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Don't Be Ignorant of Satan's Devices!

Dear Brethren,

Solomon compiled the book of Proverbs using advice and pithy sayings to help his readers overcome their naïveté and ignorance, “To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion” (Proverbs 1:4). He knew that “a wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel” (v. 5). We all lack understanding in various areas (ignorance) and we are simple (naïve) about others. But we are never too old to learn.

Ignorance is merely a lack of understanding on a specific subject. I'm ignorant, for example, regarding computer programming. That is just for starters, as there are a thousand—yes, ten thousand—subjects on which I have no knowledge. You are ignorant in some areas, too—if you are honest with yourself.

On the other hand, to be naïve—simple—carries the sense of being unable to handle everyday problems that face us. It matters little if you cannot program a computer, as there are many others who can do so and there are many other careers available to you. However, to be naïve regarding online scammers in our current environment is quite a different matter. Solomon's instructions cover practical matters such as not becoming surety for a friend, and they also focus much attention on moral behavior.

A servant of God need not understand Hebrew or Greek, as there are translations of Scripture available in hundreds of languages. Yet even most scholars who have translated Scripture do not understand God's master plan or His prophetic framework—because they fail to obey the words they've translated. “And none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (Daniel 12:10). “But on this one will

I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2). God only gives His Spirit of understanding “to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:32; John 16:13). And, of course, there is also the fundamental matter of God's calling (John 6:44, 65).

Ignorance is not normally a sin, in and of itself. Yet it can be a *serious* problem. The Apostle Paul explains that Israel's salvation is delayed due to ignorance (Romans 10:3). Paul also pleads with the Gentiles to understand “that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Romans 11:25). Happily, most of you reading this message are no longer in the blindness of ignorance, as you observe Pentecost and the Last Great Day and understand what they picture.

But even those who understand much may be ignorant of one subject that is vital for all of God's servants to understand: Satan's devices! Paul urged vigilance, while cautioning the Corinthians not to be unforgiving, “lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11). Paul's exhortations here involve two of Satan's devices in particular: An unforgiving heart is deadly to the one failing to forgive (Matthew 6:14–15), and such hardness of heart may cause depression and despair in the one who should receive forgiveness.

It may be easy to shrug this off, thinking, *I know this*. But *are* we sometimes ignorant, naïve, or in denial about some of Satan's most obvious and deadly devices that are rampant in the course of this present evil world (Ephesians 2:1–2)?

Some years ago, I received a call from a Church member who was upset about something she had heard about a member living three or four states away. She had heard that the

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Church approved of this member violating one of God's commands. I explained that I knew nothing of the matter, that she was probably not hearing the whole story, and that she should not let someone else's problem become hers: "He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears" (Proverbs 26:17).

My advice appeared to help for a short time, but she could not leave the matter alone—and eventually left the Church over it. I learned later that she had, indeed, not been aware of all the facts. What is saddest is that this woman was *ignorant* of the facts and *naïve* about how easily she could stumble because of one of Satan's most obvious devices: deceptive rumors. We might even call them "lying rumors," because that is what many are.

Why do so many fall for that Satanic device? The answer is multifaceted. It is human nature to think the worst, yet God tells us we are to believe and hope for the best (1 Corinthians 13:5–7). Most rumors contain "grains of truth" that make them seem believable. Indeed, a rumor may be 95 percent accurate—but the other five percent can make all the difference in the world. With that small bit of error, or without proper context, a simple report becomes a distortion of the truth—in fact, a lie. And whose spirit do we know is behind partial truths and twisted facts?

Scripture gives us many warnings about Satan's devices. He is a liar, an accuser, and a divider of brethren. Jesus tells us the devil is a murderer and the father of lies (John 8:44). We are told that he accuses Christ's servants before God day and night (Revelation 12:10). He is also behind that which God hates: "A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16, 19). Lies, accusations, division—these stem from the character of this evil being who is called Abaddon, meaning *destroyer* (Revelation 9:11).

Where is this great destroyer working? How is he working? And what does his success look like? If we look around the world, we see that the United States is no longer united, nor is the United Kingdom. The European Union struggles to maintain its union. Citizens in Central and South America are striving against government corruption. Satan's fingerprints

are all over the year 2020, as we see coronavirus controversies of every kind, conspiracy theories abounding, anarchy in the streets, violent crime, politics and lies, disrespect for constituted authority, nations in turmoil—in short, division at every turn. People are sharply divided in a binary world with no middle ground. One is increasingly judged as either all good or all evil, with no place in between.

We may recognize Satan's fingerprints in the world, but do we see how his influence rubs off on us in God's Church? Have we chosen sides with the world? Are we taking up guns to protect ourselves? Are we attacking others on social media? Are we spreading unfounded rumors because they fit whatever narrative we favor?

We are in a war, but not a conventional war. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Corinthians 10:3–6).

When we see attitudes and behaviors contrary to those of the Spirit of God, we should recognize the source behind them. What is the fruit of human government? Is it not political squabbling—accusations, put-downs, lies, and hypocrisy? What are the results of the many conspiracy theories abounding today? Do they not cause confusion? Rumors and innuendo destroy reputations and cause distrust. None of this is of God's Spirit! Satan delights in stirring up hatred. We must always resist this with God's love.

An ambassador has knowledge and opinions about the country in which he resides, but he must separate his personal opinions from his emotions and not take part in that country's politics. And so must we—because we are ambassadors of a far greater kingdom (2 Corinthians 5:20).



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EDITORIAL By Gerald E. Weston

Love and Government

The Church of God has faced many trying times through the centuries, and our day is no different. Every few years, some individual or group causes a distraction, very much after the manner of Korah. The Apostle Paul warns us of this problem in Acts 20:29–31. The excuse is usually “You take too much upon you” or “You are wrong on some doctrine.” Whatever the issue, it is used to justify separating members from the Body of Christ and to temporarily distract and diminish the Church from fulfilling its God-required mission to preach the true Gospel, feed the flock, and warn the Israelite nations and all the world of where they are heading. It was this way long before any of us were introduced to the true Body of Christ. I have personally lived through many challenging times during my 56 years in the Church. Some were relatively small distractions, while others were far more serious disruptions. And sadly, brethren, I doubt we have seen the last of these, although I always hope people will stop hurting themselves and others through self-will, self-righteousness, or pride.

“Government” has become a bad word in the minds of some. Different organizations have taken different approaches to this subject, and some who claim to be members of the Church of God do not want even to look at it, as it seems to them to cause division rather than unity. However, is that the right approach? Should someone lay aside one of the most important and easily explained doctrines because, perhaps, he is afraid that the clear biblical truth might not agree with his personal view or the view of the church he attends? *Right government, as consistently described in the pages of Scripture, is a means of bringing peace, unity, and love.* And how can we neglect a discussion of government when this is the problem that Christ is coming back to settle? It is what the Kingdom of God is all about!

We read that Jesus is going to be King over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9). David is going to rule under Him as king over the twelve tribes of Israel (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24). Under David, the Twelve Apostles will each rule over one of the tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:27–28). And those who are faithful and grow in grace and knowledge will rule over cities (Luke 19:11–19). Is this not what God revealed to Daniel in a dream and visions? “Then the kingdom and dominion, and the

greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Daniel 7:27). How can we neglect the magnitude of this subject just because some do not want to face the truth?

And we must ask, *Why is there hostility regarding this subject?* As I have pointed out on several occasions, people naturally believe in government only as long as the decisions of government agree with them. But why is this the case? While few want to admit that this applies to them, Paul gives us the answer: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). Even mentioning this as a possible cause of the problem raises some peoples’ hackles! But isn’t this something we were supposed to learn when coming to repentance and baptism—that our nature is hostile to God and that only with the help of God’s Spirit dwelling in us can we overcome this hostility? Do we remember Proverbs 14:12 and Jeremiah 17:9?

Both Servants and Leaders

We are all tainted by our background. Much of the Western world is based on some form of democratic rule—rule by the people—and this colors the way many view the role of government in the Church. Some of us can still remember that the Second World War and the Korean War influenced some past leaders to administer Church government in a strict, military way. But neither democracy nor a military approach correspond to the model Christ gave us. Yes, the Bible clearly shows there must be order in the Body, but how that order is administered is very different from what we see in the world.

Most of us remember the emphasis Dr. Meredith gave regarding a loving attitude of servant leadership, as described in Matthew 20:25–28. *This kind of leadership is understood through the godly family structure*, where both love and submission are found (Ephesians 5:21–25), and this mindset must be the standard for the Living Church of God. Sometimes people hear the word *servant* and forget the word *leadership*. Both are necessary, and leadership, among other important responsibilities, requires decisions on controversial matters.

Decisions are best made when proper counsel is considered. That is why the Living Church of God has a

Council of Elders. We take seriously the proverbs that admonish us to solicit wise counsel (Proverbs 1:5; 11:14; 12:15; 15:22; 24:6). We also take seriously the warning found in Proverbs 18:1–2: “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment. A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.” Note also that not all counsel is profitable. Rehoboam accepted counsel from his friends rather than those men who had greater experience and had been established in the role of counselors (1 Kings 12:6–8).

Consider, dear brethren: When is government needed the most? Is it not when there are differences of opinion, rather than when everyone agrees? What does the Bible instruct us about solving controversial matters? Brethren, this is vital knowledge that we must understand. Harsh dictatorial rule is not the answer, but neither is everyone doing what is right in his own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 21:25; Proverbs 21:2). This ends in anarchy, as we are seeing all too well in society at large. How often God speaks out against this mindset! Democracy leads to politics and imputing motives to those on the other side of an issue while promoting one’s own agenda.

