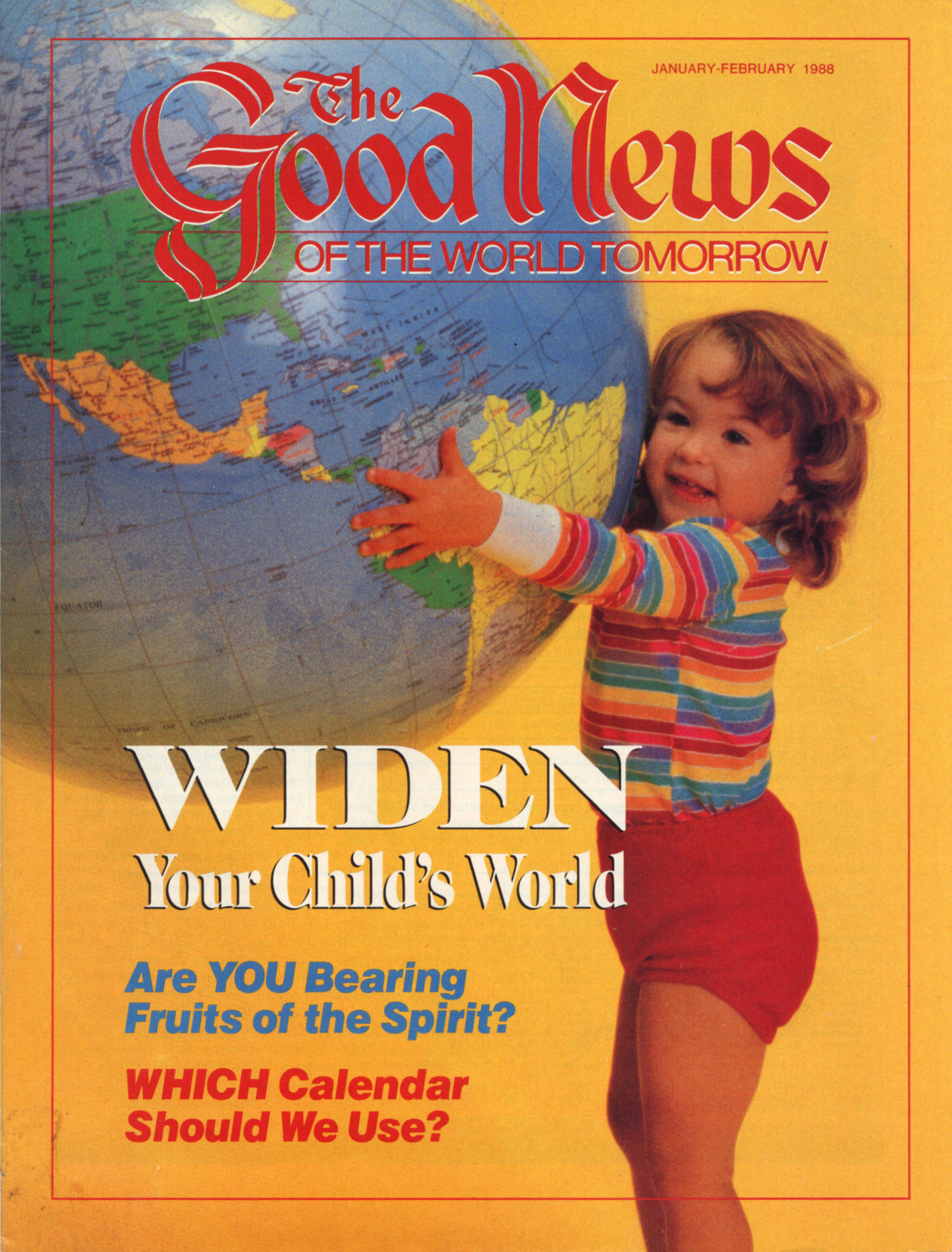


JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1988

# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**WIDEN**  
Your Child's World

**Are YOU Bearing  
Fruits of the Spirit?**

**WHICH Calendar  
Should We Use?**

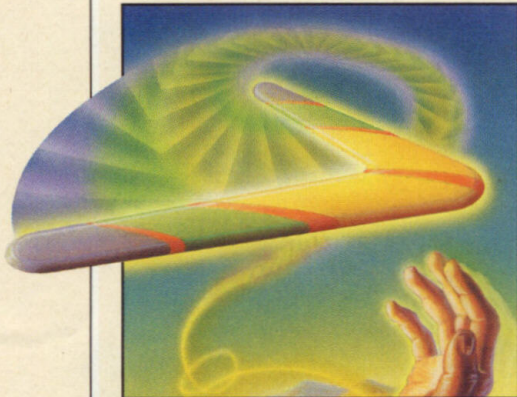
# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

JAN.-FEB. 1988

CIRCULATION: 985,000

VOL. XXXV, NO. 1



8

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**COVER:** From the moment of conception, your child's mental and social growth depends on the environment you create! The article beginning on page 18 offers practical advice on how to "Widen Your Child's World." Photo by Hal Finch.

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# GOOD NEWS PERSONAL



## We ALWAYS Need God

I guess you could call it a quirk of human nature! As humans, we tend to focus on how much we really *need* God only when we are in trouble. And the sad truth is, when things are going well, it is so *easy* to lose sight of our need for God.

I am reminded of my own experience aboard a destroyer escort in the Pacific in 1945. At a gun station amid thundering confusion and terror, the sky darkened with smoke and shrapnel, lit only by tracer shells and the flaming wreckage of aircraft and ships, *I cried out to God!*

*I needed* God! I was in trouble! I cried out in *deep earnest*: "God, if you get me out of this, I'll do everything you say! I'll be good and never miss church again! Only *save* me!"

Believe me, I *meant* it.

Well, eventually that battle was over. By December 21 I was back in Chicago, Ill., safe and sound. Safe and sound and no longer needing God. I had already forgotten all about my promises to Him. The trouble was over, and I could now take care of myself. God was the last thing on my mind.

I suppose that kind of response may be rather typical of humanity, even of those who consider themselves Christian. But true Christians *must not* permit that kind of forgetful attitude to take hold. It should not have to take a time of *trouble* to drive us to our knees to draw close to our Creator. A strong, close relationship to God is something that His own begotten children should make the first priority in their lives *all the time!*

Daily prayer and study of God's Word, the Bible, are essential in every Christian's life.

By the time Jesus Christ returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, each of God's elect will have come to truly **LOVE** the things and ways of God. Each will have come to look at things the way God does, through His perspective, with His attitude and



viewpoint. Each will have come to *think* like God does.

We will be in perfect accord with God in everything! There is and always will be *one* God (Mark 12:29). Just as Jesus Christ and His Father are *one*, so will the born children of God be *one* with them (John 17:22)!

What about you? Do you really understand

the **IMPORTANCE** of *coming out of this world* (Revelation 18:4)? Many who consider themselves Christians are still keeping one foot *in* this world. They don't seem to see the need to draw close to God and to remain close to Him.

God has called His elect to be *delivered* from the fiery destruction reserved for this world and all its ways (II Peter 3:10-11), and to live forever as His born children in indescribable joy, peace, happiness and productivity!

But how much are we really willing to turn over the reins of our lives to God? Does the living God *rule* in our hearts, or do we still want to hang onto our *own* former ways and attitudes? Does this old world still have an allure for us? Have we not had our bellies **FULL** of it yet? Can we not yet see the world's pain, suffering and hurt caused by neglecting God's law?

God is love. He calls us to a process of repentance and overcoming, of *growing* toward perfection.

**WE NEED HIM!** We need Him *all the time*, in bad or difficult times *and* in good. Our relationship with Him is the most important thing in our lives. Without it, we cannot be cleansed, we cannot be purified, we cannot grow spiritually. But with it, we will grow daily in our desire for His will to be done rather than our own — so that when Jesus Christ returns, our will and God's will shall be one.

*Joseph W. Teach*

Pastor General  
Worldwide Church of God

# LETTERS

## Mentally challenging

I first became aware of the Worldwide Church of God television program a few months before Mr. [Herbert W.] Armstrong died. I found the program interesting and listened for a few Sundays, before requesting some of your publications. When my requests were filled without any follow-up for donations, I came to the conclusion that your organization was truly interested in serving God, so as to bring the Gospel and a clearer understanding of the Bible, without soliciting for money, to those who might not have had the opportunity to see the Bible in a broader sense, particularly with regard to prophecy. . . .

Although I have completed a layman's course in theology. . . I find your articles, books and magazines mentally challenging and a stimulant to further study. I am also now in the 17th lesson of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course.

Doris A. Daniels  
Bowling Green, Ky.

## Different than others

I really enjoy your magazines and telecasts. They seem to be so truthful and do make sense to me. They are so much different and peaceful than those ranting and raving evangelists from the South who are exposed on television.

J.K. Patrick  
London, Ont.

## Amazing magazine

Thank you very much for sending me this amazing magazine *The Good News* and to those who made this wonderful magazine possible. I deeply appreciate it. All the articles are very interesting to read. I pray that this magazine will go on forever.

Fernando Sandot  
Cebu City, Philippines

## "Where Did the Original Apostles Go?"

I have often wondered about where the apostles had gone and what happened to them, these men who followed Christ our Lord. What wonderful men, I thought lost through the ages. Now to find out Peter went to the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. I wanted to cry for sheer joy.

Florence L. Husted  
Sealy, Tex.

Herman L. Hoeh says in Matthew 10:5-6 that Christ sent the 12 apostles to

preach only to the lost sheep (10 tribes of Israel), and that is true of the first mission. But Matthew 28:19 reads, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Christ also said in Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The apostles could not teach all nations and give the Gospel to every creature without touching the Jews and gentiles. True, this command was after Christ was risen from the dead, but it was still a command to them.

Any comment?

Mary H. Pittman  
Washington, D.C.

*Jesus' commission to the 12 apostles in Matthew 10 was specifically addressed to them for their time, and is reflected in the fact that the 12 will sit on thrones ruling over the 12 tribes of Israel. The commission voiced to the 12 by Jesus after His resurrection is a commission to every age of the Church through the 19 past centuries and has only begun to be fulfilled worldwide in our day.*

## "Of Punishment and Praise"

You are right in saying it is not easy to be a parent. In our affluent society, we must find time to help our children face life successfully.

If we work too much so as to earn more and more and spend less time with our children, they feel frustrated and discouraged. Unfortunately, in the Western society, most parents tend to overlook this fact. Children are no more corrected and are allowed too much freedom too soon to lead their own lives as they wish. Spiritual values have long been neglected.

Dan Chellumben  
Amboise, France

I would like to express my appreciation for another stirring article on the family by Mr. Ronald D. Kelly, "Of Punishment and Praise" (August) and at the same time acclaim my 13-year-old son.

Since my husband and I separated last year, this lad has willingly taken on the many household tasks such as mowing, sawing large branches off protruding trees, chopping wood for our fire and carting it upstairs, insisting that he be allowed to lay the fire and light it! He erected new venetian blinds and did a

good job, and I pay him to wash and vacuum the car, and he checks the oil and water.

All this is apart from his usual chores around the house and a pamphlet delivery, plus one-half-hour practice on his flute daily, as well as extra time he puts into the school band.

He's not a mother's boy, as he would rather be dragging his go-cart around with his mates or fishing, but he is very special to me. And your timely article reminds me to try to be less critical of his minor faults, and to show my love and appreciation now.

Sandra Furnell  
Brisbane, Australia

## Dating

*The Good News* magazine . . . is so informative. I like the question-and-answer section.

I also enjoyed the series of articles on "What You Should Know About Dating." . . . Although I am married and don't plan to ever date again, I plan to save these magazines so my son and daughter can read these articles when they are old enough to date.

Anita Brown  
Greenville, S.C.

*So you're married and don't plan to ever date again? Wait! Did you know that dating after marriage is the most important dating of all? Be sure to read the concluding chapter of our dating series, "Keeping Romance Alive," beginning on page 14 of this issue.*

## Victim of child abuse

I was the victim of child abuse by alcoholic parents. Psychologists told me that I would have to learn to live with all these emotional scars.

Being an unwanted child is true sorrow. It's the heaviest burden a child can carry. I thought that I had the well-earned right to take nothing and give nothing and to get involved with no one. Whenever someone would try to melt my icy personality, I kept them at arm's length.

The psychologists were wrong. I can't read the articles "Anger — Escaping the Curse," "How to Be an Overcomer" and "Emotional Maturity" in *The Good News* enough times. They helped change my life.

I appreciate the Work of the Worldwide Church of God. Don't stop.

