

Church of God News

Positive News of the Churches of God

March 2005, No. 22

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Article...

The Tsunami and the Christian

“It’s the end of the world.” “God is wreaking His punishment on sinning mankind.” “Where was God?” “What was He thinking?” “Be warned!”

The awesome catastrophe around the Indian Ocean has given many who profess belief in a deity — including the leading Anglican, the Archbishop of Canterbury — pause for thought. Would a loving God allow this? Unbelievers scoff at Christian attempts to justify.

Some Church leaders insist that this was divine punishment on those nations, which are unbelievers, or that it was a warning of worse to come. That we are now in the “end-time,” and will soon see the end of civilization as we know it may be true.

- Great Tribulation.

We have, however, been here before — many times. (Though that doesn’t negate the absolute fact that there will come an end. And an end that will be even more horrific as human evil soars to a crescendo.)

In recent history, the rise in the 1930s of the pagan Hitlerian murder squads, and their worldwide effect was seen by some as the beginning of the “Great Tribulation.” The 60s “silent spring” warnings, race riots, etc., stoked the same response, with expectations of mayhem by 1972.

- Consequences.

In His understanding of fallen human nature, and the depths to which it descends, the Creator has slapped a time limit on our occupation of His beautiful planet. Few understand the shocking effects of our rejection of God’s original guidance. That rejection is known as “sin.” Our sin is no laughing matter, nothing at which to poke fun, for its effects spill over into the physical realm, affecting even the very core and depths of the physical Earth.

Every transgression has an effect. Sin has consequences. On the personal level, seemingly minor transgression injures. Lie, for example, and it leaves its mark on the neural system, and if repeated, builds a negative pattern of behavior. Indulge in drugs — e.g. alcohol, tobacco, heroin — and you can die. Idolatry, theft, adultery, and sexual perversion all have physical, emotional, and mental consequences. Allow crime to flourish in an area, and it takes root, leads to social decay, and even to widespread violence and murder.

Sometimes a consequence is small, sometimes personally catastrophic

Anyway, we all have to go. There’s no way out but by death, for everyone. And that, too, results from sin. God, in the beginning, looked at His precious human creation and said in effect: “Go your own way and you and all your progeny will no longer live for ever.” We did, and we die. But when national sin and world sin escalates, a point is reached at which there is a violent physical response in the material world around us.

Man is built to flourish when we follow the instruction manual — God’s guidance in His revelation, His Word. Should we be surprised then, when “the machinery” breaks down?

- Divine Wrath?

These consequences, however, are not inflicted on us by a vindictive and angry deity. More often than not, the Creator intervenes to prevent catastrophe. Break the “law of life” and the consequences will follow as surely as day follows night. The Flood of some five thousand years ago is an example.

The very crust of Earth was ripped apart,

the atmosphere disturbed as the direct consequence of sin. The effects, the “violence of nature,” are with us to this day in the present configuration of Earth’s physical geography.

And yes — the innocent and the ignorant suffer; for we are all of one. We who survive weep with them and for them. God is there, here, in the storm, the earthquake, and the floods. Christ comes alongside to comfort and support, even till death. But we still experience the terrible effect of human sin, our own and that of others.

- Time to Change.

It doesn’t always have to be like this. Personally, nationally, worldwide, we can turn from our sin. God doesn’t want anyone to perish. As computer geeks will say when advice is sought for another crash: “RTM — read the manual!” Read — and follow — the “Scriptures of truth.”

- The door is still open.

Those terrible waves may indeed be a warning to everyone. But the world’s overwhelming generous charitable response says there is still hope, still a glimmer of compassion.

Sadly, the prophetic voice of Scripture has foreseen that mankind in general will, by the “time of the end,” have “hardened his heart.”

— by James McBride

Guest Editorial...

Without Natural Affection

I had just purchased a new Bible, the Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, edited by Spiros Zodhiates. As I was reading **II Timothy 3:3**, I noticed a footnote pertaining to the phrase “without natural affection” in **verse 3**. According to that footnote, the Greek word, translated into English as “without natural affection,” is derived from one of four Greek words, which can be translated into English as love. Since I had always heard that there are three Greek words for love, I decided to give this a hard look, and find out about this fourth Greek word for love.

According to the above-mentioned footnote, the Greek word, *astorgos* (Strong’s #394), is the word translated into the English phrase, “without natural affection.” *Astorgos*, is composed of the Greek negative prefix, *a* (not, or without) plus the root, *storge*, (pronounced “store-gay”), which according to the footnote, means “love within the family members.” So, in **II Timothy 3:3**, according

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“For the edifying of the body of Christ,”

Ephesians 4:12.

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to the footnote, the phrase “without natural affection” could be translated, “without familial love,” or “without love among family members.”

What had started out as an academic exercise to find out how many Greek words can be translated into the English word “love” became a rebuke directed at me personally, as I thought of the countless mistakes that I have made in dealings with my family. After an honest, though painful, assessment, those mistakes that I made with my family were made because of a basic lack of love for members of my family, and ultimately, a lack

of love for my Creator.

While pondering the ramifications of lacking a love for family members, I thought about one family member bringing another to a civil court in a lawsuit. A famous singer, having been shot and killed by his father about twenty years ago, came to mind. Then I thought about kids who have approached me, though I am a complete stranger. I found the parents, and told them that their child had approached me. The parents had never seen me before. Their reaction wasn't, "Oh, what was my child doing approaching a stranger?" Their reaction is, far too often, "Oh, I hope my kid wasn't bothering you." No, the child wasn't bothering me. Probably, the child approached me, a complete stranger, because the child was considered a "bother" to the parents. Why were those parents not alarmed when their child, alone, approached an unknown person? Could it be due to lack of love among family members?

I once lived close to a divorced woman with four kids. Those kids gave me a bit of attention. The mother didn't seem to mind. But the kids told their daddy about me when they were with him. He became alarmed, thought that I may be a pedophile, and wanted to have a background check done on me. Sadly, he never gave his kids any appreciable amount of quality time. There was always a baseball game to watch, or Daddy was tired after a hard day at work, or kids were just so full of nonsense. Had *astorgos*, a lack of love among family members, which had already split the husband and wife of this family, also made it easy for these children to come to me for attention because of inattention from the parents?

It is often said, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." In being honest with myself, I have had to admit that I am part of the problem of there being, in this society, a lack of love among family members. And that lack of love among family members, if the above-mentioned footnote in the Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible is correct, is part of what indicates "perilous times" mentioned in **II Timothy 3:1**. I am part of what is bringing on "perilous times." I am not part of the solution, but part of the problem.

I appreciate the work of Dr. Zodhiates. I appreciate his having taken a phrase, which could be deemed general, and perhaps even vague, and "brought it home" in an applicable, (though, in my case, stinging) way. I

hope and pray that I remember **II Timothy 3:3** in all future dealings with my family.

— by Jimmie Parr
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Health...

Symptoms of a Stroke

Symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness can spell disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- Ask the individual to smile.
- Ask him or her to raise both arms.
- Ask the person to speak a simple sentence.

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

Another sign to look for is that the victim feels as if the hair on the back of the head is being pulled. After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness, and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting (February 2003). Widespread use of this test could result in a prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent possible brain damage.

