

Living Church News

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Do You Have Christian Courage?

Last April, after visiting Living Church of God congregations in Britain and Ireland, my wife and I joined Dr. Douglas Winnail for a trip to Rome, Italy, where we spent a few days to get the “feeling” of that great religious center once again. During our visit to St. Peter’s Square on a Sunday, a small white-haired man appeared at the window far above us, to give the weekly “Angelus” address to the tens of thousands present. He spoke mainly in languages other than English, but did talk for several minutes in our language. He said, “Because Christ has given the church the authority to forgive sins, I now forgive all of your sins!”

Wow!

Undoubtedly, many to whom Pope Benedict XVI was speaking were not Christian in any sense. Perhaps some were Muslim or Hindu. Yet, without asking about our beliefs—or if we had in any way repented—this man “forgave” all of our sins! It gives you a little bit of a “feel” for this great false religious system when you are right there, dwarfed by a massive crowd of people, most of whom very sincerely follow this man. Later, we saw some women in St. Peter’s Basilica, turning away with tears in their eyes after praying at side altars. They had been praying to statues of St. Theresa, St. Bartholomew, St. Ann and others, and were overcome with emotion—sincere emotion—as tears were running down their faces after praying to those idols.

Brethren, millions of these people—remember, there are more than one billion Roman Catholics—are very zealous and extremely sincere. We, too, need to be far more zealous. And we must develop, through God’s Spirit within us, genuine Christian courage, to prepare for what some of these zealous people will do! For, in describing this entire religious system, the Apostle John wrote: “I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement” (Revelation 17:6). Hundreds of thousands of people down through the ages have been persecuted, tortured or even killed because of this foul system! And God clearly indicates that a tremendous upsurge of power and influence in this false religion is just ahead—in our lifetimes! Telling all of us, His disciples, what the future holds, Jesus said: “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles” (Matthew 10:16–18).

Over the next few years, many of us—including, no doubt, some of our lay members—may be brought before this world’s authorities, even in

chains. This false religion may heavily influence—or directly order—those authorities to take us into custody.

Jesus tells us: “But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (Matthew 10:19–20). So we should constantly study the examples of the Bible—much more than many of us have—about what God’s will is in these situations. We must be prepared to go through trials and tests beyond anything we have ever faced before. This will take great commitment and profound **courage**. Jesus continues: “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 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 10:21–23).

This passage was not only a commission, but also a prophecy, for it tells us what will happen right down to the end when “the Son of Man comes.” Jesus warned us: “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me” (John 16:1–3).

Do you and I **know** the living God and the living Jesus Christ enough to completely trust our God and display the Christian courage we will need in the traumatic years ahead?

Brethren, I do not in any way want to discourage or frighten you! But I do want you to realize ahead of time the type of commitment and courage you will surely need. I want to give you the impetus to think things through, to pray things through and to build the ultimate trust and **courage** you will surely need. The British people rallied during World War II when Sir Winston Churchill said that he offered them nothing but “blood, toil, tears and sweat.” How much more committed should we be, as servants of the living God?

It can be so easy to let down, to become involved in material things, to begin to feel that “God is not real”—and so to lose our faith and courage in time of trial. Even Peter, the leading apostle, had this problem. Remember, after Christ was taken into custody, Peter denied Him three times! The third time, as a young woman asked Peter about his relationship with Jesus, he began “to curse and swear, saying, I do not know the Man!” (Matthew 26:74). Immediately, a rooster crowed. “And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So he went out and wept bitterly” (v. 75). No doubt, this big fisherman became overwhelmed with sorrow upon realizing how easily he had become frightened and had denied Christ.

I pray that a time never comes when I will have to “weep bitterly” because I have been so frightened for my very life that I deny my God and my Savior! I hope all of you feel the same way. For, dear

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Seven Keys to Mental Mastery

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

Learn to think “big”—to gain real wisdom to make the right decisions. Read and use these vital principles!

Where is wisdom in our world today? Sixty years after the first atomic bomb, are we safe from global thermonuclear war and total cosmocide? With droughts across the “breadbasket of the world” in the American Midwest, are we even secure in feeding ourselves? With AIDS ravaging whole continents, and avian flu on the verge of creating another worldwide pandemic, have we learned how to protect ourselves fully from disease?

President George W. Bush has acknowledged “mistakes” in how he has conducted the war in Iraq. Politicians on both sides of the aisle are busily posturing on issues of terrorism, immigration and other national security concerns. And let us not forget the immediate problems of crime, violence, racism, pollution and joblessness—and so many other day-to-day concerns that require real solutions, not political demagoguery.

Truly, the **wisdom** of a Solomon is needed.

But where—in this mixed-up world—does that kind of wisdom exist? We need it more sorely today than at any time in human history! What is the **solution**?

The Real GOAL of Human Life

The answer is that the God “nobody knows”—the Creator, the God of your Bible, will soon inter-

vene and send the Living Jesus Christ back to **rule** this earth. He will come this time in glory and power as King of kings. The other kings assisting Him in reorganizing the entire society of this earth will be those who, in this life, have **surrendered** their wills to God and who have **overcome** their selfish, lustful, sinful, **rebellious** human nature. These “overcomers”—then born of God and composed of divine spirit—will **rule** this earth with and under Jesus Christ (Revelation 2:26–27).

Mankind has always **wanted** to rule the earth. Now we even hope to rule outer space!

God has given human beings the capacity to do just that! But we are presently limited by a body of flesh that must receive all of its nourishment from this earth and its surrounding layer of air. Our astronauts must **always** take with them some form of food that comes from the **soil** of this earth. They **must** take air and water **from this earth**.

They **must** do these things—or they will surely **perish**.

So human beings are hindered in their efforts to “conquer” space. Recent space exploration has been done, more and more, by unmanned craft. Proud humanity has had to face its limitations.

Yet, in the beginning, God said: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle...” (Genesis 1:26).

The Marvelous Human Mind

To a limited extent, human beings are made **like** God. For we are made in the form and shape of God. Unlike

any animal, the human being has a **mind** that is not guided by blind instinct, but is capable of choice, of decision—of building **character**. Also, human beings **alone** have a **creative capacity** and the ability to think in the abstract, reason and philosophize. We can invent and bring into being an almost infinite variety of physical and mechanical things. Because of the rich and seemingly endless human imagination, we can compose beautiful music, write inspiring literature and paint majestic scenes.

And so, God gave human beings **dominion** over all creatures **on earth**. Yet, in spite of all our God-given possibilities, we have thoroughly **botched** even our responsibilities here. Human beings need not only a **body** with greater capacities; we need the **mind** of a Solomon—yet a **spiritually motivated** mind to cope with the agonizing problems now facing the entire human race.

The Apostle Paul commanded: “Let this **mind** be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

The Christian who **knows** the purpose of life must come to have the very **mind**, the viewpoint, the attitude and the **wisdom** of Jesus Christ. But what, you may ask, are the qualities and **characteristics** of that type of mind? And how are these to be developed?

Key 1: Alertness and Discernment

The first quality is **awareness** of people, things and attitudes. That is the mark of real leaders. They are alert. They are fully awake and **thinking**. They notice people who are tight and tense around the

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Preparing the Bride

By Gerald Weston

Has the work of preaching the gospel to the world been completed? Has preparing the bride supplanted this mission? Some people think so, but what does the Bible tell us?

There are several variations on this idea. Some believe that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong completed the job of preaching the gospel to the world and proclaiming the Ezekiel warning. Some believe that when the Philadelphia era ended, “the doors were closed,” and any attempt to preach the gospel will be met with futility and disappointment. Still others believe the work of the Church today is not the commission given at the end of Matthew and Mark, but rather is to separate the last two eras of the Church. Are any of these ideas valid? How can we know?

Undergirding most of these ideas is the belief that what is important today is to prepare the bride. Where did this idea come from? The answer is found in the book of Revelation: “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, **and His wife has made herself ready**” (Revelation 19:7). Interestingly, this is the only place in all the Bible where such a statement is made, yet just half of this one verse has been turned into a major doctrine accepted by many who call themselves members of God’s Church. And the expression “major doctrine” is not an exaggeration; your acceptance or rejection of this new doctrine controls how you will see the work of God’s Church today. Most of us frequently hear people saying, “The job of the Church today is to ‘get the bride ready,’ and there is no time (or ability, or reason) to put our focus on preaching the gospel or proclaiming the Ezekiel warning.”

How can we understand this matter? Ask yourself a very simple question: “Where is the bride of Christ today?” The answer is found in another question: “What is the bride of Christ?” Is Christ’s bride a small group of people at the end of the age? Or is it the Church of God, down through the ages? Are Peter, Paul, John, the Old

Testament patriarchs, Stephen, Jesus’ mother Mary and the other Marys considered part of the bride of Christ? Of course they are! So, where is the majority of the bride of Christ today? Six feet under! The majority of the bride of Christ is in the grave!

Once we understand this basic point, we can understand that “preparing the bride” does not somehow conflict with, or replace, the Church’s mission to preach the gospel. If “preparing the bride” meant a different mission for the Church, we would have to conclude either that those who went before us did not really preach the gospel, or else that they were not really preparing themselves and will miss out on the marriage supper. Preposterous!

Jesus expected His apostles to preach to the world **and** to prepare the bride—and He expects us to do the same today. Notice the great commission Jesus gave His disciples: “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Matthew’s account includes Christ’s statement, “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20)—showing that His commission was not just for the original apostles, but would be valid to the end of the age. Interestingly, both Matthew and Mark report that all eleven faithful apostles were present when this commission was given (Matthew 28:16; Mark 16:14). This is important, because Jesus also told Peter, “Feed My lambs,” “Tend My sheep,” and “Feed My sheep” (John 21:15–17). Since Peter was one of the eleven who were also told to preach the gospel in all the world, it is plain folly to contend that doing both means “serving two masters,” as one man once alleged. Christ’s instructions to preach the gospel and prepare the bride are instructions from the **same** Master, expecting His servants to carry out **both** tasks!

The Closed Door Theory

Have the doors been closed to preaching the gospel? Some people say so, and cite

Revelation 3:7–8 to support their belief that Jesus (who opens and shuts doors) opened a door for the Philadelphia era of the Work, and closed that door at the end of that era. This passage does indeed show that Christ set before Philadelphia an open door. However, a careful reading of this passage shows that **there is no statement indicating that the door has been shut!** Certainly, Christ can both open and shut doors, but in this passage He speaks only of opening a door! The door of which He speaks is a means of proclaiming the gospel (see Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3). Christ opened to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong—and to the Philadelphia era—the door of modern electronic and print media: radio, television and the printing press. And let us not forget modern transportation, which allows one minister to cover far greater territory than could be imagined even a hundred years ago. Have any of those doors been closed? **No, not at all!** In fact, new doors such as the Internet have continued to open.

Through radio, television, print media and the Internet, literally millions of people have heard the gospel preached and the Ezekiel warning given. Countless millions have received this message in the 20 years since Mr. Armstrong's death, and the message has produced much fruit. Some have heard the message loud and clear and asked to be taken off our mailing list! They understood what we were saying, but did not want to accept it (Ezekiel 2:7; Matthew 24:14). God has called others who are now baptized members of His Church. Whether they are “brand new” to the Truth, or whether they first heard the message decades ago but did not act until they came across Tomorrow's World, they are nevertheless fruit of this Work.

Throughout history, while the gospel was being preached, God was also preparing the bride of Christ by means of the Sabbath, the annual Holy Days, Bible studies, personal letters, and one-on-one instruction. In our modern age, we have the added advantage of magazine articles and booklets to help feed the flock. We have audiotapes, videotapes, CDs and DVDs through which sermons can be heard hundreds or thousands of miles away from where they were first given. We have the Internet, through which scattered brethren can access the Truth even when God's ministers are unable to reach them in person.

But even with all of these new media, individuals today have the same responsibility as always to prepare to become part of Christ's bride. “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

Two Churches, Two Attitudes

William Ramsay, in his definitive book, “The Letters to the Seven Churches,” showed how the geographical and cultural backgrounds of each city affected the seven churches that John described in Revelation. Writing in 1906, Ramsay called Philadelphia the “Missionary City,” and Laodicea the “City of Compromise.” His observations are instructive.