Neither democracy nor dictatorial rule is how the first-century Church of God solved questions of controversy, and is not solving matters of controversy a big part of leadership? Brethren, let us set aside our personal backgrounds and briefly review what most of us at least *assume* we understand.

Appointed Authority

When Moses was overwhelmed by the task of settling differences between individuals, God inspired Jethro’s advice to teach everyone the statutes and judgments. When people know the law of God and understand the intent behind it, as shown in the judgments, many problems are forestalled. But, sadly, as long as we are human, not all solutions are obvious to everyone. That is why capable men must be appointed to judge between individuals when an issue is not clear to both sides (Exodus 18:21–26; Deuteronomy 1:9–18). Once a judgment is made on a controversial issue, it goes without saying that one side is usually pleased with the decision while the other side is not. So, what is one to do if the judgment is not what one hoped? God shows us His mind on the subject and explains how serious a matter it is to violate a judgment that came down from those appointed for this purpose (Deuteronomy 17:8–13).

We see that Jesus appointed the Apostles and gave them authority to make judgments that He would back up (Matthew 18:18–20). We are not talking here about abandoning the truths of Scripture, but rather administrative decisions that need to be made in all ages as circumstances change. The law does not change, but how it is applied in different circumstances and at different times may change. For example, while physical circumcision is no longer required, spiritual circumcision—of the heart—certainly is (Romans 2:28–29)!

As mentioned earlier, this authority from the top down is found in the family (Ephesians 5:22–24). What husband is perfect? I think we know that none of us husbands make a perfect decision every time, but if the wife and children disagree and go their own way, what is the point of the God-ordained family structure? It goes without saying that if a husband abandons the truth and commands his wife to do the same, she ought to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). However, she must not plead her “conscience” every time she simply disagrees with him on domestic decisions. So many domestic decisions have little to do with direct commands from God. But the overriding principle for husbands is to show love—caring, outgoing concern—to the wife and family (Ephesians 5:25). Husbands must rise above what *they* want and make decisions that are best for the family.

Ministers in the world often choose a “calling” on their own. They go to seminary and then look for a congregation that is seeking to hire someone, or they “hang out their shingle” and start their own church. That is not the biblical model. The priests of the Old Testament—and, by extension, ministers in the spiritual Israel of God—were not and *are* not to take this responsibility upon themselves (Hebrews 5:1, 4). Ministers are chosen from the top down by God’s servants who were appointed before them. Authority to appoint is found in Paul’s instructions to Timothy and Titus regarding ordinations (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9). It was seen in the appointment of deacons when a controversy broke out over fairness (Acts 6:1–6). In this case, the Apostles appealed to the brethren to bring forth individuals who were well-respected and who exemplified God’s Spirit working in them, but it was the Apostles who made the final decisions and ordained them, not the members (Acts 6).

We also see appointment from the top down in the selection of a replacement for Judas. Peter spelled out the necessary qualifications. Of the 120 who were there, only two men were found who met the criteria. The Apostles cast lots to see whom God chose, since they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. This is the last time we read of lots being cast for a decision, although it is vaguely referred to in Acts 8:21 (the Greek word here can be translated as *portion* or *lot*).

Some individuals think lots were “ballots—votes,” but this is nonsense. *Lots* were stones, pieces of wood, or other objects by which the names of potential choices were placed in a jar or the lap, and the one pulled out was chosen. See the example of the two goats in Leviticus 16: Clearly, the High Priest was not “voting” on which goat represented the Lord and which represented Azazel! Virtually all scholars agree with this, but in recent decades, to justify a different form of governance, some have tried to stretch the meaning to include balloting or voting. We must ask whether they apply the same principle within the family structure!

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We Have a Mission

By **Wallace G. Smith**

What a gift it is to be a member of the Church of God! We rejoice in the knowledge that the Father and the Son are personally involved in our lives. It is a humbling privilege to know that we have been invited to be a part of the Body of Christ and will be given the glorious opportunity to inherit all things (Revelation 21:7).

But God has not only called us for the sake of our own salvation. That is not why we have been called *now*. Rather, if you are a part of the Church of God founded by Jesus Christ almost 2,000 years ago, you have been given a mission of utmost importance.

That mission is to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the entire world.

It is a work that is so monumental in its significance, so central to the very reason that Jesus founded His Church in the first place, and so fundamental to everything the Church should be doing, that we have traditionally referred to it simply as “the Work.”

Regrettably, we live in an era of God’s Church in which many of those called by His name have forgotten the divine mission that their Savior entrusted to them. Whether out of forgetfulness, fearfulness, disinterest, or self-interest, the banner handed to them by those who went before—who had, themselves, received it directly from Jesus Christ—is one they have no passion for carrying any longer.

But a review of Scripture makes the centrality of the Work in the life of the Church absolutely plain. Let’s review the biblical account of the Church’s relationship to this mission—the very reason each of us has been called *now* instead of *later*—and let’s remind ourselves of the primary reason this Church exists.

A Fourfold Witness

First, we must note that Jesus did not leave us any room to doubt that His Church was divinely commissioned to preach the truth of God and the Gospel of His Kingdom to the world. In fact, each of the books of the Bible that cover the life and ministry of Jesus—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, commonly called the “gospels”—attests in its own way to the Church’s mission, testifying of His commission.

For instance, Matthew records that the resurrected Messiah told His Apostles, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

Mark provides his own record of the commission, as well: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15–16). Note Christ’s choice of words when He says the Gospel

should be preached to “every creature”! This highlights the need to focus on every individual human being on earth—no one is left out.

Luke writes of the resurrected Christ’s appearing to His disciples and telling them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46–47).

Notice: Both of those elements—repentance and remission of sins—are a vital part of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The Apostle Peter, himself, included them in his first presentation of God’s message to the world (Acts 2:38). After all, repentance and remission of sins—accomplished only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—is the only way to enter and be a part of the Kingdom. And as Dr. Roderick C. Meredith wrote in our booklet *Do You Believe the True Gospel?*, “The Kingdom of God would not be such a wonderful

“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” It’s a relatively short statement compared to the others, but its implications are completely clear! What did the Father send Jesus to do? No need to guess, since Christ answers the question Himself, once telling a crowd plainly, **“I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”**

message if there were no way that we could be a part of it!” (p. 32).

Finally, John, too, records the Lord’s commission to His Church, though it is so subtle that many read right over it. Like the other accounts, John’s gospel describes Jesus speaking to the Apostles after His resurrection, including this statement: “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21).

It’s a relatively short statement compared to the larger treatment given in each of the other gospels, but its implications are completely clear! What did the Father send Jesus to do? No need to guess, since Christ answers the question Himself, once telling a crowd plainly, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because *for this purpose I have been sent*” (Luke 4:43).

Again, John records that Jesus told His disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”—and what the Father sent Him to do was “preach the kingdom of God.” So, also, does He send His Church!

In the gospel writers, we have a fourfold witness to the undeniable truth of Jesus’ commission. We are to take His beautiful truth and preach it to the entire world. The mission we have been handed by our Savior could not be made any clearer.

Born Doing the Work

This mission has played a central role in the life of the Church of God from the moment it came into existence. In a sense, it is woven into the Church’s DNA.

Consider the Day of Pentecost, 31 AD. What was the very first miraculous gift God provided to the new recipients of His Spirit, at the very moment the Church began? It was the gift of *tongues*—that is, the miraculous ability to speak in a language one does not know (Acts 2:1–11).

Note that! The very first miraculous display of divine power in God’s Church was His empowering that Church to preach the Gospel to the nations of the world! And, accordingly, what was the very first *act* of the Church of God? Was it to hold a Bible study? To assemble for a sermon to the membership? To begin a “worship service”? No! It was to *preach the Gospel to those outside the Church!*

While we tend among ourselves to refer to Peter’s message recorded in Acts 2 as the “first inspired sermon” of the New Testament Church, when you think about it, it was more like the first *Tomorrow’s World* broadcast! It was *not* a message of instruction or edification intended for those *inside the Church*—it was an evangelizing message to those still *outside the faith*, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ’s coming Kingdom and the need to repent!

The Church of God began its very existence *doing the Work!* God’s first miracle in the Church was to make the Work to the world possible, and the first action of the Church was to do that Work. How much more clear can God’s purpose for His Church be?

An Often-Forgotten Purpose for Miracles

The connection between miraculous displays of power and the mission of the Church to preach the Gospel is often forgotten or neglected—yet that connection is vital! Most of the miracles we see in the book of Acts, for instance, are driven not simply by the needs of the membership of the Church, but by the *Work* of the Church to the world!

This is illustrated by numerous examples in the book of Acts. Consider, for instance, the healing at the temple of the man lame for 40 years (Acts 3:1–4:22), the Apostles’ being freed from prison by an angel so that they could continue preaching (Acts 5:17–26), Philip’s miracles in Samaria (Acts

8:5–8), the healing of paralyzed Aeneas (Acts 9:32–35), the blinding of Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8–12), and healings and divine protection on the island of Malta (Acts 28:1–10). These were more than miracles of comfort; they were divine acts meant to validate the message of God’s servants among the people of the world.

We should ask ourselves, *What is the primary purpose of miracles in the Church?* It is true that they are a comfort and blessing to us, as they were to the family of young Eutychus in Acts 20. Those who have experienced divine healing—made possible through the wounds of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24) and anointing by the ministry (James 5:14–15)—should be humbled, moved, and grateful that in their need they have access to the very throne of God in heaven!

But we dare not miss God’s larger picture by neglecting the Bible’s own answer to that question. Powerful signs and miracles are primarily a means of authenticating the message God commands us to preach to the world. Consider again, at length this time, the commission as recorded by Mark in his gospel account:

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:15–18).

