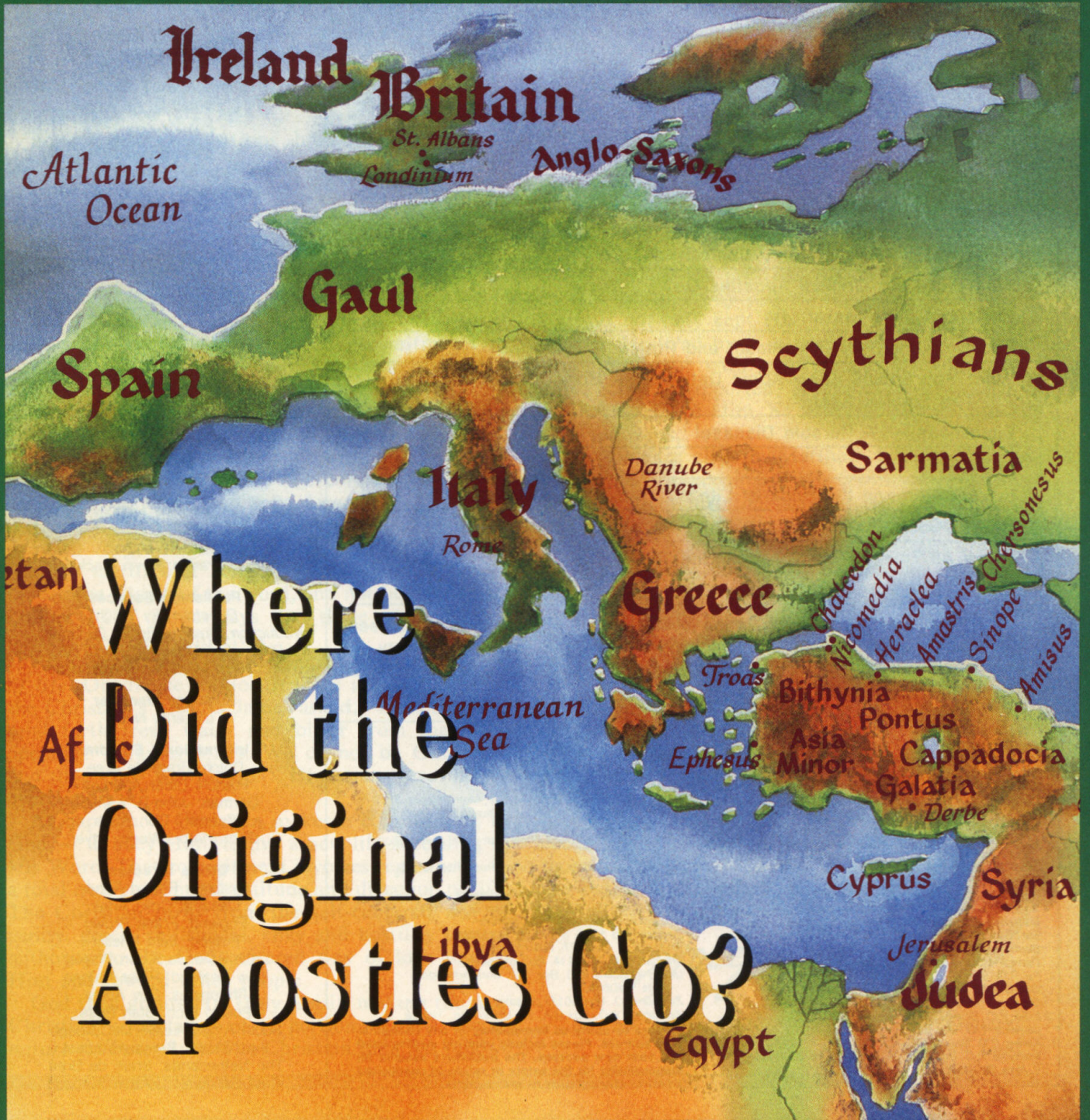


The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



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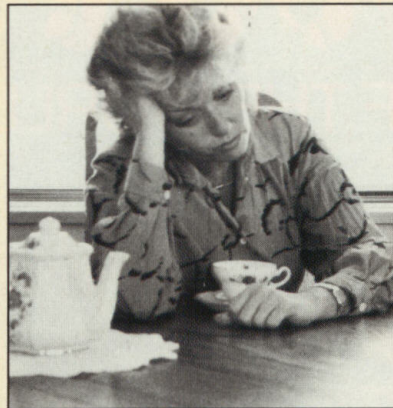
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COVER: Why has the truth about the journeys of the original 12 apostles been hidden from public knowledge? Their travels have been cloaked in mystery — until now. Read "Where Did the Original Apostles Go?" beginning on page 2. Map by Ken Tunell.

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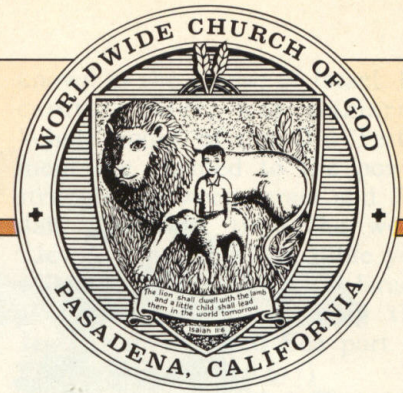
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GOOD NEWS PERSONAL



Stay Committed!

With more than half of 1987 already history, perhaps this would be a good time to look back at the resolutions we may have made as this Roman-calendar year began.

New year's resolutions have become something of a tradition for many people. There is something about the ending of a year that seems to create an opportunity for an individual to close one chapter of life and open another. There is a subtle element of hope that, *somehow*, next year will bring a better me.

But life doesn't seem to work that way. Most people find their earnestly made commitments to improve their habits fall by the wayside after only a few weeks or even days.

The beginning of a Christian life is also a sort of closing of one chapter of life and opening of another. But unlike a typical new year's resolution, the Christian cannot afford to allow his commitment to be carelessly neglected and soon forgotten.

The Christian life must instead be one of vigilance to never forget the deep meaning and value of the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God calls Christians to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). James says that those who are only hearers *deceive* themselves.

True Christianity is a lifelong process. It is a *way of life*. Obedience to God reaches into *all* areas of the Christian's life. As James asked, "Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?" (James 3:11). We cannot be Christians and live "as we please." Christians are to be overcomers.

At baptism, a Christian makes a commitment to God — to obey Him, to live a new life according to His Word. That commitment involves repentance — a total *change* of mind, attitude and direction of life. The Christian *turns* from the self-centered way of vanity, greed, selfishness, envy and hostility toward authority to the God-centered way of love toward Him and toward other people.

God then grants His Holy Spirit, making the new Christian a partaker of a portion of His divine *nature* (II Peter 1:4). The Christian then has fellow-

ship with God, having been reconciled to Him through Jesus' sacrifice in payment for the penalty of sin. He begins to abide in Christ and, as a true Christian, to walk with Christ.

But that is only the beginning. Ahead still lies a whole lifetime of *continuing* that walk with Christ. He must *continue* to turn from the actions, attitudes and thoughts that are contrary to God's way. God is merciful. *He is willing to forgive as often as we are willing to repent*. But a Christian's repentance and his commitment to God and God's way of life must be *real*. He needs to *understand* just how much *better* God's ways are than his own, and to *believe* in His law and way just as Jesus did!

Jesus not only kept His Father's law, He *agreed* with it. He lived by it in spirit and in truth — not grudgingly, nor with indifference. He wholeheartedly, actively supported, promoted and *believed* in it. It was part of Him. So it must become with His true followers.

Jesus makes clear in Matthew 5:17-48 and elsewhere that the keeping of His commandments must be *more* than just the physical actions of keeping them. It must be in the heart. It must be a way of life — not only a way of *doing*, but also a way of *thinking*, "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5).

Conditions in this God-rejecting world are growing steadily worse. The Bible prophesies that the crisis that will usher in the Great Tribulation and the end of this age will burst upon the world *suddenly!* When it comes, it will *shock the nations*.

Don't let yourself become caught up in the cares of this world and be taken by surprise. The apostle Peter admonished, "Be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10). Let *your* commitment to live by "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4) be far more than a mere "new year's resolution." Let it be the *permanent*, lifetime calling God intended!

Joseph W. Teach

Pastor General
Worldwide Church of God

Where Did the Original Apostles Go?

By Herman L. Hoeh

When Paul preached the Gospel at Rome, where was Peter? Why is the book of Acts strangely silent about the original 12 apostles after their departure from the land of Judea? Here is one of history's best-kept secrets!

Why has the truth about the journeys of the original 12 apostles been hidden from public knowledge?

You read plainly of Paul's travels through Cyprus, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy. But the movements of the original 12 apostles are a mystery. Why?

Did it ever seem strange to you

that most of the New Testament, following the book of Acts, was written by Paul, and not by Peter? Did you ever wonder why, after Peter initiated the preaching of the Gospel to the gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10 and 11), he and others of the 12 apostles suddenly vanished from view? And why only Peter and John reappear, for a fleeting moment, in Jerusalem at the inspired conference recorded in Acts 15?

You read, after Acts 15, only of Paul's ministry to the gentiles.

Why? What happened to the 12 apostles?

Let's understand.

There is a reason why the journeys of the 12 apostles have been cloaked in mystery — until now.

Now it can be told

You probably have been told that Jesus chose the 12 disciples, ordained them apostles, sent them, first, to preach to the Jews. When the Jews, as a nation, rejected that message, you probably have supposed that the apostles turned to the gentiles.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

It was the apostle Paul, called years later as a special apostle,

who was commissioned to bear the Gospel to the *gentiles*.

To Ananias, who was sent to baptize Paul, Christ gave this assurance: "Go, for he" — Saul, later named Paul — "is a chosen



vessel of Mine to bear My name before gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

It was Paul, not any of the 12, who said, "From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).

Jesus would not have called Paul as a special apostle to carry the Gospel to the gentiles, if the original 12 had been commissioned to preach to the gentiles.

Then *to whom* — and *where* — were the 12 apostles sent?

Jesus' commission tells

Notice the surprising answer — in Matthew 10:5-6: "These twelve Jesus sent out and *commanded* them, saying, 'Do *not* go into the way of the Gentiles, and do *not* enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the *lost* sheep of the *house of Israel*.'" —

Jesus meant what He said! He "commanded them." The 12 were forbidden to spread the Gospel among the gentiles. It was Paul who was commissioned to that work. The 12 were to go, instead, to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" — the Lost Ten Tribes.

Granted, Christ did send Peter to the home of Cornelius (Acts 10 and 11) to open the Gospel to the gentiles, but Peter's life mission was to carry the Gospel to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Peter merely opened the door, as the chief apostle, for the gentiles. It was Paul who went through the door and brought the

Gospel to the nations. Granted, Peter, in his capacity of chief apostle, made one trip to the gentile Samaritans. But that was not to bring the Gospel to them. Philip had done that! Peter and John merely prayed for the Samaritans that they would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5, 14-17).

Now we know to whom the 12 apostles were sent. They were not sent to the gentiles, but to "the lost sheep of the House of Israel." It was Paul who went to the gentiles.

Now to discover *where* Peter and others of the 12 went after they left the land of Judea.

That has been one of the best-kept secrets of history. If the world had known the lands to which the 12 apostles journeyed, the House of Israel would never have been *lost* from view! But God intended, for a special purpose, which few understand, that

Assyria
Babylonia
MEDIA
Parthia

the identity of the lost House of Israel should not be revealed until this pulsating 20th century.

"House of Israel" identified

From the sons of Jacob — surnamed Israel — sprang 12 tribes. Under David they were united as one nation — Israel. After the death of Solomon, David's son, the 12 tribes were divided into two nations. The tribe of Judah split off from the nation Israel in order to retain the king, whom Israel had rejected. Benjamin went with Judah. The new nation thus formed, with its capital at Jerusalem, was known as the "House of Judah." Its people were called Jews.

