

Living Church News

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What Is Your Personal "Breaking Point"?

Dear Brethren and Friends,

God has truly blessed us in this Work in many ways. We are now starting to have a more powerful impact in many parts of the world. That is very *good*—and something for which we can be very thankful. But each of us must deeply realize that God's Word tells us again and again that *severe persecution* has usually come along with any powerful teaching of the Truth. "That," as they say, "comes with the territory."

But are you genuinely "ready"?

What is your personal "breaking point"? What will be your reaction to *genuine* persecution such as we have never before experienced in this age? We all need to analyze this question and try to think through *ahead of time* both what we *might* do, and what we really *ought* to do when severe persecution arises.

On the editorial page of a recent *Wall Street Journal*, I read a very touching article by Jere Van Dyk, describing the persecutions of sincere missionaries in far-flung corners of the earth. He wrote:

"On December 8, 1934, in a village near Nanjing, in eastern China, two distant cousins of mine, John and Betty Stam, gave their three-month-old daughter to their Chinese maid and asked her to hide the baby. Then they knelt on the floor in prayer as Communist soldiers burst into their home and cut off their heads. They were Christian missionaries.... I thought of them as I read about the three missionaries killed recently in Yemen. As tragic as the story is—they were killed in Jibla on December 30, when a man sneaked a rifle into the missionary hospital where they worked and shot them as they sat at a table—evangelical Christians won't be completely saddened by it.... American missionaries, like their brothers and sisters in Canada, Europe and elsewhere, feel that God is guiding them. They go where there is a need. At memorial services for the missionaries killed in Yemen, I am sure, people sang hymns and grieved, but through their tears their faces shone, for they knew in their hearts that the missionaries did not die in vain" (January 11, 2003).

Even though these missionaries probably did not have their minds opened by God to the full Truth that God has revealed to His true Church, their sincere faith and courage is very exemplary. Will *we*—we who have

God's Holy Spirit, and should have greater understanding—show the same commitment and faith when *our time* of trial comes?

May God help us!

For religious persecution is raging all over the world even as I write. Literally tens of thousands of sincere people professing Christianity are being harassed and tortured in China, Burma, throughout the Muslim world and in many other places. You and I need to understand. As we say: "The time for 'playing church' is over!" The true people of God must develop a deeper understanding and faith. Each of us must develop—through God's Holy Spirit—a deeper commitment to *fully obey* our God, to walk with Him daily and hourly and to utterly **surrender** our entire lives into His faithful care. As the Apostle Paul stated: "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Dear brethren, I have cited Jesus' words in Matthew 24:9–10 many times. Please read these words with *understanding*—for what they describe will soon begin to happen! "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another."

As this Work of the living Christ grows in power and scope, we will be "hated" by **all nations**. Jesus said so! Many of God's people will be supernaturally protected from the full fury of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 12:13–17). But no doubt some ministers—and some zealous brethren—may be persecuted, beaten, thrown in prison and otherwise mistreated and possibly even killed *before* the full scale Tribulation begins!

So we must all "count the cost." As Jesus told His disciples, including you and me: "Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate [love less, by comparison] his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to finish it'" (Luke 14:25–28).

Again, Jesus tells us: "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (Matthew 10:22–23). And later: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (vv. 28–31).

Brethren, we must let these words "ring in our ears" so that when the *reality* of Jesus' warnings begin to occur we will **not** be confused, astonished or frightened. For, as the servants of the living God, we must *meditate* on these things, *study* the examples of persecution and of faith in God's Word and then *think through in advance* what our reaction must be. Then, we need to **cry out** to God day and night to draw us ever closer to Him and into **full surrender** as the end of this age approaches.

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Our Need for Living Faith

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

Thinking about the trials and tests that lie just ahead of all of us, I recently began re-reading the Psalms of David to gain inspiration and encouragement. I found in these Psalms—again and again—*powerful* examples of the great **faith** that David exercised in so many of his own trials and tests. Often, we focus on David's *courage, bravery* and *commitment*. But we may not fully connect these fine attributes with the remarkable *faith* of King David of Israel.

was vividly aware of God's creation. He meditated on the beauty, the power and the intricacy of the creation, worshiping and praising the great God who brought this about. David wrote: "He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart. The trees of the LORD are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted, where the birds make their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high hills are

full of Your possessions" (Psalm 104:19–24).

Aware that even his own body was carefully fashioned by God, David exulted: "For You formed my inward parts; you covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet

So through this process of constantly meditating on God's creation, of deeply studying and meditating on God's wonderful **Law** (Psalm 119:97), of walking with God and *experiencing* how God *does really* **ble**ss those who serve Him, David developed a truly remarkable **faith** in his Creator and his God!

A vital part of David's faith was that he constantly cultivated a very close, very personal and *extremely heartfelt* relationship with God. David continually put God at the very **center** of his entire life—and his thinking about virtually every facet of his life, no matter how big or how small. When David looked up at the stars, he thought about **God**: "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:3–4).

Often staying out in the open fields as a young shepherd, David

for the wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers" (Psalm 104:14–18).

David noted that God watches over and sustains His creation in a marvelous way: "He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knows its going down. You make darkness, and it is night, in which all the beasts of the forest creep about. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God. When the sun rises, they gather together and lie down in their dens. Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is

there were none of them" (Psalm 139:13–16). All of this helped David fully understand the concept that the Apostle Paul later put in words: "For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring'" (Acts 17:28).

So through this process of constantly meditating on God's creation, of deeply studying and meditating on God's wonderful **Law** (Psalm 119:97), of walking with God and *experiencing* how God *does really* **ble**ss those who serve Him, David developed a truly remarkable **faith** in

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Understanding the “Night To Be Much Observed”

By John H. Ogwyn

What is the *real* significance of the occasion observed by the Church of God at the beginning of the first holy day of the Days of Unleavened Bread? Traditionally, brethren have gathered in small groups for a festive occasion of food and fellowship that evening. Why? We do not begin any of the other holy days such as Pentecost or Trumpets in this same way.

Do you clearly understand why this particular night is set aside for such special note—why it is a night to be *much observed*? And do you understand how we should actually observe it? What does the Bible say about this important topic?

We begin the Days of Unleavened Bread with a special night on the basis of instructions given in Exodus: “And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance [“night to be much observed,” KJV] to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations” (Exodus 12:41–42).

Some have claimed that the night spoken of here is actually the night of the first Passover. Is this really the case? God’s Church observes the Passover on the evening that *begins* Abib 14. Twenty-four hours later, while we are gathered for the Night To Be Much Observed, today’s Jews are gathering for a festive meal with family and close friends in observance of what they call “the Passover.” This has caused some to conclude wrongly that the Church today keeps the Passover a day earlier than what God established in the book of Exodus.

What was Christ’s example? Was the last supper of Jesus and His disciples actually the Passover, or simply a new observance done a day earlier? In order to properly understand what the Night To Be Much Observed is all about, it is necessary that we grasp its relationship with the Passover.

The Relationship of Passover and Unleavened Bread

The distinction between Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is clearly stated in Leviticus: “On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread” (Leviticus 23:5–6). Before we examine the timing differences in detail, notice first the difference in symbolism.

The Passover represents God’s redemption of His people. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and the Creator God had sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message to let them go that they might serve Him. Pharaoh refused to heed God’s demand and, over a period of time, plague after plague was poured out on this rebellious king and his people. The final plague that God intended to bring upon the Egyptians was the death of the firstborn. God instructed the Israelites to make special preparations that would allow them to escape this terrible plague. Each family was to select a lamb on the tenth day of the first month, and save it until the fourteenth. During the period of twilight on the fourteenth they were to kill and roast the lamb, first having drained the blood into a container. The blood of the slaughtered lamb was to be used to mark the doorposts and lintels of their homes. That night they were to remain inside their homes until the morning (Exodus 12:22) and eat the roast lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Moses told the Israelites that, at midnight, God would send “the destroyer” (v. 23) through the land to strike dead the firstborn in every house that did not have the blood of the lamb on the doorpost.

This represents the first part of God’s great redemptive plan. The Passover reminds us that God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Jesus Christ came as the Lamb of God to take away the

sins of the world (John 1:29). The Apostle Paul explained: “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

However, we must remember that the Passover is the *starting point*—*not* the conclusion—of the plan. On the night of the Passover, ancient Israel received an exemption from the death penalty, setting the stage for one of history’s greatest and most dramatic events: the Exodus from Egypt. Their deliverance typifies the way in which Christians are justified and made innocent before God. First, we require God’s grace, given through God the Father’s gift of His only begotten Son, who died in our stead and paid sin’s penalty on our behalf (John 3:16; Romans 3:24–25). Second, we must *respond* to God’s grace with faith and repentance (Romans 5:1–2; Acts 3:19). Repentance—a turning away from sin and a turning toward God—flows from faith. The Israelites of old did not receive an exemption from death so that they could remain as slaves in Egypt, any more than we receive God’s grace extended to us in His Son’s sacrifice so that we might remain slaves to sin.

The original seven days of unleavened bread were the week of the Exodus, beginning when Israel started out of Egypt “with boldness” (Numbers 33:3) or “with a high hand” (KJV) and concluding when they crossed the Red Sea, leaving Egyptian slavery behind. When we celebrate the Days of Unleavened Bread, we are celebrating God’s deliverance of His people from slavery. Passover represents our redemption from death through the sacrifice of Christ, and Unleavened Bread reminds us that God will completely deliver us from the bondage of sin if we will respond to His grace by following where He leads. This must be our response to the grace that God freely extends. Even though Israel was spared the wrath of the Eternal on the night of the Passover, any who had refused to follow God’s lead would have remained behind in Egypt as Pharaoh’s slaves.

Those who confuse the Passover and Unleavened Bread festivals lose sight of the fact that two distinct events are to be noted by God’s people. The first is our redemption from death, and the second is our deliverance from the bondage of sin. They are inexorably linked, yet also distinct and separate.

The Timing Examined

Over the years, some have wondered if the first Passover was also the night that the Exodus began. If that were true, that Passover would have had to be observed on the evening that was the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth. Simply put, does the phrase “at even” (KJV) or “twilight” (NKJV) refer to the end of the day or the beginning of the day? The Bible makes the

answer quite clear, as is explained in detail in “Between the Evenings” on page 8 of this issue, and as we will examine in brief here.

