

Church of God News

Positive News of the Churches of God

February 2004, No. 12

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Article...

There Was No King

In Thomas Paine's work called "Common Sense" written in 1776, he argues against the monarchy of England saying: "Near three thousand years passed away from the Mosaic account of the creation, till the Jews, under a national delusion, requested a king. Until then, their form of government (except in extraordinary cases, where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of republic administered by a judge and the elders of the tribes. Kings they had none, and it was held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title but the Lord of Hosts. And when a man seriously reflects on the idolatrous homage which is paid to the persons of kings, he need not wonder, that the Almighty, ever jealous of His honor, should disapprove of a form of government which so impiously invades the prerogative of heaven." There is a great deal more that he said in this beautiful work that he wrote which I will not quote due to space, but I would encourage you to look up this piece of writing from our past and read it for yourself. I want to explore the historic view of the Lord God as king of Israel since the author of this quote makes mention of this topic. Let us see what the Bible says.

I Samuel 8:3 says: "...and his sons [Samuel's sons, Joel and Abiah] walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took brides, and perverted judgment." They were corrupt as leaders and had forsaken the way that Samuel taught them.

I Samuel 8:4-6: "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

Up to this point, Israel had been ruled by God through judges and had no king.

Now, the three reasons for the elders' request were: (1) The corruption of Samuel's sons (**I Samuel 8:5**), (2) The desire to conform to the nations around them in their form of government, and (3) A need for a military commander (**I Samuel 8:20**). These are good reasons for having a king, except for the fact that the error of the elders was that they failed to recognize God as their true King (again **8:7** and **12:12** of **I Samuel**.)

In **I Samuel 8:7**, Samuel was told by God: "...for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."

In *Halley's Bible Handbook*, page 168 on the book of Judges, 1972, we find: "The Hebrew Nation had no strong central government. They were a confederacy, of twelve independent tribes, with no unifying force, except their God. The form of government in the days of Judges is spoken of as a Theocracy, that is, God Himself was supposed to be the direct ruler of the nation. However, the people did not take their God very seriously, and were continually falling away into idolatry. Being in the state of anarchy, and harassed at times by civil war among themselves, the Hebrew Nation was slow in its national development."

The main reason for this slow development was that the Hebrew Nation did not focus on God as its King, and in the last years of Samuel's rule as judge, the people decided they wanted a king. But there was no king until the end of Samuel's term as judge over Israel, except God. Even before, they were not very serious about Him being King over them.

You would find it profitable to continue to research this topic and read the Book of Judges as a historical preview.

— by Doyle J. Carter

*Guest Editorial...***Are You a Willing Servant?**

As a member of God's Church today, do you willingly serve God? We understand that God's Church is not limited to any one group or organization and that it is made up of those in whom He has placed His Holy Spirit. Those that answer His call are to be His peculiar treasure above all on the earth. Although they exist, it is not the purpose of this article to discuss the other elements that make up the Church today (e.g. tares, the unconverted, and the unbaptized.)

In this country, we still have the freedom to hear God's Word expounded to us each Sabbath day. Generally speaking, we have access to several Bible translations and study aids in our homes. There may occasionally be a program that teaches the truth on the radio or television.

Yet, scripture tells us in **Amos 8:11-12** that, in a time ahead of us, people will search for the Word of God and will not be able to find it. It would seem this famine of hearing the words of the Lord will be a severe trial on God's people. Will you be able to endure when this evil time comes? Are you now, a willing servant, willing to be obedient to God in all matters of faith and conscience? Do you find that you are able to completely trust in God, placing your life in His hands and live or die with His decision for you? If you find it difficult to completely trust God now, how will you do it then? What should you be doing now, to prepare for that time?

As society continues to descend into the abyss of sin, those that teach the Word of God will be persecuted, in effect, to silence them.

Many people look forward to the day when His Word will no longer be heard. Jesus' statement in **John 9:4**, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work," is just as true for us today, as it was during His lifetime. God's Word, the truth, is the only place that mankind will ever find true peace and comfort. The night that is coming will be made even darker by the absence of the light of His Word.

The sin of forsaking God and His Word has occurred before. **Judges 21:25** describes a dark time in Israel's history when there was no one in Israel to lead them and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Church of God News

"For the edifying of the body of Christ,"
Ephesians 4:12.

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Publisher: Richard C. Nickels, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718, 307-686-5191, Rich.Nickels@giveshare.org.

Editor: Steve Kieler, 2193 Sheker Drive, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8707, 515-576-5743, editor@giveshare.org.

Suzanne Kieler (layout), Barbara Parada (proof reader).

Article Contributors: Shelby Faith (UCG), Robert J. Thiel (LCG), Wayne Holmes, Leslie A. Turvey, Craig White, Skip Westphal, and Doyle Carter.

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Each time Israel went away from God, they forsook those that taught the truth. How many prophets were tortured and killed for bringing a message of repentance from God to the people of Israel?

Originally, it was God's intent to live among the Israelites. In **Deuteronomy 23:14** Moses said: "For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." We all know the decision Israel made. **Psalms 74:1-10** tells us that the people of Israel did

not want God dwelling among them. They destroyed all of God's dwelling places in their land. Israel chose to have God curse them rather than bless them. How about you? Have you provided a place for God to dwell in you? Does He dwell where you live? Are you and your house holy?

On the other hand, does God still see uncleanness or sin there? Will you wait until the famine of the Word comes before you find out? According to **Matthew 7:21-23**, it is the many that find out too late.

I Samuel 3:1 tells us that the Word of the Lord was precious in those days because there was no open vision. Here is an example of a famine of God's Word. God did not even speak to Eli, the High Priest. Eli had allowed his sons to corrupt the priesthood. So instead, God spoke to Samuel. In **I Samuel 3:2-10**, we see Samuel being called by God as a little child. (Jesus talked about how special little children were, saying: "... of such is the kingdom of God," **Luke 18:16**). In his reply to God, Samuel said: "...Thy servant heareth," **I Samuel 3:9**. Samuel was truly a willing servant in God's sight. God knew his heart. **I Chronicles 28:9** says that we must have a perfect heart and a willing mind to serve God properly. **II Chronicles 16:9** also says that God will be strong on your behalf if you are a willing servant. If our heart is right before God, we won't have to worry about the coming famine of the Word. God can find us anywhere, just like He found Samuel.

Are you a willing servant in God's hands? **Romans 8:31** says: "...If God be for us, who can be against us?" If you are persecuted for what is right and no one else stands with you, God will, (**Isaiah 59:15-16**). We must first worship God in spirit and in truth, obeying His righteous commandments and keeping His righteous judgments, (**John 4:23-24**). We must worship God as He commands. **Isaiah 66:1-2** says that we must have a humble, repentant heart, a heart that fears to mishandle His Word. If you prepare your heart to be a willing servant to God, when the famine comes, you will still have a relationship with Him because you will be one of His! You won't have to wander from sea to sea to find God, because He will be living with you and be in you. Let us endeavor to become willing servants so that our Father will be with us through the dark days ahead.

— by Wayne Holmes

PO Box 3692, Batesville, AR 72503-3692

Would You Believe...

In George Washington's day, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington show him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others show both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are "limbs," therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression "Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg."

Article...

Appearance of Evil

When I was twelve years old, I was "mishandled" by a Sunday school teacher. It was a strange thing that, after that, God seems to have seen to it that children came around me. When that first started happening (when I was fourteen or fifteen), I tried to ignore the kids, because I had gotten the impression that the only adult men who are able to "relate" to kids must be pedophiles, and I wanted to steer far from that. But I soon saw that to ignore kids who approached me hurt their feelings, and I certainly didn't want to do that.

