

The Good News

International Magazine of
THE CHURCH OF GOD

VOL. VIII, NUMBER 8

AUGUST, 1959

Wonderful GROWTH in the Church of God!

God is continuing to BLESS His Church and His work in countless ways! Rejoice in this good news of how Christ is WORKING through His "body" on this earth!

by Roderick C. Meredith

THIS Church is the very BODY of Jesus Christ! (1 Cor. 12:27). *Through us*, as physical instruments, He is *warning* this world of soon-coming punishment—and of the joyous *kingdom of God* to follow.

Within us, Christ is developing the supreme CHARACTER required to make us fit as kings and priests in His coming *world government*. The zeal with which we do our part in the *work of God* NOW is an indicator of how we will perform THEN in the very *kingdom of God*!

This summer, Christ has been working MIGHTILY in His Church. Many of you can *rejoice* because you have had a part in this wonderful growth!

Mr. Armstrong's Trip

Real *growth* is now beginning to take place in the British and overseas work! The recent flying trip of Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Ted Armstrong has made possible a tremendous *increase* in the British church and office which could not have been accomplished without this trip.

From the point of view of *church members*, I would like to stress certain things to you. Up to this time, the zealous radio listeners in the British Isles have only been able to get our program twice a week between 11:30 p.m. and midnight. Naturally, as you can see, this was not conducive to regular listening or to building a large listening audience.

And up to now, we have been utterly *unable* to get an earlier time on Radio Luxembourg, or to get on any local British stations which are entirely government owned and operated.

So the recent announcement by Mr. Armstrong that we are now going into the British edition of the *Reader's Digest* with a two page ad containing a gospel message each month is something we ought to really REJOICE over! Now we will begin to reach *thousands* of people that we could not have reached before. This will require a larger office and staff in London, and will soon make possible—and even necessary—many *churches* throughout the British Isles.

I know that the people in our London church will rejoice with me that now *hundreds* of their fellow countrymen in Britain will soon be converted and many will be able to attend local churches within a few years! And I know you brethren in the United States will also rejoice when you realize the full significance of this *sudden jump* in our power in reaching those God is calling in the British Isles!

It was a *double blessing* in that Mr. Armstrong and Garner Ted were able to negotiate the purchase of a beautiful estate which will serve both to give us the needed larger office space for our British office and headquarters, and also to be the main building of the British Ambassador College campus! And these

beautiful grounds, as Mr. Armstrong mentioned, will be a *wonderful* place for God's people in Britain to observe His annual festivals!

Definite plans are now being made for several *evangelistic campaigns* starting in the British Isles next June and lasting through December. All of you brethren should immediately begin PRAYING for these campaigns—and that God will guide and bless them in every way so that we may really reach the British people in a way we have not been able to do before!

Our work in Great Britain is now beginning to show forth God's real POWER!

Nation-wide Baptizing Tours

Five nation-wide baptizing tours, plus two or three shorter tours, are going out from God's headquarters this summer to reap a *tremendous* spiritual harvest that He has granted! You have already heard about these tours, and we hope you have been *praying* for them.

As this goes to press, these tours have already baptized *over 400* persons into the body of Jesus Christ! As I am sure you all realize, these people are not just "interested" individuals—or people who were moved by an emotional "altar call" appeal of some sort. Rather, they have been counseled about the real PURPOSE of human existence and told they must *totally surrender* their lives to God and

The Good News

International magazine of
THE CHURCH OF GOD
ministering to its members
scattered abroad

VOL. VIII NUMBER 8

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count the cost before being baptized. So we know that these are not to be compared with the "conversions" brought about by the highly advertised revivals in campaigns of the worldly churches. Rather, these numbers represent hundreds of human lives being CHANGED and truly converted to have the living Christ live His very life inside of them!

Since some of these men on the baptizing tours may soon become ministers serving you—and, of course, some are already ministers—we would like to acquaint you with the men taking these nation-wide tours. The tour covering the extreme North and northeastern corner of the United States and much of Canada is headed by Mr. Carlton Smith—one of our most effective preachers, whom many of you already know and love. Teamed with Mr. Smith this year is Mr. Bill McDowell, a senior in Ambassador College, a zealous and able Bible student, and a dedicated servant of Jesus Christ. This is Mr. McDowell's second tour, since he assisted Mr. Gerald Waterhouse last fall in visiting many of our co-workers throughout the South.

Other Tour Leaders

The tour covering the north central part of the United States is headed by Mr. Gerald Waterhouse, one of our older and abler ministers who is highly respected by anyone who is filled with God's Spirit. Accompanying Mr. Waterhouse is Mr. Ronald Kelly, a senior student in Ambassador College this fall, and a very able Bible student and effective speaker. Mr. Kelly had a great deal

of experience last summer in assisting Mr. Ted Armstrong in the evangelistic campaign held in Springfield, Missouri.

The tour covering many of the western states and western Canada is headed by Mr. George Meeker—formerly manager of our London office and minister in the church there and also, for a brief time, associate minister to Mr. Blackwell in the Chicago area. Teamed with Mr. Meeker is Mr. Cecil Battles—a graduate of Ambassador College and a most dedicated and able servant of Jesus Christ. Mr. Battles has served as associate pastor under Mr. Blackwell both in the Eugene, Oregon, and in the Chicago area.

The tour covering the midwest and south central areas of the country is headed by Mr. David Antion. He graduated from Ambassador College this June, and acted as student body president. He is a strong leader and preacher—and a servant of Jesus Christ. Accompanying him is Mr. Ken Mowat—a zealous junior student in Ambassador College, and our first Canadian student to be used directly in the work in this manner.

The tour covering the extreme South and southeastern part of the United States is headed by Mr. Roger Foster—also a graduate of Ambassador College this June and senior class president. Mr. Foster and Mr. Antion have both had previous baptizing tour experience, and Mr. Foster also is an able speaker and is noted as a most sincere and dedicated servant of God. He is accompanied by Mr. Richard Pinelli—formerly of the Chicago church, and now a very able and zealous junior student in Ambassador College who is making tremendous strides in real spiritual growth.

We hope that you will remember all of these men, and that you will PRAY for their protection and the success of their tours under the guidance of Almighty God! Perhaps many of you can get better acquainted with them at the Feast of Tabernacles this fall, for because of their "fruits" we know that some of these men may later be ordained as full ministers of Jesus Christ in His Church.

West Coast Tours

Three shorter baptizing tours are being taken on the west coast this summer. Mr. Leroy Neff—already an ordained elder in the Church—and his wife have already completed a short tour including cities in northern California and southern Oregon. Elder Don Billingsley, accompanied by Mr. Jim Kunz, is taking a short tour through the cities of central California to baptize many there.

And by the time you receive this, Mr. Benjamin Rea—minister and our

speaker on the Spanish broadcast—will be taking a tour through some of the cities in northern California accompanied by Mr. Ronald Chandler. Mr. Chandler is now an instructor in Ambassador College, having graduated, and is a zealous servant of Christ in the Spanish department of God's Church.

We should also note that Mr. Jim Kunz, accompanying Mr. Billingsley, is one of the leading men in the letter answering department, and undoubtedly scores of you brethren have received helpful, meaningful and encouraging letters from Mr. Kunz.

Let us give God THANKS for these tours and the wonderful spiritual harvest they are able to reap! There will be well over a *thousand* new members added to God's Church by the time of the Feast of Tabernacles this fall!

Evangelistic Campaign in San Antonio

It is good that you brethren realize that, just as in apostolic times, God's Church today still has *problems*. Certain of our local churches have not grown as we would wish, and we nearly always find that the *reason* is that some "members" have *never really been converted!*

For the last few years we have had such a problem in the church in San Antonio, Texas. Many of the members, of course, have been thoroughly converted and are growing in Christ's grace and truth in every way. But there were a *few* who never grew as they should and who began to "sympathize" with each other's wrong attitudes. Naturally, this *wrong spirit* began to spread and to cause a disheartened and discouraged attitude to come over many of those who were otherwise zealous of themselves.

