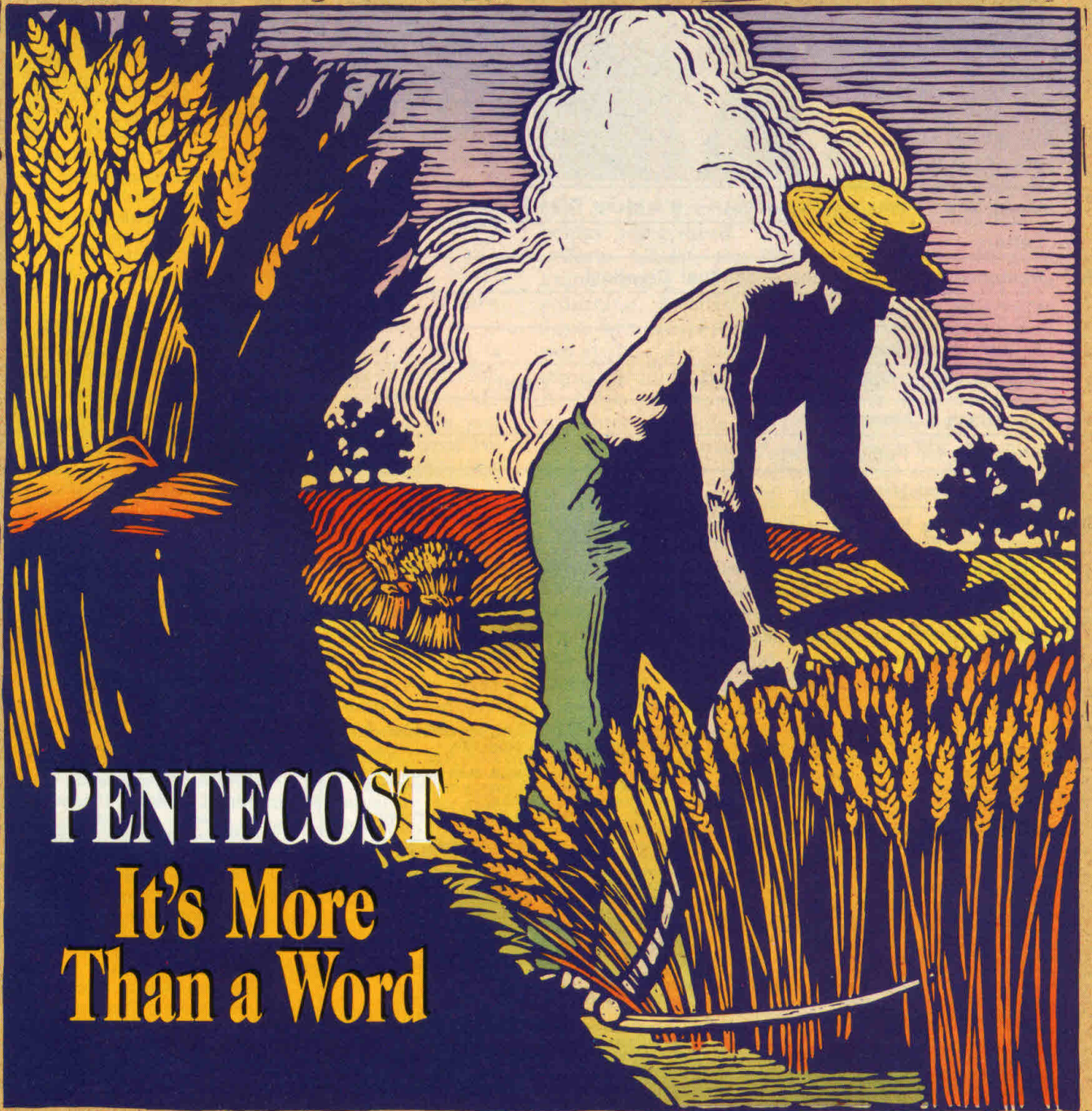


The Good News

MAY-JUNE 1988

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



PENTECOST
**It's More
Than a Word**

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

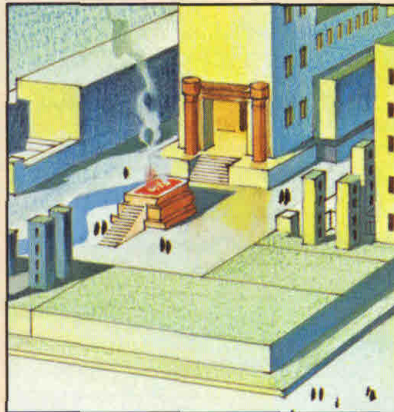
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14

Contents:

Good News Personal: Pentecost — It's More Than a Word	1
Letters	2
Pentecost — God Begins a Spiritual Creation!	3
Till Death Do Us Part	10
A Look at Ezekiel's Temple	14
Positive Child Training: Toilet Training — Take It Easy!	20
Questions & Answers	23
Checklist for Family Growth	24
Is Something Missing?	26
Fruits of the Spirit: You Can Have Peace of Mind	28

COVER: Traditional Christianity assumes God is trying to save the whole world now. But the annual Festival of Pentecost shows that God is working with only a few people at this time. These people — the members of God's one true Church — make up the first, small harvest in the plan of salvation. Illustration by Dan Andreasen.

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'Pen-te-cost It's More Than a Word

Is God, right now, as you read this page, trying to save the world?

Most religious people believe He is. Most believe that "trying to save the world" is how God spends His time and energy.

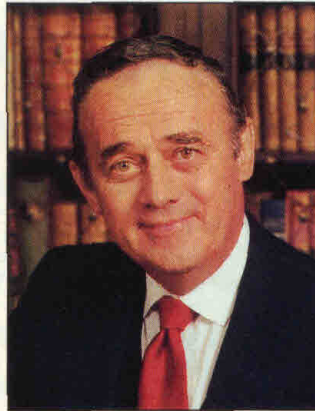
But what would you think of a God who is all-wise, all-knowing, all-merciful and all-powerful, but the best He can do is "try" to save the world? If He really *is* all-powerful, why doesn't He just *save* the world and be done with it? Why does He have to allow so much injustice, hatred, suffering, tragedy and catastrophe? Why is there so much crime, strife, hunger and war? In fact, why is there *any*? Can't God stop it?

If God really is trying to save the world right now, how would you rate His performance? All things considered, His marks would have to be pretty low.

What is the truth? We could speculate and postulate. We could surmise and theorize. We could imagine and conjecture. But we won't find the *answer* in all the pondering and contemplation in the world. There is only one source where we will find the *truth*. That source is God Himself.

God has revealed His plan of salvation in His Word, the Bible, to those who *obey* Him. Those who don't obey Him don't understand that plan: "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14). The fact is, God only gives His spirit to those who *obey* Him (Acts 5:32).

Yes, God *is* all-wise, all-knowing, all-merciful



and all-powerful. But He is *not* trying to save the world *now*! There is a *reason* humanity is suffering, but that suffering *is* going to end! God has a MASTER PLAN, and that plan is *right on schedule*. It is revealed in the pages of the Bible.

God *does* know what He is doing, and He is doing it the way that will ultimately re-

sult in the greatest possible number of human beings being saved.

Jesus Christ, the Savior, came to earth as a human being and paid the penalty of sin by His scourging, crucifixion and death. But that same Jesus was *raised from the dead* and at this moment sits at the right hand of God as Intercessor for the saints, as High Priest and as Head of His Church. And He is coming back. Not as a sheep to the slaughter this time, but to prevent the utter annihilation of all humanity, to establish His Kingdom and to *take over* the affairs of this world as King of kings and Lord of lords — as SUPREME RULER over *all nations*!

Then will begin the process that will ultimately culminate in the great judgment — the *first* opportunity for salvation for the vast majority of mankind!

Yes, Pentecost is much more than a word. It is one of the seven annual Holy Days God commands His people to keep, one which reveals what God is doing right now — *before* the return of Jesus Christ — and *why*!

Be sure to read about Pentecost in this issue of *The Good News*. And if you haven't read our booklet titled *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?*, be sure to request your free copy. Our addresses are listed under the table of contents at left.

Joseph W. Teach

Pastor General
Worldwide Church of God

LETTERS

Authority and intelligence

You strike me as the only people around who address the problems of society with authority and intelligence regardless of many ethnic and cultural differences in the world. I am not a Church member, but hope to be one, one day — I will pray for you because of the challenges that stare you in the face.

You are indeed of one spirit — as your articles do not contradict one another. It has since dawned on my once-confused mind that you are the people whom God is using to preach His marvelous true Gospel to all the world. Your writings are not biased and you are not prejudiced against anyone. I no longer attend the churches which I once attended. From henceforth, I am going to seek God and His true Church, not a group of churches divided and interpreting holy writings in different ways and manners.

Wilfred Sokiri
Harare, Zimbabwe

Help without expecting any return

I am so pleased that there are still people in this world who will offer help without expecting anything back. . . . I have picked up the Bible many times in the past but very quickly put it down because, like any book, if you can't get into it you lose interest. Thank you all for opening up the Bible for me.

Betty Ann Patterson
Barons, Alta.

"Operation Larry"

I am writing to tell you how much I appreciate John Halford's article "Operation Larry: To Save a Mockingbird" (January-February). It helped me to understand how valuable each person is to God. In this age where we feel that "nobody cares about anyone else," we need to be reminded of this truth to combat discouragement.

Rebecca Gunn
Seymour, Mo.

Dating series

Just a little note to thank you for your wonderful article "Keeping Romance Alive" (January-February). We have found it very exciting to start again to "plot and plan" romantic escapes.

Vladimir and Vicky Grishin
Seaford, Australia

Your article on "Keeping Romance Alive" is super. Please keep giving us this vital knowledge. I sit here in tears,



Hal Finch

had tears flowing reading the article this Sabbath morning. You see, I am facing a final divorce after 36 years of marriage and six children, 14 years of this as baptized members in God's Church.

There never was time or money for us as husband and wife to do anything — he was too busy running around and having a good time with other women, neglecting me and our children. If I complained, begged, I received abuse and the children likewise. The man had a marriage because I was willing to suffer.

Those men who have God's spirit should really take note of your article and practice it. I really do not think that husbands really understand that a wife needs his love, concern and caring, and time spent alone is far more important than new cars, fancy homes, etc. . . .

Reader
Oregon

I read your article today on "Dating: The Second Time Around" (November-December) and just wanted to say thank you for such a wonderful article. . . .

Ten years ago I met and married a man who'd been married before. It was his third time around, and my first. And I was in no way prepared for the load he dumped on me, or maybe better said, for the life he bound me to by this marriage.

Just about everything you mentioned in your article is part of our story. The pressure he put on me to marry, the fault-finding talk about his former mates (which still goes on), the children and child-support payments, the debts, a low standard of living — it's all there, as well as my regret and unhappiness, which are no easy things to deal with when you're talking about a lifetime.

It really has been like a nightmare for me. His third time around makes me wish I'd never had a first time! And if I had it to do over again, I definitely would

not! And to feel this way about my one and only marriage, a union to which I am bound for the rest of my physical life, leaves a deep, inner sadness that is truly hard to describe, not to mention the gap this creates between my husband and myself that may never be bridged. (And what do I tell the kids when they ask if I would marry Daddy again?)

Your article won't help me now, but everything you said was absolutely true. And I hope that anyone who is contemplating marriage with someone who is on the second time around (for whatever reasons) will read, study and meditate on this article on their knees. They need to know these things and to be prepared for them, especially someone who is looking at marriage for the first time.

Reader
Michigan

God's calling

Would you please convey my thanks to Earl H. Williams for his article "Why Are You Reading This Magazine?" (November-December). His article gave me a real spiritual boost.

Mr. Williams stated that "God's final decision [about calling us] was based on when you would have the best chance of making it into His Kingdom. Should your time for judgment be in this age, when you must battle yourself, this world and Satan. . . .?"

It is truly amazing to me that God would have the faith in me to allow me to be called at this time. Knowing me as only He can, He sees through the garbage and has faith that I *can* make it into His Kingdom. It has always seemed my faith in God was most important. Now I see God's faith in me is every bit as important. What a motivator!

Faye E. Brouse
Kamloops, B.C.

"Why Are You Reading This Magazine?" clearly showed all those reading it the co-worker's part in the great commission and the reason for enduring to the end of this age.

It's intriguing to be told that our part in the Work hinges mostly around fervent prayer and that the true apostle, Mr. Tkach, depends very much on that. I trust that the writer of this article will be more and more inspired to encourage the readers of the *Good News* magazine in a greater way. The hand of God is truly behind all this!

Jeffrey M. Joseph
Pepper Village, Trinidad

PENTECOST

God Begins a *Spiritual* Creation!

As hard as it is for others to accept, only God's called and chosen people understand the purpose for human existence. The annual Festival of Pentecost explains why God is working with only a few people in this age.

By Paul Kroll



We have a precious heritage in God's Church: a firm understanding of our incredible human potential.

