

GN

The Good News



**NEW OFFICE MARKS
20 YEARS OF GROWTH
FOR AUSTRALIAN WORK**

APRIL 1976

GN

The Good News

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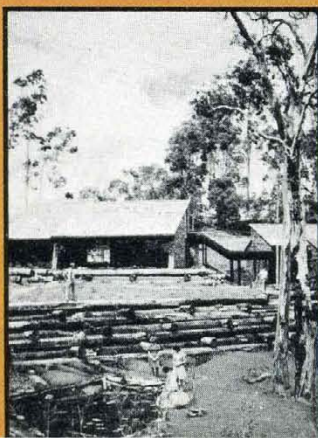
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ABOUT OUR COVER

Beneath eucalyptus trees on sloping bushland, our new offices in Burleigh Heads on Australia's scenic Gold Coast provide an inspiring setting. The history of the Worldwide Church of God "Down Under" is featured in this month's "Update" section (see article on page 14).

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WHEN A MAN FROM SPACE VISITED EARTH...

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Proof exists that earth has been visited by Beings from outer space! Absolute, irrefutable proof is available that this earth has been the scene of titanic struggles between powerful forces who reside in space. Read, in this article, of that proof — and of the secret so well kept that God the Father never revealed it to His own Son in advance!

Once this good, green earth was absolutely teeming with billions upon billions of strange creatures that are now restricted to solid stone monuments or skeletal representations and paintings in museums of natural history. Towering lizards reared up on their hind legs with giant jaws about as big as a grand piano. Some had huge "armor-plated" tails capable of swinging to and fro with incredible brute power.

The visible world was like a subtropical swamp with luxuriant, verdant foliage stretching over the continents like a carpet. Then, without warning, all this tranquility was

rudely interrupted! Suddenly there was an ominous rumbling deep in the bowels of the earth. A huge, great, titanic, gargantuan earthquake rapidly began to rend the earth's surface; then black volcanic ash spewed into the air. The sun still shone bright and red in the sky, but the atmosphere was rapidly being blighted by this smog-like dark ash. Everywhere dinosaur-like creatures were crazed with fear — grunting and squealing with terrible fright as billions of gallons of water began to gush out of the depths of the earth.

Soon came a gigantic tidal wave — a muddy wall of water over 120 feet tall, replete with the twisted bodies of millions of animal-like creatures whirling crazily with multiple tons of ferns, plants, tree trunks, and every type of green vegetable matter.

Each time these ravaging tidal waves raced back and forth across the continents, the less there was to impede them. Finally, even the tallest mountains were sunk beneath the water. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

From Outer Space. And then a

great Being sped through several galaxies in an instant and came to the corner of the Milky Way. (He may have been seated in a strange-appearing apparatus that moved in defiance of all the known laws of aerodynamics.) He searched out a tiny little speck lost in the shadow of one bright orange star. Not a sign of life was visible! What He saw was an earth covered with a huge, thick Venusian fogbank of clouds — completely and totally shutting out the light of the sun, moon and stars — and beneath that nothing but a giant, black, heaving sea. The moon continued to work upon the tides, but there were no continents to cause a Humboldt or Japanese current. Thunderous tidal waves continued to flow and sway unimpeded — constantly ravaging and digging ever deeper into the underwater surface.

This great Visitor from the further reaches of outer space commanded the light to shine out of total, thick, black darkness. Then, no more than 24 hours later, the earth once again began to shudder and shake. Huge volcanoes began to spew forth from beneath the seabed. Hot lava and magma began to

erupt from gigantic cracks and cleavages in the underwater crust of the earth. Molten rock began to flow above the surface of the sea. Large continents appeared in the midst of the oceans.

Best for Last. Perhaps in a matter of hours, like giant submarines porpoising with the water cascading off into the sea — North and South America, Asia, Africa and Europe were simultaneously glistening with waterfalls, inland seas, basins and giant riverbeds.

Another command and trees, plants, lichens, moss, and all types of ferns began to dot the earth. Then the last vestiges of a thin cloud cover were suddenly stripped away and the precious life-giving light of the sun shone through unimpeded. The earth was once again a beautiful, shimmering jewel in a minute corner of the universe.

Another command and many types of animals suddenly appeared on the earth. Some were hanging upside down from tree branches; others stood around with horns sticking out of the most unlikely places, seeming to impede their vision; still others had little creatures tucked away in funny-looking pouches. But our all-powerful Visitor had saved the best for last.

This great spirit Being knew that the scene before Him was incomplete. Something vital was missing: there was no human being to rule over and govern the earth and its newfound flora and fauna.

Our Visitor then knelt down in the dust of the earth — perhaps by a streambed packed with red clay on both sides — and began to fashion and mold the supreme masterpiece of His creation. Soon the Master Sculptor was ready for the finishing touches. He breathed into this new creature's nostrils the breath of life. The first man had been created!

But who was this great Architect from the further reaches of outer space? Who hung the earth on nothing? Who fixed the bounds of the ocean so that the waves of the sea suddenly stop at the beaches? Who made the Milky Way? Who made man?

Christ the Creator! "In the begin-

ning was the Word, and the Word was with God [the Father], and *the Word was God*. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. . . . And *the Word was made flesh*, and dwelt among us. . ." (John 1:1-3, 14).

These first few verses in the beginning chapter of John tell us plainly *who* it was that got down into the dust of this earth and formed the first man. It was the very same Personality in the God family who became Jesus Christ of Nazareth a few thousand years later.

"*And the Word was made flesh.*" Our Creator actually became a tiny germ of life in the womb of the virgin Mary. When the Holy Spirit, by a

This great spirit Being knew that the scene before Him was incomplete. Something vital was missing: there was no human being to rule over and govern the earth and its newfound flora and fauna.

divine miracle from God the Father, united with a female ovum in the body of Mary, another tiny human life was on its way to parturition.

Jesus Christ's human fetal development was no different than yours. The fetus went through all the various stages that comparative embryologists seem to think prove evolution — but instead show the functional similarities of the same great Designer. Nine months after conception, a little baby boy was born in Bethlehem just a few miles outside of Jerusalem.

God became a human being! The God-life of another dimension, the Traveler in outer space, the great Being who made this vast universe, who made Adam and Eve, who ate with Abraham, who parted the Red Sea, who had visited this earth

many times for millennia — had been changed into a tiny spark of life: a baby in His mother's arms, as apparently helpless as any other newborn infant. At day one, He knew no more than you did.

What a risky, humbling experience for One who had inhabited eternity with all the glory of being the great God! But Jesus Christ of Nazareth was more than willing to take this great risk for the sake of the human beings He had created.

Another Dimension. As He grew up, Joseph and Mary began to make Jesus aware of another dimension not shared with a single other human being. "I'm not your real father," Joseph would tell Him. "Your father is God in heaven; you were divinely conceived."

As Jesus Christ developed into a young teenager, He began to become conscious of another world. He pictured in His mind's eye whole thought processes privy to a spirit dimension He had enjoyed with the Father throughout eternity. Years later, He prayed: "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you *before the world began*" (John 17:5, NIV). He once "shocked the socks off" the Pharisees by saying: ". . . *Before Abraham was, I am*" (John 8:58).

You've seen your share of flashbacks in the movies. How many times Jesus Christ's mind flashed back to the countless instances when He had previously zipped down to this earth, we have no way of knowing. He must have remembered the expression on Adam's face when he first laid his eyes on Eve; the curious experience of hearing Adam name the various animals; His many conversations with Abraham; wrestling around in the dirt with Jacob; "arguing" with Moses about his vocal abilities, and letting him be the only human being ever to get a glimpse of God in His glorified form; talking to the young child Samuel in his bedroom; speaking to a sorely discouraged Elijah in a still small voice; etc.; etc.

Jesus must have been almost like a man who was recovering from amnesia. An eternity of experiences returned to His mind as He grew into manhood and prepared for His three-and-one-half-years' ministry.

Jesus Christ was much more attuned to that extra dimension of the spiritual world than we are. He was instantly aware of both sides of it.

The First Severe Test. He met both sides of the spirit world just before His ministry began. Physically, Jesus must have been very near the point of death. He was terribly dehydrated from fasting forty days and forty nights without a drop of water or a morsel of food passing His lips. He was readying Himself *spiritually* for terrific mental combat — a titanic struggle with Satan the devil. The stakes were infinite!

Satan tempted Jesus to misuse His office to procure food at the devil's behest. He tried to puncture Jesus' ego (there was none — it was nonexistent) and tempted Him to misuse God's promises of supernatural protection. Satan tried to get Him to grab world rulership the quick, easy way.

But though physically weak and emaciated, Jesus, by quoting scriptures in the Word of God, *countered* every temptation this evil creature was throwing at Him. He had to call on the other side of this spiritual dimension in order to *completely resist* this evil, powerful, magnetic influence that was trying to tug away at His mind, at His appetite, at any possible little ego or vanity.

After that exhausting conflict with the devil, "angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4:11). So Jesus Christ of Nazareth experienced both sides of a completely different dimension that humanly (limited to our five senses, apart from revealed knowledge) we can know nothing of. But Jesus had *instant access* to help from the positive side of this other world.

Humanly, Simon Peter wanted to protect Jesus from execution in the worst way. Impetuously, he went so far as to hack off the ear of the High Priest's servant. But Jesus asked him: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will *at once* send me more than twelve legions [a whole army] of angels?" (Matt. 26:53, RSV.)

The Humanity of Jesus. Prior to that time, Jesus had been becoming increasingly aware of the immediacy of His last great trial. Earlier

He had told His disciples: "Let these sayings *sink down into your ears*: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men" (Luke 9:44). Jesus really wanted these men — His closest friends — to deeply understand what He was about to go through. However, though they had continually seen and heard clear and irrefutable evidence of the extra spiritual dimension, they simply didn't share in it to anywhere near the same degree that Jesus did. "But they [the disciples] *understood not this saying*, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying" (verse 45).

Just hours prior to Judas' betrayal, Jesus went to Gethsemane to pray. Now this great Being —

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sped through several
galaxies in an instant and
came to the corner of
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He searched out a tiny
little speck lost in
the shadow of one
bright orange star.**

who had often visited this earth from outer space; who had actually been born later of a virgin — was faced with fulfilling, in just a few short hours, the most important purpose that He came to accomplish as a human being — having all the sins of mankind heaped upon His shoulders.

Words could not describe *the terrible agony of anticipation!* Jesus desperately needed, first of all, help from His heavenly Father; secondly, the comfort and loyalty of His very closest friends. The account is well worth quoting: "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be *sorrowful and very*

heavy [troubled]. Then he said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and *watch with me*. And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:36-39).

Jesus possessed the same physical flesh, sinew, bone and tissue that we do; He felt the same physical pulls and fleshly appetites tugging at Him. It wasn't easy to live day by day the sinless life that He did! "Therefore he had to be made *like his brethren in every respect*, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Heb. 2:17-18).

Jesus was not somehow exempt from the severest of temptations. Here He was face to face with the greatest trial of His life — and with precious little help from His uncomprehending disciples. After about one hour of earnest prayer, He returned and found them *sleeping* (Matt. 26:40). Jesus told them: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, *but the flesh is weak*" (verse 41). Here Jesus was referring every bit as much to *His flesh* as He was to that of His disciples.

"He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them *asleep again*: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words" (verses 42-44).

Luke's companion account adds something else that occurred while Jesus was yet praying: "And there appeared *an angel* unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:43). Though His disciples were rapidly waning in their resolve (eventually they all forsook Him and fled), Jesus was still, at this point, *asking for and receiving* help from His heavenly Father.

What Made Forgiveness Possible. After Jesus had prayed ear-

nestly and intensely for several hours, and had received added strength as a result of angelic help, He told His disciples: "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me" (Matt. 26:46).

What followed shouldn't happen to any human being, but it was *the only way* our rotten, putrid, filthy sins could disappear forever into the depths of the sea — never to be remembered again! God reveals, in His perfect plan, that *only by the shedding of blood* is there remission of sins!

To begin with, Jesus was betrayed by a kiss from one of His closest friends. Then, in the hours that followed, He was beaten intermittently by a cat-o'-nine-tails. He had to suffer merciless beatings which tore into His flesh, disfiguring Him, causing Him to bleed from dozens of open cuts and gashes! He was also beaten and whipped with a "scourge," which was a whip of many leather thongs with bits of lead and metal tied in the ends of them.

Finally, dragging and gasping for breath, with open raw wounds livid with caked blood, perhaps an eye ripped and part of the lid laid back, and great rents in His scalp, Jesus was led to His own execution *like a dirty criminal!* His body dripping with blood, falling and stumbling, Jesus was made to carry His own stake until He fell under the weight of it. People along His path were jeering and spitting on Him — throwing rocks and sticks and dirt in the air.