Notice that miracles in the Church are to serve as “signs.” *Thayer’s Lexicon* points out that the Greek word translated “signs” is meant to signify “miracles and wonders by which God *authenticates the men sent by him*” (“*sēmeion*,” emphasis added). Jesus indicates this concerning His own ministry when He speaks to His disciples, saying that if one did not at first see the truth in what He preached, a person could still be moved to believe His message was from God due to the miraculous works that accompanied His preaching (John 14:11).

Such signs are never sufficient to solidify faith for long, it seems (cf. John 6:26), else the tale of ancient Israel would be very different from what we read in the book of Numbers. The point is that those who forget the primary purpose of such miraculous signs—to empower the Work and to illustrate to the world just *who* is behind the message of God’s Church—cannot expect Him to long honor their requests for miracles.

An Entire Church Driven by Divine Purpose

This was understood and embraced not only by the Apostles, but by *all* the members of the first-century Church.

When Peter and John were accosted by the authorities of the Temple for the sake of the Work, they were threatened and commanded “not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18). And make no mistake—in the first century, *this was not an idle threat*. The Apostles’ very lives were in danger. So, when Peter and John returned to the congregation and reported about these threats, how did the members react?

They “raised their voice to God with one accord” and prayed (v. 24). The entire prayer is worth reading and meditating upon, but notice especially the members’ request: “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and *grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word*, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus” (vv. 29–30).

Yes, even in the face of persecution—threats of arrest, beatings, and death—their focus was not on safety and self-protection, which would certainly have been understandable. Rather, their focus was on *the Work!* They asked God not only to ensure that they would not falter in their preaching, remaining bold in the proclamation of the Gospel, but also to back up their message with His power.

Their example should prompt us to ask, *When we request that God move with power in His Church—with more healings, more miracles, more spiritual gifts—are we stirred like they were to have our mission in mind?* Do we ask not only for the comfort that such miracles provide, and even for an increase in our *own* faith, but also that the message of the Church to an unbelieving world might be authenticated to unbelievers by such supernatural works? Do such desires show themselves during our prayers to God?

Our spiritual ancestors in the first century were focused not on themselves, but on the *Work*. And God rewarded their desire to shake the world with His message by shaking the ground they stood on and filling them with His Spirit, that they might speak boldly, just as they had requested of Him (v. 31).

Did they care about their own personal safety? Of course, they did! But they cared *more* about preaching the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ to the world. *That* was at the center of their passions and concerns. And that Work was at the heart of what they laid before the throne of God in prayer.

We Need the “Food” of Christ!

The first-century Church’s passion for the Work reflects Jesus’ own. In the account of the woman at the well in John 4, we read an important revelation about the heart of Jesus Christ—about what drove Him and sustained Him in life. After He spoke to the Samaritan woman and revealed to her His identity as the prophesied King of the coming Kingdom, His

disciples returned, worried that He might be hungry. He was, indeed, physically weary (v. 6), but He used the opportunity to make a significant point to them—and to us.

“I have food to eat of which you do not know,” Jesus said. And as they wondered what He meant, their Messiah and ours made His meaning plain: “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (vv. 32–34). And lest anyone believe He meant anything less than preaching the truth to an unknowing populace, He elaborated, telling them to look out at the world around them and learn to see that world the way *He* sees it—as a field that is ready to be harvested (v. 35). He pointed out that *now* is the time for harvesting, not later, and that they should be filled with an urgency,

Failing to take in the food of Christ would starve the Body of Christ to death. Sadly, many organizations that consider themselves to be under the banner of the “Church of God” do, indeed, **neglect the Work of God.**

knowing that the Work of doing that harvesting gains “fruit for eternal life” for the harvester (v. 36).

In this last comment, Jesus reflects an observation made in the book of Daniel. There, the prophet is told of those who will be in the first resurrection, that they will “shine like the brightness of the firmament” and “like the stars forever and ever” in their new, glorified existence (Daniel 12:3). But what else is said there of those resurrected saints? The very same verse declares that they are “those who turn many to righteousness.” That is to say, *those who do the Work*.

God intimately connects our dedication to Christ’s commission with our attaining the better resurrection and joining the Family of God!

Is this so unusual? Think about it. If finishing the Work of God on earth was the “food” of Jesus Christ during His ministry—what supported Him, nourished Him, and gave Him sustenance—would it not be the “food” of the Body of Christ today? Is He not the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8)? Of course, He is!

There is a reason Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote to Church members almost five decades ago on November 18, 1974 (emphasis his),

And God has given us “the WORK” to do as the VERY MEANS BY WHICH we may grow spiritually, so we may enter His Kingdom at Christ’s coming. In 47 years I have observed that ONLY those whose hearts

are fully IN THE WORK continue to overcome and grow SPIRITUALLY, and ENDURE.

That is a sobering “ONLY”! If we are to grow as Christians in this age, we *must* grow in sharing Jesus Christ’s passion for reaching the world with His message, the good news of the Kingdom of God. We cannot truly fulfill the charge of the Apostle Paul, who said “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5), if we do not also fully embrace the desires that drove Christ Jesus, the very mission that He describes as His sustenance.

Failing to take in the *food* of Christ would starve the *Body* of Christ to death. Sadly, many organizations that consider themselves to be under the banner of the “Church of God” do, indeed, neglect the Work of God. *The time for the Work is past, and we must now prepare the Bride*, some claim, as though doing our future Husband’s Work in this world alongside Him is not a *fundamental part* of our preparation!

As Mr. Armstrong made so plain during his own ministry, there is a way of *give* and a way of *get*. How can we consider ourselves to be following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ if we are focused on *getting* our own salvation instead of *giving* the truth to the world? Ironically, by focusing on ourselves, we risk diminishing, or even losing, exactly what we hope to gain!

What Can You Do?

Of course, not all of us can stand in the studio and share the Gospel on the *Tomorrow’s World* program, nor can all of us write an article for the magazine. However, we shouldn’t sell ourselves short on all we *can* do.

For instance, though some outside the Church mock the idea of “paying and praying,” such individuals will need to answer to God one day. In this issue of the *Living Church News*, we’ve included a small collection of the *many* letters, emails, and online comments we’ve received from people impacted by the Work. Be sure to read them. If you have been praying for God’s Work and doing what you can to support that Work, you need to understand that you have a part in every one of those responses! Not one of them would have happened without the prayers and financial support of you and others like you!

Our Father is surely *delighted* when He hears from our own lips a request about the very Work He commissioned His Son and His Church to accomplish! Just as He was surely thrilled to hear His young Son say that He must be about His Father’s business, He must be every bit as thrilled to see that His business matters to each of us, too! And, as Jesus taught, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). Our prayerfully given tithes and offerings, no matter how small they may be, help orient our hearts toward

God's Work, and countless people have thanked us (really, thanked *you!*) in amazement for how they have been able to receive so much without spending a dime themselves—especially those who don't even have a dime to give.

But we can do even more. For instance, never forget the power of your *personal example*. A statement I heard long ago, before I was even in the Church, has remained near the forefront of my mind: *Your life may be the only Bible some people ever read*. Many who come into God's Church have their very first contact not with the telecast, magazine, or website, but with a member of the Church—perhaps a coworker, a school-mate, or a neighbor.

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus tells each of us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Now, we should note that He said "light," not "bullhorn"! Many of us, early in our calling, have experienced what it is like to accidentally chase people away with the truth in our eagerness to share all we have learned with all we know—even if they didn't ask. Minds are opened

We, too, must be about our Father's business if we are to consider ourselves true followers of Christ. The Church is not a social club. It is an organized body with a divine mission: **Reach the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.**

at God's will and choosing (cf. John 6:44); we can't pry them open ourselves. However, it is up to us whether our personal examples will be tools in God's hands to further His Work, or obstacles He must overcome as He works with others!

That said, sometimes the life we lead and the example we set *does* prompt some to ask questions. You have a responsibility to be ready when those moments arrive! The Apostle Peter encourages all of us to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Those in the first century who were scattered by the persecution of Saul were prepared in such a way. They took the truth of God—and their passion for the spread of the Gospel—with them, and they were unafraid to speak of those beliefs to others (Acts 8:3–4)!

Finally, each of us contributes to Christ's mission on earth by contributing to the unity of the Church. Those who needlessly divide God's people harm the very Work to which they were called—a fact Jesus well understood. It was on His mind the night before He was crucified, moving Him to pray to His Father for us: "I do not pray for these alone [the disciples with Him that Passover], but also for those who will

believe in Me through their word [including us, today!]; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, *that the world may believe that You sent Me*" (John 17:20–21). When we strive together to maintain unity in the Church, we are helping to fulfill Jesus' prayer for His Work and its authenticity before the world!

It's Our Turn

As a twelve-year-old child, Jesus once told Joseph and Mary, "I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49). At the time, He was engaging those around Him and astonishing them with His understanding of the things of God (v. 47).

We, too, must be about our Father's business if we are to consider ourselves true followers of Christ. Although our relationships among the brethren are important to us, the Church is not a social club. It is an organized body with a divine mission: Reach the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

That mission is now ours, and it is not optional.

Paul understood this, writing, "For if I preach the gospel,

I have nothing to boast of, for *necessity is laid upon me*; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Peter and John understood this, facing those who threatened them with torture and death for preaching the Gospel: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*" (Acts 4:19–20). And the rest of the Church of God—the various members and families called to be a part of the Body of

Christ—understood this, too. As we've seen, the Work to reach the world motivated their prayers and inspired their examples as they interacted with others.

The hands of those who have gone before us, bearing the standard of Christ in this mission, reach through the centuries to hand that standard to us. It is ours to grab tightly and to advance further into new battlefields and over new horizons. If we refuse it, we ignore those who have sacrificed so much before us—making our excuses, going on and on about whatever self-justification comes to mind—and allow that standard to fall to the ground for someone else to pick up.