See:

<http://www.strokeconference.org/portal/strokeconference/sc/release22003>.

Church News...

CEM Family Retreat Memorial Day Weekend 2005

Family reunions, get-togethers, and retreats are important for bonding, renewing acquaintances, making memories, and growing in God's love. What better place is there to do this than in the heart of the beautiful Ozark Mountains at the Bel Arco Resort? What better time than the Memorial Day Weekend 2005?

Bel Arco Resort is nestled in the hills overlooking the Bull Shoals Lake. Young and old alike will have plenty to do. If you don't bring your own boat, wave runners, pontoons, ski boats, and fishing boats can be rented.

Maybe you would prefer to scuba dive in the Bull Shoals Lake, or play 18 holes of golf at the River Cliff on the White River just five minutes away. Among other interesting things to do are day hiking or a visit to a quaint Ozark museum only minutes away.

You don't have to leave the Bel Arco's 25 acre resort to find a swimming pool, tennis courts, and a playground for the kids with swings and a climbing gym.

Bel Arco is a pet-friendly resort. So you can bring your pooch along. Rooms with two queen size beds are only \$69 a night. You can share a kitchen that's between your room and the room next to you for only \$5 per night.

There's a great campsite overlooking the White River only minutes away. Tent campsites are also available in the area. There's a restaurant right on the Bel Arco Resort and a couple of others just minutes away. If you're looking for good, reasonably priced food in a nostalgic, old fashioned, soda fountain atmosphere, head for Sodies about 11 miles away in Flippin. Head for Gaston's if you want a first class meal overlooking the White River while you watch the humming birds feed.

CEM is in the process of putting together a full menu of seminars, workshops, sermons, and youth classes for this retreat. Speakers, including Ronald L. Dart, will be there fully prepared to enlighten, inspire, and delight you with God's Word. Every effort is being made to ensure that you and your family will have a relaxing weekend filled with spiritual renewal, fellowship, fun, and encouragement. This is truly the best of both worlds — a family retreat where we can all be together to learn more about our heavenly Father.

We're planning a good old family reunion night starting about 7 p.m. Friday, May 27. CEM will provide snacks for you after your long trip there. We just want to say "Howdy" and welcome! Mr. Dart will give a sermon on the Sabbath, and there will be seminars and classes Sabbath, Sunday, and Monday morning. You can attend as much or as little as you would like. So mark your calendar for the evening of May 27th through the morning of May 30th, and call Bel Arco toll-free today at 866-235-2726 to reserve your room. Tell them you're with the CEM group. Watch for additional information later.

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Poem...

Love

There is no difficulty that enough love will
not conquer,
No disease that enough love will not heal,
No door that enough love will not open,
No gulf that enough love will not bridge,
No wall that enough love will not throw
down,
No sin that enough love will not redeem.
It makes no difference how deeply seeded
may be the trouble,
How hopeless the outlook,
How muddled the tangle,
How great the mistake.
A sufficient realization of love will
dissolve it all.
If only you could love enough,
You would be the happiest, the most
powerful being in the world.

— by Emmett Fox

Penned from Prison...

This Sore Trial

"We need to remember the very positive outcome of our trials — that trials are tools to remove the imperfections and flaws in our character that would otherwise keep us out of the Kingdom of God."

Those words were given by one of God's elect.

It is so easy to fall prey to the evil one, and even easier if we lose sight of our invitation.

Anyone that God invites begins to learn about three words that are synonymous to each other — adversary, adverse, and adversity. Basically, if something, or someone is one of those three, they are against you.

Satan is ascribed the name of adversary; and everything he does is against what God does.

Have you ever tried to fly a kite? Well, without the wind blowing against the kite, the kite cannot obtain the desired result.

We have been invited at a time, and for such a great reward. The adversary (or adverse actions) is necessary for the perfecting of those set apart. Sadly, there are those of us that are losing sight of this picture. The time for remembrance has come.

My life is a sore trial. Yet, I understand I

am not alone. I am not perfect, but the suffering and sore trials are the greatest blessings I could receive from God Almighty. Jesus learned obedience by those things that He suffered; and by His example, so shall I.

“For which reason, I remind you to rekindle the fire — the gift of God — which you possess through the laying on of hands.”

II Timothy 1:7-9 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (discretion). Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

The sore trials that you and I endure, we voluntarily did accept. Yes, at the first, we were drafted — seemingly having no choice; but on reflection, looking back, we see we did have a choice, and we chose life. God called heaven and earth to record against us this offer, and the choice we made.

We are the weak, base, foolish, and despised of the earth. We were not the finest material when God first selected us. Yet, we are the ones God has chosen to work with. For this very reason, flesh should not glory in the presence of God.

While you are able, seek the Lord.

Rejoice in your sore trial. Love it to death, and you shall receive a crown of glory.

My sore trial — well, it’s on-going. But, I remember what and why I had decided to endeavor to accept it. Granted, at the first, I did not know, but upon enduring, I’ve learned why I endure and continue to accept this glorious sore trial.

The pain I endure isn’t for carrying the stake, that’s easy. I endure the pain and seemingly unbearably sore trial because I felt the horrid holes in Jesus’ hands.

Yes, the stake is heavy, but you know, even though He has holes in His hands — He helps me to carry it.

Yes, it is a sore trial — but, the love, joy, and His strong hands carry me through.

For this cause, remember the sore trial.

— by Billy C. Blanton
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Good News...

Good News in a Sea of Trouble (Copy of a letter from a young Ukrainian.)

As you likely know from the news, we are in the middle of the Orange Revolution here in Kiev. I can tell you that this is one of the most incredible experiences of my entire life to be here during this time.

We have been spending a lot of time on the streets and on the main square — Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square).

It is difficult to describe what is going on here. No news footage on your TV screens can express the feeling you get being surrounded by a million people. The most amazing thing — which I believe will have worldwide sociological implications for a long time to come — is how incredible this crowd is. When you think of a crowd unhappy about something, being cheated by politicians, betrayed by the system, you expect a bunch of angry, agitated people. Well, think again. This is the happiest, friendliest, most incredibly loving and supportive group of people I have ever encountered. People are smiling, singing, laughing and offering help and support to each other. You don’t see police anywhere, not a single policeman in sight. Imagine that. According to the mayor’s office in the city of Kiev, there are no reports of any crime in this huge metropolitan area. Crime has stopped! Everyone is a friend, everyone is a neighbor, everyone is a brother. I do not know how long this can last, but we are in the middle of some kind of miracle.

It is cold out there. Most nights, the temperature gets well below zero centigrade (which is in the teens for those of you that only know Fahrenheit). But the tent city that was built in the middle of Kiev, and now has hundreds if not thousands of tents, is very warm indeed. There are mountains of warm clothes everywhere on Khreshchatyk Street of the city), which were donated by Kievites. Food, hot coffee, and hot tea are abundant and free everywhere. But you do not see any alcohol. This is the most sober one million Ukrainians you will ever meet. The crowd is completely self-organizing, and improving its collective behavior continuously. Every new day brings new elements of better organization, improved conditions, improved communications, and general functionality.

It has become clear to any observer that

this crowd is bound to win. There is absolutely no way to stop this crowd without a massive blood bath, which is almost impossible to imagine taking place in the center of Europe, with all the world's TV cameras [present]. Over the last five days, the opposition has been winning continuous victories every single day.

