crucified *outside* the city. In the Jewish tradition of stoning, this was the lowest form of criminal prosecution — done *outside* the city gates (Num. 15:36). The Roman occupational army complied with this Jewish custom. In fact, Jesus had to carry His cross so far from "city center" that a visitor from Cyrene, named Simon, was "compelled to bear his cross" (Matt. 27:32).

Many of the disciples, and even many among the "mob" at His crucifixion, believed in Jesus until the very end. But that *end* was so degrading that even *they* doubted His Messiahship when He hung on the cross. How could they believe in a Messiah, perhaps stark naked, on a cross between two obviously guilty criminals? His own mother and His twelve disciples saw Him in His shame, and perhaps even *they* were disillusioned.

Imagine Mary's feelings. All that she'd been through — the virgin birth, the angel's message, the miracles she had seen — must have gone through her mind. At the moment of His crucifixion *she* also had to bear much shame — especially from her Jewish friends.

"We always knew there was something wrong with Him," they would say. "Now *this* (being crucified) confirms it!"

For many — even those who saw His miracles, heard His teachings and were benefited by healings — the shame of the cross wiped out any thought that Jesus of Nazareth could be the Messiah.

Even *after* His resurrection, many of the disciples didn't recover from the shock of the crucifixion. Thomas doubted. Peter went fishing. The others followed Peter back into their old life-styles. Not until the day of Pentecost did the *shame* of the cross finally become *glory* to those who eventually preached it around the world.

Disciples Crucified

When the disciples perceived the glory of Christ's resurrection, they finally understood why the abject *shame* of the cross was necessary, and they became willing even to be crucified themselves!

When the disciples remembered their Master's prophecies, they saw them in a new light. Christ had not only said He would die on the cross, but that *the disciples* also would drink of His cup and be baptized with the baptism He was baptized with (Matt. 20:22-23).

To the Pharisees, Jesus had been even more pointed. "Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them *ye shall kill and crucify*; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city" (Matt. 23:34).

James was the first apostle to be martyred (Acts 12:2) and tradition tells us that Peter was crucified (perhaps upside down). Most of the disciples, including Paul, were martyred, and *all* of the disciples were persecuted continually for the cross of Christ (Gal. 6:12).

A Symbol — For Shame or Glory?

The cross became the foremost symbol of Christianity. This in itself was a miracle — how could a hangman's noose or a gas chamber become a symbol of the world's largest religion? Yet the cross during that

day was just as ghastly a symbol of *death* as a hangman's noose is today. Yet the cross became a worldwide symbol of Christianity.

However, orthodox Christianity has overdone this reverence for the cross — even to the point of perhaps making a "graven image" out of too many crosses. After all, millions of wooden "slivers of the cross" during the Dark Ages added up to enough wood to build Noah's Ark!

Today, many people "cross themselves" before doing anything important. Many wear crosses continually, or kiss the bishop's cross at each mass.

The physical cross is not holy of itself, but the *symbolism* of what it stands for (the reality of what took place on the cross) *is* — in a sense — holy. The symbolic meaning is something in which we ought to GLORY. Paul constantly preached the cross — "Jesus Christ and him crucified" — especially to those who looked for a more sophisticated and complicated road to salvation.

To the Greeks at Corinth, for instance, it was philosophic foolishness to believe in a cross. Notice what Paul wrote to them: "For Christ sent me not . . . with wisdom of words, lest the *cross of Christ* should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved *it* [the cross] is the *power of God* . . . For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach *Christ crucified*, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. 1:17-18, 22-23).

To these Corinthians, Paul further wrote: "I determined not to know *anything* among you, save *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*" (I Cor. 2:2). Of course Paul also spoke on other subjects, but he wanted them to realize that the simplicity of the cross was the FOUNDATION of Christianity.

Symbol of Atonement

The "wisdom" which the Greeks sought after was represented by the

esoteric philosophy of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the great Greek poets and playwrights. To them, atonement by a symbol of *death* was utter foolishness.

The Jews' stumblingblock was the seeking of a "sign" (a Messianic miracle) and the intolerable thought that the Messiah could die so shamefully like a common degenerate criminal!

Many Jews could not understand that all men, all nations and races, were made *one* by the universal reconciliation of the cross: "... That he might reconcile both [Jew and Gentile] unto God in one body *by the cross*..." (Eph. 2:16). "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile *all things* unto himself..." (Col. 1:20).

Yet even the Jewish Christians continually nagged Paul to preach circumcision to the Gentile converts, instead of the cross, as the sign of salvation. To such Judaisers, Paul wrote the book of Galatians, concluding: "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the *offense of the cross* ceased" (Gal. 5:11).

The cross was *offensive* to outsiders, and even to some *within* the Church. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18).

Are You an "Enemy of the Cross"?

Is it possible for a professing Christian to be an "enemy" of the cross of Christ? There are many ways in which a Christian could be such an enemy. Paul spoke of those who "walked" in a way that marked them as enemies. ("Walk" is a common biblical metaphor for a "way of life.") You can become an enemy of the cross by walking in a different way of life than Jesus walked.

Christians are commanded to follow Christ's example. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving

us an *example*, that ye should *follow his steps*" (I Pet. 2:21).

One of the most beautiful verses of the Bible describes this relationship of Christ's way of life to His cross. Paul wrote: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

It would be easy for a Christian to glory *selfishly* in human wisdom (as did the Greeks) or in outward signs of obedience (such as circumcision and the Talmudic principles of Judaism), but it is hard to glory *selfishly* in the symbol of your Savior's sacrificial death, the cross. To the Galatians, Paul wrote: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the *cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

Take Up His Cross

To a Christian, the cross is a symbol of patience, endurance and even occasional *suffering*. When Christ urged each Christian to "take up his cross daily," He referred to this lifelong process of daily *endurance*.

It is possible to be an *enemy* of the cross by merely being ashamed of the reproach that it represents. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him *without the camp*, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13:12-13).

Are you afraid to be different in your community, standing up for the cross of Christ and what it represents? There is very little *physical* persecution of Christians today, but there is a measure of embarrassment and hardship for the Christians who are not ashamed of their calling. Be willing to come out of this world's deception, and then *return* to that world with the right example.

Don't be an enemy of the cross. Instead, take up and bear Christ's cross *daily*. □

Announcing: PERSONAL APPEARANCE PROGRAMS



Proclaiming Hope for a Better World Tomorrow

You are invited to *personally* hear Garner Ted Armstrong or one of his associates expound the *way* to happiness and world peace.

They will be appearing in more than 40 cities in 1974. There is no admission charge. Watch for one of these unique appearances near you.

COMING APPEARANCES

Tampa, Florida, McKay Auditorium
January 17-18, Sherwin McMichael

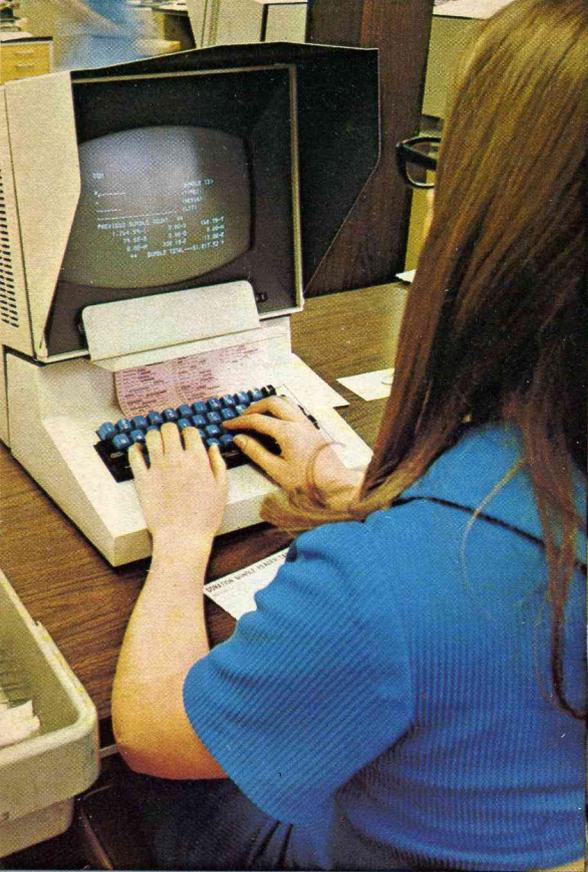
Little Rock, Arkansas
Little Rock Convention Center
February 7-8, Ronald Dart

Springfield, Missouri
Shrine Mosque
February 14-15
Sherwin McMichael

San Francisco, Calif.
San Francisco Civic Auditorium
March 22-23
Garner Ted Armstrong

Minneapolis, Minn.
Minneapolis Arena and Convention
April 18-19
Garner Ted Armstrong

Sponsored by Ambassador College
and the Worldwide Church of God



MAIL PROCESSING CENTER

EVERY DAY thousands of letters from around the country and abroad converge at Box 111, Pasadena, California. They are opened, read and in response to requests thousands of pieces of literature are hauled back to the post office to be dispersed to the four corners of the United States — and beyond.