For these reasons, the San Antonio Church has remained one of our smaller ones. For many months, the average weekly Sabbath attendance here has been just over 30 adults, plus a few children. Some sort of "spark" was needed to put new LIFE into God's Church in this area!

So we are now having an *evangelistic campaign* for our members, co-workers and interested listeners in the San Antonio area! Many of you have not heard of this campaign because it has been restricted mainly to our own listening audience. But as this article is being written, it is now in progress—and the prospects are that the San Antonio Church may be *more than doubled!* In addition to this immediate growth, *scores* of people in the San Antonio area and outlying regions will have been reached in a *personal way* and may well decide to act on what they

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Is *GLADEWATER* the **PLACE** for the Feast of Tabernacles?

Who determines **WHERE** to hold the Festival of Tabernacles? Is each individual member to decide for himself the place to hold it?

Here is the Bible evidence that *Gladewater* is the place!

by Herman L. Hoeh

THERE is *authority* for observing the Feast of Tabernacles at Gladewater, Texas! It is time you understood it!

How can we know **ABSOLUTELY** that the Church is properly keeping the Feast of Tabernacles "in the place which the Lord shall choose to place His NAME in" (Deut. 16:15)?

A COLLECTIVE Duty

It is a *collective* duty of the New Testament Church of God to observe the Feast of Tabernacles. It is not an individual matter. It is *most* vital that all members understand this!

YOU, as an individual member, are not responsible for determining where or when the *whole* Church shall assemble. If you were, then God would be using you as His direct instrument for determining *where* all other members should assemble—for determining *where* God has chosen to place His NAME! God would be ruling the Church through you!

God has not left it for the individual member to decide *when* the Church shall assemble. God Himself has set aside His Holy Sabbath, sanctified and hallowed the seventh day of every week.

Is it permissible for *you*, as an individual member, to decide that the *whole Church* shall meet on Tuesdays or Sundays? Of course *not*. Put that way it seems ridiculous. To keep any different day and profane GOD'S day which *HE* appointed is a basic SIN!

God sets the *time* for the annual festivals. In like manner **GOD** sets the **PLACE**!

Only *God* can sanctify—set apart—a place to which all His people are to assemble. *God* determines where we are to assemble! But how can the Church know which is the place God has chosen for the Feast of Tabernacles?

How and *to whom* does He reveal it?

Since observing the Feast is a collective matter, *who has the authority to bind God's choice of a place on the whole Church?* Is the individual member given the power to bind all other members—the power to rule the Church—in this matter?

What is the New Testament way by which *God rules* His Church, by which

God keeps unity among the members so that all may collectively assemble in harmony at the one place He has chosen for the Feast of Tabernacles?

Christ the **LIVING RULER** of His Church

God **RULES** His Church—the Church of God—through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Head of the Church, not some man! Jesus rules from Heaven!

But how does He reveal His decisions to the Church on earth?

Where, in the Bible, do we find **HOW** Jesus governs His Church? What is the instrumentality by which Jesus, who is in Heaven, carries out His will on earth? Notice the Bible answer:

God "hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers . . ." (I Cor. 12:28)—or, as in Ephesians 4:11-14, some are "apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith"—that is, unity in doctrine or belief—"that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . ." Christ rules and governs His Church through those whom He has chosen as His ministers and His instruments for administering **HIS AUTHORITY**, for the very purpose of preventing false doctrine creeping in to divide and to destroy the flock—for the very purpose of keeping **UNITY** in the Church.

It is to the ministry of God's Church that Christ said: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven . . ." (Matt. 18:18). It is not through individual members, but through His ministry, that *God* reveals where He places His NAME. And it is through the ministry that He *binds His choice* of the place on the whole Church.

Thus God reveals through His ministers the place He sets apart to which **HIS WHOLE CHURCH IS TO ASSEMBLE!** When individual members attempt to determine and to decide for themselves which place God has chosen they make themselves competitors and enemies of God's Church and of God's government

in it. They stir up dissension, cause division, and thus put themselves out of the Church.

The individual must first determine for himself—must satisfy himself—as to which is the one true Church of God, and then he must be subject to the government of God in His Church. This he must voluntarily submit to. He ought, however, to know **HOW** God's Church is led to recognize the place God has chosen for the Feast of Tabernacles.

GOD Chose Gladewater

God's ministers did not decide for themselves that Gladewater was the place for the Feast of Tabernacles. *God did!*

Let's notice *how* God did and *how* He revealed it to the whole Church.

In Leviticus 23:2-4—in the very chapter where the annual festivals are mentioned—God orders His ministers to convoke assemblies. One of the commanded assemblies is the "Feast of Tabernacles" (Lev. 23:34).

But the ministry cannot command a meeting unless the ministers know the place where the meeting is to be held!

God has not left His ministers free to choose for themselves where the whole Church is to meet. God is the One who chooses the place: "Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God **IN THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD SHALL CHOOSE**" (Deut. 16:15). In verse 6 of this same chapter God further tells us that it must be "the place which the Lord thy God shall choose **TO PLACE HIS NAME IN.**" It must have God's name—be deeded to **HIM!**

Notice that when God wanted the Temple built by Solomon, He caused Ornan to want to donate his property to God. David, Solomon's father, bought that property, having recognized it as the place whereon God wanted the House of the Lord built (see I Chron. 21:14 to 22:3 and II Sam. 24:18-25).

Now consider how we obtained the property at Gladewater.

Shortly before the spring of 1953 a beautifully wooded, private and secluded tract of some 45 acres was partly donated and the balance purchased and cleared. The original owner donated it

to God. The property therefore became deeded in the NAME OF "GOD"!

In the last part of the summer of 1953 the Church was still in search of the place God would appoint for the Feast of Tabernacles. The Church of God up to that year was like the "Church in the wilderness" which journeyed from Sinai to Kadeshbarnea before entering Palestine. In 1953 no place for the Church of God was available anywhere, it seemed.

Then something happened! It became evident to Mr. Armstrong, together with the ministry and many of the members at the Headquarters Church, that the only place available where we could meet was the very place GOD HAD PLACED HIS NAME—on the property near Gladewater, Texas!

Since God does command our presence where He places His NAME, THE GROUNDS AT GLADEWATER BECAME BOUND AS THE PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES!

What You Probably Didn't Know

The many brethren which God has added to His Church this year probably do not know how we came to build the two tabernacles near Gladewater and many who have known have probably forgotten!

The first report on the redwood tabernacle appeared in the February 1953 GOOD NEWS, page 10. In that article Mr. Armstrong wrote that the purpose of the tabernacle was three-fold: 1) as a local place for the Church around Gladewater to meet every Sabbath; 2) as a building to house the grade and high school; 3) as a center of meeting for the annual spring festivals—Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.

But it was *not* originally built for the Feast of Tabernacles!

God had not yet revealed—in the early part of 1953—where we should hold the Feast of Tabernacles.

But why did we call it a "tabernacle"? Because it was that kind of building! We couldn't call it a school, for it was not built like a school. Neither could we call it a church, for it is not built like the ordinary church. It was built with a large auditorium—and Webster defines a tabernacle as a "church with a large auditorium."

That is why we call it a "tabernacle"! That is what it is.

When originally built, the redwood tabernacle provided seats for an anticipated number of 1000 who would be attending the spring festivals of God. It was never built specifically to house those attending the Feast of Tabernacles because God had not then revealed where the Feast should be held.

