

The

FEBRUARY 1981

Good News

Five Steps to
Financial
Stability

**Happy Children
Are Made - Not Born**

**Is It Wrong to Be
Cultured?**
By Herbert W.
Armstrong

The Good News

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Contents:

Personal from Herbert W. Armstrong	1
Five Steps to Financial Stability	2
WHY Pray for Others?	5
The "Average, Everyday Housewife" — No Higher Calling!	7
How NOT to Raise a Juvenile Delinquent	11
The WORLDWIDE Church of God	14
Stories from the New Testament	16
Behold, I Show You a Mystery — We Shall Be Changed!	18
Grow in the Love of God	21
Ministry: Christ Teaches How to Pray	25
Q & A	27

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COVER: Your children can avoid many of the problems of other young people in this world — if you provide them with the right environment and the proper guidance. Photo by Roland Rees. (Note: Due to travel and other pressing responsibilities, Mr. Armstrong was unable to complete Part 2 of his article, "Billions Not Being Judged — And Yet Not Lost," for this month.)

Letters

Helpful articles

I would like to say how much I have enjoyed your [Herbert W. Armstrong's] articles on marriage and on teenagers: I would like to see more of these. They are very helpful. May God bless you and the Work.

Mrs. Forest Cale
Masontown, W.Va.

"Lessons from the Master Potter"

I have just finished reading "Lessons from the Master Potter" (October-November, 1980), and must say it is a beautifully written article — one I intend to read often, as I am certain I still have steps 5, 6 and 7 to go through.

Thank you [Raymond F. McNair] for the time and effort you have put into the preparation of the article. I look forward with great anticipation to reading many more like this.

Ann Mark
Hyattsville, Md.

Accurately named

Thank you [Dibar Apartian] for the encouraging, corrective, stirring articles you have written in *The Good News* magazine (the magazine could not be more accurately named — it is good news each month).

Your article, "Be a Profitable Servant" (October-November, 1980), was straight from our concerned Father wanting us to be prepared for His Son's return to this earth. I certainly needed this and, God willing, will do good works, by the power of God's Spirit, not expecting any return.

Thank you, Mr. Apartian. I know the work you do is done by the power of God's Spirit, but I believe you too work hard at doing good works.

Kenneth H. Williams
Kalamazoo, Mich.

Bon appetit!

Over the last several months, I have been enjoying some of the most delicious meals I've had in quite a while. These feasts are well-balanced, nutritious and obviously the result of a well-planned menu.

Of course, I'm referring to the articles that have been appearing in *The Good News!* Please keep these spiritual meals coming so that I can continue to say before reading each article, "Bon appetit!"

Deborah A. Dessazo
Washington, D.C.



Is It Wrong to Be a Cultured Individual?

Is it wrong to be a cultured individual?

Is it wrong — is it extravagant — to purchase quality things? Some people pride themselves on lack of culture and good breeding. They actually brag, "We're just poor folks." They spurn good-quality merchandise, saying, "That's too rich for my blood." They shop for bargain prices, condemning better quality as "extravagance." They accuse a well-dressed person of being "stuck-up."

Does God love the poor and hate the rich? People speak of "God's poor." Must one be poor economically, ignorant educationally, uncouth socially, in order to please God?

It's true Jesus said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23). But He also clarified His statement by adding: "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (verse 24).

In this world we have the poor, the ignorant, the uncouth and the uncultured. And at the other extreme we have the rich, the social snobs, the intellectuals.

What is right?

We say at Ambassador College that we teach not only how to earn a living, but also how to live! The college motto is: "Recapture True Values." Out of what textbook do we teach the true values? In what textbook do we learn how to live?

Actually, the only source of this most necessary knowledge might seem a little strange to students of the average university. It is the **ONLY** textbook that imparts the most necessary of all knowledge: What is the

meaning — the purpose — of life? What are the true values? What is the right way to live — the way to peace, happiness, prosperity, security — the comfortable, interest-packed, enjoyable and abundant life?

Why should the one book — the Holy Bible — that holds all the right **ANSWERS**, the only rational answers, be overlooked by so many?

The Holy Bible is, actually, the foundation of knowledge. So what is the answer that comes from the Textbook of the very Creator about this matter of culture, good breeding, dress, education, financial prosperity?

Actually, surprising though it may be to some, the Bible teaching upholds prosperity, culture, education and right knowledge, acquisition of good quality merchandise and proper attire. The Bible reveals human nature as being lazy, slovenly, yet full of vanity and greed.

When people *brag* about being poor, uneducated and uncultured, that is merely **VANITY**. It is usually to excuse shiftlessness, neglect, lack of effort.

Now is God lazy? Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). What was God's work? That of Creator and Ruler over His creation.

What about quality? Was His work well done or poorly done? After the creation in the first chapter of Genesis, "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was **VERY GOOD**" (Gen. 1:31). God placed the first man in the Garden of Eden. It was undoubtedly the most beautiful garden ever to exist on earth. God planted it. God gave the first man a job in that garden. That job was not to be lazy, shiftless and let the garden go to weeds and ugly-

ness — but to "dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15).

In creating, God had to think, plan and design what was to be created. For example, look at a beautiful rose or a lily. There's nothing inferior there.

His instruction to the workman: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccl. 9:10).

Jesus prior to His ministry was a carpenter, a builder of buildings. In Nazareth the best and finest buildings were built of stone. The little synagogue (mentioned in Luke 4:16) was very probably one of the stone buildings that Jesus helped to build.

A man once accused me of being a "perfectionist." But Jesus Christ *commands* that we be perfectionists: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

Jesus Christ is still a Builder. He rose from the dead. He is **ALIVE TODAY**. Today He is building a **SPIRITUAL** building — His Church, to *become* the Kingdom of God. It must be the **FINEST** (Eph. 2:20-22).

Just what is the difference between best quality and cheap merchandise? All merchandise comes out of the ground. Quality products are simply those resulting from more careful and conscientious selection of materials, which are made into an object with more thoughtful and more painstaking craftsmanship. Inferior merchandise comes from indifferent selection of materials and less conscientious and careful workmanship. God's way is the quality way!

Is good quality "extravagance"? Many people do not realize the true meaning of the word *extravagance*. Webster's definition: "A spending of more than is reasonable or necessary;

(Continued on page 23)



Five Steps to Financial Stability

*What is the proper Christian attitude toward money?
God does not intend His people to be poor! Here is vital advice on
how to survive today's financial crunch.*

By Neil Earle

"All those years of work and nothing to show for it!"
"I can't understand where this week's money has gone!"

"Honey, the car broke down today. How are we ever going to pay to have it repaired?"

Does this sound like your family? More and more people file for bankruptcy every day. Unfortunately, some of them are from God's Church. Debt and financial squeezes strain our marriages, limit our children's futures and put stress on us spiritually.

With the prospect of higher unemployment and a continually punishing inflation rate, we all need to relearn the biblical principles of wise financial stewardship.

"I wish . . . that thou mayest prosper"

Of course, the Bible warns against undue preoccupation with material things. The love of money is listed as a major root of countless evils (I Tim. 6:10). Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).

Drifting into materialism slackens zealous dedication to God, His Word and His Work. This prevents some of God's people from reaching their full potential as useful members of the

Church. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

Obviously, if there are 16 waking hours — 960 minutes — in a normal day, a Christian who prays only one minute often finds that the "cares of this life" are 960 times more real than the things of God (Luke 21:34). No wonder people who covet more, more and still *more* end up in financial, personal and family difficulties. The obsession with physical pursuits leeches the supply of God's Holy Spirit (Phil. 1:19).

Yet, in a balanced way, God would love to prosper every child of His: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper . . . even as thy soul prospereth" (III John 2).

Jesus Christ taught that the right approach and wise handling of money reflect some of the discretion, self-mastery, wisdom and planning needed for success in His Kingdom, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (Luke 16:11).

Strong words! Yet from beginning to end the Bible pictures our God as a

fabulously wealthy multimillionaire eager to share His blessings and treasures with us (Gen. 1:28-29, Rev. 21:7). Christ's parables of the pounds, talents, stewards, banquets, paying the laborers the penny, buying oxen and counting the cost portrayed the true God as a financial success (Deut. 8:18). We should be more like Him.

Here are five steps leading to financial stability. To implement them will take character, wisdom and self-discipline — attributes of God Himself!

One: Be faithful and diligent

The shortest way to spell success is W-O-R-K. The declining work ethic, creeping socialism, massive welfare programs, strikes, deficit budgeting in government and featherbedding that plague the society around us have sadly affected some in God's Church.

Yet God the Father and Jesus Christ have never stopped working (John 5:17). They are vigilantly overseeing the most massive project ever contemplated — turning sinning lumps of clay into Sons of God (Isa. 41:14). Billions of angels charge to and fro at lightning speed from God's active throne room, dispatched on

Photo by Warren Watson

missions of protection, inspiration or chastisement (Rev. 4:5, Dan. 10:12-14). The God Family is zealously busy (Luke 2:49).

As a human being Jesus Christ characteristically worked long hours — from sunup to sunset (Mark 1:32-35). He was a good provider. He was solicitous of His mother's welfare to the end, for instance, even securing a stable future for her as one of His dying acts (John 19:26-27). He inspired Solomon to write, "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children" (Prov. 13:22) and that "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise" (Prov. 21:20).

Sadly, some of God's people are not good providers. The spirit of the "laid-back" generation has so infected this age that healthy, strapping men are content to just get by as easily as possible. To those who have lost sight of the therapeutic, beneficial effects of hard work, God thunders: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8).

Paul counseled the Ephesians: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). This means having a surplus in savings, not barely scraping by. It implies reaching the status of "profitable servant" (Luke 17:10).

Such a person is prospering and sharing his blessings with others through helping proclaim the Gospel (first tithe), providing a way for others to attend God's festivals (excess second tithe) and fulfilling the biblical injunctions to care for the widows, orphans and unfortunates (third tithe). Such an individual is a credit to God's Church and to his community. "The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly" (Prov. 14:24).

The truly diligent Christian has tapped the hidden blessing in today's unemployment crunch — the fact that those who are not afraid to work and are willing to start anywhere will so impress their employers that the boss won't be able to afford to let them go (Prov. 25:6-7)! Experts on job and career counseling maintain

that few people fail because they can't do the job. They fail because of poor self-management skills — the inability to get to work on time, to operate constructively under authority, to relate well to co-workers.

Working constructively under authority? This is a basic requirement of a true Christian: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ" (Eph. 6:5).

Isn't it amazing how far the Bible takes employer-employee relationships? Begin now to respect and support your boss. If you have problems

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with your superiors, God says it shouldn't be your fault (Eccl. 10:4).

Two: Keep track of outgo

Will a windfall help you out of debt? What about winning the Irish sweepstakes? Millions wait for their ship to come in, but it usually sinks before reaching port. The plain truth is that lack of money is often not the major problem. Lack of wisdom is! Listen to more invaluable advice from the book of Proverbs:

"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase" (Prov. 13:11).

Herbert W. Armstrong, in his booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success* (which you can have free for the asking), jokes about "poor" old Sheik Ali who just couldn't make ends meet on a mere \$12.5 million a year! More

money won't solve our financial problems unless we keep track of how we spend it. One financial expert feels that at least 10 percent of the family income is frittered away as loose change or on unaccounted-for items.

Begin to run a check on where you are spending your money. Why not construct a simple fiscal thermometer? List on the left-hand side of a notebook basic expenses such as groceries, coffee, lunch, clothing, laundry, household goods, personal care items, rent, gas and car payments, fuel and utilities, bus tickets, cab fare, barber/beauty shop, entertainment, newspapers/magazines, Church donations, kids, bills, other. List the days of the week on the top of the page and keep track of every item, small or great, for a month. Efficiency experts do the same thing for large corporations when they run "time checks." At the end of the month sit down with the family and "count the cost" (Luke 14:28). Ask which items are not really essential and could be eliminated to help your family save money.

There are certain key areas by which you can judge your expenses. If your rent or mortgage costs, plus utilities and taxes, exceed one fourth of your gross income, it might be advisable to seek a cheaper location. Rent can be a massive millstone. What about food? Groceries take 20 percent of the average family's gross pay. The best way to save here, without sacrificing nutrition, is by home cooking. Potatoes averaging \$.15 a pound sell for 10 times that amount as french fries or potato chips! Cooked natural grain triples in cost as boxed cereals. Fresh, delicious ears of corn at \$.15 each retail for almost \$1 a pound as corn flakes, for example.

Be a little tough on yourself (II Tim. 2:3). The more you slash from your outgo, the sooner you can leave the debt roller coaster. Do you really need cable television? Soap, toothpaste and other household items can be stocked up during sales. Follow the storage principle taught in Proverbs 6:6-8. Plan your menu around sale specials on chicken or roasts, etc. Maybe the barber bill can be reduced by giving the family haircuts at home once in a while — if you know how. Entertainment? Why not attend

Church activities more often? They are usually inexpensive. A picnic lunch and a hike will do everyone a lot of good, as well as cutting down on movie costs. Or what about simple games like Scrabble or Monopoly, where the whole family gets involved?

Think resourcefully. Soaring clothing costs can be reduced if Mom and Dad plan their wardrobes around classic, timeless styles that will not go out of fashion quickly. Using wisdom and discernment (Prov. 1:4), you could knock 5 to 10 percent off your outgo each month. This is vital because families behind the financial eight ball often spend about 25 percent of their income on debt retirement.

Three: Stagger your payments

Debt is fiscal sin. Mistakes of judgment or emotional impulsiveness lie at the root of most debt. Lack of foresight and proper planning helps put people there. Now turn these same principles around to work for you.