We alone know the Creator is refashioning our human thinking into His own God-plane attitude of mind. His goal is to change our mortal bodies and imperfect minds into spiritually perfect bodies and minds.

What a staggering plan God has set in motion! Today, He is actively working with tens of thousands of human minds, out of all the billions on earth. But in the world tomorrow, literally the whole world will participate in God's spiritual creation.

The Festival of Pentecost tells us what stage God's plan is in now and exactly what He is doing on this earth!

God's truth hidden

For thousands of years after creation, with the exception of a

handful of people God called for special purposes, humans lived and died without any inkling as to their ultimate destiny.

The knowledge of salvation was not preached to the world. The plan of God simply was not understood. The message of Pentecost was sealed shut.

Consider how tightly God slammed the lid of ignorance over the meaning of Pentecost. Ancient Israel was God's chosen people. But they did not grasp their true spiritual heritage.

Even the ancient House of Judah, who handled and studied the scrolls containing God's plan, at best caught only a faint glimmer of man's ultimate destiny.

Why? Because God wanted to show that without His holy spirit, man could not achieve his incredible potential. God did not offer His spirit to ancient Israel as a whole.

But during all those millennia of man's spiritual ignorance, God was laying the foundation for a spiritual Temple — His Church. Pentecost represents that Temple, composed of spirit-begotten children of God.

Paul said to the Corinthian church, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16).

Paul wrote this epistle around A.D. 55. This understanding that humans were to become members of the God Family was exciting and new to the first-century Church.

Before that time, God had purposely hidden this truth from mankind in general!

Hundreds of years earlier, Isaiah was told: "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing,



Warren Watson

but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart" (Isaiah 6:9-10).

The Eternal had poured out a deep spiritual sleep on Israel and hid His face from His people (Isaiah 29:9-10). Israel's sins had

cut the nation off from God (Isaiah 59:2). No Savior had yet come to cleanse the people of sin. Neither had the spirit of God been given to enlighten and empower human minds.

Only when these two events finally occurred did the meaning of Pentecost come clear.

After the northern House of Israel forsook God, the southern

House of Judah held on to God's law, however imperfectly. The people could read the Scriptures they had and know that at some future time — in a mysterious period "at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13) — God would bring His people back to the land of Israel. The nation would then live in a veritable paradise as His chosen people (Isaiah 11). In

God's Holy Days relate to the agricultural seasons in Palestine. Pentecost, God's third festival, falls in late spring/early summer, when the early, smaller grain harvest occurred. Pentecost shows God is working with only a small group of humans now, in anticipation of the large, fall harvest of the rest of mankind, pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

some vague way, they knew that in the future, these physical descendants would follow God's way and be blessed by Him (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

Judah totally missed the crucial events that had to come first, however. The Eternal was to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. Then, the very mind of God would be given to the tens of thousands making up the first-fruits of God's creation.

Almost no one understood these two important steps, portrayed by the festivals of Passover and Pentecost.

Mystery of the ages

Not even those scribes who preserved and copied the Old Testament could see the glory God was preparing for man. God had locked up the treasure map of salvation in His spiritual vault, which could be opened only by a certain special key — the holy spirit. Paul likened it to a deep mystery (I Corinthians 2:7-9).

There was a reason why God's purpose could not be understood. The gift of the holy spirit was not to be given to men and women

until the Pentecost after Jesus' crucifixion. Without this spiritual enlightenment, God's plan would have seemed to them, as it seems to the world today, strange and odd.

Paul explained it this way: "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (verse 14).

Since God's purpose is spiritual, humans cannot accept that purpose without God's enlightening spirit working in their minds. But that spirit was not given to God's New Testament Church until the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31. Therefore God's true purpose, of necessity, was misunderstood by all except a handful God called before that time.

Peter tells us the prophets caught a glimmer of what God was doing, yet even they did not fully understand: "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

"To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look

into" (I Peter 1:10-12). The prophets made up a handful of exceptions, called ahead of time to fulfill specific responsibilities. They became part of the foundation of this new creation that God was in the process of molding (Ephesians 2:20). It was to be a single Church composed of many individual members.

Turning point in history

Then, at long last, the fullness of God's time came in the year 4 B.C. In that year a staggering and then incomprehensible event occurred. God became a man. The Logos or Word who created all things emptied Himself of divinity. He was made flesh and lived among humans as Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-14).

John put it in these words: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (verse 14). Paul said it this way: "[Jesus] being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:6-7, New International Version).

Jesus, through His death, paid the penalty for sin. That broke down the wall of partition between man and God. The holy spirit became available to those God called (John 6:44). In those few God began the process of salvation — ahead of the vast majority of humans — for a special purpose!

God's called people could now grow in godly character and prepare to ultimately be changed in mind and body, inheriting eternal

God's purpose is spiritual
— it is inaccessible to humans
without God's spirit working
in their minds. Therefore God's
purpose is misunderstood by
nearly all of mankind!

life at the first resurrection. The spiritual meaning of Pentecost — that human minds can learn to think as God does — became clear through the miraculous occurrences of that benchmark day in A.D. 31.

The idea that humans could become God was an astounding new concept. As Paul put it: “By revelation He made known to me the mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 3:3-5).

The amazing truth was that all humanity — not just Israelites — could partake of God’s grace.

For the people of God throughout the centuries since, the day of Pentecost has been a yearly memorial meant to remind us that God has a specific purpose on earth, and that we as God’s specially chosen people are the first to be able to take part in that purpose.

Pentecost at Mount Sinai

Pentecost is also the anniversary of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.

At that time, the Eternal made a covenant with ancient Israel. If they would obey Him, Israel would be God’s special people. God promised to be their protector and guide. He would bring them prosperity, health and protection from enemies. Some of these physical promises are found in Exodus 23:20-31.

The Pentecost covenant was then ratified. “Then he [Moses]

Pentecost shows that humans can learn to think as God does. It reminds us that we as God’s chosen people are the first to take part in God’s specific purpose on earth.



Ren Wicks

took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient.’ And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, ‘Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words’” (Exodus 24:7-8).

Pentecost thus represented a covenant in which God selected a special people bound to Him through their acceptance of a system of law predicated on the written Ten Commandments.

That Pentecost at Mount Sinai was a landmark day. For the first

time in human history, the Eternal had chosen a specific people to represent Him among the nations of the world. He had given them His form of government and laws by which to live.

Nearly 1,500 years later, Pentecost again came to represent a covenant. The law was delivered a second time to a nation called “Israel.” But this time the covenant people were a *spiritual* nation or Church, and the law was written not on tables of stone but in human minds through the holy spirit.

Pentecost now represents the coming of the holy spirit to create God’s New Testament Church. It represents the beginning of God’s spiritual creation.

Peter himself stood up on that day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 and quoted a prophecy from Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh” (Acts 2:17).

What happened on that Pentecost only began to fulfill this prophecy. For the last 1,957 years God has called only a limited number of people to receive His spirit. They represent the

Pentecost marks the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. On Pentecost in A.D. 31, God poured out His holy spirit on His New Testament Church. God's spirit enables His people to keep His law and serve Him.

small spring harvest depicted by Pentecost.

In the near future, Jesus Christ will return to earth to establish this same new, spiritual covenant with all humans!

A New Covenant

Paul, quoting Jeremiah, said: "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days,' says the Lord, 'I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" (Hebrews 8:8-10).

The times when salvation comes to the whole human race are pictured by the Festival of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

The New Covenant actually represents God's ultimate re-creative act within the mind of the individual person. It began on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 when God called out individuals to be part of His Church. That was the start of "spiritual Israel." We are part of that spiritual nation (Galatians 6:16).

Peter says of us, as well as of the true Christians who lived in his day, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (I Peter 2:9).

Peter said on Pentecost: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of

the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39).

Throughout the long centuries between the Pentecost when God gave His law on Mount Sinai and the Pentecost when God began His true Church, humans in general were not privileged to understand what God was doing.

Israel was told to keep the day of Pentecost holy to God (Exodus 23:16, 34:22, Leviticus 23:15-22, Numbers 28:26, Deuteronomy 16:10, 16). But the ancient Israelites had no understanding of

what it might mean in a spiritual context.

The wave-sheaf offering

The connection between the giving of the Ten Commandments on Pentecost and the spiritual meaning of the day was hazy. In retrospect we see that this giving of the law prefigured the second giving of the law in its spiritual fullness. The second time, it was poured out into the hearts of men and women through the holy spirit.

The most complete Old Testament explanation of Pentecost is given in Leviticus 23:9-22. Here

Treasures Old and New

By Garvin L. Greene

As we prepare to celebrate the 1988 Feast of Pentecost, we members of God's Church need to ask ourselves a crucial question: How can we keep God's Holy Days year after year, yet never get bored with them?

How can the ministry cover the same scriptures about the same festivals and not simply cover old ground?

Has God made it possible for us to look forward with anticipation and excitement to observing His feasts every year?

One of Christ's parables answers these questions.

Notice what Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 13:52: "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old" (New International Version).

We know there are only so many verses that specifically mention any one Holy Day. After a while, we get to know those pretty well. We treasure them for the meanings they reveal and for the promises they make. Aren't these the "old treasures" we get to look at each year?

But God also provides "new treasures." Personally, I am

amazed at the deeper understanding God reveals each time God's Church observes a Holy Day. In my job as a minister, as I study and prepare the sermon for a feast day, new tidbits of understanding, new connections, new depths of meaning appear.

"Why didn't I see that connection last year?" I often ask myself. "Have I only forgotten that I knew that fact? No," I conclude, "this is simply some new treasure God is providing for His people."

Yes, each time we appear before God on one of His feasts, He provides treasures through His "teachers of the law." They bring out the basic truths God's Church has long understood, so we may savor and appreciate and renew our knowledge of them. Then God gives more — new insights to excite and encourage us and help us develop more of God's own mind in ourselves.

Let's give God thanks that His plan and His Kingdom are like that! God will continually provide us with new treasures and pleasures forever (Psalm 16:11). He tells us, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

Be alert to new understanding God will offer at the Feast of Pentecost 1988! □

we are told how to count Pentecost to pinpoint the proper day of its observance. The reference point on which to begin falls within the Days of Unleavened Bread. As we'll see, the connection between these two festivals is vital.

During the Days of Unleavened Bread the following was to occur: "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it'" (verses 10-11).

The correct day for Pentecost depends on counting from the time of the wave-sheaf offering: "And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath [between the two Holy Days of Unleavened Bread], from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering" (verse 15).

There was great spiritual significance to this. The wave sheaf came from the very first gleaning

of the spring barley harvest. The Jews traditionally cut a sheaf, beat out the grain and ground it into flour. Then the priest offered the flour to the Eternal. The priest "shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf" (verse 11).

On that same day, a male lamb of the first year was to be offered (verse 12). Both the male lamb and the wave sheaf represent Jesus Christ. The first shows He was the sacrifice for sin. The second points out that Jesus was the first of the firstfruits (I Corinthians 15:20, 23, Colossians 1:18).

The first sheaf was waved early on a Sunday morning. Once it was waved before God and accepted, the harvest could be used. Only after Jesus was crucified, resurrected and accepted by the Father as the wave-sheaf offering for sin could other humans be "harvested" by becoming God's people through the indwelling of the holy spirit.

Spiritual meaning of Pentecost

On the Sunday morning after His crucifixion and resurrection,

Jesus told Mary, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" (John 20:17).

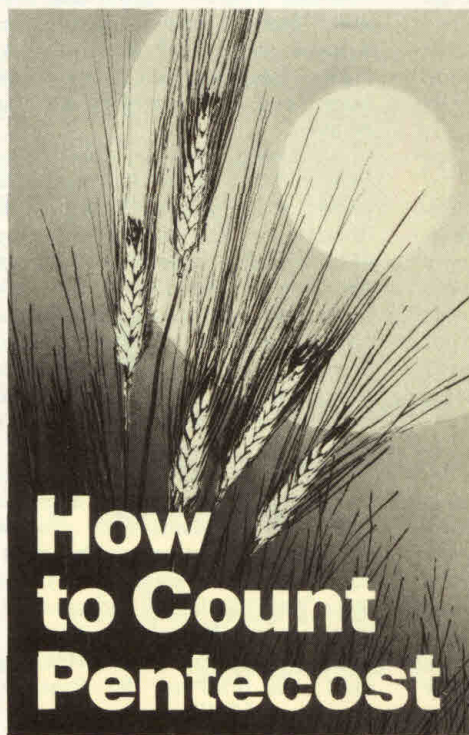
Here we have a perfect spiritual analogy!

The risen Christ was preparing Himself as the wave sheaf ready to be waved before or accepted by God. After ascending to heaven and then returning, Christ told His disciples, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). Christ had officially been accepted by God as the Savior of all humanity.

The hitherto secret work of salvation could begin. Christ told the disciples, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

That "power," the holy spirit, would come several weeks later on the day of Pentecost.