It was absolutely essential, however, that the tabernacle be built in 1953 for

the school and the local church and the spring festivals. It amply served not only its original purpose but also as the assembly hall for the whole Church during the Feast of Tabernacles, beginning in 1953! *Yes, God led His Church to build a tabernacle large enough for the whole Church—and at the place God chose for the Feast of Tabernacles—EVEN BEFORE HE REVEALED HOW WE WERE TO USE IT!* Jesus does live in His Church today!

For five years God's people met there. We multiplied in attendance four times. We outgrew the original building—which in 1958 became a dining hall—and a NEW TABERNACLE was completed by the autumn of 1958.

So large was the increase in attendance in 1958 that plans were immediately laid for constructing the second tabernacle much BIGGER for this autumn.

The new members who have been added to the Church this year should know that the expenses for all this building have been borne by those whom God has put into His Church in years past. Every new member who attends the Feast this year reaps, in a sense, the unselfish financial labor of others who have been and are helping in the building of the Tabernacle.

Now let us understand why God did *not* choose Headquarters in Pasadena, or Jerusalem, as the place for the Festival of Tabernacles.

Jesus Leads Our Church Today

Consider! Since God placed His Name at the grounds near Gladewater, Texas, and has led His Church to assemble there, *no other place in the United States can be chosen* for the Feast of Tabernacles—NOT EVEN PASADENA!

There can be only *one* place in the United States and Canada!

Jesus leads His Church—this Church. We are the Church of God. Since Jesus never changes, we find Him leading the Church today in exactly the same manner as He did in apostolic times. He is leading His ministers today to know where the festivals of God ought to be held, just as He led the apostles and ministers in olden times to know where God's people should meet.

God wants the people to appear before Him. Therefore He wants the spring festivals of Passover and Unleavened Bread and Pentecost to be observed where the greatest number of people can gather together throughout the country.

But God provided in His law for us to save the SECOND TITHE so that we all could journey to one central place for the Feast of Tabernacles. Gladewater is that place here in North America. It is centrally located from east to west.

Economically it is centrally located from north to south, for the majority of our brethren who have low incomes live in the region of the Southern states.

Certainly God is the all-wise God, and Jesus is the living Head of His Church today! Do we see how He has worked out all these things for us?

Why Hold Feast of Tabernacles in Only ONE Place in U.S.A.?

Many of you brethren have so recently come into the true Church of God that you may never have heard us explain WHY we hold the Feast of Tabernacles in only one place in the United States.

Why do we not also hold the other festivals only in one place, the same as we do the Feast of Tabernacles?

What examples in the Old and New Testaments does the Church have?

Although there are seven annual festivals we are commanded to appear before God three times or seasons in the year. Notice: "Three times in a year shall all thy males"—the women are also included—"appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles" (Deut. 16:16).

The passover is here considered as an integral part of the Days of Unleavened Bread. The separate festivals of Trumpets and Atonement are not included as they are usually held wherever the local churches meet on the weekly Sabbath.

This verse in Deuteronomy clearly shows that we are not free to meet wherever we please, but rather, to meet wherever it pleases God. He chooses the place we meet and He reveals it to His ministers who convoke the assemblies.

Notice the Bible example in the Book of Zechariah. The one feast which all will be required to attend in one place in the Millennium is the Feast of Tabernacles! "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem"—and all nations will come against Jerusalem—"shall even go up from year to year . . . to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16).

In the Millennium the Gentiles will be required to assemble in one place—Jerusalem—to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

But *Jerusalem is not now* the place which God has chosen. Jesus said: "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain (where the false Samaritan worship was centered), nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21). God rejected Jerusalem after 69 A.D. He withdrew His Name from it. It is at the second coming of Jesus Christ that "the Lord . . . shall choose Jerusalem *again*" (Zech. 2:12).

What About Other Festivals?

Nowhere in Scripture do we find that all the nations in the Millennium will be required to attend the other two major festivals at Jerusalem. Only the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned!

That means that God would place His Name in *more than one place* for the Passover season and Pentecost.

Notice the Bible proof in Exodus 20:24, last part of verse, where the God of Israel is personally quoted: "In all places where I record My Name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee."

How clear! Three times a year we must meet with the brethren wherever designated, but only once a year—according to the example of Scripture—are ALL commanded to meet together in ONE place for the Feast of Tabernacles!

Here's why!

In the Millennium the earth will become one world, UNITED BY EFFICIENT MEANS OF TRAVEL, governed by one Kingdom—the Kingdom of God. Since the feast of Tabernacles is a memorial of God's Plan for the Millennium, we are all to come together in one place to celebrate it! That is a perfect type!

God permits the other festivals to be held in more than one locality at the same time because the spring festivals picture God's Plan FOR THIS PRESENT AGE—THIS DIVIDED WORLD OF MAN.

Our earth is now a very divided earth, and the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost are memorials of God's Plan *now* being carried out on this divided earth!

Notice the proof of this is in the Bible. When Jeroboam plotted to separate the House of Israel from the House of Judah through religion, the only time he altered was that of the Feast of Tabernacles—because that was the *only* time at which ALL ISRAEL and Judah had been assembling at Jerusalem. Had the people been assembling in only one place for all the festivals, Jeroboam would have changed them all. But he didn't do that. Here is what he did do: "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto *the* feast that is in Judah" (1 Kings 12:32).

The history of the Old Testament Church proves this very fact. Josephus, who recorded the practice of the Jewish people in Palestine, says of the Feast of Tabernacles that it "was kept by the Hebrews as a *most* holy and MOST EMINENT feast" (*Antiquities*, bk. VIII, ch. iv, §1). In another place he states, according to the original Greek in which he wrote, that the Feast of Tabernacles "is the most observed festival among us" (*Antiquities*, bk. XV, ch. iii, §3).

Notice another testimony to the custom of the Old Testament Church:

"According to the prescribed regulation," writes Hayyim Schauss in *Jewish Festivals*, p. 172, "every male had to make the journey to a great sanctuary at all three festivals. It was difficult for the Jewish peasant to leave his village at Passover and Pentecost . . . He was able to leave ONLY at the autumn festival"—the Feast of Tabernacles—to keep it at Jerusalem! Jewish Christians followed this practice in apostolic days.

Why Feast of Tabernacles in London?

Since there is only to be one place for the Feast of Tabernacles in America, let's understand why we hold the Feast on our miraculously acquired estate near London, England, at the same time we hold one near Gladewater, Texas.

The answer is plain!

There is an astounding Biblical reason why Jesus has led the Church to sanction a Feast of Tabernacles near London *on an estate deeded in the Name of God!* Here is the Bible principle:

When the earth becomes one world in the Millennium, then there will be only one place in the World Tomorrow for the Feast of Tabernacles—Jerusalem, the geographic and communicative center of the coming age. BUT TODAY THE EARTH IS DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL GEOGRAPHIC AND COMMUNICATIVE WORLD-AREAS! These may include North America, Europe, Australia, South Africa and South America. It is impossible for the vast majority of people to travel freely from one of these areas—England, for example—to another area—America, for example.

Each one of these areas is a type of the WORLD TOMORROW! Therefore, in each area only one Feast of Tabernacles can be held according to the plain example of Scripture.

What wonderful types of the Millennium!

In whatever geographic world-area you brethren are located, there can be only one Feast of Tabernacles. In America that one place is Gladewater. In Northwest Europe, it is London.

No place in Scripture can you find the Feast of Tabernacles held in more than one place in any one geographic world-area. But you can find numerous examples of the other festivals being held in New Testament times in numerous secondary localities within an area wherever the circumstances permitted.

New Testament Examples

Let us notice the example of the early inspired New Testament Church.