Note that Exodus 12:6 states: “And ye shall keep it [the lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk” (JPS version). The Hebrew phrase translated “at dusk” in the JPS and “at even” in the KJV would be literally translated “between the two evenings.” This phrase is used several times in the Old Testament and these various usages show what it properly means.

Dusk, or the period between sunset and total darkness, is the proper meaning of “between the two evenings,” later Jewish tradition notwithstanding. Defining this as the afternoon period between noon and sunset was simply an attempt by the Pharisees to justify their tradition of a mid-afternoon Passover sacrifice and to read it back into the text. As Christ pointed out on various occasions, they gave their tradition more weight than the plain text of Scripture.

The Hebrew word normally translated evening is *ereb*, and refers to the period that begins with sunset. This is made clear in verses such as Leviticus 22:6–7 and Joshua 8:29 where evening [*ereb*] is equated with sunset and clearly marks the end of the old day and the beginning point for the new. The term used in Exodus 12:6, *beyn ha`arbayim*, is only used a few places in the Old Testament. In addition to describing the time when the Passover was to be killed, it is also used to describe the time when the Israelites could slaughter and prepare the quail in Exodus 16:12 and the time when the priests were to light the lamps in the tabernacle in Exodus 30:8. It clearly makes sense that the lamps would be lit at dusk (after sunset, but before it became really dark). This account regarding the quail, examined closely, explains much.

Exodus 16 explains that on the fifteenth day of the second month the Israelites began to complain about food and declared that they were going to starve. This was clearly a Sabbath, because God promised them manna the next morning and gave it to them on six consecutive days. On the seventh day, God’s Sabbath, they received none.

Now notice the giving of the quail. This was sent the evening before the first manna came. They received the quail at dusk (v. 12, JPS). Do you understand the significance of this statement? This clearly shows that dusk represented the **beginning** of the first day of the week, *not* the last portion of the Sabbath. God did not want the Israelites gathering and preparing their food on the Sabbath (cf. vv. 22–23). This miracle of the quail represented the beginning of God’s miraculous demonstration of which day is the Sabbath.

Now consider the implications of this for the timing of Passover. Exodus 16 shows that the period of

dusk was the beginning of the first day of the week, therefore the dusk mentioned in Exodus 12 also means **the beginning** of the fourteenth day of the first month, *not its end*.

Days begin and end at sunset, *not* at total darkness which comes an hour or so later. *Ereb*, referring to sunset, means the end of the old day and *beyn ha'arbayim* (“dusk” or literally “between the two evenings”) always means the beginning of the new day, as Exodus 16 shows.

Notice also that several other points help to prove the timing of the Passover. First, consider the origin of the name of the festival itself. Exodus 12:27 shows that the name came because God “passed over” the houses of the children of Israel. The slaughter of the lamb, placing the blood on the door post, roasting and eating the lamb, and the “destroyer” passing over, all came within about a six hour period and must have all occurred on Abib 14, the only day ever identified in God’s Word as the Lord’s Passover (Leviticus 23:5).

In Numbers 28 and 29 we find a detailed list of sacrifices offered in the tabernacle, covering the morning and evening sacrifices and the sacrifices for the weekly Sabbath, for the first day of the month (the new moon) and for each festival day. One very interesting point is that the fourteenth day of the first month is clearly identified as the Passover, and differentiated from the fifteenth—which is designated as the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Numbers 28:16–17). However, unlike *all the other* days mentioned in these two chapters, there is *no* special temple sacrifice designated for the Passover. Of all the festive occasions, the Passover alone was a household-centered ceremony rather than a temple ceremony. Notice also that the temple sacrifices offered on Abib 15 were repeated throughout the entire seven-day period, clearly delineating Abib 15 and the six following days as the same festival, distinct from the festival on Abib 14.

In the New Testament, the gospel accounts repeatedly call Jesus’ final meal with His disciples “the Passover.” The disciples asked, “Where shall we eat the Passover?” and we are clearly told that the disciples then “prepared the Passover” (Matthew 26:17–20). There is no indication that they were surprised at the timing of the meal, or that it differed from the Passover to which they were accustomed.

Further, Christ was our Passover, sacrificed for us. The symbolism only fits when we understand that Christ’s introduction of the new symbols as a memorial, His arrest and scourging, as well as His crucifixion and death all occurred on the fourteenth day of the first month, the day called in various Old Testament scriptures “YHVH’s Passover.” By the sunset that began Abib 15, Jesus was dead and buried, and all of the Passover sym-

bolism had been concluded. There was clearly no part of the New Testament fulfillment of the Passover that happened after sunset on Abib 14. Thus, the period of dusk that began Abib 15 saw Jesus asleep in the grave, and saw completed all the fulfillment of the Passover symbolism.

Resolving a Difficulty

Some have wrongly thought that Deuteronomy 16:1–8 shows the night of the Passover and the first night of Unleavened Bread as one and the same. Upon careful examination, however, we will see that these verses explain something very different.

First, we should remember that the Torah was occasionally edited, to make its terminology “up to date,” all the way down to the days of Ezra. A classic example is found in Genesis 14:14, which says that Abram pursued “as far as Dan” the kings that had looted Sodom and taken Lot and his family captive. While the location of Abram’s pursuit was known in later Israelite history as “Dan,” it was not known by that name in Moses’ lifetime—and certainly not in the days of Abraham! Dan was Abraham’s great-grandson. Judges 18:29 makes clear that this city, known earlier as Laish, had its name changed to Dan in the days of the judges, long after the deaths of Moses and Joshua. Some later editor, possibly Ezra, substituted “Dan” for the earlier place name, so that readers in his current generation would understand where the ancient battle took place.

In later usage, the Israelites had come to use the term “Passover” to refer to the entire eight-day period of Passover and Unleavened Bread, just as we in the Church of God commonly say “the Feast” when describing the eight-day period of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. Ezekiel 45:21 and Luke 2:41–43 are two examples of this “inclusive” use of the term “Passover.” Deuteronomy 16 is using “the Passover” in this inclusive sense when describing the Festival of Unleavened Bread. In fact, the whole theme of Deuteronomy 16 is of the three “pilgrim festivals.” Further, note that Deuteronomy 16:1 emphasizes God’s deliverance, and the night He brought Israel out of Egypt—*not* the “destroyer” passing over homes marked by the blood of the lamb.

The *Jewish Publication Society (JPS)* translation helps clarify the proper sense of the second verse: “And thou shalt sacrifice the passover-offering unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd in the place which the LORD shall choose to cause His name to dwell there” (v. 2). What were these Passover offerings “of flock *and* herd”? Exodus 12:5 makes plain that the Passover meal celebrated at the beginning of Abib 14 must be a yearling lamb, taken “from the sheep or from the goats.” It was not

permissible to use a cow or an ox taken from the “herd.” Neither was it permissible to cook it any way except dry roasting (Exodus 12:8–9). Yet Deuteronomy 16:2 plainly refers to an offering “of flock *and herd*.” The Hebrew word for “herd” is *bakar*, and is used frequently in the Old Testament, but only to refer to cattle or oxen. It can only refer to beef—not to lamb. As such, Deuteronomy 16:2 cannot refer simply to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.

How was that Passover lamb to be prepared? It was to be roasted. Notice in 2 Chronicles 35 an account similar to Deuteronomy 16. While giving “Passover offerings” in the number of 30,000 lambs and young goats, Josiah also gave 3,000 cattle (2 Chronicles 35:7). What was done with these offerings? They “roasted the Passover offerings with fire *according to the ordinance* [Exodus 12]; but the other holy offerings they boiled in pots, in caldrons, and in pans” (v. 35).

Clearly, Deuteronomy 16:2 must be using the term “Passover offering” to describe offerings made at the temple to begin the Days of Unleavened Bread—the “Passover season” in the broadest sense. Thus can the instructions of Deuteronomy 16 be reconciled with those of Exodus 12.

A Night To Be Much Observed

In Exodus 12:42, we are instructed to keep a “night to be much observed” (*KJV*) unto the Eternal. The Hebrew word translated as “to be much observed” is *shamarim*, and is only used in this one verse in all of the Old Testament. It is the plural form of *shamar*, a word frequently used in the Old Testament and generally translated as “observe” or “keep.” The plural form is often used in Hebrew to denote the superlative (i.e., holy of holies or song of songs). This is a night of *special* keeping or observation. It represented the beginning of one of the most dramatic events in God’s redemptive plan—the Exodus.

On the night when the “destroyer” passed through the land, the Israelites had been instructed to remain in their homes **until the morning** (Exodus 12:22). Pharaoh arose in the night, after the midnight slaying of the firstborn, and dispatched soldiers to send for Moses. After Moses and Aaron journeyed several miles to Pharaoh’s palace and had their meeting, they returned and sent word out to the hundreds of thousands of Israelite families to begin assembling quickly. In the process, they were to spoil the Egyptians by taking the gifts of gold, silver and jewels that their Egyptian neighbors thrust on them. As they were preparing for the beginning of their journey, they saw the Egyptians burying their dead from the night before (Numbers 33:2–4). Even though the people moved

with haste, it took a number of hours to assemble well over a million people, along with their herds and flocks, to march in an orderly fashion (Exodus 13:18). They began their journey around sunset on Abib 14, coming out of Egypt by night (Deuteronomy 16:1).

Notice further how God, in Exodus 12, distinguished the meanings of these two evenings: the Passover and the Night To Be Much Observed. Exodus 12:27 explains what the Israelites were to teach their children regarding the Passover service: “It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our

This evening that begins the Days of Unleavened Bread should be a festive and joyous occasion. Rejoicing and giving thanks to God should be the centerpiece of this occasion.

households.” Later, in Exodus 12:42, we read of another night with a *different* meaning. That night is Abib 15. Scripture says of it: “It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt” (*KJV*).

Passover commemorates the offering of the “Lamb of God,” and our deliverance from death by God’s grace. The Night To Be Much Observed celebrates the beginning of our own spiritual “Exodus” from sin! On that evening, Israel of old began its journey, coming out of Egypt “with boldness” (Numbers 33:3) or “with a high hand” (*KJV*). This was an exciting and festive occasion, which God wanted to be remembered for all generations.