“Planted on the better of the two entrances from the west to the Phrygian land, Laodicea might have been expected to be (like Philadelphia, which commanded the other) a missionary city charged at first with the task of spreading Greek civilisation and speech in barbarian Phrygia, and afterwards undertaking the duty of spreading Christianity in that country. It had, however, made little progress in Hellenising [spreading Greek culture into] Phrygia.... **Why it was that Laodicea had failed and Philadelphia had succeeded in diffusing the Greek tongue in the districts immediately around, we have no means of judging. But such was the case**” (pp. 415–16).

In other words, Laodicea's location gave it greater opportunity than Philadelphia to spread a message. But Philadelphia was very successful, while Laodicea was not. Why? Read how Ramsay analyzed Philadelphia:

“Philadelphia, therefore, was the keeper of the gateway to the plateau... and the work of Philadelphia had been to go forth through the door and carry the gospel to the cities of the Phrygian land.

It is not stated explicitly that Philadelphia used the opportunity that had been given it; but that is clearly implied in the context [of Scripture]. The door had been opened for the Philadelphian Church by Him who does nothing in vain: He did this because the opportunity would be used....

But it would be wrong to infer that Philadelphia alone among the Seven Cities had a door before it. Each of the Seven Cities stood at the door of a district. In truth every Church had its own opportunity; and all the Seven Churches had specially favourable opportunities opened to them by geographical situation and the convenience of communication.... Philadelphia must have been pre-eminent among the Seven Cities as the missionary Church” (pp. 405–6).

Ramsay avoids drawing any conclusions as to why Philadelphia succeeded in preaching the gospel and

Laodicea failed to live up to expectations, but here a bit of logic and an old adage may be helpful: “Where there is a will, there is a way.” When President John F. Kennedy set before the American people the out of this world goal of putting a man on the moon and returning him safely by the end of the 1960s, it was not technology alone that made the mission succeed—the goal was achieved because there was a will to do so! One can reasonably conclude that Laodicea’s fundamental problem, a lukewarm attitude, affected the original Laodiceans just as it will affect the era named after it—causing a lack of will or desire to preach the gospel.

Through the letter to Philadelphia, Christ plainly shows that a remnant of that era will continue to the very end of the age, even while the dominant attitude in the Church is that of lukewarm Laodicea (Revelation 3:10, 14–19). In other words, there must be Philadelphians who are still walking through open doors with focused zeal and energy. Indeed, for anyone who has the will and desire to walk through them, there are numerous doors open today: television, radio, publishing, the Internet and direct personal contact. Those doors did not close upon Mr. Armstrong’s death.

Is the Internet Enough?

Many who clamor about the need to “prepare the bride” do pursue some small efforts to preach whatever message they may have. Sadly, their message may not even be the gospel of the Kingdom of God. It may be a calendar gospel, a “new revelation” gospel, a “personality cult” gospel or some other message different from what Jesus Christ gave us. In most cases, though, these groups’ “preaching” is limited to putting up a Web page and trying to recruit members of God’s Church into their group.

Certainly these are doors, though usually rather small. These groups rarely proclaim the gospel to the world in any significant way, and usually find their most receptive audience among a tiny handful of people who are already members of God’s Church. These groups typically call for little if any personal sacrifice, and they do little more than “shuffle the chairs” between existing Church of God groups.

By contrast, Philadelphians demonstrate their zeal by the priority they place upon going through many doors in a major way, through a package of television, radio, print media, the Internet and other doors that become available. These doors, of course, are in addition to, not replacements for, personal example and the other ways God’s Church has proclaimed the true gospel throughout the ages.

Ramsay’s descriptions of Laodicea are chilling when we compare them against what some who claim the name “Church of God” today believe and practice:

“There is no city whose spirit and nature are more difficult to describe than Laodicea. There are no extremes, and hardly any very strongly marked features. But in this even balance lies its peculiar character. Those were the qualities that contributed to make it essentially the successful trading city, the city of bankers and finance, which could adapt itself to the needs and wishes of others, ever pliable and accommodating, full of the spirit of compromise....

It is the only one of the Seven Cities in which no relation is discernible between the natural features that surround it and its part and place in history” (Ramsay, pp. 422–23).

Ultimately, just as with Zerubbabel building the temple, we know that it will take something far more powerful than our puny efforts, no matter how zealous those efforts may be, to bring the gospel to the world (Zechariah 4:6). Yet we are not to despise the day of small things (v. 10). Though the Church is small, it will grow just large enough that it can no longer be ignored when preaching against the politically correct abominations of this age. Eventually, the world will notice the gifts of the Spirit poured out on zealous ministers backed by zealous members (John 15:18–24).

Of course, we must prepare ourselves individually and collectively to be part of the bride of Christ. God’s zealous people do this every day, through prayer, study, meditation, fasting, repenting and overcoming, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit indwelling in us. Those who believe that this personal preparation negates or supersedes Christ’s commission—which was to preach the gospel and proclaim a warning message to this dying world—have understood neither Christ’s commission nor how they should be preparing themselves.

Simple observation shows us that doors remain wide open. People are hearing the message and responding. Scripture shows us what we should be doing (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–20; Revelation 3:7–8, 10). Why, then, do some cling to the idea of “preparing the bride” as an excuse for turning inward and “taking care of one’s own” with the resources God has provided? Is it because of selfishness? Is it because of lack of faith? Is it because they have not studied God’s word or meditated on the importance of His commission to His Church?

No matter what reason they give, when Christ returns and requests an accounting from His servants, He will not be pleased to hear the justifications of those who have

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“Watch Out, I’m Angry!”

By Douglas S. Winnail

What are some practical steps we can take to let go of anger and to forgive others?

Do you ever become angry? Do you ever grow so angry that you want to scream, punch someone, break something or retaliate in some way? Do you find it hard to let go of your anger? Do you have difficulty forgiving someone who has hurt you—so much difficulty that you never want to see the person again? Have you ever felt guilty because you realize you are holding onto hurt feelings and to anger? If these issues are real to you, you have plenty of company! As one prominent newsmagazine stated, we live in “A Mad, Mad World” where “rage of all kinds” is becoming commonplace, where increasing numbers of people are checking into anger-management workshops and seeking help controlling violent emotions.

Sadly, Christians are not exempt from the powerful and negative effects of anger. Anger damages relationships, and destroys both physical and mental health. However, Christians have access to potent tools to deal with emotions of anger, bitterness, resentment and hurt. The Bible indicates that Christians are called to be overcomers (Revelation 3:12) who learn to live a different way of life as lights to the world (Matthew 5:14–16).

Could you explain to someone **how** to forgive someone else? Could you show someone how to let go of deep-seated, long-standing anger? Have you learned to do this yourself? In this article, we will examine what it means to for-

give, and how to deal effectively with anger. Scripture provides important keys and perspectives on the subject—perspectives supported by modern research.

Anger: A Dangerous Emotion

Some may wonder, “What is so bad about anger? Even God becomes angry,” The simple answer is that you and I are not God, and anger in human beings can lead to dangerous and destructive consequences. Anger is a strong feeling or emotion resulting from disagreement, being hurt or mistreated, or seeing something unjust happen. Not all anger is bad, but there are many types of anger that Christians simply must not exhibit.

Indignation is righteous anger at something evil, unjust or shameful. Scripture shows that properly controlled righteous anger can be an appropriate response for a Christian (Ephesians 4:26). Wrath, however, is a deep indignation along with a desire to punish or get even. Wrath is dangerous for Christians. Rage is a violent outburst of emotion in which self-control is lost. When you become furious, you experience overwhelming rage of a frenzied nature—you basically “lose it.” Wrath and rage are types of anger not only out of bounds for Christians, but outside the limits of decent civil behavior.

The Bible provides important lessons about anger and its dangerous consequences. In the Garden of Eden, God warned Cain that his anger could lead to problems (Genesis 4:4–7). Instead of learning to deal with his anger, Cain sulked and nursed his anger, until he finally vented his boiling emotion by killing his brother in an outburst of violence and hatred. Then, instead of acknowledging his sin and repenting when he had to face the consequences of his actions, Cain slid into a state of denial and self-pity. He made a series of choices that illustrate very ineffective ways of dealing with anger, and he suffered painful consequences.

We also read of Jacob’s two sons, Simeon and Levi, who became very angry over an evil deed committed against their sister (Genesis 34). They hatched a plot of mass murder and plunder to get revenge. In spite of their father’s displeasure over their actions, they felt totally justified (Genesis 34:31). However, the Bible records God’s final verdict about the cruel fruits of their “self-justified” anger; they lost their inheritance (Genesis 49:5–7). Anger is a very dangerous emotion!

The Bible and Anger

Jesus Christ’s life provides instructive examples of how to deal with anger. In the face of personal insults, Jesus did not respond in kind or retaliate (1

Peter 2:23). However, when He saw the Pharisees' callous indifference to human suffering, Jesus became righteously indignant and healed a person (Mark 3:1–5). Overturning the tables of the moneychangers in the temple was another act of controlled, righteous indignation on Jesus' part, directed at a disregard of the sanctity of God's house of worship (Mark 11:15–17). During His rigged trial, in the face of false accusations and cruel insults, Jesus showed no anger and made no attempt to justify Himself, nor did He attempt to retaliate (Matthew 26:59–63; 27:11–14). Jesus remained calm and self-controlled. He trusted and lived by the guidelines God inspired in Scripture.

Christians are called to follow Jesus Christ's example (1 Peter 2:21) and develop the very mind of God (Philippians 2:5–6). The Bible reveals that God is gracious [patient, forgiving] and slow to anger (Psalm 103:8). God wants us to be slow to anger (Proverbs 16:32). Learning to avoid angry responses helps to diffuse difficult situations, turn away wrath and avoid strife (Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14, 27). The Bible explains that only fools get into arguments and vent their angry emotions at others (Proverbs 18:6–7; 29:20; Ecclesiastes 7:9). Discretion—developing wisdom and discernment—is the key to becoming slow to anger (Proverbs 19:11). This vital quality helps us deal more effectively with others' thoughtless (or even malicious) actions. It also helps us develop patience and self-control in difficult situations.

Jesus studied the Scriptures from childhood (Luke 2:41–47). It is no surprise that His teachings reflect biblical guidelines. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful... [and] the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:7–9). These are individuals who have learned how to avoid or over-

come strife by controlling their human tendencies to become wrathful. Jesus taught that harboring hatred and giving in to name-calling is the spiritual equivalent of murder (Matthew 5:21–22). Christ admonished His followers to strive to settle differences quickly and avoid drawn-out disagreements that only foster hatred and bitterness (Matthew 5:23–25). He taught that Christians should not retaliate, but should "do good" to those who treat them badly (Matthew 5:38–44). As Christians, we should maintain the perspective that God will ultimately take care of any injustices we may see (Romans 12:17–21). Our challenge as Christians is to "live peaceably" with everyone we meet.

God promises us the gift of the Holy Spirit upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). As we learn to use this powerful gift, we can become more patient, kind, gentle and self-controlled (Galatians 5:22–23). If we do not use—or fail to nourish and exercise—the Holy Spirit, we will be prone to exhibit the normal human traits of "hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions" that characterize most angry exchanges between people (Galatians 5:19–20).

Some mistakenly assume that the scripture "Be angry and do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26) allows for all kinds of anger. Better translated, the verse implies "if you become angry, beware lest you sin" (see *The New Testament from 26 Translations*). The Apostle Paul warns, in the context of this scripture, that anger can give Satan a foothold in our lives and can grieve [limit the action of] the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:27–30). Anger, uncontrolled and of the wrong type, can hinder us from growing toward our goal—developing the mind of God. To have God's mind we must

think calmly and clearly, and be slow to anger. Our Christian behavior must be guided by biblical principles, not driven by angry feelings and emotions.

And there is another important key to defusing anger.

Forgiveness: A Forgotten Key

The Bible speaks at length about forgiveness, a quality often overlooked in our modern, emotion-driven society. Scripture reveals that we worship and strive to emulate a **forgiving** God. Forgiveness is part of His nature (Psalm 86:5; 103:3).

