

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

# Winter 2002 Camp Meeting Report

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This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker ..... Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

### THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21, Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13:1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

### SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

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In Psalm 118:23 the sacred writer declared, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." Certainly these words well express that which we beheld in the recent Winter Camp Meeting here at God's Acres. Though the weather outside was cold, inside the warmth of true fellowship, the heat of conviction, and fire in the pulpit made for a meeting in which the heated passion of the Holy Spirit could be felt by all attending.

The meeting was well attended with saints gathering in from throughout the continent. We were privileged to have saints in the midst from overseas as well.

The meeting began Thursday evening, December 26, with a message from the host pastor, Brother Roger L. Decker, entitled "The Holy Spirit." This began the meeting with a rousing reminder to the saints of the paramount need of the Holy Spirit's guidance in every aspect of our lives.

Beginning Friday morning, each day began with a Prayer and Praise Service. In these morning gatherings the saints poured out their hearts in petition to the Lord for the services of that day and the souls in need in the midst.

Friday morning Brother Allen Polston of Mechanicsburg, Indiana, preached from Romans 6:1 on a question that the Apostle Paul posed: "Shall we continue in sin?" In response to this query he laid forth the biblical truths concerning holiness and sinless perfection. The Friday evening service was a very sobering service as Pastor Decker, who felt burdened to serve as the evening evangelist, dealt with "The Four Types of Judgment." This message brought each soul face to face with the reality of the coming Judgment Day.

The Saturday morning message was a challenging message from the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Brother Polston titled it, "Is Your Lamp Burning?" This parable describes the five foolish virgins who allowed their lamps to go out. Our brother used this text to warn and stir the people of God not to allow this to become their condition. Saturday evening Brother Decker dealt with the subject of "Sin."

As the saints assembled in the prayer room the final morning of the meeting, the burden was heavy for lost and needy souls. In answer to the pleading of the saints, the Spirit of God was poured out in a mighty way during the song service of the Sunday morning service. As Sister Linda Burgin and her daughters sang, the Holy Spirit moved in the midst and souls began weeping their way to an altar of prayer. Lost souls were saved, backsliders were reclaimed, and serious needs were met. Indeed, as the Psalmist declared, it was "the Lord's doing" and "marvelous in our eyes." Several came to the microphone and made restitution and asked the church's forgiveness, showing the works of real repentance when they did as the Apostle Paul described in 2 Corinthians 7:11 when he said "yea, what clearing of yourselves." The camp meeting closed Sunday night with a message from Brother E. David Stegmeier of Canby, Oregon, entitled "The Danger of Being Spoiled."

Surely we can concur with the Psalmist that we saw "marvelous" things in the Winter Camp Meeting. If you were unable to attend, we recommend that you obtain the tapes of the messages brought. Our next camp meeting will be in June of 2003, if Jesus tarries. We trust that you will put it in your plans to travel this way and be in that meeting with us. Even now it is not too early to begin to pray that we can see marvelous things.

*Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

*38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

*39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

# THE HARDENING

# POWER OF SIN



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **The History of Old Israel**

We want to consider verse 37 of our Scripture text: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Backing up to verses 29-35 of the same chapter, Jesus said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

"Wherefore ye be witnesses unto

yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

In verse 32 Jesus said, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." This was a prediction of what was

about to take place. They were actually going to act out the true spirit that dwelled among them and the fathers of time past. They were going to prove what they were and make clear to everyone that they had the same spirit as that of their fathers. How? By putting Jesus to death and then following up with that by persecuting the Apostles. He said, "Fill ye up then the measure." In other words, He was saying, "Make your sin complete." By slaying Jesus, they were filling what was lacking in the iniquity of their fathers. In essence, He was saying, "Fill it up until God cannot possibly bear it any longer, and then shall come upon you all this blood and you shall be destroyed."

Again, Matthew 23:34-35 states:

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." In these verses Jesus was letting the Jewish nation know that persecution and bloodshed was always among them. It was there through the whole history of Israel. All you read of Israel are persecutions. Jesus was letting them know in our Scripture text that the same spirit was still present. He mentioned two righteous men: Abel and Zacharias. He did it to impress upon them that the spirit of rejection and bloodshed was still among the children of Israel.

Jesus said in Matthew 23:29, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous." There were tombs along the roads, and the Jewish practice was to keep those tombs whitewashed so they glistened in the sun. As one journeyed the road to Palestine, those tombs glowed brightly in the sun; but no matter how much they glowed on the outside, they were full of dead men's bones, and whoever touched one of them was defiled.

The people spoken of in our Scripture text claimed to be different from their fathers. They said in verse 30, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." What were they saying? In so many words, they were saying, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have done that. We would not have persecuted or killed the Prophets. We are different." However, Jesus, who knows the hearts of all men, knew they were in the same

condition, if not worse, than their fathers were before them. Furthermore, they were about to fill the measure of their fathers. They were just about to the place of bringing God's wrath down upon them. Inside them was the same spirit, calling out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

### **Spiritual Death Reigns Within**

How many people have made the statements, "I wouldn't go that far in sin. That person deserved what he got"? Yet they are just as guilty and manifest the same spirit as those guilty of vile sins. Jesus knows the hearts of all men. Our Scripture text lets us know that Jesus was jerking the covers off Israel. Though they were in a wretched condition, Jesus would have gathered them and brought them all together, but they would not. It was not that they *could not*, but they *would not*.

The same condition portrays many professed Christians today. Jesus called the Jews in our Scripture text "hypocrites." What is a hypocrite? He is one who is a pretender, or an actor, one who merely plays the part. Again, Matthew 23:27 states, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." They appeared to be righteous, but inside spiritual death reigned.

Our Scripture text reveals a people with mere acts of religion, but inside their hearts were hatred, envy, and strife. There are such people walking around today. Sad to say, some are filling pulpits who are full of envy, hatred, and strife. Outwardly, they appear to be righteous, and they demand certain things of the people; but inside they are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. They have a form of godliness, but they are without the power of God. They appeared to men as being righteous, but within

they were filled with hypocrisy and iniquity.

When love turns to wrath, you do not want to see it. You never want to have God take you on. Someone may say, "God wouldn't do that." God loved those people just as much as He loves you and me. You are not spiritual enough, strong enough, or wise enough to take on God.

Today we hear much about the love of God, and it is necessary. The love of God needs to be heralded throughout our land, but another side needs to be proclaimed as well. People do not want to hear about the wrath of God and the judgments of God. Why? Because when you start mentioning the wrath of God, with it comes persecution. You are not going to receive much persecution talking about love all the time.

### **Your House Is Left Desolate**

Verse 38 of our Scripture text states, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." What was Jesus saying? He was saying there was going to be a change in worship. One house was going to be left empty, and He was going to fill another. He was going to meet with God's people in another place.

Jesus had made various attempts to cleanse the temple, but to no avail. If you were to read back through the Gospels, you would find that He called it "God's house" or "my house." However, in our Scripture text Jesus no longer called it "my house"; He called it "*your* house."

This passage of Scripture text brings out some thoughts and truths that we need to consider. It is a chapter where Jesus pronounced many woes upon the people, and it also shows the patience of God. He is called a God of patience. Romans 15:4-5 says: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation

grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus." The word *patience* means to continually wait and endure. God is patient.

Jesus let us know that Jerusalem had killed the prophets and rejected the messages of God, yet God did not cast her off. You can read throughout the history of ancient Israel of time after time when they rose against the prophets of God. Therefore, God sent His Son to attempt to turn their hearts back to Him in repentance.

Many are trying the patience of God today. God has sent messages of love and warnings of destruction, yet they continue to go their own way. People look at Jerusalem of old and say, "How could they do that?" Yet they are guilty of the same spirit that old Israel manifested. They crucify the Son of God afresh every day. God is willing to forgive them, but some will not forsake their sins. Many continue headlong in their rebellion, and their countenances have fallen. They are not where they once were spiritually. When people start getting lean in their souls, often they go on professing. Their spirit changes and the things of God do not excite them as they once did.

God talks to many about the Bible dress standard, but they pay more attention to Hollywood and Paris than to the voice of God. They do as they please despite the many pleadings from the Lord.

God talks to people about their wrong attitudes, but they refuse to change. One cannot get along with God when he is holding a wrong attitude against someone. That person is just spinning his wheels, so to speak. Whether you are a minister or a lay member, you cannot have a wrong attitude against someone and prosper with God. As a minister, you cannot feed the Church of God and have a wrong attitude against someone.