We gather at dusk, at the beginning of the fourteenth day of the first month, to commemorate the sacrifice of our Savior by partaking of the symbols that He set apart at His final Passover with His disciples. On the following evening, we gather for a festive meal to celebrate the beginning of our journey. We were not “passed over” to continue dwelling in spiritual Egypt, but rather so that we would be free to follow our Savior all of the way out of Egypt, and on to the Promised Land—the glorious liberty and freedom of the Kingdom of God. This evening that begins the Days of Unleavened Bread should be a festive and joyous occasion. Rejoicing and giving thanks to God should be the centerpiece of this occasion. We are celebrating the beginning of our journey to spiritual freedom: “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). LCN

Between the Evenings

By Rod Reynolds

Over the years, some in God's Church have wondered why we observe the Passover in the evening at the beginning of Abib 14, while today's Jews observe it at the beginning of Abib 15. Have we misunderstood the language, and thus the command, of Scripture? Is there sound biblical and historical evidence for the practice of the Church, or should today's Jewish practice be considered authoritative? A careful examination of the facts reveals that God's Church has retained the true biblical practice, even though others have turned to error-laden traditions of men.

Understanding the meaning of the Hebrew term "twilight," as used in Exodus 12:6, is pivotal for understanding when to observe the Passover. A dictionary definition of "twilight" is: "the light diffused over the sky when the sun is below the horizon, especially in the evening; also, the period during which this light is prevalent" (*Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*).

The Hebrew used here for "twilight" is *beyn ha'arbayim*. *Beyn* is Hebrew for between (also "interval" and "within"). And *ha'arbayim* is the dual of *'ereb*, evening. Hence, "between the two evenings"—found in some translations and margin references—is an accurate, literal translation of *beyn ha'arbayim*.

At the time of Christ, the Pharisees interpreted "between the two evenings" to mean the interval between the early hours of the sun's declination—early to mid after-

noon—to sunset. Thus they justified the slaying of the Passover lambs on the afternoon of Abib 14. However, the Sadducees, the Samaritans and later the Karaites (a Jewish sect that arose in the eighth century AD) understood the term as the time interval *between sunset and total darkness*.

The prevailing view among Bible scholars is that the original, specific meaning of the term *beyn ha'arbayim* is the latter. "Aben Ezra agrees with the Caraites and Samaritans in taking the first evening to be the time when the sun sinks below the horizon, and the second the time of total darkness.... Modern expositors have very properly decided in favour of the view held by *Aben Ezra* and the custom adopted by the Caraites and Samaritans" (*Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Keil & Delitzsch, vol. II, p. 12). "Samaritans, Karaites, and Sadducees specify the time as after sunset and before darkness. The latter probably designates the more archaic practice" (*Interpreters Bible*, vol. 1, p. 919). "The phrase 'between the evenings' means the period between sunset and darkness, 'twilight'..." (*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 71). "This [Passover] lamb... was to be slaughtered 'between the evenings' or between the going down of the sun and absolute darkness.... That fateful night of the fourteenth of Abib... God's judgment passed over the land of Egypt..." (*Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, Eugene Merrill, p. 113).

Morning and Evening Sacrifice

The respected scholar Alfred Edersheim wrote extensively on Jewish history and customs. He agreed that the original meaning of "between the two evenings" indicates the time from sunset to dark. He acknowledges: "The evening sacrifice was fixed by the Law (Num. 28:4, 8) as 'between the evenings,' that is, between the darkness of the gloaming [the dusk of early evening, twilight] and that of the night.... But at the time of our Lord the evening sacrifice certainly commenced much earlier" (*The Temple*, p. 108).

Indeed, Pharisaic practice transferred the "evening sacrifice" from evening to mid-afternoon to early afternoon, just as the Passover sacrifice was transferred from twilight on Abib 14 to mid-afternoon, due to a misapplication of the term "between the two evenings."

Since the time of the evening sacrifice relates directly to the time of the Passover sacrifice, we should examine this point more closely. Some have made an issue of the morning sacrifice being mentioned before the evening sacrifice in Exodus 29:38–42 and elsewhere. Some have argued that since the morning sacrifice is mentioned *first*, in any given 24-hour day the morning sacrifice would *precede* the evening sacrifice. Therefore the evening sacrifice would have to occur in the afternoon, before sunset, as the Pharisees maintained.

This argument lacks validity for several reasons. It is based on an

assumption that because the morning sacrifice is mentioned first in some passages, it must occur first in a formal 24-hour day. This assumption does not take into account the manner in which the day-night, or morning-evening, cycle is commonly expressed in biblical language. There is no question that when the term “day and night” (*yowm* and *layil*) appears, the daylight portion of a day is “day,” and the nighttime portion is “night.” It is also clear that in a formal sense the biblical 24-hour day begins and ends at sunset. Technically then, *night* precedes *day* in a biblical 24-hour day. The biblical writers well understood this. Yet in more than three dozen instances we find either the expression “day and night”—or day mentioned before night—in the Old Testament. Using the same logic as some apply to the expression “morning and evening sacrifice,” we would have to conclude based on the expression “day and night” that day precedes night in a formal 24-hour day. But it does not.

Occasionally the expression “night and day” is used. The two accounts of Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple are very similar, capturing the essence, while differing in minor details. In one rendition Solomon prays “that your eyes may be open toward this temple *night and day*” (1 Kings 8:29). In the other he prays “that your eyes may be open toward this temple *day and night*” (2 Chronicles 6:20). Thus the biblical writers regarded the expressions as equivalent in meaning. Such manner of expression usually has nothing to do with the order of day and night in a formal sense. And the same could be said of the expression “morning and evening.” While “mornings and evenings” are associated with the daily sacrifices in some passages of Scripture, so also are “evenings and mornings” (Daniel 8:11–13, 26)!

Moreover, there is clear evidence that prior to the Pharisees’ emer-

gence in the second century BC, the temple service that accompanied the evening sacrifice occurred at night, not in the mid-afternoon! The killing of the evening sacrifice and sprinkling of its blood occurred simultaneously with the lighting of lamps and the burning of incense. All were to take place “between the two evenings” (Exodus 29:39, 41; 30:8; 2 Chronicles 13:11).

The lamps were to be kept burning all night, from evening to morning, at which time they were extinguished (Exodus 27:20–21; 30:8; Leviticus 24:3; 1 Samuel 3:3). After the salting of the sacrifice (Leviticus 2:13), prayers were offered, the pieces of the sacrifice were placed on the altar and incense was burnt on the altar of incense (Exodus 30:1–8), accompanied by additional prayers (Psalm 141:2; Luke 1:10; Revelation 5:8; 8:3–4). Then the meal and drink offerings were presented at the altar (Exodus 29:40–41; Leviticus 6:20; Numbers 28:5–8). Then the silver trumpets were blown, along with other instruments, as the Levites joined in song “praising and thanking the LORD” (2 Chronicles 5:12–13; Numbers 10:10; 2 Chronicles 7:6; 29:20–30, cf. *The Temple*, pp. 113–132).

So we see that the priests, Levites and people standing in the temple courts blessing the Eternal and singing praises were directly associated with the offering of sacrifices, including the evening sacrifice. Levites chosen as singers for the services “were employed in that work day and night [*layil*]” (1 Chronicles 9:33). Of the Levite singers it is said that they were “to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening” (1 Chronicles 23:30). That it was night when the Levites attended this “evening” service is evident from the following: “Behold, bless the LORD, all [you] servants of the LORD, who

by night stand in the house of the LORD! Lift up your hands [in] the sanctuary, and bless the LORD” (Psalm 134:1–2; cf. Psalm 92:1–3).

Josephus also testifies of the change that occurred, saying that at the time of Moses and Aaron the incense—hence the evening sacrifice—was offered at sunset, but at the time of Pompey’s siege of Jerusalem (64BC) the evening sacrifice was commonly offered in the afternoon at “about the ninth hour”—3:00 p.m. (*Antiquities* 3.8.3; 14.4.3).

Biblical Command Reflected in Samaritan and Sadducean Tradition

We have seen the clear definitions of Scripture regarding the time when the evening sacrifice was to be made and the Passover slain. Is there any historical evidence that the Jewish community ever acted according to those scriptural definitions? Actually, there is *clear evidence* from the most authoritative source of all—the New Testament itself! The gospel accounts make very plain that Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover (Matthew 26:18–19) a day earlier than the Pharisees and many of the religious leaders of His day (John 18:28).

The Jews’ Talmud does not describe any controversy regarding when on Abib 14 the Passover should be eaten, so it is important to realize that the Talmud was put together long after the New Testament, and was edited by the successors of the Pharisees. There is ample evidence of instances in which the Pharisee-influenced editors of the Talmud “rewrote history” to make it appear that their sectarian practices were the norm. Keeping this in mind, we find that when we examine historical records outside the Bible, some interesting points emerge that shed light on the differ-

ent Passover practices extant in Jesus' day.

The case of the Samaritans may be instructive. When the Samaritan temple at Mount Gerizim was built, it was presided over by the son of a high priest who had been cast out of office for marrying a Samaritan woman. Some scholars speculate that this occurred in the late fifth century BC; others accept the accuracy of Josephus' account placing it at the time of Alexander the Great (332BC; *Antiquities*, 11.8.4; see *Jerusalem in the Time of Christ*, Jeremias, p. 352 n.). "What is certain is, that the rival worship was now established at Samaria, and attracted a great number of priests and other Jews from the distracted capital of Judea" (*Angus-Green Bible Handbook*, p. 598). Although the Samaritan religious tradition embraces a multitude of false doctrines, in certain respects it reflects Jewish temple worship practices predating the Pharisaic tradition that developed during and after the Hasmonean period of the second and first centuries BC. The Samaritan Passover tradition is believed to have continued unbroken from the time of the building of their temple, and is said to be "probably the oldest religious rite that has been continuously kept up" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, "Passover").

The Samaritans sacrifice the Passover lambs "at twilight on the 14th day of the first month" (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 14, "Samaritans," p. 742). "The Samaritans still meticulously observe their ancient N Israelite Passover ritual annually on Mt Gerizim, in close conformity to the Pentateuch, keeping Passover and Unleavened Bread entirely separate entities" (*Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, vol. 3, "Passover," p. 1157). The Samaritan Passover is not killed on Abib 14 and eaten on Abib 15, but is both killed and eaten on Abib 14. "The phrase 'between the

two evenings'... has been accorded two variant interpretations, according to variant community practice—either between 3 p.m. and sunset, as the Pharisees maintained and practiced... or as the Samaritans and others argued, between sunset and dark" (*ibid.*).

