

WHO ARE WE?

Group Name: We have no official name--nor do we want one--however we provide the following: INTERDEPENDENT-INTERACTIVE, CHURCH OF GOD, SABBATH SERVICES, BIBLE STUDIES, AND OPEN FELLOWSHIP.

Address: 320 N. Griffin St. City: Bismarck State: ND Zip Code: 58501

Country: USA Phone: (701) 258-7172 FAX: (775) 239-2119

E-Mail: Darwin-Laura@Juno.com

Website: <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com>

Leadership Body: Christ the Head of God's Church, Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 5:23, and I Corinthians 11:3. Local contact persons are Darwin or Laura Lee.

Purpose: To provide Interdependent-Interactive, Church of God, Sabbath Services and Bible Studies to all of God's People, including those who are not welcome to visit or attend other groups due to having been suspended or disfellowshipped, as well as those who want a place to attend weekly, those who are just visiting our area, and anyone else who is interested in God's way of living. We also have open fellowship here, meaning that you are welcome to come visit with us during our open fellowship times even if you are not interested in attending our Sabbath Services or Bible Studies.

History: We held our first Bible Study here on June 30, 2000 and our first Sabbath Service was held on December 16, 2000.

Affiliation/Membership: Our Affiliation is with God our Father and His Son Jesus the Christ. Our membership includes *all* of God's people, no matter where they are.

Distinctive Doctrines: John 13:34-35

Use Sacred Names?: Since salvation is between God and each individual (Philippians 2:12), so the use of sacred names would be between each individual person and God.

Observe Holy Days?: We believe that God commands us to keep the Weekly Sabbath as well as Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, however, we also believe there is much controversy out there in understanding if certain ones should or shouldn't be kept, how to keep them and when to keep them. So with this in mind, we will try to the best of our ability to accommodate these differences, believing and having faith that someday through God's Holy Spirit, we will all be brought into the same understanding on this subject. Until then let's follow John 13:34-35.

Evangelistic Efforts: We provide a service to God's People no matter where they are to the best of our ability. This service includes Interdependent-Interactive, Church of God, Sabbath Services, Bible Studies and Open Fellowship. We also welcome live speakers for interactive, and special music, on a volunteer only basis.

Periodicals: We have a newsletter, which we publish every 2 months.

Literature: We distribute tapes and literature for others and ourselves to the best of our ability.

Parent Group: The greater Church of God--The Ekklesia. Language: English

Other Language: None Country: USA

Name: Contact Persons are Darwin & Laura Lee Address: 320 N. Griffin St.

City: Bismarck State: North Dakota Zip Code: 58501

Phone: (701) 258-7172 E-Mail: Darwin-Laura@Juno.com

Directions To Meeting: 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota, located at the corner of Rosser Avenue and Griffin Street, with plenty of side street parking.

Time of Meeting: Usually 1:00PM, but may vary.

SABBATH SERVICES--Every Saturday unless stated other wise on page 3. We generally do a phone hookup, video tape, or cassette tape, service with various speakers. If you have a video or audio tape you think we should hear, please send it.

We also welcome live speakers, and special music, by others on a volunteer basis.

Sabbath Schedule is as follows:

12:00 Noon--Open Fellowship
(Door Open, Come In)

1:00 PM----Sabbath Services

3:00 PM----Open Fellowship

BIBLE STUDIES--We have Bible Studies approximately every 6 weeks. We have a Pot Luck Meal before we start our Bible Studies, so please bring food if you would like to participate in the fellowship, which goes with a meal.

Bible Study Schedule is as follows:

6:30 PM----Open Fellowship
(Door Open, Come In)

7:00 PM----Pot Luck Meal
(Bring Food)

8:00 PM----Bible Study

9:00 PM----Open Fellowship

Bible Study Dates are as follows:

Friday, September 6, 2002

Friday, October 18, 2002

Friday, November 29, 2002

GUEST ROOM--If you are from out of town and are here to attend Sabbath Services or one of our Bible Studies, we do have a guest room. Please call ahead so we know when you will be arriving. (701) 258-7172 (Please Leave a message.)

LOCATION--Sabbath Services and Bible Studies are held at the home of Darwin & Laura Lee, located at 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota. Please use the upper back door by the garage. Phone Number (701) 258-7172 (Please Leave a message.)

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE--The deadline for submitting articles and letters for possible inclusion in our November/December 2002 Newsletter is October 15, 2002. Thank You. Laura Lee (Editor)

E-MAIL & SNAIL MAIL

Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please use this E-mail address for prayer requests, prayer request updates, and prayer request inquires and information. All prayer requests go around the world via E-mail and are always printed on our Web Site and they are also available via Snail Mail on request. Thank you.

Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please use this E-mail address for anything which you want considered for inclusion in our newsletter such as articles, advertisements, letters to the editor or points of interest. If you do not want it printed, then do not send it to this E-mail address. The deadline for Issue #12--November/December 2002 is October 15, 2002. Thank you.

Answer-Me-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please, use this E-mail address only for those letters which you want an answer to. Send tape, literature and newsletter requests and unsubscribes to this E-mail address. If you do not want or need an answer to your E-mail, then do not send it to this E-mail address. Thank you.

Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please only send things to this E-mail address if you only want us to read it and you do not need or want an answer to it. Also, if you want to unsubscribe and do not need a notice stating you have been taken off, this is the place. Thank you.

FAX--We now have fax 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our Fax number is: (775) 239-2119.

SNAIL MAIL--When you send a letter or information via snail mail, and you do not need an answer back or if you do not want it printed, please be sure to clearly put that information in your letter. Our snail mail address is Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502. Thank you.

WEB SITE ADDRESS--<http://darwinlauralee.150m.com>

AD SECTION--If you have an ad that you would like to have us print, please write it up and send it to: **Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com** We may not print all ads, but we will read them for consideration of inclusion in this newsletter and then will let you know one way or the other. Some ads will also be posted on our Web Site.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES 2002

For Feast of Tabernacles information, please go to our Web Site at: <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com> You will find them listed in the section called ad pages, under Feast of Tabernacles. Please let us know if you have any problems getting this information from our Web Site, because we can also send you the information via E-mail or Snail Mail.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSER

Even though, all of the things we do to try to help others, through our prayer line, this newsletter, local services, and many other things we do, to try to help others, is all given free of charge, the reality of the situation is, that all of these things do cost money. We want you our readership, to know, that we do not take any wages from the donations that we do receive. In the near future, we plan on including on our Web Site a Financial Discloser Page. On this page, we plan to list the things we generally order on a regular basis and the postage stamps we most often use. For those who are uncomfortable with sending cash donations, we do and will accept the products we use most often as well as the postage stamps we use most often. Please wait until we have our product list up before sending things like paper or envelopes, etc. as we don't want you to send us things that we cannot use. If you send cash donations, please make the check or money order out to either Darwin Lee or Laura Lee or both. It doesn't matter.

On this page, we also plan to list the donations that we do receive. Instead of listing a donation and a name of a person, we will assign each donator a number and post that number on there, next to the donation. This way everyone will always know when we have a need and when we don't.

Our more detailed Financial Discloser will start on January 1, 2003, although the page will be on the Web Site before that. We will also post an undetailed discloser for expenses and donations for the years 2001 and 2002 as we have those figures.

For those who do not have access to the Web, please let us know and we can send a Financial Discloser to you via Snail Mail. Anyone who needs a receipt for their donations for 2001 or 2002 or in the future please request it. Thank You Laura Lee

Feast of Trumpets September 7, 2002
Services At 1:00PM Meal At 5:00PM At:
 Bonanza Family Restaurant
 In: Mandan, North Dakota

Atonement September 16, 2002
Services At 1:00PM Meal At Sunset At:
 North American Steak Buffet
 In: Bismarck, North Dakota

Feast of Tabernacles September 21-27, 2002
Last Great Day September 28, 2002

There will be **no** services here in Bismarck, North Dakota at 320 North Griffin Street, on September 21 or 28, 2002.

We here in Bismarck, North Dakota, at 320 North Griffin Street want to once again remind everyone, that as we go into the Fall Holy Day Season, as well as all year around, how important relationships with each other are. With this in mind, once again we extend our helping hand to those who need some help with keeping any of the Holy Days, even if we do not keep the same dates as you. We are willing to help anyone to the best of our abilities.

We have a zero disfellowshipment/dismemberment policy here. You may cut us off if you want, however, we will not cut you off. When people no longer speak to each other all hope of straightening anything out or having a relationship with that person is gone. **PLEASE DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN DISMEMBERING THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

UNITY

There are thousands of congregational associations that teach God's law, the observance of the Sabbath, and the annual festivals. These organizations appear to be teaching the correct worship of God; however, most are separated by major doctrinal differences over subjects that are extremely important to one's salvation. These doctrinal differences and certain attitudes and behaviors keep God's elect from being unified in belief and a work for God.

There are over 300 different congregational associations that have sprung from W.W.C.G. over the last 35 years and thousands of lives have been destroyed and are being destroyed because of a lack of unity among the Father's children.

The saddest part is that most of the elect do not truly understand the many causes of disunity and that there is absolutely no hope that these various congregations of the Father's elect will become unified in doctrine during this age.

For you who are truly serious about your salvation we have prepared a taped presentation that clearly explains how the condition of disunity came about and what you can do to make sure that you are not trapped into being punished by Jesus Christ for contributing to disunity. For your copy of this important presentation, send \$1.00 to help defray the cost of postage to: Congregation of God, P.O. Box 612440, San Jose, CA. 95161 U.S.A..

LETTERS SECTION--This section can contain letters to the editor, to the brethren, or from the editor. Please keep in mind while reading these letters, that just because we print them does not mean that we agree with everything people say in these letters. Letters many times are filled with opinion and emotion and sometimes factual and un-factual information. This section is interactive. If you agree or disagree with a letter or an article in this newsletter and want others to know, this is the section for you. Please, if you want your letter to be printed, clearly say so and send it to Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com We do not print all letters that we receive. If you state you want your letter printed, then we do consider it for inclusion. If we receive a letter that we feel would be of interest to others, generally we ask the writer for permission to print it. If you clearly state that you do not want your letter printed, it will not be printed.

by Ed & Nancy Oettel
Lynden, Washington

Hi to you both,

My wife and I live in the beautiful Northwest near the Canadian border, at Lynden Washington.

We are part of the scattered brethren

and consider ourselves as interdependent as you do. I enjoyed your latest newsletter very much as I have previous issues. They mainly reflect the way we think on many topics. We were never disfellowshipped from any group, we just withdrew before that could happen. I was an elder in Worldwide Church of God and Global before we left, and have come to the conclusion that all hierarchical religion is wrong. If we believe scripture, we are

all called to be ministers or servants. Most ministers who have come thru Ambassador College have been brainwashed to believe that they are special or one cut above the people they serve.

We have a blessing this year as the Building Bridges group will be hosting a feast site on Salt Spring Island near Vancouver Island in British Columbia this fall. We have met with them before and

are good friends with Claudia and Wayne Speed.

