

God Visits Kenya, East Africa

by Bill Glover (Eugene, Oregon)

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Articles

God Visits Kenya, East Africa

by Bill Glover (Eugene, Oregon)

BACK TO STEPHEN'S SERMON

With what has thus far been recorded here, one can now see the importance of Stephen's first sermon in Kenya. Having witnessed all the abject poverty, ignorance and superstition Stephen was inspired by the Holy Spirit to use the example Jesus gave when He encountered the Canaanite woman as recorded in Matthew 15:21-28. Stephen boldly compared the people of Kenya to the "dogs" Jesus referred to in this passage. He said, "What I see here in Kenya are people scrambling around UNDER THE MASTER'S TABLE like little dogs hoping that someone sitting at the table will toss them a scrap now and then. He then pointed out that God sent us to Kenya to announce the **GOOD NEWS** that they are being **INVITED BY GOD** to get up off the floor and to **SIT AT THE MASTER'S TABLE** and receive blessings FROM THE HAND OF THE MASTER - - GOD THE ALMIGHTY FATHER!

Will you stop for a moment and imagine two white men in a country made up of black people from various tribal backgrounds and with a toxic mixture of pagan Christianity and tribal customs and superstitions and boldly telling them they need to REPENT of their ways and turn to the God that is sending them this message! For the first few days we did not get much of a response. We attributed this lack of response at first to the fact that these people must have been in a STATE OF SHOCK. We had suddenly stepped into their dark and deceived world and began to shine the LIGHT OF GOD on them and their ways. We held nothing back from them. We pointed out the TRUE HOPE that God offers to them and asked them what their former way of life had netted them (see 1 PETER 1:18 - - being "REDEEMED FROM THE EMPTY WAY OF LIFE HANDED DOWN FROM FOREFATHERS"). They had never heard such preaching before. Thankfully, they did recover from their shock and began to respond to God.

White missionaries have been working in Africa and deceiving them for over three hundred years. They helped ENSLAVE the African people to the ways and teachings of Satan the devil. We were there - - sent by God - - to help them break this bond of slavery to Satan. One statement I repeated over and over again and again was "You people have now been EXPOSED to THE TRUE GOD OF THE BIBLE and your lives will never be the same from this day on." [In all the meetings we held we had only one person who came to us and stated respectfully that he was not at this time ready to accept all that we taught. We cordially shook his hand and let him know how he could contact us further should he choose to do so.]

ENCOUNTERING A BIGAMIST

It is truly amazing how many people God brought to us - - we did not need to go out searching for them - - they sought us out. One extremely interesting encounter was with a bigamist. Kenya law allows a man to have more than one wife provided he can afford more. We found this man to be fascinating and he also was fascinated with us and what we taught. We actually spent five evenings with him (one evening in his home for dinner with his favored family).

He brought up the bigamy problem as he was relating to us his conviction that God had chosen him for a special "healing ministry." Since others had confronted him over the bigamy problem, he wanted to know our view. We used the Bible to show that such is a sin and that God clearly states that a true minister can have ONLY ONE WIFE. His Initial response was that God "told" him that the important healing ministry God had for him would cancel out any sin involved in the bigamy. We pointed out that sin is the breaking of God's laws and that the wages of sin is death and that the only way God forgives sin is through deep repentance where the person stops sinning. Even though the words spoken to him were very bold and straightforward, they were said respectfully. Once we had pointed out God's clear statements, he finally said "Well, God also told me that I was going to have to make certain changes in my life!"

I will be corresponding with him so as to keep in touch. But it will be interesting to see what he decides now that we are gone. In fact, we asked him point blank whether he would merely dismiss what he had learned from us once we were

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gone. He is one of those I told that their lives would never be the same after they have been exposed to the truths of God through us. All through the years I have told people this as they were having trouble reconciling the truths of God with their choices in life. On many occasions people have checked back with me later relating that they had been unable to get around or forget these truths. Just one of the many beautiful things about being a representative of the Almighty God is the fact that you do not have to defend your position since the Bible is very plain and needs NO interpretation from any man. Besides, as God’s true servants, it is not OUR job to try and convert anyone. That is God’s job through the Holy Spirit. No one can come to Christ and be a true Christian unless and until God the Father calls that person (John 6:44).

TROUBLING MEMORIES

There are many memories from Kenya that trouble me greatly. One is captured in a photo of an elderly grandmother with a load of sticks on her back. The caption I placed under this photo is “Senior Retirement in Kenya.” This worn out human being has spent (actually wasted) her life packing heavy loads on her back eking out a bare existence and had finally “graduated” to a relatively light load of firewood sticks which she had rummaged around and found and packed them home to her dwelling. I did get her permission for the photo but did not dare try and photograph her dwelling. I had to be careful what photos I took lest the people come to think I was somehow belittling their residence. Most of the homes we visited had dirt floors. Some we merely saw from the outside but realized they too had dirt floors. Most of the “dirt” in Kenya is identical to the RED GUMBO CLAY SOIL I have seen in the state of Oklahoma.