Then He screamed with pain when He felt huge spikes being pounded mercilessly through the flesh, pinning His hands and feet to the wood. He felt Himself being hauled roughly up as His tormentors reared that great stake upright and jammed it into the ground, causing Him to scream again with unbearable pain! On the stake every breath of air brought Him sharp spasms of still more pain. Without any relief whatever, He had to feel His own body weight ripping and tearing at the flesh where the nails had been driven through. Here Jesus was left to die *a slow, wretched, hideous, merciless death* — almost as if someone was gradu-

ally pulling a great dark veil over His eyes as His bodily strength ebbed away.

He was thinking the thoughts of the 22nd and 23rd Psalms. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of *the shadow of death*, I will fear no evil: FOR THOU ART WITH ME." There had never been a single time in Jesus' life when He had been unable to call on God the Father and actually feel the strength and vitality of the response. Always the courage, the faith and the help came.

The Secret Revealed. Then Jesus was shocked by something He never remotely expected! He saw, as it were, the back of God walking away from Him out into the nothingness of eternity! He knew it and He felt it. His Father had left Him *absolutely alone!* And He didn't understand it — then.

"Jesus cried with a loud voice . . . My God, my God, *why hast thou forsaken me?*" (Matt. 27:46.) Jesus never said a word He didn't mean! Jesus didn't cheat with words; He meant it with all of His being. There was *no more help!* *Jesus was utterly by Himself!*

Now do you understand why the Bible says: "When he had BY HIMSELF *purged our sins*, [He] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). Jesus had to endure those final moments *alone* — with horrible agony of spirit, mind and body!

But *He had the spiritual reserve* and the character to do it!

Finally, Jesus felt a sharp metal spear jamming into His side, cutting the tissue and the organs, severing blood vessels and rupturing His bladder — and perhaps even ripping open His stomach.

Then nothing. He was dead!

Three days and three nights later Jesus stepped triumphantly through a solid rock wall, having been transformed instantaneously back into spirit life to become the glorified Son of God sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven with all the power in the universe in His capable hands. Power not only to rule this earth, but to save humankind from itself. Once again He was able to step out into space itself. □

(To be continued)

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) in the United States and British Commonwealth and many other areas of the world. These men will visit you, if invited, directly in your own home.

So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses are as follows:

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THE BIBLE IN A CHANGING WORLD

TEENAGE TIPLING

Many parents are giving a sigh of relief. After a decade of turning on with all kinds of illegal, strange drugs, teenagers are turning back to the familiar, tried-and-true alcohol.

They need to consider the words of Dr. Morris Chafetz, Director of the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in the United States: "Parents who learn their children are not using the so-called 'other' drugs, but the drug alcohol, are relieved. And while we are not getting into a competitive battle with other drugs, but a comparative one, parents are being relieved into a serious situation. Since no drug comes close in any measurement to the human and social destruction of alcohol problems, these parents are being relaxed into a situation that is like jumping from the frying pan into the fire."

Teenage tipling is nothing new. What is new is that they seem to be starting at an earlier age and seem to be hitting the bottle harder than previous generations.

Drinking and driving is one of the major hazards of teenage drinking. The car has become a favorite "watering hole" for youth. But drinking and driving don't mix — about 60% of traffic deaths among youth involve alcohol.

Drinking and other drugs don't mix either. Taking alcohol and uppers, downers, or opiates can result in a synergistic syndrome. That is, the combining of two drugs may result in an effect far greater than the sum of effects of the drugs taken on separate occasions. For example, one small dose of anti-histamine chased down by one small dose of alcohol will have not two — but perhaps 20 times the effect of a single drink. And alcohol mixed with barbiturates or other "downers" can be fatal.

Experimentation and excess

seem to be hallmarks of adolescence. In the case of drunkenness, it might seem like fun at the time, but it can be fatal when mixed with driving or other drugs. And then there is always the hangover the next day as well as long-term hazards to the health and pocketbook if one drunken binge leads to another, and then another, and then another. That is why God counsels: "Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your mind in the way. Be not among winebibbers, or among gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags" (Prov. 23:19-21).

And Solomon, who had tried it all, wrote: "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Remove vexation from your mind, and put away pain from your body. . . . Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth . . ." (Eccl. 11:9-12:1).

WHEN "FREE SEX" IS NOT SO FREE

Every year millions of teenagers discover that "free sex" is really not so free after all. One price they pay for their promiscuity comes in the form of VD.

Venereal disease is that part of promiscuous sex that teenagers don't like to talk about — or, for that matter, don't know much about — but that a lot of them are contracting. In fact, the number of teenagers afflicted by VD has reached epidemic proportions. Every hour of every day in the United States, over 20 persons aged 15-19 become infected with gonorrhea.

More than 750,000 new cases of gonorrhea were reported to health officials in 1973. Well over two

thirds of the cases occurred among persons under 25. Almost half of these were teens and younger — ages 10-19.

The picture is actually darker than these statistics paint. Health authorities use the rule of thumb that the actual number of new cases of VD is about four times the reported number.

Worse yet, there are at least a dozen diseases other than gonorrhea and syphilis that can be contracted by sexual intercourse. The "dirty dozen" include trichomonas vaginalis, chlamydia, nonspecific urethritis, genital warts, and pubic lice or "crabs." But the one that most concerns health authorities is the herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2 (HSV). Ten years ago it was thought to be a rare disease. But now a conservative estimate of 300,000 genital herpes infections are being treated annually in the U.S., making HSV the second most prevalent venereal disease.

"Chastity is the only known guarantee against venereal disease," says Dr. Philip Reichert. "This is one of the oldest medical facts known to man." Also one of the oldest biblical facts. The number of biblical warnings and examples of the hazards of promiscuity are too numerous to mention. Suffice it to cite the warnings in a book especially addressed to young people: Proverbs. Young people are specifically warned to see through the temptations of promiscuity and consider the end result — to see the very unhealthy hook in the appealing bait. Proverbs 5:11 in particular describes the health consequences, probably including venereal disease: "And thou moan, when thine end cometh, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed" (Jewish Publication Society translation).

The biblical injunctions against promiscuity are not arbitrary do's and don't's. They are based on the *real* facts of life and love. For more information write for our free booklets *VD — The Silent Epidemic and Is Sex Sin?* □

DOES GOD HAVE A MASTER PLAN?

Throughout the ages of man, philosophers, mystics and visionaries have pondered the meaning of human existence. Why was man placed on this good, green earth? What, if anything, is God doing with His human creation? Does God have any kind of plan, or is man merely some kind of uncontrolled, divine experiment?

by Brian Knowles

Life on earth just seems to happen, doesn't it? It's all action and reaction. The fickle finger of fate seems to be constantly stabbing the human race entirely at random. You never know what's going to happen next. There just doesn't seem to be any purpose in it all.

The Apparent Futility of Life. It appears that there is no plan, no intelligible scheme of things. Life is a series of accidents and chance circumstances. Everything is cyclical it seems; history does repeat itself. There is predictable pattern but no apparent purpose.

People go on having wars, maiming and killing each other, never seeming to learn the lessons of history. Any solved problem is immediately replaced by another just as serious. Man advances technologically, but regresses morally and spiritually.

Good people suffer too! Evil people thrive and capitalize on the vulnerability of the masses. Oppression is the hallmark of our age; there is no apparent justice. Those who break the rules seem to get away with it with impunity. The

wicked flourish like a green bay tree (see Psalm 37:35, KJV).

To the average citizen of the world, life just doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense. It's a series of happenings over which one seems to have little control. Many disillusioned people, faced with the harshness of life on this planet, descend into an attitude of despair and cynicism.

"Where is God?" they ask. "I don't see any purpose in all this mess that mankind has gotten himself into. I think the best thing to do is to eat, drink and be merry. Tomorrow we'll all be dead anyway."

And so they adopt an attitude of selfishness. Me first. I'm going to get all I can out of this life. I don't want to hurt anyone, but I will if I have to.

Life becomes an endless round of pleasure seeking and self-indulgence. It becomes meaningless and fruitless.

Too many people adopt an attitude of total pragmatism and opportunism. They give up on life in a sense. After all, what's the use of being moral if people are just going to step on you for it? Why try to fit yourself into some great scheme of things when everyone seems to have a different idea of what the scheme is — or even whether there is one?

Reason for Life. Of course, not everyone who has searched for meaning in life has become cynical. Abraham Lincoln, for example, concluded that "The Almighty has his purposes" (address to an Indiana regiment). Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime leader, was convinced that "There is a great purpose being worked out here below."

Those who truly wish to find meaning in life can do so. God, the Creator of life, has revealed Himself and His purpose in the pages of the Bible. To those who accept God's written revelation, His plan is no mystery.

Speaking of the Church, the apostle Paul wrote: "For he [God] has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9-10).

God has a purpose — a plan! That plan is being worked out by Jesus Christ. It will come to fruition in "the fullness of time" and it will involve the uniting of all of the elements of the universe in Christ!

What God is telling us is that someday it will all come together — it will all make sense! What seems to be a random, uncontrolled divine experiment will ultimately jell into a beautiful, cohesive unity that will dazzle the senses and stagger the mind!

Jesus Christ, as "Executive Director" of the divine plan, is very much on the job. He said: "I work and my father works" (John 5:17). Christ is working out the great master plan of salvation which involves the reconciliation of all of mankind to God. Ultimately, Jesus will bring about the "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21, KJV).

But how is this to be done? What is the mechanism through which God is working? How does it involve Jesus Christ?

Jesus' Message. Jesus Christ came with a message from God the Father. It was one of good news —

the "gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13). That message contained *hope* for the future of the human race. It was a message of how man could be reconciled to God and how he could actually become a part of His divine Kingdom. Therefore it was called "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24:14). In the first instance of Jesus' preaching, we find this account: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and *the kingdom of God* is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:14).

Jesus came to reveal *the way into* the Kingdom of God! Prior to Jesus' time the people had only had "the law and the prophets" (Luke 16:16), but now "grace and truth" were added (John 1:17). Jesus brought the light of the gospel into the world. He came with *new information* that had not previously been revealed. Until God sent Jesus Christ with the message of the gospel, the plan of God had been somewhat enigmatic to the religious world. A blanket of "darkness" had been spread over the Jewish people concerning the real meaning of the Scriptures. Paul pointed out that "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear, down to this very day" (Rom. 11:8).

No one had really understood, with full comprehension, the marvelous plan of God up until that time. Even Paul confessed that "we know in part" (I Cor. 13:9, KJV).

Though we still see through a darkened glass, we do see *much more* clearly than in ages past! God has revealed the essential elements

of His master plan to the Church.

The average man on the street would consider most of this foolishness, of course. "Nobody really knows what God is doing," he would explain. "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, *and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned*" (I Cor. 2:14).

So long as the world refuses to "repent and believe the gospel," it *cannot* know what God is doing! The world has shut itself off from that information by its refusal to submit to God.

A Way Out. But you can know! You can understand. Jesus said: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and *learn from me . . .*" (Matt. 11:28-29).

Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, will teach and instruct you through His Word and through the Holy Spirit. But you will first have to allow Him to enter into your life — and become a vital part of it! The only real hope of eternal glory is "Christ in us" as Paul pointed out in Colossians 1:27. Jesus Christ is the "door" through which we enter into eternal life. He is the only way to the Kingdom of God. He said: "I *am the way*, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12).

There is no way anyone can reject Christ and still expect to understand the plan of God. Christ is the key figure in that plan. He is working it out. He *alone* has made it possible for man to be reconciled to his Creator: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

and *through him* to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19-20).

It is through Christ's sacrifice on the cross that God set up the mechanism by which man could be reconciled to God. That aspect of the plan is complete. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived, preached, was crucified, died, was buried and was resurrected after three days and three nights. He now sits at the right hand of God the Father as High Priest and Mediator for the children of God (the Church). The *act* that made it possible for man to be reunited with God is complete. In that sense, man *has been* reconciled: "And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds; he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death . . ." (Col. 1:21-22).

Paul was addressing the Church. Those who are true Christians and have accepted the lordship of Christ, and who have faith in His sacrifice, *have been* reconciled to God. We are forgiven, washed in the blood of the "Lamb." We are no longer cut off from God by our sins (Isa. 59:2).

We Don't Have It Made. But we don't have it "in the bag"! We can still *lose* that condition of reconciliation. God has attached a string, a *provision*, on that status: ". . . *Provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel . . .*" (Col. 1:23).

This is very important! Christians must realize that it is entirely possible to *lose out* on salvation even after they have been reconciled to God by the blood of Christ! Paul

himself did not believe that he had it made, though he was reconciled. He wrote: "I count not myself to have apprehended . . ." (Phil. 3:13, KJV). He knew he could lose out on the Kingdom if he forsook his hope in the gospel.

"For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27). This refers to reverting to "sin" as a way of life. It speaks of returning to the world out of which one was called — of forsaking the Christian way of life. Peter likened it to a dog returning to its own vomit (II Peter 2:22).

(A word of qualification here. Many have worried unnecessarily about "the unpardonable sin." They have lived in fear and terror because they feel they may have committed it inadvertently. If you have been concerned about this, please be sure to write for our free booklets titled *Just What Do You Mean . . . "The Unpardonable Sin"?* and *Just What Do You Mean . . . Conversion?* They will put your mind at ease.)