Because of the antiquity of the original Samaritan practices, we find that in matters of religious legislation, certain aspects of Samaritan and Sadducean tradition were often comparable (Jeremias, p. 358 n.). The Sadducees "held strictly to the literal interpretation of the Torah, in particular to the precepts on the cultus and the priesthood" (*ibid.*, p. 231). In these matters, "generally, the Sadducean rule undoubtedly conformed to ancient practice" (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XI, "Sadducees," p. 45). Due to their understanding of the meaning of "between the two evenings," the Sadducees designated the beginning of Abib 14, not the following afternoon, as the correct time to kill the Passover lamb. Consequently, "the Sadducees and Pharisees differed as to the proper day [to eat the Passover]" (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*, "Passover," p. 235).

Since the Sadducees and Samaritans agreed on the meaning of "between the two evenings," it is no surprise that the Sadducean belief concerning the proper time of day to kill the Passover is reflected in the practice of the Samaritans. Stating that the Samaritan practice antedates the Pharisaic, the *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* declares: "The counsel to kill the lambs 'in the evening' is more literally followed in the Samaritan rite, the Hebrew is properly interpreted as dusk and cannot be fully reconciled with the later practice of making the sacrifice in the late afternoon; it is also true that as with the Samaritans, the communal meal was about midnight, rather than in the evening, as was later true in

Jerusalem" (p. 666). The *New International Encyclopedia* concurs: "Passover, according to critical views, was originally observed by the sacrifice of a lamb on the night of the 14th of Nisan [Abib]" (1974, "Passover," vol. 14, p. 112). In discussing the Samaritan Passover the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* affirms: "In two important points they differ from later Jewish interpretation. The term 'between the evenings' (Lev. xxiii. 5) they take as the time between sunset and dark, and the 'morrow of the sabbath' (v. 11) they take literally as the first Sunday in the Passover week; wherein they agree with the Sadducees, Boethusians, Karaites and other Jewish sectaries" (11th edition, "Passover").

Biblical Definitions

The Bible gives us a clear example showing that "between the two evenings" (*beyn ha'arbayim*) follows evening (*ereb*). Evening (*ereb*) is directly associated with the setting of the sun in several scriptures (Leviticus 22:6–7; Deuteronomy 16:6; Joshua 8:29; 10:26–27; 1 Kings 22:35–36; 2 Chronicles 18:34; Judges 14:12, 18).

The command concerning the Day of Atonement shows that the day begins and ends at evening (Leviticus 23:32). In Genesis 1:5, evening is associated with darkness and night; morning is associated with the light portion of the day. The first day began at evening and ended the following evening when the second day began (v. 8). Hence, *ereb* (evening, sunset) is the time when one day ends and the next begins. Time flows in a steady, linear fashion. At the exact moment when one day ends, the next begins. The clear evidence of Scripture is that this moment is sunset, and is also referred to as "evening."

"Formally, the Sabbath commenced at sunset on Friday, the day

being reckoned by the Hebrews from sunset to sunset” (*The Temple*, p. 138). “The special preparations for the Passover commenced on the evening of the 13th of Nisan [Abib], with which, according to Jewish reckoning, the 14th began, the day being always computed from evening to evening” (*ibid.*, pp. 171–172). The later rabbinical tradition of beginning the day when the first stars are visible is without biblical support.

God told the Israelites that He would send “bread” (“manna”) and quail for them to eat. Referring to the

The Hebrew term translated “until night” is *`ad-layil*. *Layil* is night. The term *`ad* is a preposition that could as well be translated “during.” Thus it would read that they “were busy in offering burnt offerings and fat during [the] night.” Fatty parts, and certain other parts of the peace offerings were to be placed on the altar as burnt offerings to remain all night, the fire kept burning perpetually (Leviticus 3:3–5; 9–11, 14–16; 6:9).

The Israelites were commanded to “sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun” (Deuteronomy 16:6). Here, the word

Joshua 5:10; Ezra 6:19). The 14th memorializes God’s passing over the homes of the Israelites **during the night**. On that night the Israelites were instructed that “**none of you shall go out of his house until morning** [*boqer*: morning, daybreak, sunrise, end of night (*Gesenius; Brown, Driver, and Briggs*)]” (Exodus 12:22).

However, “God brought you [Israel] out of Egypt by **night** [Hebrew: *layil*]” (Deuteronomy 16:1). Since Israel stayed in their homes on the night of the Passover until morning, they could not have left Egypt the same night.

The gospel accounts make very plain that Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover (Matthew 26:18–19) a day earlier than the Pharisees and many of the religious leaders of His day (John 18:28).

quail, God said: “At twilight [*beyn ha`arbayim*] you shall eat meat... So it was that quail came up at evening [*`ereb*] and covered the camp...” (Exodus 16:12–13). Note the time order. They would eat meat at twilight, or between the two evenings. Obviously, they could not eat the meat until after it had arrived. The quail arrived at evening. Hence “evening” (*`ereb*) preceded “twilight” or “between the two evenings.” This example reveals the correct biblical definition of the term “between the two evenings.” It is the time from sunset to dark, and by definition *always falls at the beginning of a biblical day*.

At the time of Josiah, the Passover lambs were slaughtered on the 14th day of the first month (2 Chronicles 35:1), and the leaders also gave supplemental peace offerings to accompany the Passover sacrifices (vv. 8–9). The Levites prepared portions for the priests, “because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busy in offering burnt offerings and fat until night” (v. 14).

translated “twilight” is *`ereb*, or “evening.” Once again, evening is associated with sunset. The Hebrew could as well be translated “in [the] evening.” When we put this instruction together with that of Exodus 12:6, to “kill it at twilight [between the two evenings],” the intent is clear. Evening (*`ereb*, “sunset”) begins the period of twilight, or sunset to dark, and this is when the killing of the Passover was to begin.

It is true that *`ereb* is sometimes used for “night.” When used in a general sense, it can include the time immediately preceding (and especially following) sunset. But to stretch either it or “between the two evenings” to include early- to mid-afternoon is simply not credible. This is especially true when the terms are being used to lay out a specific time schedule for the keeping of the Passover, or other important ceremony.

Everywhere the Bible designates a specific day on which the Passover proper is to be kept, it is **always the 14th** (Exodus 12:6; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:2–6; Numbers 28:16;

Accordingly: “They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the **fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover**” (Numbers 33:3). The journey began on the night of Abib 15. The Israelites had only the daytime portion of Abib 14 to gather themselves, their belongings and animals together at Rameses in order to begin the journey. So they left Egypt in haste (Exodus 12:33; Deuteronomy 16:3).

Those who defend the practice of slaying the lambs in the mid-afternoon of Abib 14 and eating the Passover on Abib 15 have no real way of justifying their position from a biblical standpoint. They are left only with the weak plea that God did not really mean what He said about the time to kill and eat the Passover sacrifice, and an appeal to the late-developing and error-laden Pharisaic tradition. God set the original Passover to be observed on the night of Abib 14, and this fact establishes the correct time frame for the New Testament Passover observance as well. LCM

Practicing Wise Stewardship

By Rodger Bardo

God's Work is financially poised for more growth. Although our audit (by Maginnis, Knechtel & McIntyre, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants) is still in progress, we have preliminarily projected that 2002 year-end figures will reveal an 8.2 percent increase in U.S. income over 2001, excluding special gifts. This is good news indeed. And with our year-to-date income for January 2003 surpassing a 10 percent increase over January 2002, we are grateful that God is preparing us for more growth in the near future.

The Church financial news is encouraging, especially in light of a year that saw the demise of so many financial and business giants, coupled with substantial economic difficulty for so many individuals. Growth is indeed exciting, and is something that pleases all of us at Headquarters, but we must be good stewards of that growth, finding effective ways to manage income. In this area, we see some interesting trends emerging.

Our core income comes primarily from the dedicated membership of the Church of God who faithfully practice tithing. Approximately 80.44 percent of our total income at present is coming from Church members. Another 12.44 percent comes from co-workers (non-members who donate twice or more within a year), 3.4 percent comes from prospective members, 2.5 percent comes from donors (non-members who have donated only once in a year), 0.68 percent comes from Church youth and 0.54 percent comes from other sources.

Income in every one of these categories rose in 2002 compared to 2001. Member donations rose by 3.4 percent, prospective member donations rose by 21.01 percent, co-worker donations rose by 50.09 percent, donor donations rose by 155.11 percent, Church youth donations rose by 39.26 percent and donations from other sources rose by 12.97 percent. We thank God for these increases and for those who truly have their hearts in His Work!

Another very encouraging detail is that "one-time special offerings" from all categories rose by 54.26 percent in 2002, and estate donations grew by an astounding 1,435.59 percent! Realistically, we understand that this last percentage is atypical, but it is worth noting that these generous estate donations were given during 2002 at exactly the right times to meet Church needs.

The Church began 2003 with 1,333 donors and 1,463 co-workers. This is an increase of 39.7 percent

over 2001. Remember that in February 1999, there were only 12 co-workers! We know that most of our new members come from these two categories of givers, yet even before they become members their growing numbers enable us to do the work better.

With all this positive financial news, are there no more needs? Consider just these few facts: the January-February 2003 issue of *Tomorrow's World* had a print run of 159,950. This is up **43 percent** from the January-February 2002 issue! The *Tomorrow's World* television program in the U.S. and Canada saw similar increases, generating 88,627 responses in 2002, which is 41.8 percent over the 62,507 responses received in 2001.

Overall international growth was also substantial. While, as of this writing, the final figures for 2002 are not available, one point is abundantly clear: God is indeed calling more members from around the world, and a financial challenge in the Church today is to be ready for that growth.

So just how can we effectively prepare or "manage" for such growth? Through *wise stewardship*: that is, the ability to balance the needs of the Work with the income God provides.

On the chart accompanying this article, you can see our income vs. expenses. You will clearly note that our income over the past four years has kept pace with our outgo. This careful approach is significant, as no one can predict the business future with any certainty these days.

It is this consistent pattern of keeping expenses below income that allowed the Church to afford its move to Charlotte, North Carolina, while still maintaining its strategic reserves at a level consistent with fiscally prudent business practices. In a future article, I hope to discuss the importance of the Church's strategic reserve accounts.

Our four-year average domestic income has been approximately \$7.2 million (excluding one-time gifts for 2002) compared to a four-year average of \$6.4 million in expenses (excluding relocation costs paid in 2002). These figures are approximate, since we have not received our finalized audit for this year. However, as you can see, God continues to bless. For 2003, our budgeted domestic income, excluding special gifts, is expected to rise to more than \$8 million. Yet with this growth, we must even more effectively manage what God provides.