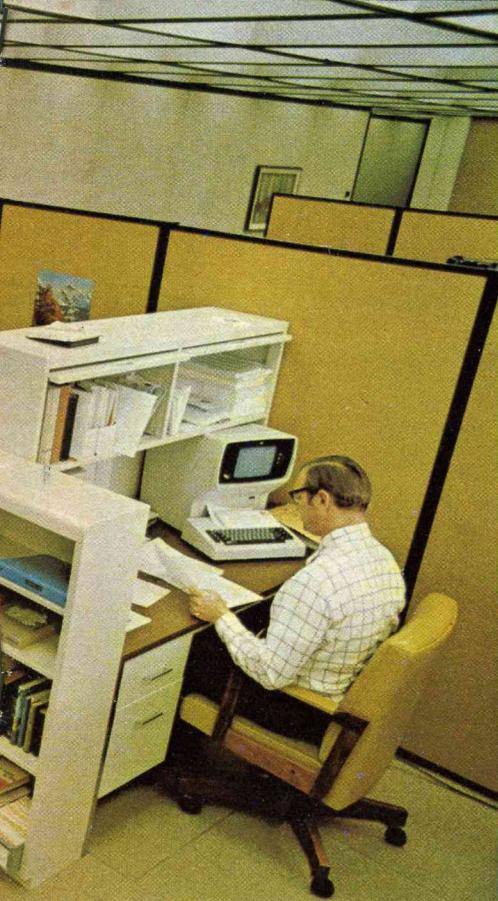
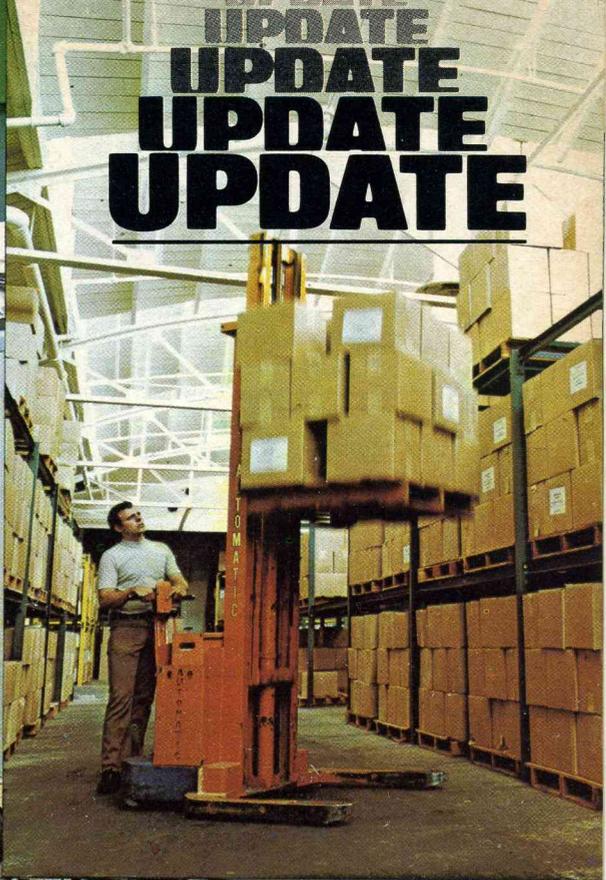
This feat is all in a day's work for the men and women of the Mail Processing Division. Coordinating this team effort is the division head, Mr. Richard Rice.

Recently, Mr. Rice asked someone to sit down with paper, pencils and a calculating machine and figure out how much mail we have received and how much literature we have mailed out in the past 40 years. He came up with the estimate that we have received about 28,400,000 letters since 1934. In that same period we mailed some 375,000,000 pieces of literature!

In 1974, over 3,000,000 pieces of mail were received at our Pasadena address. That represents a stack of mail over 1½ miles high. If one per-



UPDATE
UPDATE
UPDATE
UPDATE



Photos by Joe Clayton — GN

son had to read that mail, and if he could do so at the rate of a letter per minute, eight hours a day, five days a week, 50 weeks a year, it would take him about 1,700 years.

But thanks to the help of over 160 employees, we are able to process the work load on a day-to-day basis. We also have a lot of help from the latest in computer technology. If we tried to maintain our subscription list without a computer, the cost of processing the mail would skyrocket. We would need thousands of additional square feet to store the names on cards and scores of additional employees to maintain the files. Service would be slower, and the chances of making mistakes would be higher.

As it is, we are able to maintain high standards of efficiency and accuracy. "The number of complaint letters we receive varies depending on the volume of mail," notes Rudy Dykstra, who oversees quality control. "But I would say that the number of complaints figures out to about .01% or less of the total volume of mail we receive."

Amidst this mass moving of the mail, we are able to maintain the personal touch. Letters with questions or problems of a personal nature are given high priority and their writers are quickly referred to our local ministers for the appropriate help.

The Pasadena office is the largest handler of the mail and literature —

TEAMWORK AND TECHNOLOGY. Each letter is carefully read. Literature requests are entered by terminals (upper left, opposite page) into IBM 370/158 computer which produces nearly 1,000 address labels a minute. Literature taken from inventory (upper right, this page) is inserted into envelopes and dispatched to the post office.

but by no means the only one. This is a worldwide Work — additional hundreds of thousands of letters are processed by our offices in Canada, several European countries, Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Rhodesia, Mexico City and Israel. All of them are dedicated to giving *you* the best service possible. □

WITNESS TO THE FRENCH- SPEAKING PEOPLES

Dibar Apartian, director of the French phase of God's Work, recently conducted evangelistic campaigns before large audiences in Paris, France and Fort-de-France, Martinique.

Following a successful campaign in Montreal last summer, the *Salle Pleyel*, in Paris, was selected as the site of the second campaign to be conducted in the French language. Although the *Salle Pleyel* is normally used for musical performances, its modern facilities were easily adaptable for a public lecture. (However, the stagehands, accustomed to dealing with musicians, were apparently not quite so adaptable: they kept addressing Mr. Apartian as "Maestro.")

Mr. Apartian spoke two nights with over 750 in attendance at each meeting. His message the first evening focused on the worsening economic and social difficulties plaguing the world and particularly the French-speaking nations. The following night, he explained the solutions to these problems through the Kingdom of God, as well as what can be done now on a personal and individual level.

Following each of his messages, Mr. Apartian was thronged by scores of persons who were anxious to talk with him, since most of them listened to his



M. Robert — GN

broadcasts and were regular readers of his articles in *La Pure Vérité* (the French edition of the *Plain Truth*). He chatted with members of the audience and answered many questions on a variety of biblical topics until near midnight on both occasions.

The master of ceremonies for the program was Etienne Bourdin, pastor of the Paris congregation of the Worldwide Church of God which now numbers over 200. Mr. Bourdin will be holding a series of post-campaign Bible

MR. APARTIAN is surrounded by members of the audience anxious to chat with him (top photo). Posters at the entrance to the Salle Pleyel announce the campaign (bottom).

studies for all who are interested.

A week after the Paris campaign, Mr. Apartian was in the tropical Caribbean island of Martinique for another *conference publique*, as it is called in French. *Le Monde à Venir* (*The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast in French) is widely listened to in

Martinique, and Mr. Apartian is quite well known there. It is not uncommon for cabbies, waiters, bellboys and other strangers to recognize him just from the sound of his voice.

There was a good turnout for the campaign — about 625 each night — despite drenching rains the second night and the unavailability of public transportation upon which so many of the islanders depend. No buses run after 8:00 p.m. in Fort-de-France. This meant that anyone taking the bus to the campaign would have had no sure way home afterwards other than a taxi. The cost of the latter, though, is prohibitive for most Martinicans. Mail received in the French Department indicates that even more people would have come to the campaign had it not been for the transportation problem.