The northern 10 tribes, who rejected Solomon's son, became

known as the House of Israel. Its capital, later, was Samaria. Whole books of the Old Testament are devoted to the power struggles between Israel and Judah. The first time the word "Jews" appears in the Bible you will discover the king of Israel, allied with Syria, driving the Jews from the Red Sea port of Elath (II Kings 16:6-7).

The northern 10 tribes, the House of Israel, were overthrown and led into captivity (721 B.C.) by the mighty Assyrian Empire. Its people were led into captivity beyond the Euphrates River and planted in Assyria and the cities of the Medes around Lake Urmia, southwest of the Caspian Sea.

The House of Israel never returned to the area. The nation became known in history as the Lost Ten Tribes. To them Jesus sent the 12 apostles!

The House of Judah — the Jewish people — remained in Palestine until the Babylonian invasions under King Nebuchadnezzar more than 100 years later. Judah was deported to Mesopotamia. Seventy years after the rise of Babylon to a position of world power, the Jews in 538 B.C. returned to the original land of Israel.

In history they now became commonly known as "Israel" because they were the only descendants of Jacob — or Israel — now living in Israel. The 10 tribes — the House of Israel — became lost in the land of their exile.

Jesus "came to His own" — the House of Judah, the Jews — "and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). Jesus was of the lineage of David, of the House of Judah. When His own people — the Jews — rejected Him, He did not turn to the gentiles. It was Paul who did. In-

Judea
Jerusalem

illustrations and map by Ken Tunell

stead, Jesus said to the gentile woman, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24).

To fulfill, later, that divine mission — for Jesus was soon

Asia Cappadocia Galatia

slain on Golgotha to pay for the sins of the world — He commissioned His original 12 disciples. They were commanded, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

They did go, but history has lost sight of where they went. Their journeys have been shrouded in mystery — until now!

What New Testament reveals

The history of the early New Testament Church is preserved in the book of Acts. But have you ever noticed that Acts ends in the middle of the story? Luke doesn't



Built by the ancient Romans, these roads are typical of those the apostles used in carrying the Gospel during the first century. (Photos: Wide World, the Bettmann Archive)

even finish the life of Paul after his two years' imprisonment.

Why?

You will find the answer in Christ's commission to Paul. Even before Paul was baptized, Christ had planned the future work he was to accomplish.

First, Paul was to teach the gentiles — which he did in Cyprus, Asia Minor and Greece. Second, he was to appear before kings — an event brought about by a two-year imprisonment at Rome. At the end of that two-year period, during which no accusers appeared, Paul would automatically have been released according to Roman law. It is at this point that Luke strangely breaks off the story of Paul's life. See Acts 28:31.

But Paul's third mission was not yet accomplished. Christ had chosen Paul for a threefold purpose — "to bear [His] name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). There is the answer. He, too, was to end his work among the Lost Ten Tribes!

Luke was not permitted by Christ to include in Acts the final journeys of Paul's life. It would have revealed the whereabouts of the children of Israel.

It was not then God's time to make that known. But the moment has now come, in this climactic "time of the end," to pull back the shroud of history and reveal where the original 12 apostles went.

Now turn to the book of James. To whom is the book ad-

ressed? Read it: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: greeting" (James 1:1).

You probably never noticed that before. This book is not addressed to the gentiles. It is not addressed exclusively to Judah — the Jews. It is addressed to all 12 tribes. To the House of Judah and to the House of Israel — the Lost Ten Tribes.

Have you ever noticed that the letter of James, like the book of Acts, ends abruptly, without the normal salutations? Read it — James 5:20.

Compare it with Paul's epistles. In the original inspired Greek New Testament every one of Paul's letters ends with an "Amen." Every one of the four gospels ends with an "Amen." The book of Revelation ends with an "Amen."

This little word *Amen*, of He-

Pontus Bithynia

brew derivation, signifies completion. In the *New King James* (most modern versions are incorrect, and in several instances leave off the proper ending found in the official printed Greek text) every one of the New Testament books ends with an "Amen" ex-





cept *three* — Acts, James and III John. In these three, and these three only, the word “Amen” is not in the inspired original Greek. It is purposely missing. Why?

Three missing words

Each missing “Amen” is a special sign. It indicates God wants us to understand that certain knowledge was not to be made known to the world — until now, when the Gospel is being sent around the world as a final witness before the end of this age.

God purposely excluded from the book of Acts the final chapters in the history of the early true Church. If they had been

included, the identity and whereabouts of Israel and of the true Church would have been revealed. It was part of God’s plan that the House of Israel should lose its identity and think itself gentile.

If the book of James had ended with the ordinary salutation, the nations of Israel would have been disclosed. Paul often ends his letters with names of places and people. See the last verses of Romans, Colossians and Hebrews, for example. This is the very part missing, purposely, from James.

And why is the short letter of III John missing an “Amen”? God did not permit John to make known, in plain language, the full nature of a conspiracy by which some sought to gain control of local congregations, expel those truly converted and loyal to the apostle John and make Christianity acceptable to the majority of the Roman Empire (see III John 9 and 10).

That is why John cut his letter

short. The missing “Amen” is to tell us to look elsewhere in the Bible for the answer. The conspiracy is described, if you have eyes to see, in Revelation 17,

Britain Ireland

Acts 8 and many other chapters of the Bible.

But return, for a moment, to the letter of James.

Wars reveal where

From James 4:1 we learn that wars were being waged among the lost tribes of Israel. “Where do wars and fights come from among you?” asks James.

What wars were these? No wars existed among the Jews until the outbreak, several years later, of the revolt against the

Sarmatia Scythia

Romans. These wars absolutely identify the lost House of Israel — the lands to which the apostles journeyed.

James wrote his book about A.D. 60 (he was martyred two years later, according to Josephus). The world was temporarily at peace — cowed by the fear of Roman military might. Just prior to A.D. 60 only two areas of the world were torn by wars and civil fightings. When you discover which areas these were, you will have located where the Lost Ten Tribes, addressed by James,

Gaul
Italy
GREECE
Spain

were then living. All one need do is search military history for the period immediately before and up to the year A.D. 60. The results will shock you! Those two lands were the British Isles and the Parthian Empire.

But these were not the only lands to which the exiled House of Israel journeyed. Turn, in your Bible, to I Peter.

To whom did Peter write?

To whom did Peter address his letters?

Here it is: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the *strangers* scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (I Peter 1:1, Authorized Version).

These were not gentiles. Peter was not the apostle to the gentiles (Galatians 2:8). Paul was. Peter was chief apostle to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

Notice the word "strangers." It does not mean gentiles. The original Greek is *parepidemos*. It means "a resident foreigner," literally, "an alien alongside." It refers not to gentiles, but to non-

gentiles who dwelt among gentiles, as foreigners and aliens.

Peter was addressing part of the lost 10 tribes who dwelt among the gentiles as aliens or strangers. He was not writing primarily to the Jewish people. He would not have addressed them as "strangers," for he was himself a Jew.

Now notice the regions to which Peter addressed his letter. You may have to look at a Bible map to locate them. They are all located in the northern half of Asia Minor, modern Turkey. These lands lay immediately west of the Parthian Empire.

Paul did not preach in these districts. Paul spent his years in Asia Minor in the southern, or Greek half. "And so I have made it my aim," said Paul, "to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20). Paul did not preach in the areas where Peter and others of the original 12 apostles had carried the Gospel.

Nowhere in your New Testament can you find Paul preaching in Pontus, or Cappadocia, or Bithynia. These regions were under the jurisdiction of Peter and certain of the 12.

Paul did spread the Gospel in the province of Asia — but only in the southern half, in the districts around Ephesus. Paul was expressly forbidden to preach in Mysia, the northern district of the Roman province of Asia (Acts 16:7-8). Those were the regions in which the lost sheep of the House of Israel dwelt as strangers among the gentiles!

Paul did preach, on his first journey, in *southern* Galatia, in the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14). But nowhere in the New Testament do you find Paul journeying into northern Galatia — the area to which Peter addresses his letter to the tribes of Israel.

Remnant of Ten Tribes on shores of Black Sea

Notice the historic proof — confirming Peter's letters — that a remnant of the House of Israel

was settled on the shores of the Black Sea in northern Asia Minor in early New Testament times.

Greek writers, in the time of Christ, recognized that the regions of northern Asia Minor were non-Greek (except for a few Greek trading colonies in the port cities). New peoples, the Greeks tell us, were living in northern Asia Minor in New Testament times. Here is the surprising account of Diodorus of Sicily:

"Many conquered peoples were removed to other homes, and two of these became very great colonies: the one was composed of Assyrians and was removed to the land between Paphlagonia and Pontus, and the other was drawn from Media and planted along the Tanais [the River Don in ancient Scythia — the modern Ukraine, north of the Black Sea, in southern Russia]" (Book II, §43).

Notice the areas from which these colonies came — Assyria and Media. The very areas to which the House of Israel was taken captive! "So Israel was carried away from their own land to *Assyria*, as it is to this day" (II Kings 17:23). "The king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to *Assyria*, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the *cities of the Medes*" (verse 6).

The House of Israel dwelt in captivity as aliens or strangers among the Assyrians. When the Assyrians were later removed from their homeland toward northern Asia Minor, part of the House of Israel migrated with them. We find them still there in New Testament times.

To these people — the lost sheep of the House of Israel — the apostle Peter addresses his first letter.

We shall see later when and where these "lost sheep" migrated from Asia Minor to Northwest Europe.

Now to draw back the curtain of history and see where each of the original 12 apostles preached. You'll be amazed!

(To be continued)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Would you please explain Daniel's prophecy of the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days (Daniel 12:11-12)?

Daniel was told that his prophecies would be sealed until the end of the age, but then God would reveal the meaning to His servants. We are now very near the time when the prophecies will be fulfilled, and God is now revealing what they mean.

These time periods refer to events that will happen to the people of God in this very generation, within the next few years.

Both the 1,290- and 1,335-day periods end with the return of Jesus Christ. And each period begins with a significant event. But first notice the context of Daniel 12 — the time of the end!

Daniel wrote in verse 7, "When the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished."

These events refer back to verse 1, when Michael the archangel stands up for God's people during a time of trouble "such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time."

This is the beginning of the Great Tribulation spoken of by Christ in Matthew 24:21-22. The Great Tribulation will last for three-and-one-half years — "a time, times, and half a time" (Daniel 12:7, Revelation 12:14).

Now to Daniel 12:11: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

This verse seems to indicate the Israelis may restore the twice-daily sacrifice. However, it does not necessarily imply a Temple will be built in our time in Jerusalem. This verse was fulfilled, at least in type, when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Temple during his assault on Jerusalem in 167-164 B.C.

Since this verse also states that

the "daily sacrifice is taken away," the indication is the armies of the "beast" of Revelation 17, upon entering Jerusalem, will stop this daily sacrifice. Should this be the case, the time until the Messiah appears would be 1,290 days, or just more than three and a half years.

Now verse 12: "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days." This verse actually pronounces a blessing on God's people who endure until the 1,335 days — about 1,335 days before Christ's coming.

Since no one knows the day of Christ's coming (Matthew 24:36), we may not know the exact time when the 1,335 days begin. But apparently that is the time when the organized efforts of God's Work to proclaim the Gospel to the world will end.

Forty-five days later, or 1,290 days before the return of Christ, the beast's armies will surround Jerusalem. Those who are worthy will have been warned and taken to a place of refuge God has provided for them (Revelation 12:14-16).

When God's Church is in a place of protection, the 1,260 days ("a time, times, and half a time," or 42 months) of the Great Tribulation will begin. At the end of the 1,260 days, Jesus Christ will return to this earth.

Who or what is the "antichrist" in the Bible?

The Bible does not name any one specific person as the "antichrist." Rather, the Bible speaks of "many antichrists" (I John 2:18) and "many false prophets" with "the spirit of the Antichrist" (I John 4:1-3).

The word *antichrist* simply means one who is "in place of" or one who is "against" Christ. A political or religious leader could be an "antichrist," but so could any number of quite ordinary people. Any one of us could manifest "the spirit of the Antichrist"

if we refuse to submit to God's perfect ways!