Reader  
Indiana

# You Reap What You Sow! Or Do You?

*Have you ever been a "victim of circumstance"? Or do you get exactly what's coming to you every single time?*

By Bernard W. Schnippert

**H**e got away with it! As amazing as it sounds, he got away with a quintuple murder!

This middle-aged, unemployed salesman from a large town in the southwestern United States killed five members of his own family (his wife and four small children) in cold blood, and then walked away from the heinous act scot-free. And he got off because he confessed!

That's right, he confessed. And since he had no attorney present at the confession, and had not been informed of his "rights," he

was released to walk the streets. He absolutely, completely got away with it!

Or did he?

You need to know. For the way in which you answer that question will decide just how vigorously you work at ridding your own life of evils. Your answer will show whether you truly believe in the most important and basic tenet of good and evil, of right and wrong — namely, that God rewards good for good and evil for unrepented evil.

## Do you believe it?

The apostle Paul put it in these striking words in Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Do you believe that, really? Do you believe that a person gets what's coming to him or her every single time, without fail?

When it comes to God's spiritual laws, we can feel that sometimes the laws let us down. We feel that sometimes the evil prosper and the righteous don't get their earned reward.

Why? What makes us doubt? We doubt because we see so many apparent exceptions to the rule that the rule itself — that we always reap what we sow — seems to be of little real effect.

## Exceptions to the rule?

The first exception that tries our belief about the law of cause and effect is the age-old belief that who you are makes a difference. We feel that the wealthy or the famous or the powerful can do what they want and yet still prosper.

But this thinking is wrong. For proof, look to righteous Abraham. He was faithful and obedient to God (Genesis 26:5), and increased in wealth and power. Certainly, if ever the law of cause and effect (reap and sow) were to be suspended even just a little, it would be for Abraham. But it wasn't.

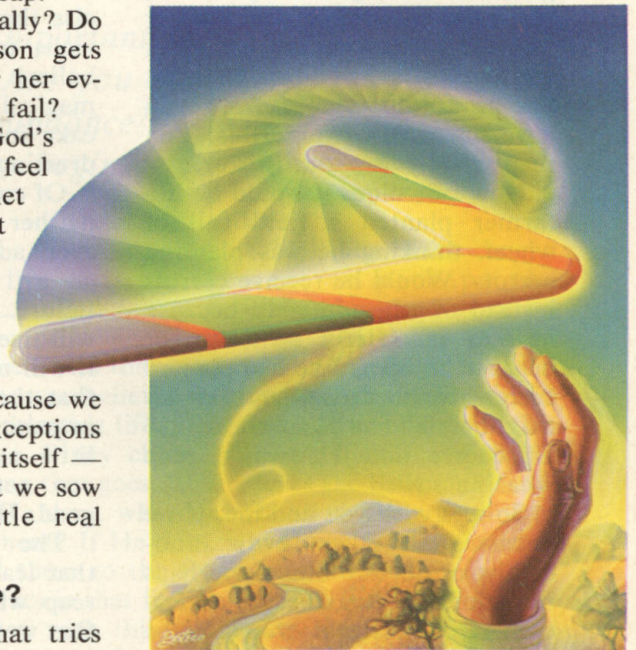
For in spite of Abraham's leg-

endary faithfulness, he was not perfect. He unwisely took his wife's handmaid as his concubine and had a child, Ishmael, by her. His wife Sarah became jealous and ultimately demanded that Abraham cast out his son.

And Abraham's reaction? "And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son" (Genesis 21:11).

Abraham grieved because of the unwise decision he had made. He suffered because of his own mistake. He reaped what he sowed!

Another so-called exception to the rule is the belief that time alters the reap-and-sow principle. That is, if the penalty or reward



for an act doesn't come quickly, it isn't coming at all, and hence the law of cause and effect is broken.

But what if a farmer thought this way? What if just because the seed he planted on Monday hadn't sprouted by Tuesday, it meant it wasn't going to sprout? Or, if it did produce, he would get, say, beets when he had planted carrots?

Ridiculous? Of course it is. But we humans tend to do bad acts and then think we got away with them, or do good and then become discouraged, simply be-

cause the pain or pleasure that's supposed to follow takes a while to come.

Solomon said it this way in Ecclesiastes 8:11: "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

How true! And conversely, how quickly we become discouraged from doing good works if the reward doesn't come back to us almost immediately. Yet, like a boomerang, our good and bad works will always come back to haunt or bless us.

### Good intentions don't count

Perhaps one of the most insidious mistakes is to believe that you do not reap what you sow, but what you *think* you sow, or what you *say* you sow, or what you *wish* you had sown, or what you want others to *believe* you have sown. But realize this: You reap what you *actually* sow.

How ridiculous it would be if a farmer planted a field full of wheat, thinking he was planting carrots. Would he receive carrots instead of wheat merely because he was innocently mistaken, or because he wished he had planted carrots, or because he told his neighbors he had planted carrots? Of course not. He would reap what he sowed.

So it is with you and me. If we deceive ourselves, even innocently, or deceive others, perhaps intentionally, it makes no difference. Our spiritual crop will be faithful to our acts.

Another common, supposed exception to the cause-and-effect rule is that fallacy that "a little never hurt anybody." As humans, we just naturally tend to believe that evil in small amounts isn't too harmful.

The effect of this false belief can easily be seen in a problem experienced by millions of people worldwide — being overweight. It seems incredible that only one cookie, or one piece of cake, or one extra soft drink could make so much difference. So we go blindly on, adding cookies to cake to soft drinks until our waistlines

reap the fruits of our illogical thinking process.

So remember: We reap what we sow. God does not say we reap only when we sow a thousand acres of evil or good, but merely that whatever we sow, in whatever amount, will take root and grow. One single seed will sprout as surely as a million acres will.

### Effects can't be avoided

The next misconception is that we can erase the effect of evil we have done by doing good.

For example, a few joggers seem to feel that if they exercise they can then eat whatever they want — like two huge chunks of cake with lunch, washed down with two soft drinks — and suffer no ill effects because the exercise they get makes them impervious to harm. It is as if they believe that exercise somehow magically turns the two hunks of cake into a chef's salad without dressing!

Of course, this is not true. And neither does a good work, however admirable, somehow erase an evil seed and cause a crop failure. Certainly, the good work will itself cause a good crop, but it will not destroy the evil. Were that the case, we could sin with impunity as long as we did just a little more good than evil, and our net reaping would be all good. How illogical!

The final error of reasoning that leads us to believe we don't reap what we sow is the belief that we humans are mere victims of circumstances — that our lives are the result of mere luck.

Of course, life *is* partially beyond our control. Solomon said that the best runner does not always win the race, but that "time and chance happen to them all" (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

But consider: Although time and chance happen in life, as Solomon said, they happen to *everybody* ("all"). Everyone has good *and* bad "luck," and in about the same amounts.

So we all have about even chances of success or failure in the end. And, even more importantly, the "luck" we do have is

not the most important or controlling factor in our happiness. Our actions — what we sow (and hence reap) — are the most important factor.

### You control the cause

It helps, finally, to see what the supposed exceptions have in common with each other. The answer is that in each case the observer who looks at himself or others and concludes we do not reap what we sow is looking only on outward appearances.

This is the very mistake David almost made in Psalm 73. David saw that, in this world, the wicked sometimes seem to prosper. But when he finally looked inside people, or far ahead in time, or into God's future plans for punishment or reward, he could conclude, "Evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:9).

We will reap what we sow!

Think what this means. It means your life is not the result of luck, but of cause and effect. You are not merely a victim of circumstances. You need not worry about luck, politics, who knows who, or whether men will reward you or punish you. God always will, in the end.

If you don't believe this, then you have allowed yourself to fall into one of the errors of thinking explained above. And worse yet, you have allowed yourself to believe the first lie — the lie Satan told Eve when he tempted her with the forbidden fruit.

Do you remember the story? God told Adam and Eve that if they ate of the forbidden fruit they would die. Satan told them they would not die. Adam and Eve ate of the fruit because they believed Satan's lie. They believed they would not *reap* death when they *sowed* disobedience.

But they were wrong — *dead* wrong — because they were deceived!

But, "Do not be deceived," wrote Paul. "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). □

# Fruits of the Spirit

**T**rees are known by their fruits! And Christians are known by the fruits of God's holy spirit working in them!

The fruits of God's spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

These fruits stand in sharp contrast to the "works of the flesh," listed in verses 19-21: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like."

Of these God warns, "Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God"!

We cannot see electricity, yet we can see what it does. In the same way, we cannot see God's holy spirit, which is God's own mind and power. Yet the fruits of the spirit are just as evident spiritually in converted Christians as the effects of electricity are physically in the world around us.

Beginning with this issue of *The Good News*, an entire series of important articles will examine the fruits of God's holy spirit in detail. They are living power every Christian needs to "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

What about the first fruit of God's spirit — love?

## Where is the love of God?

This world is on fire! Trouble spots are everywhere. War and terrorism rob the world of peace. Starvation stalks millions. Crime, family strife and mental illness afflict individuals. In such a setting as this, many ask, quite understandably, where is the love of God? If God

## Are You Expressing the Love of God?

*Why is love the most important fruit of God's spirit? Are you bearing this fruit in abundance? A new series of articles begins.*

By James E. Kissee



is love, why is there so much violence and ugliness in the world?

Love, the first fruit of God's spirit, means doing what pleases God and what serves our fellow-man. Love is rooted in good deeds and works. Love is a gift of God.

But this world has rejected God and His love! The result is the evil world we live in!

Only God's called people can understand God's love and live God's way of love now.

## God's love revealed

God's love is not the fickle, selfish attitude that masquerades as love today. The attitude of the "me" generation is not true love. Despots do not dispense godly love. Rioters do not express godly love.

Millions have heard what is perhaps the Bible's best-known verse, John 3:16: "For God so

loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." But few really understand this scripture. Many churchgoers are familiar with the little song that goes, "Jesus loves the little children." But if He does, why does He allow their parents to abuse them? If He does, why does He allow nations to send them to the front lines in war?

The fact is that for the present, God has a hands-off policy with this world. He most certainly does not approve of the way the world is living. But He is allowing the world to go its own way and experience the bitter suffering that comes from rejecting the sweet fruits of God's spirit.

For more information, write for a free copy of our booklet *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?*

John 3:17 says God has proven His love for humanity because "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world,

**Godly love is the first fruit of God's spirit. If practiced by everyone, it would bring total peace and happiness to the entire world.**





**W**ise parents create practical, positive ways to educate children about God. With their children, Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach and his wife Elaine associated the fruits of God's spirit with physical fruits. For example: A banana was long suffering because it was long and had a thick skin. An apple — sweet but firm — represented love. A plum symbolized faithfulness; plums always contain seeds!

but that the world through Him might be saved." God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, in the same corruptible flesh that we live in today. Why? So Christ could carve out the way of salvation — deliverance. Notice Romans 5:8: "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

God's action clearly demonstrates the living definition of love — a sincere concern and action to produce the lasting welfare of others.

### Have you rejected God's love?

God's love — His way of outgoing concern — can be rejected by the loved party. This is what mankind, under Satan's influence, has done. Satan, the god of this age (II Corinthians 4:4), has convinced mankind that it is God whose ways are unequal — that God is at fault — that God is to blame for the world's troubles.

But the Bible reveals the truth. God, in His love, has granted humanity free moral agency. Why? He desires to share what He is — love. But love must be freely chosen. Man has chosen to reject God and His revealed knowledge. So true godly love — and the beautiful results it would produce — have been hidden from mankind.

John, called "the apostle of love," noted why. Few lay down their lives — give of their time and energies in a selfless manner:

"And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But 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? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:16-18).

"Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends," says John 15:13. This certainly is not a battle cry for war! It is God's explanation of how the godly should live — how Christians should give their lives daily for the safety and success and joy of others.

God is the very personification of love. It is His

dominant quality (I John 4:8). The original Greek word for this type of love is *agape*.

### God is love

God has shown the remarkable quality of His love in creation. The earth — without the effects of man's abuse — is a marvelous habitation for mankind. God provided everything for our health, pleasure and well-being. But above all this, God made man like Himself (Genesis 1:26) — with a great capacity to love.

The love of God, imparted by God's holy spirit, is based on obedience to God's law (I John 5:3). "He who loves another has fulfilled the law," says Romans 13:8. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (I John 5:3). God's love expresses itself in right attitudes and actions. One who expresses God's love is becoming like God.

God's love is manifested, first, in wholehearted devotion toward God, and then by an intense concern for fellow humans (Matthew 22:37-40). The fruit of love, imparted by God's spirit, works no ill to anybody (Romans 13:10).

God's love is explained in the "love chapter" of the Bible — I Corinthians 13:

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (I Corinthians 13:4-7). Love never fails (verse 8). What you give in love lasts. Unselfish, freely given devotion to righteousness and the lasting good of others is the greatest spiritual gift of all (verse 13).