God talks to people about their secret sins, yet they continue to conceal them. They will even go as far as to lie to try to cover them up,

all the while others know they are lying. Read the words of the wise man in Ecclesiastes 12:14: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." A secret thing is that which is hidden, or concealed. It could be that you have committed fornication or adultery, and no one knows about it but you, the other person, and God. Perhaps you stole something or lied. Some people would rather lie when the truth would sound better. They are religious liars. God was saying through the wise man that He is going to bring all hidden things into judgment.

God is very patient, just as He was with Israel as a nation. Despite the fact that Israel stoned and killed the prophets, God sent Heaven's best, His only Son; however, God was not going to put up with their evil any longer when they turned against His Son. What was Israel doing? They were filling up the last portion in the measure. God gives us a measure, and when He says it is enough, believe me, it will be enough. You could have a dozen preachers around you praying all night, but when God says you have filled up the measure, you have filled it up.

God loved King Saul just as much as He loves you and me, but what did God tell the Prophet Samuel? He told Samuel to quit mourning for Saul. First Samuel 16:1 tells us, "And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?" How was Saul ever going to get back to God? He would have to go through Samuel, but God said, "I have rejected him." In other words, God was saying, "Get up off your face, Samuel. I am not going to hear that prayer."

### **The Pleadings of Christ**

Going back to our Scripture text, I want you to notice something else. Jesus was speaking as a lover of

souls, and the only means of appeal that He used was love. Sinner friend, He is standing at the door of your heart and knocking. He was knocking at the door of Israel. Jesus said in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Friend, Jesus Christ is a real gentleman. He never forces Himself on anyone. He is always a gentleman, and always polite. If you serve God, you must serve Him because you love Him.

The reason some people have trouble serving God is that they love themselves and the world more than they love God. Oh, they would not admit that, but their actions speak for them. Some people sing, "Oh, how I love Jesus," yet their actions prove that they love themselves more. Still, God waits patiently and gives them time to consider their ways. He gives people time to turn. You can hear the pleadings of God through the Prophet Ezekiel when he said, "Turn ye, turn ye" in Ezekiel 33:11. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

We can see something else that was working in our Scripture text, and that was the hardening power of sin. Today we just do not see as many people sold out to God as we once did. What does that tell you? The world has a stronger hold on the hearts of people than they realize. So many people are so much in love with the world and in love with themselves that they do not have time for God. Oh, they like to have God if someone becomes seriously ill or dies in the family. Then they love to have someone come and pray, but later they do not need the preacher.

Proverbs 28:14 says, "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." We read in Proverbs 29:1, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without

## Start Life Anew

[mercy or without] remedy." Jesus was talking to people whom He addressed as scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites. Those people could look in the face of Jesus Christ and hear His pleading words and still not be moved. They could have cried out, "Lord, save me," but they did not. He was looking into the eyes of people who were unmoved.

The hardening power of sin will cause you to turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of the Gospel. People harden themselves to the Gospel and say, "Oh, I have heard that before." There is going to come a time when they are going to wish to God they could hear it again. The latch of the heart of a man is on the inside. Friend, Jesus will knock, but you must let Him in of your own accord.

### The Consequences of Rejection

Another point that we need to consider in our Scripture text is the consequences of rejecting the appeal of Jesus Christ. You may say, "Well, I can take it or leave it." Yes, you can, but that will not remove the consequences of rejection. Love will turn to wrath. Psalm 9:17 states, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Jesus spoke the words of our Scripture text in approximately A.D. 30-32. Down the road about forty years later came the literal destruction of Jerusalem, when the city was reduced to a heap of ruins. With that destruction came God's wrath. What was not there? There was no mercy, no more pleading, and no more intervention. God turned His back on a people who were once His people as a nation. He allowed Prince Titus to ruin it and spare not. God is the One who stirred up their adversary. You can read of it in the Scriptures and the Book of Josephus. Josephus wrote that it was a destruction such as man has never seen. Even when Prince Titus surrounded that city, one more time God backed Titus off, as if God was saying, "I will give you one more opportunity."

Those who heeded the voice of Jesus Christ fled Jerusalem and escaped to the mountains. When Prince Titus came the next time, there was no backing off. You can read about what occurred in Josephus. There was no mercy. Oh, their cries were going up as they always had before God, but their measure had reached its capacity, and love was squeezed out of the measure. Their house was left desolate. They could not even get God's attention. Had the Jewish nation accepted Jesus Christ, the power of Rome would have had to stay its hand.

History records what the Bible said was to take place. Matthew 24:21 tells us, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Many try to move the great tribulation out in the future. On the contrary, Jesus said there was never one like that tribulation since the beginning of time and never would be. Why was that? In most tribulations that one goes through, the mercy of God is still present. However, that one did not receive any mercy.

God let Prince Titus ravish that city and starve them out. Those who were covetous and did not want to leave their gold, their houses, or their land died with the rest as it all was destroyed. The fires of the temple were so hot that gold ran in the streets. Women and men ran down the streets crying for mercy, and those soldiers just ran them through with their swords. Where was God? He was in the same place He has always been, but they had filled the measure, and He was not about to change His Word. His Word is settled. That which happened to the Jews in Jerusalem in that day was the judgments of God. That is the reason it was so severe and complete. The Bible speaks of the tribulation that already had taken place in the literal destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus said there was never a tribulation like it since the world began and never shall be.

You may ask, "Are you saying that we do not have tribulation?" No, we have tribulation. You can read about it in John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Every child of God goes through tribulation, yet he can go through it with peace. However, in that tribulation there was no peace. The Bible says there is no peace to the wicked. In that tribulation those people could not cast it on God; they had to face it alone.

Dear one, do not fill the measure of sin and rebellion. You need to repent and turn to Jesus Christ. Do not put another rejection in the measure. You need to start your life anew. God has been patient with you, and He will help you to start your life anew in the arms of Jesus Christ.

We find in that great tribulation that love turned to wrath and mercy turned to judgment. You never want that to happen to you. You never want to be in a place where God refuses to listen to you. Won't you come to Jesus Christ while mercy is still being offered? Do not let time run out on you.

The Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." While you have been reading this message, the clock has been swiftly moving along, though you might not have noticed. I am sure you did not keep track of the moving of the hands on the clock all day long, yet they kept moving. Where is time taking us? Right before a God of judgment in eternity. Time has moved along steadily all day and will continue until time is no more.

Have you lost your zeal for God? Were you once more fervent than you now are, but you have settled

into a state of complacency? If you fill the measure as Israel of old, you may cry and plead, but God will not answer.

To this day, literal Israel goes through the same Old Testament rituals and ceremonies, and God allows them. He does not stop them. Friend, God will let you go on rebelling and rejecting His offer of mercy. He will not come down and shake you. Remember, He is a real gentleman. Nevertheless, when the measure is full, when He has had enough, then I pity your soul,

because there will be no mercy. There will be nothing but wrath.

You should not be so earthbound that you lose your soul. Your soul needs the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Listening to tapes is good, but you cannot live off them indefinitely. There is nothing like being right in the presence of a congregation where the Spirit of God is moving and you can feel the Spirit of God. Your soul is at stake.

There are many woes in Matthew, Chapter 23, but I trust that you can see that Jesus is a lover of

souls. He loves your soul, regardless of who you are or what you have done. Friend, God is willing to forgive you. He can wash away your sins with the blood of Jesus Christ, but all He is asking you to do is turn from sin and give your life to Jesus Christ. God has great things ahead for the church. Has the Lord spoken to your heart? If He has, it is time for you to come to the Cross of Jesus Christ and move forward to the work in the Kingdom of God.

*(Cassette C-4860E)*

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# Constancy in Prayer

Constancy in prayer implies a fixed principle of prayer in the life, a habitually devout spirit. It does not mean paroxysms of prayer or prayer at stated times, but it means to "pray without ceasing."

There is a difference between constancy and fervency. By fervency we mean that earnest taking hold upon God for any specific object; by constancy we mean that habitual prayerful frame of spirit. Devoted men have said that "prayer is the breath of the soul." Then let the soul never cease its breathing. Those who live in an atmosphere of prayer will love the place of secret prayer and the hour of public prayer. To them it is a dear and sacred place. And oh, how they love the hour of private communion with God! He is the fairest and dearest of ten thousand to their souls. There is no companionship like His. No voice is so musical as His, no voice so tender and sweet.

