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Our Mission as a Church

Dear Brethren and Friends,

As Mr. Armstrong used to ask: “WHY are we here?” Every so often, it is good to review our *goals* and *purposes* in God’s Church—and in the *Work* which He has called us to do. In the recent ministerial conference here in San Diego, I reviewed some of these goals with our ministers and their wives.

First of all, it is obvious that God has called us to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and the “name” of Jesus Christ. In Mark 1:14–15, we read: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” In Matthew 24:14, Jesus tells us: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

After His resurrection, Jesus commanded His disciples: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned’” (Mark 16:15–16). And in Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus instructed His followers: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Note that even to the “END of the age” Jesus’ disciples were to preach and teach “all things” which Christ had commanded them during His earthly ministry—NOT some new “gospel of grace” supposedly introduced later by the Apostle Paul.

Then, we find in the book of Acts that Jesus continued to directly guide His Church and inspire its preaching. So when Philip went to Samaria to preach the Gospel, God’s inspired Word tells us: “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the NAME of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized” (Acts 8:12). Near the end of Paul’s ministry, the Bible tells us: “Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:30–31).

Thus, God’s Word makes it clear that the good news of God’s coming Kingdom was a basic part of the Gospel—along with the “name” or “the

things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:31). Throughout the Bible, the term “name” refers to the office, the authority, personality and even *character* of an individual. As *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* explains “The *name* in Heb. is sometimes used to signify the collected attributes or characteristics of the object named. This is particularly the case with the divine name (Exodus 34:5–6). Our Lord says, ‘I manifested Thy *name*,’ etc. (John 17:6), where *name* embraces the whole divine nature revealed by the Son.”

Our commission is to preach the powerful message of God’s soon-coming GOVERNMENT on this earth and describe its laws, its administration and *how* one should prepare to be part of this coming Government. Then, we need to make clear in our teaching the kind of Christ-like *character* God wants to develop within us through His Spirit. Putting two scriptures together, all true Christians must “GROW in grace and knowledge” (2 Peter 3:18) “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). In every way we can, we need to help our brethren and new converts alike to capture and to build on these principles.

Next, since all true Christians are to understand and to LIVE by every Word of God, we must preach especially the END-time prophecies of the Bible and also give the vital “Ezekiel” warning to the peoples of the Israelitish nations. In Revelation 1:3, God tells us: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

When we understand the Israelitish origin of the American and British-descended peoples, we would be derelict in our duty if we did not heartfully WARN them of the coming Great Tribulation which will strike primarily at these peoples. God, in fact, warns *us* of this responsibility: “But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand” (Ezekiel 33:6).

As you brethren know, we are doing all we can to warn our peoples through the television messages devoted to this “Ezekiel warning,” through articles in *Tomorrow’s World* magazine and through our powerful booklet, *What’s Ahead for America and Britain?* Later, if God opens the door and guides us to do this, we will hold personal evangelistic campaigns across America and our British-descended nations as the prophesied punishments begin to occur and people are finally made willing to come to such meetings and to listen with open minds.

Then God’s Word tells us to “feed” the Church of God and strengthen it in every possible way. After His resurrection, Jesus told Peter: “Feed My sheep” and repeated this admonition three times (John 21:16–17). And the Apostle Paul commanded Timothy: “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will

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Keep “Watching” Carefully

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

When discussing the exact time of His Second Coming, Jesus Christ told His disciples: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, WATCH and PRAY; for you do not know when the time is” (Mark 13:32–33). Yet, after listing an entire series of events to precede His return to earth, Jesus stated: “Assuredly, I say to you, *this generation* will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (v. 30).

So although we do not know the “day” or the “hour,” we are commanded a number of times to “watch” the unfolding of prophetic events and therefore have a *pretty good idea* about the generation in which Christ will come. Then, at that point—as more and more events rapidly unfold—we should probably know *within a few years* the time of Jesus’ Second Coming. As the Apostle Paul wrote: “For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us WATCH and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:2–6).

Let us all be sure that we *are* “watching”—and that we know *how* and *what* to watch!

One good way to be sure we are watching world events in a thorough and intelligent manner is to have *various categories* of events to watch

world, we might consider a recent article in the *San Diego Union Tribune* of March 6, 2001. Discussing “The power of media on teen rage” the

Is this the nation that has as its motto “In God We Trust?” As always, we need to explain to our readers that they need to be careful *which* “god” they may be trusting in. And we must warn them about Satan’s deceptions—as well as the horrible influence of the media in a nation which is truly cut off from God.

for and to “group” our thoughts and news clippings together in this way. For instance, we could group world events to watch in the following categories:

- Spiritual sickness of Israelitish nations
- God’s punishment on Israelitish nations
- European Empire rising
- U.S. and British power waning
- Mideast struggles and King of the South
- Religious deterioration and confusion
- False church increasing in power

Some of you may wish to come up with slightly different categories, of course, but this can perhaps give you an idea to work with. As we consider fulfilled prophecy, I hope that all of you realize that prophetic events on a truly broad front really are “heating up” and indicating to us that we are in the “last generation.”

Thinking about our spiritual sickness in America and the western

author, Bob Waliszewski states: “The causes have been well-documented for decades. The breakdown of the family. A prevailing lack of purpose and sense of hopelessness. Rejection by peers. The postmodern philosophy which says God and absolute truth do not exist. And one more—the most ignored of all (except briefly during times of crisis)—the influence of today’s violent entertainment.”

Later in the article, the author describes how completely gross much of our entertainment has become: “Take for instance, the three-time Grammy-winner, white rapper Eminem. He advocates killing, drugs and rape. On one song, Eminem even goes so far as to boast about murdering his girlfriend, then forcing his toddler daughter to help him dispose of the body. Similarly, in his song ‘Kill You,’ Jonathan Davis of the mega-popular rock group Korn fantasizes about killing his step-mother, and in his song ‘My Gift to You’ sings of strangling his lover. Marilyn Manson on his platinum

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The Writings of John—

Their Timing and Purpose

By John H. Ogwyn

The rest of the New Testament had been completed for more than two decades. Peter and Paul were both dead and the Jerusalem temple had long since been destroyed. Nearly all of the first generation of Christians had died. In the final decade of the first century, the last surviving eyewitness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ took his pen in hand to write the last books of the New Testament.

He wrote the gospel of John first, followed in the next few years by three short epistles. Last of all, while in exile on the island of Patmos during the reign of Emperor Domitian, he penned the book of Revelation. All commentators recognize that John's gospel is quite a bit different in its approach and subject matter than Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's—earlier writings called the “synoptic gospels” because they follow a similar outline and describe many of the same events.

Why is John's gospel different? After all those years, what was the need for yet another gospel—and for three short letters added to the canon of Scripture? The book of Revelation, of course, is in its own category and worth discussing elsewhere. This article, however, will show that when we look carefully at John's gospel, its purpose is clear and its timing is very significant.

Second century testimony about John's writings can be found in the works of Irenaeus (ca. 120–202AD), who grew up in the area of Smyrna and later lived in Rome and in Lyons. In his book *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus mentioned that in his youth he had known Polycarp, a church leader in Asia Minor who had personally known and been taught by the Apostle John. Irenaeus preserved the information, also confirmed

by other ancient sources, that John came to Ephesus near the time of Jerusalem's fall in 70AD, and in the early 90s was exiled to the island of Patmos on the order of Emperor Domitian. After the emperor's death in 96AD, John returned to Ephesus, where he died in approximately 98AD, shortly after the beginning of the Emperor Trajan's reign. He had written Revelation while on Patmos (Revelation 1:9); he had evidently written his other books before his exile.

Why did John believe it necessary to write yet another gospel account? Simply put, the situation had greatly changed since the other accounts had been written in the 50s and 60s. A new generation had come on the scene and new heresies were creeping in. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, the church population was no longer centered in Galilee and Judea, but in predominantly Gentile areas. Yet John in a special way addressed both Gentile and Jewish concerns in his gospel. Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 1:22 that the Jews were seeking signs while the Greeks were looking for wisdom. John emphasized both in his writing. He showed that the wisdom the Greeks sought through philosophy was really revealed only in Jesus Christ. He also showed that “the signs of Messiahship” that the Jews claimed to want were displayed by Jesus—and by Him *alone*.

John demonstrated that what both Jews and Greeks claimed to be searching for could only be realized in the person and the message of Jesus of Nazareth. He also made clear to the increasingly Gentile church that Jesus Christ had revealed His gospel in the context of the Holy Days. Nearly all of John's gospel is organized around the actions and teachings of Christ during selected festival seasons throughout His

ministry. Far from “doing away” with the Holy Days, Christ’s entire message was *revealed* in the context of Holy Day themes. John provided a last witness to those who would arise in the early years of the second century and promote their own ideas.

