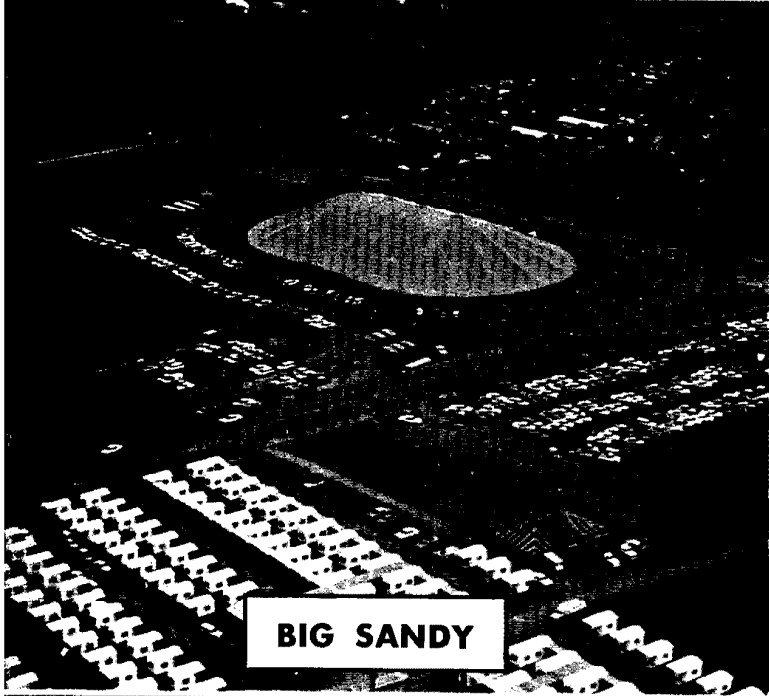


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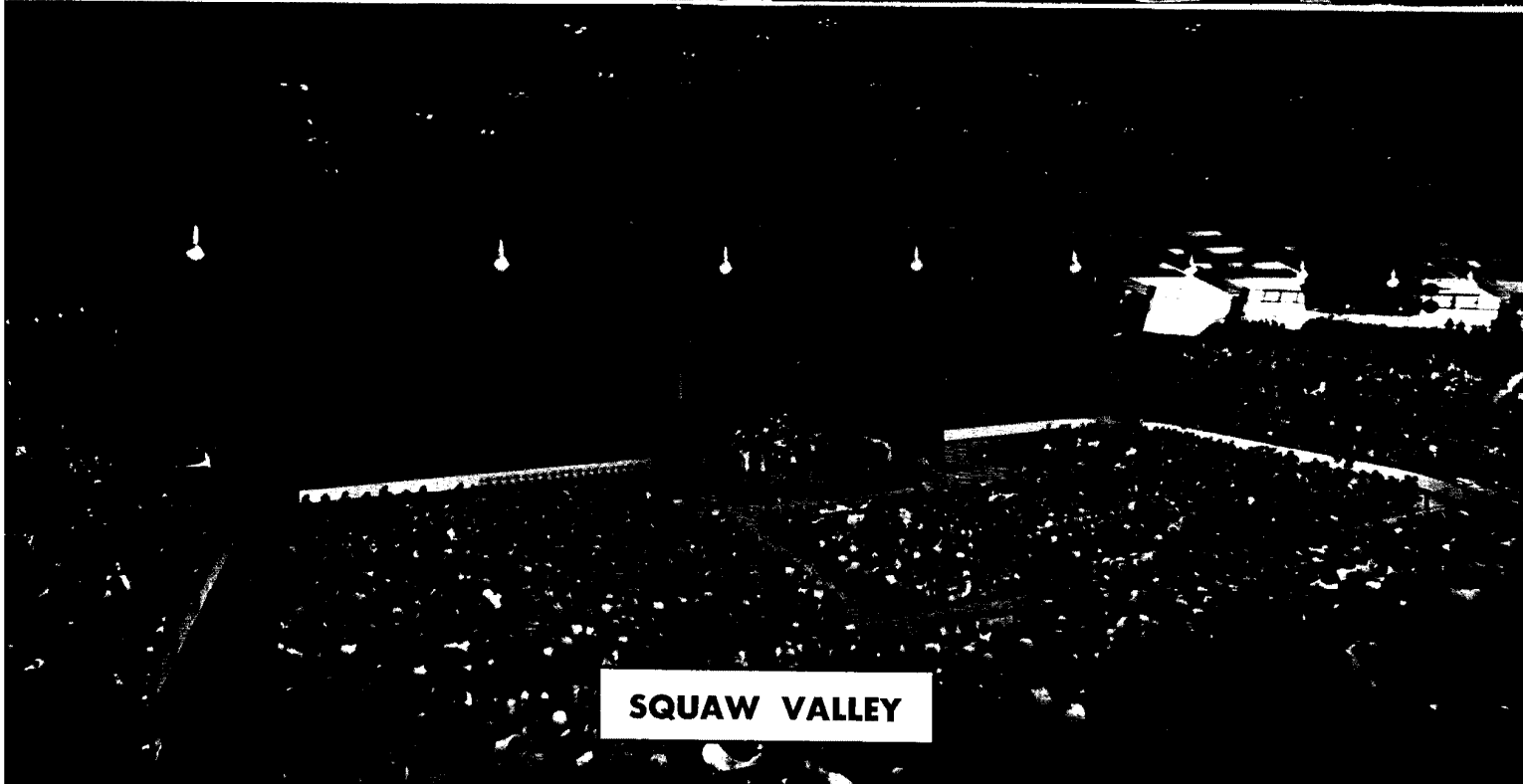
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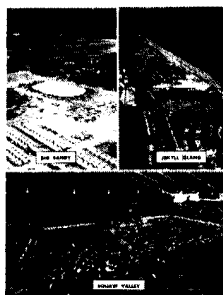
BIG SANDY



JEKYLL ISLAND



SQUAW VALLEY



More About Our Cover...

Another Feast of Tabernacles has come and gone, and again it was "the best Feast ever!" The cover this issue shows the three major sites in the United States. For full coverage of all Festival sites, worldwide, complete with pictures, see Mr. Meredith's article beginning on the next page.

Top left shows the huge tent we have purchased for the Texas site—largest in attendance. Another aerial view pictures the main area of Jekyll Island. The big Blyth Arena at Squaw Valley—filled with God's people—completes our cover.

Ambassador College Photos

What our READERS SAY...

Comments on the Feast of Tabernacles

"I attended the Feast at Big Sandy again this year. I just wanted to thank everyone who had part in making this such a wonderful Feast for everyone. You could really see God's government at work there. God's ministers spoke with such power and authority. It truly was a blessing to be one of the called."

Mrs. Lyle L., Illinois

"What a privilege to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Squaw Valley this year! It was our first time and I simply cannot tell you the joyous uplifted feeling I had. Words can't express how one really feels, but God knows. . . I only wish the whole world knew now of God's great plan. I wait, very impatiently I'm afraid, for the day when we can teach them. But, too, even though I am so happy and rejoicing and look forward to our change, I realize there is much overcoming for me to do and with determination and God's help, I can do it."

Mrs. Dorothy T., California

"I lost my job when I took off for the Feast. When I got home I asked God to direct me to the job He wanted me in as He knew what was best for me. Well, guess where He placed me? I

have a wonderful job in the Communications Dept. of the Morton Salt Company. I only deliver messages now but they said that if I would get my typing up they would train me on the teletype, and that it was up to me. By the way, I receive \$10.00 more a week also. So I know that God does truly bless the tither."

Carol McS., Illinois

"Just wish to say I had a wonderful time at the Feast of Tabernacles at Big Sandy, Texas. I enjoyed hearing your sermons in person, and also hearing Garner Ted in person, as well as the others who gave their inspiring sermons. I just wonder if it is possible for me to have some of the highlights of Garner Ted's sermon on the Catholic Church and the Pope. He just enlarged on your sermon on the Catholic Church and its meaning in our day. I got so interested in listening to both of you I failed to take notes."

Dorothy H. W., Kansas

"I just got home a couple days ago from the Feast of Tabernacles at Jekyll Island. It was the most enjoyable and inspiring occasion I have ever attended. I felt very lonesome when I had to leave there. Ever since I returned home, I cannot get my mind off of the Feast,

(Continued on page 15)

The Good News

International magazine of
THE CHURCH OF GOD
ministering to its members
scattered abroad

October-November, 1965

Volume XIV

Number 10-11

Published monthly at Pasadena, California
© 1965, by Radio Church of God

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Magnificent Feast Observed *Worldwide!*

Over THIRTY-ONE THOUSAND attend Feast! POWERFUL sermons given. Inspiring GROWTH includes twenty-five ordinations!

by Roderick C. Meredith

THE LARGEST, most joyful and most glorious Feast of Tabernacles in modern times ended just a few weeks ago. In plain language, it was *terrific!*

The Great GOD who rules this Church seemed to pour out more blessings on His people during the Feast than ever before. Some of the most powerful, moving and colorful sermons of this age were preached. Some of the most inspiring miracles and dramatic interventions in the weather were witnessed. And the overflowing *love* and JOY of God's people was, all in itself, a dramatic witness that *God's way is GOOD!* In *eight* separate locations—circling the globe—the story was the same.

A New Member's Comment

One newly baptized member, attending the Feast at Squaw Valley for the first time, wrote his impression of the Feast. Here are a few of his comments:

"This was my first Feast of Tabernacles, and I was in a state of amazement, a state of awe, a great deal of the time. . . .

"God's religious festival beats man's religious festivals hollow. All of God's ways are as magnificent as all of man's ways, without God, are rotten. The Feast of Tabernacles is the very antithesis of Christmas. In every respect it seemed to give me a warm, deep sense of fulfillment. I was amazed at one turn after another; at one revelation after another during the sermons; at one exemplification after another of the magnificence of Christian conduct and behavior; at the abundance of Christian love.

"Love is a word that I had never understood, it had always disgusted and confused me. To finally begin to understand the meaning of love as it was being explained during the sermons and to see the Christian outgoing concern for one another had me in tears on several occasions.

"One of the most important things I learned was what a Christian is and, as part of this, I learned to want very much to become the finest Christian that God will permit me to become. It was very exciting to see the warmth of the brethren one for another; to see their obviously considerable concern for the welfare of each other; to see their hungering and thirsting for the spiritual meat of the sermons; to see the consistency of doctrinal application by various members of the church from various parts of the country; all this gave me a tremendous spiritual boost."

God's Intervention—And a "Witness" In Our Conduct

God gave us unusually *beautiful* weather at the Feast locations everywhere. When bad weather did start to materialize, it seemed to be "nipped in the bud" almost before it started.

At Jekyll Island, for example, during the very opening night's sermon, a torrential downpour suddenly "unloaded" on our huge tent near the end of the sermon. A continuation of this would have literally *wrecked* the Festival for hundreds in the camping areas.