Those who have been called by God and who understand why they were called *now* and not *later* will not let it fall. They will grab hold of it, hoist it high, and march forward with it. They will be driven by the desire to share the greatest news on earth with the billions of people of the world who so desperately need it.

Almost 2,000 years after Jesus first commissioned His Church, His mission now falls to us. Let us pour all we have, our whole lives, into fulfilling that mission in such a way that we will look into our Master's eyes at His return and hear Him say, "Well done, My good and faithful servant." (LW)

2020 Digital and Broadcast Media Update



By **Mike DeSimone**

The Church of God has been commissioned to preach the Gospel to the world, both “as a witness” and to “make disciples” of those who respond to the message positively (Matthew 24:14; 28:19–20). Mr. Weston takes this very seriously, and he has commissioned the team here in Charlotte to increase our reach to more people who have never heard the truth—as well as to help them respond to what they hear, removing obstacles from their path toward becoming members of God’s Church and, ultimately, the Family of God. This is a focus that God, in His mercy, has blessed tremendously with both open doors and abundant fruits of walking through those doors.

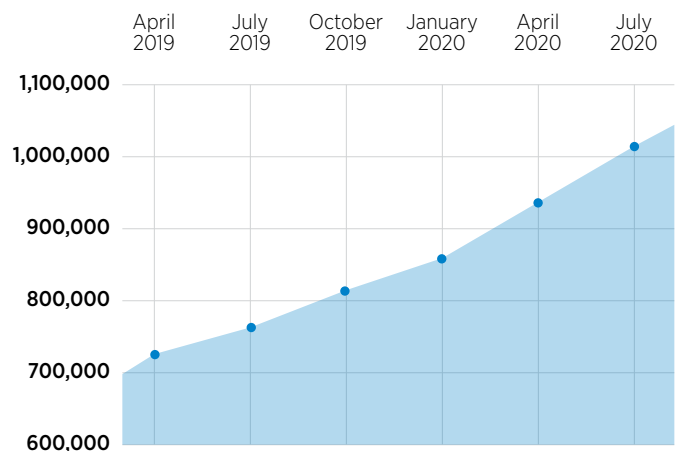
In this report, we will survey these doors and the encouraging results of going through them. First, we’ll examine our efforts to extend our reach, which could be considered the “witnessing” portion of our mission. Then we’ll see how people are responding as they order literature or follow us in another way. Finally, we’ll see what is happening with those who positively respond to what they read and hear from our literature and God’s word.

There are really three primary areas that we measure in our active effort to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel message: social media followers/subscribers, unique website visitors, and television viewers. In this report, we’ll focus on social media followers and website visitors.

Social Media Followers

In late 2019, we set a goal to have a little more than 1,050,000 total followers and subscribers to all our social media platforms in all languages by December 31, 2020—a 30 percent increase. The great news is that we passed this target in September 2020, and currently have 1,054,000 social media followers. This is in large part due to some “viral” gains that came through our Spanish and English YouTube channels in March

Total Social Media Followers
2019–2020



and April this year, which added over 60,000 YouTube subscribers toward our goal! Those who “follow” us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, or “subscribe” to us on YouTube, are, in effect, saying, “I like what I hear, and I want to hear more from *Tomorrow’s World* and/or the Living Church of God.”

Fourteen videos on our Spanish and English YouTube channels now have more than 1 million views, and two videos on our Spanish channel have over 2 million views! Our YouTube channels average about 1.5 to 2.5 million video views every month, about half of which come from unique viewers. This does not include the multiple millions of times *Tomorrow’s World* videos show up as viewing options when people are on YouTube. In this way, the truth *is available* to millions of people, letting them know where they can find it when the time is right for them to hear it.

Website Visitors

In 2019, *TomorrowsWorld.org* averaged 125,000 unique visitors per month, and it has been our goal to increase traffic to the website to an average of 250,000 monthly visitors by the

end of 2020. There are many ways to do this, utilizing tools such as paid advertisements and other search optimization techniques, social media, and organic search traffic. We have made specific efforts to reach more people with these methods, and with God's blessing, we are moving closer and closer to achieving our goal for 2020. In fact, the website received more than 250,000 unique visitors in both March and April, setting new records for monthly website visitors!

To be sure, we don't just want more traffic, but also "higher quality traffic"—in other words, we want more people engaging with the website, not just more people showing up and leaving immediately. Some of the actions we measure in order to understand our visitors' engagement levels are subscriptions via email, *Bible Study Course (BSC)* "starts" and "completes," literature orders in response to the telecast, and literature orders made online. This year, we narrowed our focus to online literature orders and *BSC* starts.

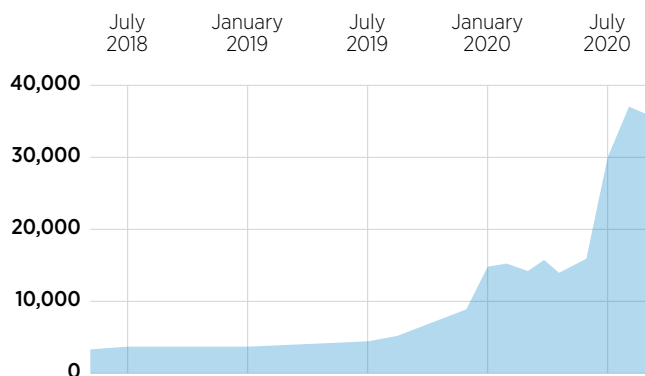
Online Literature Orders

An online literature order occurs when someone orders literature at *TomorrowsWorld.org*. We measure the number of *times* people place orders, not the number of *products* people order, since a person who regularly orders a few pieces of literature is generally more likely to be *reading* them than many of those who order "everything you've got." We would like for about 45 percent of these orders to be made by "new adds"—in other words, we want to continue to reach out to new people and get them subscribed to *Tomorrow's World* magazine.

Late in 2019, Mr. Weston approved the goal to reach an average of 10,000 monthly literature orders by the end of 2020—a 400 percent increase from the average of 2,500 per month we were receiving at that time. We thought this goal would be very difficult to reach. However, God opened doors and blessed our efforts, and even before 2019 ended, we were receiving 10,000 orders per month. So, after further evaluation and adjustments, we increased our 2020 goal to an average of 17,000 monthly literature orders—and later increased it again, to 34,000. Our 2020

Monthly Literature Orders Online

2018-2020



goal is now about 1,360 percent higher than it was originally. As much as Christ opens the doors, we want to go through them!

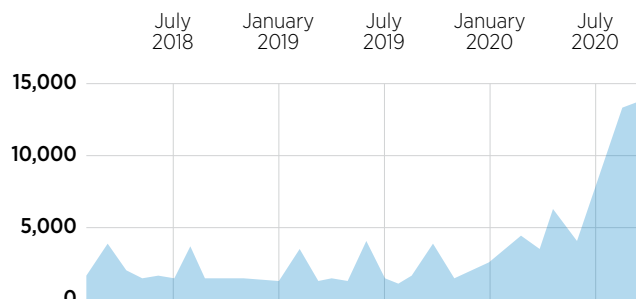
One of the reasons literature orders are so important is because they allow us to begin a "relationship" with people. When people order anything we offer, they also begin receiving the *Tomorrow's World* magazine. It comes to their home ten times per year and continues to spiritually feed them beyond the literature they initially ordered. Then, so that we can have a "high-quality" circulation of subscribers who actually read the magazine, we maintain an active renewal program by asking subscribers who have not ordered anything from us in three years if they wish to continue their subscription.

Bible Study Course "Starts"

Anyone who completes the *Bible Study Course* certainly has learned a great deal about the true word of God. The *BSC* serves as a tool for engaging people on a deep level, providing us with another way to build a "relationship" with those interested in the truth.

Monthly Bible Study Course "Starts"

2018-2020



In an effort to reach more people with this wonderful tool, we originally set a goal to have an average of 6,000 people starting the *BSC* every month by the end of 2020—about six times more than the monthly average in 2019. Again, doors opened in ways we didn't expect, and this goal was achieved more quickly than we had imagined. Because of this, and because of the importance of the *Bible Study Course* in helping people learn God's truth, we raised the goal again, this time to 16,000 new "starts" per month. We have been making active progress toward this new goal, getting closer each month and having over 13,000 people start the *BSC* in both July and August. As with our other goals, though, we don't want to just increase numbers for the sake of increasing numbers—we want as many people as possible to not only start the course, but *complete* it. Therefore, we are actively working on improving the completion rate, and we have made it our goal to double that rate by the end of 2022.

Attend in Person

The next major step for a person responding to the truth is attending a *Tomorrow's World* Presentation and/or Sabbath ser-

vices. Due to COVID-19, we have stopped holding *Tomorrow's World* Presentations for the time being, but hope to revive them again soon. In the end, since God is the one who does the calling, we can't just increase the number of people requesting to attend services each month—however, we can try to remove as many stumbling blocks as possible from the paths of such people. So, at Mr. Weston's direction, that has been another active project this year. We have removed stumbling blocks in a few different ways—for example, we have redesigned the *LCG.org* homepage to better introduce ourselves to non-members.

Another active project has been to redesign the "Attend with us" form to make it easier for people to get in touch with a minister and learn more about services held in their area. The initial results of this project are very promising and encouraging. Not only are more people requesting to speak with ministers, but those who do go to the online form are actually completing it at a higher rate. This means that more people are desiring to attend services *and* following through with the process. In the third quarter of 2020, more people asked to come to services than in any other quarter since the Living Church of God began in 1999!