In the time immediately following John’s death, both Jews and Christians were confronted with serious choices. History shows that many Jews, urged on by leaders such as the priest Eleazer and Rabbi Akiva, accepted a false Messiah in the person of Bar Kokhba and launched the Second Jewish Revolt (132–135AD). “The suppression of the revolt all but depopulated Judaea and thereafter Jews could enter Jerusalem but once a year” (*An Encyclopedia of World History*, William Langer, editor; 1968 edition; p. 124). During the same period, the professing Christian church increasingly went after heresies centered in Rome that sought to label the law as “Jewish” and no longer binding upon Christians. The influence of Gentile converts with a background in Greek philosophy and Platonic thought also set the stage for serious third-century heresies concerning the nature of God. Many of the generation to whom John originally wrote were confronted by these circumstances and were forced to make decisions accordingly.

Themes in the Gospel of John

The Greek word for “believe” occurs 98 times in John’s gospel, far more than in any other book of the New Testament. At the conclusion of his gospel, stating his very purpose for writing, John emphasized that he had written so “that you may *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life” (John 20:31). He made the same point, in very similar words, in his first epistle (1 John 5:13). John made plain that Jesus the Messiah is the source of life and that *only* through Him is *real* life available.

The Greeks placed much emphasis on wisdom and knowledge. Those influenced by philosophical schools such as Plato’s thought that a proper understanding of God and spiritual truths could be arrived at through proper logic. They believed that men could reason themselves from darkness to light. John emphasized at the very beginning of his gospel that true knowledge of God and the spiritual realm is only available through the One who knew firsthand and had come to reveal that knowledge to mankind. Jesus Christ *declared* or revealed the Father (John 1:18).

In fact, John’s gospel records Jesus speaking of the Father more than do the other three gospels combined. While first-century intellectuals, influenced by Greek philosophical thought, viewed the supreme God as

remote and unknowable, John made plain that the Father was *very* knowable as a result of Jesus Christ’s ministry. John explained that Jesus alone had seen the Father (5:46), that He came from Heaven to do the Father’s will (5:38) and that He knew the Father just as completely as the Father knew Him (10:15). Christ’s bold assertion that He and the Father were one—were *totally* unified in outlook and approach—prompted His Jewish listeners to pick up rocks and try to stone Him (10:30–31).

John also used the word *truth* more than all other New Testament writers combined. In his gospel, as well as in his three epistles, he emphasized again and again that Jesus Christ came to reveal the truth. John recorded that, when Jesus was on trial before Pilate, He explained that He had come to “bear witness of the *truth*” (John 18:37). Not only did Jesus bear witness of the truth, He came as the *light* of the world to illuminate the truth! John’s gospel made plain for wisdom-seeking Greeks that absolute truth is knowable, but can *only* be known as a result of divine revelation, not through philosophic speculation and reasoning.

Just as the Greeks looked to wisdom as proof, the Jews looked to signs. The New Testament uses three words to refer to miracles. One word refers to *wonders* or miraculous events. Another means *power* and is often used to emphasize the *miraculous power* employed by God’s servants. The third Greek term—*semeion*—literally means “sign,” and refers to miracles in the context that they are *signs* or *evidence*. John consistently uses *this* term rather than the other two, though most English translations obscure his choice by rendering *semeion* sometimes as the English word “miracle” and sometimes as “sign.” In his gospel, John records signs so his readers might know that Jesus was the true Messiah and Son of God.

Signs of the Messiah

John actually calls attention to *seven* miraculous signs performed by Jesus, though he emphasized that Jesus did many others that he did not record in his gospel account (John 20:30). John 2:11 provides a starting point by stating that Jesus’ turning the water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana was the *beginning* of the signs (the Greek term here is properly rendered “sign” rather than “miracle”) that He did. In fact, we are told that in doing so He manifested His glory—and His disciples believed on Him.

While Jesus performed a number of unnamed signs during the first Passover season of His ministry (John 2:23), John emphasizes the healing of the nobleman’s son as the *second sign* he was recording (John 4:54). This gives us the clue that John is describing only selected miracles—recording them as signs that point to Jesus as the

Messiah. Counting onward through John's gospel, we find five other such signs detailed. John 5:2–16 records a third miraculous sign: the healing of a crippled man on the Sabbath. John 6:4–14 records a fourth sign: feeding of the 5,000 with loaves and fishes. John 9 tells of a fifth sign: restoring sight to a man blind from birth. John 11 tells of a sixth sign: the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

What was the seventh sign? None other than the one Jesus had promised the religious leaders when they asked,

The gospel message Jesus proclaimed certainly did not do away with the need to obey God or to observe His annual festivals. Rather, as John made clear in this fourth and final gospel account, Jesus Christ's life and teachings are most clearly understood in light of God's annual festivals and their meaning.

at the beginning of His ministry, for a sign to validate His authority. The seventh sign was that, after three days and three nights in the tomb, He would be raised up in power and glory (John 2:18–19).

What is the special significance of these signs? How do they point in a unique way to Jesus' Messiahship? Ultimately, the Messiah is the only One who can meet all of Israel's needs. All other attempts to do so will eventually end in failure and disappointment. Jesus began to reveal Himself to His disciples when, at the wedding feast in Cana, He turned water into wine. This occasion of celebration and joy was threatened with being cut short; it could only continue because of a miracle of conversion or transformation—the changing of one substance into something else. The *true* Messiah is Israel's source of true joy and celebration because He is the only One able to bring *real* change and transformation.

By the second recorded sign, John emphasized that the Messiah is the source of healing for Israel, the One through whom the sick can be made well. The third sign, also a healing, emphasized that the crippled man was impotent or powerless. The Messiah is the only one who can restore power and strength to Israel. In recording the fourth sign—feeding the 5,000—John showed that the Messiah is the only source for assuaging Israel's hunger. Jesus Christ not only fed Israel physically, but also offered Himself as the bread of life, the only way to assuage their

spiritual hunger. The fifth sign—giving sight to the blind—showed another aspect of the Messiah's special role. Only through the Messiah can the spiritual blindness besetting Israel, and indeed the whole world, be removed. He alone can enable the people to see.

The sixth sign showed that not only is the Messiah the source of joy, health, strength, nourishment and sight; He is also the source of life! John 11 describes Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead, which convinced the Jewish religious leaders that they must take action to “get” Jesus (John 11:46–53). They were afraid that these signs would convince the common people that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, provoking a Roman crackdown and costing them both their special status and indeed their very nation. Ironically, it was their rejection of the signs of Jesus' Messiahship that brought upon them the very outcome that they feared!

The seventh sign recorded in John's gospel was the culmination of everything that identified Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus Christ announced in advance that not only would He voluntarily lay down His life for the sheep; He would also take up His life again. He alone had authority from the Father to carry out such an unheard of action (John 10:15, 17–18).

These signs, John declared, were recorded so that his readers would know that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God—and so that by believing on Him they might have life.

Holy Days and the Gospel

John also focused on Jesus Christ's words and actions in the context of God's annual festivals. Leaving aside many of the details recorded in the other gospel accounts, John used Jesus' words, spoken in the context of seven different festivals during His ministry, to reveal the gospel.

John 2:13 calls attention to the first Passover of Jesus' ministry. The cleansing of the temple, the miraculous signs performed during the festival period and the ensuing private discussion with Nicodemus marked the beginning of His public ministry. In this context, He spoke of His future crucifixion and of God's love in making forgiveness possible (John 3:14–17).

John 4 opens by describing Jesus and His disciples returning to Galilee after several weeks spent baptizing new disciples. Comparing Mark 1:14 and Luke 4:14–19 with this account, we find that Jesus returned to Galilee in time to be in the Nazareth synagogue for the first Pentecost of His ministry. The Luke 4:16 term which most English-language translations render as “Sabbath day” literally means “day of the Sabbaths [or weeks]” and

is a reference to Pentecost—called in the Old Testament the Feast of Weeks—as confirmed by the John 4:35 reference to the harvest being four months distant. The seventh month was the time of the Feast of Ingathering (or Tabernacles), which celebrated the completion of harvest. Four months earlier would have been the beginning of the third month, or just prior to Pentecost. John 4 tells of Jesus teaching the woman at the well in Samaria about the Holy Spirit, the river of living water and the importance of worshiping the Father in spirit and truth.

John 5 describes Jesus, in Jerusalem for an unnamed festival, giving a message emphasizing the resurrection (vv. 28–29) and His role as judge of mankind (v. 22)—which certainly points to it being given during the fall festival season. In John 6:4, we learn that the 5,000 were fed just prior to Passover, and Jesus' subsequent teaching to many of that same group in the Capernaum synagogue (v. 59)—that He was the “bread of life”—was most likely on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. John 7 records Christ's teaching, about judging righteous judgment, that He gave during the last Feast of Tabernacles of His ministry.

Beginning in John 7:37, we have a detailed account of Christ's activities on the Last Great Day of 30AD, the final one of His ministry. When we compare John 7:53 with John 8:1–2, we see that the account opened with the events of the evening that began this final festival, and that the ensuing events recorded in chapters 8, 9 and 10 are the activities during the daylight period of this Holy Day. Jesus used this festival to describe the time when the Holy Spirit would be available to all mankind, when sinners would be given a chance to change—to go and sin no more—and when blindness would be removed from all. These themes all relate to the Last Great Day.