Freely give God the praise He deserves for what He has done. Freely give love to your neighbor equal to love for yourself. And love even your enemies (Matthew 5:44-45). Pray that they can enjoy the same fruits of God's spirit as you do, and treat them the way you would like to be treated (Matthew 7:12). Overcome envy by enjoying others' success. Overcome selfish interest by showing concern for your fellowman. Don't rejoice in the calamities of others, but rather rejoice when truth triumphs.

"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue [don't just say you love], but in deed and in truth [prove your love by actually serving others]" (I John 3:18).

Think how different the world would be without murder, theft, adultery and all the other evils that selfishness and hatred produce. What a change God's law of love would make.

God does not presently force this world to follow what He is — love. We who are called must decide for ourselves, freely choosing the way of love.

Love is the way all who enter God's Kingdom will live forever! □



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **How may I become an ordained minister of the Worldwide Church of God?**

The Church of God is different from the churches of this world. Above all, it is governed by God through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). On earth under Christ are the human leaders He has chosen and put into office (Ephesians 4:11-12).

In other words, a man cannot choose the ministry of Jesus Christ for his vocation. Jesus told His apostles, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit" (John 15:16).

It is Jesus Christ who selects those He will ordain into His ministry. His will in these matters is revealed through the established ministry.

Being ordained means being put into an office of lifelong service. The apostle Paul said, "This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop [pastor], he desires a good work" (I Timothy 3:1). Paul then outlined some of the basic requirements taken into account in evaluating a man's fitness to serve as a minister (verses 2-7).

One of those stipulations is that a man not be a novice, or, as the margins of some Bible versions render it, "not one newly come to the faith" (verse 6). To be a minister, then, a man must first have served well as a lay member of God's Church and must have grown spiritually. A man's readiness to serve in the ministry will be seen by the fruits of his life (Matthew 7:16).

The Worldwide Church of God, therefore, ordains only baptized, spiritually mature men whom God is obviously calling into the ministry.

Of course, people can serve God's Church in many ways besides being in the ministry. James said, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this:

to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Jesus said to those who will inherit God's Kingdom, "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" (Matthew 25:35-36).

In other words, we serve Christ by serving His people. This type of service is enjoined upon every member of the Church.

## **Should Christians preach the Gospel from door to door?**

From a quick reading of Acts 20:20, one might assume that the apostle Paul went from house to house to preach the Gospel to the unconverted. But when we read the entire passage, beginning with verse 17, we can understand the intended meaning.

Paul "sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church" (verse 17). He said to them, "I . . . taught you publicly and from house to house" (verse 20).

Paul was teaching the leaders of the Church in their own homes. He was not going from house to house trying to teach whoever opened the door.

Another misunderstood scripture is Acts 2:46: "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they [the 12 apostles and other disciples] ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart."

Notice that these people continued daily "with one accord." They were all of the same belief. This is simply talking about people who ate together as one might have close friends to his home. It says nothing about preaching to strangers.

In this instance, many had come to Jerusalem from many nations to attend one of God's

annual festivals, Pentecost. Because they had no home in Jerusalem, the people who lived there invited them to come to their homes and eat.

Paul kept his own rented home at Rome where he "received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God" (Acts 28:30-31). Paul did not go from house to house preaching to disinterested sinners and unconverted people. Paul never pestered people this way because he knew the principle of John 6:44: It is God Himself, not any human, who calls people to the truth.

Certainly, Paul did visit the homes of those who sought counsel and information about God's truth. But it was by request of the people concerned.

Today, as the Gospel is proclaimed on the *World Tomorrow* program, anyone is at liberty to listen or not to listen by turning the dial of his or her set. The Gospel is also being published and sent free of charge to all who request it. Also, as in the New Testament examples, we go into the homes of people who specifically invite us to counsel them. We do not go uninvited into the homes of people to try to persuade them of the truth or to try to get them to join anything.

We might turn the question around and ask, "Should we invite into our homes just anyone who is going from house to house trying to get us to accept his or her form of doctrine?" Here is God's instruction: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [the truth of God's Word], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (II John 10, King James Version).

We are not to go preaching from house to house. Neither are we to accept into our homes any peddlers of religion who might show up at our door. This is the example of Jesus Christ and the early Church of God. □

# It's About Time!

*Where did we acquire our methods of counting time?  
Why do we calculate days, months and years the way we do?  
Is there any spiritual importance in how we observe time?  
This article gives surprising answers from history and the Bible.*

By L. Leroy Neff

**J**anuary 1 begins a new year.

At midnight on December 31 people mark the passing of the old year with much noise from bells, firecrackers, horns and whistles. There is merrymaking and revelry in many places around the world.

This time is almost "magical." At the stroke of midnight comes that great change. Every hundred years that midnight stroke tolls a new century, and every 1,000 years a new millennium.

Some churches have "watch night" services. The members watch the old year out, and the new year in. Some pray the old year out and the new year in.

Why all this? Where did it come from? When did it start? Does it have anything to do with true Christianity or the Bible?

Except for small increments of time — the hours, minutes and seconds of the day — we look to the calendar to keep track of time.

But where did calendars come from?

## Origin of the calendar

In ancient Rome the *calend* was the day of the new moon, or



**Traditional new-year celebration** at Times Square in New York City. Crowds gather to watch the red apple (upper right) drop at midnight. (The Stock Market: Roy Morsch)

first day of the month. From this we get our word *calendar*.

The calendar defines the beginning, length and divisions of a year. Many different calendars have been used down through history, arbitrarily defined and established by men.

Several calendars are in use in

the world today. But the common calendar used in the United States and other Western societies has almost universally been accepted as a standard by the world.

This common calendar counts the years from the "birth of Christ," or *Anno Domini*. These Latin words are usually abbreviated by the better known "A.D." To mark time before Christ's birth we use the letters B.C., meaning "before Christ." The Jews usually use the letters B.C.E., meaning "before the common era."

The exact year used to designate the division of A.D. and B.C. was not established for more than 500 years after Christ's birth. It was determined by a sixth-century monk. Later, chronologers came to recognize that he was off in his calculation by about four years. So, it should be understood today that Jesus was born in 4 B.C.

*The New American Desk Encyclopedia* says: "The principal problems in drawing up calendars arise from the fact that the solar day, the lunar month and the tropical year — the most immediate natural time units — are not simple multiples of each other."

Let's notice how these prob-

lems have been resolved in the calendar used today. We will discuss the year, the month, the week and the day. Then we will contrast what this civilization practices and where it came from with what God in the Bible says on the subject.

Consider first the longest of the periods.

### How long is a year?

Is the year 365 days long? Yes and no!

A year is generally considered to be the time it takes for the earth to revolve once around the sun. This can be measured quite accurately. It is called a *sidereal year* and is 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes, 9.54 seconds long. The word *sidereal* means the year is expressed in relation to the stars or constellations.

Each year is about one thousandth of a second longer than the previous year.

Another way of calculating the year is to measure by the seasons. This is called a *tropical year* (sometimes called a *solar year*) and lasts 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds. Therefore, it is about 20 minutes, 23½ seconds shorter than a sidereal year.

A third way to measure a year is by the moon. A *lunar year* is a year of 12 lunations, moons or months.

Of these, the Western world's calendar is most nearly related to the sidereal year. Since this year is not an exact number of days, the calendar would get out of sync with the seasons if the same number of days were used for each year. To provide for the approximate one quarter of a day over the 365 on the calendar, every fourth year is called a "leap year." An extra day is added to February in those years to make the year 366 days long.

What is done with the remaining minutes more than the six hours? This is resolved by beginning each century without a leap year, except those centuries divisible by 400. Thus the year 2000, divisible by 400, will be a leap year. This should keep the com-

mon calendar in balance with the solar or sidereal year for about 3,000 years.

### Here is how it began

The present calendar is based in part on an earlier calendar used in Egypt. Julius Caesar established a newer calendar, named after himself, which was known as the Julian calendar. This calendar was based on the advice and help of the Greek astronomer and mathematician Sosigenes, from Alexandria, Egypt. As we have already seen, it was based on the sidereal year rather than the lunar year.

The result is that the months in this calendar have no relationship to the moon or its phases. You might say that a real month comes only once in a blue moon!

The lunar calendar previously used in Rome periodically required the addition of an extra month to adjust for the extra days and hours beyond the 12 regular lunations in the lunar year.

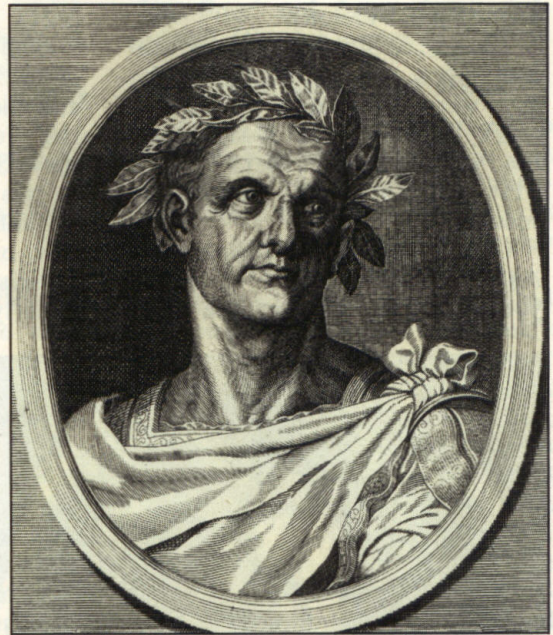
Previously, the Roman year started in the first month of spring. Julius Caesar apparently decided that the year should start with the shortest day, December 22, which is the winter solstice.

"However, he delayed the beginning of the year out of regard for the customs and superstitions of the people, who had always begun the year with a new moon. The new moon nearest to the winter solstice fell on January 1, and so the Julian Calendar was started on that date in the year 45 B.C. Thus we see that our New Year's Day is not related to any astronomical fact or logical reason" (*Pictorial Astronomy*, Alter and Cleminshaw).

This Julian calendar did not properly compensate for the extra minutes and seconds, and in a few centuries the calendar and

seasons were out of sync. So Pope Gregory XIII revised it in 1582. The new calendar was again named after the "inventor." In this case it became known as the Gregorian calendar. This is the common calendar in use today.

The accumulated error by then was 10 days. So by proclamation, the day following October 4,



*Galus Julius Caesar, a Roman emperor in the first century B.C., established the Julian calendar, based on the sidereal year instead of the lunar year previously used in Rome (The Bettmann Archive).*

1582, became October 15, 1582. The weekly sequence was not interrupted, just the number of days on a calendar.

This calendar was not adopted by England and the American colonies until 1752, almost two centuries later.

We can thank the Egyptians, Sosigenes, Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory XIII for the calendar we all use. Also, we can thank Julius Caesar for determining that on December 31 each year, at the exact stroke of midnight, a "happy new year" starts.

There is nothing scientific, sacred, holy or even religious about that specific instant of time. And yet many people apparently consider that it is most special, very significant and perhaps even ordained of God.

But God does not count time

the way man does. We will now see what He says about these time periods.

### What does God say?

“And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years’” (Genesis 1:14, New International Version).

This text states that the sun and moon, the “lights” in the sky, were designated by God to mark the days, the seasons and the year. Psalm 104:19 states, “He appointed the moon for seasons.”

God instructed Moses and Aaron, “This month is to be for you the first month, the first

changed it to start in the spring. The year as instituted here is sometimes called the “sacred year.” The Jews have continued to use the fall-to-fall calendar, which is usually referred to as the “civil year.” However, the calendars for both years are the same otherwise.

God sometimes “changes the times and the seasons” (Daniel 2:21).

God entrusted the preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures and the details of the calendar to the Jews. The Jews preserve these Scriptures and the calendar to this day.

“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1-2).

We saw that the Julian calendar was based solely on the solar or sidereal year. God’s calendar is more complex and is based on movements of *both* sun and moon in relation to the earth.

Now a few points of interest about God’s calendar.

It is based on a 19-year cycle of years, with six different lengths among those years. The ordinary year consists of 354 days. An embolismic or leap year has 13 months and is 384 days long. Other years have 353, 355, 383 or 385 days in order that certain of the feasts God established would fall on appropriate days of the week.

There are 12 ordinary and seven embolismic or leap years during each 19-year cycle. The embolismic or leap year, 13 months long, includes the month Adar II. This occurs during the third, sixth, eighth, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th years of the cycle.

How details of this calendar

are prescribed is quite complex and is a considerable study in itself. Complex formulas based on the exact time of the new moon for the seventh month determine the date for the beginning of the year. This is based on visual sighting of the new moon from Jerusalem, and also can be determined by formula. The exact details of the calendar for any year in the past or future can be calculated.

### Where do we get the month?

The word *month* comes from the word *moon* and is generally considered to be that period of time it takes for the moon to revolve around the earth.