The borrower truly is servant to the lender (Prov. 22:7). You must be prepared to face the music. Above all, don't run and hide. Notice Jesus' advice here: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (Matt. 5:25-26).

Face your creditors. They will appreciate your communicating with them in a forthright, respectful way (Prov. 28:1). Indicate your willingness to make restitution. They don't really want to turn your case over to a collection agency and lose 50 percent on the deal. Plead for time (Matt. 18:26). Indicate a schedule of payments. That will show them you are sincere — that you are taking repayment seriously.

Now comes the hard part: budgeting your assets to meet your debts. Many families live "high on the hog" with their first check and then hide from the bill collector at the end of the month. End this feast-and-famine cycle through careful planning and

foresight. God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33).

Wise, balanced budgeting follows the tithing principle. When we are increased, we tithe (Prov. 3:9-10). Apply this principle to your debts. It is not easy but it does help.

Adjust every bill to the length of time between your paychecks. If, for

example, you are paid twice a month, then monthly bills will have to be divided in half and weekly bills doubled. A yearly bill should be divided into 24 parts. For example, to pay a \$200-a-month rent bill from a weekly pay period, set aside \$50 from each paycheck. By saving for bills from
(Continued on page 24)

Teaching Kids About Money

While you are keeping your family's financial house in order, be sure to inculcate your good habits into your children. Teaching your children godly principles is one of your main responsibilities as a parent (Deut. 11:19).

A friend of mine hit on a dramatic and graphic way to impress upon his children the value of money and the wisdom of budgeting and saving.

His income was being sapped by high electricity bills because his children constantly left unneeded lights burning. His children were fairly young, but his simple method could be adapted for older children and even teenagers.

My friend gathered his children around the kitchen table one evening. On the table were numerous stacks of pennies. Each stack was labeled to represent different household expenses: tithes and offerings, mortgage, food, heating, electricity, clothing, entertainment.

He explained that the pennies represented the money he brought home from his job and that the stacks showed where the money went each month.

"Now each of the bills we have has to be paid," he said. "And if one of the bills is larger than we expected, we have to take some money from one of the other areas to help pay for it." His children nodded, keeping their eyes on the pennies. They understood his reasoning.

"One of the things we like to do most is go out and have a good time, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," his small son answered. "We like to buy ice cream!"

"And we like to go to the movies," said his daughter.

"Right," my friend agreed. "But this month our electricity bill is bigger than we expected, because we leave lights on all over the house when we don't need them."

His children could see the inevitable coming.

"So you know what we have to do?" my friend continued. "We have to take money from somewhere else to pay the electricity bill. The only place where we have extra money is in our entertainment stack."

My friend moved pennies, one at a time, from the entertainment stack to the electricity stack until there weren't any left in the entertainment stack. His children's eyes widened each time he moved another penny, the chagrin on their faces deepening until it resembled despair.

"Now," my friend announced. "Our budget for this month is balanced. Maybe next month we'll have enough money to go out and have fun," he said hopefully. His kids could tell he was on their side and was just as sad as they were.

After the family meeting was over, his children immediately began running all through the house, shutting off lights. From then on, they made sure no money was wasted on unneeded electricity. My friend's electricity bill went down and his kids learned an important lesson.

Don't forget to teach *your* children about money management. —
By Dexter H. Faulkner □

WHY Pray for Others?

Does it really make any difference whether you pray for others? After all, can't they pray for themselves? Just what is the role of intercessory prayer?

By Clayton Steep

We know very little about Epaphras as a person. He is mentioned only briefly in the Bible. But what a lesson for us!

When the apostle Paul wrote to the brethren in the city of Colosse, he said Epaphras was "always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12).

Here was a man who worked ("laboured") long ("always") and hard ("fervently"). Doing what? Praying for others. Praying earnestly that they might overcome and grow to perfection.

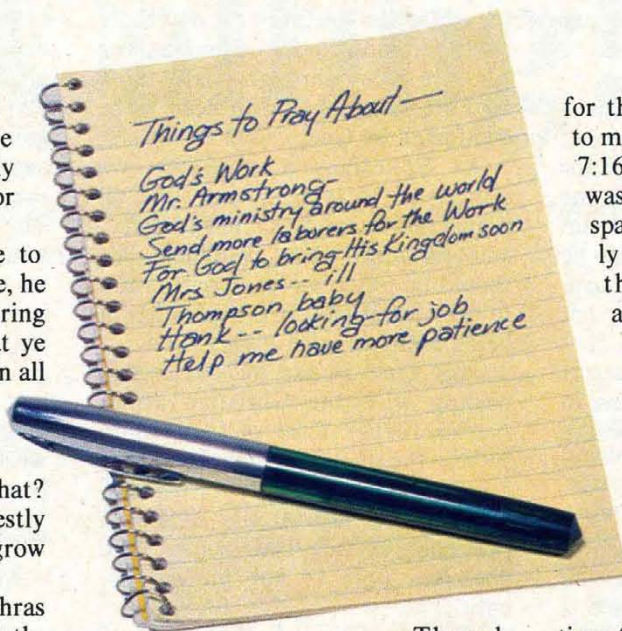
Now did the prayers of Epaphras really make any difference in whether the brethren overcame and grew to perfection? Couldn't they "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" *without* his diligent prayers? If they could, what good was all the effort Epaphras put into it?

In other words, what purpose is served by intercessory prayer?

Praying for the unconverted

The Bible leaves no doubt that Christians are obligated to pray for others. We should pray for our unconverted family members and friends. Jesus said we should even pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:44). Jesus did (Luke 23:34). So did Stephen and David (Acts 7:60, Ps. 35:12-14).

Job prayed for his unconverted friends. They had made many unkind and untrue remarks about him. Still, it was only after Job prayed for them that God blessed him (Job 42:10).



Though we may at times be annoyed or even disgusted with some of the actions of sincere but unconverted people, we need to develop compassion. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Jeremiah exclaimed (Jer. 9:1).

Isaiah prophesied that in the last days evil, crime and injustice would be rampant. At the same time the lack of anybody with the courage to get involved in solving the problems would be amazing. As Isaiah described, God "wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 59:16, see also Ezek. 22:30).

It is true that there are times when it serves no purpose to pray for people in the world. God told Jeremiah: "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer

for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee" (Jer. 7:16). The attitude of the people was so wrong that God would not spare the punishment they so sorely needed. But unless God makes this evident we should not assume it to be the case.

But why should we pray for fellow Christians, when they themselves have contact with God?

Praying for brethren

"Pray one for another," James exhorted Christians (Jas. 5:16). Paul wrote that he prayed for other Christians (II Cor. 13:7, Phil. 1:3-4, 9) and that he did so "without ceasing" (II Tim. 1:3, Eph. 1:16). In turn he entreated, "Brethren, pray for us" (I Thess. 5:25). Praying for each other is a Christian duty. Why?

God is interested in developing teamwork among the future members of His Family. He wants us to get our minds off ourselves, to be concerned with the needs of others. That's God's nature and character.

It is not wrong for a Christian to pray for his own needs. The Bible instructs Christians to "let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). And if no one else is praying for a Christian in need, certainly God will hear his prayers and answer them.

But scriptures about intercession show that God likes to supply the answers as a result of the prayers of a third party. This fulfills His desire to see concern for others, rather than only for the self. "Bear ye one another

Photo by Warren Watson

er's burdens," the Bible tells us, "and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The law of Christ is the universal law of love. It is Christ's mind, the same mind we must have if we wish to be in God's Kingdom (Phil. 2:5). "Let each of you look not *only* to his own interests [it is not wrong to look to your own interests!], but *also* to the interests of others" (verse 4, Revised Standard Version).

Teamwork. Unselfishness. Individuals pulling for each other. That's what God wants to see among His children. God is forming a Family that will rule the universe as one solidly united team in which every member looks out for the welfare of every other member.

Solomon saw the value of teamwork: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. . . . and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:9-12).

This verse beautifully expresses the attitude Christians should have in bearing each other's burdens before God's throne.

"What can I do?"

Did you ever have this happen to you? For one reason or another you feel a special sentiment toward a particular brother or sister in the Church. You just wish with all your heart that there were some great feat you could accomplish for that person. Some blessing or gift you could bestow. But your finances aren't adequate for what you have in mind; you wouldn't really know exactly what to buy anyway. Perhaps the person lives thousands of miles from you, so you are separated geographically. Yet the desire to do something for that individual is just overwhelming.

Is there anything you can do for that loved one? Yes, there is! You can cause an outpouring of blessings, spiritual and even physical, to rain down upon that person — by praying for him. "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it" (Prov. 3:27). It is in the power of your hand to do it — through intercessory prayer.

Moses pronounced a wonderful blessing upon the unconverted house of Israel, God's physical people. Surely God can be asked to place a similar blessing upon a member of spiritually converted Israel — God's Church. Moses proclaimed: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num. 6:24-26). Such a blessing is priceless.

But that is only one possible use of intercessory prayer. We need to pray for *all* of the brethren — especially for those whose needs we know, those who are going through trials, those who are sick, those who need to be comforted by God.

As Ephesians 6:18 shows, we should be "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and *watching*." Yes, watching. We should be watching for opportunities to pray for others. It is a question of being aware of what others need.

This verse is part of the section dealing with the Christian armor (verses 10-19). Parts of that armor, such as the shield, the helmet and the breastplate, are basically for defense. They protect against the attacks of the enemy. But the armor Paul describes here is not for defense only.

Using the "sword of the Spirit" (verse 17) and prayer (verse 18), Christians are to go on the offensive — to attack — against the powers of darkness. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (II Cor. 10:4).

Remember that Epaphras put real effort into interceding for others. He "laboured" at it (Col. 4:12). In the final analysis, how many people received blessings, help and maybe even owed their salvation in part to this one intercessor? Epaphras will not know until the resurrection. Is anybody going to come up to you in the Kingdom and deeply thank you for all the times you brought about divine intervention in his or her life by your prayers?

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Our lives are composed of portions of time. Are

we willing to lay down some of that time for others? Can we forego watching a meaningless television program and spend that time instead bringing about, through prayer, divine intervention in the lives of others?

Or is there still doubt that it would really make any difference at all if we prayed? Here faith comes in.

We, by our own human strength, are not capable of blessing, healing, delivering or granting understanding, faith or any other spiritual gift. Even Jesus, as a human, affirmed, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30). But after He was resurrected He declared, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). What are we going to do when we receive supernatural power? How are we going to use it? For the good of others? That's what God wants to find out while we are still mortal. That's why we must develop the habit of looking out for the welfare of others, of bringing God's power into play through prayer to help others. Being thus minded must become a part of our character if, in the resurrection, we wish to be given *direct* control of that power.

What to pray about

Many have found it helpful to note on a "prayer list" the names and needs to be prayed about. With such a list at hand there should never be a time when one runs out of subjects. Some ideas as to how to pray for the brethren may be gleaned from the following scriptures: Colossians 1:9-11, Ephesians 1:16-19, 3:14-19, II Corinthians 13:7, Philippians 1:9-11, I Thessalonians 5:23, II Thessalonians 1:11, 3:5, I Peter 5:10, I John 5:16, James 5:16.

As these passages reveal, you can pray that your brethren receive wisdom, hope, spiritual understanding, revelation, increased knowledge of God's will, love, abundant strength, healing, Christ living within, more of the Holy Spirit, freedom from sin, the full fruits of righteousness, sincerity, patience, longsuffering, joyfulness, the ability to walk worthy of God. In short, anything and everything really good!

Be especially aware of the neces-
(Continued on page 23)

The "Average, Everyday Housewife"— No Higher Calling!

Will positions in God's Kingdom be based on the jobs individuals hold in this life? How do we qualify for rulership in the world tomorrow?

By Ronald Kelly

Should we assume the top leadership positions in God's Kingdom will be occupied only by those who were men in this human life? Will women be eternally relegated to the lowest, least important jobs?

No!

A few months ago in *The Good News* (June-July, 1980), we showed from the Bible that men and women all have the same opportunity. All who overcome will be given eternal life and the positions for which they qualify as they overcome (Rev. 2:26, 3:21).

After that article I received a letter from a young homemaker. She summarized the problem many American women face when they choose to stay home and be housewives. She wrote: "For a good while, I have wanted to write someone who would write an article about women's role. Why? Because of my particular situation. I am married, 28 years old, no children as yet, and have attended God's Church since I was 12. The problem? I am continually asked if I work. When I reply that no, I don't, a look of incredulity almost always spreads across the person's face, and then comes that inevitable question, 'What

on earth do you *do* all day?'"

Some people apparently think that homemakers just sit around all day watching soap operas, never bothering to get dressed or to get their hair out of curlers.

What about it?

This life is a training ground for ruling with Christ. Can an "average, everyday housewife" qualify for rulership over five cities, 10 cities or an entire nation in God's Kingdom (Luke 19:11-27)? Does any woman have cause to be ashamed if she is "just a housewife"?

Character the purpose

As we discussed in the last article, God did not create women as some sort of afterthought — a last minute "Whoops! I almost forgot." The creation of women was an integral part of God's plan. Mankind was not complete with the creation of the male only (Gen. 2:18). So God made Eve, from the rib of Adam, to be his perfect companion and complete spiritual equal.

To make the human family, which pictures God's Family, complete — to provide it with proper depth and to create the total environment — God

established family life. Male and female. Marriage. Children. Breadwinner and homemaker. They all fit together.

But how do women qualify for rulership? Just like men.

First and foremost, what each of us does most to qualify for God's Kingdom is to develop holy, righteous, godlike character. Character is the one thing God cannot create instantaneously, by fiat. Character transcends this physical life — physical things don't.