We, like so many other individuals, have studied many doctrinal issues since we left corporate religion, and after it all we have come to the conclusion that several of the main issues that divide and scatter brethren come from the fact that there are no black and white commands. The one important ingredient that we all need from what the Messiah commanded before His death was that true Christians would be known by the love they have for each other. This would also include compassion and tolerance as well. When a person makes a decision on what he believes and hangs on to it with every fiber of his being, he ends up all by himself. We have seen members who have followed that path, and they spend the Passover and Feast Days all by themselves alone. In Hebrews we are told to assemble together and more often as we see the end times approaching. I envy your group who come together on a regular basis. I wish we were not so far away. Thanks again for your e-mails and for your newsletter. My wife and I are retired, but we are as active as we can be.

In Christian Love
Ed and Nancy Oettel

by Don Esposito
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Brethren;

Greetings in the name of Yahweh the Father and his Son Yahshua. I pray that all of Yah's set apart Saints are well. We are currently in America for a short visit, and will be leaving in a few weeks to head back overseas to set up for the Feast of Tabernacles in Israel. If there is, still anyone who plans on being with us, please send in your feast information as soon as possible. We truly expect to have a wonderful feast this year, and we also have an extremely discounted price from normal years.

I also wanted to update you on some of the needy brethren worldwide. We have made a new contact with brethren from Romania, and hope to shortly send several hundred pounds of clothing aid

there. One problem we run into, in some third world countries, is the fact, that if we ship boxes to them, many times they are stolen. However, we have contacts that are going to bring the much-needed aid directly to them. We are also trying to set up monthly aid to a fellow congregation in Kenya. It really sounds that they truly need help there. Please keep these situations in your prayers, as well as all the suffering brethren worldwide. It is not an easy time to be an evangelist bringing the News of Yahshua's Kingdom. The Moslem world is totally violent to the good news of Yahshua's Kingdom. Recently in Jerusalem, we were threatened to be killed by a Moslem man for sharing the truth with him. They are the most violent religion on the face of the earth today, and are the greatest threat to the preaching work.

The world will never be the same again. So many believers say that they believe in Yahshua's return, and know that it is near, yet live so much for the world. Life, in this world today is totally centered on self-pleasure and entertainment. Slowly, also the love of many is waxing cold. This is the most dangerous time to ever live in. I believe more people will lose salvation in this end time than ever before. Mathew 24 tells us, that if possible even the elect will be deceived. Brethren, it is time to wake up to the reality of our calling. To much is given, much is expected. We are all part of the body of Messiah and members in particular. It is time to make that full dedication to Yahweh while it is called today. The two tapes you will be receiving deal with the subject of the Dead Sea Scrolls. (Editor's Note: These two tapes would have to be ordered directly from Don Esposito--Congregation of YHWH, 28 Swarthmore Drive, Carteret, NJ 07008) I do not believe that it is a coincidence that these scrolls were found the very day before the vote took place to make Israel a nation again according to the word of Yahweh. The Dead Sea Sect left Jerusalem due to the corruption of the priesthood and the worldly ways of society at that time. They had believed that the Messiah's return was imminent and went to the wilderness to spiritually cleanse themselves from the defilement of the world. There is much to learn from them. I believe, very shortly, more news about these scrolls will become public.

For those of you who will be spending the feast with us, we will visit the site, where these people lived and the scrolls were found. I pray that you may receive spiritual edification from them. Both Petra and I also want to thank everyone for your prayers and support while the Father has us doing ministry in Israel.
B' Shem Yahshua,
Don Esposito

by Ed & Nancy Oettel
Lynden, Washington

Hi again Darwin and Laura,

One of the things that has been so evident during this period of the end times is the scattering that has taken place with God's people. One of the scriptures that we have read to describe this time is Dan 12:7 It was the act of God who started to scatter His people, which still continues as we speak. While we were all under the influence of Worldwide Church of God, we accepted without question every doctrine that came to us thru the ministry. None of us dared to question the word of a minister, because of the threat of being disfellowshipped. Many who did and were disfellowshipped have since turned up doing an independent work, or having formed together with others who may have been subjected to the same treatment. As I mentioned in my last letter, we joined with Global Church of God for several years. But joining with that group taught us that it was even worse than Worldwide Church of God, because the ministerial leaders were more adamant, than some from Worldwide Church of God. If anything it helped us to see that all these groups, even though sabbatarian, were organized the same as the Catholic Church. Or we could say it followed the same path as the Babylonian Mystery Religion. There are many small groups that follow this mode of corporate religion, actually these are under the control of the federal government. God is really not the head of these groups, but the corporate leader as well as the government is. We subscribe to "The Journal" (News of the Churches of God), and its interesting to read about individuals who have been disfellowshipped by United Church of God

an International Association. Its interesting because the reasons for their disfellowshippment was because they held differing beliefs about certain doctrines than the council of ministers has adopted as "truth".

The many controversies over various doctrines has been very divisive for God's people. We have come to see that there are many subjects such as: Passover timing, Calendar, etc. that are not clearly defined in the bible that have caused many to divide from others. There are concrete points of doctrine that God clearly reveals in His Word.

The one command that Christ made very clear as a measure of identification of true Christians, was that they would have love for each other. The bible clearly states that Love covers a multitude of our sins. We should be able to love each other despite doctrinal differences that divide.

We have been attending occasionally with a United Church of God group in Sedro Wolley Washington. They know we are not regular members, but they have been friendly to us whenever we come. We have others up in Canada who have separated from corporate religion, and they accept us whenever we come up for a visit. Its nice when people of like mind can come together, despite some doctrinal differences, and then show genuine love for each other despite those differences.

My wife and I can appreciate the trials you and your wife have faced to bring you where you now are. Your work with the newsletter is a very worthy effort and it is being enjoyed by many who read it.

Love in Christ's service,
Ed and Nancy Oettel

ARTICLES SECTION--We are always looking for good articles written by ordinary people, to consider for inclusion in this newsletter. Darwin and I do not always agree with every single thing that we print. Darwin and I also do not know everything. Like most people reading this newsletter, we are still learning. We do strive to bring to you Biblically Based Articles--The problem is that opinion and interpretation of scripture varies from person to person. So with that in mind let's let "iron sharpen iron" Proverbs 27:17--Let's learn from each other. Send articles to: Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com

**THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH
PART #5**

by Catholic Mirror 1893
Baltimore, Maryland

CONCLUSION

We have in this series of articles, taken much pains for the instruction of our readers to prepare them by presenting a number of *undeniable facts* found in the word of God to arrive at a conclusion absolutely irrefragable. When the Biblical system put in an appearance in the sixteenth century, it not only seized on the temporal possessions of the Church, but in its vandalic crusade stripped Christianity, as far as it could, of all the sacraments instituted by its Founder, of the holy sacrifice, etc., etc., retaining nothing but the Bible, which its exponents pronounced *their sole teacher* in Christian doctrine and morals. Chief amongst their articles of belief was, and is today, the permanent necessity of keeping the Sabbath holy. In fact, it has been for the past 300 years the only article of the Christian belief in which there has been a plenary consensus of Biblical representatives. The keeping of the Sabbath constitutes the sum and substance of the Biblical theory. The pulpits resound weekly with incessant tirades against the lax manner of keeping the Sabbath in Catholic countries, as contrasted with the proper, Christian, self-satisfied mode of keeping the day in Biblical countries. Who can ever forget the virtuous indignation manifested by the Biblical preachers throughout the length and breadth of our country, from every Protestant pulpit, as long as yet undecided; and who does not know today, that one sect, to mark its holy indignation at the decision, has never yet opened the

boxes that contained its articles at the World's Fair?

These superlatively good and unctuous Christians, by conning over their Bible carefully, can find their counterpart in a certain class of unco-good people in the days of the Redeemer, who haunted Him night and day, distressed beyond measure, and scandalized beyond forbearance, because He did not keep the Sabbath in as straight-laced manner as themselves.

They hated Him for using common sense in reference to the day, and He found no epithets expressive enough of His supreme contempt for their Pharisaical pride. And it is very probably that the divine mind has not modified its views today anent the blatant outcry of their followers and sympathizers at the close of this nineteenth century. But when we add to all this the fact that whilst the Pharisees of old kept the *true Sabbath*, our modern Pharisees, counting on the credulity and simplicity of their dupes, *have never once in their lives kept the true Sabbath* which their divine Master kept to His dying day, and which His apostles kept, after His example, for thirty years steward, according to the Sacred Record.

This most glaring contradiction, involving a deliberate sacrilegious rejection of a most positive precept, is presented to us today in the action of the Biblical Christian world. The Bible and the Sabbath constitute the watchword of Protestantism; but we have demonstrated that it is *the Bible against their Sabbath*. We have shown that no greater contradiction ever existed than their theory and practice. We have proved that neither their Biblical ancestors nor themselves have ever kept one Sabbath day in their lives. The Israelites and Seventh-day Adventists are witnesses of their weekly desecration of the day named by God so repeatedly, and whilst they

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HIS OR HER LIFE WITH SO
MANY WORKS OF LOVE THAT
EVEN IN THE RESURRECTION
JESUS WILL NEED A CUP OF
COFFEE TO REMEMBER THEM
ALL.**

by Alan Ruth
Farmington Hills, Michigan

have ignored and condemned their teacher, the Bible, they have adopted a day kept by the Catholic Church. What Protestant can, after perusing these articles, with a clear conscience, continue to disobey the command of God, *enjoining Saturday to be kept*, which command his teacher, the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, records as the will of God?

The history of the world cannot present a more stupid, self-stultifying specimen of dereliction of principle than this. The teacher demands emphatically in every page that the law of the Sabbath be observed every week, by all recognizing it as "the only infallible teacher," whilst the disciples of that teacher have not once for over three hundred years observed the divine precept! That immense concourse of Biblical Christians, the Methodists, have declared that the Sabbath has never been abrogated, whilst the followers of the Church of England, together with her daughter, the [pg. 9] Episcopal Church of the United States, are committed by the twentieth article of religion, already quoted, to the ordinance that the Church cannot lawfully ordain anything "*contrary to God's written word.*" God's written word enjoins His worship to be observed on *Saturday* absolutely, repeatedly, and most emphatically, with a most positive threat of death to him who disobeys. All the Biblical sects occupy the same self-stultifying position which no explanation can modify, much less justify.

How truly do the words of the Holy Spirit apply to this deplorable situation! "*Iniquitas mentita est sibi*" - "Iniquity hath lied to itself." Proposing to follow *the Bible only* as teacher, yet before the world, *the sole teacher* is ignominiously thrust aside, and the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church - "the mother of abomination," when it suits their purpose so to designate her - adopted, despite the most terrible threats pronounced by God Himself against those who disobey the command, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath."

Before closing this series of articles, we beg to call the attention of our readers once more to our caption, introductory of each; viz., 1st-The Christian Sabbath, the genuine offspring of the union of the Holy Spirit with the Catholic Church His spouse. 2nd- The claim of Protestantism

to any part therein proved to be groundless, self-contradictory, and suicidal.