What was God's balance concerning so many lonely children wanting attention? I got at least part of the answer, which I needed, from a *National Geographic* presentation of Jacques Cousteau in San Francisco Bay. As the Calypso was sailing in the bay, sea otters approached, and soon were swimming alongside the vessel. The crew members were delighted, and in no time at all were feeding the otters by hand. The next day, the crew of the Calypso observed what must have been the same otters swimming beside a fishing boat. Being "sportsmen," the fishermen shot the otters. Cousteau, sickened that his having fed fish to the otters set them up to be shot, made it a policy that he would never feed such animals in the wild again. He didn't want to set any other animals up to predation.

Michael Jackson claims that it is "OK" for him to sleep with kids, because he's not "Jack the Ripper." I never want to do to kids what Cousteau and his crew did to set up those otters. I don't want to train kids that it is "OK" to come alone to my house, and otherwise do things without asking parents about what I am

doing. Kids never come to my house alone, because I know that it will be easier for them to go to another's house, and it could be "curtains."

Kids who approach me for the first time take me to their parents immediately for introductions, and, in a roundabout way, I let the parents know that their kids approached a stranger. As a substitute teacher, I have told many children in many classrooms the story related on that *National Geographic* presentation. Even if Michael Jackson isn't "Jack the Ripper," or a predator, he is setting kids up as the prey for someone else. And many parents are pliant co-conspirators.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil,"
I Thessalonians 5:22.

— by Jimmie Parr
blondjackdaw@hotmail.com

Church News...

Living Church of God

Charles Bryce reports, "There is inspiring news about Church attendance around the world in the Living Church of God. From January to September last year, we had a 9.58% increase in total average monthly attendance. There is a 10.7% increase just in the U.S."

Jonathan McNair sends this report on the Work in Trinidad: "The total responses for the November 29th telecast were eighteen. A telecast in November was entitled *Where Are We Now in Prophecy?* by Richard Ames. Another December program was entitled *Prophetic Signs in the Middle East* by Richard Ames. After services one Sabbath in December, we held a baptismal counseling for two people. We also held a picnic on December 25th."

Gerald Weston sent this report about the Work in Canada: "Reports have been positive concerning all three Canadian Feast sites. We moved to a new location on Prince Edward Island and this turned out to be a real hit with everyone — the hall was warm and inviting, housing was very affordable, and personnel at the establishment were wonderfully friendly and helpful. Reports have been very positive concerning the messages delivered at all sites. Guelph has seen two brand new families in the last two months, which has been very encouraging to the members there. We started distributing the Internet Ad cards following

the Feast. It is too early to assess any results; but our goal was to distribute 50,000 by the end of November. We started *Leaders of Tomorrow* (a Spokesman Club designed for teens and young adults) here in Toronto, and also started up an adult Spokesman Club again last November 9 after a summer break. I took a trip to Saskatchewan at the end of October and a trip to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia the first part of December."

— by Robert Thiel

A Bit of History...

History of Christianity

Christianity first touched Niger in the seventh century when Berber Christians migrated south after being driven from North Africa by emerging Islam. Isolated from other Christians, the faith gradually weakened and Christianity disappeared from Niger until the twentieth century. Protestant missionaries were the first to arrive in Niger. In 1929, *African Christian Missions, Inc.* (now known as *Evangelical Baptist Mission*) began their work. Roman Catholicism spread from Benin to Niger in 1931. The Roman Catholic Church currently has over 15,000 affiliates, although approximately 95% of these are expatriates.

In the past decades, other Protestant missions have arrived. These include *Baptist International Mission, Assemblies of God, Southern Baptists, Fellowship of Independent Missions, YWAM* (now called *JEMED-Jeunesse en Mission et Développement*), *Horizons (includes Frontiers)*, *Calvary Ministries, Portes Ouvertes, Sahara Desert Mission, and SIL.*

The Church in Niger is small and faces tremendous pressure from Islam. Nevertheless, national believers have a growing vision for Church planting and evangelism. Challenges include a shortage of pastors, educated Christian women, and mature, well-trained leadership.

Unreached People

Niger has fifteen ethnic groups in which less than 20% of the population has any affiliation with a Christian Church. Although Niger is predominantly Muslim, there is a surprising openness — albeit general unresponsiveness — to the Christian message. Many Muslims are willing to listen. Radio Station ELWA has helped prepare the hearts of many nomadic Tamajaq and Fulani. Some

Fulani, feeling the effects of famine, are opening up to the message of Jesus due to the response of Christians who brought relief to them. Encouraging progress is also being experienced among the Tamajaq.

Please pray for:

1. True reconciliation at the heart level and renewal of cooperative efforts between national Churches.
2. Wisdom, grace, and strength as we labor in the field.
3. Fruit from showings of the Jesus film (we borrow the films).
4. Growth in responsible partnership between mission and Church in evangelistic, educational, medical, and development ministries.
5. Mobilization of the Church for effective AIDS-related ministries.
6. Re-establishment of a French Bible school.
7. Growth in effectiveness and distribution of media: literature, radio, audio, and video cassettes.
8. Political stability.
9. Healthy mission/employee policies and relationships all across Niger.
10. Financial help to train former Muslims who have given their lives to Christ.

It is frightening to consider where we would be without our partners in ministry, of which you are one. We hold them up with very high esteem because kingdom building is far greater than one group or individual. We need each other! We prayed for 1000 people to attend the effort. About 700 people filled the meeting place, with many more standing outside the gate listening to the message. The highlight of the evening was the choreography presented by children to the songs, "O Lord, We Enter into Your Presence"; "Jesus is the Solution" and "I Have Jesus in my Heart." The preaching of **John 3:16** through the movements of these little ones touched many hearts.

The message proclaimed by songs and choreography was reinforced by an evangelistic message. Later we heard that one brother, who had been neglecting his witness for the Lord, was so touched that he made a recommitment, weeping. A young woman was also crying and promised to be more faithful to the Lord. After the concert, I preached on the love of Jesus and prayed with 458 people who expressed a desire to know Christ. There is no Sabbath Church here in Niger, but we have already established three house Churches.

Please pray with us:

- For the good collaboration with more than eight people in organizing this event.
- For those touched by the Good News, some for the first time.
- For every Bible, book, toys, tract, etc. distributed. May they continue to pass on the message.
- For the encouragement to the body of Christ as representatives of virtually every Church association attended.
- That those who responded will continue on with the Lord
- That those who saw the truth of the Gospel, but hesitated, will still commit their lives to Christ.
- That God will provide us with a bus, or at least an automobile, to help alleviate much suffering in trekking.
- For God to provide us with \$400 to pay the rent for six months in Niger Republic where we shall continue to teach the converts.
- Praise God for providing \$600 through a brother to meet our housing need. Thanks God for the brother and ask for God's blessing upon him and his family.
- Remember many others who are praying and helping in various ways.
- We need a large quantity of Bibles in Hausa, French, and other Niger languages.
- Pray for our health and wisdom.
- Ask God to provide us with a computer, printer, camera, and a piece of land for construction of a Church, etc.
- Ask God to provide a person who will be helping us monthly with a sum of \$130 to pay our rent.

— by Michael Porter, 03BP2991 Jericho
Cotonou, Benin, Africa
goodseed1st@hotmail.com

Advice...

Judge Gently

Pray don't find fault with the person who limps or stumbles along the road, unless you have worn the shoes they have worn, or struggled beneath their load.

There may be tacks in the shoes that hurt, though hidden from view, or the burden they

bear . . . placed on your back might cause you to stumble too.

Don't sneer at the person who's down today, unless you have felt the blow that caused their fall, or felt the shame that only the fallen know.