There are three ways of calculating this: 1) As determined by using a fixed star as a reference point. This period is 27 days, 7 hours, 43 minutes. 2) The average time between successive full or new moons, which is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes. This is also called a *synodic* or *lunar month*. 3) One twelfth of a tropical year, which totals 30 days, 10 hours, 29 minutes, 3.8 seconds.

That should be confusing enough, but here we are considering only the astronomical factors. How this relates to the calendar is a different matter. In a calendar, of course, complete days must be used.

In the Gregorian calendar now in use, the month is one of 12 divisions of the year. Each one is called a month, but it has no relationship to the moon (or real month).

Notice again from *Pictorial Astronomy*:

“The month is a convenient period of time and has been retained in the calendar, denoting an arbitrary number of days approaching to the twelfth part of a year. Seven months have 31 days, four have 30, and one veers between 28 and 29. The details as to how the months came to have their present lengths are somewhat in dispute among historians. The Roman belief that there was luck in odd numbers probably was an important factor. Febru-



**Pope Gregory XIII** revised the Julian calendar in 1582 to compensate for the extra 10 days accumulated over the centuries. The Gregorian calendar is the calendar commonly used today (The Bettmann Archive).

month of your year” (Exodus 12:2, NIV). The time of this text is springtime in Israel and Egypt. It is a time when new life is springing forth. This is not during midwinter.

Apparently the year had previously started in the fall, from Adam’s creation. Now God

ary is so short because it was the twelfth month under the old calendar. When days were needed to make other months lucky, it seemed logical to take them from the end of the year. The fifth and sixth months of the old calendar, Quintilis and Sextilis, were renamed July and August, after Julius Caesar and his successor,

**T**here is nothing scientific, sacred, holy or even religious about the new year. And yet many people consider that it is most special, very significant and perhaps even ordained of God. What does God say?

Augustus Caesar, respectively. December is the twelfth month, but its name tells us that at one time it was the tenth, from the Latin 'decem'. Likewise September, October and November were originally the seventh, eighth, and ninth months, respectively. The reason for the present discrepancy . . . is that Julius Caesar changed the date of the beginning of the year from March to January."

The names and meanings of the months are:

*January*: "Door," from the ancient Roman gate god Janus, pictured with two faces looking in opposite directions.

*February*: from "cleansing." The month when Roman women sacrificed to Juno Februa.

*March*: This is the month for Mars, the god of war. Earlier months were not suitable in ancient times for war because of the weather.

*April*: From the words "to

open." The month when the flowers "open" and come forth. Probably also related to the goddess of love, Aphrodite, to whom this month was sacred.

*May*: From "the greater" or "major" god, Jupiter.

*June*: From the famous Roman family Junius.

*July*: From Julius Caesar.

*August*: From Augustus Caesar.

*September*: The original seventh month.

*October*: The eighth month.

*November*: The ninth month.

*December*: The 10th month.

#### The Bible month

What can we learn from God's sacred calendar about the month?

We already saw that the first month of the year was in the spring (Exodus 12:2).

The month relates to the moon, in accordance with God's statement in Genesis 1:14. In God's calendar a month is really a moon. It starts with a new moon and is alternately 29 and 30 days in length.

The Bible refers to the months mainly by number, sometimes by name. The month names most familiar are:

*First month*: *Abib*, which means "green ears." After the captivity Abib became known as *Nisan*, from the Akkadian word for "beginning" or "opening."

*Seventh month*: *Tishri* or *Tisri*, a Babylonian word. The Bible simply calls it "the seventh month."

Most of the names associated with this calendar today are either Canaanite or Babylonian names.

The months of God's calendar are related to the planting seasons. We saw this earlier in Psalm 104:19: "He appointed the moon for seasons."

For example, the first ripe grain of the year was to be presented before God during the

Days of Unleavened Bread in the spring. This required planting at the proper time, so that the beginning of the harvest would occur during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Another example is seen in relation to the Feast of Tabernacles. This fall festival occurs in the seventh month, "when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress" (Deuteronomy 16:13).

#### God established the week

There is no direct relationship to the heavenly bodies in the seven-day week. Various civilizations have tried different lengths for a week, but the seven-day week is in common use today.

Genesis 1 records that God personally established the weekly cycle. He hallowed and set apart the last day of the week for rest (Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Hebrews 4:4). Leviticus 23:3 tells us that a commanded spiritual assembly is to be held on this day.

The Bible usually lists the specific days of the week by number. The seventh day is referred to as the Sabbath. The sixth day is sometimes referred to as "the preparation day."

In the United States, calendars usually show the week as starting with Sunday, the first day, and ending with Saturday, the last day. When someone is just beginning to learn God's truth about the Sabbath, it is easy to refer him to a calendar for a graphic indication that the day we call Saturday really is the last or seventh day.

European calendars, however, portray the week differently, as we will see.

Here are the meanings of the names of the days of the week:

1) *Sunday*, which means "day of the sun."

2) *Monday*, meaning "day of the moon."

3) *Tuesday*, or the "day of Tiu." This is taken from German mythology. Tiu was the god of war and the sky.

4) *Wednesday*, from "Woden's day." He was the chief Teutonic

god, often identified with the Norse god Odin.

5) *Thursday* is "Thor's day." He was Norse god of thunder.

6) *Friday*, from the "day of Frigg," wife of Odin, goddess of love, also "Venus' day."

7) *Saturday* means "Saturn's day," from the planet Saturn.

### Europe has a different "calendar"

In Europe the calendar is usually displayed differently from the one used in North America and elsewhere. Monday, the second day of the week, is listed first; Sunday, the first day of the week, is listed last. Therefore it appears that Sunday is the seventh, not first, day of the week.

In spite of this recent change in European calendars, there is no question about which day is which. Most religious people know that Sunday is the first day of the week. The Jews know that the seventh day of the week, Saturday, is and has always been the Sabbath.

This same practice is followed in many public transportation schedules. Since the weekend days, Saturday and Sunday, often have similar but abbreviated schedules, it is easier to put them together at the end of the week instead of at opposite ends.

Acknowledged problems exist in the Gregorian calendar. The months, the quarters and the halves of the year are not equal. The numbers of working or business days are not consistent in these divisions.

To correct this, a "world calendar" was proposed many years ago. A more recent calendar with similar characteristics has been called a "constant calendar." These calendars are usually based on a 364-day "year."

### Will there be another calendar?

Regarding the "world calendar," *Pictorial Astronomy* says:

**T**here is no direct relationship to the heavenly bodies in the seven-day week. Various civilizations have tried different lengths for a week, but the seven-day week is in common use today as God established.

"It is a perpetual, symmetrical, 12-month calendar. The quarters are identical, each one containing three months, 13 weeks, 91 days."

From a business point of view it would be a great improvement.

The catch is that each year there would be "world day" or "blank day" at the end of the year, with two such days every fourth year. These would be holidays, but they would not be considered one of the regular weekdays. The weekly cycle would cease during these holidays.

Depending on when such a calendar might be instituted, the Sabbath for the first year would probably be as it is now. The second year it would come on what the world would call Friday; the third year, Thursday. In leap years it would drop back a second day at the end of June, compared to what most people would be observing. The Sabbath and the "Lord's Day" would thus become "nomadic" or "floating days."

If such a calendar or one similar to it is ever

adopted, those who obey God's instruction to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8) will really "stick out like a sore thumb."

### What is a day?

A day is the period of time that it takes the earth to revolve on its axis. The *mean sidereal day* is 23 hours, 56 minutes, 4.091 seconds. But the average rotation is 24 hours. This time is calculated today from midnight to midnight.

Anciently, the Sumerians and Babylonians started their day at sunset. Later, the Babylonians started it at midnight, dividing the day into 12 hours and the night into 12 hours.

"The time when the day shall begin is purely a matter of convenience. The present practice being the dominant one from the time of Ptolemy until the present, it was felt that the confusion in the combination of past and present astronomical observations, and the doubts and difficulties in using the astronomical ephemerides [celestial tables],



formed a decisive argument against any change" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, article "Day").

Ptolemy was a Greek astronomer, mathematician and geographer who lived in Alexandria in the second century A.D.

In New Testament times the Romans started their days at midnight, having "four watches" during the night and 12 hours in the day. The New Testament makes reference to certain hours in this Roman system.

God started His days at sunset, in the evening. "And there was evening, and there was morning," for each day in Genesis 1. And notice Leviticus 23:32: "From evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath." The King James Version reads, "From even unto even." A number of times, particularly in the Gospels, certain work activities took place after the sun was set following the Sabbath.

From the Scriptures it is obvious that God begins the day at sunset. This time is regulated by

the great light in the sky, the sun, just as God proclaimed in Genesis 1:14.

### What difference does it make?

What is the importance of all this? What does it have to do with us today? For that matter, so what?

We have seen the history, in brief, of how the world has changed from what God established to something quite different. This was prophesied long ago by the prophet Daniel.

Daniel wrote about the ruler of the "fourth kingdom" in his vision, which is the Roman Empire: "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall *intend to change times and law*" (Daniel 7:25).

The King James Version renders that last phrase as "think to change times and laws." The Revised Standard Version states "shall think to change the times and the law." The New International Version reads "try to change the set times and the laws." The New American Standard Bible has the following: "he will intend to make alterations in times and in law."

That has happened!

The year — its length and its beginning — have in effect been changed.

The month has been changed until it is no longer a real month.

The week, though still seven days, has for most people been effectively changed to a Monday-Sunday week. Sunday has become the only "day of rest" for

many people, whether religious or not.

In due time Sunday as a rest day and the Sabbath as a work day will become a life-or-death issue between God's servants and the world.

The world will have the "mark" of that fourth kingdom (government), the Roman Empire. That mark has to do with times and the calendar and the laws produced by this coming government. The saints will have

**I**n due time Sunday as a rest day and the Sabbath as a work day will be a life-or-death issue between God's servants and the world. It has to do with obedience to God and His commands, which include the Fourth Commandment.

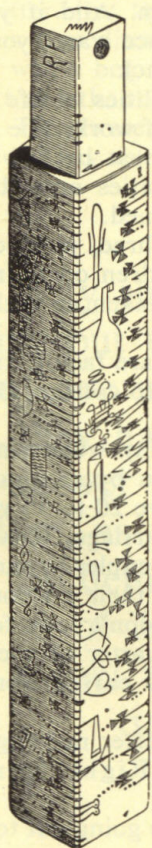
a different sign. It has to do with obedience to God and His commands, which include the Fourth Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day."

Those who do not have the mark of that fourth government will not be able to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17). For more information on this subject, request free copies of our booklets *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?* and *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*

Such thoughts are very sobering. We in God's Church need to be close to God and stay that way so that God will provide us with refuge from the Great Tribulation period, when the "mark of the beast" will be enforced by violence!

Even though bad times are coming, as the Bible says in effect in its last chapter, "We win!"

Now you should understand: It is about time that you learned about time! □



SAXON CALENDAR.

**Ancient Aztec calendar stone** (upper left) now at National Anthropological Museum in Mexico (Photo: Norman Prince). Lower left: European wooden calendar used until middle 19th century (The Bettmann Archive). Right: Calendar used by the Saxons (Culver Pictures, Inc.).

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

# Dating

## Keeping Romance Alive

*To most people, the word date means what you do before you get married. But the most important dating of all takes place after the wedding ceremony!*

By Ronald D. Kelly

**I**t's sad but true! After marrying, many couples settle into a predictable routine. The spark goes out of their relationship. The romance slowly fades.

In this series of articles on dating, we have shown how important dating is toward achieving a happy marriage. We have encouraged singles to spend time getting sufficiently acquainted — to be thoroughly prepared for marriage.

But the dating years before marriage are comparatively short-lived — typically from about age 16 to 25. One may date a prospective mate two or three years. But marriage ought to last 50 years or more — till death do you part.

How much more important, then, is dating after marriage! Yet this may be the most neglected area of all in a marriage.

### Settling into the routine

For some reason we seem to let the barriers down after we are married. We take each other for granted. We assume. We neglect. We pursue our careers. We have children. We get busy. We forget. We drift.

As a result, many marriages fail.

Most couples marry in a flush of exciting romance. Candlelight dinners. Sentimental journeys. Beautiful sunsets. Whisper-

ing sweet nothings to each other. Why is it so many so soon forget the fantasy and togetherness of those exciting dates?

You must not let that happen. And if you are married and have let your romance wane, you must begin immediately to build it back.

After the honeymoon, the realities of life set in. There is the everyday necessity of work. The rent or mortgage must be paid. Food must be put on the table. Clothing and other necessities must be purchased. The house must be cleaned.

And after a year or two or three, most couples plan for children. After the children come into the world, a large portion of time is taken up with them and their needs.