The score for the first five rounds is clearly 5-0. The crowds are growing and demonstrations are now taking place all over the country. More and more famous athletes, actors, artists, high-ranking military, and police officers are joining the opposition. When Ruslana, the most famous Ukrainian singer, and heavyweight champion Vladimir Klitchko joined Victor Yushchenko on the podium, the crowd went wild. The following day brought Lech Walesa, senior officers of SBU (former KGB) and Police, several formerly neutral "oligarchs" and finally a major breakthrough at the end of the day — the rebirth of free media in Ukraine.

Prior to that, only Channel 5 was broadcasting 24 hours a day directly from Maidan, and giving complete coverage to all the events. And, of course, our Volia Cable was proudly delivering its signal to some 1.5 million viewers in Kiev despite all the pressure on them, including several horrible days in July when some of our key managers had to spend 10 days in jail. One other channel (Era) was doing the same, but only a few hours a day.

All major channels had previously been completely ignoring the millions of people on the streets, never reporting it, and instead showing cartoons, classical music concerts, and exotic travel destinations.

We knew that most journalists from the major channels had either been fired by then, or had gone on strike because they refused to continue broadcasting lies. As a result, all news programs on National channels 1 and 2, Inter, 1+1, Noviy, and others simply ceased any, and all operations. For three days in a row, most of Ukraine, which only has access to the major channels, had no TV news.

Imagine that — the very day after a major election — no news for three days, no morning news, no evening news, no news at all! All these channels simply had no creative staff left to produce bogus news. All fired or on strike.

Thursday night it all changed. The management and owners of all of the major

channels gave in to the demands of their striking journalists, and allowed honest news reporting for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine. Some of the channels like National Channel 1 and 1+1 began their evening news broadcast on Thursday with a group shot of all journalists standing together, and one of them reading a statement from the creative staff in which they swore to report honest news and honest news only! This was one of the most unbelievable sights I have ever seen. And then, the miracle happened. They showed a direct feed of a million proud Ukrainians on Maidan in Kiev to the whole country. If there are defining moments in the birth of a Nation, that was certainly one! I am so proud to have been able to witness it with my own eyes, in spite of all the tears that covered them at that moment.

Today was another exciting day with the extraordinary session of the Ukrainian Rada currently ongoing. It started over four hours ago and is being shown live on a number of TV channels all over the country and also to people on the streets. We are all glued to the television screens. The Rada already voted to consider the runoff elections invalid, express non-confidence in the Central Election Committee, and several other major items. They are still debating, but are making good progress. Things are looking up! The Orange Revolution continues!

— by Michael Bleyzer, Kiev,
Ukraine, November 27, 2004

Hmmm...

They told me I was gullible . . . and I believed them.

All I ask is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy.

Church News...

India

Greetings,

Yes, I am here to report about the events after the tidal floods and the relief operations, which we undertook. First of all, our immediate help was providing rice, and other edible provisions to many peoples and families. Later we identified 50 families and started our help with providing family kits, which contain things for shelter, food materials, bedding, and other essentials. We call these family kits.

We have identified the children who miss their educational items like books, notebooks, pencils, and school uniforms and we have planned to help these children go back to school. We are planning to help about 40 children from these families to regain their studies. Our additional activities include, providing safe water, and medical camps. The final aid would be to help them start with some micro enterprises such as providing fishing boats, fishing nets, or start one small business. We are able to march with these activities with your support and good-wishes. I am forwarding some photos for your kind perusal. I would like to explain something about the loss and background of the photos. About 20 people died from these 50 families, which include the elderly, and babies. One of the sad experiences was the death of a mother, daughter, and granddaughter.

I am so happy to forward the report of the

program "Motivation to Tsunami-Affected Children." We have selected children from a fishing village where the children and families were hit by the tsunami. In some cases, there was death and in all cases there was loss of home and properties. We wanted to motivate these children, and be strong enough to take up the loss and look to the good future. The faculty was very different to conduct this program we call the faculty G7 (great seven). They were youth who have come to India from overseas for educational and training purposes, and volunteered to train these children. These youth were from Taiwan, Britain, Italy, France, Bolivia, Finland, and Iceland. After a brief introduction, the entire program was given to G7. First, they started with family memory name games, next they started with fun and group games of interest (GRIEF INTO JOY), then there was a drawing session where the children drew their expressions of tsunami which hit their village. After the program the G7 sat with children and ate the meal together, and we served special delicacies. The children were so happy and expressed that this was first time such a good event had happened. We thank you for all the support and good wishes. Our next mission would be to help with some micro enterprises program.

The photos show some of the provisions we were giving to these affected brethren. Our mission continues, well I have special



energy to continue this work, and am so thrilled and excited to work. Thanks for all your kind support and good wishes. Herewith, I forward the photo of the family kits provided, which contains food, utensils, bedding, and shelter plastic sheets, etc. The other photo shows how the kit looks. Thanks.

Love,

— by M. R. Hubert
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The Sign...

Two elders from local Churches were standing by the side of the road, pounding a sign into the ground that read:

“The end is near! Turn yourself around now before it’s too late!”

As a car sped past them, the driver yelled, “Leave us alone, you religious nuts!”

From the curve, they heard screeching tires and a big splash.

One elder turned to the other and asked, “Do you think the sign should just say ‘Bridge Out’?”

Article...

Blessed Are They Which Hunger and Thirst After Righteousness

There’s a wide gap between the rich and the poor. Those who govern are free from the taxes the average man has to pay. But the time is coming when those who hunger and thirst for the ultimate good life will be filled.

Dad would often say, “I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.” Well, I doubt he was ever that hungry, but he expressed something common to us all: the desire to be filled.

In the gospel accounts, we read of Jesus feeding thousands of people. They were hungry, and Jesus had compassion on them. But what was their hunger? Theirs was the same physical hunger Dad had when he said he could eat a horse.

But Jesus told His disciples of another hunger. He said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled,” **Matthew 5:6**.

Life is no different today than it was 2,000 years ago. There were the rich and the poor, the greedy and the needy, corrupt governments, and the overburdened governed. There’s nothing wrong with being rich, but

too many people get that way at the expense of others.

It’s no wonder Jesus spoke of those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. There wasn’t much righteousness in the world. Even the Pharisees and Sadducees, who sought their righteousness by keeping God’s law to the minutest degree, laid heavy burdens on the not-so-righteous — in their estimation — average people.

These average people were hungry: desperately hungry. They wanted righteousness in their lives. They looked for a powerful Messiah who would overthrow the unjustly rich, the corrupt governments, the Roman rule, and set up His kingdom of peace in their time.

Jesus loved these people. He had great compassion on them. He may have even wished He could be the kind of messiah they wanted. But such could not be. His kingdom of righteousness would have to come about another way. Mankind would have to learn the way to peace, not to have peace given to them. Otherwise, the good times would be only temporary, lasting only until another unrighteous ruler took over. An example of this is in **Exodus 1:8-11**, and **Acts 7:17-19** where we’re told a king arose who did not recognize Joseph, and enslaved the Israelites who had enjoyed freedom in Egypt.