Again, we hear that excuse, "I have no time to pray." You had as well say that you do not love prayer. Somehow we will take time to do that which we love to do. Those who love the amusements of the world take time for them. You do not know how much you are saying when you say you have no time for prayer. No time to do that which we have such a relish for and find such enjoyment in!

David said, "As the hart pants after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." There should be a constant reaching forth of the soul after God. Life should be one long, undivided prayer. There has been much comment on the Apostle's words, "Pray without ceasing." I believe them to mean that we should live in the spirit or temper of reverence and devoutness. We should have a continual spirit of prayer in our souls. This gives power to the life.

One who lives in a spirit of prayer is always ready to pray. I do not mean that he will always feel like praying, so far as emotions are concerned; but he feels like it so far as a sense of duty and his will are concerned. One who lives a life of prayer is one who has stated times for prayer and observes them as strictly as propriety will admit. Besides this, he is often lifting his heart to

God in petition or praise. When he sees a man doing evil, his first thought is to pray the Lord to have mercy upon him. When he sees a man prosper, he thanks God for His goodness to that person. He prays for those who despitefully use him. He gives thanks in everything; and as the giving of thanks is praying, he who lives a life of thanksgiving lives a life of prayer.

We are to rejoice in the Lord always. A spirit of rejoicing in God is a spirit of prayer. A life of worry, anxiety, and care is not a life of believing prayer. God would have His children to be ever free and happy, and to be so they must live in intimate communion with Him.

*Dear restless heart, be still; don't fret and worry so.  
God hath a thousand ways his love and help to show.  
Just trust and trust and trust until his will you know.*

*Dear restless heart, be still; for peace is God's own smile.  
His love can ever wrong and sorrow reconcile;  
Just love and love and love, and wait a while.*

*Dear restless heart, be brave; don't moan and sorrow so.  
He hath a meaning kind in chilly winds that blow;  
Just hope and hope and hope until you braver grow.*

*Dear restless heart, repose upon his heart an hour.  
His heart is strength and life, his heart is bloom  
and flower;  
Just rest and rest and rest with his tender power.*

*Dear restless heart, be still; don't toil and hurry so.  
God is the silent One, forever calm and slow;  
Just wait and wait and wait, and work with him below.*

*Dear restless heart, be still; don't struggle to be free.  
God's life is in your life; to him you may now flee;  
Just pray and pray and pray till you have faith to see.*

Charles E. Orr

*Matthew 11:7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?*

*8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.*

*9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more*

*than a prophet.*

*10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

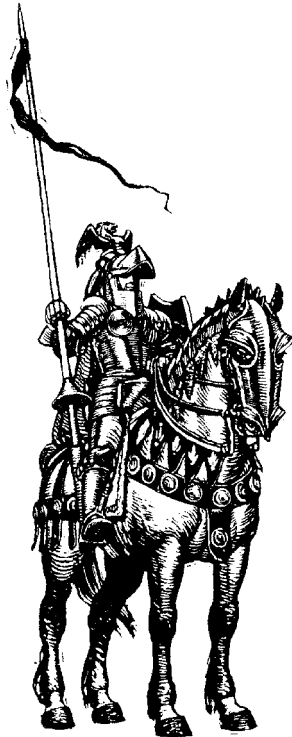
*11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

*12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

*13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.*

*14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.*

*15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*



# The Battle for the Kingdom

*Brother C. H. Dickerson*

## **What Is the Kingdom?**

I want you to focus your attention on verse 12 of our Scripture text. Jesus said, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." We want to consider the Kingdom of God. While people are looking for a kingdom to come and preaching about a literal kingdom that is supposedly going to come in the future, the Word plainly teaches us that the kingdom is a present-day reality. It also lets us know that the end will be when Christ delivers up

the kingdom to the Father (not a kingdom that is going to come, but one that is already here).

Paul let us know that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. He said in Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The Word also teaches us that to establish God's kingdom, it took great suffering on Christ's part; He gave Himself for it. While Christ was here on earth, He was misunderstood, laughed at, mocked, and mistreated, and He suffered much physically. In the garden of

Gethsemane, His sweat became as great drops of blood, and then He was crucified.

Being in the Kingdom of God is not a bed of ease. There is a great price to pay. When we talk about the kingdom, we are talking about reigning over sin. When we reign over sin, it takes the power of God in us. Dying out to the flesh and to ourselves is difficult. Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection [another translation reads, 'I treated it like a boxer']: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a

castaway."

In the past year or so, we have heard much concerning violence, and in that violence many have died. Every time you listen to the news or read a newspaper, you get news of wars and violence on every side, and with war comes much suffering, both physically and materially. Also, there is emotional distress with war, some become prisoners of war, some are wounded, and others die.

Our minds have been directed to these verses of Scripture because of the spiritual violence that is occurring. Again, Jesus tells us in verse 12 that the kingdom "suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The center reference in my Bible says that "it is a continued pressure"; in other words, the Kingdom of God is gotten by force. Spiritually speaking, in the Kingdom of God, a battle is raging for the faith of every man, woman, and child. This battle is a battle of the flesh. Friend, when you serve God and take a stand, the flesh is still the same; it still desires the same things. Nevertheless, God can give you power so that you can bring the flesh under control.

### **A Daily Battle**

Child of God, you must battle the flesh, or battle your will. The flesh likes to have its own way, but when you serve God, you cannot have your own way, or your will. Today we are in a battle of lukewarmness and modernism, and this battle is raging on every side. Behind the scenes, a fierce battle is raging in the lives of every man, woman, and child who is serving God. Many battles go unrecognized because some of the ministry has ceased to preach the Gospel and is preaching a message that is not quite so unsettling to people.

We are living in a day when people want to claim to be religious, yet they live as the world does. They do not want to be awakened with the true message of God. Because of

this, they want someone to preach smooth sayings to them. In other words, they will settle for someone to tell them a lie rather than the truth, so they can continue to live the way they want to live.

This battle is fierce because the stakes are eternal. We all are facing eternity, and the devil is merciless. He has set out to get you, and he is doing his best to defeat you. You are either facing Heaven or a lost eternity. The wise man tells us in Ecclesiastes 12:5 that "man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." Dear one, wherever you choose to make your home, that is where it is going to be forever. There is never going to be an end to it.

If you are going to be in the Kingdom of God, you must take it by force. Again, the center reference lets us know that it is continued pressure. It is not just pressure one day, but it continues every day that you serve God. Certainly we can verify that it is true. The kingdom is gotten by force.

As we get down to studying the very root of this conflict, I want you to realize that the struggle lies in opposition to the Truth. The religious world is looking for the battle of Armageddon out in the future. The devil has sold people the false idea that this battle is something out in the future. As a result, they sit down and fold their hands and think there is not much of a battle going on. Nevertheless, I say on the authority of God's Word that we are in the battle right now.

Many people are looking for a third earthquake to come in the future. On the contrary, we are in the earthquake now. The church is being shaken more than it ever has since its existence. God is shaking everything out of the church that ought not to be in it. Many people have been merely hanging around the church for years, but God is shaking off all the dead branches. The church is pure, solid, righteous, and holy. All that God has in it is a holy people. He also shook the earth

and got everything out of the man-made organizations that ought to be in the church. He is calling His people out of every false way and into the true church.

### **How to Be an Overcomer**

This battle that we are in is not a battle of fleshly power. God has given Satan power so that we can know exactly where we stand. In Ephesians 6:12 Paul stated, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." One of the biggest problems that the people of God have today is people who have hung around the Church of God who will not measure to the Truth. The devil magnifies it and shows them people who will not dress right or measure to the hair standard that God has set forth for His people.

Paul said that we are not warring against flesh and blood but against spiritual wickedness in high places. In this battle God is taking us to the place where we each know our true selves. He will take us to the place where we will really appreciate the power of freedom and peace that is found only in Christ. Some people hang around the church only for the benefits, and when the battles come, you do not see them anymore. It is just about like Gideon's army. Gideon started with thirty-two thousand men, but when they were put to the test, he had only three hundred men. As long as "the loaves and the fishes" are being passed out and things done the way people want, they flock in. On the other hand, when the Truth goes forth, people are about like they were in Gideon's day. Some people will tell you that they wish they never would have become involved in the modernism that is going on today and that they would like to take a stand, but why do they not take a stand? Just as it was in Gideon's day, they are afraid.