Jesus emphasized that God is willing to forgive our sins. However, He also taught that unless we forgive others, we will not be forgiven (Matthew 6:12–15). Christians must learn to forgive from the heart—completely, and without any strings attached (Matthew 18:21–35). The Apostle Paul warned that if we are unwilling or unable to forgive, Satan can gain a foothold in our lives to wreak havoc with our relationships and damage our physical, mental and spiritual health (2 Corinthians 2:6–11). We are asking for trouble if we fail to understand the importance of forgiveness!

The Apostle John wrote that God will forgive us when we acknowledge our part in problems (1 John 1:9–10). To do this, we must rid ourselves of self-justifying anger that blinds us to our own faults. John warned that if we harbor hatred and bitterness against our brothers and sisters, we deceive ourselves and are not acting as Christians (1 John 2:9–11). As Christians, we must be loving, patient, understanding and forgiving. We must be willing to "lay down our lives" for others—willing to put aside our own angry emotions in order to bring peace (1

John 3:16–23). Truly, forgiveness is a vital aspect of loving one another!

To Forgive Is Divine

Daniel wrote, “To the LORD our God belong mercy and forgiveness” (Daniel 9:9). This may be the source of the popular phrase that “to err is human, to forgive is divine.” Does this mean that only God can forgive, and that human beings cannot be expected to do so? No! The Bible clearly teaches that we must learn to forgive.

In order to forgive, we must first understand what it means to forgive. We do not learn forgiveness off in a corner by ourselves. We learn forgiveness through relationships. We learn forgiveness through practice. When we forgive, we discover a sense of calm and relief that dampens the desire to lash out and retaliate against others. We overcome the mental turbulence that unforgiven hurt can create.

When Cain was hurt, he had to choose his response. So must we. When we are hurt or offended, we can choose to retaliate, becoming defensive and erecting barriers of self-protection. We can avoid or ignore the one who has offended us. We can gossip about that person’s faults, and seek the company of those who will agree that we have been wronged. We can tell ourselves how “bad” the other person is, and can replay those thoughts endlessly in our minds, reinforcing our anger and hurt.

Or we can choose to forgive. Forgiveness may not be easy; it can take courage, conviction, compassion and commitment. How do we forgive? Forgiveness has two parts: letting go of anger, and striving to rebuild relationships.

Many people think they have “forgiven” simply by deciding not to retaliate.

Moral Reasoning Levels

1. **Revengeful forgiveness**—only if offender is punished and experiences pain
2. **Restitutorial forgiveness**—only if guilt is admitted and apologies are made
3. **Expectational forgiveness**—forgiving in response to social pressure
4. **Lawful forgiveness**—forgiving due to moral or religious pressure
5. **Social forgiveness**—forgiving to gain social harmony and restore relationships
6. **Forgiveness as love**—forgiving is unconditional, no pre-conditions or expectations (see *To Forgive Is Human*, pp. 44–47)

Christians will grow toward higher levels in their moral reasoning ability.

iate. They never actually let go of their underlying anger, and they continue to avoid the offending person, making no effort to restore the relationship. Of course, this is not real forgiveness. Forgiveness requires that we overcome not only the desire to retaliate, but also the desire to avoid relating to the other person. We must be willing to rebuild the relationship, which means being willing to talk things over, cooperate with, and speak well of the other person. Real forgiveness can be difficult, because it requires us to change our self-image and our image of the one who has offended us. Real forgiveness “requires a fundamental change of heart—a turning from old ways... If we are to learn to forgive, most of us must repent of the strategies that we use to cope with our hurts and our insistence on obtaining revenge” (*To Forgive Is Human*, McCullough, Sandage & Washington, pp. 75–76). To forgive from the heart requires a real

change of heart. This change of heart is a hallmark of Christian conversion.

Learning to forgive also requires that we grow in our moral reasoning ability (see box, “Moral Reasoning Levels”). The Apostle Paul wrote, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Corinthians 13:11). As Christians, we are admonished to grow in our knowledge of how God wants us to act (2 Peter 3:18). Forgiveness not only involves recognizing and overcoming our own tendencies to retaliate in anger, but also involves learning how to promote positive relationships with those who have hurt us. This may be a challenge, but it is easier than you might think. Knowledge of what it really means to forgive is important. Following biblical guidelines and asking God for the help of His

Spirit are also vital steps to take.

But how can you get rid of chronic anger?

Dealing with Anger

Anger is a powerful emotion that involves the mind and body—and habits we have acquired over a lifetime. Overcoming anger requires us to take steps to rearrange our thinking. We must learn to identify situations and perceptions that generate anger in us. We must learn new skills and habits that reduce anger (see box, “Dealing with Anger”). To deal effectively with chronic anger, and let go of hurt feelings, we must change how we perceive offenses—and how we react to them. One key is learning to empathize. Try to understand where the other person is coming from, and why he or she might have said or done something that hurt you.

Put yourself in the other person’s shoes. Instead of jumping to conclusions and making accusations, try to understand what was said or done. Maybe the other person had no evil or ulterior motives at all. Maybe you have over-reacted, and have assigned blame wrongly.

If we learn to act and think in this manner, we will often find that our anger is unwarranted, and we will remain more calm and more willing to let go of anger. If we can empathize, we can more easily forgive.

Steps to Managing Anger

Analyze what makes you angry and how you handle it. Look for better ways to handle situations that provoke you to anger. Find good role models.

Dealing with Anger

Anger-Arousing Perceptions

Injustice: “it is not fair” vs
Blaming: “it is your fault” vs
“You are not treating me right” vs
“I deserve better than this” vs
Shattered expectations vs
Shattered belief in a just world vs

Anger-Intensifying Habits:

Yelling, sulking, pouting vs
Plotting revenge, arguing vs
Accusations (“you never...”) vs

Anger-Reducing Perceptions

“Bad things often happen”
“What part do I play in the problem?”
“Maybe they see things differently”
“How can I be an example?”
Empathy for other people
Humor—learn to laugh at difficulties

Cooling-Off Habits:

Count to 10, sleep on it, exercise
Do not yell, sulk, pout, or argue
Go see a movie, take a walk

Focus on positive aspects of others (see *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion*, Travis 1989, p. 289)

Christians grow and replace anger-arousing behaviors with behaviors and habits that reduce or eliminate angry emotional reactions. This requires us to change how we think and perceive.

Focus on dealing with the situation, not on accusing or avoiding the other person.

We generate and maintain anger by statements we make to others, and to ourselves, about our problems. We can learn to control our anger by reinterpreting the supposed provocation—“I’m sure he didn’t mean to be hurtful,” or “She must have had a bad day.” People who are slow to anger learn to empathize with others, thus reducing the feeling of being attacked, and avoiding the onset of anger. This approach puts you in control of situations, instead of feeling that you must react.

Use positive “self-talk.” Instead of telling yourself why you should become or remain angry, tell yourself, “Stay cool; being angry will not help this situation.” Remain focused on the issue, not on the other person’s presumed faults. Avoid using inflammatory words that add to your anger and irritate others.

Also, try to look for humor in difficult situations. Humor is calming. It defuses tense situations and is often a

good sign of reconciliation.

The next time you feel offended, think about your own need to be forgiven. This should motivate you to be forgiving. Make a real effort to empathize with the person who has offended you, and try to understand where he or she may be coming from. Remember that forgiveness requires you to let go of anger, and to be willing to promote a healed relationship.

This article is not intended to advocate a “lift yourself up by your own bootstraps” approach to solving all your problems. However, the Bible contains sound principles, as mentioned above, that can help you deal with feelings of anger which are destructive to relationships and debilitating to health. You can learn practical skills that will make forgiveness much easier.

We each choose how to react to offenses. When we learn to forgive, we are making a conscious choice to honor and obey God by letting go of angry emotions that aggravate, but do not solve, our problems. LCN

Godly Youth

By Don Davis

The Bible has a lot to say about—and to— young people. Scripture gives many outstanding examples of youthful men and women who displayed godly valor and sterling character. Though all human beings sin (Romans 3:23), God has recorded the stories of teen and young adult heroes and heroines. These stories can encourage young people in His Church today to continue “fighting the good fight,” in the face of the many difficult obstacles and temptations confronting them.

There are many, many fine, clean, morally upstanding teenagers and young adults in the Living Church of God. Many parents are doing an outstanding job of teaching their children God’s way of life, not only in word, but most importantly by example. Those parents are faithfully fulfilling God’s desire: “But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring” (Malachi 2:15). Parents who sacrifice now, to ensure that their children learn the ways of God, will be rewarded for their diligence when Christ returns, and will receive great peace and happiness even now. “Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate” (Psalm 127:4–5).

Let us consider the examples of some godly youth in Scripture. What lessons can they teach young people today?

Diligent Joseph

Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel, is one of the Bible’s greatest young heroes. Joseph was persecuted by his older brothers, and was even sold into slavery. It would have been easy for Joseph to become discouraged, and to give in to the many temptations to sin that surrounded him every day. Yet Joseph knew God was with him, and he kept his character clean—so much so that he impressed his Egyptian master. “Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.... And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made

all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him” (Genesis 39:1, 3–4).

Potiphar liked Joseph, saw value in this industrious young man, and eventually entrusted him with all he owned. He saw, again and again, that Joseph was a young man of fine character, whom he could count on. “And it came to pass after these things that his master’s wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me.’ But he refused and said to his master’s wife, ‘Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’” (vv. 7–9).

But Potiphar’s unfaithful wife would not take “no” for an answer. She kept pestering Joseph, trying to seduce him. But Joseph did not give in. “So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her. But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, ‘Lie with me.’ But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside” (vv. 10–12).

In a fit of anger, Potiphar’s wife then framed Joseph, accusing him of trying to force himself on her. This aroused Potiphar’s anger, and he put young Joseph in the prison where the king’s prisoners were kept.

Joseph could have given up, but he remained close to the God of his fathers and remained faithful and diligent in his work. Through a series of miraculous events, he rose to be ruler over all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. Because of Joseph’s diligence, God was able to use him as an instrument in bringing about the events that ultimately allowed his father’s family to grow into a nation (Genesis 41:40–41).

Three Courageous Youths Who Defied an Idolatrous King

Babylon’s vain King Nebuchadnezzar built a great idol, and decreed that everyone should worship it. A herald proclaimed his decree: “To you it is commanded,

O peoples, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:4–6).

Nebuchadnezzar was the absolute ruler of a mighty kingdom. One could not challenge the king’s decree without risking one’s life. Yet three young Jewish captives, trained in the palace school to serve the king, refused his order. Nebuchadnezzar was angered by their resistance, but at first tried to win them over to his way of thinking. “Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, ‘Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear... in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?’” (Daniel 3:14–15).

Faced with being plunged into a fiery furnace, many young people would surely compromise. Thinking of their whole lives ahead of them, and their careers hanging by a slender thread, why not cave in to the wishes of the boss? These three lads, however, were made of sterner stuff, and they courageously defied the king to his face! Answering the king, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego, said: “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (vv. 16–18).

The young men’s courage did not stop Nebuchadnezzar from throwing them into the fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter than usual. Yet an angel of God intervened to save them, giving Nebuchadnezzar a witness of the LORD’s great power. “Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ ‘Look!’ he answered, ‘I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’... Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on

whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!’” (Daniel 3:24–28).

Today, we live in a world of cowardice and compromise. How many young people today even know about this shining exhibition of fearless loyalty to the Maker of heaven and earth? Young people (and older people) in God’s Church can be inspired by such courage, even in the face of what seemed to be certain death. We need to remember these examples so that we, too, can be emboldened to display such spiritual strength, and can be effective and valiant witnesses to those who would dare to defy God!

Girls Can Be Brave-Hearted, Too!

Esther was a young woman, in her late teens or early twenties, when she found herself thrust into a position of power in the greatest empire of her day. She was gorgeous—she had won a “beauty contest” held to find the king a new queen—but she did not allow her beauty or her success to go to her head.

Soon after she was crowned, Esther learned of a plot to destroy her fellow Jews. She could have tried to keep her lineage a secret, and to live out her life selfishly, in luxury and comfort, as a queen. Instead, she chose to risk it all, allowing God to use her to save His people.

Esther was aware of the danger she would face if she tried to discuss the matter with her husband, the king. She sent her uncle Mordecai a message explaining her dilemma. “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days” (Esther 4:11).