To prefigure the imminent reality and to make an official promise, Jesus engaged in a sym-



How to Count Pentecost

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SABBATH
			Passover A.D. 31	1st Day U.B.		Sheaf cut shortly after sunset
1	2	3	7th Day U.B. 4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
Pentecost 50						

Pentecost is always to be observed on a Sunday, which is the 50th day after the cutting of the wave sheaf during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

A ***As a result of God's spirit coming into our minds, an incredible war is being fought. On one side is human nature, influenced by Satan. On the other side is the spirit of God, allied with our humbled minds.***

bolic act with His disciples on the Sunday evening after being accepted by the Father: "Then Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:21-22).

Pentecost shows that humans cannot be given the holy spirit until they are cleared of sin. Pentecost also tells us that God's spiritual creation depends on the holy spirit working in the human mind. Finally, Pentecost represents those few people God has called in this age, the small harvest of humanity.

To the Church of God at Rome Paul said, "We also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23).

Spirit of God in man

Paul told the Corinthian church that "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13). This spirit-filled body of believers, or the Church, was begun on the day of Pentecost.

The indwelling of the holy spirit enables a human mind to be motivated by God's thinking. Paul said, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should

walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Paul told the Ephesians, "Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Pentecost reminds us that God is working in us, remolding and reshaping our character. We should be yielding to His spirit and renouncing the works of darkness.

No scripture better summarizes the Pentecost spirit than this one written to the Galatian brethren: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Pentecost reminds us that as a result of the coming of the holy spirit into our minds, an incredible war is being fought. On one side is the enemy — human nature, allied with the evil pulls of Satan. On the other side is the spirit of God in us, allied with a humble and yielded mind.

Pentecost shows us that we can serve God and keep His law through the power of the holy spirit.

Pentecost in the Christian life

Before the day of Pentecost, it was not possible to understand

that character grows out of the spiritual war taking place in the converted mind. In fact, no such war had taken place, since no mind had God's spirit (except for the very few mentioned earlier). People simply did what came "naturally."

Since that Pentecost described in Acts 2, those called by God have come to see that a fierce struggle does indeed rage in the converted mind. The good news, however, is that we win. Through the spirit of God, humans can master and defeat sin.

Before Pentecost, men and women simply did not have the desire or power to mount an effective campaign against sin. Not even God's law given on tablets of stone during that ancient Pentecost at Mount Sinai could help in the struggle. But all that changed when the holy spirit came on Pentecost A.D. 31.

Paul wrote: "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4).

As we celebrate this Pentecost, let us remember that sin should not have dominion or control over the converted Christian. By the power of God's spirit we can put to death the sinful deeds of the natural mind (verse 13). Then we can say with the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

The message of Pentecost is that we are the firstfruits of God's creation and that we "may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4).

Our eyes are on Christ, "who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20) — the power of God's holy spirit! □

Till Death Do Us Part

By Sheila Graham

A slight breeze stirred the morning air as the honor guard from the U.S. Navy removed the Stars and Stripes from the blue and silver casket, folded it and presented the flag to the widow.

Surrounded by her children and grandchildren, she quietly accepted the flag and words of appreciation for her late husband's service to his country.

It was the second funeral for me in the space of only a few weeks. Both of my friends, one now a widower and the other a widow, lost their mates prematurely. Neither his wife nor her husband had reached the biblical "threescore and ten."

A fact of life

Death is a fact of life — of all our lives. We are startled into that reality when someone we know and love dies.

Why do we never seem to be quite ready to lose a friend or loved one to death? We know death is inevitable, yet we live as if we're never going to die.

Suddenly faced with our loss, and our own vulnerability, we are forced to go on. In too short a time we are expected to act and react as we always have — to be the same person — when all the time we know we will never be quite the same.

What is needed is time, time to work through the stages of grief — the hurt, the anger, the guilt. We need time to heal. The traditional year may be enough time for some; for others it may not be long enough.

Studies show major decisions



G.A. Belluche Jr.

about relocating, getting a different job or remarrying shouldn't be made during this period. The newly widowed should wait until they feel settled again mentally, physically and emotionally, before making major decisions about their lives.

Grief can be overwhelming, agonizing, numbing. But no matter how terrible, we have to go through it. Those who try to bottle up and avoid their feelings only prolong the experience.

Grief is part of the process we must go through to get to the other side — to fully recover from our bereavement. What should we expect during this time?

Relationships will change

The death of a mate changes a couple into a single. A widow or a widower has a major social adjustment to make. Your married friends will still be your friends, but the relationship will not be the same.

Widows and widowers need to

add to their circle of friends at least one or two others in the same circumstances. Only another person who has suffered the same can truly understand and share the burden of grief.

The greatest need for most widows and widowers is human contact. Talking to another who knows and understands what you are going through can be tremendously encouraging. And, when the opportunity arises, you can pass along the same consolation and encouragement to others who need it.

Also, though it won't be easy for some, there comes the time when we must psychologically let go of our former mate. Sooner or later, we must not "feel married." The wedding vows are "till death do us part."

If we need to remarry to be able to fulfill the goals and objectives of our lives, then we should feel free to do so.

Our lives, our work must go on. We were put here in this world and given one lifetime to

develop the character we need for eternity.

Yes, we should grieve, and not cut that grief too short, but our physical years on this planet are relatively few. We must eventually go beyond the present distress — we must begin to work and to serve and to live life to the full once again.

Responding to loneliness and guilt

You will feel a deep loneliness for your mate for quite a while. Any little thing that reminds you of him or her will oftentimes bring tears to your eyes. And you may not be able to control when those tears come. That's to be expected.

Don't be ashamed or embarrassed about expressing your feelings. Those who know your circumstances will understand and appreciate your deep love for your mate and your sense of loss.

During those hours by yourself, not only will you feel lonely, you may also find yourself feeling guilty. It's only natural to look back and say to yourself, What if . . . ? Or, Why didn't I . . . ? Or, Why did I . . . ?

It would be wonderful if we were all perfect, but we aren't. There's not one of us who couldn't find something to feel guilty about if one of our loved ones died.

Learn from this experience. Don't let it overcome you. If you didn't show enough love and appreciation for your mate, determine to become a more loving, appreciative person.

You can't relive the past, but you can certainly do something about the future.

Older widows

Widows, especially older widows as a group, tend to continue to suffer the pangs of loneliness and grief longer than their younger peers. Oftentimes, the stresses of a lower economic condition, plus the couple-oriented society we live in, combined with the pressures of aging, prove debilitating to them.

But you widows must accept

that you have a new role in life now. You have much to give and to share with others, no matter what your age.

If you have neglected developing some of your talents because of responsibilities to husband and family, now would be an ideal time to consider doing so. If further education is necessary, community colleges and workshops are usually available. You might be surprised to see how many gray heads are in classrooms today. And, you'll likely find you will have little trouble staying up academically with your younger counterparts. It's amazing what a little serious dedication to study can do.

Set goals for yourself

It's time to set some goals for yourself. If formal education is not for you, analyze your skills and abilities. What do you really enjoy doing? Go to a library and

Grief is part of the process we must go through to recover from bereavement.

check out some books and become an expert on the subject.

If you like to have people over, do so. Learn how to be an expert host or hostess. If you can't afford the food necessary for a dinner or luncheon, have everyone contribute by bringing a dish.

Get involved with life. Become an interesting person and other people will be drawn to you.

Don't overlook good health

One extremely important aspect of life that many people neglect is good health. Bereavement

can devastate you physically as well as mentally. This can be especially true of men. Now is not the time to be careless about your health.

Schedule a physical checkup. Watch your diet, your weight and cholesterol level. Did you know that depression can actually be controlled by adding more physical activity to your daily routine?

Start moving. According to your ability, get yourself some good, comfortable, well-supported shoes and start walking. Make yourself a walking schedule. For some the early morning hours might be best. Others might prefer later in the day. Also, walking is a good activity to get your friends involved in.

If walking is impossible for you, find another intelligent way to exercise. But whatever you do, start moving.

Avoid alcohol as a crutch

Be extremely cautious about the use of alcohol or any other drugs. Many have been tempted to try to blot out their suffering by abusing their bodies with an excess of alcohol or by the unwise use of tranquilizers.

Alcohol is not a cure for depression. It *is* a depressant. And it is addictive, just as other drugs are. Some widows and widowers have become alcoholics. A wiser course is to avoid such crutches.

That doesn't mean that you should refuse even one drink at a social occasion, but always be extremely moderate. Never drink alone.

Drinking glass after glass of beer, wine or other alcohol to help you sleep at night doesn't work either. Alcohol disrupts sleep patterns and can actually make you more tired. A glass of warm milk works much better.

Don't isolate yourself

Maintain your family contacts. More often than not it is the woman who writes or calls or in other ways maintains contact with the family. A widower may tend to ignore these duties and thus feel even more isolated.

As time goes along, you may

want to consider moving closer to your family. In our mobile society families often become scattered. Widows or widowers may find themselves left alone hundreds or thousands of miles away from their closest relatives.

But, again, don't be hasty. Your longtime home, surrounded by familiar neighbors, may be your haven.

Plan family get-togethers and reunions, research your family tree, start a book of your family's history.

Be an asset, not a liability. As in all situations in life, you shouldn't wait for opportunities

to serve to come to you. Instead, go out and find them.

Serve!

Look for opportunities to serve others. Fellowship and associate with all age groups. Younger singles need to be able to talk to older people. Children need contact with people who have time to pay attention to them.

New mothers need help. The sick need encouragement. Volunteer to help whenever help is needed and you are able to do so. Don't just sit around waiting for someone to ask you to do something or to go somewhere. Be the

most concerned, best neighbor on the block or in your apartment complex. Yes, some days it will take more effort than others, but it will be well worth it.

Don't neglect your children

Children handle death in various ways, depending on their ages and personalities. If you have children still at home, remember, they are as traumatized by the death of your mate as you are.

Those who seem to need the least attention may be the ones who need your help the most. Include your children in your bereavement. If you express it to

Dead... and Gone?

The death of a loved one can cause tremendous grief. Survivors often wonder: Is he or she really gone — forever? The answer will surprise and encourage you!

By Cecil E. Maranville

Many of you reading this article know all too well the grief that the death of a loved one brings.

The mental and emotional trauma is intense, and recent studies indicate that unresolved grief can even lead to physical ailments and death!

All around you are constant, cruel reminders of your loss: The empty chair that was his or her favorite. The silence that is so penetrating. The times you start to speak, only to be reminded that no one is listening.

Proverbs 14:10 declares that only the heart knows its own sorrow — that only the person involved can fully appreciate the sense of loss and loneliness.

How true in the case of a lost loved one!

There is some small comfort in the treasury of your memories. But the greatest comfort, the greatest hope, is that of being reunited with the one so dearly missed. Will it happen? Could it be? It seems al-

most too good to be true. Many ideas and teachings exist today on this subject. They seek to bring the comfort widows, widowers and other bereaved people need. But all of these teachings have one thing in common: They do not provide lasting encouragement.

The most comforting knowledge that can be offered is the straightforward, sincere *truth*. It *does* give real comfort!

Do you know the truth on this matter? If you are grieving over a loved one, you need to hear it!

The Bible clearly shows that God understands the loss and pain that death inflicts upon those who are left.

I Corinthians 15:55-56 speaks of death's biting sting. Verse 26 plainly labels death an enemy. It is the enemy of all the hopes and dreams that are left unfulfilled. It is a cruel visitor that uncaringly

snatches away laughter and love. But is your loved one really dead and gone?

The hope we have

Some time ago I talked to a widow in her 80s. Her husband died many years ago. She reminisced about her husband, clearly still lonely for his companionship. She asked me directly if she would ever be with him again.

"Would it encourage you," I asked, "if you knew for certain that you could be with him again soon?"

I wanted to show that her reunion with her husband was sure — surer than she realized.

Look at the account of the death of a close friend of Jesus Christ in John 11. This is the story of Lazarus and his grieving sisters, Mary and Martha.

When Lazarus became critically ill, the sisters sent word to Christ, hoping that He would come and heal Lazarus (verse 3). But Christ stayed away intentionally until He was certain His friend was dead. What an incredible thing for the



Homer Sykes, Woodfin Camp & Associates

gether among yourselves, it will bring you closer as a family.

Try to get your household back on a schedule as soon as possible.

Your children need that stability that only you can give, and you need it, too. If you have to list what you are going to do every hour of the day and check it off as you go, then do it.

Questions about death

The points in this article are physical things you can do yourself to help you through this most difficult time in your life. But the death of one dear to you can also cause you to seriously question

the meaning of life itself. The friends I mentioned at the start of this article are feeling the loss of their mates, but they're not despairing in that loss.

They understand that life here and now is temporary, and that God has much more in store for them and their loved ones than the difficulties and trials of this physical life.

If the death of one close to you has caused you concern because you're not sure of what has happened to that person after death, write for our free booklet *Is There Life After Death?* You'll find some surprising and com-

forting answers in this fascinating booklet.

