

The Advocate of Truth

Thanksgiving

A Child of God

The Wrong Crowd

The Good Father

The Seven Churches



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The Advocate of Truth is the official organ of The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Advocate of Truth Press, Inc. PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. Entered as Second Class Matter on January 22, 1990 (now periodicals) at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia under the Postal Act of March 3, 1879. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription is free. It is paid for by people who are concerned about the truth.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated. You may request this periodical by sending your mailing address to this address.

POSTMASTER:

Please send address changes to:

**THE CHURCH OF GOD
PUBLISHING HOUSE**
P.O. Box 328
Salem, WV 26426-0328

Telephone: 304-782-1411
Fax: 304-782-2248

E-Mail: cogsevday@aol.com

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Volume LX I Number 5
November 28 , 2011
The Advocate of Truth
USPS 542-940



Beware Of Precarious Qualities

By Sister Nesta John

“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:16). Jealousy brings on covetousness which can be avoided by starting to think differently. Changing the way you think can change the way you feel and act. Jealousy is a combination of fear and anger, fear of losing something and anger that someone is moving in on something that you feel belongs only to you. A feeling of low self-esteem or insecurity can contribute to jealousy. Cain was jealous of his brother Abel because his sacrifice was not accepted by God. That was anger on Cain’s part. Seeing someone else succeed should inspire you to good things. It can help motivate you to do better. Let us give thanks for the achievement that anyone has made in life. Stop comparing yourself to everyone else. God has a plan for everyone on earth. Take focus off people and start focusing on God’s plan for you.

The covetousness of Ahab was great. His eyes coveted the vineyard of Naboth. It displeased Ahab because Naboth would not give him the inheritance of his fathers. Ahab’s spirit was therefore sad, and he ate no bread. Because of all this, his wife Jezebel wrote letters in his name and sealed them with his seal. She sent them unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city dwelling with Naboth. She wrote in the letters, “...Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die” (I Kings 21:9-10). The order was granted in the letter, and Naboth was stoned to death as it was

written. “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it” (verse 16).

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). Covetousness will come across when you are not satisfied with the blessings God has bestowed upon you. A deep desire to obtain a possession of another person can be defined as covetousness. The Word of God clearly lets us know that we, as Christians, should never covet anything that belongs to another person whether house, wife, servant, ox or ass.

Covetousness has been a problem with man from the beginning of Creation. It contributed to the fall of Adam and Eve, which led them to stealing. Please read Genesis 3:1-6. Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, were very covetous. They “...sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” Ananias allowed Satan to fill his heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land. But Ananias was not lying unto men, but unto God. He and his wife, Sapphira, agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, but the feet of them which buried her husband carried her out the door. She fell down straightway, and yielded up the ghost, and the young men “...buried her by her husband”. Please read Acts 5:1-10. Ananias and Sapphira coveted, lied and stole. Greed at times can cost us our lives. Covetousness cost Ananias and Sapphira their lives.

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). Let us not set our hearts on things on the earth, but lay all of our treasures up in heaven. Our desire for things of this life must be controlled by the Holy Spirit, because in these last days covetousness is great. “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). “For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (Psalm 10:3).

Envy is the feeling that one has against another person who is seen to be better than one’s self. We hate seeing someone that is more prosperous and wealthy than we are. Malice is a need to see others suffer. It comes across with a grudge against a person because he has done good to someone whom we hate. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Thanksgiving

Bond Tennant



Each year in the United States, many people observe a national day of Thanksgiving. Many know that Thanksgiving Day originated with the early settlers of New England. It occurred after the annual harvest time of fruits and vegetables. Thanksgiving was given to God for the harvest.

Of course, we know that many changes have taken place since that time. The true significance of that occasion has been lost for the most part in the hearts of many. However, the custom has endured and continues until the present time. This year, Thanksgiving Day will be observed on Thursday, November 24.

Thanksgiving Day is a time to remember our true God to whom we owe our existence, and He continues to provide for our daily needs. Let us turn our attention to the wonderful words of the psalmist: “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all

generations” (Psalm 100:4-5).

Thanksgiving encourages us to appreciate all that God has done for us. We thank Him for giving us the truth which has enlightened us. We realize our unworthiness of His blessings. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Romans 5:8-10). “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:30-31). The Apostle Peter explained that our Lord Jesus was God’s wonderful gift to his human creation. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the

Spirit” (I Peter 3:18).

The Apostle Paul – A True Example Of Thankfulness

Let us be inspired by the zeal and determination of the Apostle Paul. He wrote, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Many of God’s servants endured hardships, but their hearts were filled with thankfulness. This is especially true with the Apostle Paul. He wrote, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (II Corinthians 4:7-11).

Few of the Lord’s people have suffered more for the

gospel than the Apostle Paul. However, there is no indication of complaint in his writings which form a major part of the New Testament. Also in his letter to the Corinthian brethren, he explained, “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (verses 14-18).

Readily, the apostle accepted his duty in the service of our Lord. We know that this service brought him almost continuous suffering and trial which at times nearly cost him his life. He did not waver from his commitment, and he continued serving the Lord and his brethren with his heart filled with thanksgiving and devotion to God.

Like the Apostle Paul, let us give sincere heartfelt praise and thanksgiving to God for all His blessings and benefits He gives to us!

Four Things One Must Know Before Becoming A Child Of God

Number One: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6). “Behold, I was

shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).

Number Two: The best you can do – won’t do! “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The question is directly asked and directly answered in Acts 16:30-31: “And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16).

Number Three: Every sinner needs to know “...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3). “. . . . And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (I John 2:1). “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5). “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10). “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Suppose you were in the third floor of a burning building, and the black smoke was boiling into your room and the hallways, and a friendly fireman with a big ladder knocked at your window and said, “Come with me.” Would you say, “Well, let me try the door: Why not use the elevator? Why not go down the stairway?” Finally you are convinced that your only hope of escape is to get on the ladder and go down with the fireman and land on the ground safely. You found out that the fireman was the way.