In this lifetime we may develop great physical skills. We might run faster, jump higher, play music or sing better than anyone else. But do these physical accomplishments mean anything in the spirit world? If an athlete develops the skill to jump 7 feet 8 inches, will he be special in the resurrection?

No. Not because he could jump high in this physical life. All spirit beings can most likely jump 7 feet 8 inches and much more with ease. Qualification to rule does not depend on how much we train ourselves in a physical way. Character is what carries over to spirit life.

An athlete may develop a lot of char-

acter in addition to physical skills through hours of hard work and self-discipline. A musician must also work and discipline himself to become proficient. Doing the best we can in any aspect of life is part of the character development process (Eccl. 9:10). And both sexes have exactly the same opportunities for character development.

The day-to-day events of life constantly provide opportunities to develop character. From our decision to get up in the morning through the decisions we make all day to our decision to retire at night, character is being developed — righteous or unrighteous, whichever is the case. In addition to the daily character-building process, no doubt a direct correlation exists between all of our life experiences and our ultimate potential to serve in God's government.

We can't just sit around and do nothing and expect that 10 cities will be laid in our laps at the return of Christ. We have to be prepared.

But in these articles on husbands, wives and the family we are attempting to show that one kind of lifestyle or profession, or whether we are male or female, has little to do with the positions we attain in God's Kingdom.

Some might feel the president of a multimillion-dollar corporation would automatically have a greater reward in the Kingdom than a carpenter. Why? Well, because of all the decisions the president has to make and his complicated daily routine. Not necessarily. That corporate president may not have come close to developing godly character. Maybe he fought his way to the top in the competitive corporate structure and developed no godly character at all in the process. On the other hand, the carpenter may have developed love, self-control and reverence for God through his experiences. The carpenter would be well suited to rule in the Kingdom, while the corporate executive may not even be in the first resurrection.

The housewife stereotype

Satan's society has cast the homemaker as a wet mop. She is pictured as a haggard, unattractive drudge with her hair in curlers, a broom in her hand and several screaming brats around her.

On the other hand, society idolizes the chic, modern career businesswo-

man. Up at the crack of dawn, she dresses like a fashion model, prepares a hearty breakfast for her family and drives the kids off to school. She puts in a full day at her office, comes home to a house full of girls (she is a Girl Scout den mother) and somehow has a piping hot dinner on the table by 7. At the same time she gives her husband all the attention and encouragement he needs, and, through all this, a radiant, cheerful smile beams from her face.

Where such a modern wonder woman exists, I don't know. But we have been made to believe that this is what a woman should be.

No one ever said mopping floors

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was fun. Cleaning the toilet bowl is not a tremendous challenge. Soaking a tubful of dirty diapers really doesn't make the day. And many a mother, wife and homemaker who devotes her full time to taking care of the home might wonder what a hot stove, dirty floor or unmade bed have to do with making it into God's Kingdom.

But the effective management of the home has just as much to do with learning to rule as any other job any other person could have. Running a home is in many respects like managing a corporation. Let's look at the similarities.

The executive homemaker

We think of several things when we hear the word *executive*. Somehow that word smacks of success. We think of tall buildings, suites of

offices, financial wealth. We visualize such top-level managers living in exclusive suburbs and driving late-model cars larger and more expensive than the rest of us can afford. We see them, in our mind's eye, making decisions, talking on the telephone, holding important meetings, going to lunch at the best restaurants.

And we are tempted to think of how well qualified they are — how much more important than we are. We probably think such a person would be much more qualified to rule 10 cities in the world tomorrow, certainly more qualified than the "common housewife." But are the jobs really that different? What are some of the things executives do?

One area is that of time scheduling. The effective executive knows how to get things done. He makes sure the business meets its deadlines. He has to deliver as promised.

Executives make multiple decisions daily, and these decisions have to be the best and wisest ones possible.

Executives spend a lot of time solving problems. With all businesses, things can go wrong. Problems can arise over money, personnel, equipment or a dozen other items.

An executive is responsible for the morale as well as the safety and training of those employed by the company.

And then executives have to delegate. No one person can do it all. The effective executive knows how to give tasks to others who can handle the job.

These are only a few of the things most commonly associated with executives. But what does this have to do with housewives?

Much!

Read Proverbs 31:10-31! These verses describe an ideal executive manager, a person who scheduled time, made decisions, solved problems, was responsible over others and delegated work — and was very successful at it. Who was this person? A homemaker — the virtuous woman!

The writer probably knew one or more women who were setting examples such as he described. The virtuous woman made a profession of caring for her household the best way

possible — she was much more than the false image society has of housewives today. “Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates” (verse 31). There it is. Her outstanding example was recorded for posterity in God’s Word.

An effective homemaker employs every one of the tools of effective management. She is developing the qualities needed to direct cities and nations in the world tomorrow, just as much as anyone else is. Frankly, when you understand the job of the homemaker — the wife and mother — you might wonder if it does not present one of the greatest opportunities for skill development.

The homemaker’s job

Take time and scheduling, for example. A major manufacturer may have huge, impressive-looking charts and graphs showing corporate production schedules. How all the parts that go into a car get into the new car you order is a modern production miracle. But it only took time and scheduling.

The homemaker gets the family off to school and work, well fed and clothed, does the shopping, pays the utility bill, meets the kids when they return from school, takes Susie to the orthodontist and Jimmy to the YOU basketball practice. She has dinner ready in the evening and during her “extra time” cleans the windows, strips the wax from the kitchen floor, calls the repairman to fix the washing machine, makes an appointment for counseling about her children at school, visits ailing Mrs. Smith and drops by the post office on the way home.

Have you men reading this article ever stopped to think about how much a wife — a homemaker — has to do? Running a smooth-flowing household takes the skill of a corporate president and then some. And that is the same skill it will take to be over several cities in God’s Kingdom.

A housewife is responsible for making many decisions and solving problems. Let’s say your family is struggling with inflated food costs (who isn’t struggling just to keep

up?). In many cases the housewife is responsible for the food budget. In order to feed the family well, she checks the sales, perhaps buying vegetables at one store, bread at another, coffee down the street and beef somewhere else.

But she has to be an efficiency expert as well. She has to consider the cost of gasoline to get to all the stores and the time it takes to shop. Decisions have to be made. If she really is an effective executive she will get the shopping done at the best prices and get other things done too.

Then there is delegation. Not doing it all yourself is the name of the game. Many a harried housewife cleans up after the kids, makes all the beds, washes all the clothes. Somehow she just never gets around to delegating these jobs to the children.

As dean of students at Ambassador College, I was often amused — even shocked a few times — when, over the years, some students would come to college not even knowing how to make a bed. Mom had always done it for them. Some students literally did not know how to operate the college’s washers and dryers. And many did not know how to put in an honest, full day’s work.

Not only is the mother who does it all alone making life much harder for herself, she is doing her children a great injustice. One of a parent’s major responsibilities is to teach his or her children how to work.

Delegate! That means teaching the children to do the dishes, wash and iron their clothes and make their beds. Children should learn to cook, shop, repair things and help in every part of home life. So Mom is a teacher as well.

Let’s go through a typical example. It’s time for spring cleaning in your home. The first order of business is to decide which parts of the job can be delegated. For example, your teenage son can dismantle the bed and take it out of the room. The girls can empty



Photo by Roland Rees

Making decisions, resolving problems, scheduling time, delegating and many of the other responsibilities of executive managers — all these tools must be employed by the effective homemaker. Housewives, just as much as anyone else, are developing skills to be used in ruling with Christ in God’s Kingdom.

their own drawers, but maybe they are not big enough to put the new shelf paper in — you'll want to do that.

So you make a schedule of who will do what jobs. Be sure you match the proper job to the proper person. Heavy lifting cannot be done by small children. Set realistic goals for them. Put the kids on a time schedule. Give them 45 minutes, for instance, to put everything from the dresser drawers into the cardboard boxes and to set aside everything they want to throw away. You can now go to another part of the house for 45 minutes and need only to check on their progress once or twice.

If you adopt such a plan to get a room clean several things will be accomplished. The room will get cleaned. The children will share in the responsibility. You will get another job done. You will have applied the tools of effective management. And you will have developed skills that will be used in ruling with Christ in the world tomorrow.

Appreciate the wife

The woman who decides to be a homemaker is choosing as high an occupation as it is possible to choose. No corporate executive, great financier, famous entertainer or sports personality has a greater calling or profession. It's time we all realized that.

The training of the homemaker prepares her for the Kingdom of God just as other people's jobs prepare them. God has not established an elitist system of "better" jobs and "lesser" jobs. God does not look down on the janitor, laborer, farmer or housewife, while he looks up to the doctor, lawyer or banker.

Human societies established hierarchies of respect — class systems. Some professions seem to carry greater honor — certainly they carry higher financial rewards. But no profession will carry more social status than any other in God's Kingdom. This does not mean a pseudocommunist state will exist. God's Word is clear that some individuals will work harder and grow spiritually stronger than others in this life; those who do will qualify for greater rewards. But the development of character has little to do with what job you occupy now.

But, partially because of the modern feminist movement, the role of homemaker and housewife has been relegated to practically the bottom rung on the ladder of respect in this age. Women have been made to feel that if they are not in the battle for top executive jobs in the professions, they are not fulfilling their potential and aren't worth much.

It just isn't true! There is no higher calling for a woman than to be a homemaker — a full-time wife and mother. *No higher calling!*

I may not win a popularity contest with the women's liberation movement, but that remains the

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truth. On the other hand, neither should men try to subordinate and suppress women — keep them "barefoot and pregnant" — while men go out and play the big shots. God's Word is clear about the roles of men and women. They are both made in the image of God and are equal (Gen. 1:27), and in marriage each has particular responsibilities (Eph. 5:21-33). Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church (verse 25), and that includes *appreciating* them — treating them with proper respect, "as being heirs together of the grace of life" (I Pet. 3:7).

My wife holds a college degree and taught school for two years before our marriage. I consider her an extremely capable woman. But when we married more than 20

years ago, she began to devote all her talents and efforts to being a homemaker — a wife and mother. We have had five children, two of them now in college, and it has taken her full time to fulfill her role and responsibility. She has been developing the skills to qualify her every bit for the position she will be given in God's Kingdom, if she continues to grow and overcome and is privileged to be born into the Family of God at the return of Christ.

The quality that carries over to the Kingdom from this physical life is character. As Herbert W. Armstrong has often stated, God will not save anyone He cannot rule. The test of character in this life is the development of faith and obedience. Any profession — laborer, executive or homemaker — has built into it the training necessary in preparation for spiritual responsibility in the world tomorrow. Then, unlimited power will be given to those who are changed to immortal beings.

Housewives train just as much in the character-developing process. Positions of rulership are not passed out based on how many dollars one controlled or how many employees over which one had authority, but rather on what kind of overcoming one does — on how well one does with what he or she has to do with.

God has, in His infinite wisdom, provided the means and opportunity in this lifetime for training and character development for all people whom He calls. It is God's desire and His will for us to be saved.

Male and female are terms that apply to this physical life. In the Kingdom we neither marry nor are given in marriage (Matt. 22:30). Resurrected from the dead and changed from mortal to immortal, we shall all serve with Christ, ruling with Him for a thousand years and then fulfilling our destinies for eternity.

We have by no means exhausted this subject, so important to this physical life. There is much yet to be said about husbands, wives and the family. Next time we will analyze the qualities of the "perfect wife." You might be surprised at what the Bible has to say about homemaking and motherhood. □



Photo by Roland Rees

How NOT to Raise a Juvenile Delinquent

By Ray Johnson

The human family is a picture of God's Family, and parents need to rear their children in a manner pleasing to God.

Stan and Harry had much in common. The two teenagers grew up in the same neighborhood, in a nice but relatively poor section of town. Both lived with their mothers — their fathers left for parts unknown soon after their births. Both their mothers worked long hours; nei-

ther was able to spend much time with her son. As youngsters Stan and Harry attended the same school and were members of the same Boy Scout troop.

But Stan and Harry were as different as night and day.

Blond, smiling, happy-go-lucky

Harry couldn't walk out of a store without stealing something. He couldn't talk to anyone, even briefly, without telling several lies. He grew up to be an embezzler, an incurable gambler and an alcoholic, finally ending his life in suicide.

Meanwhile, dark, quiet Stan main-

tained good grades, upheld his scout's oath, was painfully honest and was respected by everyone. He grew up to be a geologist, has a happy marriage and generally is a successful person.

What made the difference? Was Harry born to be a delinquent? If not, what went wrong? Psychologists and sociologists have pondered these questions for years. They have studied illegal behavior among youths since early in this century, and generally agree that delinquents are *made*, not born. They feel that environment, parental guidance and peer-group relationships all play a part in predisposing young people toward delinquent behavior.

Evidence indicates that these scientists are correct. Thus parents have a deep obligation to their children. And this is nowhere more true than in God's Church!

Our Father in heaven desires godly offspring (Mal. 2:15, Revised Standard Version)! We parents have a great deal of control over the environment in which our children grow up. We must provide an atmosphere that will give them the best opportunities to develop in the ways of God.

"To turn the heart"

God tells us that in the latter times He will send Elijah, in spirit, to bring our families closer together. God intends to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:6). Is this happening in *your* family?

This prophecy must come to pass. Through Herbert W. Armstrong, God has been thundering this message at us for some time now. God has sent us a leader in the spirit of Elijah to teach us what He expects of us. But what are we as individuals doing about it? God is not going to force us — the adults in His Church — to make the first move toward the children of His Church, but He is going to hold us accountable in the judgment day if we have not done so!