The point is: *it is possible* to be "lost" after one has been reconciled to God through Christ! Every Christian should strive to make his "calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10, KJV).

Intended From the Beginning. As we have clearly seen, God does have a purpose — a master plan for the universe. It is being worked out through the agency of Jesus Christ. And that purpose is one of long standing. It was established even before the creation of the first man. God knew just how He would reconcile man to Himself in Christ even before the world was created! Speaking of those who would ultimately be in the Kingdom, Jesus said: "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

God had intended, right from the very beginnings of the material universe, to provide a Kingdom for the saints to inherit. Preparations were made long beyond the memory of man.

But certain aspects of that great master plan had been hidden from man's understanding. God did not reveal the entirety of His plan to the early patriarchs of the Old Testament. Many of the prophets earnestly desired to look into the things which we can now understand and know (Matt. 13:17). But Jesus uttered "*what has been hidden since the foundation of the world*" (Matt. 13:35).

God's plan was "finished" — that is, established — at the very beginning: ". . . His works were *finished* from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3). God knew, even before creation, that Christ would have to

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come to this earth and be revealed to man. Peter wrote: "*He was destined before the foundation of the world* but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake" (I Peter 1:20).

God knew that He was going to select a people, an *ekklesia* (church or group), to exemplify His way upon the earth. And He knew that long before He created man through Christ: "Even as he chose us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph. 1:4).

God knew that Christ would have to die in order to pay the penalty for human sin. The Lamb was "slain

from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8, KJV).

Every human being, from Adam to the last human being ever born, will have his or her opportunity to become a part of God's great plan of salvation! God is not willing that any should perish, but that "all should reach repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

The Three Resurrections. Each of us will be included in one of a series of three possible resurrections. There is a resurrection to eternal life; there is one to judgment; and finally, one to eternal death.

Jesus said: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28, 29).

Those who take part in the first resurrection will live and rule with Christ in the Kingdom, administering God's government on this earth for a thousand years (see Rev. 20:4, 6).

Others who have never had an opportunity to be called to the Kingdom will be resurrected back to *physical* life and given an opportunity to live God's way. This second resurrection will occur after the thousand-year rule of the saints: "The rest of the dead did not come to life again until the thousand years were ended" (verse 5).

But all who refuse to "bend the knee" to God, in the final analysis, will come up in a final resurrection to be judged and condemned to eternal death from which there will be no resurrection. Those who have been incorrigible and unwilling to submit to God's rule and government will be destroyed in this third resurrection. "Then Death and Hades [the grave] were thrown into the lake of fire. *This is the second death*, the lake of fire; and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (verses 14-15). (More detailed information may be obtained by writing for *After Death — Then What?* and "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?")

The Exciting Climax. After the third resurrection, which follows the

millennium, God the Father will descend to a refurbished earth which has been prepared for Him by Christ and the saints. John wrote of this in Revelation 21: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . . I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God . . . and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them . . . and God himself will be with them . . .'" (verses 1-3).

Here we are reading about the culmination of the master plan of God! Here is the exciting climax to that great, divine purpose! God dwelling with men! The complete absence of evil in the earth and its environs.

In the new Jerusalem, "There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads" (Rev. 22:3-4).

At this point in future history, every human being who has ever lived on earth will have had his or her chance for salvation. The vast majority of mankind will have "made it." Some — the incorrigible wicked — will have ceased to exist. They will have been *burned up completely* in the lake of fire (see Malachi 4:1). No trace, no spirit, no soul, no flesh — nothing of them will remain. It will be as though they had not been.

Satan, too, will have been banished to "outer darkness." Never again, from that time on, will he or his demons be allowed to influence the children of God. They will be like "wandering stars for whom the nether gloom of darkness has been reserved forever" (Jude 13).

Evil will have been banished from the universe and peace will reign supreme. Death will be a thing of the past. Mankind will have realized his ultimate destiny within the family of God. Man will have been made immortal.

The apostle Paul summed up the sequence of events in the master plan of God in his letter to the Corinthians: "As in Adam all men die, so in Christ all will be brought to

life; but each in his own proper place [order]: Christ the firstfruits, and afterwards, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he *delivers up the kingdom to God the Father*, after abolishing every kind of dominion, authority, and power. For he is destined to reign until God has put all enemies under his feet; and the last enemy to be abolished is death. Scripture says, 'He has put all things in subjection under his feet.' But in saying 'all things,' it clearly means to exclude God who subordinates them; and when all things are thus subject to him, then the Son himself will also be made subordinate to God who made all things subject to him, *and thus God will be all in all*" (1 Cor. 15:23-28, *The New English Bible*).

The Master Plan Complete. What a marvelous statement: "*God will be all in all!*" The entire universe will be united to God — reconciled in Christ! Man's destiny will be complete. The master plan of salvation will have been worked out by Christ. The Spirit of God will permeate the universe.

How could anyone, realizing these dazzling, inspiring truths, wish to remain apart from that magnificent plan? Can you possibly remain uninvolved?

"Beloved, *we are God's children now*; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is. And *every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure*" (1 John 3:2-3).

Will you take the first step to such self-purification? And if you have done so, will you continue in the faith? Will you do what is necessary to fulfill your intended role in God's great master plan of *salvation*? □

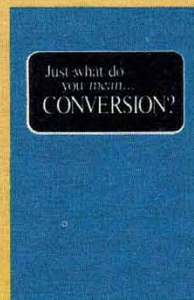
RECOMMENDED READING

Further information about God's master plan for mankind is available in the booklets listed below. To receive your free copies, please request them by title (mailing addresses are on the inside front cover).

Why Were You Born?
What Do You Mean — Salvation?
After Death — Then What?
Just What Do You Mean — Conversion?

REAL CONVERSION (You can't win the prize unless you start the race)

The apostle Paul likened the Christian life to a race, which must be run for the "prize" of eternal life. A person does not even begin his "race," however, until he has undergone a *genuine* conversion. The New Testament concept of conversion involves much more than a mere intellectual or ritualistic acceptance of a set of beliefs. True conversion can be defined in two parts. The first involves a definite event which occurs when God fulfills His promise to place the Holy Spirit within a person after certain conditions are met. The second part is a process which continues throughout the Christian's life. If you'd like to know more about the Bible's teaching on conversion, request the free booklet *Just What Do You Mean — CONVERSION?* Write to *The Good News* (see addresses on inside front cover).



WORLD RELIGION- BOON OR BANE?

For almost 6000 years of recorded history, man's existence has been one long chronicle of war, poverty, disease and intolerance. Ironically, during this same period man has seldom been without some kind of strong religious influence. And yet lasting peace and prosperity have largely managed to elude the grasp of the human race. Could there be any connection between man's traditional patterns of religious observance and the mounting number of woes that are beginning to beleaguer the human race? This article is part I of a series dealing with the first of John's four horsemen (Revelation 6) — the white horse of religious deception.

by George P. Ritter

Four small children sob as the body of their mother is lowered into a freshly dug grave. She is another tragic victim claimed by the long nightmare of terrorist bombings that continue to blight the face of Northern Ireland.

In Belfast, a young Roman Catholic girl is lashed to a post and mercilessly beaten by an angry knot of men. Dozens of people watch impassively from their windows, making no attempt to rescue her from her enraged tormentors.

On the outskirts of Tripoli, Lebanon, a band of gunmen order 25 Moslem travelers to evacuate a bus. With no warning they open fire with a submachine gun and twelve innocent victims are cut down in the fusillade of bullets.

In Rome, the Pope reaffirms his church's age-old stand on the use of birth-control devices as millions of people around the world continue to suffer from hunger, malnu-

trition and disease. In Saudi Arabia, the government bans the use of contraceptives following a decree from the World Moslem League that "birth control was invented by the enemies of Islam."

Religious World in Turmoil. To millions of people around the world, such religious practices can be (and are) a definite hazard to life and health. For instance, the Hindu veneration of the sacred cow certainly does little to help the plight of millions of malnourished people living on the Indian subcontinent. Nor does their ancient religious caste system. In recent times "untouchables" have been beaten for attempting to satisfy their thirst from an upper-caste temple well.

Or consider the negative impact Chairman Mao's revolutionary revival had on the peoples of the Far East. Millions of Chinese were enslaved in a system right out of the pages of Orwell's 1984. In many quarters, Mao was (and still is) virtually worshiped as a revolutionary demigod; his little red book became the Chinese Bible. Many a militant Communist was imbued with a quasi-religious "hellfire and brimstone" zeal, and some were more than ready to take up the sword in a holy crusade against the "decadent, imperialist nations of Western capitalism."

Religious superstitions have virtually condemned many people in the underdeveloped world to lives of perpetual poverty and deprivation. In some areas of the world, prayer flags are thought to be more important than health or sanitary measures in combating outbreaks of cholera. Among some peoples, a modern piece of equipment such as a diesel generator can't begin operation until a blood sacrifice is offered. Boiling drinking water is often understood more in terms of a religious ritual than a biological cleansing process.

In the hills of Nepal, iron ore is smelted using the same process

that was employed by the ancient Greeks millennia ago. No attempt has been made to improve existing techniques. Instead, a small image of a local deity molded into the wall of the smelter is looked to as a guarantor of successful operations.

Cure for Woes? To some, all this might seem somewhat ironic. Traditionally, men have always thought of religion as a powerful positive force working for the betterment of the human condition. Today the bulk of the world's population adheres to some type of religious creed in one form or another. Millions of Western Christians go to church every Sunday, men in office invoke the name of God in public ceremonies, faithful Moslems take their pilgrimages to Mecca, and Hindus and Buddhists diligently practice the same precepts that were handed down to their forefathers generations ago.

In spite of all this outward religiosity, though, the state of the world's health continues to deteriorate. Numerous nations are either in a state of war, preparing for war, or recovering from the last one. Major powers continue to accelerate a no-win nuclear arms race. Governments rise and topple, leaders are submerged in bloody coups, and the majority of the world's population still lives under the ominous shadow of famine, disease, malnutrition and poverty.

Is all this occurring because mankind has lost sight of his original religious convictions? Would *more* religion be the answer to humanity's problems? Can man's religion help solve the monumental problems now facing the human race? Or on the other hand, is religion the *cause* rather than the *cure* for many of mankind's present woes?

Before we can answer these questions, we need to go back to the beginning and see how the foundation of virtually all of the world's major religions was first laid.

Introducing a Clever Counterfeit.

Throughout all of recorded history, mankind has shown a remarkable talent for getting itself into religious hot water. Deception in the field of faith and morals can be traced all the way back to the beginning of human existence. In fact, our first parents, Adam and Eve, started things off on the wrong foot when they fell prey to the world's first religious con artist — Satan the devil.

Satan was smart enough to know that a direct, open approach was almost certainly doomed to failure. So he came on as a "good guy" dressed up as an innocent-looking serpent. At the same time, he brought along what appeared to be a very religious-sounding message.

His first tactic was to debunk the fact that Adam and Eve were mortal fleshly beings. "You shall not surely die," he told the woman. Then he piqued Adam and Eve's intellectual vanity with the alluring promise, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). Using this approach, Satan subtly inferred that there was a vast amount of esoteric knowledge that was theirs for the asking — knowledge that God was holding back from them. All they had to do was accept his program. Before it was all over, he had added another element to his false religious package: a feeling of guilt concerning their physical bodies and the subject of sex (Gen. 3:7-10).

Satan's offer in the Garden of Eden quickly became the pattern of many of the world's ancient pagan mystery religions. His statement ("You shall not surely die") was another way of saying that man has an immortal soul. Unlike God, Satan was not leveling with Adam and Eve.

Numerous scriptures clearly demonstrate that the idea of an immortal soul is a figment of ecclesiastical imagination. (See Ecclesiastes 3:19; Psalms 146:4; Matthew 10:28. Also write for our

free booklet *Do You Have an Immortal Soul?*)

The mystery religions that followed, likewise placed an inordinate emphasis on hidden knowledge, ceremonies and rituals. By religiously following certain sacred rites, the devotee would supposedly gain favor with the gods and earn a gilt-edged guarantee of eternal immortality. The idea that sex and the human body are inherently evil also managed to permeate much of later religious thought.

Greek Synthesis. But it was the Greek philosophers who really perfected and articulated these fundamental concepts. Plato was perhaps their number-one proponent. Concerning the idea of an immortal soul, he wrote: "The soul, then, as being immortal, and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that now exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all" (*Meno*, 81).

Unfortunately, as the Greek philosophers looked at it, this "poor soul" had to live here on earth trapped inside a human body. According to Plato: "It is, indeed, because of these affections that today, as in the beginning, a soul comes to be without intelligence at first, when it is bound in a mortal body" (*Timaeus*, 44A-B).

Here was the other side of the Platonic coin — the concept of a mundane, corrupt human body that enslaved a pure, pristine soul. The shame over sex and the human anatomy that originated in Eden was echoed even more clearly in much of this later philosophy.