Why plunge into the water in New York Harbor to swim to London, England through big waves and water that is filled with man-eating sharks when a rich man is ready to pay your fare on the Queen Mary? Why want to do it your way when your way will not work, because it is not “Do” – it’s “Done.” Jesus said on the cross, “It is finished.” “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans

10:13). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “. . . and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (I Peter 1:23).

Number Four: You MUST know that today is the day, and now is the time.

A man lost in a snow storm finally ran out of physical strength and fell. The next morning, he was found dead at his own doorstep. If he had fallen with his hand stretched out, he would have touched the bottom step. He was so near, and yet so far away. “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6). “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). (“. . . now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”) (II Corinthians 6:2). “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14).

OBEDIENCE

By Sister Alitha Alexander

- O - Overcomers will be rewarded for their obedience.
- B - Believe and be baptized and you shall receive
- E - Eternal life as
- D - Daniel, by obeying, was delivered from the lions den.
- I - Inheritance will be granted to all who believe.
- E - Eve disobeyed and she died.
- N - Noah obeyed God and built an ark and saved
- C - Creation from full destruction. Therefore,
- E - Exercise obedience because without it the heaven and the earth would not have been.



Parents Keep Your Children Away From The Wrong Crowd

Bond Tennant

I remember the time that a grandfather and parents in the Church of God strove to keep their grandson and son away from the wrong crowd.

Parents need to try their best to keep their children away from the wrong crowd. The wrong crowd are those who practice sinfulness and cause rebellion.

Here is something on which to think. A good portion of the Bible is about God trying to keep His people from the wrong crowd. A wrong crowd influence entered the Garden of Eden and caused rebellion. God flooded the earth to destroy the wrong crowd. In the Old Testament, God tried to keep His people, Israel, from the wrong crowd.

In the New Testament, the wrong crowd killed Jesus. The wrong crowd murdered disciples. The book of Revelation tells us that the wrong crowd will finally be destroyed.

It is no wonder that the Bible warns against hanging out with the wrong crowd. Let us quote a few verses to this effect. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (I Corinthians 15:33).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (II Corinthians 6:14)

“Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For their heart studieth destruction, and

their lips talk of mischief” (Proverbs 24:1-2).

“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence” (Proverbs 4:14-17).

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Psalm 1:1).

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi: (“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”) (Philippians 3:18-19).

The following are some of the things that parents can do to keep their children from the wrong crowds. Parents, don’t drop your children off at the movies or a party unless they are with kids you have learned to trust as the right crowd. Don’t drop your children off at youth programs unless there is adequate adult supervision for keeping them where they belong ...and out of empty rooms.

Parents should network together to identify wrong crowd types in order to guide their children away from

The Good Father

By Bibi Allicock



“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (Ephesians 6:1). The key word here is "obey". “...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Samuel 15:22, last part). "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry..." (verse 23, first part). We must realize that if we disobey our parents and become rebellious and stubborn, it is as if we indulge in witchcraft, iniquity and idolatry. The fifth commandment which was written with God’s own finger states, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12).

The Good Father commanded Saul to utterly destroy all the Amalekites consisting of both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. “But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night” (I Samuel 15:9-11). “Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD

anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?” (I Samuel 15:16-19) “And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou” (verse 28).

Because of disobedience, that same Saul whom God sent Samuel to anoint to be king over Israel was rejected by God, Himself, for God had taken the kingdom back from him and given it to another which was better than him. Thus, as children of God and as children in a home, we must be very careful because God loves us more than our parents, because some parents compromise with our wrong doings, but God does not compromise nor is He a respecter of persons. The Psalmist David declared, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up” (Psalm 27:10). Isaiah, the prophet wrote, “Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah 49:15). “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Brother Francis from Grenada always admonished

us that children of God take no chances, and our heavenly Father grants us two ways. Therefore He says to us, "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" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Children, let us remember Lot who chose the best part of the land, but it was not the best part in which to dwell. Sometimes when we look around us and see the things that our neighbors have, we start to become envious, but we must remember that our heavenly Father owns it all, and more likely He will give it to us according to our needs. God and Abraham had such a relationship that before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He made it known unto Abraham what was His plan for that city. "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? (Genesis 18:17-18) "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come upon me; and if not, I will know" (verses 20-21). "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (verse 23). We saw where God and Abraham communicated together. Abraham kept the count down even unto ten. "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (verse 32).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Here, the Lord shows us that few will find the narrow way, but let us be ones who find it. When we find it, no matter how green the grass looks elsewhere, please do not launch out. Launching out, though, was very good for the fishermen. When Jesus was at the lake of Gennesaret, after He finished His sermon, He said unto Simon, "...Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught" (Luke 5:4, last part). "And Simon

answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (verses 5-8).

We see that Peter obeyed the Lord and launched out, which was good for them. However, launching out can be detrimental for us because the Apostle John encourages us to, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

Simon Peter and his fellows had toiled all night but didn't catch any fish. Thus, they had need. The Lord saw the need and had compassion on them when He granted them a miracle.

Since commandment number five is a commandment with a promise, let us do the honors that we may be honored or rewarded. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:7-11)

Since our parents will ensure that we have the physical things that we have need of, let us therefore be obedient unto them and also unto our heavenly Father, that we may be able to gain the spiritual gifts which our heavenly Father has in store for us. Always remember that, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

The Seven Churches--(Part One)

By David DeLong

In this article, we will not be examining whether the seven churches of Revelation are time periods in history, or whether they represent churches in our day. Rather, we will examine the messages given to each of the churches so that we may apply this teaching to our own lives. These seven churches existed in the Apostle John's time and, geographically, they formed a rough circle in the western part of Asia Minor. The Lord chose these particular churches as examples of the successes and failures that could be in every church of God.

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:1-7).

Concerning the church of Ephesus, as well as all of the seven churches, the Lord addresses His messages "unto", or "to", the "angel" of that church. Some believe that the angels, which means "messengers", to which the messages of the churches are being delivered, are the pastors of those churches. This may be true. However, they may be actual angels from heaven. Notice that when Revelation was being given to John, it came by an angel: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Revelation 1:1). It is an amazing thought that per-

haps the Lord has a special angel watching over each of His churches.