You may be strong today, but still the blows that were theirs . . . if dealt to you, in the selfsame way or the selfsame time . . . might cause you to stagger too.

Do not be harsh with the person who sins . . . or pelt them with word or stone unless you are sure . . . yea, doubly sure that you have no sins of your own!

For you know . . . perhaps if the tempter's voice should whisper as softly to you as it did to them, when they went astray . . . it just might cause you to falter too.

— by author unknown
submitted by L.W. Bowleg, Bahamas
lwbowleg@hotmail.com

News from India...

I am so happy to send a brief report about the training program I have attended. It was on home base care and support for the people living with HIV and AIDS. The program had many resource people who were doctors, field workers, etc. The topics included were on various aspects of care and support, especially on the new approach of caring for them at home rather than in a hospital. The home is much better for the HIV and AIDS related people than a hospital. When the patient suffers from opportunistic infections, the hospital is required to guard against the attack of tuberculosis, which is more threatening in India. The purpose of this program is to train the caregivers. The interesting aspect I have understood is the continuum of care. When proper care and motivation are given, the life of an HIV person becomes as good as a normal person. Motivation, care, love, and nutritious food are the best medicines. Of course, anti-retroviral medicines play a role, but love and care are most important. They need encouragement, not sympathy.

As you may be aware, we have many brethren who are affected by this disease, and we have launched a goater program for these brethren at the village level. I am evolving a network program for the HIV-positive brethren at the city level. God blessed me with many new openings through this program. One is that I have met many infected

people that have shown the signs to receive the good news, and that is a marvelous blessing.

They said, "give us something spiritual which we lack." I could not believe my ears. I am still wondering why God is calling such a people; and the only answer I could infer is the example of the one man who was on the cross along with Jesus, who showed signs of repentance. Let me tell you, the calling of God in India is exploding. When I describe the above statements of these brethren requesting spirituality, I do not mean it in a judgmental fashion, for I know I am a sinner and seek God's forgiveness and guidance. I do not stop with that. Let me tell you, I am not a pastor, rather a facilitator. I do not just give an answer from the Bible and leave, but I become their brother. I told them that I would help their children get educated with special tutoring if necessary. What I need from you is your prayers, prayers, and prayers. Please pray for me and for all our brethren. Thanks. Please keep in touch. Love.

— by M. R. Hubert
5 Buddha Street
Madras 600024 India

Gem...

Drug Problem

Maybe my generation was just lucky. I had a drug problem when I was young.

I was drug to Church on Sunday morning. I was drug to Church for weddings and funerals. I was drug to family reunions in all kinds of weather. I was drug to the bus stop to go to school every weekday. I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults and teachers. I was also drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents.

Those drugs are still in my veins, and they affect my behavior in every thing I do, say, and think. They are stronger than cocaine, crack, or heroin, and if today's children had this kind of drug problem, America might be a better place.

— by author unknown

Hmmm...

- A car company can move its factories to Mexico and claim it's a free market.
- A toy company can out-source to a Chinese sub-contractor and claim it's a free market.

- A major bank can incorporate in Bermuda to avoid taxes and claim it's a free market.

But, heaven help the elderly who dare to buy their prescription drugs from a Canadian pharmacy. How un-American.

Article...



The Power of Touch

We all have a basic human need for touch. Touch makes us feel connected to others, supported, and loved. We can learn from science that skin is the human body's largest organ, containing millions of receptors (for example, we have about 8,000 receptors in just one fingertip) that send messages through nerve fibers to the spinal cord and then to the brain. A touch triggers the release of brain endorphins, which are the body's natural pain suppressors that are more powerful than morphine. A simple touch — a hand on a shoulder, an arm around the waist — can reduce a heart rate and lower blood pressure. Even people in deep comas may show changes in their heart rates when someone holds their hands.

Positive, nurturing touch also stimulates an increase in the amount of hemoglobin in the blood which, while supplying oxygen throughout the body, helps to prevent disease and encourage recovery from illness. A touch provides comfort and makes us feel secure because it unites us with an affectionate, loving, and feeling human being. A touch shields us from the worries of today because of the confidence it brings. A touch can even make the body aversive to stress.

From infancy into adulthood, touch and affection are a vital part of the bonding process for human beings. The affect of the most casual touch has been seen in several studies. In one, waitresses who touched their customers on the hand or shoulder as they returned change received larger tips than those who didn't. The picture that accompanies this article is from an article called "The Rescuing Hug." The article details the first week of the lives of a set of twins. Apparently, each was in their respective in-

culcators, and one was not expected to live. A hospital nurse fought against the hospital rules and placed the babies together in one incubator. When they were placed together, the healthier of the two threw an arm over her sister in an endearing embrace. The smaller baby's heart rate stabilized and her temperature rose to normal. They both survived and are thriving as happy kindergarteners now. The hospital changed their policy after they saw the effect of putting the two girls together and now they always bed multiples together.

In comparison, people who are deprived of touch often try to fill the void they feel with such psychic painkillers as drugs, alcohol, food, cigarettes, caffeine, or sugar. They often immerse themselves in their work, their children, anti-social behaviors, or by adopting an "I don't care" attitude towards others. Their emotional distress and isolation may reveal themselves in such physical symptoms as migraines, hypertension, muscle spasms, ulcers, and insomnia.

Children are in even more need of physical touch and affection. A study shows that children, who have not been hugged enough, have a tendency to be violent and aggressive compared to those who receive hugs more often. In the 19th century, it was discovered that children were dying from a disease called *marasmus*, a Greek word that means "wasting away." This terrible calamity only stopped when Dr. Henry Chapin realized that the babies who died were the ones who had never been picked up and held. He found a simple solution to the problem: he brought in people to hold the babies, talk to them, and stroke them. The death rate for *marasmus* virtually dropped to zero.

When Jesus Christ walked on this earth as a human being, He, as the Creator of life and mankind, understood this vital need for touch. Everywhere He went, He touched and accepted touch from the people He came into contact with, regardless of their social, physical, religious, or economic backgrounds. To Him, they were all deserving of a loving, healing, human touch. He held and touched little children and infants, blessing them and making them feel special and loved (**Mark 10:30-34; Luke 18:15**). He healed blind men (**Matthew 9:27-30, 20:30-34; Mark 8:22-25; John 9:1-7**), a deaf-mute (**Mark 7:32-35**), lepers (**Matthew 8:2-3; Mark 1:40-42; Luke 5:13**), a crippled man (**John 5:1-9**), a woman

who had suffered from a bleeding disorder for twelve long years (**Matthew 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48**), made a crooked woman straight (**Luke 13:11-13**), cast out demons (**Mark 9:17-27**), and restored the ear of a servant of the high priest that Peter cut off in anger (**Luke 22:51**), all with a gentle touch of His hand. He took away fevers with a simple touch (**Matthew 8:14-15**) and comforted His disciples when they were afraid (**Matthew 17:1-8**). His touch even raised the dead, restoring them to their grieving loved ones (**Matthew 9:23-25; Luke 13:11-13**).

Jesus' touch was so powerful that people followed Him wherever He went and tried to touch even the hem of His garments in order to be healed or to receive comfort (**Matthew 14:36; Mark 3:10, 5:27-31, 6:56**). His kind and gentle touch was talked about far and wide.

We may not be able to literally heal people with our touch as Jesus did, but there is great power in our touch as well. We are Jesus' hands in the hurting world we live in today. Some people have walls built around them and have fears of being touched because of some form of abuse, possibly, that they have suffered. The one thing they desire the most is very possibly the one thing they turn away from, that is, to be touched in kindness. Our hands can reach out to those who are open, willing, and able to receive the therapy of the love we have to offer in the form of our hand on their shoulder, a gentle touch of their hand, a pat, or a soft brush across the cheek.

