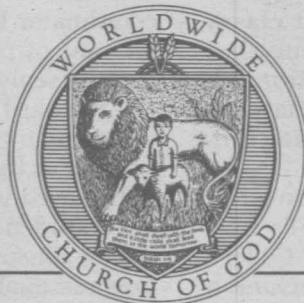


2 New chairman will seek to unite Amerindians in Guyana

4 Can you overcome enough for God?

5 Experienced volunteers needed for special music this Festival

The Worldwide News



VOL. XXII, NO. 10
MAY 17, 1994



Personal from...

JOSEPH W. TKACH

The true Church: what and where is it?

Through Herbert W. Armstrong's 53-year ministry, God blessed the Worldwide Church of God with wholehearted dedication to the Bible as our guide to worship and faith, as well as with a deep commitment to walk in all the ways of God, including the observance of the Fourth Commandment on the seventh day and the observance of the annual festivals.

This heritage is God's bountiful gift to us, and we gratefully and humbly dedicate ourselves through the Holy Spirit to remaining faithful to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by keeping that heritage alive and strong.

Only a tiny minority of Christian churches observe the seventh-day Sabbath, and even fewer observe the annual Holy Days. Because we do not accept the traditional Christian reasoning that the apostles changed the observance of the Fourth Commandment to the first day of the week, we have tended to regard all Sunday-keeping Christians as children of the devil.

Over the years, some of us have unnecessarily alienated family members, friends and others because many of us have not always understood how *God instructs us* to think of and relate to members of other Christian churches. In this letter, I want to explain more fully how the Bible teaches us to look at this subject.

Is there such a thing as a "nominal Christian"? In other words, are there people who are Christians "in name only"? Of course there are. And there are lots of them. That is why so much of the material we write in *The Plain Truth* is designed to stir up such people who call themselves Christian, to motivate them to make a commitment to obey God.

The fact is, *most* people who claim the name "Christian," and even most of those who attend a church, are, in reality, only nominal Christians. As most of us know, real commitment to Christ, real belief, real fruit of the Spirit, is *scarce*.

On the other hand, we also need to realize that *not everyone* who claims the name "Christian" is only a nominal Christian. Many of us know people who are indeed dedicated Christians, yet are not in our Church.

As you know, in my speaking and writing I have often commented that we cannot limit where and with whom God works when it comes to other Christian churches. I make it a point to bring that up when I visit church areas because it has to do with an *attitude of heart* that is of great concern to God.

When I have addressed this topic, I have usually explained that the job of deciding where God works or does not work is simply not our business. It is God's business. God does, however, make it our business *not to condemn others who believe in his Son*.

Jesus made that plain in Mark 9:38-41. However, since we have had a history of doing just that, I need to mention it from time to time so we all understand what God expects of us.

The first question that comes to mind when this subject comes up is this: If there are converted people in other churches, does that mean we are not the true Church of God? The answer is that it definitely does *not* mean we aren't the true Church of God. We need to understand what the true Church of God actually is, and what it is not.

If God also has children in other churches, that does not mean we are not his children! It simply means we can rejoice, just as the angels in heaven do, that sinners have come to repentance. It doesn't lessen our identity as God's people. It doesn't alter our responsibility before God to preach the gospel and make disciples.

It doesn't mean we aren't the true Church of God. *It simply points out the fact that the true Church of God is not limited to any corporate entity nor any human organization.*

The true Church of God consists of all converted people, all people who have the Holy Spirit. That is a point Mr. Armstrong frequently

See Personal, page 3

Exciting viewer response marks television spot advertisements

One woman tells her husband she's found what she's been looking for

By Paul Monteith

Television spot ads offering booklets and a subscription to *The Plain Truth* have generated more than 90,000 requests since they began airing this year.

Some television viewers asked for more than literature, however. "Within the last five weeks we've had about 15 people show up for services," said Curtis May, pastor of the Los Angeles church.

"They saw our ads on television and when they called in for the booklets they asked if there was a church nearby."

One of those attending services told Mr. May she had been going to a different church every Sunday to find the right one to attend. When she returned home her husband would look at her as she walked through the doorway and say, "That wasn't the one, was it?"

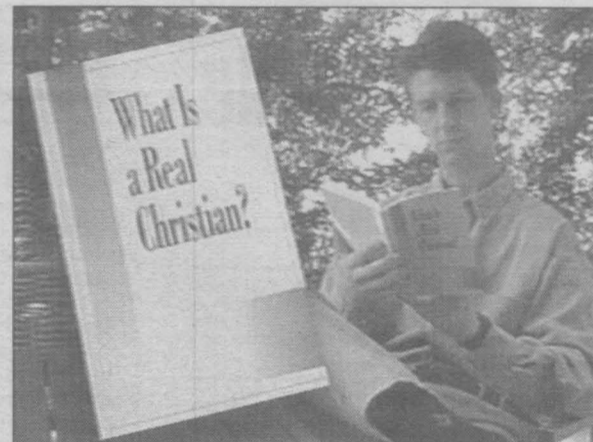
"Her husband was there as she told me the story," Mr. May said. "After she attended a service with us, her husband knew by the smile on her face when she

got home that she had found what she was looking for. The next Sabbath she brought along her sister-in-law."

Richard Dunlap, pastor of the Ada and Lawton, Oklahoma, churches, said two people attended services after seeing the spot ads aired in his area, and another two telephoned him to ask questions.

The 60-second direct response ads that aired in the Southern California and Oklahoma areas were part of a test that included several other television markets throughout the country.

The ads, produced by the Television Department, will eventually replace the *World Tomorrow* telecast as the way the Church advertises its magazine and booklets on television.

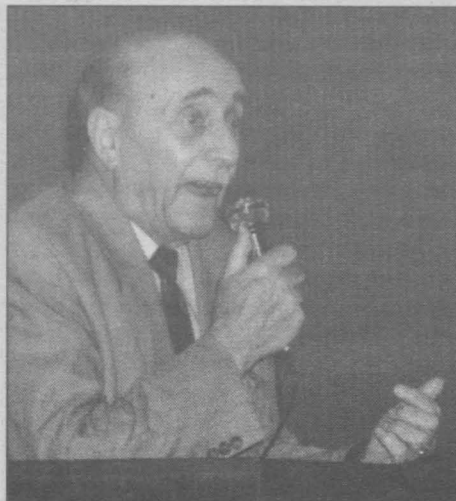


ON THE SPOT—*What Is a Real Christian?* is one of four spot ads. [Video photo by Ambassador Television]

Visit to Zaire seen as gift from God

By Bernard Andrist

KINSHASA, Zaire—"From now on, you will be under my protection," a commando soldier in charge of the Intercontinental Hotel here told me on my arrival Feb. 10. Despite police and army roadblocks and customs



Bernard Andrist

difficulties, this trip turned out as a gift from God. The members were enthusiastic to see me again, and so was I to see them.

Many shops were destroyed and looted. Shop windows were broken and covered with planks, sheet iron or cement.

Unemployment is considerable, and transportation is scarce and expensive. Gasoline has doubled in price to 75 cents a liter. School fees are about \$20 per child. I took the Church members some funds to buy food.

A deacon in the Church in Zaire, who is an assistant manager, earns \$20 a month, when a bottle of Coca-Cola costs \$30. He has not been paid in three months.

The members have courage and faith. No one has asked me for finan-

See Zaire, page 2

Bernard Andrist, who pastors brethren in French-speaking Africa, submitted this report March 10.