Positive Responses

Take a look at a very small sample of the responses that have recently been pouring in:

"I've been studying the *Tomorrow's World* Bible study and would like to attend and fellowship."

—Sharon from New Castle, DE

"I want to learn what God wants from me as I try to put into practice what I read in God's word that's different than what I find in most churches."

—Mark from Nampa, ID

"I'm reading all your free materials and I believe all the information about having Jesus Christ [as] our Savior. Since I was in high school I've read *The Plain Truth* by Herbert W. Armstrong. Now, I'm searching for the continuation. It's the *Tomorrow's World* magazine.... Kindly send me information... so I can give my tithes to help in the publication of the magazine, even a small amount I can afford but it comes from my heart. Thank you very much."

—Tony from Mississauga, Canada.

If these people continue on this path and remain faithful to the end, they will have the opportunity to rise in the first resurrection to eternal life as members of God's Family—and each of us currently in God's Church will have played a part in that process!

Plans for 2021 and Beyond

Even with as much growth as we've had, we haven't made a dent in reaching the population of this world. We still have a

very long way to go, and we'll continue making progress in the important areas we've mentioned, walking through doors as Christ opens them. We are not likely to continue having the rapid growth we had this year, but we will continue to reach as far as our available resources will allow. With this in mind, here are a few more things to keep an eye out for in 2021:

Television Optimizations

- Increased number of television stations and associated responses
- Simple improvements to the *Tomorrow's World* telecast to increase its response rate

Website Traffic

- Search Engine Optimization efforts helping our organic search traffic

Bible Study Course

- Further improvement to and promotion of our online *BSC*
- Optimizations made to the online *BSC* to help people complete the course. We hope to begin seeing even more people complete the course as a result of the increased amount of people who start it

"Go-tos" (Those who request to speak with a minister; ministers are asked to "go to" these people)

- We hope to see the number of "Go-tos" continue to rise through 2021, as more people complete the *BSC* and order literature in general
- We plan to continue our efforts in making it as easy as possible for those who are sincerely interested in God's truth to begin attending services

International

- In 2021 and 2022, we hope to intensify our efforts in several international regions

The exciting fruits of 2020 are, of course, the results of God's blessings and Mr. Weston's vision and leadership. Our Work also takes a great team of dedicated people, and it could not be done without the Church Administration, Internet, Editorial, Television, Finance, Mail Processing, Personal Correspondence, and Legal Affairs & Risk Management departments working together toward the same goals *as one body*. We hope to reach more and more people and continue to build on previous improvements, but in the end, the Great Commission will not be accomplished by our doing—it will be accomplished by Jesus Christ, His power, and His Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). It will be accomplished through miracles that He provides to support the small efforts we make. He will open doors to reach the people of the world—it is our job to continue asking, seeking, and knocking for Christ to open those doors. As we go through them, He will continue to bless this Work (Revelation 3:8). (LN)

Conducting TWPs in Zimbabwe and Zambia

By **Lawdi Ferreira**

When we look at satellite images, we see Africa as a dark expanse with only minute dots of light revealing its larger cities. For centuries, Africa has had a reputation as a mysterious, dangerous place, as we can see from its now-outdated nickname the “Dark Continent.” A vital part of our Church commission is to be “lights” to a spiritually dark world—and this is certainly true in Africa, where God’s people are shining bright and the Gospel message is going out powerfully.

In June 2019, six *Tomorrow’s World* Presentations and Bible Studies were successfully conducted in Zimbabwe and Zambia. After weather-delayed flights, I finally arrived in Harare, Zimbabwe, late in the afternoon on June 14. To my surprise, I arrived without my luggage, which was stuck somewhere in transit at the Johannesburg airport. Thankfully, I had my Bible, laptop bag, and TWP notes with me, so the *Tomorrow’s World* Presentation went ahead smoothly the next day—except that I was dressed not in my *best* clothes, but in my *only* clothes!

Nevertheless, this was a wonderful opportunity to bring a message of hope to the 24 people in attendance (eight LCG members and 16 visitors). During the first session I spoke about “What’s Ahead for Zimbabwe and the World?,” and after a tea break, I covered the topic of “What Happened to the Church that Christ Founded?”

Among the attendees was a local pastor from a mainstream church who brought up a number of questions, which we discussed—and he surely left with a lot of homework to do! Also among the visitors were some who had attended our TWPs the year before, and it was encouraging to witness their growth in understanding. Others had travelled nearly four hours to get there, despite the fuel and cash shortages in the country.

At the time of this writing, the political and financial situation in Zimbabwe remains critical, with shortages not only in fuel and cash, but also in food supplies. There are regular power cuts and rising inflation. Many citizens have lost hope that their situation will ever improve. During the

TWPs, the causes of the current issues, as well as the solution, were highlighted. God’s word describes the hope of a bright future filled with peace, prosperity, and real lasting success for those who will obey Him. It is this hope of His coming Kingdom that our members are holding onto. It is the only hope, as man’s government cannot and will not bring the solutions; without the addition of God’s Holy Spirit, man cannot submit to God, nor solve human problems and evils that are of a spiritual nature.

On June 16, I gave two TWPs in Lusaka, Zambia. The TWPs in Lusaka had a total attendance of 21 people (eleven LCG members and ten visitors). Initially, I had planned to travel by bus to visit members in another city, but they decided to travel to Lusaka instead so that they could fellowship with members they don’t get to see very often. We made good use of the days that we spent together, with counseling sessions from early morning until late in the evening, as there is no local minister based in Zambia. My journey then continued by bus to the Copperbelt area in the northern part of Zambia, where I gave another two Bible Studies to seven members in Kitwe on Saturday, June 22. One of our members from Lubumbashi, Congo, travelled to Kitwe to attend these Bible Studies and was very excited to meet other brethren.

It was a wonderful privilege to again visit our members and meet new people in these two countries, as well as to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, the true name of Jesus Christ, the end-time prophecies, and the Ezekiel warning. It was also an opportunity to feed the flock and help build our members to the stature of Jesus Christ as best we can.

It is inspiring to see that our scattered brethren are holding fast, as well as God’s faithfulness to provide and care for His people. This is evidence of the power of God’s Spirit nourishing those who are attached to the spiritual Vine: “For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:8). May God’s Kingdom come soon, when the spiritual darkness will be removed across the globe and the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ will shine on all. ^(L)

You Are Making a Difference!

Statistics and numbers help to illustrate the encouraging state of the Work today, but they don't always communicate a real sense of the impact the Work has in people's lives.

Here in Charlotte, we regularly receive feedback from magazine readers, telecast viewers, and website visitors that leaves us moved and encouraged. We have compiled a number of examples of such feedback for you and present them on the next several pages. When possible, the location from which the comment comes has been included, though the names have been removed for privacy purposes. Where needed, comments have been edited for clarity and brevity.

We hope you find this small collection of comments as inspiring as we do. The Work that Jesus Christ is doing in the world through you is making a difference!

Thank you very much for sharing this video. I am only 14, and at first my mind cursed the Holy Spirit, but it's not my intention. So I cried, because I'm afraid I committed [the unpardonable sin], but God is great. He used you for me to understand. I ask for forgiveness of my sins.

— *Comment on YouTube*

Thank you so much for this article and the "Easter" booklet. I've been trying to explain to family/friends why we should stop following man-made traditions and your work and these articles are so beneficial to opening eyes and ears. I've always questioned how Friday night to Sunday morning was 3 days and 3 nights. Thank you for your time and research to explain it. May you be blessed in all you do.

— *Subscriber in Covington, WA*

[Concerning the booklet *Your Ultimate Destiny*:] What amazing, amazing revelation and inspiration to persevere this much appreciated message has been. No words can express my gratitude!!! This has truly been a lifesaving message to me!

— *Subscriber in Park South, GP, South Africa*

Your publication helps to inculcate a sense of hope, humility, and commitment to those who choose to read it (with an open mind). I especially enjoyed reading the article titled "Are We a Thankful Nation?" God bless you in your efforts. Keep the gospel going.

— *Donor in Saitama, Japan*

The January-February 2019 issue of *Tomorrow's World* article "The Powerful Privilege of Prayer" by Richard F. Ames provided me with a total new perspective for my daily praying and made me understand that prayer is indeed a true privilege that we have from God. It has shown me the correct steps to real praying and to expect from our Father, not what I want, but instead what is best for me. Yes, I am changing the way I

pray. Thank you so much to Mr. Ames for this article because now I know exactly how to draw closer to God in prayer, bare my heart when doing so, share with Him my feelings, and not be ashamed to confess my sins, asking for whatever is His will for my life in the name of Jesus. Again, thank you for giving me, and I hope many other readers, the firm understanding that prayer is my privilege. Thank God for His love and mercy!! May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ keep blessing your mission and everyone at *Tomorrow's World* ministries.

— *Subscriber in Naples, FL*

I have lost everyone I ever loved. Through it all you, your publications, and Christ have been there. Thank you!

— *Donor in Gladewater, TX*

I was not raised in religion, nor were my children, but something propelled me to purchase and start reading the Bible. These booklets have been a tremendous aide in my understanding of God and what is to come. My sister and brother-in-law directed me to your website, and I am beyond grateful. I am often overwhelmed with emotion and hope, which inspires me to continue on my journey of righteousness. God bless.

— *Donor in Auburn, MA*

Editor's Note: *Though the next two notes come from different states, we couldn't help but notice how, together, they illustrate how God can multiply our efforts unexpectedly!*

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to read your wonderful *Tomorrow's World* magazine. I look forward to reading all the truth-filled articles. After I finish reading them, I take them to a doctor's office or any place where there is a waiting area with magazines. Perhaps someone will pick them up and start to read and they will learn the truth they never knew.