Three ways to manage costs are in taxes, rent and salaries. In our Charlotte location, we project a five-year

collective savings of approximately \$1.5 million, even *after* our moving costs and our down payment for the building (with more than twice the space of our current facility) are factored in.

In addition, with our loan rates “locked in” over the next 30 years and *no* balloon payment, thus *stabilizing* our “rent” costs, these savings can continue well into the future. In California, as with most states that in some way tax church property, purchasing property becomes cost and tax problematic. So, while you may not immediately notice significant outward changes other than our physical address, we are already seeing the benefits of our move to Charlotte.

Employee housing and other living costs are also lower in Charlotte. This allows us to hire and retain good talent, while stabilizing our salary costs and providing a good quality of life for the employee. With the Charlotte real estate market presently undervalued in both commercial and residential sectors, and with the community practically having “rolled out the red carpet” for the Church, we have found a very favorable environment.

I wish all of you could have been with us during our many discussions with banks, civic and local business leaders, who assisted the Church in locating a new city, community and building from which to do God’s Work. Even aside from the real financial and space advantages to the Work, throughout this entire process, we could again and again see God’s hand, guiding, even when we thought we had another plan!

Another aspect of wise stewardship concerns efficiency. With all departments under one roof, this will improve productivity. One area most affected by this change will be our Mail Processing Department, or “MPD,” which in San Diego has been in our Via Tazon facility about two blocks from our main building. In Charlotte, the entire department will flourish in a modern, air-conditioned section of our new complex, which will have more storage room for publications, and more room to expand our growing mailing operations.

Obviously, things will be challenging for a while. So please be patient—but after we are settled, in the words of

MPD Manager Gaylyn Bonjour: “We won’t have to trip over each other anymore.” He is certainly correct. Space in San Diego has been at a premium.


In business, time is also money, so improvements in efficient operations, space, equipment and flow of work will also improve productivity. Leasing the new “Riso-Graph” photocopier-printer will allow us to print our letters “in house”—with savings estimated at 50 percent of what we were previously paying. And with our new Imager 3 printer, MPD staff can print labels in 1-1/2 to 2 hours that previously required a day to print. Many of the savings anticipated from our Charlotte location are directly responsible for our ability to meet the needs in MPD

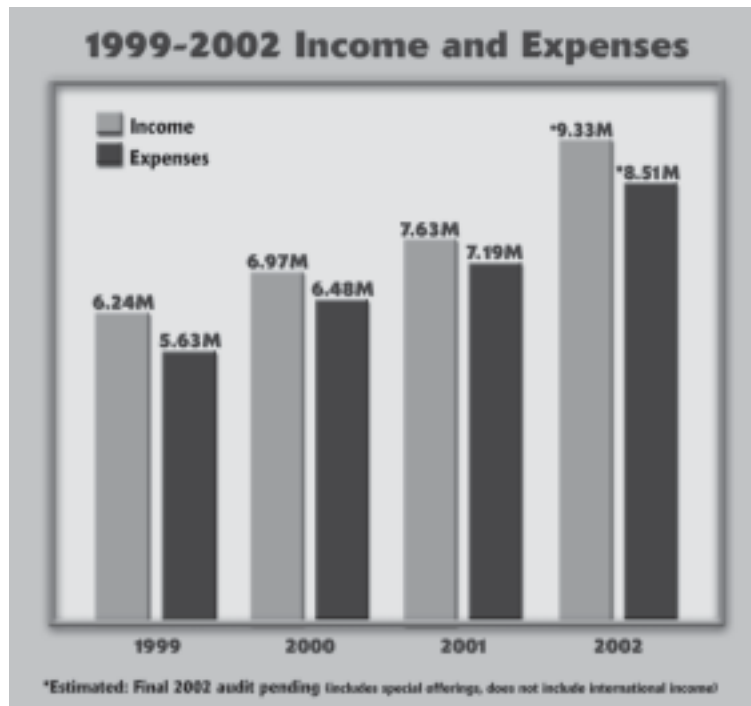
and other areas of the Work, such as more *Tomorrow’s World* magazines and television stations.

One point is abundantly clear: Jesus Christ is ensuring our stable financial future by blessing our practice of wise stewardship today. In Luke 12:42–43, Christ said: “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give *them* their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.” We

must be found “so doing” in every aspect of our lives. It is easy to spend, but difficult to manage. God wants all of us to manage what we have wisely.

December 2002 marked the 10th year since the revival of God’s Work, and the 50th year of Dr. Meredith’s ordination as a minister of Jesus Christ. Yet other milestones lie just ahead as we embark on this new phase of God’s Work in Charlotte.

You all know that your generosity and diligence—putting the Work first through your many prayers, sacrifices, service, tithes and offerings—is very pleasing to God. When our attitude doing the Work reflects that of Jesus Christ, we can be assured that the Work will move forward to meet the challenges of future growth. At a time when most companies are feeling the pinch of an ailing economy, we can be reassured that God’s Church is poised and ready to tackle the great Work ahead! 





International Corner...

European Update

by Douglas S. Winnail

The work in Europe continues to make progress. Although still a “small flock”—with many members in scattered locations—there is a definite sense of focus and commitment. During the last year I have been able to visit most of the congregations and video groups in the European region. I have been deeply impressed with the desire and sense of dedication for doing the Work of God and the support for Dr. Meredith and the staff at Headquarters. The relocation of the main office to Charlotte, on the east coast of the United States, will put the Church closer to the heartbeat of world events—both in America and Europe.

Results of the advertising efforts in various parts of the region have been encouraging. During the past year advertising in the UK has generated over 10,000 responses from just three mass circulation ads. In Ireland, 17 smaller circulation ads have produced over 700 requests for tapes and literature. The German language Web site has seen more than a 100 percent increase in downloaded literature in the last year, and has registered more than 10,000 downloads in its 2 1/2 years of operation. The Dutch language Web site is currently showing responses 5-7 times greater than last year. During the last two years, the French language Web site has downloaded 3,000 broadcasts, 3,000 booklets and more than 8,000 articles to more than

8,400 unique visitors from 64 different countries.

Canadian Update

by Gerald Weston

The year 2002 saw solid growth in the Work in Canada. Church attendance figures rose by 13 percent, and income was up a little over 18 percent. There were 22 baptisms, most of which were brand new members. New congregations were started in Grande Prairie, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Red Deer, Alberta and Victoria, British Columbia also joined the ranks of official groups.

The greatest growth in 2002 took place in Alberta and Quebec. Mr. Stuart Wachowicz, in addition to his full-time job with the Edmonton School District, took on the task of starting a fourth congregation in Alberta. Grande Prairie, which is about five hours northwest of Edmonton, only meets once a month, but this new group has grown from 15 at its first meeting in February to a high of 25. Mr. Jacques Secours oversees our two congregations in Quebec. Montreal and Quebec City also saw significant growth, doubling in size from 30 at the beginning of the year to 60 at year's end.

Canadian morals continue to plummet in a downward spiral. Last spring the big news in Toronto concerned whether a 17-year-old boy could take his “boyfriend” to the prom at his Catholic high school. The court finally ruled in his favor, and forbade the school from canceling the event. More recently, a male

grade school teacher in British Columbia had a sex change operation, coming back as a woman. One teacher rallied to his defense by declaring that this provides a good opportunity to teach the children tolerance. Another British Columbia court ruled by a margin of 7 to 2 that books of the *Heather Has Two Mommies* genre could not be banned from kindergartners and first graders on the basis of religion, declaring that public schools are secular.

Overall, Canadian citizens are quite complacent, priding themselves on their open-minded tolerance. Their economy is currently outperforming the American economy, and terror has not yet touched them on their soil. In the meantime, public scandal follows public scandal. The Prime Minister has been forced to defend one subordinate after another for what appear to be shady and unethical practices. The Premier of Alberta confessed to having a problem with alcohol, following an embarrassing incident in which, under the influence, he walked into a homeless shelter and told everyone to go out and get a job. The Premier of British Columbia recently spent the night in a Hawaiian jail for driving under the influence. A scandal came to light in the battle over the registration of firearms when it was revealed that the advertised two million dollar price tag for registering all firearms was expected to grow to one billion dollars. But, in spite of these problems of leadership, life is good for most Canadians.

This makes it difficult to stir them to action. We receive a good number of inquiries, but few actually follow through on their initial request. Severe drought in the western prairies has failed to catch the attention of the eastern provinces. Perhaps it will take acts of terrorism, disease epidemics, or a severe economic downturn to convince some that all is not well in this wonderfully blessed country.

Caribbean Update

by Jonathan McNair

Jamaica is located in the northern portion of the Caribbean islands. To get to Jamaica, many travelers fly to Miami, Florida. From there, a short two-hour flight will take you over Cuba and on to Jamaica. Many tourists fly directly into Montego Bay on the northern coast. “Mo Bay,” as locals call it, is a hub of tourist activity. Beach resorts line the coast, with sand, sun and fun attracting thousands of tourists each year. With the popular Ocho Rios along the coast to the east, and the lesser-known Negril to the west, the beautiful north coast is the area most familiar to tourists. If you travel south through rural Jamaica, through the sugar cane fields and Blue Mountain, you will find that all roads eventually come to Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. The majority of our members live either in Kingston or in the surrounding suburbs.

Today, Kingston is a city of about 700,000 people, clogged with cars and buses. But in the 1600s Kingston Bay, with its protected harbor, was famous as a hideout for pirates. Port Royal, on the opposite side of the bay from modern-day Kingston, was known as the “wickedest city on earth.” Though our brethren do not have to face pirates, they do confront high crime, crushing unemployment and political instability.

Jamaica is famous as the country with more churches per square mile than any other country. Yet, the enthusiasm for religion has not provided the average Jamaican with the answers to the fundamental questions of life.

The Living Church of God congregation began with a handful of members and has grown to more than 60. Thousands of Jamaicans have seen *Tomorrow's World* on television. More than 3,000 have requested subscriptions to our magazine. In 2002, we held public Bible lectures in Kingston and Montego Bay. Our 2003 schedule will include another meeting in Kingston, and also in the town of Mandeville.

As Regional Pastor, as well as the local pastor for Jamaica, I travel on a quarterly basis to Jamaica. Mr. Hugh Wilson, associate pastor, provides experienced leadership on a day-to-day basis. Mrs. Blondelle Chang works full-time in the Church office, handling many of the administrative duties. Many of the members have been pillars in the Church for years. Our newer members, some only called in the last two or three years, add a spark and zest, while our elderly members provide wisdom and perspective.