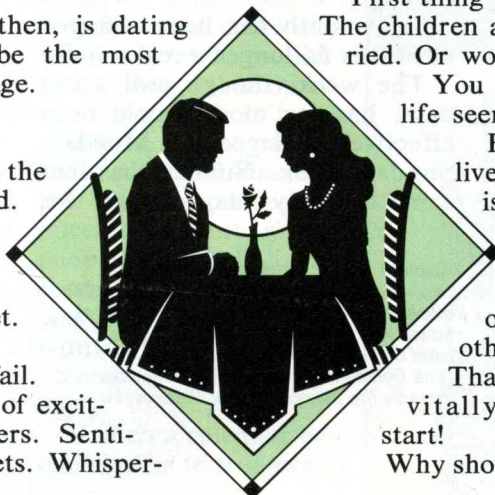
First thing you know, you are facing mid life. The children are grown. Off to college. Or married. Or working full-time.

You wake up one day wondering how life seemed to pass you by so quickly.

But you still have 20 to 30 years to live together in marriage. How sad it is that so many couples in our world today have let their precious love fade. They don't look forward to that last quarter of a century of sharing and caring for each other.

That's why dating after marriage is so vitally important. Right from the start!

Why should couples stop going out together





just because they are married? Or because they have children?

The answer is, they shouldn't.

In fact, that's when it is more important than ever! Walks in the park. A movie. A play or concert. Out to a ball game. A Sunday at the beach or in the mountains. Dinner at your favorite restaurant. These special times are an integral part of the intimacy of marriage.

But often, as we get caught up in the demands and pursuits of life, we tend to forget the need to spend time together.

### Remembering each other

Not long ago, a couple came to me for counseling. They were having marital problems. They had been married 12 years and had three children ages 10 to 4.

As we talked, I discovered that since their first child was born 10 years ago, they had not been alone for even one evening! Not one night had they spent away from the children. Not one dinner for just the two of them.

Now, in one way that is admirable. They certainly had devoted a great deal of time to the children. But they had neglected each other.

As the years passed, they had lost the ability to communicate with each other. They had become a father and mother and forgot they were still a husband and wife.

During the counseling sessions, I recommended they begin to date each other again. It was hard for them. The children had never been left with a baby-sitter. But they made arrangements and went out to a nice dinner. It wasn't a smashing success. But it was a beginning.

Next month, they did it again. This time it was better. They were more relaxed. They talked. They laughed. They remembered. Now they go out once

**Why should couples stop going out together just because they are married? Or because they have children? The answer is, they shouldn't! Often, as we get caught up in the demands and pursuits of life, we tend to forget the need to spend time together.**



every few weeks.

Every marriage needs that. Not always for dinner. Sometimes, when finances are a little tight, you might take in a free concert. Or go for a drive. Or take a long walk.

But once a week — certainly at least two or three times a month — every married couple needs to get out alone for an evening or afternoon. Just to be together.

### Escape weekends

In addition to regular dates for dinner or entertainment, every marriage profits by spending an occasional few days on a "mini-vacation."

In counseling, I call these "escape weekends." And I advise couples to make such escapes at least once each year — two times a year if time and finances permit.

The purpose of doing this is to keep the romance alive.

I have counseled hundreds of couples. It's been humorous, sometimes, to see the reaction when I suggest this kind of getaway.

One husband reacted: "Why, I can't go away just the two of us for an entire weekend. What on earth would we talk about that long?"

How eloquent.

He didn't even realize he had just showed how important it was. He didn't have in him two days worth of conversation with his own wife.

Some time ago, I was giving a lecture at a seminar. My topic was this very subject — how to keep romance in your marriage. I was talking about escape weekends and I noticed a woman in the audience momentarily close her eyes and she seemed to clutch her purse a little. I thought nothing more of

it till the next day. She requested a few minutes to talk with my wife.

In my lecture I had mentioned how important an occasional escape could be. And I gave several ideas of how a couple might make plans and enjoy a day or two away from home alone.

She told my wife that as I discussed the topic, she closed her eyes and prayed, "Dear God, please help my husband understand how much I need and want that kind of time with him."

Of course her husband was not aware of her short prayer. As they drove home from the seminar and talked about the topics, he said, "We don't need to do that kind of thing, do we?"

She was so intimidated by him, she simply responded, "No, I guess not."

He failed to recognize the hurt in her voice.

But the next day, when she told the story to my wife, she came to realize she had to let him know what her needs were. My wife urged her to go right home and tell him just what she had told my wife.

She did.

At first he couldn't see why it was so important. *He* didn't feel the need. Why should *she*?

But as they talked, he began to see what he had been missing.

He had become so involved with his work, with paying the bills, with his own interests, that he had not realized he had neglected his wife.

So he made plans to pick her up Friday after work. She would arrange for some friends to keep the children. They would spend the weekend at a resort condominium.

It was a delightful experience. This man had forgotten how to relax. It had been years since he had sat at the beach and watched the ocean waves roll in.

They had a nice dinner Friday evening. On Sun-

As the couple talked, the husband began to see what he had been missing. He had become so involved with paying the bills, with his own interests, that he had neglected his wife. They began to see the necessity of keeping their marriage alive.

day they got up early and strolled along the beach and watched the sun rise.

And they talked.

It was a new beginning.

As they walked through the waterfront shops they noticed a greeting card they couldn't resist sending to my wife and me. It was a cute cartoon drawing of a little boy and little girl walking hand in hand on the beach. Inside they wrote the message: "Having a wonderful time. Thanks so much for the advice and encouragement."

They did not need to say more.

Now they plan to go someplace every year. And they are more in love today than ever. Not just because of an occasional weekend away. But because through that they began to see the necessity of keeping their marriage alive. It helped break down barriers that were starting to build. It gave them a new and different perspective.

It can do the same thing for your marriage. But it does take effort.

### Taking turns

After I had completed a recent lecture on this subject, one couple told me how they had already put that to practice in their marriage. I thought their idea was well worth passing on.

They have a regularly scheduled date. It takes place sometime during the last week of each month. They have set aside an amount in their budget for these dates. It's not a lot. They can't afford a really expensive restaurant. So they have to use creative ideas.

The interesting twist was, they alternate months on who plans the date. One month the husband surprises his wife. The next month it's her turn to plan the evening. They keep their plans completely secret till the day of the event.

Sometimes it's a picnic. Other times horseback riding at a resort. They have been to nice but inexpensive restaurants. They have been to concerts and ball games.

But one thing they each try to do is plan an event that will please the mate — not something they alone want to do. That makes them think about the other person and put their own selfish interests in the background.

Then for their anniversary each year they do the same thing. One year the wife plans a two- or three-day trip. The next year it's the husband's turn to plan. The only requirement is that they set a budget in advance for the next two times. It has to be the same.

I thought that was such a good idea that my wife and I have instituted it into our anniversary plans. This year is her turn, and I can hardly wait to see what she has in store. She won't even give me a little hint.

So if you thought dating was just for the unmarried, think again. Dating after marriage is far more important than before the wedding ceremony. Keep the romantic fires burning. There is nothing more

If you thought dating was just for the unmarried, think again. Dating after marriage is far more important than before the wedding ceremony. There is nothing more joyful than a long and happy life together as husband and wife.

joyful than a long and happy life together as husband and wife.

#### Every day is a date

The kind of dating we have been talking about up to now is the kind where you make plans and go out. Dinners. Movies. Sporting events. Walks. Drives. Trips. But once you are married, how you react to each other *every day* is just as important, from the moment you wake in the morning till you fall asleep at night.

Perhaps the most important key of all toward a successful marriage is not to take each other for granted.

We all have needs, hopes and dreams. In the happiest marriages, each mate does his or her best to help the other person achieve those goals.

You need to tell each other "I love you" every day!

You should talk. Not just, "What's for dinner?" But really talk. About how you feel. About what you think. About your concerns, fears, doubts. About your joy and happiness. About what hurts. About what excites.

You'd be surprised how little many couples do that. A recent study revealed a shocking statistic. The question was: "How many minutes do the average husband and wife spend in meaningful conversation each week?"

What do you think? Five to six hours? Two hours? One hour? Half an hour? Keep going.

The average was 16 minutes!

Can you believe that?

How sad. Many have allowed their marriages to become a dull and drab part of life.

Those who want to keep their marriages exciting and fulfilling have to work at it every day.

So why not begin now to view dating in marriage as part of the glue that holds it together?

Take an escape weekend as soon as possible. Go

out to dinner, just the two of you. Watch the sun set. The idea is to plan an evening or a day to do something different.

Go on a date.

And make every day a date with the person you will spend your life with.

There is nothing more important in the physical lives we lead than our marriages and families.

When Paul wrote of the relationship between a husband and wife, he said, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32).

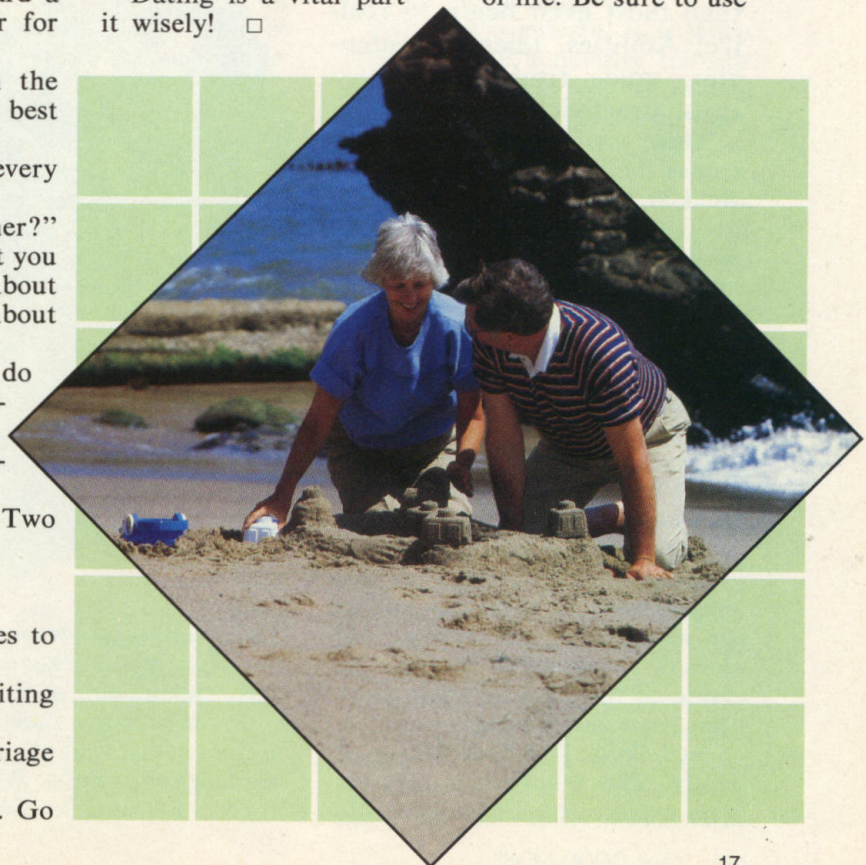
So marriage is more than just a physical relationship. It shows a spiritual type of the soon-coming marriage of Jesus Christ to His Church.

This series of *Good News* articles on dating has been designed to help people young and old know how to make the most of times spent with members of the opposite sex. Most single people date hoping they will meet the person they will marry. Not all dating leads to marriage. But that's why most individuals date. It's a time to get acquainted. It's a time to learn how to consider the needs of others, how to share your life and experiences. It is a time of development and preparation. It is an integral part of life. It's an art. It's a talent — but a talent that can be learned and improved upon.

Dating is a tool of giving. Of sharing. Of learning. Of loving.

We hope you will reread this series many times. While you are young. When you think you have found your one-and-only. Even years after you are married.

Dating is a vital part of life. Be sure to use it wisely! □



# WIDEN Your Child's World

*From conception, your child's mental and social growth depends on the environment you create!*

By Joan C. Bogdanchik

**A**t its beginning your baby's world is smaller than the period at the end of this sentence.

Yet in this minuscule start resides potential far greater than most even begin to realize! Abilities, talents, tendencies, voice timbre, mannerisms, proclivities are there.

Then your baby's world becomes the extent of the amniotic fluid in Mother's womb. During gestation, your child's world widens. Hereditary influences are at work. The factors that were in the father and mother cells when they united now influence the new life.

After about nine months, Baby will burst forth into a much bigger realm. Training and environment now continue this process of widening.

Early on, the newborn's world is comparatively small. The initial environment is often not subject to much change. Geography doesn't mean much at first, because of the infant's short attention span and limited vision.

But Baby is off exploring already! The mouth and tiny fingers explore the food source. Ba-

by sees. Hears. The memory records. Baby discriminates taste, smell and sound. He or she soon grasps and plays with his or her feet. At about 6 months, experiments with hand manipulation take place. Baby pushes up to a sitting position. He or she learns from the environment.