Since the body and material things were considered evil, a person's chief aim in life, according to these ancient philosophers, was to escape the clutches of this world. Man's aspirations, hopes and dreams were to be found in other-worldly goals. Plato summed it up when he said: "Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to

heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God" (*Theaetetus*, 176).

The best way to prepare for this celestial calling was to devote oneself to a quiet life of sober contemplation and thought. The pursuit of higher "spiritual" knowledge became an end in itself. According to one ancient Greek sage: "The philosopher as priest of the God who is over all things must abstain from flesh meat and always strive to come near to God, solitary to solitary" (James Shiel, *Greek Thought and the Rise of Christianity*, p. 37).

Numerous religious cults grew and thrived in this atmosphere of Hellenistic dualism. Their primary concern largely centered around achievement of personal salvation for their votaries and disciples. Not only was ascetic self-denial emphasized, but also the importance of inner knowledge, or *gnosis*. Mystery religions flourished as men sought to achieve inner tranquility, peace and deliverance.

A Radical Departure. Into this Hellenized environment came Jesus Christ of Nazareth, preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. The main thrust of His revolutionary message had to do with an earthly kingdom — not an escape to the nether reaches of spiritual Nirvanaland. Instead of speaking in vague dialectic and dualistic concepts, he taught simple, direct principles of ethics and morals. He was continually at loggerheads with the religious establishment in Palestine, took a dim view of their burdensome and petty rituals, and was not afraid to castigate them for their religious hypocrisy (Matt. 23; Luke 18:10-14; 11:37-54).

After Christ's departure, the early Church was initially highly successful in propagating His gospel. But it wasn't long before many of the Jewish and Hellenistic elements of society were up in arms over the revolutionary impact of His message. Their reaction was so violent

that Stephen was stoned to death by an incensed group of Jewish religious leaders. James was martyred by Herod, and Paul met violent resistance in Asia Minor on two separate occasions when he threatened to burst the bubble of local pagan divinities. He was mocked by Stoics and Epicureans at Mars Hill, and in Thessalonica was accused of "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

Fading Back into Normalcy. Under such circumstances something was bound to give. As the early apostles passed from the scene, the visible church began to accommodate itself to many of the Hellenistic philosophies and doctrines then in vogue. Some felt such a maneuver was essential for the future survival of Christianity in a Hellenized world.

According to Arnold Toynbee: "Even Christianity might have found it hard to make headway in the Hellenic world if it had not, like its competitors, presented itself in Hellenic dress" (*Hellenism*, p. 277). Toynbee went on to say: "The Christian propagandists of the second century sought to commend Christianity to the educated minority of the Hellenic public by presenting it as the crown of all known philosophic systems. And this minority could not be won for Christianity without translating Christian beliefs into Hellenic philosophy's technical terminology . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 228).

Edwin Hatch, author of *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity*, also described this process: "It was impossible for Greeks, educated as they were with an educa-

tion which penetrated their whole nature, to receive or to retain Christianity in its primitive simplicity" (p. 49). He also wrote: "The Greek minds which had been ripening for Christianity had absorbed new ideas and new motives; but there was a continuity between their present and their past; the new ideas had new motives mingled with the waters of existing currents" (*ibid.*, p. 5).

So the process of Hellenization began in earnest. Visible Christianity took on a completely different form as Greek elements flooded into the visible church.

James Shiel explains what happened: "On their [the Greek's] conversion many of them retained current preoccupation with the religious concept of 'salvation,' mingled with a host of similar concepts from the Oriental mystery religions. Salvation was to be achieved by perfect knowledge (*gnosis*). They insisted that there were hidden truths in the Scriptures which only the true Gnostic could discern" (*op. cit.*, p. 51).

The heavy influence of Greek philosophical concepts on Christianity was also apparent from the writings of the post-apostolic fathers. Origen, for instance, even urged that Hellenistic philosophy be used as a basic primer for Christianity: "I am therefore very desirous that you should accept such parts even of Greek philosophy as may serve for the ordinary elementary instruction of our schools, and be a kind of preparation for Christianity" (*Philocalia of Origen*, p. 57).

Clement of Alexandria wrote: "The philosophy of the Greeks, partial and particular though it is, contains the basic elements of that genuine and perfect *knowledge* which is higher than human, which is engaged upon purely intellectual objects, even upon those spiritual objects which eye has not seen. . . . until they were made plain to us Christians by our Great Teacher . . ." (Shiel, *op. cit.*, p. 3).

Compromise and Defeat. Visible Christianity was well on the way to becoming just another version of a modern, updated Oriental mystery religion. Elaborate ceremonies were

TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY: SCHOLARS AND HISTORIANS PINPOINT ITS BASIC PROBLEM

H. G. Wells: "The kingdom of God that Jesus of Nazareth had preached was overlaid . . . almost from the beginning by the doctrines and ceremonial traditions of an earlier age, and of an intellectually inferior type. Christianity, almost from its commencement, ceased to be purely prophetic and creative . . ." (*The Outline of History*, p. 573).

Eric Fromm: "The real, historical world no longer needed to change; outwardly everything could remain as it was — state, society, law, economy — for salvation had become an inward, spiritual, unhistorical, individual matter guaranteed by faith in Jesus. The hope for real, historical deliverance was replaced by faith in the already complete spiritual deliverance Christians no longer looked to the future or to history, but, rather, they looked backward" (*The Dogma of Christ*, pp. 58-59).

G. P. Fedotov: "Practically the whole of Byzantine religion could have been built without the historical Christ of the Gospels The divine, glorified Christ is, certainly, the main object of the Byzantine cult — together with His Mother, the Queen of Heaven. Yet, strangely, His earthly life, and His good news of the Kingdom of God, and particularly His teaching, attracted little attention" (*The Russian Religious Mind*, p. 35).

Frederick C. Grant: "As a consequence of this Hellenistic-Roman influence, much of the vast potency of the gospel became neutralised, insulated, and has never been set free to this day" (*Roman Hellenism and the New Testament*, p. 164).

instituted, an intellectual priestly caste began to assert itself, and esoteric doctrines were kept back from the multitudes. Many of the major tenets of competing pagan religions readily found a safe haven within the walls of a changing Christianity.

Pagan divinities were transformed into Christian saints, martyrs and angels. The cult of the Oriental mother goddess was revitalized in the veneration of the Virgin Mary. And pagan temples were often transformed into "Christian" houses of worship.

Hellenistic dualism centered around the concept of an immortal soul; and an evil, corrupt material creation loomed large in post-apostolic thinking. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas also drew deeply from these same philosophical wells. Augustine was probably the staunchest advocate of Greek otherworldly concepts since the Stoics. Writing in *The City of God*, he was quick to eulogize ascetic ideals: "For that vision of God is the beauty of a vision so great and is so infinitely desirable that Plotinus does not hesitate to say that he who enjoys all other blessings in abundance and has not this is supremely miserable" (book X, chapter 16).

Aquinas, for instance, took a dim view of earthly pleasure. In his monumental *Summa Theologica*, he wrote: "The religious state requires the removal of whatever hinders man from devoting himself entirely to God's service. Now the use of sexual union hinders the mind from giving itself wholly to the service of God" (p. 655). He continued: "First, as regards the practice of perfection, a man is required to remove from himself whatever may hinder his affections from tending wholly to God. . . . Such hindrances are . . . First, the attachment to external goods, which is removed by a vow of poverty; secondly, the concupiscence of sensible pleasures, chief among which are sexual pleasures, and these are removed by the vow of continence. . ." (p. 659).

A Remarkable Transformation. Long before Augustine and Aquinas got around to writing these weighty tomes, the established

Christian church had lost whatever little resemblance it had borne to the early church of Paul and the Apostles. The Sermon on the Mount had given way to the Nicene Creed. Christian communities periodically became more agitated over tortuous and involved dogmas on the identity of God and largely ignored the simpler teachings of the man from Nazareth. The Messianic hope of a world under the rule of Jesus Christ had been abandoned in favor of a gospel of otherworldly escape.

Christianity had triumphed as the state religion of the Roman Empire, but the question of who had really been converted to what still remained. According to James Shiel: "In the converted Empire he [the historian] finds some Christians whose mentality is hardly distinguishable from that of the pagans, and who regard pagan philosophy as a thing of 'holiness.' Conversion of the Empire involved a certain conversion of the Church towards paganism" (*op. cit.*, p. 57).

As Edward Gibbon put it: "The victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals." About all that visible Christianity had in common with Jesus Christ was the use of His name. The revolutionary impact of His teaching had long since vanished into the mists of pagan philosophy.

In effect, the established Christian churches have adopted a totally different posture from the one intended by Jesus Christ. The long-term effects are still with us to this day. And the implications for society have been tragic, to say the least.

Perhaps Frederick C. Grant best sums up why this has become the fundamental dilemma of modern religion: "As G. K. Chesterton said, 'Christianity has not failed — it has never been tried.' And this is the tragedy, that a gospel meant for the healing of the nations accepted a lesser role and became only one more of 'the world's great religions,' leaving Hatred, War, Greed, Hunger, and Misery still the permanent rulers of mankind" (*Roman Hellenism and the New Testament*, p. 171). □

(To be continued)

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Reader response to the first edition of this new column was very gratifying. A lady from Milwaukee writes: "Compliments on your new feature. We so often think we know, but when faced with giving answers, we find we really don't." And from Stillwater, Oklahoma: "I've wanted to see this added ever since I began receiving your magazine." (Answers are found on page 23.)

Multiple Choice (circle the correct letter):

1. The number "ten" in relation to the Ten Commandments is A. an arbitrary number assigned by ancient evangelicals. B. specifically designated as "ten" in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. C. specifically designated as "ten" elsewhere in the Pentateuch. D. specifically designated as ten by Jesus and Paul in the New Testament.

2. Adam and Eve *directly* broke _____ of the Ten Commandments in the original human sin. A. all ten. B. four. C. six. D. two.

3. Obedience to the Ten Commandments A. earns eternal life. B. is no longer necessary for the true Christian. C. is up to individual choice since Christ nailed all ten to the cross anyway. D. is fundamental to real Christianity, but does *not* save anybody.

True or False (circle T or F):

1. Paul specifically indicated in his writings that the Ten Commandments were "the royal law of liberty." T F

2. Jesus summed up all of the commandments into two basic principles: love toward God and love toward neighbor. T F

3. The whole concept of the Ten Commandments began with Moses on Mount Sinai. T F

4. It is possible to love God by observing the first four commandments and simultaneously dislike one's neighbor by disavowing the last six. T F

AUSTRALIAN WORK MARKS TWENTY YEARS OF GROWTH

by Dennis G. Luker,
Regional Director for Australasia

Australia is a unique continent, sometimes referred to as "the land down under" because of its location in the southern hemisphere. It is a big country, nearly 3,000,000 square miles, with a relatively small population of 13½ million people. Vast portions of Australia are desert and "bush" country.

Nearly everyone has heard about the kangaroo, koala bear, platypus, and maybe about the Aborigines, the original people of this country. But most have not heard about what God is accomplishing here through *this Work*.

Broadcast Twenty Years Old. It is now twenty years since *The World Tomorrow* was first heard in Australia. On April 14, 1956, eight radio stations around the nation began to broadcast the program once a week. As a result, a few Australians wrote to the United States asking to receive the *Plain Truth* magazine (at this time, the *Work's* only mailing office was in Pasadena, California, eight thousand miles away). During the next two years, seven more stations began broadcasting a weekly program. Then, in 1959, arrangements were made for the original eight stations to air the program daily. Soon the rapidly growing mailing list made it obvious that an office was needed in Australia.

On November 12, 1959, Garner Ted Armstrong and Gerald Waterhouse flew to Sydney. Arrangements were made to lease space in the newly completed M.L.C. Building in North Sydney. In December a small office was opened, and Mr. Waterhouse remained in Australia to supervise the work and to become the pastor of the first Aus-



GN Photos

lian congregation of the Worldwide Church of God (in Sydney). The Church began on January 30, 1960. Just 30 people attended the first service.

Once the office was established, Ambassador College began to advertise in several Australian mass-

circulation magazines, including *Reader's Digest* and *Australian Woman's Weekly*. As a result of these ads and increased radio coverage, the circulation of the *Plain Truth* tripled in two years to 15,000 copies a month.

At the end of 1961, Mr. Water-



Brian Hose — GN



VIEW OF STAFF in North Sydney office in 1961 (above, opposite page) supervised by Gerald Waterhouse (standing). C. Wayne Cole (below, with Garner Ted Armstrong) took over at the close of that same year. Exterior and interior views on this page show the pleasant surroundings our new offices provide for the Australian staff.

morrow program could be heard in most parts of Australia. The Australian office also assumed the responsibility for mailing the *Plain Truth* and other literature to New Zealand, the Philippines and many countries in Southeast Asia.

At first, all magazines and booklets were brought in directly from the United States. But the increasing circulation of the *Plain Truth* soon made this uneconomical, and so arrangements were made to print in Australia. From 1961 to 1967 the magazine was printed in Melbourne by Wilkes & Co., one of Australia's largest printers. However, rising costs and growing circulation forced us (in 1967) to upgrade our own small printing

works so that we ourselves could print the Australian edition of the *Plain Truth*.