The Bible does not prophesy that a single great human personage will take over the world. However, the apostle Paul did warn that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ would not occur until, at the very end of this age, a "man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2:3-4).

When this occurs, Christ's return is imminent!

I have heard there is a giant computer in Brussels, Belgium, called "the beast." This computer supposedly has a number for everybody, and this number is soon to be imprinted on our foreheads and hands. Is this true?

The "beast" mentioned in Bible prophecy is a man, not a machine (Revelation 13:18). When Christ returns, He will throw the beast and his "false prophet" accomplice into a lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

Receiving the beast's number and his mark has to do with giving allegiance to the government and system this dictator will establish, and the false religion that will be part of the system. The Bible uses the terminology "a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads" (Revelation 13:16) to represent one's allegiance by thoughts and works.

The Scriptures teach us that God's law is to be uppermost in our lives — bound upon our hands and as frontlets between our eyes (in our minds). The beast's system will simply be a counterfeit of God's way.

For more information on what Bible prophecy shows is just ahead, request our free booklets *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!* □

Of Punishment and Praise

A father stopped by his daughter's school to drive her home. She was obviously upset. So he asked what happened.

The girl told about a teacher who had just scolded another youngster on the school grounds. "Whenever there is trouble around here, your name is always connected," the teacher sternly warned the girl.

The man's daughter reacted: "Why do they make a federal case out of such a little thing? She's not a troublemaker."

This young woman was "guilty" of being out of sight of the schoolyard supervisor during a school recess.

Her usual "trouble" consisted of sometimes talking in class, chewing gum or not paying attention to the teacher.

She and her friends had never been involved with drugs. Didn't cheat on tests. Were not sexually active. To many adults, these young people would be model 14- and 15-year-olds.

But to this young teacher, they were "troublemakers."

Mind you, I am not condoning breaking school rules. The girl should have been where she was supposed to be. But wisdom is required in dealing with young people when they make mistakes. In other words, the punishment should fit the crime. In those tense moments, words and labels can be devastating.

I couldn't help but think of the mistakes I have made and the

lessons I have learned rearing five children and spending 25 years as an educator. I'm sure my children and some of my students would tell you that, unfortunately, I did not learn them soon enough.

Often, as parents, teachers or adults in general, we expect too much of our children. Or our students. Or even our neighbors' children.

First things first

The first step in dealing with our children when they make mistakes is to determine just how bad the problem is.

Lying, stealing, cheating, vandalism, drug abuse and immorality are critical problems. They must be dealt with swiftly and firmly.

But should a parent scream at a child for spilling milk? Or spank a child for wetting the bed? Should a teacher ridicule a child for talking in class?

If you yell, scream, spank or send a child to the principal for those infractions, what in the world will you do when you have to deal with the really severe problems?

A teacher friend of mine expressed it well when he said, "The only weapons we adults seem to have in our arsenals are nuclear."

Think about it. A nuclear



bomb destroys everything. Good. Bad. Big. Small.

With children, a more "conventional" type of warfare is needed when dealing with the ordinary problems of growing up.

Some parents explode over every infraction. But there is a great deal of difference between having a messy room and snorting cocaine.

Determining the difference

My wife and I used to fret over our oldest daughter and her messy room. In spite of everything we said, she just couldn't or wouldn't keep it as neat as we wanted. Sometimes we got very upset with her.

Then she grew up and went a thousand miles away to college. We straightened up the room. We made it as neat as a pin.

Sometimes we would just stand and look at the room. We even wished it had a few things lying out of place.

Her grandmother wrote this



*And now they are either moved
away
Or neatly put in place
And now there are only memories
Of dates and curls and lace.*

*No tender arms around my neck
No more good-
night kiss,
The little lassie
that I love
I'm certainly
going to miss.*

*Please, God, set
an angel
To guard her day
by day
And always in
Your pathway
You'll lead her,
Lord, I pray.*

You can imagine how conscience-stricken

we were that we had made such an issue out of books and clothing on the floor.

When she was a teenager, we had visions of her living in clutter the rest of her life. (Funny thing is, all our fretting was for naught. She has now been married a couple of years and is a very neat housekeeper.)

Now her 17- and 15-year-old sisters continue the "messy room" syndrome. But we don't make quite the issue out of it we once did.

Don't get me wrong. There is nothing improper in expecting a high standard of cleanliness and neatness. But don't make such a big deal out of it.

You see, leaving clothing on the floor is a different "sin" from robbing a local store.

Words of praise

Not only must parents learn to discern the severity of a problem, we must learn that compliments and words of praise have their place as well.

As parents we always seem to

be shouting out orders. But too much yelling is just as wrong as no correction at all.

And a home void of praise is an empty shell.

Last summer our then 16-year-old daughter got her first regular job. When it was time to return to school full-time, the people in her office had a little party. They gave her a bouquet of roses. Her boss called her in to compliment her on her work and gave her a \$100 bonus.

That may sound like a wonderful story.

And it is.

But there is a painful part in it. I realized she had to receive her compliments, flowers and bonus from people who only knew her for three months. We had known her for 16 years and failed to express our appreciation nearly enough.

It sometimes seemed to her all I ever said was, "Shari, eat your peas. Shari, pick up that mess. Shari, finish your homework or you'll be in big trouble. If you don't stop that, I'll . . ." etc.

It's not easy being a parent, is it? As parents it is our responsibility to guide, teach and, when necessary, correct our children.

If we don't, we abdicate an important responsibility. Children should not just grow up. Correction is essential to a successful life.

But be certain the punishment fits the crime. A nuclear explosion destroys everything. Loving correction provides direction and stability.

There is a great deal of difference between the two.

As Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

As for praise, it can't be said better than Solomon's advice: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). □

special poem for us on that sad occasion:

Empty Room

*I got up this morning
And wandered through the house
Everything was just as quiet
As one lone country mouse.*

*As I looked into her room
With everything in place
I realized more than ever
I was in the human race.*

*The time had gone so quickly
The years have raced away
No laughter of my darling
Will ring out here today.*

*The tears quickly began to flow
As I stood by her door,
And then I gently closed it
And walked across the floor.*

*There were no shoes, books or
clothes
Strewn upon the floor,
The many times I had wished
She would put them up once
more.*

Illustration by Kirk Botero

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Dating

The Singles Scene

The single "life-style" is highly publicized as an attractive alternative to marriage and family. As our series of articles on dating continues, we offer important counsel for singles.

By Greg R. Albrecht

What's behind the dramatic increase in the number of men and women who are defined as single today?

Some men and women, because of various circumstances, are forced to remain single through no choice of their own, though many would like to be married.

Many other young people, however, are choosing not to marry, or to delay marriage. As divorces increase, more and more ex-marrieds are living alone and re-entering the world of singles.

Liberal educators and most of the mass media have popularized the single life as an exciting, fulfilling alternative to marriage and families:

Independence is better than commitment. Sexual freedom and experimentation are more desirable than loving monogamy. Selfish personal pursuits and satisfaction are more important than giving oneself in caring service to a mate and children. Marriage itself is outdated.

Or so we are told!

Yet loneliness, alienation, mental illness and sexual diseases are also increasing in society, as marriage, the family and traditional sex roles erode.

If you are single now, for whatever reason, you need to understand the Bible-based princi-

ples we will cover in this article. If you are a parent, you need to make a special effort to teach these principles to your children.

This knowledge, rejected by the world as a whole, is a basic key to happiness in life!

The war between the sexes

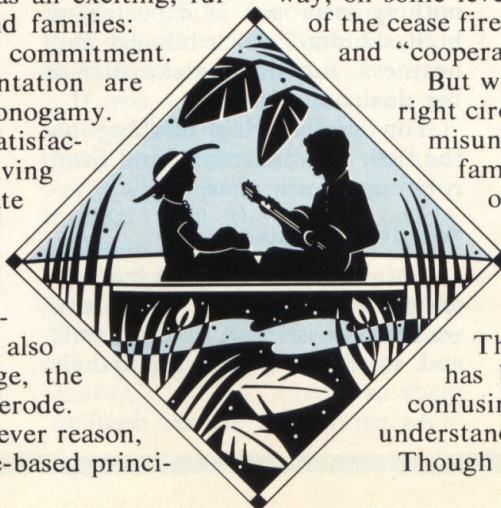
Decades of social upheaval have created the climate in which the single life is increasingly popular. Yet one by-product of these changing attitudes and values is the further erosion of understanding between the sexes.

The so-called war between the sexes has given way, on some levels, to an uneasy truce. The terms of the cease fire are "toleration," "understanding" and "cooperation."

But while these are all virtues under the right circumstances, these terms have been misunderstood to mean the rejection of family government, the abandonment of traditional sex roles and the acceptance of behavior that directly violates the laws of the almighty God!

The results have been deadly. The movement toward "equality" has blended sexual differences into a confusing mixture that neither sex can understand or cope with.

Though we discussed sex roles in an earlier



article in this series, it is good to review, here, some foundational statements from the Bible.

The Bible tells us that God gave different responsibilities and characteristics to men and women in the beginning: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

What, exactly, does it mean to be a male or a female? How should we think, act and relate to the opposite sex?

"Unisex" invades fashion

In the past few decades increasing pressure has been on the sexes to blend. "Unisex" invaded fashion. The equal rights movement put men and women at odds in the political arena. Confused sex roles blared from the media in the guise of entertainment.

The result? Mass confusion — even ambivalence in terms of sexual identity!

You need to understand that the blending of sexual roles has twisted and perverted God-given concepts and standards. Many people, frankly, wonder who and what they are and should be. Both married people and singles have been hurt in their relationships with one another.

Christians know that the god of this world — Satan (II Corinthians 4:4) — is masterminding this entire scenario. Satan tells us there is no difference between men and women — that we should be very much alike.

Therefore, women say: "Where are the men? We just meet irresponsible, immature little boys — we never meet any real men!"

The men counter: "Why don't women stop being so aggressive and hard? Aren't there any sweet, gentle, feminine women anymore?"

Men, Satan wants you uncertain and hesitant, lacking the qualities of a strong and intelligent lead-



er, insensitive to the needs and desires of women, afraid of making any commitments.

Women, Satan wants you to feel that toughness works better than softness, that you should always be in charge, that you must compete with men at every level.

No, we're not saying that men should be cavemen types, with no regard for a woman's feelings, or that women should be spineless, clinging vines.

But we are saying that men should be men and women should be women.

Ephesians 5 is a major text in explaining how men and women should relate to each other, especially in marriage and in the dating and courtship leading up to marriage. This Bible passage speaks not only of the marital relationship, but of the basic difference between the sexes. These differences have to do with physiological and psychological differences that God ordained and created in us.

Paul tells us that a man is to lovingly lead and that a woman is to happily follow (Ephesians 5:22-23). These values are defined by God and are not contingent upon cultural conditioning.

God's way is cooperation

Note that Ephesians 5:21 says *all* should be "submitting to one another in the fear of God." God's way is cooperation, not competition.

Male and female, quantitatively different, are to cooperate and live in harmony. To cooperate, you must understand your fellow human beings.

Scientific research and thousands of years of human experience point up numerous physical, mental and emotional differences between men and women. Don't let anyone tell you any different!

These are differences God created to allow men

You need to understand that the blending of sexual roles has perverted God-given standards.

Many people, frankly, wonder who and what they are and should be. Both married people and singles have been hurt in their relationships with one another. What does it mean to be a male or a female?

Illustration by Wendy Legerström;
photos by Hal Finch



and women to complement one another. Women need strong, protective men who are confident and decisive in their masculinity. Men need responsive, gentle, caring women, who are willing to share their lives with them.

There should be no conflict of interests here, no competition for who's in top position. God created these feminine or masculine characteristics within us so that we could function as a smooth-running team in marriage.

It's these differences that attract men to women and vice versa. A truly feminine woman makes a man feel more masculine and a masculine man brings out a woman's femininity.

Though its eternal truths are discarded by society in general, the Bible gives us clearly defined sexual roles and responsibilities.