Even though death is the natural cessation of this physical life, God is much concerned about the life and death of every one of His people. Physical death is not the end. God has a master plan for humans.

Our Creator, aware of every sparrow that falls, is certainly not going to overlook the death of even one of His human creations.

God is aware and He is concerned about you and your loved ones. Write today for *Is There Life After Death?* It's yours, free for the asking. □

Son of God to do! Christ intended to teach us a lesson that offers great hope, if we can grasp the truth.

The women were deeply disappointed. They expected their brother would be healed. Both expressed their frustration in the same words: "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (verses 21, 32).

Why did Christ let Lazarus die? What was on His mind? He explained to Martha, "Your brother will rise [be alive] again" (verse 23).

Christ knew that death was only temporary! He knew God had the power to bring the dead back to life again. Christ knew that, while death is one of the greatest trials humans face, it is not the end.

While our loved ones may be dead, they are not gone forever. There is a resurrection coming for every human (verse 24). Martha understood and believed that. Do we? She and her sister then were given a dramatic demonstration that Christ could indeed do as He promised. Lazarus was brought back to life — he walked out of his tomb.

Sooner than you think

How long will you have to wait to see physical proof of Christ's words?

Christ showed that in God's plan, not all of the dead will be dealt with in the same manner or at the same time.

Some will be brought back to life at His Second Coming to this

earth, now just ahead of us, to set up God's government. Others will be brought to life again much later. Read John 5:28-29.

The first resurrection, which will involve God's true servants down through time, is to spirit life. The second resurrection is to physical life. All those who never before had a chance to understand and live God's way will be raised to learn the truth and to be judged by it (Revelation 20:11-12). A later, third resurrection will mark the final judgment of those who have known God's truth but refused to submit to God's purpose (Revelation 20:13-15).

If this is all new to you, request our free booklet *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?* for a full explanation.

The first resurrection will include those who have known and followed God's ways in their lifetimes. How long until this great event? We don't know for certain, but we do know that we are near the end of this age, at which time the first resurrection occurs.

Christ said that once the signs of the end are clearly evident, we can be sure His Second Coming is soon (Matthew 24:32-33).

The signs of the end are clearly with us.

But wait, you say to yourself. Perhaps your loved one did not understand or obey God. What of him or her? When will you be reunited? Will you, perhaps, never see him or her again? Read on.

Revelation 20:5 teaches that the second resurrection occurs 1,000

years after the first. There *is* a resurrection for those who have not been true Christians. Every human who has ever lived will have a chance to enter God's Family.

Are you thinking that 1,000 years is a long time to wait? Don't despair! Listen: "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8). Once Christ's rule is established, the next thousand years will whisk by like one day passes for you now.

Take comfort

For those willing to believe Him, God assures us that "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God" (Romans 8:37-39).

Although we miss those who are gone from our lives, we can take comfort in the fact that they are not permanently gone. That smile, that laugh, that unique personality are not forever lost.

That's the truth — and it's the most encouraging message you can hear.

If you want to learn more, request a free copy of our booklet *Is There Life After Death?* Just mail the literature request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you. □

A Look at **EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE**

Do you understand Ezekiel's description of the millennial Temple? Here, in a two-part Bible study, we examine how that Temple — if it is physical — might look.

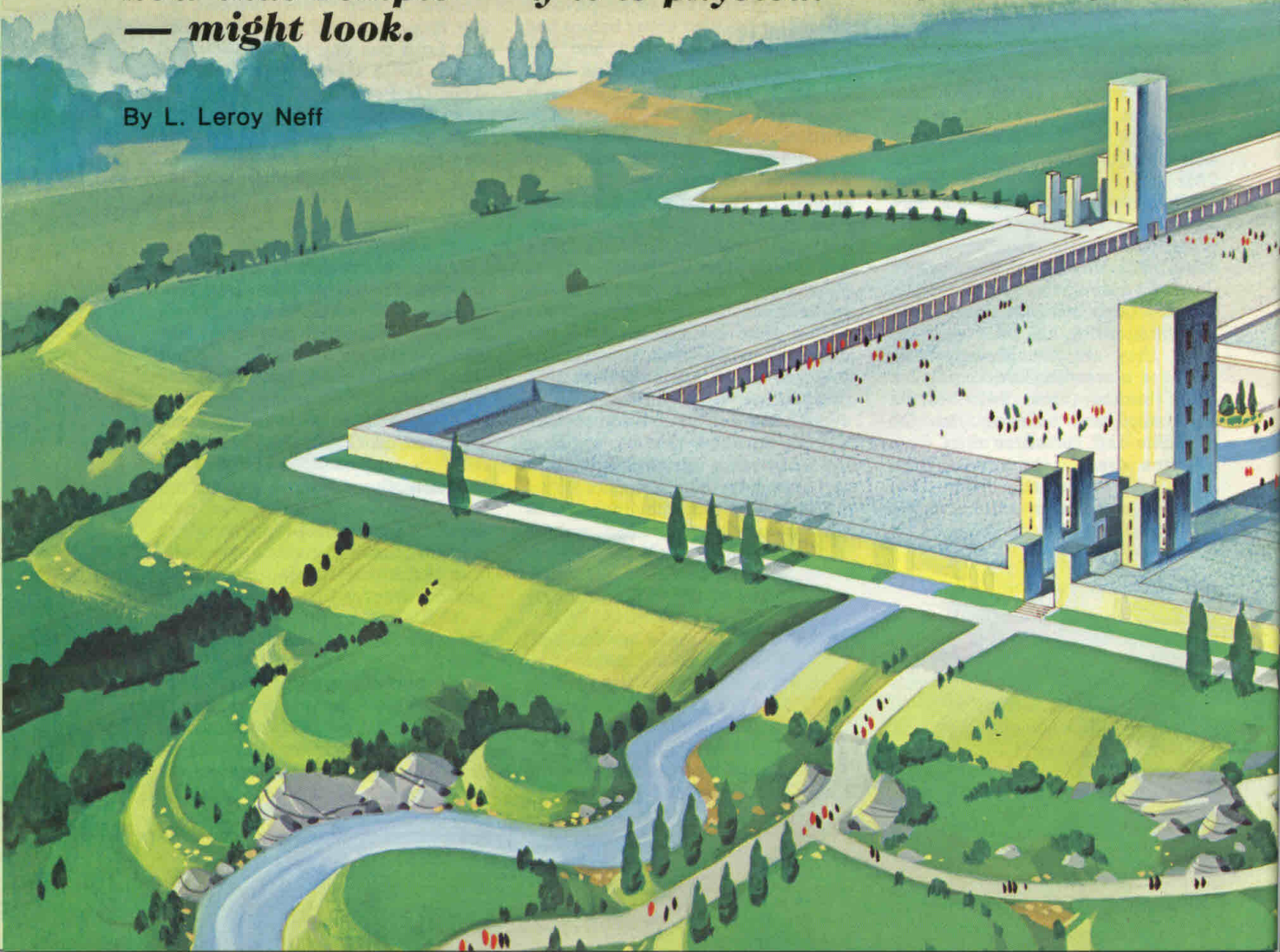
By L. Leroy Neff

If indeed there is to be a literal millennial Temple, just what will that Temple be like? What is the style of architecture? Where will it be built? What is its purpose?

The Bible passages relating to the Temple are not always easy to understand. Therefore, many people skip over them, or read them without understanding. The description is found in the latter chapters of Ezekiel.

To understand what Ezekiel describes, we must also understand the details of Solomon's Temple. The description of each is incomplete without the other.

This two-part Bible study, to appear this issue and next, will examine the Bible's physical description of the Temple, not spir-



itual analogies or the Temple service. We will examine each of the major components of the Temple, and then put everything together in one grand picture.

Ezekiel saw the world tomorrow

This Temple is sometimes referred to as Ezekiel's Temple, as he is the one who describes it. Actually, whether literal or symbolic, it is God's Temple, as the previous ones were. To distinguish between them they are often referred to as Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, Herod's or Ezekiel's temples.

The Bible says that all nations will come to Jerusalem to worship God during the Millennium

(Zechariah 14:16). Most scriptural quotations we will look at in this article will be from the 1917 edition of the Holy Scriptures published by the Jewish Publication Society of America.

God is very concerned about this Temple and greatly loves even its gates: "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion [at the Temple] more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Psalm 87:2).

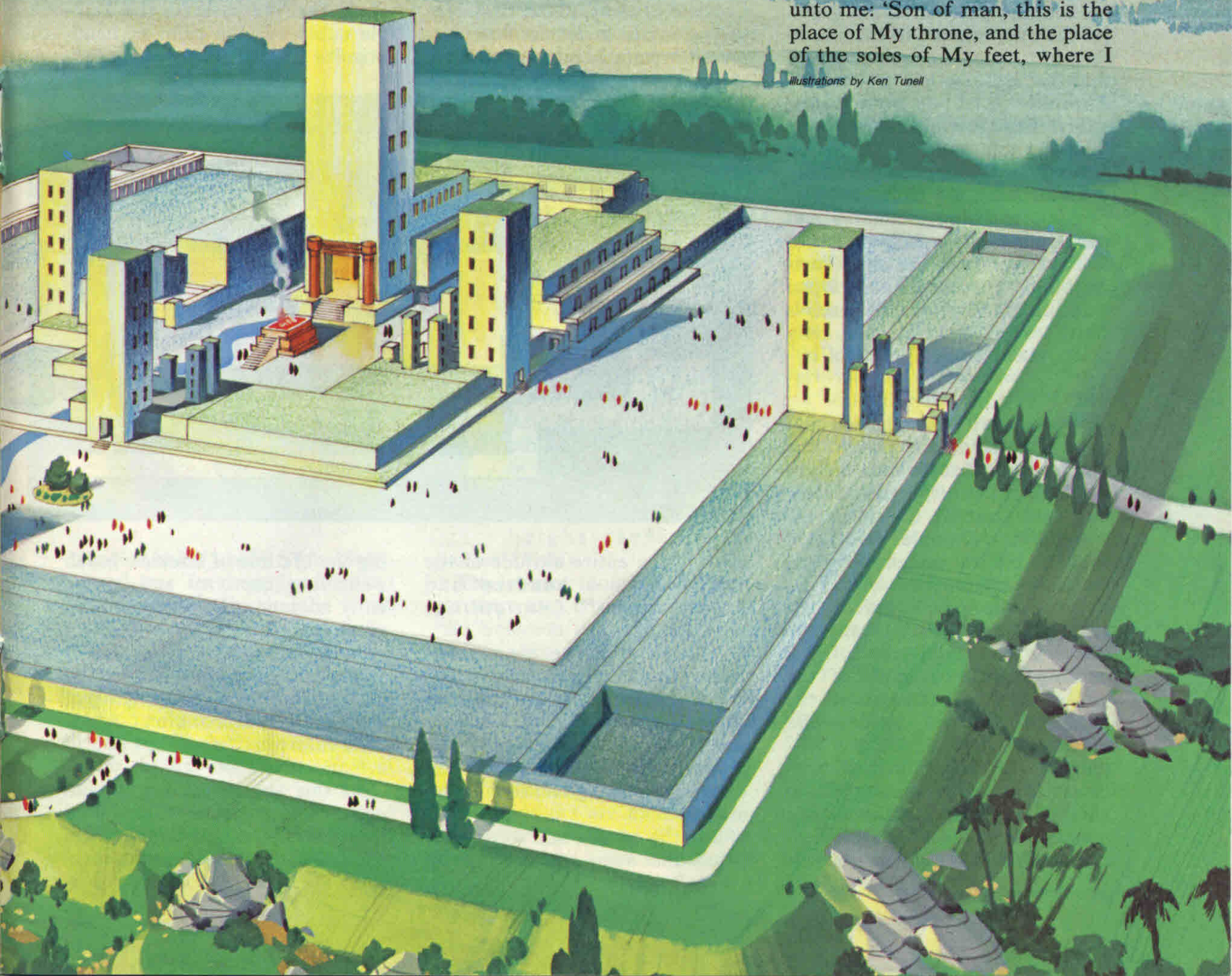
We should love what God has planned to be His capital in the world tomorrow.

"For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:11). Even though

these physical aspects are important, the most important part, the part that makes the Temple of God so grand and glorious, is that Jesus Christ, in all of His glory, will be there.

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east; and, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth did shine with His glory.... And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. And a spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard one speaking unto me out of the house; and a man stood by me. And He said unto me: 'Son of man, this is the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I

Illustrations by Ken Tunell



will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever" (Ezekiel 43:1-7).

Here is the Temple

Now we begin to piece together the many parts of this "jigsaw puzzle." There are no photographs, blueprints or drawings to go by. God caused the important details to be written down and preserved for us. We find these details "here a little, there a little" in the Bible (Isaiah 28:13).

We must put together what is said in Kings, Chronicles, Ezekiel and even the book of Jeremiah to understand any one of the Temples, past or future.