John 11:55 begins the story of Christ's final Passover. Far more than any of the other gospel writers, John records what Jesus taught His disciples on their final night together. Almost half of John's gospel—ten out of the 21 chapters—describes events connected with this final Passover and Jesus Christ's subsequent crucifixion and resurrection.

The gospel message Jesus proclaimed certainly did not do away with the need to obey God or to observe His annual festivals. Rather, as John made clear in this fourth and final gospel account, Jesus Christ's life and teachings are most clearly understood in light of God's annual festivals and their meaning.

John's Epistles


In addition to his gospel, John wrote three short letters. By carefully noting the beginning verses of 1 John, we can discern that they were penned after his gospel.

John opened his first epistle by referring to things that he had explained clearly in the opening verses of his gospel. If his readers had not previously read John 1, they would not have understood his allusions, in the opening verses of 1 John, to the Word, the One who was in the beginning, life and light.

Jesus Christ came to make things clear, or to manifest. John used the Greek word for “manifest” several times in both his first epistle and his gospel. In his short first epistle, he used the word nine times. We learn that Jesus was manifested to take away our sins and to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:5, 8), and that the Father manifested His love toward us by sending His uniquely begotten Son (4:8).

In each of his three epistles, John stressed the importance of the truth. The truth can be known—and it is something in which we must walk. John also stressed the importance of obedience to God's commandments. Writing at a time when many claiming to be God's people sought to de-emphasize obedience to God's law, John emphasized that real love toward God would reflect itself in keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3; 2 John 6).

At a time when many were departing from the truth and accepting heretical ideas, John commended those who remained faithful. Some had departed from the Church and gone their own way (1 John 2:19). Others had sought to take over entire congregations and cast the true Christians out (3 John 9–10). It was a time of many antichrists (1 John 2:18). In that time of confusion, what was the answer for God's people? “Abide in Him,” John told his readers (1 John 2:18). The word rendered “abide” or “continue in” was used throughout 1 John, as well as in John's gospel. To “abide” in Christ is to follow His ways (1 John 2:6) and to keep his commandments (1 John 3:24). John exhorted his readers to continue faithfully in the truth that they had learned from the beginning (1 John 2:24).

This elderly Apostle, the last surviving eyewitness to all of the events of Christ's ministry, provided a final witness in the twilight years of the first century. Only those who would take heed to that witness—and would believe the message that Jesus came from the Father to reveal—could have life. John made plain who Jesus *really* was: the *Logos*—the Word—the One who was in the beginning with God and was Himself God. He was the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world. He was the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the True Vine and the Good Shepherd. He came to reveal the Father and to make Him knowable to His disciples. He came to bear witness of the truth. His words not only *offered* spirit and life, they *were* spirit and life (John 6:63). They still are! 

Biblical Roles for Men and Women: Outdated Curse or Key to Success?

By Douglas S. Winnail

The last half of the 20th century saw many changes. One of the most profound was the rejection of traditional roles for men and women in the family and in society. Those roles are outlined in the Bible. As the Western world cut itself loose from the moorings of Scripture, pressure mounted to discount and discard the traditional biblical roles for men and women. Today we are a society adrift without an anchor. We *blindly assume* that “anything goes”—that *everything* is OK and nothing is fixed in stone—especially so-called “archaic” ideas about roles for men and women. But have we been hoodwinked? Have we bought into bogus ideas? In this article we will examine the biblical roles of men and women. We will look at mankind’s arguments for rejecting God’s fundamental instructions, His purpose for creating these roles and the challenges facing those today who try to recapture principles that promote strong and stable families and societies.

Costs of Change

Since the 1960s, many in the freedom-loving West have jettisoned, with no thought of the cost, traditional values that have guided our lives for millennia. As a new century dawns, the tragic consequences are becoming obvious. In the last 40 years, divorce rates have increased around the world, particularly in the West. More and more children are born into, or grow up in, fractured single-parent (largely fatherless) homes. Boys from such homes are more angry and aggressive and spend more time in jail. Girls are sexually active at younger ages and are more rebellious. Boys and girls from such homes

exhibit more psychological problems. Gender confusion has blossomed as traditional roles have been trashed. Homosexuality is blatantly promoted as an acceptable lifestyle. Women have become more aggressive and men more passive. Deprived of clearly identified roles, more people are seeking psychological help to discover a purpose in life and a meaningful identity.

In the face of these disturbing social trends, many clamor for studies to determine the cause, and for legislation to solve the problems. The connection between social pathologies and the rejection of traditional biblical roles is not always appreciated. Yet Nobel prize-winning Austrian zoologist Konrad Lorenz made a telling observation more than a quarter century ago, calling “the break with tradition” one of the “great errors of our Western civilization” and a sign of “collective stupidity” (*Civilized Man’s Eight Deadly Sins*, Lorenz, p. xii, 1974). He wrote that to think we can “throw overboard the enormous fund of knowledge and wisdom contained in the traditions of every old civilization and in the teaching of the great world religions is an *erroneous belief*” (*Ibid.*, p. 63). But why would knowledgeable people toss important and even fundamental traditions overboard?

Arguments Against Roles

Our actions have been influenced by liberal secular ideas that permeate our modern society. Anything that has religious roots is suspect. To suggest that something is right or wrong is seen as judgmental. To believe that our lives should be structured in any way (especially by prescribed religious roles) is

viewed as a limitation on human freedom and a stifling of individual fulfillment. Intellectuals view traditional roles as outdated sexual stereotypes that have functioned as oppressive cages down through history. As sophisticated modern people, we have been conditioned to think that guidelines found in the Bible are “primitive” and no longer relevant—especially biblical roles for men and women.

Liberal theologians support similar arguments by twisting or ignoring the Scriptures. They assert that since men and women are both made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), there are really no fundamental differences between the sexes, so men and women should be equally free to pursue *any role* they desire. These thinkers assert that biology is not destiny, but that is their wishful thinking. Men do not give birth to babies—or nurse them! Biology is destiny in many ways. Ignoring God’s counsel that it is not good for human beings to be alone (Genesis 2:18), independence is promoted today as the way to fulfillment. Noted feminist Gloria Steinem gained attention by declaring that “a woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.” The idea that men and women might *actually need* each other seems ridiculous to the modern mind.

Today the biblical idea that men should take the lead in marriage and family matters, and that women should respect men’s leadership, is viewed as hopelessly old-fashioned and even laughable. Some misguided theologians contend that the idea that a woman was created to be a “helpmeet” or suitable partner for a man “demeans” a woman and makes her an “afterthought” and a second-class citizen. Others argue that if a woman follows a man she is guilty of idolatry; they say that the biblical instruction about woman’s submis-

sion was the result of Eve’s sin and was not part of God’s original plan. The Apostle Paul’s comments about the roles of men and women are said to be misguided, chauvinistic, biased and bigoted—perhaps even forgeries or, at most, temporary instructions no longer applicable to Christians today. The Galatians 3:28 statement that “there is neither male nor female... in Christ Jesus” is often used as a “trump card” in an attempt to supersede all other scriptures on the topic and nullify traditional biblical gender roles. Are these errors related? Is there a conspiracy at work?

it and destroy biblical roles for men and women because they play vital parts in God’s purpose for mankind. That purpose is exciting and inspiring.

Proper Perspective

Scripture plainly indicates that God did not create the first two human beings “gender neutral”—He created them *male* and *female* (Genesis 1:26–27). They were created *different by design*. Men and women are each to reflect God’s image and character in their own unique way as they learn to fulfill

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Satan (which means “adversary” in Hebrew) is described as one who has *deceived the whole world* (Revelation 12:9). He fosters rebellion against God’s way (Isaiah 14:12–15) and causes the “way of truth” to be “blasphemed”—despised and rejected (2 Peter 2:2). Most liberal scholars today, whether secular or theological, do not realize that many of the ideas they promote are influenced by this powerful, unseen force. Satan is out to discred-

their God-given roles. God’s purpose was for men and women to have children and learn to live in a family relationship (Genesis 1:28; 2:24–25). Biblical roles play an important part in this process. Adam was created first, from the ground, and was given instructions and responsibilities to carry out—to dress the garden, name the animals and prepare a home for his family. He was to be the **achiever**—the husband and father—to lead, guide, serve and provide (Genesis 2:15, 19–20). The Bible reveals that the *primary* roles of men would be leadership in the family and in the *public* sphere. Eve was created second, from Adam’s rib, for a **relationship** (Genesis 2:18). The man-woman relationship was to be

life-long, monogamous, enjoyable for both and separate from parents (Genesis 2:24).