In New Testament times transporta-

tion was much slower than it is today. The eastern Mediterranean region, where the apostle Paul preached, was actually divided into several geographic and communicative areas. Paul was guided by the Spirit of God to take special journeys—falsely called "missionary journeys"—to each of these separate areas. In a sense Mr. Armstrong is doing the same today by preaching to North America, to Europe, to Australia, to South Africa, to India. Each one of these large regions today is as separate as were the much smaller areas in which each of Paul's journeys took him.

In New Testament times, Palestine was one geographic and communicative region. All the people living there *kept the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem* until 69 A.D.

So did Jesus, according to John 7:2, and also John 5:1, where the original inspired Greek reads "*the* feast of the Jews"—a phrase used to refer to the Festival of Tabernacles (see Ogg's *The Chronology of the Public Ministry of Jesus*, pp. 42-49).

In addition, many wealthy Jews from far-away areas came to Jerusalem (Acts 2:9-11) as representatives from those distant geographic areas where the feasts were also being held. This was a common practice since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Similarly, we have from time to time members from abroad who will meet with us in North America at Gladewater.

History records that uncircumcised Gentiles were not permitted by the Jews in Palestine to come to Jerusalem to observe the festivals. When Paul was seen in Jerusalem in 56 A.D. with one Gentile about the time of Pentecost, the Jews nearly killed him (Acts 21:27-30). This means that converted Gentiles, uncircumcised in the flesh, and not living in Palestine, would have been observing the festivals elsewhere than in Jerusalem, as Jesus prophesied they would (John 4:21).

Paul's Ministry Proves It

Notice the proof from Paul's life. *Paul kept the festivals of God* (1 Cor. 5:8; 16:8; Acts 18:21; 20:16). Even the *History of the True Church*, by Dugger and Dodd, admits that the original apostolic Church—the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5)—kept these days. *Yet for nearly 14 years Paul "was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: but they had heard only, "That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed'"* (Gal. 1:22-23). Paul was not keeping the feasts *at Jerusalem* or he certainly would have been known by face.

Where was Paul observing the Fest-

tivals during those years?

"I came," he said, "into the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. 1:21). That is where they were! Paul and Barnabas spent many years preaching there before being sent on their journeys. The center of the region of Cilicia and Syria was Antioch. At Antioch "it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people." Paul, then, would have observed the Feast of Tabernacles in Antioch because he was there a whole year! Read Acts 11:25-26.

Festivals Held in Europe

On the second apostolic journey the apostle Paul went into Europe. He came to Philippi in Macedonia—exactly 19 years after the Holy Spirit had come on the day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. And what do you suppose happened?

"And we were in that city abiding certain days"—there were so few Jews in Philippi that there was no regular synagogue, only a place of prayer. "And on the Day of Weeks we went out of the city by a river side where we supposed there was a prayer place; and we sat down, and spoke unto the women which came together"—so reads the original Greek. How plain! Exactly 19 years after the gospel began to be preached on Pentecost by the Church in Asia, it began to be preached in Europe on the Day of Pentecost—the Day of Weeks, the Feast of Weeks.

Paul then journeys in late summer to Corinth, in South Greece, in the province of Achaia. "He continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:11). That accounts for two more Feasts of Tabernacles, this time, it is indicated, spent in Corinth.

Distances were so great in those days that it would have taken two weeks to a month just to travel to Corinth from Antioch. So, at the same time, converts in the geographic area of Syria and Cilicia were probably observing the Feast of Tabernacles in Antioch in Syria. Jews in Palestine were observing it in Jerusalem, as always. Each of these cities was the one central location in a geographic, communicative area. We follow the same example today!

In the autumn of 52 A.D. Paul specifically mentions journeying to *keep* the Feast of Tabernacles with the Jerusalem Church (Acts 18:21—a verse which is part of the inspired Greek New Testament).

The third journey took Paul into the province of Asia, which was subdivided into Mysia, Lydia and Caria. The central location of this region was Ephesus, where Paul preached for at least *two*

years and three months (Acts 19:8-10). The Feast of Tabernacles was probably kept here during this time.

Spring Festivals Held Locally

Early in the year 56 A.D., we find the Feast of Unleavened Bread held in the secondary cities of Troas and Assos. Notice it in Acts 20:4-7, 11, 13-14:

Luke and other ministers stayed in Philippi, until "after the Days of Unleavened Bread." If there were no Days of Unleavened Bread being observed among those Gentile converts, then Luke could not have written it was "after" those days! Here is proof that Gentiles KEPT God's Festivals. Paul, at the same time, was accompanied by seven others to Troas in Asia (verse 4). So Paul was observing the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in the city of Troas while the others accompanying Luke were observing it in Philippi in Macedonia. Immediately after the last day of Unleavened Bread—which, in 56 A.D., fell on a weekly Sabbath—Paul left for Assos, having left word at Troas for Luke to meet him there. This would certainly seem to indicate that the brethren in Assos were not there at Troas when Paul was at Troas. They probably were keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread at Assos, some 30 miles distant by foot.

The keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in so many minor towns clearly substantiates the practice of the Church of God today when we hold the spring festival in numerous local *Churches of God* on which God has placed His Name.

But *nowhere* in the Book of Acts can you find one instance where the Feast of Tabernacles was ever held in more than one place in each communicative-geographic area in which Paul preached.

Jesus' Own Example

Jesus is our example. We know that He observed the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, the headquarters of the Church in Palestine. But did He ever observe the spring festivals in any city other than Jerusalem?

He did!

Notice what the Scripture says. Jesus began to preach the gospel at Nazareth. He read from the book of Isaiah where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor . . ." (Luke 4:17). Consider the fact that up until this time Christ was merely calling disciples and teaching them in private. When Nicodemus acknowledged that Jesus was "a teacher come from God" (John 3:2), Jesus now had the tacit approval of a Sanhedrin representative to publicly preach. Then Jesus goes to Nazareth in Galilee to begin preaching.

And when did He start preaching publicly in the synagogues?

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Day of Weeks, and stood up for to read" (Luke 4:16). Here again the original Greek has been misunderstood! Jesus began preaching, not merely on a sabbath, but on a *particular* sabbath—the annual Feast of Weeks or Pentecost!

It was His custom to observe that Feast in Nazareth. You will never find Jesus in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. He was setting us an example that the spring festivals are not required to be held in only one place!

It was often the practice of the Jews living in Galilee to attend services on the spring festivals in Nazareth or other Galilaean cities. (See *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, by Ederheim.) Because the disciples had often been accustomed to keep Pentecost in Galilee rather than Jerusalem—for they were Galilaean—Jesus had to command them in 31 A.D. to remain in Jerusalem till Pentecost. God purposed to give them His Holy Spirit at the Headquarters Church in Jerusalem as a witness to all the Jews and the world.

There is strong evidence that Jesus also once observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Galilee. Turn to Matthew 12:1-9. On a weekly sabbath "at that season" the Pharisees wrongly accused Jesus of breaking the sabbath. This event appears to have occurred in Galilee, according to the account in Mark 3:7, where Jesus withdraws nearby to the Sea of Galilee.

But notice what the original inspired Greek, written by Luke, calls that sabbath: "And it came to pass on a second high sabbath that He was going through the cornfields" (Luke 6:1).

If you look in some Bibles you will see that the translators have awkwardly rendered the Greek words "second sabbath after the first." Actually, the Greek expression means that the weekly sabbath that year was also the second high day, an annual sabbath—a day of first rank. And in that very year—29 A.D.—the Sacred Calendar proves that the second Holy Day in the days of Unleavened Bread fell on a weekly sabbath!

So Jesus was keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread in all probability in Galilee that year!—not in Jerusalem, the place where the Feast of Tabernacles was always held in Palestine.

Yes, there is ample testimony that the Church of God today *has Jesus living in her*. Jesus is leading His Church today as He led His Church in apostolic days. GOD *has chosen* Gladewater as the place in America, just as He has chosen London as the place in Europe!