Neither Solomon nor Ezekiel is the architect of the Temple — God is! Notice:

"Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch [of the temple], and of the houses thereof . . . and the pattern of all that he had *by the spirit*" (I Chronicles 28:11-12).

Five basic sections make up the main Temple building: the porch (*ulam*, in Hebrew), the holy place (*hekal*), the Holy of Holies (*debir*), the side chambers and the upper chambers.

The entrance to the main Temple building is on the east. Upon entering the Temple, the porch is first traversed, then the holy place, then the Holy of Holies.

The *ulam*, or porch

We start with that portion that is first entered, the porch. The porch is not what we today might call a porch, but is, rather, a slender and graceful tower on the front of the Temple. It is here that the biblical account as given in Kings commences.

"And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house" (I Kings 6:3).

Only the basic floor dimensions of the porch are given in this place. The height is not given. There is no description of the walls — no details of the

ceiling, windows or exterior. Those facts are found in other places.

Here is a perfect example to show that no scripture can be understood by itself. We must look in all the other places where the Temple is described to get the full picture.

The text does state that the porch's width (20 cubits) is the same as the breadth of the "house," and is 10 cubits in depth. These are inside room dimensions. Outside dimensions are given elsewhere.

The height for this porch is the first major mistake many biblical scholars have made.

"And the porch that was before [the house], the length of it, according to the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and the height a hundred and twenty" (II Chronicles 3:4). The first-century Jewish historian Josephus gives the same height as the Bible

willing to accept what they think to be unreasonable!

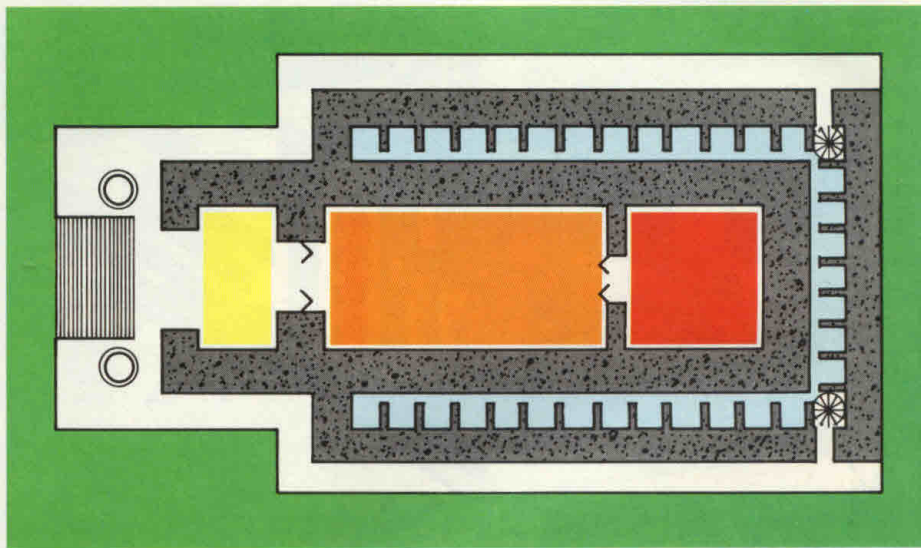
How long is a cubit?

Usually, 18 inches is given as the length of a cubit. This is said to be based on the approximate length of the forearm.

Many different "cubits" were used in ancient times. In Israel there were cubits of five, six and seven palms, a palm being a handbreadth of about 3.6 inches. Five palms equaled 18.0 inches, six palms 21.6 inches and seven palms 25.2 inches. Each "cubit" was used for different purposes.

The cubit of the Temple was after the ancient measure (II Chronicles 3:3) and included an extra handbreadth over the cubit commonly used during Ezekiel's time (Ezekiel 40:5, 43:13).

From this it would appear likely that the basis for the Temple cubit was the palm or handbreadth and not the forearm; dur-



gives. "The entire altitude of the Temple was a hundred and twenty cubits" (*Antiquities*, VIII, III, 2).

In spite of these clear statements, scholars have almost universally rejected this statement about the height as a "corruption" of the biblical text. The proportions, as given here, seem completely wrong and illogical to many.

But the text is not corrupt. It is just that some scholars are un-

ing the lifetime of Ezekiel, Judah went into captivity and apparently adopted a Babylonian cubit of six palms.

A shorter cubit such as one of five or six palms was apparently used in reference to Og, King of Bashan (Deuteronomy 3:11). This cubit was "after the cubit of a man."

In this article the seven-palm cubit of 25.2 inches will be used for Temple measurements. On the basis of this standard mea-

surement we have a better perspective of the lofty height and impressive size of God's Temple.

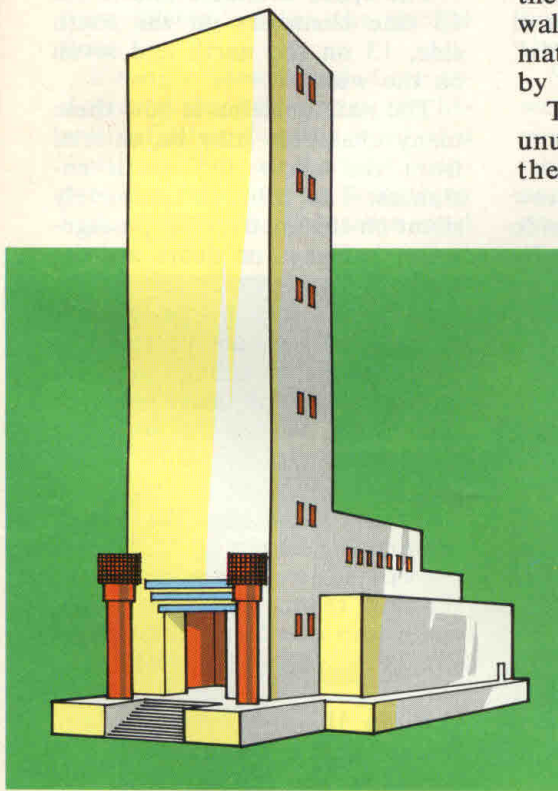
The porch of the Temple is exceedingly tall, 252 feet in height. It is narrow from the front view and slender or graceful from the side view.

Other aspects of the porch, the upper chambers and the front decorations will be discussed later.

The *hekal*, or holy place

The *hekal* is the largest room in the Temple. It is immediately behind the porch, to the west.

"And the house, that is, the



temple [*hekal*] before [the Sanctuary] was forty cubits long" (I Kings 6:17). The height is 30 cubits (verse 2).

We have seen how the porch and the Temple (house) were 20 cubits broad inside. Here we have a room described as 20 cubits broad by 40 cubits long. Such a room would be about 40 feet wide by 80 feet long.

"And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar; from the floor of the house

unto the joists of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the house with boards of cypress" (verse 15).

These wallboards were engraved or carved, as another scripture states: "And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm-trees and open flowers, within and without" (verse 29).

To further add to this splendor, even the floors were overlaid with pure gold (verse 30)!

There were windows near the ceiling in the *hekal*. They would have to be over 20 cubits above the floor level, as the exterior wall was surrounded to approximately that height on the outside by the side chambers.

These particular windows were unusual in their design: "And for the house he made windows broad within, and narrow without" (verse 4).

The *debir*, or Holy of Holies

The *debir* is better known as the Holy of Holies. It consists of a smaller room of exactly 20 cubits in all of its dimensions.

"And he prepared the Sanctuary in the midst of the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord. And before the Sanctuary which was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof..." (verses 19-20).

The interior rooms of the Temple were also covered with gold. "So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold; and he drew chains of gold across the wall before the Sanctuary; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until all the house was finished" (verses 21-22).

No windows are mentioned in the *debir*, or Holy of Holies. There could be none, because the

exterior side chambers would cover them up.

The side chambers

Most authorities come to about the same conclusions when it comes to the floor plan of the main part of the Temple. But when it comes to the height of the porch as well as the side chambers, they almost all reject the Bible description.

These side chambers are arranged around the outside of the main part of the Temple building on three sides, the north, west and south.

Here is a summary from the *Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, article "Temple": "On every side of the house except the east, Ezekiel's temple, like Solomon's, had side chambers. The MT [Masoretic Text, or original Hebrew] gives the number of them as 33, and Smend displays much ingenuity in justifying the text, which in this connexion is by universal confession very corrupt."

The text is not corrupt, but some scholars do not understand or agree with what the scriptural account reveals.

The text shows that there were stories or chambers "one over another," or three floors (compare I Kings 6:5-6). The text also shows that the chambers were "thirty three times" for each floor, as the previous quote admitted.

"And the side-chambers were one over another, three and thirty times" (Ezekiel 41:6).

Another translation reads, "And the side rooms were one over another thirty-three in order" (*The Holy Bible*, translated by George Lamsa).

The King James Version, along with most of the others, has interpreted and not translated this particular point.

The translations by the Jewish Publication Society and George Lamsa have faithfully translated the original Hebrew scriptures at this point. The correct wording is, literally, as stated, "three and thirty times," or 33.

These side chambers are mentioned in the books of Kings and

Ezekiel, but not in Chronicles. As Isaiah said, it is "here a little, there a little" (Isaiah 28:10). A particular truth is usually not found in just one place in the Scriptures. One must study every place in the Scriptures that speaks about a particular subject.

These rooms are arranged in an unusual way. Usually (but not always) the second and third stories of a building are either the same width or narrower. In this case, in each higher story the side chamber is larger than the one beneath.

"And against the wall of the house he built a side-structure round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the sanctuary; and he made side-chambers round about; the nethermost story of the side-structure was five cubits broad; and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad, for on the outside he made rebatements in the wall of the house round about, that the beams should not have hold in the walls of the house" (I Kings 6:5-6).

Notice that the first floor had chambers of five cubits broad, the second floor had chambers of six cubits broad and the third floor had chambers of seven cubits.

Another unusual factor in the placement of these rooms concerns the outer wall of the main part of the Temple.

There were projections in the Temple wall to support the beams that held up the successive floors and roof of the side chambers. Ezekiel 41:6 uses the word *cornice*. These ledges or cornices were provided so the beams for the side chambers would not project into the walls of the main Temple structure.

James Moffatt translates this, "Allowing space all round the outside wall so that the ends of the planks upholding the rows need not pierce the walls of the temple" (I Kings 6:6).

Since there could be no cutting into the wall of the house itself, the increasing width of each successive story would of necessity

cut into the outside wall of the chambers.

So far we have only seen one measurement of the side chambers, that of the breadth, from the Temple wall outward. We still do not have the height of these rooms.

"And he built the stories of the side-structure against all the house, each five cubits high; and they rested on the house with timber of cedar" (verse 10).

There is still a third dimension lacking. Kings and Chronicles do not include this dimension. We know two dimensions, and we know how many chambers there are. Ezekiel gives the answer. "And the breadth of every side-chamber, four cubits, round about the house on every side" (Ezekiel 41:5).

Entrance to the side chambers

"The door for the lowest row of chambers was in the right side of the house and they went up by winding stairs into the middle row, and out of the middle into the third" (I Kings 6:8).

Notice: The door gave entrance to the first floor. Entry to the second and third story was by "winding [or circular] stairs."

Ezekiel adds an additional point to the description. "And the doors of the side-chambers were toward the place that was left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south; and the breadth of the place that was left was five cubits round about" (Ezekiel 41:11).

We now have two entrances described, but where are they on the north and south sides? Ezekiel 41:11 says in "the place that was left." This "place that was left" is said to be five cubits round about, or in both directions. This is the place left for the "winding stairs."

Since all of the chambers are four cubits in breadth, they each take only four cubits of wall space on the outside of the inner Temple wall. One could not fit properly in the corner since one chamber of four cubits' breadth would have to match the other

chamber's length of five cubits. The side chambers must fit against the main wall, and not in the northwest and southwest corner. The corner is the "place that was left." A five-cubit square arbitrarily set somewhere along the north or south wall is not logically the "place that was left." This five-cubit space that was left is for the "winding stairs."

Using the available north-south wall space, each chamber can be exactly four cubits in breadth, with one-cubit inner walls between each side-chamber. On the west the inner walls must be one-half cubit (one foot) in order to fit.

The space available allows for 13 side chambers on the south side, 13 on the north and seven on the west.

The next question is how these many chambers may be entered from the north and south entrances. The Bible is completely silent on this matter. No passageways, hallways or doors are described. No space is left in the description for such a passageway or hall. Where can we find the answer to this puzzling question?

We must look elsewhere for the answer. Where the Scripture is silent, about the only source left is the records of the priest Josephus. Sometimes the Jewish *Mishna* is of help.

"He also made passages through them, that they might come into one through another" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, VIII, III, 2).

From this it becomes plain. There was a passageway that went the entire length of the rooms to connect them together. It was, of necessity, a part of the space allotted to each chamber.

No windows are mentioned in the Jewish Publication Society translation; therefore none are shown in the artwork that accompanies this article. But some translations of Ezekiel 41:26 seem to indicate there may be windows.