A journalist from a local newspaper, *France-Antilles*, attended the campaign and planned to do an article on it. He talked to Mr. Apartian at some length and was very interested in the Work, having been a listener of *Le Monde à Venir* for ten years. He offered to help in any way he could the next time Mr. Apartian comes to Martinique.

The local church congregation in Fort-de-France, under the direction of their pastor, Gilbert Carbonnel, helped with the many backup and support functions that go into making a successful campaign. One of their projects included posting throughout the city some 4,000 notices publicizing the campaign.

Overall, Mr. Apartian feels that French-language personal appearance campaigns, a relatively new thrust in the French Work, are off to a good start. But there are still many more cities to be reached. The next campaigns in French are tentatively scheduled for April in Brussels, Belgium and Lyon, France. □



NASHVILLE '74

On October 25, Garner Ted Armstrong returned to Nashville, Tennessee for another personal appearance campaign. For three evenings he spoke about world conditions and Bible prophecy in the Municipal Auditorium — site of the original *America Listen!* campaign in June 1970.

On the first and last evenings, Mr. Armstrong stressed the prophetic meaning and urgency of the times in which we live. On the second evening, he spoke on the all-important subject of family relations. He also spoke at length and candidly — particularly the first evening — about the Worldwide Church of God. Each evening he introduced the local pastor, Mr. Tony Hammer, and invited the audience to attend the



THIRTY AMBASSADOR singers and musicians perform on the second night before Mr. Ted Armstrong gives his message.

John Robinson — GN

weekly Bible study held in the Nashville area. The program brochure contained further information on the study.

Mr. Ted Armstrong's visit provided an opportunity for several congregations in the central Tennessee area to get together. Almost 1300 gathered for a special Sabbath service during the campaign to hear messages from Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Sherwin McMichael (Director of Personal Appearances) and Mr. Ronald Dart (Vice-Chancellor of Ambassador College, Big Sandy, Texas). □



THINK FOR a moment of the earth's ecosystem as a finely tuned precision piece of machinery. Man sits at the control console twisting various knobs, levers and buttons. Invariably a big red "tilt" sign lights up every time a new adjustment is made.

After almost 6000 years of such repeated trial and error, the operator still doesn't understand how the thing ticks. Reason? He failed to read and apply the manufacturer's instruction manual.

Not only that, but in this instance the operator figured he could run the machine just about any way he saw fit — regardless of what the manual said.

World Pollution — The First Cause

It all started with the first man — Adam. The One who designed and created the planet earth did not leave him in ignorance regarding the care and maintenance of its ecosystems. In Genesis 1:28

God told Adam: "... Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

God gave Adam the responsibility of caring for, maintaining, and improving his environment. Adam's first specific job involved the Garden of Eden. He was told to dress and keep (maintain, improve) this lush, verdant piece of real estate (Gen. 2:15).

But Adam forfeited His God-given stewardship and responsibility over the earth. Instead of following God's instructions, he opted for the approach originated by Satan the devil — that of lust, greed and selfishness (Gen. 3:6; Eph. 2:2-3). Rather than do things God's way, Adam figured he could launch out on his own and take a few expedient shortcuts (Gen. 3:1-7).

But Adam paid dearly for this

wrong decision. He not only lost his tenure in the Garden of Eden, but incurred some rather stiff ecological penalties as well.

Notice Genesis 3:17-19: "And unto Adam he [God] said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Ever since that time, human history has been a continuous chronicle of one environmental debacle after another.

Adam's son Cain continued in his father's footsteps. The Jewish historian Josephus records that he

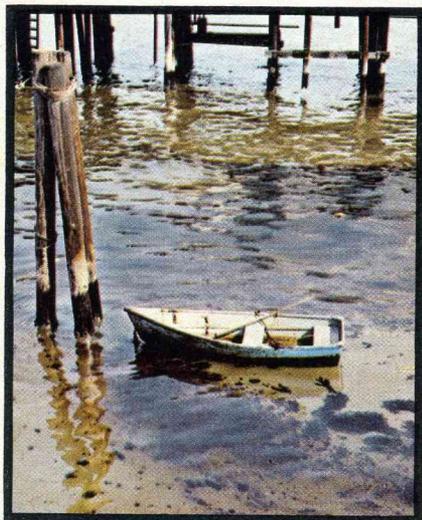
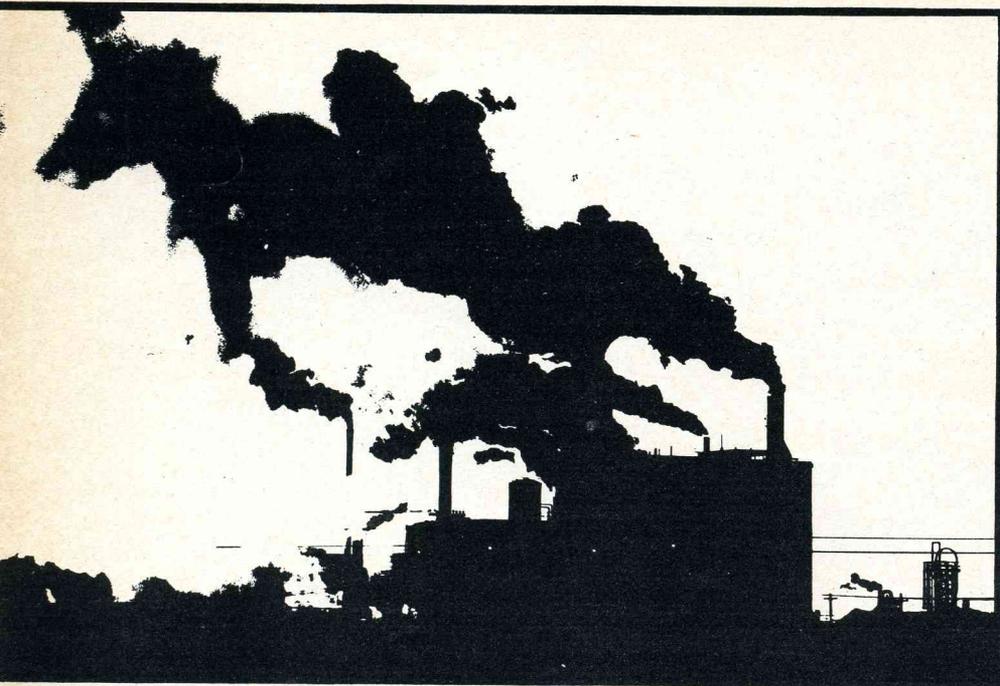
COMING!

THE TRANSFORMATION OF PLANET EARTH

Nobody today needs to tell you that the world is suffering from a giant ecological headache. If you live in a pollution-plagued metropolis, you are only too well aware of it. But what is the primary cause — and, even more important, the only ultimate cure?

by George P. Ritter





IN TODAY'S WORLD, air and water pollution are familiar sights. A survey taken in 1973 found that over one-half of the plankton samples collected off the East Coast of the U.S. were oil contaminated. Some scientists warn that continued oil pollution of the oceans could threaten the earth's oxygen supply.

John Kilburn

“forced the ground.” Apparently, in Cain’s case, economic profit came ahead of ecological principle.

By the time Noah stepped onto the scene a few centuries later, the world was in a sad state of ecological affairs. The scripture records that “The earth also was corrupt before God . . . for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6:11, 12).

God intervened by flooding the earth with forty days and nights of water. After the Flood He made a rather unique covenant with Noah. Its details are recorded in Genesis 9:13-16: “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth . . . And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh . . .”

A National Reawakening

Centuries after Noah’s Flood, God decided to call out the nation of Israel to carry on where Adam and the rest of mankind had previously failed. God intended that Israel be a national showpiece for the rest of the world (Deut. 4:5-8). All they had to do to qualify was to obey the statutes, judgments and laws that He set before them. Obe-

dience would mean fabulous physical blessings. Disobedience would bring on just the opposite results (see Deut. 28; Lev. 26).

Interestingly enough, many of the laws that God gave Israel specifically dealt with environmental matters. He instructed them on proper care of the soil, waste disposal and sanitation, timber management, animal husbandry and wildlife conservation. So it was probably more than coincidental that many of the blessings and cursings listed in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26 were related directly to ecological matters (see Deut. 28:2-6, 16-18 and Lev. 26:4-6, 22-26).