Mordecai responded with an urgent appeal to his niece, the queen. “Then Mordecai told them to answer Esther: ‘Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’” (vv. 13–14).

Upon receiving Mordecai's message, Esther realized that she alone could act to preserve her people, and she sent her uncle this brave reply: "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him" (vv. 16–17).

Through faith, fasting and prayer, this young lady overcame great odds, found favor in the eyes of her husband the king, and prevailed upon him to save her people. Because of Esther's bravery, the Jews won a great victory over their enemies, and the people were saved, many of whom would later return to the ruined Jerusalem, to rebuild the city and temple of God. And her courageous actions preserved the Davidic line from which Jesus would be born.

A Loyal Young Woman of Character

Some examples of loyalty and character are not as earth-shaking on the surface, but they bring about deep and lasting consequences. Ruth was a young Gentile widow who remained loyal to her aging mother-in-law, Naomi, whose husband and two sons had died. Naomi did not want her daughters-in-law to live out their lives alone, so she tried to send them back to Moab, their land of birth (Ruth 1:8–13). But Ruth resisted, saying: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (v. 16).

This virtuous young woman was probably only in her mid-twenties when she chose to care for Naomi and return with her to Israel. Ruth's loyal example came to the attention of Boaz, a wealthy leader in Judah. They married, and their union led to a grandson named Jesse—who fathered King David.

A Young Man After God's Own Heart

God came to see that Jesse had done a good job of rearing his children. After King Saul had turned aside from following God's instructions, God sent the prophet Samuel to Jesse's house in Bethlehem. "Now the LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons'" (1 Samuel 16:1).

Jesse had a large family, including many tall, brave and handsome sons. From the eldest to the next to the

youngest, each was presented to Samuel for consideration. "Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen these.' [Samuel knew that God had not sent him on a "fool's errand," so he persisted.] And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all the young men here?' Then he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.' So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, 'Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!'" (1 Samuel 16:10–12).

Samuel had come to anoint David as the nation's king, but Jesse could also be happy in witnessing the character of his other sons. David's three eldest brothers became soldiers in the service of their king and country. "The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons... were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah" (1 Samuel 17:13). When another Philistine giant from Gath defied Israel, he was killed by "Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother" (1 Chronicles 20:7). David himself became the greatest warrior-king in Israel's history. In the resurrection, Jesse—who fathered a royal dynasty whose descendants have been sitting on David's throne down to this present day—will have good cause to be well pleased by the valor and character his children displayed.

Like Jesse's sons, teenagers and young adults in God's Church today must fight difficult battles. But there is one important difference; God is not sending His young men and women to strive in carnal warfare. The young people of God's Church today must struggle against a greater enemy than Goliath—they must overcome Satan himself! Their weapons are not swords, spears and slingshots, but instead are prayer, fasting, meditation and Bible study.

Many are succeeding in that battle. We can find examples of godly youth not only in the pages of the Bible, but in our Church congregations, where many fine young men and women are successfully overcoming Satan, self and society. Sometimes the battle is not easy, but God has made help available—through His word, and through His ministry. If you ever feel you need some help, ask! Many are avoiding the temptation to give in to the pulls of this carnal world—and you can, too, with God's help! Remember: if you are not yet baptized, God's Spirit is "with" you, and if you have been baptized, His Spirit is within you. Your life can exemplify the words the Apostle Paul wrote to the young evangelist Timothy: "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12)! ☐

Stewardship Report:

2005 Audit

By J. Davy Crockett, III

“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2).

Recently, in a meeting with our bankers, we explained that all our literature is offered free of charge. They were amazed, and said, “We really need to talk to you folks about your business model for the Church!” We quickly explained to them the biblical principle, “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

The Living Church of God takes very seriously its responsibility to properly account for the tithes, offerings and donations given by members, prospective members, co-workers and donors. As part of our “business model,” we undergo an independent audit each year, to verify our financial activities and to validate our numbers and our procedures. This year, we engaged a well-known accounting firm in Charlotte to perform an independent audit. Its detailed report is reprinted here for your examination.

The auditors were generally very pleased with our procedures, record-keeping and methods of doing business, but did make some recommendations regarding areas where we might improve. For example, the auditors suggested a change in how we document “restricted donations” (e.g. for disaster relief). We have already implemented that recommendation.

Pensions and retirement benefits are, as you know, a hot topic in the business world today, because some companies have abandoned established retirement plans when faced

with financial difficulties, while others have used retirement plan funds to offset current business costs. As a result, legislation such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act has imposed on businesses a set of stringent rules and regulations concerning the reporting of pensions and retirement benefits. The Church has a number of retirees and ministers’ widows who receive benefits funded by third tithe. Third tithe income is currently sufficient to cover the cost of these benefits, which are reviewed annually and paid at Church discretion based on criteria set by the Board of Directors. Our auditors observed that our accounting practice does not record an accrual to reflect future payments. This has not been an issue in our previous audits, and at this point we are comfortable with our position on how retirement benefits are funded and paid.

Our Accounting Department follows generally accepted accounting principles. However, the auditors noted that while we have a well-trained staff, and have documented many of our procedures in writing, we have not yet pulled those procedures together into a comprehensive procedural manual. The auditors recommended that we complete such a manual, and we are working on this as a priority project, which we plan to complete within the year.

Another requirement of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act is that we put in writing a policy regarding how we will handle any reports of activities

or accusations of fraud by Church employees. With this policy in place, everyone will know how to respond properly to any allegations of fraud that may arise. Of course, we have always endeavored, and will continue to strive, to operate in an open and transparent manner that encourages honesty and integrity at all levels. A written fraud policy will help us better achieve this long-standing goal.

This year, we underwent our first formal Information Technology audit, to assess the state of our information systems and procedures. Overall, our practices and procedures were found to be good. The auditors made a few specific recommendations in areas such as information security, which we will be implementing as soon as we are able.

The Work continues to look for ways to control costs and improve quality. For example, we recently negotiated a printing contract with BANTA, a large multinational printing firm. Thanks to BANTA’s expertise and cost-saving technology, we will reduce our Tomorrow’s World magazine printing costs by as much as 25 percent, while maintaining equivalent or greater quality—and we will be able to improve quality and even expand the magazine in the future at costs far below what our previous printer was able to offer.

Although the United States Postal Service does a good job over-

continues on page 21



Report of Independent Auditors

Board of Directors
Living Church of God (International), Inc.
Charlotte, North Carolina

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of the Living Church of God (International), Inc. (the "Church") as of December 31, 2005, and the related statements of activities and changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Church's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Living Church of God (International), Inc. as of December 31, 2005, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, L.L.P.

Charlotte, North Carolina
April 7, 2006

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2005

Assets

Current assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,160,920
Investments	267,490
Receivables, net	441,226
Inventory	185,498
Prepaid expenses	320,539
Deposits	3,900
Total current assets	2,379,573

Property and equipment, net 2,667,447

Other assets, net 6,423

Total assets **\$ 5,053,443**

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities

Accounts payable	\$ 180,470
Accrued wages and other liabilities	308,637
Mortgage payable, current portion	30,944
Capital lease obligations, current portion	61,760
Total current liabilities	581,811

Long-term liabilities

Mortgage payable	1,548,274
Capital lease obligations	114,231
Total long-term liabilities	1,662,505

Total liabilities **2,244,316**

Net assets

Unrestricted net assets	2,736,105
Temporarily restricted net assets	73,022
Total net assets	2,809,127

Total liabilities and net assets **\$ 5,053,443**

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended December 31, 2005

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Totals
Revenue and support			
Tithes and contributions	\$ 8,089,195	\$ -	\$ 8,089,195
Holy Day offerings	1,932,434	-	1,932,434
Investment income and other revenue	154,360	-	154,360
Special project donations	-	176,604	176,604
	<u>10,175,989</u>	<u>176,604</u>	<u>10,352,593</u>
Net assets released from restrictions due to satisfaction of restricted purpose	158,644	(158,644)	-
Total revenue and support	<u>10,334,633</u>	<u>17,960</u>	<u>10,352,593</u>
Expenses			
Feeding the Flock:			
Support of local congregations	4,336,022	-	4,336,022
Assistance to the needy	874,734	-	874,734
Preaching the Gospel:			
Television and radio	2,380,920	-	2,380,920
Publishing and editorial	1,049,420	-	1,049,420
Mail processing and distribution	999,037	-	999,037
General and administrative:			
Support services and other	711,651	-	711,651
Total expenses	<u>10,351,784</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,351,784</u>
Change in net assets	(17,151)	17,960	809
Net assets			
Beginning of year	<u>2,753,256</u>	<u>55,062</u>	<u>2,808,318</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 2,736,105</u>	<u>\$ 73,022</u>	<u>\$ 2,809,127</u>

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

Statement of Cash Flows
Year Ended December 31, 2005

Cash flows from operating activities	
Change in net assets	\$ 809
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities	
Depreciation and amortization	211,294
Net unrealized/realized gains on investments	(43,711)
Provision for uncollectible receivables	10,000
Change in operating assets and liabilities:	
Receivables	45,429
Prepaid expenses	(54,169)
Inventory	(13,678)
Deposits and other assets	4,119
Accounts payable	4,603
Accrued expenses	119,159
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>283,855</u>
Cash flows from investing activities	
Purchases of property and equipment	(154,864)
Proceeds from sale of equipment	2,324
Proceeds from sale of investments	172,447
Purchase of investments	(274,091)
Net cash used by investing activities	<u>(254,184)</u>
Cash flow from financing activities	
Principal payments on mortgage	(30,657)
Principal payments on capital lease obligations	(53,788)
Net cash used by financing activities	<u>(84,445)</u>
Decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(54,774)
Cash and cash equivalents	
Beginning of year	<u>1,215,694</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 1,160,920</u>
Supplemental disclosure of cash flow information	
Cash paid during the year for interest expense	<u>\$ 96,084</u>
Equipment acquired through issuance of capital lease	<u>\$ 139,809</u>

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 1 - Organization and summary of significant accounting policies

Organization and nature of activities - The Living Church of God (International), Inc. (the "Church"), a North Carolina nonprofit religious corporation is involved in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and providing for the spiritual and material needs of its members. The Church is primarily funded by unrestricted tithes and offerings. It maintains its worldwide headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Consolidation of reporting entity - The Church is comprised of various legal entities in the United States. Entities in which the Church holds a majority interest have been included in the accompanying financial statements. These entities include Living Church of God, Inc.; Tomorrow's World, Inc. and Tomorrow's World, LLC.

Basic of presentation - The accompanying financial statements are prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The operations of foreign affiliates are not included as they are independent entities from the Church. Net assets and revenues, expenses, gains, and losses are classified based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Accordingly, net assets and changes therein are classified and reported as follows:

Unrestricted net assets - Net assets that are both undesignated and designated in nature. Undesignated unrestricted net assets are those currently available for use in the day-to-day operations of the Church and those resources invested in property and equipment. The Church may designate certain amounts to be temporarily invested to meet specific objectives of the Church.

Temporarily restricted net assets - Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions that may or will be met by specific actions of the Church and/or passage of time. When a restriction expires, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restriction.

Permanently restricted net assets - Net assets that are subject to donor-imposed stipulations that they be maintained permanently by the Church. Generally, the donors of these assets permit the Church to use all or part of the income earned on any related investments for general or specific purposes. As of December 31, 2005, the Church had no permanently restricted net assets.

Contribution revenue - Tithes and offerings are recorded as revenue in the year the contribution is made. Members of the Church practice tithing, the donation of ten percent of one's income for the Church's unrestricted use. These tithes (known as first tithes), plus unrestricted offerings given at each of seven annual Holy Days, comprise the majority of Church support and revenue.

In addition to first tithes and offerings, members save a second tithes for personal use to be able to attend the annual Holy Days. Those who are able, give ten percent of their personal second tithes and/or excess second tithes to the Church. The Church uses these funds to help pay for expenses incurred by the Church to conduct the Holy Days and assist the needy members to be able to attend the Church festivals. These contributions are known as tithes of second tithes.

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 1 - Organization and summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

Prepaid Church meeting hall rentals are expensed in the month the meeting is held. All of the Church hall rentals are on a month to month basis.

Prepaid vehicle lease costs are paid at the inception of the lease and amortized over the term of the original lease, usually 12 to 48 months.