The kitchen in most homes is a very small square room with a dirt floor and with a very small stove situated in the corner. This small stove is similar to what we in the United States call a “hibachi.” The fuel used is either wood or coal [the coal used is “homemade”] We ate several meals cooked over these stoves and it is truly amazing how good the food is. The typical African dish is made from rice or maize (corn - - prepared like “grits” in the Southeast in the U.S.) with peas, beans, or other staple items mixed in. Then they serve a vegetable” stew” to add moisture to the rice or corn. They dish you up a heaping bowl of this food and give you a “tablespoon” for eating it.

We also ate dinner with three professional families in different areas and were served a variety of delicious items in a buffet style meal. Yet the meal was served in a large bowl and we were given a “tablespoon” for eating. In most cases, after the meal, we were served a cup of sweetened hot tea laced heavily with milk. The meals were delicious and the company and fellowship great.

PASSOVER IN KENYA

We arrived in time to observe the Passover. It was the FIRST REAL PASSOVER for these brethren. I conducted the services, and a translator translated my words so that all present could understand what they were doing with these symbols. I had already sent printed material which thoroughly explains that no one should partake of these symbols of bread and wine who had not repented and been baptized or who was not mature enough to be baptized. During the service I stressed that we must take heed to God’s warning found in 1 Corinthians 11:27-31. The bread and the wine are very sacred emblems TO GOD and SHOULD BE TO US ALSO. God states emphatically “That is WHY many among you are sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep” (verse 30). A person MUST be converted enough and spiritually and physically MATURE ENOUGH to “EXAMINE HIMSELF BEFORE HE EATS THE BREAD AND DRINKS THE CUP” (verse 28). These are God’s warnings - - NOT mine!

The minister conducting the Passover services does not “police” the people by trying to determine who is eligible to partake of these symbols. God says clearly that each person must make this determination - - make this judgment - - and certainly he or she must be physically and spiritually mature enough to make such a judgment and will be held accountable for the decision made.

ONE MEMORABLE PASSOVER OBSERVATION

Since there was NO ELECTRICITY in the meeting hall where we held Passover services, we had to begin services right at sunset so that we could be finished before it was too dark to read the appropriate scriptures. Present at the service was a young mother with a baby about nine months old on her shoulder. She had walked carrying this child for more than four miles THROUGH THE BRUSH just to keep the Passover with us. I only had a brief encounter with her after services

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before learning her story (I was meeting and greeting as many people as possible realizing we possibly would never meet again in this life). After a few minutes I looked around (IT WAS NOW DARK) in hopes of learning more about her BUT SHE WAS ALREADY GONE! I learned that she had already left on her trip back home through the African bush. Needless to say, that I was totally stunned and truly amazed with great admiration at this young mother 's example. Here was a young woman packing a nine-month-old baby for almost nine miles over rocky trails to keep God's Passover with God 's people. As I sit here today at my computer writing this article, I still find myself stopping and thinking and (still stunned) evaluating what I witnessed. I ask myself whether I would be willing to walk carrying a nine-month-old baby on my shoulder some nine miles through the bush so as to keep God's Passover. I then think of all the people I have known over the past 54 years and ask HOW MANY OF THOSE PEOPLE WOULD BE WILLING TO DO THAT? How many would consider the Passover "IMPORTANT ENOUGH" for such a sacrifice of time, effort, and fortitude! Thus, here is another important reason for our trip to Kenya - - so that God could use this experience to ask all of you reading this account JUST HOW MUCH YOU PERSONALLY VALUE THE PASSOVER AS WELL AS YOUR INVITATION FROM GOD TO BECOME HIS SONS, HIS HEIRS AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST (see Romans 8:17)! I truly hope and pray that each of you reads this article over and over again and again until you have received the message God wants you to gain from this trip to Kenya! Yes, this trip to Kenya was for your benefit too! Do any of you dare read and prayerfully consider James 1:22-25 and then prayerfully study this article and then do this self-examination?

THE “LEAST” OF THESE

The entire trip to Kenya and all the experiences encountered force me to consider and review Matthew 25:31-46 in light of James 1:22-25. We found human beings in Kenya who are hungering and thirsting for the true word of God - - not the “dog's vomit” and the “sow's excrement” preached by Satan's ministers as well as many ministers claiming to represent God.

How many of you reading this article feel genuine concern for others scattered across this earth who are hungering and thirsting for the truth of God that you believe you have? Those scattered people the Almighty God is calling in Kenya and in so many other places ARE LITERALLY THE “**LITTLE ONES**” CHRIST IS SPEAKING OF IN Matthew 25. I personally know of people claiming to be the people of God who, upon hearing of our trip to Kenya asked, “why should we be concerned with those people in Kenya or other countries?” If you have God's Spirit and if you hope to be in the kingdom of God yet you show no concern for “these little ones” (babes in Christ) then you definitely fit the category Christ mentioned in Matthew 25:41-46. Remember Christ spoke these words - - I am merely quoting Christ! We all need to consider what God says in Romans 2:2-11.