But even more important, these principles exemplified a *fundamental attitude* that God intended for man to have toward His creation. God made the earth’s ecosystems to be *used* by man for his sustenance and pleasure. He also intended that man should never tax the environment beyond its natural capacity. The whole approach perhaps is summed up by one of the major spiritual precepts He gave to ancient Israel: “Thou shalt not steal.”

Failure on a National Scale

But Israel, true to the leanings and dictates of human nature, failed in this assignment. Rather than follow God’s way of giving and sharing, they chose the same selfish route Adam had taken.

Although the Scriptures do not specifically enumerate every one of Israel’s national sins, environmental transgressions were obviously involved. For instance, notice Leviticus 26:33-34: “And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies’ land; *even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.*”

Like Cain, the Israelites undoubtedly thought more about what they could “get” from the soil than what they would put back into it.

By the time Israel went into captivity, her land was in a state of extreme depletion. The Prophet Jeremiah, just prior to the fall of Jerusalem, gave a brief description of what had happened: "How long shall the land mourn, and herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end" (Jer. 12:4).

Israel paid the price for her national sins by the eventual loss of what had been a land of "milk and honey." Today the hot, arid and parched condition of much of the Holy Land bears witness to her former inhabitants' cavalier treatment of the environment.

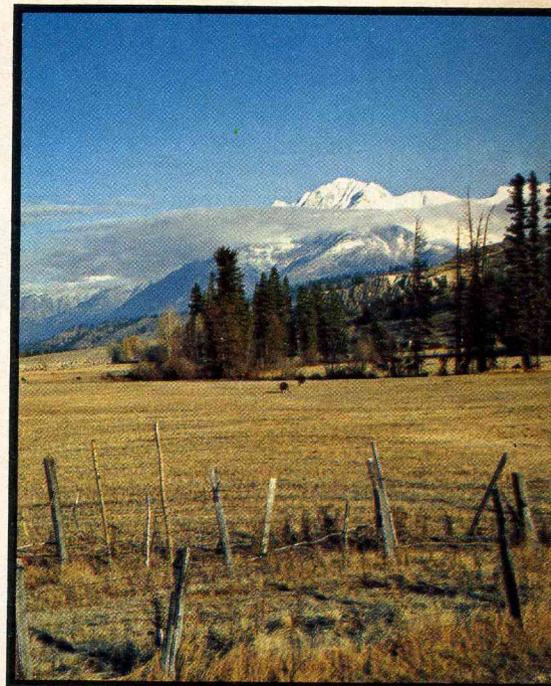
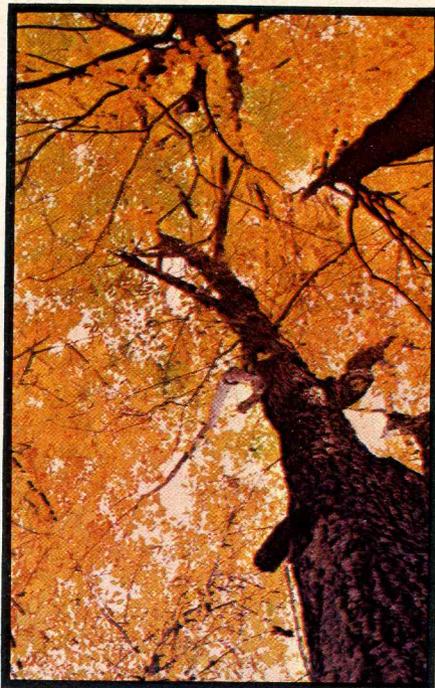
No other nation since that time has ever come close to treating the environment with the respect it has been due. The Romans, Greeks, Europeans and Americans have all left a lengthy legacy of their ecological sins. Had the nation of Israel set the proper example, things might have been different today. But they, along with every other nation, never really got in tune with the environment.

World Pollution — The Cure

Almost 2000 years ago, a final solution to man's age-old environmental problems was proclaimed to the world for the first time. The announcement came in the form of a futuristic message that was brought by the foremost Newscaster and Prophet that ever walked the face of the earth — Jesus Christ.

Much of Christ's message centered around the famous Olivet prophecy recorded in the 24th chapter of Matthew. In answer to His disciples' question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?," Christ outlined a detailed scenario for specific future fulfillment.

First He mentioned the rise of false prophets, followed by wars and rumors of wars (verses 4-6). Then, in verse 7: "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against king-



dom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

In the sixth chapter of Revelation the same sequence of events is apparently described by the well-known Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: a white horse (representing false Christs), a red horse (representing war), a black horse (representing famine) and a pale horse (disease epidemics).

John's vision of the Four Horsemen occurred some twenty years after the severe local Jewish war and famine of A.D. 70. Therefore, these prophecies were for a time yet future. Neither do the Four Horsemen refer to the events surrounding the Black Death or other historical European famines. The Four Horsemen were to symbolically ride at a time when an army of 200 million adult males was to emerge from the East (Rev. 9:16). Until the 20th century, the world did not have this kind of population. But much more was involved in this prophecy than wars, famines and plagues.

In the 8th chapter of Christ's end-time revelation, ecological disasters are included. Notice verses 7-11: "... And the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.... and the third part of

IN TOMORROW'S WORLD,
the earth's ecosystems will flourish as never before. Under God's rule, men will become more interested in how they can upgrade their environment than how they can exploit it (Isa. 11:5-9). At that time "the wilderness . . . and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. 35:1).

Wilbur Berg — GN



the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died . . . and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters, and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

During this time God is going to punish men for the high-handed manner in which they have treated the earth. Jesus Christ described this period as "the days of vengeance, that all things which are written [prophesied] may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22). Just as with any other type of sin, men will eventually reap what they sow (Jer. 2:19; Gal. 6:7).

In this regard notice the 11th chapter of Revelation, verses 15 and 18: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ . . . And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and *shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.*"

Old Testament Futurists

Prophecies of such future worldwide ecological calamities are not limited to the New Testament alone. The One who was later to become Jesus Christ also inspired Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah: "The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; *because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.* Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and

they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isa. 24:3-6).

Also Hosea 4:1-3: "... For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. *Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.*"

These prophecies seem to reveal, then, that future large-scale ecological catastrophes will occur in tandem with the wars, famines and plagues mentioned in Matthew 24, Revelation 6 and elsewhere. Could not the wars, in part then, be triggered by nations scrambling for a diminishing base of resources? Could not worldwide famines be aggravated by a defiled landscape, unhealthy livestock, and oceans bereft of protein-rich sea life? And wouldn't it be possible for pestilence and plague to run rampant if the world's freshwater supply was unfit for human consumption?

Man left to himself in such miserable conditions would surely perish off the face of the earth. That's why Christ stated in Matthew 24:22: "Had not those days been cut short, not a soul would be saved alive; however, for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short" (Moffatt translation).

Ecological Balance God's Way

God — not technology or science — will eventually deliver man from his self-made ecological problems. This will be accomplished as the events described in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation reach an earth-shaking crescendo. But before humanity destroys itself, Jesus Christ will return to restore the government of God on this earth (Luke 1:32; Rev. 19).

One of the first things He will do is to rid human society of the influence of Satan the devil (Rev. 20:2). Universal salvation will be available to all peoples (Isa. 52:10; 45:22). This, combined with Satan's removal, will mean that humanity at long last will be freed from the bonds of his selfish nature (Rom. 8:7).

Men will be taught God's laws under the jurisdiction of Christ's government (Micah 4:1-4; Isa. 2:1-4).

The world's ecosystems will flourish as never before. A massive clean-up campaign will be organized (Rev. 19:17-18); desert lands will be reclaimed (Isa. 35:1, 2, 6); the world's oceans and freshwater systems will be purified (Ezek. 47:8); cities will be properly planned and laid out (Amos 9:14; Zech. 8:4-5); and world agricultural production, aided by a rich, thick topsoil, will break all known records (Amos 9:13).

Mankind in general will learn for the first time a proper respect and appreciation for the environment. Godly character will gradually replace the carnal selfish drives of humanity (Rom. 8:19-23).

Eventually the world will achieve such a pinnacle of ecological success that the supreme Ruler of the universe, God the Father, will relocate His headquarters to this earth (Rev. 21:3).