Yet, *miraculously*, before the final prayer by Mr. Raymond Cole—*asking God about this very problem*—was completed, the downpour had stopped,

TOTALLY! And *just in time* for everyone to go home and get a good night's sleep!

To many people, of course, these are just "accidents"—"tropical storms often start and then stop suddenly," etc., etc., etc.

Yes, we know that!

But isn't it wonderful that all these "happy" accidents keep happening to God's people during the Feasts—and *precisely when we need them most?*

At Big Sandy, a young Ambassador male student was working on a high-line pole and somehow encountered a loose live wire! *Miraculously*, his safety belt allowed him to fall to the ground—instead of being electrocuted—and although he fell on his head in a way that normally would have killed him, *he lived!* He is still coming along fine and, although brain concussion and severe damage was indicated at first, it appears that he will be completely over this in every way before long!

In Squaw Valley, a young girl fell from the balcony during one of the services and every indication was that she was having *severe hemorrhaging* of the brain which would have been fatal! But, after anointing, she rallied quickly and is *perfectly all right* today!

Two long-standing, faithful members from one of our California churches had a car accident *on ice*. Although the car was *totally demolished*, they received only a *few scratches!*

We know GOD did it! He allows us to have scratches, injuries, trials and tests, but—in the long run—He DE-



LIVERS His people and blesses all of us over and over again!

From the outside world, letters of commendation came from many sources praising the conduct of God's people! Mr. Armstrong has received letters from the Georgia State Highway Patrol and the California Highway Patrol praising the exemplary behavior of the people of God's Church.

I personally had to talk to the Georgia Highway Patrolman assigned to Jekyll Island. Because our conversation involved a problem of one of the members, his attitude was very sober at the beginning. But, once I indicated that we were going to cooperate *in every way* and mentioned the fact that: "we teach obedience to the laws of God and man more than any other church I know!" he *immediately* softened and began to tell me some things! He actually gave me what amounted to a three-minute sermonette praising the exemplary conduct of God's people ever since we have been there at Jekyll Island.

This Georgia State Highway Patrolman said, in effect: "I have been in the patrol for many years and have been assigned to Jekyll Island for the last several years. The people of your church are the most cooperative and best-behaved people of *any* groups that I have ever dealt with—and that means **ALL** groups!" (*His* emphasis, not ours!)

In addition, the Festival Office reported that they had not received **ONE COMPLAINT** on housing this year!

Over Thirty-One Thousand Attend Feast in Eight Major Locations

Inspired by the moving and dramatic sermons of Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Ted Armstrong, a surging throng of 12,321 brethren attended a magnificent Festival at Big Sandy, Texas. Everyone there reported that, as usual, it was "the best Feast ever!" From the terrific organization and cooperation in the camping areas to the spirited interest and enthusiastic participation in the

The brethren in Australia have their own tabernacle in an isolated and beautiful mountainous district just a few hours' drive from Sydney. **ABOVE:** The tabernacle in its lovely setting, warm and pleasant—and **USED!** **BELOW:** Mr. Wayne Cole, Evangelist in charge in Australia, is speaking to the twelve hundred brethren who attended the Feast this year.

Ambassador College Photos



huge tent services, the brethren at Big Sandy displayed a spark and enthusiasm during God's Festival second to none.

Leading off the Festival, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong brought inspiring sermons on the *meaning* of this Feast and the coming world tomorrow. Also, he gave a personal "heart-to-heart" insight into the growth of the Festival and of God's Work that inspired hundreds of the newer members and thousands of the older ones as well.

Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, Dean of Ambassador College in Pasadena, joined Mr. Armstrong in setting the pace during the first half of the Festival. He brought scintillating and interesting sermons on prophecy and other points tied in with the plan of God.

Then, Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong arrived from Squaw Valley to take charge of the second half of the Festival and was joined by Mr. Charles Hunting coming from Jekyll Island. Suddenly, the Festival took a slightly different and inspiring turn as Mr. Ted Armstrong brought unusually moving and dramatic sermons on how the people of God are going to be persecuted and are going to be *very well known* for the HUGE Work we are beginning to do. Probably we will be literally *thrust out* of this nation in being taken to a place of safety!

Mr. Charles Hunting—Evangelist and

Business Manager of God's Work in Britain—brought powerful sermons on the *meaning* of this great Work of God and keeping our eyes on the goal. All of the messages this year seemed especially inspired—and the wonderful music provided by the new Texas College Chorale, the special musical numbers, the food, and the love and cooperation of all the brethren combined to make it a memorable occasion for all who attended.

The Festival at Jekyll Island

A happy throng of 7,045 people attended God's Feast at Jekyll Island this year. In this beautiful seaside location, with fabulous facilities and beautiful weather, the Feast was a *tremendously* inspiring occasion for all. Powerful sermons by God's ministers and the enthusiasm and wonderful *cooperation* of the Deacons and brethren combined to make it one of the best Feasts ever.

Even before the Feast began, many of the leading Deacons and Spokesman Club men—*especially from Detroit*—pitched in at the last minute to "rescue" the first part of the Festival from what might have well been a disaster. Because of heavy rains, most of the crew which was to put up the huge tent left their jobs in laziness or despair. Therefore, *our own men* (many of them Detroit *engineers!*) had to figure out

how to put up the huge tent and *do it themselves* without the usual equipment the regular crew would have had! This spirit of sacrifice and service continued throughout the entire Festival and certainly was an example for everyone to behold.

I had the privilege of leading off the Feast myself at Jekyll Island—joined by Mr. Charles Hunting, Evangelist and Business Manager of God's Work in Bricket Wood. Mr. Hunting gave moving and powerful sermons on the *meaning of God's Work* and how GREAT God is. I spoke on the *meaning* of the Feast of Tabernacles, the prophesied events just ahead, and on the way to become a king.

For the last half of the Festival, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong arrived from Big Sandy to take charge of the Festival—joined by Mr. Albert J. Portune flying over from Squaw Valley. Mr. Armstrong gave heartfelt and moving sermons on the *meaning* of God's Festival and the times just ahead of us. Mr. Portune gave very inspiring sermons on the miracles, signs and wonders to be performed in God's Church before this Work is completed.

The Feast in the Mountains

Starting off the Feast at Squaw Valley with dramatic inspiration, Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong painted a vivid picture of recent prophetic occurrences



and what *will begin to take place* in the near future. He also brought sermons about the *meaning* of the Feast and about the tremendous WITNESS God's Church will be to this nation in the near future.

Joining Mr. Ted Armstrong in leading off the Festival was Mr. Albert J. Portune. He brought a moving and inspiring sermon on the *signs* and *wonders* which will be worked in and through God's Church before our Work is finished.

The organization and cooperation of all the brethren, the *beautiful*, crystal-clear mountain weather and the tremendous enthusiasm and inspiration of the brethren all combined to make this a truly outstanding Festival. Adding additional impetus and inspiration was a very fine Chorale Concert put on by the Ambassador Chorale and a tremendously exciting and fun-filled "Fun Show" put on by the Ambassador students from Pasadena. A grand total of 7,811 brethren reveled in enjoyment and *appreciation* of the sermons, fellowship and spiritual *blessings* of the Feast of Tabernacles this year at Squaw Valley.

SEVEN Ordinations at Squaw Valley

A total of *two* Preaching Elders and *five* Local Elders were ordained at Squaw Valley at the Feast this year. For lack of space in this issue, I will only introduce those who were ordained at Squaw Valley. There was an unprecedented total of *twenty-five* ordinations this Feast—three *Preaching Elders*, and *twenty-two* *Local Elders*. Next month we will meet the *eighteen* ordained at the *other* sites—now for those at Squaw Valley. First, let us introduce you to the two new *Preaching Elders*.

Mr. Keith Thomas' elevation to the rank of *Preaching Elder* was the culmination of many years of service and training in God's Church. For Mr. and Mrs. Thomas first began attending the Headquarters Church at Pasadena in 1954. In 1955, they attended their first Feast of Tabernacles at Big Sandy. Mr. Thomas soon became active in the service of the Church and in the Spokesman Club and in May of 1960 was ordained a Deacon.

Continuing his growth and service, he was ordained in 1962 a *Local Elder*. Now, having been sent to take over the Churches at Phoenix and Tucson over a year ago—and having fulfilled this assignment admirably—Mr. Thomas becomes a full *Preaching Elder* in the Church of God!

An important point to note is that Mr. Thomas—during the time he was stationed in the Pasadena area—took nearly all of the Bible and Speech classes at Ambassador College and has had a great deal of *Ambassador training* through his many years in this area.

Mr. Jim Lichtenstein graduated from Ambassador College nearly two and one-half years ago. He came to Ambassador from DePauw University in Indiana and began working in the Letter Answering Department and on the Visiting Program during his senior year in Ambassador. Also, he was an Ambassador Club Vice President. Between his junior and senior years, Mr. Lichtenstein was a Ministerial Assistant for an entire year in the Pittsburg, Pennsylvania area.

After graduation, Mr. Lichtenstein assisted in the Seattle area and was ordained a *Local Elder* at Pentecost in 1964. Now, having become a full pastor over God's Church in Spokane, Washington, Mr. Lichtenstein has been elevated to the office of *Preaching Elder* in God's Church. He is ably assisted by his wife, Charlene, a former Ambassador coed, and they were recently blessed with a little baby boy.

Five Local Elders Ordained

First, alphabetically, Mr. Fred Kellers was ordained as a *Local Elder* at Squaw Valley. Mr. Kellers graduated from Ambassador College in 1963 and began assisting Mr. Dale Hampton in the Eugene area. Later, he married an Ambassador coed—formerly Miss Lucretia Leonard. They now have been blessed with a young son.

Recently, Mr. Kellers and his family have been transferred back to the East coast to assist Mr. Guy Engelbart in the growing Baltimore-Richmond area.

Mr. Bob Lay was also ordained as a *Local Elder* and is another Ambassador graduate. After his graduation, in June

of 1964, Mr. Lay was assigned full time to the Letter Answering Department here at Headquarters. Then, because of a need in the Canadian office and his growth and service, Mr. Lay was transferred to take charge of the Letter Answering Department at our Vancouver, B.C. office.

Growing in spiritual service and all-around ability, Mr. Lay began to be a lead-man on the Visiting Program in Vancouver. Now, Christ has placed him as a *Local Elder* in His Church. Mr. Lay, also, married a former Ambassador coed—Miss Arlene Manbeck—and we can all be thankful that *so many* of these men have Ambassador-trained wives to help them in their ministry!

Coming up through the local Church Spokesman Clubs, Mr. Herbert Magoon of Long Beach was another of those men ordained as *Local Elders* this Feast. Mr. Magoon and his wife began attending services in Long Beach in November of 1959. Zeal and dedication were apparent very early in their Christian lives, and Mr. Magoon was ordained to the office of a Deacon in 1962. He has been a Vice-President and then President of a Spokesman Club and a lead-man on the Visiting Program for some time. Now, we can join the Long Beach brethren in rejoicing in his ordination as an *Elder* in the Church of God!