It is truly amazing how many people GOD BROUGHT TO US while we were there even though we did NO advertising. It is also truly amazing how many people have come to the services since our trip there.

ENDEARING ENCOUNTERS

Most of the people we visited are poor people. Yet in many instances they chose to take from their meager possessions and give me a gift. One family could find nothing to give until they found four chicken eggs which they proudly gave to me. My human impulse was to refuse the eggs and ask them to eat them rather than to give them to me. But I knew that refusing them would be very offensive. So, I graciously took them and had the motel chef prepare a couple of omelets for my son and myself the next morning.

Another family gave me a live chicken. The mother ordered her son to “Go catch a chicken” and when he brought one, she presented it to me. Since we would not have been allowed to bring a live chicken to America on the plane, I gave it to one of the leading men in our group.

Another person gave me a pineapple. Three others gave us bags of Kenya tea. Two women gave handmade bags for me to bring to my wife and another gave a bag for Stephen's wife. Another lady gave me and my wife a cup with an inscription regarding the trip to Kenya.

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THE MOST RESPECTED GIFT

Most of the gifts we received were tokens of thanks and appreciation for our presence and our efforts to bring them the *good news* of God and His family. But one gift was very moving to me personally. This one man, who was the head of his family tribe, regarded himself a “Shepherd” of that family. He always carried a “Shepherd’s Staff” wherever he went as a symbol of his status. He called my son aside and said, “come into my home for I want to give your father a gift and I will allow you to present it to him.” The gift was a hand tooled Shepherd’s Staff. This individual has become a devoted follower of God through our ministry there. He is a unique person in other ways. He always wears a white turban on his head. This turban is called a “tabernacle” that symbolizes “the dwelling of God here.” He wanted to know what I thought of his turban and my reply was, “I have no problem with your turban but I am much more interested in your HEART than your turban.” He seemed to really like and respect that answer.

PETER’S JEALOUSY

Remember the Peter (the Judas) mentioned earlier the one who invited us to Kenya? Well, as we learned, his motive and intent was that of self-promotion and greed. He wanted to GET FOR HIMSELF - - not serve. What he wanted is something he can never obtain - - true respect and admiration from others. We learned that he is a man distrusted and disliked by all that know him. Yet, what he witnessed was a “white man” from America coming to Kenya and obtaining the love, the respect and admiration he lusted after but could not obtain. He used some of the money he got from me to try and bribe others to *follow him*. We did not bribe anyone but presented the truth straight from the Bible. Because we represented the Almighty God to them, they all witnessed many miracles (and continue witnessing miracles to this very day) and saw proof that our ministry is from God. Peter became envious and jealous of what was occurring, and the gifts given to me. He tried to take the chicken away. He even grabbed the Shepherd’s staff from my hand and tried to hold on to it. One could see he was visibly upset over the love and respect given to my son and me. But since he was greedy, vain, and proud as well as a deceiver, he could never receive such respect or admiration from others. He is truly a miserable man with no hope of finding fulfillment in life and the only “hope” he has is being called to JUDGMENT before the Christ he dishonors every day. He is truly a pitiful human being Even though these gifts are not of great monetary value they held great significance with the people who gave them to me.

A GLORIOUS SUMMARY

The message we brought to Kenya is the message we are taking to the entire world. In short, the thrust of that message is that the ENTIRE WORLD is ANXIOUSLY WAITING FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED NOW TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY OF GOD (see Romans 8:19-25). This is so that the masses can be brought out of their servitude to sin and into the glorious liberty of being SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST (Romans 8:16-17). That is the message we took to Kenya and it is a MESSAGE OF POWER - - not just nice sounding platitudes such as “I’m saved,” or “I’m born again.” The message we bring is THE WAY OF LIFE AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE. We stressed that God will not bless anyone in their sins and will not save anyone while they are in their sins - - we must change! All people on earth need God’s blessings BUT THEY NEED REPENTANCE FIRST! John the Baptist preached REPENTANCE. Jesus preached REPENTANCE. Paul and the other apostles preached REPENTANCE and we preach REPENTANCE. But we also preach that each person has the obligation from God to SEARCH HIS OWN HEART AND SOUL and make necessary changes (see James 1:22-27). We recognize that very FEW people are willing and able to do this and most are not willing to carefully study the entire chapter of Matthew 25 and apply it to themselves word by word.

World events show we are rapidly approaching the time of Christ's return. Jesus often warned that MANY would be unprepared when He returns. Will we personally be ready for His return?

There is one final reason for our trip to Kenya. It was so that this article could be written and all of you reading this be given the chance to evaluate *where you stand before God*. What I stressed in Kenya is that EVERY ONE OF US IS GOING TO DIE EVENTUALLY - - THE ONLY QUESTION IS HOW! Will we die SERVING GOD AS HE REQUIRES, or will we merely die with no hope or with a false hope believing that all God wants is token obedience to His Sabbath and holy day commands and a few other points of the law? That is the primary question we each should ask ourselves - - and we need to make certain we come up with the right answer. God help us all in this evaluation of ourselves!