The first proposition needs little proof. The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. We say by virtue of her divine mission, because He who called Himself the "Lord of the Sabbath," endowed her with His own power to teach, "he that heareth you, heareth Me;" commanded all who believe in Him to hear her, under penalty of being placed with "heathen and publican;" and promised to be with her to the end of the world. She holds her charter as teacher from Him - a charter as infallible as perpetual. The Protestant world at its birth found the Christian Sabbath too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence; it was therefore placed under the necessity of acquiescing in the arrangement, thus implying the Church's right to change the day, for over three hundred years. The Christian Sabbath is therefore *to this day*, the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.

Let us now, however, take a glance at our second proposition, with *the Bible alone* as the teacher and guide in faith and morals. This teacher *most emphatically forbids any change in the day for paramount reasons.* The command calls for a "*perpetual covenant.*" The day commanded to be kept by the teacher *has never once been kept*, thereby developing an apostasy from an assumedly fixed principle, as self-contradictory, self-stultifying, and consequently as suicidal as it is within the power of language to express. Nor are the limits of demoralization yet reached. Far from it. *Their pretense* for leaving the bosom of the Catholic Church was for apostasy from the truth *as taught in the written word.* They adopted the written word as their sole teacher, which they had no sooner done than they abandoned it promptly, as these articles have abundantly proved; and by a perversity as willful as erroneous, they accept the teaching of the Catholic Church in direct opposition to the plain, unvaried, and constant teaching of their sole teacher in the most essential doctrine of their

religion, thereby emphasizing the situation in what may be aptly designated "*a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.*"

[CATHOLIC MIRROR EDITORS' NOTE. - It was upon this very point that the Reformation was condemned by the Council of Trent. The Reformers had constantly charged, as here stated, that the Catholic Church had "apostatized from the truth *as contained in the written word.*" "The written word," "The Bible only," "Thus saith the Lord," these were their constant watchwords; and "the Scripture, as in the written word, the sole standard of appeal," this was the proclaimed platform of the Reformation and of Protestantism. "The Scripture *and tradition.*" The Bible as interpreted by the Church and according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers," this was the position and claim of the Catholic Church. This was the main issue in the Council of Trent, which was called especially to consider the questions that had been raised and forced upon the attention of Europe by the Reformers. The very first question concerning faith that was considered by the council was the question involved in this issue. There was a strong party even of the Catholics within the council who were in favor of abandoning tradition and adopting *the Scriptures only*, as the standard of authority. This view was so decidedly held in the debates in the council that the pope's legates actually wrote to him that there was "a strong tendency to set aside tradition altogether and to make Scripture the sole standard of appeal." But to do this would manifestly be to go a long way toward justifying the claims of the Protestants. By this crisis there was developed upon the ultra-Catholic portion of the council the task of convincing the others that "*Scripture and tradition*" were the only sure ground to stand upon. If this could be done, the council could be carried to issue a decree condemning the Reformation, otherwise not. The question was debated day after day, until the council was fairly brought to a standstill. Finally, after a long and intensive mental strain, the Archbishop of Reggio came into the council with substantially the following argument to the party who held for Scripture alone:

"The Protestants claim to stand upon

the written word only. They profess to hold the Scripture alone as the standard of faith. They justify their revolt by the plea that the Church has apostatized from the written word and follows tradition. Now the Protestants claim, that they stand upon the written word only, is not true. Their profession of holding the Scripture alone as the standard of faith, is false. PROOF: The written word explicitly enjoins the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath. They do not observe the seventh day, but reject it. If they do truly hold the scripture alone as their standard, they would be observing the seventh day as is enjoined in the Scripture throughout. Yet they not only reject the observance of the Sabbath enjoined in the written word, but they have adopted and do practice the observance of Sunday, for which they have only the tradition of the Church. Consequently the claim of 'Scripture alone as the standard,' fails; and the doctrine of 'Scripture and tradition' as essential, is fully established, the Protestants themselves being judges."

[The Archbishop of Reggio (Gaspar Ricciulli) de Fosso) made his speech at the last opening session of Trent, (17th Session) reconvened under a new pope (Pius IV), on the 18th of January, 1562 after having been suspended in 1552. - J. H. Holtzman, *Canon and Tradition*, published in Ludwigsburg, Germany, in 1859, page 263, and Archbishop of Reggio's address in the 17th session of the Council of Trent, Jan. 18, 1562, in Mansi SC, Vol. 33, cols. 529, 530. Latin.]

There was no getting around this, for the Protestants' own statement of faith - the Augsburg Confession, 1530- had clearly admitted that "the observation of the Lord's day" had been appointed by "the Church" only.

The argument was hailed in the council as of Inspiration only; the party for "Scripture alone," surrendered; and the council at once unanimously condemned Protestantism and the whole Reformation as only an unwarranted revolt from the communion and authority of the Catholic Church; and proceeded, April 8, 1546, "to the promulgation of two decrees, the first of which, enacts under anathema, that Scripture and tradition are to be received and venerated equally, and that the deuterocanonical [the apocryphal] books are part of the canon of Scripture. The second decree declares the Vulgate to be the sole authentic and standard Latin

version, and gives it such authority as to supersede the original texts; forbids the interpretation of Scripture contrary to the sense received by the Church, 'or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers,'" etc. (See the proceedings of the Council; Augsburg Confession; and Encyclopaedia Britannica, article "Trent, Council of.")

This was the inconsistency of the Protestant practice with the Protestant profession that gave to the Catholic Church her long-sought and anxiously desired ground upon which to condemn Protestantism and the whole Reformation movement as only a selfishly ambitious rebellion against the Church authority. And in this vital controversy the key, the chiefest and culminative expression, of the Protestant inconsistency was in the rejection of the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day, enjoined in the Scriptures, and the adoption and observance of the Sunday as enjoined by the Catholic Church.

And this is today the position of the respective parties to this controversy. Today, as this document shows, this is the vital issue upon which the Catholic Church arraigns Protestantism, and upon which she condemns the course of popular Protestantism as being "indefensible", self-contradictory, and suicidal." What will these Protestants, what will this Protestantism, do?]

Should any of the Rev. Parsons, who are habituated to howl so vociferously over every real or assumed desecration of that pious fraud, *the Bible Sabbath*, think well of entering a protest against our logical and scriptural dissection of their mongrel pet, we can promise them that any reasonable attempt on their part to gather up the "dissecta membra" of the hybrid, and to restore to it a galvanized existence, will be met with genuine cordiality and respectful consideration on our part. But we can assure our readers that we know these reverend howlers too well to expect a solitary bark from them in this instance.

And they know us too well to subject themselves to the mortification which a further dissection of this anti-scriptural question would necessarily entail. Their policy now is to "lay low," and they are sure to adopt it.

DUE TO THE LENGTH OF THIS ARTICLE IT WILL BE CONTINUED IN ISSUE #12--THANK YOU LAURA LEE (EDITOR)

"THE PRECIOUS FRUIT OF THE EARTH"

**by Arlan Weight
Bismarck, North Dakota**

Not long ago a young fourteen year old girl was abducted from her home in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her only sister watched as she was forced at gunpoint. It's been quite some time now and the girl has not been located. Where is she? Where did her kidnapper take her? What did he do to her? Is she still alive? Is she now being tortured? Certainly if not physically, mentally.

If you are a parent these are but some of the agonizing questions going through your mind. But how about the rest of us? Do we agonize over them as well? How deeply does it affect us? Do we go without sleep? Are our lives interrupted in the same way as this girls parents?

It was over one year before they discovered the remains of Chaundra Levy. For one long terrifying year her parents agonized over her whereabouts. Until recently the most awful news was reported that her body had been found.

How about the two young girls in California who went off to school one morning and that was the last anyone had heard or seen of them. Everyday we turn on the news and brace ourselves for what we might hear next. How many more of these kidnappings and gruesome details are we going to yet hear? How many more Daniel Pearls must we witness and hear of, while he's brutally murdered in front of the whole world, for all to see! How many more suicide bombings are now at this moment being planned. How many 'dirty' bombs are right now in the making?

As we watch and hear all these gut wrenching events, are we more and more horrified? Does it shock you anymore? When the first suicide bomber walked into a crowded market and blew himself and

everyone near him to bits, were you shocked? You bet and how! When you thought of the grisly mess and all the innocents brutally destroyed and all the maiming of those who survived, were you horrified? I should say so!

But what about today? After 71 bombers in 21 months carry out their murderous deeds are you still affected in the same way? After a dozen or so Chandra Levys and Elizabeth Smarts are taken, do we still feel the anxiety and horror we once did? Do we still 'sigh and cry' for the innocent victims and their loved ones in the same way? (Ezek. 9:4)

When we saw the World Trade Centers plummeting to the ground we could not believe our eyes! We viewed this thing as if it was a Hollywood movie. It simply was beyond what we had ever witnessed before and it was too much to take! But those of us who had loved ones in the area were especially helplessly sickened by what we saw. Knowing it was our son, our daughter, mother, father, husband, wife, or friend that was trapped in this carnage. What will it take to outdo this terrorist attack? No doubt by the time this short article is finished, there will be many more heinous crimes and acts of violence committed!

Today, June 18, 2002, another suicide bomber blew himself and 19 other innocent people to bits on a crowded bus in Israel! It barely makes the news anymore. It gets lumped right in with the stock market reports and . . . and we move on. What's happening? What's going on? Are we becoming so calloused we aren't able to cry anymore? Is the sheer number of events like this numbing us?

The more we see and hear of these ghastly acts of violence, the less we seem to be affected. It's like a conditioning process for a climate condition, the more we're exposed the more acclimated we become.

Because, there seems to be so much violence, so much hatred and callous behavior in various parts of the world, people are beginning to wonder if there is a God. And if so, has he forsaken the earth? Has God simply turned his back on it so he's not able to watch, while we little by little destroy ourselves.

But has he? Has he forsaken the earth? And has he turned his back? Or does he see all the violence, kidnapping, murder and other perverse madness?

Notice Ezekiel 8:12, "for they say, the Lord sees us not; the **Lord has forsaken the earth.**" And again in Ezekiel 9:9 God says, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is **full of blood**, and the city **full of perverseness**; for they say, the **Lord has forsaken the earth**, and the Lord **sees not.**"

This is what people say. But do we consider for a moment that God does see, that he does know what is going on and he does see every heart as well. Don't ask me how he does it. It's far beyond my human comprehension to know. But on the other hand, with the advent of the computer, we can see, how, just on a human level, what things are possible. So then would it seem beyond the reach of possibility, what a great Creator God might be able to do?

Think about it. What if God can see all the heinous crimes going on. What if he can see even the very thoughts and intents of every person on earth? Notice what he says in Genesis 6:5. "And **God saw** that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Margin: 'everyday') And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it **grieved him at his heart.**"

These are the words written down just before God destroyed all humans and animals except Noah and his family. The Hebrew word for 'imagination' here is 'yetser'. The margin in the King James Bible says this, "The Hebrew word signifies not only the imaginations but also the purposes and desires."

God can also hear. Notice what he said about the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18:20. "And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous: I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the **cry of it**, which is come unto me; and if not I will know."

Consider it. It says God saw the thoughts and intents of humans before the flood as well as the violence. He heard the cries of Sodom and Gomorrah. Because of these heinous things he heard and saw, it says it was 'grievous' (Gen. 18:20), and 'it grieved him at his heart.' (Gen. 6:5). If he saw those things back then do we think for a moment he doesn't

see what's going on today? Do we think for a moment he doesn't hear the **cries of the innocents** today?

Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 24:37-39. "But **as the days of Noe were**, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Was God grieved with the eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage? One would highly doubt it. These are all part of the human experience and if done rightfully they are good and what God intended. So what was it then that grieved him so much? The answer appears to be in Genesis 6:11-13. "And the earth also was corrupt before God, and the **earth was filled with violence**. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth and God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the **earth is filled with violence** through them."

There it is. It appears that violence was the main thing God was grieved over. Mistreatment of one human to another. He made us all of one blood (Acts 17:26), but man had not learned how to control his violent nature. Is the world more peaceful today? Is it more safe than ever before in human history? Has man today learned the secret of peace?

Again one must only stand back and think of the terrible bloodshed over the 20th Century, and now in the 21st Century. How many people were brutally murdered in the slave camps in Germany during the 2nd World War? In more recent times, think of the half million people butchered in Rwanda. In the mid-nineties genocide was continuing on in Yugoslavia where whole towns and villages were emptied out of certain ethnic groups. As this writing is taking place many more of earth's citizens are losing their lives in Israel. The blood letting is continuing on. Have we become more peaceful. . . more safe?

Consider the ongoing efforts of many in recent time to negotiate peace in the Middle East. We sit back and wonder why. . .? Why doesn't God bless these

efforts? Notice Isaiah 59:1-15.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For **your hands are defiled with blood**, and your fingers with iniquity: **your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has uttered perverseness**. None calls for justice, nor any pleads for truth: They trust in vanity and **speak lies**; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice' (adders) eggs, and weave a spiders web: he that eats of their eggs dies, and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the **act of violence is in their hands**. Their feet run to evil, and **they make haste to shed innocent blood**: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; **wasting and destruction** are in their paths. **The way of peace they know not**; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein **shall not know peace**."

Two things seem to stand out in this indictment of the humans involved; **lying and violence**. Do we realize there are major religions that go about promoting violence and say God is pleased with their warfare. Recently the father of the latest suicide bomber said he was proud of his son for blowing himself up and 19 other **innocent students** on a bus heading for school! **Unsuspecting children** off to school and in an instant they are no more!

Match this with the scriptural words above, "the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil and **they make haste to shed innocent blood**: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, **wasting and destruction** are in their paths. **The way of peace they know not**;"

Was Chaundra Levy innocent? Was Elizabeth Smart innocent? Were the victims in the Twin Trade Towers innocent? Were the firemen heading up

the steps, giving comforting words to those coming down, innocent? How about the bomb victims in Israel. . . innocent? You bet and God says he hates it!

Notice Proverbs 6:16-19. These six things does the Lord hate: Yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A Proud look, a **lying tongue**, and **hands that shed innocent blood**, an heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to **mischief**, a **false witness**, and he that sows discord among brethren." The word mischief comes from the Hebrew word 'Ra'. The word can be translated into thirty two different meanings of which many are rendered 'calamity, distress, hurtful, wretchedness and harm'.

Think of it. Four of the seven things God says he hates, directly pertain either to lying or violence, and the last three can indirectly be related as well. Yet, do we stop and consider that thousands, possibly millions of this world's citizens have been duped to believe God is pleased for young men and women to sacrifice themselves, like that father mentioned above? Amazing!

Notice again what Jesus said in John 16:2. "The time comes that whosoever kills you will think he does God Service." That father, mentioned above, was so proud. . . proud of his son who had just taken his life and the lives of nineteen other innocent victims. The reason being that he's convinced he's serving God! What lies! How totally misguided can you get? Worse, this is what is being taught to a whole generation of young people; young people, whose minds are now in the process of being set.

Jesus goes on, "And these things will they do unto you because **they have not known the Father nor me**". They have not remotely understood the nature of God or his plan for mankind. In addition to this, how many millions of people say, "The Lord has forsaken the earth". For many others, there is always the theory of evolution, which says we have no God, no higher power to blame for all these evils.

Again let's consider the likelihood of God existing and knowing all that is going on, and far more so than we think possible. Why doesn't he do something? Why doesn't he intervene and cut these awful events, described above, short?

Notice the words in James 5:7. "Be patient therefore brethren, unto the

coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman **waits for the precious fruit** of the earth and has **long patience** for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." What precious fruit? What's he talking about?

The scriptures describe God as being a gardener. This earth has many plants (people) growing. Like the process of plants they grow up, mature and produce fruit. But like any garden, some of the plants growing there are not producing good fruit, and like some weeds, these plants look very much like the plants intended when they first come up. But as they grow it becomes more and more evident that they do not belong there. Notice the parable of the tares in Matthew 13:24-30.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him. Sir, did not you sow good seed in your field? From whence then has it tares? He said unto them, An enemy has done this. The servants said unto him, Will you then that we go and gather them up? But he said, No; lest while ye gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather you together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Jesus often spoke to the general public in parables. But to his disciples then as well as now he gives insight into the significance and what it means. In Matthew 13:36-43 he gives the meaning after he sent the general public away.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that sows the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the

children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, Who has ears to hear, let him hear."

So with this backdrop, has God forsaken the earth, or has he no knowledge of all the evils that are going on? From the parable we can see that in the world there are many elements that will not be harvested for his kingdom. Some of these bad elements are in far away places but some very near to us and some could be even in our own midst.

Years ago this writer was introduced to the understanding that God has a great plan and that he is active in bringing it to completion. But the time of its completion, the harvest, is not yet. The question yet remains what is this **precious fruit** mentioned in James 5:7? Where and how is it growing? First of all God says it is 'precious'. That could mean a few things (1) that it is difficult to produce (2) that it is not plentiful and (3) it has God's involvement.

So what is it that it says that God has "**long patience for it**"? It's obvious, that if God has long patience for it, it can't be produced quickly. These fruits are developed sometimes over a lifetime of experience taking much time and for some things it's in the midst of difficult and dire circumstances.

The second part to the question is where are they growing? In John 15:1 Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The preciousness of the fruit is because it takes God's careful and patient hand to produce. These fruits cannot be produced any other way. They are none other than the fruits of God's Spirit

(Galatians 5:22) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. . ."

So here it is also evident that the fruit, if it is good fruit, must be good because of its attachment to the 'true vine'. So then the answer comes, it's the Church. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church". It's his church, his called out (ekklesia) ones. It's his 'body' of which he is the head. Notice Ephesians 1:22. "And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the **church**".

So if it is the 'church', which church? Do we know this answer conclusively? One identifying sign is given in Matthew 7:15-20:

He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

You shall know them by their fruits.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore **by their fruits you shall know them.** Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? And in your name have cast out devils? And in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity."

It's obvious from these words, kidnappers or murderers or liars are not part of those who are producing good fruit but what about those who claim to be Christians, attending church every Sabbath, observing all the Holy Days etc. They could be. . . however let's be careful. And let's be careful with ourselves as well.

In that regard, how much **kindness** are we showing toward people. Not just those of our local church group. . . all people. How much **love** are we showing

toward others of similar faiths when we disassociate ourselves from them because they don't see things exactly as we do. How much **longsuffering** when we disfellowship and shun the brethren? How much **gentleness** does it show? Do we forgive as we want to be forgiven? How much **patience**? How much **peacemaking** are we practicing? How much **faith** do we exhibit? These are the important questions church members must ask themselves. These are the '**precious fruits**' God is looking for. It also explains why He may choose not to intervene in a big way at this time. Could it be because he is giving a bit more time for these fruits to mature?

In the church a work of God is going on. The work involves the production of all of these Godly character traits of his spirit. And it is a struggle, a struggle to overcome our own human failings and to grow in these good fruits. Many times we yet fail in our own lives to develop as we should, but if, when we look inward, we groan and grieve over our own failings, we are at least conscious of our need for our attachment to that vine to allow our sustenance to come.

Again, back to the account in Isaiah 59:8 it says, "they know not the way of peace". From the beginning of mankind's existence, people have sought peace, but it has not happened. Why? What is the secret to peace?

In Isaiah 9:6 Jesus is called the "Prince of Peace". When he was on the earth the first time he taught those who would follow him how to have peace. It's quite opposite to the way one would logically think. Like it says in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death".

Yes, indeed, Jesus' advice is quite the opposite of this world. Look at how he says true peace will come in Matthew 5:38-48. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Are these efforts even possible without God's involvement?

One can begin to see the difficulty in beginning to follow this way, but on the other hand if this kind of way is developing in some individuals, one can see the preciousness and lasting value in it. Indeed this one character trait may

have a high degree of value yet future.

One day he will say enough. *In Revelation 22:10-12 he says, "for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."* He will send Christ back to gather those who have produced the good fruit that is in them and remains. When will it occur? He says we can know in a general sense, but to be exact no one knows. Maybe not even Jesus. *(Mat. 24:36)* Again Jesus says like in the days of Noah so shall it be in the end of this age. *(Mat. 24:37)*

The hallmark of Noah's time was that of **violence**. But it all started with **lies**. Lies about almost everything, including the creator. His nature, his plan or whether he even exists. People in Noah's day must have been so confused and mixed up they didn't trust or believe anyone, including Noah himself.

What about today? Lately there is much talk about weapons of mass destruction and going to war with Iraq. Has all this talk generated the desire for peace? For some it shows a great need for peace. But for many others there is a desire to let, or help, the whole world erupt, all the while convincing themselves this is God's will.

Are we approaching 'Critical Mass'? Are we growing ever closer to that time where Jesus said, "except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved:"? *(Mat. 24:22)*

It could be near, but whether it is near or far off we can get a little insight from James 5:7 as to the big picture and what's important in God's eyes. We can rest assured that He has not forsaken the earth and particularly those whom He has called and is working with. Every time an Elizabeth Smart is kidnapped, every time a suicide bomber blows up, every time some innocent victim is mistreated or murdered, God grieves and we can know how He yearns for this time to be over. He has all power to step in and stop it at any time, but is very patient for the development of this **precious fruit**.

This work of God is silently going on unsuspected to most. One day the harvest will come. The key to that time of

harvest is when these fruits are sufficiently ripened and matured. All indications are that the harvest could be delayed except for the fact of the **worsening violence worldwide**. God apparently will have to cut it short to prevent the total destruction. *"but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."* *(Mat. 24:22)*

When Jesus returns all unsavory elements of murder and mayhem will be eliminated and peace will finally come to this war torn world. Then the **meek** shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." *(Ps. 37:11)*

The saints shall rule in that kingdom and all those **precious fruits** now being prepared in them will be their natures. They will rule as God now does, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord of Hosts." *(Zech. 4:6)*

MISSING MERCY AND LOVE INGREDIENTS--PART #1

by Ted Saunders
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Bitter Life Lessons

Often it seems we have to learn certain things the hard way. Just because we understand something with our mind does not guarantee we will understand it with our heart. What good are all the truths of the world to any of us if we have little or no real love in our hearts? Would life then be worth living forever? Is a religion that is so completely consumed with finding and keeping numerous aspects of **truth** really a true church of God if **love** of one another falls forgotten or neglected by the way side? On the other hand, should a religion that is disillusioned with bitter fruits of the past throw away all the hard found **truths** and devote itself to only **worshiping** Jesus while continuing to neglect **love** of one another?