God’s time of righteousness and peace will come with the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (**Revelation 19:16**). Until then, we have many promises in the Bible to fill our hunger.

God inspired David to write, “...but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart,” **Psalms 32:10-11**. Are we glad in the Lord? It’s easy to be happy when things are going well, but do we rejoice in afflictions (**Ephesians 5:20**)?

In another Psalm, David wrote, “But the Lord shall endure for ever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness,” **Psalms 9:7-8**. Do we hunger and thirst for Christ’s righteous judgment?

“The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide,”

Psalm 37:29-31. Is God's law in your heart?

Yes, the time of righteousness will come, and it will not be temporary, but eternal. Until then, remember Jesus' promise, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."

— by Leslie A. Turvey

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Article...

Cause and Effect of Good Deeds

Do you ever wonder whether the good deeds that you do for others really make any difference in people lives, or assist in the spreading of God's Word? This question came to me by an individual who wrote me recently. They felt that the various good deeds appear to have little or no real effect on others. I must admit that I am unaware of the person's good works, but I realize that various deeds, such as helping a poor family, or donating to an organization, or even just encouraging another person can produce great results.

For example, **Act 9:10-22** states that God called a disciple in Damascus, named Ananias, to assist Saul. I will not quote the entire story, but you can read it in your Bible.

Paul was blinded for the acts that he had done to Christians in and near Jerusalem. So he was lead to Damascus where he prayed and fasted for three days.

During this time, God called Ananias to lay hands on this man and ask for his sight back. That was all God wanted him to do. He did not want Ananias to preach to him, clothe him, or anything else, just to pray for Paul to receive his sight and the Sprit of God.

Yes, I realize that healing in this way is a big miracle. But did he know that God was going to use Paul to spread the Gospel to the Gentiles? I believe that Ananias was unaware of this man's potential in doing the Work.

When you do an act of kindness to another person in Christ's name, you do not always know how it may affect the heart of that person, or if your witness through this act may cause a change toward God by this individual.

It may take years before you know what your act of kindness may have done, or you may not know until you are face to face with God and Jesus Christ.

In **Hebrews 11:6** it states, "...for he that

cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Also in **I Corinthians 3:8** Paul wrote, "...and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor."

As we read in **Matthew 25:31-46**, Jesus states in this passage that our little deeds, such as helping others with clothes or food, are accounted to us as an act toward Him.

Our good deeds to others may not make themselves apparent now, but someday God will reward us for our efforts if we are sincere. Who knows if one of your acts of kindness may cause someone to be converted? And when you are rewarded, you may be very surprised.

You should not perform good acts for gain as you have read in **Matthew 25**, but out of a pure heart.

I encourage you to do good to all, as you are able, and do not seek a reward. God will reward all according to His righteousness.

— by Doyle J. Carter
PO Box 690592
Tulsa, OK 74169

Video Review...

Surprising Discoveries Jonathan Gray's Video Series #5 & #6

#5 Secrets of Ancient South America #6 In a Coffin in Egypt

In *Secrets of Ancient South America*, you will find headhunters, poison darts, unexplored territory, old Inca roads, floating islands where a tribe isolated for 300 years lives, and the *Lost City in the Clouds* which was hidden from man's knowledge for the last 400 years. A history of Pizarro's conquest is given. Very old construction technology is discussed. Then you are treated to a lesson in head shrinking.

You will have to pay attention to find the Biblical lesson, but it is there in the form of common beliefs found in mythology and history. You will see what happens to people far removed from their beginnings and the truth.

This video is more of a travel log than the previous ones. However, as most of us will never be able to visit these areas, you should find it interesting just as you would reading a *National Geographic* about some strange place.

In a Coffin in Egypt

Surprising Discovery #6 starts with a narration and pictures of the oldest pyramid in Egypt. Be prepared to turn up the volume as the sound track has a hollow effect. There are two parts. You will be taken 180 feet below ground in some tunnels under the desert to the center of Egyptian pagan worship during Tutankamen and Imhotep's time to learn the meaning of Imhotep. Could this be the Joseph of the Bible? View the immense pits where Joseph stored the grain during the years of plenty — the Sakkara bins. Then you will see Joseph's tomb.

Part Two concerns the Biblical prophecies about Egypt and how they have been fulfilled. Then comes a demonstration of making paper out of papyrus. At the last are pictures of a well with no explanation.

As usual, Gray finishes with a commercial concerning the books, videos, and subscriptions he sells to finance his travels. His office tells me that the DVDs available covering these Amazing Discoveries are of no better quality than the tapes. The commercial speaks of a few more features that the DVDs have in case you may want to get more involved.

This completes the review of the six Jonathan Gray videos. They are now all available from the Giving and Sharing Library for your viewing on the normal loan basis. A deposit of \$35 is required for each video, which will be refunded upon return. It appears that God may be using this man to find proof of the Biblical account.

— by William B. Scherer

Hmmm...

I planted some bird seed. A bird came up. Now I don't know what to feed it.

Teach a child to be polite and courteous in the home, and when he grows up, he'll never be able to merge his car onto a freeway.

Experience is the thing you have left when everything else is gone.

True Tales to Live By...

Comments from 1957

Here are some more interesting bits of history with comments made in the year 1957.

1. I'll tell you one thing, if things keep

going the way they are, it's going to be impossible to buy a week's groceries for \$20.

2. If cigarettes keep going up in price, I'm going to quit. A quarter a pack is ridiculous.

3. Did you hear the post office is thinking about charging a dime just to mail a letter?

4. If they raise the minimum wage to \$1, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store.

5. When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost 29 cents a gallon. Guess we'd be better off leaving the car in the garage.

6. Kids today are impossible. Those ducktail haircuts make it impossible to stay groomed. Next thing you know, boys will be wearing their hair as long as the girls.

7. I read the other day where some scientist thinks it is possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century. They even have some fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas.

8. Did you see where some baseball player just signed a contract for \$75,000 a year just to play ball? It wouldn't surprise me if someday they'll be making more than the president.

9. I never thought I'd see the day that all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They are even making electric typewriters now.

10: It's too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women are having to work to make ends meet.

11. It won't be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch their kids so they can both work.

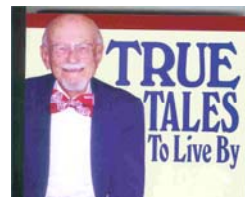
12. Marriage doesn't mean a thing any more; those Hollywood stars seem to be getting divorced at the drop of a hat.

13. I'm just afraid the Volkswagen car is going to open the door to a whole lot of foreign business.

14. Thank goodness I won't live to see the day when the government takes half of our income in taxes. I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people in congress.

15. The drive-in restaurant is convenient in nice weather, but I seriously doubt they will ever catch on.

16. There is no sense going to Lincoln or Omaha anymore for a weekend. It costs nearly \$15 a night to stay in a hotel.



17. No one can afford to be sick any more; \$35 a day in the hospital is too rich for my blood.

18. If they think I'll pay 50 cents for a hair cut, forget it.

— by Skip Westphal

Announcement...

Hello:

In 2005, I began two new weekly radio programs. One is titled "Lord of the Sabbath." It will be broadcast each week on Saturday at 4:30 pm for one half hour on 50,000 watt WWNL 1080 AM out of Pittsburgh, and on WSKY 1230 AM out of Asheville, NC. It will be about the weekly and annual Sabbaths, why they are important to the Lord of the Sabbath, and why they were made for man/us.