Mr. Tullio Panella from the Phoenix Church also grew through the local Church activities and Spokesman Clubs. As pioneer members of the Phoenix Church when it was raised up in 1961, Mr. and Mrs. Panella were part of the original 88 people attending. In July of 1963, he was ordained as a Deacon and has served as President of a Spokesman Club and a member of the Visiting Program for some time. Now, he has even greater opportunities to serve his brethren as a *Local Elder* in the Body of Christ.

Mr. Frank Williams of the Santa Barbara Church came up by the same route, and has been a President of the Spokesman Club in Santa Barbara and a leader on the Visiting Program there for some time.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams, also, were
(Continued on page 17)

THE CHRISTMAS PROBLEM

Looming right around the corner is the world's chief holiday—Christmas! Do you know HOW to face the trials and handle the problems imposed by this pagan holiday? Here are helpful hints on how YOU can avoid the usual Christmas chaos and confusion!

by William F. Dankenbring

THE WHOLE world is beginning to prepare for the BIGGEST holiday of the year—the Christmas season! Christmas presents are being stashed away, Christmas trees—with their fire hazards—are looming up in innumerable living rooms. To the world, the season of “good cheer” is fast approaching!

But, at the same time, you can almost hear the inaudible groan of many, “Oh no, not again! When will it all be over!”

This is the time of year when millions begin thinking about a little “babe in a manger.” Other millions begin thinking about office parties, days of vacation, and whooping it up! Still others eagerly await the midnight call of Santa Claus and his reindeer! To some few, Christmas reminds them of Christ—but to the vast, overwhelming majority, it merely means the biggest HOLIDAY of the entire year!

Season of Crime and Death

Strange, isn't it, that on the world's chief religious holiday, supposedly in memory of the birthday of Christ, crime sky-rockets. Theft, burglary, adultery, murder and drunkenness crescendo to staggering proportions! Strange, that at this time of year there is more marital unfaithfulness, drunkenness, and debauchery than at any other time!

Strange, too, that at Christmas time, death haunts the highways, more traffic accidents occur, and motor mayhem rules the roads!

But it is not *really* so strange when

you understand the REAL ORIGIN of Christmas—when you realize that Christmas stems from the ancient pagan Saturnalia, a time of wild carousing and drunken orgies, when the pagans celebrated the winter solstice in honor of the waning sun-god's rebirth! Not so strange, after all, when you know that Christmas is actually an ancient HEATHEN festival which has donned the disguise of “Christian” garb, and modernly masquerades itself as “Christian”!

No longer is the true character of Christmas so surprising, or so difficult to understand!

A Blind World

Christmas observance is so widespread today, however, that many people will frown if they learn you don't observe it. Some devout people will even consider you a rank religious fanatic. The world is BLINDED to the truth of God, and cannot see.

Yet, Almighty God plainly commands His people, in regard to the pagan celebrations and customs of this world, “Come OUT of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her PLAGUES”! (Rev. 18:4.) God says, “Learn NOT the way of the heathen” (Jer. 10:2). True Christians are not to fellowship with the darkened ways of the world, or participate in the world's pagan customs and traditions (II Cor. 6:14-17).

Yet, how SHOULD a true Christian handle the Christmas problem? How

should a Christian act toward unconverted people who do not understand God's truth about Christmas? How should he act toward unconverted friends and relatives?

What about receiving Christmas gifts, bonuses? And what about the myriad other problems presented by the Christmas holidays?

What about YOU, and YOUR family? Are you going to handle the Christmas problem with WISDOM, this year? Or are you going to cause resentment, hard feelings, and hostility, by your lack of wisdom and tactfulness?

Here are some guidelines to help YOU overcome the Christmas problem, God's way!

Don't Be Afraid!

Often, the person who has just recently learned the truth about Christmas finds himself “trapped.” It seems strange, not observing Christmas any more. Fears, doubts creep in, and he wonders, “What will my friends and relatives think?”

But DON'T allow Satan to implant fear and worry in your heart! First, realize—to most people, Christmas is NOT such a big thing, after all. In fact, the world is FULL of people who, like yourself, don't care for the frantic pace and gift-giving of Christmas. MANY worldly people see that Christmas has been GREATLY commercialized!

Therefore, you are not alone. The problems you will meet will NOT really be as “big” or “monstrous” as they may at first appear! If you use wisdom



Two youngsters view the nation's Christmas tree on the Ellipse in Washington as the lights go on for testing. President Johnson will do the official lighting. The entire society is permeated with this holiday. It is difficult for people to believe it can be wrong. We must use wisdom in how we explain our beliefs which seem so strange to them.

Wide World Photo

and tact, most of the problems will simply evaporate and disappear!

Pray to God for the help you need; and then step out on FAITH, sincerely determined to follow God and obey Him. He will GIVE you divine help, confidence, and WISDOM so you can handle every situation that arises!

The Shining Christian LIGHT

Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a 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."

He added, "Let your LIGHT so SHINE before men, that they may see your GOOD WORKS, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 5: 14-16).

This is the basic KEY to follow—

to remember—and to use! It is USELESS to argue. It is folly to wrangle, quarrel, or get into a *heated argument* about observing Christmas! If you try to talk your friends or relatives into refraining from Christmas observance, you will very likely only succeed in MAKING ENEMIES, causing contention and alienating friends! Often the quickest, easiest way to turn friends against you is to PREACH to them about God's truth. Cramming *your* beliefs or convictions down someone else's throat. The force-feeding method simply *does not work*, as sad experience proves.

Therefore, when you learn about God's way, you should NOT immediately go to friends and "preach a sermon" about the paganism and evil of Christmas. Just LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE in good works and kindly deeds. Remember, a light glows, *silently*, effec-

tively. It doesn't make a sound. It doesn't argue, scold, berate, preach, or blast forth like a foghorn or blaring trumpet! Yet, it is a very illuminating, effective witness!

That is the WAY you should handle the Christmas problem! Let your light *shine*—by being friendly, kind, considerate. Be positive when you approach your relatives. Be smiling, congenial. Do not be upset, nervous. Do not tremble for fear of what others may think.

Pray to God that He will grant you wisdom, grace and favour in the sight of others and that He will guide you in handling the problem. It will not then be so difficult as you might think!

How to AVOID Trouble

Now let's deal with some specific problems which often arise. What should you do about relatives or friends sending GIFTS? Almost everyone newly converted faces this problem.

The first step, in this situation, is to contact the friends or relatives who might send gifts AHEAD OF TIME. Before Christmas arrives, get in touch with them, and casually, politely explain that you no longer keep Christmas and would prefer that they not send you any Christmas gifts. After talking about general topics of conversation, you might casually bring the subject around to Christmas and just mention that you see how overly commercialized Christmas is, and therefore you are not going to bother keeping it any more. In many cases, a short explanation of this kind would be all you need—and no feelings would be hurt.

In cases where out-of-town friends or relatives might send you gifts, you could simply notify them by a short note or letter, and include the same information.

That is all there is to it. No big problem, no big "fuss" at all! Just be friendly, be casual, and when you steer the subject around to Christmas, just mention that you are not going to bother with it any more, and you are not going to send any more gifts. Don't make a mountain out of a mole-

(Continued on page 22)

SPIRITUAL LETHARGY

Can Strike YOU!

The Old Testament is a chronicle of human failures and successes. The accounts are in case history form. They point out WHERE and WHY some failed and how others succeeded. Read this lively and practical article to learn how to apply this part of God's Word to your life.

by Paul W. Kroll

GOD CAUSED these examples to be cataloged for us. Remember! Jesus Christ was on the scene when these men lived. He knew *why and where* they made mistakes. He recognized their particular human weaknesses which we all struggle against.

But Christ had *something further* in mind.

Written for Us

Christ knew he was going to call out of this world thousands of human beings. This vanguard of pioneers would have a great purpose: to be trained to one day assume high positions of authority and responsibility in His Kingdom.

That's where *we* come in. Each of us is a part of that advance unit of believers.

But we also have the SAME WEAKNESSES as these men in the Old Testament. So Christ saw to it that these case histories were *preserved for us*. He stripped human nature bare—so we could probe its weaknesses and not fall into its clutches.

WE read in I Cor. 10:11-12, "Now in these events our ancestors stand as *examples to us*, warning us not to crave after evil things as they did... Now these things which happened to our ancestors are illustrations of the way in which God works, and they were written to be a WARNING TO US who are the heirs of the ages which have

gone before us. So let the man who feels sure of his standing today be careful that he *DOES NOT FALL TOMORROW*" (Phillips translation).

Six Failures

Let's take a look at six human kings in the Old Testament and see *why* they failed. These kings of Judah had everything going for them. They launched into their careers with great trust and faith in God.

Each would have been considered a *pillar member* in God's Church today. All of them certainly had a zealous "first love."

But they found themselves spiritual shipwrecks at the end of their lives.

They became spiritually weak. They began to make mistakes. They threw away their faith. They died in disgrace.

These examples are IMPORTANT TO US! Because large numbers are spiritually weak in God's Church today. Many are making mistakes and sinning. Some are on the verge of throwing away their faith. A few may die in spiritual disgrace.

Does this apply to you?

As we read through each king's life—apply the principles TO YOURSELF. Ask yourself, "Am I guilty of this weakness?" Because you can be sure of this: If you have problems in any of these areas—YOU ARE BECOMING SPIRITUALLY LETHARGIC!!

I. ASA—The Faithless King

Asa's life is recorded in II Chronicles, chapters 14-16. Read it in its entirety (as you should the other kings' lives also).

Asa began his career with a "bang." He completely came out of the religious confusion of his time. With great zeal, he destroyed all the worship places of the pagan gods. Asa rooted immorality out of Judah. The "queers" and homosexuals were among the first to be punished.

Judah was becoming spiritually clean. Asa was prospering. Greatness was around the corner.

He proved his loyalty to God.

Asa was able to lick his problems.

When Zerah the Ethiopian rattled his military muscles, Asa stood firm. One million men in battle gear faced him. Chariots galore kicked up dust. Zerah was threatening Judah with obliteration.

Problems?

Ycs.

But here was Asa's attitude.

"Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for WE REST ON THEE, and in thy name we go against this multitude" (II Chron. 14:11).

God answered that prayer.

Zerah was destroyed. So was his

army. So were his armaments.

For *thirty-five long years*, Asa was faithful.

But then he made a "mistake."

However, before we see what happened—remember this! Asa's "problem" was building up for years. It merely manifested itself when a trial came. No doubt, Asa was *steadily losing contact* with his Creator over a period of months and years. He had forgotten God.

When a sudden trial came, he failed.

Asa Fears Physical

Now came the telltale problem that exposed his Laodicean attitude. "In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

"Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, There is a league between me and thee..." (II Chron. 16:1-3).