The Fear of the Unpardonable Sin

Here is an intriguing article by Mr. Garner
Ted Armstrong's Administrative Assistant

by Albert J. Portune

THE MOST destructive and terrifying thought that can enter a Christian's mind is the thought that he has been completely cut off from God by having committed the unpardonable sin.

Think of it for a moment! How would it feel, after having known the depths of God's wisdom, after having seen the glorious reward of eternal life in God's very own family—as His Son—to live forever fulfilling His purpose throughout the endless reaches of the universe through joy and wisdom and service—having been glorified like Jesus Christ and made like Him—shining as the sun in its full strength (Rev. 2:16), and then after having known all these things to realize you had LOST IT ALL through the commission of the unpardonable sin!

Cut Off from God FOREVER

Think of what it would be like to be cut off from God forever. Sin SEPARATES US FROM GOD (Isa. 59:1-2). The unpardonable sin cuts us off from God forever. Cut off from God, He would never hear your voice again in prayer. No matter how long or how hard you prayed or cried out with tears, He would NEVER HEAR YOU AGAIN!

The fear of having committed the unpardonable sin is very real. It is a fear that many of God's people have had. It is one of the most potent weapons of Satan the Devil, to make us believe we no longer have access to God—that we have been cut off forever.

Fear of this kind can utterly destroy us, can throw us into such a fit of despair we no longer want to live. To a true Christian, there is no life but service to God, and if one feels he has lost his connection with God, then there is nothing else left to live for. In this frame of mind, Satan can easily overpower us and destroy us, which is his goal.

In order to be sure we do not fall into this destructive trap, we need to fully understand what the unpardonable sin is. We need to look into the Bible—the word of God—for the answer.

What Is the Unpardonable Sin?

There is only *one* "unpardonable sin"! Let's notice *what* it is. Jesus Christ said in Mark 3:28, "Verily I say unto you, *all* sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."

The one sin man can commit that is unpardonable is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; *all* other sins, when repented of, can be forgiven—but *not* blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

What does blasphemy against the Holy Spirit mean? How is it done?

In Matthew 12:22, we pick up the story of the same incident mentioned in Mark 3:28. A man was brought to Christ. This man was possessed by a demon that made him both blind and dumb. Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, rebuked the demon, releasing the man from his bondage. Immediately all the people that were there said, "Is not this the son of David?" (verse 23). They meant, was not this the promised Messiah who would be the Son of David? (Isa. 11:10). They were convinced Christ was the Messiah and had done this miracle by the power of the Holy Spirit in Him.

But notice what the Pharisees said when they heard of it, verse 24, "This fellow does not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub, the prince of demons" (in other words—Satan). These Pharisees did not attribute this wonderful miracle to the Holy Spirit, but to *Satan*—they accused Christ Himself of having a demon. They called the precious Holy Spirit of God a dirty, foul spirit of Satan. They BLASPHEMED against the Holy Spirit. These same Jews later crucified their very own Savior, placarding and nailing to a stake—in open shame—the Son of God who had come to redeem them.

Now, here is the primary key. Every man who has committed the unpardonable sin, *has done exactly what those Jews did . . .* but let's go on.

How We Can Blaspheme Against the Holy Spirit

The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit tells us, "If we sin *wilfully* after we have received the knowledge of the truth, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin*" (Heb. 10:26). Wilful sin is unpardonable! *Wilful sin, then, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.*

The sacrifice that was originally made for sins was the life of Christ given for us (Rom. 5:10). And, if we sin wilfully, deliberately, *on purpose*, realizing in our minds we are knowingly committing the very sins that put Jesus Christ on the cross, we are *consenting* to His crucifixion—in full knowledge He is the Son of David—the Son of God. We are guilty as were those very Pharisees who accused and crucified Him. We agree with the words by which they condemned Him: "Away with Him—crucify Him. We have *no* king but Caesar" (John 19:15). We are putting our Savior to open shame—*blaspheming*—in contempt, the Holy Spirit that is in Him. That is why Paul concludes by saying that for these there is nothing but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour them (verse 27).

Is Sin Under Temptation Unpardonable?

Many times, as Christians, we fall short of the perfection for which Christ was our example. We weaken under temptation and make wrong choices, discovering later—perhaps the next instant—that we have sinned against God. Is this type of sin unpardonable?

Notice in Rom. 5:10 that our *past* guilt is pardoned by the death of Christ our Savior, but we SHALL be saved (in the future) by His life. Christ is now our High Priest, seated at God's right hand making intercession for us. He knew we would stumble and make mistakes. But, when we realize we have committed a sin and *repent* of it, He ever lives to make intercession for us by His ONE sacrifice (Heb. 7:25). By

that sacrifice He gained access to God the Father. The key to the forgiveness of our sins is our *repentance*.

Did Paul Sin?

The apostle Paul fell short and sinned, as we also do. He realized the weakness of human flesh. He states in Romans 7:15, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would that do I not: but what I *hate*, that do I."

Yes, even though Paul knew the right way, he at times did the wrong thing. How many times do we—knowing deep within us that it is wrong, allow our minds to deceive us, to persuade us it is right, only to discover later we have sinned against God.

Did Paul commit the unpardonable sin? Certainly not! He sometimes yielded to the temptation of sin which is common to us all (verse 23). Most important is the *attitude* of Paul. Notice verse 24, Paul REPENTS for this miserable weakness of the flesh: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death." He then thanks God that Jesus Christ *will* deliver him (verse 24).

When Is It Impossible to Repent?

The key to understanding the commission of the unpardonable sin is in Paul's attitude. His attitude was one of *repentance*. In Hebrews 6:4-6 he tells us that those who have fallen away from the truth of God—who have wilfully sinned and rejected the truth of God,

through the Holy Spirit—*cannot repent*. "For it is IMPOSSIBLE for those who were . . . made partakers of the Holy Spirit . . . if they shall fall away to *renew* them again unto repentance." *They cannot repent*—their whole attitude has changed. Instead of being repentant and subject to the Holy Spirit of God, they now reject truth and abhor the Spirit of truth. They now *crucify* Christ—the Son of God—within themselves. Within their minds they take the Son of God, through whom alone they have forgiveness, and nail Him once again to a stake, holding His Holy life up to open shame. Read it yourselves in verse 6: "Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to open shame."

Those who have committed the unpardonable sin have no Redeemer! They have crucified their Redeemer and Savior, blaspheming against the Holy Spirit by which they *had* access to God.

The Proof

Any Christian who has found himself guilty of sin and who has thought he has committed the unpardonable sin has suffered terrible mental anguish. For he has realized what a horrible fate it would be to be cut off from God *forever*. He sees himself in utter misery and sorrow.

For those of you who have had this fear, be reassured that those who have really committed the unpardonable sin can *never* feel this way. For they want nothing to do with God or His works.

They have attributed God's works to Satan—have blasphemed and cried out against the Holy Spirit—and have crucified the Son of God within themselves. *They cannot repent! In their eyes they have nothing to repent of.*

A truly begotten Christian, realizing his sin, will cry out in prayer and tears—repenting of his transgression. In this attitude of *repentance* and fear at having disobeyed God, we have absolute reassurance we have *not* committed the unpardonable sin. It is our proof!

We should fear to commit the unpardonable sin. We should guard against becoming antagonistic toward the ministers whom God has chosen—letting ourselves fall away little by little from prayer, Bible study and service to God—lest one day we lightly esteem the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His truth and blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. Our life must be constantly striving for perfection. We must continue to overcome and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Remember that God is a God of love (I John 4:8). He is longsuffering toward us, desiring us to *repent* daily of our mistakes (II Pet. 3:9). Do not fall prey to unreasonable fear of having committed the unpardonable sin. If you are sorry and have repented, *look up to Jesus Christ your Savior* and realize His word is truth (John 17:17). For He said "*Fear not*, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32).