The other 15-minute program is titled "Voice of the Shepherd," and broadcast each week on Sunday at 4:45 pm on WWNL. It is more evangelical, offering help to the lost and hurting sheep of the world. There are so many who need to hear His voice, and follow Him in this life to inherit the eternal life of joy He promises them. And I need loving volunteers to help me respond and help, one on one.

If you are interested in the "Lord of the Sabbath" program, but cannot receive the radio broadcast, contact me at the E-mail below, and I will add your name to those who I send the scripts. It is easy and cost effective for everyone. LawstSMinistries@aol.com

I do not try to sell anything on the program. What I have been given freely regarding the Lord and His ways, I offer freely. But you all know these radio broadcasts come with a price tag. If you would like to help in that regard, I would be very grateful. Basically, if there were 52 persons willing to donate \$200 each year, it would pay for the station time. I leave that to your heart, and to your love for the Lord of the Sabbath who made the Sabbath at creation for all mankind. As far as I know, it is the only weekly Sabbath program of its kind.

I also just started a closed group that you can join only by invitation called "Lord of the Sabbath." If you enjoy more meaty discussions of the significance of the Sabbaths of the Lord in daily life and in prophecy, you can both ask and answer questions that group members have. You need to request being added as a member.

Please keep me and these programs in

your prayers, that it might bring glory to the Lord of the Sabbath who is also the Great Shepherd of the sheep of God's pasture. Your physical and financial support of the "Voice of the Shepherd" is especially valuable, and will allow you to minister directly to a lost sheep that the program will identify. This will please our Great Shepherd as you help bring the lost sheep home to His flock, and teach them His ways. It really is the commission for all of us, not just for some incorporated Church.

I am interested in your reactions. If I say something you feel is incorrect and needs to be clarified, or you have a better idea to improve the program, I would be happy to receive your input (either privately and personally at my address below, or to the yahoo



group). If you want to share the scripts with anyone, you have my permission.

May the Lord of the Sabbath and His Sabbath day be a delight to you (**Isaiah 58:13-14**) for He will cause you will ride high on the hills of the earth.

— by Kenny Kitzke
LawstSheep@aol.com

Hmmm...

You're from California if...

You make over \$300,000 and still can't afford a house.

You take a bus and are shocked at two people carrying on a conversation in English.

A really great parking space can totally move you to tears.

Gas costs \$1.00 per gallon more than anywhere else in the U.S.

Unlike back home, the guy at 8:30 A.M. at Starbucks wearing a baseball cap and sunglasses who looks like George Clooney really is George Clooney.

Your car insurance costs as much as your house payment.

It's barely sprinkling rain outside, so you leave for work an hour early to avoid all the weather-related accidents.

Both you and your dog have therapists.

The Terminator is your governor.

If you drive illegally, they take your driver's license. If you're here illegally, they want to give you one.

*Establishing the Children...***Spring Holy Days
Youth Bible Study****Teachers/Parents:**

As you teach the Spring Holy Days to your children, ask questions and check your children's understanding of these days.

Old Testament Passover

Read Exodus 12:6-7. A lamb was to be killed on the 14th day of the first month at evening. The blood of the lamb was to be painted on the side posts and over the door of all the houses of Israel. It is called the Lord's Passover (**verse 11**).

Activity: Have the children draw a doorway and color the sides and top red to represent the blood, but explain to them not to color the threshold (lower door post) as blood was not to be painted on the threshold. When they left home, they did not step on or over the blood of the sacrifice.

(Note: For older students, also teach that the blood represents the shed blood of Christ and we are never to tread under foot Christ's blood. See **Hebrews 10:29**, "...who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing...")

Read Exodus 12:12-13. The death angel was to pass over the land by night and kill all the firstborn of man and beast in Egypt. All Israel's houses were to be spared because the blood was on their doorposts. It happened at midnight (**verse 29**).

Exodus 12:42: Explain that this Passover Night is a night to be remembered, and why we should observe it. It's also a memorial to be kept forever (**Exodus 12:14**).

Activity: Explain what "firstborn" means, and ask who is the firstborn in their family. Ask how their family observes this night. Do they get together with family or friends, have a special meal, tell the Passover Story, etc.?

Days of Unleavened Bread

Read Exodus 12:15-18. Israel was to eat unleavened bread seven days.

Exodus 12:30-39: Explain that Israel left Egypt in a hurry by night, and their bread dough didn't have time to rise. **Read Deuteronomy 16:1.** God commanded Israel to put away all leavening from their houses (**Exodus 12:15**).

Explain what leavening is: Definition –

substances used to puff up or cause to rise, such as yeast, baking powder, and baking soda. Tell what products contain leavening such as cakes, cookies, bread, buns, etc.

Activity: Have the children draw pictures of foods containing leavening, and foods not containing leavening (fruits, vegetables, etc.).

Ask them how many days we are to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread. How do we prepare for these days and what are we supposed to do during these days?

(Note: For older children, you might want to teach the following lesson about the New Testament Passover in **I Corinthians 11:20**.)

**New Testament Passover
(The Lord's Supper)**

Read Matthew 22:1-2. Christ said in two days would be the Passover, and He would be crucified. **John 13:1-5** tells about Christ and His disciples coming together to keep the Passover meal. Christ rose from supper, washed the disciples' feet, and commanded them to do likewise (**verses 13-15**). Then He instituted new symbols using unleavened bread and wine, representing His body and blood. By Christ's death, He became our Passover Lamb (**I Corinthians 5:7**).

Preparation of Last Supper: **Matthew 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-16, Luke 22:7-13.**

Blood of New Covenant, Bread and Wine Instituted: **Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20.**

A Memorial of Christ's Death: **I Corinthians 11:23-26.**

Activity: Ask the children the meaning of the word "crucified." Why did Christ wash His disciples' feet, and why should we wash each other's feet? What symbols represent the body and blood of Christ? How did Christ become our Passover Lamb? (By becoming a sacrifice for our sins.) Should we keep the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread?

We are to keep Passover as an annual memorial of Christ's death (**I Corinthians 11:23-26**) and because He became our Passover Lamb by His sacrifice for our sins (**I Corinthians 5:7**).

Paul stated in **I Corinthians 5:8** to keep this Feast of Unleavened Bread. "Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," (Revised Standard Version). This was years after Christ's death.

— by Shelby Faith
sfaith@mindspring.com

BIBLE VILLAINS

The Bible has stories of many righteous people, but villains are also used to teach us lessons. Use your detective skills to see how many you can identify. The answers can be found in the Scriptures listed.