AC senior dinner wins accolades from students

By Reginald Killingley

"It's an inspirational and classy evening—and a unifying one that helps us to focus on perfection," is how senior Sharon Wiese of Hanover Park, Illinois, described senior dinner, April 27.

For the annual occasion—the social highlight of a student's four years at AC—the Ambassador College Field House Auditorium became a five-star restaurant.

College founder Herbert W. Armstrong began the tradition of dining with graduating seniors. Joseph W. Tkach, chairman of the board of regents, has continued the tradition.

For senior Jim Moody of Colville, Washington, the dinner was a capstone: "Sitting at the table reminiscing has brought back many pleasant memories of my four years here at AC," he said.

Fellow senior Lance McKinnon of Adairsville, Georgia, put it this way: "If rarity be the measure of value, once-in-a-lifetime events such as senior dinner would have to be considered priceless."

This year the event was organized in-house, at a considerable savings over past years. Debbie Wood, overall coordinator for the dinner, said: "The amount of preparation for an event such as senior dinner is considerable, but the hard work and the participation of many people behind the scenes enabled us to pull it off successfully."

The hard work paid off handsomely in student compliments. "Senior dinner illustrates the goals of perfection and quality—it's a great privilege to be here," said Miss Wiese.

In his toast to the senior class at the conclusion of the dinner, Mr. Tkach encouraged the seniors to "be rich in deeds and service to humanity."



SENIORITY—From left: Josh Baudoin, Joseph Tkach, Karen Mosleh and Heidi Topash. [Photo by Craig Pifer]

Member bends his shoulder to the task

GUYANA—Eustace Rodrigues, a member who lives in the heart of Guyana, is the new chairman of the Regional Democratic Council's Region 9. Mr. Rodrigues, who is 72 and speaks five languages, "does not like the way things have been going for his fellow Amerindians and has very little time for terms like 'comrade' as he bends his shoulder to the task," reported the *Georgetown Chronicle*.

Mr. Rodrigues plans to reconstruct a major bridge, improve education in the region and unite Amerindians. "I never look for honor," he told the *Chronicle*. "Discipline, to me, is one of the pillars of life, and honesty. With the spirit of God, I will try to do the best that I can for one and all."

Working as a farmer in the Awarewaunau area, Mr. Rodrigues has planted "every crop that could bring a few dollars," including peanuts, rice and sugarcane. He also raises cattle and fowl, assisted by his family. He has 13 children, knows carpentry and loves to read.

Zaire: Members hopeful, optimistic

Continued from page 1

cial help to live, but several have asked for assistance to pay schooling fees.

On the Sabbath, Feb. 12, 115 people attended services. Many children were unable to come because of transportation problems. Members walked up to four hours to attend, some of whom had eaten nothing that morning.

I baptized six people that Sabbath, and the next day 60 people came to a Bible study. We ate a sandwich without butter or mar-

garine and had a sweet drink of the country.

Many questions were asked, and we talked about building our own meeting halls and having our own schools. The members are hopeful and optimistic.

Some members in Binza, Zaire, have opened a small bakery, which will employ about 10 people. Others are growing crops, but the fields are far from Kinshasa.

The church in Zaire is solid, faithful to Christ and Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach. No member has followed the dissidents.

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Letters to the Editor

Letters for this section should be addressed to "Letters to the Editor." The editor reserves the right to use letters so addressed in whole or in part, and to include your name and edit the letter for clarity or space. We welcome your comments.

Out of the darkness

What a wonderful, inspiring blessing it is to receive *The Worldwide News* each fortnight, to read articles that are unceasingly positive and encouraging.

Sad to say, so many publications in our Western world deem it necessary to emphasize detailed accounts of murder; with pictures of mindless violence; articles on anything and everything to do with sex and which are contrary to God's teachings; stories exploring spiritualism and star signs; empty, misguided advice on how to handle problems; escapism; fruitless gossip about the rich and famous; and advertising designed to shock and manipulate the general public.

It's a battle to weed through the print and electronic media to find anything of value. Even sadder is the fact that most people have been fed this diet for so long that they would probably consider any publication that reported good, uplifting news as being boring.

Yet, to prove the contrary, we have the example of *The Worldwide News*. It is so inspiring to read stories of God's intervention in people's lives; so encouraging to experience reporting that emphasizes peace and hope; so moving to share in the joy and sufferings of those listed in the births, deaths and marriages section; and so exciting to behold the accomplishments of the Church as more people around the world are lifted out of their darkness into the glorious light of God's truth.

Zoë Krause
Newport Beach, Australia

Coming close to home

I applaud the Church's decision to build meeting halls instead of renting space. I pray the day will come when the Church will have a place of worship in every community.

When one has to travel miles to church and depend on others for transportation, it limits one's ability to be as active in church affairs as one would like to be. I thank God for helping me find the Worldwide Church of God.

Grace Moore
Clermont, Florida

Free from the prison of sin

I have lived a troublesome life filled with drunkenness, drug addiction, thievery, forni-

cation and all forms of lawlessness. My life was miserable and I was ashamed of my sinful ways. I've been in and out of prisons for half of my life. I am presently serving time in a prison.

I subscribed to *The Plain Truth* back in the '80s during my third or fourth felony conviction. I became interested in the Lord's salvation as I read *Plain Truth* articles.

Reading your literature has helped me to understand God's Word and has helped open my eye of faith to the Lord's salvation. I have come to understand the Lord's will for me, and now I'm growing to be a highly effective servant to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I've been baptized and have been given the Holy Spirit. And even though I'm still imprisoned for my lawlessness in the past, I'm very much at peace in my heart and mind through the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

My life has changed completely. Being in confinement has no effect on me now because I'm serving the Lord Jesus Christ and I am willing to go serve the Lord wherever he wills

for me to be. I am so thankful to the Lord for his precious love and the blessings God has so graciously bestowed upon me.

Name withheld

Mapping it out

I have been a member since 1965 and have received *The Plain Truth* and *The Worldwide News* with enthusiasm. In the past 29 years we have witnessed changes according to God's will and much growth. It is exciting to see where in the world this growth is taking place.

I enjoy it when you include maps with your articles. In that way I can better realize where our brethren are located in reference to ourselves.

John Thiessen
Huffman, Texas

Hers for the first time

I received *The Worldwide News* and was very excited. I thought only baptized members could receive the paper. If, for some reason, that has changed, I am very glad. I read my in-laws' paper and enjoy everything in it!

I've been with the Church for 13 years and would not exchange it for anything. Thank you for letting us be a part in receiving this paper. Mr. Tkach and all of you who work there are always in my prayers. God bless you all!

Baltic, Ohio

"Into All the World..."

Your involvement in the Work produces fruit. In this column subscribers to the Work's publications and viewers of the *World Tomorrow* telecast express their views and opinions.

Feeding the children

I love learning, and your magazine helps me understand and learn. I am a Christian, a child of God, and cannot find a feeding ground at this time.

If I could receive your articles on a daily basis, it would be just as exciting and fulfilling as it is monthly. Here is a small contribution to help ensure that others as well as myself continue to receive your help.

I pass on some of my magazines to my children to help answer their questions and explain views that I am not capable of doing.

Denver, Colorado

Grace is not cheap

I am pleased with the changes made to *The Plain Truth* and especially with the emphasis on the need for repentance on the part of all who would want to accept the Lord Jesus as their Savior. The life lived is as important as the faith to believe. Most churches now

preach a "cheap grace" message—what I call a "cut-price salvation" not in keeping with the full gospel message.