This, then, is the future ecological heritage of the planet earth. But it won't come until man first experiences some painful ecological lessons. You as an individual, however, do not have to suffer through the disasters that may soon be engulfing this planet. God has promised protection for "the little flock" — those who are willing to start living by His principles and laws in this present life (Rev. 3:10; 12:14).

He has also promised these same people an opportunity to help administer His globe-girdling government in the world tomorrow (Rev. 3:21; 20:4). □

CHRIST THE REVELATOR

Millions are aware of the redemptive role of Christ. They know that Jesus died to reconcile man to God. But how many realize that their very Savior predicted today's chaotic world conditions in advance and foretold the outcome of it all?

by John R. Schroeder

THE VERY first verse of the book of Revelation states: "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants *things which must shortly come to pass . . .*"

Jesus Christ was a prophet; Jesus Christ was a newscaster of future world events; Jesus Christ forecast the overall, general sequence of events that would characterize the world from His time to now and on into the future; Jesus Christ was an up-to-date *futurist* in the true sense of the term.

He talked not only of the mind-bending, fast-moving, sometimes horrifying events to presage His second coming, but also of a *wonderful world to come*.

Go to the Gospel accounts. In their contents, Jesus spoke directly of an altogether different kind of society that would envelop the earth in future ages.

The religious set of Jesus' day thought they had Him cornered with a trick question about marriage and the resurrection. But He deftly answered their questions by informing them of the never-before-heard-of conditions of tomorrow's world.

He forecast: "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that world* [age, Greek], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: *neither can they die any more . . .*" (Luke 20:35-36).

Have you ever before heard of a world in which part of the inhabitants — the *compassionate* ruling class as other scriptures make clear — can no longer die? Visionary futurists of our day contemplate a fantastic world with a vastly lengthened human life-span made possible by super-replacement parts for worn-out body organs. But how many envision the ultimate: ". . . Neither can they die anymore"?

Matthew's Gospel account sheds yet more light on conditions in this incredible civilization yet to come.

This particular scripture about tomorrow's world does have a definite negative connotation. However, it also has an unspoken positive side as we will show. Those that were hostile to (and attributed intentional indignity to) the Work that Jesus Christ was doing through the power of the Holy Spirit in proclaiming that future world would be on the outside looking in.

Notice Matthew's description: ". . . But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in *the world to come*" (Matt. 12:32).

But on the positive side, the benevolent rulers will be composed of those who execute justice and judgment in their personal lives. David said: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (II Sam. 23:3).

Some specific positions in this future world have been preassigned by Jesus Christ Himself.

To His apostles, Jesus promised: "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30).

The epistles written by Peter and John are a microcosm of the overall good character of the apostles. Dedication, loyalty and love earmark those remarkable letters.

The Gospels are not the only biblical books whose contents reveal specific prognostications of Jesus Christ in His role as a prophet.

As was pointed out, the book of Revelation is unveiled by Jesus Christ Himself. If you have a red-letter Bible — one in which the first-person quotations of Jesus are printed in red — you will be struck by the many prophecies spoken by your Savior.

Further revelation on the world to come unfolds as you progress into its exciting contents. Specific rewards are prophetically promised to specific churches (and the Church as a whole) in chapters two and three. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations [in tomorrow's world]" (Rev. 2:26).

Rulership — the reward for overcoming sin and doing Christ's Work — is promised to every Christian executing justice and judgment in his personal life.

The Bible is chock-full of prophecies about this wonderful world to

come. One scripture that perhaps best sums up the general conditions of the wonderful world tomorrow, and *on beyond*, was spoken by Jesus in Revelation 21:5. "... Behold, I make all things new." That statement is all encompassing. Our fragile, uncomprehending human minds could never fathom the depth and breadth of that prophetic promise.

In keeping with Jesus' *modus operandi* in His message to the seven churches, we have first presented Christ as the Revelator of these good things to come.

But He also is the Revelator of incredible prophecies of punishment to come on this world in the relatively near future.

Jesus was *both* specific and general in His futuristic forecasts of various types of punishment for the world's sins.

He directly foresaw the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The horrible picture was so vivid in His mind that He made great lamentation for what He knew would befall that city (Matt. 23:37).

And on His painful path to the cross, "... there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

"But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, *the days are coming*, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" (Luke 23:27-31).

This stark prophecy *was fulfilled* (at least in part) in less than four decades. The historian Josephus recorded a vivid account of the terrible famine which ravaged Jerusalem: "It was now a miserable case, and a sight that would justly bring tears into our eyes, how men stood as to their food, while the more powerful had more than

enough, and the weaker were lamenting [for want of it]. But the famine was too hard for all other passions, and it is destructive to nothing so much as to modesty; for what was otherwise worthy of reverence, was in this case despised; in-somuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants: and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives..." (*Wars of the Jews*, book V, chapter X, section 3).

Josephus further described mass

"The Revelation of
Jesus Christ, which
God gave unto
him, to shew unto his
servants things which
must shortly come
to pass . . ."

Revelation 1:1

killings and deportation: "... So the [Roman] soldiers, out of the wrath and hatred they bore the Jews, nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another, to the crosses, by way of jest; when their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies" (*Wars of the Jews*, book V, chapter XI, section 1).

"And now, since his soldiers were already quite tired with killing men, and yet there appeared to be a vast multitude still remaining alive, Caesar gave orders that they should kill none but those that were in arms, and oppose them, but should take the rest alive. But, together with those whom they had orders to slay,

they slew the aged and the infirm . . . Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon their theatres, by the sword and by the wild beasts; but those that were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves . . .

"Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege, eleven hundred thousand . . ." (Flavius Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, book VI, chapter IX, sections 2, 3).

The horrible happenings of A.D. 70 are an apparent type of the even more grueling events of the end time.

Perhaps the whole picture of these age-ending prophecies is best described and brought into proper focus in Matthew 24.

The disciples asked Jesus: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [Greek *aion*, meaning age]?" (Verse 3.)

Then Jesus proceeded to enumerate a series of general events and happenings that would characterize the times from the first century to now — actually intensifying to the extreme at the very end of the age.

Among the things Jesus specifically mentioned was religious apostasy, wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters here and there on the earth, and blatant religious bigotry finding its ultimate expression in countless brutal martyrdoms.

Finally, the world would be so dominated by sin that even some Christians would begin to lose their first love and actually begin to betray, persecute, and cause to be put to death their own brethren. On the world scene, Jesus warned of several prophetic benchmarks *to precede* His second coming — none of which has yet been fulfilled to the fullest extent.

1) *Publishing of the Gospel*: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). When you see the *true* gospel beginning to be announced to the world's nations — when you see this prophecy in action on the world scene — you should increase your personal world watch and vigilance.

2) *The Abomination of Desolation*: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place [apparently some type of edifice of worship is yet to be erected in the Holy Land]... then let them which be in Judaea [the modern nation of Israel] flee into the mountains...."

"For then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be [again]" (verses 15-16, 21).

Jesus spoke of the vital necessity of understanding this "abomination" in the parenthetical phrase, "whoso readeth, let him understand" (verse 15). It appears to involve a great religious leader who would make his world headquarters in the Holy Land. This event's great import lies in the fact that it is a sign signaling the beginning of the *great tribulation*.

3) *The Hour of Trial*: Jesus — the real Revelator of the Bible's last book — refers again to this utterly unique time in the world's history. Notice His message to the Church in Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the *hour of temptation* [trial], which shall come upon *all the world*, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

This hour of trial (an hour is a relatively short time in biblical prophecy) will not be a local upset done in a corner of Asia. It will be global in range — all the inhabitants of the earth will be affected.

4) *Jerusalem Surrounded With Armies*: The companion prophecy in

Luke 21 gives us an additional prophetic waymark to consider. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (verse 20; cf., Zech. 14:1-4; Rev. 16:16).

But notice that this prophecy then parallels Matthew 24:16-20 as it describes the events just before the great tribulation: "Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto" (verse 21). Luke then describes the *great tribulation* in different words. "For these be the *days of vengeance*, that all things *which are written* [in the Old Testa-



"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Luke 21:36



ment prophecies] may be fulfilled" (verse 22). (Jesus often used the expression "it is written" when quoting or paraphrasing a passage from the Old Testament [Matt. 2:5; 4:4, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; Mark 7:6; 9:12, 13; 11:17, etc.]