Property and equipment - Property and equipment is stated at cost. Depreciation of property is computed on the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of 30 years for buildings and improvements and 3 to 5 years for office furniture and equipment. The costs of major improvements are capitalized, while the costs of maintenance and repairs, which do not improve or extend the life of the respective properties, are expensed when incurred. The cost and accumulated depreciation of property are eliminated from the accounts upon disposal, and any resulting gain or loss is included in change in net assets.

Other assets - Other assets include purchase of "The World Ahead" trademark and "Global Church of God" copyrights, trademarks, trade names and all its intellectual property rights. The intellectual property rights are amortized over 7 years. Amortization expense for the year ended December 31, 2005 amounted to \$4,413. Accumulated amortization of these assets was \$24,461 at December 31, 2005.

Accrued liabilities - Accrued liabilities primarily pertain to amounts accrued for compensated officers, salaries and wages.

Income taxes - The Church is exempt from income tax under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Church's controlled entities are non-profit organizations with no taxable activity.

Programs and support services - The Church sponsors a number of programs and support services. Those programs and activities are broken down as follows:

Support of local congregations - Represents the cost incurred and paid by the Church at the local congregation level to provide for the spiritual needs of its members. Included are pastoral expenses such as salaries, health care, vehicles and other travel related costs, as well as weekly meeting hall rentals, mailing of DVD sermons, expenses to conduct the annual Holy Days, the direct support of foreign affiliates and other support.

Assistance to the needy - Provides for the material needs of Church members primarily as assistance for widows, orphans and the poor; including assistance to enable some members to attend the annual Holy Days. Assistance to foreign affiliates in need, is also included.

Television and radio - Primarily represents the cost of purchasing air time for the Church's weekly television program, Tomorrow's World. Also included are the production costs associated with creating the program and costs for video tape and answering service.

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 1 - Organization and summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

Members, who are financially able, also contribute a third tithes in the third and sixth years of every seven year cycle. These contributions are used first, to assist widows, orphans and the poor, and secondly, for those performing the Church's work in various ministerial functions.

Restricted donations are received for the purchase of media time, the operation of the Church's summer youth camps, buildings and facilities maintenance, disaster relief and assistance to foreign affiliates in need.

Cash and cash equivalents - The Church considers all highly liquid debt instruments purchased with an original maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

Inventory - Inventories consist of various books and publications and are stated at the lower of cost (first-in, first-out method) or market. A physical inventory of the publications is taken semi-annually (mid-year and year-end).

Investments - Investments consist of equities, preferred stock and mutual funds stated at fair market value. Unrealized gains and losses are included in the change in net assets.

Other receivables - Other receivables at December 31, 2005 are included in the receivables line on the statement of financial position and consist of amounts due from foreign affiliates, employees, the state of North Carolina for sales tax paid and vendor receivables. Management's determination of the allowance for doubtful accounts is based on an evaluation of the receivable, past experience, current economic conditions, and other risks. Amounts receivable are written off when, in the opinion of management, such receivables are deemed to be uncollectible. At December 31, 2005, management determined that an allowance for doubtful accounts of \$10,090 was reasonable.

Contributions receivable - Contributions receivable are included in the receivables line on the statement of financial position and consist of tithes and offerings collectible within one year. Management's determination of the allowance for doubtful accounts is based on an evaluation of the receivable, past experience, current economic conditions, and other risks inherent in the tithes receivable portfolio. Contributions receivable are written off when, in the opinion of management, such receivables are deemed to be uncollectible. At December 31, 2005, management determined that no allowance for doubtful accounts was necessary.

Prepaid expenses and deposits - Prepaid expenses consist of television time, publications, vehicle leases, Church meeting hall rentals, insurance and other including postage paid in advance. Deposits include funds to secure hall rentals and festival sites.

Programming costs of television time are paid in advance of the scheduled air date. The expense is recognized in the month that the program is aired.

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 1 - Organization and summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

Printing and editorial - Includes editorial and publishing costs of the Church's bi-monthly magazine, Tomorrow's World, and an array of booklets, primarily intended for non-members. Also included are costs of printing all other Church materials.

Mail processing and distribution - Represents the costs of mailing literature, audiotape and compact disk requests generated by preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God through television, radio and publishing. Computer support of mailing lists is also included.

Support services and other - Includes administrative expenses not directly attributable to specific programs. This includes the full cost of all finance, accounting, purchasing, human resources and legal support. It also includes general insurance and other miscellaneous expenses.

Advertising expense - Advertising costs are expensed as incurred. Total advertising expense for the year ended December 31, 2005, was \$124,944.

Use of estimates - The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Note 2 - Investments

The carrying amount of investments at December 31, 2005 is summarized below:

Preferred stock	\$ 102,000
Equities	164,590
Mutual funds	1,100
Total investments	\$ 267,690

Investment return is included in other income on the accompanying statement of activities and changes in net assets and consists of the following at December 31, 2005:

Interest and dividends	\$ 8,127
Unrealized and realized gains	43,711
Total	\$ 51,838

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

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Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 3 – Receivables

Receivables at December 31, 2005 are as follows:

Other receivables	\$ 98,839
Contributions receivable	395,280
	400,139
Less allowance for uncollectible receivables	18,000
Total receivables	<u>\$ 382,139</u>

Note 4 – Prepaid expenses

Prepaid expenses at December 31, 2005, consist of the following:

Prepaid insurance	\$ 11,839
Prepaid vehicle lease	12,159
Prepaid youth camp	20,500
Prepaid church hall rental	26,260
Prepaid television	198,125
Prepaid postage	44,134
Prepaid other	7,422
Total prepaid expenses	<u>\$ 528,529</u>

Note 5 – Property and equipment

The following is a summary of property and equipment at December 31, 2005:

Land	\$ 415,000
Land improvements	10,670
Building and improvements	2,034,098
Equipment, fixtures and software	707,493
Automobiles	139,800
Construction in process	7,517
	3,316,583
Less accumulated depreciation	1,681,136
Property and equipment, net	<u>\$ 1,635,447</u>

Depreciation expense, including amortization on equipment and vehicles under capital lease, was \$206,481 for the year ended December 31, 2005.

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

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Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 6 – Mortgage payable

The term of the mortgage payable to the Bank of Sturdy is 30 years, with a variable interest rate based on 1% below the Bank of Sturdy base rate (9% at December 31, 2005). The mortgage is collateralized by the Church's headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina, with principal and interest payable in monthly installments of \$9,839 through October 2032. The final payment of the balance plus accrued interest, if any, is due November 2032.

Future maturities of the note payable are as follows:

2006	\$ 31,844
2007	25,882
2008	27,479
2009	29,175
2010	30,973
Thereafter	1,424,787
	1,579,218
Less current portion	30,944
	<u>\$ 1,548,274</u>

Total interest expense for the year ended December 31, 2005, was \$96,084.

Note 7 – Capital lease obligations

The Church leases certain equipment and vehicles under agreements that are classified as capital leases. These obligations require monthly payments varying from \$583 to \$2,046 and extend through April 2009. The cost of equipment and vehicles under capital lease is included as property and equipment and is summarized at December 31, 2005, as follows:

Equipment	\$ 98,000
Vehicles	128,889
	226,889
Less accumulated amortization	60,655
	<u>\$ 166,234</u>

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

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Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 7 – Capital lease obligations (continued)

Required minimum lease payments as of December 31, 2005, are as follows:

2006	\$ 66,567
2007	66,567
2008	48,065
2009	3,728
	184,932
Less amount representing interest	8,927
	173,999
Less current maturity	61,766
	<u>\$ 114,233</u>

Note 8 – Temporarily restricted net assets

Temporarily restricted net assets are restricted for the following purposes at December 31, 2005:

Disaster relief	\$ 72,883
Other projects	141
	<u>\$ 73,024</u>

Note 9 – Commitments

The Church leases four vehicles and equipment under various non-cancelable operating leases. These leases require monthly payments varying from \$102 to \$1,266 and extend through April 2009. Lease expense for vehicles under various operating leases amount to \$203,117 at December 31, 2005.

Required minimum lease payments on lease under operating leases as of December 31, 2005 are as follows:

2006	\$ 174,368
2007	112,092
2008	11,651
2009	846
	<u>\$ 298,957</u>

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

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Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 10 – Benefit plan

The Church has a 401(k) Tax Deferred Annuity Plan for all eligible employees. Eligible employees may elect to enroll up to the maximum contribution permitted by the Internal Revenue Code. The Church does not contribute to this plan.

The Church has a Simplified Employee Pension Plan (SEP) covering all eligible employees. The Church's contribution is based on 2.5% of eligible participants' compensation for the year ended December 31, 2005. The contributions made by the Church for the year ended December 31, 2005, amounted to \$55,332.

Note 11 – Contingencies

The Church provides discretionary post-employment retirement payments and health care benefits to select ministers' widows and retired employees that meet certain objective and subjective criteria. Although one of the criteria includes an employee's years of service (including the Church and its predecessors), an accrual for these future benefits has not been recorded due to the Church's ability to deny payments at its sole discretion. For the year ended December 31, 2005, the Church expensed payments for this purpose totaling approximately \$250,000.

Note 12 – Line of credit

The Church has a \$100,000 line of credit commitment from a bank which matures June 20, 2006, and is payable in full on demand. The line of credit bears interest at prime. There were no borrowings on the line of credit as of December 31, 2005.

Note 13 – Concentration of credit risk

Financial instruments which potentially subject the Church to concentrations of credit risk consist principally of cash and cash equivalents, contributions receivable and investments. The Church places its cash and cash equivalents on deposit with a North Carolina financial institution. These balances are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation up to \$100,000. From time to time, deposits in these accounts may exceed federally insured limits. In addition, the Church has \$102,000 of its investments in one company's preferred stock.

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.

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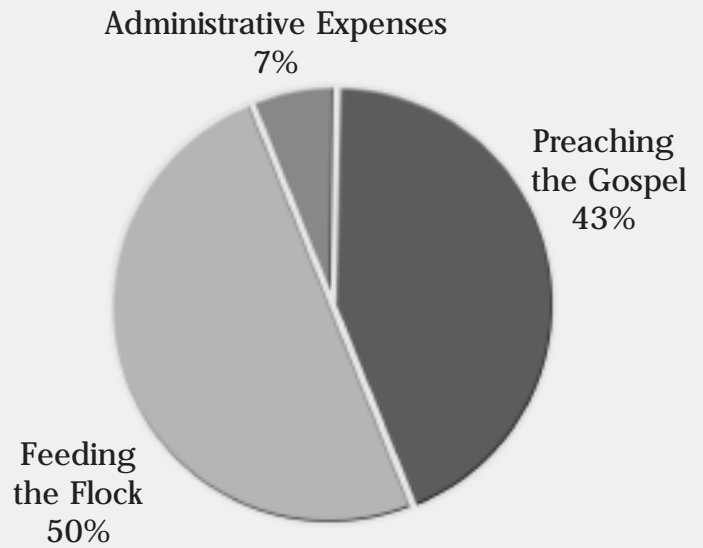
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2005

Note 14 – Related Party

The Church has affiliated entities throughout the world that are related by some common board members. For the year ended December 31, 2005, the Church expended \$247,668 related to these affiliates and had a receivable of \$82,509 due from affiliated entities.

Note 15 – Subsequent Events

During the year ended December 31, 2005, the Church entered into a purchase commitment for the acquisition of a corporate condominium in Charlotte, North Carolina. Subsequent to year-end, the purchase was finalized for \$137,000 and the Church obtained mortgage financing of \$106,600.



2005 Audit

(continued from page 14)

all, we are trying to address several chronic problems regarding mail processing and delivery. We recently installed new software in our Mail Processing Department that will help us track mail flow and delivery time so that we can more precisely identify areas causing and experiencing delays in delivery. We are also exploring ways to speed mail delivery without adding substantially to the cost.


Our income so far in 2006 has been steady, and generally on budget. We carefully monitor expenses so we can stay within our budget. As a result, several important projects remain “unfunded”—meaning that we would like to pursue them, but only if our income increases or our other expenses decrease, and funds thus become available. Among those unfunded items are ministerial hires, office equipment and additional stations airing the Tomorrow’s World telecast.