His weakness exposed its ugly head. Asa was trapped. If he had only been close to *God*, he would have known what to do. But Asa was caught off guard.

He had drifted away!

And not only that, he never found his way back to the right road.

Asa never repented.

He raged out at the messenger God sent to show him what to do. He even clapped the seer into prison. Asa was so mad he took it out on the general populace.

The rocky road to disaster continued.

In the thirty-ninth year of his reign he fell sick.

But still—NO REPENTANCE!

"Asa... was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he *sought not to the Eternal*, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign" (II Chron. 16:12, 13).

Asa had *two years* to repent and quit trusting in doctors. But he never made it.

Do You Have Asa's Problem?

Asa's BASIC PROBLEM was a long-standing spiritual laxness. It became evident when political pressures came. It could be clearly seen when he became ill.

Asa was not much different than some of God's people.

Imagine yourself!

Think back to the time when you first came into God's Church.

You probably would have given up wife, brother, sister, job—or *even your own life*. But *now* you may no longer have that burning zeal and deep faith.

And why? For this simple reason.

Prayer time has gone by the wayside. Bible study has been curtailed. Fasting has been neglected. Meditation has been forgotten. Contact with God is threadbare.

Is this you? If so, the slightest problem is going to snap that weak thread of faith. It happened to Asa. It can happen *TO YOU!*

II. Joash—The Drifter King

Joash was a "drifter" by nature. He did fine as long as someone was around to prod him. But out on his own—he drifted into disaster.

Again, note the parallel.

Are you one who must be CONSTANTLY PRODDED by God's ministers, constantly visited, constantly corrected—and almost cajoled into obeying God?

Joash had this problem. It caused his downfall.

"And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord *all the days of Jehoiada the priest*" (II Chron. 24:2).

But Jehoiada died—and Joash fell.

"Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king *bearkened unto them*. And they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass" (II Chron. 24:17-18).

Rather fickle—but very familiar.

Sounds like Satan and his demons trying to put thoughts into our minds. Trying to make us turn away from God. And SOME LISTEN!

But again, we have the familiar

problem. Joash did fine at first, but finally failed. He drifted away from God. Joash murdered *Jehoiada's son* when he rebuked him for his mistake. Next, a small band of Syrians conquered Judah. Then, Joash became diseased. Finally, his own servants murdered him.

Joash died in ignominy.

Is this happening to you? Let this be a *warning!*

III. AMAZIAH—The Dabbler King

The tragedy of Amaziah is almost a jugular vein comedy.

Amaziah had a peculiar weakness. He, like many people in the world—and *in God's Church*—was a religious hobbyist.

Here is the story of his weakness.

"Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the *slaughter of the Edomites*, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, AND SET THEM UP TO BE HIS GODS, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them" (II Chron. 25:14).

This was utter stupidity! Almost unbelievable. Yet, there it is recorded for us. How could Amaziah bow down to these pieces of wood and stone? Especially when he himself had destroyed those who based their empty hopes on these very inanimate objects. But God had to send a prophet to him. Amaziah was asked, ". . . Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which *COULD NOT DELIVER* their own people out of thine hand?" (II Chron. 25:15).

But it didn't get through to Amaziah.

So Amaziah was a "religious dabbler." How *else* can you explain his head-scratching actions?

The sad thing is this. Many in God's Church TODAY have the *same, identical problem!*

Some see—as we ALL should—the vanity of this world's religions. God lays bare the error-permeated doctrines that exist. He lavishly reveals His Truth. And yet, some of God's people begin to dabble in this world's ideas. Some listen to other preachers. A few allow representatives of other *false religions* to darken their door. Some read



Courtesy Archeological Museum—Teheran, Iran
A Persian idol similar to the idols of the Edomites which Amaziah ignorantly worshipped. Think how God must view our idols we sometimes mentally make!

magazines and articles slanted AGAINST this Work—or against God's Truth on race, religion, politics or medicine.

Doubts begin to creep in. Some become skeptical of the way this Work is handled.

Others begin to idolize PHYSICAL POSSESSIONS—after living a lifetime of experience which proved that these by themselves *do not bring happiness!* But they once again "trust" in these things. These "gods of the people."

God has set the utter debacle of Amaziah as a witness against us. It blinks the neon sign, "Human nature tends to worship vain and false gods."

We can see Amaziah's mistake. Can we take the beam of idolatry out of our own eyes? *God help you to see—before it's too late!*

IV. UZZIAH—The Presumptuous King

The story of Uzziah is found in II Chronicles 26.

"He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (II Chron. 26:5). With God's power, he destroyed the Philistines, then the Arabians, then the Mehunims. The Ammonites became subservient to Uzziah. Judah's border stretched to Egypt. The nation began to abound in livestock. Agriculture

soared. Uzziah was carving out a tremendous empire! "And his name spread far abroad; for *he was marvelously helped*, till he was strong!" (II Chron. 26:15.)

But at the pinnacle of his career—**HE FELL!**

But *why* did he fall?

The answer: "But when he was strong, his heart was *lifted up* to his destruction" (II Chron. 26:16).

Uzziah had been around a long time. Perhaps nearly fifty years. He might have been called a "pioneer member" in God's Church today. But he *drifted* into a proud attitude.

Here was the consequence of losing contact with God.

The priests withstood Uzziah. They told him: "*It appertaineth not* unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God.

"Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar" (II Chron. 26:18, 19).

Uzziah's Problem

Uzziah didn't agree with the way things were done. He probably knew these priests and their problems. Who were **THEY** to tell *him* what to do!—he probably thought.

But how did he get that way?

By being *spiritually lax*. By forgetting God. By losing contact with him.

And that's what happens to some of God's people today. They don't like the ministers to tell them what to do. Their old opinions—concerning child-rearing or church government or some pet doctrine—creep in.

It doesn't matter what the *manifestation* is. The underlying problem is: **THEY DON'T AGREE WITH GOD. Why?** Because they haven't been "listening" to God "talking" to them through Bible study. They haven't told God what a rotten mess **THEY** are through prayer.

Is this *you*?

Have *you* lost the humbleness and meekness you had when you were baptized? You knew then (or should have known) your own *INSIGNIFICANCE*. Do you feel you "know the ropes" now?

Better change!

THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT!!

V. JOSIAH—The Hard-Headed King

Josiah was a bit different. He wasn't exactly rebellious. He just lacked wisdom. But his lack of wisdom **CAUSED HIS DEATH!**

His life story is found in II Chronicles, chapters 34, 35.

Josiah was just a child when he became king. At the tender age of *sixteen* he began to seek God. When he was age twenty, he destroyed all the worship places of the false religions in Judah—*personally supervising* the whole operation. At age twenty-six, he began to repair the House of God. It was then that the book of the law was found. After reading it, he saw where he needed to **CHANGE**. And he repented, and changed.

Later, we read this of Josiah: "And the king stood in his place, and made a **COVENANT** before the Eternal, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, *with all his heart*, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book" (II Chron. 34:31).

Sound familiar?

It is!

We promised God **THE SAME THING** when we were baptized. We gave God, as it were, "our word"—to obey Him all the way. We said that we wanted to be taught in every way. To obey everything He said. (Today, God *speaks* through the Bible and through His ministry.) We were teachable (and still should be)—even in "little" things. Like obeying speed laws, learning to dress properly, learning to deal with other people properly.

Careless Foolishness

But now have we grown "older" in the church? Have we become a little bit careless?

Josiah did. And he **DIED** because of
(Continued on page 16)

The Bible Answers Your Questions

Please address any questions YOU would like answered
in this column to the Editor.

What are the groves mentioned so many times throughout the Old Testament?

At first glance, the impression you usually get from reading about the groves is that they were merely clumps of trees on a hillside where pagans went to worship an idol. Yet the Bible mentions in II Kings 23:6, how king Josiah took a grove out of the house of the Lord, and burned it and stamped it into powder. How could he do that to a clump of trees?

Notice it speaks of the grove in the singular tense. It was something he could pick up. And he hated it so vehemently that he burned it and ground it into bits. Just exactly what is the true meaning of the word grove as defined in the original Hebrew in which the Old Testament was written?

In every instance except for one, the Hebrew word for grove is "asherah." The meaning of this word is: "an image or symbol to an ancient pagan goddess 'Astarte'." You can verify this in any Bible dictionary or concordance.

The one exception where grove doesn't mean "asherah" is found in Genesis 21:33. Here the Hebrew word is "eshel" and simply means tree. Abraham planted a tree. But that had nothing to do with the "asherah," or groves, mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. There was no religious meaning attached to the tree. Beersheba is a hot, dry place. The tree was for shade.

As you will notice in reading the various other scriptures mentioning these groves, they are always in connection with idols, images, pagan worship, etc. A few examples are: II Kings 17:16; 21:7; Exodus 34:13; II Chronicles 14:3; Isaiah 17:8; and Jeremiah 17:2.

These groves, or asherahs, were symbols of a pagan goddess called

Astarte. All of the heathen nations worshiped her through these images. When Israel came into the land of these pagan peoples, they soon began inculcating this idolatrous practice into their religion also. This was rank idolatry, which God condemned. That is why Josiah smashed the grove he brought out of the temple (II Kings 23:6). He knew it was an *abomination* to Almighty God in heaven.

Here's why it was an abomination—To honor Astarte, men and women practiced prostitution, and positive efforts were made to induce spiritual frenzy through wild dances and self-mutilation (*History of the Old Testament*, Heidt, p. 127). Not only did the people bow down to the symbol of the queen of fertility, but they carried on a virtual orgy of demons before these images or asherahs.

It may surprise you to know that this satanic worship is carried on today right in the midst of modern Israel by millions of people!!

The key to understanding this fact is the identity of this pagan goddess Astarte, or Asherah. The groves were posts, pillars, images, or denuded and stripped trees dedicated to the worship of this woman. In Hislop's *The Two Babylons*, on page 307, this queen is identified. "That Semiramis, under the name of Astarte, was worshipped not only as an incarnation of the spirit of God, but as the mother of mankind, we have very clear and satisfactory evidence." Semiramis was deified as Astarte, and worshiped as the sex queen of heaven—the goddess of fertility.

The asherahs—or groves—were symbols of fertility used in pagan idolatrous worship of her—the "goddess of fertility." They have been brought down through the generations since her reign until now, by millions who have

knowingly or ignorantly been duped into the despicable worship of her.

Astounding as it may seem, you probably have many of these symbols or groves right in your home town. They have spread the world over, and stand in mute dedication to the "queen of heaven"—the great whore Semiramis. They are simply obelisks, or upright towers, representing the male sex organ. In Semiramis' day, they were usually erected on a higher rise of ground called in your Bible a "high place." (I Kings 14:23; II Chronicles 17:6.) They were put at the place of worship. Today they are still used at the place of worship in the pagan churches of the world, in the form of steeples perched on top of the church buildings themselves.