#### **What will be developed?**

Some potentials of a child may be tapped. Others may lie dormant, or asleep. Some may be

ment, emotional stability — or lack of it — do you allow your yet-unborn child to imbibe?

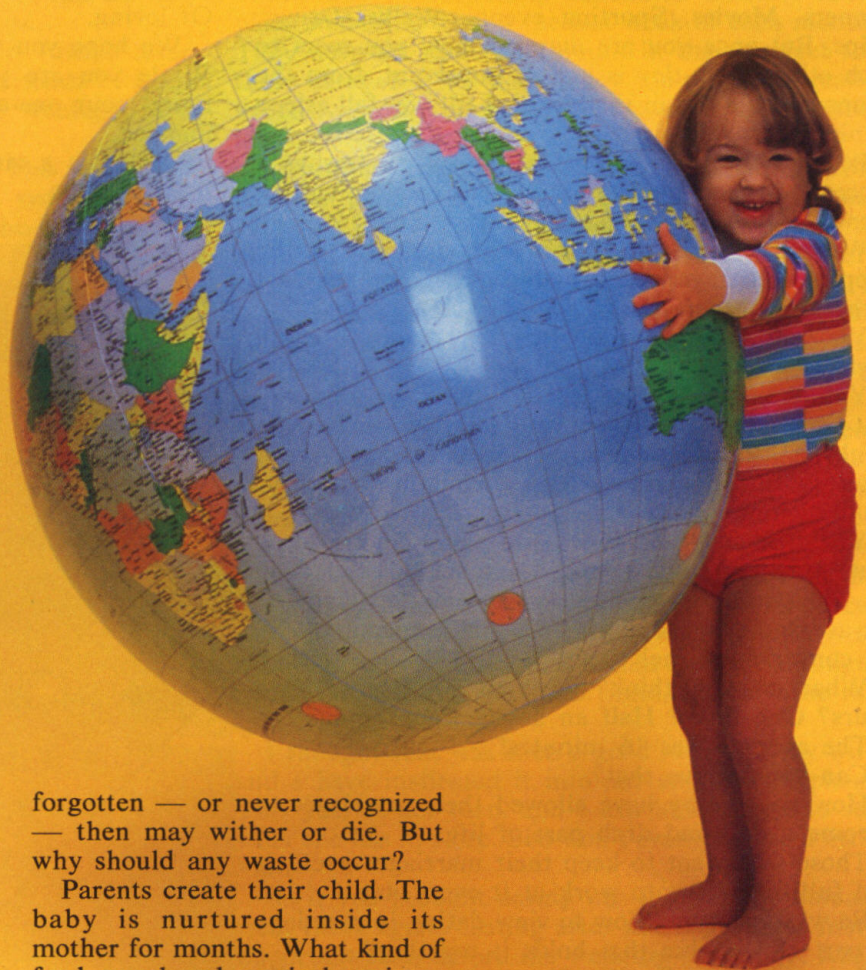
#### **Developing independence**

At birth your baby's independence from the womb began. Yet how far from real independence he or she was at this time!

Baby depends upon the parents for life itself. If mother did not provide food, life would be limited indeed. Caring and providing for the child, and seeing that he or she is comfortable, are important duties of parents.

Yet added to this is another great responsibility that parents should be prepared to undertake for the years the child is in their charge. This responsibility — and great privilege — is the furthering of the purpose for which all humans are born. This purpose is to reach our highest potential!

Parents are key to this development — or lack of it — until the child is on his or her own and can



forgotten — or never recognized — then may wither or die. But why should any waste occur?

Parents create their child. The baby is nurtured inside its mother for months. What kind of food, vocal and musical environ-

assume personal responsibility. In early childhood the basic, beginning understanding of the world forms. Parental involvement with the child during these years influences the child's intelligence and character. It lays the groundwork for how the child will later approach situations, relate to others, react to problems. The child grows in the parents' ways of doing things.

As the child's environment grows from the parents to brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors and pets, the world steadily widens with each contact.

Each new encounter is different, and the child begins to learn how to respond. Alert parents watch these contacts — they tell Mother and Father how well the child is interacting and how they need to further aid the child in developing.

Baby's first outing is a broadening experience — full of wonder. All kinds of new sights beyond the confines of home greet him or her. With each subsequent outing, Baby is "all eyes," soaking in new sights. This is where parents must control and direct learning experiences and present the child with as many opportunities as possible.

And these opportunities are often just normal details of everyday living, such as walks in the backyard, garden, woods, forests, on sidewalks to parks and supermarkets, to zoos, lakes, the sea and its shores.

But the wonders we see in the world about us are often quiet in their teaching. Parents need to instruct and explain as their child observes the awesome creation God has given us.

When parents show picture books to their offspring and discuss them, his or her world further widens. As they read storybooks and poetry, it widens even more — Baby now meets new experiences vicariously, through the written messages of others.

How exciting this world-widening becomes to children — and how exhilarating to parents!

But there is a vital prerequisite



*The Stock Market/Gabe Palmer*

we must remember before — and while — we expose our children to new learning. This will help ensure that maximum benefit is gained from all instruction and learning.

If we do not heed this crucial point, the child's learning — and self-worth — can be sorely hampered. Some parents tend to ignore this area without realizing it.

What is it?

### **A vital prerequisite**

First and foremost — above all else! — your child must know you love him or her. You must be educating with love.

This means you must do more than merely state your love. You must show it by your actions — and by the value you place on your child's right responses and accomplishments.

Your child should be growing in respect for himself as a valuable individual.

Too many children grow up with the feeling that they can never do anything "good enough" to please Mom and Dad. Some parents are very critical of their children and offer little praise or encouragement. The child is "put down" or told he or she doesn't know anything.

Hearing this enough, children come to believe it and quit trying. They develop the attitude, "I can't do it well enough to please my parents, so why try?"

This painful feeling of inferiority can cause a child to withdraw,

and later in life become openly aggressive. Or he or she may become the class clown, hoping this will mask the deep inward pain of feeling inferior, as parents have led him or her to believe he or she is.

### **A healthy self-image**

Children must value themselves if they are ever to value others. How sad it is when children reject themselves, as so many do today! Different children, of course, display inferiority and self-hatred in different ways. Some are timid and shy. Some are aggressive and hostile. Any of these characteristics hinders growth and narrows the child's world.

Even some very young children have already become defeated. They cannot cooperate with others, and they disrupt their classrooms at school. If not corrected, this disruptiveness, defeatism and inability to achieve can ruin their adult lives. At best, they are nearly impossible to live with. At worst — well, watch the news and notice the shocking acts that supposedly mature, sane people commit every day!

But how wonderful it is when children have a healthy self-image. They think well of others and show concern for them. They interact and cope easily. They respect authority.

This kind of child is a joy. He or she is ready to respond, to learn, to try new things, to contribute. He or she is gaining emotional maturity. This is the kind of child who gladdens the hearts of his or her father, mother and others. He or she leads among peers today and in the future.

### **Importance of the family**

When children learn about themselves, they learn about their families. Actually, learning about their families is largely responsible for making them into what they are.

Primary in learning about the family is the loving father image. Father occupies a role distinct from others. How he directs the home and his family are patterns

his child will tend to follow. We tend to envision God in a way that parallels our relationship with our physical father.

It is important to have much joy and delight in family living. Children should be reared in a happy environment where warmth, security, joyous play, learning and happiness prevail.

Parents should make their home a pleasurable place to be, where discipline and self-control are a way of life. Children should speak but not dominate. During their early years at home, children should be taught good work habits and dependability through play and activities. They should be complimented on every task well done.

Discipline helps children learn acceptable limits of behavior. It causes them to think about the meaning of their actions. Children should be disciplined for willful disobedience, as growing up without bounds does not allow their world to widen properly.

Be consistent in your child rearing. The child becomes uncertain when you are. Consistency is essential to real success, as is discipline with love and control. When disciplining children, always remember to reassure them of your love. Make sure that they understand it is for what they *did*, not because they are bad children.

Encourage, encourage, encourage. When you see an area where your child is strong, develop it so he can feel good about excelling in it, but continue to expose him to a wide variety of other experiences and skills as well.

Often, children are pushed to achieve just to make parents look good — for the parents' ego or status. This should not be.

Think about your child's well-being and where he or she is now in development. Enjoy your child every step of the way, and don't compare him or her with others. Don't rush your children. Let each child develop his or her own personality and abilities.

To be observant of your child and his or her needs takes time. But *time* is one of the greatest

gifts we can give our children. (*Things aren't!*)

Make time for close, emotional touching. A husband and wife should realize when they conceive children how much time is required to widen their child's world to his or her greatest potential.

Parents represent God to their young children. They are their child's protectors, standing behind him or her in all difficulties. If a child brings home a poor paper, for example, don't rebuke or scold, but ask what could have been done to make it better. Then work *together* to help your child improve.

If your child is having trouble with games, help find new strategies. A child needs to know that his parents are behind him.

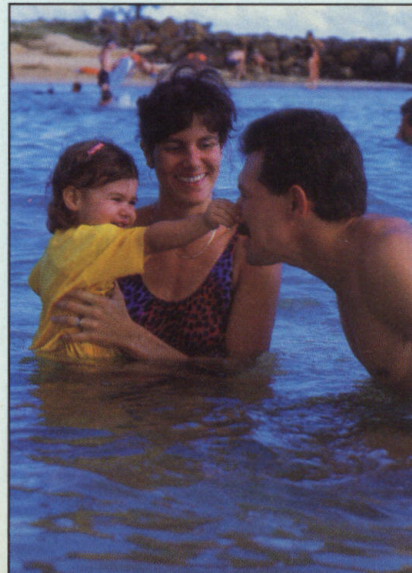
#### **Children also need other children**

No matter how understanding and adaptable a parent may be, he or she is still an adult. Children need the childishness, the naivete, of other children.

They need to mix with peers, not only in play, but in work. They need to learn to roll with the childish rebuffs, knocks and verbal responses that others give. They need to learn to negotiate, make decisions and live with the consequences.

Children need a balance of time alone and of social interaction with others. This stretches their emotional, social and intellectual growth. Their world expands to include others. This will

Hal Finch



help prevent the loner and, later, the lonely.

A child secure in his home relationship — growing and learning steadily from it — grows in interfacing with others.

Your child should be growing in obeying rules, playing fair, sharing and handling situations. Being part of a group requires greater independence and self-reliance. This learning helps mature him or her.

Parents must be sure not to let a child grow in pride and arrogance in the name of self-esteem. This is going wrong at the other end of the scale. A child should be growing spiritually in character, as well as mentally, socially and physically. He or she should be learning to esteem others better than self.

#### **Countering peer pressure**

What a responsibility parents have! They must not make the mistake of underprotecting or neglecting their duty to their children. The child in such a situation has a hard time with other children. A successful child must have a strong, loving family backing him, or his peers will become his guide and example.

The parents' influence must counter peer pressure. A child learns from each and then forms his path. This takes place over the years as the child matures toward adulthood and eventual independence.

Parents should be aware of their child's friends. Invite them to your home. How good it is when a family relationship develops between your child's friends and you! I have seen this in action. It is a sign of solid, smooth development of your child's widening world.

If your child's associates are not desirable, do all you can to change the situation early. Perhaps a change of area, school or neighborhood should be considered. If not possible, provide experiences that place your child in different groups: clubs, summer camp or summer visits to relatives. Do all you can to improve your child's environment. □

# POSITIVE CHILD TRAINING

## Before You Say Good Night...

BY DEXTER H. FAULKNER

PART ONE

*Editor's note: For years I have wanted to do a series of articles on child training. Molding our children's future is a tremendous responsibility. Children are a gift from the Creator God! This is not a comprehensive study in child development — just a collection of observations from a father and grandfather, based on years of study and experience from a biblical point of view. I hope these will be practical, down-to-earth, basic principles.*



**H**as bedtime become a battle of wills between you and your small child?

Even if it's not a battle of wills, if you're exhausted after 3-year-old Katie has cried for two hours after being put to bed, you are probably wondering if there isn't a better way to end the day.

### Find the cause

Bedtime can either be a trial or a triumph. If your child never seems to want to go to bed, try to find out exactly what the prob-

lem is. Don't assume it's just outright rebellion. There are several reasons children resist going to sleep. Know your child well enough to find out what his or her reason is.

One reason your child may resist going to bed may be that your child has developed "separation anxiety."

Small children cannot comprehend that you are still there when they can't see you (i.e., when you are in another room). Going to bed may frighten them because they are left alone in a dark room.

Another reason may be that

your child may be afraid of missing something. A toddler is just beginning to learn about what the rest of the family is doing, and is intensely interested in everything that goes on. He or she can be afraid of missing something exciting. At least an hour before bedtime you should start a quieting down time.