Let us look, then, at some aspects of the environment many delinquents have in common and see how we can give our children a better chance in life.

Family relations

The *family* is probably the single most important environmental factor

in childrearing. If every family was based on a good marriage, there would be far fewer delinquency problems. But even in the Church, unfortunately, we have disintegrating families, and these are breeding grounds for juvenile delinquents.

When a family is split by divorce, for instance, a child can be deprived of affection, security, social opportunities and physical needs. Overprotecting children, of course, can cause them problems later. But the *lack* of the inherent securities a solid family unit provides is a major cause of delinquency. A disintegrating family is cursed with alienation, tension and rejection, which destroy the environment children need.

Of course, we have no control in the case of a parent dying. But who has more control over separation or divorce than the parents? If family disintegration ceases to be a problem for Church members, it will cease to be a problem for our youths.

Even within marriages that remain intact, proper family relations can be absent. This only hurts the marriage and the children. But who is responsible for the tension present in many homes? The parents!

God spells out for us more than once the formula for happy marriages (Eph. 5:21-6:4, Col. 3:18-21). Are you tired of hearing these verses referred to and expounded? Believe God! If you will follow these instructions, your marriage will have a vibrant, joyous, lasting quality not found in marriages in the world, and your children will be far better able to cope with the evil world in which they must live.

Are you aware of the ways you could be contributing to the future delinquency of your children? Do you reject their advances and put them down? Do you fail to uphold them and listen to them — do you refuse to give them the loyalty you expect them to show you? If so, you need to *change!*

Do you tell your children they are dumb or stupid? Do you tell them they can't do anything right? When they want to tell you something — something meaningful to them but trivial or silly to you — do you ignore them, tell them to go play or otherwise put them off rather than give of yourself? Do you teach your

children God's standards and then not enforce them, or do your children see you deviate from God's way yourself?

We can't discuss every possible aspect of family relations here, but these ideas are representative of areas where some of us miss the mark. Our job as parents is to develop, with God's help, meaningful, pleasing marriages in His sight. We must demonstrate real love and affection for our children.

In regard to discipline, some interesting generalizations emerged from one 10-year study of 500 persistent delinquents and 500 nondelinquents.

It was found that children whose fathers were overstrict and/or erratic in disciplining them had a 72 percent delinquency rate. On the other hand, youngsters whose fathers were lax or too lenient had a 60 percent delinquency rate. Some 83 percent of those children whose mothers' supervision was classified as unsuitable became delinquent. Those whose mothers' supervision was classified as close or suitable had a 10 percent delinquency rate.

Parental affection is also important; 76 percent of boys whose fathers were indifferent or hostile became delinquent, and 86 percent of boys whose mothers were indifferent or hostile went the same route.

In other words, overstrict, erratic or lax discipline by the father, unsuitable supervision by the mother, lack of affection from both parents and lack of family cohesion in general promote juvenile delinquency. Parents reap what they sow (Gal. 6:7)!

Personal approach

The *approach* to life a young person adopts and the kind of goals he pursues are important in determining whether he will become a delinquent.

For example, a young person, from whatever background, who wants to get a good education and do the best he can in the occupation he chooses is less likely to show illegal behavior than a youngster who does not care about school or work but wants to do "whatever comes along." The first young person has a sense of purpose and is becoming more responsible. The second is drifting through life with-

out any worthwhile goals and is prone to get into trouble.

Solomon noted this centuries ago: "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them" (Prov. 11:3). "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom" (Prov. 10:23). "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments . . . Let not mercy and truth forsake thee . . . So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:1, 3-6). A young person with the right goals in life — one who has been taught the way of God and travels in it — will be far better off than one without this outlook.

Are you as a parent extending your young people's horizons in the work area? Are they being given opportunity to learn what education, experience, income and ethics are involved in different occupations they have shown interest in? Have you been helping them set right goals?

Living in a certain area, holding a certain job or having a certain education level is not what is important. The important factor in developing godly character is what we do with what we have. The laws of God give us the instruction we need to travel in the right direction — toward His Kingdom. A youth who is trained to let God's laws govern all His actions will be in good stead.

Peer-group pressures

Youthful crime is seldom committed by lone individuals. Of 5,460 delinquents studied in Chicago, Ill., 82 percent were caught with one or more companions. One study reported that "delinquents almost without exception chummed largely with other delinquents while the nondelinquents, despite the fact that they too lived in the slum, had few intimates among delinquents."

Another large study revealed that 98.4 percent of the delinquents were accompanied by peers. Conversely, nondelinquents associated with delinquents only 7.4 percent of the time. Birds of a feather flock together.

Peer-group pressures heavily influence the development of your child, for good or for evil.

A child's character can be known by how he behaves — whether what he does is pure and right (Prov. 20:11). Can associating with law-breaking youths be considered "pure and right"? God says, "He that followeth vain persons is void of understanding" (Prov. 12:11). Paul warned, "Be not deceived: evil communications [associations] corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33).

How does an adolescent develop his attitudes and master the skills of his social group? Largely through his peers. They are his friends and have the traits he likes or desires. In addition, he is looking for their acceptance and approval.

How much of their peer group's culture your children will take on depends on the attitudes and values they develop in your home! We must help our young people develop a stable, godly system of values by the time they are running around with other kids, or they are likely to take on the values of their peers. This means working closely with our children from the time they are in diapers. We must consistently set good examples for them to emulate.

Also, we must exert some control over who our children's peers are. This doesn't mean meddling unnecessarily in their affairs ("provoking them to wrath" — Eph. 6:4), but Satan is the god of this world and rules over the hearts of men except they be called and chosen of God (II Cor. 4:4). The devil deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9) and will exert a strong negative influence on your children through their peers unless you help them avoid it.

Instill right values

A child's value system is part of his entire personality, those distinct characteristics that make him different from everyone else. Your child is the person he is because of the values he has.

George Mouly says: "The child's personality is molded by a vast array of interacting forces. The school, for example, plays an important role in providing a relatively objective basis from which he can get his bearings and assess his potentialities for

growth. The foundation for personality, however, is unquestionably *set in the home.*"

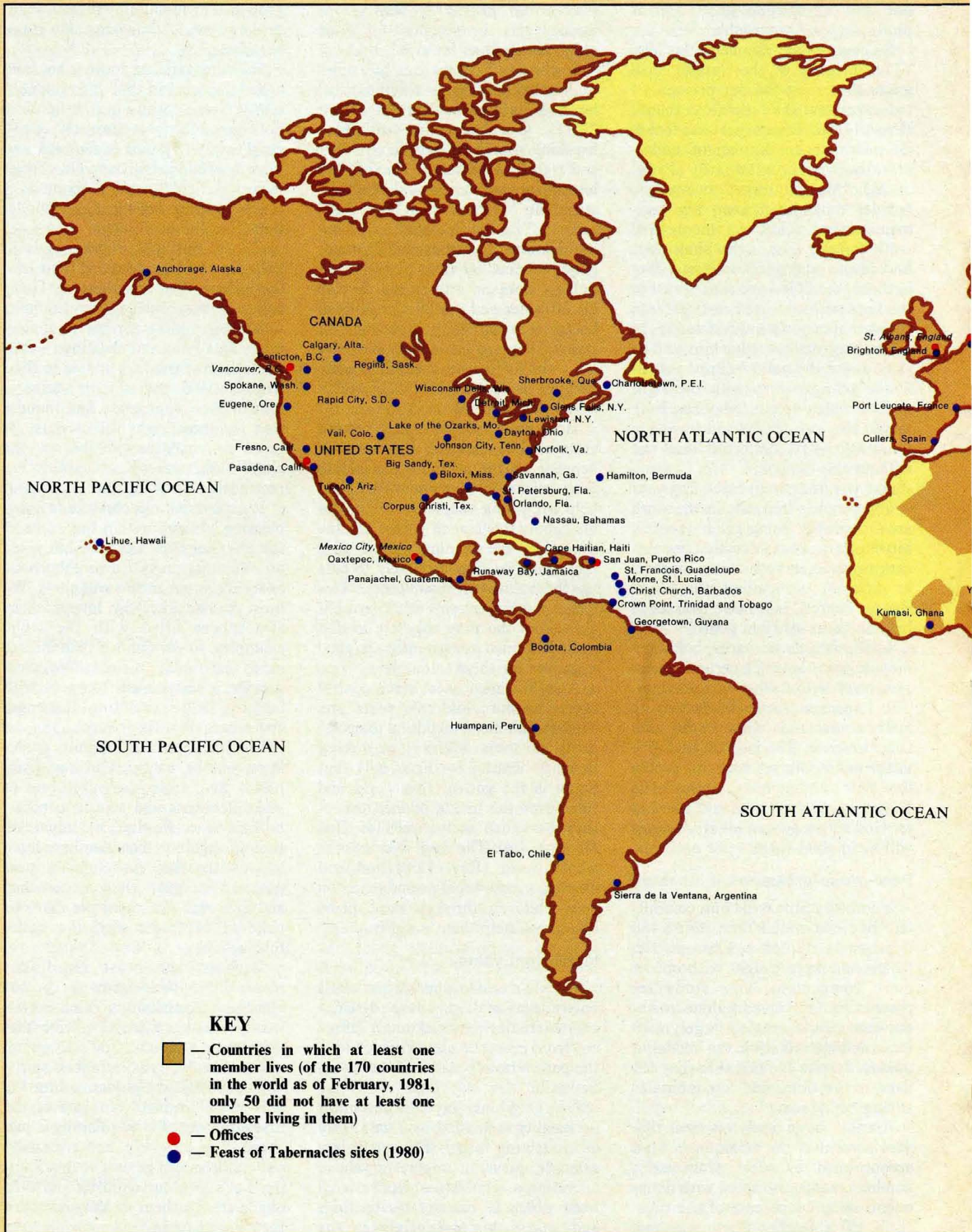
Housemovers can move a house to a new foundation, but it is difficult, costly, time-consuming and therefore not commonly done. Similarly, once a child's value system is founded and his way of life is built upon it, change is very difficult to bring about. It is much better to lay the right foundation from the beginning.

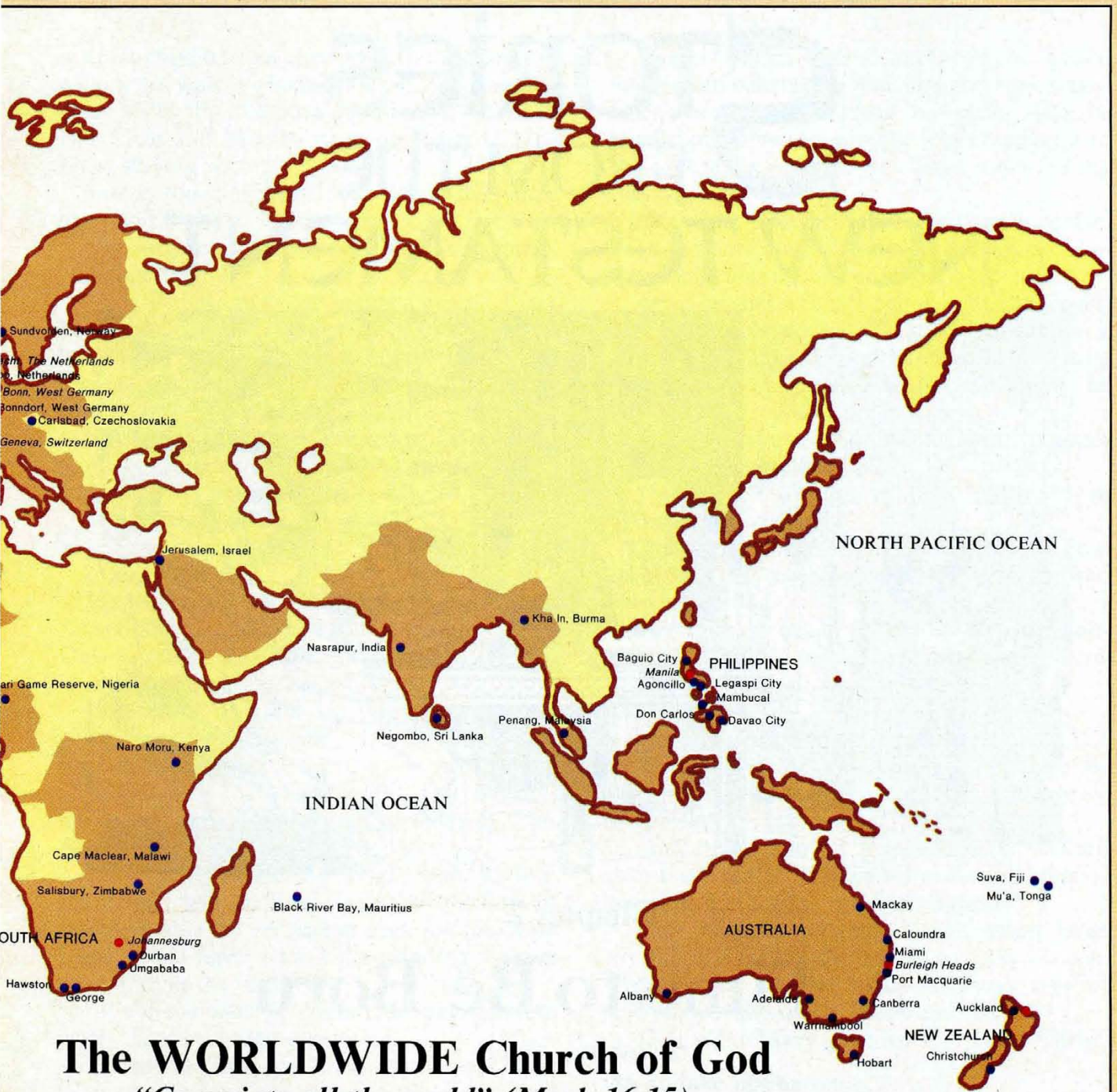
One of our jobs as parents is to help our children adopt as their own the values that are right in God's sight. If they believe, for example, that being honest is right — if they really hate lying and cheating — they will manifest trustworthiness in their lives. It will be part of their nature — part of their *character*. The foundation for these right values must be laid as early as possible in the child's life, and we as parents are responsible for doing so.