Touch is the most vital gift you can give to someone else, and it is such a simple act. If you're a person who likes their "personal space" and isn't used to giving or receiving positive, nurturing affection, let me share with you the story of a retired judge named Lee Shapiro. He was known as the "hugging judge," because of his propensity toward hugging. The bumper sticker on his car read, "Don't bug me! Hug me!" In fact, a few years ago, he created a "Hugger Kit" which he carried around with him. In it were 20-30 little red embroidered hearts with stickums on the back. Lee went up to people and offered them a little red heart in exchange for a hug.

One of the toughest challenges for him was when a friend of his who was a professional clown showed up and asked him to go with her to a home for the disabled. When they got there, they started passing out balloon hats, hearts, and hugs to the patients. Lee

was a little uncomfortable because he'd never done this before. It was hard, but as the hours went by, it got easier and easier.

Finally they came to the last ward, and the one with the most challenging patients. It was a grim place to be, but they began working their way around the room. They got to the last patient, Leonard, who was wearing a big white bib, on which he was drooling. The hugging judge looked at him, and said, "Let's go. There's no way we can get through to this person." But his friend wouldn't let him off the hook, saying, "C'mon, Lee. He's a fellow human being, too, isn't he?" With that, Lee took one of his little red hearts, put in on Leonard's bib, and leaned down and gave Leonard a big hug.

All of a sudden, Leonard began to squeal, and some of the other patients in the room began to clang things together. Lee turned to the staff asking for some sort of explanation, only to see that every doctor, nurse, and orderly was crying. "What's going on?" Lee asked. The head nurse responded, "This is the first time in 23 years we've ever seen Leonard smile."

Judge Shapiro learned first hand that you can't give a hug without receiving one in return. Jesus always touched the untouchables. We can too. Reach out and touch someone today!

— by Barbara de Parada
jrbr_parada@hotmail.com

Story...

Shepherds of Africa

His usually merry brown eyes were tense and troubled as we crouched African style across the cooking fire from each other. An earlier altercation between Ahmed (not his real name) and our senior guide had caused the change in Ahmed's mood.

I had been an unwitting accomplice to the quarrel, and was looking for a chance to restore things, so I asked Ahmed to help me start the fire and prepare the meal. It seemed now that he welcomed the opportunity to talk. Ahmed is the age of my son Michael Jr., and was beginning to feel a bit like a son to me in the five days that we had all been traveling and camping together. He is a strikingly handsome young man, as are so many of the Tamajaq tribe. At the request of our guide, he had come along on my last trip into the

interior (to Agadez and the Air Mountains in the Sahara Desert of central Niger). He was to be a helper guide and extra security. Both men had known each other as soldiers in the Tamajaq rebellion, only leaving their soldiering ways a few years earlier when a peace accord was drawn up with the government.

As soon as the fire was going and our freshly slaughtered goat was boiling in the water, Ahmed started to talk about why he had gotten angry and, why in fact, he thought he got angry in other situations as well. His first reasons were superficial but then he began to tell his personal story, showing surprising self-insight in the end. Ahmed's mother had died when he was five and the woman his father soon re-married was not a kind stepmother to the little boy. It wasn't too long before he was living with an older sister and his heart had begun a long journey in search of "home." Fast forward ten years and he found himself as a teenager joining the soldiers in the rebellion. War often brings atrocities and it was his lot one day to come upon the remains of a massacre, finding the dead bodies of several close friends.

At this point in his tale, Ahmed stopped for a bit. The desert sky above us was black with a magnificent spangling of stars. The firelight flickered on Ahmed's face as he poked a stick into the embers, his hair a wild curly frame for the light and shadows that moved over his features. Then he said, "Perhaps if I had been a man, I would not have been hurt so much by finding my friends shot and dead. But I was only a boy, and it put a terrible pain in my heart. Later I talked about it with a doctor from France who was in Agadez, and that helped a little, but I still have a great pain in my heart. I need to buy some stronger medicine for my pain."

My heart had begun to ache for Ahmed and now as he talked about buying stronger charms, I burst out, "Oh, Ahmed, you don't need more medicine. You need Annabi Isa (the Prophet Jesus). He is the only one who has the power to heal your wounded heart!" He stared at me with what? Disbelief? Hope? We had been doing all our talking in Hausa, a second language for both of us and a bit limiting to us for deep discussion, so I instructed him now, as a father does, to talk with our mutual Tamajaq Christian friend back in Niamey. They could talk in their heart language and Ahmed could find out the whole

story about Jesus and how He could save him from the bondage of his pain.

Close to an hour had passed. We had been adding our vegetables, seasonings, and oil to the pot along the way and now it was done. It was time to eat, to sit on our mats and cots and gain physical sustenance from the goat whose life had been given for us. The stew was good and Ahmed and our guide were again eating together amiably.

In just three short weeks, I would leave this harsh land of the Sahara, in Niger Republic. I wouldn't see Ahmed again for a long time. Later that night I lay on my cot and stared at the stars and the rising moon, the same stars and moon that have lit Ahmed's nights for these short years of his life, the same stars and moon that have lit the nights for the Tamajaq people for centuries here in this desert land, the same stars and moon that lit the nights for the Palestinian shepherds who first heard the good news from the angels. Were they as filled with disbelief and hope as Ahmed, that there really was One who had come who could bring true peace to all our hearts?

On that long ago night, the shepherds decided to go to the stable to see for themselves and they found it exactly as the angel had said. I pray that Ahmed, and all those with a wounded heart, will make the journey to Jesus to see for themselves. May their eyes be opened to the loving and only One with real healing power. Thanks for sharing and for caring.

— by Michael Porter, 03BP2991 Jericho,
Cotonou, Benin, Africa
goodseed1st@hotmail.com

Gem...

Be ye fishers of men. You catch them and He'll clean them.

A Bit of History...

Did You Know

As you walk up the steps to the Capitol Building which houses the U.S. Senate and the House of Delegates, you can see a row of the world's law givers near the top of the building. Each one is facing one in the middle who is facing forward with a full frontal view — it is Moses and the Ten Commandments!

As you enter the Supreme Court courtroom, the two huge oak doors have the Ten Commandments engraved on each lower portion of each door. As you sit inside the courtroom, you can see the wall right above where the Supreme Court judges sit, a display of the Ten Commandments!

There are Bible verses etched in stone all over the Federal Buildings and Monuments in Washington, D.C.

James Madison, the fourth president, known as “The Father of Our Constitution” made the following statement, “We have staked the whole of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, and to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.”

Patrick Henry, that patriot and Founding Father of our country said, “It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists but by Christians, not on religions but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Every session of Congress begins with a prayer by a paid preacher, whose salary has been paid by the taxpayers since 1777.

Fifty-two of the fifty-five founders of the Constitution were members of the established orthodox Churches in the colonies.

Thomas Jefferson worried that the Courts would overstep their authority, and instead of interpreting the law, would begin making law — an oligarchy — the rule of few over many.

The very first Supreme Court Justice, John Jay, said, “Americans should select and prefer Christians as their rulers.”

How then, have we gotten to the point that everything we have done for two hundred years in this country is now suddenly wrong and unconstitutional?

— author unknown

Article...

Stand Firm Ephesians 6:13-17

Stand

1. There is never a time that we can let down. 2. The Bible says that we are to be instant in season and out of season. 3. You must have a firm and total commitment to God and a Godly life. 4. Do all things consistent with the Christian lifestyle. 5. Trust in

the Lord for strength. 6. If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything.