Throughout the sixties, membership of the Worldwide Church of God steadily increased. A second church began in Melbourne in 1961. Brisbane was added in 1963. Soon many of the cities and larger towns in Eastern Australia had regular services or monthly Bible studies. In 1966 a congregation was raised up in Perth in the far west. The Church and Work of God continued to grow. Then, after 11 years of service directing the Work in Australia, C. Wayne Cole returned to the U.S. (in August 1972) where he now serves as Vice President of the Worldwide Church of God and Director of the Church Administration Division. I was appointed as his successor in Australia.

"Exodus" to Burleigh Heads. By 1973, the effects of the world economic crisis and a rising inflation rate began to be felt in this country. As the cost of living skyrocketed, it became obvious that something had to be done to ensure a sound future for the Work here. After an extensive feasibility study, the deci-

house was reassigned to the Philippines to open an office there. He was replaced as Regional Director in Australia by C. Wayne Cole, who remained for the next 11 years.

These years brought steady growth. Many radio stations were added and by 1968 *The World To-*

sion was made to relocate the office out of Sydney because of high rents and increasing congestion. At the same time, it was decided that we should build our own office complex rather than rely on rented space. After much searching, a suitable site was selected in a new industrial park near the town of Burleigh Heads in southeast Queensland. The park's owners were planning to make it the most outstanding and beautiful industrial development in Australia. They were delighted with our plans and offered every assistance.

The office moved from Sydney in January 1974 to temporary rented premises in Burleigh Heads. And finally, after more than two years of

planning, preparation and construction, the new Australian office building is finished. The Australian branch of God's Work moved into its new regional headquarters last month. The 14,000 square foot building has been specially designed to fill the needs of the Work here. It will house all the operations needed to keep the Work running smoothly, including administration, accounting, data processing and mailing.

Our new office complex is constructed on six acres of gently sloping bushland, and every effort has been made to preserve the natural beauty of the site. Trees and natural flora have been left undisturbed wherever possible. Even the con-

struction materials, natural brick and timber, and the interior decor have been chosen to harmonize with the subtle hues of the Australian landscape. The tastefully furnished offices and landscaped grounds will provide an inspiring working environment for the Australian staff members. It is indeed a fitting home for God's Work in the land "Down Under."

The move out of Sydney to Burleigh Heads has not hindered the growth of the Work. In fact, the very year we moved (1974) the circulation of the *Plain Truth* tripled to 150,000 copies per month as a result of a breakthrough into newsstand distribution which began in Queensland. Within six months, over one hundred newsagents in all the states of Australia were distributing the *Plain Truth*.

This dramatic breakthrough into nationwide newsstand distribution of the *Plain Truth* came, "coincidentally," as postal rates were soaring. It now costs more than 30 cents to mail *one copy* of the *Plain Truth* in Australia. God opened a new door for the Work in this country just when it was needed (see article in July 1975 issue of *The Good News*).

TV Opening Up. Something else that is new, and in this case unique, to Australia are five-minute radio programs by Garner Ted Armstrong on social problems and issues in this country. Garner Ted Armstrong recorded these for us in 1973 and 1974 using Australian facts and statistics supplied to him by our local news bureau. These programs first went on the air in April 1973, and they proved to be an invaluable supplement to the half-hour program. They continued to be broadcast on 27 stations throughout the nation without interruption for nearly two years. As a result of these programs, many additional thousands of Australians heard our message for the first time, and several thousand were added to our list of regular subscribers. We are now

AUSTRALIAN FILM PROGRAMS

The Australian branch of God's Work has just completed its first series of film presentations. The films ("Herbert W. Armstrong, Ambassador for World Peace" and Garner Ted Armstrong's Portland personal appearance campaign) were shown in ten Australian cities to an audience of invited *Plain Truth* and *Good News* subscribers.

Results of the first film shows have been very encouraging. A wide variety of towns and cities were chosen, from metropolitan Melbourne and Sydney to Cairns in the tropical north. An average of 14 percent of the *Plain Truth* subscribers attended the film evenings in each area, and in some towns it was as high as 25 percent! The Church pastors acted as MC's and members of the local congregations manned literature displays. In each of the presentations, more than half of the audience stayed to talk after the films. They seemed to appreciate the opportunity to meet the people behind the magazine.

One lady told us: "Why, your church members are just ordinary people — like me." We were encouraged by the large number of enthusiastic comments received about the films. Even hall managers, projectionists and others who had never heard of the Work or Mr. Armstrong were favorably impressed by the films — and said so.

Australians in general are not "turned on" by traditional, sentimental religion, but they seemed to appreciate Garner Ted Armstrong's realistic approach to the subject. A strict no-follow-up approach was maintained, but many people requested personal visits and counsel, and several have started to attend Church regularly.

Altogether, we consider our first series of film presentations a very successful experiment. Plans have been made to continue the program in many more towns and cities in Australia next year.

— John Halford



Brian Hose — GN

planning to use these programs again on different stations at different times.

Bigger and better news is that we are also planning to place the *Garner Ted Armstrong* one-hour TV specials and selected half-hour TV programs on television throughout the country. Color television has only been in Australia for one year. Although a comparative latecomer to color TV, the use of advanced systems makes Australian color transmission among the best in the world. Recent innovations have solved the technical problems of using videotape designed for American TV with the Australian system. Australians like the straight-from-the-shoulder, hard-hitting, not overly sentimentalized approach of Garner Ted Armstrong, and we believe that television will allow us to make the biggest impact yet in this country.

Until television becomes a reality in cities all over Australia, we are continuing with a special program of showing Garner Ted Armstrong's one-hour TV specials on film to many hundreds of interested *Plain Truth* subscribers and co-workers. Several thousand Australians have

already been reached directly and personally by an ongoing program of campaigns and films.

Encouraging Growth. God has called many Australians to help do the work in this country. Besides many faithful co-workers, current baptized membership of the Worldwide Church of God here is 2,700 and growing. And more than 4,000 attend services in churches all over Australia. There are now 30 congregations, and the Church has ordained ministers in all major population centers and many of the smaller cities and towns.

The Work of God in Australia has come a long way from that day in April 1956 when *The World Tomorrow* was first heard on a few radio stations.

Australia is sometimes called the "lucky country." It is rich in agricultural land and mineral resources. Its vast size and small population make it nearly self-sufficient in food and fuel. But even a "lucky" country cannot remain immune from the critical problems facing the world today. Most of the problems that are eroding the fabric of society in the U.S. and Europe are found here too. Internal political crises, wars on

AUSTRALIAN office staff smiles for the camera. Dennis Luker, Regional Director, is on the far left of the picture.

our very doorstep in Southeast Asia, breakdown of family life and the effects of recession and inflation are causing many Australians for the first time to worry about their future. A recent survey in one Australian town showed that an astonishing 38 percent of those interviewed believed that the world may be coming to an end. Forty-six percent said that they were not finding mental peace and spiritual fulfillment in traditional religion.

From our new headquarters building, the Australian branch of God's Work is looking forward to fulfilling its part in warning, teaching and preparing our people for survival in the tumultuous years that lie ahead for Australia and the world.

Readers in Australia wishing to contact a minister of the Worldwide Church of God may write to G.P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220. Or dial this number: 075-35-4233 (reverse the charges). □

AN *Open Letter* TO THE APOCALYPSE GENERATION

First my credentials: I'm twenty-three years old and have been associated with the Worldwide Church of God long enough to know what's going on, or most of it anyway. So here goes:

The most nettlesome thing most young people find about the Church is its teaching that the "world" (meaning organized society) is going to end soon.

To be honest, the idea doesn't set well with anyone under thirty — or under ninety for that matter — whose earthly existence isn't so bleak that he has nothing to lose by looking forward to a cataclysmic upheaval.

I will be blunt — no matter how one intellectually acquiesces to the idea that, shortly, the world will indeed be coming to an end, one is haunted by the notion that something will be missing — that a given amount of the experience of life simply will never be realized.

Another point a younger person finds hard to understand is the apparent *eagerness* of one's elders to want to believe the end is imminent. One recoils at what might be called the "medieval" syndrome: the tendency to put all one's hopes on some afterlife because life now is so bleak.

The net effect is to predispose a person against a church which proclaims that the end is near.

The problem is that how one feels about truth doesn't change it. Individuals can go into an apoplectic rage against the sum of $2 + 2$, but it is still 4, no matter how hard that fact is to swallow.

Or, to be more specific, *if* the world really is coming to an end, sulking about the fact isn't going to change anything.

It ultimately is the problem of the "universe," of objective reality: I may not like it, but there it is, staring

me in the face. I may have no appreciation for smog, nuclear weapons, or high crime rates, but there is nothing I *personally* can do to make them go away. They are facts which have to be lived with.

It's the same way with the Church. It really has no choice: it must be true to itself, and if it believes that God Himself said for it to collectively say certain things, it must say them come "hell or high water."

The More Things Change . . . Personally, I'm not at all impressed with the world bequeathed to my generation by the one which went before it: a world of inflation, communism, terrorism, and the threat of nuclear war.

Why did it have to be *my* generation which grew up under the shadow of the bomb? . . . which was handed a world with about as much stability as nitroglycerin? . . . which got the privilege of living in a time of potential holocaust?

The problem is that my own words remind me of the sentiments of twenty-three-year-old John Franklin Carter who wrote: "The older generation . . . certainly pretty well ruined this world before passing it on to us. They gave us this Thing, knocked out pieces, leaky, red-hot, threatening to blow up. . . ."

Carter wrote those words at the beginning of the 1920s. My sentiments exactly. Yet I can't escape the fact that Carter's generation only managed to make the world, on the net, worse, and I can't conceive of my own generation doing any better.

In other words, the mess the world is in is a function of the nature of man and the universe, and not the antics of one or two particu-

lar generations which just managed to uniquely botch things up.

True, I am a little older than most teenagers today (four years!) and sometimes the gap seems more like eons. My own generation created the historical debris known as the 1960s: we were the "perfect generation" idolized by the media and politicians, infallible, the ones who would ban the bomb, end the Vietnam war, and fight for the civil rights of black people. Remember the idealism of the early sixties? It's gone. Gone like so much old brown grass. It was killed by the reality of human society — the nature of man. The world just wasn't ready for Camelot. Yet.

There it is again. The dark figure with the hood and the long, bony finger pointing at you: reality, depressing reality, which won't go away, even though you would like it to.

After Camelot vanished, the Vietnam war refused to go away, and poverty stubbornly resisted its abolition by Lyndon Johnson. The creeping realization set in: we live in an imperfect world, a world in which progress was sticky. Cold. Cruel. Not the sort of place one would like to live in.

My own generation learned its lesson. So did the one just younger. In response to an imperfect, unfortunate world, both generations immersed themselves in a philosophy known as "existentialism": "live for the moment," the "NOW" generation. The idea was that nothing makes any difference but the immediate moment — the NOW. Since the universe is one chaotic mess, one must concentrate on immediacy.

Ah, but there must be something beyond. Life can be fun, but can also be rather fragile also: it doesn't take much to end it. And, however life is lived, it is terminal: "one thing happens to them all" (Eccl. 2:14).

But there is something beyond the chaotic physical mess in which the world finds itself. And it is the duty of religion — true religion — to reveal that something.

If the world is in chaos, then it is the duty of the true Church of God to tell the world what it knows to be the way out: the return of Jesus Christ.

... The More They Stay the Same. Back to the uniqueness of our generations. I'll be blunt. The return of Christ is "inconvenient," to say the least. There *are* all sorts of things I'd like to do in the meantime, some of which I will in all probability never get to do.

But here's where perspective comes in. While the typical American middle-class teenager has many positive things to look forward to, given the indefinite continuity of this "present evil world," most people in that world, particularly the Third World, don't. For them, grinding poverty is a permanent lot. Furthermore, what about the personal tragedies even in our affluent society: crippling sickness, accident, suicide; the private dramas which take place because the world is the way it is — without Christ.

It comes down to this: Christ's return may cut short my life the way I'd like to live it out physically — but for *most of the world* any change would be blessed relief. After all, if the world is ever going to be straightened out by a divine miracle, somebody's generation is going to have to be "inconvenienced."

One of the literary fads when I was in high school was the *Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien. A passage speaks very eloquently to our generations: "I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," Gandalf answers,

"and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time given us."

And what shall we do with "the time that is given us"? Waste it? Gandalf's words echo those of the apostle Paul: "... Redeem the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). Yes, the days *are* evil. And short. Which is all the more reason not to squander them.

"The Present Distress." Now I'm really going to be blunt. *The* most haunting image that dogs young people who accept the biblical strictures against fornication is the specter of never experiencing a sexual relationship. It is as if one were caught in a vise: God prohibits sex until marriage and then proceeds to end the world *before* one can get married. It just doesn't seem fair.

Bear with me for a moment, and I think I can demonstrate that such fears are largely unnecessary.