We must rear our children in a way pleasing to God, within the limits of the physical blessings God has given us. We must provide a neighborhood as secure as our means will allow. We must provide a healthy, loving family atmosphere filled with the right examples, so our children can imitate us as we imitate Christ. We must provide a positive environment with many growth-stimulating challenges and reasonably few failures.

We must provide definite guidelines, but be balanced in our discipline, and train our children to make decisions and accept responsibility. As a family, we must do enough together that members learn to pull together for common purposes. We must show acceptance and approval; the closer we rear our children to God's way, the easier this will be.

Perhaps the most important responsibility God gives us is our family. A kingdom is essentially a family that grew to be a tribe that grew to be a nation. God's Kingdom is His Family, His immortal, spirit-born sons and daughters, ruling the universe. The birth of some of the first members of God's Family is just ahead of us now. We, and eventually our children, can be part of that Family. Let's love our children and turn our hearts to them so they *can* turn their hearts to us. □





The WORLDWIDE Church of God

"Go ye into all the world" (Mark 16:15)

Jesus Christ told His disciples they would be witnesses of Him "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). As of February, 1981, that prophecy is being fulfilled. Worldwide *Plain Truth* circulation in five languages (subscriptions only) is 2,563,000. Newsstand distribution increases that circulation number substantially. The Work of the Church is supported by: 68,882 members

- who live in 124 countries
- and attend in 730 congregations
- scattered over 61 countries
- ministered to by 939 ordained elders
- of which 446 are employed by the Work

Map by Minette Collins

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT



Illustration by Monte Wolverton

Chapter 2

A Time to Be Born

By Shirley King Johnson

The cooler days of fall came to Nazareth. A chill was in the air as Joseph returned to his modest home one evening after a hard day at construction work.

As Mary served the evening meal she saw that something was troubling her husband. Refilling his cup, she sat down beside him as he sipped the wine. Gradually the tired lines in his face eased away.

“What’s wrong, Joseph? Did things go badly at work today?”

“No, the walls are going up straight and right.”

“Then what is it?”

“Do you remember last month I decided you shouldn’t go with me to the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem? Because of your condition?”

“Yes, I remember, and I know it’s for the best. I’m not anxious to take a chance on having

After consulting with the religious leaders regarding the place of the Messiah’s birth, King Herod met with the foreign dignitaries, asking them to report to him if they found the child in Bethlehem.

my first child born on the way to Jerusalem. I'm willing to wait at home. Please don't worry, dear. I'll be fine. I'll have good help if I need it, and Eliza and Martha have promised to take turns staying with me."

Joseph shook his head. "We'll have to change our plans."

Her large eyes turned upon him in surprise. "Change them?"

"Yes. The Romans are taking a census. I just heard about it this afternoon." He sipped the last of the wine and put down the cup. "The emperor apparently is suspicious that not every Jew is paying his taxes, and he's ordered a census to be made. They've passed a law that requires everyone to go to register at his ancestral home" (Luke 2:1-3).

"To Bethlehem?" she asked. "You and I have to go to Bethlehem?"

"I'm afraid so."

Mary turned the news over in her mind. Joseph and she were both descendants of King David and he was born in Bethlehem. "How soon is the census to begin?"

"At once." He laid his large, rough hand gently over her small one. "It'll be a hard trip for you."

"Don't worry. I'll be all right. Our donkeys are good animals. They're surefooted. But, Joseph, where will we stay?"

"I've been wondering about that myself. Bethlehem will be filled with the overflow of travelers into the Jerusalem area for the Holy Days. We'll have a hard time finding a room anywhere in the vicinity."

"We'll manage. It doesn't do any good to worry. God will take care of us."

He smiled. "My dear little Mary, your faith is so strong. You are so sweet. So strong and good."

"No Joseph, it's you who are strong and good."

They made preparations for their trip.

Finding a room

Joseph's concern about finding lodging was well founded.

"Sorry, there's not a bit of space left," the keeper of the inn at the eastern edge of Bethlehem announced with a shake of his head. "We absolutely can't take another family."

Joseph looked toward the rows of walled houses and courtyards. Perhaps someone somewhere would make room for them. But he needed to stable his animals. He turned back to the innkeeper. "Would you have room for my two donkeys?"

"Yes, I do. Take them around back to the stable. We don't have much livestock this week. Some of the people came in on foot" (Luke 2:7).

After paying a small coin to the innkeeper, Joseph led his donkeys around the inn to a cavelike stable built into the hillside. Choosing a stall that was spread with fresh straw, he lifted Mary from her donkey.

She glanced about the quiet stable. "It's half empty," she observed.

"Uh huh," Joseph replied, absorbed in unloading provisions.

Untying a cloth bag, Mary began to set out food for their evening meal. "It's warm and cozy here."

The donkeys began to pull hay from a manger. Mary smiled as she smelled the sweetness. "Joseph, why can't we stay here?"

"Here?"

"Yes. It's dry and warm. And it's quiet."

Walking over, he wiped perspiration from his brow. "No, I'll knock on every door, if I have to, until someone takes us in."

"But this is a lovely place. There's a cistern over there that's dripping water for the animals to drink. Let's wash and have supper."

They washed and then Joseph pulled large armfuls of hay from the manger to make a couch. They nestled together in its satisfying comfort and enjoyed dried fish, bread and raisins.

That night Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ.

An angelic appearance

A myriad of angels hovered over the stable where the newborn Infant lay in a wooden manger. Thousands more of them appeared to a group of shepherds who were keeping their flocks on the Judean hillside. The angels sang praises to God for sending a Savior to the world, and told the shepherds where to find the Child (verses 8-14).

Leaving their sheep with younger shepherds, they hurried into Bethlehem and found the newborn Baby in a stable as the angels had
(Continued on page 29)

Behold! I tell you a mystery...

We Shall Be CHANGED!

Down through time man has desired an answer to the riddle of what happens after death. One source — God's Word — reveals the inspiring answer!

By Dennis R. Robertson

Once there was a mother whose small son died. She came in despair to a great teacher to beg him to miraculously restore the boy to life. He told her to go round the countryside collecting mustard seeds, but only from houses in which no one had ever died.

In house after house, however, she found that at some time there had been a death. When she returned she had no mustard seeds, but she had instead a deeper realization and acceptance of the inescapable reality of death.

Across the centuries man has tried to quench an insatiable desire to understand death. Of all living creatures on earth only man knows that one day he must die. Death is inescapable. And it is no respecter of persons; it comes indiscriminately to everyone.

What is death? To understand this question we must first know what is life.

I'm reminded of a passage from *Don Quixote*. Quixote is puzzled by something he saw in the eyes of a soldier who lay dying in his arms; the soldier's eyes seemed to be asking a question. Sancho asks, "Was it the question 'Why am I dying?'" and Don Quixote replies, "No, it was the question 'Why was I living?'"

Why does man exist? You can be assured that there is a definite reason for your existence!

Life is not the consequence of serendipitous action taken by aerobic amoeba eons ago in the process of evolution. The Creator God made man in His own image for a purpose that transcends this physical life. Man, however, apart from God, cannot know or comprehend this great purpose. Nor can he understand why men live or why they die.

Much has been written of late about death. There are hundreds of books and articles available on the medical and psychological aspects of death, the cultural and social impact of death and the philosophical implications of death. Philosophers, teachers, preachers, historians, anthropologists — learned men of every discipline — have searched for the answer to the ultimate question, "What is death?" But they haven't known where to look.

There is only one source that reveals the true answer — God's instruction Book, the Bible.

Physical life temporary

For there to be a creation there must be a Creator. That's one of the major proofs that God exists. And through God's revelations to us about

this creation we can begin to unlock the secrets to the great mysteries of death, hidden to man apart from this revealed truth. But first we must learn more about life.

Exactly what is life? Physical life is purely a biological, chemical existence. In this regard man's life is no different than that of an animal (Eccl. 3:19); although the spirit in man makes him a special creature (Job 32:8, Zech. 12:1, I Cor. 2:9-14).

To answer the question "What is life?" directly, turn to the book of James.

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jas. 4:14).

Life is physical. Life is temporal. Over and over in His Word God stresses the transient nature of life.

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" (I Pet. 1:24).

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone" (Ps. 103:13-16).

Genesis 2:7 describes the very first life being "born." Notice the exact wording of the verse: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Three of the most fundamental truths concerning the life of man are packed into that one verse.

The first is: God formed man of the dust of the ground. Adam was composed of earth. Every cell, every tissue, every muscle and every limb was made from the dust of the ground. Man was, and is, a purely physical creation, composed of physical matter. At that moment of creation, man was no different than the rest of the physical creation — until a second, more profound event occurred:

"And the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." As God's breath passed through Adam's nostrils and filled his lungs with life-giving oxygen, life began, which brings us to the third point:

"And man became a living soul." The last six words of that verse are very significant. It's important to realize that a soul was not placed within man, separate from man. God said that man *became* a living soul. The man was a soul — physical, material, animal life — subject to death.

The original Hebrew word for soul is *nephesh*. Look it up in a lexicon. It is defined as breath, anything that breathes, an animal. *Nephesh* can even refer to a dead body. There's nothing supernatural about the soul. The soul merely means, in this case, man. Man is a soul. And the soul is not immortal. We're told that in Ezekiel 18:4, 20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Immortal soul a pagan doctrine

Shocking, isn't it? Hundreds of millions of people have been taught by misguided men that man has an immortal soul. But here God clearly says that the soul is composed of the dust of the ground. It is material, not spiritual. The soul (man) can die (for more information on this important subject, write for our free article reprint, "What Is Man?").

Ancient philosophers taught that man is essentially an immortal spiri-

tual "soul" housed in a temporary body of flesh. At death the soul leaves the body and journeys to a nebulous realm, possibly paradise or a place of punishment. The body goes to the grave, but the spirit begins a great journey. The body ends, but begins again in some other realm.

Ancient Egypt, perhaps above all other civilizations, was the nation that fostered the erroneous concept of an immortal soul. Although it is likely that prehistoric Egyptians believed in a bodily resurrection, the notion was discarded early in dynastic times. Evidence of that shift in belief can be found in the compilation of

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religious writings known as the Book of the Dead. The earliest version is inscribed on a pyramid built by Unas, ninth and last king of the Fifth Dynasty.

"Re receives you," the king is told, "soul in heaven, body in earth [at least the part about the body in earth was correct]." This remained the general view for 3,000 years. A text dating from a much later period repeats the message:

"Your soul is in heaven before Re; your double has what should be given to it with the gods; your spiritual body is glorious among the spirits of fire; and your material body is established in the grave."

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, so prevalent in so-called Christian teaching today, came directly from pre-Christian Greek philosophers who acquired it from the Egyptian culture.

"The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato, its

principal exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended" (Jewish Encyclopedia, article "Immortality of the Soul").

Plato wrote in his book, *The Phaedo*, a summary statement of this ancient doctrine. He acquired this doctrine from Socrates, the Greek philosopher who traveled to Egypt and consulted the Egyptians on their belief concerning the soul.

"The soul whose inseparable attribute is life will never admit of life's opposite, death. Thus the soul is shown to be immortal, and since immortal, indestructible. . . . Do we believe there is such a thing as death? To be sure. And is this anything but the separation of the soul and body? And being dead is the attainment of this separation, when the soul exists in herself and separate from the body, and the body is parted from the soul. That is death. . . . Death is merely the separation of soul and body" (*The Phaedo*).

This doctrine has been perpetuated by Greek and Roman scholars and writers. The pagan teaching was slowly, over the centuries, injected into the churches by many of the early "church fathers" such as Origen, an early Catholic teacher in Alexandria, Egypt, and Tertullian of Phoenician North Africa.

Not only did this doctrine become religious dogma in the medieval world, those who rejected it were branded as heretics and often suffered death at the hands of the professors.

The apostle Paul gave instruction about believing this kind of nonsense: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Not taught in the Bible

Nowhere does the Bible say the soul is immortal. Actually, it plainly teaches just the opposite. Read Peter's statements in Acts 2.

Here Peter clearly states that King David of Israel, one of the greatest men of God who ever lived — a man after God's own heart — is dead and buried. David is not in heaven. He's in his grave, with us unto this day:

100 YEARS FROM NOW

Where will you be?

Chances are that no one reading this is going to be a living, breathing human being 100 years from now. It's a bit unsettling, isn't it? Of course, we all know that human beings don't live forever. But thoughts of our own death, no matter how distant that event may seem, lead to thoughts about the "afterlife." Millions of people feel that for those who live a worthy life — for those who are "saved" — the afterlife is in heaven. Such beliefs are supposedly based on the Bible, but are, in fact, nonbiblical. The Bible does have a great deal to say about an afterlife, but it's surprisingly different from traditional beliefs. If you'd like to read more about the true biblical teaching on this subject, write for the free booklet *What Will You Be Doing in the Next Life?* Use the Literature Request card in this issue or write to *The Good News* at the address nearest you.

What will you
be doing
in the
**NEXT
LIFE?**

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day" (verse 29).

"For David is not ascended into the heavens" (verse 34).