Scripture plainly states that it is not good to be independent and alone, and that God created woman as a suitable companion for man—one who *completes* the other (Genesis 2:18). Her *primary* (but not

to submit to and respect the husband's leadership role (Ephesians 5:22–25). This governmental structure in the home is a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Christ loves, leads and serves the Church, which in turn responds and serves Christ in fulfilling its assigned mission. These com-

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exclusive) role is in the *domestic* sphere as a wife and mother and manager of the household (Genesis 3:20; Proverbs 31:10–31). A major mistake of our modern society has been the demeaning of this incredibly important domestic role. God's creation of woman was a *culminating event*, not an afterthought (see Deuteronomy 24:5; Proverbs 12:4; 18:22; 19:14). It is through the female function of childbirth that God is adding to His family, yet God instructed males to provide the support that surrounds this miraculous process. In proper perspective, the biblical roles of men and women are designed to work in a beautiful and complementary manner. They are not intended to be competitive or demeaning; each partner has an equally important part to play.

In the New Testament, Paul amplifies the roles outlined in the Old Testament. He reveals that there is structure in the biblical concept of family. Men are to lead, love and cherish their wives, and women are

plementary roles picture how God wants His family to operate—harmoniously, as a team. These vital roles are designed to help us prepare for the kingdom of God.

Paul also emphasizes that men will carry the primary leadership role in the public sphere, and that the primary role of women will be in the domestic sphere (1 Corinthians 14:34–35; 1 Timothy 2:11–15). However, women are not excluded from work outside the home (Proverbs 31:13–16, 20, 24; Acts 16:14), especially when children are not involved. Peter adds that men are to strive to understand and meet the needs of their wives, and that wives are to cultivate a supportive and respectful attitude towards their husbands as an *example* to them (1 Peter 3:1–7). Husbands and wives, with their different roles, are equally valued members of a team. Older men and women are to serve as role models and mentors to the young (Titus 2:1–8) so these vital skills can be transmitted to future generations.

Many of the mistaken ideas about traditional roles for men and women have come from a **perversion** of God's intended relationship between the sexes (see Genesis 3:16–19). As a result of sinful human actions, and ideas that ignore or reject God's instructions, the birth and rearing of children has become a trial instead of a joy. Because some men have abused their God-given leadership role in the family, women have been dominated and oppressed. The woman's assigned responsibility of willing (but not blind and unquestioning) submission has been twisted into a resented subjugation, and she has often been provoked into open rebellion. Problems that have occurred throughout history are not caused by the God-given roles, but by perverted and distorted *ideas about* those roles! Satan has twisted into instruments of oppression the fundamental God-given guidelines for society's smooth functioning (Isaiah 5:20). It is no wonder that our modern society has rejected misguided concepts that are *wrongly assumed* to have come from the Bible. The challenge we face today, as individuals and as a society, is how to restore an understanding of the Truth in a world filled with deceptive ideas about the roles of men and women.

Implementing Biblical Roles

The *initial step* in gaining a true understanding of the biblical roles for men and women is to see through the *smoke screen of deception* that Satan has cast over this world. Satan has used individuals in our liberal and secular society to promote lies, half-truths and misguided arguments to discredit fundamental God-given guidelines. Part of the mission of the end-time era of the Church of God is to “recapture true values”—to “restore all things” and “prepare

the way” for the return of Jesus Christ to this earth (Matthew 17:11; Malachi 3:1). However, anyone who chooses this path enters into a spiritual war (2 Corinthians 10:3–6; Ephesians 6:10–20). The challenge will be formidable and the cause will not be popular (Matthew 24:9–13), but there will be rewards in this life and beyond (Matthew 19:29; Revelation 11:17–18).

The *second step* is to realize that men and women were created to play different but equally important roles in God’s master plan (see *Different by Design*, Burke, 2000). Different does *not* mean superior or inferior—it means different, comparable and complementary—each completing the other. The modern idea of men and women competing in a “battle” of the sexes, dominating or rebelling against each other or striving to function independently of each other, is a satanic deception destroying the very fabric of our society. We must learn to appreciate, value, enjoy and respect the biological and psychological differences between men and women. These innate and acquired differences can attract or repel, enhance or erode the relationship experience (see *Opposites Attract*, LaHaye, 1991). Men and women must learn to cultivate and nurture, in themselves and their children, God-given roles designed around differences.

The *third step* is to understand the biblical role of men. Each man should strive to identify and develop his unique talents and abilities. He must learn how to lead (see *The Man of Steel and Velvet*, Andelin, 1972). Men must develop skills to protect, provide for and guide their families with confidence. They must develop character to be examples and make worthwhile contributions to society. godly men must also develop understanding, humility, gentleness, and attentiveness so they can properly

show concern and affection to the women who become their wives and daughters. Men must learn how to meet the unique needs of women (see *His Needs, Her Needs*, Harley, 1994). While some modern intellectuals assert that fathers are unnecessary in child-rearing, godly men must learn and practice their unique part in molding their children—modeling true masculinity, fostering respect for women, providing discipline and showing love. These are all important aspects of the masculine role.

The *fourth step* is to understand the biblical role of women. Each woman needs to identify and develop her own unique talents and abilities. However, in this process, she should never lose sight of the incredibly important roles that God has designed her to fulfill—bearing and raising children, nurturing relationships and managing a household that creates a warm environment away from the world for her entire family. A special challenge for women is to learn how to submit to (follow, work with and respect) her husband in accordance with the biblical instruction (see *The Excellent Wife*, Peace, 1999; *Then God Created Woman*, Newman, 1997; *The Surrendered Wife*, Doyle, 2001; *Me? Obey Him?* Handford, 1994).

Women who want to be outstanding and effective wives must also learn to understand and meet the needs of their husbands (see *His Needs, Her Needs*, Harley, 1994). Men and women have many of the same needs, but have different priorities—which makes this an interesting challenge. As mothers, women have their own unique contributions to make in raising their children—teaching boys the importance of character and how to understand and respect girls, and teaching their daughters how to be women, wives and mothers. Women

without children can also serve as role models as they develop their unique capacities to serve others.

The *fifth step* in understanding the biblical roles of men and women takes us back to the beginning in Genesis. Men and women were each created to reflect the image and character of God in unique ways. The God-designed roles we have discussed in this article are complementary roles—leading and following, serving and supporting, loving and responding. As both partners develop their respective skills, the man-woman relationship becomes more harmonious and enjoyable. The goal of God’s master plan is for men and women to learn the way to peace and harmony—not confusion, competition, domination or rebellion (1 Corinthians 14:33). These are the qualities God wants future members of His family to develop—so they can teach these skills to the world in the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 9:6–7; 30:20–21).

It is both interesting and instructive that Jesus Christ learned to play each of the roles that God assigned to men and women. He learned to lead and to follow, to use authority and to submit to authority, to love and to serve and to respond. This is the perspective we must develop as men and women—the very mind of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5–11). We will develop this mindset as we learn to fulfill the biblical roles that God designed for men and women. These roles are not archaic and out-of-date—they are the *real* keys to success in this life and will be taught to all mankind in the coming Kingdom of God.

Do not be deceived by modern arguments designed to destroy the most fundamental roles in a stable human society. Strive to understand and live by God’s instructions. The benefits stretch from here to eternity. ☐



International Corner...

Australasian Report

—By Kinnear Penman

In the South Pacific, there are many small island nations which have only very limited television coverage. In many cases, a single channel is government-owned and is not accessible to the *Tomorrow's World* broadcast. However, there are usually very active video rental outlets in all towns.

As a result, the Living Church of God here is using a new method to fulfill the commission to preach the gospel. We have been able to place videotapes of the *Tomorrow's World* telecast into some of these video outlets. Each tape contains six *Tomorrow's World* telecasts, provided in a box with an attractive display cover.

In Fiji, a chain of 14 outlets will make our tapes available, and in the Cook Islands a chain of four outlets will do likewise. Apart from the initial cost of providing the tapes, there is no cost to the Church. Members in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands will be seeking additional outlets in those nations.

This may prove to be a cost-effective means of preaching the gospel and developing a mailing list. If it is successful, further volumes of telecasts will be prepared and distributed.

Canadian Report

—By Charles Bryce

Canada is a vast country stretching from Newfoundland in the east to British Columbia in the west, across a distance of some 4,200 miles. It is the second largest country (by land area) in the world, but has about the same population as the state of California, numbering over 31,000,000. Because of its ethnic and cultural diversity, it is known as a nation of people who came from somewhere else. Canada has more lakes and inland waters than any other country, and is famous for its wide variety of climates and ecological systems such as rain forests, prairie grassland, deciduous forest, tundra and wetlands.

God has raised up a viable and growing work here, with brethren of the Living Church of God sprinkled, like the salt of the earth, from one end of this beauti-

ful country to the other. There are 21 churches and video groups, faithfully served by ten ministers and wives. Only three are full-time church pastors. We have a dedicated and energetic contingent of young people who participate each year as workers and campers at the Living Youth Camp, and who attend other Church activities such as the Michigan Ski Weekend. Feast sites are located in Cranbrook, BC, St. Sauveur, QC (a bilingual French-English site) and Charlottetown, PEI.