Examples of Standing

1. David had an unshakable faith in God. Saul tried to kill him, and David hid in a cave. Even so he said: “My heart is fixed O God; my heart is fixed.” **Psalm 57:7.**

2. Joseph stood against moral compromise. “And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me,” **Genesis 39:7.** “And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out,” **verse 12.** Joseph followed the instruction Paul wrote later in **I Corinthians 6:18** telling us to flee from sexual immorality.

3. Peter and John stood against political forces (**Acts 4:18-19**). a. Peter and John had healed the lame man at the gate Beautiful in Jerusalem. b. The counsel called them and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. c. Peter and John replied, “...Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” **Acts 4:19-20.**

4. The three Hebrew Boys stood firm in the faith. a. Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura. “And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace,” **Daniel 3:11.** b. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied: “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” **Daniel 3:17-18.** c. They were thrown into the furnace, and God saved them. Nebuchadnezzar said, “...Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God,” **Daniel 3:28.**

— by Maurice K. Mickles

Gem...

Never give the devil a ride. He will always want to drive.

*Establishing the Children...***Life's Choices**

A group of kindergarten children visited the local police station and viewed the pictures of the ten most wanted men. One child pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photograph of the wanted person. The policeman guide replied that it was. The youngster inquired, "Well, why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?"

Children sure do ask a lot of good questions sometimes. The right answer to a good question is usually the information we can use to make a proper decision.

As adults, we have to make decisions every day. God designed human life that way. How much thought do we put into the choices we make? Do we help our children make Godly decisions?

Young people in God's Church today have many choices to make as well. It is at this time in their life that many young people are required to make life-directing, or life-changing decisions. The decisions they make at any given time could affect them the rest of their lives, for better or for worse. Sometimes they have to learn for themselves that, indeed, the stove is hot. We must help our children learn to make good choices in life.

Throughout the scriptures, we see people making choices. In **Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-6**, we read that Adam and Eve made a wrong choice in the Garden of Eden. This single decision brought immeasurable grief upon the rest of mankind. Sin and death were passed on to their descendants.

But why would a loving God put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden? Did He not know that if they made a poor choice, they could eat from it and have to die? Why would a loving God leave the serpent there to tempt them to eat from the forbidden tree? The reason is that it was by the "act of choosing," that they demonstrated in whom they believed. They chose to believe Satan rather than God.

God also commanded Israel to choose His ways in **Deuteronomy 30:15-20**: "...See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy

God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days. that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Do we see how our everyday decisions have very lasting consequences?

Young people sometimes think, "I can do whatever I want and still have God as a backup plan, or I am young and have plenty of time." How does anyone know that? How can we take the chance that we will live to be older and then decide to follow God?

Accidents happen. If we choose to follow our own ways, God is not obligated to protect us. We can't take our time here on earth for granted. God has your best interests in mind. His law is for our benefit. So then, we too must choose between God and Satan — good and evil. We must learn to put God first. We can't put anything or anyone ahead of what God wants us to do. We must choose if we will serve the one true God or not. Young people, please read **Proverbs 1:27-31**, because anyone that puts off serving God, must live with the consequences of that choice.

In **Joshua 24:14-15**, Joshua was inspired to write: "...Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Which God will we serve? The Egyptians worshipped frogs. Frogs? Even young children can figure out that if you can acci-

dentally step on someone's god and kill it, it probably isn't going to be able to protect anyone. Our heavenly Father is the Great God of the universe. He really can provide for us and protect us.

You might ask "If I make a wrong decision, can't God forgive me?" Sure, He will, if you repent. **Psalm 86:5** says: "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee." But, just because you repent and God forgives you, doesn't mean there won't be consequences.

Every action we take has a result. If a person makes the decision to steal, God can forgive them, but they still might go to jail. If a young girl has a baby without being married, she can be forgiven, but she still has that baby to raise for the rest of her life. We can be forgiven, but we are not always free of consequences. We should always make decisions very carefully.

The important decisions are the ones that will change your life. When we make right choices, we are able, through the indwelling of His Spirit, to build holy, righteous character. It is how we become like God. The correct choice is usually obvious if we will take enough time to consider both sides to a question,

Jesus was also a young person once. He also had to make decisions. He chose, every day, to obey His Father. If Jesus had made the choice to sin, we could never be in the Kingdom of God. The results of His decisions still affect us. Because He made the right decisions, it is now possible for us to enter into eternal life someday.

God is not asking us to do the impossible. God never tells us to do something that He doesn't do Himself. Jesus was tempted in all points as we are. He took things one decision at a time. The only way He was able to follow God was that He made every decision, every choice, every day according to what God wanted Him to do. Look at the result. He is with God right now. He has been given authority to come back and be the King of kings.

How could we ever choose to follow Satan? His choice to never obey God ever again will cause him to be put away forever. He will have no power, no kingdom, nothing. Which way sounds better? We all have choices. Which choice will you make?

— by Tim Hall and Wayne Holmes

Jokes...

What did Noah say as he was loading the Ark? "Now I herd everything."

Why did the people on the ark think the horses were pessimistic? They kept saying neigh.

What animal could Noah not trust? The cheetah.

What kind of lights did Noah have on the ark? Flood lights.

What did God say when Noah told him he wanted to build the ark out of bricks? "No, Noah — go for wood."

Who was the best financier in the Bible? Noah. He floated his stock while the whole world was in liquidation.

— by Anonymous

Poem...

There's a Reason

For every pain that we must bear,
For every burden, every care,
There's a reason.

For every grief that bows the head,
For every teardrop that is shed,
There's a reason.

For every hurt, for every plight,
For every lonely pain-racked night,
There's a reason.

But if we trust God as we should,
It will all work out for our good.
He knows the reason.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28.

— author unknown

Gem...

I am only one. But still, I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.

— by Edward Everett Hale

THE OLD TESTAMENT

- GENESIS
- EXODUS
- LEVITICUS
- NUMBERS
- DEUTERONOMY
- JOSUUAH
- JUDGES
- RUTH
- SAMUEL 1 & 2
- KINGS 1 & 2
- CHRONICLES 1 & 2
- EZRA
- NEHEMIAH
- ESTHER
- JOB
- PSALMS
- PROVERBS
- ECCLESIASTES

- BOOK OF SOLOMON
- ISAIAH
- JEREMIAH
- AMENAGEMENTS
- ZEKIEL
- DANIEL
- HOSEA
- JOEL
- MALACHI
- HAGGAI
- ZECHARIAH
- MALACHI
- MATTHEW
- MARK
- LUKE
- JOHN
- ACTS
- ROMANS
- CORINTHIANS 1 & 2
- GALATIANS
- EPHESIANS
- COLLOSSIANS
- HEBREWS
- JAMES
- PETER 1 & 2
- JUDAS
- REVELATION

Color the words "The Old Testament". Write the missing letter from each Book of the Old Testament in the box provided.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Complete the list of New Testament Books.

MATTHEW

JOHN

ACTS

CORINTHIANS

EPHESIANS

PHILIPPIANS

COLOSSIANS

THESSALONIANS 1 & 2

PHILEMON

HEBREWS

JOHN 1, 2 & 3

REVELATION

ROMANS — MARK — GALATIANS — LUKE — TITUS — JAMES — TIMOTHY — JUDE — PETER

Article...

God and Sorcery

I placed this scripture in RED letters on the Master's Table Web site "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons," **I Corinthians 10:21** NKJ. You might want to read the article "The Lord's Table."

This world is fast moving towards the ancient occult practice of sorcery. Even Christians today fail to see the importance of shunning this evil and all its ways. The truth is that we can't afford to allow it in our personal lives even if it looks innocent. We can't allow the practice of sorcery in our children's lives just because it is presented as a fun educational tool in schools.