At death man ceases to exist. His body slowly returns to the elements from whence it came. "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). Death is the end of consciousness. As Ecclesiastes 9:5 points out, "The dead know not any thing."

Resurrection our hope

So God says death is death. There is no immortal soul. This being the case, is there any hope for man? Definitely! The resurrection from the dead is the whole hope of a Christian.

The Bible speaks in both Old and New Testaments of a resurrection of the dead — a re-creation of life. Paul was inspired by God's Holy Spirit to write one whole chapter of the Bible on the subject of the resurrection. You should study the 15th chapter of I Corinthians. If there were no resurrection, death would be the final victor (verse 54).

William Tyndale, the printer of the first New Testament in English, wrote: "In putting departed souls in heaven, hell or purgatory you destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. . . . The true faith putteth the resurrection; the heathen philosophers, denying that, did put that souls did ever live. . . . If the soul be in heaven, tell me what cause is there for the resurrection?"

When a person dies, he is dead. There is no consciousness in the grave (Ps. 146:4). There is no remembrance in the grave (Ps. 6:5). If at death man's soul was released there would be no need for the resurrection.

The fact that the Bible teaches the resurrection from the dead is further proof that man has no immortal soul!

Job once asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" He was inspired to answer his own question.

"O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,

that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:13-14).

The Old Testament prophets knew about the resurrection of the dead. Job knew about the resurrection, and so did Daniel: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

In the New Testament the resurrection is the central theme and hope of the early Church. Jesus said: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead . . . even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:21-29).

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:50-52: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The resurrection from the dead was the paramount theme in the sermons of Peter and Paul (Acts 2:23-24, 32, 3:15, 26, 4:1-2, I Cor. 15:36-44, 52).

And it should be plain to us now that the Creator God says death is death and that a resurrection from the dead is the Christian's only hope. This is the truth of God. Because Christ conquered death, God's great purpose for man will be achieved. And it is a great blessing to know that those loved ones who have died will soon be resurrected and given a chance to know God and keep His laws. And the woman who lost her small son will see him again, at the resurrection. □

Grow in the Love of God

*God's begotten children are to manifest His love in their lives!
Are you exhibiting this type of love?*

By George Kackos

At age 14 Todd Conner had an interest that surpassed even his enthusiasm for his high school football team. It was his baby brother Allen, born Oct. 7, 1975. Todd loved Allen a great deal and their relationship grew, but it was shaken by tragedy.

In November Allen's body went limp in Todd's arms. "Mother!" shouted Todd. "Something's wrong!" Allen had suffered permanent kidney impairment. Two valves on the tubes leading from his bladder had malfunctioned, causing urine to back up into and damage Allen's kidneys.

Emergency surgery saved Allen's life. His recovery was slow but by Dec. 15, 1976, Allen weighed 16 pounds and was ready for valve reimplantation surgery, which was a success.

Allen's well-being lasted only until July, 1977, before his condition began deteriorating again. This was a painful period for Todd. He saw his brother lose what he had gained through surgery. No longer could Todd gallop around the house with Allen on his back shouting "Go, horsey!" Allen became so unsteady he could barely walk. Soon Todd's relationship with Allen was reduced to carrying him.

Doctors said Allen's only hope was a kidney transplant. Todd quickly volunteered one of his. Initially, his parents were against the surgery because they feared that something might happen to Todd. With only one kidney, for instance, he might never play football.

Tissue compatibility tests showed Todd to be the best choice as the

donor. In counseling before the operation his feelings about football were discussed, but his love for Allen was still greater. "I don't care about that," said Todd.

On May 10, 1978, Todd was wheeled off to surgery. He heard Allen's familiar voice crying out "Todd!" as the baby, too, was taken to surgery. "After today," Todd reminded him, "you're not going to hurt anymore." But Allen's concern at that point was only for Todd. "When they give me part of you, will you hurt?" Allen asked. "Nope," said Todd. "It won't hurt me because you're my brother."

The day after the surgery Todd and Allen greeted each other with kisses and repeated each other's name. The surgery was successful, and Allen regained his strength. A year later Todd resumed football practice.

The story of Todd and Allen proves Jesus Christ's words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Todd was willing to risk his goals — and his life — for Allen. Of course, we in God's Church know that God could have healed Allen, but the point of the story is the great amount of love Todd had for his brother.

The world lacks love

How many of us today openly exhibit the type of love Todd had for Allen? How much are we willing to give of ourselves — to sacrifice — for the benefit of others around us? Most human relationships do not exhibit this kind of love. They are damaged by the "get as much for me as I can"

philosophy that has prevailed throughout history.

From the beginning we have been subject to these selfish pulls, authored by the fallen archangel Satan the devil. Cain murdered his brother Abel because he lacked brotherly love. His heart was filled with jealousy because he wanted to *get* rather than *give* to his brother.

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah also reveals a breakdown in human relationships. The angels visiting Lot in the form of men were not safe. They were threatened with homosexual acts by Lot's neighbors! Why did this situation exist? The citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah lacked love. Their problems went much further than homosexuality — the moral, social and spiritual fabric of the society was ripped beyond repair (Ezek. 16:49-50). There were not even 10 men of good character in Sodom (Gen. 18:32).

The end time — the time in which we now live — is compared to Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-30). We see the same breakdown in human relationships. One in three U.S. marriages ends in divorce, and the surviving marriages are often unhappy. Homosexuality is increasing. Child abuse is a serious problem worldwide. Labor unrest abounds. Wars divide the nations of our planet.

All these conditions indicate a lack of love. They show that the world is going the way of the *get* philosophy rather than the *give* way of life. All these breakdowns in human relationships produce the same thing — unhappiness! Unhappiness for the person failing to show love, and mis-

ery for the person experiencing the lack of love.

Educators, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers and religious leaders vainly attempt to determine the underlying reasons for the present state of man. But only one source strips away human reason and gives us the true answer: God's Holy Word. The Bible reveals the cause of breakdowns in human relationships: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (Jas. 4:1). The conditions in the world persist because man has rejected the way of God! People cut off from God are subject to the lusts of the flesh (Rom. 1:18-32).

What about the Church?

But can God's Church lack love? God calls this Church age the Philadelphia era (Rev. 3:7). The word *philadelphia* means "brotherly love." However, Christ warned that because of the sinful environment around us, the love of many in the Church would wax cold in the end time (Matt. 24:12). We as Christians live in a modern Sodom and Gomorrah. This environment weakens our ability to love one another.

The environment of ancient Corinth was extremely corrupt as well. It was notorious for sexual looseness. Christians in that city were adversely affected.

Paul wrote that the Corinthian church was full of envy, strife and division (I Cor. 3:1-3). One man committed incest with his stepmother; this was not a hidden sin but one that was freely accepted by other members (I Cor. 5:1-2). Church members were unable to resolve their problems among themselves, and foolishly went to the judges of the world (I Cor. 6:1).

What love produces

These problems reveal a church lacking proper love. In response, Paul showed them how love should work in the Church — what it should produce among Church members.

The Church is one spiritual Body made up of many members, each of them important — just as a physical body is made up of different but equally important parts. With this

established, Paul showed the need for appreciating one another. In fact, those who appear the least deserving of appreciation are to be shown the most! The purpose for this attitude among Christians is to produce unity and empathy for each other (I Cor. 12:13-26).

How wonderful it is when the children of God respect and appreciate one another. It breeds a far different atmosphere than does a corrupt world that hinders people from showing love. Furthermore, this atmosphere of brotherly love stimulates the love of God.

What, then, is love? Love begins with the keeping of God's law. Many people today think God's law is done away. But the Bible reveals that it is only through the knowledge of God's law that we know what sin is (Rom. 3:20, I John 3:4). We enjoy the fruits of God's love by putting His law to work in our lives (Rom. 2:13, Jas. 1:22). God's law doesn't harm your neighbor — it helps him. Keeping God's law shows him love (Rom. 13:8-10).

More than that, God's love is a product of God's Spirit working in us (Rom. 5:5). By utilizing His Spirit and the tools of prayer, Bible study, meditation and fasting we produce obedience to Him and develop right attitudes and approaches to life. Then those around us are affected by the godly love that flows through us.

These character traits of godly love are beautifully described in I Corinthians 13, where love is broken down into the attributes it produces in Christians and the benefits it offers people around them. Each part is worthy of careful consideration. For our purposes we will substitute the word *love* for the King James term *charity*.

Love suffereth long (I Cor. 13:4). Patience is needed when things go wrong, so we will suffer without anger or discouragement. It comes from understanding the other person's weaknesses, just as God understands our weaknesses and exhibits great patience toward us. How much happier we all are if this trait is practiced, because it produces a more relaxed feeling within ourselves and others. God expects us to have the same mercy for others as He does for us (Rom. 2:1-5).

Is kind (I Cor. 13:4). Kindness is responding to the needs of others. Much of Christ's life was spent meeting the needs of others through healings and other miraculous events. He performed miracles out of compassion (Matt. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32), which is a combination of sympathy for someone in distress and a desire to alleviate his or her problem. Jesus acted out of deep sympathy and sorrow for the plight of those around Him (Isa. 53:3-4). So ought we.

Envieth not (I Cor. 13:4). Envy prevents us from rejoicing at the successes of others. It cripples personal relationships (Prov. 27:4). It led to Christ's death at the hands of the Jews (Matt. 27:18). How much better it is to be grateful for the accomplishments of others! It builds much warmer and more secure relationships. It helps others reach their full potential without fear of hurt. Aren't you happier when your successes are appreciated? When envy is removed, appreciation is possible.

Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up (I Cor. 13:4). Love eliminates pride, which separates us from others because we feel superior. Feelings of self-superiority should warn us that love is missing in our lives; this separates us from God and men (Prov. 16:18, 29:23). When pride is eliminated, love replaces it and draws us together, because we hold other people in higher esteem than ourselves. We see our own weaknesses more clearly and focus on the strengths of others. We can share our fears and failures with others (Jas. 5:16). Humility is an important ingredient in producing godly love.

Doth not behave itself unseemly (I Cor. 13:5). Good manners are an expression of love. They show our concern for others when we act out of humility. We should question our actions to see if they are done in good taste: God tells us to show honor and follow the rules of custom (Rom. 13:7). Our society has faltered in this trait and discarded etiquette and proper behavior.

Seeketh not her own (I Cor. 13:5). God's love acting in us will make us more generous; we will have the *give* attitude that motivates God Himself. We will think as much or more of others as we do of ourselves. The way

(Continued on page 28)

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

excessive expenditure; wastefulness." God's quality, then, is NOT extravagance unless it is excessive.

But what if you can't afford the best quality? Then purchase only what you are able — always live within your means — and be satisfied with such as you have. But, be industrious, doing what you do the best you can, and, if you really live God's way, in due time He will prosper you so that you can afford better.

Yet never set your heart on physical things. In the quotation from Jesus mentioned above (Mark 10:23-24), it was not the possession of wealth that Jesus said would keep a man out of the Kingdom of God — but the TRUSTING in those riches. Jesus said that we should "beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). David warned us that, when God prospers us, we should be careful not to set our hearts on the prosperity.

Through John, Jesus says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health" (III John 2). Look at the prosperity of the patriarch Joseph: "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a PROSPEROUS man . . . the Lord made all that he did to prosper" (Gen. 39:2-3). Job was the wealthiest man in the East. After he learned his lesson, God gave him double his original wealth. The greatest national prosperity was promised by God to the descendants of Abraham if they would diligently follow His way.

Prosperity is not a sin. It is a BLESSING. God is the Giver of abundance and prosperity. But carnal man usually sets his heart on the wealth, instead of on serving God. He makes it an idol in which he trusts. That is the sin.

It is God's will that we prosper, be obedient to Him, with our hearts set on Him, relying solely on Him. Then when we prosper — when God gives abundance of good things, of good quality — He wants us to be appreciative, grateful, give Him thanks and enjoy what He has blessed us with, all the while trusting and worshipping Him and realiz-

ing we shall have the material things but a short time.

One businessman whom God had blessed with a very nice home well furnished with good-quality things put it this way: "My attitude toward my home is like it was when I was assigned to a very fine hotel room for the night. I said: 'I will enjoy it these few fleeting moments, give God thanks, be appreciative, try to use it as facilities for serving God, obtain a good night's rest, and then leave it and go on my way in the morning, never looking back with any regrets at leaving it.' That's my attitude toward my very nice home. If I had to leave it forever tomorrow morning, there would be no regrets — just thanksgiving that God let me enjoy it for the little time I had it. This life doesn't last long — and we soon leave everything in it. I'm merely a transient sojourner here, looking forward to something more real and permanent in God's Kingdom."

But what about one who never had this understanding of how to view material things — and now, at middle age or older, realizes what has been lost? It may be no fault of the person at all. But everyone should do all he can, from the time he awakens to this truth. Forget the past. Begin where you are, and start living God's way!

What about good manners and proper attire?

There is much sophisticated "culture" in this world that is pure snobbery and vanity. But TRUE culture is based on God's great law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:39). That part of culture and good manners that expresses concern for one's neighbor in politeness, graciousness, pleasantness, smiles and service is true culture.

What about dress? Yes, one should dress according to the occasion, and also within reason — according to his pocketbook. On our Ambassador College campus, during work hours, students dress in the proper work clothes for the job. During classes, they do not "dress up," but men often come in shirt sleeves and open collars — yet clean, neat and orderly. For an evening function, they dress up in whatever is their best — and if they cannot afford better than they have, that's quite all right.

But for a wedding or graduation

Why Pray?