Church Growth

(Continued from page 2)

have heard and start attending the local church later.

During this, the third week of the campaign, the nightly attendance has averaged about 90 people so far. Of course, the attendance is up each week-end. But we are thankful that this number of people are zealous enough to attend these meetings *every night*—six nights a week!

Naturally, as we get into the stronger "meat" of God's truth, many people will fall by the wayside. But indications are that we will still be able to more than *double* the size of this local church—and to put new "spark" and *life* in the entire membership in this area!

The Evangelistic Team

I am personally heading this evangelistic campaign, and am receiving wonderful assistance from a competent evangelistic "team." Mr. Al Portune has been serving as song-leader, soloist and counselor. You will remember that he

assisted Mr. Ted Armstrong in the Springfield campaign last year. Mr. Portune has also been bringing *powerful* sermons in the local churches in this area, and you brethren will be hearing much more from him in the future!

Mr. Hal Baird, formerly a member of the Corpus Christi Church and now an "older" student at Ambassador College, is also here to assist in counseling with people and visiting prospective church members during the day. He has also been bringing very inspiring messages in the local Sabbath services, and shows promise of becoming a powerful servant of Jesus Christ in His work. Mr. Baird is an example of a local church member who has put God's Kingdom and His work *FIRST* in every way, and is now preparing to serve *directly* in the Work of God!

Helping provide the inspiring music for the campaign meetings are Miss Ruth Myrick and my sister, Miss Kathryn Meredith. Miss Myrick will be remembered by many of you as the young lady on the piano at the Feast of Tabernacles last fall. She is unusually talented and has been a wonderful help

in accompanying the hymn singing and solo work here in the nightly meetings.

My sister, Kathryn, is an accomplished violinist and has majored in music at the University of Kansas, receiving her degree there. She plays beautifully and feelingly on the violin, and her solos have been very inspiring and uplifting to those attending the campaign meetings.

Temporarily acting as part of the "team," our local minister in San Antonio, Mr. Allen Manteufel, has been an able and zealous help in every way in counseling with the people and helping arrange the halls for these meetings and many other things. He is the man who will have to "follow through" after these meetings are over. So I ask all of you brethren to *pray* that these meetings will bring forth real "fruit" in this local church, and that Mr. Manteufel will be able to build this church up continually from now on!

Because of the campaign, new interest, new members and new *LIFE* will be felt in this area! Let us *rejoice* that this has been made possible, and keep *praying* (Please continue on page 12)

What Is the “LAODICEAN CHURCH”?

When should we expect the Laodicean condition in the Church of God? Who are to be a part of it?

by L. Leroy Neff

SEVERAL church denominations claim that they are now in the Laodicean era—that the many churches of THIS WORLD are a *part* of that Church described in Revelation 3:14-22.

A few claim that we, the Church of God, are the Laodicean Church because, as one person has stated, we do not have the gift of “unknown tongues!”

Others say the Laodicean era of the Church will occur in the Millennium. But notice! During the Millennium, God will use the *Kingdom of God* as His instrument on this earth, and *not* merely a fleshly Church. Therefore, the Laodicean era of the Church cannot be during the one thousand year period! The seven Church ages of Revelation 2 and 3 lead up to the coming of Christ. The Millennium follows the ages of these seven Churches.

We must expect this period before the soon return of Jesus Christ. The time is short! The Laodicean era is either here now, or it must come quickly and last but a short time!

God's Church Divided?

Is it possible for two entirely separate works, or two separate organizations of God's Church to exist at the same time as Jesus' instrument in preaching to the world? Was the New Testament Church in Paul's time two separate organizations? No, the Church was not split! The Church was *one*. God does not have two organizations *carrying out His work of preaching the gospel to the world at one time*. The Church is not a divided work competing with itself.

Christ's own words were, “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name”—The Church of God—“those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one*, as we are” (John 17-11). Notice, “that they may be *one*”—not divided, not split in two organizations. If the Church of Laodicea and the Church of Philadelphia are separate bodies—both doing the same work of God at the same time, this prayer of Jesus was in vain!

What happens to members of God's

Church if they commit apostasy, or if some split off as another group? They would no longer be a part of the Church of God!

There are several examples of groups who have split themselves off from the true vine. We have the two recent examples of the “Seventh Day Baptists,” who have taken themselves out of the name of the Church of God, and the “Seventh Day Adventists” who have done the same. They do not even call themselves the “Church of God” any more—because *they are not God's Church!*

But what about the “Sardis Era” of God's Church? Are they not existing at the same time as the “Philadelphia Era” of the Church? Yes, but notice their condition in Revelation 3:1. “And unto the angel of the Church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, AND ART DEAD!” They have the name of the Church of God, and yet *they are dead*. Today the small divided remnants of that Church are spiritually dead. They are not now God's instrument for carrying out His work. They are just a few scattered people—not a living organization carrying on God's work! Since 1934, at the beginning of the Philadelphia Era, this work has taken the place of the dead Sardis Church. Since that time the Sardis Church has not been doing the work of spreading the gospel to the world as a witness!

Let us take another example. If a part of the Church today would go off into error and establish its own Church, that body would be rejecting the authority that God has set in the Church (Eph. 4:11). An example of such rejection is found in I Samuel 8:7. The Church of Laodicea would *not* be such a split from the Philadelphia Church! Such a split *would no longer be a part of the Church of God!* All these scriptures show us that the Church of God is not a divided or a split Church!

Laodicea Lacks Zeal

Let's examine some of the facts about the “Church of Laodicea.” Read Revela-

tion 3:14-22. Notice verse 15. “I know thy works, that thou are neither cold nor hot.” Here is the first indication about this Church—they are lukewarm! Verse 19 tells them to “be zealous.” Because they do not have zeal, Christ will “spue them out of His mouth.”

It claims that it is spiritually rich and increased with goods, and has need of nothing. We can apply this to physical things; however, the Bible makes it plain that the condition is primarily spiritual! This Church believes it has knowledge, understanding, spiritual goods, righteousness, and many other attributes to commend it to God. Instead of that, Christ says, “You are wretched and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked!”

This Church is then told: “Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.” Notice that this particular Church should buy gold tried in the fire. What does it mean to have “gold tried in the fire?” Turn first to Malachi 3:2-3. “But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is *like a refiner's fire* and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, *that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.*” These people are to be tried in the fire, purified and purged. They are punished, and tried in persecution and tribulation!

Next turn to Zechariah 13:7. “Awake, O sword, against *my shepherd*, and against the *man* that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite *the shepherd*, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.” In Matthew 26:31, we find that this refers specifically to Jesus Christ. But prophecies are often dual in meaning. This verse can also refer to a leader in the Church of Laodicea. He—the shepherd—is killed as a result of the persecution against the Church of Laodicea. The sheep, or the remnant of that Church (Rev. 12:17), are to be scattered through war.

When does this happen? Just before the coming of Jesus Christ! At the time that *shepherd* is going to be killed and the sheep scattered, the third part of the nation Israel (Ezek. 5:12) is going

to be brought through the fire—and the Church of Laodicea will have to go through it! A time is coming when what is left of that Church is going to be scattered, persecuted and hunted, killed by the "fire" of men. *After* this severe trial, they *will* zealously call upon God and He will hear them, and say "It is my people."

The "Laodiceans" are also told to "get white raiment," typical of righteousness and purity. That is obtained by *overcoming* the severe trials and tests that they will face (Rev. 3:5).