Harry Potter is the latest trend hitting our world today, and it is what I call a satanic Trojan Horse. Through the *Harry Potter* series, the ancient occult practice of sorcery is being introduced in almost every public school in America. The largest publisher of children's books in the world is supplying *Harry Potter* materials to millions of schoolchildren. Scholastic Inc. is using its unrivaled position in the educational system to flood classrooms and libraries with wizardry, repackaged as "children's fantasy literature." Teachers are encouraged to read the *Harry Potter* books aloud in class, and millions of children are being desensitized to the dangers of the occult spirit world.

Through this new *Harry Potter* trend, people are learning the tools of the trade, which are: visualization, mind power, levitation, and astro-projection. All Harry's teachers tutor their students in the dark arts of sorcery, divination, fortune telling, astrology, potion mixing, spell weaving, and curse casting. This teaching says that drinking dead animal blood gives power, and a satanic human sacrifice of a virgin (one that is innocent) brings new life. It teaches that demon possession is not spiritual suicide, and that passing through fire, conversing with the dark spirit world of the dead is acceptable.

The plan here, my friend, is to let your children GROW UP with Harry. By the time Harry has grown into a full fledged warlock (a male witch), your child will be a teen or older, and will look at Harry as a childhood friend. During these years when your child is very malleable, he/she will have been exposed to

ALL the teachings of sorcery, and witchcraft. If Christians continue with this attitude of accepting magic, and sorcery with all its trappings, it will not be long before Churches will accept the so-called white witchcraft of Wicca.

Does this align with the teachings of God, and the true Church of God? Can we allow any teachings of sorcery, and witchcraft to be connected in our lives? Do the terms God and Sorcery fit together?

— by Timothy Youngblood

For the complete article, go to:

www.masters-table.org/warning/sorcery.htm

Poem...

In Loving Memory

You never said "I'm leaving." You never said "goodbye."

You were gone before we knew it, and only God knew why.

A million times we needed you, a million times we cried.

If love alone could have saved you, you never would have died.

In life we loved you dearly, in death we love you still.

In our hearts you hold a place that no one could ever fill.

It broke our hearts to lose you, but you didn't go alone.

For part of us went with you, when God took your spirit home.

— by author unknown

Penned from Prison...

Growing Faith of One Called Out

As a disciple, not yet sanctified by God, I dwell on the things of God. Each day that I meditate on God, my faith grows and becomes stronger.

I have heard many talk of faith and believe they understand and know what faith is, and I find their faith is good. But can it be stronger? What kind of faith is required to be like the faith of Christ?

In the passing years, I have found a wonderful example of great faith in God's Word that I use to measure my faith, and to give to others that are in the world. Perhaps the glorious light might shine on them; it is that of Elijah's in **II Kings 2:11**.

Now faith is described by Paul: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the

evidence of things not seen," **Hebrews 11:1**. It is by faith that we know that He is.

Now consider Elijah's faith. Imagine a hurricane or a storm of great force, perhaps even a tornado, and it's coming straight at you. Quick, what would you do? Well, I have considered this, and time after time, I find God uses this to strengthen my faith in Him. I, like you, know that for us to be found worthy to escape all these things, our faith is going to have to be strong, as strong, or stronger, than Elijah's.

Do you have the kind of faith it takes to believe that God might be sending that tornado for you? To the world, that is foolishness, even thought to be crazy. However, for one called of God, this should be on our minds daily.

Yes! I know that this is a tough way to measure your faith, but then God is very serious about our calling, and you should be also. So, the next time (hour) that you see dark clouds forming on the horizon, the lightning striking, and the thunder sounding so loud, think of your faith and measure it. I believe that if we look at our storms in this light, faith has only one way to go. It will grow in the One we look to return any day now. To "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered for all to the Saints" is our common goal. Don't let our adversary steal that storm God has sent to aid the growth of our faith. Meditate on your faith, and let it grow.

— by Billy C. Blanton #750531 Eastham
PO Box 16, Lovelady, TX 75851

Church News...

New Fellowship in Arkansas

In Harrison, Arkansas on January 10, there was a new fellowship meeting in a senior citizen center which is coordinated by a gentleman name Johnny Orr. They had two families meeting on this day.

Mr. Johnny Orr and his wife have been long time members of the Church of God. They have been loyal to the Faith and continue in the Truth.

Just recently, he got in contact with another family and they decided to meet in the senior citizen center in Harrison, and distribute the booklets printed by Mr. Justus of the Church of God, Sabbath Day, Springdale, Arkansas.

These senior citizens there found the booklets very interesting and they wanted to hear more of the Truth from God's Word. So Johnny Orr decided that his first meeting was going to be January 10.

As of January 11, 2004, the new fellowship is called Church of God, Sabbath Day in honor of the assistance that Mr. Justus and his group have provided for this small fellowship. The two groups will be working closely together. They are just setting up the E-mail and Web page, but if you wish to attend or contact this group, you are welcome to contact me at photocrazy88@cox.net and I will pass on the information. I plan to visit them and will relate more to you later.

— by Doyle J. Carter

Church News...

FOT Anniversary...



Hugh and Trini Ethridge celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary during the Feast of Tabernacles in Mountain View, AR. They are members of the Mountain View congregation. The brethren at the Feast surprised them during the Talent/Fun Show evening with an anniversary cake, made from towels, by Charlene Waller.

True Tales to Live By...

A Good Word

I'm sure that most of my readers have read the story of the lion trainer in a show at the Las Vegas gambling casino that attacked his trainer and almost killed him. The TV showed a picture of the trainer standing by his tiger with his arm around him showing the kind of affection for him as if he were his pet cat.

But suddenly that gentle and loving tiger, for some unexplainable reason, turned and

attacked his trainer, grabbed him by the neck as jungle lions do when attacking their victim, and dragged him across the floor barely missing his jugular vein, and seriously injuring him.

You would think that the trainer would have no more love for that tiger, but the newspaper reported that, from his hospital bed, the trainer was to have said: "Please don't do anything to my tiger!"

This unusual happening brings to mind the sad reports we read in the newspaper about how half of the marriages in our country end in divorce. There are many reasons why this is true. However, perhaps one reason so many marriages end in divorce is that many husbands use abusive language to their wives and the wives in turn snap back at the husband.

It may seem strange to compare some marriages to that story of a long time friendly tiger that suddenly turns on his loving master and almost ruins his life.

It is sad to realize that many marriages begin with a loving relationship between the bride and groom, but after a few months, it develops into bitter words, which eventually end in divorce. On the other hand, there are many marriages which result in a tender love between a husband and a wife which results in their living happily together for fifty years or more and when one of them dies, their partner is broken hearted at the loss of their marriage partner.

I have a small booklet entitled "Our Daily Bread." I use it every night in my devotions. It contains a story which I think is appropriate to what I have written about — a man whose career and, possibly his life, was ruined by his long time gentle tiger. Marriages that seem loving at the start can be destroyed by a bad temper and bitter words.

Speak That Word

In Charles Dickens' novel, "David Copperfield," young David returns from a happy visit with friends to find his widowed mother remarried to Edward Murdstone, a harsh and domineering man. Mr. Murdstone and his permanently visiting sister Jane set out to conquer David's spirit through cruel punishment and intimidation. Early in the process, David describes his feelings: "I might have been improved for my whole life. I might have been made another creature... by a kind word."

Copperfield desired so much to hear a word of encouragement, understanding, and

reassurance, that he was still welcome at home. He was sure that any act of kindness would help him respect and obey Mr. Murdstone. However, to his dismay, he never received any words of encouragement.

The tragedy of not speaking a kind word to a fearful and worried heart is as old as time. Wise King Solomon wrote: "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is health," **Proverbs 12:18.**

"In our personal and family relationships, are we trying to force others to do what we want, or are we seeking to lead by example and encouragement? A sharp tongue leaves a scar, while a helpful word heals the heart." (David McCasland).