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EPILOGUE

What will happen in Kenya now that my son and I have returned to America? Actually, there has been growth both spiritually in the individuals but also in the number of people turning to God. I keep cautioning them that their personal growth toward the Kingdom of God and the growth of God's work in Kenya is dependent on the efforts they put forth in serving God. I have informed them that the main reason God is now working in Kenya is because many God has called in other countries have become lukewarm and refuse to shake off their spiritual lethargy. That if they do not remain steadfast and stay close to God, they too will be left out of the Kingdom at Christ's return. Their attitude and growth are truly encouraging fruits of this ministry. We pray that God will keep this zeal flowing and growing.

Other Items

Wanted!

Sent by Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Jesus Christ

By the FBI, IRS, CIA, FDA, EPA, DNR, AF&T, NCC, NEA, USDA, AMA, SSA, MHA, ADL, NAACP, UNGC, & the USCG for the following crimes:

- 1. Wanted by the FBI for teaching the people that there is a higher power and authority than Caesar or the state.**
- 2. Wanted by the IRS for failure to report income to the taxing authorities.**
- 3. Wanted by the CIA for causing political unrest at home and abroad.**
- 4. Wanted by the FDA for turning water into wine without a license.**
- 5. Wanted by the EPA for feeding a crowd of 5000 and threatening the environment.**
- 6. Wanted by the DNR for fishing without a license.**
- 7. Wanted by the AF&T for telling his disciples to sell their coat and buy a sword.**
- 8. Wanted by the NCC for teaching doctrines not approved by the National Council of Churches.**
- 9. Wanted by the NEA for teaching without proper certification.**
- 10. Wanted by the USDA for driving a herd of 2000 hogs into the sea.**
- 11. Wanted by the AMA for practicing medicine without a license.**
- 12. Wanted by the SSA for failure to apply for a social security number.**
- 13. Wanted by the MHA for healing minds without a psychiatric license.**
- 14. Wanted by the ADL for exposing and teaching the people the truth about the Jews.**
- 15. Wanted by the NAACP for telling His disciples to preach to White Christian Israel instead of black Africa.**
- 16. Wanted by the United Nations Genocide Convention for creating mental anguish among the Jews.**
- 17. Wanted by the U.S. Coast Guard for walking on the water without a life jacket.**
- 18. Wanted by the U.S. Department of HEW for teaching people to work and depend on God rather than the welfare dole.**
- 19. Wanted by the U.S. Department of Justice for exposing the evil among the leaders of the government.**
- 20. Wanted by all civil and religious authorities for telling the common people the good news of the coming kingdom "government" of God upon earth.**
- 21. Wanted by OSHA for failure to wear a hard hat when driving the Money Changers from the Temple.**

If you know the whereabouts of this unusual person please contact your local chapter of any of the above named Government Agencies. Failure to apprehend this dangerous radical rightwing Bible teacher may result in the establishment of God's Great and Glorious Kingdom here on Earth. This mighty Christ may make his appearance at any time. Watch and be on guard at all times.

A Blast from the Past

First Love

by Arlan Weight (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Just where is the church today? It has been only 15 short years since the death of **Herbert W. Armstrong** and how many splits and factions are there? Oh sure, some folks split off from the **Worldwide Church of God** prior to 1986, but that was miniscule compared to today. But why all the groups? What is it that makes us split up? And why all the **Armstrong** bashing? It seems as though the church is in a confused state. Was **Herbert Armstrong** a false prophet?

All these questions and more deserve an answer. If we are ever to make any sense of things in the church today, we must get to the bottom of it all. To this writer the answer is somewhat simple, and yet at the same time profound. The reason the church is scattered today appears to be the same reason it became scattered after the death of Paul, and the other apostles.

It seems as though history repeats itself. The New Testament church began on Pentecost 31 AD. The last apostle to die was John, which may have been somewhere at the turn of the century. The scattering of the church began a bit earlier, but about the same time of John's death the church seems hidden from view and does not appear until much later. According to many Bible scholars, when the church reappeared, it looked quite different from what the apostles started out with.

This modern era of the church began about 1900 years later or somewhere about 1931. **Herbert W. Armstrong** died in January of 1986 and here we are at the turn of the century again. Can we see some similarities between the original church of 31 AD and that of our time today? Where is the visible church? Is there any one of the so called 'Church of God' groups that is dominantly the true Church of God... the one Jesus said he would build? (Mat. 16:18)

Of course, we can't know all the details of what happened in 100 A.D., but if present conditions are any hint of the past, we can see many people began separating and splitting off, just like today. But what caused the splits back then? Does the Bible offer any clues? Let us take a look.