Bournemouth, England

'Dad's Gone'

I would like to get your *Plain Truth* for my family. I work in a high school library, where we get it, and I am impressed with it. I would also like to get the pamphlet mentioned in your latest issue, *When a Loved One Dies*. This year my very precious husband, David, died very suddenly, and the children and I have been finding it hard to come to grips with it.

I thought the article "Dad's Gone" by Rick Shallenberger [January *Plain Truth*] was very good. My kids miss their dad terribly. He was the most wonderful father. All of us ask the question, Why, God? Why did you take this dad, husband, a man so full of enthusiasm for his Lord, so young in his life? We know we will never know the answer this side of eternity, but the things Rick shared are felt and experienced by us too. We pray God blesses you in your work.

Napier, New Zealand

Personal: The Spirit identifies the true Church

Continued from page 1

stressed. As he explained, it is not the building, nor is it the incorporated organization that constitutes the Church of God.

It is the *people* in whom God dwells by his Spirit that make up the Church, the Body of Christ. The incorporated organization is a tool that enables the Church to do its work of preaching the gospel, making disciples and teaching its members. In other words, we are the true Church of God. And make no mistake! There is *only one* true Church. That means that all who are converted are members of the *one and only true Church*.

Answering to God

Therefore, we should understand that we do not form *all there is* of the true Church of God. Who make up the rest? That is not our business. It is God's.

We might know of some, as we come into contact with them and see their fruit. But God has not set us as his watchdogs to try to determine to what extent he has children in other organizations.

What other organizations do or do not do is between them and God. They answer to *him*, not to us. As Paul wrote in Romans 14:4: "Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

How many of us would want to be in the position of condemning people who have the Holy Spirit, who worship our Lord and Savior, and through whom God is doing a work that pleases him? I wouldn't, and I think that neither would you. Yet, it is so easy to do that, especially when other persons or groups interpret certain things differently from the way we do.

What I hope we can all see is that God gave us examples in the Bible to help us understand how to view such matters. I have already referred to Mark 9:38-41. In this passage, John came to Jesus because he had seen a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and John had told the man to stop.

Why had he told the man to stop? Because "he is not one of us." But what did Jesus say? Let's read the passage. "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward."

This is the approach Jesus took. Shouldn't we take the same approach Jesus did?

Likewise, Paul did not take an approach of condemning others who preached Christ. He rejoiced that Christ was being preached, even though he knew very well that some of those preaching Christ were doing it for the wrong reasons (Philippians 1:15-18). Shouldn't we follow Paul's example?

God has called us to lead people to *him*, not to ourselves. So why do we want people to come into the fellowship of the Church? Because this is where God is at work in his people. It is where they assemble together to worship and praise God, and to be fed spiritually by the leaders God gives them.

It is where they are able to be nurtured, encouraged, loved, inspired and challenged to grow by other brothers and sisters in Christ. It is where they are

able to partake of the bread and wine, the symbolic flesh and blood of Christ.

The purpose of the Church is to worship God, preach the gospel and nurture its members in the faith, love, hope and knowledge of Christ. We all belong to Christ, not to ourselves.

We preach the gospel so people will come to Christ, not so they will come to us. However, when a person comes to Christ, he or she also comes into the Body of Christ, the Church. And as the Body of Christ, we are doing *God's* work in the world, the work *he* has given us to do, not what we came up with.

It is for God's purpose that we serve him, not our own purpose. With

Why do we want people to come into the fellowship of the Church? Because this is where God is at work in his people.

Christ leading us, we work hard to advance the kingdom of God, not merely to advance our organization.

Another question that comes to mind when we think about this subject is, "How are we different?" The important difference between true Christians and nominal Christians does not lie primarily in doctrinal explanations; it lies in worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, true Christians distance themselves from the works of darkness, they walk toward the light of Christ, and they eagerly await the hope of their calling.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:11-14).

True Christians are different because they believe the gospel, *really* believe it, and Christ lives in them. And if Christ lives in us, isn't it obvious that we will learn to avoid sitting in condemnation of others in whom Christ may live?

So, how are we to regard those who attend "other churches"? With love. Does anyone think that God would approve of our ridiculing them, degrading them or despising them? Yet, that is just what many of us have tended to do over the years.

Those who did not agree with us on all doctrinal points were looked upon as simply unconverted, regardless of whether they believed in and had devoted their lives to Jesus Christ. We thought of their churches as either grossly deceived or rebellious.

Holy Spirit identifies Church

Another question arises: Are all churches the churches of God? The question itself is misleading. The Church of God, and there is *only one*, is not a human organization. It is a spiritual Body, the Body of Christ.

As explained above, the true Church of God is not *limited* to any humanly incorporated organization. God works where he pleases, and *all converted people everywhere* make up the true Church of God. As many as are con-

verted are part of it. There is *only one true Church*, only one Body of Christ, and it is unified by the Holy Spirit, which dwells in every true Christian.

Let's get this vital point: *It is the Holy Spirit that identifies and unifies the true Church of God, not any humanly incorporated church organization.* That is what the Bible teaches, and it is also what Mr. Armstrong taught.

The converted *people* are the Church. God also raises up leaders through whom he works to proclaim the gospel and nurture those who are called into the fellowship of the Church. But they are in God's service to do his will, not running their *own* business. And spiritually speaking, they are accountable to *God*, not to other Christians or other incorporated churches.

We don't have to worry about what God does elsewhere. We need to be involved in what God is doing through *us!* God has called us to preach the gospel, to make disciples, to teach Jesus' commands (Matthew 28:19-20). That is our calling and responsibility, regardless of who else is doing it or is not doing it.

God does not lessen our responsibility by virtue of what others are doing. He expects us to do the job he has given us, and he expects us to do it with our whole hearts, with the zeal and joy supplied by the Holy Spirit! God expects us to be concerned about our own spiritual condition, about our own relationship with Jesus Christ, and about our own sins and problems.

Other churches have their own responsibilities before God, and they answer to him for it. We answer to God for what *we* do, and for how we fulfill what he has given *us* to do!

Paul wrote: "You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you

How are we to regard those who attend "other churches"? With love. Does anyone think that God would approve of our ridiculing them, degrading them or despising them? Yet, that is just what many of us have tended to do.

look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat" (Romans 14:10).

We have tended to be judgmental, looking down on others in a spiritual sense. (And this judgmental attitude was not only toward all Christians not in our fellowship, but even toward one another within our own congregations. Those who weren't quite as strict on certain points were condemned by those who were stricter, and vice versa.)

We all know that we have had our mistakes, problems and errors over the years. Yet, we never questioned, and we still don't, whether God was working in us and through us, despite our shortcomings and imperfections. Shouldn't we extend that same courtesy to others who love Jesus Christ?

This is a vital issue, because it has to do with what is in our hearts as Christians. It reflects our view of God, and how we perceive the operation of his grace and love toward people.

Paul further admonishes, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (verse 19). That leaves no room

for condemning or gainsaying other Christians. Paul is not saying we are obligated to *agree* with others on every issue. He is giving instruction about our *attitudes* toward those Christians with whom we *disagree*.

To disagree is perfectly normal. We should hold our beliefs conscientiously, and in the Worldwide Church of God, we certainly do! But Paul is telling us that, on issues other than life-changing faith in Jesus Christ, we need to refrain from condemnation of our brothers. It is, after all, the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all sin, enables us to walk in the light, and makes us brothers (1 John 1:7).

Again, that does not mean we *agree* on every point. We certainly don't agree with most other churches on the correct day to observe the Sabbath. But it is *one thing* to teach what we believe to be the truth on a particular issue, explaining where we believe other views to be in error, and *quite another thing* to claim that all those who disagree with us are unconverted or in "utter rebellion against God." I pray that we can all see the difference.