We recently received a phone call from a former church member who pointed out that it is possible God's sheep exist in the various groups I call Church of God splinters. I agreed it is possible that

Herbert W. Armstrong may have been inspired of God in the early years of leading our church into truths that were gifts from God. Following his death in 1986 the Church he founded and led so persuasively has disintegrated and the remains have been taken over by new leaders who have replaced nearly everything with a completely different agenda! One of the hallmarks of our Church years ago was great zeal in keeping the Ten Commandments. Could it be ironically possible that we all failed to understand in our hearts what the Commandments of God really are?

Now it happens that I have done a lot of contemplating about my Radio Church of God experiences since my 1965 baptism up until my reluctant departure from the evolving Worldwide Church of God in 2001 because of the changes of nearly all doctrines to totally different ones, which I could not agree with. It now makes perfect sense to me that real love for one another could have been the glue that could have held our church together and made it possible to work everything out together in peace. I suspect that our past characteristic great zeal was often mistaken for love. Picky, fussy, judgmental, intolerant behaviors have hurt and opened wounds instead of promoting healing.

Back in the 1960's remarried couples contemplating joining the church were told they had to separate because they were continuing to "live in adultery". The separations caused great mental suffering to the adults and children involved, which was on top of the suffering they had already endured from the earlier divorce. Later, the great sufferings were a driving force behind a controversial decision that was made that God forgives everyone of their past sins as far as the east is removed from the west and remarriages are to be accepted. People were not allowed to join the church if they did not quit smoking. Some who were able to quit for a while and join were in continual fear of being cast out, if they were found smoking again. Members were repeatedly told "this is Satan's world" and we as church members are to withdraw ourselves from it so our associations were to be primarily with the brethren. We church members often said disparaging things about the people outside of our church environment without actually understanding why they did what they did.

Parents were expected to spank their children as much as it took to force them to be quiet in weekly church services for two hours. This happened all over again in midweek bible study meetings. On the feast holy days there were two services of two hours each so most of the day for the faithful was taken up with getting ready, eating, attending services, and sleeping. There was almost no time left for what the children wanted to do and no time at all if the parents decided to do what they wanted. The natural inclination of children to develop and grow through physical play activities was suppressed to the point where they disliked going to church and love between parent and child was strained to say the least.

Ministers expected us to accept that they were the final authority in all personal problems that were brought to their attention because their word was said to be from God himself through them as his agents. If you failed to obey the minister's decision, then you risked being put out of the church for having a "bad attitude". Those believing the church was the only true one, were in constant fear of losing their salvation if they failed to do what the minister demanded. Over the last dozen years or so the church membership went into major decline with numerous groups splitting away and many individuals no longer attending any church at all. The smaller church splinters have themselves split into even smaller groups and many additional individuals quit attending any church at all. Looking back at the fruits of emotionally crippled personalities and organizational wreckage over the years it appears to me that we should have all learned from our hard life lessons and repaired what was actually wrong instead of trying to keep everything just the way it was. Or, is it wise to reject everything and try to start all over with totally different doctrines from scratch? The fruits we in the Churches of God have witnessed over the years are a strong indicator that something very big was seriously wrong!

There are some who neatly blame all our church troubles on attacks by Satan (Revelation 12:7-17). But which of the many disagreeing church splinters really represent the "remnant of the woman's seed" that Satan the dragon would persecute? The passage in Revelation does not say Satan would actually

succeed in smashing the true church into many splinters. Another set of scriptures commonly used to support the idea of an attack by Satan is found in Acts 20:28-31 where "grievous wolves" entering into the flock is described. These scriptures do not say that a large segment of the flock would escape the attacks by separating from the parent body of the church to reform as a new flock. This notion does not square with the statement by Jesus that nothing would prevail against his church. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Perhaps the idea of an attack by Satan is true but leaders of many other religions use the exact same excuse for all their big troubles and it ignores many other contributing factors that need to be considered such as severely missing elements of love and mercy described in great detail in the New Testament. Should we just excuse away serious problems that God expects us to overcome with the guidance of his Holy Spirit? We should have the Holy spirit if we are truly converted. Of course no church or individual is perfect but should that be an excuse to ignore areas in which we need to grow?

A person cast out of the parent church or leaving because of hasty wholesale changes is faced with a Babylon of splinter churches each totally convinced they *only* are the true Church of God. How can anyone intelligently choose which of the many bickering small splinters to join if any? Does anyone have enough time in their entire lives to research every claim and counter claim to prove which are right and which are wrong? It appears to me that most are a mixture of some truth together with at least some major errors. Would God be fair to us if he refuses to grant safety from the Great Tribulation and/or salvation to the many scattered sheep confused by the blizzard of conflicting claims because we fail to join the one and only tiny true splinter church?

I believe I have come across the fundamental problem that our church leaders should have attempted to repair long ago if they had been truly inspired and led by God. The caller's description of severe family troubles hit home very close to my own personal experiences and helps confirm my observations of

what has been our most fundamental problem through the years.

Please consider an idea:

Could **love** and **mercy** together in the face of our bitter problems be essential ingredients in God's plan of **grace**? If we never did anything wrong in our lives then there would be no need for God's grace. I believe it is God's ability to forgive us and love us in spite of all our wrongdoings in his sight, that is his greatest most wonderful quality and that surely inspires total loyalty to Him.

What have I discovered more and more over my last 40 years?

Love One Another

Love is a quality that has come to my attention through the hard experience of many life lessons as I reflect back. I have come to believe if a child learns SELF-less love of others through the example of their parents or someone very close to them, they too will have it in their behavior when they grow up. My experiences indicate there appears to be a living law that the way we treat others around us is generally the way we will be treated back. Remember the Golden Rule to "do unto others as you would have others do unto you" as described in Matthew 7:12? It was taught to me as a small child in a Methodist church but I have found it is not just for little children! Luke 6:31 says the same thing in different words and the very next few subsequent verses that follow show we should be actively merciful and show love to people outside of our churches too, even to our enemies!

Many religious families have seriously misapplied Proverbs 3:11-12, 22:6 and other verses to the point where it degenerated into attempts to beat godly qualities into them. The fruits of over correction of children have frequently been manifested as rebellion, which should have been recognized long ago as a serious danger sign. An adult parent can forcibly control the outward behavior of a rebellious child but fail to win his/her heart. Then when the child eventually reaches an opportunity to become independent from the parents the real attitude emerges into the open with little or no change. There may be severe emotional damage from overly harsh discipline that must be coped with for the

remainder of the child's natural life as an adult. There is obviously something much more to successful child rearing. As some say, "The Spirit doesn't push, it leads".

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

Jesus spoke of not pushing little children away Matthew 19:13-15. Of course we parents all imperfectly tried to completely love our children and wanted only the best for them. Nearly every parent develops a love for their children they never would have learned if they had not raised any children. This shows that caring love grows through experience and practice. Love does not spring into existence fully formed. Greater love often appears to grow out of the most painful experiences.

Mother Teresa set a wonderful selfless example of caring and giving to the poor and needy of the world in every way she could with no evident thought for her self. The firemen who lost their own lives running up the stairs into the World Trade center towers to save other lives before the collapses on September 11, 2001 showed the love of John 15:12-13. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." One witness who escaped said on the news that he did not see any fear in the faces of the public servants as they ran up while everyone else was running down. Surely, people cannot do such brave deeds without making up their own minds in advance in a spirit of total love for others.

Think about it. If you had the power to hand out eternal life, would you not want everyone to have the kind of love which builds, helps and preserves instead of destroys? Would you preserve judgmental qualities of anger, hate and destructiveness in an eternally living person who would oppose you and those you love?

What treatment do wives crave the most from their husbands? Some experts have concluded it is appreciative caring love that is commonly missing in marriages! Numerous times ministers have told husbands they "must love their wives" (Ephesians 5:25) but the obvious widespread fruits of dysfunctional, damaged and even destroyed marriages (even among the married ministers)

indicate a widespread failure to successfully practice the advice. Are we not all guilty of "do as I say but not what I do" teachings?

In order to better understand what the New Testament is saying about love it is helpful to recognize that the word **love** has different meanings in different settings of the English language. It is easy to unintentionally apply wrong meanings when reading scriptures, if we fail to understand the Greek language had specific words for different kinds of love. The New Testament uses *agapao/agape* and *phileo/philia*. The first form of each is a verb and the second is a noun. The Greek word *eros* used for sexual kinds of love is not found in the New Testament.

A Greek Lexicon says the Greek spelling for *agapao* is *agapaw* which is pronounced *ag-ap-ah'-o*. It is translated love 135 times and beloved 7 for a total of 142 occurrences in the King James Version of the Bible. The Lexicon says when it refers to persons it can mean to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of or to love dearly.

The same Lexicon says the Greek spelling for *agape* is *agaph* which is pronounced *ag-ah'-pay*. It is translated love 86 times, charity 27 times, dear 1 time, charitably 1 time, and feast of charity 1 time for a total of 116 occurrences in the King James Version. The Lexicon says it can mean brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence or love feasts.

Writers who have studied how *agapao/agape* is used in the New Testament have suggested various definitions. Some say it is a self-giving love that "involves a consuming passion for the well being of others". This kind of love is the primary focus of this paper. It is the opposite of human tendencies to love in a self-centered manner. It has been said that *Agapao/agape* is rarely used in Greek literature.

The word *phileo/philia* is used less commonly in the New Testament. Some writers describe it as a brotherly or friendship love, which involves an emotional bonding.

The Two Great Commandments

In Matthew 22:39 Jesus says the second great commandment is "Thou shalt love (*agapao*) thy neighbor as thyself". Of course the first great commandment is (v 37) to "love (*agapao*)

the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." I have heard plenty of sermons and teachings that we should worship and love God. My experiences are that while the first great commandment receives lots of attention in churches everywhere, the second great commandment is widely neglected.

Many different religions claim they worship the same God but actually treat those who belong to a different religion with contemptuous hate. How many sermons on love of one another can you remember from your past? The biggest breakdown is obviously in failure to follow the second great commandment. Strife and war would surely go away if everyone learned to faithfully follow the second great commandment. Such practice by everyone would lead to millennial settings of the future such as described in the Old Testament. Almost all church sermons and literature I remember have been practically empty of the love one another ingredient to the point where it is effectively missing. On the other hand most teach worship and love of God (His first Great Commandment). Please don't get me wrong. I too believe we must all worship our Supreme Creator with all our hearts, minds and all our being in every way we are able to forever and ever, Amen.

Love of one another follows behind our total devotion to God Almighty. I believe that ideas on ways and means to practice the second great commandment need to occupy perhaps a third or more of our church agendas instead of less than one percent. Successful inspirational practice of the second great commandment within local congregations could result in outsiders noticing and eagerly wanting to join. This could cause personal growth and membership growth to be natural instead of forced through personal sacrifices or even faked. Some say we must live and practice "love" in our lives instead of just preaching it. I agree but how can we expect people to start living lives of love if there has been failure to teach or preach it? Just because we should live something does not eliminate the need to teach it and be living examples of it. Our own bitter experiences have shown that love does not just naturally grow in the human heart all by itself.