1. _____ committed the first murder by killing his brother, Abel, **Genesis 4:8.**
2. _____ made many attempts to swindle Jacob, but Jacob ultimately prospered, **Genesis 29:24.**
3. The man who broke many oaths of love toward David and attempted to kill him several times was _____, **I Samuel 19:15.**
4. Who led a revolt against his father, David? _____, **II Samuel 15:14.**
5. _____, king of Israel, “did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him,” **I Kings 16:30.**
6. _____ plotted to have the entire Hebrew nation legally killed, **Esther 5:14.**
7. In order to kill Jesus, _____ ordered the killing of all babies in Bethlehem two years old and under. He also authorized John the Baptist’s Beheading, **Matthew 2:16, 14:10.**
8. _____ betrayed Jesus into the hands of His enemies for 30 pieces of silver, **Matthew 26:14.**
9. _____ allowed Jesus to be crucified, even though he acknowledged His innocence, **John 18:37, 19:6.**
10. “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and _____, and bound him a thousand years,” **Revelation 20:2.**

From Everlasting To Everlasting

A Youth Bible study (Lesson 2)

Who Authorizes Whom?

In the first lesson, you learned there are many beginnings, and the apostle John spoke of the beginning of all beginnings. He also revealed that God is a family name.

So far, there are only two members in the God family: the Father and His Son. In the New Testament, you can read about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So we know the two members of the God family are the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Recall that John said, "In the beginning was the Word [the Spokesman], and the Spokesman was with God, and the Spokesman was God."

Does a child authorize his parent to be his spokesman? Not normally. The parent generally authorizes the younger person to speak. You know how it is: The doorbell rings and Dad says, "If that's Tony, tell him I'll be there in a couple minutes." Dad has just made you his spokesman.

So, the Spokesman John referred to, spoke on behalf of a senior member of the family. Wouldn't that be the Father of the God family? And wouldn't that make the Spokesman His Son, the One we know as Jesus Christ?

Before the Earth Was Formed

In **John 1:2**, we learn more about the Spokesman. We're told He was in the beginning of all beginnings with God His Father. How long ago was that? We don't know. The psalmist, David, sang, "...From everlasting to everlasting thou art God," **Psalm 90:2**. How long ago is "From everlasting...?" No matter how long ago it was, it was before the earth was formed.

Suppose the scientist who believes the universe is 45 quintillion years old is correct, then God the Father must be at least that old. And since the Spokesman, the One we know as Jesus Christ, was with His Father from the beginning of all beginnings, He also must be at least 45 quintillion years old.

Bible radio commentator, Ronald L. Dart, says, "There is no explanation of God offered by man that can do anything but diminish God." So when we try to determine how old the God family is, we make the Father and His Son less than what they are.

Although we can't know anything about

the age of the God family, we can still study the history of what they did. The first part is in **John 1:3** where we're told the Spokesman — not God the Father — was the Creator of everything that has ever existed. (No, He didn't build your computer, but He created the electrons, atoms, and metals that makes up your computer. The Spokesman, the Creator, the One we know as Jesus Christ, simply left it up to man to discover how to use those things so you can read this message on your monitor.)

It can get a little unwieldy speaking of the Spokesman, the Creator, the One we know as Jesus Christ, so for now we will simply refer to Him as God. By now you should understand which member of the God family is being referred to.

In **John 1:10**, John refers specifically to God making the world; but God created all things (**verse 3**). Doesn't all things refer to the universe, the sun, the moon, and the stars? Then why does John specifically speak of the world? There must be a reason.

Next, you will go to the first chapter of the Bible and discover it doesn't say what you may have been taught.

— by Leslie A. Turvey
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Article...

Age Appropriate Baptism

(Excerpted from a larger work on baptism by a man coming into the truth about water baptism as he sat in the pews of an Assemblies of God Church.)

I recently witnessed a number of children being baptized. Not a single baptism candidate showed any sense of repentance. The preacher threw a few meatball pitches for questions that anybody should have been able to knock out of the park. However, none of them did, and at least one child couldn't answer even the simplest of questions. Do you think that stopped him from being baptized? Not a chance! "Upon your profession of faith, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The saddest part of this true story is that this was the man's first opportunity to baptize anyone. I was stunned when his own young son was the first to enter into the baptistery, and led

into deception by him! Isn't faith supposed to proclaim Jesus as Lord? Professing or confessing anyone as lord says to that person, "I submit to your rule and reign in my life. What you say, I will do." To confess Jesus as Lord says, "I surrender!" I seriously doubt half of those kids actually knew what they were doing. All the preacher did was to lead those kids (even his own dear son, whom I know he loves) deeper into the woods!

I'm nearly fifty years old, and I think I'm at least semi-intelligent. I've been in the "Church" for well over twenty years. What I've been through in trying to gain a right understanding of God's message to mankind is reflected in this visual I have of a huge open Bible, ten, maybe twenty, feet tall, standing upright in the distance. With a twist, I glance over my shoulder, and behind me, I see a badly beaten man hanging on a cross. Between the Word of God and me is this jungle of false doctrine that obscures my view to the point that I can't understand what the Word of God is telling me. I hold a machete in my hand. I have had to hack my way through that jungle of false doctrine in order to come this far in my understanding of who that Man is, and why He is hanging on that cross!

There is a glorious message of God's love and mercy for all of mankind; a message so incredible I simply can't do justice to it with any words I may use in attempting to describe it. That message is being obscured by an unrelenting jungle of false doctrine. Folks, we're running out of time. These kids are not going to get the amount of time I've had to sort these things out. We need to do everything we can to get them started on the right path right from the start!

How in the world is a child supposed to repent when the Bible says in **Deuteronomy 1:39** that children, even to the age of 20 years old, have no knowledge of good and evil? This is a phenomenal verse. Let's take a look at it. **Deuteronomy 1:39**: "Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them I will give it, and they shall possess it." To a child, what is there to repent of if he or she has no knowledge of good and evil? There is repentance in calling on the name of Jesus as Lord if you know what you are talking about, but if your "profession of faith" is not according to a

foundational knowledge of what it is to call Jesus your personal Lord, then it follows there will be no submission, no surrender, no subjection.

Most child baptism candidates are simply not repentant; their hearts are not cut as the Bible describes those who heard the preaching of John the Baptist, or any of the other disciples. It's not possible; they don't have knowledge of good and evil! For that matter, how many adults are repentant? Unless you have come eye to eye with the "horrifying truth" of not being in a right relationship with God the Father through God the Son, how can you possibly know what it is to repent?

Here's a good question a person might ask, "Would the apostle Philip have baptized those children?" Remember, he told the Ethiopian eunuch, a man of great authority, "if" he believed with all his heart, he may be baptized. It leads me to believe that if Philip had any thought that in fact the eunuch did not believe with all his heart (wasn't repentant), Philip would not have participated in his baptism. There is definitely an issue of accountability here for the person doing the baptizing, and you can see it in **Acts 2:41**, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." As I've already mentioned above, you can see accountability exercised in **Acts 8:36-37**, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, "...See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" and Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." You can also see that accountability in **Acts 10:47**, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Acts 16:14-15 also show that a threshold was met before a baptism was performed. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us."

My favorite scripture of the like is **Matthew 3:7** which has John the Baptist telling

the Pharisees and Sadducees what he thought of their appearance at his baptizing. Take a look for yourself. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, Oh generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say to you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

The person doing the baptizing needs to exercise discernment; and from what I read in the Biblical accounts, children of any age were not baptized, and adults were not baptized willy-nilly. Certainly, a person shouldn't baptize a kid who doesn't have a clue what he is doing. I ask again, "Would the apostle Philip have baptized those children?" Isn't it amazing that Philip couldn't find any children in the entire city of Samaria to baptize? Check these verses out for yourself, **Acts 8:5-8 & 12**, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

It frightens me to think that we have erred so completely as to have abandoned a "baptism of repentance" for "baptisms of ignorance," "baptisms of obedience," or "baptisms of indifference!" God help us!