As I was studying along this line, my mind went back to a good old song that C. W. Naylor wrote, which says:

*Be an overcomer, only cowards  
yield  
When the foe they meet on  
the battlefield;  
We are blood-bought princes of  
the royal host,  
And must falter not, nor desert  
our post.*

(As he wrote this song, he let us know that the enemy is out there and that he has set out to defeat us. He also let us know that when we meet the enemy on the battlefield, only cowards yield and get out of the race. He went on to tell us that we are bought by blood, and we must not falter or desert our post.)

*Be an overcomer, he who stands  
with you  
Is a Mighty One, who is always  
true;  
In the sorest conflict you shall  
win the day,  
Face the legions dark till they  
flee away.*

*Be an overcomer, you are heaven's  
heir,  
And a crown of life you may ever  
wear;  
So with courage press the battle  
to the gates,  
Till you gain the prize which in  
heaven waits.*

*Be an overcomer, forward boldly  
go,  
You are strong enough if you  
count it so—  
Strong enough to conquer thro'  
sustaining grace,  
And to overcome ev'ry foe you  
face.*

### **The Lord Searches the Heart**

God has one thing in mind. He took the Israelites of old and proved to them who they were. We do not know who we really are until we

face the battle. You see, many people make statements and sing the old song, "If I had ten thousand lives in which to praise him, I could not enough my blessed Lord adore." My friend, you have only one life. Most people do not spend it praising God. If they do not do it in one life, they certainly would not do it in ten thousand lives.

I have heard people stand up and say, "As long as the Truth is preached, you can count on me. I will be there," but they are not around today. Why? Because they faced a battle. Others have said, "You can always count on me, preacher," but when the battle came and they had to take a stand either for or against God's eternal Truth, they did not have enough backbone to stand. And where are they today? They are gone.

I repeat, friend, God wants you to know who you really are. Deuteronomy 8:2, speaking of the Israelites, reads, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." God took them through very trying times when they were in the wilderness for forty years. It should have only lasted about forty days, but they failed to keep His commandments when He proved them. Likewise, God allows you to go through many temptations and hard places so that you can know what is in your heart and whether you will keep His commandments.

We read in verse 3, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live." God wants you to take all the Word, not just what you like. The Word of God is good for you and gives you the power you need to have victory.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 states: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

Friend, God will allow you to have what you want. If you want modernism, you can have modernism. God searches the heart and tries the spirit that you have. If you want worldliness, you can have worldliness. If you want Truth, you can have Truth. Also, God will give you all the grace you need to stand for His eternal Truth. He led the Israelites through the wilderness for forty years to prove them. He takes you through trials and temptations and tribulations so that you can know who you really are.

The Bible tells us that the heart is desperately wicked and asks, "Who can know it?" If you have a spirit that likes modernism, it will never fit in where God's eternal Truth is preached. My friend, God will give you what you want.

The devil has power only to the extent of the power given to him by God. Job 1:6-12 reads: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the

LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD."

These verses of Scripture let us know that the devil cannot touch you or me unless God lifts His hand and allows him. God has confidence in His people and allows them to be tried, because He knows that they have the power to hold out and stay true to Him. Many times we think we would do this or that. However, we do not truly know ourselves, only when we are in a battle.

We have seen many people who have fallen by the wayside and have quit serving God altogether. As we look at them, we wonder why they would do that. Well, friend, I say again, you do not truly know yourself until you get in the battle. If you will get in the battle and be determined to live for God, He will furnish you with all the power and the grace you need to have the victory.

### **"Be Ye All of One Mind"**

It is so necessary to have unity in the homes. If we do not have unity in the homes, we will never have it in the church. Peter told us in 1 Peter 3:7-8: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge [in other words, husbands, you took a vow when you got married, so you should dwell with your wife according to the vow you made], giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

God wants us to have unity in our homes. Unity in the church is a large part of what makes the Church of God what it is. If you were to go back and study, you would find that there was a time when people saw justification by faith and sanctification, or complete dedication to God and letting Him move in and

motivate their lives. Then came a time of unity. This is what the Church of God message is all about: holiness, the unity of God's people, and working together as a body. Christ is the Head, and the church is the body. This body is unified: it works together, just as the physical body is unified and works together. People cannot be out of unity in the home and come into the house of God and be in unity.

First Peter 3:8-12 reads: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Psalm 34:12-14 reads: "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." The Psalmist desired life. No one really wants to die. Sometimes you hear people say they will be glad when they do. I wonder sometimes if they really know what they say. If they want to die, then why do they call the preacher to pray for them when they are sick? If they want to die, why do they go to the doctor or the hospital when they are ill? No one really wants to die when it comes right down to it.

### **Stand Fast in One Spirit**

The Lord did not tell us that we were going to live forever, but He did tell us that we can live without condemnation. When God saves a soul, He wipes the slate clean, and every sin is removed. It does not

make any difference how filthy an individual had been, how deep in sin or how self-righteous he might have been, when God gets done with him, he is clean, and every sin is under the blood. He is just as the newborn baby who has no sin and no condemnation; all sin is gone. My friend, when God looks down in the heart and sees that a person wants to serve Him more than anything else, and he looks to God and tells Him that he is a sinner and wants to be saved, God will clean him up entirely. He changes him from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. He gives that person a brand-new start in life. No matter what he had done in the past, when God saves him, he is clean; he is a brand-new creation.

Once God saves you and gives you a brand-new chance, you need to weigh what you think about and what you say. You need to seek peace with God every day and pursue it, or in other words, continue that peaceful plan. This is God's plan. He changes things entirely in your life.

You ought to weigh everything you get ready to say to make sure that it is pleasing to God. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

As a saint of God, you must be careful not to defile the body. If you do, you will be in trouble with God. Paul said to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together." The word *strive* means "to struggle." We want to consider the magnitude of this struggle. Luke 13:24 reads, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." God made man pure in the beginning, but little by little, men got to the place where they were evil continuously. Therefore, God said He would destroy them.

## Abstain From Fleshly Lusts

God moved upon Noah to build an ark, and he built it in a dry place. No doubt, as the people came by and looked, they thought he was crazy. Nevertheless, Noah continued to build the ark. Noah warned the people, but they failed to heed the message. When the time came, God told Noah and his family to get into the ark, and God closed the door; then the rain came. God was true to His Word. As the rain came down, soon the people found themselves in water that was up to their ankles, and then their knees, and then their thighs, and so on. They wanted to get into the ark, but they could not get in because God had already closed the door. Our minds cannot comprehend the frustration that the people felt when they wanted to get into the ark but could not. It was too late.

Today we are living in a time very similar to Noah's day. The only ones who can get in the door are those who are saved. Today people think the Christian is crazy for being so narrow minded. Nevertheless, a day is coming when they will be frustrated because they will want in, but the door will be closed. Friend, that day is coming fast. The Bible lets you know that you had better get into the kingdom while there is yet time; and once you get into the kingdom, you need to stay in.

We are living in a day when many people think, "Well, as long as I do my best, God will overlook the little things and I will make Heaven my home." No, the only ones who are going to Heaven are those who are in the kingdom. Jesus made that quite clear. First Corinthians 15:24 tells us, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." If you are not in the kingdom, my friend, you are not going to be delivered up, no matter how long you have sat in

the church.

Paul said in Hebrews 12:4, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Spiritually speaking, the church is in war. Paul said in Romans 7:23, "But I see another law in my members [or fleshly body], warring against the law of my mind."

In 1 Timothy 1:18 Paul spoke of warring a good warfare: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." In 1 Peter 2:11 Peter said to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Church, we are in a war, and the devil wants to destroy us. Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

This struggle, or warfare, that the church is in continues unceasingly day after day. Your response to every temptation has eternal consequences. In other words, your response determines where you are going to spend eternity. You see, the church is not at peace; she is at war. Jesus said in Matthew 1:34-35: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." Jesus let us know that when we serve God, we are not going to be at peace with everyone. There is going to be a division, and it separates families.

The only peace that we have is in doing the will of God. The false prophet cries peace where there is no peace. The Prophet Jeremiah tells us in Jeremiah 8:11, "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Friend, there is no peace without salvation.

## Examine Yourself

Friend, I want you to realize something. People can tell you that holiness and living a righteous life is a fairy tale; nevertheless, Heaven is a holy place, and only those who are holy are going to make it in. It does not make any difference how many people knock on your door and tell you that God would not send a soul to hell. If you make a decision to be disobedient to God's Word, you are going to send yourself to hell, my friend. God has a law of obedience, and if you are disobedient to God, no matter how small a matter you think it is, you have separated yourself from Him.