Much of the Old Testament is a

chronicle of the failure of the Israelites to live according to God's will which would have resulted in his pouring out physical blessings upon them.

8. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:
9. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. (Hebrews 8:8-9)

The new covenant made possible by the blood of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit as described in Hebrews chapter 9, in contrast, bears spiritual blessings and promises of salvation to eternal life.

The New Testament is full of examples and mention of the second great commandment subject.

36. Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?
37. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love (agapao) the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
38. This is the first and great commandment.
39. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love (agapao) thy neighbour as thyself.
40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:36-40) *Note: King James Version is used throughout this paper.*

A significant observation in the above set of verses is that the Greek word used in telling us to love (agapao) our neighbor is the very same as the word used in telling us to love (agapao) God! They are not identified here as different kinds of love.

Love and the Ten Commandments

Jesus talked about what must be done to have eternal life.

16. And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?
17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good

but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder {commandment 6}, Thou shalt not commit adultery {commandment 7}, Thou shalt not steal {commandment 8}, Thou shalt not bear false witness {commandment 9},
19. Honour thy father and *thy* mother {commandment 5}: and, Thou shalt love (agapao) thy neighbour as thyself {second great commandment}. (Matthew 19:16-19)

Notice Jesus specifically identifies five (5 thru 9) of the 10 commandments given in Exodus 20:3-17 and then summarizes them as "love (agapao) thy neighbour as thyself" just like Matthew 22:39 where such love is called the second great commandment.

The book of Romans contains a set of verses that parallels the above ones with a certain difference.

8. Owe no man any thing, but to love (agapao) one another: for he that loveth (agapao) another hath fulfilled the law.
9. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery {commandment 7}, Thou shalt not kill {commandment 6}, Thou shalt not steal {commandment 8}, Thou shalt not bear false witness {commandment 9}, Thou shalt not covet {commandment 10}; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love (agapao) thy neighbour as thyself.
10. Love (agape) worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love (agape) *is* the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

Notice love (agapao) is used in the passage above and starts out on the subject of "love (agapao) one another". Then it specifically identifies five (6 thru 10) of the 10 commandments from Exodus 20:3-17 and enfolds them in verse 9 into "Thou shalt love (agapao) thy neighbour as thyself" very much like Matthew 22:39 where such love (agapao) is called the second great commandment. Verse 10 goes on to say, "love (agape) is the fulfilling of the law" which is suggested in Matthew 22:40. Also notice

the Matthew 19 identification of commandments 5 thru 9 overlaps the identification in Romans 13 of commandments 6 thru 10, which shows all six of the commandments 5 thru 10 are in the same category of the second great commandment of love (agapao) one another.

It does not take a brilliantly powerful PhD type of intellectual to take one more step and recognize the first four of the 10 commandments fit the first great commandment category of Matthew 22:37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love (agapao) the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." How could it be possible to love God in such a way without an accompanying quality of obedience, which is implicitly implied in the 10 commandments of Exodus 20?

Jesus also specifically magnified certain, if not all, of the 10 commandments during his life time on the earth as seen in the following example:

20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.
21. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:
22. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. (Matthew 5:20-22)

Love Fulfills the Law

An additional item of interest is the Romans 13:10 statement "Love (agape) worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore **love (agape) is the fulfilling (pleroma) of the law**" together with Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" shows commandments of Exodus are still actively in force in the New Testament and the "fulfilling" cannot mean they have been done away.

A Greek Lexicon says the Greek spelling for pleroma is plhrwma which is from pleroo (see below). It is translated

fulness 13 times, full 1 time, fulfilling 1 time, which is put in to fill it up 1 time, piece that filled it up 1 time, for a total of 17 occurrences in the King James Version of the Bible. The Lexicon says it can mean that which is (has been) filled, that which fills or with which a thing is filled, fullness, abundance, a fulfilling or keeping.

A verse used by some to claim the law has been fulfilled and done away is:

17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (pleroo). (Matthew 5:17)

The Greek Lexicon says pleroo can mean, to make full, to fill up, to fill to the full, to render full, to complete, to fulfil, or to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfillment.

The fact that fulfil (pleroo) used in Matthew 5:17 gives foundational meaning to fulfilling (pleroma) in Romans 13:10 (see above) which describes a living continuously active ongoing love (agape) has to mean the law is not done away because love (agape) is not done away. If the law is really done away with then how can Christians be continuously fulfilling it?

Many people think of the Ten Commandments as a list of "don'ts". However the fourth and fifth ones are actually stated as direct "do" commands:

8. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: (Exodus 20:8-9)

12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (Exodus 20:12)

An example of the so-called "negative" commandments is:

13. Thou shalt not kill. (Exodus 20:13)

Consider what is the opposite of murder. Obviously an opposite would be to give or to save a life. Would not saving a life or an in between act of healing or helping to make a life better be an active kind of love that Jesus taught and set examples for us?

4. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.
5. And when he had looked round

about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. (Mark 3:4-5)

It surely does not require years of highly specialized university religious training to recognize that the so-called "negative" commandments actually compliment the "do" commandments in explaining how God wants us to love him and to love each other. Love is surely active applications of the Ten Commandments in our daily lives and not just neutrally refraining on a list of commanded "shalt not's".

Notice God promised he was going to write his law into our hearts as a new covenant:

33. But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33)

God said he would put a "spirit" in us that would cause us to actively "walk in" and "do" what he says we should. That our heart would be changed to fleshly instead of stony, suggests to me that God's people would become compassionate.

26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

The above Old Testament promises are confirmed in the New Testament. Notice in Hebrews the new covenant is to be both put into our minds **and** written in our hearts with the help of God's Holy Spirit. This supports the concept that we can intellectually understand love in our minds, but we will not be fully able to walk in the ways of love in our lives, until it is in our hearts.

10. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and

write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.
12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.
13. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:10-13)

The new covenant law God speaks of can be none other than **love** (agape) as summarized in the two great commandments, each of which in turn summarize magnified versions of the 10 commandments. Notice God said in the Old Testament times he would put his laws into people's minds and hearts in the future. What could be more important in the minds and hearts of mankind than **love** (agape)? Could it be Faith? Could it be Hope? No! 1 Corinthians 13:13 says charity (agape) is greater than either one.

Jesus said those who love (agapao) him are keeping **his** commandments.

21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth (agapao) me: and he that loveth (agapao) me shall be loved (agapao) of my Father, and I will love (agapao) him, and will manifest myself to him.
22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?
23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love (agapao) me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love (agapao) him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
24. He that loveth (agapao) me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. (John 14:21-24)
23. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and

love (agapao) one another, as he gave us commandment. (1 John 3:23 KJV)

Jesus said we are to **do** the will of his Father, which in places is described as being the same as his own will.

21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:21-23)

It is evident that the will of both Jesus and God the Father is summarized in the two Great Commandments. They in turn are a summary of the Ten Commandments and are the law that was and is to be placed in the hearts and minds of mankind as agape love.

NOTE: Statutes and judgments are laws that further define specific conduct in greater detail, on how to apply each of the Ten Commandments. These statutes and judgments are also part of this "New Covenant". See scripture quoted above by Ted Saunders: Ezekiel 36:27 which says: "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." See also Ezekiel 11:19-20. Leviticus 18 lists specific ways to keep the Seventh Commandment of adultery, and four times in just this chapter alone, God says, "You shall therefore keep (obey) My Statutes and My Judgments. Darwin Lee

Mercy and the Sabbath

The fourth commandment is the only one of the 10 commandments repeatedly attacked by many "Christian" religions as being an awfully heavy burden that should be abolished. Notice that mercy is a quality mentioned in Hebrews 8:12 in association with the new covenant law to be placed in human minds and hearts. When the disciples were accused of unlawful behavior on the Sabbath day for

plucking corn because they were hungry Matthew 12:1-6, Jesus replied:

7. But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. (Matthew 12:7)

This comes from Hosea and indicates Sabbath keeping should be kept with mercy, which is associated with agape love instead of the judgmental harshness some tend to apply:

6. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

Consider:

12. But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13. But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Matthew 9:12-13)

Some of the healings by Jesus mentioned in the New Testament were done on a Sabbath and show a strong quality of mercy. An example is:

1. And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

3. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. (Mark 3:1-5)

Jesus quoted from the Old Testament to show part of his work would be to perform merciful acts of healing and set the oppressed "at liberty".

16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the

synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18. The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20. And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. (Luke 4:16-21)

The healing and freeing of the oppressed is also supported by:

6. I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

7. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. (Isaiah 42:6-7)

The living examples of Jesus suggest an important part of observing the Sabbath is an active practice of love for one another. The works of mercy Jesus performed for men on the Sabbath supported his message of love of one another and salvation made possible through his shed blood.

Really active living practices of love for one another (always secondary to love of God of course) could make the boredom many (especially children) have experienced on the Sabbath vanish. The Jews have developed some traditions that involve the whole family such as lighting candles and singing a lovely song as the Sabbath draws on. They have given women and children parts to play in a family setting of the Passover time "Seder" meal such as singing, reciting a part of the story or hiding a piece of matzos. Having an active part in a service can do wonders for getting rid of

boredom. For some high day occasions the Jews have prepared special delicious food and treats fondly remembered and looked forward to by many.

I am sure many uplifting ways of helping children enjoy the Sabbath could be invented if we made lots of effort to apply some imagination. What could be wrong with parents taking generous amounts of time on the Sabbath to get down and play what the children want in ways that set examples of compassionate caring for them and for others? Little children have a hunger for being praised and being made to feel good for what they **do** rather than punished for failing to be physically quiet. Most children and teens have not had the patience or interest to listen to the minister talking on for hours about adult stuff. Jesus said we adults need to become like little children and not the other way around!

3. And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:3)

Grown ups can learn from little children too. Church members without children need to develop attitudes of working to understand the needs of the little children and become mercifully tolerant of innocent disruptions instead of irritated into judgmental thinking that the children still have a lot to learn. Each disruption can be a challenging opportunity for all of us to become understanding of the needs of others and try to think of ways to help out. By making positive agape efforts, we can replace dread of the Sabbath with wonderful inspirational behavior leading towards utopian styles of happiness and joy. Of course no one is perfect but that must not stop us from striving to develop in directions of positive good works.

Before leaving the subject of the Sabbath, please notice a statement made by Jesus concerning the same corn plucking incident mentioned in Matthew 12:

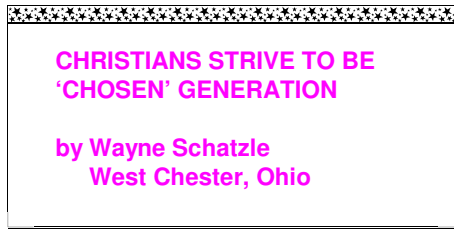
27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: (Mark 2:27)

This suggests there is value for mankind in keeping the Sabbath. How about mental and physical rest? How about activities that help us draw closer to God and better understand his will for us?

And, certainly but not the least, it is an excellent time to practice agape love for one another. Many of us don't have much time or energy to devote to such things because we work for a living on the other six days of the week and spend most of our spare time on family necessities, commute trips, hobbies and recreation.