Paul gives one clue when he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**:" (Gal. 1:6) Paul could see this sort of thing beginning to happen to the Galatians. But also, he told the Ephesian church elders (Acts 20:17) what was to befall them after he was gone. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking **perverse things**, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30)

So, in Galatians Paul indicated they were beginning to be fed with **another gospel**. What was the gospel that Paul preached? "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the **kingdom of God**, shall see my face no more." (Acts 20:25) When Paul was nearing the end of his life in Rome, he was still preaching the same message... that of the kingdom of God. Notice Acts 28:23. "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging to whom he expounded and testified **'the kingdom of God**, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening." (Acts 28:23) "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the **kingdom of God**, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." (Acts 28:30-31)

So, from the discussion here in Acts and Galatians the underlying problem had to do with the message. Various individuals, apparently, began deviating from the message first delivered to the church. The message from the beginning was what Jesus brought to this earth. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the **gospel of the Kingdom of God**... repent ye and **believe the gospel**." (Mark 1:14) "And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**" (Mat. 4:23)

The Greek word for 'gospel' is '*euaggelion*' and is used 76 times in the new testament. From the **Eerdman's Bible Dictionary** the meaning for the word 'gospel' is **good news**. The word '*euaggelizo*' appears to be the verb form of the word which means 'preach the gospel or bring glad tidings'. (**Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible**)

Another clue of what went wrong with the first church era was that they 'left their first love.' Notice what Jesus said of them in Revelation 2:1-5. "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 your works and your 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..."

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So, what was their 'first love' and what were the works they were involved in? The word 'first' comes from the Greek word '*protos*' meaning foremost. The word 'love' comes from the Greek word '*Agape*' meaning an outgoing concern for something or someone. **Eerdman's Bible dictionary** describes it this way. "In its basic sense the Greek word designates the divine, selfless love which will **go to any length** to attain the well-being of its object.

Apparently, '*Agape*' is the highest form of the word love. It is the same word for 'charity' in 1 Corinthians 13. In short it is the highest, most exalted fruit of God's spirit. (1 Cor. 13:13) It is the first one listed in the nine fruits of God's spirit of Galatians 5:22.

So, whatever this '**love**' was, it was what they left off doing. So again, what was this love and why did they cease from doing it? To find out we need to back up to when the church first started.

The First Century Church

In Acts 4:32-37 it describes how people sold their property and gave freely of their possessions. Think about it. These people were so excited, so stirred to action, so motivated by the witness of the apostles and the resurrection of Jesus that they would **go to any length** to give out this good news and see that the needs of each other were met. So, what was it that drove them, gave them such zeal to do what they did?

The church was taking off with great power and causing quite a stir, especially among the leaders at that time. Religious leaders especially began to see their power base slipping. They were, no doubt, quite angry and frustrated, but no matter what the consequences, these new converts were not deterred. Nothing was going to stand in their way... nothing. Many of these same folks, at that time were a 'living sacrifice' (Rom. 12:1) They really did fit the definition of 'agape love'. They would go to **any length** to attain the wellbeing of its object.

It becomes quite evident these folks had a vision of something that gave them great hope. In addition to the miracles they saw, they also remembered Jesus' teaching about the **kingdom of God**. For example, they may have remembered parables of certain ones given the opportunity for rulership. The parable of the 'pounds' showed how many cities certain ones would be given based on their efforts. The word city comes from the Greek word '*polis*'. It is used 159 times in the new testament and has no other meaning but that of a **city**.

In the beginning their eyes were focused on that future time and the promises Jesus talked of. Everything else was secondary. Notice Mark 10:29-30... "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come **eternal life**."

This message that Jesus talked about had substance. It was not a 'pie in the sky' thing. It was real. The people, who heard him speak, saw themselves in that kingdom. It is very likely they also thought it would happen in their lifetimes, or very shortly thereafter. So, when Jesus did not return when they expected him, what happened?

The word's written to the Galatians, mentioned above, were penned about 55 A.D., which was about 24 years after Christ's resurrection and the beginning of the New Testament church. It was then that they were turning to another gospel. So, 24 years later people began to change - why? People began to doubt and lose hope. Most of all though, it was because they lost their focus of the original message of God's kingdom and the world tomorrow.

Paul mentions in Galatians 1:7 that "there be some that trouble you and would **pervert the gospel of Christ**." This was the real crux of the matter. It was the thing that began to undermine their zeal. They began to lose sight of that future, that wonderful world tomorrow when God's kingdom would usher in a time of peace and prosperity for all, including their own reward in that kingdom. They began to talk less and less of that future and focused more on their own time and circumstances. Consequently, their **love** for this **message**, and even each other began to wane. They began to say, "what's the use!" They began to give up this hope.

As we read carefully through the scriptures, we can begin to see certain dissension concerning who the people would follow. Notice 1 Corinthians 1:11. Paul was exhorting them to stay united with the message... stay focused and not get hung up on who was their favorite leader. Some liked Apollos. Some liked Peter. And, no doubt, there were others who were gaining a following.

As time marched on the original message of God's kingdom continued to dim. Paul's life was about to end, and he tells Timothy, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." (2 Tim 4:6) So he gave instruction to him to continue to focus in on the preaching of God's kingdom, and to be ready for the time when Jesus would return. For he says the time was coming when people "shall turn their ears **away from the truth** and shall be turned unto fables:" (2 Tim. 4:4) It's very likely at the close of the 1st century the love they once had, so slipped, so faded, that instead of being a living sacrifice to each other, many would betray one another.