This is because they apply only to select age groups: those few who are old enough to be baptized into the family of God but not mature enough to marry. Those who are younger, and who are trying to live by God's law, could live over into the time of the millennium and be married then. Those who are older and not married would be in that condition regardless of how far away Christ's return is.

Here's the clincher. An individual who isn't prepared to face the *possibility* of never marrying because Christ might return, really isn't prepared to be baptized anyway.

God really is fair and he hasn't plotted to deny this generation what he provided for all the others.

When Life Throws You Lemons ... Make lemonade. One can look exclusively at what might have been, and which possibly won't be,

and proceed to develop a great cosmic funk. But this ignores the good side of the coin, the unique positive opportunities.

Our generations have the opportunity to physically escape the holocaust which threatens to cut short our physical lives.

The prophet Ezekiel speaks of God's supernatural protection on those who "sigh and cry" for the abominations around them (Ezek. 9:4). Solomon pointed out that God would not permit the righteous to famish (Prov. 10:3), while, most importantly, God promises direct protection for His Church in the time of the great tribulation (Rev. 12:14).

In the meantime, life can be fun. There's nothing in the Bible against sports, games, hobbies, music, cars, friends or clothes. True, there are some limitations on the use of some things (the Bible does condemn drunkenness, for example), but God never intended that we become monks and withdraw to monasteries where we could afflict ourselves all day because God is in some way pleased by our pain.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Eccl. 11:9).

Granted, our generation may never get the opportunity to live out full physical lives. Still, there are better things to do in the meantime than mope around all day, contemplating our navels, transfixed at what could have been. It would be better to focus one's attention on what could be. As long as we're here, we might as well make the best of it.

Regards,
Jeff Calkins

WHY ALICE DOESN'T

by David L. Antion

On October 29, 1975, the National Organization of Women declared "Alice Doesn't Day" (named for the motion picture *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*). Women were asked to go on strike for 24 hours — to stay away from school, not go shopping or deposit money in the bank, and skip work if possible (if not possible, they were asked to wear an armband to work or refuse to do "feminine" jobs like making coffee).

This mass demonstration was an attempt to show people in the United States (and around the world, for that matter) that women have an essential function in today's society. In fact, society as we know it could not continue if "Alice Didn't" go to work or if she didn't shop, teach, drive, answer the phone, do the typing and filing, cook the meals, make the coffee, etc., etc., etc.

But why were these women moved to demonstrate so strongly against doing what they've always done? What is making many of them dissatisfied with their traditional role in life?

Women in Today's World. Times have changed radically in the past fifty years, mainly because of new technology. Problems have arisen all over the world because our environment is changing faster than our social institutions. Change is thrust upon us before we are ready to deal with it.

As Alvin Toffler wrote in the best-selling book *Future Shock*: "Future shock is a time phenomenon, a product of the greatly accelerated rate of change in society. It arises from the superimposition of a new culture on an old one. It is culture shock in one's own society. . . . [It] is the dizzying disorientation brought on by the premature arrival of the future. . . . It may well be the most important disease of tomorrow. . . . The malaise, mass neurosis, irrationality, and free-floating violence already apparent in contemporary life are merely a foretaste of what may lie ahead unless we come to understand and treat this disease" (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971, p. 11).

One example of this hard-to-take change is the way the average woman's life-style has rapidly

evolved since the 1900s. While a woman could formerly count on having a large family and spending nearly all her life rearing children, today the average woman in the United States has her last child before she is 30 years old. By the time she is 34, that child will start to school, and by age 46 he or she will leave home for college.

Consequently, many women find themselves finished with motherhood in their middle forties. Add to this the fact that the average American woman is widowed by age 56, and has a life expectancy of 76, and it's no wonder many women are concerned about their rapidly changing role in life. What do they do when their children are no longer dependent upon them and their husbands have perhaps died?

Unfortunately, many women become very despondent. Some turn to alcohol—figures show that an increasing number of women are becoming alcoholics. Others turn to pills or suicide, or strive frantically to remarry. This depression or despondency is only normal, however. It is paralleled by a man's feeling of letdown when he is laid off his job or fired.



WOMEN'S LIB. DECLARES
WAR
N.O.W.
ON
SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

MAN/WOMAN
& I ENJOY
BEING a
GIRL

I HAVE
A BRAIN TOO
LET ME USE IT!!

HAPPINESS

FEM
FEEL
FREEDOM

If a woman cannot count on being a homemaker, mother and wife all her life, then she is indeed in trouble unless she discovers other options. As she grows older, the job she filled for the first half of her life will vanish, and she will need to find something else to give her life meaning and purpose.

A Brief Biblical History. According to the Bible, women have been on earth almost as long as men. So what does the Bible have to say about them? Does it really limit their role in life as much as some people think it does? Does God want women to be considered inferior beings? What is His attitude toward them as outlined in His Word? And how should women view themselves and their purpose in life in light of the Scriptures?

As Christ stated in Matthew 19, God originally intended for a husband and wife to be "one flesh" (Matt. 19:3-6). A man was to leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife. He was not to divorce or put her away, or take to himself more than one wife.

But people failed to live up to this ideal. Polygamy is recorded as early as Genesis 4:19. By Moses' time, it was actually legally recognized, with laws governing how a man should treat his different wives (Deut. 21:15-17).

Under the laws of ancient Israel, it was obvious that women were thought of as somewhat inferior to their husbands. Yet under the Mosaic and Levitical system, and later on in Judaism, women were infinitely better off than their counterparts in most of the surrounding nations. They were honored as mothers (Ex. 20:12) and were to be feared and obeyed by their children (Lev. 19:3; Deut. 21:18-19). The mother was a highly respected figure. She often helped name the children, and was responsible in many cases for their earliest education.

Israelite women were allowed to attend religious services and could even present offerings for sacrifice (Lev. 12:5-6). It may come as a surprise to some that in Old Testament times a woman as well as a man could take a Nazarite vow to dedicate herself to the Eternal (see Numbers 6:2).

Women Demand Their Rights.

But under the laws given to Moses governing land inheritance, only male heirs could inherit their father's land. Consequently, if a man had no sons, his land would ordinarily go to the next of kin who was a male.

During that time, a man named Zelophehad died who had only daughters. But these daughters stood up to protest to Moses against what they considered an unfair law. Moses took the matter to God, and God rendered this decision: "The daughters of Zelophehad *are right*; you shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them" (see Numbers 27:1-11).

Because of the spunky protest of these women, God went on to give this added legislation: "If a man dies, and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. And if he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers."

Jesus' Unorthodox Approach.

When Jesus Christ came on the scene, He taught contrary to the Jewish establishment of His day by declaring that "judgment, mercy, and faith" were more important than picky Pharisaic rituals. Some of His actions were radical compared to the accepted practice of that time and society. For example, in the Gospel of John, chapter four, we read of Jesus carrying on a lengthy conversation with a Samaritan woman. When His disciples saw it, "They *marveled that he was talking with a woman*, but none said . . . 'Why are you talking with her?'" (Verse 27.)

The disciples were truly shocked — and not just because Jesus was talking to a despised Samaritan, but to a *woman*. In order to understand their reaction, we must realize that according to the custom of the times it was considered shameful or disgraceful for a rabbi or teacher to speak to any woman in public. In fact, most rabbis would not even speak to their own *wives* in a public

situation. It lowered a man's public esteem if he even considered them worthy of conversation.

So Jesus' unorthodox conduct shocked the disciples. But being who He was, and having the tremendous awe and respect for Him that they did, no one took Him to task or interrogated Him about His actions.

The Lesson of Mary and Martha.

In Luke 10:39-42, there is a short account of Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. While Jesus was a guest in their home, Martha acted as hostess while Mary "sat at the Lord's feet" (an expression which meant to sit as a student learning from a teacher) "and listened to his teaching." This aggravated Martha quite a bit, since she was "distracted with much serving." So she came to Jesus and finally complained to Him, asking for His help in telling her sister to do the woman's duty. "Lord," she said, "do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

Of course this was her role — to serve and be hospitable and prepare the food. It was the men's place to sit and eat and discuss scriptural matters.

This is exactly the way it was centuries before when the angelic messengers came to visit Abraham (Gen. 18). Sarah stayed out of the way while Abraham talked with these "men." Sarah made bread, prepared the meal, and eavesdropped on the conversation.

But Mary, in contrast, sat among the disciples as a student listening to Jesus' words. How did Jesus view this situation? He answered her worried sister: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her" (verses 41, 42).

It wasn't that Jesus thought serving was unnecessary. Certainly someone had to do it, and we must admire Martha for her diligence. But Jesus was emphasizing that the role of women encompassed more than physical duties. Women along with men should learn the "one thing" that is "needful." Christ believed that women were to heed the

divine words of God and be concerned with spiritual issues every bit as much as men.

Again, this was revolutionary. Most rabbis would have preferred the women to be in the kitchen preparing the food, leaving the men to discuss spiritual matters. But not Jesus!

Faithful Women. Christ's overall attitude of respect for the dignity of every human being attracted quite a few women followers who "provided for them [Christ and the disciples] out of their means" (Luke 8:1-3). These women who followed Jesus and gave to Him from their money or possessions were faithful right to the end of His life. While His own disciples all "forsook him and fled," these faithful women followed Jesus right to the cross (see Matthew 27:55-56 and John 19:25-26).

And on the first day of the week, after they had rested on the Sabbath, it was again the women who went to visit the tomb very early in the morning to bring spices which they had prepared. They were the ones who found the sepulcher opened, the stone rolled away, and Jesus' body gone (Luke 24:1-3). The disciples had no idea of what had happened. It was the women who saw the angels and heard the words they spoke and "remembered his [Christ's] words" (Luke 24:8). They returned from the sepulcher and told the disciples and the rest of the followers what they had found, even though the disciples didn't really believe them (verses 9-12). We find that these women were also among those that were waiting faithfully with the apostles of Jesus for the promise of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:13-14).

Outstanding Women. In his letters, the apostle Paul mentioned a number of women who had labored and served the Church, thus furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One outstanding example is Phoebe. Paul said of her: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well" (Rom. 16:1-2). Paul in-

troduced her to the church at Rome, commending her for her exceptional assistance.

In this same chapter, Paul commends several other women for their service and help. Among them is Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, who were Paul's helpers in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3). It is interesting to note that in some instances Priscilla's name is listed even ahead of her husband's. However, when they are mentioned in the context of their home, Aquila is mentioned first.

Paul states that Euodia and Syntyche were women who had "labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:2-3). These women had such an outstanding part in furthering the gospel that Paul gave them honorable mention along with Clement and other of his fellow laborers.

And the gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon the women of God's Church in that early first century, just as they were to men. The daughters of Philip "did prophesy" (Acts 21:9).

Women's Contribution. Throughout the Bible, God shows He is pleased with His creation of mankind as male and female. God does not want the abolition of these distinct characteristics of sexuality. But a man and a woman are both human beings, and as human beings deserve an equal amount of respect and dignity. No matter what one's gender might be, we are all children of God and empowered to fulfill the same destiny (Gal. 3:28, 29).

As times and circumstances change, God does not expect Christians to try to indefinitely maintain their particular society's old status quo regarding women. Christ certainly didn't. Because of our rapidly changing culture, we may need to reevaluate traditional thinking in order to help women make a greater contribution to society as a whole. All of us as Christians need to reexamine our own personal lives, habits and prejudices in this regard, and make sure our individual attitudes toward women parallel those of Christ. □

ANSWERS

Multiple Choice (test is found on page 13):

1-C. "And he [God] wrote on the tables, as at the first writing, *the ten commandments* which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain . . . and the Lord gave them to me" (Deut. 10:4; see also Deut. 4:13). These two scriptures are the only ones in the Bible that specifically designate the number of commandments given as "ten."

2-B. Our first parents 1) had another God in place of the true God; 2) dishonored their only parent — God; 3) coveted what was not theirs; 4) stole what was not theirs.

3-D. Salvation cannot possibly come as a result of keeping the Ten Commandments (Rom. 3:23-26). It can only come through grace — free, unmerited, undeserved pardon for past sins. However, Christians are *not* licensed to continue sinning (Rom. 6:1-2; Jude 4). Obedience to the Ten Commandments is the required standard of Christian conduct (Matt. 19:16-19; I John 2:1, 6). It's all explained in our free booklet *What Do You Mean . . . Salvation?*

True or False

1-F. James did! Read James 2:8-12.

2-T. The Founder of Christianity summarized the Ten Commandments into the two fundamental principles of love toward God and love toward neighbor (see Luke 10:25-28; Matt. 22:36-40).

3-F. Many biblical passages, when taken together, show that the Ten Commandments existed as *an oral standard* of conduct prior to the time of Moses. Our free reprint article "Were the Ten Commandments in Force Before Moses?" is an excellent study guide on this subject.

4-F. "If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (I John 4:20).

We invite you, our readers, to send in your questions on biblically oriented prophetic, doctrinal, historical and Christian-living topics. While we cannot promise that all questions will be answered in print, we will try to cover all those that are of general interest as space permits. Send your questions to the appropriate address listed on the inside front cover, care of *The Good News*.