It appears that the real burden many have experienced on the Sabbath was from the man made unmercifully harsh judgmental rules, which were imposed by zealous individuals who failed to understand and apply God's intended mercy and agape love.

DUE TO THE LENGTH OF THIS ARTICLE, THE LAST PART WILL BE PRINTED IN ISSUE #12--THANK YOU LAURA LEE (EDITOR)



I have been enjoying the best selling book, "The Greatest Generation."

Author Tom Brokaw presents a study of the generation born around 1920 and the trials and triumphs they faced growing up in the depression and in particular, the amazing victory in World War II. The aftermath of the great war was staggering with 292,000 killed and 1.7 million returning disabled (the movie "Saving Private Ryan" graphically depicts the cost to American soldiers). Brokaw surmises that this generation was united not only by a common purpose, but common values of duty, honor, economy, courage, service, love of family, and love of country, and a lacking element not found today, responsibility for oneself. He did want to get their story out now because the department of Veteran Affairs estimate that 32,000 WW2 veterans die each month.

Brokaw takes some criticism for declaring that generation as the greatest ever, and until proven otherwise, I will agree with him --- but only as the world measures such things.

But how would God judge what is the greatest generation? In 1 Peter 2:9, speaking of Christians. "but you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. His own special people." It is interesting that the word "generation" used here appears only once in the entire bible. In the Greek, ghen'-os means kin, countryman, nation, offspring, stock. So rather than a generation existing as a group, God's greatest generation is actually a fine line weaving throughout the ages. By being adopted into this family lineage all men can be kin to Abraham (Galatians 3:29) and the other great personalities of the Bible. In Romans 11 the apostle Paul gives an interesting analogy of this truth by calling the true vine an olive tree, and showing how one can be grafted into it for salvation!

The cold facts are: You must be of this lineage --- in order to live forever (John 15, Revelation 20:15). World history gives detailed accounts of great nations, yet says precious little of Bible history. Conversely the Bible gives the record of God's chosen people, and only mentions other nations as they come in contact with them.

Being in God's greatest generation is difficult at times. Hebrews 11, shows the struggle they endured through the ages --- and not receiving the promises. We, in the lineage to inherit all things, have an awesome responsibility to be true to our calling, and remember that as easy as we were grafted into the true vine we can be broken off. The verse mentioned from the letter of Peter was borrowed from Exodus 19:5, which shows the conditional aspects of the calling. "Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to me above all people ... and you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Like the generation Brokaw documents, true Christians also have a common purpose. Ours is to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Furthermore, true Christians shall be granted the gift of the Holy Spirit conditional to their obedience (Acts 5:32). Also, we must be models for honesty, honor, morals, courage and service.

In the movie "Saving Private Ryan," at the end, the one soldier most responsible for saving Private Ryan, with his last

breath, tells Ryan to go, live your life and be the best person you can be. This is a reasonable request from someone who gives his life so another can live. Is this not the same thing Jesus asks of us? Does he not say. "Your sins are forgiven; sin no more; and do the will of your Father in heaven?"

LEARNING TO WAIT

by Michael Porter
Africa

Why Yahweh desires perseverance in prayer!

Some of the pages in my prayer notebook were so old they were tattered. Many of the requests had notations in the "God's answer" column, but some did not. One man was still gripped by alcoholism, a young woman was persisting in a relationship with a non Christian man, and a couple was still in serious debt and spurning Christian financial counsel.

Why pray anymore? I wondered. And almost before the question came out I recalled the answer: because Yahweh has commanded persevering prayer. His answer may not come within His timetable; but when the free will of people is involved, prayer is needed for them as well as for our own attitude toward the situation.

Biblical Example of Perseverance

A dramatic illustration of perseverance prayer comes from the story of Elijah's conflict on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18. The lesson I'm referring to doesn't come from Elijah's prayer for heaven's fire to consume his waterlogged sacrifice, as you might expect. It comes after that, in the guise of an unnamed, weary servant who stayed by Elijah after the crowds had disappeared. Kneeling his face between his knees, Elijah began praying for rain. Suddenly he called out to the servant to go up the trail and look toward the sea. Again and again --- six times --- he ordered the servant up the parched, rocky path. The seventh request came. His patience stretched to the quitting point, the servant once more plodded up the path, expecting to see nothing new. But

this time a cloud as small as a man's hand appeared in a section of sky. Rain was coming --- a fast, furious rain to end the year of drought.

It took seven trips before the servant got a glimpse of answered prayer. So often in our own prayer lives we're like that servant. Our natural tendency is to go up the path once and demand that the answer be delivered. We resist going back again. Luke 11:5-8 records Jesus parable of the man caught off guard late at night by surprise guests and with nothing to feed them. Going to His neighbour for bread, he knocked on the door until the exasperated neighbour opened it and gave him what he needed.

Immediately, Jesus eased into the spiritual application of persistence: ask, seek, knock (Luke. 11:9-10). The Greek grammar of these words translates as keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking. Persistent requests will reach the ears of the Father. Another parable, at the beginning of Luke 18, concerns a widow who kept showing up in court to plead her case. The godless judge, tired of her continual pleas, finally decided her case and restored justice to her.

Delayed Responses to Prayer

Although God the Father is an obvious contrast to the godless judge, they have something in common: the choice to delay a response. The judge delayed settling the widows case out of selfish indifference. God often delays His response out of love, as He works all things together for good. One of those "things" that needs to be worked out is the attitude of the one praying. God does not want whiny, demanding prayers. He wants humble and earnest asking, seeking, knocking. The very act of persisting in prayer can make us more worthy of His answer. We'll learn to praise Him as sovereign Lord, not regard Him as a divine vending machine.

Reasons to Wait

Delayed answers to prayers may also open our eyes to the reason we're waiting. Here are some of them:

We may need to deal with parts of our lives that are displeasing to the Lord. The bible records more than 30 times that when God didn't answer someone's prayer, most were due to sin. Saul's prayers were blocked by disobedience. He wrongfully took charge of the battle

offering (1 Samuel 15) and sought counsel from a medium (1 Samuel 28). His successor, King David, declared: "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not hear me" (Ps.66:18). Jesus said you wouldn't be forgiven if you have an unresolved conflict with some one (Mk.11:25-26). James 4:3 names self indulgence as a barrier; "when you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." Husbands who dishonour their wives (and conversely, wives who dishonour their husbands) will be hindered in prayer. (1Pet.3:7)

God may want to see growth in us before He answers. The prophet Habakkuk couldn't understand why God was punishing His people by allowing a pagan nation to conquer them. But after listening to God declare His holiness and justice, Habakkuk would admit growth in his spiritual perspective. He said, essentially, "you're in control, Lord. Even though the world is falling apart, I will still rejoice in you" (see Habakkuk 3). I have several "25-ish" friends who long for a life's mate. Because I didn't marry until age 27, I can understand their feelings. But I know from my own experience that more growth will make them more worthy of the mate they desire. My friends want godly mates, but some of them have spiritual walks that are like a baby's toddling. They came to Church to meet people, not to meet Yahshua the Messiah. God may be waiting until they've focused on their relationship with Him before He allows a relationship with another person.

Yahweh may declare or say "no" in order to engineer a total answer. For hundreds of years the Israelites prayed for their Messiah, but He came only when it was in the "fullness of time." Corrie Ten Boom prayed that her sister would be healed at Ravensbruck but her sister died instead. When Corrie was later released, she learned that her sister, had she lived, would have had to remain in the concentration camp without her." I have praised and thanked my Lord for that unanswered prayer. She said, "just imagine how it would have been if she had been healed and would have had to stay in the hell of Ravensbruck without me. I would have returned."

TO BE CONTINUED----

THE END

WHO IS, OR IS NOT FREE TO MARRY?

by Rhoda Foust
Williamsburg, Indiana

Has this ever happened to you? Some time ago, when you were young, or maybe not, you married a person whom you thought would make your life wonderful. After awhile you decided the person you married was incapable of making you happy. As time passed you grew apart. Life filled with boredom, children, and responsibility seemed empty. Your spouse no longer showed an interest in the same things you are interested in. You grew apart. You turned to God for comfort and began studying His word. You found a congregation of like minds to fellowship with, but your spouse refused to join in. Gradually your spouse became irritable and resentful, accusing you of caring more for "your church" than your family. Your relationship grows from empty to hostile often leading to angry words. "Well, if you're so unhappy why don't you sue for divorce?" your spouse lashes out, "If you don't I'm going to!"

You assume the spouse is bluffing, so you ignore the suggestion. You might think, "I would like to be free of this marriage, except that when we got married I thought marriage was for life." I remember someone saying, "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder". So, as long as I strive to keep God's laws, I have to stay with this marriage regardless of how miserable I am."

If this is what you have experienced you might find this study interesting. Just who, if anyone, is free to divorce and remarry? What does the bible tell us about this subject? Christ discusses marriage and divorce with the Pharisees and his disciples in Mat. 19:3-9.

3. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?
4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,
5. And said, For this cause shall a

man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
7. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?
8. He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.
9. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

2. And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.
3. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?
4. And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.
5. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.
6. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.
7. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;
8. And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. (Mark 10:2-8)

At the beginning it was God's purpose, His plan, for a man and a woman to become one by the union of intercourse. The man was to leave his parents, "cleave" to his wife, and the two of them become a new family. This would "join" them in marriage.

Jesus referred to Deut 24: where Israel was given permission to divorce a wife.

1. When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and

give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

2. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. (Deut. 24:1-2)

Notice: This was a case where the man found "uncleanness" or as Jesus said, "fornication" in the woman. She was not the sexually pure woman he thought she was. After she is divorced she may remarry, but if she remarries she is never to go back to the former husband who divorced her. The man, in this case, represents the believer, and the woman represents the non-believer. The first husband is being instructed not to take her back IF she marries some one else.

Editor's Note: "uncleanness" is Strong's #6172 'ervah' , from #6168; nudity, lit. (espec. The pudenda) or fig. (disgrace, blemish): nakedness, shame, unclean (-ness). Laura Lee

3. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;
4. Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (Deut. 24:3-4)

Paul condemns fornication among believers in 1Cor. 6

15. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.
16. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.
17. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.
18. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. (1 Cor. 6:15-18)

Webster's Dictionary: Fornication - 1. Human sexual intercourse other than between a man and his wife: sexual

intercourse between unmarried people - used in some translations of the Bible (as in Mt. 5:32) for unchastity (as in RSV) or immorality to cover all sexual intercourse except between husband and wife or concubine. 2. Sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person accomplished with consent and not deemed adultery.

Adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband.

In the Bible the term "fornication" and "adultery" is mentioned as a sin. According to Strong's Concordance: Fornication is #4202(3) = to indulge in unlawful lust. Adultery is #3431(2) = a male paramour (an illicit lover).