— by Ken Adler
KenAdler@gpcom.net

Announcement...

Internet Radio

Guardian Ministries has ventured into new territory. We have now launched a new Web site (www.guardianministry.com), and an Internet Radio Station! While the Internet has many evils, it is also a major source of communication. While everything, including the telephone, radio, and television can be used for evil, they can also be used as instruments

to spread the knowledge of God's Holy Word and His Way of Life!

There are millions of people around the world who have access to the Internet. Perhaps you're one of them. If you are, Guardian Ministries offers you a safe haven on the Internet where you can hear inspiring Christian music, informative, motivating, inspiring, and uplifting sermons, short teaching stories, and vignettes! You may "tune in" at any time.

— by Dr. David Antion
Guardian Ministries
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Hmmm...

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and populated the earth with broccoli, cauliflower and spinach, green, yellow, and red vegetables of all kinds, so man and woman would live long and healthy lives.

Then using God's great gifts, Satan created Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream and Krispy Creme Donuts. And Satan said, "You want chocolate with that?" And man said, "Yes!" and woman said, "and as long as you're at it, add some sprinkles." And they gained 10 pounds. And Satan smiled.

And God created the healthful yogurt that woman might keep the figure that man found so fair. And Satan brought forth white flour from the wheat, and sugar from the cane and combined them. And woman went from size 6 to size 14.

So God said, "Try my fresh green salad." And Satan presented Thousand-Island dressing, buttery croutons, and garlic toast on the side. And man and woman unfastened their belts following the repast.

God then said, "I have sent you heart healthy vegetables and olive oil in which to cook them." And Satan brought forth deep-fried fish and chicken-fried steak so big it needed its own platter. And man gained more weight and his cholesterol went through the roof.

God then created a light, fluffy white cake, named it "Angel Food Cake," and said, "It is good." Satan then created chocolate cake and named it "Devil's Food."

God then brought forth running shoes so that His children might lose those extra pounds. And Satan gave them cable TV with

a remote control so man would not have to toil changing the channels. And man and woman laughed and cried before the flickering blue light and gained pounds.

Then God brought forth the potato, naturally low in fat and brimming with nutrition. And Satan peeled off the healthful skin and sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fried them. And man gained pounds.

God then gave them lean beef so that man might consume fewer calories, and still satisfy his appetite. And Satan created McDonald's and its 99-cent double cheeseburger. Then said, "You want fries with that?" And man replied, "Yes! And super size them!" And Satan said, "It is good." And man went into cardiac arrest.

God sighed and created quadruple bypass surgery. Then Satan created HMOs.

And so it goes.....

— author unknown

Penned from Prison...

Do You Know Him?

Those God the Father has invited (**John 6:44**), have been drawn to His Son, Jesus Christ.

As professing Christians, do we actually know the One we say we follow? We must believe in Jesus to be saved. We had better know Him, or we are liars.

Jesus is the Logos, the Word (**John 1:1**). Elsewhere, He is called the Word of life (**I John 1:1**). Through our studies (**II Timothy 2:15**), we learned that Jesus was the One of Elohim that was in the Garden of Eden, and that spoke to Moses — the God of the Old Testament. All the words of the Holy Bible should be read.

Now, again, we understand that Jesus is the Bible — only in print, but none the less, the Bible [is] Jesus!

So, at this point, we should make very crystal clear whether or not we live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (**Matthew 4:4**). **Exodus 19:5** says (. . . if you will obey my voice...).

How, you ask?

I John 2:3-4, "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

We cannot say we know Jesus if we do

not know, or do not do what is commanded in the pages of the Bible. If we do, not knowing, or not doing, we are liars, and no doubt the truth is not there either.

A good understanding have they that do His commandments. As God our Father draws us to Christ deeper and deeper, Christ (the Bible in print) reveals our Father more and more to us.

Therefore, before Passover, let us discern the Lord's body. Do we know Him, or not? You must be sure. Your eternal salvation hangs on this.

— by Billy C. Blanton #750531
Lynaugh 1098 FM 2037
Ft. Stockton, TX 79735

Church News...

United Church of God

Our great desire is to share God's truth with as many people as possible. When individuals and families live the way of truth, they will better understand His great purpose for their lives. In the midst of a truth-rejecting world, we find that God graciously works in those whom He calls and who choose to genuinely love and live the truth. He says, along with the apostle John, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," **III John 4**.

For an ever-increasing number of people, a belief in unchanging, ageless standards and values, and a Creator God Who expects compliance to them, is fast becoming a ridiculous, old-fashioned idea. To many, the concept of "absolute truth," seems narrow-minded and intolerant — perhaps even bordering on fanatical. As Western society continues to grow in wealth, prosperity, and a greater dependence on science and technology, it is becoming easier for people to discard a "superstitious" need for God and His requirements of them.

This is why *The Good News* magazine and other literature produced by the United Church of God is so important. We have a message of hope for a world that is mired in trouble of unbelievable proportions. Indeed, disdain for Godly truth (defined as God's Word in **John 17:17** and the law of God in **Psalms 119:142**) is a convenient excuse for many today to "do their own thing." It is easy to reason that if absolute truth doesn't exist, there is no need for God. And if there is no God, who is to say what is good or evil?

Everyone is simply free to decide for him or herself. By contrast, our literature helps preach the truth of God's soon-coming Kingdom and the importance of obeying Him if we want to be a part of the glorious future He has in mind for us. Your support in preaching that exciting news is very much appreciated!

We recently designed seven new subscription brochures with the following themes: "Are We Living in the Time of the End?" "Why Does God Allow Suffering?" "Jesus Christ-The Real Story," and "The Book of Revelation Unveiled." These eye-catching "take-one" advertisements offer potential readers edifying booklets by the same titles and a subscription to *The Good News*. If you would like a copy of any of these booklets, please write and we will be happy to send them to you.

We will soon distribute over 420,000 copies of four of the new brochures on Good Neighbor "take-one" displays in 4,000 major supermarkets and discount stores throughout the United States. Also, 160,000 copies of two of the brochures will be used by the brethren in the Philippines and in countries in the Caribbean to help generate new *Good News* subscribers.

Furthermore, we recently added 50,000-watt news/talk station KRMG 740 AM in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to our *Good News* radio program log. The program is now airs every Sunday morning at 8 am. Also, 50,000-watt talk station WTAR 850 AM in Norfolk, Virginia, just began airing the program on Sundays at 10 A.M.

Radio host Gary Petty recently recorded six new programs with *Good News* senior writer Jerold Aust and with Gary Antion, coordinator of our Ambassador Bible Center in Cincinnati. Additionally, material for six more radio programs has now been edited from special sermons given by Mr. Petty in San Antonio, Texas. He has now delivered more than 100 radio programs, many of which are archived on our Web site at www.ucg.org/radio.

In Christ's Service,

Roy Holladay
www.ucg.org

New Feast Site in Costa Rica...