(Continued from page 6)

sity to intercede for God's Work (Col. 4:3-4, Eph. 6:19, II Thess. 3:1). You by your prayers can increase the effectiveness of the ministry, the broadcasts, the publications, Ambassador College — all facets of the Work. Never underestimate your part! "They that turn many to righteousness [shall shine] as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). By prayers of intercession for the Work and the Church you can help turn many to righteousness.

Remember, too, that the principle of praying for others works both ways. If you have a need, instead of just praying about it yourself, ask some of your brethren to pray about it. You may be surprised at how quickly the answer comes. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16).

Yes, praying for others does avail much. It is not wasted effort. Such unselfish prayers please God and He responds to them. All the power in heaven and earth is ready to be moved if we will get involved and pray for one another! □

exercises, they should dress properly — in the best they have. Is that being "stuck-up"? Never! Jesus gave a parable picturing the wedding between Himself and His Church. The king in this parable is God, and his son is Jesus Christ. Notice:

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness" (verses 11-13).

The Bible teaches the principle of proper attire according to the occasion. Bodily apparel is also used in the Bible to symbolize character. There is a kind of pride that is NOT vanity, but rather concern for others and respect toward God. That kind of pride we should have. □

Five Steps

(Continued from page 4)

each check, the worry of budgeting disappears. In brief, the principle is to pay part of every bill with every check.

You are now setting your house in order. This should ease some tensions with even your most contentious creditors. If you are resolutely doing your part God will give you the unexpected breaks (Mal. 3:10). In general, with most debts it is wise to pay the principal as soon as you are able. This is why if you must borrow, borrow only the bare amount needed and from reputable banks and lending institutions rather than from fly-by-night finance companies and loan sharks.

Don't be easily dissuaded from your repayment program. Even in emergencies refuse to panic. Change your routine only in extreme necessities. Often people raid their savings or abandon a sound program when tact and wisdom might have eased them through the difficulty.

Four: Begin to save

Should you begin a savings account even if you are in debt? Most financial counselors say yes. Many people will say, "But I can't afford to save!" The point is to begin small, perhaps with a token amount of only \$5 to \$10 from each paycheck.

Why save? Because the safest way to make your money work for you is to capitalize on the best interest rates available. Christ counseled the slothful servant, "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury" (Matt. 25:27). Some banks offer a daily interest rate on money deposited for only part of the month; money you have earmarked for other items can still earn some increase. Deposit these itemized amounts with your regular savings and interest accumulates faster.

Our forefathers believed in saving for a rainy day. Proverbs 27:12 says, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself." We, though, have been so brainwashed by credit companies and hard-sell advertising that money truly burns holes in our

pockets. Perhaps the missing 10 percent of our income fritters itself away as pocket money or on impulse buying: "For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov. 23:5).

Be wary of credit cards. Get into the habit of paying cash. It will make you more conscious that you are parting with your hard-earned dollars.

Never shop for food on an empty stomach — when you are hungry everything looks good. If you really need an item, you will feel as strong a desire for it the next day and the next month as you did at the time the impulse struck you. Much personal

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debt is caused by purchasing unessential items for emotional or psychological reasons, under the pressure of advertising hype and slick packaging.

Knowing these propensities, debt counselors strongly recommend that people open savings accounts. Money in the bank is sometimes more awkward to get at than if it's lying around the house or being carried as pocket money. Also, debt counselors know that saving even a tiny portion from each check is a foundational principle for teaching people the value of money. Try it!

Five: Seek wise counsel

Sadly, some of the most wrenching financial problems in the Church occur among brethren involved in business dealings with each other, or when brethren invest in other mem-

bers' projects that, while well-intentioned, may be economically unsound. Here is where the local pastor can give invaluable counsel and advice. Often the minister knows more of the total background of a project and can offer sound advice.

Beware of "get rich quick" schemes where you are surety or guarantor for loans and financial adventures of other people. "Be not thou one of them . . . that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?" (Prov. 22:26-27). Proverbs 28:19 says, "He that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough." Sometimes members organize whole consortiums involving other brethren without even an hour of counsel from the ministry. Financial disaster often follows. Personal relationships are strained. Then, belatedly, the minister is called, and then only to play the role of a peacemaker.

While it isn't wrong to start your own business, it is wise to seek abundant counsel on such crucial matters as job and career changes. One career counselor warns, "Self-employment offers a faster route to bankruptcy than working for someone else." Your minister may know you better than you think. He may offer valuable advice in the area of personal skills and career placement. These are areas of personal growth and development as well as emotional maturity.

These subjects lie well within the sphere of the called, chosen ministry of Jesus Christ. The overwhelming majority of our ministers' families are financially solvent and stable. Follow their example. Seek wise counsel. Study. Search the book of Proverbs. Re-read the free literature we put out on this subject. Make it a special part of your personal Bible study until you have achieved financial stability.

The way to prosper is to work diligently, plan ahead, evaluate your spending habits and invest wisely. How much safer this is than following some wildfire project for which one has no training or experience!

Begin to take charge of the financial area of your life. God desires us all to prosper. It can happen for you — you can become financially stable. □

MINI STUDY

Christ Teaches How to Pray

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and *read in your Bible* the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Jesus Christ knew how to keep in contact with His Father in heaven. Consequently His life was filled with love, faith and power from God. His frequent and fervent prayers made possible His victory over sin and death.

Christ's disciples were aware that their Teacher knew how to draw close to the eternal God and call upon His help in every pressing situation. So they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). His instructions are preserved for us today in Luke 11 and Matthew 6.

Let's learn how to structure our prayers, following our Savior's inspired guide to effective prayer.

1. Did Jesus begin by telling His disciples to repeat His example prayer over and over again, or were they to pray in a *similar way* — "After this manner"? Matt. 6:9. Didn't He tell them not to repeat the same prayer every time? Verse 7.

Notice that Jesus Himself did not call this the "Lord's Prayer" as men have done, or in any way encourage His disciples to memorize this particular prayer and repeat it over and over. He had just forbidden them to do that!

Jesus was simply outlining the correct approach to God in prayer and the basic things for which we should pray. Pray thus, not pray this, was Jesus' plain instruction.

2. How did Jesus begin His example of a complete prayer? Matt. 6:9.

Jesus came to reveal the Father to mankind (John 1:18). And He always addressed the Father in His prayers. This Father-child relationship is open to all of us. Such a private and intimate relationship should be as real as the physical relationships we are to have with our own fathers or children of the flesh.

3. Where does Jesus say the Father resides? Matt. 6:9.

Christ said that our Father is in heaven. When you address the Father in your private prayers, realize that you have a personal audience with the Supreme Ruler of the universe! Most people would treasure a private audience with one of this world's rulers. Think how infinitely greater is our privilege of coming daily to the very throne room of the universe, to talk with the Ruler over all!

4. Are we to "hallow" the Father's name when we pray to Him? Matt. 6:9, last four words.

As we begin our prayers, we should not only address and think of God as our Father, but also praise and venerate His name, His office, His character and His beneficence.

God's name and all that it stands for is to be held in absolute reverence. Our deep respect and awe for our heavenly Father should be total. Addressing God in this attitude of praise, worship and adoration (see Ps. 18:1-2, 104:33) focuses our attention on the greatness of the Being to whom we are praying.

5. How did Jesus continue His sample prayer? Matt. 6:10, first sentence.

This section of Jesus' prayer outline is perhaps the most overlooked and misunderstood of all. Praying "Thy Kingdom come" is asking that God's literal government be set up on this earth through the return of Jesus Christ as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16)! It is yearning and aching for the time when real peace will be ushered in and all mankind will know the truth of God (Isa. 11:9). Then there will be no more starvation and want. We will be in the prophesied time of "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:19-21) under the government of God, when the Ten Com-

MINI STUDY

mandments will be the standard for daily life everywhere.

6. But before God's Kingdom can come, did Jesus say that the advance news of its coming must be proclaimed as a "witness unto all nations"? Matt. 24:14.

Those who have their hearts in this end-time Work of God are praying daily that the broadcasting and publishing of this really good news to the world by God's Church today will expand in ever-increasing power and authority.

7. What did Jesus say in the second part of Matthew 6:10?

In this section of your prayers you should ask God to help you understand and surrender to His will. Ask God to help you study and understand the foundation of all knowledge, the Holy Bible, in which He reveals His will for mankind.

Also ask for God's help, inspiration and guidance in expressing His love, joy, warmth and affection to all your fellowmen. Ask Him to help you be long-suffering and gentle. Ask for meekness and humility and for the power of self-control over your temper, weaknesses and lusts.

Ask for the living faith of Jesus Christ to trust God totally — to know that His way and His law are right — and that He stands behind and backs up His will, His laws and His promises to those who serve Him.

8. What is the next petition of Jesus' prayer outline? Matt. 6:11. Can we ask this in confidence if we are seeking first God's Kingdom and His righteousness? Verse 33, I John 3:22.

Although certainly not put first, this request is necessary. We can sincerely ask God to supply our daily needs as long as we are seeking first the spiritual things of God, such as keeping His commandments.

In your personal requests you can detail your needs and ask God to guide you to do your part. God knows of these needs even before we ask Him (Matt. 6:8). However, He has not promised to automatically supply what we do not ask for.

9. Is our "daily bread" dual? Matt. 4:4. Who did Jesus say is the spiritual "bread of life"? John 6:35.

Come to God through daily prayer and imbibe of Christ through daily Bible study, and He will supply your daily spiritual needs as well. You have as much need of daily spiritual food as physical food — and God promises you both, if you will ask Him and strive to learn of His ways.

10. Are we also to ask forgiveness of our sins? Matt. 6:12 ("debts" should be translated *sins*).

All of us sin daily in one way or another. We need to sincerely recognize and repent of our daily sins, and then ask God to forgive us. Remember to ask that "our," not *my*, sins be forgiven. Learn to be concerned for other spirit-begotten Christians and have godly love and compassion for them as well.

11. Should we also be forgiving toward others? Verses 12, 14-15.

Remember that you may ask God's forgiveness only if you first forgive others. If you cannot first rid yourself of feelings of bitterness, resentment or hatred toward others, then ask God to clean you up and replace the spirit of hate with His spirit of love so that your prayers won't be hindered.

12. What is the last request of Jesus' example prayer? Matt. 6:13, first part. But doesn't the Bible elsewhere state that God does not tempt anyone? Jas. 1:13. Is it rather the devil and his demons who are stalking us, watching for a chance to tempt and even destroy us when we are off our guard? I Pet. 5:8.

Jesus' statement in Matthew 6:13 is more correctly rendered from the original Greek: "Bring us not into sore trial, but deliver us from the evil one." God tempts no man, but He does permit us to fall into trials and troubles of our own or Satan the devil's devising, if we are not keeping close to God and seeking His guidance and help every day.

We should pray daily and earnestly that God would not permit us to be brought into any "sore" or severe trial or temptation, and that He would give us the spiritual help to master any wrong desires and to do His will daily.

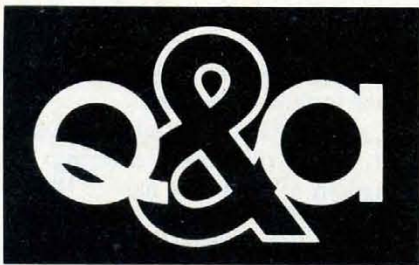
13. Before closing our prayers, in whose name should we acknowledge that we are praying? John 16:23.

As God's children we can rightfully ask the Father for things "in Jesus' name" when we know it is His will — that His authority stands behind our requests.

14. How did Jesus say we ought to close our prayers to the Father? Matt. 6:13, last part.

As Jesus' inspired outline of prayer begins with praise and adoration of God, so does it close. This reminds us, again, to whom we are praying and of the character and office of the true God who rules over the nations of men.

Finally, as Jesus shows by this example prayer, we are to affirm that what we have prayed is so, and that we really mean it by concluding with "Amen." *Amen* simply means "be it so." □



Can you tell me how the cross symbol came to have religious significance?

Many assume that the early Christian Church revered the cross as part of its religious observance. Quite the contrary. The cross, in many shapes and forms, was used centuries before Christ by abject pagans! Notice a few of the many examples:

- In the British Museum is a statue of the Assyrian king Samsi-Vul, son of Shalmaneser. Around his neck is an almost perfect Maltese cross. On an accompanying figure of Ashur-nasir-pal is a similar cross.

- The ancient Greek goddess Diana is pictured with a cross over her head, in much the same way that the "Virgin Mary" is represented by many medieval artists.

- Bacchus, the Greek god of wine, is often pictured wearing a headdress adorned with crosses.

- Different types of crosses were used in Mexico centuries before the Spaniards arrived.

- The Egyptians used cross symbols in abundance, as did the Hindus.

The surprising thing is that the Christian use of the cross did not begin until the time of Constantine, three centuries after Christ. Archaeologists have found no Christian uses of the symbol before that time.

According to one writer, the cross as a "Christian" symbol was taken directly from the pagans: "By the middle of the third century A.D. the churches had either departed from, or had transvested, certain doctrines of the Christian faith. In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system, pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and symbols" (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, article "Cross").

The New Testament does not spe-

cifically describe the instrument upon which Christ died, though Acts 5:30, 10:39 and 13:29 refer to it as a "tree." The Greek word *xulon*, translated "tree" in these verses, can mean a stick, club, tree or other wooden article.

The first person to describe the instrument of Christ's crucifixion as a two-beamed cross was Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho* XCI), and he wrote more than a century after the resurrection.

There is absolutely no evidence that God's true Church ever used the cross symbol in any shape or form. Nowhere does the Bible command such a use, which it surely would if God intended this of Christians.

Only after three centuries, after a "Christianity" much different from that of the New Testament had developed, do we find professing Christians using the symbol — and they adopted it from pagan worship.