Our Toronto office, with its staff of two full-time employees and two volunteers, responds to approximately 150 requests per month. Of these, 25 typically are contacting the Living Church of God for the first time. Responses come by mail, phone, e-mail and fax, and include requests for literature and information about the Living Church of God, as well as inquiries about church locations and visits from ministers. Many ask in what way we are connected to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and the work he used to do. The Toronto office also handles donation records and annual receipts for our Canadian brethren and coworkers, and sends out Dr. Roderick C. Meredith's monthly letters.

There are 14,000 people on our mailing list in Canada. The Vision Cable Network, which beams the *Tomorrow's World* telecast throughout the country, brings in more than 20 percent of the total television responses from around the world. A recent program on "The Middle East in Prophecy" brought in a record number of responses, totaling 504, far surpassing the previous high of 345 set by Vision on April 25, 1999. While 80 percent of all Canadians reside within 100 miles of the U.S. border, our northernmost church in Edmonton, Alberta, is 406 miles north. Responses to the *Tomorrow's World* telecast, asking for visits and literature, have come from as far away as Kugluktuk, Nunavut, which is on the Arctic Ocean—2,000 miles north of the U.S. border.

Some refer to Canada as the "frozen north," but its people do not fit that description. Rather, Canadians are by and large a very warm, friendly and hospitable people who come from hearty, self-reliant stock. Such is the case with the Canadian congregations of the Living Church of God. While scattered geographically, they comprise a close-knit family, unified by deep love and the inspiring commission and way of life Jesus Christ has given to His true Church.

Caribbean Report

—By Jonathan McNair

The Caribbean Work is surging forward with new television coverage. In 2001, our improved media coverage is giving a real boost to responses to the *Tomorrow's World* broadcast.

Our campaign for better coverage began with a surprise opportunity to go on television in Guyana. The *Tomorrow's World* telecast began to air there in September 2000. Since then, two new members have been added, as well as a number of prospective members.

In November, CVM TV in Jamaica began to air the *Tomorrow's World* telecast. More than 30 people call or write in each week for the literature offered on the program—our best response surpassed 70!

Barbados has hosted a radio broadcast of *Tomorrow's World* for the last two years, though the response had not been more than a handful a week. However, with the new Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation television time slot in which we first aired in March, we are expecting a big increase in responses. We will soon know how successful this new venue will be.

Our latest addition to the television lineup was inaugurated on April 7, in Trinidad. We had been on Radio TBC in Trinidad since January 1997, and received an average of 25 responses per program. Since the television program began airing, responses have more than tripled, and as a result new people began attending services on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread.

Not only are new people attending Sabbath services; people are requesting baptism. In April alone, there were five baptisms in the Caribbean region.

In all locations, local brethren answer the phone and letter requests for literature. Others handle the mailing,

while still other people record the information on computer. Without all-out cooperation from the local congregation, the Work would not be done. Most importantly, all the brethren welcome newcomers with warmth and hospitality, so they know that God has placed them in His Church.

Philippines Report

—By Rod McNair

In recent months and years, the Philippines nation has experienced many trials, including political turmoil, military conflict and economic malaise. Since 1997, the peso has depreciated almost 50 percent, to its current level of P49.74 to the U.S. dollar. Growth of the country's merchandise exports has dropped from 18.8 percent in 1999 to 8.7 percent in 2000, and is expected to plummet to 3.8 percent this year, according to an April 4, 2001 report in the *Manila Bulletin*.

The skidding economy has affected many brethren in the Church, as farmers face lower selling prices, and everyone faces the skyrocketing cost of goods and commodities. Because of the economic difficulties, the cost of preaching the gospel and feeding the flock has also risen.

Yet despite the Philippines' economic problems, the Church's finances are, almost inexplicably, experiencing good growth. The first quarter of 2001 saw an increase in tithes and offerings of approximately 30 percent over the first quarter of 2000. While the number of members has not increased dramatically, brethren in the Living Church of God continue to sacrifice financially for the great Work of God. In the midst of the worst economic crisis of the decade, God is blessing and multiplying the efforts of our Filipino brethren. ☪



France

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread, French-speaking brethren met in Senlis, a small suburb of Paris, France, for services led by Mr. Raymond Clore, LCG's minister in Paris. The 31 brethren who attended services represent a good portion of the French-speaking LCG members in Europe. A few had come all the way from Belgium; others came from Switzerland even though services were also held for a smaller group near Geneva.

What Does God Like to be Called?

By Donald Roach

God has many names and titles revealed in Scripture: God (Genesis 1:1), Lord (Genesis 4:6), I Am (Exodus 3:14) and Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9, 13, 22), among others. But does He especially cherish one term that we may use when addressing Him? Does Scripture show the very special importance of one of His names?

Note Jesus Christ's frequent use of a certain word in Matthew 6:1-8.

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your *Father* in heaven.... But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your *Father* who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.... But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your *Father* who is in the secret place; and your *Father* who sees in secret will reward you openly.... Therefore do not be like them. For your *Father* knows the things you have need of before you ask Him"

Note the frequent use of the word *Father*! Just after this passage, we reach the "model prayer." Count how many times God teaches us to address Him as "God" in the model prayer. "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our *Father* in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). God loves for us to call Him "*Father*." *Not once* in the model prayer did Christ use the term "God." He used the word *Father*. As we read on in Matthew 6:14-18, we may notice that a certain word *stands out* in Christ's teaching:

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly *Father* will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your *Father* forgive your trespasses.... But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your *Father* who is in the secret place; and your *Father* who sees in secret will reward you openly."

We should not be surprised that the great God likes to be called "Father." After all, how do you address your father? Do you address him as "Mr. So and So"? Or do you instead call him "Daddy" or "Dad" or "Father"?

Still, we can certainly address God by *any* of His names. The

Bible records that Christ and others addressed God by His other names as well—and saw *spectacular* results. We can know how *the very Christ Himself* prayed. What a privilege to read Christ's own prayer in John 17:1-26:

"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: *Father*, the hour has come.... And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God..." (John 17:1-3)

Christ here calls Him God—and so can we; we can address God by *any* of His names.

"...and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.... And now, O *Father*, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.... Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy *Father*, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.... that they all may be one, as You, *Father*, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.... *Father*, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may

be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous *Father...*" (John 17:3–25).

Yes, Christ freely called out to His *Father* in His prayer. But there is more! In His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ used another word in praying to God. "And He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for You...'" (Mark 14:36). God's Word admonishes us to *cry out*, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). We are also told that because we are sons, the Spirit of God within us *cries out*, Abba, Father (Galatians 4:6). According to *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, the word "Abba" is a child's term for "Daddy" in Aramaic. Imagine that! Jesus Christ, a man's Man when He walked the earth, called His Father *Daddy!* We can address God as *Father—Daddy!*

God is all about family! A *damnable heresy* that emanates from the very mind of Satan is the teaching that God is a trinity. *Nothing could be further from the truth! God is a Family* (Ephesians 3:14–15)! Notice the very words He uses in the Bible to describe our relationships with Him—father, son, daughter, child, brother, sister, wife, bride, mother and husband. God could not have made it any plainer that He is describing family relationships!

But why would being called *Father* or *Daddy* mean so much to God? One can find several reasons. For one, we know that God has existed for billions upon billions of years, and then some—He has existed from eternity. Yet only in the last few years—6,000 or so—

has He become the *Father* of begotten children who will one day actually be born into His divine Family. And only in the last 2,000 of those years has *one and only one* of those begotten children been born into His family—our Savior, Jesus Christ—and it is through Him that we may also be born into God's Family (John 6:44; Romans 8:29). This *fulfillment* of His *Fatherhood* is *very recent* to God, and is only in its *beginning* stages!

know yourself. Some feel that God does not know what they are going through, but He knows even the number of hairs on your head. Talk about attention to detail! We can share with our heavenly *Father all* our cares, worries, concerns, anxieties, problems, pain, hopes and dreams—*everything*—for, as a loving *Father*, He *truly* cares (1 Peter 5:7).

What sacrifice would a loving father *not* make for his children?

Some feel that God does not know what they are going through, but He knows even the number of hairs on your head. Talk about attention to detail! We can share with our heavenly *Father all* our cares, worries, concerns, anxieties, problems, pain, hopes and dreams—*everything*—for as a loving *Father* He *truly* cares (1 Peter 5:7).

Another reason that being called *Father* or *Daddy* means so much to God is that it captures the very essence of His plan—his aspirations and goals for those He has created. God plans to become the *Father* of multiple *billions* of glorified, divine, sons and daughters. Addressing Him as *Father—Daddy*—reminds Him, and us, of His cherished plan for each of us, who were created to be His future sons and daughters.