Effect of misinformation

Young people have been educated in this latter half of the 20th century not to let anyone impose a role on them. We all have been told that we each have the right of self-definition.

For example, women, who, admittedly, have often been victimized by male-dominated society, are now led to believe that they must revolt against tradition, seize control and save themselves from abuse.

Satan the devil would like us to believe that there are no guidelines — that each case is unique — that one can never know what to expect — that “openness” and “tolerance” are virtues to be pursued over self-control, decency and morality.

The tragic result of this teaching and misinformation has been the *desexualization* of society. The

whole concept of what women and men are supposed to be, look like and do is mixed up.

How does this confusion affect singles? Men and women don't know how to act and react toward each other.

Within just the past generation, dating has become almost a thing of the past. Indeed, as we noted in an earlier article, dating is a lost art.

The practice of a man “wooing” a woman is looked upon as almost archaic — a relic of an ignorant, male-dominated, bygone age.

Without a courtship period, however, there's little time to get to know another person and how you might relate to him or her over the long term.

That's because too many times there is no long term. In this age of instant gratification, when couples are just looking for a one-night stand or roommates for the semester, there's no need to worry about making a commitment.

But successful, truly happy relationships between male and female must eventually include a commitment on the part of both.

And to make that decision wisely, a period of dating or courtship without the physical and emotional involvement of a sexual relationship is necessary. This person may be a great lover, but what kind of provider or parent will he or she be?

Dating gives you time to get to know yourself and the other person by seeing how you both react under different circumstances. How well do you work together as a team? Are you each others' best friend?

That euphoria, or honeymoon, that comes with a beginning sexual relationship, inside or outside of marriage, is no long-term proof of real, true love. Too many couples today mistake sensuous feelings and emotions for love.

Then, when the feeling is gone, they believe their love is finished, and the relationship is over. That's why a time for dating and courtship, without sexual involvement, is so important.

A yearning for “romance”

If you think that a man asking a woman out for dinner or a movie or a concert or a picnic is old-fashioned — have you noticed? — there's a strong undercurrent of yearning in this society for what we call romance.

Go to any supermarket check-out stand and note the popularity of tabloids and sensational novels that sell romance. The heroic male in such stories is usually pictured as a swashbuckling pirate, or a handsome Middle Eastern type leaping from behind a sand dune to sweep the heroine off her feet.

Films and television show us the same thing. Romance is a best-seller today! There's obviously something missing in our courtship practices.

What has happened to that mysterious interaction between male and female that the Bible speaks of when it alludes to that beautiful “way of a man with a maid” (Proverbs 30:19, Authorized Version)?

Dating should be part of the courtship process

that eventually leads toward marriage. During late teenage and early college years is the time to date for mainly social reasons, but this type of dating should not go on forever.

Dating with purpose

There comes a time when dating should become a serious search for the proper mate for life. The women you date should realize you're the kind of guy who is interested in marriage at some time, and not just for one shallow relationship after another.

Again, men, it's difficult for a woman to be attracted to an indecisive, weak-kneed character who is afraid of any long-term commitments.

And, women, when this masculine, serious-about-marriage fellow comes along, treat him with the same respect he is giving you. If the evening he has planned isn't exactly your idea of a perfect date, don't try to take charge and make all things right.

Some women, when they're asked out by a man, act as if they're trying to reel in a big fish. Be responsive to his concern and tell him you appreciate his thoughtfulness, but don't be the aggressor. You wanted a masculine man — allow him to be one.

In the beginning God made male and female. He told them to become one flesh. In this marital equation, one plus one equals one.

Two people not only literally become one flesh in the sex act, but they unite emotionally and spiritu-

To accomplish a God-plane,
one-flesh union, both male and
female must learn to appreciate
the differences and strengths
of the partner. God made us to
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You need to remember this in
any dating, but especially in
dating toward marriage.

ally as well. Everything they are should become a part of the other. To accomplish a God-plane, one-flesh union, both male and female must appreciate the differences and the strengths of the partner.

God made us to be different and, as the French say, *vive la différence!* Remember this in any dating, but especially in dating toward marriage.

The major concept that we need to think about is cooperation, not competition. The world emphasizes

competition and strife. But we need to emphasize love and cooperation between the sexes.

Cooperation, not competition

Notice briefly the feminine role of submission. What does that mean for a single? God tells women to submit to their husbands, to cooperate with them. He doesn't tell women, however, that they must submit to every man they meet or date.

If a woman goes on a date with a man and he domineers and browbeats her to prove his manhood or for whatever other reason, she must evaluate whether she could submit to that kind of ill-advised and unwise leadership in a marriage.

Women, do you want a "caveman-cavewoman" marriage? You must make a decision before marriage. You should choose a man whom you can respect and whose leadership style you can admire. You owe it to yourself for the future happiness of both your husband and yourself!

Conversely, when a man considers a woman as a potential wife, he should look for someone who will allow him to lead. Most men want to marry a woman who is a partner, not an adversary.

Men, you certainly do not wish to marry a woman who is going to continually fight over control of the family, and refuse to agree with and support your decisions. It's your responsibility to evaluate before marriage as you get to know a woman.

Loving leadership is the male responsibility. You must be able to do so effectively with the woman you choose as your wife.

The law of love

In I John 4:19 we read, "We love Him [God] because He first loved us." We are able to respond to God because He loved us first. That sets the major pattern for all human relationships, including male-female interaction. Both sexes must apply this principle in their relations with each other.

Men are charged to be loving leaders. They are to take the lead in demonstrating love, kindness, understanding and service to women. Men must be properly assertive, not "caveman-style" leaders.

Women need to know where men are "coming from." Then they can respond accordingly. Men should not be hesitant or tentative in serving and caring. They must step out toward women with the kind of love God shows His creation.

Likewise, women who want to obey God will show love toward men by being submissive, tender, supportive helpers. Such women will radiate charm, self-control and humor. A woman can show this type of godly love by encouraging and advising and inspiring a man — by truly being a "help meet [fit] for him" (Genesis 2:18, AV).

Men and women were created different, but were created to love and care for one another in the most special and mysterious of all relationships — marriage (Ephesians 5:32). Singles, be men and women of God, and God will bless your relationships with the opposite sex! □

Loneliness afflicts many in this society. But God wants us all to enjoy a happy and abundant life. And He shows us how to find it.

By Dexter H. Faulkner

Recently, a reader of *The Good News* wrote to us with a heartbreaking story. Here are excerpts from her letter:

"I am literally dying by degrees — and there is nothing I can think of to do about it. It seems that I am helpless. . . . First of all, you need to know that I am alone. Or at least I feel alone most of the time. . . .

"There has to be something I can do about things, or I will not survive

. . . I have no friends. Isn't that terrible? Why, there must be something wrong with me. . . .

"Maybe I am all wrong. Maybe I'm the only one out here who feels like that. I somehow don't think so. . . . I certainly am not the only 'alone' person in the world. . . .

"I have to do something, and it has to be soon. I know people who may read this will think that I should go to God for help. But I do and have all the time, to seemingly no avail. . . .

"I have actually told people that I have been very lonely, and I would appreciate it if they would please remember that and invite me if an occasion arose

. . . I have never heard from these people.

"My list of names and phone numbers is very long. But my life is very empty. I have done all that I can. People don't seem to want to relate to me on a one-to-one basis. I don't understand that. . . .

"Please . . . pray for me and everyone like me. We may be our own worst enemies, or we may just be victims of circumstances over which we have little or no control. . . ."

What is loneliness?

Let's take a look at this terrible scourge of loneliness. Let's learn how to eliminate it from our lives once and for all.

First, what *is* loneliness? One definition of loneliness is "sadness from being alone." Another is the suffering of "bleakness and desolation." A third is to be or feel "cut off from others."

Loneliness is depression, a sorrowful feeling for or about oneself. It has an element of hopelessness. Loneliness is the opposite of joy and happiness.

It is simply being alone — but alone in a certain kind of way. A person may be in the midst of a huge crowd and still feel alone. Being lonely is to lack a special



Loneliness—

and ongoing *relationship* with other humans. This relationship must have the quality of "oneness" that binds two or more people together emotionally, either in close friendship or a family.

We speak of a "family circle" or one's "circle of friends." If one is on such a circle, he or she is always connected with others. The lonely person feels as though he or she has been kicked off this circle and into a kind of emotional darkness.

Of course, we all sometimes feel bored and at loose ends. That's not the problem at issue here. We are describing a pathological loneliness — a hopeless feeling of emptiness and separation that is continually a part of one's life. It is a dangerous feeling because it can make a person attempt desperate cures that can be worse than the disease!

Why loneliness?

Perhaps it will help us to understand why there is so much loneliness in this world.

Loneliness can stem from a certain condition of life. Often it can be the result of family disruption — divorce, disagreements with parents, death of a spouse, inability to find a spouse, an unhappy marriage.

Loneliness, in that sense, is a direct result of incomplete, unhealthy or nonexistent family relationships. That's a major reason why we have so much loneliness in this world — because the family has been disrupted in so many ways.

Of course, loneliness can be compounded by poor health, poverty and physical separation from loved ones or friends.

Now, not all people who find themselves in situations that cause loneliness remain lonely. They find ways to eliminate loneliness from their lives. But some



people seem hopelessly trapped by a desperate loneliness.

We thus come to another cause of loneliness that actually feeds on adverse situations. Some people continue to feel rejected and lonely year after year. They see themselves as unwanted people without control over their lives. They never seem able to connect to other humans.

For people caught up in the evil ways of this world around us — "of the world," in Jesus Christ's words (John 17:14) — this loneliness can be a hopeless dead end.

But there are no such dead ends for the people of God! True Christians have all the needed

tools to eliminate loneliness and find friendship, love and true happiness.

The law of love

Did you know that Christ actually set down a *new law* for His disciples to follow? Christ said, "A *new commandment* I give to you." What was it? "That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

Love was to be the sign of discipleship. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (verse 35).

During His last talk with His disciples, Christ repeated twice

Photos by G.A. Belluche Jr.

A Curable Disease!

more this commandment about showing love (John 15:12, 17). Later, the apostle John again referred to this commandment of Christ — that His disciples should have true love for each other (I John 4:21).

Christ used mundane examples to illustrate how love was to be shown: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, making new friends, clothing the needy and visiting the sick and imprisoned (Matthew 25:31-46). Showing love in these and other ways is prerequisite to entering God's coming Kingdom.

That's why the apostle Paul said, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:14).

And again, "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).

And, "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being" (I Corinthians 10:24).

This is the basic law by which the God Family operates; no one can become a member of that Family unless he or she also operates according to this principle.

Helping others

James says that an important part of pure and undefiled religion is to "visit orphans and widows in their trouble" (James 1:27). And by "visit" we are certainly to understand he means to take care of their needs — not just shake their hands. He points out that to say "be warmed and filled" without giving "them the things which are needed for the body" means nothing (James 2:16).

John plainly says that "whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17). Those "goods" can certainly include sharing our time, our personality, our family and our happiness with the less fortunate.

Paul says that those who wish to follow Christ must "bear one another's burdens" and "do good

to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith [the begotten children of God in God's Church]" (Galatians 6:2, 10).

Part of the solution to loneliness is clear. It rests with people who are not lonely — the ones with the means to give of themselves to others. But they do not bear all the responsibility for solving the problem.

What the lonely must do

The help that any lonely person receives from others is only part of the solution to loneliness. There is only so much that others should be expected to do for us. There is an aspect of the problem of loneliness that only lonely persons themselves can solve.

What that is was made poignantly clear by the woman whose letter we quoted at the beginning of this article.

She also stated: "I get outgoing concern . . . Everybody is willing to come for a brief time and take me to the store, or vacuum my carpet and dust, and even do my laundry — but they come and go. And I am very grateful for them. But it isn't enough. I feel lonelier than ever after they've gone. Because they have all gone somewhere where life is meaningful and interesting for them, and I have no part in that."

This woman meant that what such people as herself needed is not just "outgoing concern" but "ongoing concern." In one sense, that is true. In another sense, it points out the limitations of relying on others to fill voids in our lives. We must all do our part to help ourselves.