To clarify this, we find the following in the book entitled *Pagan and Christian Creeds* by Edward Carpenter: "As to the lingam as representing the male organ, in some form or the other—as upright stone or pillar or obelisk or slender round tower—it occurs all over the world, notably in Ireland and forms such a memorial of adoration paid by early folk to the great emblem and instrument of human fertility, as cannot be mistaken." (Page 183.)

Sometimes at the very peak of the steeple a cross is attached supposedly in commemoration of Christ's death on the cross. However, the truth is they too represent the male member. The well-known T-shaped cross was in use in pagan lands long before Christianity, as a representation of the male member.

Think how deluded and deceived the world is!! They enter the "church of their choice" every week believing they are worshiping God, when in fact they are merely sitting in a "high place" with an asherah or grove poised over their heads as the symbol of the "goddess of fertility." They worship they know not what. (John 4:22.) Satan is a clever deceiver and liar who has blinded the entire world. (II Corinthians 4:4.) You have been shown the truth, and instead of worshiping a false god with symbols, steeples and groves, you can worship the true God in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23.)

SO YOU HAD A COLD!

Each year at the Feast of Tabernacles and immediately afterward, there is a rash of colds and sickness. This year was no exception! Here is the answer on how to escape colds and sickness in the future.

by Paul S. Royer

AT ALL THREE Feasts in the United States and overseas, many suffered from colds and the flu. Few families escaped the "bug." One Elder, on returning from Squaw Valley, had some *sixty* anointings in one day!

We have arrived at the very threshold of seeing the prophecy in Mat. 24:38 fulfilled. "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . ." The people who lived in the days of Noah were sick and degenerate from overeating, drinking and "living it up!"

This world and its knowledge, its wisdom, is rapidly approaching the degeneracy of the days of Noah. Many are sick, diseased and handicapped because of a lack of the right kind of knowledge.

As in the days of Noah, there is little true knowledge left in this blinded world. Not because truth does not exist, but because it *cannot* be understood and used until God, in his mercy, opens our minds to understand.

God has chosen only a handful from this world to reveal His truth and His plan for the Kingdom. If you are reading this article, the chances are pretty good that you are one of those fortunate individuals chosen to recapture true values!

Common Misconceptions

Sickness and disease is not understood by the vast majority. The physicians, the medical men of this world, continue to search for the *CURE rather than the cause!* In blindness they (as we once did) have rejected God's Way

to heal and have turned to the drugs and poisons of science, looking for the *CURE!*

As a result of rejecting God and His Way, many common misconceptions have arisen. They are all Satan-inspired. All of us have unknowingly accepted wrong ideas about religion, medicine and politics. As an example—most of us still cling to the old idea that colds are inescapable! Comments such as "I got my feet wet," "I was in a draft," or "Someone with a cold coughed and now I'm sick," are all too common. **NONE ARE RIGHT! ALL ARE MISCONCEPTIONS!**

Why Are We Sick?

If it isn't from a draft or wet feet, then what *is* the cause? We all need to understand why we get colds. We need to understand the real cause so we can *prevent* sickness.

Before we get to the *real cause* of colds and sickness, let's understand a few basic facts—remember this world is Satan's world. He calls the shots insofar as God allows. He is the author of *all* lies and propaganda. He is opposed to the truth.

Satan has this world living to the *full*—burning the candle at both ends—and believing this is right. As a result of life Satan's way, man becomes sick. When sick, he reaches for the nearest bottle of pills that will magically erase the (sin) ache, pain or discomfort. The world in general is not interested in the facts. They are not interested in the cause of sickness and disease. They are only interested in the *CURE!* "Live it up. Live to the full, *get* all you can get while you are able, for

tomorrow you may die!" This is the way of this world!

Do We Make the Same Mistake?

Could we in the Church of God be making the same mistake as the world? Are we looking only for the cure (the anointing) and disregarding the cause? Are you living to the full, especially at the Feast, filling your stomach with all manner of food and drink without regard to common sense or law? Are you ignorantly overeating "flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after . . ."??

If you are, then your sin is great in the eyes of God! If you are sinning, there is a need to *stop sinning!* There is a need for balance and a need for common sense with regard to diet and proper rest. There is a need to exercise and to have the right mental and spiritual outlook on life and God's Word.

You need to understand why disease germs exist and where they come from. You need to learn how to keep up your body defenses against disease germs. By understanding, you will be able to avoid a great deal of sickness and discomfort.

God The Creator

God created disease germs—not the devil!! "For by Him were *all* things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . ." (Col. 1:16). There you have it—God created—and God did so with a *PURPOSE!*

He told man to live by and according to His laws—all laws, including *physical laws* as well as His spiritual laws. Yet God in His wisdom knew man would disobey and break *all laws,*

spiritual and physical, that He, God, has set in motion for *our* good!

Disease Prevents Extinction

Knowing our nature and knowing that we would sin, God included special laws to preserve the human race until the time of the end. Without disease germs, man would have eradicated life from this earth thousands of years ago!

In order to keep man alive, a check was needed to prevent man from going too far too fast toward oblivion. Disease germs and sickness are a part of that check.

Think what would happen if there were no disease germs or sickness. If this were true, then the *only* penalty of sin would be death. Man would live to the full, burn the candle at both ends until he died as a result. He would destroy himself before God's time, before the end of this age. Not only would man thwart God's plan, man would, without sickness, never experience or learn the vital lesson that God is teaching. Therefore, a penalty in addition to death was needed. That penalty is sickness and disease.

Disease Not *Just* a Penalty

Disease and sickness were not created as a penalty alone. Sickness serves to notify us that we have broken a law or series of laws. Through disease and sickness we are told to *stop* breaking laws, *stop* sinning and *look to the cause!* We are being told to look to the law that preserves life, GOD'S LAWS!

Sickness and disease has a two-fold purpose. In addition to teaching us right from wrong and warning us that we have sinned, disease acts to cleanse the body of accumulated waste. If waste were not expelled by the common cold, then those who continually and habitually break God's physical laws would die or *drown in their own filth!*

We are all *potentially sick* BEFORE the draft or the wet feet. The draft and the wet feet are merely the spark that ignites the fire!

What Happens

What happens when you do come down with a cold? You develop a

fever. You begin coughing and spitting and blowing out through the nose great amounts of mucous in which the cold germ is growing. Because of the presence of the disease germs and the fever, the body is *forced to stop* all other activity with the exception of emergencies and concentrate on expelling the mucous or die!

The cold, the running nose rids the body of waste or mucous that should not accumulate in the first place. That is, it would not accumulate if we were living properly. The fever also burns up additional amounts of mucous that should have been eliminated through exercise and normal elimination. Finally as a result of the cold and the forced elimination of waste material, the body cells and its organs are cleaned to the point that they can again function and maintain life.

Controls Disregarded

Two ways to control or help eliminate the waste are often disregarded, *especially at the Feast!* Exercise, *vigorous* exercise pumps oxygen into the system. The exercise, the heat and increased circulation with the oxygen, burn up waste matter in the body. Deep breathing and exercise produces a reaction similar to bellows which force additional oxygen into a fire. Given enough oxygen, a fire will burn so hot that it will even burn up *metal!*

Sleep is also *very important* in maintaining good health. The right amount of sleep, usually eight hours, rests and rejuvenates your body. When properly rested, you acquire the necessary strength and energy to eradicate and expel waste products, including cold-producing mucous from your system.

When we do not exercise, waste begins to accumulate in quantity. When we do not get proper rest, our organs, our bodies are so tired and sluggish that they are unable to do a full energetic day's work in expelling waste.

Fasting Too!

Another way that God has designed to expel waste is through fasting. The world looks at fasting with dismay. All

too often God's people are negligent in this responsibility.

When we fast, the energy necessary to digest and assimilate food is rechanneled toward cleaning out excess waste material in the body. Fasting is like house-cleaning. When fasting, the normal day by day activities are stopped and all energy is directed toward a thorough clean-up! It takes approximately *eight hours a day* or a constant drain in body energy just to digest and assimilate food!

By getting the right amount of sleep, exercise and by controlling our diet, we do not build up excess waste material in our bodies. When our body functions are not hindered by mucous and waste materials, then we are impervious to disease germs and sickness! Remember disease germs cannot grow or find a foothold in a clean "*house.*" They must have the proper media before they can multiply. When we obey God physically and spiritually, we *maintain health* and no amount of draft, wet feet, or germs coughed on us will cause any of us to become sick.

Good Health Important

It is becoming increasingly important in this end time for each one of us to faithfully observe the laws of good health. We have a lot of work to accomplish before Christ returns. WE CAN'T DO SO IF WE ARE SICK!

All of us tend to become negligent in what we sometimes consider the smaller things. We often push on, giving an extra hour or two beyond our physical capacity or limitation. Unless we achieve balance, we who break God's physical laws will in a few short years end up with a broken body. By *our REASONING* and misuse we would eventually deteriorate to the point that we would be able to give God only about *half as many hours as we are now giving.*

The Temple of God

You have all read the scripture, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 3:16.) You have read it—now do you comprehend what it means? God does not dwell in

temples made with hands (Acts 17: 24). He dwells in us, if we obey Him—*we are the temple of God!*

What kind of a temple do you provide for God? Is it fitly constructed, cleaned up and rejuvenated according to the architect's plans to the point that it is occupied? Would God dwell in a fat, sloppy, dirty, unkept, uncombed, disobedient, disease-ridden body? Are you working daily to refurbish and remodel the temple of God?

A lesson can be learned from Ambassador Colleges and the construction being performed by God's Church today. God chooses the very best of quality. He constructs His building with the finest material available and builds them architecturally sound.

David knew and understood God's Way of doing things. He prepared to build a temple of wood, gold and silver that cost more than a *billion dollars!* (I Chron. 29.) David contributed over *one hundred million*

dollars from *his own pocket* toward this temple. The temple his son built was one that God did dwell in. It was properly cared for and constructed out of respect to God!

Can we learn from David's example? Can we learn a lesson from today's Ambassador Colleges and construct the right kind of physical temple that God will dwell in? God is worthy to occupy a temple that is immaculately kept, one that is trim, neat, clean, well dressed and free of disease! Out of respect toward our Creator and in the interest of our own personal salvation, we should be deeply concerned with, and we should be busy, providing Him the very finest temple possible, both physically and spiritually!

Danger of "Rusting Out"

While some give too much and push themselves until they endanger their own good health, others give *too little!* They are in no danger of overextend-

ing the physical limitations of the body. They are in danger of a *greater* problem or sin. Because of inactivity or curtailed use of the mind and body, they will "rust out before they wear out!" Unless they change they will never make it into the Kingdom!!

All of us need to increase our knowledge of what it takes to maintain good health. Much of our knowledge of health is limited to the eating of whole wheat bread and brown sugar. By comparison, this is like lifting a few scriptures from the Bible and trying to live "by every word of God."