Papua New Guinea Update

by Rod King

Papua New Guinea is the body and tail of that lizard-shaped island north of Australia. The Indonesian province of Irian Jaya is the western part of the island. Its “spine” is a high mountain range called the Owen Stanleys, which rise to more than 15,000 feet above sea level.

My trip took me from dry Port Moresby to the lush jungles of Wewak and Lae on the northern coast. The town of Wewak has long lost its

colonial freshness since the Australian administrators left in 1974. Everywhere can be found the evidence of buai. This green skinned betel nut is chewed by both men and women, who add to it some lime dust taken from either ground coral or oyster shell. This turns the juice into a red mixture and the effect is to produce copious saliva which must then be spat out. Everywhere the red juice is splattered on walls and footpaths. The juice is a mild sedative to those who chew it.

For the Sabbath, we planned to have the members and their children travel by bus to the Windjammer Hotel where I was staying. Half an hour after the arranged time, seventeen hot, perspiring people walked into the air-conditioned meeting room. They had walked the distance from town. Cold drinks were served to everyone, and then I gave a study on “What is true wealth?”

The next day, local deacon Mr. Peter Devis and I traveled by air to the highlands over steep mountains and vast plains of kunai grass. We reached Mt. Hagen, where we planned to meet with members and *Tomorrow's World* readers. The next day we waited, but no one arrived. We learned that travel had become dangerous since recent election fraud caused violent clashes in the area. A few days before we arrived, police shot three bank robbers dead at a bank 200 meters from the hotel where we were staying.

Upon returning to Port Moresby, I was overcome with a headache, fever and weakness. To Mr. Devis the symptoms seemed those of malaria, endemic to PNG. I made a decision to cut short my trip, and Mr. Devis decided to return to Wewak. I arranged for a flight home on Sunday, and spent the next two days in bed. Blood tests revealed that the condition was a tropical virus that had been afflicting many local people. So it does not look like malaria, but we will take precautions in future. LEN

Becoming a Leader:

Five Important Steps

By Douglas S. Winnail

The Bible reveals that Christians are to become “kings and priests” to reign with Christ on earth in the millennium (Revelation 5:10; 1:6; 20:4–6). Scripture explains that God is preparing a chosen people to function as civic and religious *leaders* in the coming kingdom of God. Many find this hard to believe, especially when the Bible also states: “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Corinthians 1:26). You are not alone if you have sometimes wondered how *you* could ever rule over cities and nations.

However, it is important to realize that God does not intend to use us *as we are*. The Bible explains that we are called to *grow* so we can function as leaders in the coming government of God. The parables of the talents and the minas (Matthew 25:14–19; Luke 19:11–27) indicate that our reward will be in direct proportion to how much we grow and overcome. When Jesus returns, He will marry His bride—the Church. The bride is described as a woman who “has *made herself ready*” (Revelation 19:7). We need to consider: what can we do *now* to become effective leaders in the future?

The foundation of effective leadership rests on skills and character. Individuals who hope to become leaders must *acquire* certain skills and *develop* specific qualities of character. In this article we will focus on five qualities of character and associated skills that make leaders effective. These are qualities that anyone can develop with reasonable effort. These qualities can be fostered in children by forward-looking parents. By asking God to guide you in this process, you can let God mold you into an instrument He will be able to use now, and in His coming kingdom.

Think Like a Leader

The Bible emphasizes three important mental attributes that leaders must develop to rule effectively: knowledge, understanding and wisdom. We are not born with these attributes—they must be developed. Jesus upbraided religious leaders of His day for their lack of knowledge. When the Sadducees challenged Christ with a hypothetical question about the resurrection, Jesus responded bluntly that

“you are mistaken, *not knowing* the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). Leaders must be knowledgeable—they must know their subject. This is why Peter admonishes Christians to “*grow* in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Jesus said: “You shall *know* the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Knowledge is power. When you know—and remember—the truth, you will not easily be deceived or led astray. When you know the truth, you can function as a leader, teaching that truth to others. The job of the saints in the kingdom of God will be to explain to mankind “this is the way, walk you in it” (Isaiah 30:20–21). In order to grow to the point where we can do this effectively, we must *spend time studying* the Bible (2 Timothy 2:14–17) and explaining it to our children.

However, leaders need more than knowledge of facts. Solomon wrote that “*wisdom* is the *principal* thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get *understanding*” (Proverbs 4:7). Understanding involves learning *how* facts fit together; wisdom involves *using* knowledge and understanding to make *right* conclusions and sound judgments. It is possible to be smart (with much knowledge) yet make dumb decisions that get us—and whoever follows us—into trouble because we lack wisdom and understanding! But how can you *develop* wisdom and understanding?

The Bible reveals that “the fear of God is the beginning [starting point] of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). If we are willing to look humbly into the Word of God, to find out what God has revealed on a subject, we will be pointed in the right direction. We can then look for additional information that fits with these biblical principles. We are advised to *actively seek* after wisdom (Proverbs 2:1–12), and become *observant* (Proverbs 1:20–33) so we notice the *causes* of success and failure. Effective leaders must learn how to identify wise counselors and seek their advice (Proverbs 11:14). The wisest counsel comes from God and His word (Proverbs 2:6). This is why David wrote: “Oh how I love Your law... Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:97, 105). Aspiring leaders will choose wise companions, and avoid spending time with fools or wasting time in foolish pursuits (Proverbs 13:20). Reading biographies, autobiographies or books about great leaders is an excellent way to learn how leaders

think. Meditating on the Bible will help you to understand how God thinks (Philippians 2:5). Effective leaders are *constantly learning*—and *growing* in knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Wise parents help their children understand and develop these same attributes.

Develop Courage

Peter states that, to grow, Christians must *add* specific qualities to their faith. The first quality mentioned is *virtue* (2 Peter 1:5–11). The Greek word for virtue is *arête*, which means strength, courage, valor, resoluteness, determination. Jesus warned that real Christians will face persecution, “but he who *endures* to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22). Endurance requires courage and determination. Throughout the Bible, God continually urges leaders to develop courage. When Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of Israel, God told him: “Be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or the left” (Joshua 1:6–9). When Solomon assumed the throne of Israel, he was admonished by his father David to “be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God; to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses” (1 Kings 2:2–3). Jesus said, “if you love Me, *keep My commandments*” (John 14:15).

In our modern secular society, it requires courage and determination to keep the commandments of God. The pressures of today, both outside and inside the Church, urge us to compromise and fit in with the values of the world. To stand up for the Truth is not easy. We develop courage by resisting temptations—by refusing to compromise on the Sabbath or the Holy Days, regardless of what our friends, relatives or employers think or decide to do. We exercise courage when we persevere doing the Work when others are saying that the Work is over. Jesus said that if we are willing to live God’s way of life, He will intercede for us with the Father, yet He warned that “whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32–33). To be effective, leaders must *develop* courage to do the right things.

Learn Teamwork

Paul describes the true Church as the “body of Christ,” unified and “joined and knit together by what every joint supplies” (Ephesians 4:12–16). The human body is able to survive and function in a healthy manner when all its parts and systems work together. The Church of God is to function in a similar manner. However,

because we are human and subject to Satan’s divisive influence, we have important lessons to learn in this regard—just as the Apostles did (see Acts 15:36–40). Scripture provides us with important instructions about teamwork, which we can study and put into practice.

One of the most important ways to promote teamwork is to communicate positively and often with teammates and the team captain. When the communication systems of the body—nerves and chemicals—work properly, the result is coordinated and timely movements. When the body’s communication systems break down, we do not function well. It is the same in a family, a church or any other organization. It is the job of leaders and team players to encourage communication. Malachi wrote that “those who feared the LORD *spoke to one another*, and the LORD heard them” and recorded their names in a book (Malachi 3:16). Communication is fostered when we use pleasant words instead of making harsh demands (Proverbs 15:1), when we avoid making judgmental statements about others and focus on getting our own lives in order (Matthew 7:1–6). James notes that wise leaders learn to control their tongue. Leaders who learn to use God’s Spirit will be “peaceable, gentle, willing to yield [to reason—and to God’s Word], full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17). Such individuals will be approachable, respectful of others and easy to talk to. They say what they mean, and mean what they say. Effective leaders become good communicators, and promote communication—which promotes teamwork.

Be Firm, But Flexible

One big pitfall for anyone in a leadership position is the abuse of—or misunderstanding how to use—authority. It is easy to get carried away with authority and go on a “power trip.” Children—and many who act like children—love being in charge, even when others who are affected do not find the situation very pleasant. Learning how to lead is an art that requires training and experience. Leaders must be able to recognize when to be firm and when to be flexible and adapt to changing situations.

The Bible indicates that husbands are to take the lead in family relationships, and wives are to be subject to this God-ordained structure (Ephesians 5:22–23). Yet husbands are also instructed to dwell with their wives “with understanding” (1 Peter 3:7) which means being sensitive to their wife’s needs, desires, hopes and dreams. This is not a sign of weakness on the part of a man, but an indication that the man has learned how to adapt to another person. While a wife is to recognize and adapt to the authority of her husband, she should be capable of exercising authority in a wide variety of

Dress for Services

We live in an age when standards of decency and what is socially acceptable have undergone a dramatic change. It used to be considered extremely bad taste for a man to go out in public unshaven, or to wear a cap into a restaurant or someone's home. People would not wear torn or tattered clothing unless they were extremely poor. The only women who wore clothing that exposed too much flesh were either naïve or prostitutes. Young people were taught to show respect for their elders, and no one would think of calling people in responsible positions by their first names. Yet behaviors once considered uncouth and unacceptable are now widely practiced and considered "normal."

The Church of God has taught for many years that appropriate dress for services should be the best we can afford within the realm of good taste and in harmony with scriptural guidelines. Yet the Church has been affected by the same "relaxed" social trends that have affected society. In recent years, questions have arisen about what is appropriate attire for services, and how leaders should be addressed. Some suggest that dress should be more casual, and that titles should be eliminated because they indicate division. They argue that what is in our heart is what is important, and that if we are more casual we can be more "real." However, it is instructive to notice the *results* of these modern trends, and how current opinions *contrast* with the instructions God provides in His Word about appearance and conduct.