Now, it is true that many lonely people do have extenuating circumstances to contend with — poor health, old age, singleness, unconverted mates, poverty, isolation. But what is also true is that many old, unhealthy, single, poor, physically and spiritually isolated people are the very people who do the most to extend help to others! They have turned their problem into a solution.

That forces us to point out a few things. Yes, people who



"have everything" can be selfish. But lonely people can also be selfish. Yes, Christ commands those who "have this world's goods" to help others. But we must never lose sight that Christ's command to love your neighbor as yourself applies to every single person — not just the well off, or those with happy families, or those with the "everyone-wants-to-be-with-them" personalities.

Single people can make other people a part of *their* lives. Older people can visit others. Those with unconverted mates can ask people to *their* homes. And so on. Love works both ways.

Christ commands those with the least to do exactly as those with the most. Because someone has little does not excuse that person from following the principles of love. The principles of helping others apply equally to everyone.

Some lonely people bury themselves within themselves, expecting others to dig them out of their loneliness. But Christ says that's not the way it's supposed to be. We must all scramble out of the same pit and reach out to others.

Why? Because God wants us all to learn to take control of our lives by using His Holy Spirit. Simply put, feelings of loneliness miss the mark that is the perfec-

tion of Christ (Philippians 3:14). Others can help us, of course. God will also do His part, as we shall see. But in the final analysis we must all "work out our own salvation" (Philippians 2:12). Others cannot do it *for* us. God will only do it *through* us.

Feeling "entitled"

It is common in this world for people to blame others for their misfortune. Those who victimize others often look upon themselves as "victims." Mother didn't show love. Father was abusive. Teachers didn't understand. Home was in the wrong part of town. Nobody cared.

Some in this society excuse criminals as "sick people." Teenagers who use drugs often blame their parents. A young man who was caught selling American secrets to a foreign government excused his behavior by saying that his crime didn't compare with what had been done to his ancestors by the U.S. government.

The world is full of injustice. No one denies that. Life isn't fair to all. But as true Christians, we cannot blame others for anything. Neither can we blame or excuse ourselves. Why so? Because to blame is to judge. Christians are commanded not to judge (Matthew 7:1).

To simply continue in one's loneliness and say "I'm lonely because no one will help me" is to judge others. It also takes the solution to the problem out of one's control and transfers the responsibility to someone else. In the meantime, nothing is solved; the person continues to live in loneliness and isolation.

A problem in one person's mind cannot be solved within another's mind. That's why the message of the Bible is that we are responsible for changing our own lives through the Spirit and power of God. And that is actually the greatest message of hope, freedom and independence one can have.

In short, there is something that others can do to help us overcome loneliness. But we must

also do those same things for ourselves.

People whose lives seem meaningful and interesting are that way for a good reason. They, in large part, make their own world by the decisions and actions they take.

In the same way, lonely people often are lonely because they see themselves as "lonely." They act in ways that fortify their own image of themselves and their condition in life as being an impossible obstacle to climb.

For example, they may say: "Well, nobody is coming to talk with *me*. No one makes friends with me or invites me out. I must not be the kind of person who people want to associate with." The conclusion? "I am a lonely, tragic figure."

A look at some lonely people

It's true that *some* who are lonely are the kind of people that others must force themselves to be around. They may be irascible, uncommunicative, opinionated, strange, uptight emotionally, negative, judgmental, unreachable, uncooperative, demanding, unaccessible, unknown quantities. Those qualities make a person hard to love.

Such lonely people see only that "no one loves them." They want to be accepted as they are, not realizing that those very attitudes *create* loneliness. What such lonely people first need is a change of spiritual heart (Galatians 5:22-23, I Corinthians 13:4-8).

Then they need to set about to change the circumstances of their lives.

Let's look at a practical situation. Suppose that you are a lonely widow, in reasonably good health. Let's say that you have been *wrongly* neglected. So you're lonely.

How can you solve your problem? Instead of waiting for someone to reach out to you, why not turn the problem into a solution and reach out to others? Invite someone to your home or apartment for a meal. Help out in a people-oriented activity — a so-

cial, a fund-raising activity, visiting the sick. Obviously, one would enjoy much more fellowship in this manner than by being invited out for a short meal.

Let's say you're a person with an unconverted mate, and others have failed to invite you to their homes. Why not invite someone to *your home* for dinner? Or involve yourself in some activity that will help you develop your personal skills and talents, without neglecting your mate?

Let's say you're a lonely single man. What's the solution? Same as above. Concentrate on developing your talents or get involved in a service project. Invite a single woman or widow or even a whole family to dinner. If you make it a potluck at your home, instead of going out to an expensive restaurant or trying to bear all the costs yourself, all the guests will feel they've made a contribution and you can hold these occasions more often.

Let's say you're physically isolated and feel lonely. Can you make a *wise* move that would bring you closer to other people with whom you could make friends? Can you make use of the other ideas mentioned above?

There are many opportunities to eliminate loneliness and to build relationships with others. It's a matter of thinking positively and constructively about the problem.

"But I just can't do it!"

The person who replies to such suggestions with "I'm too shy" or "I can't" or "It won't work" is expressing an attitude of mind that no Christian need be shackled with. It reflects a spirit of fear, which Christ commands us to eliminate. And He offers the means to do so.

That is why Christ had no patience with the individual who buried his talent and said, "I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground" (Matthew 25:25). Christ never accepts fear as an excuse for not doing what is righteous and good.

The words of the late American President Franklin Delano

Roosevelt certainly ring true for the Christian: "There is nothing to fear but fear itself."

When we commit ourselves, through true repentance and baptism, to follow God's way, God gives us the gift of His Spirit. That's why He doesn't accept

fear as an excuse. The apostle Paul tells us, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

God commands us to make use of His Spirit to straighten out our lives and become happy. Consider

this great gift that God has given to us and what it can do in our lives:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all

ABLE to Be Friends

There are many types of physical disabilities, but the disabled share one ability — the ability to be friends!

By Terri Black

I sat down in the wheelchair, my heart thumping. One at a time I picked up my feet and placed them in the footrests, shoving my heels solidly against the back strap so they wouldn't fall off.

This is it, I thought. Now I am a paraplegic.

I was participating in a program sponsored by the University of Washington's Disabled Student Association. The idea was to let able-bodied people spend a day in a wheelchair to find out what it's like to be physically disabled.

The day I was disabled, I found that some people went out of their way to be friendly and helpful. But I also found that some noticed me — and side-stepped me.

Which type of person are you? Are you one of the friendly ones, or one who tries to ignore the disabled?

Examples of friendliness

The student who was running the program gave me a map of the campus that showed which paths and buildings were accessible by wheelchair. Armed with the map, and wearing gloves to protect my hands from wheel-burn, I pushed myself out of the office and took the elevator to the ground floor. So far, so good.

Then I started up the hill to class. Within a few minutes my arms ached. Was this whole thing a mistake?

It's easy to go unnoticed in a college of more than 30,000 students — unless you're in a wheelchair. Just when I despaired of getting to class on time, someone came up behind me and

started pushing. "Where are you going?" he said in my ear.

I had read somewhere that it was bad etiquette to start pushing someone's wheelchair without asking. But I was too grateful to mind. I let him wheel me to the building my class was in. Other people also helped me that day. Some asked first, some didn't. But they all saw a need and responded to it.

Do you realize the importance of what these people did? It's not easy to reach out to someone who is different. But learning to understand others is necessary for growth. And the disabled need contact with a variety of people. We deny them that contact if we shy away from them.

It's better to be friendly, even if you run the risk of committing a faux pas. We should stop being self-conscious and have a giving attitude instead.

"How do you eat?"

A young woman, pushing me to the cafeteria, asked, "How do you eat?" When she realized how that sounded, she was embarrassed. "How do you get your food, I mean?"

It was a good question. I answered that if I couldn't reach something, I could ask someone to hand it to me. I hoped she didn't think I was offended, because I wasn't.

Don't hesitate to ask a question like that. And parents, don't stop your children from asking questions of a disabled person. Shushing your children teaches them to feel awkward or afraid around the disabled or anyone who is different. The disabled person doesn't

mind answering if it means dispelling ignorance. The key to overcoming the anxiety you might feel around the disabled is to realize that there are more similarities between the disabled and the able-bodied than there are differences. A disabled person isn't a member of another species. He or she is a human being whose body happens to have been damaged by disease or injury. He or she has the same basic needs and the same ultimate potential as every other person.

You may know all this, and still feel awkward. Old emotional patterns are hard to change. But there are ways to overcome them so that you can get to know that disabled person to whom you've been saying hello but not much else. And if you don't have much contact with the disabled, read on. You never know when a disabled person might come into your life.

Doing your part

Here are a few ways you can establish a friendship with a disabled person. They may take extra effort on your part, but the rewards are worthwhile.

● *Talk with them.* For some this is the hardest part — to ignore the disability and have a normal conversation. Try to remember that it's just like getting to know anyone else — it's always



that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

a little awkward at first. But soon you find common interests, and you're on your way.

You will have to take the initiative. A blind person can't mix in a crowd, usually, and a wheelchair isn't maneuverable enough for it. You will have to make the first move. A deaf person has the most mobility of any of the physically disabled, but how can he or she know you're willing to put up with speaking through an interpreter unless you express it by going to him or her?

Once you've started a conversation, do the same as you would in getting to know anyone. Make small talk. Ask questions about family or interests. Discuss world events or the latest scientific developments or the weather. If the person's disability comes up in the conversation, that's fine. It doesn't necessarily make the person feel bad.

Disabled people, like members of any group, are individuals. Cast out your preconceived notions of what they are like.

The day I was disabled, one woman asked me, "Do you participate in wheelchair races?"

"No," I said.

"Well, why not?" she said. "You really should."

One of the rules of the program was that I couldn't tell anyone I wasn't really disabled. So I didn't mention that my forearms, after half a day of propelling my weight with my hands instead of my feet, felt as if someone were peeling the muscles off layer by layer. I just said, "I'm not very athletic," which is true not only of me but of many paraplegics. Not all of them like to race.

I used to assume that all disabled people were bitter about being disabled. But often they're grateful for having lived through whatever disabled them. Many have a positive attitude, like one deaf man I know. He believes God hasn't healed him and other disabled people because God wants to show that anyone can live His way of life, no matter what their problems may be.

If you meet several disabled people,

"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Corinthians 12:10).

Every Christian has the tools at his or her disposal to turn a

defeated life into one of joy. That is why we say loneliness is a curable disease. No person who submits his life to the great God, the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (II Corinthians 1:3), ever needs to be lonely again. □

you will find you have more in common with some than with others — just like your other acquaintances. But you have to talk with them to find that out!

● *Educate yourself.* Once you get to know a disabled person, researching his or her specific disability may help you understand needs he or she might have.

If you know a deaf person, consider learning sign language. It doesn't take long to learn enough to have a simple conversation. Most deaf people are happy to help hearing people learn sign language — it gives them more people to talk to.

● *Offer assistance* if you can. For instance, if you have a car, you can offer rides to those who can't drive. Look at the circumstances to see what type of assistance would be helpful.

Think of something specific, rather than just saying, "Is there anything I can do for you?" They may hesitate to propose something that might put you out of your way. Also, they don't know what kind of help you're able to give unless you make a specific offer.

Invite your disabled friends over, or if getting transportation is a problem, bring the fun to them. Sharing a social occasion is a good way to show acceptance and caring.

● *Don't condescend.* None of the above points will help if you only do them as your "good deed for the day." The disabled can spot that attitude immediately. It takes acceptance and a genuine interest to establish any friendship. You have to care enough to give your time and attention. This is impossible if you are just racking up "brownie points" by speaking with someone less fortunate than you. Have the humility to realize that you could easily become disabled yourself, and behave as you would want others to behave if you were disabled.

Etiquette with the disabled

Certain practical points of etiquette with the disabled can make everyone more comfortable.