God, in the riches of his grace, has revealed himself and our Lord and Savior to us. We have no right to become self-important, thinking that we have all the truth. Every truth we have, *God* has given us through his Word. We have truth only because God is gracious.

On some things, we have even been wrong, *not* because God gave us error, of course, but because we misinterpreted his Word. Did God destroy us for that? Or did he extend his mercy to us in patience? *Don't we need to consider the fact that God can work with other Christians in the same patience and mercy, in his way, in his time, according to his will, just as he works with us?*

Notice Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 4:5: "Judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God." This advice, which was given in the context of strife over who was the best leader to follow, further illustrates that it is not our place to pass judgment on matters that belong to God.

Paul goes on to say: "For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (verse 7). Whatever truth any Christian has, was given by God, by God's grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. How then can any of us condemn other Christians on the basis of how much or how little we think God has given them?

Again, that is God's business and his prerogative. He called us to preach the gospel, not to try to judge and condemn all others who preach it.

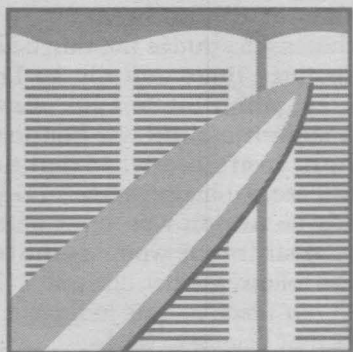
We stand in need of God, looking to him always for correction and leadership. But it is only in humility that we are capable of receiving his guidance, his discipline, his leadership. Jesus Christ has led us to a deeper and more profound understanding of what it means to be his disciples. He will continue to do that as we humble ourselves before his mighty hand.

We have not reached perfection, and God will continue to fashion, shape and mold us until he gets us like he wants us. The fact that we have a lot to learn, that we have a lot of growing to do, that we have been wrong on certain things and God has had to correct us, doesn't mean we aren't God's people. It simply means God loves us, because he chastens *those he loves* (Hebrews 12:6).

See Personal, page 7

Iron Sharpens Iron

Proverbs 27:17—As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.



Can you overcome enough for God?

By Ralph Orr

As Christians we want to do God's will. We wish to obey him, to keep his commandments, to love God and fellow humans. Yet in our honest moments we recognize how weak we are.

Obedying God, trusting God and living daily from a pure heart motivated only by love, eludes us. Paul's words ring so true, for they are our words: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).

Then, too, those tough scriptures in Revelation cry out, "To him who overcomes..." They were written, a cynic might argue, to taunt us, to frustrate us, because there is no hope that we will ever attain the goal.

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). "He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death" (verse 11).

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

What is required?

Perhaps you have read these scriptures or heard them preached, and afterward thought: "I better fast more. I better study more. I better pray more. I haven't overcome enough. I've got to do more or I'm not going to be in God's kingdom."

We've unconsciously concluded that Christ's sacrifice is not enough to guarantee our salvation, that we must be overcomers and conquer our carnal pulls and desires.

We conclude we must learn to withstand every blow of Satan and this world, build holy righteous character and only then will we be true overcomers.

If so, how much must we over-

come to have eternal life? Can we ever be confident that eternal life is ours? Does there come a day when we know our efforts have finally made us acceptable to God?

Is overcoming achieved by fasting? By prayers? By hard and continual sacrifice? Is it by going through a series of severe trials? Is it by living sinless for a time?

How many fasts, how many prayers, how many offerings does God require? How many trials and tests, and how many sinless commandment-keeping days must we live before God will give us eternal life? How do we measure such a thing?

Is it by years in the Church? Does God keep us living long enough so we have plenty of time to overcome all that is required? If so, does that mean that those who have died after less than a year as a Christian had less to overcome than those who died after decades in the faith?

We know we will go to our graves having tried to keep the commandments perfectly, but still having fallen short. Will our failure doom us? After all, isn't commandment keeping required for eternal life? Isn't that what overcoming is all about?

Already overcomers

The good news is that God says you have already overcome! You are already an overcomer. You are an overcomer now! You have overcome your flesh, this world and Satan! How could that be? How could anyone say that of a sinner?

John, the apostle who wrote those troublesome verses in Revelation, gives us God's answer. As a prelude to God's answer, we can read shocking yet encouraging words in 1 John 2:13. "I write to you young men," John says, "because you have overcome the evil one."

God is telling us that John knew people who had already overcome Satan the devil. They didn't need to overcome. They already had overcome. Could that be said of you and me?

Yes, it can. In fact, God already has said it. He says we already are overcomers. He says we have

already overcome Satan, this world and even our flesh. We've overcome all we need to overcome to have eternal life.

"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.... God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life" (1 John 5:4-5, 11-12).

The victory is ours

Yes, we are overcomers. We have overcome. The victory is ours. Eternal life has come to us not through our fasts, prayers, trials and tests, nor through our commandment keeping, but through Jesus Christ. Revelation reminds the Church of its need to overcome. John's epistle reveals how overcoming is possible.

Christ's sacrifice and our faith in Christ, evident in our willingness to testify to others about it, makes us overcomers.

It is just as we read in Revelation 12:11: "They [Christians] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by their word of their testimony."

That does not mean we can ignore our need to grow in Christian character. If we love God we will strive to be more like him. But in the Scriptures growing and overcoming are two separate ideas.

Only if we turn our back on Jesus Christ through disbelief or willful disobedience will we be condemned. "If we *deliberately* keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God" (Hebrews 10:26-27, emphasis mine).

God knows our frailty. God knows our inability to obey perfectly. For each of us, trapped in this body, subject to its lusts, its weakness and open to Satan's corrupting influence, God provides a way to overcome it all. That way is Jesus Christ. Whoever is going that way has overcome.

Ralph Orr is a minister working in Editorial Services.

Biblical promises can dispel your doubts

Here's how Jesus Christ can calm fears

"When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'" (Matthew 11:2).

How would you have dealt with John's question? Did Jesus Christ dismiss John for his doubts?

"Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me'" (verses 4 to 6).

Jesus alluded to Isaiah's prophecies about what the Messiah would do when he came. Christ reminded John that he was fulfilling those prophecies to the letter.

John had momentarily forgotten the promises of God in the depressing flood of his personal circumstances. Sometimes this happens to

us when the Church is refining doctrines and growing in grace and knowledge. The danger is that in those circumstances we forget the basic foundational building blocks of our Christian faith. We may forget or perhaps become confused over some of the fundamental doctrines.

The understanding of sin is among the fundamental doctrines that you and I should under no circumstances forget and about which we should never become confused. Of course, even more important than the awareness of sin is the solution to sin: forgiveness through faith in Christ.

I've heard of a lot of people who have heard these things before and who've ended up forgetting them.

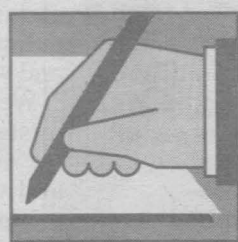
Don't forget your calling. Don't take it lightly. Be careful not to let your guard down for one second. Because at such moments Satan throws the fiery darts of doubt.

Just because doubts arise does not mean all is lost, however. Note the words of Christ following his reminder to John of fulfilled promises.

As John's disciples were leaving, "Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: 'What did you go out

and fears with the constant reminder of his promises.

Listen to the apostle John's words: "See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what



Just One More Thing

DEXTER FAULKNER

into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ... there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist: yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he'" (verses 7 and 11).