Remembering God as our *Father* or *Daddy* certainly helps us, as it reveals His very nature. Just as a loving father keeps up with *each and every one* of his children, God the *perfect Father* does—but even more so. Even though there are more than 6 billion people on the earth today, God's eyes are on *you personally*. A Christian does not and *cannot* escape God's attention. God knows you better than you

To what lengths do fathers (and mothers) go to ensure the success, happiness and well-being of their children? By having us call Him *Father*, God wants to help us realize that He feels the same way toward us—and even more so, since unlike human fathers He is *perfect*. A loving father loves *each and every one* of his children. God wants us to realize that as a *perfect Father*, He *does not have favorites!* *God is no respecter of persons!* His love for *you personally* runs deeper than the deepest ocean! His Son, Jesus Christ, has revealed the Father (John 14:9), and the divine love that the Father and the Son have for us!

Yes, in Heaven we have *more than a friend!* The *most powerful*, yet *most loving* Being in the entire universe is our very own *Father—Daddy*—in heaven! What a wonderful way to call out to our God! ☞

Ministerial Conferences 2001

Two recent Living Church of God ministerial conferences provided vision, instruction and fellowship for ministers from around the world.

From Phoenix to the Philippines, from Scotland to South Africa and from Australia to Albuquerque, approximately 100 ministers and their wives traveled to San Diego for the combined International/Western Ministerial Conference, from March 12 through March 14, 2001.

Presiding Evangelist Dr. Roderick C. Meredith opened the conference by expressing appreciation for the ministry's diligent service. He reported that in 2000, worldwide income for the Work exceeded US\$8 million and U.S. income increased by nearly 12 percent over 1999.

Dr. Meredith noted that slightly more than two years after Living Church of God was formed, the *Tomorrow's World* telecast could be seen on 100 television stations, supported by bimonthly editions of *Tomorrow's World* magazine and 12 booklets currently in print (13 as of this writing).

Dr. Meredith outlined the Church's vision of the Work, emphasizing four major objectives and three "sub-themes." The objectives are:

- To preach the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God and the true name of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:14; Acts 8:12; 28:30–31)
- To preach end-time prophecies and the Ezekiel warning
- To "feed the flock" and actively prepare future kings and priests
- To exemplify the character of Christ—for the world and for our children (Matthew 5:14)

The three sub-themes, applying across all four objectives, are:

- To practice servant leadership
- To build an atmosphere of faith
- To restore Apostolic Christianity



International and Western ministers and their wives gather at the Radisson Hotel for their March conference.

Dr. Meredith reviewed Jesus' Matthew 10:7–8 commission to the Apostles. "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." He emphasized that we must be close to God and Christ if we are to fulfill the commission. As we develop that relationship, we can feel deeply that Christ is alive, that He is in charge and that He is the living Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22-23). The Presiding Evangelist exhorted the ministry to spend more time "studying the Book" and to "give attention to reading" (1 Timothy 4:13). He reminded conference attendees that as we "feed on Christ" (John 6:57), God's word will "go forth" and not return to Him "void," but it "shall prosper" and bring forth fruit (Isaiah 55:10–11).

Following Dr. Meredith's opening address, the Regional Directors gave reports on growth and challenges affecting the 125 Living Church of God congregations and 143 video groups worldwide.

Topics presented at the conference included: "Fundamentals of Prophecy," "Servant Leadership," "Personal Performance and Planning," "Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible," "Biblical Roles of Men and Women" and "Principles of Administration." Mr. Charles Bryce, International Director for Canada and Regional Pastor for the Northeast United States, shared his ministerial experience in a presentation titled "Lessons Learned."

On Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Meredith led the Headquarters evangelists in ordaining three ministers as

pastors and two men as evangelists. Mr. Glen Gilchrist (who oversees the Albuquerque, New Mexico and Denver, Colorado areas), Mr. Eng Monson (who oversees the Regina, Canada area) and Mr. Mario Hernandez (who oversees the work in Latin America) were ordained as Pastors. Regional Directors Mr. Syd Hull (Republic of South Africa) and Mr. Bruce Tyler (Australia and Southeast Asia) were ordained as evangelists.

Afterward, Mr. Carl McNair, Director of Church Administration, wrote regarding the ordinations: “Congratulations to each of them. The ordinations are not ‘elevation to positions of praise’ but recognition of the work they are actually doing.... If we look at ‘hierarchy’ or ‘ranks’ of the ministry as a means of organizing and administering the Church—which is another way of saying service and leadership—rather than as the Gentiles’ practice of ‘overlordship,’ which is oppression and self-service, then we are in sync with Christ and God the Father. There is no alternative for us.”

At the conference, Mr. McNair expressed appreciation for the service of our local church elders who, in spite of their full time jobs, extensively serve the brethren and the Work. The Church would not be able to provide for its many congregations and video groups without them. In instructing the ministry on principles of effective organization and administration, Mr. McNair reminded conference attendees that the ministry can be a “man-killing job” unless one plans and



Ministers and wives enjoy fine Mississippi cuisine and warm fellowship at the Eastern conference in April.

Following the main conference, Mr. Carl McNair, Director of Church Administration, held a special meeting for the International Regional Directors on Thursday, March 15, to discuss the special needs of the international ministry and brethren, who comprise roughly one-third of the Church membership.

Eastern Ministerial Conference

From April 30 through May 2, 87 ministers and wives gathered for the Eastern Ministerial Conference, held in Louisville, Mississippi at beautiful Lake Tiak-O’Khata approximately 90 miles northeast of Jackson.

The three-day conference followed much the same agenda as the Western Ministerial Conference, but with several additional presenters. Evangelist John Ogwyn, Regional Pastor for the Southern U.S., spoke on “Our Role in Nurturing God’s People.” Mr. Lambert Greer, Regional Pastor for the Central U.S., spoke on “Use of the Pulpit in Pastoring.” Mr. Gerald Weston, Regional Pastor for the Midwest U.S., spoke on “The LCG Youth Program.”

Evangelist Richard Ames gave an additional report on Church media efforts, writing for Church publications and on ways the brethren can help promote the media effort—such as the “cardholder” program currently being shared with interested local congregations.

In his presentations, Dr. Meredith emphasized his desire for Christ’s coming, stating that we “can be more expectant than we have been.” In his concluding presentation he reminded attendees that prophecy is moving forward, and again implored the ministry to grow close to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

As with the Western Ministerial Conference, everyone attending felt that the three days of meetings were inspiring and unifying. LCG

—Richard F. Ames



Five ordinations took place at the March conference. From left to right: Mr. Mario Hernandez, Mr. Glen Gilchrist, Mr. Syd Hull, Mr. Bruce Tyler and Mr. Eng Monson.

organizes well, and that the Church certainly needs more manpower.

Dr. Meredith concluded the conference on Wednesday with a presentation exhorting each minister to “Become a True Bondslave of Christ.” That evening, attendees gathered at a nearby Mexican restaurant where all enjoyed good food and fellowship.

Keep “Watching” Carefully*(continued from page 3)*

album ‘Antichrist Superstar’ screams, ‘Let’s just kill everyone and let your God sort them out.’”

Ghastly!

Is this the nation that has as its motto “In God We Trust?” As always, we need to explain to our readers that they need to be careful *which* “god” they may be trusting in. And we must warn them about Satan’s deceptions—as well as the horrible influence of the media in a nation which is truly cut off from God.

Under the category of religious deterioration, we continue to read articles about various professing Christian churches which not only allow their members to practice homosexuality, but even ORDAIN practicing homosexuals as supposed ministers of Jesus Christ! A recent (April 23, 2001) issue of *Christianity Today* magazine states: “The 70-million-member Anglican Communion, which has its roots in the Church of England, officially condemns homosexual behavior. But the Episcopal Church unofficially allows local dioceses to ordain practicing homosexuals and to bless same-sex unions.” So here is a church in utter confusion. Some of their leaders realize that the Bible clearly states that homosexual practice is absolutely WRONG. Yet they are so wishy-washy that they are afraid to crack down on the spiritually sick American branch which ordains homosexuals into its ministry.

In another approach to the religious problems our nations are facing, *U.S. News and World Report* (March 26, 2001) states: “Here in New York, Cardinal Edward Egan had a little chat with Gov. George Pataki last week about whether Roman Catholic institutions should be forced to provide contraceptive services and the ‘morning after’ pill for their female employees... So far

the public and the news media have paid little attention to the debate, because contraceptive funding seems like a ho-hum issue. Most people, including many Catholics, do not consider contraception immoral. But some religious leaders think this is a slippery slope. The slide could lead to mandatory funding of the abortion pill, euthanasia, and assisted suicide. So, many churches feel they have to make a stand here, before they are dragged into funding new abortion medicines, cloning, and suicide pills. Joe Loconte of the Heritage Foundation wrote: ‘It is no whimsy to worry when people are forced to bankroll whatever reproductive practices are in vogue—today chemical abortion, tomorrow cloning.’”