In Matthew 24:10 Jesus is painting the picture of the end time events. When persecution really begins in earnest He says, "And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall **hate** one another". It is very likely these

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words were played out, at least to some degree, in the 1st century.

Paul knew this was going to happen and the longer the time passed from Jesus' resurrection, memories of events faded as eyewitnesses continued to die off. Soon no one would be alive to remember. Their **love** for the **message** of God's Kingdom continued to slip. It is a matter of record now. We can read about it and wonder why? Why did it happen? What could have prevented it from happening?

No doubt persecution also played a part in their zeal to remain faithful. So, the church began to compromise on many things to the point where it (the visible church) was unrecognizable from the original. Much more could be written. Much more can be studied about what happened to the church of the 1st century A.D. but let us fast forward to the church age of the 20th century to see if there are any parallels between the two church ages.

The 20th Century Church

My first encounter with the church, more specifically the **Worldwide Church of God**, was in 1966. At that time, a friend of mine gave me a stack of Plain Truth magazines. These caught my interest as they seemed to give some practicality to the Bible. It was far different than what I was acquainted with in my protestant background.

Shortly thereafter, I began listening to a radio broadcast called '**The World Tomorrow**'. The very title and its introduction each time, set the stage for what would be spoken on the program. "**The World Tomorrow...**" Immediately these words stirred my imagination. What was he about to say? What would be the message? Would it be a doomsday message, or a message of hope?

At that time, we were in the tumultuous 60's and the Vietnam War was raging. There were conflicts, both at home and abroad. If ever there was a time, we needed to hear a message of hope, it was then. We were sick of war and what was happening to our nation. It seemed like we were being torn apart. Many of us began to ponder questions like, why war? Why does man always try to use war to settle matters rather than peaceful negotiations? Why can't nations find a better way? On the home front, why all the broken homes, along with all the other social unrest? Why shouldn't we have peace? If only we could put away our human tendencies for '**anger**', for selfish ambition at the expense of our neighbor. If only we could treat our neighbor the same way as we would want to be treated, we could have peace. **This world could be utopian**. People could be extremely happy. If only... If only...

Then, the larger questions began to form. Was there a purpose for man? Was there really a God? If so, why does he permit war... this wretchedness. Why the empty lives? Many people, we could see, seemed to have no answers. What was the meaning of it all?

As we continued to listen to the '**World Tomorrow**' broadcast, we began to see some answers put forward as solutions to man's dilemma. The voice of this program claimed the answers have been there all along. It is just that the world has been deceived.

So, this is what was drawing us, This is what was holding our attention. It was this message. But were they just empty words? Could it really be true? Was it possible for a utopian world? This voice not only said it was possible, but that it was going to happen. Furthermore, the voice of this radio broadcast claimed this was the **message** that had been hidden from mankind all these years, but why?

As I look back on it now, as we all can, was it not this **same message** that had been preached by Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles, that was stirring our hearts? We all not only read our **magazines** but listened intently to the broadcast each day. In addition to that, we could hardly wait until each Sabbath came when we could fellowship with people who also had this newfound interest.

The following is a sampling of one such radio broadcast beginning with the announcer **Art Gilmore**, who has since died. For those of you who remember, think of the background music also as you listened to these words:

Herbert W. Armstrong brings you the plain truth about today's world news and the prophecies of the World Tomorrow".

"Well greetings friends, this is **Herbert W. Armstrong** with the good news of the world tomorrow. Yes, it is a wonderful thing that the news is going to be good... tomorrow. There is a reason why it is not good today. And it is not good because we have not made it good. It is not good because human beings do not know the way of peace. We are reaping exactly what we have been sowing.

Now there is a way that seems right to a man, the ends thereof are the ways of death. That is the way we have been living. We are living now in a world of chaos growing up into world revolution. We look out over this world and look at the suffering, the unhappiness and the heartache, the empty lives. There is a cause for it all. And we are not going to have a world of peace, a world of real happiness and abundant living, and prosperity for all, until we come to find the way into those things. And we are going to be forced to learn that way and in our time and in our generation..."

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Try to recapture the dynamics and intensity of **Herbert Armstrong's** presentation! But more than that, were the words true? Were they believable? If they were believable then, are they still believable today?

First off, **he** says it is a wonderful thing that the news is going to be good... tomorrow. Meaning at some indeterminate time a new world order is coming. Is that statement true? Well, it depends on who you talk to. Those who believe in the Bible as God's word can see that new world order described through the pages of Isaiah and elsewhere. The Bible plainly says that there is a time coming when all people will know God from the least to the greatest, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9) There's a time coming when **all** people will learn how to have peace with his neighbor. Do they know it now? It is obvious they don't as we think of wars in the Middle East, Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

So, this message rang out over the airwaves loud and clear that there is a new world coming. One where there will be universal peace. One where even the vicious wild animals will be at peace with mankind. (Isaiah 11:6-10) How wonderful! How tremendous! This was a message like we never envisioned growing up in the Protestant or Catholic backgrounds. On and on the Bible explains this in various places. **Herbert W. Armstrong** hit us with this good news (gospel) right up front on most every radio broadcast he ever did. It was the heart and core of the gospel message that Jesus preached. It was the same message Paul and the rest of the apostles preached. It was the message of the hope of **God's kingdom** and the **world tomorrow**.