The Bible simply does *not* clearly delineate all these eventful prophetic bench marks in easy one-two-three order. Nor are the ones mentioned the only ones; there are many more. The Bible is written "here a little and there a little," and therein lies one of the reasons Jesus continuously admonished His servants to watch (Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:33-37).

As world events unfold, Christians (and especially the ministry —

see Amos 3:7) should begin to match up the world scenario with the biblical prophecies.

Jesus Christ — the Revelator of all prophecy and the living Word that inspired the whole Bible — enjoins the following very big responsibility on all Christians: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things [the end-time events mentioned in the preceding verses] that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

Believe it or not, God is very concerned that His elect (any person or persons who will truly obey Him and help perform His Work upon the earth) not suffer with a disobedient, God-rejecting world.

But the qualifications for physical escape are spiritual. Hoarding honey, soybeans and other food staples is not the right route to take.

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye *meek* of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger," cried the Prophet Zephaniah (2:3).

A sermon-on-the-mount-type character is required. If you develop such Christlike character, the chances of your escaping the great tribulation are very good.

God's anxiety for the physical welfare of His people is recorded by the Prophet Isaiah: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold [here is the reason for hiding], the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity..." (Isa. 26:20-21).

Notice that verse 21 ties right back into the Christian's prophetic responsibility: watching significant world events individually (and warning the world as a Church) as well as praying to be worthy to escape the punishments of God on this sick and dying world.

Watch!

□

QUESTION: "In the article on 'The God Family' [June 1974 GN], the author mentions God's '7,000-year plan for earth.' Would you please explain what he means by this?"

Edward W.,
Lincoln, Nebraska

ANSWER: Up until now God has allowed approximately 6,000 years for humanity to write the painful lesson of "doing its own thing" — going its own way without the revealed knowledge of His Creator.

A study of biblical chronology indicates that Adam and Eve (our first parents) were created about 4,000 years before Christ (Gen. 5, 10; I Chron. 1-9; Matt. 1; Luke 3). And almost another 2,000 years have elapsed since the time of Christ's birth — totaling nearly 6,000 years of human civilization to date.

And the Bible tells us that shortly after the appearance of Christ on this earth again, a peaceful, utopian, 1,000-year reign begins on this planet (Rev. 20:1-10; Isa. 11).

These two general spans of time (approximately 6,000 years of man's rule; approximately 1,000 years of God's rule) add up to a period of about 7,000 years.

Further, the 7,000-year concept comes from an *analogy* between the perfect weekly cycle (seven days) and the apparent 6,000 years allotted to mankind prior to the millennium.

We must realize that even though the saints will live and reign with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4), there is still an undetermined period of time allowed *after* the millennium during which Satan shall be loosed and the Great White Throne Judgment will take place (Rev. 20:11-12). This span of time is *in addition* to the 1,000-year period.

The main biblical indication of a 7000-year plan is the evidence provided by the millennium as a type of God's rest or Sabbath (compare Revelation 20 and Hebrews 4). If the millennium represents a "Sabbath," then it would be logically



preceded by six similar 1,000-year "days."

II Peter 3:8 provides a basis for setting the length of each millennial day: "... One day is with the Lord *as* [Greek: *hos*] a thousand years, and a thousand years *as* [*hos*] one day." But we need to realize that even if we understand this as a literal statement regarding a 7,000-year plan, it is not giving us a precise, measured duration.

Why not? Because *hos* before numerals denotes "nearly," "about," "approximately." Compare its usage in Mark 5:13, "*about* two thousand"; Mark 8:9, "*about* four thousand"; John 6:19, "*about* five and twenty or thirty"; John 21:8, "*as it were* two hundred cubits"; Acts 13:18, 20, "*about* the time of forty years... *about* the space of four hundred and fifty years."

The biblical meaning behind man's 6,000-year period of human history, marked by costly trial and error plus ignorance and rejection of God's revealed Word, is carefully explained in our booklet titled *Why Were You Born?*

Q: "In your book you say God will force this country to do certain things. God never forces anyone to do anything. He tells us the rewards of obedience and punishment for disobedience. Throughout history, from Adam and Eve through the present day, He has given everyone freedom of choice."

Verna K.,
Las Vegas, Nevada

A: In general, God will not *now* force this country (or individuals for that matter) to do His will. God is allowing mankind to write his own history over these six thousand years since Adam and Eve chose their own way. But man is coming

to the point where someday he is going to have to admit that doing whatever *seems* right in his own eyes isn't as good as the way that God has prescribed (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

Although God is taking a "hands-off stance" in most matters in the world today, there is soon coming a time when He will have to step in before man obliterates himself and all other forms of life from off the face of the earth. Notice Matthew 24:22: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [alive — Moffatt]..."

Jesus Christ, as many biblical prophecies assert, is going to literally return to this earth (Acts 1:11; Matt. 24:27, 30-31). Armies of this world will actually try to repulse Christ and His army of angels when they return (Rev. 19:11-20). Notice verse 15 especially. He will not rule by popular mandate, but with a "rod of iron." People will be so deceived by Satan that He will have to enforce the ways of peace until they begin to see through their own human experiences how wonderful and joyous God's way of living is.

Christ will return to teach the nations how to worship and obey the true God. If a nation refuses to worship Christ, God will send plagues of drought and pestilence to bring that nation to submission (see Zech. 14:16-19). This is the kind of force your Bible says will be used to bring people to a willingness to learn of God and His ways.

Other prophecies show that God's way will eventually be practiced *willingly*. At last the nations of this earth will lay down their military hardware and will begin to employ farm implements instead. They will begin building instead of destroying (Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-9; Micah 4:1-4).

The nations will be *forced* to try God's way. But after God puts a new heart and spirit into them (Ezek. 11:19-20), they will cheerfully and willingly choose to continue in the only way to real health, happiness, peace and eternal life.

IN His model prayer, Christ instructed His disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come." And so we do — at least some of us do — perhaps perfunctorily, perhaps fervently — but we pray for it.

And we hope it will come soon — or we hope it will come later so as not to preempt our plans and worldly pursuits. Or we don't hope at all.

And we speculate about it. And argue over it. When will it come? Will it come at all? What sequence of events will lead to its arrival?

But who among us is really *preparing* for it?

Preparing to meet our God is something most of us would consider seriously only on our deathbeds or if we believed that Christ's return were very, very imminent. Otherwise, forget it for now — we'll think about it some other day.

Such a don't-bother-me, devil-may-care (Satan takes the second coming of Christ *very* seriously, by the way) attitude is extremely shortsighted. In the first place, if Christ does return in your lifetime, you, of course, could be in real trouble.

But should you die before He returns, as billions have before you, the question of preparation is still important. For the Bible teaches that the dead in Christ — and you do hope to be numbered among

that privileged group — will be resurrected to immortality *when Christ returns, when the Kingdom comes!*

Wising Up

So no matter how you figure it, the coming of the Kingdom is of immediate concern to you. When you pray "Thy kingdom come," you should also pray the prayer of Moses: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). You should take to heart the exhortation of the Apostle Paul: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *redeeming the time*, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).

How do we wise up? How do we know what Christ's will for us is in these crucial times? Fortunately, we don't have to guess. For Christ not only told us what would happen (which everybody worries about), but also what to do about it (which most people ignore). Let's take a look at His important — and often overlooked — instruction.

Future Shock

In 1970, Alvin Toffler, in his best-selling book *Future Shock*, proclaimed the gospel of rapid change and predicted a radically different world of the future. Toffler warned of massive future shock — bewildering anxiety, frustration and dis-

orientation — for those who don't change their modes of thinking and living to prepare themselves for the changes to come.

Toffler is one of a new breed of thinkers called futurists. They attempt to predict the future based on past and present conditions and trends.

Over 1900 years earlier, Jesus Christ preached another gospel of change and prophesied of a different — better — world to come. You can read about it in *His* best-selling book, the Bible. As the first and foremost futurist, Christ predicted the coming Kingdom of God and told people to change — repent — in order to be prepared for its arrival (Mark 1:14-15). He also warned of extreme future shock — often summed up in the expression "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" — for those who didn't heed His message.

Some of Christ's strongest warnings about future shock are recorded in Matthew 24 and 25. First, He foretold the sequence of traumatic events that would culminate in His return. Then He warned: "But of that day and hour *knoweth no man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. . . . Watch therefore: for *ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*" (Matt. 24:36, 42).