Increasing Difficulties

As the time of Christ's return nears, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to observe all of God's laws of health. Our soils are becoming depleted, our air and water are becoming polluted. Our work is increasing and we are tempted to work longer than is wise. We are living in the *last days* when extra precautions must be taken. Even though we have little or no control of the pollution of the air, water and soil, we can observe various controls to insure good health.

There Is a Way!

We can EXERCISE! We can control the KIND OF FOOD we eat! We can control the AMOUNT of food we eat! We can FAST! We can get PROPER REST and we can PRAY for and receive an answer for good health—if—we first *obey what we already have control over!*

Remember, Jesus Christ was *never* sick! Not because disease and sickness did not exist, but because He did have balance. He exercised, rested, fasted and He ate the right amount of proper food and then He prayed to His Father in Heaven for good health. He knew that He was the temple where God's Spirit dwelt (John 2:19-21).

This would be a good time for all of us to reread the articles on "Fasting for Health" and "The Seven Laws of Radiant Health." Put them into practice. You need good health to complete the Work that you have been called to perform in these last days just before Christ returns.

What Our Readers Say . . .

(Continued from page 2)

the very friendly people that one could fellowship with and the fabulous sub-tropical surroundings."

Member, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

"God sure blesses the tithepayer. When I returned from Jekyll Island the mailman gave me a registered letter from the Ford Motor Co., informing me that I had been recalled to work. I was laid off since August 1965 and I went to the Feast of Tabernacles unemployed. Also, when I was at Jekyll Island, the company decided to terminate all of my 22 years seniority. . . . So to show you God takes care of His own: He softened the hearts of the Employment and the Personnel Managers and I was re-instated with all my 22 years seniority and commenced working immediately."

Member, Windsor, Ontario,
Canada

Good News

"The GOOD NEWS is getting better. I really enjoyed the articles about sin. You know, when you study the Bible

and read about sin it seems vague and far-off, but from using Dr. Dorothy's articles I can pinpoint sin and see exactly how it is affecting my life. Now I see more clearly how to root it out."

Isaac C. M., Alabama

"I just received *The GOOD NEWS* for this month and read the article on 'Train Your Children for Sabbath Services' by Mr. Kelly. It was a very enlightening article. I had wondered how this was accomplished as the children were so well-behaved in church and not at all like in other churches. I wish I could have known all this when I was rearing my children."

Mrs. John A. S., Illinois

Overcame Tobacco

"I am writing to thank you for your help in my healing. Your prayers helped me so much—some of my habits just left. I don't crave smoking or snuff anymore. My appetite for them

(Continued on page 22)



Jezreel Valley where Josiah fell.

Photo by Kluger

SPIRITUAL LETHARGY

(Continued from page 11)

his childish foolishness. The tragedy of Josiah's death is that it happened over a matter that didn't concern him. The tragedy is Josiah DIDN'T have a reprobate attitude—he was just hard-headed.

This is what occurred.

"After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? *I come not against thee this day*, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not" (II Chron. 35:20-21).

But Josiah *didn't* heed. Josiah came down to Megiddo and fought with Necho. He was wounded and later died.

What's the lesson for us?

Josiah was like the church member who puts his foot in his mouth. He constantly gets in trouble with neighbors, in-laws, school and medical authorities. Like some members who try to preach to others—where they have NO BUSINESS preaching to them. But they won't "forbear from meddling."

Is this you?

When the subject is discussed in articles and sermons, do you see it APPLIES TO YOU? If not, you're headed for trouble—like Josiah.

VI. SOLOMON—The Worldly King

Solomon typifies the Christian who has once again become enmeshed in the cares of this world. The person in

God's Church who finds himself in this Laodicean condition: "And the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mark 4:19).

But Solomon would also have been a model Christian—one who would be considered as having great zeal in God's Church today.

Notice his *godly attitude*.

"*I am but a little child*: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people whom thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people" (I Kings 3:7-9).

But Solomon grew old and he *lost* his childlike attitude! (Mark 10:14.)

He got entangled with what this world offers. Read the book of Ecclesiastes. It's his own confession. The last thing we read of Solomon is: "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" (I Kings 11:4).

An aerial view of famed Megiddo—site of much history, and prophecy yet to be fulfilled. Let's hope we are hidden in a place of safety, and don't fall at Megiddo like Josiah did when he went out to fight someone else's battle with Necho, king of Egypt!

P. Gross Photo



Perhaps the tragedy of Solomon was the greatest. He *started* so far up the ladder—and tumbled so far down. Everything was in his favor. But he let it all slip away from him.

How do you measure up?

Are you letting the things of this world turn you away from God? Are you so concerned with the physical things around you, that you don't have time for God? If you are too busy to study, pray and meditate—YOU ARE TOO BUSY! *Take* time out for God FIRST. Then do everything else.

Is some physical thing getting more attention and interest than God? Better watch out! You're slipping spiritually.

Are you beginning to lust after things you shouldn't have or *even think about*? There's only one problem. You've gone off *away* from God. He isn't *real* to you anymore. You need to get a grip on your mind. Don't slip. Don't be like Solomon in his old age. Be like Solomon *when he began*.

The Chronicle of Tragedy

It isn't enough just to *begin* obeying God. He shows throughout his Word that it is *more important* how we END OUR LIFE than how we begin it. We read in Revelation 2:26: "To him that overcometh and keeps my works UNTO THE END, to him will I give power over the nations."

We must be diligent to the end of our life.

The apostle Paul calls the Christian life a race. In a mile race, it isn't so much the man who zips away from the starting point in a burst of speed—as it is the man who *breaks the tape*. To start first is fine. But to COME IN FIRST is the deciding factor.

He wrote in I Cor. 9:24-27: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain. And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

"I therefore so run not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any

means, when I have preached to others, I MYSELF SHOULD BE A CASTAWAY!"

The apostle Paul realized *he* could LOSE OUT in the end.

What About You?

Have *you* been letting down? Have *you* started out with a burst of spiritual speed only to sink down in the mire of spiritual lethargy?

It's time to *wake up*. YOU could *lose out!*

Ezekiel gives us this dire warning.

"But when the righteous *turns away* from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All his righteousness that he has done SHALL NOT BE MENTIONED: for in his trespass that he has trespassed, and in his sin that he has sinned, IN THEM SHALL HE DIE!" (Ezekiel 18:24.)

This is a frightening warning!

If we end our life in a *state of disobedience*, God will FORGET our righteousness.

Let's heed that warning. Let's conquer the weaknesses that are beginning to overtake us. Cry out to God Almighty to supply the desire, strength, zeal to *continue* to overcome. Begin to pray fervently. Study with drive. Meditate. Fast when necessary.

Let's be Christians of Ezekiel 18: 21, 22.

"But if the wicked will TURN FROM ALL HIS SINS that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he has committed, THEY SHALL NOT BE MENTIONED UNTO HIM: In his righteousness that he has done he shall live!"

Feast Observed Worldwide!

(Continued from page 6)

pioneer members of their Church, in Santa Barbara—and began attending in North Hollywood even before the Santa Barbara Church began. Ordained a Deacon in January of 1964, Mr. Williams now will be able to assist his brethren even more as a *Local Elder* in the Church.

Congratulations, men! And hearty *thanks* and *congratulations* to all the wives and families who helped!

Overall, most of the full *Preaching Elders* and top leaders of God's Church are and *should be* products of Ambassador College. But, it is interesting and inspiring to note that of those ordained as *Local Elders* this fall, *thirteen never attended* Ambassador College. The Spokesman Clubs are producing fruits! Keep it up, men. For many, many more Elders and Ministers are desperately NEEDED in God's Work!

The Feast in Great Britain

Packing three of the holiday camps and many nearby hotels on Hayling Island—off the South coast of Britain—the brethren there observed a glorious Feast of Tabernacles this fall.

There was a total of 1530 brethren from forty-four nations represented there, and each man heard the message "in his own language" as simultaneous translations were relayed by ear-phones to the German and French members who were present.

Mr. Raymond F. McNair—Director of the Churches in Britain—led off the Festival there and was joined by Mr. David Jon Hill from Pasadena Headquarters. Mr. McNair brought heartfelt and moving sermons on the *meaning* of God's Festival and on preparing for the World Tomorrow. Mr. Hill—with his inimitable style and humor—brought three very interesting and enlightening sermons on the history of the Feast from the time of Moses until the present.

The following is a report by Mr. Hill on the Festival this year in Britain:

Members of God's Church representing *forty-two nations* gathered for the Feast of Tabernacles in Hayling Island, England, this year. The official attendance was 1530, indicating an increase of 20% over the previous year. Next year an even greater percent of increase



Local Elders, Mr. Fred Kellers, left; and Mr. Robert Lay.

Squaw Valley Ordinations



Preaching Elders, Mr. James Lichtenstein, top; and Mr. Keith Thomas.

Local Elders, from left to right: Mr. Herbert Magoon, Mr. Tullio Panella and Mr. Frank Williams.



is expected as the new, super-power radio stations begin to bear fruit.

English was the official language of the sermons, but every word spoken from the pulpit was also translated into German and French to accommodate a large number of brethren speaking those tongues. A local newspaper in Portsmouth gave a very friendly report of our activities on Hayling Island, but they did insult at least four of our people by calling them "instant translation *machines!*" Mr. Frank Schnee and Walter Rupp translating into German; Mr. Colin Wilkins and Mr. Etienne Bourdin translating into French are more than *machines!*

This instant translating is *unique!* It is different even from the United Nations, which provide a similar service at their conclaves, in that they usually have a prepared *script*, already translated to work from. Our man sat in an isolated building looking at the speaker over closed-circuit TV and listening thru earphones. He in turn would speak into a microphone which fed his translation via earphone-headsets provided for the members, each language group in its own section in the tent (marquee as the British call it). In this way, even the feeling and vocal expression of what was being said was translated. Because of the translation, there was a little gap between what the speaker said and what the member heard—so whenever a joke was made, everyone in general would laugh, and as they finished, the French and German brethren would burst out laughing as they heard the translation!

Hayling Island was familiar to many who were there, because the Feast had been kept there before. The weather was remarkable—bright and sunny every day. It did rain *once*—but that was during services and inconvenienced no one. There was little sickness, much fellowshiping, a great deal of pleasurable sites to see and things to do, an abundance of spiritual blessings!

To describe the sermons by Mr. Raymond McNair and the other ministers there would only repeat comments already made from the other sites of the Feast! As usual, and in step with

God's Festivals around the world, this Feast was *the best ever!*

The Festival in the "Land Down Under"

A wonderful Festival was observed in Australia this year, and I will just quote verbatim most of the report from our Australian office:

The 1253 people who attended the 1965 Feast of Tabernacles at Blackheath came from all states of Australia, from New Zealand and from New Guinea to obey Jesus Christ's injunction: "*Go ye up unto this Feast*" (John 7:8). They followed the example He set when He came to the Feast and took part in it (v. 10). This was an increase of 54% over the 812 who attended a year ago.