"I long to have a Caring heart, to show God's love to those in need; so help me, Lord, to share a part of all I have through word and deed." (Hess)

— by Skip Westphal

Of Interest...

Courage

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself. "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along." You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

— by Eleanor Roosevelt

Book Review...

The History and Future of Israelite America

by Walt Baucum

This book reveals the truth of our ancient past, our rich inheritance, and our brilliant future. It traces our people from the great Sumerian civilization, through the Israelite empires of Phoenicia, Carthage, Greece, Celtica, and others, and growth into today's modern nations of West Europe, Scandinavia, Great Britain, and the United States. It shows why Israelite America is ours by right of settlement, and why our government bought into the Smithsonian Institution's report that ascribed Asians as the "native" Americans; how the English language can be traced to Hebrew, and, therefore, is the oldest language

on earth; and how “ostrichologists” have buried their heads in the sand and refused to tell us the truth of our past. Finally, it tells why our Israelite peoples have been a light to the nations of the world and what is in store for us in the future.

Highlights

- Our English-speaking peoples can be traced directly to the Israelite Tribes;
- These Tribes can be traced back to Shem and the Sumerian Civilization;
- Our Israelite forebears have been coming to America for thousands of years;
- America is our land by right of settlement, exploitation, and a Covenant Promise;
- The first Asians crossing the Bering land bridge did not stop in North America but continued to South and Central America;
- The future of America will be even more brilliant than its past, after the Time of Trouble ends.

History and Future of Israelite America

Today, after two hundred years of independence, growth, and wealth, America still struggles with its own self-identity. Our nation has all the earmarks of a millennia-old Covenant Promise to Father Abraham — passed down through his descendants — of land, people, and national greatness.

Ancient inscriptions, being discovered almost daily on buried temples, gravestones, and rock cliffs speak of Old World visitations to this land by ancient Celts, Basques, Libyans, Phoenicians, Arabs, and Egyptians. Some of these languages date from 3,000 years ago, or earlier. Yet we still teach our schoolchildren that Columbus discovered America and our history goes back only 500 years.

Preview

“Sumerians [were] a worldwide empire, with their influence found in many nations on the earth — the ancient Hebrew-Israelites were descended from Shem, from whom came the Sumerians, founders of early civilization — these Israelites carried on the Sumerian’s cultural and empire-building traditions, down through, and by right of, the Covenant Promise to Abraham, establishing empires and spreading the same culture to all corners of the globe.

“Many of the Phoenicians, Greeks, Libyans, Celtiberians, European Celts, and Scan-

dinavian Norsemen who settled at various times in America were Israelites. That America is not only our land today, but also that we have a prior, more ancient claim to it by our Sumerian forebears, has become overwhelmingly evident by modern research.

“Our people came to this land as rulers, exploiters, and colonizers before Columbus. And they continued to come after Columbus as so-called New World colonists. America is our land by right of the Covenant Promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [Israel]. This is our past, as mapped out by both Biblical and secular history. It is our destiny as one of the two ‘birthright’ nations to preserve this ‘original’ knowledge.

“The aim of all learning should be to arrive at the truth, but once a paradigm has been established and bought into, such as ‘Columbus discovered America,’ the students can do little or nothing but agree with what their professors tell them. Thus the error is perpetuated with each successive generation.

“America is Israelite land, as proved by history, archaeology, serology, Amerindian tribal tradition, epigraphy, and, most of all, by inheritance and settlement. That the English-speaking people are Israelites seems evident in light of much research. We are the modern heirs of this land.

“State lines and borders in America did not exist in ancient times. That so much evidence did exist, though, of Israelites in the present-day states of Iowa, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, New Mexico, California, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, West Virginia, Ohio, Florida, Rhode Island, Texas, Indiana, Minnesota, Colorado, Arizona, and others should be proof absolute that America is Israelite land.

“When all the available evidence is seriously weighed and studied, it should be obvious that The United States of America is Israelite land. The ‘Covenant People’ were empire builders who spread out into different parts of the world, settling in parts of Africa and Asia, Italy, Ireland, the State of Israel, the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, Holland, Belgium, Canada, the U.S.A., Finland, Switzerland [Helvetia], Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and France.”

To order, go to www.1stbooks.com and ask for *The History and Future of Israelite America*, by Walter Baucum. Price per book is \$15.50 plus \$5.00 shipping. Or buy directly from Walt for \$15.00 per book (includes

shipping) at 1110 Washington St., Gooding, ID 83330 [wwbaucum@aol.com].

— by Craig White

Church News...

Living Church of God News

Adrian Kaefer reports on LCG's activities in Germany: "In 2003 the Web site www.weltvonmorgen.org had a total of 4,449 booklet downloads (+ 92.2% compared to 2002), 11,586 article downloads (+ 109.4% compared to 2002), and 1,302 Bible Study Course lesson downloads (+ 76.4% compared to 2002). Additionally, in 2003, the following printed publications were sent out by mail: 269 booklets (+ 88.1% compared to 2002), 374 articles for the entire year (+ 77.3% compared to 2002), and sixty Bible Study Course lessons (+ 200% compared to 2002).

In total, the German Web site has now distributed 29,947 publications (95% via Internet) since its beginning in August 2000 — three and one-half years ago. Of these, more than half were distributed this year alone (+ 101.3% compared to 2002). This was without placing any advertising in a magazine or newspaper."

The Jan-Feb 2004 edition of LCG's *Tomorrow's World* lists 155 television and sixteen radio stations carrying LCG's broadcast. *Tomorrow's World* is broadcast in fourteen countries, with six different presenters, and in five languages. TV station 156, C31 in Adelaide, Australia is scheduled to begin in February 2004 on Sundays at 9:00 A.M.

— submitted by Robert Thiel

Service Feature...

LifeNets International, Inc.

Thanks to people like you, the mission and spirit of LifeNets works! This past year was particularly exciting, as we watched our focus manifest new achievements in ways unprecedented.

From the outset of our organization, LifeNets officials determined not to try to "re-invent the humanitarian wheel." We wanted to identify places and situations where we could be of unique assistance, but also look for ways to extend existing or complementary aid efforts wherever possible. Part of that

focus was, and remains, on helping achieve self-sufficiency among those we serve. Gaining such a position not only relieves suffering and major need; it also introduces and fosters a new mindset of life, breaking the toxic outlook and expectation of unrelenting mental and physical poverty.

Our experience has shown that the happy and exciting consequence of achieving self-sufficiency often produces a strong desire in those who have received LifeNets aid to pass on their gift of self-sufficiency to others!

Here's proof: Thanks to people like you, LifeNets was able to ship six tons of food to starving people in Malawi, Africa. One of the recipients was our Chizeni Clinic in Balaka. When the food arrived, they could have hoarded the excess food, which might have been a typical and expected response among those recently facing starvation. Instead, the food was shared freely and many orphans were rescued from starvation!

The unintended happy result was that the Clinic became even more of a positive influence on the region.

Our efforts to replace cattle, lost through disease and drought in Zambia, Africa, has touched the lives of others beyond the original recipients.

A few weeks ago, a pair of newborn calves from our first replacements, was given free-of-charge to a needy neighbor in Zambia. The program works!

LifeNets International, Inc., Victor Kubik, 3707 Turfway Court, PO Box 88165, Indianapolis, IN 46208; phone: 888-821-0095, fax: 707-202-3313, info@lifenets.org.

Health...

Food Alerts

* Olive Garden uses pork in almost everything, without saying so on their menu. In fact, the Pasta e Fagoli soup, while saying it is made with beef, is made with pork!