The upper chambers

When it comes to the details of the upper chambers, we are faced

with a difficult problem. The Bible nowhere specifically describes these rooms or tells where they are located!

First, let us understand that so far, when speaking of the side chambers, the Bible uses the Hebrew word *tsela*. This word comes from a root signifying "ribs." These side chambers are arranged somewhat like ribs around the Temple. Now we are ready to investigate a new and different type of chamber.

"And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold" (II Chronicles 3:9).

The side chambers could not in any way be referred to as upper chambers since one third of them were "lower," or on the ground floor.

Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible gives the literal definition for this word as a "loft" or "upper chamber," apparently referring to something high or lifted up. This same word

is used to refer to the upper chamber of Uzziah (II Kings 1:2).

Where are these chambers?

There is only one logical place left! In the porch!

Did you suppose that the porch was a hollow shell? If so, why was it made so high? Just for outside appearance, or for a practical purpose, also?

We have already seen that the interior of the porch was overlaid with gold (II Chronicles 3:4), yet the side chambers were not. The upper chambers are also overlaid with gold (verse 9).

How many of these chambers are there? How large are they, how are they entered and what is their purpose?

Since the Bible does not say, we need to go to Josephus. He wrote about Solomon's Temple, which was destroyed almost six centuries earlier. Some of his statements about this Temple,

while not always agreeing with Scripture, are based on facts that he may have misunderstood.

First, let's find out where the entrances to these rooms were.

"The king also had a fine contrivance for an ascent to the upper room over the temple, and that was by steps in the thickness of its wall; for it had no large door on the east end, as the lower house had, but the entrances were by the sides, through very small doors" (*Antiquities*, VIII, III, 2).

These rooms must have been "over the temple" in the porch, and not, as Josephus supposed, above the *hekal* and *debir*. But their entrance was through small doors on the inside of the porch, through the walls of the porch, not through the main walls of the *hekal*.

That solves the problem regarding the entrances, but what about the number of rooms or stories in the porch?

Again, the Bible does not tell us. God nevertheless may have seen fit to preserve the key for us, this time also in Josephus.

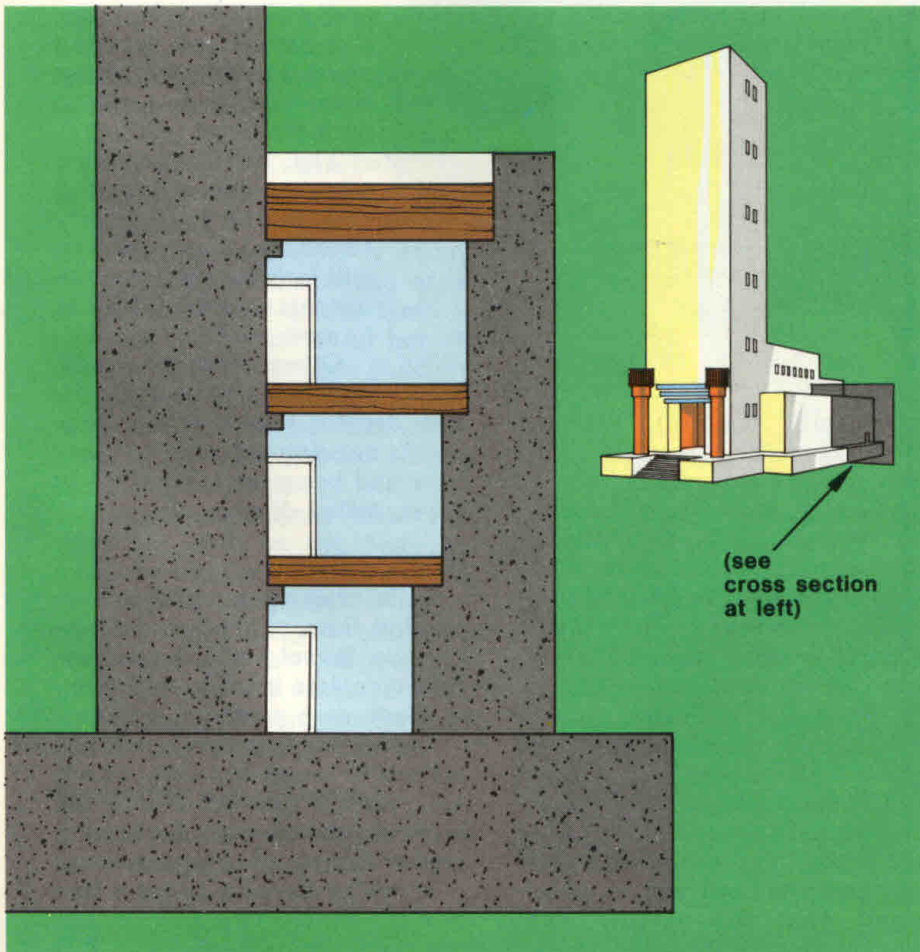
In the same section from which the preceding passage was taken, he mentions that each of the side chambers was 20 cubits high: "Every one of these rooms had five cubits in breadth, and the same in length, but in height twenty."

This could not possibly refer to the side chambers, as the Bible plainly and specifically states they were five cubits high. Josephus further states that those rooms were one over another, or in successive stories. It seems obvious that Josephus must have confused two different kinds of rooms, and combined details of both into one description.

The chambers must have been 20 cubits high, one over another. In 120 cubits there would be six separate chambers on separate floors.

The use of these upper chambers is not stated. The house of God contained treasuries, and possibly that is what these upper chambers were for. □

(To be continued)



POSITIVE CHILD TRAINING

Toilet Training - Take It Easy!

BY DEXTER H. FAULKNER

PART THREE

So you've decided it's time to toilet train your child.

You might be comforted to know that all normal children can and do acquire control eventually. But *when* they achieve it depends, to a large extent, on your handling of the situation.

In this area of child training, it is vital to *take it easy*.

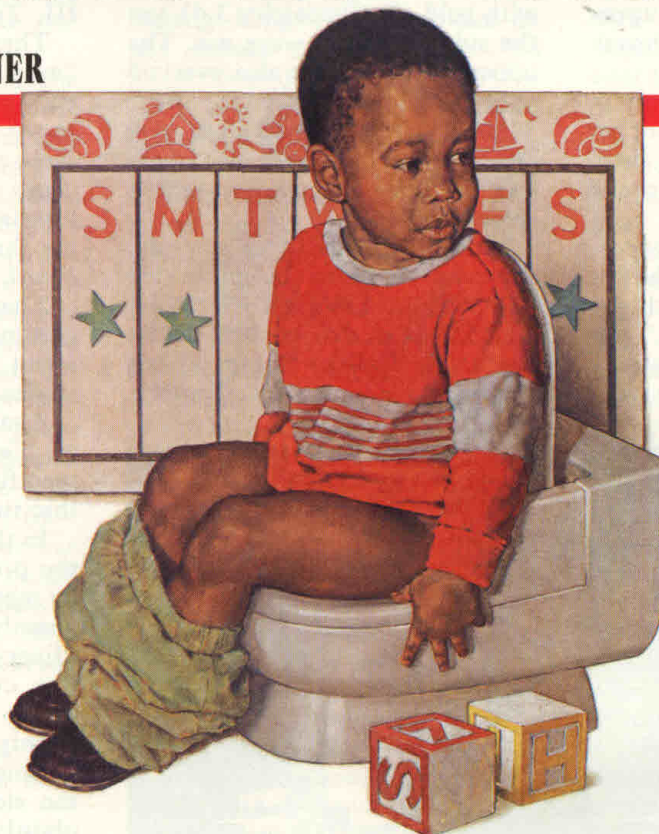
You've heard a lot of horror stories, and you've heard a lot of differing opinions. Our experience is that every child is different, so there is no one right way to toilet train. All techniques that work require patience and understanding.

Here are some of the steps, techniques and insights we've found that make toilet training successful.

When should training begin?

First, be sure your child is ready. The time can vary between different children. Timing is more important than technique. You can test his or her readiness by simple record keeping.

Keep an accurate record of the times the baby wets or soils his or her diapers (nappies to our Com-



monwealth readers). When a fairly consistent pattern shows that the times of elimination are coming at about the same periods, you are safe in assuming the time has come to start training.

Many experts feel that a child should be at least 18 months old. This is because the child's nervous system must mature enough to direct the sphincter muscles that control the openings to the bladder and bowels.

The child also needs to be old enough to be aware of when he or she needs to go to the bathroom, to signal the need and to understand what the parents want when they put the child on the

toilet. Children also need to be old enough to walk, sit and pull down their pants by themselves.

Let your child wear training pants over diapers so he or she can practice pulling them up and down. Buy inexpensive, oversized training pants to make removing them easier (they shrink with washing).

The child also must want to achieve control and mastery of bodily functions. Many children will look forward to making this step toward being "grown up."

Other signs of readiness include keeping a diaper dry for several hours, your child's noticing the need to eliminate and being uncomfortable in a wet, soiled diaper.

It takes time

Toilet training is a process that requires time, patience and perseverance. Bowel control may precede complete bladder control by as much as a year and a half.

During toilet training, it is important to remember that you are not judging your child in some kind of contest, but encouraging him or her in a learning process.

If you're planning to use a potty chair instead of a smaller seat placed on the regular toilet, put it

in the bathroom some time before you plan to use it. Explain that the chair is there for the child to use when he or she is old enough. Have the child sit on it fully dressed. The idea is to make the child familiar and comfortable with it.

At first you may find that potty chairs are better for your child than a smaller seat placed on the toilet. Big toilets are cold and noisy and some children may be afraid of being flushed down the toilet! If you do use a small chair on the regular toilet, make sure there are sturdy steps or a footstool to help your child climb up and down and feel more stable while he or she is up there.

Also, help your child wash his or her hands after using the toilet. When the child is old enough to wash his or her own hands, put a footstool by the sink to stand on.

Girls can sit backwards or sideways on a big toilet if necessary. Eventually, boys can stand on a footstool. It is usually best for boys to be taught sitting down first, as it takes some time to master the skill of urinating while standing.

Watch for daily patterns. When you see the signs (when he or she fidgets, squirms, gets red in the face or makes grunting sounds) that your child is about to have a bowel movement, or if he or she wakes up dry from a nap, you can place him or her on the potty. Don't put your child on the potty and expect him or her to "perform" if no biological need is apparent. Forced sitting builds up resentment.

If nothing happens after the child has been on the potty or toilet for 10 minutes, take him or her off and try again 10 to 20 minutes later. If your child is overly resistant to toilet training and no results are achieved after a week or so, discontinue the project for a few weeks.

Accidents will happen

Help your child to notice when he or she needs to urinate. Then,

while your child is on the potty chair or toilet, teach him to stop and start the flow of urine. This exercise strengthens the muscles used in bladder control. It also gives the child a needed sense of control. Your child will need help

with the mechanics, especially if you are in a strange place.

Throughout the toilet-training process, be prepared for many accidents. It is hard for small children to remember to interrupt their play to use the toilet. En-

What About Bed-wetting?

Bed-wetting, though common, can be a distressing problem — for both parents and children. But with patience and common sense, you can help your child overcome it.

Up to 15 percent of children at age 5 still wet the bed, and 10 percent occasionally do at age 6.

According to *The Child Care Encyclopedia*: "Staying dry during sleep is not a learned skill but a physiological development. Babies pass water involuntarily whether they are awake or asleep; older people's urination is a voluntary matter and therefore never takes place during normal sleep. In between those two stages, beds stop being wetted not because the child is 'trained' but because he matures to a point where he can concentrate his urine sufficiently for his bladder to hold a full night's complement comfortably and to a point where if his bladder is too full for comfort it will cause an awakening rather than a flood."

As in everything, children mature to this point at different rates. By the end of their third year, most girls are reliably dry at night. Boys are slightly slower to mature.

You will probably be able to tell if your child is on the way to dryness or if he or she needs some help. If your child reaches 5 years of age with no real progress (if he or she still wets the bed several times a night, for instance), it's time to help.

Stay calm. It will help your child stay that way, too, and he or she may get over the problem without undue anxiety.

If your child suddenly starts wetting the bed after becoming reliably dry at night, you may want to contact a doctor for an exam to rule out any physical causes, such as urinary

tract infections. Another cause for bed-wetting after nighttime dryness has been achieved is some type of fear, grief, anger or anxiety. A new baby in the family, a divorce or death or a family move can contribute to a child's relapse into bed-wetting. Examine your family life to see what emotional stresses your child is under. Give your child more attention and love while he or she is making difficult adjustments.

A great deal of frustration for the parents comes from the constant necessity for changing wet bedclothes and pajamas. A plastic tablecloth or waterproof sheet between the bottom sheet and the mattress can help keep the mattress from getting soaked. A large, rubber-backed flannel pad (available in baby stores) on top of the sheets can alleviate the need to change the sheets in the middle of the night. Have the child sleep on top of it. Have the child learn to change his or her own nightclothes.