● *Wheelchair-bound* — Don't push someone's wheelchair without asking; it's like sneaking up behind someone

and shoving them. But do ask, if it looks like someone needs assistance.

If you talk for more than a minute or two to someone who is in a wheelchair, take a seat. Looking down on someone implies that you are superior, but if you sit down you become equals. It makes such a difference!

● *Deaf* — When talking through an interpreter, speak directly to the deaf person. It's a conversation between you and the deaf person, not you and the interpreter. By addressing the deaf person directly, you keep the conversation friendly and personal.

If the deaf person can lip-read, form your words clearly but not with exaggerated slowness. Make sure you keep your face turned toward the person!

Expressions using words that refer to hearing, such as "I hear you were



sick," are fine. They're part of the language and don't bother deaf people.

● *Blind* — Identify yourself immediately every time you speak to a blind person, at least until he or she learns to recognize your voice. If you guide a blind person, let him or her take your arm. Warn of stairs and curbs a few steps before you reach them.

As with the deaf, expressions that refer to sight, such as "I see what you mean," are no problem to the blind.

Disabilities have no effect on a person's need for friends, or his or her ability to give friendship. Who knows? If you make the effort to be friendly to the disabled people you come in contact with, some of them may become your closest friends! □

Photos by Hal Finch

LETTERS

March Good News

I enjoyed the story in the *Good News* magazine "He Shall Be Like a Tree." When I was young we visited in California and stood under the General Sherman tree in Sequoia National Park. It really brought back many happy memories. Now we have four tulip poplar trees in our front yard that are 65 feet tall. They are lovely trees and I enjoy their shade very much.

Louise Armstrong
Terre Haute, Ind.

Thank you so much for the very beautiful article "He Shall Be Like a Tree." It was one lone tree that has had a great deal to do with the shaping of my life. I was born in north central Texas, but when I was around 2 my parents moved to the desert area of Texas near the Rio Grande River. . . .

When I was around 4½ years old Mother and an aunt took me and a sister . . . on a picnic to a large, flat, rocky area. Back of that area . . . stood an upright boulder about four to five feet high and two or more feet across, and behind the boulder was a tree I'd never seen. I went behind the boulder and laid down under that tree and heard the sweetest music of breeze singing in the leaves.

My mother called, "Reba, where are you?" I got up and went but wished she'd leave me alone and let me listen to the music.

That day the out-of-doors became my paradise. It was years before I learned that tree was a cottonwood tree. We had moved back to north central Texas where I grew up. I've often wondered how so many people scarcely notice all the beauty all around them.

Reba Shields
McCloud, Calif.

My wife and I would like to endorse and thank you for Mr. Kelly's beautiful article "So You've Decided to Have Children." We have five children and now, at an early age (still under 50), four grandchildren. Your article brought back many memories of trials and errors as well as thrills. It's exciting now to watch our children go through the same events with one exception. They have the teaching of God's Church to lead them to even greater blessings.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Thibault
Kamloops, B.C.

I really appreciate the article "How

Much Does God Care About You?" It really shows me that God not only cares about the big problems but also every little problem in our lives.

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Wise
Newberry, S.C.

Dating series

I am a 16-year-old student at a small country school in Texas. I really enjoy and appreciate your dating articles. They help me to realize I'm not the only person who feels there are still dating morals and codes.

With this belief and my religious standards, I am left dateless. But with faith, family support and God-given patience, I am waiting for the dates and, later, mate God will give. Thank you for your brotherly support!

I have also heard of your *Youth 87* magazine and wish for a subscription to this helping source of information and support in the carnal world full of temptations for the young minds of today.

Shannon Barnhart
Palestine, Tex.

Youth 87 is a bimonthly, full-color magazine published by the Worldwide Church of God for youths aged 12 to 19. Youth 87 addresses young people from all walks of life in all parts of the world and offers helpful personal advice as well as articles on family relations, hobbies, careers, adventure and life in different countries. If you would like for your children to receive Youth 87, or if you would like to receive it yourself, just write to our address nearest you. A list of our addresses is on the inside front cover of this magazine.

When a mate dies

"Woman, Wife, Widow" (February) — I truly do not know how to compliment you enough. No truer words were ever spoken. And I am sure you must have made many, many people happy to read your beautiful article.

But what about "Man, Husband, Widower"? Myself, I am in pain and hurt something awful. I am 75 years old and was married 50. My wife left me four months ago through a stroke. . . .

I prayed. . . . I walked a path around her gravesite. . . . Until I read your article, I thought only God knew. When I saw that front cover, I went after that story like a hungry bear, and then realized that everyone has pains even I never knew about, and that the person who could write such a wonderful story must

have been the one who had also gone through her share of pains and heartaches.

I thought, Oh, my, there is someone else who knows exactly how I feel and hurt. Oh, everything you said was so true and exact, especially the part where you said "voraciously devouring God's Word." Yes, I found everything I was looking for all in *The Plain Truth, Good News* and the Bible. And your article tied a nice, happy feeling of relief around the feeling of my loss. . . .

I baked a half dozen pies — blueberry, pumpkin, cherry, coconut, custard, and rolled my own dough, and as many cakes. But most times when I cook I must unhook the smoke alarm first. And I never burned myself so often as I do now. I try to think I am honoring her by doing everything the same as she would want it to be. . . .

Thank you for the comfort and understanding feeling from your article.

Ralph Connelly
Philadelphia, Penn.

I felt compelled to write on behalf of my experience with Joan C. Bogdanchik's article. With tears streaming down my face, I thought, How all women need an article like this one. I am a wife to a wonderful husband, and a mother to two beautiful boys. I would dearly miss my husband, but it is something to contemplate and somewhat prepare for if the event would take place.

My father died when I was 11 years old, leaving my mother to raise two sons and two daughters. My father provided for us financially, but the rest was up to my mother. You have pictured my mother in this article, and I thought, How lucky I am! It's not luck, it is a blessing. . . .

My mother kept our family together. . . . She's been an example to many.

Sherry Lutz
Pittsburgh, Penn.

Educational magazine

I do not know how to describe your educational magazine, *The Good News*. It carries educational articles that contain many Bible quotations that guide me, and remains evergreen in my memory. My friends who read these magazines (*The Good News* and *The Plain Truth*) normally come back to ask me for old copies.

E.C. Ohakwe
Lagos, Nigeria

Is Your Name in the Book of Life?

Several Bible verses speak of a "book of life." What is this book? Why does God need it? Is your name in it?

By Jerold W. Aust

The Israelites had sinned grievously!

While Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving instructions from God, the Israelites made a golden calf and began to worship it. When Moses returned, he was shocked at what he saw. He knew God would be well within His rights to wipe out the entire sinful nation!

So Moses begged God to forgive Israel:

"Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, 'Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin — but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written'" (Exodus 32:31-32).

Moses boldly approached his Maker, asking to have his own name blotted out of God's "book" if God would not forgive Israel their sin of idolatry!

The Bible alludes to this "book" — the book of life — on only a few occasions. But the book of life does exist, and it is vitally important to you! Having one's name in the book of life is so important that Moses used this as a kind of bargaining point with God for Israel.

What is this book? Why would

the all-knowing God need it? Is it like some spiritual computer system, containing the names of God's people? Is your name now written in it? How can you know? And if your name is there, what is the risk of it actually being blotted out, as Moses asked for his name to be if God would not forgive Israel?

Why the book of life?

God is a God of order and structure. He gives us physical figures and patterns for things that are found in the spiritual or heavenly realm (Hebrews 9:9, 23). These types help us understand God and see what He wants us to do. This leads us to what God's book of life is.

First, understand that the phrase *book of life* cannot simply refer to the Bible. Revelation 22:19 shows that these two books are separate: "If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy [the Bible], God shall take away his part from the Book of Life."

Obviously, all the people who will be born into God's Family do not have their names written in the Bible. There must be another, separate book — the book of life.

Many ancient societies kept extensive genealogical records and registered citizens for different purposes (Nehemiah 7:5, 64,

12:22-23). In the same way, the fact that God has a book of life shows that God is aware of all His creation, particularly those people with whom He is specially working.

But God holds all power and knowledge, doesn't He? So why would He need a book of life to keep track of His saints?

Well, it's not altogether a question of need — it's a matter of planning. God does so for our benefit. He knows it is easy for us to identify with the idea of a record book, kept up to date with our names in it. Having a book of life for His faithful saints offers us encouragement and security.

Paul wrote that the Christians in Philippi should "help these women . . . and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life" (Philippians 4:3). "For our citizenship is in heaven," he explained (Philippians 3:20). You can be sure these Christians were encouraged by this acknowledgment.

And so should we be! The book of life is indeed a kind of register book of those who are begotten as future citizens of the Kingdom of God. Luke 10:20 says their "names are written in heaven." Those whose names are written in the book of life will be given eternal life and inherit this earth, the heavenly Jerusalem and ulti-

mately the entire universe (Hebrews 12:23, Revelation 21:22-27).

But just whose names are written in the book of life now?

Who is now listed?

The Bible is clear on whose names are now written in the book of life. The book contains the names of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn [begotten]" (Hebrews 12:23).

This includes all the members, down to our time, of the New Testament Church of God, which began in A.D. 31 with the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit. It also includes all the holy men and women of Old Testament times (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Such heroes of faith as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Deborah, David and the prophets have their names written in the book of life.

Human beings in the forthcoming millennial rule of Christ will also have their names in it (Isaiah 4:3). (For more information, request our free booklet *World Peace — How It Will Come*. Just mail the literature request card in this magazine or write to our address nearest you.)

And beyond the Millennium, in the period the Bible calls the White Throne Judgment, the vast majority of humanity, who will be resurrected and have their minds open to God's truth, will have their names written in the book of life (Revelation 20:11-12, Ezekiel 37:11-14). (Ask for our free booklet *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?* for further details.)

What a loving, wonderful, sharing God to give us all the opportunity to become members of His very Family!

But what of you? How can your name be written in this book of life?

How can your name be entered?

If you are one of the few people whom God is calling at this time — one of those through whom God is working to prepare

for the wonderful world tomorrow — you can guarantee that your name is written in this divine book of registry by following some basic steps.

Overall, you must become an overcomer (Revelation 3:21)! Overcome what? Every way contrary to God's law! Repent of sin, believe God, obey His commandments and endure to the end of this age. That is what the Christian life is all about. Let's look at these steps more closely.

● **Repent.** God requires His people to repent, or cease from their old, evil ways to instead follow His righteous ways (Acts 2:38). That's the first step. Ask God to help you repent, for repentance itself is a gift from God (Romans 2:4).

● **Believe.** God expects you to believe His promises. As Hebrews 11:6 says: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Faith is also a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8). Ask God to help you believe His promises. He promises to help you replace your evil ways with His holy thoughts and actions (Hebrews 9:14).

● **Obey.** Step out and act on the truths God reveals to you. "Faith without works is dead," says James 2:26. Of course, no amount of your own works can earn or in any way "qualify" you for salvation, but obedience to God's law is still a definite requirement. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (I John 5:3). Again, ask God to help you obey Him. He will!

● **Endure.** God desires and expects us to endure to the end, as His faithful Christian soldiers (Matthew 24:13, II Timothy 2:3).

This is how your name can be written in the book of life. At the resurrection, God will be reminded of your faithfulness through His book of remembrance (Malachi 3:16) — the book of life.

But beware! Your name actu-

ally can be blotted out of the book of life!

Blotted out through sin

"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (Revelation 3:5).

As we can see, it is possible to have our names blotted out of the book of life. But how?

Remember how Moses begged God to forgive Israel their sin of idolatry — or else to blot his name from the book of life? What a request! What a humble and loving attitude Moses had!

Moses knew that God's forgiveness of his sins and his continued obedience to God kept his name in the book of life. But he also knew — and we should, too — that ongoing, willful sinning removes one's name from this special book. Moses cared so much about Israel's welfare that he was willing to risk being blotted out of the book so that they might live to enter Canaan.

In this action Moses became a type of Jesus Christ, who was willing to give His own life to pay the penalty for man's sins — so that we all might have the opportunity for salvation!

"Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book," God told Moses (Exodus 32:33). This is perfect justice. Everyone of us bears the responsibility for our own sins. "The soul who sins [willfully, refusing to repent] shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Clearly, willful sin is the factor that causes one's name to be blotted out of the book of life!

Your name can be written in the book of life if you will humble yourself before Almighty God, repent of your sins and begin to obey Him totally according to all the instructions in His Word. Then, at Christ's Second Coming, if you endure until the end, God will give you the gift of eternal life! □

DETAILS COUNT!

By Rick Sherrod

The big decisions we make in life result from a lot of little decisions we make along the way.

It was a cool, misty, Mother's Day afternoon at my in-laws' farm. The family gathered in the living room to share in pleasant conversation.

As the afternoon wore on, my father-in-law excused himself to head for the dairy barn and tend to the afternoon milking. My mother-in-law rose from her chair, intending to herd the cows from the adjacent lot into the barn.

On Mother's Day, I couldn't in good conscience allow her to go. Springing to my feet, I quickly volunteered to relieve her of her duties.

With some obvious misgivings, she reluctantly conceded, and began to search for some appropriate clothes for me.

A few minutes later, I was headed for the barnyard. I was bedecked in loose-fitting bib overalls, my father-in-law's extra-large jacket (which hung nearly to my knees) and my mother-in-law's rubber boots (which were two sizes too small).

Armed with a short stick and wincing in the undersized boots, I trooped across the barnyard toward the cows. With each step I sank to mid-calf in a pungent combination of mire and manure. Nevertheless, for a city boy, I didn't do half bad! In short order, I had managed to chase all the

cows into the barn — all except one, that is.

Determined not to be outmaneuvered by this uncooperative bovine friend, I continued my pursuit with stick in hand, sloshing from one corner of the barnyard to the other. As determined as I was, the beast simply refused to enter the barn. Fatigued, wet

and thoroughly spattered with mud, I stared in frustration at the muscular and obviously irritated animal across the barnyard. At last, I noticed one *minor detail* I had overlooked in my zeal to complete the job. For the past five minutes, I had been trying to run the *bull* into the barn to be milked!

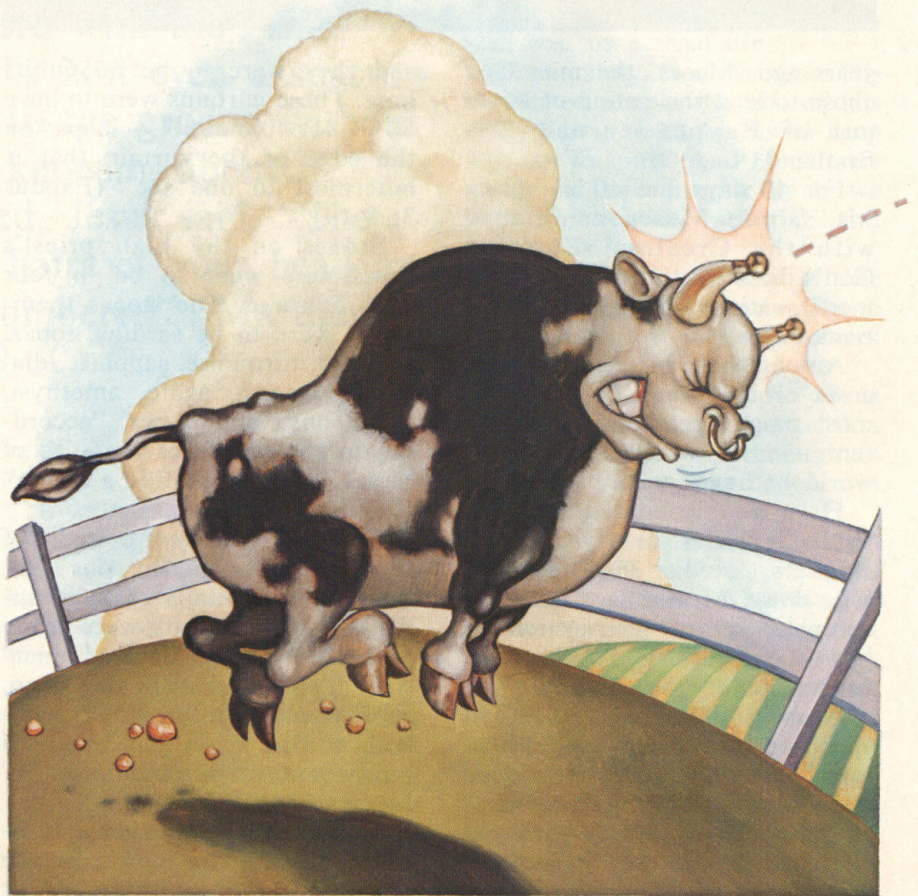
God's attention to detail

How important are details to you? They can make the difference between success and failure!

God pays careful attention to detail. And as we will see, so should we!

Good News publisher Joseph W. Tkach has often observed that the ability to make the right *big* decisions in life comes from making a lot of right *little* decisions along the way. This is simply another way of saying that paying attention to details makes the difference between mediocrity — or worse — and excellence.

God's own instruction Book, the Bible, reflects an intricate interest in detail. More than 3,000



Illustrations by Dan Andreason



years ago, Moses, the man God chose to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt, learned this firsthand.

For 40 days and 40 nights on Mt. Sinai, Moses communed with the Creator, recording God's directions to make Israel a model nation among all the nations on earth.

Among these instructions were a set of blueprints detailing the most magnificent and expensive tent — the Tabernacle — the world had ever seen.

Have you wondered why the Bible includes nearly six full chapters (Exodus 35-40) providing, down to the last detail, a complete set of instructions on how the Tabernacle was to be constructed?

Among other things, God specified not only the use of rams' skins, but rams' skins dyed red for use within the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:7). Finely wrought curtains inside the Tabernacle were to be made of goats' hair,

and they were to be 30 cubits long. These curtains were to have 50 — not 40, not 30 — loops "on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set" (Exodus 36:8-19).

Stones on the high priest's breastplate were to be in four rows of three. The stones themselves were to be sardius, topaz, emerald, turquoise, sapphire, diamond, jacinth, agate, amethyst, beryl, onyx and jasper, "according to the names of the sons of Israel . . . engraved like a signet" (Exodus 39:9-14).

God even specified the attire of the high priest and his sons right down to the details of their underwear! Their coats were to be "artistically woven of fine linen" with "exquisite hats of fine linen, short trousers of fine linen, and a sash of fine linen and blue and purple and scarlet thread, woven" (verses 27-29).

While the marvelously intricate outline of God's plans for the ancient Tabernacle teaches us

many lessons, one of the most important is that God pays attention to detail.

Neatness and order

This same attention to detail is clear in the way that Jesus Christ lived as a human.

You've no doubt seen the aftermath of huge public gatherings in our day — rock concerts, sporting events, political rallies, parades: empty beverage containers, popcorn sacks, hot dog wrappers, napkins — a mountain of litter strewn from one end of a stadium or assembly hall to the other.

Even in a small movie theater, one often stumbles over mounds of garbage that viewers leave behind.

What a contrast to the example set by Christ!

During His public ministry, large crowds often followed Jesus. On one occasion, 5,000 people (plus an unspecified number of women and children) came to Him after witnessing His power to heal the sick. His disciples had only five barley loaves and two small fish to feed the massive gathering.

Through a miracle, Christ used that meager amount of food to feed everyone there. After all the people had eaten their fill, His disciples "filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten" (John 6:1-13).

Did you catch that? Jesus was not content to leave even scraps of food to mar the countryside, let alone the "disposable" containers with which we pollute our environment today.

He paid attention to the small details of neatness and order. His disciples didn't leave a thing behind. Rather, they tried to leave their surroundings looking better and cleaner than when they first arrived.

Testimony of God's creation

All of God's creation testifies to His concern with the "small" details. Not even a sparrow falls



to the ground without God knowing about it. Jesus said, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:29-30).

Have you ever examined a man-made object under high magnification? The sharpened point of a sewing needle or a straight pin may be able to do the job you need done. However, you will find that even objects of the finest and most detailed craftsmanship are marred by one imperfection after another. Careful scrutiny reveals the flaws even in man's most noble achievements.

In contrast, the handiwork of the creator God is beyond criticism. Jesus observed, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matthew 6:28-29).

Why does the Bible show a God so concerned with the details of His creation? Because God wants us to see and understand what His character is like. We are to become like Him.

Jesus put it this way: "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

So how can we put all this into practice?

Practical application

There are several areas in which we can take on the God-like attribute of paying attention to details.

Here are some practical exam-

ples showing areas where you can be more detail-minded:

1) *Personal finances.* How do you manage your money and personal resources? Do you know what became of that cash you had in your wallet or purse only a week ago — or did it just make itself wings and fly away (Proverbs 23:5)?

God keeps track of His resources. He knows the multiple billions of stars in the heavens so well that "He calls them all by name" (Psalm 147:4). If you imitate God in this area, you can greatly improve your financial condition.

2) *Marriage.* Marital strife is one of the most common problems in the Western world today. Yet so many confrontations and disagreements between husband and wife could be remedied if only each partner carefully paid attention to the small details of

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making life pleasant for the other.

Interestingly enough, when you immerse yourself in the details of caring for your mate's happiness, you won't have time to dwell on self-pity, on what you don't have, on your own selfish wants and desires.

3) *Social relationships.* What about getting along with others? Jesus summarized our responsibility by saying, "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12).

Do you attend to the details in

your social relationships? Are you kind and pleasant to other people even when you feel grumpy or sad? Do you send thank-you cards in response to the favors, gifts and thoughtfulness of others?

These expressions of appreciation may seem of minor importance. But they are one indication of how well we are living up to the charge that Christ gave to all who would call themselves His disciples.

Keeping God's law

In addition to these three areas, how about our attention to detail in the way we observe the rest of God's law? While it's not in our human nature to obey God totally (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 8:7), our failure to do so brings the death penalty for sin upon us (Romans 6:23)!

James wrote, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

Think about it! Breaking or overlooking even one point of God's law, if we fail to repent, will cost us eternal life.

Fortunately, God has given His converted people the gift of His Holy Spirit to enable us to keep His law in spirit. And He is merciful and will forgive us if we repent when we stumble and break His law.

Christianity is a way of life (Acts 18:25). Paying attention to details is part of that way toward perfection.

If we wish to follow Jesus Christ in every regard, attention to details will matter enough to affect our thoughts and actions in everything we do.

My inattention to detail on Mother's Day provided entertainment for my family, who watched in amusement my zealous but misguided efforts from the living-room window. But had I not realized my mistake in time, it could have caused quite a commotion in the barn!

Let's be careful not to cause upset for ourselves or others by neglecting the details of God's way of life. □

The Tongues Question

Here is a vital question! You need to know the answer!

Are the ecstatic utterances — called gibberish by some observers — that boil forth from the mouths of members of some charismatic churches true manifestations of the New Testament gift of tongues? Are they from the Holy Spirit?

Or are they, as others would contend, a ridiculous and dangerous counterfeit?

This question is of no small importance. Many feel such “speaking in tongues” is proof one has the Holy Spirit, or at least proof one has some superior level of the Spirit. Is this true? You need to know.

The basic doctrine

The Bible gift of tongues is the God-given, miraculous ability to speak in a human language that one has not learned in any normal way. It is decidedly *not* that manifestation of emotional and indecipherable babbling that some charismatic circles today label “tongues.”

The usual teachings of this world

With all the confusion, how can we prove, with confidence, exactly what the Bible teaching on tongues is — and what it isn't?

The process of proving the Bible truth about tongues has three steps: 1) Listing the common teachings. 2) Carefully examining all the major Bible verses about tongues and distilling from them all the essential

traits of speaking in tongues. 3) Comparing the common beliefs with the clear biblical record and seeing if the two match or clash.

The commonly held false beliefs about this subject form a thick web teeming with pet theories and often contradictory ideas.