WHAT TO DO UNTIL THE KINGDOM COMES

by D. Paul Graunke

Second-Guessing the Second Coming

In spite of these emphatic statements of Christ, there have always been some who have tried to second-guess God the Father about the return of His Son. And who wouldn't want to know? After all, the return of Christ is the focal point of all prophecy, the hope and expectation of all true believers.

But those who try to outguess God are setting themselves up for an unpleasant dose of future shock — the trauma and disillusionment of being wrong.

Prophecy is interesting and informative, but it is plain from the words of Christ that there is only so much we can know beforehand. So it's futile to try to second-guess God. Besides, there are more important things for a Christian to do than play guessing games.

Take a word of advice from Paul: "... Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.... And though I have the *gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge... and have not charity [love], *I am nothing*" (I Cor. 12:31; 13:2). Concentrate on matters that really count.

Eat, Drink While the Lord Doth Tarry

At the opposite extreme of the second-guessers are those who give up hoping or believing Christ is coming. They comprise a much larger group, and their problem is far more serious. Second-guessing is foolish — but skepticism and doubt can be fatal!

The Apostle Peter predicted that as we drew closer to Christ's return, there would be, ironically, greater and greater skepticism that He would return. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:3-4).

Peter explained that God does

not view time as we mortals do and any "delay" is for our benefit. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..." (verses 8-10).

The smart Christian realizes this and keeps himself busy doing what Christ says.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh *shall find so doing*. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods" (Matt. 24:45-47).

But the doubter or skeptic, lacking conviction and motivation, is liable to misuse the precious time afforded him. He adopts an eat-drink-while-the-Lord-doth-tarry life-style — with fatal consequences. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (verses 48-51).

Avoid future shock. Don't be caught off guard. *If you let down in your spiritual responsibilities, you may be left out of the Kingdom.*

The "Fuelish" Virgins

Another group of people in danger of suffering future shock is portrayed in the parable of the wise and foolish — or "fuelish," as we shall see — virgins.

Ten virgins go out to meet the bridegroom — Christ (Matt. 25:1). Half of them are well supplied with

oil; half aren't. While the bridegroom is delayed, they fall asleep. At midnight the cry goes out to meet the bridegroom.

"Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. 25:7-12).

Spiritual Energy Crisis

Christ tells us to be lights to the world (Matt. 5:14). "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (verse 16).

Your light can shine if you have plenty of oil — if you have and use God's Holy Spirit daily, if you have a close one-on-one relationship with God, and if you are doing His will.

But if you aren't "on fire" for God, then you, like the "fuelish" virgins, are suffering from a spiritual energy crisis.

The problem with them was not that they did anything particularly evil — but rather that they didn't do anything at all! They were spiritually apathetic and complacent. Maybe they didn't dive off the deep end of the cesspool of sensuality and sin — like the wicked servant in Matthew 24 — but neither were they fervent and zealous for the things of God.

The foolish virgins couldn't make up their deficiency by borrowing oil from others. This shows that you can't make it into the Kingdom — you can't be saved — on someone else's coat tails. All of your friends and good connections won't do you any good at the time of judgment.

You will be judged on your own merits — or demerits.

Christ ended the parable with this warning: “*Watch* therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:13).

Watch what? Certainly world conditions. But Christ also meant we should *watch our own spiritual condition*. The literal Greek carries the connotation of being vigilant, awake, alert, prepared. We should post a continual watch on our own lives — what we think and what we do — and have plenty of fuel on hand through contact with God and His Word. Then we will be prepared for *future salvation* instead of future shock.

The Parable of the Talents

Now that you're awake, you need to keep yourself busy. You need to be doing something constructive with your life. This is Christ's advice in His next parable — the parable of the talents.

A talent in Christ's time was a unit of currency worth several hundred dollars at today's rates. In this parable Christ used it to symbolize a person's abilities and natural aptitudes. Etymologists tell us the modern use of the word “talent” is derived from the use Christ made of it in this parable.

The parable begins in Matthew 25:14 with a man (Christ) taking a long journey into a far country (heaven). Among his servants (Christians) he distributes his wealth for them to invest; some get more than others. Upon his return he calls for an accounting.

“And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (verses 20, 21). The servant with two talents also

doubled his amount and was similarly commended.

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:24-30).

Don't Sell Yourself Short

The lesson to all is to make the most of the talents and opportunities God gives you. This message is especially important to those who think they possess only one talent — or less. Focusing their minds on what they don't have instead of what they do, they are fond of quoting Paul's statement in I Corinthians 1:26-27: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world . . . the weak things . . . and base things of the world, and things which are despised.” Identifying themselves with this description, they short-sell themselves, bury their talent, and wait, wait, wait for Christ to come.

It's too bad they don't read and identify with Paul's response to his *own* weaknesses. In II Corinthians 12 Paul prayed three times for relief from his physical afflictions. But

God answered: “My grace is sufficient for thee: *for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” To which Paul responded: “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: *for when I am weak, then am I strong*” (verses 9-10).

The short-sellers should also read the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12-27. It is identical to the parable of the talents except for the fact that each servant is given only *one* pound to work with. (For those who like to discount their ability, it should be pointed out that a pound was worth *much less* than a talent.) The profitable servants were able to show Christ a 1,000% and 500% return on His investment in them. What you start out with is Christ's responsibility — and what you end up with is *yours*.

The criterion for Christians to keep in mind is that Christ will only hold you accountable for what you do with what you have — not what you haven't. So get busy!

The Ice Age Cometh

In Matthew 24, Christ predicted that as the end approaches there would be an Ice Age — of the human heart. “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (verse 12).

The Apostle Paul elaborated on this chilling of human emotions and relationships in II Timothy 3:1-4: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . unthankful, unholy, *without natural affection*, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”

One of the great challenges facing Christians today is to give love, to be concerned and involved in people's problems and needs.

Thus the parable of the sheep and

goats. The time setting is the judgment when Christ sorts out the sheep (righteous) from the goats (wicked).

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

The righteous ask how this could be so. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:34-40).

The goats on the left are left out of the Kingdom of God because they never took the time and effort to care. They took their motto from the first murderer, Cain: "... Am I my brother's keeper?"

Endangered Species

If you were in the sorting pen now, on which side of Christ would you be placed? If you can't say confidently that you'd end up on the right side, now is the time to do something about it.

There are too few sheep in the world — in fact, they are becoming an endangered species! Any additions to their depleted ranks will help a love-starved humanity and be well rewarded by Christ when His Kingdom comes.

The concept and *practice* of brotherly love is such a vast one that it could scarcely be covered in a whole article, much less in these few paragraphs. But for a working definition read Romans 13:8-10. Also write for two important booklets — *What Is a Real Christian?* and *The Ten Commandments*. They expand upon the theme of love.

Warn the World

We have seen that Christ instructs us to watch, to develop our talents,

and to love our fellowman. These are things we *as individuals* can — and must — do. There is yet another responsibility Jesus places upon us. But it is a *collective* responsibility — a job that He has assigned to His spiritual organism — the Church. And that is to warn the world that He is coming.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the *gospel* to every creature," said Christ (Mark 16:15). The gospel is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God — see Mark 1:14-15.

He also commissioned His Church to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

This is the work given to the Church to perform until Christ returns. It is being accomplished today through the personal ministry of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, now proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God to heads of state

around the world. Through the personal ministry of Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong on TV, radio, in print, and now in evangelistic campaigns. Through hundreds of ordained ministers around the globe who teach repentance and baptism, and who are involved in the problems and needs of tens of thousands of people. Through the printing and mailing of millions of magazines and booklets each year that proclaim the gospel and instruct people in all the teachings of Christ.

The Worldwide Church of God is doing something more than pray "Thy kingdom come." As the collective body of Christ it is striving to make this important prophecy of Christ a reality: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then shall the end come*" (Matt. 24:14).