Jesus refers to Himself as "...he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Revelation 2:1). In chapter 1, verse 20, the seven candlesticks are the seven churches, and the seven stars are the angels of the churches (see chapter 9, verse 1, where a star also appears to represent an angel).

The Lord praises the good works of the saints in Ephesus, even to the trying of those who were false apostles. This not only shows the diligence of the Ephesian brethren, but it proves that the apostolic form of church government was being followed as instituted by Jesus. However, something tragic had happened to these disciples--they had left their "first love". Perhaps they were weary in well doing. Maybe the cares of this life was beginning to wear them down. In any case, they were just going through the motions and not having any real zeal for the work of the Lord. This is a good reminder for us. If we let our relationship with the Lord slip, we can also lose our first love for Him.

Jesus commands them to "repent, and do the first works". In other words, they were to regain their former loving relationship with Him, and to have a passion for His service. If they didn't, He would remove their candlestick out of its place. Their candlestick, we recall, was their church itself. How does a church get removed from its place? For one thing, it can stop being "the light of the world" (see Matthew 5:14-16). The local church can lose its influence in the community, and thus it can eventually die out.

However, the Ephesian brethren did hate "the deeds of the Nicolaitans", something that Jesus also hated. The Nicolaitans were a group of gnostic Christians who were involved in immorality. The origin of this group is not known, but it was most likely started by a man named Nicolas and its licentiousness was practiced by some. The church of Ephesus did not allow these evil deeds to take place in their congregation. This was praised by the Lord

Jesus.

To each of the seven churches, the Lord gives this warning--a warning which applies to all disciples of every age: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..." To the overcomer a promise is made that he or she will be given "to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." This may be the final fulfillment of what was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 2:9).

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Revelation 2:8-11).

Here Jesus calls Himself "the first and the last" (see also chapter 1:11-18). He is the One who died for us and now is alive in heaven. The church in Smyrna is praised for its good works and for enduring tribulation. In financial matters, it is a poor church, but in spiritual matters it is a rich one. This is a wonderful testimony to this church, and it is a comforting message to us as well. We may be struggling with a low church budget. We may have a congregation which is not able to contribute very much in offerings. But the Lord looks at our hearts, not our offering plates. If our church is rich in faith, prayer, Bible study, and other spiritual matters, then we have a rich church.

Some in the church in Smyrna were apparently calling themselves Jews when they were not. To the Lord, this is not only telling a lie, but it is being "the synagogue of Satan". Many today want to call themselves Jews to try to receive of the blessings that are promised to Israel. Galatians 3:28 informs us that in Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek..." The Bible instructs us that there are three classes of people: Jews, Gentiles, and the church of God (see I Corinthians 10:32). Therefore, anyone who is truly in Christ is a member of the church of God. Furthermore, Galatians 3:29 teaches us: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The devil would cast some of the Smyrna brethren into prison. This would be to try their faith. Every believer must have his or her faith tried. Perhaps some in our generation will be cast into prison for their faith. The Lord gives these promises: "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And, "...He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Revelation 2:10-11).

"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

To the church in Pergamos Jesus is witnessed as having a sharp, double-edged sword. This probably represents the Word of God (see Hebrews 4:12). To this church, like the two preceding churches, the Lord praises them for their good works. They held fast to His name and had not denied Christ's faith, even though they lived among pagans who practiced gross idolatry. Antipas had been a faithful representative of Jesus, even giving up his life for his testimony to the Lord.

In Pergamos, there were temples dedicated to the pagan gods Zeus, Athene, Apollo, and Aesculapius. The symbol for Aesculapius was a serpent, and thus the worship of this pagan deity, as well as the others, may have given to Pergamos the notorious scriptural designation of "where Satan's seat is" (see Smith's Bible Dictionary, pg. 500).

However, some of the congregation in Pergamos held the "doctrine of Balaam". Balaam, we recall, was a back-slidden prophet of God who had been "hired" by king

Balak of Moab to curse the children of Israel. But God would not allow him to curse them. Later, Balaam gave counsel in order for the children of Israel to commit whoredom with the women of Moab and to eat sacrifices to, as well as worship, Moab's gods (see Numbers 22:1-12; 25:1-3; 31:15-16). Thus, like Balaam's influence, some in the Pergamos church were being enticed to eat "things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

It may be possible to look at this situation in Pergamos through two different views: naturally and symbolically. Some of these church members may have been involved in these sins physically. Though the Apostle Paul makes it clear that believers may eat foods offered to idols, he also writes that it is a sin for one to do so with a defiled conscience (see I Corinthians 8:4-7). And, of course, it is always wrong for a person to commit fornication.

If the Scriptures are referring to committing these sins in a symbolical sense, then what may the Apostle John be teaching us? Since this situation is also present within the next church, Thyatira, we will wait until then to answer the question. But the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans" was also being taught in the church of Pergamos. This, as we have seen, was at least partly about physical fornication.

The message of the Lord for these believers is to repent or suffer the consequences. Overcomers will be able "to eat of the hidden manna" (possibly the Lord, Himself-see John 6:47-51), and will receive a white stone with a new name written in it.

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the

depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 2:18-29).

Jesus' appearance in this passage is similar to that in Revelation 1:14-15. Having "...eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet...like fine brass" probably refers to Christ's attribute of judgment, since fire and brass can designate this quality (see Exodus 27:1-3; Isaiah 66:15-17). The church in Thyatira was praised for a number of fine characteristics: works, charity, service, faith, patience, and that their last works were even more than their first. And yet, like most of the other churches, the Lord pointed out some things that He wanted to correct in the Thyatira church. He specifically mentions that they allowed "Jezebel", a self-proclaimed prophetess, "to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." This situation was similar, as we have seen, to that in the church in Pergamos.

Again, these sins may have been physically committed in the church in Thyatira. However, there may be some indication that they symbolize other abominations being perpetrated as well. For instance, in verse 23 the Lord informs us about this Jezebel: "...I will kill her children with death..." This could not be referring to Jezebel's natural children (unless they were also involved in their mother's sins), because the Lord promised that the children will not die for a parent's wrong doing (see Ezekiel 18:20). Very possibly, then, Jezebel's children represent her followers who are partaking of her teachings.

If committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols is symbolical, what could they represent? In the Old Testament, spiritual fornication against the Lord involved worshiping idols (see Ezekiel 16:20-25). Idolatry, therefore, is serving other gods rather than the Lord. It is putting one's thoughts and ways up higher than the Lord's thoughts and ways (see Isaiah 55:7-9). Eating things sacrificed to idols could involve receiving teachings which are contrary to the will of God. Jesus said "...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). Romans 12:1 informs us to "...present your

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Both of these concepts require obedience and submission to God's will.

Gnostic teachings were being introduced into the church of God, one of which was the substitution of Sunday worship for the Sabbath. Traditions of men were competing for acceptance along with the truth of God's Word. Paganism was, in some cases, being mixed in with the pure teachings of the apostles. Jezebel, therefore, may have represented a gnostic religious movement which was trying to "teach and to seduce" God's servants. These teachings may very well have involved physical fornication, too. In any case, they helped cause some in the Thyatira church to disobey God's commandments and to follow an evil path.

One tragedy of these happenings was that "Jezebel" did not repent, even though the Lord gave her a chance to do so. Both she and her followers would have "great tribulation" unless they would repent, even to her children (possibly her followers) being killed by the Lord. Those who did not get involved with Jezebel's doctrine and "the depths of Satan" would be rewarded. They were to "hold fast till I come."

To the overcomer, Christ will "give power over the nations". He, or she, will "rule them with a rod of iron..." even as Jesus received of His Father. That person will also receive "the morning star."



Sister Monica Herrera
1936 - 2011

Sister Monica Herrera was born May 4th, 1936, and went to rest May 29th, 2011. She was born in, and was a long time resident of, Seagoville, TX.

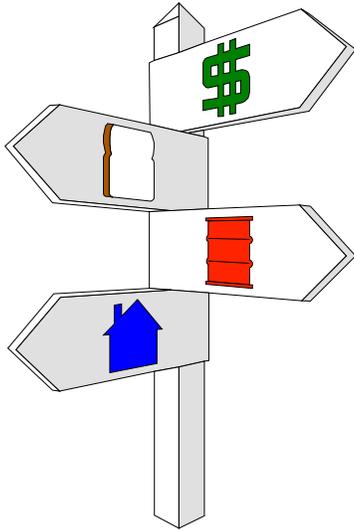
She is survived by her husband of 56 years, Brother Paul Herrera, who is an apostle of the church. Her children are: Paul Herrera Jr., Naomi Sanchez, Abel Herrera Sr., Israel Herrera, Debbie Smith, Louis Herrera, Eli Herrera and Carolina Herrera. She had 24 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren.

Sister Monica was a glorious member of the Church of God, 7th Day, and held the position of church secretary for 55 years. She was also a faithful member of the Women's Society and held many chairs and positions through the years, including the position of corresponding secretary. She also served as Deaconess of the church for a number of years.

Sister Monica always realized the importance and value of education. She was the first Hispanic female to graduate from Seagoville High School and later went on to receive her Associates Degree from Paul Quinn University and was working on her Bachelors Degree at the age of 64. She began the Herrera Scholarship Fund to help her grandchildren who wished to further their education. She loved working with children and began working for Dallas Independent School District as a teacher's assistant in 1973 at Seagoville Elementary. She later became an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher at Seagoville Middle School, working in education for a total of 22 years. She also had a passion for the children in the church where she volunteered teaching the children and the youth.

She was an active member of the PTA, and National PTA, for 45 years. She served as the first vice president of the Dallas City Council of PTA's. Sister Monica played a vital role in her community; she was the first female Hispanic City Council member for the City of Seagoville. She was also a member of MABPW (Mexican American Business & Professional Women's Club) and held the position of treasurer on the board.

To express the differences Sister Monica made in her community, church, and in the lives of those who knew her, would be impossible. Her lovingkindness and friendship to all she met made her a very special child of God. She would be proud if you would make it your life mission to love one another and to serve the Lord and the church with your whole heart. She will never be forgotten and will truly be missed by all those who knew and loved her. We look forward to seeing Sister Monica at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

Personal

Persecuting Christians

I wish to share with you an item that was sent to me by an organization that works with those Christians who are persecuted. Keep in mind that this item only tells of those Christians who are persecuted by radical Islamists. The item follows:

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,

And Of His Final Prophet, Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him):

The true religion of Islam **WILLARISE** in your area: you cannot stop Allah's will.

We have been watching your family: we have seen you go to church and seen you pray to your false god. We know that you are infidels, and we will deal with you as our holy Quran declares: In Sura 9 verse 5, it says **TO SLAY** the idolaters wherever you find them: take them captive and besiege them.

It also says in Sura 9 verse 29 to **FIGHT** those who have been given the scripture and believe not in Allah or the Last Day or follow not the religion of truth.

If you and your entire family do not leave your false religion and follow Islam you will be killed. Your sons will be slaughtered and your daughters will become Muslim wives, bearing sons who will fight for Allah in this region.

Your **ONLY** other option is to **FLEE TONIGHT**. Leave your home and everything behind.

ALLAHU AKBAR!

(end of item)

Unbelievable! It is difficult to believe that anyone could threaten to kill others in order to get them to convert to Islam or any other religion. This is an extreme form of

persecution. I am far from being an authority on Islam, but I do know that Islam was spread by the sword in the beginning of its being founded.

Of course times have changed, and many Muslims claim to be peaceful, which may be correct. There has been a division made between radical Muslims (sometimes call fundamental Muslims which are spoken of in the item) and peaceful Muslims who do not persecute Christians and others.

There seems to be a difference in the minds of Muhammad (the prophet of Islam) and our Lord Jesus Christ (Who is the living prophet that true Christians follow) in regard to the means in which their messages were to be spread. A religion can be no better than its founding prophet.