Christ certainly did not consider John lost because he doubted, rather Christ dispelled John's doubts. Jesus can dispel our doubts

he promised us—even eternal life" (1 John 2:24-25).

If you sometimes have doubts about your conversion, the forgiveness of your sins, of the evidence of God's work in your life, look to the Word of God and ask God to help you change your thinking. When you doubt, don't turn away from Jesus Christ—turn to him.

1994 Festival Music Coordinators & Directors

The Festival Office announced special music coordinators (SMC), Festival choir directors (DIR) and children's choir directors (CCD). Those interested in performing at a Feast site should contact the appropriate person listed below and request copies of the music to be used. Prospective choir members should list the voice part they sing and their experience level.

Instrumental or vocal soloists should contact the SMC for the site that they plan to attend unless an instrumental ensemble is noted separately. Soloists should submit several possible numbers for consideration.

Choir members are expected to know their music before arriving at the Festival site, as rehearsals during the Festival will be sufficient only to tune up the choir for performance.

Anchorage, Alaska: Doug Hanson (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 5109 Lionheart Dr., Anchorage, Alaska, 99508, telephone 1-907-333-4390.

Chattanooga, Tennessee: Bob Vitale (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), c/o Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, California, 91129, telephone 1-818-304-6000, ext. 5453; or Bob Vitale, 117 E. Newby Ave., San Gabriel, California, 91776, telephone 1-818-288-4130.

Corpus Christi, Texas: Brent Fiedler (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 125 Cloudland Dr., Bristol, Tennessee, 37620, telephone 1-615-968-5456.

Dayton, Ohio: King Finlay (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), Box 124, Spinnerstown, Pennsylvania, 18968, telephone 1-215-538-2115.

Daytona Beach, Florida: Ted Japhet (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 4167 Westgate Rd., Orlando, Florida, 32808, telephone 1-407-299-1872.

Eugene, Oregon: Bill Samuelson (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 5028 48th Ave., NE, Seattle, Washington, 98105, telephone 1-216-529-1380.

Fort Worth, Texas: Roger Bryant (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), c/o Ambassador College Music Department, Box 111, Big Sandy, Texas, 75755, telephone 1-903-636-2170.

Hot Springs, Arkansas: Randy Heidrich (SMC), 4 Stoneledge Dr., North Little Rock, Arkansas, 72113, telephone 1-501-851-0551; Seth Cardew (DIR), (CCD), c/o Randy Heidrich.

Jekyll Island, Georgia: Rick Thomas (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 7620 SW 147th Ct., Miami, Florida, 33193, telephone 1-305-386-1448.

Keystone, Colorado: Craig Coulter (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 3989 S. Fundy Circle, Aurora, Colorado, 80013, telephone 1-303-766-1519.

Kona, Hawaii: Paul Heisler (SMC), c/o Ambassador College Music Department, Box 111, Big Sandy, Texas, 75755, telephone 1-903-636-2170; Pat Henry (DIR), (CCD), 13 Donnell Dr., North Little Rock, Arkansas, 72120, telephone 1-501-834-0945.

Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri: Joseph Rivers (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), (Instrumental Ensemble), 611 W. 15th St., Apt. G6, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 74127-9193, telephone 1-918-587 5728.

Lexington, Kentucky: Al Dennis (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 100 Forest Place, Apt. 805, Oak Park, Illinois, 60301, telephone 1-708-445-0928.

Lowell, Massachusetts: John Sullivan (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), R.R. 1, Box 1683, Kennebunk, Maine 04043-9732, telephone 1-207-985-9087.

Niagara Falls, New York: Jon Kurnik (SMC), 4350 Elmview Dr., Hamer, Ontario, Canada, P3P 1B4, telephone 1-705-969-7777; Ted Rounds (DIR), 8 Sunrise Dr., Apt. 8, Newfield, New York, 14867-9213, telephone 1-607-277-1552; Marge Rounds (CCD), c/o Ted Rounds.

Norfolk, Virginia: Floyd Satterwhite (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), Box 561, Mechanicsville, Virginia, 23111, telephone 1-804-746-7948.

Palm Springs, Florida: Ella Marie Schatz (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), (brass players also needed), c/o Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, California, 91129, telephone 1-818-304-6000, ext. 5319, or 1-818-445-1193.

Pasadena: Roger Smith (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 622 E. Poppyfields Dr., Altadena, California, 91001, telephone 1-818-798-2060, ext. 4006; Hernan Herrera (Instrumental Ensemble), c/o Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, California, 91129,

telephone 1-818-304-6000, ext. 5599.

Pensacola, Florida: Steve Myers (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), (Youth Choir), 20 Sabine Court, Kenner, Louisiana, 70065, telephone 1-504-461-9090; Travis Riddle (Instrumental Ensemble), 450 Billville Rd., Cottage 7, Hammond, Louisiana, 70403, telephone 1-504-567-1396.

Rapid City, South Dakota: Ruth Myrick (SMC), c/o Ambassador College Music Department, Box 111, Big Sandy, Texas, 75755, telephone 1-903-636-2170; Steve Kakacek (DIR), 349 E. 19th St., Idaho Falls, Idaho, 83404, telephone 1-208-523-0105; Mark Graham (CCD), 1490 Roycroft Ave., Lakewood, Ohio, 44107, telephone 1-216-529-1380.

Redding, California: Tom Hammett (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), (Instrumental Ensemble), 3107 Elmore Ave., Chattanooga, Tennessee, 37415, telephone 1-615-877-7270.

St. Petersburg, Florida: Daniel Chapman (SMC), 271 West Lake Rd., Palm Harbor, Florida, 34684-3910, telephone 1-813-787-8754; Mark Halliar (DIR), 1535 Ohio Ave., Whiting, Indiana, 46394; Gary Gooch (CCD), 6547 Mauna Loa Blvd., Sarasota, Florida, 34241, 1-813-377-7450.

Saratoga Springs, New York: Jim Herrick (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 80 1/2 S. State St., Concord, New Hampshire, 03301, telephone 1-603-225-9391.

Spokane, Washington: Phil Rosenzweig (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 4110 S. 42nd St., Omaha, Nebraska, 68107, telephone 1-402-733-5860.

Tucson, Arizona: Gary Pendergraft (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 3112 Old Medina Rd., Jackson, Tennessee, 38305, telephone 1-901-422-2770.

Vail, Colorado: Dan Salcedo (SMC), (DIR), 117 Lohrum Lane, Anaheim, California, 92807, telephone 1-714-637-4335; Carolyn Burchett (CCD), c/o Dan Salcedo.

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin: Galen Morrison (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 3425 Trainer Rd., Rockford, Illinois, 61114, telephone 1-815-654-7889.

Canada

Granby, Quebec: Frank Saliba (SMC), (DIR), (CCD), 17048 Apple Blossom, Pierrefonds, Quebec, Canada, H9J 1H8, telephone 1-514-696-8895.

Halifax, Nova Scotia: Owen Willis (SMC), 25 Autumnwood Ave., Gondola Point, New Brunswick, Canada, E2E 1V6, telephone 1-506-849-6644.

Penticton, British Columbia: Bob Berendt (SMC), 133 Sherwood Blvd., West Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, T1K 6E7, telephone 1-403-381-1601; Jim Brandenberg (DIR), 3559 Morley Trail NW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2M 4H5, telephone 1-403-282-8981.

Regina, Saskatchewan: Todd Warren (SMC), 174 Gladmer Park, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, S4P 2WP, telephone 1-306-522-3100; David Ives (DIR), 24 Kettering St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3R 2A1, telephone 1-204-895-1966; Joyce Simons (CCD), 527 Webster St., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, S7N 3G6, telephone 1-306-249-2607.