Many attending the Feast for the first time had never previously travelled and had written to the Australian Headquarters in Sydney saying they were apprehensive about setting out on so long a journey. For example, the 2200 miles from Western Australia or the 1500 miles from New Zealand.

On being reassured and reminded that God guards those who obey Him, they set out in confidence. It was thrilling indeed to hear them say the experience of meeting so many of God's people and of hearing His Word so powerfully expounded was a joy and a blessing beyond their imagination. Happiness and rejoicing were apparent in the faces of all those present. And, this was also evident by the willingness with which those rostered to serve fulfilled their allotted tasks and by the many volunteers to help from among those not on the opportunities list.

The Ministerial force of six headed by Mr. C. Wayne Cole, the Evangelist in charge, and including Mr. William Winner from Melbourne and Mr. Royston Page from Brisbane, was indeed inspired as were those who gave sermonettes.

The reasons for God's people assembling together were expounded with clarity by Mr. Cole. The sermons and sermonettes following drove home and proved beyond doubt the fact that God exists and that mankind's present appalling condition and degeneracy,

brought about by his forsaking God's good and perfect way of life, will not be overcome or done away until Jesus Christ returns to institute His rulership. The gloriously happy, prosperous and abundant life to be experienced in The World Tomorrow by those who submit to God's Government was highlighted. From all sides, from among original members as well as from the newer members, were expressions of heart-felt thanks and gratitude to God for the power and authority He had given the speakers throughout the Festival. The order, the harmony, the peace and happiness that were abroad during the whole eight days were indeed a foretaste of the operation of the Kingdom of God on earth—that wonderful era just now ahead of us.

The Feast in South Africa

Flying from Pasadena Headquarters to take charge of the Feast in South Africa this year was Mr. Richard Plache. Mr. Plache, a Pastor-rank minister in God's Church and formerly pastor over the Churches in Greensboro and Richmond, is now assisting Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong in the Foreign Work and many other administrative responsibilities here at Headquarters. Therefore, to bring the brethren in South Africa news and inspiration *directly* from Headquarters, to give Mr. and Mrs. Plache direct experience in the Foreign Work and the opportunity to see some of the overseas offices, this trip was necessary and proved to be a tremendous *blessing* to our South African brethren. Rather than paraphrasing the news, I will simply quote verbatim from Mr. Plache's report on the Feast at Scottburgh:

South Africa

In the tropical beauty of the coastal resort town of Scottburgh, Natal, 268 of the "firstfruits" of God's Church in South Africa gathered to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

This was the third Feast to be held in South Africa, and it proved to be the very best. Once again, there was dramatic proof that despite the human instruments being used, Jesus Christ is in reality the One who actually conducts

His Feast and inspires and empowers His servants. The sermons were unusually powerful and direct.

The theme of the Feast centered around the necessity of proving that this is the *very work of God* and what we must be doing NOW to be prepared to change this world when Christ returns.

Two very spectacular miracles highlighted God's special concern for His people. Mr. Aubrey Beck, our business manager in the Johannesburg office, was stricken with a recurrence of malaria the very day the Feast was to begin. He was running a high fever and delirious. The normal pattern is for the person to grow progressively worse until the crisis is reached the third day. This was not the case with Mr. Beck. God intervened, and Mr. Beck was recovered sufficiently to be in services the third day!

The other miracle involved the small daughter of Mr. Van Wyck. A spark from the steam engine of the train on which they rode down to Scottburgh struck her in the eye, imbedding itself in the cornea. A doctor said that she would have to have an operation for it to be removed. The very next day after she had been anointed, a scab—the size of the eyeball—peeled off, removing the particle and leaving the eye completely healed!

It was not easy to leave these people whom we had grown to love. After the final service, most of them filed by with tears in their eyes to express their appreciation and to say "goodbye." How wonderful it was to know that very soon we would be together once again. But this time, we would be *living in the WORLD TOMORROW*—and not just looking forward to it!

The Feast in Martinique and the Philippines

In the Caribbean, Mr. Louis Jubert conducted the Feast of God's people on the Island of Martinique. A total of 83 brethren attended through the Festival, and all-day meetings were held on each of the Holy Days and evening services were conducted on the days in between.

Mr. Jubert reported that interest was high and the weather was very fine.

The brethren were especially excited and thankful to receive a telegram directly from Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong at Squaw Valley telling them about the Feast here in the States and sending best wishes for the Festival there at Martinique.

In the Philippines, the Feast at Manila was directed by Mr. Art Docken—our Elder in charge of the Manila office. He was assisted by Mr. Pedro Ortiguero, Filipino Local Elder, during the first half of the Festival. Then Mr. Ortiguero went to Mindanao where a larger number of Filipino brethren met for the Feast there.

At Manila, they had a total of 152 attending the Festival, and Mr. Docken reports that the interest was high and the brethren were very enthusiastic throughout the Festival. One Dutch couple from the Island of Guam even joined the brethren there!

At Mindanao, a total of 1,227 brethren were in attendance, and Mr. Ortiguero reports that enthusiasm was high and that God blessed His Festival there in many ways.

Overall, then, you can see, brethren, that when you add up these figures from all over the earth a grand total of *well over THIRTY-ONE THOUSAND* brethren and friends attended this year's Feast of Tabernacles—*worldwide!* All reports certainly showed that God *poured out* His blessing and help in an unprecedented fashion—for which we should give *Him* thanks and praise from now on!

GROWTH and CHANGE Are Imperative!

In every aspect, the ferment of continuing *growth* and CHANGE is apparent in the Church of the Living God! To reach this *entire earth* with God's message as a witness, and to really *feed* God's flock properly, this is all absolutely necessary.

In *rejoicing* over the blessings and growth during and following the Feast—as *we all should*—let us not forget to *pray earnestly* for the tremendous NEED for *more laborers for the harvest!* Far MORE *dedicated, balanced and growing* men are needed as elders and ministers in God's Work!

In discussing this matter recently with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, it became apparent to several of us ministers that—apart from the need of more of God's Spirit and His love—the GREATEST single *need* in God's Church was for *more dedicated laborers* of the right type!

Let's take this need SERIOUSLY!

Every single one of you who are Christ's *brethren* should be praying *fervently* that God would send many more of the *right kind of students* to the Ambassador Colleges! And all of you local church men of real leadership and ability (don't try to be what you are not, however!) should really "get in gear" and *surrender yourselves* as instruments in the hands of the Living God more than you have EVER done before—seeking Him in fervent *prayer, Bible study on your knees* and *fasting* so that He can fashion, mold and USE YOU to an ever greater degree in His service!

This does NOT mean that you are to try to "appoint yourself" to the ministry! I think all of our older members understand that. But it DOES mean that you should be willing to *study, grow* and CHANGE in your *mental, spiritual, personality* and *leadership* development so that you may be a really effective instrument in Christ's service—whether as a Spokesman Club leader, Deacon, Elder or perhaps even full *minister* in the future as *Christ directs!*

As God's Work begins to literally MUSHROOM in size and reach this earth with real POWER, *let us take this need seriously!*

Finally, at this time especially, let us not only remember the blessings and inspiration of the recent Feast, but let us *plan* and *prepare* DILIGENTLY for next year's Festival! Let us begin *now*—as God commands—to *save* our second tithe! Let us NOT borrow from it or "water it down" in any way! Let us encourage others to do the same! Let us literally begin praying and planning for the success of next year's Feast of Tabernacles that it may be the greatest ever—and that we may really USE the inspiration of *this year's Feast* more than we have ever done before in the year between!



ABOVE: The central mall at Sunshine Camp on Hayling Island was a favorite place for fellowship—and God saw to it that the sun DID shine, every day! BELOW: Sunshine Holiday Camp and the marquee (tent) as seen from the air, surrounded by a green and sunny England.

Ambassador College Photos



Readers Say . . .

(Continued from page 15)

just left. It was a habit I had for more than 30 years. Thanks again."

Percy L. P., Pennsylvania

Paid to Quit

"Enclosed is a check for \$526.00, first tithes for the Work of God. Automation finally caught up with my line of work, but God worked out circumstances whereby I was paid to leave my job. The people of this confused world can learn a good lesson from this—the God of this universe can bless His people in the most unexpected ways."

Robert A. L., California

Successful Boys

"My brother and I want to pay our tithes to Mr. Armstrong. We began to save last month a tenth of our pocket money each week. After two weeks I got a prize (one pound) for a story I sent to a newspaper. We know that the Bible is true and God has shown us already what happens when you pay tithes. I am ten and Charles is seven."

Brothers from Wewak,
New Guinea

CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 8)

hill! In this way, you can AVOID trouble, before it starts!

In some other cases, of course, the friends or relatives will probably wonder why the sudden change. They may press for a fuller explanation. What should you do in THIS case?

First, here's what NOT to do: Above all, DON'T mention RELIGION! Doing so would be the quickest way to arouse suspicion and antagonism. People don't want to hear about your new "religious" interests. If you mention religion, you are very likely to arouse a hornet's nest of trouble!

Don't bring religion into the picture at all. First, just let them know in a friendly way that you are not interested in keeping up with all the Christmas bother any more. You and your family are going to avoid all the hectic Christ-

mas buying and all the frantic gift-exchanging.

If your friends or relatives probe a little more deeply, and some even insist that you keep Christmas along with "everyone else," you might simply mention, "No, I've thought it over carefully, and I've decided. Yes, I've made up my mind. There is too much commercialism connected with Christmas, and it is just too much bother. My family and I are going to have peace and quiet, this year."

Be PERSONAL when you explain. Make it a personal matter—not a religious matter. Speak from the basis of your own *personal* convictions! This approach will help smooth over a lot of potential difficulties.

In some cases, the people might *really* be interested in why you no longer observe Christmas. In these cases, still using the personal approach, it would be all right to say, "You know, I've been doing a little research, lately, and was I surprised. I looked Christmas up in the encyclopedia, and I found that it was observed a long time before Jesus Christ was even born. In fact, I found out that nobody really knows *when* Jesus was born, but all indications show that it could not have been on December 25. Therefore, I've decided to stop keeping Christmas. It's not really Christian anyway. The encyclopedia even showed that the ancient pagan Romans observed it in honor of the sun-god!"

This kind of simple, PERSONAL explanation will go a long way in avoiding offence or kindling strife. Even when mentioning these things, however, emphasize that it is a *personal* decision. DON'T try to give the listeners the impression that THEY should not observe Christmas! DON'T try to preach a sermon to them!

If your acquaintances are really interested in learning more, you could even mention that you read a booklet explaining all about Christmas and where it came from. You might loan them your copy of *The Plain Truth about Christmas*, if they would like to read it.

But what should you do if some people send Christmas gifts to you, anyway?