These people cannot see their spiritual wretchedness. They are told to anoint their eyes with eyesalve so that they may see. Are some of you in this same condition, where you cannot see yourselves as you should? Are you zealous, or are you like people who are neither cold nor hot? We must have this zeal, or we may find ourselves in the Church of Laodicea! "Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

The next thing commanded the Laodicean Era is to repent (verse 19). God's people need a repentant attitude at all times. Since these people are told to repent, they are not in such a repentant attitude! And yet, they are the Church of God! They keep God's commandments (Rev. 12:17), keep the Sabbath, obey God's laws, and yet they have no zeal and they are not fully repentant! They do not change when they receive correction. Does this describe any of us? Remember individuals and local congregations may at any time be like any of these seven Churches. They all existed locally in the apostolic age!

Parable of Ten Virgins

Read the parable of the ten virgins (Mat. 25:1-13). Notice the condition of those who are begotten into the "Kingdom of heaven" at that time (Mat. 25:1-2). Observe the similarities between the "Church of Laodicea" and the ten virgins who "*all* slumbered and slept" (verse 5).

All ten, though lacking in zeal and slumbering, are virgins and have not defiled themselves with the harlot of Rome or her daughters (Rev. 14:4). Five, however, were wise enough to repent in time and be imbued with the Spirit of God. But there are certain things wrong with the other five of them. The five foolish took no extra oil with them. There was no repentance—no change. Their lamps were *going* out. (The King James Version inaccurately reads "*gone* out." See the Greek text or any modern translation.) Oil is typical of the Holy Spirit of God and they did not have enough of this Spirit.

They did *not* realize this most im-

portant need until the cry went forth to go out to meet the bridegroom!

The foolish virgins then went to buy oil. But it was too late! The door was closed for them. They were not admitted into the marriage.

The lesson here is that the remnant Church must always watch, for it does not know the day nor the hour that Christ will return!

The Church of Philadelphia Compared with Laodicea

Let's compare this parable and the Church of Laodicea with the Church of Philadelphia. We have proved through history and through God's Word that this work, the Radio Church of God, is the "Philadelphia Era" of the Church.

Notice now the differences. Revelation 3:7-13: "And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write; these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that *openeth*, and no man *shutteth*; and *shutteth* and no man *openeth*." The great door that God has opened to this work is the facility to go into all the world and preach the gospel; the door of radio, the door of the printing press, plus many other such doors. God has set before us an open door and no *man* can shut it. God can shut it, and He will when the work is finished and the Philadelphia Church goes to a place of safety.

"I know thy works: Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (verse 8). Notice that this Church has works. It has works of *zeal* and of *repentance*. This Church has only a little strength.

But, by contrast, the Church of Laodicea believes that *it* is increased with goods and has a great deal of strength. Philadelphia has little strength to do this great work that God has given it to do. God has opened the door, and yet look how insignificant, how weak, how little strength we as a Church have to do that work. How much we lack in every way, and yet God has opened the door and has given us certain vital, supernatural, spiritual gifts. Very often we lack enough money to pay the radio bills and other expenses. *We are few in number*, while many other eras of the Church of God numbered in the hundreds of thousands. We indeed have little strength. And yet, look at the great power that God has placed before us.

Let's bring it down to the individual level even though it is referring primarily to the Church as a whole. Most of us as individuals realize how little strength we really have, how we lack in some of the spiritual gifts. God has

given the Church a good measure of wisdom and of knowledge and faith. He has given us many other gifts but we still lack in many things, but we also realize it. Our Church has not denied the name of God.

This Church is going to be protected from the hour of temptation, or of trial and tribulation which will come upon all the world (Rev. 3:16). But the Church of Laodicea must go through severe tribulation. The Church of Laodicea is to be lukewarm, lacking in zeal and repentance. They were lacking in God's Spirit. Because of this, Christ said that He would spue them out—they would no longer have His protection. They thought they were rich, just as the foolish virgins, in the parable, thought they had plenty of oil. After it was too late, they learned that their supply of oil was gone!

There is a door in each case, closed! Christ says that He knocks at the door of the Laodiceans. The foolish virgins among them left the door closed!

The Philadelphians will be taken to a place of safety for three and one half years (Rev. 12:14). And yet, there is a remnant of the Church which remains and who will not be in that place of safety (Rev. 12:17). This remnant which remains *is* a part of the Church of God, and keeps the commandments of God. It is the Church of Laodicea who had no vital part in the work of God today *even though they live today and are a part of that generation which will see Christ return*.

Jesus Christ instructs all of us to watch and pray always that we may be accounted worthy to escape all the things that are coming upon this world (Luke 21:36). Some will not be accounted worthy to escape these things. Those of the Church of Laodicea will find that they are not worthy to escape. The *door of safety* will be shut for them. To those who still will not overcome, it will be closed forever! Others, who become faithful and overcome, not losing their lives unto death, may yet gain eternal life as the five wise virgins do.

Warnings for Today

God's people have been warned time after time from the pulpit and in the pages of the PLAIN TRUTH and The GOOD NEWS that they must continue in a repentant attitude. Yet some still lack zeal, though exhorted to be zealous. Some are spiritually asleep, and have been exhorted to wake up. Any one of you can now be in the spiritual condition of Laodicea even though that age of the Church is yet to arise.

Notice I Corinthians 3:11-15. Here
(Please continue on page 12)

God's Church Is Watching

by A. J. Portune

THE GRAND smash climax of six thousand years of human experience is upon us! World news events are rapidly fitting together into the breath-taking and ominous picture that God foretold thousands of years ago!

We in God's Church have the opportunity of being right on the scene—on the inside as it were—as these world-shaking events take place.

Each week tens of thousands of news items appear in the newspapers and periodicals around the world. In this blazing array of headlines, by-lines and feature articles, which comprize the panorama of world news, can be read the inexorable fulfillment of the prophecies of the Bible.

Yet to most of the world these really BIG news stories, depicting the "main-line" events that herald this world's end, go unnoticed in the routine jumble and scramble of activities that fill our era. Without the knowledge of God's truth and the understanding of the prophecies of the Bible, there is no pattern nor rhyme nor reason in the news today. Each individual takes or leaves what he likes—according to his OWN little world—and the rest is so much paper and printers' ink.

News Gathering Department at Ambassador College

At God's Headquarters Church in Pasadena, California, the nerve center of God's work on earth, trained personnel of the News Gathering Department spend hour after hour every day sifting, sorting, comparing, cataloging and filing thousands of news reports from all over the world.

Nowhere on earth is there another such department! There are many, many news agencies and news gathering facilities around the earth, but there is not another one that really KNOWS WHAT TO LOOK FOR! Without God's Holy Spirit to guide them to an understanding of what lies ahead, they, too, would be blind to the significance of the very news stories they process.

The news gathering department of the Vatican at Rome is perhaps the largest and best equipped on the face of the earth. Yet with all their superior equipment, thousands of files and hundreds of employees, they are not able to really discern the signs of the times.

What a thrill to realize we in God's Church have the opportunity of knowing what really is important in the news. What a blessing to be able to

see these things happening and to KNOW what they mean.

An Important Commission

How many of us realize, however, how serious our responsibility is of "watching" and understanding the news as it develops?

God has opened the prophecies of the climactic times ahead to OUR understanding. He has shown us—step by step—with pin-point accuracy, the events that would lead up to the end of this age and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Notice what Jesus Christ said, after reviewing to the disciples what was ahead:

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise when ye shall see ALL THESE THINGS, know that *it* [the end of the age] is near, even at the doors." Again: "*Watch ye* therefore and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things." (Matt. 24:32-33 and Luke 21:36.)

For our OWN safety—that we might be praying and staying close to God—Jesus warned us to be watching and discerning the signs of the times.

Our Responsibility

Now do you begin to see the scope of our responsibility? With the understanding of the events set down by Ezekiel and amplified by Christ and the Prophets, WE must read in the day-by-day unfolding of the news the signs of the times. We must shout it to Israel and the world. Jesus Christ said we would do this work! "And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness [warning] and then shall the end come (Matt. 24:14).