So far in 2006, Holy Day offerings—which account for almost 20 percent of Church income—have been very close to our projections. We ask for your prayers that the Work receive generous Holy Day offerings in the fall, so we can make our budget.

In 2005, the Work increased its spending to better accomplish its mission of preaching the gospel and feeding the flock around the world, while delivering the “Ezekiel warning.” We hired several ministers, and moved several others. We greatly expanded Tomorrow’s World television coverage. As a result, our “net income” after expenses for 2005 was just \$809. We truly are a “non-profit” organization! Thankfully, though, we ended the year “in the black,” having balanced our income and expenses quite well. We hope that a larger budget surplus in 2006 will allow us to expand our “strategic reserve” and further strengthen the financial position of the Work to set the stage for even greater growth in the future.

One hopeful sign of future growth is viewer response to the Tomorrow’s World television program. In 2006, so far, response has been phenomenal! As a result, our list of co-workers is growing steadily. To encourage these faithful supporters, and to deepen their understanding of this Work, we recently offered the Living Church News to co-workers who have been donors for 18 months or more.

We are also receiving an increasing number of requests for ministerial visits. More and more people with no previous Church of God background are asking to attend services. These developments are very exciting, but we can only respond to them if we have the resources to meet the growing demand. Please pray fervently that God will send many more laborers to the harvest, and that He will grant us the resources to accomplish the Work he has given us to do.

Thank you all for your continued, generous, prayerful support of the Living Church of God. 

Preparing the Bride*(continued from page 6)*

turned inward. We must not fail to heed the parable of the nobleman going into a far country. We must not fail to act on what we have been given (Luke 19:20–26). Christ also warns the lazy, complacent and unprofitable servant, in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:24–30). Notice especially: “And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (v. 30).


Many have faced confusion and difficulty in the last 15 years. But God’s servants do not give in to adversity. Rather, God expects them to see through the fog, pick themselves up, and go about their Father’s business: “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Surely we did not know this,’ does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?” (Proverbs 24:10–12). Again, let us consider Ramsay’s analysis:

“The ordinary historian would probably not condemn the spirit of Laodicea so strenuously as St. John did. In the tendency of the Laodiceans towards a policy of compromise he would probably see a tendency towards toleration and allowance, which indicated a certain sound practical sense, and showed that the various constituents of the population of Laodicea

were well mixed and evenly balanced.... The very characteristics which made Laodicea a well-ordered, energetic and pushing centre of trade, seemed to him to evince a coldness of nature that was fatal to the highest side of human character, the spirit of self-sacrifice and enthusiasm” (Ramsay, pp. 426–27).

During the persecution of 303–313AD, the brethren of Eumonia (a city in the Laodicean circuit) retreated to the church when threatened. Ramsay recounts what happened:

“In ordinary circumstances, doubtless, some or even many of them would have lacked the boldness to choose death; but it lies in human nature that the general spirit of a crowd exercises a powerful influence on the individuals who compose it; and even those who, taken singly, might have compromised with their conscience, and shrunk from a terrible death, accepted it when inspired with the courage of the whole body. The entire people was burned with the church; and they died ‘calling upon the God over all’” (p. 426).

The letter to the church of Laodicea is addressed from “the faithful and true witness” (Revelation 3:14). It appears that the Laodiceans will be required to be zealous, faithful and true witnesses, one way or the other. Let those of us who seek to be Philadelphian learn the lesson, before it is too late! 

Seven Keys to Mental Mastery*(continued from page 3)*

mouth, people who are “working an angle.” They also notice people who are **unbalanced**, disturbed and in need of help.

Such leaders will also notice physical characteristics of people and things. They will be alert to and aware of the nature of the foliage, plants and animals around them if they are out in nature. Normally, they will not be the ones to blunder into quicksand—or into a beehive!

I first became impressed with this characteristic when traveling overseas with Dick Armstrong, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s eldest son.

Dick and I were driving through Europe in the summer of 1954. I had

graduated from college a couple of years before, and it was my first trip overseas. I was noticing and learning many things. But often, **many** times in fact, when we would be sitting in the car or at a sidewalk café and I would be thinking over what we had seen, Dick would suddenly point out to me some unusual characteristics of the people around us, or of the architecture, the plant life, the trees or the flowers.

I had traveled throughout the Midwest as a boy, and later over most of the United States with **many** different young men. But never had I been with a companion who was so **alert** to what was going on around him. Dick used his God-given eyes and ears to discern the characteristics of the people we encountered.

He noticed their habits and ways. Soon he would pick up certain words and phrases from each foreign language and begin to use them.

These mental qualities and abilities made Dick a “natural” to head our overseas Work. He did this, and soon the foundation was laid for the growth of the Work of God in Britain and Europe.

Jesus Christ’s Example

Jesus was **alert** to the moods and attitudes of others. You will find His example in Matthew 16:5–12. Here Jesus **noticed** the subtle appearance of doubt and confusion in His disciples. He **perceived** the moment His disciples were unsure on a vital point.

In Matthew 22:18, Jesus perceived that the Pharisees were trying to **trick Him** and bring about His downfall in the way they asked a certain question. If He had not been **alert and awake**, His ministry might have **ended** right there!

Yes, Jesus of Nazareth **noticed** the arched eyebrows, the questioning eyes, the shifty expressions and furtive smirks of those who doubted Him or tried to trap Him in some way. He quickly perceived attitudes as well—and was often able to forestall trouble before it started. **Always**, therefore, He was one step ahead of His disciples—and was **able** to lead them.

A Constant PRACTICE

Most of us are not by nature as **alert and discerning** as we ought to be.

Learn to observe specific things about people—such as height and weight, color of hair and eyes, voice qualities and accent, and any definite physical characteristics. This should **not** be done, of course, with any remote thought in mind to **prejudice** yourself against anyone. But this definitive information will help you to better remember people you meet—even those whom you only know casually. It will definitely help you to **understand** and to better serve and deal with them in the future.

Become more **aware** of the scenery and the environment around you. Observe the style and architecture of the buildings. Notice **what kind** of fish are in the pond, and what kind of birds are in the park.

Obviously, this practice will add **immediately** to your store of knowledge and to your effectiveness in dealing with people and things.

If you learn to **observe** and **properly discern** all of these things, in right balance, you will in any case be far better prepared to be a literal

king over some area or phase of society in Tomorrow's World!

Key 2: Education and Knowledge

Nearly every future king is **educated and tutored** in preparation for the wide-ranging responsibilities that await him. He is taught not only the history of his own people and their neighbors, but the social and cultural heritage of the past. He is—or at least **should be**—instructed a great deal about current events. For he must be familiar with recent trends in international diplomacy and warfare as well as domestic and local political issues.

For a future ruler, a **thorough education** is a **necessity**. Leaders must **know** whereof they act and speak. They must have correct information and **facts** behind their decisions and their policies—or the nations they lead will be headed for **disaster**.

It may surprise some to learn that most, if not all, of the great leaders of the Bible were **highly educated**. The prophet Daniel was of royal blood and was among the captive princes in Babylon who were taught “the language and literature of the Chaldeans” (Daniel 1:4). He was, therefore, educated in the royal court of the **greatest** empire in all the earth at that time.

In Acts 22:3, the Apostle Paul tells us that he was “brought up,” or educated “at the feet of Gamaliel”—who historians tell us was the acknowledged **greatest** teacher of Jewish rabbis of that time.

The lesson in all this is that we should endeavor to obtain the best education possible. Especially, we should be concerned about **basic** subjects such as grammar, diction, mathematics, history, geography and a good knowledge of current events. Obviously, many older people may

find it difficult to go back to school. But there are several fine correspondence schools that offer courses in all of the above-mentioned subjects. Besides, many outstanding business and industrial leaders have the equivalent of a Ph.D. through **diligent personal study** of books and courses on their own.

Read widely, and keep growing mentally all of your life!

Teach Your Children

A vital point here is to teach your children to **read widely** and to **think**. Encourage your young children and grandchildren to use the **dictionary** often—to become familiar with the basic meaning of thousands of key words in our language. For words provide the very **tools** by which we think and reason. Teach them also to become familiar with the good encyclopedias—to begin early building a real **storehouse** of knowledge on basic subjects.

Both you and your children are to be encouraged to read biographies and autobiographies of the great leaders of the past and of recent times as well. Read *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Read some of the better volumes of Sir Winston Churchill—“the man of the century.” This type of reading should inspire one to a life of accomplishment and leadership.

If at all possible, have your children or grandchildren read **this very article!** For they should be the **leaders** in Tomorrow's World. They must, therefore, obtain the best possible education **today!** Teach them to **study** the word of God, the laws of God and the perfect **example** of Jesus Christ! Teach them that **all real knowledge of truth** is based on—and in harmony with—this **revelation of basic knowledge** from the Creator.

Thousands of “educated fools” are abroad in the world today—utterly

confused about who they are, where they came from, what are the laws of life, what is the meaning of world conditions, and where we are headed. Yet the true answer to these questions is the most important knowledge of all. So much mis-knowledge is being disseminated today that one must constantly exercise alertness and discernment to be sure of the “facts” being presented in a class or in a textbook.

Acquire your education with a high purpose in mind! Acquire it in order to join Jesus Christ in ruling, in teaching, in rebuilding this world and bringing about peace in Tomorrow’s World. In doing so, you will be acquiring a great deal of tomorrow’s education today!

Key 3: Understanding, Vision and BIG-Mindedness

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong stated that he had a burning desire for “understanding” beginning at about age 16.

What is “understanding?”

It is different from knowledge. For knowledge connotes merely the possession of facts and information. And wisdom is the ability to draw on those facts and with understanding make a right decision in a given situation.

But understanding is the grasp not only of information and facts, but of their relationship to each other and their meaning. It is the awareness of the basic laws and principles governing personal, national and spiritual situations that come up. It usually involves much study, thought and experience. It enables one to see the big picture in a given situation.

Take the example of Sir Winston Churchill, called “the man of the century.” It is widely recognized that his greatness was made possible by the unusual understanding and

vision he possessed, at least in physical matters. He became Prime Minister of Britain at the beginning of World War II. He was relieved that he could at last straighten out the desperate situation into which his nation had fallen, about which he had been warning for many years.

For, over and over again, Churchill had warned his fellow Britons about the dangerous tyranny rising in Nazi Germany. He understood the meaning of Hitler’s boasts and the Nazi torchlight rallies. He grasped the meaning of the historical background of the German peoples and their militaristic nature. Like “a voice in the wilderness,” he had warned the democratic leaders of his own and other friendly states what was bound to come. But they would not heed!

Upon becoming Prime Minister, he was able to deal with the ugly situation. His people now were frightened at what he had known all along would come. But Churchill was able to see the big picture. For he had a vast knowledge of history, and he understood the nature of the rise and fall of dictators. Moreover, he deeply understood not only the military but the tremendous industrial power of Britain and America and worked unceasingly to convince America to help Britain before it was too late.

Churchill had gained early a deep understanding of his nation’s army, its navy, its parliamentary system (he had been a member of Parliament since 1901) and of its people. Most importantly, he was able to see them in relation to each other and how they fit together as a whole. This even included the Commonwealth nations that he came to know well through his wide study, travel and his early military experiences.

His understanding of this whole picture was unique.

So it was that when Winston

Churchill was given the crushing responsibility of directing his people in their hour of need, he was not the least upset or overwhelmed. He wrote: “I felt as if I were walking with Destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial” (The Gathering Storm, p. 596).

How To Exercise Vision

Along with understanding comes vision. This is the ability to foresee events or situations even before they happen. This comes, partly at least, from training the mind to think ahead, to consider the end of a series of events or a particular course of action. I am grouping it here with understanding because these two qualities often go together, and complement each other.

As would be expected, therefore, Churchill also possessed a great deal of vision. In his autobiography, Bernard Baruch tells about a conversation with Churchill just after the First World War: “Pointing his walking stick toward the east, where the Red Revolution had erupted, he made a prophetic remark, ‘Russia, Russia. That’s where the weather is coming from.’” Even then, Baruch tells us, Churchill could sense the antagonistic spirit of the Soviet dictatorship toward free men. For he had vision.

Solomon wrote: “Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18, KJV).