Our sons would have their baths and be in their pajamas. Then it was time for one of their favorite activities — attacking the giant! I would lie down on the floor and they would try to pick me up. I would help them along until I was almost in the chair and then I would fall down and they would have to start all over again.

This would go on at least half an hour. Then I would let them lead me to the chair, and each one brought me something to read to them, or I would tell them a story.

This didn't happen every evening, but often. We were recalling this with our sons a few weeks ago and were interested to learn that it is still one of their fondest memories. They did this until they were teenagers. We

had to stop, finally, because they got to the point where they were able to pick up the giant!

A third possibility is that the child is not tired enough to go to sleep. Your child may simply not need as much sleep as he or she is getting. It may be time to shift from two naps to one, for example.

After you have determined the cause of any sleep problems, you can make bedtime a special time for the whole family. How? Following are some helpful points you can use.

These points can be applied to children of any age, but ideally these principles and ideas should be applied as early as possible in the child's development.

#### **Make bedtime special**

• *Have a set bedtime* that is convenient for both your schedule and your child's sleep needs. Break this only for a special occasion, such as a visit from Grandma and Grandpa. A consistent bedtime is vital for establishing regular sleep habits for your children. In fact, a consistent schedule for all regular activities will help promote your child's confidence and peace of mind.

• *Provide the child with a pleasant place to sleep.* Don't make going to bed a punishment. A cozy comforter on the bed, a night-light and some familiar books or stuffed toys around can make bedtime more appealing.

• *Establish a routine.* Children feel more secure and steady if there is a set pattern of events surrounding bedtime. If you have more than one child, make sure you spend time with each child.

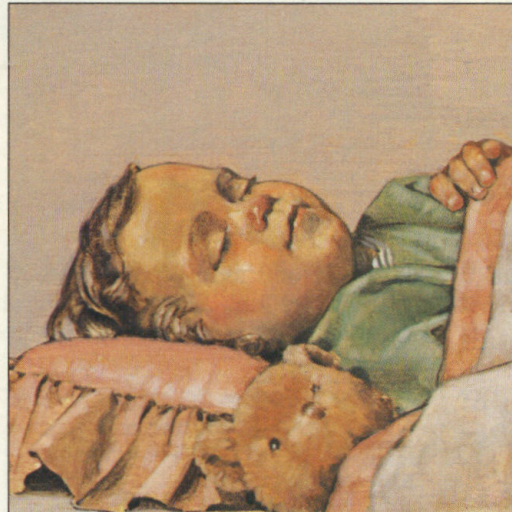
• *Make it positive.* Bedtime is the perfect time for reinforcing your love for your children. Don't let it be a harried, busy, exhausted time. Try to make going to bed and the routine surrounding it a positive experience. This also makes a child feel secure and

***B***edtime is the perfect time for reinforcing your love for your children. Don't let it become a harried, busy, exhausted time. Try to make going to bed and the routine surrounding it a positive experience.

can even take some of the fear out of going to sleep all alone in a dark room.

• *Read, sing or talk.* What special events happened today? Let the child choose what to do or what story to read, unless you have something specific you want to teach or say.

One of my staff members tells me that when she was a little girl, her mom would never fail to come in and read her a story before she went to sleep. It was special to her and she'll never



*Illustrations by Dan Andreassen*

forget her mother doing this. She plans to make it a part of her "bedtime ritual" when she has children.

• *Care for all needs.* Take care

of all bathroom needs right before your child goes to bed, so there's no need for a sip of water or a trip to the bathroom right away.

• *Pray together.* Your child's age and your personal preferences will decide how you do this. You may want to pray aloud or silently. You may need to do all the talking, or you may be able to have both you and your child pray.

This is an ideal time to teach your child about God's kindness and love, and ask God for His protection while you sleep. Children need to be taught how to pray, and bedtime presents a great chance to do it.

• *Don't forget cuddling.* Give your child a hug and a kiss. When you do this, your child will go to sleep in an atmosphere of love and affection.

#### **Loving training**

After you have said good night, make sure the child can communicate with you. Leave his or her bedroom door open, if necessary. Be sure others in the household aren't overly noisy while the child is going to sleep. If your child still does not go to sleep, and there are no health problems or other good reasons why your child would still be awake, he or she must be taught to lie in bed quietly until sleepy.

If discipline is necessary occasionally, one or two swats, according to the child's age, should be enough to show your child you are firm about him going to bed. Be sure to express your love for your child again as you tuck him in.

Consistent, firm, loving training is the key to happy, well-balanced children. As the children of God Himself, let's use these Bible-based guidelines to help us fulfill our role as parents to our own children. □



# Operation Larry: To Save a Mockingbird

By John Halford

**T**he first time I saw Larry, I thought he was a dirty old tennis ball. He was actually a baby mockingbird that had fallen out of a nest.

By the time I got home from work, Judy, my youngest daughter, had already decided to try to save its life.

I wasn't so sure. Baby birds nearly always die when separated from their parents, and this one was *very* young. I was tempted to put it out of its misery right then, but my daughter insisted: "Dad, we have got to try to save it!"

But how? The little bird just sat in a cardboard box, looking bedraggled, frightened and utterly helpless.

And hungry!

"What do mockingbirds eat?" asked Judy.

"Worms."

"What else?" she asked, hopefully.

"I don't know," I said, "but I think most birds eat worms."

## Caring for Larry

Funny how when you really need a worm, you can never find one. Judy searched the yard, looking under rocks and digging in the flower beds, until eventually she found one solitary worm.

Getting the worm into the bird was the next problem. Judy spent an hour with tweezers trying to drop bits of it into the wide-open beak. She eventually got some down, and then covered up the box for the night.

I got up the next morning, ex-



pecting to find a stiff little corpse. But no! The chick was alive, hopping about and obviously expecting a further installment of worm.

We called him Larry, after Larry Bird, the U.S. basketball star, who is 6 ft. 9 in. tall. A farmer once told me that when he had to wean lambs that had been abandoned, he always gave them "power names" like Brutus or Champion. He said it made him feel positive about them as he went about the laborious task of raising them himself.

I think that weaning lambs would be easy compared to the task of keeping Larry going. A search for more worms was fruitless. It seems our garden had just one, and Larry had eaten it.

We tried bread and milk, but he wouldn't touch it. Then I had a brain wave — chicken. Chickens eat worms, and you are what you eat, so — we bought a can of minced chicken baby food. He wouldn't eat that either.

Finally, as Larry got hungrier

and Judy got more frustrated, they reached a compromise. He *would* eat minced lamb. In fact, he would eat minced lamb several times a day. Judy had to come home during her morning break, at lunch and in the middle of the afternoon, just to stuff minced lamb down his ever-open beak.

After three or four days, it was obvious that we could, with much effort and patience, keep Larry alive. But, of course, we couldn't keep him forever. He was a wild bird, and eventually we would have to let him go. But first, he would have to learn to feed himself, and somehow learn to fly.

Do birds sort of just know how to fly, or are they taught? We didn't know. Larry didn't show any inclination to fly. He would hop around on the ground quite happily, but never even looked as if he would take to the air.

Someone suggested we try perching him on a finger and waving him up and down, so he could get the idea. We tried this. Larry squawked indignantly and

flapped his stubby wings — but hung on grimly. However, after several days of flying lessons, his wings did seem to be getting stronger, and his tail feathers were growing. From time to time, he would try a solo, jumping off while still three feet or so off the ground. His landing technique needed working on — he tended to lead with his beak. But eventually he learned how to keep his balance.

An encyclopedia told us that mockingbirds are quite common in our part of the world, that they eat worms (we knew that), insects and seeds and are able to mimic many other types of birds — hence their name. Larry's specialty seemed to be a gate that needed oiling — his screech could be heard from inside the house. It was astonishing how anything so small could make that much noise.

In the middle of Larry's rehabilitation, I had to leave for a business trip to Europe. I called my wife regularly: "How are you? How are the girls? And" — this is dumb, I thought, a grown

put so much effort into keeping him alive.

### Not a mockingbird falls

Our family gained a lot of satisfaction by helping Larry. That baby bird became very important to us for a while. Looking after Larry made something that Jesus taught much clearer to us. You see, astounding as it may seem, God knew about Larry!

Jesus once explained: "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will" (Matthew 10:29). God knows about the death of a sparrow (or mockingbird, presumably) if He needs to know it. Jesus went on to say, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (verse 30).

This is comforting. The great God, if He so chooses, can know the condition of every hair on our heads. And this is something God *needs* to know, because, as Jesus explained, "You are of more value than many sparrows" (verse 31).

Larry was just one mocking-

bird, "for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them" (Luke 12:24). He added, "Of how much more value are you than the birds?"

How much more indeed.

### God's concern for us

Larry was only a bird. You and I were made for a much greater purpose. We are destined to live forever in the Kingdom of God, as part of the Family of God!

We — the human race — have a greater potential than anything else God has made. Tragically, today most people are blinded to this. But God has never lost sight of it, and time after time in the Bible, He reassures us that we are all *very* important to him.

Even when we do know God, we can still underestimate the wellspring of concern, the endless capacity for forgiveness, the never-failing reservoir of good will that God has for the human race — the future members of His eternal Family. "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," said Jesus (Luke 12:32). And just before He returned to His position in the eternal Family of God, Jesus prayed, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am" (John 17:24).

Powerful words, and He meant them. Unless something goes very seriously wrong (and only *you* control that) God intends that you and every other human who has ever lived will eventually reach eternal life as a member of the Family of God.

If you don't really understand that yet, write and ask for a free copy of our book *The Incredible Human Potential*.

I suppose, if Larry could think, he would have thought that my family and I were God. We rescued him, provided for his food and shelter, protected him from predators and even taught him to fly. And he was just a bird.

How much more is God prepared to do for us — we who are of much more value than many birds! □

**L**arry became very important to us for a while. Looking after him made something that Jesus taught much clearer to us. Astounding as it seems, God knew about Larry!

man calling halfway round the world to ask about a bird's health, but I wanted to know — "how's Larry?"

Larry was fine. He spent his time hopping around the yard looking for seeds and — because he knew where to look — the occasional worm.

"Be careful with him," I warned from Paris, Rome, Munich and London. Cats prowl our yard occasionally, seeking whom they may devour, and I didn't want Larry eaten after we had

bird. But to our family he became very important, and we went to great lengths to help him. We gained a new respect for God's handiwork. What care, what planning, what forethought must have gone into the design of the mockingbird and everything else in creation to ensure that all species survived.

When we look at God's creation, one lesson comes across loud and clear: God looks after everything He wants to preserve. "Consider the ravens," said Je-

# Why I'm Not Going to Heaven

*What are your chances of going to heaven after you die?*

By Paul Kroll

**I** consider myself a true Christian. Yet I know for a fact I'm not going to heaven!

I certainly hope to be with Jesus Christ for all eternity. Yet I have no hope of spending eternity in what's called "heaven." If I did, then I'd be spending it alone, because Christ will not be in heaven much longer Himself!

I know all this may sound a bit confusing.

Right now, of course, Jesus is in heaven. But He's alone with God the Father and the angels. *Not a single former human is there with Him now!*

If your hope is heaven, read on. You'll find that what lies beyond this human life is much more exciting and staggering than you've thought.

## **Where have they gone?**

What about all the spiritual giants of the Bible — people such as Enoch, Elijah, David, Daniel, Sarah and Moses? These people fearlessly obeyed God in the face of persecution and even martyrdom. Surely all these individuals went to some kind of eternal reward when they died, didn't they?

The answer is no — they didn't! Every single one of these great men and women of God is still dead and buried. Their minds are unconscious and their

bodies have disintegrated. Wise King Solomon tells us, "The dead know nothing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). The great men and women of the Bible are not aware of us and our world.

Jesus Himself plainly said, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven" (John 3:13). When Jesus made that statement, David had been dead for about 1,000 years, the patriarch Abraham much longer. Righteous Abel had been dead for almost 4,000 years.

Why has most of Christianity refused to believe the clear statement of Jesus Christ Himself?

Much later, the apostle Paul, writing about the Old Testament heroes of faith, confirmed, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" (Hebrews 11:13).

So when and how will the great people of God receive their reward? What about you? What hope do you have of life after death? How will you receive your reward?

Only through a resurrection from the dead! Without a resurrection, there is no hope for anyone. Yet the Bible reveals that, eventually, everyone who ever lived will be resurrected from death to life.

Jesus had to straighten out the Sadducees, who taught there was no resurrection. He said: "But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, say-

ing, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:31-32).

Though Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead and their bodies had disintegrated, they were as good as alive because God was going to resurrect them to life.

The same holds true for David. After Jesus' own resurrection, Peter said, "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried." A bit later Peter said, "David did not ascend into the heavens" (Acts 2:29, 34).

Does David have no hope to be alive again? Yes, he absolutely does. He will also come back to life in a resurrection.