One result—over time—of more casual dress at services can be a more casual approach to doctrine. Individuals who become comfortable ignoring biblical standards of dress may quickly find that other "comfortable" individual opinions *about* the Bible begin to take precedence over Church teachings *from* the Bible. A casual approach to dress is not unlike a casual approach to respecting the ministry, or older brethren. Those who view a minister as just another "Tom, Dick or Harry" are not giving the office the biblically ordained respect it deserves. Where such an irreverent attitude prevails, standards will decline, worship will suffer, and respect for accurate doctrine and zealous Christian living will also diminish. We have all seen how, in such congregations, people at first reason that whatever is acceptable to the majority is OK—then, soon, many individually assume that however *they* decide to wor-

ship God will be acceptable to Him "because He is a God of love."

Of course, this is simply misguided reasoning. Surprising as it may seem to many today, the Bible contains clear guidelines about dress and conduct. When Adam and Eve sinned, they stitched fig leaves together to cover their nakedness; but God instead made for them tunics of animal skins, to clothe them more appropriately (Genesis 3:21). When God established a priesthood to represent Him on earth, He gave specific instructions about how priests were to dress, especially when conducting a religious service (see Exodus 28). The Bible states that it is not appropriate for men to wear women's clothing, or for women to dress like men (Deuteronomy 22:5). Men are not to wear their hair long, and women are not to have short hair like men (1 Corinthians 11:1–16). Godly women are to dress "with propriety and moderation [discretion]" (1 Timothy 2:9) especially—but not only—for worship services. When Christ returns, there will be a great wedding feast; however, those who are dressed *inappropriately* will be excluded (Matthew 22:11–14). The saints who rule with Christ will be given fine white garments (Revelation 3:5; 19:8) that are symbolic of righteousness—which entails right conduct. Paul advised the Church to "recognize [respect] those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord... and esteem them highly for their work's sake" (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13). They were not to be viewed as just "one of the boys."

These scriptures indicate that God does not take a casual approach toward the subject of dress or appearance, or how we view those in positions of responsibility. God does not alter biblical standards because society decides to change. What we wear, and our attitude toward those over us, is important to God—because it *reflects* what is in our heart and *our attitude towards His instructions*. This is why the Church of God has taught that appropriate dress for services should be the best we can afford within the realm of good taste and in harmony with scriptural guidelines. The Church has also taught that deference and respect should be shown to leaders, and older people, because that is the biblical example. If we follow these Bible-based instructions about appearance and conduct, we may also find that we will become more careful about following other biblical teachings and less prone to compromise in many other areas.

circumstances (Proverbs 31:10–31). She, too, must learn when to be firm and how to be flexible. Wives can lead their daughters to a right understanding of the marriage relationship by appropriately following and supporting their husbands. Fathers lead their sons by demonstrating how to adapt to and understand the needs of their wives.

These same skills have applications within the Church. Although Paul told elders that there were times to exercise authority—to convince, rebuke and exhort (cf. 2 Timothy 4:1–2). Paul understood that there were times to be firm, and times to be flexible and adapt to situations that arose. Wise leaders learn to recognize when they need to take charge, and when to follow and be supportive so the team can achieve its goal. The team is damaged and even destroyed when someone assumes that a certain responsibility is “my personal territory” and cannot be done by anyone else. Sometimes jobs are rotated so that others can gain experience and grow. In areas where we once led, we may later need to follow and be supportive—without griping or complaining. Being able to adapt smoothly is a sign of a mature leader who can still exercise leadership, and provide an example, by following.

Be a Profitable Servant

We live in a world that glorifies perks and position. Many want to be on top so they can have more of the benefits. This is the way human societies function. Yet Jesus said: “whoever desires to be 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” (Matthew 20:26–28). Jesus told His self-seeking disciples they needed to focus on becoming *servant leaders*. But how can you do this if you are not in charge of anything?

One of the most effective ways a leader can serve (and a servant can lead) is *by example*. This is why Jesus told His disciples to “let your *light* shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16). We set a good example when we notice and try to fill the needs of others. We set an example by attending services on a regular basis, by encouraging others and not criticizing the messages or the leadership or other brethren. We set an example by how we dress and by what we talk about or do not talk about. James commented that a person who is truly converted will “show by good conduct [conversation] that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13). Paul observed that a godly person will focus on whatever is “true... noble... just... pure... lovely... of good report” (Philippians 4:8). Profitable servants of God will strive to set this kind of example because they want to please God and qualify to be leaders in His coming Kingdom.

The prospect of becoming a king or a priest—a future civic or religious leader, or both—may seem distant and unreal, yet that is why you were called. That is also why children are born. Becoming a leader involves building character and developing skills. The process involves repenting, changing, growing and overcoming. It is not easy, but it is possible. The reward is a crown—a chance to rule with Jesus Christ, and to teach God’s way of life to the world. LCN

Upcoming **Tomorrow’s World** Telecasts

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 AM ET

VISION (Canada): Sunday, 3:30 AM & 5:30 PM ET

Air Date	Broadcast Title
March 23	Ezekiel: A Watchman for Our Time
March 30	Who Is the Antichrist?
April 6	Can Prophecy Fail?
April 13	Keys to Effective Prayer
April 20	Easter Is Pagan
April 27	Where Is God’s Church Today?

For additional stations and times, check the Television and Radio Log on page 31 of your **Tomorrow’s World** magazine.

Our Need for Living Faith

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his Creator and his God! David exclaimed in the magnificent 18th Psalm: “For You will light my lamp; the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. For by You I can run against a troop, by my God I can leap over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him. For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?” (Psalm 18:28–31).

Yes, David’s God was his “**Rock**.” This powerful concept enabled David to fully **trust** in God through thick and thin—through every *manner* of trials, tests, illnesses and discouragements. No matter what, David **knew** that the true God was solid as a “Rock”!

Through David, God tells the leaders of the world today: “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. *Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him*” (Psalm 2:10–12). We will *all* be “blessed” if we put our **trust** in God! Again, David was inspired to write: “The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; for You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You” (Psalm 9:9–10). If we, today, set ourselves to truly **seek** God and to more fully “know His **name**”—His awesome beauty, wisdom, love and total **power**—then we will learn to put our full **trust** in our heavenly Father in a way we may never have done before.

Herbert W. Armstrong was a modern “Apostle of faith.” After describing how he gave up a small

ministerial salary from a religious group that was pressing him to take actions he considered to be unscriptural, Mr. Armstrong wrote: “‘As for me and my house,’ I then said firmly, ‘we shall serve the Eternal our God, and Him **only** shall we serve. If **men** pay us a salary—even as small as \$3 per week—we have now learned we must preach only what **men** order us to preach. If we are to **work for God** we must look to God as our **employer**, and **trust Him to supply our every material need**. And then,’ I added, ‘if we fail to serve Him as He commands, He will stop our income.’ I wrote my wife to this effect. It may seem like a step that required great courage to give up even a \$3-a-week income, when that was all we had. Of course, a few offerings were by this time being handed to me personally—but they were usually a dollar or less, and averaged less than the \$3 weekly salary. But it really did not require any real courage. My wife and I *knew* we were obeying and serving God. We *knew* He was using us. The **fruits** being borne were loud testimony of this. God had prepared us for relying solely on Him by many miraculous answers to prayer. Therefore we *knew* in perfect faith, God would supply our need” (*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, Vol. 1, p. 585).

Later in his *Autobiography*, Mr. Armstrong described how he and his wife had to **trust God fully** to give them the needed resources to preach the Truth on radio during the depths of the Great Depression: “And I have explained how, in those bottom-depression days, this took real living faith! When 25¢, 50¢, and \$1 per month was all that people felt they could afford to pledge, you may realize how big the unpledged balance appeared. At that time Jesus Christ *opened the door!* I walked through it. I *trusted Him* to keep the balance

coming. He kept it coming! Sometimes the necessary \$2.50 was not on hand up to 30 minutes before broadcast time. Then one of the brethren might knock at our front door and *just happen* (?) to leave some tithe money, or an offering, at that psychological minute! Never once did Christ fail to provide. Never did we have to miss a broadcast! Real faith requires that *courage of believing*, and *acting* on it! This, let me explain, was not like going in debt for something consumed and unpaid for. We didn’t go into debt. We trusted Christ to send the money to pay *before* each program, in advance” (pp. 614–615).

Yes, even in modern times, God’s ways *always* work. For the God of Abraham, even today, will bless, guide, heal and deliver those who really put their **trust** in Him. And God inspired David to write these words as part of Holy Scripture: “But let all those rejoice who put their **trust** in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield” (Psalm 5:11–12).

If we in God’s Church today will fervently **seek** God and **trust** God—as David did—He will begin to use us even more to do a genuinely **powerful** Work. The *true* gospel of the Kingdom of God will be preached effectively around the world, and more and more people will be brought to **real surrender** of their lives—to **serve** and **obey** God and let Christ fully live within them (Galatians 2:20). More will be supernaturally *healed, blessed* and *delivered* during the terrible trials to come at the end of this age, and many more will be made ready to enter God’s Kingdom in the *first* resurrection—the “better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35). ☞

What Is Your Personal “Breaking Point”?

(continued from page 2)

How would you like to be imprisoned in a dungeon and then let down into a tank filled with “mire”? That is exactly what happened to Jeremiah—one of God’s greatest prophets! A weak and vacillating King Zedekiah of Judah handed Jeremiah over to some of the princes who hated his warnings and wanted to destroy him. “Then Zedekiah the king said, ‘Look, he is in your hand. For the king can do nothing against you.’ So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king’s son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire” (Jeremiah 38:5–6).

Then, a God-fearing black man heard of Jeremiah’s predicament and rescued him! (vv. 7–13). But Jeremiah still remained in prison for months, until King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem and let him go free. It must have been a long and painful experience.

The Apostle Paul was also one of the most dedicated servants of God in human history. Yet God allowed Paul to go through trial after trial. Feeling impelled to prove his dedication because of the accusations of false ministers, the Apostle Paul wrote: “Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:23–28).

What an example to us!

For, *if need be*, we must be prepared to follow the examples of Paul, of Jeremiah and of Jesus Christ Himself—and many other faithful servants of God down through the centuries—in going through trials, tests and severe persecution. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, pointedly instructs all of us: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works” (Matthew 16:24–27).