— *Donor in Sikeston, MO*

I first saw your literature at a doctor's office, started reading it, and was so impressed by it that I asked the lady at the desk if I could take it with me. Then I received a magazine from a friend who had picked it up and given it to me because he knew I liked reading that type of magazine. So, I decided to send for it. It has helped me understand what I read in the Bible and what we discuss at Bible study at church. Thank you so much for your free literature and the encouragement I receive through reading your magazine.

— *Subscriber in Hollywood, FL*

I want to say thank you and God bless you for knowing that I was struggling reading the Bible and understanding what I was reading. You sent me the Bible study course, some booklets, and a magazine right at the time I needed these things. I don't remember asking for it or ordering anything. It just showed up and I am so blessed. So, praise Jesus and God bless you.

— *Subscriber in Airway Heights, WA*

Hello. I'm 25 and have not always been close with God. I just want to thank you all for what you do and thank you for having everything you offer!

I always wanted to gain a greater understanding and sometimes found it difficult to understand the Bible. But all of you have done and continue to do such a great job on explaining and simplifying the messages of Jesus Christ. I thank you for opening up my eyes and mind, it feels so great to finally have a clear understanding!

— *Subscriber in Etobicoke, ON, Canada*

Thank you again for another one of your great and informing booklets. Have enjoyed both books I have received from you all: *The Real God: Proofs and Promises* and *Evolution and Creation*. Both were most interesting to me. After reading both books, I'm absolutely convinced there is a Creator of our universe, earth, and all life on earth. God and your booklets have caused this old fellow to see quite a few things in a different perspective, and I'm most grateful to both God and your booklets of enlightenment. Old dogs seldom learn new tricks, but it's not impossible.

— *Subscriber in Dixon, IL*

Thank you so much for your deep biblical insights. You are not mainstream Christianity—refreshing for me. You are TRUTH.
— *Subscriber in Houston, TX*

Editor's Note: *In the comment that follows, we have not corrected the spelling in any way, as it helps to illustrate the source of the letter. You'll see when you get to the end...*

I have one question, how many *Tomorrow's World* booklets have you sold? I read evry leter I recive from you and it is true the world is realy in trouble and those who are beliving in Jesus can help save the world. I am reading one of the *Tomorrow's World* books. I keep forgetting to read it becuase I have a lot of books to read. Did you know the King Alfred the Great loved to read and fought to protect his kingdom and his people? I am homeschooled and I use the *Tomorrow's World* magazine for learning. I am 8 years old and I belive in Jesus and thank you for reading this letter and thank you for spreding the word of God.

— *(Young) Reader in Sangudo, AB, Canada*

I am bedridden and I have very little income. The miracle is that I have been asking God in my daily prayers, "What happens at death?" Here I get sent this letter you sent [offering]

What Happens When You Die? WOW! I will anticipate the arrival of this book.

— *Donor in Lahore, GPO, Punjab, Pakistan*

[Concerning a "Woman to Woman" web commentary, "A Quiet and Gentle Heroine":] I would just like to say, regarding the story of Abigail, Nabal, and David, it was an amazing read! It came at a perfect time for me. The Lord led me to your site to this story to address a situation in my own life.

I just want to thank you for the walk you are taking with our Lord in bringing literature and written stories with key Bible verses to take people into their Bibles! God bless you!

— *Subscriber from Chehalis, WA*

You probably don't know the extent to which your literature inspires the weak. But God knows. Please keep up your important work.

— *Subscriber in Navasota, TX*

I want to say thank you for your broadcast and all the literature you have sent me in the last few weeks. Problem is, as I read

Enclosed, please find my donation to your magazine as appreciation for your continuance in sending me copies throughout the year. Your biblical articles exposing where the world is headed gives me a hope I get nowhere else. I am a 78 year-old man living on social security in a small apartment. I can't thank you enough for your magazine—to give hope where none existed.

— *Donor in Johnston, RI*

them, you offer more little books. I'm sorry but I find myself wanting all of them to read along with my Bible. I pray a lot more people like me find you on TV and learn from you. I am sending this money order in hopes it helps pay for what you send. I want to send you more. Please don't be offended. I know you don't ask for money. I just want to help. You help people like me. Thank you—thank you—thank you again.

— *Donor in New Castle, DE*

I believe the Living Church of God is like the true church of God in the Bible. So, I am sending my tithe. I am going to try and live my life this way. I am an 86-year-old widow living alone.

— *Co-worker in Pulaski, MN*

I would like to thank you for all the lovely books you have sent me. I lost my husband and grief took me into such a dark deep place I'd never been in before. God got me out of that dark place. Reading your books helped me to lean on God more than I had ever leaned on Him. I would never [have] gotten there without the help of your literature. May God bless you for helping people like me who live on a fixed income. I read and pass your books to others. May it help them as it has me.

— *Co-worker in Chocowinity, NC*

Recently we left a church after realizing Catholic holidays were being promoted, and we searched scripture and took all our findings to the pastors. They blatantly told us they wouldn't change, even after reading what we shared. We are now studying the full scriptures at home and honoring Sabbath on its God given day.

— *Subscriber in Laurel, MD*

Hello. I really loved this. I plan on ordering your books for my kindle. I have had a very trying life and have never trusted anyone. These last few years have been very hard, and I have felt lost. I have never been a Christian, but I would consider myself a good person. I just didn't understand the Bible or God but believed in something greater, if that makes sense. This made it much more pleasurable to read and helped me a lot. God bless you and I mean that.

— *Email from Website Visitor*

I have been trying to eradicate the ridiculous story of Easter that is being told in the church that I attend, with some success. After hearing your presentation on TV, I was thrilled. I recommended your book on Easter and they are going to order it. God bless you, and thank you immensely.

— *Subscriber in Mauston, WI*

Just wanted to write a quick note about your book *The Plain Truth About the Protestant Reformation*. I just finished this book 10 minutes ago in my prison cell and just had to run down to the computer and write this letter. Your book was refreshing. Although straining to my brain with all the history. (I'll have to read it again to absorb all of it.) It was so confirming to me and all of my suspicions about the reformers and "Christian" history generally speaking. I always felt a disconnect between the founders of

Christendom and the words in my Bible—two different things completely. I wanted to also say that my friend read your book too. I asked him if he had any thoughts and he also said, "enlightening and enjoyable." I just thought you should know it. I will be passing your book around to some of my friends.

Thank you and God bless!

— *Subscriber in Moose Lake, MN*

I just want to thank you for all the books and maga-

zines. I love them. They give me hope. Thank you.

— *Co-worker in Providence, RI*

Each day I read your booklets, and I've learned so much about our Christ and myself. Thank you for giving me a new way to love and respect not only our Lord, but also everyone I meet each day of my life. May God bless you for giving so much.

— *Comment on Facebook*

Wish I could afford to send you more money. But I do enjoy your newsletters and wonderful magazine. Thank you! In an article many years ago from your magazine, I read about the perils of smoking cigarettes. I quit that very night. So, thank you again.

— *Donor in Hopkins, MN*

I forward my sincere thanks to [those] responsible for your wonderful and much valued broadcasting and literature. Your efforts have changed my direction in life and given me a secure understanding in the Word of God. I have recently decided to

If it wasn't for you all I would be in the streets drugging. Now I watch the program. I'm learning thanks to your words of blessings. I'm not stealing anymore either. Thanks to God's word, I don't want to sin any more. Pray for us all. Thank you.

— *Donor in Albany, NY*

leave the Pentecostal ministry after some 30 years.

— *Subscriber in Ourimbah, NSW, Australia*

Dear *Tomorrow's World*, I wish to thank you so much for helping me and my family on our spiritual journey seeking the true living God. Your literature has really helped us a lot. Our family has suffered so much over the years, our faith has truly been knocked. But your literature has helped us regain some of our faith.

— *Subscriber in Stoke-on-Trent, UK*

I just wanted to say thank you for offering your booklets for free. They have been a godsend to me and my path with God! They have broken things down and explained things in a way that can be understood. My favorite booklet thus far has been *John 3:16*. You are all a blessing to those of us who can't afford expensive resources. So, from the bottom of my heart, I thank you! God bless!

— *Subscriber in Stockton, KS*

Thank you very much for all the free information, studies, knowledge of scriptures and world events with Bible knowledge. I truly enjoy and have been living for the Lord. Without Biblical knowledge I would be a big mess.

— *Subscriber in Folsom, LA*

I watch your television program on the CW network here in Nashville. You know it's nice these days to be able to turn the TV on and actually hear the truth. And then to back it up with solid evidence. In a world full of "fake news" your show is a blessing. Keep up the good work. You're in my prayers.

— *Subscriber in Nashville, TN*

[Concerning the Commentary about Christmas, "Green Trees and Jesus":] I am utterly shocked and deeply saddened to learn this, but I am also glad that I did. Thank you for showing me how I have been taught to INSULT God. I neeeeed help learning the right and holy.

— *Email from a Website Visitor*

This is to thank you so very much for your TV program and for the literature we've received from you. It means so, so much to us! Finally, the Bible is becoming more understandable to all of us thanks to you all—including, of course, the members of the Living Church of God and your co-workers.

— *Subscriber from Mabank, TX*

Thank you so much for your literature. If ever there was a time when truth was needed now would be that time, and if ever there was a place that revealed that truth, *Tomorrow's World* would be that place. Thank you for bringing truth to the world. May God bless you all!

— *Subscriber in Summerside, PE, Canada*

Enclosed please find a donation towards all the wonderful work you do. I hope it helps in some small way. I'm not a very

big believer in the mainstream "televangelist" works, and for that matter much of mainstream "Churchianity," because I have a Bible and believe in the law of God as the only standard of righteousness for both government and individual! It is for these reasons that I tithe, and tithe to YOUR work, as a man mindful to be a good steward of [God's] tithe and place it where His work is being actually done!