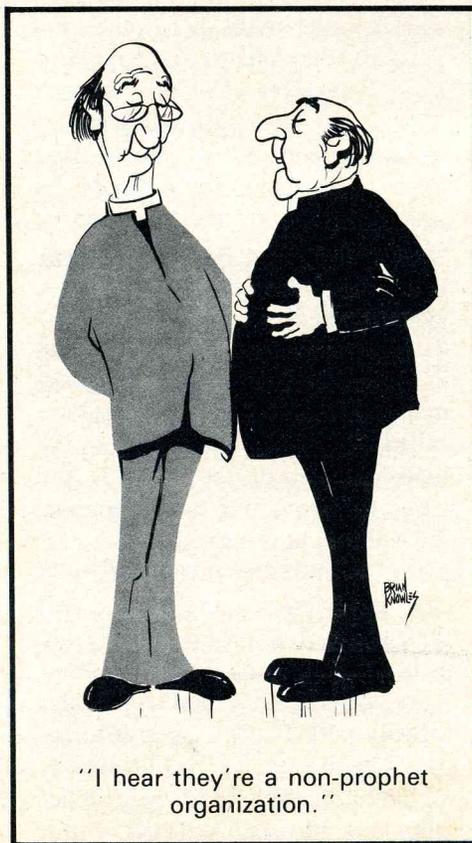
For more information about who we are, and what we are accomplishing, write for the booklets *This Is the Worldwide Church of God* and *Where Is God's True Church Today?*

And if you are interested in becoming a part of this worldwide Work, and have questions you would like answered, you are invited to write us and request a special, private appointment with one of our ministers.

Or if you would prefer faster service, simply pick up the phone and dial this toll-free number in the *continental* United States: 800-423-4444. (Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.)

We have no religious ax to grind, no quotas to meet, no pressure to exert. We simply have a message of hope and salvation, and a mission to broadcast that good news to the world. We intend to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God until that Kingdom comes. For as Christ said: "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh *shall find so doing.*"

What will you be doing when Christ comes? □



WHAT OUR READERS SAY

Anybody Can Gripe

I want to tell you that I really enjoy *The Good News* magazine, especially the article "Anybody Can Gripe" in the September issue. I was feeling very negative and it seemed like it was written custom-made for me. It really was just like a mirror — made me see what state of mind I was in.

Mrs. Kenneth H.,
Irving, Texas

I just couldn't let this opportunity pass by to congratulate Mr. Antion for his fine article in the September *Good News*, "Anybody Can Gripe." Without realizing it, I had slipped into a negative attitude. That article helped to wake me up, and I'm sure many others saw themselves in it. Please convey my sincere thanks to Mr. Antion and to Mr. Wolverton for portraying our self-righteousness so accurately.

Mrs. Larry H.,
Ft. Smith, Arkansas

Update

I just finished reading an article in the September *Good News*, "Our Office in Brussels." It is brief but informative. The fault is that I usually overlook articles about the Work overseas. Oh, I read articles in the *Plain Truth* and *Good News* that pertain to events that are to affect us so-called Americans. But how these informative articles came about and by whom never seemed to enter my mind. How self-centered I have been. Please continue the informative articles on the Work itself. The short biographies of the individual men in the field of such a great Work are very inspiring.

Dan B.,
San Jose, California

You See Your Calling — But Why You?

The article "You See Your Calling — But Why You?" seems to fit me. I have become a co-worker voluntarily. I like paying tithes and offerings. It's become a habit I wish not to break. I have often wondered why He has called me to understand the truth. There are so many people who are better qualified than I.

Donald B.,
Poyen, Arkansas

I have received *The Good News* magazine for the past ten months and I think it is wonderful. The September issue gave me a real jolt. The article "You See Your Calling — But Why You?" by Paul S. Royer was a real awakener. I have read it three times to be sure I didn't miss a single point. In all of my 69 years I've never read anything like it. Being in that age bracket, I belonged to that group which was raised on the "hellfire and damnation" principle. I searched for real truth for many years, but I never found it until your magazines and booklets came into my life. My appreciation goes far beyond words.

Ferris T.,
Long Beach, California

The Parables of Jesus

In the "Parables of Jesus — Part 4: Who Is My Neighbor?" (printed in the August

1974 *Good News*), we are bringing up a lawyer (a Jew), a Jewish priest, a "Levite" and Jewish religious leader who passed by and didn't want to assist the injured man. First: A parable is a short fictitious narrative. Second: I don't care how you indoctrinate Christians by quoting Isaiah 9:6 — wrong interpretation (on page 21) — and other Isaiah quotations — also wrong interpretations. But I am a Christian and a good one, broadminded, who resents your insinuation of Christians against Jews.

We know that anti-Semitism has its root in Christianity, or rather in teachings of fanatical, ignorant priests and ministers — that Jews killed Jesus Christ — changed finally after 19 centuries by Pope Paul VI. After all, I never saw a Jewish pamphlet criticizing or teaching against Christianity. I am embarrassed that Jews are more ethical, believing in a commandment "Love your neighbor . . ." and don't indoctrinate their believers against Christianity, as you do in the *Good News*.

Anonymous,
Los Angeles, California

• *Anti-Semitism was the furthest thing from the author's mind. Anybody of any race, color or creed could have ignored the injured man in the parable account. The problem of noninvolvement is not racial in origin; it is man's heart that is the problem (cf., Rom. 8:7; Jer. 17:9).*

Personal Counsel

If you have an ordained minister in my area, I would appreciate him coming to see me so he might answer some of my questions. Your openness to help is very encouraging, and do keep it up if possible.

Robert B.,
Morganton, North Carolina

• *He's on his way! Other readers desiring personal counsel with a Worldwide Church of God minister can write to The Good News, P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123. Those in other areas of the world can write to the address of our office nearest them. See the communications box on the inside front cover.*

Is God's Law Bondage?

The article entitled "Is God's Law Bondage" in the October *Good News* was absolutely fabulous. If a person will look up and read all the scriptures quoted, it will take up a whole week of daily Bible study — I know — I did it. All I can say is thank you and thank God for using your magazine in this capacity to help us all learn God's ways and laws more fully.

Rosemarie F.,
Falls Church, Virginia

In "Is God's Law Bondage?" you say "Does it make any sense that Christ would abolish a perfect, eternal spiritual law that was given for man's good and joy?" You say Jesus knew that obedience to the Ten Commandments was the way to freedom from sin. You don't know what you are talking about. Every believer has to come to Jesus. And Jesus has the power and the way to forgive and free us from sin. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that we have to obey

the Ten Commandments in order to be free from sin.

Mary B.,
Bronx, New York

• *It is only through Christ and His sacrifice that we can be forgiven our sins. No man can "earn" salvation by any amount of law-keeping. The scripture says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: that of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). While we cannot be justified or earn salvation through "works" (Rom. 3:20-31) — grace is an unmerited and undeserved gift from God — the scripture goes on to say: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works . . ." (verse 10).*

Christ freely grants forgiveness and "remission of sins that are past." But to remain free from sin we must learn to keep God's law, for "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Paul said we become servants to whom we obey, "whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16). We are created to perform good works and to bear good fruit through God's Holy Spirit. Although not saved by works, our reward in God's Kingdom is definitely tied to our overall obedience now in this life (Rev. 22:12). And that way of life is summarized by the Ten Commandments.

For a more detailed explanation of this question, request the free booklets "What'll You Be Doing in the Next Life?" and "Just What Do You Mean — Conversion?" Also the reprint "The New Testament Teaching on Law and Grace."

Money Isn't Everything

I always marvel at the track record of increasing excellence of *The Good News*. But I especially want to thank you for the article "Why People Say, 'Money Isn't Everything'" in the October 1974 issue. Before I became a member of God's Church, I felt exactly as was stated in the article: "Many . . . have felt that they should give up the material comforts of life and give a great deal toward 'causes.'" Since coming in the Church, I have come to understand that wealth isn't wrong, but I never really understood the balance between prosperity and giving until now.

Bob B.,
Pasadena, California

Tithing

Enclosed is my tithe from my last two paychecks plus a little extra to be used in God's Work. I have been sending donations to God for a few years, but didn't start true tithing until about three years ago. Before that time I was always in debt but managed to keep my bills paid most of the time. During the last three years I have gotten almost totally out of debt except for my house and a new car. This is the first new car I have been able to buy in over 20 years. It is the first one since I first got married in October 1950. I know now that true tithing really does work, because now for the first time I have a little extra spending money, too.

Roy J.,
Dallas, Texas

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The Good News

P. O. Box 111
Pasadena, California 91123

Printed in U.S.A.

690920-1620-0 211 G015

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What will you be doing in the next LIFE?

Is there an afterlife? If so, how does one attain it? Even some who claim to accept the biblical revelation are confused. Many have unknowingly accepted a *false* salvation. Nothing is more misunderstood than the difference be-

tween "grace" and "works."

This free booklet, *What Will You Be Doing in the Next Life?* gives you the true, biblical answers.

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