First, Islam seems to have been spread by the sword. However, in some manner, there appeared those who are peaceful. In Christianity, the opposite seems to be true. Christ told His disciples to preach the gospel. His disciples are to love one another, and they are to love their enemies- not kill them.

There are those who discredit Christianity by pointing to the Crusades. We must remember that those who participated in the Crusades were not really Christians who followed the teachings of Christ. They were those who did the bidding of the harlot woman (the false church who changed the truth that Christ taught).

Without a doubt, persecution is increasing in this last time. Christians cannot escape persecution. Persecution will happen in some form or another to all of those who live godly. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).

The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary defines persecute as "harass persistently, esp. make suffer for divergent principles". Persecution of

Christians is not only done by radical Islamists. Those of other religions, excluding radical or fundamental Islam, have also persecuted Christians. This has happened in India when those of the Hindu religion set fire to buildings used as meeting houses for Christians.

There is even persecution in the Christian community. Some who call themselves Christians wish to persecute, or harass, others who call themselves Christians but hold to strange doctrines or they may dress differently. Those who are in error will answer to God—not man. The Church of God does not persecute anyone because Galatians 6:10 tells them, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” This gives them no choice but to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them!

Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:43-44).

--B. T.

CHANGING HOLIDAY'S FOCUS

Church pushes to shed some of season's trappings

By Cassandra Kirby

Knight Ridder Newspapers

Lexington, Ky. - A Kentucky church is approaching Christmas a little differently this year: it is skipping it. And through advertisements around town and their Web site, www.skipchristmas.net, members of the church are urging you to do the same.

Crossroads Christian Church in Lexington isn't suggesting bailing out on the celebration altogether, just the bad parts: the stress, spending money you can't afford to spend, the huge crowds.

“We want to encourage people not to get so caught up in the trappings of the season that they miss the heart of what Christmas is about,” said Fred Turner, a minister at the church. “We are not calling for people not to buy presents or put up trees, but we are trying to turn the focus on the things that matter.”

He said people often tell him how they wish they could scale back and not spend as much on Christmas, or how they feel obligated to buy gifts for certain people, even if they don't want to.

He said the church got the idea from John Grisham's

book *Skipping Christmas* which has been made into a movie, *Christmas With the Kranks*. The story is about Luther Krank (Tim Allen), who is sick of the high costs of Christmas and persuades his wife to skip the holiday and spend the money on a cruise. When his Peace Corps-bound daughter decides to come home for Christmas, he goes into a frenzy of preparations.

The nondenominational church began weekly discussions earlier this month. The sessions focus on helping the community find simplicity, joy, rest, belonging, and Jesus, while skipping the loneliness, obligations and rush that come with the holiday.

“We really think this is important because the heart of Christmas needs to be getting back to who Jesus is and why he cares,” Turner said.

Davis Caldwell, a member of the church since 1989, said he thinks some people might consider the church's message negative when they first see the advertisements – some just list the Web site address.

Caldwell said he thinks the ads will intrigue some, though, and encourage them to log on to find out what the message is all about.

“I think people will find it interesting when they see the Web site,” he said.

Caldwell said that when the idea was brought up at church last month, he and other members were instantly excited.

He said the *Skipping Christmas* theme, as ironic as it might sound, will bring some back to the original reason for the holiday.

“It's fun to celebrate, it's fun to give gifts and talk about Santa and all of that, but it's important to focus on the gift God gave us: Jesus,” he said.

--Houston Chronicle

Comment

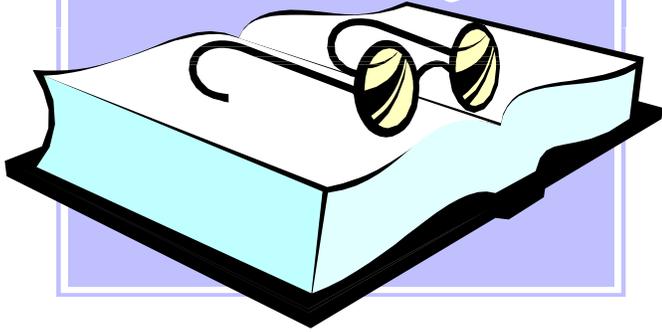
One cannot get rid of the bad parts of Christmas because the whole observance of it is bad. Jesus is not the heart of Christmas. In fact, because of its origin, it is an abomination to Him.

Yes, Christmas is fun to celebrate, and that is just why they do it. We know that December 25 has nothing to do with the birthday of our Lord. When we celebrate a birthday, we give gifts to the one who has the birthday. We do not exchange gifts among ourselves.

The observance of Christmas is a trap itself!

BIBLE

Study



Questions

and

Answers

Question: Will you please comment on family arguments in the home? How can we overcome them?

Answer: First, let us tell you a story. The new pastor was duly impressed when the hostess showed him around her house. "I spent seven years in hunting for the dishes to make up this matched set," she exclaimed. Then pointing to flowered drapes in the living room, she continued with a note of pride in her voice. "I spent two entire days scouring the department stores in New York City before I found these drapes to match our pink wallpaper."

A few weeks later, the pastor walked up to the same house for a brief visit. Pausing momentarily before ringing the doorbell, he overheard a violent quarrel raging among the family. The moment he touched the doorbell, the argument ceased, and he was ushered into the living room where he was greeted by a smiling wife and quiet children. Try as he might, however, his countenance betrayed his knowledge of the strife.

The wife, noticing his reaction, said, "I guess you overheard us."

"Unavoidable, I did," the pastor admitted sadly.

"That is the biggest blight to our happiness. Every now and then a quarrel breaks out to mar the tranquility of our home," the husband regretfully added.

From that point on, the pastor entered into a frank discussion of the difficulties with the family, who were all Believers. They listened attentively while he pointed out

God's commands on the matter of bitterness in the home, and told them that it was one of Satan's chief weapons in destroying contentment. The pastor ended his advice by pointing to the drapes in the living room. "If each one of you would choose your words as carefully as those drapes were chosen for the pleasantness of the home, I'm sure no unkind, hateful arguments would destroy its loveliness again." (end of story)

That God fearing home is typical of thousands of others. Months, and even years, are spent in careful selections of the pieces that go to make it a beautiful, harmonious place, but amid all the beauty little time is given to the selection of words of love and gentleness. It is even sadder because these same voices are often lifted in prayer around the table, or in family devotions. God's Word describes the situation perfectly: "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (James 3:10).