The United Church of God in El Salvador is sponsoring a first-time Festival site in San José, Costa Rica for the 2005 Feast of Taber-

nacles.

Costa Rica is an exquisite tourist destination that is renowned for its amazing scenery, national parks, biological preserves, pristine beaches, and modern conveniences. San José, the capital of Costa Rica, is located just 20 minutes from the Juan Santamaría International Airport. It is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city that boasts and excellent dining and nightlife. International guests will be lodged in a first-class hotel with a rate of \$70 per night, single or double rooms.

San José offers everything from historic to modern museums, local cuisine to fine international dining, and typical handcraft markets to modern shopping malls. Metered taxis are inexpensive.

Costa Rica may be reached by air via any of the major international airlines. Discount airline tickets for most major airlines can be purchased from Traveland.com by calling 1-800-321-6336, 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. (EST), Monday through Saturday. Use the code "jtchurch" before September 15th to receive a discount. All visitors must have a valid passport (visa not required). There is no entry fee, but an approximately \$30 per person exit fee (cash only) will be required upon departure from the airport. A taxi from the airport costs approximately \$12.00. The local currency is the Colón, but dollars and all major credit cards are widely accepted. ATM machines are available to withdraw cash. Services will be held in Spanish, with translation into English provided by experienced translators. The following Web site contains detailed information about the Feast site and important travel information: www.unidaelsalvador.org/feast/index.html.

Because the Church is responsible and liable for all reservations, as well as coordinating activities, guests must register with the festival coordinators and are asked to refrain from making arrangements on their own for lodging with other hotels.

Please contact Barbara Parada (English) by E-mail at: jrbp_parada@hotmail.com or by phone at (011) 503-228-1099, or Herbert Cisneros (Spanish) by E-mail at: hcwpnj@integra.com.sv or by phone at (011) 503-225-4308 for specific questions and concerns.

The hotel deposit will only be accepted via a personal check or money order in U.S. dollars (international money orders will be accepted from outside the U.S.) made payable

to “Shirley Nickels.” Write “Costa Rica” in the memo line of your payment, and mail it to: Shirley Nickels, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, Wyoming, 82718, U.S.A. You may also register on-line at the above mentioned Web site, but be sure to send your payment promptly.

— by Herbert Cisneros

Poem...

God’s Love

We can only see a little of the ocean,
A few miles distant from the rocky shore;
But out there — beyond
Beyond our eyes’ horizon,
There’s more — there’s more.
We can only see a little of God’s love —
A few rich treasures from His mighty store;
But out there — beyond,
Beyond our eyes’ horizon,
There’s more — there’s more!

— by author unknown

Church News...

Living Church of God

LCG’s Charles Bryce reported, “We have ended the year 2004 with a 3.6 percent increase over 2003 in total Church attendance in the Living Church of God. This is the yearly average, and while it is not dramatic, it is steady, gradual growth and we are very thankful for it. But what about our individual spiritual growth? Are we really growing in our personal individual lives or not? It is an either/or question! When individual progress and growth becomes widespread throughout the Church, like a groundswell, I believe that is when we will have a breakthrough in growth throughout the Work. They go together! Now is the time for each of us to honestly and carefully examine ourselves to see if we are in fact growing, day by day. Then, wherever it is needed, we must change so growth will continually take place.”

From Thailand, Mehm Pho Saw reported, “As the year of 2005 is the seventh year of LCG Myanmar (Burmese) Congregation in Mae Sot, everything is going more powerful than last year. We are able to continue the works by wonderful blessings because of God’s hearing many fervent prayers from our beloved brothers, sisters, and ministers all around the world for our healthy and safe living. As a result, I (Mehm Pho Saw), my wife Phyu Phyu Aye, and my two sons have

an opportunity of official registration for legal living status in the Mae Sot District of Tak Province in Thailand. I would like to request all to ask God for opening the door of our congregation to be stable in this area by His richest blessings. So that God will draw more and more Burmese and Thai people to the Church in time before the End Time.”

Paul Shumway reported, “We were very pleased with our trip to Trinidad and Tobago. We had 5 new people in attendance in Trinidad last Sabbath, and set a new record of 84! On Sunday, there was a Church picnic which was attended by 57. There were all kinds of races, games, and other activities. I had my first personal exposure to the game of cricket. I thought a background in baseball would be far more helpful than it proved to be. The members brought a wide variety of local dishes which my wife and I thoroughly enjoyed. Everyone seemed to have a wonderful time. It was sad to leave our new friends, and we look forward to our next visit! Please remember our brethren in Guyana. They’ve been having the worst flooding in over a hundred years — and this is the “dry season!” To date, our members are OK, but the situation is very serious. Not only is the flooding problematic, but with all the dead animals in the water, terrible diseases are threatening many. The high water also brings crocodiles into areas not usually bothered by these animals. One large croc entered a schoolyard and attacked a child. A crowd of people distracted the animal with loud noises and by hurling bricks at it. The crowd killed the confused crocodile and no one was hurt. I read a story where the raging waters brought a crocodile into a TV studio. What a surprise for the news commentators and others in the room!”

R.C. Meredith reported, “But this Work of the living Christ is now surging ahead with renewed growth and vigor! I feel it important to tell you that this coming January 2, 2005 marks the twelfth anniversary of this revival of God’s Work! For we had our first Sabbath service on January 2, 1993, and have grown and developed a great deal since that time. Under Christ’s leadership, plans are being made to move this Work forward faster than ever before. Prophetic events are also swiftly speeding up. At this time, I am delighted to announce the big news that we are starting to air the *Tomorrow’s World* program on two different television outlets in Britain

beginning in early February! The potential audience within the “footprint” or coverage of these stations is in the tens of millions!”

Charles Bryce also reported, “The first five weeks of this year are blowing away all previous year-to-date records. So far, the telecast has generated 13,363 responses, which is 64 percent above last year’s 8,147 for the first five weeks. The number of first-time callers so far this year has reached 7,329, which is nearly double last year’s count, which was 3,772 — making this year’s increase 94 percent. Wow!”

Wow, in my opinion, is right! With only about 1/20th the membership of the old Worldwide Church of God (WCG), LCG is receiving about 1/6th the responses to its telecast that the old WCG used to receive. As reported earlier in *Church of God News*, LCG is also reporting a higher percentage of baptisms to responses than the old WCG once had.

— submitted by Robert Thiel
cogwriter@aol.com

Telephone Services

If unable to attend Passover or Sabbath service with other brethren, we recommend a telephone service. Ed Burson and/or others

plan to conduct Passover services via telephone as well as Sabbath services and Monday Question and Answer sessions during the year. For times, call Ed Burson at 903-576-0086, or Rich Nickels at 307-686-5191.

Hmmm...

It’s a myth that bulls get agitated just because they see red. Bulls are color blind.

**You are Invited to a Special
Presentation On The book of
Revelation
Where Are We in Prophecy?**

Speaker: Steven Kieler, Fort Dodge, Iowa

**Where: Tonganoxie Historical Society Church
201 West Washington
Tonganoxie, KS**

**When: Saturday, March 19, 2005
11:00 A.M.**

Finger Food following Presentation

If you would like to attend, please

RSVP ASAP to:

Kathy Monahan: jpmmono@direcway.com or

Tina Packard: mmax@lvnworth.com