The prophet Jeremiah, under inspiration of God, wrote of a yet future time called the "latter days." In those days, God promises, "And David their king . . . I will raise up for them" (Jeremiah 30:8-9, 24).

So David, now dead, will come up out of the grave in the future. And so will every true Christian who has been called by God throughout the ages. Every such Christian must remain dead until a certain event occurs — the Second Coming of Christ!

## **The fate of all humans**

Paul said, "It is appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27). That is the fate of every

human — Christian or otherwise. Everybody dies and remains dead until it is God's purpose to bring each individual back to life.

There is only one way for dead saints to become alive again and receive their reward. That way is through a resurrection.

I Corinthians 15, sometimes called the resurrection chapter, explains how this process works for a true Christian and when it will occur.

Beginning in verse 35, Paul addressed the kind of body a resurrected saint would have. Paul made it clear that it would be a kind of body that was no longer subject to death. Since flesh and blood cannot enter the Kingdom of God, humans would have to be given immortal, spirit bodies.

Paul summed up this teaching in these words: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (verse 51-52). Notice! The dead are to be raised "at the last trumpet." The blowing of the last trumpet occurs at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to this earth (I Thessalonians 4:16).

#### God's master plan

For the moment, let's backtrack to put the resurrection into its proper historical perspective.

For the last 6,000 years God and Jesus Christ have been working out their supreme plan for humanity, a plan conceived "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

Part of that plan called for God to choose a very few individuals during these 6,000 years for specific responsibilities.

These persons had to be em-

powered by God, through His spirit, for special callings.

Noah had to build an ark by faith. Abraham had to leave his homeland. Moses had to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and give them God's law. The prophets had to foretell future events. True Christians now are called to deliver God's final warning message to the world before the return of Christ.

Jesus Christ came to pay the penalty for sin as the perfect sacrifice. Then He was resurrected from the dead as the firstborn of those who would, in their time, also be resurrected.

For the last nearly 2,000 years Jesus has been in heaven, seated on the right hand of God the Father, serving as the High Priest of those God has called into His Church (Hebrews 1:13, 4:14). This group of people is to be

***Paul said, "It is appointed for men to die once." That is the fate of every human. Everybody dies and remains dead until it is God's purpose to bring each back to life in a resurrection.***

resurrected at Christ's Second Coming.

#### Held in trust

Jesus said to His disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

Jesus is preparing "places" or

positions of responsibility for every true Christian. Notice that these positions include being where Christ is at His coming.

For any true Christian who has died, his or her reward has already been prepared but not presented. Even though that person is now dead, resurrection is sure. And that person's reward is reserved and protected by Jesus, who is in heaven.

That's why Jesus said, "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12).

Notice when Jesus said that reward will be meted out. The answer is found in the Bible's closing chapter: "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12).

In Matthew 25, Jesus described what would take place at His Second Coming: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him... Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (verses 31-34).

For God's true people, the resurrection to eternal life and the receipt of positions of responsibility occur at Christ's return.

This will be the Kingdom of heaven simply because that's where it originates. It is to be distinguished from the "kingdoms of this world" (Revelation 11:15), which God's heavenly kingdom will supplant. That's why Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). His Kingdom is of heaven.

#### Reserved in heaven

Think of it this way: You tell a friend that you will buy him dinner at an expensive restaurant of your choice.

You reserve a table for the two of you in your name for a certain hour. It's the "table of Mr. Jones," if that's your name. At

this table, held in your name, is where the free dinner will be dispensed.

Your friend cannot receive this gift until the time of the reservation. And he must wait until you come to the restaurant at which time and place you will meet him. Your table will then also become his table, because he is to share in the meal.

That's the same way with the reward of the saved. It is reserved for them and will be dispensed by Christ at a certain future time at a designated location. The time happens to be the Second Coming. The location where the reward will be given happens to be planet earth.

Right now, our eternal "inheritance" is "reserved in heaven" (I Peter 1:4).

The true Christian's citizenship as a member of the Kingdom of God is held in trust even while that person may now be dead and buried (Philippians 3:20-21). Those Christians who will be alive when Christ returns also have their citizenship held in trust (I Thessalonians 4:17). Neither group will receive that citizenship until Christ returns and changes physical bodies into spiritual ones.

### **Resurrection in "last days"**

Daniel described the last days and the first resurrection in these words:

"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life" (Daniel 12:1-2).

All the dead in Christ from Abel down to the last true Christian who died just before Christ returns will be resurrected and receive salvation.

Of this most dramatic event in history, Revelation 11:17-18 tells us: "We give You thanks, O Lord

God Almighty... because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints" (verses 17-18).

This is the time Paul looked forward to when he said, "There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (II Timothy 4:8).

### **Events of resurrection day**

Let's now take a closer look at the specific event of the resurrection of the dead to occur at the very time of Christ's coming.

The final conversation between Jesus and the disciples is recorded in Acts 1. The disciples asked Jesus when He would "restore the kingdom to Israel" (verse 6). They were really asking, "When are You coming the second time?"

Jesus didn't give them a specific answer, saying, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (verse 7). Now, more than 1,900 years later, that event is still in the future.

As Jesus departed out of their sight, an angel asked the disciples: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (verse 11).

Paul later gave the Thessalonians more details about the resurrection of the dead in relationship to Christ's Second Coming:

"We who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will

by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the

***No one is going to heaven. Heaven is actually coming to earth. Earth is destined to become the center of all activity in the universe. The headquarters will be New Jerusalem.***

air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:15-17).

True Christians who are alive when Christ returns will be changed to spirit "in the twinkling of an eye" (I Corinthians 15:51-52). Immediately before this change in the living saints, all the dead in Christ will be resurrected with spiritual bodies.

### **No higher than a cloud**

Both groups will ascend together as high as the clouds while Christ descends from heaven. From this moment on the resurrected saints will be wherever Christ is. But where is that? Will everyone then go to heaven with Christ?

Jude wrote, quoting a prophecy of Enoch, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all" (Jude 14-15).

Christ is not going back to

heaven with the resurrected saints. Everyone will stay here on earth.

The prophet Zechariah filled in other important details about the return of Christ: "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming . . . For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem . . . Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two" (Zechariah 14:1-4).

Zechariah summarized it all in verse 9: "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth."

Christ will descend from the clouds with the saints and everyone will alight on the Mount of Olives. Immediately, Christ will begin the job of instituting His government over all the nations. His first act will be to conquer the armies that oppose Him.

The saints will remain on earth with Christ and assist Him in the formation of a new government that will bring peace and happiness to humanity. At the resurrection, the saints will receive a "crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). Christ will give them "power over the nations" (verse 26).

The Kingdom of God will at last be set up on earth! Numerous Bible prophecies tell what it will then be like for 1,000 years, during the Millennium (Revelation 20:4-6).

Our booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like* provides more information. Write for a free copy!

But what about all those who lived through the ages but were not called by God to be in the first resurrection? What is the fate of the rest of humanity?

### **The rest of the dead**

Revelation 20:5 tells us the fate of all those who died without having been called to the truth: "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished."

In verses 11 and 12, John gives

us additional details about a period God's Church refers to as the Great White Throne Judgment. In a vision, he saw "the dead, small and great, standing before God . . . And the dead were judged according to their works."

Christ and the saints will ultimately extend their government and ministry to every human who has ever lived. All these dead humans will be resurrected back to physical life so that they, too, can learn to trust and obey God. Then they, too, will be changed into immortal spirit.

Finally, at the end of this period of time, "Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (verse 15). This is the second death, from which there is no resurrection (verse 14).

More details are offered in our free booklet *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?* and in our free reprint "The Resurrection: Hope of Mankind."

During all this time the resurrected saints will rule under Christ, administering justice and assistance to humans on earth. But what happens when that work is finished? Will Christ then return to heaven with the saints?

### **The end is the beginning**

No, Christ will not return to heaven. When the work of offering salvation to all humanity is complete, that will only be the beginning!

Consider this analogy: After four years of schoolwork, college students attend a "commencement" exercise and graduate. But their lives are not over upon graduation. Rather, their work is just beginning — hence the name *commencement*.

In the same way, the human experience on this earth now is merely the preparatory stage for the work that will be done afterward. Salvation merely produces the tools — the spirit-born members of God's own Family — to do the work to come.

God tells us nothing about this ultimate work except that it does

exist. To kick off His new plan, God will bring "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Revelation 21:1).

God promises His saints, "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). What is this Paradise?

It is explained by the stupendous events recorded in Revelation 21 and 22. John saw, in vision, "the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Then John heard a loud voice saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:2-3).

Did you catch that? Christ is not going to heaven. The immortal saints are not going to heaven. *God the Father Himself is coming to earth* — to a new earth made spiritually clean. He is bringing His own spiritual city — the New Jerusalem — to this new earth.

### **Home base: earth**

God will dwell on earth. He will then say, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). Yes, there will be new works, exciting projects, indescribable vistas of which we now know almost nothing.

No one will be going to heaven. Heaven is actually coming to earth. Earth is destined to become the center of all activity in the universe. Productive, eternal life emanating from an earth-based headquarters is the reward of the saved.

For more information write for free copies of our booklets *Is There Life After Death?* and *What is the Reward of the Saved?*

There isn't a single scripture in the entirety of the Bible that says Christians go to heaven when they die — or at any other time.

That's why I'm not going to heaven. □

# Where Are You Going?

**“W**here are you going?”

My daughter Crystal, during her younger childhood, heard that question more than once from me. But she probably doesn't remember it, because she was asleep!

You see, Crystal had a tendency to sleepwalk. Every now and again, after she had been in bed a few hours, but before her mother and I turned in for the night, Crystal would awaken — or, rather, partially awaken. Then she would stumble into the hallway and meander into the family room where we were sitting. There she would mumble some nonsensical sentence that only a sleepwalking child can mumble and only a parent can even begin to interpret.

After a while, as we would hear her start her ramble down the hall toward us, we would call out, “Crystal, where are you going?”

Of course, she never really could answer our question. She didn't know where she was going, for she was half (or maybe three-quarters) asleep. She just mumbled some sleepwalker's gibberish and then, having been told to go back to bed, she would amble down the hall to her room and finally settle in for the night.

Have you noticed that some people tend to live their entire lives like that — seemingly half asleep, bumbling around as if in the dark, never really knowing where they are going?

What about *you*? Do you know where *you* are going?

## Where Christians are going

Sad to say, many people don't know where they are going. If

you are one of these — or even if you are not — listen carefully. The Bible makes plain exactly where all true Christians should be going. The apostle Paul declared, “Therefore, leaving the... elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection” (Hebrews 6:1).

His point is this: Once we, as Christians, understand the foundational points of doctrine in God's truth, we have something

**G**od will not give eternal life to one who accepts mediocrity in this life. Those who tolerate sin are unworthy of eternal life and its perfection!

important to do. Or, rather, we have somewhere important to go — to perfection!

Paul was not the only one to give this advice. Jesus Christ Himself was even more firm, making a direct command: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

You have probably read this command before, but have you ever wondered *why* God wants us to be perfect? The answer is found in the second half of the verse just cited: “Therefore you shall be perfect, *just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*”

We must become perfect to be just like our Father. Our Father is God. Our destiny is to become His spiritual children and therefore part of the God Family. If our destiny was to be something less than a child of God, then perhaps we could be less than perfect. But it isn't, and we can't! It just wouldn't do for one of God's children not to be perfect.

Clearly, perfection is impossible to attain in this life. Everybody knows that; therefore some

don't bother to try. But realize this: One who accepts mediocrity in this life will never attain perfection in the next, for the very faults God wishes him to overcome are the ones he chooses to tolerate in himself. And those who tolerate sin are unworthy of eternal life and its perfection! God simply will not give eternal life to such a person.

Those who seek for perfection, on the other hand, will find it. They will not find it now, of course, but in the Kingdom of God. For it is the very attitude of settling only for perfection of character that God requires before He will give the gifts of eternal life and perfection!

## Working toward perfection

Don't be deceived. Perfecting yourself means work. It means analyzing yourself and your life, finding the difficulties, sins and errors in your way and, with God's help, replacing them with His character. It is tough. It is at times agonizing and humbling, discouraging and tiring.

It is, quite frankly, the toughest job you will ever love! For although tough, it is addicting, exhilarating, invigorating, stimulating and overwhelmingly joyful and fulfilling!

Practice make perfect — or, rather, makes for perfection!

Our goal is to go where no human but Christ has truly gone before — on to perfection. We will not get all the way there ourselves. We all know that before we leave. But in leaving for the destiny of perfection, and in striving to get there, and in holding on to the goal, we will in the process develop the character that God demands of those He will finally make perfect.

That's certainly where I want to go. How about you? Where are you going? — *By Bernard W. Schnippert* □

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