Frankly, you should consider the attitude of the sender. If the gifts were merely sent out of affection, love, and esteem, it would be best to simply accept them with a polite thank-you. If you tried to return them, you could cause offence or antagonism. It would be best not to make a big issue of the matter by refusing to accept the gifts, lest you cause resentment.

On the other hand, if a particular individual sends a gift in order to TEST the sincerity of your convictions, it would be best to return the gift with a thank-you and a brief explanation that you really *don't* keep Christmas any longer.

Problems With Children

What about the children, who may be accustomed to keeping Christmas and receiving gifts?

The best way to handle THIS problem is to sit down with the children, ahead of time, and begin explaining the TRUTH about Christmas, and where it comes from. You could have a family study about the matter, or even include the subject of Christmas in your family Bible study. It might be helpful to use the Christmas booklet as a guideline in the study, simply pointing out the important facts about Christmas.

You could also explain how Satan the devil has deceived the whole world, and that is why so many people keep Christmas (Rev. 12:9). You could then mention that since God has had mercy on you, and revealed His truth to you, your family is going to obey God and not keep Christmas any longer.

As you teach your children God's truth, they will soon come to understand. Christmas will no longer be a problem with them!

Then, at other times during the year, you should demonstrate your love and affection for your children by surprising them with gifts. Such surprises will mean much more to them than "compulsory gifts" given at Christmas time.

The School Problem

Younger children may at first feel "left out," when Christmas comes at school. Positive teaching at home should take care of most of the problem, however. Even though other children may

be involved in Christmas activities at school, if you POSITIVELY teach your children about God's ABUNDANT WAY of life, they should not really miss Christmas. However, you should be careful to instruct your children to use tact when discussing Christmas with other children, lest trouble arise due to some brash, blunt and foolish statement!

What should parents do if certain teachers want their children to take part in some kind of Christmas program or activity? In some cases the children might be excused merely by means of a short, polite note. Sometimes, however, it might be good to have a friendly visit with the teacher, and explain your *personal* feelings about Christmas. Explain that you do not want your children participating in Christmas activities, since you don't observe Christmas. Usually, a friendly visit of this kind would be all that's needed.

But, from time to time persecution might come from some teachers. In this case, it might be wise to take the matter to the principal of the school and explain your personal convictions to him. In this way, the problem can often be resolved, with a minimum of trouble.

The school problem should not be too difficult if handled wisely. If you properly educate and train your children at home, and teach them to be friendly and outgoing in personality, the problem presented by Christmas in school should be greatly lessened!

Avoid a Shattered Home

Perhaps the most serious problem concerning Christmas is the problem of a divided home. If one mate desires to obey God, but the other wants to observe Christmas, the sparks can fly, tempers can be aroused, and disaster can result—if wisdom and understanding are not used.

Many wives who wish to obey God and cease observing Christmas have husbands who are not at all interested in God's truth. And many husbands whose minds God is opening to receive His truth have unconverted wives who want to keep Christmas.

What is to be done?

In far too many cases, when Christmas has come around the battle lines

are drawn. Each stands opposed to the other, adamantly refusing to give an inch. Tempers flare, wild words are loosed, emotions are vented. Misery! Frustration! Discord!

And sadly, in some cases where wisdom and understanding were not used, a family EXPLOSION occurred, shattering the home and leaving it a broken, torn-up shambles!

But WHY? With a little human understanding, a little compassion and willingness to be considerate of the other, the whole problem could have been solved—with PEACE reigning, not strife and warfare in the home!

The home is the very foundation of society. The family relationship is a GOD-PLANE relationship. The union of husband and wife is a type of the union of Christ and the Church, His bride (Eph. 5:23-32). It should be a union of LOVE—not bitterness!

When the home is threatened is no time to lose control of the emotions or become upset. That is when real calm, soundmindedness, and self-control are needed! Remember—both husbands and wives are FREE MORAL AGENTS in God's sight. One should NOT try to cram his religion down the throat of the other! Strive to maintain PEACE in the home (Rom. 12:18).

You Wives

You wives need to use wisdom when Christmas comes. If your husband wants to keep Christmas, don't hinder him. Don't nag at him to change, or argue with him. Don't show him disrespect or contempt because he doesn't accept the truth about Christmas.

Rather, you should STRIVE to show him all honor and respect, regardless of his convictions. Remember, God placed the husband as the HEAD of the home (Eph. 5:22-24). God commands wives to be submissive to their husbands. If you wives will strive to be the BEST helpmates you possibly can, at ALL times during the year, you will find the Christmas problem vanishing out of sight. If, through your helpfulness and consideration, and by your conduct, you SERVE and assist your husbands as you SHOULD, you will find that they, in return, will be more considerate (I Pet. 3:1-4).

Then, when Christmas comes, your husbands will be more concerned about YOUR feelings and convictions! And trouble will be avoided.

Sometimes, though, some husbands may want their wives to participate in Christmas. In the case where your husband commands you to do something contrary to God's Word, the Biblical example is that we "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Even then, however, wives should be respectful and use wisdom when explaining to their husbands that they simply cannot engage in any Christmas festivities. Pray for wisdom! And use it, with understanding.

You Husbands, Too

What should *you* do, if your WIFE insists on having a Christmas tree? Should you adamantly REFUSE to let her have it—even if your home is gravely threatened?

The answer to this problem will depend *how well* you are in control of your home. If you ARE in control of your home, and your wife respects your authority—then you should gently, firmly explain your convictions, and explain that you are not celebrating Christmas this year.

Don't make it sound "religious." Remember, you should AVOID mention of religion, in order to *avoid* trouble and unnecessary hostility. If you are really in charge of your home and family, there should be no serious problem.

However, if you are not yet the real leader and ruler of your own family, and your wife is not submissive to your authority, then—rather than break up your home—you should tread very lightly, the first year.

If your wife insists on having her Christmas tree, let her have one. Be kind and friendly. Let her know that you would rather she did not have a tree, but if she insists, she may go ahead and purchase one. And if she wishes to send gifts to others, that is up to her.

Although you should permit your wife to keep Christmas, if she insists, you should not let her take over the whole house in order to do it. Rather, it might be best to simply let her have a certain room or part of the house,

where she can do her decorating, put up her tree, or whatever.

Be gentle. Be understanding. But meanwhile, during the coming year you should begin taking steps to become the real leader and wise ruler in your family. Learn to be the HEAD of your home, as God intended you to be. Learn to RULE, with wisdom, compassion, gentleness and firmness. Work toward bringing your wife and family into proper subjection to the authority God gives you as father and husband.

As you GROW in Christian character and leadership, Christmas should really become a thing of the past in your home.

As the head of the home, God holds YOU responsible for the proper education of your children (Eph. 6:4). Therefore, you should teach *them* the truth about Christmas. If your wife wants to give presents to the children, that would be up to her. But you should not neglect teaching them the truth about Christmas. Don't ridicule their mother's beliefs, or explain how *she* is wrong. Explain how Christmas *itself* is wrong! Avoid unnecessary strife and argument. Use discretion!

Christmas "Dinners"

What should you do when invited over to a relative's home for Christmas dinner? Should you accept?

In most cases, sure—why not? Frankly, most so-called "Christmas dinners" are merely family reunions and afford an opportunity for the family to get together and fellowship. They are not held to commemorate or observe Christmas, at all! Therefore, if invited to a friend's or relative's home for dinner, even though it occur on Christmas, it would not necessarily be wrong to accept.

Of course, you should use wisdom, too. If you know that the dinner would involve Christmas trappings and festivities, then you should avoid attending, simply explaining that you are unable to go.

Christmas at Work

Some have also wondered about "Christmas bonuses." Such bonuses, given at the end of the year or around Christmas time, are not usually con-

sidered as Christmas gifts. They are given in gratitude for work done *throughout* the preceding year. Often, employers will simply wait till the end of the year before giving bonuses, combining them with Christmas.

Most large companies are not interested one way or the other in the personal convictions of the employees. It would not be wrong, therefore, to accept a bonus, along with the other employees, even if it is given around Christmas time.

If you are working for a smaller company, you might simply mention to the employer that you don't bother to keep Christmas and don't celebrate it. If he wants to give the bonus to you regardless, as a simple gift, it would not be wrong to accept it. If he knows your religious convictions and would consider you a hypocrite for accepting the bonus, then it would be best to refuse it, however, lest he misunderstand. But if he wants you to take it as a token of appreciation, it would be all right.

What about putting up Christmas decorations for an employer?

In this case, the employer is the one responsible for setting store policy. What he does to his store is his own decision to make. If an employer asks a Christian to put up Christmas decorations for his store, it would generally be all right to do it. Of course, a Christian should NOT have or hold the kind of job where the whole work is concerned with Christmas, or other pagan practices.

It would be advisable to briefly mention to the employer that you would rather someone else put up the Christmas decorations, explaining that you personally no longer keep Christmas (again, avoiding any mention of religion). If your employer tells you to do it, however, it would not be wrong to do so. The responsibility would be his, not yours.

"Merry Christmas!"???

What if someone wishes you a "Merry Christmas"?

In many cases, it would not be necessary to give an answer. Many clerks will say this as a matter of habit, and no answer is needed. If a reply seems

expected, however, you could murmur "Thank you" and leave it at that. Just thank them for the sentiment they express, but don't wish them a "Merry Christmas" in return since God does not approve of Christmas paganism.

Certainly, you should NOT begin preaching a sermon about the evils of Christmas, or make a foolish scene. Just be friendly, smile, or even nod. Or even a simple "Thank you" would be enough.

Remember, most people are not even expecting a reply. Saying "Merry Christmas" is merely customary to them. They don't care if you say anything!

Be BALANCED!

The Christmas season affords the people of God a special opportunity—an opportunity to build CHARACTER. If you will use wisdom in handling the problems presented by Christmas, if you will use common sense, and THINK before you speak, you will not only succeed in conquering the problems which arise, but you will also strengthen and build godly, righteous CHARACTER.

The coming of Satan's chief holiday presents a CHALLENGE! It gives you an opportunity to exercise good judgment and wisdom in dealing with other people.

Therefore, be POSITIVE in your approach to these problems! Learn to be BALANCED. Where you can, avoid trouble by anticipating it before it occurs. Make it a personal matter—not a matter of "religion." On the one hand, you should not become engrossed in celebrating Christmas. But on the other hand, don't stick out like a *sore thumb* by preaching to others, "Christmas is PAGAN!"

Use wisdom! Pray about it! Have outgoing concern for the deceived multitudes who do not understand the wonderful truth of God. But *don't* think of yourself as "spiritually SUPERIOR," in vanity and egotism!

Be THANKFUL that God has had mercy on YOU, and opened YOUR eyes to grasp, and understand, His glorious truth! Be thankful that YOU are no longer swept up in the frantic CHAOS and hectic confusion that surrounds this world's CHIEF holiday—the modern Saturnalia, Christmas!