Theoretically, most Believers are aware of the Scriptures' teaching on this subject, but, sad to say, all too many fail to apply their knowledge to the refined art of abundant Christ-like living. It is rather sobering to realize that any person's intrinsic worth is no greater than his self-control in choosing his words to others.

Out of the ruin and wreck of humanity, the home still stands as our only foundation of society. This is particularly true of the religious home. Its very nature, built as it is on the love of a man and a woman, who by mutual consent

committed themselves to one another, should cause every husband and wife to take account earnestly of their conversation in the home.

During the days of courtship, no harsh or contemptible words passed between them. The utmost kindness and patience were exercised, resulting in a period of continual pleasure. Any problems arising were quietly discussed, and a genuine effort was made to keep the harmony of the relationship on the highest level. Why, then, after the marriage ceremony, should this favorable condition cease to be? "Hateful words" supply the majority of the answers. Scripture instructs husbands and wives to love one another, and surely cranky words do not manifest this love.

How many homes, even religious homes, could testify that a few unkind words led from one thing to another, until bitter hate flared to unforeseen ramifications? How many times in unguarded fury a cutting word has caused deep sorrow to one near and dear, sometimes wounding to such an extent as to bring shipwreck to love and consequently to the marriage? God's Word tells us, "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

When husband and wife welcome into their home the gift of children, the responsibility is multiplied infinitely. The pattern of the child's entire future is molded and is set in the early impressionable years. No one can ever overestimate the importance of consecrated conduct in conversation during this time. When sensitive children are exposed to constant bickering, how can they hope to overcome the undesirable example set for them?

Why should children of God allow Satan to use the God-given gift of speech to breed bitterness and strife in the hearts of children? Passionate outbreaks of irritability often crush and even destroy a child's incentive in his daily activities. Then parents wonder why Junior is not getting along in school the way he should.

It has been said that no one ever won an argument, and we find in Job 6:25 Scriptural backing for this statement: "How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?" The old adage "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still" is as true today as ever before.

We have noticed the negative side of this matter. Now let us glance at the other side.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath." Kind, tender words spoken in response to a quarrelsome person will

leave the pathway open to pleasantness. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

In this world of chaos and trouble, the home should be a mighty fortress of understanding and sympathy. Here the rough, sharp edge of the world's rebuffs must be soothed. The husband, home from the pressure of a difficult day in the business world, has a right to expect encouragement from his wife. The wife, tired with her day's work, has every right to expect words of love and affection from her husband when he returns home.

Here, behind closed doors of the home, advice and correction should be meted out, tempered with wholesome love. Problems may be solved without contention, both husband and wife remembering the Lord's promise of guidance.

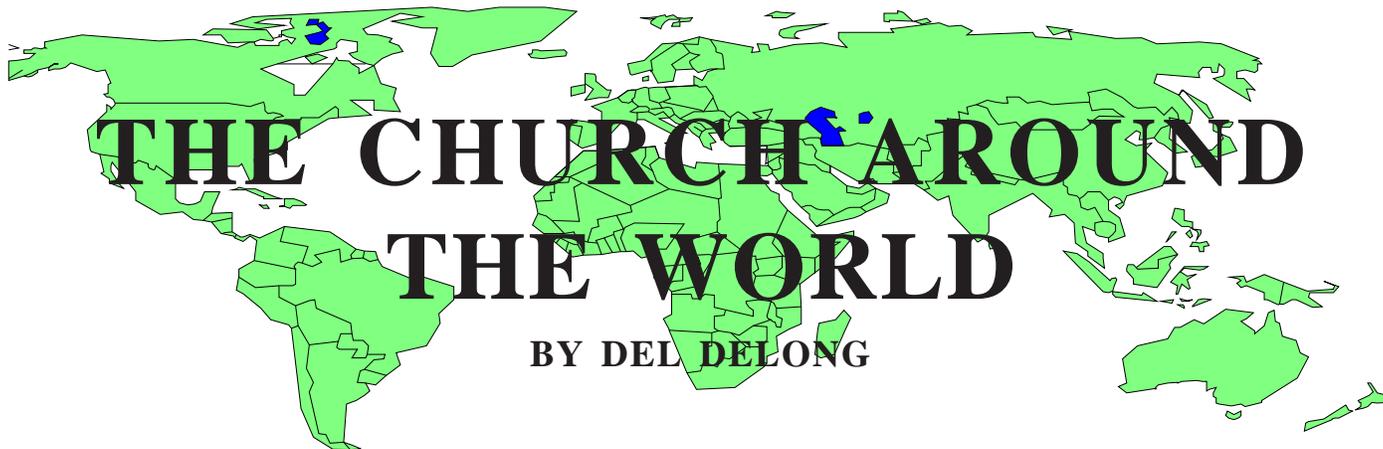
The God-fearing home, according to God's Word, should be the schooling ground for children in the ministration of godly instruction. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). These verses are a powerful indictment against the laxness exhibited by the average Christ-like parents toward their responsibility to their children in regard to instruction in the Ten Commandments.

Our peculiarities and weaknesses are best known to our loved ones, and by the same token, theirs are known by us. These circumstances require a great deal of tolerance in our attitude. We can help the members of our households overcome these handicaps, or we can aggravate these difficulties by not using tact and love.

David's prayer, found in Psalm 141:3, offers the God-given corrective for strife, bickering, quarrels, and every sort of trouble arising from the abuse of the tongue: "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Question: Who were the angels of the seven churches of the second and third chapters of Revelation?

Answer: The word "angel" means "messenger", and those "angels of the churches" were doubtless messengers from the churches sent to inform John in his exile on Patmos.



The Church in Tahiti





LESSON I

SPIES SENT INTO THE PROMISED LAND

Scripture Reading: Numbers 13:17-33.