— *Co-worker from Connell, WA*

On behalf of [incarcerated] offenders and ex-offenders we, would like to welcome the church of God by thanking your ministry for their service and dedication. Without your staff's fervent dedication and love for each one of us we probably [would] be lost in mediocrity. Thank you for not leaving any-one of us behind. We are blessed and our lives are so much richer because of your ministry. We wouldn't know the true meaning of life without your ministry.

— *Subscriber in Malone, NY*

Just a brief note and small donation to express my heartfelt gratitude for all your wonderful help in preparing me for my role in God's soon-coming Kingdom. I consider you to be one of God's greatest blessing of the modern era. In closing I wish to say, I love you, God bless you and keep up the great work. You are truly making a difference.

— *Donor in Des Moines, IA*

Reading this makes my heart ache greatly because of how true this is. Just from the time of being a little girl, living the past three decades to now, so much has changed [that] it is hard to not feel discouraged at times. But the Eternal's promises, I try to keep mindful of. Thank you for this article. I pray it reaches the heart of many others and helps to bring true awareness of what is happening today.

— *Email from a Website Visitor*

I love your teachings [and] believe in the original teachings of Jesus. My pastor has advised me not to visit [your website] or follow any of your teachings. However, I find nothing wrong with what you teach for it is scriptural. I follow you by reading my Bible. I refuse to become a hater against the teachings of Jesus and the early Church. I will not allow the world or false church to turn me against God's word.

— *Subscriber in Meridian, MS*

Your magazine is one of the best sources of information I receive. I learn of issues around the world that are ignored except by a few. The article on "food" is the only time I completely understood WHY God commanded only certain foods and yet created all of them. Thank you all for the information you take the time to research and print for all of us. The enclosed check is to help with printing costs and mailing.

— *Donor in Willmar, MN*

I'm a reasonably new viewer. I've watched 20+ *Tomorrow's World* videos, and I've learned more about the Bible and God's plan than I have in the past 18 years. There's so much not told about the truth of the Bible, Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit.

— *Comment on YouTube*

Thank you for sending the book *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?* I have read the book, and it has helped me to know that Saturday is the day God set aside to rest. I knew if anyone could help me understand more about Saturday worship, you great men could.

— *Subscriber in Frankford, WV*

I went [to the *Tomorrow's World* website] to order the free book (and did order it) and I got lost there for over four hours. The articles are fascinating and inspiring. Glad I found the site.

— *Comment from a Website Visitor*

I want to thank you so very much for all the books and DVDs I have received from *Tomorrow's World*. The reports and writings are truly enlightening and a blessing. I am 85 years old and I feel as though I am a child again.

— *Co-worker in Chicago, IL*

Thanks for the CDs and books you send. You have helped me a lot since my wife passed away.

— *Co-worker in North Plainfield, NJ*

Dear Sir: I have received your wonderful literature. What struck me most is your TW Magazine July-August 2020 edition. Your article, "The Perfect Storm," touched my soul. I believe I must pay serious attention to God's warning. One of your ministers visited me before. Hoping I can attend your Sabbath worship service someday. May God bless you.

— *Subscriber in Manila, Metro Manila, Philippines*

Thank you for your telecast "Are You Going to Hell?" I was raised in a church that taught that. I remember how terrified I was as a child and growing up. Sadly, those teachings sometimes do still haunt me today. I was told I was a heathen and will never be worthy. I never believed I was worthy of our Father and I was too terrified and Bible illiterate to learn the truth. May God our Father bless you all and thank you.

— *Subscriber in Columbia Falls, MT*

I want to thank TW for all you do to bring the true Christian religion to the people. I have learned so much since I began

watching you. You have explained many questions I have had in the past and made Christianity a way of life for me and not just a religion. I admire how TW teaches in plain simple English without talking down to anyone. Nor do you beg for money every 10 minutes like so many others. You just give to the people and know God will provide for you. I could do my studies over the Internet but I prefer to get booklets and DVDs so once I am finished I can pass them along to people and pray that God touches them with the curiosity to learn more. I humbly thank you so much, and may God bless you many times over for what all of you at TW do for humanity.

— *Co-worker in Jennings, LA*

First, I would like to thank you for your assistance, support, and real concern for the salvation of people. And second, for providing free materials for our spiritual development. God bless your mission. I wish and pray that Brazil awakens to seek God and his mercy. God bless you all.

— *Anápolis, GO, Brazil*

Thank you, Mr. Weston, for your usual, straightforward, no-nonsense delivery and message regarding Christmas. Also, I appreciate your closing paragraph that calls for the courage of your convictions and faith in the Word to make the right stand. This will be the first year that my wife and I will not be celebrating the man-made tradition and trappings of Christmas, as we endeavor to celebrate and follow our Lord and Savior each day and Sabbath.

— *Co-worker in Margate, FL*

Yes, it seems things are getting worse. Even for myself it's hard to cope in such a testing time! I'm a homeless mother of six! But with hope of Jesus coming soon, I know I truly can get through anything. Bring on the new world under God's rule!

— *Subscriber in Hamilton, New Zealand*

I enjoyed your teaching on life after death. I have trouble not sinning, mainly in my thoughts. I have repented daily and tell God all about my troubles. Thank you for your TV show and the newsletters that I received. Thank you!

— *Subscriber in Rocky Mount, NC*

Thank you for this message. I am guilty of spending too much time on the computer and Facebook. It actually woke me up to my weakness and taking time from God.

— *Comment from a Website Visitor*

Editor's Note: Make no mistake, they are not all positive! We receive plenty of criticism—which, frankly, should also encourage us (Luke 6:26)! Here is just a small sample.

I woke up this Sunday morning and came across your programming. I was disgusted. Jesus preached to be accepting of everyone and to treat people with kindness and respect.

Your organization is doing the exact opposite. To discriminate against another religion or sexual orientation openly on television is sickening, especially on the Sabbath. What the world needs now more than ever is love and acceptance while you are sowing seeds of fear and deception. I sincerely hope that you are forgiven for these sins that you are committing and that you take time to reflect on the pain that you are directly influencing on groups that don't share your beliefs.

— *Email from a Viewer in Lexington, KY*

How could you people look at Revelation 12 and see that as the church? Seriously? Wow! A 3rd grader could tell you that is about ISRAEL, not the church. Can't you even recognize who the first few verses are about? Are you so ignorant that you don't recognize the dream that Joseph had so many years ago about the sun, moon and stars? Who produced the Messiah? It was Israel, NOT the church. You should be ashamed of yourselves for your false interpretation and false teaching. I'm certainly glad that I was only flipping thru the channels when I heard what you said.

— *Comment from a Viewer in Elon, NC*

Thank you for your preaching this morning. It was very enlightening. But you were standing, and I thought during the intermission you would get a chair and sit down, but you didn't. I do not trust those that continue to stand. Good luck standing.

— *Email from a Viewer*

My opinion... I don't think you should be saying that, on Easter, the Easter Bunny and eggs, candy, etc. are wrong for the kids... nor, on Christmas, presents and other things are wrong. They are not of Satan/the devil. Shame on you for saying that. It is all a way to get the younger people involved in the holidays so they can eventually learn the true meanings in time. Condemning the things you do is not a good thing to do. Who are you to judge??? God knows what I am saying. He prompted me to tell you these things. Be more positive and less haughty and all knowing. The Only One capable of that is God Almighty. Period. I hope this helps you all.

— *Subscriber in Easley, SC*

The Kingdom of God is not "yet to come." It is here now. If you cannot see it, you are not born of the water and of the Spirit. If you are not born again, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Read John 3:3-5. Jesus is God and cannot lie, praise His name!

— *Email from a Website Visitor*

I totally disagree with your inference that we just sit back and do nothing about the disaster this nation is about to suffer. Oh. Except grin and bear it with joy, twiddle our thumbs, and send you money "to preach the gospel." God will put you through the Great Tribulation to teach you that your noninvolvement brand of Christianity will give you the opportunity to experi-

ence the JOY of persecution, extreme suffering, and death. Mr. Armstrong was dead wrong about not even voting.

— *Comment from a Website Visitor*

Sorry for cutting back my donation, but my 2011 Merriam-Webster dictionary doesn't always have words used in your articles to find the meaning so I (or others I let read) can understand what the author is trying to teach us. I'll go back to donating when I get a new dictionary. Do you know what "milquetoast" means without looking it up in a dictionary or the Internet?

— *Co-worker in Curwensville, PA*

Editor's Note: *The next several comments illustrate that many of those who were originally touched by the work of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong recognize what they saw and heard from him in what we do, and that God is using us to continue the work he may have begun in their lives.*

I remember as a child how my father from Guyana studied with Herbert W. Armstrong. Now at 67 years old I am following in his footsteps, and I am so blessed from these study materials.

— *Subscriber from Bradenton, FL*

Recently, I came across your highly informative magazine *Tomorrow's World* that struck me as familiar with its remarkable analysis of world events and developments through the unique perspective of biblical prophecies. Soon I was caught up with it, for during the period from 1969 to 1996, I had been a subscriber to *The Plain Truth*, the world famous news magazine edited by the late Herbert W. Armstrong. So, I am very happy to know that there is a successor to *The Plain Truth*, informing [of] world events through the same perspective.

— *Subscriber in Kollam, Kerala, India*

You explain better than any other church. Keep up the good work. I am 82 and used to listen to Armstrong. Am glad I found *Tomorrow's World*.