God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, asked the question in Jeremiah 8:12: "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?" People are not ashamed of anything anymore. Some claim to be saints of God, yet they dress any way they want to dress. It does not matter to them that a garment is too tight, too short, or too low. They are not ashamed of it at all. The Lord answered the question in the same verse: "Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD." You might have a knowledge of the Truth and carry a Bible under your arm, but it does not mean a thing unless you obey it. If you are not obeying the Truth, it means absolutely nothing.

The Scripture tells us in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Some people hinge their experience on the thought, "Well, I am in the faith. I have gone to the Church of God for years." However, that does not mean a thing if you are not obeying God's Word. You can sit in the Church of God and yet not be in agreement with the true saints of God and not be in the faith. If you are in the faith, certainly you will be in agreement with God's eternal Truth.

You might have personality problems with the pastor, a Sunday school teacher, the choir director, or the song leader; nevertheless, God's eternal Truth is still Truth. If you have the Truth in you and the preacher preaches the Truth, you are going to be in agreement. You might not like the way he ties his necktie or the way he combs his hair, but you will still be in agreement with God's eternal truth. The Bible lets us know that we each need to examine ourselves to see if we are in the Truth or in the faith. When you examine yourself, you should not just ask yourself if you are in the church, but examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. Are you in the faith? If you are in the faith, you will be in agreement with the Truth and in agreement with the true saints of God. You will not be involved in division. John said in 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." If you walk in the light and I walk in the light, all the devils in hell cannot separate us, because we will have unity.

### **A Promise of Victory**

God has given us a promise of victory. Second Kings 6:16 says, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:3, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." John said in 1 John 4:4, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Then in Hebrews 7:25 we read, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The Lord is able to keep those who see the war and want the victory.

I repeat, every saint of God is in a

war, not materially or literally, but spiritually. When you see that you are in a battle and you want the victory, God has promised that you can have it. Again, Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:12, "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Paul wrote this letter, and he had been through many things. You can read in the Corinthian letter that he had been shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, and thrown in prison, yet he said that he was persuaded that God was able to keep that which he had committed to Him.

If you are going to win the battle, you cannot enter into it in a halfhearted way. You must be fully determined that you are going to go all out for God, no matter what others do. Our text of Scripture reads in verse 12, "The violent take it by force." Again, in 1 John 4:4, John said, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Every war costs something. It cost six thousand American lives to set foot on the shores of Normandy.

### **Fighting a Good Warfare**

It is a battle today to be honest. When you are honest, I will guarantee you that you will find that it is a battle. For example, suppose a cashier were to give you too much change, and you catch the mistake. The devil will say, "Well, that is his problem." So you start battling there. Maybe you did not realize it until you got in the car, so you go back into the store and try to give it back, and the cashier says, "No, I gave you the right change." It is a battle to be honest.

It is a big battle to keep the right spirit in the day and age in which we are living. Sometimes it is a battle to stay true to God's Word. We are in a battle constantly. Many today have been overtaken by antichrist spirits. Antichrist spirits

are not just going to be in the future; they are already here. Anything that is against God's man, God's Truth, and God's church is an antichrist spirit.

Lukewarmness has overtaken many people, and many others have fallen into discouragement. Friend, in this war that we are in, all of these are adversaries. Antichrist spirits will try their best to get you to pick at this and that. Of the seven periods of time in the Gospel Day, God had some complimentary comments for six of them. However, when He wrote to the church at Laodicea, He had not one compliment to make. He let them know that they were in a lukewarm condition. This old lukewarm spirit is trying to get people to be satisfied: "Well, I am in the Truth, and we go to church Sunday morning and Sunday night, and we go to Young People's meetings and choir practice. Also, we put money in the offering." My friend, God still wants all these things, but He also wants you to walk in His eternal Truth and to praise Him. Furthermore, He wants you to back His man and the church. He wants you to stand up and let the people know exactly where you stand. You do not have to pull yourself into a shell and not say anything. If someone cries out against God's eternal Truth, He wants you to let them know that you are against that thing.

The devil is doing his best to get you to become lukewarm. He is doing his best to cause you to be discouraged. My friend, is an old antichrist spirit, a spirit of lukewarmness, or a spirit of discouragement working on you? Have you become self-satisfied? If so, I want you to know there is still victory for those who want to fight for it.

With every war there is a battle. Paul spoke of a war in his fleshly body, and he admonished Timothy to war a good warfare. Peter said to abstain from the fleshly lusts that war against the soul. The devil is doing everything he can to defeat you. Has he gotten you to the place

where you are lukewarm or discouraged and maybe even ready to give up? There is victory if you will stand up and fight for God's eternal Truth.

All that Christ is going to deliver up is the Kingdom of God. Are you in the Kingdom of God? To be in the Kingdom of God, there is continual pressure. Again, our text of Scripture reads in verse 12, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The center reference says it "is gotten by force."

It is a continued pressure on the people of God to keep from getting

lukewarm. Also, it is a continued pressure not to become discouraged. Many have become discouraged. The Psalmist spoke of a time when he became discouraged, until he went to the house of God and saw what the end of the sinner was. There is victory if you will only stand up and fight for what is right, but you must fight for the Truth. Jesus said the kingdom is taken by violence. It is a fight to stay in the Kingdom of God, because the devil is doing his best to defeat you, me, and every preacher who is standing for Truth. We do not have to be defeated; we can have victory. How?

We must fight this continued struggle; then we will have that victory.

Are you willing to fight this battle so that you can have the victory day by day? Temptations are going to come. People are going to tell lies on you and say all kinds of things about you. They are going to laugh at you; they did Christ. My friend, won't you stand up and fight for God's eternal Truth so that you can have victory? Only then can you hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter in."

(Cassette C-4861M)

## *The Power of God*

*One day a teacher in an East German school told the children in his class to stand and say, "There is no God!" In the class was an eight-year-old girl from a Christian home who believed that there was a God. Her parents prayed to Him, and their prayers were answered, which proved to her that God is. So she refused to comply with the teacher's demand.*

*Try as he might, the teacher could not make her deny God. Finally, he commanded her to go home and write "There is no God" fifty times and bring it to him the next day.*

*When the girl told her mother what had happened, the mother did not know what to do, for she was afraid of the communists. However, she did pray. That night the girl sat down and wrote fifty times "Es gibt Doch ein Gott" (There IS a God).*

*The teacher flew into a rage when he read the words she had written. He commanded her to go home and write "There is no God" five hundred times "or else." The girl knew very well that "or else" meant death.*

*When she told her father what was taking place, he looked at her approvingly and, with a calmness equal to hers, said, "Tomorrow we shall both see the superintendent of the school. Do not worry about it any more."*

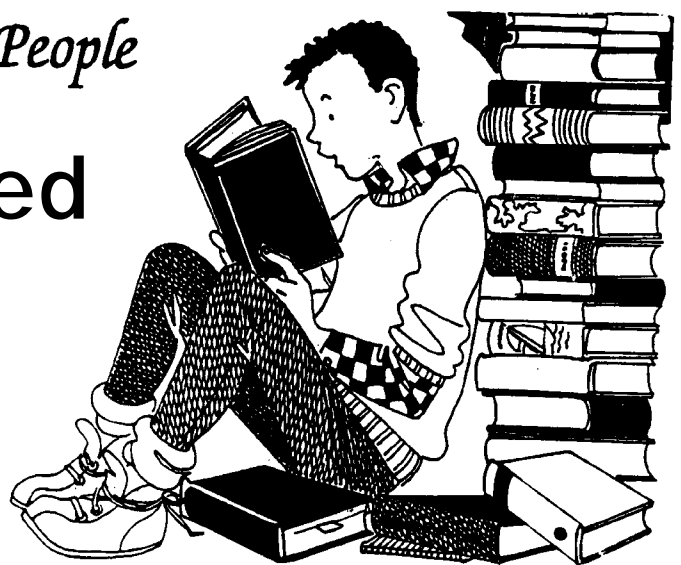
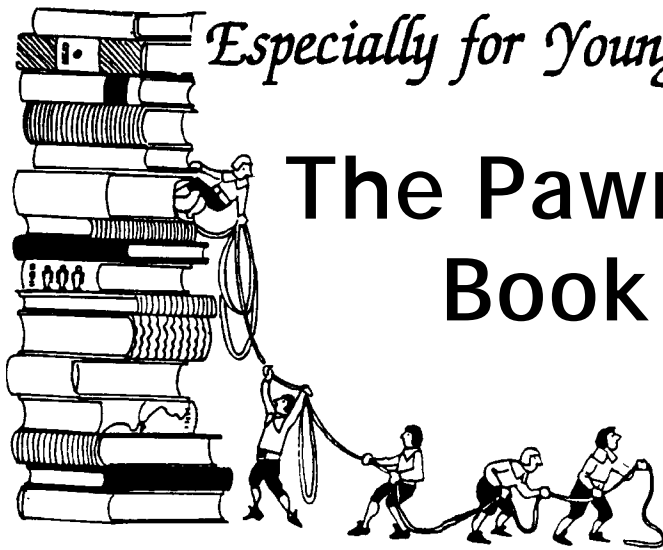
*That night the little girl slept with no anxious thoughts. She believed God. She knew He would take care of her.*

*When she and her father told the superintendent about the trouble they were in, the superintendent smiled and said, "Little girl, your teacher was killed in a motorcycle accident yesterday. The matter is finished."*

*Selected*

*Especially for Young People*

# The Pawned Book



Dr. W. P. Mackay left home to attend college at the age of seventeen. His mother gave him a Bible, writing her name, his name, and a verse of Scripture on the flyleaf. He graduated with honors and became the head of a hospital. He also became the head of an infidel club where they practiced everything that was licentious and vile. He was open in his ridicule of God and the Bible.