Often such “speaking in tongues” takes place at an emotionally charged religious service called a “tarry meeting,” where the “spirit” is “called down” or “worked up.” Often such “working up” consists of frenzied repeating of certain phrases like “Glory, glory” or “Sweet Jesus.”

Suddenly one or two or more, either men or women, are “overcome with the spirit” and begin shouting gibberish. Usually this includes waving of the arms, jumping, shouting or even rolling on the floor.

One or another of the congregation may rise to “interpret” what a speaker is saying, usually attributing to the person great utterances of praise for God and other spiritual insights.

Some groups view this phenomenon as absolute proof one has the Spirit of God. Some even believe it is the *only* proof. Still others allow that Christians who

do not “speak in tongues” in this manner may have the Spirit, but that those who do “speak in tongues” have attained to a “higher level” of the Spirit with such speaking. It is a greatly prized spiritual goal in all tongue-speaking circles.

Some believe that such “speaking in tongues” is related to the episode of the “tongues of fire” in Acts 2:3. Others believe it to be the “baptism of the Spirit” predicted by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11).

Beliefs differ, too, as to whether the utterances mean anything in any language. Some believe the utterances to be the “tongues of angels” (I Corinthians 13:1). Others say the languages are unknown and cannot be known. Still others believe such utterances to indeed be known foreign languages spoken today, or at least previously known languages such as ancient Hebrew.

All who do such speaking take the greatest pride in the fact that they “spoke in tongues,” not in what, if anything, they said that might have meant something.

But few, it seems, stop and ask themselves whether their gift accords with what the Bible calls “tongues.” Often such speakers do indeed quote chapter and verse to support their ideas, but usually such quotations are ripped entirely out of context and explained illogically.

When we look carefully at the main verses, however, a clear picture emerges.

The Bible teaching

The place to begin is Acts 2:1-21. The verses in this passage form the crux of the Bible doc-



trine of tongues. Here recorded is the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit. After the death of Christ, believers were assembled on the day of Pentecost when a mighty wind filled the room, fire descended upon them and they began to speak in tongues. The apostle Peter then spoke in tongues to others who were gathered in Jerusalem; all marveled at the gift.

Such a brief summary at first might seem to support the beliefs of the charismatics. But look closer!

Note that this was not a "tarry meeting," but a church service on Pentecost, a Holy Day the Bible commands true Christians to keep (Leviticus 23:15-21). (If you haven't done so already, write for a free copy of our booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* Just mail your request to our address nearest you. See the inside front-cover of this magazine for a list.)

Notice, therefore, that Pentecost was a day — a Holy Day — not an event.

And those who advocate tarry meetings simply misunderstand Christ's command for the apostles to wait in Jerusalem till the Spirit was given (Luke 24:49). The word *tarry* in this verse comes from the Middle English *tarien*, meaning "wait." Modern translations bear this out.

Further, Acts 2:2 shows a wind filled the whole house suddenly. It was a wind that made the noise, and it was sudden. It was not that their mouths gradually worked up a wind! Further, the tongues of fire were not the tongues in their mouths, but small, burning fires. Notice, also, that *all* were filled with the Spirit, not just *some*.

And, most importantly, see that the tongues Peter spoke in were known languages of the day that were clearly understood by those listening.

The listeners marveled because

Peter, to their ears, seemed to be speaking in their native, local dialects, although he obviously hadn't learned all these languages by going to school or through some other normal method of study.

Peter was not speaking unintelligible gibberish. Further, we see no descriptions of wildly gyrating bodies, waving hands or rolling on the ground.

Before leaving the book of Acts, we must examine one more instance of speaking in tongues, this time in Acts 10:44-48. It was on the occasion of the first outpouring of God's Spirit to the gentiles.

The account is brief, but verse 46 clearly states that those listening heard those speaking in tongues "magnify God." The only conclusion is that these tongues again were known languages of the day.

Acts 19:1-6 relates a similar episode.

The book of I Corinthians has much to say about tongues. I Corinthians 12, verses 1 and 10, mention the gift. But verses 27-31 are the most crucial.

In verse 28 Paul lists the governmental offices of the church, including apostle. Then, beginning in verse 29, through a series of rhetorical questions, Paul emphatically proves that not all have the gift of tongues (or any of a number of other gifts, for that matter).

Clearly, having the gift of tongues cannot be the only proof one has God's Spirit. Nor is it proof of superior righteousness, for verse 31, coupled with I Corinthians 13, declares unabashedly that love is a greater gift of the Spirit than speaking in tongues!

I Corinthians 13:1 says that even if one has the power to speak in the "tongues of angels," he is spiritually worthless unless he has love.

These are strong words indeed,

and should once and for all lower tongues from any imaginary position of superiority among gifts of the Spirit!

And these verses do not imply that the Corinthians spoke in angelic language. For in I Corinthians 13:1-2 Paul lists numerous incredible feats, all of them beyond the capability of men (such as moving mountains with faith, and understanding every single mystery of life). He wanted the Corinthians to see that even if they could do certain things far beyond their normal abilities, it still wouldn't make them righteous unless they were filled with and expressing God's love. It is clear that he spoke of the tongues of angels also as something beyond their current abilities, just like moving mountains.

I Corinthians 14 is a crucial chapter, for it is devoted entirely to the topic of tongues. Be sure to review every word of this chapter on your own. Numerous points stand out and with great force defeat the arguments of modern tongue speakers.

To begin, the same Greek word for "tongues" used in Acts is also used here, not some different word. Further, the overwhelming conclusion is that Paul wrote these words to downplay and control the gift of tongues, not to extol it.

The first verse of the chapter unceremoniously dethrones tongues from a position of pre-eminence among gifts, since it encourages normal, inspired preaching (called prophesying, in the Authorized Version) over the gift of tongues.

The next verses time and again stress that the purpose of speaking in tongues is to edify the audience, not the speaker. This, of course, is vastly different from modern tarry meetings and the like, where the one who "speaks in tongues" is the center of attention while the audience just sits back and watches the show. No

real edification takes place. Verses 10-17 stress the need for the audience to understand the words, and thus make plain that the words are capable of being understood. Clearly, Paul is writing of common human languages of the day.

Verse 23 makes the same point in a different way. Paul warns against speaking in a language the audience doesn't understand, saying that to do so would make one who is an unbeliever or unlearned think the believers were crazy. (After all, what sense does it make to speak French to an audience if the audience doesn't know French?)

When Paul says an unlearned person would be confused, he tacitly is saying that a learned person would not be confused. It is abundantly clear that these languages were real ones that could be learned!

The remaining verses drive the final nails into the coffin of the modern misunderstanding.

Verse 27 limits the number who may speak in tongues at any one time to two or three who must take turns. It demands calm order in the service — the very opposite of the emotionally charged atmosphere of a tarry meeting.

Verse 28 requires the tongues be translated for those who do not understand. If there is no translator then no speaking in tongues is allowed — period.

Verse 31 demands tongues be used one by one in turn — not at the same time in confusion.

Verse 32 states that the one who speaks in tongues is at all times in control of himself. This is the very opposite of modern speakers, who give themselves over to tongues and are for a while controlled by the phenomenon, so much so that they may not remember or even know what they said!

Finally, the women are forbidden by Paul to preach in the

church at all, let alone use tongues (verse 34)! Such is not so today, when many if not most of the speakers are women.

We now have listed the main beliefs about modern "speaking in tongues," and we have examined the pertinent Bible verses and extracted the key points.

How obvious it is that modern "tongues" and biblical tongues are not merely different — they are indeed opposites!

The Bible tongues are real languages, modern tongues are not. One is always under control, the other is worked up to uncontrolled frenzy. One is in turn by two or three at most, the other is disorderly and confused.

One must always have an interpreter, the other may not. One is for instruction, the other for display and self-glory. One is at a preaching service where people are to be edified by the content of the speech, the other at an emotional tarry meeting. One is vocal only, the other is linked with wild physical movement.

One is considered a lesser gift, the other a badge of righteousness to brag about or seek with intense effort.

To be fair, some modern tongue speakers do claim their tongues are real language, and some claim to interpret. Impartial studies, however, have shown that such claims are not supported by the facts. Often only a few words or phrases of a real foreign language are detected in the ecstatic utterances — as if spoken only by accident! — and so-called interpretations of the same tongue-speaking episodes often vary widely and are very general even then.

Further, John the Baptist's reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11) does not refer to tongues as some separate baptism in addition to one's initial receipt of the Holy Spirit. It is, instead, a reference to that very act of receiving God's Spirit

after repentance, which baptizes us into the Church of God (I Corinthians 12:13).

The final two remaining questions are why God ever gave the gift of tongues, and whether the genuine gift exists today.

No doubt the gift of tongues was for the same purpose as other miraculous manifestations in the early Church — to call attention to the initial outpouring of God's power, to attract attention to the Gospel message (not to the speaker) and to spread the Gospel in a part of the world peppered with people who spoke many different languages.

Despite claims to the contrary, people today are not seen to speak miraculously in languages they did not learn the normal way. But the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32, cited by Peter in Acts 2:16-21, may indicate God's servants will again exercise that gift at a time of God's own choosing yet future. When and if that happens, God's Church will, of course, acknowledge it, while it also recognizes such a thing as one of the lesser gifts of the Spirit.

Key verses

The main verses about this subject fall into a few easily remembered sections of scripture. Acts 2:1-21 — the first outpouring of tongues occurred on the day of Pentecost. Acts 10:44-48 — the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Gentiles is described. I Corinthians 12 — various scattered statements about tongues. I Corinthians 14 — Paul's instructions about and limitations regarding tongues.

As with so many other subjects, once again we have seen that despite their sincerity, people can be led far afield from the truth when they allow their own thoughts and emotions — and evil spiritual influences! — to dictate their beliefs, rather than God's precious Word. □

Will God Abandon You?

*Is God with you only in the good times —
and down on you when you stumble? Will God ever
abandon any of His begotten children?*

By John R. Schroeder

Once you have counted the cost and made your commitment to God through repentance and water baptism, are you then left on your own to sink or swim?

Do you just have to be lucky to enter God's Kingdom? Is it only a series of fortuitous accidents that will make the big difference?

Or has God so preprogrammed events that it is virtually assured you will enter His Family? Has He prepared His plan so as to guarantee success if you follow the biblical instructions?

The apostle Paul reassured the Philippian brethren of God's faithfulness: "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Does Paul say God the Father might whimsically drop His human children at any moment? Or, rather, does this passage not say that God will continue His work in us until the day of Jesus Christ's coming?

Continue with the same thought in Paul's letter to the Corinthian brethren. He told them that they came "short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the reve-

lation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 1:7-8).

These two scriptures confirm that both the Father and the Son are totally and irrevocably committed to see each and every begotten son and daughter through to the finish. They have no plans to abandon us.

Is God a fairweather friend?

But does God guarantee His Kingdom only to those who make a few *nonserious* mistakes? Or has God committed Himself to help us through the hard times when we have sinned seriously and the door to God's grace appears forever closed?

King David's life story is a living witness to the answer. The prophet Nathan passed on a vital message from God to David. God had said: "Now therefore thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone"''" (II Samuel 7:8-9).

Let's face facts. David allowed himself to go to a lot of places that God never would have led him. David had an affair with

Bathsheba, he committed murder, he numbered the people against God's command and he shed a lot of human blood in battle. But God Almighty never abandoned him even in his worst predicaments.

After sinning, David cried out, "For I said in my haste, 'I am cut off from before your eyes'; nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications" (Psalm 31:22).

David knew that God suffered along with him when he reaped the inevitable fruits of making a wrong choice. But a totally loyal and faithful God stayed with him because David always repented.

No respecter of persons

Is God a respecter of persons? Is He any different with any one of His begotten children?

Emphatically no! God has a desire to the work of His hands. He will finish the work He has begun in us. He cannot lie!

The road ahead may be a ruddy one. Trials may be enormous. But God will not give up on you unless you throw in the towel. God is not a quitter. He will bring you into His Kingdom.

Let us say with David: "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever; do not forsake the works of Your hands" (Psalm 138:8). □

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