The following is quoted on their Web site: "Does Olive Garden use pork in its recipes? Pork is primarily used as a flavor enhancer and traditionally is a common ingredient in Italian cooking. Pork is included in our meat sauce.

With some advance notice, our managers would be happy to accommodate your diet by specially making a ground beef meat sauce to accompany your choice of pasta."

www.olivegarden.com/ouropportunities/ourcompany/faq.asp#recipes

* Jennie-O: Adds pork to their Turkey bacon! Those “natural” flavorings are pork. At this point, it looks like all their packages now state that real bacon (bits) is included for flavoring.

* HoneySuckle White: Their Turkey Sausages are in natural pork casings (intestines) with the exception of the small breakfast sausages (they are in collagen [beef] casings).

Special Fourth Anniversary

On Sabbath of January 10, 2004, the Church of God Tulsa Fellowship, Tulsa, OK, honored the fourth anniversary of Mike Smith’s successful heart surgery. There was a potluck after services with 38 people in attendance from Tulsa, along with special guests from Texas.

David Hope of the Tulsa Church of God had an interactive Bible study on Bible Heroes which involved the children. Some of the heroes mentioned were Daniel, David, and many others.

Then, for the second sermon, Ray Kurr spoke on how to build strong friendship using many examples from personal experiences and from the Bible.

The purpose was to help us to build trust with others and spend quality time with your friends.

After services, the Church surprised Mike with a cake. Everyone rejoiced in God’s healing power shown through Mike’s recovery.

— by Doyle J. Carter

Of Interest...

The Sense of a Goose

Next fall, when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in “V” formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in “V” formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going much more quickly and easily, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone — and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those people who are headed in the same way we are.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or with geese flying south.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

What messages do we give when we honk from behind?

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies; and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation, to catch up with their group.

If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.

— by author unknown

Would You Believe...

Ladies wore corsets which would lace up in the front. A tightly tied lace was worn by a proper and dignified lady as in “straight laced.”

Opinion/Observation...

Seventy Years Spreading the Gospel

Given the supposed seventieth anniversary this month of the Church of God utilizing radio to preach the gospel, I offer the following thoughts. My upcoming forty-first birthday on January 15th jogged thoughts about Church of God history that I have pondered since attending Garner Ted Armstrong’s funeral four months ago.

January, 2004 is thought to be the seventieth anniversary of when Herbert Armstrong began to utilize mass-media to preach the gospel. While it is true this month began his first use of a dedicated half-hour time slot on radio to preach the gospel, it was not the

actual beginning of using mass-media evangelistic techniques. The truth may have far more profound implications than folks may realize.

In HWA's biography, Volume 1, pages 529-530, in the chapter titled "*The World Tomorrow Broadcast Begins*," the section HWA himself entitled "The First Broadcast," he writes: "In September — very soon after rejecting a salary and being controlled and muzzled by MEN, the living Christ began opening doors for the mass-proclaiming of His Gospel."

The year he is talking about is 1933. According to HWA, the "real" beginning, the first TRUE open door to preach the gospel occurred in September 1933.

It is interesting to note that HWA was not actively seeking to use such mass-evangelism media up to this time. HWA quickly took advantage of it (pg. 530) when an unnamed person told him about a radio opportunity at station KORE in Eugene, Oregon, which I find it fascinating that it is EXACTLY seventy years, to the month, from the time of the FIRST opportunity unexpectedly presented to the Church for mass evangelism to the death of the very LAST man (GTA) in the Church to still somewhat effectively use television, arguably the most powerful evangelistic tool of his generation.

Now, I am not saying others have had NO fruit from such tools. The fact remains, however, that the heyday of TV/radio/magazine evangelism is past — period.

Church cheerleaders notwithstanding, most groups today using these "Big Three" techniques far more promote station numbers and bulked-up public access TV listings than responses and effective use of money God has given them.

In spite of foibles, flaws, and sometimes foolishness, I have no doubt HWA and GTA were specially gifted of God to take full advantage of the most powerful mass evangelism tools of their generation. While there are many talented brethren in the Church, I have yet to find, in the three hundred plus Church of God groups, a person like-gifted as they were that is effectively reaching the world with the gospel with the same tools they used.

On an interesting note, Bullinger's *Number in Scripture* book states that the number seventy in scripture, "...signifies perfect spiritual order carried out with all spiritual

power and significance. Both spirit and order are greatly emphasized."

This certainly is food for thought given the current state of the greater Church of God.

Of course, now and for the future the new, growing, and most powerful mass-evangelism tool of this generation is the Internet.

What we are seeing may be a true "shifting of gears" in the Church, not the END of the Church's powerful preaching of the gospel.

This may be the line that defines the end of God's evangelism plan using mostly the previous generation's tools and his quickening pace to more powerfully utilize the awesome new "next generation" mass-evangelism techniques and tools within his Church. The next several years in the Church should prove most interesting.

— by Alan Ruth
webmaster@Biblestudy.org

Article...

The Worst of All Fears

People hold many fears in their minds. Dozens of phobias are listed in the diagnostic books on psychopathology. People can be anxious about any number of situations.

These fears and anxieties are often self-inhibiting and self-destructive. When they get into the areas of delusional paranoia they can be destructive to others as well.

But of all the fears, which one would you say is the greatest fear of all? What fear is most likely to cause us to deny Christ, be untrue to ourselves, and dishonest with others?

Proverbs 29:25 tells us: "...the fear of man bringeth a snare." It is a trap, a pit into which many have fallen. If you are honest with yourself, you can think of many times in your life when you compromised yourself out of fear of what others would think.

One of the most anxiety provoking situations is speaking in front of a crowd. We fear what others will think, and how they will judge us.

Abraham asked Sarah to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister not his wife for fear they would kill him (**Genesis 12:12**). He told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister out of fear. Abimelech almost committed adultery as a result and God had to stop him. Abraham admitted it was out of fear that he did it (**Genesis 20:11**).

Many Pharisees believed on Jesus but were afraid of what others would think and therefore would not confess Him openly (**John 12:42-43**). How many people have denied God's truth because of the fear of friends and family?

Peter was the one who made the great confession about Jesus and professed that he would never forsake Him. Yet, because he feared humans, he denied even knowing Jesus three times. He went as far as to take an oath and curse, saying he did not know the man. (**Matthew 26:69-74**).

Pilate knew Jesus was innocent but sent Him to be crucified anyway when the Jews threatened to report him to Caesar. They said that any man who makes himself a king is no friend of Caesar. Pilate feared for his status among other Romans (**John 19:12-13**).

Peter was the first one to eat with Gentiles in their homes but, because he feared the other Jews, he backed away from his integrity. These Jews, who came from Jerusalem, totally intimidated Peter, the other apostles, and even Barnabas! While at the Gentiles' table they subtly got up and went over to be with the Jews. All the other Jews

did likewise including Barnabas!

Paul was the only one who did not change his behavior for fear of man. Paul had to take a courageous stand and rebuke Peter to his face in front of them all (**Galatians 2:11-13**). These are some of the Bible examples of how the fear of humans can trap us.

Jesus told us not to be afraid of men who can only kill the body but be afraid of God who can kill both body and spirit in gehenna (**Luke 12:4-5**).

"And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered Me, nor laid it to thy heart? Have not I held My peace even of old, and thou fearest Me not?" **Isaiah 57:11**.

We are told, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man," **Psalms 118:8**. And again, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever," **Psalms 125:1**. The more we trust and fear God the less we tend to fear humans! Because the fear of humans is a trap.

— by Dr. David Antion, Guardian Ministries
PO Box 50734
Pasadena, CA 91115
drdaveca@earthlink.net