Those who keep God’s Law will have vision because they will be given a penetrating insight into human nature—and the collective nature of people and nations. They will possess superior understanding of the principles of life, and will therefore sense, before others, the outcome of various situations and problems.

Learn To Be **BIG-Minded**

In like manner, those who keep God's law will be given superior understanding and **big-mindedness**. For God promises: "A **good understanding** have all those who **do His commandments**" (Psalm 111:10).

To gain greater understanding, read widely—especially in history—trying to learn the **lessons** behind the many adventures and misadventures of humanity down through the centuries. In any situation, try to see the **Big Picture**. Relate the situation to similar ones in the lives of others you know or may have read about. Do not be so upset or involved in the **immediate problem** that you fail to relate it to your whole life and future. Think of its meaning in terms of the **entire world** and God's ultimate **purpose**.

An amusing yet meaningful account of how Winston Churchill did this concerns his being run down by a New York taxicab in 1931. Confined to a bed of pain and kept from his work for some time, he could easily have become discouraged, or perhaps bitter against America and against all cab drivers, etc.

Instead, Churchill made front-page news by completely exonerating the driver. Then, he dashed off a lurid description of the episode for which he received \$2,500!

Churchill was **big-minded** about what a lesser man could have considered a "tragedy." For he possessed the **understanding** that this need not be a tragedy at all unless he made it so.

Use these examples in gaining understanding yourself!

Remember always the account of King Solomon's early reign over ancient Israel—while he was still obedient to his God. For, because of Solomon's yielded spirit, God asked him to name what he would like and

promised to grant it. Solomon's concern was not for **vanity**, but for his awesome **responsibility** as king over all Israel. So Solomon asked: "Therefore give to Your servant an **understanding heart** to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" (1 Kings 3:9).

This greatly pleased the Eternal. And so God gave Solomon a **wise and understanding heart**, and both riches and honor—for which he had not asked (vv. 10–13).

In addition to reading widely—especially the lessons of history and the lives of great men and women—try always to see the Big Picture in any given situation. Exercise vision and train yourself to look to the real end or outcome of a problem or a course of action. Read and study the Bible itself to gain real understanding and acquire God's viewpoint on the big questions and problems of life. Then pray earnestly to the Eternal God and ask Him for understanding—remembering in faith the example of Solomon!

Key 4: Wisdom and Resourcefulness

One of the most important qualities in any high official or leader is **wisdom**. For although a president or prime minister cannot possibly be an expert in petroleum engineering, aircraft and missile production and nuclear physics, he must nevertheless have the **wisdom** to make sound decisions on all these matters and many, many more.

Solomon wrote: "**Wisdom** is the principal thing; therefore **get wisdom**. And in all your getting, get **understanding**" (Proverbs 4:7).

Wisdom, of course, is the faculty of making **sound decisions**. Anyone with great wisdom would need at least a good degree of **understanding**

and **vision**. They would also have to acquire **knowledge** of the problem at hand—and attempt to get **all** of the pertinent facts.

Having the **facts, and possessing understanding** of the past history, trends and laws governing the situation they face, those who have **wisdom** must correlate all of these factors and make **sound decisions** that will be practical and that will actually work—both **now and in the future**. This is true **wisdom**.

All too often, political decisions are made in order to please the general public **at the moment**. Undoubtedly, those making such "expedient" judgments realize that there will be greater trouble in years to come because of their shortsighted, crowd-pleasing decisions. But, perhaps at least partially blinded by the pressures of the moment, they "hope" that their biased decisions will somehow work out all right!

One of the "keys" to real wisdom is the willingness to **learn from one's own mistakes**. Bernard Baruch, one of the wisest men of the 20th century, wrote of how he systematically developed this practice: "After each major undertaking—and particularly when things had turned sour—I would shake loose from Wall Street and go off to some quiet place where I could review what I had done and where I had gone wrong. At such times I **never sought to excuse myself** but was concerned solely with **guarding against a repetition of the same error**."

Be willing to **learn from your own mistakes!**

Another point of wisdom is to **get all of the pertinent facts** concerning any problem. Many are too lazy or too vain to do this—feeling they can "play it by ear" and somehow get by. The powers of human intuition being what they are, this approach will work **part of the**

time—especially when one is on familiar ground, and the decision is not of major consequence and is not a volatile or potentially dangerous issue. But when it is, then **woe** be to a leader who rushes around and makes decisions **without having gotten the facts** and without also getting **wise counsel!**

For God's word makes plain: "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but **in the multitude of counselors there is safety**" (Proverbs 11:14). Great leaders usually surround themselves with top-notch assistants and **advisors of both ability and wisdom**. They will not seek insipid "yes men," but rather will search out counselors who dig deeply into the facts, possess **vision**, and will independently give truly **wise counsel** when an important decision is to be made.

Where does **wisdom** come from?

Wisdom Proceeds from God

The Eternal God answers: "The fear of the LORD is the **beginning of wisdom**: and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). Apart from the knowledge of the Creator, deep and lasting wisdom is impossible. Regarding the knowledge of money-making, social status and purely material things, Jesus said: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8, KJV). But in the **big** decisions that involve the **outcome** of human lives, nations and the **entire human race**, only those who deeply **respect** and **reverence** the great **God** of Creation and understand **His purpose** possess **real wisdom**.

"For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come **knowledge** and **understanding**" (Proverbs 2:6). Remember God's promise: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let

him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

So **ask** God, in believing **faith**, for **wisdom**. Then **study** the word of God—especially the book of Proverbs—for the examples of wisdom in God's own revelation to man. Also, read and study the lives of great and successful people to gain some of the keys to wisdom.

For God says, "He who walks with wise men **will be wise**, but the companion of fools will be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20). Not everyone can be the personal friend and confidant of leaders like Sir Winston Churchill, but everyone **can** read the examples of wisdom from their lives, and in this way "walk with" and **learn from** the wise and the great.

Seek to learn not only **wisdom**, but also **resourcefulness**—the capacity to **resolve emergencies**, to come up with wise alternatives when trouble has upset an ongoing plan or operation. Along with wisdom, seek to **exercise resourcefulness** in your daily life. For it will grow with **habitual use**.

Do all of this to grow in **wisdom** and **resourcefulness**.

Then, when a particular problem arises, always be sure to get **all** of the pertinent **facts** involving a decision. Next, be sure that you get **wise counsel**—not just from those who necessarily reflect your own opinions—but from a number of others who understand the subject you are concerned with and will independently give you well-considered advice.

Not only to be a **king** someday, but in our day-to-day lives, all of us need more **wisdom** and **resourcefulness** to be truly happy and successful. Start **now** to build these vital qualities into **your life!**

Key 5: Faith, Hope and Courage

A **positive** frame of mind, coupled with **faith** and **courage**, often "separates the wheat from the chaff" in times of trial and test. A truly great leader **must** possess these qualities.

Yet we live in an age of compromise and expediency. We live in an age when even leaders whine and moan about the dangers in the world—yet are **afraid to act resolutely** when crises come. More, we live in an age when many people are "not sure" of God's existence, "not sure" whether they should be **loyal** to their family, friends or country—not sure, in fact, of **anything**.

In this sickening situation, a person has **no basis** for faith or courage! Thank God, then, that this kind of society will soon come to an **end**.

For the kind of real leader God intends to use in governing this world is typified by King David of Israel. Remember that even before he became king, David exemplified **faith** and **courage** to a high degree.

When David, as a very young man, was challenged about his ability to fight the giant Goliath, notice his answer: "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God" (1 Samuel 17:36). David had learned to have confidence and courage. But he also had **faith** in the **living** God and His **willingness** to intervene in behalf of those who served and obeyed Him.

As young David strode out across that valley toward a cursing, raging, **experienced giant of a warrior**, he had to have supreme courage to do **his part**. And he had to **know** that the Creator God of his fathers **would intervene** and **help!**

People who are always **fearful** and **worried** are not fit to be leaders

and **kings**. For they will be utterly unable to inspire others or command their respect.

They will be afraid to make the hard decisions, afraid to take swift **action** when it is necessary. In addition, their effectiveness is doubly impaired, for their fears and worries will bring on ulcers, high blood pressure and perhaps even a heart attack or mental breakdown!

Note what God's word says: "But the **fearful**, and **unbelieving**... shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8, KJV).

So, think **positive** thoughts! Set yourself to develop an attitude of **courage** and **confidence**! Set out to **prove** the existence of the true and **living** God! Obey Him and learn from Him! **Learn why you are here, where you are going and what life is really all about**. Do not be an intellectual or spiritual coward! Have a reason for **being**—something worth **living** for and, if need be, worth **dying** for!

Heed God's instruction: "The **fear of man** brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the **LORD** shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25). Quit worrying so much about what people think or say! **Seek** and **obey** the Creator God. In all things, **prove** what is true and right. Then, with God's help, think and act **courageously** and let the world know that **you stand for something**!

Key 6: Mental Discipline and Persistence

Many intelligent and capable people seem to make their lives a success—for a little while. Then, inexplicably, they suddenly let their feelings and passions dominate them and begin to throw away their short-lived "success" in the pursuit of drunkenness, drugs, sexual

conquest or some other human weakness.

They have **not learned to discipline themselves!**

In our society, dominated by the "permissive psychology" in its child-rearing methods and educational processes, this **lack of self-discipline** has become a **gigantic** problem. With young people **under 18 years of age** committing many types of crimes, and with drunkenness, drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases becoming great physical and mental **crippers** in our Western world, we need to learn the vital importance of **self-discipline**.

The word of God says: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and **he who rules his spirit** than he who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

People who have **lasting** success are those who have learned to guide, direct and **master** their thoughts and emotions. They have learned to say "No!" to themselves on many, many occasions.

Referring to the national need for self-discipline, Bernard Baruch, "the counselor of Presidents," wrote: "The greatest blessing of our democracy is freedom. But in the last analysis, **our only freedom is the freedom to discipline ourselves.**"

Apply this to yourself!

Build Right Mental Habits

Develop the **habit** of **ruling** over your thoughts and emotions. **Discipline** yourself to get up on time in the morning, to get to work **on time**, to work hard and to grow on the job. **Direct** your thoughts into constructive channels—**not** permitting yourself to dwell on hurt feelings or lusts. Purposefully **guard** your mind so that these negative and destructive thoughts do not even find a place of lodgment. Also, **avoid** idle and purposeless "daydreams"

that usually engender lusts, vanities and foolishness, and are a childish form of **escape from reality**.

Train yourself to **avoid discouragement** and to **finish** whatever worthwhile project you have begun. God says: "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10). **Do not** be a "quitter." Train and discipline your mind and body to **keep on to the end**.

Discipline your mind and your moods. **Guard the door of your mind** against negative, vain or lustful thoughts. **Do not** allow yourself to sit around moping, to feel sorry for yourself, or to give up and quit anything worthwhile.

Rather, direct your mind and emotions into positive channels—into **productivity** and **accomplishment**. Have an attitude of **outgoing concern** for others, and of **giving** and **servicing** and **keeping on** to the end. Then you will be **truly happy** and, at least to some degree, a **leader** both now and in your ultimate future!

Key 7: Loyalty and Service

One of the most important qualities any nation, group or organization looks for in its leaders is **absolute loyalty**. For when people cannot be completely **relied upon**—then all of their other good qualities are negated.

To the very end of His physical life, Jesus Christ was **totally loyal** to God the Father—even unto **death**. He never argued or questioned His Father's will. He said: "Not my will, but **Yours**, be done" (Luke 22:42).

The main quality that caused God to promise Abraham and his heirs the ultimate possession of **this entire earth** was his complete **faithfulness and loyalty** to God. When Abraham had demonstrated his willingness even to sacrifice his own son Isaac—his **only** son by his wife

Sarah, the very son through whom the tremendous birthright promise would have to come—God **blessed him**. God said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies” (Genesis 22:16–17).

God gave this tremendous blessing **because Abraham was faithful and loyal to the utmost!**

So develop this sense of **absolute loyalty** to God, to your nation, to your employer, to your spouse, your children and your family. Then, along with that sense of loyalty, develop an attitude of **service**.

At the beginning of this article, I quoted the scripture: “Let **this mind** be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). Christ **exemplified** the spirit of service. He **gave His life** for us. He was constantly **giving help**, encouragement, blessings, healings, and real **love** to others throughout His physical life.