Q **UESTION:** "Is it wrong for women to wear pants? Many people quote me the scripture found in Deuteronomy 22:5 to teach against it." **Danny P.,**
Ranger, Georgia

A **NSWER:** Deuteronomy 22:5 reads: "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." This verse implies *transvestism*, a type of sexual deviation in which the affected person derives an unnatural sense of pleasure from dressing like a member of the opposite sex. The rest of chapter 22 goes on to talk about adultery, fornication and incest.

Practicing transvestism involves wearing the clothing of the opposite sex — but the type of clothing this entails would differ drastically from society to society. So these verses are not a prohibition against either women or men wearing specific types of clothing such as pants, if those clothing styles are appropriate for the particular sex in a given society. What the verse is condemning is a *perverted use* of clothing — such as men wearing certain articles of women's undergarments, for instance.

God is a universal God and His laws and principles are meant for mankind throughout all time in all of our diverse societies and customs of dress. In some countries, it is customary for men to wear flowing robes, skirts, or kilts. In other na-

tions, such as Turkey and China, women traditionally wear pants-like garments or pajamas.

God does not dictate in the Bible what styles of clothing are to be worn by men or by women.

We are told to walk as Christ walked, to live as He lived (1 John 2:6). Christ wore the style of clothing that was customary for His day. He looked like any other average Jew; in fact, he blended in with crowds so well that He escaped from enemies several times this way (Luke 4:29-30; John 8:59; 10:39). We should follow His example, wearing the styles that are customary and *appropriate* for our area of the world.

The basic principle involved in women's dress is *modesty*. A woman should dress attractively, but not draw undue attention to herself. Her dress should be appropriate for whatever activity she is participating in. If it is the custom in her area for women to wear pantsuits to almost all activities, then it is certainly proper for her to do so. These outfits are usually much more modest than some types of short skirts or dresses, and they are in many cases better for the health since they obviate the need for tight girdles and allow a woman to sit more comfortably while still maintaining decorum and modesty. (Women's pants are designed for women — they are *not* "men's clothing.")

And Deuteronomy 22:5 is also not a prohibition against occasionally borrowing a garment from a member of the opposite sex for a legitimate purpose. For example, it would not be wrong for a woman to paint the ceiling in an old work shirt borrowed from her husband. And likewise it would not be wrong for her husband to borrow her apron to wear while wiping the dishes. They are not practicing transvestism by any stretch of the imagination. Common sense should help us to determine God's will in minor areas such as these.

Q: "The book of Acts on several occasions speaks of Christ's dis-

ciples meeting and 'breaking bread' together (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7; 27:35). Is there a religious significance to this? Does it refer to the Lord's Supper or Communion?"

Steve K.,
Pasadena, California

A: Bread was so important as a staple in the diet of Middle Eastern societies that it became synonymous with "food" (see Lam. 4:4; Matt. 4:4; 14:19; 15:36; Luke 11:3). Bread was baked in hard flat loaves which were not easily cut with a knife. During meals, those partaking would break off as much as they needed; hence the term "breaking bread."

New Testament scriptures read in context show conclusively that "breaking bread" means simply *eating or partaking of a meal*, not taking Communion.

Acts 2:46 says: "And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts. . . ." Notice that this was done "day by day" in their homes — they "partook of food."

Acts 20:11 states that "when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and *eaten*, he conversed with them a long while. . . ." Notice that the apostle Paul *ate* after breaking bread. This cannot be anything but a common meal.

In Acts 27:33-38, Paul and his companions were about to be shipwrecked. The crew had been fasting and their strength was nearly exhausted. "As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, 'Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food; it will give you strength, since not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.' And when he had said this, *he took bread*, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all *he broke it and began to eat*. Then they all were encouraged and ate some *food* themselves."

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

From these scriptures it is evident that "breaking bread" is simply a biblical expression for eating a meal.

Q: "How often should the Lord's Supper be observed?"

**Alice A.,
Houston, Texas**

A: The Passover service, or Lord's Supper, is a yearly memorial of Christ's sacrifice which occurs in the spring. For more information on this subject, write for the free booklet *How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper?*

Q: "You say Easter is a pagan holiday. How come Acts 12:4 says that the Jews were going to bring Peter forth to the people after Easter?"

**John S.,
Kenedy, Texas**

A: The word "Easter" occurs only once in the Bible — and that only in the King James translation. Here the Greek word *pascha* (elsewhere translated "passover") is mistranslated "Easter." The Revised Standard Version and other modern translations correctly render it as "Passover." This subject is covered in more detail in our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Easter.*

Q: "Would you please answer a question for me? The Temple curtain covering the entrance to the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom in the earthquake that took place at the time of Christ's death. Does this torn curtain have any special meaning for the true Christian? If so, what?"

**Thomas H.,
Fulton, Missouri**

A: Indeed, it does have meaning — a tremendous meaning.

Exodus 26:31-33 describes the original curtain which was installed when ancient Israel first built the tabernacle in the wilderness: "And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; in skilled work shall it be made, with [woven-in designs of] cherubim. . . . And you shall hang the veil . . . and the veil shall

separate for you the holy place from the most holy." Similar curtains were made and installed in Solomon's Temple (II Chron. 3:14) and in the Temple of Zerubbabel (Ezra 3, 5, 6; Haggai 2), being renewed or replaced whenever necessary as centuries passed.

At the death of Jesus, there was a tremendous earthquake, and apparently it was the swaying of Temple walls as the earth rocked and heaved beneath which tore the heavy veil or curtain apart from top to bottom. This exposed to view the innermost room — the Holy of Holies — which was symbolic of the heavenly throne of God Himself (Matt. 27:50-51). The beginning of the tear at the top, some 90 feet above the floor (Josephus, *Wars*, 5:5:5), was a sign. No man could have caused it. Only God could be held responsible.

But why did God cause this to occur? Hebrews 6:18-20 tells us that we — Christians — now have a hope set before us "as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever. . . ." Christ has entered behind the curtain into that restricted throne room (not into a room on earth, but to the actual throne in heaven — see Hebrews 9:24). He entered as a *forerunner* for us — implying that we also may be privileged to come to God's throne. And the torn and severed curtain shows the way for us is open, even now; that in prayer we may go *now* direct to God our Father (see Eph. 2:18).

With a few exceptions, there was no spiritual salvation offered in the Old Testament. To the people who lived before Christ, God the Father was not accessible and was virtually unknown. It was Christ who came and revealed the Father (John 1:18; 5:37). "For a tent [which was superseded later by a Temple compartment] was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the

bread of Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies. . . . But into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people." Now notice carefully what follows: "By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary [that is, directly to God the Father] is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing" (Heb. 9:2-3, 7-8). Nor was the way to the Father's throne open during Temple times; this did not occur until the death of Christ and the ripping asunder of the veil or curtain.

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption (verses 11-12).

Christ has opened the way and obtained redemption for us. So what should we do about it? "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary [we can enter boldly] by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near . . ." (Heb. 10:19-22).

Q: "Will you please tell me if the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost are the same person?"

**Roy D.,
Sanford, Florida**

A: The King James version of the Bible translates the Greek word *pneuma* (meaning a current of air; breath; or, used figuratively, "spirit") into the archaic English word "ghost," meaning "spirit." So the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit are one and the same thing — but it is not a person. For more on this, write for our free booklet *Is God a Trinity?* □

COPING WITH LONELINESS



The affliction of loneliness has reached epidemic proportions in our society. Striking both young and old without warning, it provides psychiatrist and huckster alike with a fertile field in which to work. Why so much loneliness? Is it due to some personal deficiency in lonely people, or is it caused by outside factors beyond their control? And — most important of all — when loneliness hits close to home, how can you personally cope with it?

by Carole Ritter

People will do practically anything to avoid loneliness. The moderately lonely in our midst join astronomy clubs, take night classes, or have somebody's computer fix them up with blind dates. Others seek relief on the shuffleboard court, the park bench, or at the nearest Arthur Murray's. Lonely people avidly devour thousands of copies of pop psychology books on "Intimacy Made Easy," and if they're young and affluent they rent apartments in Marina Del Rey or some counterpart community and jump feet-first into the frantic singles scene.

Some of them haunt the encounter group circuit — bouncing from therapy to therapy in search of the magic cure, their loneliness temporarily eased by contact with throw-away companions. Lonely people who strike out everywhere else run explicit ads in the "Personal" column of their local underground newspaper. And the really hardcore lonely may end up patronizing a new service called *Conversation*,

Edward Simpson

where a trained nonexpert will listen to them talk their lonely hearts out for only \$8 an hour.

An Ignored Problem. Loneliness is a universal problem and a driving force in millions of lives. Although chronic loneliness is known to be a contributing factor in mental breakdown, divorce, alcoholism, drug addiction and suicide, psychologists and researchers have paid little attention to it. Loneliness has been looked on as a symptom rather than a cause, and consequently ignored.

This is because most people are ashamed of loneliness in themselves and intolerant of others who admit to feeling it. Loneliness is usually swept under the rug; it's a painful embarrassment.

Most of the lonely feel that they are somehow to blame for their plight. Dr. Robert S. Weiss writes: "So great is the shame of the lonely . . . that they are wary of each other's company — a bit like Groucho Marx, who believed that any club that admitted him could not be worth joining" (*Loneliness: The Experience of Emotional and Social Isolation*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1973, p. xix).

In fact, the experience of loneliness is so painful that once it is alleviated people will go to extreme lengths to forget they ever suffered from it — even to denying others' needs, since this reminds them of their former pain. Psychologist Frieda Fromm-Reichmann "noted that at least one reason that we have no very good theory about loneliness is that we have studied it so little." Further, "She suggested that the absence of attention to loneliness was to be explained not by the challenge loneliness presented to understanding but rather by the threat it presented to well-being. She said that loneliness is such a painful, frightening experience that people will do practically everything to avoid it" (*ibid.*, p. 10).

Too Frequent Advice. Weiss further states that "Loneliness is entirely natural in certain situations, yet it is so easy to think of it as weakness or self-indulgence, so easy to say that since one is suffering no physical pain or obvious pri-

vation, it should be possible to shrug off one's loneliness, even to label it solitude and thereupon enjoy it. At least, so goes the too frequent advice, one ought not to let oneself become caught up in self-pity: use the time alone to perform household chores or to improve your mind. The lonely are apt to hear this advice from others, but even if they do not, they very likely will offer it to themselves. And they, like others, will condemn themselves if they cannot shake off their loneliness and attend to something else" (*ibid.*, p. 3).

And loneliness researcher Dr. William A. Sadler, Jr., professor of Sociology at Bloomfield College, New Jersey, says that the general public sees loneliness "merely as a symptom of a weak character. The result is one tends to downplay the impact it has on one's life, or even to deny that it has any significance at all. A common response given to persons who admit being lonely is: 'Well, what's wrong with you? You don't need to be lonely. Go out and get busy. Join a club. Do something.' Frequently through workshops, interviews, and articles [he has] found the response to be even more negative than this . . ." ("The Cause of Loneliness," *Science Digest*, July 1975, p. 60).

Victims of Loneliness. Loneliness attacks everyone from time to time. It's not a character flaw, but rather the natural result of circumstances which are usually beyond the control of those affected.

Even those in seemingly intimate situations can be extremely lonely. Children who live in upstanding families and seem to have many friends may actually suffer acute loneliness: "It is . . . possible in adolescence for there to be intervals in which the world seems emptied, bereft of possible attachment. The parents no longer serve in this way, and there is no one else" (Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

And their parents may be faring no better: "There are empty-shell marriages, marriages without attachment, that provide no defense against loneliness. Indeed, marriages of this sort may seem to the participants to be the chief cause of their loneliness, since they prevent

the formation of genuine attachments" (*ibid.*, p. 90).

Loneliness Defined. But just what is loneliness — and what are its causes? Dr. Sadler describes the emotion: "The first and most outstanding feature of loneliness is a painful feeling, sometimes experienced as a sharp ache, as in moments of grief or separation; but it can also be a dull, lingering form of stress that seems to tear a person down." He adds that "One can be lonely for another person, a group, a home, a homeland, a tradition, a type of activity, and even a sense of meaning, or God" (*op. cit.*, p. 58).

Sadler has categorized loneliness into five dimensions: *interpersonal*, *social*, *cultural*, *psychological* and *cosmic*. The first, interpersonal, is the most familiar type — where one misses an intimate relationship with another very special person such as a spouse or close friend.

Social loneliness is a feeling of being cut off from a group one considers important, such as a church or fraternity. Cultural loneliness occurs when one feels separated or alienated from a way of life or system of traditions. This is the type of loneliness suffered by minorities who feel they aren't part of the mainstream of the dominant society. It is also felt by those who see their cultural heritage rapidly changing or disintegrating around them.

Psychological loneliness refers to a person's being out of touch with themselves and their true feelings. And cosmic loneliness is a yearning for an ultimate source of life and meaning, or God.