Golden Text: Numbers 13:17 (first part).

“And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan...”

NOTE: The Lord has led the children of Israel in their long journey to Canaan, and now they were at the very border of the land.

1. At this time, what did God tell Moses to do? Numbers 13:1-2.
2. What did Moses ask these spies to do? Numbers 13:17-18.
3. Besides finding out about the strength of the people, what else were they to look for? Numbers 13:19-20.
4. How long were the spies gone? Numbers 13:25.
5. When the spies returned, what did they bring with them? Numbers 13:26-27.
6. What report did they give of the people there? Numbers 13:28.
7. Caleb was one of the spies and what did he say? Did the other spies agree with him? Numbers 13:30-32.

NOTE: Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies who brought back a good report.

8. What did the spies who brought evil reports call the people who were in Canaan? Numbers 13:33.

NOTE: Out of the 12 spies who went into Canaan, 10 returned with an evil report. Two believed God and wanted to cross over the land. They knew He had been with them all the way and would still protect them.

LESSON II

MURMURINGS OF THE PEOPLE

Scripture Reading: Numbers 14:1-9.

Golden Text: Numbers 14:2 (first part).

“And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron...”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we found that 12 spies were sent out into the land of Canaan. When they returned, only 2 gave a good report and wanted to go over and take the land.

1. What effect did the evil report of the 10 spies have on the people? Numbers 14:1.
2. Were they sorry they had left Egypt, and what did they decide to do? Numbers 14:2-4.
3. What did Moses and Aaron do? Numbers 14:5.
4. Joshua and Caleb were the two spies who brought a good report. What did they say to the people? Numbers 14:7-8.
5. Why did they tell the people not to be afraid? Numbers 14:9.
6. What did the congregation want to do with their leaders? Numbers 14:10.

NOTE: The people rebelled and refused to go forward. They would have stoned their leaders except for the appearance of the Lord.

7. The Lord was very angry. What did He say He would do? Numbers 14:11-12.
8. Moses answered the Lord and what did he say? Numbers 14:13,16,19.

LESSON III

TURNING BACK INTO THE WILDERNESS

Scripture Reading: Numbers 14:20-45.

Golden Text: Numbers 14:25 (last part).

“...To morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that the Lord was very angry with the children of Israel, and Moses pleads for them.

1. What does God promise, and what will He bring on the people? Numbers 14:20-23.
 2. Caleb was one of the good spies. Was he to see the promised land? Numbers 14:24.
 3. Where did the Lord tell the people to go? Numbers 14:25.
- NOTE: For their disobedience they were sent back into the wilderness.
4. What did the Lord say would happen to all over 20 years old? Numbers 14:29-30.
 5. What would happen to the children under 20? Numbers 14:31.
 6. How long were they to wander in the wilderness? Numbers 14:34.
 7. What did the people want to do when they saw they had sinned? Numbers 14:39-40.
 8. What did Moses tell them about leaving? Numbers 14:41-43.
 9. Did they go anyway? What was the result? Numbers 14:44-45.

LESSON IV

THE REBELLION OF KORAH

Scripture Reading: Numbers 16:1-22.

Golden Text: Numbers 16:19 (first part).

“And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation...”

NOTE: In the last lesson, God turned the children of Israel back into the wilderness because of their sinfulness, lack of faith, and murmurings. Now Moses has a new trouble arise.

1. Who rose up against Moses and how many men were with him? Numbers 16:1-2.
 2. What was the complaint of Korah and others against Moses? Numbers 16:12-14.
 3. Moses was angry and what did he do? Numbers 16:15.
 4. Moses then spoke to Korah and what did he ask him to do? Numbers 16:16, 18-19.
 5. What did the Lord tell Moses and Aaron to do? Numbers 16:20-21.
- THANKFUL HENRY**
6. What did they ask of God? Numbers 16:22.

Matthew Henry, the famous scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary:

“Let me be thankful; first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”



LONE JOE'S PARTNER

By Jean Leathers Phillips

Lone Joe was an old man, and he lived all alone in a little house with only one room that stood back from the street among some big trees. Edna May lived very close by with her daddy and mother in a trim little white cottage with a lawn and garden about it.

Some of the children in the community said unkind things to Lone Joe and sometimes did unkind things, too; but Edna May never did. She liked to go to Lone Joe's little house sometimes and talk to the bent old man who had lived such a long time and could tell such good stories.

One Sabbath noon when it was cold, Edna May said at dinner, "I wonder if Lone Joe has a good dinner today. My, but this meat pie is nice. Couldn't we send over a plate to Lone Joe, Daddy?"

"Yes, daughter, but take time to eat your dinner first, for it is ready," Daddy replied. And tell Lone Joe if he needs anything to let us know. We don't want him to go hungry or cold right here next door to us."

Edna May ate her dinner and hurried into her coat and galoshes, and Mother fixed Lone Joe a nice dinner on a plate in the bottom of a basket so that it would not spill. Then Edna May hurried over to the little house. Lone Joe answered and opened the door when Edna May knocked. How he smiled when he saw the basket and smelled the dinner.

"You're a very good little girl," he said to Edna May. "And you have a very good father and mother too, to

remember old Lone Joe. Here I was down to one tator. But says I to my partner, says I, "Something will turn up. It always does, and sure enough it has. The best dinner I ever ate."

"Partner, Lone Joe?" asked Edna May, "why, who's your partner? I thought you lived all alone and that was why they called you Lone Joe."

"Oh, ye can't see him, but they's a partner with me all the time," Lone Joe told Edna May. "The good Lord give me a partner a long time ago, else I never could lived here all these years. He helps me out of all my tight places. I call him a believing heart."

"A believing heart!" Edna May did not quite understand. "What is it, anyhow, Lone Joe, and how does he live with you or help you?"

Edna May sat down on one of Lone Joe's wobbly old chairs and watched him as he started to eat the good dinner her mother had fixed for him. Lone Joe usually had very nice stories to tell, and Edna May thought he might tell one now.