Decrease fluid intake after dinner, especially avoiding drinks with caffeine in them (coffee, tea, colas, hot chocolate). Let your child go to the bathroom before bed, and perhaps get him or her up to use the bathroom before you go to bed.

Remember that your child probably feels embarrassed and worried, not to mention uncomfortable, when he or she wakes up in a wet bed. Don't talk about it a lot or punish the child for wetting the bed.

Don't discuss the problem publicly with others. This is embarrassing for the child and only makes matters worse.

Bed-wetting will be outgrown, eventually. Until then, keep your cool and keep encouraging your child. □

courage children by telling them they are old enough to go to the bathroom now and that it is much more comfortable to stay dry.

Keep putting your child on the potty at the appropriate times every day. Don't give up or be inconsistent or your child will be confused.

Don't be discouraged if nothing happens for a while. There is no link between your child's intelligence and the time it takes to toilet train. Be interested in and encourage your child's progress.

Relax. Don't make toilet training an earthshaking matter. A child having trouble being trained will feel guilty and ashamed and may even be made fun of by other children. Treat your child with compassion and understanding. Don't demean or embarrass him or her. Further shame will cause anxiety and more loss of control.

Summer may be better than winter for training because children are more aware of their physiological sensations when they are wearing fewer clothes or are without diapers.

Eventually your child will have to be taken out of diapers all day, or he or she will not realize that a full bladder means he or she must go to the potty or toilet. Replace diapers with training pants at a nonstressful time at home. You can use plastic pants with training pants to avoid soakings. When your child stays dry at home, then he or she can progress to wearing them away from home.

Praise your baby for all successes, but don't gush and don't reprove failures. Give your child (and yourself) the calm assurance that everyone has accidents sometimes. Be relaxed and matter-of-fact when accidents occur. Don't talk about them to your baby or mention them to others in his or

Toilet training is a process that requires time. It is important to remember that you are not judging your child in some kind of talent contest, but encouraging him or her in a learning process.

her hearing, for this is sure to embarrass.

Training away from home

You can have your child learn to clean up accidents as soon as he or she has the basic idea and has become pretty reliable. After children reach this point, they won't like to wet themselves. However, they may still need diapers when the family is going someplace where a toilet may be hard to locate.

When your child makes his or

before a flood occurs. Your child may also have trouble using a strange toilet. Try to get the child accustomed to using different toilets by occasionally letting him or her use the big toilet at home and at other familiar places when appropriate.

It is also necessary to help children learn to urinate outdoors for those times when no potty chairs or restrooms are available. Boys will find this easier. Girls will need help keeping their pants dry and staying out of thorns, bugs and so on. Help your little girl by holding her out slightly above the ground — squat behind her, holding her bent knees and cradling her hips with your elbows. If there is enough privacy, have her take her pants off completely.

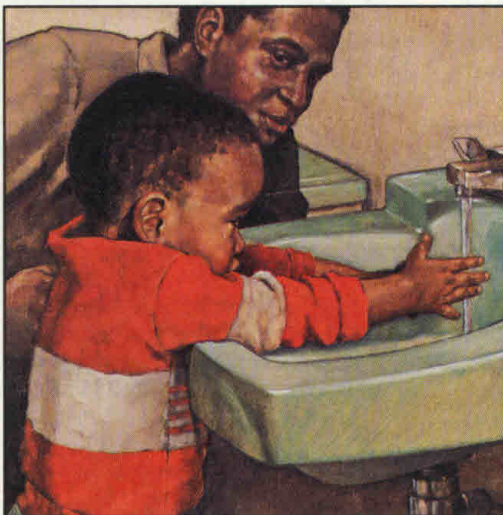
Have children go to the toilet just before leaving the house. When at church or other social functions make it a habit to take care of these important things before the event starts.

If your child regresses

Children can regress after becoming fairly reliable if unusual joy, stress or other change in their lives, such as a major family move, occurs. If a child does regress, make sure that he or she is not ill. If illness is not the problem, then encourage your child to talk to you about his or her feelings, bad or good. Help your children to deal with their emotions.

Praise and positive feedback are necessary, but not so much that your children think they can manipulate you by their actions. Lapses and setbacks can occur if your child begins to try to control your emotional state.

Toilet training is a real achievement for a child. It works best when it is made a joyful experience. Keep calm and take time to delight with your child as he or she learns this new skill. □



Illustrations by Dan Andreasen

her debut in public without diapers, it will be important for you to be able to locate bathrooms quickly. Your child probably won't have much time to wait

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What is the Song of Solomon about? What significance does it have?

The Song of Solomon was written by Solomon and illustrates a right attitude toward the intimacies of married life. Its central theme is the wedding night and the tender, delightful love talk between a man and his bride.

Some scholars also believe this book pictures the intimate, devoted relationship Jesus Christ has with His Church, which is His bride.

The Moffatt translation of the Song of Solomon is especially clear to read.

For more information about the God-ordained purposes of sex, write for a free copy of our book *The Missing Dimension in Sex*.

What does the Bible teach about the practice of "confession"?

Christians are to confess their sins to God — not to other people. Notice David's example in Psalm 51.

No man can forgive sins. Neither has any man been given the office of mediator between mankind and God. This office is held by Jesus Christ alone.

Paul was inspired to write, "Therefore He [Christ] is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). And Paul wrote in I Timothy 2:5, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."

John wrote that when we sin, Jesus Christ serves as our Advocate with God the Father (I John 2:1-2). God is faithful to forgive our sins when we confess them to Him (I John 1:7-10). Therefore, we can come boldly to God's throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Jesus commanded, "Do not call anyone on earth your father;

for One is your Father, He who is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9).

The Scriptures do tell us to confess our *faults* to one another — so we may pray for each other (James 5:16). But there is a difference between seeking a brother's help in overcoming a fault — a human weakness — and confessing sins of the past. The latter usually should not be done because humans cannot forgive sins. And humans do not forget, either, as God does when He removes our sins (Hebrews 8:12).

Where was Christ between the ages of 12 and 30?

At the time Herod ordered the slaughter of all the young boys in Bethlehem, Joseph took Mary and Jesus and fled into Egypt. When the danger was past, they returned to their own country and settled in a town in Galilee: "And he [Joseph, with his family] came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene'" (Matthew 2:23).

From Nazareth the family traveled to Jerusalem each year for the Passover. On one of those occasions, when He was 12, Jesus stayed behind in the Temple. Afterward, when His parents found Him, "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them" (Luke 2:51).

So, Jesus evidently spent most of those years in Nazareth. Otherwise, He would not have been known as a Nazarene.

After He was 30, Jesus preached in the synagogue in His hometown: "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up" (Luke 4:16). Notice the reaction from the people: "So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, 'Is this not Joseph's son?'" (verse 22).

The people knew Jesus! A similar occasion confirms this. The

people said: "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" (Matthew 13:54-56).

Obviously, Jesus spent most of those years between the ages of 12 and 30 in Nazareth. The Bible offers no foundation for suggestions that Jesus traveled to other parts of the world or studied with the Essenes.

Who are the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11?

No one now knows who the two witnesses are. But when they do appear, we will know that the return of Christ is not far away.

The two witnesses are two humans who will be given extraordinary power for three-and-a-half years just before Jesus Christ's Second Coming (verse 3). If anyone tries to harm them before they complete their ministry, "fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies" (verse 5).

The two witnesses also will have power to produce drought and famine — just as Elijah did (I Kings 17:1-7, Luke 4:25) — and to smite the earth with plagues (Revelation 11:6).

The two witnesses' mission will be to give one final warning to the governments of this world. They will be martyred because of their message, and the whole world will rejoice as their dead bodies lie unburied in the streets of Jerusalem (verses 9-10).

But those same people who rejoice will be struck with terror when they see the two witnesses come to life again and ascend into the sky in a cloud (verses 11-12)!

The entire book of Revelation is explained in our booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!* We would be happy to send you a free copy upon request. □

Checklist for Family Growth

Successful families need to grow in many ways. Has your family overlooked any of these important areas?

By Norman L. Shoaf

Every year, on the first day of school, my parents had my brother and me stand against the wall in our hall, and they made marks on the wall to show how tall each of us had gotten.

Looking at the marks as the years went by, we could see how much we had grown!

Yes, *growth* is a key element in every family. Children grow taller. Families grow in size as new children are born. Family members grow older. As new needs arise, expenses grow, too.

But physical growth is not the only type of growth that should take place in a family!

Family members need to grow mentally, learning new skills, learning to make wise decisions, learning to communicate effectively. They need to grow emotionally and socially, showing love and respect for each other and making friends outside the home. And they need to grow spiritually, grasping more about God's way and building God's very character.

Unfortunately, in this world,

more and more families are growing in bad ways. They are growing *apart*. They are growing *discouraged*. They are growing *frustrated*.

In short, traditional, healthy, happy families are growing *rare*.

It must be different among the families of God's people!

The purpose of the family

"Grow," Peter tells us, "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

The knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ includes an amazing truth that no one else on earth understands: God is an eternal, perfect Family, and humans were created to become part of that Family!

That is why the family is so important in this physical world. It is the central training ground in which we may prepare for eter-

nal, spirit life in God's coming Kingdom.

The Church of God is made up of the begotten children of God (I John 3:2). The Church is God's Family!

God's people understand that we must now work as never before to strengthen our physical families. That is one of the four great mandates that Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach has stressed to the Church.

Our strong families will be a key factor in saving humanity from the utter destruction toward which this world is hurling itself (Malachi 4:5-6, Matthew 24:22)!

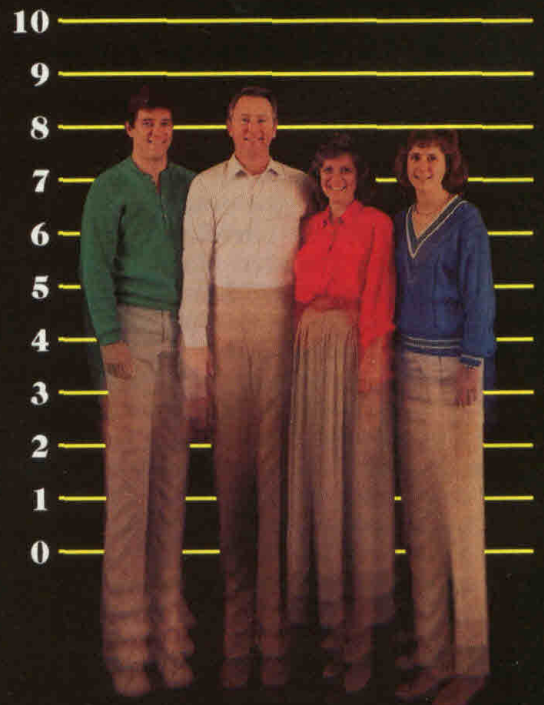
As husbands and fathers, wives and mothers, parents, children, brothers, sisters — family members in general — we would all do well to constantly evaluate our progress toward building the kind of families God desires.

A helpful checklist

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith," wrote Paul. "Prove yourselves" (II Corinthians 13:5).

Having a list of specific goals to work toward and examine ourselves by can help promote

Hal Finch



family growth. Does your family have such a list?

Below is a sample checklist of goals by which you can evaluate your family's growth in physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual areas. You could certainly add more of your own goals to the list. It is intended to inspire ideas.

Why not take a few minutes — as a family! — to look over the list and think about each item as it relates to you? Perhaps you

could use a rating system from 1 to 10, with 10 showing tremendous accomplishment already in an area and 1 showing need for a lot of improvement.

We at *The Good News* would be delighted to hear from readers who wish to comment about this checklist — points you would add, ways you have strengthened certain areas in your family, interesting experiences that have helped your family grow together more effectively. II Corinthians

10:5 tells us we should be “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” And I Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Let's concentrate all our thoughts and energies on helping our families grow in every way God intends. As God's called-out people, let's strengthen our families so that they may truly glorify God! □

Does Everyone in Your Family...

PHYSICAL

- Eat an intelligent diet?
- Get enough rest and sleep?
- Exercise regularly?
- Respond to stress in healthy ways?
- Maintain a neat personal appearance?
- Help keep your home in order?
- Help manage family finances wisely?
- Enjoy regular, balanced fun and recreation?

MENTAL

- Communicate constructively and constantly with each other?
- Consider the needs and desires of every family member when decisions need to be made?
- Read regularly?
- Make learning a lifelong activity?
- Work to develop talents and skills?
- Try new activities together?

- Make wise use of television and other media?

As a parent, do you...

- Show interest in your children's schoolwork?
- Guide your children into positive hobbies and recreational pastimes?
- Teach your children to make wise decisions?

EMOTIONAL

- Openly show love and concern for each other daily?
- Support, encourage and comfort each other?
- Show respect for each other's ideas and concerns?
- Share each other's innermost hopes and dreams and work toward them together?
- Trust each other, and act in a way that earns trust?
- Resolve problems constructively, with tenderness?
- Praise each other's achievements, especially those of children?
- Provide warmth, encouragement and, when possible, physical assistance when others need help?