Our Lonely Society. Our society as a whole seems to be custom-designed to induce certain types of loneliness. Ralph Keyes makes some interesting observations about the causes behind one type of cultural loneliness: "There are three things we [Americans] cherish in particular — mobility, privacy and convenience — which are the very sources of our lack of community" ("We, the Lonely People," *Intellectual Digest*, December 1973, p. 25).

This lack of community has caused us to develop "temporary love systems, hit-and-run intimacy,

self-destructing communities that are making closeness just as convenient and just as disposable as a two-week guided tour." Keyes adds that "Millions of us have gladly rejected the suffocation of total community, and even the partial oppression of churches or clubs, where we were once known and scrutinized. We feel well rid of that kind of oppression. . . . But we forget to provide anywhere for the fellowship that went hand in hand with suffocation. The sermons may have been a drag, but the potlucks weren't so bad" (*ibid.*, p. 31).

Specific Needs. Understanding the limiting structure of our society and being able to define and categorize loneliness is a step in the right direction. But how can we use this knowledge to cope with loneliness as it affects us and those around us? Sadler states that "Many attempts to cope with loneliness are unsuccessful because the need for a particular type of loneliness has not been met." He also feels that "Recognizing specific needs proper to different dimensions [of loneliness] is extremely important when someone is trying to cope with loneliness. For example, a person who sorely misses a special other person will not have that need satisfied by joining in a group. Yet in spite of an impressive history of failure, we continue to encourage widows to compensate by joining organizations. That is, we tell them to look to the social dimension to satisfy an interpersonal need" (*op. cit.*, p. 66).

But even if we recognize the specific cause or causes of our particular private loneliness, we may be unable to control the factors governing it. There are many reasons why this is so. An interpersonal relationship may be terminated by death or unavoidable separation; a social relationship by a necessary job-related move to another part of the country. Cultural loneliness by its very nature is brought on by factors that are normally outside one's control, such as being born into a certain racial group or growing old in a changing society.

What can a lonely individual do about all this? First of all, he can pinpoint his own particular type of

loneliness and determine if there is any way he can change things. But if he can't, he shouldn't condemn himself or feel guilty about his feelings. Changing one's circumstances can be very difficult. A widow or widower, for example, may find it nearly impossible to replace a lost mate. A shut-in might not be able to join a club. And an older person can't turn the calendar back to "the good old days."

"Self-Actualization." But there are two of Dr. Sadler's dimensions of loneliness a person can control: the "psychological" and the "cosmic" — and they are actually very closely related. In fact, the Bible has a lot to say about both of these areas.

There was a recent best-seller titled *How To Be Your Own Best Friend*. Loving yourself, "being your own best friend," being at peace with yourself and on good terms with your conscience, are all a vital part of personal Christianity. God loves us, and in the Bible He commands us to love others as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:39). In fact, we really cannot love others properly unless we do love ourselves first.

God wants us to take good care of ourselves, to develop all of our talents to the full (see Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27), to if at all possible derive joy from the work we do (Eccl. 3:22), and to behave ourselves morally and lovingly toward our fellow human beings. One psychologist, Dr. Abraham Maslow, called this type of mature and full development of our human potential "self-actualization." A person on the road to self-actualization is far less likely to exhibit the type of loneliness caused by being out of touch with oneself and one's desires and impulses.

But this sort of personal development needs to be built on the foundation of a good relationship with God. As Maslow put it, self-actualized people have "worked out their philosophical, religious, or axiological bearings" (*Dominance, Self-Esteem, Self-Actualization: The Germinal Papers of A. H. Maslow*, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1973, p. 178).

Relationship With God. Christ taught that love of God and love of fellowman (including oneself) are

the two basic principles from which all other moral laws are derived (Matt. 22:40). Developing this love for God and a relationship with Him involves being called by Him, repenting, being baptized, receiving His Spirit, and trying to live the kind of life Christ would in our circumstances (Acts 2:38-39; II John 5-6).

If we actively seek and develop this relationship with God, the Bible gives us something to hang onto — hope for the future. Even if our circumstances are irremediably lonely right now, God promises us a resurrection to eternal life, into an unimaginably satisfying fellowship with Christ and other resurrected Christians. (For more information on this subject, write for our free booklet *What Is the Reward of the Saved?*)

This relationship will be far more warm, intimate and rewarding than any human friendship. Christ uses the analogy of a marriage to describe it, but it will transcend even this deep human bond. Christ's prayer (recorded in the Gospel of John, chapter 17) hints at its nature: "Holy Father, keep them [the disciples] in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. . . . I do not pray for these only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us . . ." (verses 11, 20-21).

This relationship — which is guaranteed to every one of us who reaches out to take God's promises — will eventually wipe out all loneliness. In the book of Revelation, it is prophesied that "God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).

So loneliness, no matter how chronic or hopeless in this age, is going to be nonexistent in the fantastic future God has prepared for us. If you would like to read more on the subject of mankind's eventual destiny, write for the booklet *Why Were You Born?* It will be sent to you free of charge. □

The Real Jesus

Garner Ted Armstrong's article in the December issue of *The Good News* ("Millions Don't Know the Real Jesus Christ of Nazareth — Do You?") was timely and provoked some deep thoughts as to just how far down the road towards the second coming of Christ we actually are. And his treatment of the importance of the person of Christ made me realize I have always thought of Him as one with flowing robes, long hair and beard, and wandering around the country teaching and blessing as he went.

Harlow C.,
Newburgh, New York

Christians — In Deed?

I'd like to commend Brian Knowles on the article "Christians — In Deed?" It made me reassess the values in my life and realize that I had to become more of a doer. I had become somewhat of a "spiritual isolationist," comfortably sitting behind closed doors in my home. Now I am trying to change all that.

Corean W.,
Birmingham, Alabama

Who Was Jesus?

I enjoyed immensely the article "Who Was Jesus?" It cleared up a lot of things about Him I always wondered about, such as what He was before His human birth. The article made it plain.

Reuben D.,
Fargo, North Dakota

Children Are People Too!

I would like to commend you for the article entitled "Children Are People Too!" In our opinion, it all too often happens that children are considered as objects instead of real people.

Mr. and Mrs. Darrell L.,
Altus, Oklahoma

It is stated that an unknown author wrote the poem entitled "Children Learn What They Live." A friend of mine has that poem taped to her refrigerator door, and on that

copy the poem was attributed to one Dorothy Law Nolte. Perhaps you could give her credit in your next issue.

Robert S.,
Dallas, Pennsylvania

Judge Not by Appearance

I just finished reading the articles "What Is True Liberty?" and "Judge Not According to Appearance." They were extremely well written and really helped me to discover a lot of my faults and weaknesses. I don't usually react this much to most articles, so maybe it is God's way of shaking me up a little.

Mrs. R. H.,
West Lafayette, Indiana

The Wavesheaf Offering

In your November *Good News* there was a question and answer (in the "Letters" section) about the Wavesheaf. I read it and don't understand the second paragraph where it says that "In a sense it was on the Sabbath. In a sense it was on a Sunday. Or you might say it was on neither." The wording in the answer has me confused. My question is, doesn't it have to be one or the other? The answer gives the impression that it might have been on a Sunday.

Eleanor C.,
Buffalo, New York

We are sorry the terminology was confusing. The word "Sunday" was imprecisely used to denote the biblical sunset-to-sunset first day of the week, rather than the period of time we think of as Sunday today (midnight to midnight). The Jews still reckoned days from sunset to sunset instead of midnight to midnight as the Romans did. While it may be true that the priests' cutting of the wavesheaf for the offering would inevitably have been a few seconds off from the precise instant the sun went down, they were doing it (as near as was humanly possible) exactly as the Sabbath was ending and the first day of the week was beginning. This sym-

bolized Christ's resurrection taking place at the very instant one day ended and the next began. Using today's terminology, Christ was resurrected on Saturday evening. He did ascend to present Himself to the Father on the morning of the first day of the week, or Sunday, but He had been resurrected many hours prior to this.

Multiplying Talents

In the "Update" section (December GN) I was happy to read "Congregation Puts Parable into Practice." This wonderful example of taking your talents and using them to the best of your ability, and of proving God and His promises, was truly inspiring! The congregation from London, Kentucky has set us all a very good example.

G. S.,
Reno, Nevada

God's Share

We've seen some pretty hard times this past twelve months, but always sent God His share. He's blessed us today with more than we could dream of. We praise the Lord for this opportunity to send this enclosed check to help in this work.

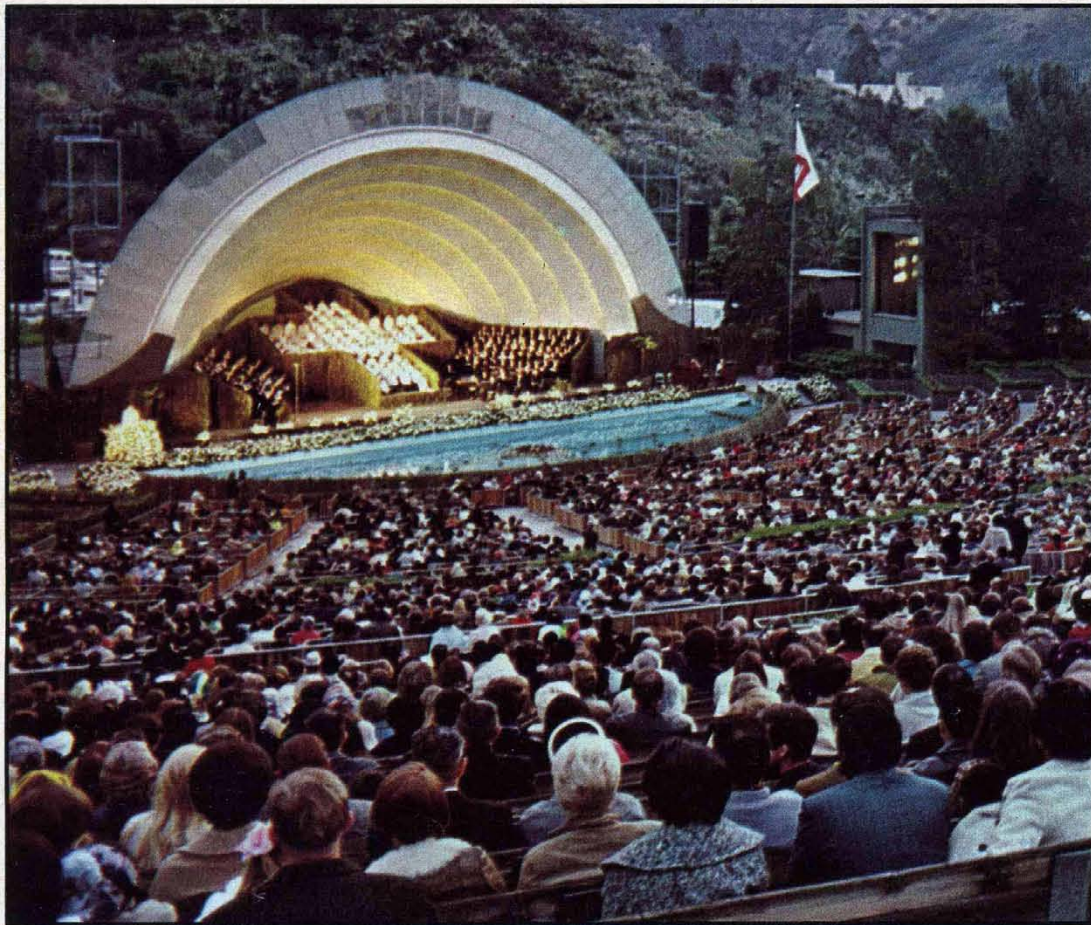
Peggy D.,
Rosamond, California

Read the Book

I don't even remember the date that I received the booklet *Read the Book*, but I have read the Bible twice since then (with the exception of the measurements and materials that the tabernacle and temple were composed of). I had read the Bible through once before and understood some of it. The second time through added a little more and the third time yet more. I don't intend to stop there, however.

Maude W.,
New Harmony, Indiana

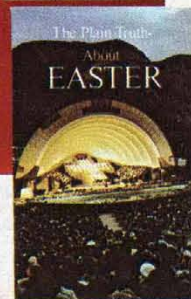
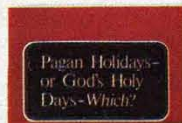
"Read the Book" and the companion pamphlet "How to Study the Bible" are available free of charge. See inside cover for address of our office nearest you.



Could all these people be wrong about Easter?

Each year, millions of faithful participate in a variety of Easter observances: sunrise services, Easter morning church services, the Easter parade and egg hunts. Ostensibly, Easter commemorates the central event of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet, strangely, many of the traditions and accoutrements of Easter — including the name of the day itself — came down to us from the worship of an ancient pagan goddess of fertility. Clerics generally defend these traditions as harmless customs which add to the festivity of the day. But could they be mistaken? Does it make any difference *how* Christians worship God? Did Jesus Christ Himself have anything to say about Christian observances? Can a day which derives its very name from a pagan goddess be acceptable to Jesus Christ as the highest Christian celebration? These questions are answered in two booklets which you can have for the asking. They're entitled *The Plain Truth About Easter* and *Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days — Which?*

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