One day they brought in a man on a cot, the lower part of his body horribly crushed. On his face, however, was a look of calm and peace so pronounced that Dr. Mackay was amazed. The man asked what the doctor's verdict was.

"Oh, I guess we will pull you through and fix you up."

"No, Doctor, I don't want any guess," the man said. "I want to know if it is life or death. I am saved and am not afraid to die." With a face shining with radiance he continued, "I know I am going to be with the Lord Jesus. He says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37). I have come to Him and accepted Him as my Savior. But just what is my condition?"

"You have, at the most, three hours to live," replied the doctor frankly. "Is there anything you would like to have us do for you?"

"Yes, Doctor. In one of my pockets is my paycheck. I wish you

would send it to my landlady and ask her to send the book to me."

"What book?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, just the book; she will know."

Dr. Mackay arranged for this request to be carried out, and then started on his hospital rounds. But those words, "I am ready, doctor," kept ringing in his mind. Never before had he ever inquired about a patient for personal interest, but now he wanted to know how this one was making out.

"He died just a few minutes ago," the nurse informed him as he came in. The doctor asked if the book had arrived in time.

"Yes, it arrived just a few minutes before he died," she said.

"What book is it?" asked the doctor, "his bankbook?"

"No, it is not his bankbook," she said. "He died with the book under his pillow. It's still there; go look at it."

Dr. Mackay went to the bedside, reached under the pillow, and drew out an old Bible. Thumbing it a little, he turned to the flyleaf. There, in his own mother's handwriting, was her name, Dr. Mackay's name, and a verse of Scripture. It was the very Bible she had given him when he left home to attend college. In a drunken brawl he had pawned it many years ago.

Dr. Mackay slipped the Book under his coat and rushed up to his private office. He began thumbing through it again, looking at the man's markings, and the crude penciled rings around certain verses. One of these that caught his eye was Romans 5:8, which says, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Another was Ephesians 2:8. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." One well-marked verse was the one the man had quoted: "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Dr. Mackay cried out to God to have mercy on him, and on the promise of this Scripture, he accepted Christ as his own personal Savior.

Selected

'Tis not enough to say, "I'm  
sorry and I repent,"  
And then go on from day to  
day just as I always went.  
Repentance is to leave the  
sins you loved before,  
And show that you in earnest  
grieve by doing them no  
more.

# Why You Need God



*Brother E. David Stegmeier*

## "Come and Be Saved"

I remind the Lord every day of how much I need His grace, His strength, and His divine wisdom. I need His divine direction every moment of the day. I am often amazed at how God works in the little details of life. As saints of God, we should be aware of God's direction in our lives. He leads us, even in the trivial or the minute details.

Each of us needs God. We all are mortal creatures. Friend, if you have been procrastinating concerning getting the needs of your soul met, I urge you not to put it off another moment. You need to give your heart and life to God. It is the best decision that you could ever make in life. The decision to get married is very important, and so is choosing a

certain vocation. However, the greatest and the most important decision of all is what you are going to do with Jesus Christ.

I thank God that I settled it long ago that I was going to serve the Lord, and I am so grateful. I have told God repeatedly, "I am so glad that You saved me at an early age." I was spared from all the scars and the sadness that people carry in sin, and I thank God for that.

Young person, you ought to give your heart to God at an early age. It is the best life that you could ever live. Do not delay in giving your heart to God. Every moment that you live in sin is costing you. Time is precious, and life is uncertain. You do not know what tomorrow holds for you. That is the reason that having your heart and your spirit right with God is so important. That

is the most important matter in life. Child of God, you should not allow anything to hinder your relationship with God. The Bible says no man can pluck you out of the Father's hand. You must not allow anything to separate you from the love of Jesus Christ. Sinner friend, the greatest need that you have is the need to be saved. You need to give your heart to God.

I want you to read a beautiful song written by Daniel S. Warner entitled "Come and Be Saved."

*Listen, sinner, to the voice  
Of thy reason's noble choice,  
For thy better judgment calls  
thee to repent;  
Reason tells thee there's a God,  
Bids thee tremble at his word,  
And invites thee to the Savior  
he has sent.*

*There's conviction in thy heart  
That from sin you should depart.  
Oh, that monitor in mercy do obey;  
'Tis a canker in thy breast  
That will never let thee rest,  
If you do not turn from sin's  
destructive way.*

*Jesus came, the Son of God,  
Shed for you his precious blood.  
Oh, behold him dying on the  
cursed tree!  
Can you slight his love so true,  
Holding out a crown for you?  
Hasten, sinner, Christ is calling  
loud for thee.*

*Jesus comes in melting love,  
Drawing you to joys above,  
Gently knocking for admittance  
to thy soul;  
Harken to his voice within,  
Warning thee to flee from sin,  
To the kingdom of the Savior's  
sweet control.*

*Heaven wills to thee a crown,  
Hell is moved to cast thee down,  
And this moment may decide  
thy endless state;  
Father, Son, and Spirit call,  
Reason, conscience, thunder all,  
Sinner, wake and turn to God  
before too late.*

*Come and be saved, come and  
be saved,  
Take the cross and you shall  
wear a starry crown;  
Come and be saved, come and  
be saved,  
Take the cross and you shall  
wear a starry crown.*

The Bible states that the fool says there is no God. All atheists and scientists who deny the existence of God are fools, according to God's Word. Sinner friend, if you do not have conviction in your heart, you need to plead for God's help. The Bible says in Genesis 6:3, "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man." God's Spirit will not always strive with you to get saved. Are you going to offend the love of God and the Spirit of

God? You should not want to do that. You ought to be extremely careful of how you treat the Spirit of God.

### **The Cost of Rejecting God**

One morning two boys who had been raised in a broken home were acting up in a church service. At the conclusion of the service, the pastor went home. Not long afterwards, the county ambulance service called and said, "One of your members has been involved in a fatal car accident." Oh, that hit his heart so heavy and so hard. He said, "Who is it?" When they told him, he said, "I will be there immediately." One boy was killed and one was injured. So he called another brother and they hurriedly went to the hospital, and there the injured boy made his way to them crying and said, "My brother is dead! My brother is dead!" The boys had left the church in their car and drove down the highway very rapidly. They went around a curve and could not make the curve and rolled the car. Friend, you do not know when your end is coming, and I do not know when my end is coming either. Therefore, we each need to be ready to meet God every moment.

Sinner friend, I trust that you will give your heart to God. That is the best choice. If you will, you will be so happy, free, and thrilled that you made the choice to follow God. Sin is a canker; it is like a cancer. People do not realize what rejecting God will cost them.

Years ago, a young man in Brother W. A. Wilson's congregation did not feel that his testimony amounted to anything. Others told of how they were saved from drugs and alcohol and other terrible vices. Brother W. A. Wilson took the young man out to his woodshed and said, "Now, young man, you get a choice piece of wood without a blemish, and I am going to give you a hammer and some nails to pound into the board." So the young man pounded the nails into the board.

Then Brother Wilson said, "I want you to take this claw hammer and remove all the nails." After the young man had done that, Brother Wilson said, "Now how does that nice piece of wood look?"

"Well," he said, "it is all scarred."

Brother Wilson said, "Why don't you try to see if you can get those scars out of the wood?"

He said, "Oh, I couldn't do that."