We are “saved” or *justified* from our past sinful lives by Jesus’ shed blood. But, as verse 27 points out, we are *rewarded* according to our “works”—according to the degree of our *obedience* to God, and our *service* to God and to fellow man. God demands that we act on our faith in Him! “*Faith without works is dead*” (James 2:20). This means that we must still remain faithful and obedient, even during times of trial and persecution. All of God’s servants down through time have faced this same requirement. Why should we be any different?

At a time of severe persecution, Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians: “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy” (2 Thessalonians 1:3–5). Our willingness to *suffer* for the name of Jesus Christ is “evidence” to God that we are “worthy” of the Kingdom of God—as Paul wrote. Today, many of God’s people are physically old and certainly weak in many ways. God knows this. He is a loving Father. He will **not** “tempt” or *test* us beyond what we are able to bear, but will also “make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Dear brethren, we need to *help* one another, *encourage* one another and *pray fervently* for one another that each of us may be able to “bear our cross” as Jesus did. We must have Jesus Christ really *living* within us in order to truly please God—and in order to have the absolute **faith** and the *courage* to make it through the coming trials and tribulations prophesied to come on God’s people at the time of the end.

Faith comes by “hearing” (or *studying*) the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Each of us needs to be earnestly and thoughtfully *studying* the examples of faith under adversity that are sprinkled all through the Bible. We need to *pray* with our whole being that God will give us, and our brethren, the *faith* and *courage* we will surely need in the years ahead.

And all of us need to remember the example of *radiant faith* exemplified by the Apostle Paul not long before he was martyred: “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6–8).



Lake Tahoe Singles' Weekend

Warm fellowship, if not warm weather, greeted the 56 singles at the fourth annual Lake Tahoe Singles Weekend, December 20–24, 2002, and many of the 28 men and 28 women who attended commented on its positive and friendly atmosphere.

“You can’t imagine the immediate closeness of everyone you meet and the immediate friendships you can form,” said Britney Jackson, 21, from Fayetteville, Arkansas. “It’s so different from the world.” This was Jackson’s first singles’ event, and though she is not a skier, she is definitely hoping to return to the ski weekend next year.

“Compared to other youth activities I’ve been to, it’s obvious how well the group meshed together,” said Ryan Ruttencutter, 24, of Columbus, Ohio.

The weekend offered plenty of opportunities for laughter and learning. About half of the crowd went skiing or snowboarding at Heavenly Lake Tahoe ski resort on both Sunday and Monday.

In the evening after Sabbath services, the singles enjoyed a dance, and a covered-dish meal provided by the Reno brethren. Some brave members took a nighttime dip into the frigid Lake Tahoe in order to spend hours recovering in the hot tub.

Mr. Rod McNair, who organized the event, gave a sermonette on being content in whatever state we find ourselves. His message was followed by a sermon by Mr. Carl McNair, who spoke on the value of understanding why God’s Church does not observe Christmas. Dr. Jeffrey Fall delivered a Bible study on Sunday evening, emphasizing the importance of finding a spouse God’s way. “The messages always add a lot to the weekend—it is a unique time for singles in the Church to hear messages geared around issues they face in their relationships and in their lives,” said Mr. Rod McNair.

Mr. Glen Gilchrist commented: “I think the singles in the Church are faced with a unique trial, in the absence of a facility like Ambassador College, and in the scattered nature of the Church today.” Activities such as this one strive to bridge the gap between singles separated by these long distances.

The weekend itself was enough to energize each person in attendance, making new friends and reinforcing old relationships. “I would come back for the people, for sure,” Ruttencutter said. “It’s a great opportunity to fellowship with young people in the Church and just enjoy each other.”

—Carol Blanchard

Australian Youth Camp 2002

Marysville, 100 kilometers from Melbourne, saw the first Australian Living Youth Camp under the direction and leadership of Mr. Rod King, Melbourne congregation pastor. With a crystal-clear stream passing through town, and large established plane trees either side of the main street, the feeling was millennial.

Camp started on Friday morning, December 27, 2002. After settling in, the 15 campers heard Mr. King discuss the importance of setting an example of God’s way of life to the local residents. He encouraged all the campers to continue

their daily prayer and Bible study, and explained the camp rules.

Activities commenced that afternoon, cricket being first up. We had lessons from our cricket expert, Mr. Lyndle Nguale, who showed us that cricket is not just a game of skill, but also of patience, perseverance, self-control, gentleness and longsuffering. It was a good way to start the camp, and brought campers together quickly. After the evening meal, Mr. King guided us through a very enjoyable Bible quiz.

On the Sabbath, the Melbourne congregation joined the campers for

services. Many were able to stay for the evening barbeque and fellowship.

Every morning, campers and staff enjoyed hearty breakfasts prepared by members of the Melbourne congregation, who gave selflessly of their time. Mr. King then delivered Bible lectures on various topics. He explained the importance of work ethics, and of always including God in our work. Mr. King also reminded the campers that God hates idleness, and gave the example of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah. He spoke about “The Way,” and gave a Bible study on questions including

the Sabbath, the Holy Days, clean and unclean foods, Christmas and the “immortal soul” doctrine.

Under Mr. King’s guidance, several campers had the opportunity to prepare and deliver a five-minute speech. Mr. George Calache, Melbourne deacon and insurance broker, gave practical advice on financial affairs. Mrs. Rebecca Tyler taught the girls the skill of folk art. Also during the five-day camp, athletic dexterity and endurance were tested on the obstacle course. Basketball, Frisbee football, archery, volleyball and canoeing were among the other enervating and enjoyable activities.

On the last day of camp, the sun was hidden by clouds and periods of rain. No one minded, though, and it was refreshing, for much of Australia is in its worst drought in 100 years. The campers had their last Bible study, played their last game of volleyball and had their last lunch before Mr. King presented the camp awards. Congratulations to Josh Penman, Lara King and Melanie Bouras for being “campers of the session.”

—Robert Tyler

Legacies and Other Gifts

Some have requested information on how to make a present gift to the Living Church of God, or a future gift by way of a will or a trust, or by way of other charitable means. Those wanting to receive such information should send their request to Legal Affairs. Please write to:

Living Church of God
Attn: Legal Affairs
PO Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227

You may also write via email to legal@cogl.org. As the laws of different countries vary, most of the information available through Legal Affairs will only apply to the United States. However, Legal Affairs will furnish as much information as possible. You may also wish to consult with your own financial and legal advisors.

Births

Barton and Pamela Nelson announce the birth of their daughter *Jessica Kay Nelson* on January 7. Jessica weighed 7 pounds, 15 ounces and joins three brothers: Brett, Brendan and Braddley.

Steve and Anna Leigh Novak of Agoura Hills, California announce the birth of their third child, *Joshua David Novak*, on August 29, 2002. He was 22 inches long, and weighed in at 9 pounds, 11 ounces. Joshua is the 22nd grandchild for Steve and Stephanie Novak of Savannah, Georgia.

In Loving Memory

Susan Leijah died of cancer on January 21. Born in January 1942, she was one of 13 siblings. She was baptized in 1969, and married to Lupe Leijah in 1971. She is survived by her husband, seven sisters, one brother and more than 56 nieces and nephews. Susan faithfully endured to the end, and is greatly missed by the New Mexico brethren.

John Nestor, beloved member of the LCG Headquarters congregation, died on January 11 of natural causes. He was 90 years old. Born in 1912 in Monessen, Pennsylvania, he spent 10 years working in a steel mill, and then spent 28 years at Trans World Airlines, where he worked as a chief mechanic. Baptized in 1958, he began his “third career” in 1967 as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s chief jet mechanic—a position he held for more than 20 years before his retirement in 1988. He is survived by

Ruth, his wife of 38 years, a deaconess in the Headquarters congregation; two sisters, a daughter, three granddaughters, one great-granddaughter and four great-grandsons. He was buried in a family plot in Monessen, Pennsylvania after the funeral on Friday, January 17. A dear friend of many, a gentleman and a faithful servant of Christ, he will be greatly missed.

Ilda M. Route, age 91, a long-time faithful member of God’s Church, died on July 30, 2002. Miss Route was the oldest member of the Living Church of God congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and faithfully attended services each Sabbath until her infirmities prevented her from doing so. Even when bedridden, she continued to pray for Dr. Meredith, the Work and the brethren. Mr. David Burson performed the funeral service.

Commentary

The Privilege of Parenting *By Charles E. Bryce*

What could be more important to our future than the education and development of our children? The youth of today will become the leaders of tomorrow. Yet the vital process of educating our future generation is in serious trouble. Perhaps the greatest cause of this growing crisis is parental disconnect. Mothers and fathers are so caught up in the “rat race” that they either cannot find the time or will not take the time to be fully involved in all aspects of their children’s development. Reliable and well-done research is showing more and more that parental engagement on all fronts of our children’s lives—mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually—is the key that makes the difference in how they turn out. This involvement must start at birth.

Children whose parents take time to work with their teachers at school—and work with their children at home—excel in their education. Without parental support and guidance, the opposite is the case. Children falter and fail. Mediocrity sets in. This should come as no surprise to thinking, caring people. There is a bond that develops between parents and children that is like no other. No one can take the place of Mom and Dad in a child’s life. When parents step up and fulfill their responsibilities, with love and diligence and with right examples, this becomes the greatest factor in the success and achievement of their families.

That is not the only component of this equation, of course. Teachers, schools, churches, relatives, friends and communities play a vital role. But loving, fully engaged parents are the ones who “pull it all together,” enabling their children to fulfill their full potential. Just go down to your children’s school, and talk to the teachers and faculty there. See for yourself. Ask them

about your children. You will find that they do not want interference from you, but they *do* want help, and your involvement—especially at home with homework, as well as participating in activities at school, when your children need you there to back them up and cheer them on.

Notice in Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Training and caring take time, involvement and engagement. In Proverbs 29:15, we find an example of what happens when this does not take place: “The rod and rebuke give wisdom...” This is talking about proper direction, proper loving and kind, firm discipline—never abuse. But notice the last part of verse 15: “a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.” This speaks of children just left “rudderless”—without direction, without example, without guidance, without parental love and care in all aspects of their life—children just left to themselves.

Look also at Ephesians 6:4. Even in the area of spiritual instruction, it is vital that parents are involved. “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” That word “nurture” means teaching children, in every facet of life, what life is all about, and what is right and wrong.

There is no greater joy in life than to see children grow up into happy, successful, responsible adults. There is no greater accomplishment than that of totally committed, loving parents who devote their lives to bringing this all about—who play their part in bringing about success and happiness in the lives of their children.