Sherbrooke, Quebec: Ginette Dion (SMC), 6, rue Laval, St. Constant, Quebec, Canada, J5A 1E1, telephone 1-514-632 5560.

Victoria, British Columbia: Jim Little (SMC), 10511 Agassiz Ct., Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, V7A 4K3, telephone 1-604-241-5944; Al Neighbour (DIR), 10160 Cornerbrook Crescent, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, V7E 4H4, telephone 1-604-275-9456; Betty Kost (CCD), 3018 Baynes Rd., Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, V8N 1Y6, telephone 1-604-472-0991.

Experienced volunteers needed for Feast music

By Ella-Marie Schatz and Ross Jutsum

It's time once again for music coordinators to plan the music programs for the Feast.

Music is an integral part of the worship service. To quote Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach: "Music glorifies God and inspires us to be in the most positive frame of mind to receive the spiritual message God has for us in the sermon. We thank all of you for your service and labor of love over the years in providing fine music for the Feast."

Why not volunteer?

If you have had experience singing or playing an instrument, why not volunteer to perform at the Feast? Your participation is an opportunity to uplift and encourage many people. Not everyone can perform special music, so we want to encourage those who have this talent to consider using it at the Feast.

If you plan to volunteer, here are some steps you can take to ensure high quality music at the Feast.

Volunteer early

As soon as you have been accepted to a site, contact the choir director or music coordinator for that site. It helps the choir director to know well in advance how many musicians will be available, the experience of the group as a whole, and the number of soloists available.

This helps in choosing the music to be performed. For instance, the director will not choose to sing "King All Glorious" if there are no soprano or tenor soloists. Or, the director

Ella-Marie Schatz is music coordinator at the Palm Springs, California, Feast site, and Ross Jutsum is chair of the Ambassador College Music Department.

may want to do "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" with brass, but is not sure if there will be enough instrumentalists to do so.

Another consideration is that it can take as long as six weeks to receive music after placing an order. In addition, the director needs time to mail the music to you.

Learn notes before the Feast

Good ensemble performances require as much rehearsal as possible. The small amount of time rehearsing at the Feast can be best spent learning to sing as a group and not learning the notes.

Although some can sight-read, the quality of the rehearsals and performances will be better if choir members don't resort to sight-reading. A last-minute attitude does not yield the best musical performance.

"Success of the group is more easily assured if each participant assumes individual responsibility and does his or her homework before the Feast," said Roger Bryant, assistant professor of music at Ambassador College.

Attend rehearsals

Plan to attend the entire initial rehearsal. Also, make every effort to be punctual for the rehearsals during the Feast.

This will help to ensure that the director will not have to repeat instructions to someone who is late. In the past few years we have reduced the amount of rehearsal time at the Feast.

Fulfill your commitment

It is understandable that, when committing to something so far in advance, situations may occur that make it impossible to keep your commitment to sing or play an instrument. However, please do your best to honor your commitment. If you cannot, notify your coordinator as soon as possible.

Immigrant Visa Lottery Program

The Church's Legal Service Department offers the following help to Church members who are natives of the countries listed below and who would like to become permanent residents of the United States. The Department of State will conduct a lottery and grant 55,000 immigrant visas. Natives from the following countries can participate in the immigration lottery:

Africa	All countries.
Asia	All countries except the following: China—mainland born and Taiwan born, India, Philippines, Vietnam and South Korea. (Hong Kong is eligible.)
Europe	All countries except the following: Great Britain and its dependent territories. (Northern Ireland is eligible.)
North America	The Bahamas is the only eligible country included in the North America region. Canada is not eligible.
Oceania	All countries.
South America, Central America and the Caribbean	All countries except Mexico, Jamaica, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.

If you want to participate in the lottery, it is extremely important to file an application within the requested time. The application period for registration will begin at midnight Wednesday, June 1, 1994, and will end at midnight Thursday, June 30, 1994.

For more information contact:

1. If you live overseas, the American consulate in your country.

2. If you live in the United States, the V-1 Lottery at 1-202-663-1600.

3. If you cannot receive information from other sources, you may call the Church's Legal Service Department and ask the operator for information on the Immigrant Lottery Program.

Anniversaries

Continued from page 6



GAVINO & AUTILIA GATTA

Gavino and Autilia Gatta of Montreal, Quebec, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary Dec. 1. They have three daughters, Rosella, Santina and Antonella; and one son-in-law, Rene Vargas.



FREDERICK & CAROLYN RAINVILLE

Frederick and Carolyn Rainville of Colebrook, New Hampshire, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary Aug. 23. They have seven children, two daughters-in-law, one son-in-law and five grandchildren.

Anniversaries Made of Gold



EARL & RUBY SIXT

Earl and Ruby Sixt of San Dimas, California, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary March 14. They have two daughters, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



DICK & GEORGIA LATHAM AND ELI & FELICIA FRYSSINGER

Two Fort Worth, Texas, couples celebrated 50th wedding anniversaries in March. Dick and Georgia Latham's anniversary was March 3, and Eli and Felicia Frysinger's anniversary was March 5. Fort Worth West brethren honored them with a reception and anniversary plaques.



MAURICE & MARY YALDREN

Maurice and Mary Yaldren of Winchester, England, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary April 12. They have two children, Gladys and Leslie; and four grandchildren, Polly, Simon, Wendy and Richard.



CARL & MARY KELLY

Carl and Mary Kelly of Cape Coral, Florida, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Feb. 10. Fort Myers, Florida, brethren honored them with a reception and anniversary cake Feb. 5.



LAWRENCE & BESSIE YORK

Lawrence and Bessie York of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary Nov. 25.



HAROLD & ALBERTA BAUMGARTNER

Harold and Alberta Baumgartner of Florence, Kentucky, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary April 15. Erlanger, Kentucky, brethren honored them with a reception April 9. The Baumgartners have seven children and nine grandchildren.

Obituaries



RHURI MATTI

MATTI, Rhuri, 22, of Johannesburg, South Africa, died Feb. 10 in an explosion at work. He is survived by his parents, Richard and Meri; three sisters, Shonach, Rhea and Dana; and one brother, Callum. He is preceded in death by two brothers.

COFFILL, R. Bernie, 46, of Monroe, Louisiana, died Jan. 28 after a lengthy battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Jo Ann; one daughter, Nicole; one son, Matthew; his mother, Mary; and one adopted sister, Beverly.

WIKOFF, Jacqueline L., 65, of Bloomington, Illinois, died March 20 after a long illness. She is survived by four sons, Timothy, Daniel, Rick and Paul; one daughter, Angie Bicknell; one sister; 19 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.



THADDEUS MILLER

MILLER, Thaddeus L., 72, of Lenoir, North Carolina, died Jan. 25. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte; six sons, Thad Jr., Daniel, Stephen, Robert, Bruce and Roma; one daughter, Charlene; 25 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and 12 brothers and sisters.

PYDYNKOWSKI, Lana Marie, 39, of Ogilvie, Minnesota, died March 24 after a yearlong battle with cancer. She is survived by her husband, Charles; four children, James, 13, Michael, 10, Andrew, 8, and Gina Marie, 3; her mother, Florence Quattullo; two sisters, Kathy Olivas and Karen Oliver; and four brothers, Dominic, Gary, Basil and Daniel. Her father and infant daughter, Jessi, preceded her in death.