Listening to **Herbert Armstrong** and following along in our Bibles we believed a new utopian era was about to dawn upon us. We were so inspired by this prospect that we wanted to be a part of it. We saw ourselves as being in that new world. Furthermore, we saw the proof in our own Bibles. If we could prove that God exists, and if He really did inspire this book, the Bible...?

Herbert Armstrong made this message come alive. It had been almost dead, it seems, for these 19 millennia, and now it was alive again. As we listened and pondered, we were gripped with excitement. It made sense. We began to understand how the world was deceived. (Rev. 12:9) It seemed only a very few people understood these timeless truths. Why could we envision this new world, and why did these things make sense to us and not to most people? We felt drawn to the message. It was different all right. And we were following right on as he read the words out of the pages of our Bibles.

But going on, **Herbert Armstrong** said today's world is a world of our making and the way of peace we just do not know. He stated that there is a cause for all the suffering and heartache today. Was he accurate about that? I think it is every bit as accurate today as it was then. Aren't many, if not most of our problems, self-inflicted? And aren't most of our problems of a spiritual nature? If we could only get a handle on anger on our selfish desires and turn them around to love our neighbors as ourselves. We could see how a utopian world could happen, but when?

The one thing he said oftentimes was that this new world would culminate in our generation. Now that is something that he would not know, nor can anyone know for sure. Although, if we look at Matthew 24 where Jesus is describing the end time events, He says, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, **this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.** (Mat. 24:33-34)

The urgency of these words seemed to say, this is happening now. We must be living in the end time. But didn't Jesus own followers of the 1st Century hear these words and how about every succeeding generation? Maybe each generation has thought, "it can get no worse, we must be living in the time of the end." There seems to be evidence to prove this to be true. But what makes our generation unique is that no other time in history did the possibility exist for all human life to end with a big bang! Not like our time... What with endless array of war machines and the technology to operate them. With the push of a button, whole cities can now be obliterated. The scenarios of chemical and biological warfare are even more frightening.

Conditions for global warfare are continuing to move ever closer. So just when do these words of Matthew take effect. We thought they were true in **Herbert Armstrong's** day, and so did he. But are not conditions more likely today than they were back then? Just think of the computerization of everything since 1986. Surely the words of Daniel 12:1, 4 are more appropriate today than they were 15 years ago. So was it wrong for **Herbert Armstrong** to lead us to believe we are or were **that generation** of Matthew 24:34. I think not.

But think about these words of Isaiah how he describes this physical world that is coming... Don't they hit at the heart and core of what involves peoples hopes and dreams? And just how good is technology anyway, if you cannot live in peace to enjoy all the endless gadgets?

I think you will have to agree with me, **Herbert Armstrong's** message began in a dynamic way and continued on hitting the nail squarely on the head. The message he talked and wrote about appealed to all of us then, and it is one that should appeal to all of us now. But why all the splits and what happened to this good news. **Herbert Armstrong** continues...

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"Now my friends why is it that you have **not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ**, but a different gospel about his person? A gospel that teaches exactly the opposite of what Jesus Christ did. Why is it that you have been brought up to believe exactly the **opposite of what the Bible says**? Exactly the opposite of what Jesus Christ taught. Why is it that you have been brought up from childhood **practicing customs** that are exactly the **antithesis of those that Jesus practiced**, setting us an example that we should follow his steps, and do as he did. Exactly opposite than the apostle Paul taught to the Gentiles that had been converted Christians."

This was a bombshell! Never had we heard any preacher say such things. Could something like this actually be true? It sounded like a far out claim that for 19 centuries we had "**not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ**." It sounded a bit preposterous, even a bit arrogant, for anyone to make this claim. But could it really be true? This was the challenge he put before us. The more we pondered it the more it began to ring true. Whenever had we heard sermons in the churches of our worldly background about the message Jesus preached? Wasn't it always about his person? We were not ignorant about what Jesus did in giving of His life so that we may live. This was not something we were strange to. But little did we remotely realize or take to heart what He talked about... a **God Kingdom**, a place in that kingdom, and the physical effects of it **on this earth**.

Think back 20 or 30 years ago. Look at the zeal we all had for this message! Were we any different than the 1st Century church? No, I would say not. We fell in **love** with this message. We embraced it. We believed it! We began proving it out of our own Bibles.