The News Gathering and Reporting Department at Ambassador College is growing into one of the major departments in God's work. It has the most modern and efficient memory-o-matic system of recording and filing information. This filing system is constantly being revised and improved to fit the changing pattern of world events. Daily into these files goes the vital information gleaned from many sources. Many of the astounding—eye opening—articles you read in *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine and the startling facts you hear on *The World Tomorrow* program are drawn from these files.

Behind the bizarre headlines that splash across the newspapers and news magazines are often the obscure articles

and news trends that are the *real news*. Sometimes the real news stories about to SHAKE THIS WORLD—stories that fit another piece into the plan of God—are found in small type on the inside pages. The development of *botulinus*—a substance one-half pound of which could wipe out the entire population of the earth—originally appeared as an obscure second or third page item.

How the News Department Functions

Keeping pace with the growing news developments is the regular staff of the News Gathering Department. Their job is to study and analyze the thousands of items that arrive weekly and to make them available in condensed analysis form. These vital reports present the developing panorama of news as seen through the eyes of prophecy.

Assisting the regular staff are a group of volunteer news readers. These "watchers" are selected from the alert student body at Ambassador College. Each is assigned two to three of the leading magazines or periodicals that are received regularly at Ambassador College Library. Carefully scanning and perusing these publications, they extract the important news items and channel them to the News Department.

Other confidential news reporting services and news letters from Washington, D.C., and other sources are subscribed to by the department to keep abreast of developments and trends.

Supplementing this also, come reports from the Ministers of God's Churches from their areas of the nation and the world. Ever on the watch, these trained and responsible men are continually sending valuable information for the files. Many valuable reports have been received from overseas from the headquarters for the work in England, where they are much closer to what is developing in Europe.

Your Part

By far the greatest volume of information, however, comes from members and co-workers in God's Church. Each day—through the mail—come literally thousands of news clippings on every conceivable subject and aspect of the news.

This valuable cross-section of the news represents many hundreds of "watchers" who are having a part in this vital "end-time" work. These unseen workers are able to cover the many newspapers and publications that the news department has no access to. These thousands of clippings add depth and

scope to the department that would not be possible otherwise.

Here is where YOU can have an *active* part in God's work.

Perhaps many of you have wondered which news clippings are of value—what kind of information is important enough to send in. Our understanding of the prophecies of the Bible gives us the answer. Your diligent study of the Bible and your careful and alert attention to *The World Tomorrow* program and the articles in *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine will tell you what is important. These news articles which show the working out of God's plan here below—the fulfilling of prophecy—are the important ones. You may have to search for them; they won't always be on the front page.

You, as scattered members, can be particularly helpful by contributing information that shows trends in *your local area*—information we don't get from our local big-city newspapers and national news magazines. It may seem a small thing, but put together with other reports from other areas, it may be a BIG story.

In sending your clippings, in order to increase their value and authority, *please* always include the *name* and *date* of the paper or magazine from which you take your clippings. This is very important! In using these news items, we must quote the source.

Send your clippings to the regular address: Herbert W. Armstrong, Box 111, Pasadena, California. It would help if you would put "News Department" on the outside of the envelope.

The News Gathering Department would like to thank those of you who have been already faithfully helping us by sending your clippings. Without your help we could not be nearly as effective as we have been.

Laodicea

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we see those whose works are burnt up—*who themselves must be purified by fire* to be saved "at that day." Surely here is a picture of the Laodicean character!

Let's be among those who realize that they have little strength, and have not denied the Name of Christ. They have kept His patience. They have kept His Word. They are striving hard, and are overcoming. Let's hold fast and maintain the identifying marks . . . Church of Philadelphia.

Let's not be among those whom God will have to separate from His living Church today.

The Laodicean Church is not going to be worthy to escape to a place of

safety. When it is too late, they will find that the Church of Philadelphia has gone to safety. Only two choices remain for each person left. They will be tried by the fire of men, and may lose their lives in severe tortures; or if they recant, they will lose their lives in the final gehenna fire. In either case, they will be tried in the fire. If they are tried by the fire of men and still overcome, they will be given eternal life. If they fail this, the final *gehenna fire* with everlasting destruction will be their doom.

Judging from the parable of the ten virgins, if you are found in the Church of Laodicea, *you probably don't know it*. You may think you are in the Church that will go to safety. When you find out it will be too late.

Now is the time to prepare. Now is the time to be zealous. Now is the time for good works—the time to obtain more of the Holy Spirit of God. Now is the time to keep repentant, to change our lives.

Let's not be a part of the Laodicean Church!

Church Growth

(Continued from page 8)

for this church and all of God's local churches that we may all overcome our human problems and grow "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Pentecost Services

God's Feast of Pentecost fell on Monday, June 15th, this year. So it was a little late for us to get this information to the press in time for the July issue of this magazine. But a truly *bountiful* and *joyous* Feast was observed in all of the local churches!

As I am writing you from "campaign headquarters" here in San Antonio, I do not have before me all of the attendance figures of all of the various churches—but will give you the information we do have here.

A large and inspiring feast day was observed at headquarters church in Pasadena. Mr. Norman Smith was in charge of the festival, and brought the main messages during the three day period. Attendance was well over 700, and everyone enjoyed a bountiful feast during the noon recess on Pentecost on our own beautiful Ambassador College campus. The attendance would probably have been *many dozens more* except for the fact that *scores* of our students had already left for the summer vacation!

Mr. Herman Hoeh and Mr. Benjamin Rea took charge of the Pentecost services in Fresno and San Diego, respective-

ly. Well over a hundred people were in attendance at each festival, and a Bible study was held in Fresno in the Kearney park after the morning service and noon "potluck" feast.

Our ministers in Oregon report that there were 543 people present for the feast in Portland—which included members from the churches in that area! Mr. Raymond Cole brought the principal message on the need of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The churches in the Denver, Colorado, area observed a wonderful festival directed by Mr. Carlton Smith and Mr. Bryce Clark. They were assisted by Mr. Robert Hoops and Mr. Bill McDowell. On Pentecost, the attendance was 212 adults plus many children!

An inspiring Pentecost festival was observed in the Chicago area under the direction of Mr. Dean Blackwell. He was ably assisted by Mr. Dale Hampton and Mr. Frank McCrady. Both these men are acting as assistant ministers in that church area. Mr. Dale Hampton came to Ambassador College as an older married man and is now a senior in Ambassador College, graduating next June and preparing to go into God's service full time. Mr. McCrady has been a zealous member of the St. Louis Church, and has already qualified himself to serve full time in assisting Mr. Blackwell in the Chicago area.

A wonderful feast was observed there with both of these men bringing sermonettes, Mr. Blackwell bringing the main messages and an attendance of over 575 individuals!

The only other Pentecost report available at this time is one from our minister in the Philippine Islands. Mr. Pedro S. Ortiguero reports that an inspiring Pentecost service was held in San Nicholas with approximately 35 in attendance. This is a *wonderful* start in these islands, and Mr. Ted Armstrong's projected trip there this fall should result in even more progress and the real building up of God's Church and Work in southeast Asia!

Let ALL of us—local members and scattered brethren alike—*pray* for the local congregations Christ has raised up *everywhere*! As you come before God each day, remember His Church in the British Isles, in the Philippines, in Australia, in South Africa, the United States and Canada, of course, and over *all this earth*!

Together, as co-workers *with Christ*, we have a *globe-girdling* JOB to do!

Let us REJOICE and give God *thanks* that He has blessed us so much thus far—and that we have the tremendous *privilege* of being used together as His instruments and performing this Divine *mission* in these last days!