Brother Wilson told him that is the way it is with a soul that has gone into sin. As it was with the wood, the source of the scars was gone, but the scars remain. I am thankful that I do not have the many scars that people have in their lives, because I began serving God when I was a child. Dear one, you need to turn to God, because it is the best life. When I hear of people faltering here and there and going into sin, I say, "Oh, how can they do that? It will mar their lives." If you are a saint, you need to keep your life clean and holy. If you are unsaved, you should turn to God as soon as you can. It is God's will for you to be saved. I do not go along with doctrines of divine election and so forth. God ordains that every soul be saved, and He is not a respecter of persons; whosoever will may come.

### **"Now Is the Day of Salvation"**

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:3-4: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." I thank God for the Church of God. Wherever we go, whether it is in the United States, the Netherlands, England, Africa, or wherever, I believe that we are responsible to live right. We never know when we will come in contact with a sinking soul. If you are not living right, the blood of souls could be on your skirts. We each are so responsible.

As I read those verses of Scripture, I thought of the Mormons, the Church of the Latter Day Saints.



I love the people, but I hate their false religious teachings. There was a time when they would not allow precious black people in their church. The Mormons said they were cursed, until the government put its thumb on them.

When I was confronted by some Mormon elders in the Sixties, I asked, "Why don't you allow black people in your church?"

They said, "Well, they are cursed."

I said, "Oh, come now. Let's look in the Word of God," and I brought forth many Scriptures.

They said, "Mr. McKay (at that time he was the president of the Mormon Church) is looking to God to see if we can accept them."

Sad to say, millions of people are embracing that ungodly heresy. God wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth.

You may inquire, "When should I get saved?" The answer to that question is, you should get saved now. I have heard people say, "Well, I want to wait until I am older." I know of one individual who said that, and to my knowledge, he has never accepted Christ. Today is the day of salvation. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Once a brother told us of a young lady who wanted to go to church. She told her father, "I am going to church."

Her father said, "Whatever you do, don't get involved."

She went to church, and God began to move on her heart and speak to her. She wanted to get saved so bad, but the voice of her father kept ringing in her mind, "Whatever you do, don't get involved." She worked against that feeling until finally, she said, "God, take it away," and God did.

She went home, and it was not long until she contracted a fatal disease. She got worse and worse. Her father came in one night and

said, "Daughter, how is it with your soul? Are you at peace with God?"

She said, "No, Daddy. I have no desire to find God. I don't even have any feeling anymore, because you told me not to get involved. That night I asked God to take away that feeling, and I have never felt it again."

"Oh, daughter, pray, pray!"

She said, "No, Daddy, I have been praying and praying, and I just can't feel that feeling any more." Then she said, "Daddy, I have one request."

"Oh, daughter, I will do it."

She said, "Would you go outside down to the spring and get me one glass of cold water, because I know it will be the last glass of cold water I will ever have."

He said, "Daughter, daughter, I will do it."

He ran to get the glass of water and brought it back. Within hours she went into eternity lost.

Friend, you had better be careful of what you ask God to do. God may take you at your word. Young people in school have often asked me questions such as, "Which church is right? Why am I here? Why did God create me?" John tells us the reason for our existence in Revelation 4:11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." You were created to praise God and to give glory to Him. God wants to get pleasure from your life. Reason ought to tell you that it is right to serve God. His Spirit is wooing and pleading with you. Where sin exists, the Bible says one comes short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

One individual said this about our creation: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it reposes in Thee." Do you know why people are so restless? They need God. Some people walk around so unrestfully. There is no peace about them because they are

so troubled. Their consciences are troubled; their souls are troubled.

Another individual said this: "There is a mysterious push within which sets man on a quest as irresistible as that of the migrating bird." There is something within the soul of every man that causes him to want God.

When you have sin in your heart, you cannot bring glory to God. If you are smoking, drinking, taking drugs, cursing, swearing, or involved in illicit sexual acts, you cannot bring glory to God. Again, Paul said in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Where there is sin, you cannot bring glory to God.

### **Grace to Overcome Temptations**

I want to mention a few reasons why you need God. If you are unsaved, I want to reason with you. As I look upon people's lives, it appears that most people do not feel they need God. I need God every day. I tell God, "Life is so uncertain; I need Your help."

You need God so that you will have strength to live a moral, righteous life. That is the greatest life that you can live. It is a life that brings peace and joy and fulfillment. Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." You need God because you need strength to live a moral and righteous life. Without God, dear one, you do not have the strength and the grace to overcome the temptations that harass you and work to destroy you. You will succumb and give in to temptations without the grace of God. Paul wrote in Romans 5:6, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

How can you live without sin? God can enable you. When a man runs for a political office, people look into his life. When a man stands behind the pulpit, people look at his life. We each need God's strength. I do not take it for granted.

James wrote in James 1:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." We all are tempted; that is the reason we need God each and every day. We need His strength and His grace. You must be careful of where you go and what you read so that you are not tempted with something that you cannot handle.

James went on to say in verses 14-15: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." One songwriter wrote that sin will take you further than you want to go, it will keep you longer than you want to stay, and it will cost you more than you want to pay. Sin is a terrible thing.

The Apostle Paul wrote of the wretched condition of one who is not living for God in Romans 7:18. Sinner, you need to seek God. When I was a child and had something a little amiss in my life, I went to the altar. I did not want to step out the door of the house of worship with something amiss in my life. It might have been over a wrong attitude that I had toward a brother or a sister or words that I might have spoken to my mother. I was brought up to live a clean, holy, godly life.

### **Who Can Deliver You?**

Paul said in Romans 7:18-25: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: [That is another reason you need God. You need His help to overcome the flesh, to reign over the flesh. Our three enemies are sin, self, and the devil. If you live for God, if you stay where God wants you to be, nothing can harm you. The situations I have passed through in my many years of serving the Lord have not hurt or hindered me; they have helped me.] for to will is present with me [many people would like to change and do better and make resolutions, but

they cannot perform that or bring it to fruition without the help of God]; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. [That is a terrible condition to be in. Paul was under the Law, but he was not saved then.]

"Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring [warring and contention is in the life of a sinner, not in the life of a saint] against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! [A sinner is a wretched individual. The Church of God has the message for the world. I thank God for holiness; it keeps a man clean, upright, and wholesome. It makes him a good father and a good husband.] who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Paul went on to say in Chapter 8 that God can deliver us so that we can live after the Spirit. We do not need to live after the flesh anymore! We can reign. Friend, without God you cannot overcome sin. You need a new heart and a new spirit to enable you to overcome temptations and sin.

### **Turn From All Your Transgressions**

The Prophet Ezekiel wrote in Ezekiel 18:30, "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions." Are you really sorry for your sins, sinner man or woman? If you are truly sorry, you are grieved because you have offended God, His Spirit, and His people. You should desire to ask God to forgive you and to help you live a new and

different life. God will hear you, and He will help you, but you must repent and turn from all your transgressions, every one of them.

Once a couple of sisters came to my congregation for a period of time, and both of them had a problem with cigarettes. One of them came one day and said, "Brother Stegmeier, I got victory."

I said, "Oh, praise the Lord!" I was thrilled, until I heard the rest of the story.

She said, "But in case I have a problem, I put one pack of cigarettes way up in the top cupboard of my kitchen, way up in the corner."

I thought, "Oh, you have not given it up at all." When you get saved, you must burn all the bridges behind you. You must leave sin in its entirety. When I was a child, we used to sing a chorus that says, "Good-bye, sin, I am bound for Heaven." That is what a sinner must say. Ezekiel said, "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Iniquity has been the ruin of many people. You must cast away all your transgressions. Ezekiel 18:31 reads, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

### **Something Worth Living For**

Sinner man or woman, you need God to give you meaning and purpose to life. There is no real purpose or meaning to life outside of God and doing His will. God gives true meaning and purpose. He can give you a reason for living. We sing a song that says, "He gave me something worth living for." It is so important to live right.

God works through His people to bring men and women to Him. Do you want to be used of God? The greatest thrill that I get out of life is to be a vessel used of God.

Friend, if you think all hope is gone, there is Someone who can restore hope in your life. One song

says: "Life was shattered and hope was gone Crushing the load that I bore; Then out of the depths I cried, O God, Give me something worth living for [God will hear a prayer like that]. Something more than my yesterdays, More than I had before, Something more than wealth or fame— He gave me something worth living for."