Editor's Note: Please use caution in using dictionary definitions. The dictionary definitions for words we find both in the Bible and also use today, may or may not have the same definition when the same word is used in the Bible. I would suggest going to a concordance and check to see if there are other places where the same word is used in the Bible and then read it in context, in those places where it is used. In doing this, you should be able to see how it is being used and usually by doing this, the meaning of the word will become clearer to you. If you are still stuck, check several other sources as well as the dictionary. In 1 Cor. 6:18 the word "Fornication" is used twice-- The first time it is Strong's #4202 'porneia' from #4203; harlotry (incl. Adultery and incest); fig. Idolatry:-- fornication. The second time is Strong's #4203 'porneuo' from #4204; to act the harlot, i.e. (lit.) indulge unlawful lust (of either sex), or (fig.) practice idolatry:--commit (fornication). In most places throughout the Bible where the word 'fornication' is being used, in context, it is generally talking about idolatry. Idolatry can and does include sexual sin, however it includes a lot of other sins as well. A Bible definition of 'fornication', can be found in Colossians 3:5 "...fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry;" Also if you want to

know what a fornicator looks like, study Esau. Hebrews 12:16 "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." The word 'Adultery' can also mean to "apostatize", see Strong's Hebrew #5003. Also in Jeremiah 3:8, the reason that God divorced Israel was for "Adultery", here meaning an apostatizing from God's way. They did not commit only sexual sin here, but many sins. They turned from God's way and went into idolatry.

Paul agrees that the sex act binds two people together. Ideally, the sex union makes the marriage binding. Marriage ceremonies made by man serve for announcement to friends and family that a couple is making a commitment to each other. Since we are to "obey the laws of the land" it is acceptable to God that the couple obtain a license from their state that insures the stability of any children that they may have, and family property and possessions. But the state license or ceremony is not what God looks at that "joins" them together. God does not give an outline as to how to perform a wedding ceremony. He simply says that a man should leave his parents and "cleave" to his wife, and be sexually active with her. Other places we find that the man is also responsible for supporting his wife and the children that come from that marriage. The commitment to God and one another is the primary glue that "binds" the marriage.

In the story of Isaac and Rebecca (Gen. 24:51) we see that he "took" her to his mother's tent and there they became married. They became "bound" by God as soon as they became sexually active with each other. It is important to note that these two people were being lead by God and were mature enough to know what they were doing. They would be considered by most religions of today as being "believers" whose lives were dedicated to God.

A married believer, one who is striving to obey God, must flee sexual sin, having sexual desire for no one other than the spouse. Once the sex act has been engaged in they are bound to each other, and should accept responsibility for each other in a marriage relationship.

How many believers have at one time

or another been intimate with other than the person they are married to? In Old Testament Times when a man had sex with more than one woman he assumed the responsibility of husband to all of them. They became a part of his household. He accepted them as his responsibility. They bore children by him and became his family. God knew some would eventually break his laws, and commit sexual sins.

God made His laws specifically for His people.

1. Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,
2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. (Amos 3:1-2)

When talking to the Pharisees Yeshua made a very interesting comment: John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Not every one who gets married is either physically or spiritually mature enough to know what they are doing. So from Yeshua's point of view unbelievers are spiritually "blind". So, when unbelievers enter into a sexual relationship, they can be "blind". God is not personally involved in the decisions they make.

Of course God's laws are binding on all peoples, but, as we read earlier, all peoples are not being judged now. However, judgment has begun in the house of God, to his begotten believers, to those people who are not spiritually blind. Believers are, regardless of nationality, considered spiritual Israelites and must abide by God's laws. Now, if we have become spiritual Israelites, a spirit filled believer, have we been forgiven for past sins? If we have been "washed" of our past sins, does God still hold them against us? Of course not! We may have to suffer the consequences of wrong choices, but that does not mean God holds those sins against us after we repent. Does God approve, or bind every couple who has committed a sex sin? If that is the case how many wives or husbands would many of us in the body of Christ be bound to? God is not the author of confusion.

33. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (1 Cor. 14:33)

Many people who advocate a person is not free to remarry because they have a living divorced spouse should ask themselves if their spouse, that they are presently married to, is the only one they have ever been intimate with. Those of us that have repented of our sins, including sexual immorality, have been forgiven of past sins; that includes sexual sins, and "blind" marriages.

Paul deals with a problem of a man (considered to be a "believer", brother) having sex with his father's wife (a step-mother?). In 1 Cor. 5:1-6 He shows this was a sin. If her husband was dead she was free to marry, but not to her step-son. It is clear that they were being intimate. In 2 Cor. 2:3-11, After sufficient time has passed Paul encourages the church congregation to forgive and accept this same person back into their fellowship. Evidently the man has stopped the sexual relationship with his father's wife and has repented.

Did God bind this man and his step-mother? Not at all! When one has sex with a prostitute does that make them "joined" by God? No. That is a sex sin. When a child is sexually abused, does God "bind" the child to the abuser? No. That is a sex sin of the abuser, not the abused. When non-believers enter into a sexual union, does God "bind" them? No. They are "blind", not inviting God into their lives at this point. But, if they become believers, and agree to "stay" together, in a sexual relationship, then God binds them in marriage. However, if only one becomes a believer and the other does not, if the non-believer chooses to leave, the believer is free from the relationship and according to Paul, "is free to remarry".

If, on the other hand, a believer marries a non-believer, knowing he/she is not being lead by God, the believer binds himself to his sexual partner. Otherwise it would be a sexual sin of fornication. As long as the non-believer is willing to live in peace with the believer, the believer is obligated to honor that marriage. The believer is not free to divorce and remarry. It becomes only the non-believers choice to end the marriage. Paul also advised believers not to become "unequally yoked" which if followed, would

prevent many marriage problems believers bring upon themselves.

14. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (2 Cor. 6:14-16)

If two believers marry they are "bound" by God. But suppose one believer stops being lead by God and chooses to leave the marriage? Jesus says that person, if he enters into another sexual relationship, commits adultery. If the one who leaves the marriage, commits adultery, and becomes an unbeliever (falls away) and chooses not to return to the marriage, it is the same as being married to an unbeliever.

If a believer, divorces a believer spouse, and remarries, he causes the person whom he marries to commit adultery as well as himself. Converted people truly are "bound" for life as long as they stay believers. They may separate, they may divorce, but they are never free to remarry. They can, however, reunite with each other. Marriage is taken very seriously by Jesus Christ, and so it should be with all converted believers! However, if a believer goes leaves the spouse, and remarries, commits adultery, the believer (who is left) is no longer bound, and is free to remarry.

31. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (Mat. 5:31-32)

A believer who divorces (a believer), except for the discovery of sexual sin, causes the divorced to commit adultery (if one remarries). And even the one he/she marries commits adultery. The same rule applies to both man and woman. Jesus

speaks to believers:

9. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

11. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery. (Mark 10:9-12)

God does not "join" every spiritually blind couple that has a sexual relationship. But, they, who are spiritual Israelites, who "see", are converted and inviting God to be a part of their life, do become "joined" when they enter into a sexual relationship. They are being judged according to how they conduct themselves, whether in sexual sins, or other sins, and are being held to a higher standard.

10. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

11. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. (1 Cor. 7:10-11)

15. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

16. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. (1 Cor. 7:15-16)

13. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (1 Cor. 7:13)

15. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

16. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O

man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? (1 Cor. 7:15-16)

Verse 16 shows that Paul is addressing both husbands and wives. The question arises: "What constitutes "being pleased to dwell"? If one is guilty of physical, or mental abuse, or adultery, or incest, or abandonment, or anything that involves breaking the marriage vows, as set forth by God, are they "pleased to dwell"? **I think not.** "God hath called us to peace". These sins are not conducive to a peaceful co-existence in any kind of relationship, and in reality, in some cases, could cause death to the abused spouse. In such a case every person has an obligation to protect themselves and their families by leaving the offender.

In conclusion:

If you and your spouse were mature, knowing God's laws, striving to please Him, and you entered into a sexual relationship, you are married and "bound" by God into one flesh. If, on the other hand, problems arise that take time to work out, you are allowed to separate, even divorce, but you are not free to remarry.

If you, as a converted believer, married a non-believer who does not commit adultery, is not abusive, and is willing to live peacefully, you may not leave that person and remarry, because you were not "blind" when you entered the relationship. On the other hand, if that person chooses to leave you, you are "no longer under bondage" to the relationship, and are free to remarry.

If you, as a non-believer married a non-believer, and later you became a believer and your spouse does not want to live peacefully, you are free to leave that person. God did not "join" you because you were both spiritually "blind". You were not being lead by God at that time. However, if, after you become converted, you choose to stay in a sexual relationship, God will accept and "bind" that relationship as long as the unbelieving spouse is willing to live peacefully.

In this case, if a believer finds himself married to a non-believer who is unwilling to live peacefully, unwilling to change, and the believer chooses to leave, the sexual relationship should be discontinued until changes are made that indicate an acceptable commitment has been made by the non-believer. Once the

believer returns to the non-believer he/she is "bound" The believer is no longer "blind" and is making a commitment to both God and the spouse. On the other hand, if the believer does not return to the non-believer, (becomes divorced), because their marriage was made when they were both "blind", he/she is free to marry.

Editor's Note: The bottom line: If you or your children are being physically or mentally abused by your mate, whether man or woman, such abuse is neither love or peace. The abusive spouse has broken the marriage contract. Do not stay in a dangerous situation. Get out. Once a spouse breaks a marriage contract by abusing their mate or children, the non-abusive mate is free to remarry after divorce no matter which one of them files for the divorce.
Laura Lee

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Laura Lee (Editor)

A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE

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PROGRESSION FROM

LOVE TO ME

TO LOVE *THROUGH* ME.

by Alan Ruth

Farmington Hills, Michigan

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| _____ 7. Dennis Mouland 3-10-01 (2 Tapes) | _____ 8. Ron Dart 4-28-01 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 9. Ron Smith 5-26&27-01 (3 Tapes) | _____ 10. David Antion 7-28-01 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 11. Dean & Susan Wheelock 9-15-01 (2 Tapes) | _____ 12. Leon Sexton 11-17-01 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 13. Marv Davis 2-9-02 (2 Tapes) | _____ 14. Mark Kaplan 6-29-02 |

OTHER TAPES

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|---|---|
| _____ 1. Nimrod's Effect on the Church Today
Wes White 6-17-00 | _____ 2. Spiritual Gifts (3 Tapes & Study Papers)
Wayne & Claudia Speed |
| _____ 3. Church of God Big Sandy Seminar (3 Tapes)
12-23&24-00 | _____ 4. Interview With Dixon Cartright, by Ken Westby
6-9-01 |
| _____ 5. The Holy Spirit
Wayne Speed | _____ 6. Keynote Message For The Tulsa Conference
C. Wayne Cole & Dixon Cartwright 7-22-00 |
| _____ 7. The Hireling & the Wolf --Brian Convery (3 Tapes) | _____ 8. Noah's Ark Seminar--Arnold Mendez (Study Papers) |
| _____ 9. Origins--Arnold Mendez | _____ 10. Evolution: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups--Arnold Mendez |

LITERATURE [Snail Mail Only]

- _____ 1. Why Were We Disfellowshipped By The United Church of God an International Association? by Darwin & Laura Lee 111 pages
_____ 2. Wiley & Suzanne Black (Another Case of Abuse) by Bernard Kelly (The Bible Expositor--Last Issue) 16 pages