— *Co-worker from Farmington, NM*

Just received my copy of your *Tomorrow's World* Magazine. I wish to convey my thanks to your editor, Mr. Weston on his article of the September-October issue. Said article was inspiring and very timely during this time of pandemic. Your magazine's view is almost identical [to] that of the *Plain Truth* magazine edited by the late Herbert W. Armstrong. Please keep on writing eye-opening articles for your readers' peace of mind and inspiration.

— *Co-worker in San Diego, CA*

GREAT Work you are doing, letting our Savior lead you. I am now a financial co-worker, asking God to bless you, as He did Herbert Armstrong for nearly 60 years. I joined him in 1961, until his death. Please continue to follow his forceful example.

— *Subscriber from Sunnyrock, GP, South Africa* (LH)

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Digital Marketing Impact in the Asia-Pacific Region

In the past few months, we have continued to increase our digital marketing efforts to preach the Gospel in the Asia-Pacific Region via the Internet. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many more people are using the Internet as they spend more time at home. Internet advertising is an essential way we can reach these people—especially the younger demographic, who may see our messages almost exclusively on the Internet, rather than on television.

Facebook Advertisements

We have been working with the Church's international headquarters in the United States to walk through the exciting "open door" of Facebook ads to promote our free booklets and DVDs. Our advertisements are displayed on Facebook and Instagram in Australia and Malaysia, and they have proven to be successful in reaching new subscribers. Since starting to run Facebook ads on August 12, 2020, we have received 81 literature orders in Australia and 24 literature orders in Malaysia (as of September 15, 2020). An encouraging aspect to consider with Facebook ads is that we are spending less than \$7 per response, while a television response costs us \$25 on average. Also, more than 90 per-

cent of responses on Facebook are from new subscribers. We are very thankful to God for this new opportunity to do the Work in a greater way.

Google Ads

We have reported on Google ads in the past, and the good news continues. We continue to create Google ads to promote Church literature throughout the Region. Here is a quick overview of the effectiveness of our ads for the period of January–September 2020:

- We received 130 literature orders, compared to 71 in Jan–Sep 2019 (83 percent increase)
- We received 1,736 booklet downloads, compared to 622 in Jan–Sep 2019 (179 percent increase)

We are very excited by the growth we are seeing in the Work through the Internet in this region of the world. Please pray for continued success in our reaching a new audience through Facebook and Google!

— Timothy Mager

Tomorrow's World Presentation in Kitwe, Zambia

The following is a reflection on the Bible Studies Mr. Lawdi Ferreira gave in Kitwe on June 22, 2019, during his travels conducting Tomorrow's World Presentations in Africa, written by one of our members there.

I was one of seven people who attended the *Tomorrow's World Bible Studies* in Kitwe, Zambia, conducted by Area Pastor Lawdi Ferreira in June 2019. One member had even travelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo to join us there.

The *Tomorrow's World* Presentation given the previous week focused on the

future of Zambia and the world. At first, it was difficult to grasp what the future of Zambia had to do with Bible prophecy. But Mr. Ferreira's message showed that what is ahead for the world includes not only every country in the world, but every *individual* in every country in the world. So biblical prophecy has everything to do with the country of Zambia and what will happen to its people in the future.

The Bible Study covered the severe drought and water crisis, governmental corruption, increasing crime and violence, the growing gap between rich and

poor, rising drug and alcohol use, other symptoms of moral decline, a weakening economy, and shortages in food and money.

These issues were described as "disturbing world trends" that significantly affect Zambia and all countries, and they were presented using Bible scriptures and prophecies. The presentation truly was relevant to the future of Zambia because the country is subject to suffering the same curses and consequences as the rest of the world, as we are already starting to experience.

—Edward Manda

LOVE AND GOVERNMENT continued from page 4

After hearty discussion about circumcision, Peter clearly made the decision in Acts 15, and James, the leader of the Jerusalem congregation, where the controversy originated, said, “Therefore I judge...” (v. 19). We also see Paul exercising authority in 1 Corinthians 5 regarding the sinning man. He later exercised his God-given authority again when discussing hair length in chapter 11! After explaining biblical principles that related to masculinity and femininity, he said, “But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God” (1 Corinthians 11:16). In other words, Paul was saying, *This is what we teach, here and everywhere else—case closed!*

When the People Willingly Offer Themselves

We see what happens when authority breaks down and many, even leaders, refuse to follow directions from leaders above them. California refused to follow the federal government regarding illegal immigrants and declared itself a “sanctuary state.” But then some cities and counties turned around and defied the state government, which, of course, the state didn’t like. It would be comical, if it weren’t such a serious matter with equally serious consequences. We see law and order breaking down as all want to be authorities unto themselves.

The period of the judges was a similar time, when there was no central authority to look to, and we can read the lesson of those times. The last verse of the book sums it up: “In those days there was no king [no central authority] in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). The account of that period shows that it was a terrible time to

live in—though there were some bright spots, and the book of Ruth tells the story of one of them.

Another was at the time when Deborah judged the nation. It was during that time when Israel threw off Jabin, king of Canaan, and Sisera, the commander of his army. Following the decisive battle, “Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: ‘When leaders lead in Israel, when the people willingly offer themselves, bless the LORD’” (Judges 5:1–2)! Not only must leaders lead, but others must willingly cooperate with their leaders. Does this mean we should follow leadership anywhere? Of course not! Paul makes it plain that we are to follow leaders as they follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1) and Peter and the Apostles declared, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). This should be a given, but we should never confuse obedience to God with self-will when we face controversial administrative decisions.

Husbands and wives must learn to balance these matters if they are to have a harmonious marriage. Wives are not to follow their husbands in rebellion against God, but neither are they to invoke personal “conscience” because they disagree and think their solution to a problem is wiser. Frankly, it may be, but respecting her husband’s decision is what will work out best for the family in the end (Ephesians 5:22–24).

God shows us the way to deal with controversial matters. It is then up to us to choose whether to follow His way or to go our own way. To follow or not to follow is a choice—a critically important choice, because it has a lot to do with our eventual reward and whether we will even be in the Kingdom. As God spoke through Moses in Deuteronomy 30:19, “therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.” (LN)



Behind the November-December 2020 Cover: A Clash Between Holidays and God’s Holy Days

Pictured here is the cover to the November-December 2020 *Tomorrow’s World* magazine, highlighting one of the great “distinguishing beliefs” of God’s true Church. Depicting seven trumpets set to sound and directed toward the people of earth, all while the world continues on its way enjoying the “festivities” of the season, the cover of this issue was designed to illustrate the clash between the world’s approach to holidays and the meaningful Holy Days the Eternal has actually commanded us to use in worshipping Him.

The cover article, “Holidays or Holy Days?,” written by longtime evangelist and *Tomorrow’s World* telecast presenter Mr. Richard Ames, takes a broad view of national celebrations. He notes that some worldly observances—such as the American and Canadian Thanksgiving Day—are per-

fectly fine, but days originating out of pagan worship customs are off limits to those who desire to follow the God of the Bible, highlighting the difference that obeying God makes and summarizing the meaning of each of the days. Given the huge growth in subscribers over the last year, this article will be the first exposure to the Holy Days of God for many readers.

Also highlighted on the cover are two more articles. Mr. Gerald Weston’s article “Should You Recite the ‘Sinner’s Prayer’?” addresses a topic long taken for granted by mainstream Christian evangelicals and uses the so-called “Sinner’s Prayer” as a foil to illustrate the great truths it generally ignores. And Mr. Wallace Smith’s article “The Cure for Politics” discusses the current chaotic political environment we find around us and points readers to the world Jesus Christ will bring, in which politics will become a thing of the past.

—Editorial Staff

Bursting the Bubble

As America experienced the most robust economy in memory, with high employment, rising wages, record retail sales, and booming international trade, it was the pride of government leaders and political partisans.

Then the illusion of stability in the economy and financial system rapidly evaporated. The vulnerable nature of the system was quickly exposed as a mysterious virus brought the world to its knees. Confidence in the vaunted economic miracle was shattered when an obscure illness began in Wuhan, China, in November 2019 and quickly developed into a global pandemic. Great panic ensued as nations “shut down” to prevent a devastating loss of life.

This bursting of the economic bubble should not have been a surprise, considering the modern financial system, which is based on an idea in which all the players must believe. Millions of employees in every sector depend upon being paid on a regular schedule. Each payday, they receive a physical paycheck or a direct deposit into their bank account. The payee gets a piece of paper with some numbers on it that represent wages or other compensation. Upon deposit, one receives a deposit receipt with some numbers on it. The person then pays monthly bills or makes purchases using physical checks, credit, debit cards, or electronic transfers, all of which involves exchanging numbers representing the value or price of the transaction.

In this process, no physical currency has changed hands. It is all based on an idea, a system of financial transactions. The system works only if everyone in the chain of events be-

lieves in the system and accepts the concept that the numbers on the check, receipt, bill of sale, etc. are a valid store of value. The system is a fragile financial arrangement subject to the vagaries of panic or instability.

Prosperity can be an illusion based on current conditions, subject to sudden, drastic changes. An unsound system can collapse when its financial bubble bursts.

The Bible states, “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help” (Psalm 146:3). King David, along the same line, highlighted a different approach: “In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (Psalm 56:11).

What can we learn from this disastrous time? Scripture warns us, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). As a nation, our great pride in the bustling economy was evident to all. God makes it plain that there is a limit to His patience: “Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward” (Isaiah 1:4). Can anyone deny that these words describe this time in our history?

As millions of people face uncertainty brought about by the pandemic and the resultant bursting of the economic bubble, we should realize that we can’t count on the system or government procedures. However, we can rely on God to do His part if we do ours. The key is to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

—J. Davy Crockett III