Many people at that time gave generously of their time and substance, just like Acts 4:32-37. Some even sold their farms and moved into town so they could be nearer to the church and other people of like faith. For those that remained far distant, they drove... and **drove**... Each week they got up early and headed down the road to church, sometimes 200 miles or more, each way! Once at church, they stayed the rest of the day and then turned right around and headed back home, arriving late, just in time to greet the 1st day of the new work week. Sometimes people stayed overnight at church brethren's homes. These folks were happy to help out as well with meals and other accommodations. This they did week after week, month after month, year after year, in all kinds of weather... for many years! Was this not **love**?

Yes, there was **zeal** alright. There was **love** alright... not only for the message, but for one another as well. We were in the process of bonding with each other stronger than we ever had with even our own physical families. Never, would we ever expect to drive this far to hear a speaker, or fellowship with other people. How was it possible? Some extended family members, as well as others who knew what was happening, thought we were crazy!

As the months and years passed, we were learning more and more about what the Bible says. We were actually **'coming out of this world'**. We began to learn about God's Holy Days verses the counterfeit ones the world observed. Did it cause a stir in families? You bet, and how! Many people lost their jobs because of their desire to observe the Sabbath and not work that day. Many families were broken up. Was it easy living in families where there was a lot of yelling and screaming because of this newfound fanatical religion of **Herbert Armstrong's**? They did not remotely see it as God's commands. To this day, they do not. But was it easy? No, but it made our determination stronger when we saw the words Jesus spoke. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother-in-law. And a **man's foes shall be they of his own household**. (Mat. 10:36)

No, it was not easy... but we had joy. Life began to have meaning. We saw God's plan unfolding to us through the Holy Days. We began to see that God's purpose for creating man was far greater than anyone could have imagined. And it was through this message that we were called and let us be honest about it. The messenger at that time was **Herbert W. Armstrong**.

When Jesus came to this earth, he brought a message of hope, and the 1st century church started out with a **fervent love of that message**. We can look back and it seems amazing that the whole world, basically, lost sight of His message and followed after a different message... that of his person. It appears that Satan, who is the god of this world, was quite effective in making it seem right, while at the same time diverting mankind's attention away from the goal... **God's Kingdom**.

But how much more amazing is it when we contemplate our present era. When we can see how quickly the message **has changed** again. Can Satan actually use the same tactics and deceive folks just as easily this time as he did in the 1st Century?

TO BE CONTINUED IN ISSUE #17

Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Oil, Ten Virgins and Leaven by Nathaniel Burson (Big Sandy, Texas)

I was surprised to find Bill Goff's articles took a new look on the symbolism of oil and the parable of the ten virgins and the meaning of leaven. I have never seen anyone but myself break with the traditional interpretations of these things. I also found his statements on the fallible nature of Christ very encouraging; antichrist is, simply, a spirit that believes Jesus was "special", in some way *different* from us, incapable of sinning. Anyone who believes otherwise is, quite simply, not a Christian but an Anti-Christian (which is, sadly, most everyone). So, kudos, Bill.

And while I mildly disagree with Bill's final conclusion that oil = truth (he is in fact precisely 1/3 correct, it was far better than the party line. Darwin's defense of the status quo on the other hand I found deeply flawed; he said you cannot buy truth; yet are we not commanded to do just that?

Proverbs 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

And even more so in today's age? (**Revelation 3:18**). No, you cannot buy this from a hardware store, but it is for sale everywhere if you use the correct currency.

1 Timothy 6:18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

Indeed, it is the *holy spirit* which cannot be bought with money, for it is a gift; need I cite the scriptures? So, if the oil does indeed, in the slightest way, symbolize the holy spirit, and if "one must stay with what the words mean to imply as in buy, just as in oil to burn", then it would be a Biblical approval of simony. **Ergo, oil most definitely does not picture the holy spirit.**

Response to: The Parable of the Ten Virgins and The Good Leaven by William P. Goff

Trinity and Deist Systems by Ray Daly (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Started on your weekly mailing. And would like to comment on the first article by Eddie Hyatt. An excellent article. But perhaps lacking one major point. Toward the end he mentions the Supreme court comments on "The Church of the Holy Trinity vs. the United States." It seems that Eddie has missed one point on the founding of the US. This point being as follows.

The US was not founded as a "trinity" religion nation. But rather, a "deist" system. The founding fathers and later did not want any of the Catholic "trinity" church to settle in the US. Because of that "third" being. Actually, the revolution itself was fought because the "Trinitarian" English did not wish to work with the "Deist" settlers. This is why Australia and likely New Zealand were settled as well. The "Deists" being forced to leave the "Triist" (my usage) forces. As well, South Africa was settled by "deists" as well. The whole point began when the "triist" Israelites began to settle in the west, after their leaving Parthia. For example, William the conqueror invading in 1000 AD. Triists fighting against their deist "brothers". It wasn't until the Catholic Religion did begin to "invade" America that mindsets changed.

If you get a chance to read it, my article on Mat. 28:19 points this out. And, if you wonder why the Supreme Court is so against our "original" constitution, consider that, as late as 2019, of the nine judges, three were of the "enemy Jewish Edomites". And six were of the "enemy Catholic Trinitarian's".

Response to: Are You a Christian Nationalist? by Eddie Hyatt