GENE BYFIELD

BYFIELD, Gene, 8 months 22 days, of Auburn, Nebraska, died March 8 from heart failure and other complications following two liver transplants. He is survived by his parents, Richard and Christine; two brothers; three grandparents; and numerous aunts and uncles.

KEALIHHER, Russell L., 85, of Wartrace, Tennessee, died Dec. 13. He is survived by his wife, May; two children, Russell E. and Janet Littleton; several brothers and sisters; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



MARION KOLASSA

KOLASSA, Marion, 51, of Calgary, Alberta, died Feb. 8 after a lengthy battle with cancer. She is survived by her husband, Adolf; two sisters, Gilda and Hannelore; two nieces; and one nephew.



ROBERT WEEKLEY

WEEKLEY, Robert D., 68, of Parkersburg, West Virginia, died March 28 of a stroke. He is survived by his wife, Waneta; his mother; five brothers; two sisters; and two stepdaughters. He was a deacon in the Marietta, Ohio, church.

BRADY, Barbara, 59, of Gladewater, Texas, died March 9. She is survived by her husband, Melvin; six children, Victoria Feazell, Timothy, Kristina Lado, Gregory, Michael and Kasonnia; and five grandchildren.

TUCKER, Mildred Reese, 81, of Pasadena, died March 20 after a long illness. She is survived by one son, Raymond; one daughter-in-law, Lois; three grandchildren, Maria Sexton, Timothy and David; and one great-grandchild, Bryant Sexton.

NELSON, Genevieve, 85, of Palm Springs, California, died March 27. She is survived by her husband, Robert; one son; one daughter; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

BOWMAN, James Alexander, 78, of Baltimore, Maryland, died Feb. 3. He is survived by his wife, Alberta; three sons; six daughters; and 45 grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.



EVELYN ANDERSON

ANDERSON, Evelyn, 78, of Big Sandy, died March 18. She is survived by her daughter, Peggy Bernard; and Peggy's four children. She had been employed by Ambassador College for many years, as a food service employee and as a nurse.



CLIFFORD ANDERSON

ANDERSON, Clifford, 63, of Big Sandy, died March 28. He is survived by his sister, Doris Nasby, Dr. Anderson was a professor at Ambassador College for many years.



LUCILLE MORRIS

MORRIS, Lucille, 88, of Seattle, Washington, died Feb. 5. She is survived by her husband of 67 years, Basil; two daughters, Glorianna Brittain and Mary Elizabeth Obolensky; five grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

ROLLINS, Barbara, 61, of Leon, West Virginia, died April 19. She is survived by her husband, Brian; two sons, Brian Lee and Justin; two grandchildren; three sisters; and one brother.

Personal: We are committed to all the ways of God

Continued from page 3

Jesus said he would never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), and that the Holy Spirit would *guide us into all truth* (John 16:13). That doesn't mean we won't have problems, and it doesn't mean we won't have to struggle for understanding. But it *does* mean that when God leads, we must follow!

One final point. When people cause division, contention and strife within the Body, the Bible also gives us instruction in what to do and in how to relate to those creating the division. We are instructed to guard the flock, to protect it from those who would cause division. We are told that those who do not serve Christ, but serve "their own appetites," are to be avoided (Romans 16:17-18).

We are not to fellowship with those whose goal is to divide the Church to get a following for themselves, nor with those who turn members away from faith and obedience to Christ. Also, we are not to eat with those in the Church who are openly immoral, dishonest, hateful or worshipping idols (1 Corinthians 5:11).

Those who do not believe Jesus has come in the flesh are specifically mentioned as false prophets, and as having the spirit of Antichrist (1 John 4:1-2). And Paul wrote that any who bring a gospel different from what he taught are to be condemned (Galatians 1:6-8).

Further, there are those who make a mockery of Christ and the gospel, turning the gospel into a kind of side-show. We are not to condemn them, and we don't know their hearts, but

we can certainly recognize that side-show methods tend to bring shame and ridicule on the name of Christ.

The way of Christ

"Well, then. Why can't I just go to another church where I won't have the problems of Sabbath-keeping?" one person asked. First, because God commands Sabbath-keeping. Second, because God has called all his children to "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him." The way of the cross of Christ is not the way of least resistance. It is the narrow and difficult path.

Third, God expects us to be faithful with what we understand, even if he has not given that understanding to others. And finally, we should not assume that people who faithfully keep Sunday never make any sacrifices to do so. The film *Chariots of Fire* depicted only one small example of sacrifices people have made to remain faithful to God in Sabbath-keeping, insofar as God has given them understanding.

God is faithful to all who truly trust in him, and he does not forget their sacrifices of faith in obedience to him, even if their understanding is not quite perfect. After all, God did not reject us during the 40 years we did not keep Pentecost on the correct day. Maybe he let us experience that so we could understand the lesson I'm explaining in this letter.

Jesus told his disciples: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35). This is of utmost importance to God. Even though we may disagree with

other disciples about many things, we still need to obey this command.

Let's thank God for his glorious love toward us, for his mercy in forgiving our sins and giving us new life in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Let's walk humbly before him, grateful for our calling and for the courage and power he gives us to enable us to fulfill it.

And let's thank him for the special heritage that he gave us through his servant, Herbert Armstrong, of deep commitment to the authority of the Bible as our continual guide toward faith and obedience. Through Mr. Armstrong, God gave us a tradition of continually studying the Bible for purity of doctrine, spiritual renewal and strength, correction and instruction in the ways of God. Because of that, we seek always to be washed in the water of the Word of God, and we never cease to pray for God to lead us in rightly dividing the Word of truth.

For this reason, we are also committed to upholding and walking in all the ways of God, including the observance of the Sabbath, the fourth of the Ten Commandments, as well as the annual festivals, during which we celebrate God's plan of redemption and salvation of humanity through Jesus Christ. Again, let's thank God for all his marvelous spiritual blessings and good gifts!

Pray for one another and for me. I need God's guidance and wisdom in making numerous decisions about the many aspects of the work of the Church. Thank you for your many expressions of support and love. They are truly encouraging and deeply meaningful to me. I thank God for all of you daily.

P.S. As I'm sure you realize, certain of our dissidents are very eager to stir up division in our fellowship. Their purpose for doing so is to get more members to follow them. They call this "growth."

In reality, it is the fruit of an ungodly spirit of deliberately causing division in the Body of Christ, which is condemned in Scripture. We have the responsibility to identify and avoid such people, and the Bible tells us we must not follow them (Romans 16:17-18).

One of the goals of these divisive preachers is to create dissatisfaction by injecting doubt and uncertainty in members. In this way, they hope to get the affected members to follow them. In order to create this dissatisfaction, they resort to innuendo, half-truths, accusations, twisting of facts, and, for some dissidents, occasional outright lies. If I responded to every falsehood in their continual flood of disinformation, that's all I would be doing.

I hope you have the spiritual insight and wisdom to keep focused on the positive things the Church is doing under Christ's guidance and to not fall for the barrage of rumors and accusations with which these wolves in sheep's clothing never cease to attack the Church.

Of course, some members do not yet understand some of our recent doctrinal changes, but the vast majority of these members are *not* causing division. God will help them understand as they faithfully live according to what they do already know. Those who understand a change should not look down on those who don't, and vice versa. We all need prayer, study, faith and love.

Update

NEWS OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS

Open house services have multiple benefits

More than 1,100 new people attended open house services at 45 congregations across the United States May 7. **Stephen Elliott**, who pastors the Queens, New York, and New York City Spanish congregations, said the Queens church had been preparing for open house for the past seven months.