Notice Philippians 2:6–9. Although Jesus was equal with God, and had been **very God**, He “emptied Himself” as the original Greek should be translated, “taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” Even though Jesus had shared the **glory of God**, even though it was **His voice** that had said: “Let there be light,” when God reformed the earth at the time of Adam, Jesus was more than willing to **give that up** in order to **serve** the lowly human beings God had created through Him (Ephesians 3:9).

What about you?

Are you not only **loyal** to God, to your family and others—but do you have an **outgoing concern for them**? Do you have the spirit of **giving, of sharing—of serving**?

Jesus said: “It is more blessed to **give** than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Learn to **give** of yourself to others—in service, in warmth and encouragement and in your **total personality**. In this way, you will find that what Jesus Christ said is not just an idea, but a **living law that works**. For it is more blessed to **give** than to receive!

Getting the mind **off** the self, and **on** serving others—and most of all **serving the Eternal God—is the way to lasting joy, peace of mind and true success**.

With the daily practice of **alertness** and **discernment**, with the acquiring of **right education and knowledge**, the cultivation of **understanding, vision** and **big-mindedness**, the exercise and development of **wisdom** and **resourcefulness, faith** and **courage, mental discipline** and **persistence**, you will be well on your way to building the mind of a great leader—a **king**. With the additional qualities of total **loyalty**, and the spirit of **giving** and unselfish **service** to God and to other human beings, your horizons will be even broader!

You will be building a mind **like God**, your Creator. You will be building an instrument of **service—both now and forever**. You will be exercising seven basic “keys” to **building** and **mastering** what is undoubtedly the greatest physical thing God has created—the **human mind**. In all this, you will be **glorifying** your Creator, and you will gain a sense of **deep fulfillment**. Now it is **up to you!** LCN

Do You Have Christian Courage?

(continued from page 2)

brethren, we—more than many of you realize—are among the very few on this earth called to truly serve the great God and finish His Work among men before Christ’s Second Coming. We will certainly need a great deal of courage to do this.

Recall the example of Israel’s King David, “the man after God’s own heart.” David had many qualities that made him beloved of God. One was the profound courage he showed—time after time—when his life was threatened and when other things went terribly wrong. We all remember the inspiring account of David confronting Goliath, an absolute giant of a man. As that huge warrior moved directly toward David, cursed him and threatened him with instant death, the young shepherd shouted, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a

javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel” (1 Samuel 17:45–46).

David had not only the faith, but also the raw physical courage, to face this giant in a life-threatening situation when everything—humanly speaking—seemed stacked against him! In the future, my brethren, there will be times when we, a tiny Church, will face overwhelming odds in doing our job of completing the commission God has given us. We will need the type of faith and courage David exemplified. We need to meditate, pray and think through this need ahead of time—so we can be “ready” when these trials come right at us!

Ebed-Melech's example is a fine illustration of courage shown by a more typical person. The prophet Jeremiah had been let down into a "slime pit" by some of the princes of Judah, although the king only allowed this to happen because of his own weakness and confusion. It was this dedicated and courageous black man, "Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian," who gained the king's permission to bring Jeremiah out from the pit of mire before he perished.

"So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah. Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, 'Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes.' And Jeremiah did so. So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the dungeon. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison" (Jeremiah 38:11–13).

Because of Ebed-Melech's faith and courage, Jeremiah was able to finish his ministry. Certainly God used this very dedicated individual, but Ebed-Melech had to exercise courage—raw physical courage—for God to use him. God might otherwise have raised up someone else to do the job, but Ebed-Melech was a willing instrument in His hands.

Later, God sent word to Jeremiah: "Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, and they shall be performed in that day before you. But I will deliver you in that day," says the LORD, "and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid. For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me," says the LORD'" (Jeremiah 39:16–18).

Remember also the example of the Apostle Paul, who went through trial after trial after trial in his ministry, yet trusted God and displayed magnificent courage even in life-threatening circumstances. Paul was even dragged outside of Lystra and apparently stoned to death—but, when the disciples were gathered around him, he awoke and went right back into the city. With Barnabas, he then continued making a circuit through Asia Minor. Then, displaying an amazing degree of courage, Paul came right back through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch—where he had been persecuted so terribly. As Luke wrote, Paul was "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through **many tribulations** enter the kingdom of God.' So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14:22–23).

Paul had just himself gone through horrifying "tribulations," and certainly wanted to warn the brethren that through "many tribulations" we must enter the Kingdom of God! In like manner, I want to warn all of you, **ahead of time**, what may be ahead for many of us—so we can be drawing much closer to God!

Brethren, even in the darkest hours of the trials and tests ahead, we must always remember that we in God's Church have an "extra edge." For we have the very Spirit of the great God—the Supreme Power by which He created the heavens, the earth and everything there is! And our God tells us plainly, through the Apostle Paul: "Therefore I remind you to **stir up** the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of **power** and of **love** and of a **sound mind**" (2 Timothy 1:6–7).

This tremendous **power**, which comes directly from God, will enable us to have the genuine courage we will need in the years ahead. For genuine faith and courage go hand in hand, and we will need an abundance of both! God's word tells us that we have not been given the "spirit of fear." We must meditate on this—read the hundreds of examples of faith and courage throughout the Bible—and pray for the genuine **power**, in future trials and tests, to overcome our fears and our lack of faith. God has promised: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will **never** leave you nor forsake you.' So we may **boldly** say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5–6).

Therefore, as Paul wrote, we may face the future boldly, with faith and courage—and **never fear what man can do**. For our ultimate trust and source of courage is in the great God who has called us, given us of His Spirit. He is **now** beginning to use us in His Work, and in His Church, ever more powerfully to carry His message around the world, and truly prepare a people for God. May God grant that you, personally, are able to build on this understanding and—through His Spirit—seek God's guidance, faith and **courage**. May you be the kind of "Christian warrior" Christ wants you to be! May each of us at the end of our lives be able to say, as did Paul: "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 4:7–8).



Local Church News

2006 Ministerial Conference



More than 200 Living Church of God ministers and wives attended the 2006 Ministerial Conference, held May 15–17 at the University Hilton in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Births

Carl and Scarlet Cole, Living Church of God members in Turondale, New South Wales, Australia, announce the arrival of their son, **Brady Mason Cole**, born April 13. He was welcomed home by his sister Shanna, age 3. His paternal grandparents are Frank and Jenny Cole and great-grandmother Glenice Hastings, all of Turondale. Brady's maternal grandparents Steve and Maureen Smith, and great-grandparents Harry and Shirley Smith, reside in Smoaks, South Carolina. Great-grandparents Frank and Ella Fry reside in Bamberg, South Carolina.

Michael and Shana Jewsbury of Bellevue, WA are pleased to announce the birth of their son, **Scotland Michael Jewsbury**. Scott was born on April 24, weighing 9 pounds, 9 ounces; he was 23 inches long. His 16-month-old sister Hannah was very excited about the new addition to the family.

In Loving Memory

Ora W. Clampitt, of the Kansas City congregation, died on May 6. He was 68 years old. He is survived by his wife Mary. Ora and Mary were baptized together in June 1975. Ora will be sorely missed by the Kansas City brethren.



New Booklet!

Dr. Douglas Winnail's new booklet, *The Bible: Fact or Fiction?*, will soon be sent to each Living Church of God member household.

Mr. Meredith is offering the booklet in his latest "semi-annual" letter to *Tomorrow's World* subscribers. Brethren will receive the booklet automatically, and need not request copies.

Ordination

Mr. Robert C. Tyler, office manager of the Australian regional office, was ordained as an elder on May 17, during the 2006 Ministerial Conference, by evangelists Roderick C. Meredith, Richard Ames, Dibar Apartian, Bruce Tyler and Douglas Winnail. Mr. Meredith presided over the ceremony.

Weddings

Mario Espinoza, Jr. and Casey Anne Hallett, of the Houston congregation, were joined in marriage on April 23, in Magnolia, Texas. Mr. Keith Walden performed the wedding ceremony in the company of friends and family. The newlyweds will reside in Pearland, Texas.

Noli Jamil and Genevieve Parbo, of Kidapawan, North Cotabato, Philippines, were joined in marriage on May 15, in Kidapawan, Cotabato, Philippines. Mr. Felipe Casing officiated at the ceremony, which was witnessed by brethren, family and friends.

Joshua Penman of Auckland, New Zealand and Jenny Rose Marshall of Helena, Montana, were joined in marriage on May 21. The groom's father, Mr. Kinnear Penman, performed the wedding ceremony in the bride's hometown. The newlyweds will reside in Charlotte, North Carolina.



Living Church of God brethren in Indonesia.

Anniversary

Gary and Barbara Morris of the Houston congregation celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on May 15.

Upcoming *Tomorrow's World* Telecasts

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 AM ET

Inspiration: Friday, 10:00 PM PT

VISION (Canada): Sunday, 5:30 PM ET; Monday-Friday, 3:00 AM ET

Air Date	Broadcast Title
July 2	2006 and Prophecy
July 9	Who Controls the Weather?
July 16	Lessons of History
July 23	America's Moral Meltdown
July 30	Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days
August 6	Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?
August 13	Seven Satanic Deceptions
August 20	How to Overcome Sin
August 27	Beware of the Antichrist

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

We want to hear more about the happy milestones in the lives of our brethren. If your family has had a birth, marriage or major anniversary, please ask your local pastor to send word to the *Living Church News*, PO Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010 (or to send e-mail to lcn@lcg.org).

Commentary

The Rise of China and India

By Scott Winnail

Natural resources often play powerful roles in global conflicts. In modern times, the most highly populated nations have often had the weakest economies, and thus have never been able to consume vast amounts of natural resources.

However, change is in the air as India and China—the world's two most heavily populated nations—also begin to develop stronger economies. Now they have the money to buy what they need, and they are beginning to do so. "In 2005, China alone used 26 percent of the world's steel, 32 percent of the rice, and 47 percent of the cement" (World Watch Institute, Jan. 11, 2006).

China has 8 percent of the world's fresh water and 22 percent of the world's population. "India's use of oil has doubled since 1992, while China went from near self-sufficiency in the mid-1990s to the world's second largest oil importer in 2004." China and India "both have just started to build what are slated to be two of the largest automobile industries in the world," the report continues.

India and China are on track to demand 100 percent of the world's annual natural resource yield, including food, by the year 2030 (ibid.).

In addition to the rising Chinese and Indian economies, there has been an explosion in the number of civilian nuclear power deals being brokered throughout the world, many involving both China and India. Currently, for example, we see deals being created involving: France and Libya; the United States, Australia and India; Russia and Iran; China and Bangladesh; an attempted deal between the U.S. and Pakistan and, potentially, a deal between China and Myanmar (Global Security Newswire, March 7, 2006).

Although many of these deals are in reaction to growing global concerns about fossil fuels, particularly oil and coal, the spread of nuclear technology will likely put added economic pressure on the oil-producing nations of the Middle East, Africa and South America. Additionally, although civilian nuclear technology is not "easily" converted into military technology, it does place nations who own it one step closer to nuclear weaponry.

Jesus Christ prophesied nearly 2,000 years ago that at the end of the age, time would need to be "cut short" or no flesh would be "saved alive" (Matthew 24:22). The current spread of nuclear power is one more potential tool that mankind can use to destroy itself.

History has shown that when resources are scarce, they go to the highest bidder and the one with the best long-term potential for consumption. China and India show tremendous potential to be among those nations doing the bidding. The Bible foretells of a time when the highways of the Israelite-descended nations will be desolate (Leviticus 26:22), when they will be debtor nations (Deuteronomy 28:44) and their people will be hungry, thirsty, naked and in need of everything (v. 48).

Additionally, near the end of the great tribulation predicted in the pages of the Bible, a 200 million-man army will approach Europe and Jerusalem from the East (Revelation 9:13–21). Few nations could field an army this size, but China is certainly one of them—and China is currently developing the military and civil infrastructure, along with the economy, to drive such an effort.

As the sleeping Asian giants awake, we should be sobered, as we see yet another tool that God can and will use to humble the Israelite-descended nations.

The above is adapted from one of the many commentaries, discussing vital topics facing our world, available at the www.lcg.org and www.tomorrowworld.org Web sites.