Reuters (March 20, 2001) offered from Vatican City another significant report on religion: “The Vatican acknowledged Tuesday a damning report that some priests and missionaries were forcing nuns to have sex with them, and were in some cases committing rape and forcing the victims to have abortions. Some nuns were forced to take the contraceptive pill, the report cited in the *Rome la Repubblica* daily said. The Vatican said the issue was restricted to a certain geographical area but the report cited cases in 23 countries, including the United States, Brazil, the Philippines, India, Ireland and Italy.”

God’s Word clearly labels as a “doctrine of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1–3) the practice of forbidding priests—or *anyone else*—from marrying. This should help us realize the blessings of God’s way of life, including a happy marriage and family, and we should be *repelled* by the horrible teachings and superstitions believed and practiced by the “Great Whore” of Revelation 17.

An entire array of problems shows up in the category of “God’s punishment on Israelitish nations.”

Among them are the rising incidents of drug use and the once again rising crime rate of our youth in the United States. As the *San Diego Union Tribune* (April 3, 2001) stated: “After a decade of steady decline, reported crime has leveled off and is starting to rise prompting concern from police and criminologists that the numbers may get worse before getting better.”

Also the current financial malaise in the United States may become ominous if Japan is forced to repatriate the hundreds of billions of dollars they now have loaned or invested in America. As the *U.S. News and World Report* magazine stated recently (March 19, 2001): “Weather forecasters may have sounded a false alarm for much of the East Coast last week, but economists have harder evidence that an *economic* tsunami is bearing down on Japan. A financial disaster of the size implicit in their latest numbers would send huge waves everywhere. Japan is the largest economy in Asia. The spending power of its 127 million residents exceeds that of the 1.8 billion inhabitants of East and Southeast Asia. It is also the world’s largest gross and net international lender, with over \$2.5 trillion outstanding—so that its financial troubles could disrupt global financial markets.” And then another article in the same magazine the following week quoted William Breer of the *Center for Strategic and International Studies*: “In desperation, Japanese banks WILL pull U.S. holdings” (emphasis ours).

As for the situation in Britain, I feel it is admirably summed up by a heartfelt letter I just received from one of our British subscribers:

Dear Sir,

As one who has always believed in God and who has been taking your magazine for several years, I am now taking your *Bible Study*

Course, I wish to express my thanks to you for your work.

When I read in our newspapers of events which are occurring in Britain, from floods, the shoreline breaking up, mad cow disease, foot & mouth disease, the problems of over fishing in the North Sea, the problems of intensive chicken farming and intensive fish farming, your publications give reassuring answers to just what is going on. None of these problems were there sixty years ago in my youth, but now when one buys a

newspaper one wonders just what the latest thing is, which has gone badly wrong.

I am enclosing a newspaper cutting which I find appalling, but it nevertheless backs up the fact that for all our computers and web sites, the really true knowledge of how to lead a good, useful, and contented life, is abysmally low, if not in fact nonexistent.

I thank you once more for your most instructive and welcome teaching, for which I wait eagerly each month.

Dear brethren, God is NOT mocked. Our godless way of life is SOON going to bring about a truly terrible result. But we who know God have both the opportunity and the responsibility to *study* His Word, *understand* what is going to happen and “watch” prophetic events unfold and so be INSPIRED that the Great God we serve is very near—and that His Kingdom is *coming soon*. As the Apostle John was inspired to put it: “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20). ☐

Our Mission as a Church

(continued from page 2)

come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:2–4).

In all of this we must try to help everyone we can—both within and without the true Church—to at least grasp the concept that true Christians are to “live by EVERY Word of God”—and that Christ is to literally LIVE His life within us through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20). A vital part of this mission is that we are to be “examples” and “lights” to the world (Matthew 5:14–16). As the “Church of the living God, the pillar and ground [or “bulwark”] of the Truth” (1 Timothy 3:15), we, dear brethren, should set the EXAMPLE to the world—and to all professing Christians—of the WAY of life which Jesus taught!

In our personal lives, in our zealous work and productivity, in being closely bonded to our wives and families—and in a constant spirit of GIVING, serving and helping others—we should set a sterling example of what Christ really stands for! This is an AWESOME responsibility for each one of us and is, in fact, part of our commission.

By our own examples, we should set the standard of self-control, wisdom and judgment, of faith and courage and—most of all—of genuine LOVE and outflowing concern. We should show others by our *conduct* that we do LOVE God and put Him and His commandments *above all else* in everything we think, say and do.

Finally, as adjuncts to these vital Christian imperatives, I have tried to stress in recent years three more

important concepts we should all incorporate into our lives. First is the concept of Servant Leadership. This powerful, biblically based principle is simply learning to think through and *put in action* the many scriptures that tell us to “serve” one another. This concept informs us that even one in a high position or office is to use that office to SERVE—not to “get,” not to exalt the self or domineer, but to do all he can to sincerely and humbly use his time, strength and talents to SERVE everyone with whom he deals. As Jesus said: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25–18).

I hope that by now you have all read our vital booklet, *Restoring Apostolic Christianity*. I pray that *all* of you will inculcate the principles in this booklet into your own thinking and in explaining the Truth to others. For it is *extremely important*, brethren, that we do not let the world at large or Satan’s ministers “box us in” with picky arguments about individual points such as the Sabbath, Holy Days or unclean meats. We must all come to understand that these are not “separated” issues which someone just put together in a disjointed manner. Rather, these basic doctrines and other important Truths are all clearly derived from the original Apostolic Church of God under the direction of the living Jesus Christ.

If we are to be effective servants of Christ, we MUST LEARN to “explain” these doctrines as part of the entire pattern of “Apostolic Christianity.” For that is *exactly*

what they are. And, as our booklet explains, both the inspired New Testament and countless references in early church history show that we are following in the footsteps of Christ in the *true* Church of God—the Jerusalem Church of God under the immediate direction of the original Apostles.

Finally, you have undoubtedly heard some of our sermons emphasizing the absolutely vital need for us to build an “atmosphere of FAITH” within God’s Church. We know that we are living in the most mechanized, industrialized and probably the most hedonistic civilization in human history. We are surrounded by “things” which man has made. And our minds are bombarded with the worldly messages pumped into our homes via television, radio, the printing press and now the computer. Nearly all of this is *faith*-DESTROYING if we allow it to be so.

Therefore, we tend to have LESS faith in the invisible God, FEWER healings and miracles than in times past. As Jesus prophetically asked: “When the Son of man comes, will He really find FAITH on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

To counter this spiritual stagnation and retrogression, we need to purposefully do all we can to rekindle the kind of FAITH exhibited by the early Christians. We need to deeply *study* the Word of God and “feed” on Christ (John 6:57). For *faith* comes by “hearing the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). We need to PRAY for faith! In the end, it is GOD who will put within us the needed faith IF we truly seek this from Him. Indeed, faith is one of the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:4–9).

Yet throughout the Bible, God gives us example after example showing that we should CRY OUT to Him for our physical and spiritual needs—even as Jesus Christ did when He needed extra faith and strength in order to be our Savior and High Priest. The inspired book of Hebrews describes Jesus, “who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement CRIES and TEARS to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” (Hebrews 5:7).

As the end of this present age swiftly approaches, I am sure that all of us desire that the powerful “signs” Jesus spoke of in Mark 16:17–18 would follow us today, more frequently and more powerfully: “And these signs will follow those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by

no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

If we seek God with all our hearts and build the living FAITH in God which I have described above, then I know we will see an outpouring of these “signs”! Then—even though most are not called to repentance now, vast numbers of people all over the earth will begin to “know” that there is a REAL God. And they will also begin to realize *through whom* He is working. So let us each do *our part* to seek God with absolute fervency and ask Him to put within us, individually and collectively, the powerful FAITH we need to truly be His ambassadors and effectively complete His Work at the end of this age!

Dear brethren, I hope that all of you will “catch the vision” and join with us in fulfilling this SEVENFOLD commission. Of course, it could be worded or structured differently, but these key elements of Christ’s Commission to His Church—as outlined above—do break down into seven parts:

1. Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and the true *name* of Jesus Christ.
2. Preach the END-time prophecies and the Ezekiel warning to the Israelitish peoples.
3. Feed the flock and build all our members to the stature of Jesus Christ as best we can.
4. Be EXAMPLES to the Church at large and to the world of Christ’s way of life.
5. Learn and practice Servant Leadership in all our dealings with others.
6. Restore Apostolic Christianity and all that this implies.
7. Build an atmosphere of radiant FAITH within God’s Church.

Again, “WHY are we here? *What* is our Work and our Commission all about?”

I hope that the above explanation will help and inspire all of us to understand WHY we exist and *what* we ought to be doing as the *Living Church of God*. Let us then move ahead on *all fronts* and honor God and our Savior Jesus Christ as we zealously fulfill these vital elements of the Great Commission.

Please *study, meditate* and *pray* about these points and ask God to help you build them into your daily lives. If we all do this, the Work of God will go forward with a *zeal* and POWER never experienced in modern times.