"We began training group leaders in August and started neighborhood fellowship groups in November," he said. "With these groups in place throughout the area, we were in a stronger position to welcome new people.

"This whole experience has generated renewed zeal in the congregation," Mr. Elliott added, "and given many members a leadership role in evangelism for the first time in their church lives."

Steve Buchanan, who pastors the Tucson and Sierra Vista, Arizona, churches, had 44 new people at open house in Tucson and seven in Sierra Vista.

"The open house has energized our members in southern Arizona. They were surprised and elated at the response," he commented. "One *Plain Truth* reader said receiving the invitation letter was 'like an answer to prayer.'

"The encouragement to the members is in reliving the excitement of God's calling. They are exposed to others who share the same purpose in life. Now they have opportunity to positively affect those God has been working with."

Forty new people attended services in Memphis, Tennessee. **Mark Cardona**, the pastor there, said brethren are enthusiastic about the program.

"It has really brought them back into focus into what the Church is all about and what personal evangelism is all about," he said.

Ministers hone skills

PRETORIA, South Africa—South African ministers and wives completed a four-part training program of five

hours each on the principles of counseling, organized by the Johannesburg Family Life Centre.

Each session followed similar principles of a counseling session with discussion, role plays and feedback.

Session I discussed self-awareness and awareness of others. In session II, ministers examined their family of origin, while sessions III and IV dealt with psychological development, divorce, remarriage, step-parenting and grief therapy.

Lecturer **Liz Dooley** said that ministers and their wives had counseling skills, but suggested that what she offered was an opportunity to hone skills to better serve members through better-quality listening and being available, empathetic, understanding and nonjudgmental. *John White.*

Turning deserts into parks and woodlands

LONDON—British editorial staff members **Julie Wilson** and **Ruth Arnold** attended the Houses of Parliament for the launch of The Holy Land Foundation, a charity formed out of Christian and Jewish cooperation in planting trees in Israel.

Barren land is turned into parks, woodland and playgrounds for all who live in or visit Israel, also increasing water retention and soil quality.

The Holy Land Foundation aims to counteract the desert conditions in the area by encouraging people to commemorate births, marriage and anniversaries by planting trees either in person if they visit Israel, or with a donation.

They also hope the Israeli experience of restoring the natural beauty of their land will help other countries to renew areas of desert.

The charity takes as inspiration two passages of the Bible—Isaiah's vision that the desert would "blossom as a rose" and that when the children of Israel entered the promised land, they would "plant all manner of trees" (Leviticus 19:23).

As the Church has published many articles about Christian responsibility toward creation, one environmentalist commented that as an occasional *Plain Truth* reader, he had appreciated its commitment to concern for the environment. *Ruth Arnold.*

Singles activities

JOPLIN, Missouri—Singles here invite other singles to their Fourth of July luau weekend July 2 to 4. Activities include morning Sabbath services with an afternoon cookout and singles seminar with guest speaker **David Albert**. Dinner Saturday evening will be at a restaurant reserved for the group.

Sunday's activities will be a novelty olympics followed by a Hawaiian luau and a

dance. Dress will be colorfully casual. Monday will feature a morning bowling party.

Housing will be available with area brethren or in a motel. The cost for the weekend is \$30 (excluding motels and bowling), and reservations need to be made by June 20. For further information or to make reservations, call **Dan King**, Joplin associate pastor, at 1-417-781-3895, or write to him at Box 66, Webb City, Missouri, 64870.

Singles from the Montpelier, Vermont, and Boston, Massachusetts, churches invite you to celebrate Independence Day weekend (July 1 to 4) in the Connecticut River valley of Vermont and New Hampshire.

Activities begin Friday night, July 1, with hors d'oeuvres, snacks and a Bible study. Guest speaker for the weekend will be **John Halford**, a *Plain Truth* senior editor. A goat roast will feature a medieval theme and a dance with period music.

Sunday's activities will be a singles seminar and a field day with swimming, games and horse-and-buggy rides. A stocked trout pond is available, and the Connecticut River has bass, northern pike and trout fishing. On Monday there will be a service project (carpenters, please bring some tools).

Experience all this for four days and three nights for \$100. This includes meals, lodging, entertainment and all activities except fishing.

Space is limited to the first 200 singles who apply, so send a \$20 deposit to guarantee your reservation. Please make checks payable to Local Church Activity Fund—Montpelier, and send them to **Chris Micale**, 29 Slayton Terrace, Woodstock, Vermont, 05091.

Member paid royal visit

Winston Bothwell a deacon from the Watford, England, church, met **Queen Elizabeth** when she visited his workplace last summer.

Mr. Bothwell is head gardener at an Institute of Arable Crops Research in

Harpden. Formerly he was employed at the campus of Ambassador College in Bricket Wood.

When it was sold, he stayed on under the new owners and became head gardener.

His present employer said in a letter to Mr. Bothwell that he was being given the honor of meeting the Queen as "a recognition of the splendid effort you have put into preparing the grounds."

Churches to celebrate anniversaries

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas—The church here will celebrate its 40th anniversary June 25. Those interested in attending or who would like more information should contact **John Bald**, Corpus Christi pastor, at 1-512-992-7562.

TOPEKA, Kansas—The church here will celebrate its 25th anniversary June 25. Afternoon services will be followed by a reception, a photo history of the congregation and entertainment. A special speaker is planned. For more information contact **Dwaine Hudson** at 1-913-273-5744. *Dexter Faulkner.*

BATON ROUGE, Louisiana—The Baton Rouge church will celebrate its 25th anniversary July 30. Many of the ministers who have served in the area will be on hand for the celebration.

Activities will include comments from each of the ministers present, a dinner and a costume ball. Dance music will be provided by the Baton Rouge church band. If you would like to come or need further details, contact **Terry** or **Cheryl Richardson** at 1-504-622-4660. *Anthony Rice.*

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Brethren who have attended the Charlotte congregation are invited to attend the 25th anniversary celebration June 25.

Services and activities will be at Sun Valley High School in Monroe, North Carolina. Scheduled activities include a slide presentation and a formal banquet with entertainment.

Reservations are necessary. Please contact **Curtis Polk**, Box 418, Indian Trail, North Carolina, 28079. To receive a map of the location please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the same address.

25-year plaques given

The following ministers and wives received plaques and watches in recognition of 25 years of service to the Church: **Jeff and Judy McGowan**, **Jess and Paula Ernest**, **Mitchell and Linda Knapp**, **Ray and Carol Meyer**, and **George and Merry Kackos**. The awards were made at the north central ministerial conference in Chicago April 7.

Bill and Pat Dixon and **Bill and Barbara Hutchison** received plaques and watches at the Australian regional conference in February. **Olivia Flores** received a plaque in January. Her husband, **Robert**, died in 1984.

Canton festival readies for pickin' and grinnin'

CANTON, Ohio—Brethren here will have their third annual bluegrass festival July 1 to 4. The rolling hills of private farmland provide the backdrop for this family-oriented activity.

Bluegrass shows Saturday night and Sunday afternoon will feature pickin' and grinnin' around camp fires. Primitive camping is available at the site; motels and full hook-up RV campgrounds are located nearby. A Friday night Bible study and Sabbath services will be conducted at the camp.

If you're a bluegrass musician (acoustic instruments only) or fan, you won't want to miss out. To register your group to perform or for more information, call **John Dewell** at 1-614-945-7075 or **Bob Miller** at 1-216-855-5243.

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GROWING GROUNDS—Winston Bothwell (right), a deacon from Watford, England, and head gardener at an Institute of Arable Crops Research, meets Queen Elizabeth.