What is the first chapter of Ezekiel about? What was it Ezekiel saw?

Notice the account of what happened: "I was among the captives by the river of Chebar . . . and I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1). Here is a picture of the very throne of the One who later became Jesus Christ!

Ezekiel saw a great whirlwind (verse 4) in the midst of which were four living creatures (verse 5), carrying, over their heads, an expanse of translucent material (verse 22) the color of glass or crystal. On this expanse of beautiful, crystalline material was a throne (verse 26)!

Seated upon the throne was One "as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward [compare with Rev. 1:13-16], and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. . . . This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezek. 1:26-28).

What about the cherubim and wheels under God's throne? Their function is to transport God's throne wherever He desires to go (Ezek.

1:24-25). The Bible shows in other scriptures (Ps. 18:10, Ezek. 10:1-22) that God does not always remain in His heaven, but has at times come down to this earth. When He comes in all His glory, He comes sitting on His throne and the angelic creatures under the throne carry Him about with the speed of lightning (Ezek. 1:13).

What did Christ mean when He told a man, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. 8:22)?

The context of Christ's statement reveals that He offered this man a special opportunity to participate in His ministry and teach the way that leads to eternal life (Luke 9:59-60). When this man said that he had to first go and bury his father, Christ told him to let the dead (spiritually dead) bury their dead.

Was Christ denying this man the opportunity to attend his father's funeral? Obviously not! A funeral only takes a few hours and Christ continually showed that Christians are to have compassion and display proper respect for others. He was even present at funerals during His ministry, where He raised the deceased to life again (John 11:17-44, Luke 7:11-15).

Why, then, did Christ answer this man in such a manner? He realized what the man said was nothing more than an excuse. The young man's father was, most probably, an elderly man about to die. This man, realizing his father's condition, told Christ in effect that he did not want to get involved in God's Work until after his father was dead and buried. This indicates that he placed undue emphasis on family ties and other mundane, worldly matters pertaining to this physical life. He could have found someone to fulfill his responsibility toward his father if he had wanted to. That is why Christ told him to let the spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1 — those not being called now) be concerned with such physical matters.

No one should allow himself to be hindered by physical circumstances (the cares of this world) from having a part in God's Work once he has been called. Jesus was teaching that it is more important to be concerned

with doing God's Work and salvation than any other matters (Matt. 6:33).

I would like to know why Christ only mentioned six of the Ten Commandments in Matthew 19:16-19. Surely the other commandments are in force as well, aren't they?

They certainly are! David said all of God's commandments are sure and stand forever (Ps. 111:7-8).

Christ did not need to enumerate all of the commandments. His hearer knew them. All He needed to do was mention several to show which set of commandments He was referring to as a supreme rule of conduct — so the person would know He was speaking of the Ten Commandments and not the commands of the Sanhedrin.

Notice the commandments Christ did mention: "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These are the last six, which explain man's duty to man.

Christ's hearer needed to be reminded of the commandments dealing with his duty to his fellow men — that tell a person how to love his neighbor. This rich young man's refusal to use his great wealth for the good of others (Matt. 19:22) proved he did not love his neighbors.

Notice, now, the commandments Christ did not refer to directly: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . . nor serve them . . . Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . . Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:3-8). Since these commands are not mentioned, does this mean it is all right to worship other gods, curse and break the Sabbath? Of course not! The Jews understood this.

Jesus inspired James to write that we must keep every point of the law — not just one or two, or even half of them. He who offends in one point is guilty of all (Jas. 2:10). To break any of the Ten Commandments is to be guilty of sin! □

Love of God

(Continued from page 22)

of selfishness and *get* has caused all this world's evils, but a Christian will not demand to have his own way at the expense of others.

Is not easily provoked (same verse). Love eliminates wrong anger. When God gave us His Spirit at baptism, He intended that we conduct ourselves according to His character and that we be of the same mind as Christ (I Tim. 1:7, Phil. 2:5). Christ was compassionate, sympathetic, slow to anger (Neh. 9:17). Should not we be so in dealing with the unconverted and even our brethren? There is a time for righteous indignation (Eph. 4:26). Christ Himself was angry on occasion, but He channeled His aggression perfectly. Wrong anger results from our lack of patience, kindness, generosity, courtesy and unselfishness. One who controls his anger is better than the mighty (Prov. 16:32). Remember that a soft answer eases the tension of an angry confrontation (Prov. 15:1).

Thinketh no evil (I Cor. 13:5). God's way is one of forgiving and forgetting the evil deeds of others, when repented of. It replaces unnecessary suspicion with trust. This approach builds friendship. Stop and analyze how much this world suffers because of evil thought.

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth (verse 6). A person filled with love doesn't like to see others sin and suffer the consequences. Instead he enjoys the truth that frees a person from sin and unhappiness. As Jesus said, "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Beareth all things (I Cor. 13:7). Love doesn't avoid obligations. It is willing to take on responsibilities. Bearing one another's burdens fulfills the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). Jesus gladly took upon Himself the burden of being our Savior (John 10:17-18). It required a tremendous sacrifice, but His love for us made it possible. We need the same love for others.

Believeth all things (I Cor. 13:7). Believing all things doesn't remove us from reality. It makes more real to us that God is about to usher in His perfect government to replace today's pitiful societies. History has shown

that we cannot believe in man's ways, but we will soon *all* believe God. We are frequently too negative — we doubt instead of believe.

Consider God's optimism. He said that, for a rich man, entering the Kingdom of God was harder than a camel passing through the eye of a needle. True, with men this is impossible. But, Christ said, with God all things are possible (Matt. 19:23-26). When you are burdened with trials and troubles ask yourself, "Do I believe God?"

Hopeth all things (I Cor. 13:7). Christian love is filled with hope for the future. There is the hope generated by God's presence in our lives and in the lives of others. There is the ultimate hope of God's Kingdom being established and having a part in it. We are to lay hold of this hope (Heb. 6:18) — when we are filled with it we will radiate happiness.

Endureth all things (I Cor. 13:7). Love endures hardship. It helps us have the right attitude when things are difficult. True Christianity causes all things to work for good (Rom. 8:28). Endurance is essential for salvation (Matt. 24:13). We must have it to face the frightening events to precede Christ's return to earth.

God is love

Relationships work well when love is present in them. When it isn't, unhappy relationships exist. This is true among marital partners, family members, friends, casual acquaintances, fellow employees and members of God's Church. We all need love to make our relationships work.

God is love (I John 4:8)! Love literally emanates from Him. Everything God has created for us and is doing through us is done in love. What greater example of love is there than the fantastic plan God has designed to change humans into literal members of the God Family?

By following Christ's example and obeying God's laws, we can have the right relationships among ourselves. By submitting ourselves to God we can be prepared to enter His Kingdom. The Kingdom of God will be based on love — and we must grow in God's love to be there! "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Phil. 1:9). □

NEW TESTAMENT

(Continued from page 17)

announced. They bowed before Him and worshiped.

When they returned to their flocks, they told other shepherds about the baby Savior they had seen. Their story spread quickly and it caused curiosity and skepticism among those who heard it (verse 17).

The homage of Simeon and Anna

When the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day were over, the crowds began to leave the area. Joseph was able to find a house for his little family.

When the Baby was 8 days old, He was circumcised and named "Jesus" (verse 21). About a month later the parents took Him to the Temple at Jerusalem to present Him to the Eternal and make a sacrificial offering according to the law of God (Lev. 12:1-8).

King Herod the Great was restoring the Zerubbabel Temple, making it larger and more beautiful. King Herod began his work about 20 years before Jesus was born, and it was finished by another king in A.D. 64.

A devout man of God named Simeon came into the outer court of this Temple and stood watching the persons that passed in. The Holy Spirit of God that moves upon men's minds had assured Simeon he would live to see the Eternal's Christ (Luke 2:22-26).

Leaning against a pillar, Simeon waited and watched. An hour passed. Then two. He stiffened. A well-dressed couple approached, and the young woman carried a tiny Baby wrapped in a soft wool blanket. Her husband carried a small wooden cage that confined two doves. They obviously had come to make the sacrificial offerings to God as required at the birth of a child.

"Ah! Blessed be God, who has fulfilled His promise to me!" Simeon exclaimed as he stopped before the parents. Mary and Joseph watched in wonder as Simeon bowed.

"Excuse me. I won't take much of your time, but I want you to know that this is the happiest day of my life! This Child of yours will bring salvation to all people." Leaning down, he looked into the tiny face.

"You may hold Him if you'd like," Mary

offered, seeing the old gentleman's sincere joy. She placed the small bundle in his arms.

"Thank you, thank you." He cradled the Infant closer to his heart. "Now I'll die in peace. I've seen the One who'll bring salvation to the gentiles and to His own people Israel." He murmured a blessing as he returned the Child to his mother's arms. "This Child will be the downfall and triumph of Israel and He will be a sign that the world will resist. The true reasoning of many hearts will be revealed."

Standing in amazement, Mary and Joseph marveled at the elderly man's words. His eyes moved to her face. "Your soul will be pierced with sorrow as sharp as a sword." Turning away, he moved off into the crowd.

"Strange," Joseph said.

Before Mary could comment on the incident, a thin, white-haired woman spoke to them. She was Anna, a prophetess, and she thanked God that she had now seen the One for whom all Israel waited (verses 36-38).

King Herod receives visitors

Meanwhile, a delegation of foreign dignitaries were on their way to Jerusalem, intent on their purpose of worshiping the new King of the Jews (Matt. 2:1-2).

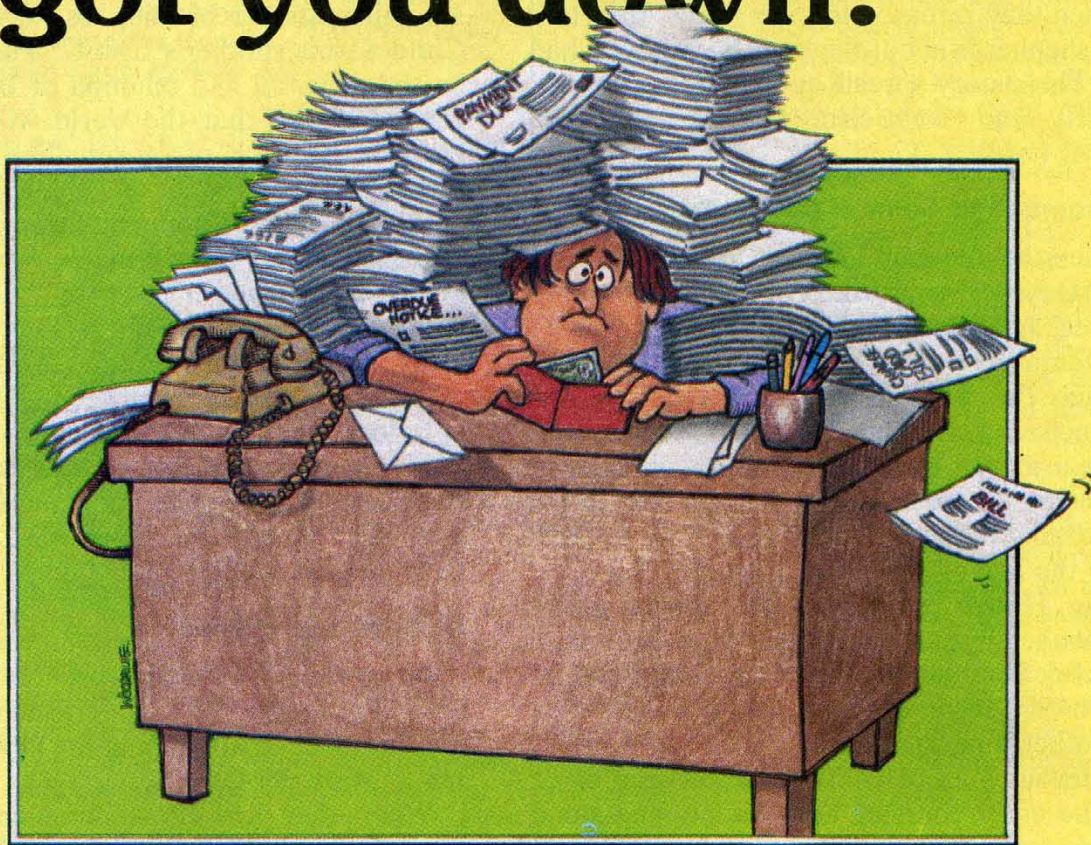
When they arrived in Jerusalem from the east, they went directly to King Herod's court to ask where they could find the new young King.

Troubled by their inquiries, King Herod called a meeting of the religious leaders of the day and demanded information about where the King of the Jews was to be born (verse 4). They quoted a prophecy in Micah: "Out of Bethlehem shall come a governor who will rule my people" (Mic. 5:2, paraphrased).

Dismissing them, King Herod once more admitted the foreign travelers into his presence. He urged them to continue on to nearby Bethlehem. Saying that he, too, wanted to worship the young King, he asked them to report back to him if they found Him there.

But the dignitaries did not comply. Following angelic guidance, they found the young Child in a house (Matt. 2:9-10). They presented gifts of gold and precious spices to Him and then, being warned in a dream not to report back to King Herod, they left by a different route, avoiding Jerusalem altogether. □

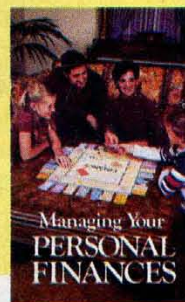
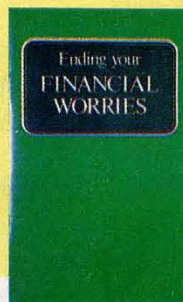
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