"Well, it's like this," Lone Joe looked up from his plate to explain. "Long time ago, long time ago," he began, "I read in the Good Book where it says if we love God He will help us and take care of us, but we've got to believe that He is going to do what He says He will do. It says, 'believe in your heart,' really way down here," and Lone Joe put his rough old hand on his ragged shirt front.

"So then I asks the good Lord to make my heart a believing heart so's I'd always believe, really believe, and he did. Now when I get the rheumatism and can't sweep out the depot and do errands and things like that, and my old pocketbook gets empty, I just trusts in the good Lord to keep my believing heart, and my believing heart tells me it's all going to be right, and sure enough, it is. See?"

"I'm going to have a believing heart for a partner, too," Edna May told old Lone Joe. "Cause sometimes I have been afraid to go down the street after dark if Mother needed something. And sometimes I think a girl just can't be honest and truthful all the time, but if I have a believing heart, why, I can be, can't I?"

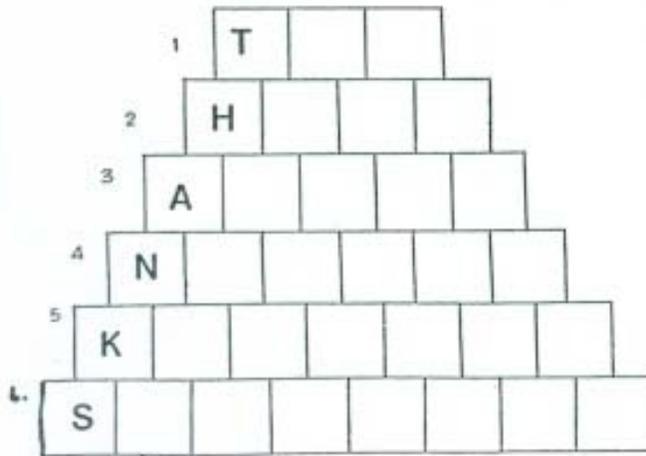
"That you can," old Lone Joe told Edna May. "And it's old Lone Joe that will ask the good Lord this very day to give you that good partner, the believing heart, too." And Edna May ran home singing like a happy little bird.

THANKSGIVING PYRAMIDS

The two pyramid puzzles are based on the words THANKS and GIVING.
Use the clues to fill the rest of the puzzles. Use your Bibles to help find the answers.

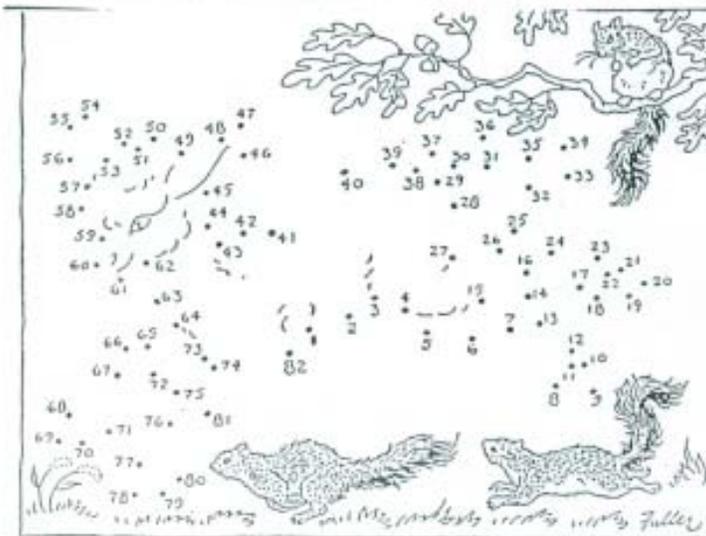
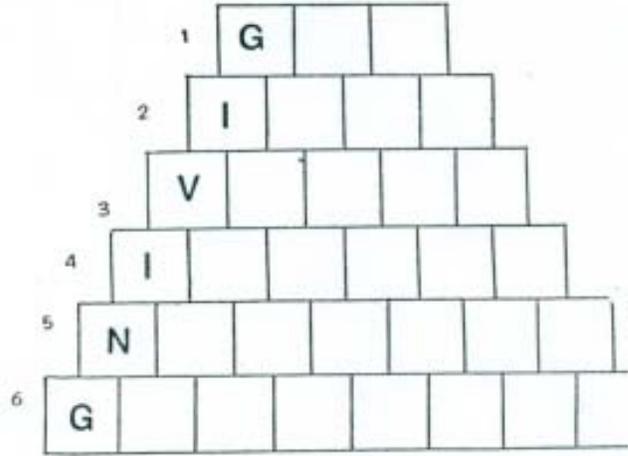
THANKS

1. The number of Commandments.
2. David played this musical instrument to entertain Saul. (I Samuel 16:23).
3. A messenger for God. (Genesis 22:11).
4. This is used for sewing. (Psalm 45:14).
5. God's place of rule over the earth. (II Samuel 7:13).
6. Someone who watches and tends to the sheep. (Isaiah 40:11).



GIVING

1. The Creator of all living things. (Genesis 1:1).
2. Image or statue that people bow down to instead of God. (Acts 7:41).
3. This is what grapes grow on. (Habakkuk 3:17).
4. The name given to Jacob and his descendants. (Genesis 32:28).
5. The fourth (4th) book in the Old Testament.
6. All people in the world other than the Jews. (Romans 11:25).



Draw from dot to dot.

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The Parting of the Red Sea

By David DeLong

The Israelites were led by day,
Protected by a cloud;
At night, a fire showed the way,
With light which God endowed.

A mighty sea before them spread,
The enemy behind;
The Lord, His people, safely led,
As His great glory shined.

Moses stretched his arm and rod,
The waters parted when
A wind blew in that night from God,
And made the sea to open.

The chosen seed then strode in tight
Upon the dried up ground,
Between the waters, left and right;
But Pharaoh's men were drowned.

For God had rolled the waters back,
And packed them in their place,
Destroying those who did attack
The holy, Hebrew race.

God always leads His saints along,
Their sorrows, He partakes;
He wants no one to do them wrong,
Reproves kings for their sakes.