2001 Feast of Tabernacles 2001

Updates

Volunteer Service at the Feast

Do you like to sing? Do you have nursing skills? Would you like to help with ushering or parking duties? If you would like to serve in these or a variety of other ways, you will want to fill out the Volunteer Service Form, which will be available in local congregations on the Sabbath of June 9.

On that date, pastors will be conducting a survey to help determine approximate attendance figures for each Feast site. For those wishing to serve, the Volunteer Service Form will be available. For those who are not at services on June 9, copies of the form should be available from your local pastor.

If you have Internet access and prefer to submit your form via the Internet, an online version of the form will be available in the Feast of Tabernacles section of the official Church Web site, www.livingcog.org. This information is in the Members area of the Church Web site; please remember that in order to access that area, you must enter, as your username, the word *member*, and as your password *galatians220*.

JACKSON HOLE, WY

Teton Village condominiums and Village Center Inn studios are available at a 20 percent discount this year. To take advantage of this offer, call (800) 443-8613, and refer to the Living Church of God reservation (or reservation numbers 61330 or 8372). A two-night deposit is due upon booking, with final payment due 30 days prior to guest arrival. Reservations may be cancelled up to 30 days before arrival with a full refund minus a \$50 administration fee.

PIGEON FORGE, TN

Please note that for reservations at Smoky Mountain Convention Center and Resort establishments—including the adjacent Ramada Inn—Feast attendees should use the following toll-free number: (800) 523-3919.

When you call, identify yourself as a member of Living Church of God. Smoky Mountain Convention Center is offering a variety of motel options to Church members at a reduced rate.

Note, however, that Feast attendees are not limited to staying at the Smoky Mountain Convention Center and Resort offerings. Many other housing alternatives, including cabins, condominiums and other independent hotels and motels, may offer similar or better quality at a comparable cost. Please be sure to compare prices and amenities before making your reservations.

TUCSON, AZ

Please note that those wishing to contact the Tucson site coordinator, Mr. Gaylyn Bonjour, are asked to contact him at the office if possible; his phone number is (858) 674-2222 and his fax number is (858) 674-6353. His cellular phone number, listed in the last *Living Church News*, should only be used as a last resort, as he is billed for incoming calls. Those with e-mail may prefer to contact him at gbonjour@cogl.org. Please note that the toll-free area code for InnSuites reservations is 877; those wishing to stay at the InnSuites Hotel (St. Mary's exit, I-10), where services will be held, should make their reservations by phoning (877) 446-6589.

GUYANA

In a change from the original plan announced in the March-April 2001 *Living Church News*, the Feast in Guyana this year will be held at the Ocean View International Hotel. This hotel, one mile outside the greater Georgetown area along the east coast of Demerara, is located overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, providing a wonderful view of the sea coast for miles to the east and west, and a refreshing sea breeze all day and night.

Room rates range from US\$65 for a single or double standard room with no meals provided, to US\$138 for three guests staying in a suite with breakfast and dinner provided.

For further information, please contact site coordinator Mr. Fitzroy Greeman by e-mail at rgreeman@hotmail.com.

JAMAICA

Services will be held at Negril Cabins Resorts, which is located on the beach, nestled among lush vegetation. Activities will include a Family Fun Day, Jamaica Night, Seniors' Luncheon and Children's Party.

Whatever your housing preference, please book directly with the hotel, and advise the Jamaica congregation by e-mail at kingstonlivingcog@hotmail.com.

Negotiated rates at the Negril Cabins Resorts are US\$120 for single occupancy, and US\$150 for double occupancy, per room, per day, on the Modified American Plan. For further hotel information, phone (800) 382-3444, go to <http://www.negril-cabins.com> or send e-mail to negrilcabins@cwjamaica.com. Other housing alternatives

are available; for details please visit the Feast Information area on the Church Web site.

For further information, please feel free to contact site coordinator Mr. Hugh Wilson by e-mail at ehd.wilson@cwjamaica.com.

PORT D'ALBRET, FRANCE

Please note that in the last *Living Church News*, two Web addresses contained errors. The correct addresses for these online Port d'Albret information sources are: <http://www.tourismelandes.com> and <http://www.ot-vieux-boucau.fr>.

Additionally, the French brethren are maintaining an unofficial Port d'Albret Feast information site, in French and English, at: <http://www.mondedemain.org/fot2001/>.

If you would like to attend the Port d'Albret site, or need further information, please contact site coordinator Mr. Dibar Apartian by phone at (858) 673-7470 or by e-mail at dapartian@cogl.org.

TOBAGO

Those wishing to attend the Feast in Tobago are asked not to make reservations directly with the Grafton Beach Resort, but to make arrangements through site coordinator Ramsumair Sookram. Those doing so will receive a rate 30 percent below the regular charge, and will help ensure that the Church is able to have the meeting hall free of charge.

Mr. Sookram may be contacted by e-mail at sookram1@lycos.com or by phone/fax at (868) 645-6858.

Feast Information Online

Living Church of God Feast of Tabernacles information is kept up-to-date at the official Church Web site, in its Feast of Tabernacles area, at URL: <http://www.livingcog.org/members/fot/default.htm>

There you will find updated news about the various sites, and in many cases more detailed housing and area information than can be fit into an issue of the *Living Church News*.

For those wishing to volunteer for service at the Feast, an online Volunteer Form is also available. This Feast information is in the Members area of the Church Web site; please remember that in order to access that area, you must enter, as your username, the word *member*, and as your password *galatians220*.

If you have further questions about the Feast of Tabernacles 2001, please feel free to send them via e-mail to feast@cogl.org.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Elsa Maria Campos, age 65, of the Living Church of God Headquarters congregation, died on Tuesday, April 24. She is survived by her children Boni Camarena, Carmen Mendoza and José Antonio Redilla. She was well-loved, and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Edelmira Hernández, age 71, of the La Crescenta, California LCG congregation, died on Tuesday, April 24, after a long battle with cancer. Even during her own trial, she was known as an encourager of others. She is survived by her husband Álvaro, and by six of her seven children. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Ana Arellano de Carvajal, mother of Sergio Carvajal, Sr., LCG host in Santiago, Chile, died of cancer on April 12. She was 84 years old, and is survived by three sons and two daughters. Mr. Carvajal Sr. and his family, inspired by her example and devotion to God's way, follow faithfully in her footsteps.

Wedding Anniversary

John C. and Ruth M. Fischer, of the Houston, Texas LCG congregation, celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary on May 5, 2001. After Sabbath services that day, the Houston congregation met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wes Metzler for finger food and cake.

The Fischers were married on April 11, 1942; they have four children (all sons), 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The Fischers were both baptized on March 27, 1971; they are very loyal and dedicated to God's Truth, and have been an inspiration to their brethren in Houston.

Birth

Matthew Randy Wayne was born on March 8, 2001, to Randy and Lyndee Wayne of Cincinnati, Ohio. Matthew weighed 9 pounds, 10 ounces, and measured 22 inches.

Twelve Keys to Answered Prayer



Dr. Meredith's new booklet, *Twelve Keys to Answered Prayer*, will be sent automatically to all Living Church of God members. Members *do not* need to send in the return card that was included in the semi-annual letter; if you received the letter, you will also receive the booklet.

This inspiring new booklet brings to 14 the number of booklets that the Living Church of God currently has in print.

Bible Study

From “The Gospel of Matthew—Program 6”

By Roderick C. Meredith

Matthew 6:32–33

“For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first [notice this—not second or third or fourth, but seek *first*, above everything else there is] the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

It is interesting that God tells us that His righteousness is His Commandments. Back in Psalm 119:172, God inspired King David to write: “For all Your commandments are righteousness.” The Commandments tell us *how* to love God and how to love our fellow man.

Matthew 6:33

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and *all* these things shall be added to you.”

What you should eat and drink, and what you should wear, *God will give you*—and will give you plenty and often—if you really serve Him. In a prosperous society, He may give you *more* than plenty. There will be other times when you may have to do without, just like the Apostle Paul, who said: “I know how to be abased and I know how to abound, I can do *all* things through Christ who strengthens me.” The Apostle Paul said that in Philippians 4:12. And you can, too. Basically, He will bless you if you serve Him—there is no question about it.

Matthew 6:34

“Therefore do not worry [or have anxious thought, have your mind on it all the time] about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

You will have enough trouble today without worrying about tomorrow—wondering what you are going to eat, what you are going to wear, what you are going to do—trying to save so much money for the future and having your mind on that. God tells you to do good, be generous, put your treasure in heaven, *lay up* treasure in heaven and do your part toward the Kingdom of God. Serve others and serve your God, and God will take care of you. And above all, seek *ye first*—above everything else—the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Then *all* these material things will be added to you. But above all, and beyond that, you will have a place in God’s family in the coming Kingdom of God to be set up on this earth. This is *real*—it is just ahead! So we must do our part and get ready.

This is a brief excerpt from Part 6 of Dr. Meredith’s 32-part commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. The full series is being made available on the Church Web site, www.livingcog.org, in online video, audio and text format.