SOCIAL

- Maintain strong friendships, especially with other members of God's Church?
- Know neighbors and show friendship toward them?
- Visit and serve friends and relatives, especially when they are sick or discouraged?

- Know what is going on in your community, and strive to be a model citizen within God's law?

As a husband or wife, do you...

- Spend plenty of time with your mate?

As a parent, do you...

- Know your children's friends?

SPIRITUAL

- Pray regularly?
- Study the Bible regularly?
- Meditate regularly?
- Fast regularly?
- Concentrate on fulfilling the “four mandates” (come out of the world, simplify your life, prepare to teach, emphasize the family)?
- Support Church activities?
- Develop and display the fruits of God's holy spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)?
- Celebrate all of God's festivals and Holy Days, including the weekly Sabbath, in positive, special ways?
- Maintain a positive, cheerful outlook on life?
- Base every thought and action on God's law and God's plan?

As a parent, do you...

- Teach your children about God and God's way?

Is Something Missing?

Do you have an "arms-length relationship" with God — a spiritual void in your life? If so, read this!

By Clayton D. Steep

Many people lead what they feel is a "good Christian life" — and yet real peace of mind eludes them.

How about you? Are you as free from fear and anxiety as you would like to be?

When you pray, are you sure your prayers are being heard?

How easy do you find it to cope with the minor, day-to-day problems in life? What about major problems that occur?

How positively you can answer such questions will be determined by the quality of your personal relationship with God. Many make the mistake of assuming that, as Christians, they are as close to God as they need to be. Such is not the case at all, as the Bible clearly shows.

Some are lukewarm

In Revelation 3:20, we find Jesus standing at a door and knocking. He says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

You may have thought this often-quoted verse pictures Jesus calling sinners and unbelievers to repentance. But the message in this section of the Scriptures is not directed to the world. Rather, it is addressed specifically to Christians (notice verses 1, 6-7, 13-14 and 22)!

These people in verse 20 are not merely unbelievers on the

other side of the door. These are Christians who have allowed a door to close in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He is standing without and they are within, perhaps feasting, feeling warm, secure and complacent. They apparently are unaware of how remote Christ is from them.

How could such a situation come to be?

It is significant that these Christians are the same individuals who are warned about being "lukewarm" (verses 15-16). They are not "hot," that is to say, burning with zeal for God's way, deeply involved in what God is doing, actively seeking to grow in grace and knowledge. On the other hand, they are not "cold," that is to say unbelieving, atheistic, out-and-out evildoers. Hot water is conducive to healing. Cold water is refreshing. Lukewarm water is neither.

These Christians are lukewarm. They follow Christ, but their works are ineffective. They maintain an "arms-length relationship" with God. They want God to be there so they can call on Him when they are in need. They want the blessings that come from knowing God. They are willing to obey some of God's commandments. But total commitment to the One who created them and gives them the breath of life is missing.

Jesus emphatically says in verse 16 that He does not accept such a lukewarm following!

It happens to be a fact that if

one is not making a real effort to be a fervent Christian, one will automatically be lax. If one is not consciously trying to be close to God, one will be distant from Him. If one is not seeking God every day, one will quickly lose sight of Him in the daily whirl of material pursuits and interests.

No Christian "cruise control"

Being close to God does not come automatically. Just because a person is a Christian does not mean that person is fulfilling (filling to the full) God's will for his or her life. There's no such thing as "automatic" righteousness. We can't just coast along, nonchalant, and be in the proper relationship with God. We cannot breeze along the way that leads to life by switching on some godly "automatic pilot" or Christian "cruise control." Instead, we ourselves constantly have to be involved and put forth effort.

Isaiah in his day lamented to God that there was none "who stirs himself up to take hold of You" (Isaiah 64:7).

It is easy to lose sight of God amidst the complexities and cares of life. That's why it is so essential to seek Him. Even "though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27), God has ordained that to establish a true contact with Him we must seek Him.

And not just halfheartedly! But "you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). This is commitment. This is ac-

tion. This is breaking out of merely following the path of least resistance.

To the extent we do not purposefully decide and make the effort to draw close to God, we will be absorbed in worldly, material pursuits. In spite of scriptural warning (II Timothy 2:4), we will become entangled with the affairs of this life. God will seem remote, distant and unreal to us.

Seek God? How?

How does a person go about seeking to come closer to God? Isaiah 55:6-9 shows that seeking God involves action in two spheres: a person's deeds and a person's thoughts. (See also Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-23 and James 4:8.)

It is a question of repentance — true sorrow and regret for past mistakes and a real change of direction.

Do not discount the importance of being a doer. A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ. That's what the word *Christian* signifies. Therefore we must do just that — follow!

We can't just stand still. That is not "following" Christ. We've got to exert the effort to pick up our feet and march in Christ's steps. There must be movement.

Notice, in Revelation 3:15, one of the means God uses to determine the quality of a person's Christianity. "I know your works," Jesus declares. A person's works mirror his or her spiritual condition.

Let's not forget that, while forgiveness of sins, salvation and eternal life are free gifts, a Christian shall be rewarded "according to his works" (Matthew 16:27).

Works are essential. They prove to God that we are in earnest about doing His will. After all, talk is cheap.

Jesus uttered some searing words to various individuals who claimed to be religious, but who did not produce the deeds to prove it. To them He quoted Isaiah: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their

heart is far from Me" (Matthew 15:8).

Jesus asked on another occasion, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). There is no getting around it. The Bible is replete with statements showing that faith without works is dead (James 2:20). Christians must be doers. But doers of what?

Doers of God's commandments (Romans 2:13). Doers of kind, helpful and charitable actions (Galatians 6:9-10, James 2:14-18). Doers of whatever part an individual may have in promoting the Work of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world (I Corinthians 15:58).

We are instructed to bring Jesus Christ into everything we do or say (Colossians 3:17). That is part of what it takes to change an "arms-length relationship" with God into a close walk with Him.

But the process must go deeper than outward deeds. It must be inward. It involves the heart, the mind. God must fill our thoughts.

We can't let just anything that comes along occupy our minds. We need to think selectively, righteously. Wrong thoughts have to be quickly recognized and put out. It is a question of "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5).

This can be accomplished only through the use of several vital tools. Diligent Bible study puts right concepts — God's thoughts — into our minds. Prayer is an important key and brings us into contact with God. The Bible shows many examples where prayer accompanied by fasting worked wonders in this regard. And, of course, meditation, what we allow our minds to dwell on, has much to do with our drawing near to God.

That's why the apostle Paul elaborated as he did when he wrote to the Philippians that "whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of

good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

To sum up what it takes to be close to Him, God says, "Be holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). This does not come easily. It takes effort (Luke 13:24). It requires work (Philippians 2:12). It involves labor (John 6:27).

God will help you

Does all this sound impossibly difficult? The disciples once exclaimed that it is not humanly possible to do what God requires. And do you know what? Jesus agreed with them!

"With men this is impossible," Jesus declared. But He didn't stop there. He went on to explain the all-important, critical factor that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:25-26).

If we show our earnestness by trying to do our part, God will make up for what we lack. He will give us His holy spirit (provided we have fulfilled the conditions in Acts 2:38) so that we can be "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). He will fill us with love, joy, peace — all of the wonderful fruits of His way of life (Galatians 5:22-23).

Break down anything that keeps you at a distance from God. It was to Christians that James wrote, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8).

When Jesus was knocking at the door, asking to be allowed in, He didn't say, "If you open the door to Me, I will come in and let you serve Me a meal." What an honor and privilege that would be! But God holds out to us something far better. Jesus wants us to sit at the same table as He and dine with Him (Revelation 3:20).

What an awesome calling we have! If you are not stirring yourself up to take advantage of the close relationship God offers you, if you are trying to coast along, you are missing out on the greatest opportunity ever made available to humankind. □

Fruits of the Spirit

Have you ever overheard a lament such as this? "How in the world can I enjoy any peace in my life when all I ever see is trouble?"

Maybe you have felt this way yourself.

Is it really possible to enjoy true peace that lasts longer than a few fleeting moments?

The simple answer is yes. But getting to that yes means a little work, a little self-control, a little help from a power greater than yourself.

But you can get there — you can have lasting peace!

In this third article in our series on the fruits of God's holy spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), we will explore the ingredients that make up peace and how you and those with whom you come into contact can benefit from the peace of a loving God.

The source of strife

This world desperately needs and desires peace. But why is peace so elusive?

"P *Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice."*

Benedict [Baruch] Spinoza

nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war.

"The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at the door.

"The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature and all material and cultural developments of the

You CAN Have Peace of Mind

*Even in this world of
hatred, violence and war,
you can enjoy lasting peace
that surpasses all
human understanding.*

By Jerold W. Aust

makes right — that "survival of the fittest" is the way to peace.

And now man has the power to wipe all life from the face of the earth. History proves that man has never invented a weapon he has not used. Unless God intervenes soon, man is doomed to destroy himself!

Where does this leave you and me? Is there some way whereby we can overcome Satan's influence, which taints our thoughts and sways our actions?

God's peace is available

Jesus Christ, shortly before His crucifixion, explained to His disciples that His lasting peace was to be theirs: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Christ's peace is different from this world's brand of peace. His peace surpasses human understanding. It guards our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7). It is based on God's great purpose.

God's purpose for hu-

past 2,000 years. *It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh*" (Reminiscences).

That is the key to lasting peace! General MacArthur hit on it, precisely. The way to peace is *through the spirit*, not of the flesh.

So why, then, doesn't man just change his attitude and practice peace with his brother?

Strange as it may seem, there is a mighty force at work on this earth whose avowed purpose is to annihilate human life from the planet (Isaiah 14:12). Satan the devil is the author of contention, fighting and war. Christ said Satan's purpose is only "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10).

Satan has influenced men to argue, fight, war and kill one another. He has deceived the nations into thinking that might

"B *ehind the black portent of the new atomic age lies a hope which, seized upon with faith, can work out salvation. . . . Let us not deceive ourselves: we must elect world peace or world destruction."*

Bernard Mannes Baruch

“Man is stumbling blindly through a spiritual darkness while toying with the precarious secrets of life and death. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living.”

Omar N. Bradley

Father and ask Him for true peace. It is a fruit of God's holy spirit (Galatians 5:22).

The Bible is filled with helpful instructions on down-to-earth ways we can secure peace. We should avail ourselves of these words of wisdom so we can apply them!

Humility precedes peace. Humility is the opposite of pride. And pride breeds contention (Proverbs 13:10).

“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Psalm 34:14). God tells us to consciously avoid evil, to seek and pursue peace.

“When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7). God honors those who honor Him. We honor God by obeying His Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), which define the way of peace.

“Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (Psalm 119:165). Not only will you enjoy peace among your friends, but God can cause even your enemies — those who despise you, gossip about you and assassinate your character — to be at peace with you.

“The beginning of strife is like releasing water; therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts” (Proverbs 17:14). Nip contention in the bud before it gains a head of steam. Humility is the key. Pride is the culprit. Prayer makes the difference. You must see it coming before it arrives or you will become part of quarrels before you know it. Ask God for help in this.

“It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel” (Proverbs 20:3). This world, steeped in pride, falsely believes that you are a coward if you don't strike back against any put-down. Not true. This is of Satan the devil. Christ didn't conduct Himself this way.

Proverbs 15:1 tells us, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Before you know it, other people will notice the control you

manity is that we enjoy eternal life in peace. God is the author of peace (I Corinthians 14:33). He wants to give peace to mankind. Peace is not inherent within man's nature (Isaiah 59:8).

Now how can we receive, enjoy and practice God's peace?

A fruit of God's spirit

A change of heart is needed in man, as General Douglas MacArthur suggested.

Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He is willing to give you God's lasting peace. But you need to go to God the

have over your emotions. They will want to be like you. Your reputation will become highly regarded by your family and friends.

It just takes a little diligent attention to these critical areas to experience the joy of God's peace. And you will help others in the process.

Christ exhorts us to have peace with one another (Mark 9:50). He said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9).

Through Paul, Christ urges us to follow after the things that make for peace (Romans 14:19). He instructs us to esteem others better than ourselves and to look out for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4). He commands us to “do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” — to other members of God's Church (Galatians 6:10). This promotes peace.

Peacemakers are powerful people. They please God and persuade men. Because they are meek, they shall “inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:11). This is how you can enjoy lasting peace in



Bob Jones Jr., Stockfile

the midst of hatred, violence and war. God the Father sent His Son, the Prince of Peace, to give His peace to us in the Church, now, and to the rest of mankind soon.

Pursue peace

Don't forget your immediate family. This is where you start. Practice peacemaking with them first, last and always. Overcoming in this area will make it much easier to make peace outside your home.

Keep in touch with God, the greatest peacemaker of all. And don't forget to thank Him for His lasting peace that He gives to you.

God has called you to be a peacemaker. Love Him for it, rejoice in it and pass His peace to others! □

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