The purpose of every person should be to live to glorify God. The second verse of that song says, "There, with life at its lowest ebb, Who could heal and restore? Then He came and mended my broken heart— He gave me something worth living for." Verse 3 says, "O the joy of sins forgiv'n— Nothing's the same as before; My life overflows since Jesus came And gave me something worth living for."

Sinner man or woman, God can give you something worth living for. Another reason for living for God is that you need Someone to help you with life's trials and heavy problems. Life gets difficult at times. Troubles

and problems are inevitable. We each need Someone who will help us with life's trials and problems. Job said, "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). You need Someone to help you with the problems that you are going to face in life.

Without God you will never make Heaven your eternal home. In speaking of death, Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 12:7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." That is an awesome, sobering thought.

If you are unsaved, you need God. If you have a restitution to make, God can help you with that. I would do anything within my power to see you make Heaven your eternal home.

For every desire that you have in life, God has provided something to satisfy those desires that you have. For hunger there is food, and for

thirst there is water. For loneliness and for companionship, there is marriage. For the desire of your soul, God will give to you His Son, a Friend who will stick closer than a brother.

Won't you give your heart and life to God? I can assure you that you will be happy that you made that decision. Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 29:12-13: "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Another songwriter wrote, "Soon the summer will be ended." Friend, soon your life may end. Are you ready to meet God? Do not go on unprepared to meet Him. Ask God to come into your heart and life.

(Cassette C-4875E)

# Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	8:15 a.m.-9:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Gaffney, South Carolina	WAGI-FM 105.3	Monday	8:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

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# TRIBUTE TO A MAN OF GOD

## PASTOR ROBERT L. MULLEN

April 1, 1908—November 3, 2002

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Brother Robert L. Mullen, age 94, pastor of the Church of God in Hamilton, Montana, for a total of forty-nine years answered the last call of the Lord on Sunday morning, November 3, 2002. Christ's beckoning call came as he laid suffering from complications that followed a broken hip.

Brother Robert L. Mullen was born in Atwood, Kansas, on April 1, 1908. He was the son of Arthur and Rachel Mullen.

In 1930, Brother Mullen was converted while attending a Free Methodist congregation. The following year, Brother Burge, a Church of God minister, came to work on the family farm during the harvest season. He invited Brother Mullen to an evangelistic meeting at the congregation in Norton, Kansas, where Brother MacIntosh was pastoring. During this service, Brother Stuart brought a message from the Book of Revelation on "The Church." Brother Mullen saw the beauty of the Church of God and accepted the message. He then took his stand for the truth and came out of sectism.

Brother Mullen was married to Myrtle Davis in Medford, Oregon, on June 14, 1936. For a very short period of time before they married, Brother Mullen had been Sister Myrtle's pastor. They enjoyed sixty-six wonderful years of married life.

During the ministry of Brother and Sister Mullen, they had the privilege of knowing the following reformation ministers: Brother J. J. Gillespie, Brother E. E. Byrum, Brother E. H. Arndt, and Brother O. L. Yerty. Brother Byrum prayed for the healing of Brother Mullen's brother. Un-

doubtedly, it was through the influence of these dear brethren that Brother and Sister Mullen enjoyed a ministry of faith in the healing power of Jesus Christ. Brother and Sister Mullen preached and practiced the doctrine of divine healing. During their labors, they witnessed the mighty, miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. The words of Jesus Christ: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," were fulfilled in the ministry of Brother and Sister Mullen.

Brother S. O. Susag was another pioneer Church of God minister that Brother and Sister Mullen knew. While Brother and Sister Mullen were pastoring in Plains, Montana, Brother S. O. Susag held several revival meetings for the congregation. According to Sister Mullen, "Brother Susag was a great faith builder." He was in his mideighties when he traveled to Plains, Montana, on a train. Brother Susag had come to this country from Norway. At times Brother Susag was told that he should not travel at his advanced age, but he replied, "If I am in Norway or in the United States, I am the same distance from Heaven."

At the time of His departure, Brother Mullen had been retired from the active ministry for approximately two years. He first served the congregation in Hamilton, Montana, from 1950 to 1957. At that time, he accepted the call to pastor the Church of God in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, for the second time. In 1960 he returned to Hamilton to pastor again until 2000.

Before moving to Hamilton, Montana, in 1950, Brother Robert Mullen had

pastored congregations in Medford, Oregon, from 1936 to 1938; Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, for the first time from 1939 to 1941; Grants Pass, Oregon, as an interim pastor in 1941; and in Plains, Montana, from 1942 to 1950.

As we all know, Brother Mullen was an avid fisherman and hunter. However, it was a principle of his life that he would never hunt or fish on Sunday, the Lord's Day, even though it was the opening day of the hunting season. God always honored him for his obedience.

The Apostle John wrote, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). Brother David Stegmeier, pastor of the Church of God congregation in Canby, Oregon, was brought into the truth of the beautiful Church of God through the efforts of Brother and Sister Mullen in Plains, Montana, during the late forties.

Brother Patrick Brower, a converted Roman Catholic under Brother and Sister Mullen's ministry in Hamilton, Montana, a few years ago has assumed the responsibility of pastoring the congregation there. The Psalmist wrote, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age" (Psalm 92:14).

Brother Mullen will be missed by his many loved ones, friends, and members of the family of God. He was a blessing to all who knew him.

Pastor E. David Stegmeier

*2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:*

*15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

*16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now*

*henceforth know we him no more.*

*17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

*18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

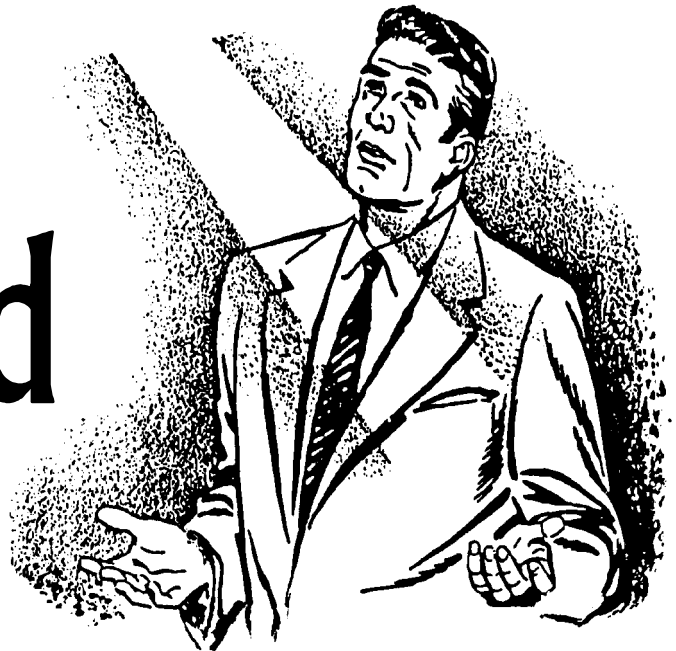
*19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not*

*imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

*20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

*21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

# Be Ye Reconciled to God



**Brother Allen Polston**

## **All Must Appear Before the Judgment Seat of Christ**

In our Scripture lesson in verse 20, a prayer or a plea went forth, and it was directed to those who have not yet made a move for God. Those of us who have lived for God for very long are familiar with this cry, because we know what it is like to have loved ones unsaved and on their way to an eternity of destruction. We understand the Judgment and the fear and the terror of the Lord; therefore, we persuade men, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:11. We pray for them and plead with them along the lines that we find recorded in our Scripture text.

Today a cry is being sent out, that if you have not made your calling and election sure with God, do not neglect to do so any longer. You need to seriously count the cost.

I do not believe that God wants you to make moves hastily and not pray or think about the consequences of such moves. He wants you to count the cost. If you begin to reason biblical things and search out matters, it is not difficult to conclude that the best thing to which you could devote yourself is getting right with God and living for Him.

God, through the Prophet Isaiah, sent out the invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). Perhaps you do not feel an

urgency about doing something concerning the matters of your soul. However, God wants you to reason this thing out and to quit pushing it aside and refusing to consider it. You need to spend time thinking about salvation and what it really consists of. A part of you is going to live forever. One day you are going to stand before God.

You need to consider how you are living your life, because whether you like it or not, you are on your way to the judgment bar of God. Friend, your soul is going to live forever in eternity. Second Corinthians 5:10 reads, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive

the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Verse 11 states, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Today we are engaged in a time of persuasion, so that God might be able to penetrate whatever is keeping you from doing what you really need to do. He wants to sweep away the refuge of lies to let you see that you really need to be reconciled to God. If you have already been reconciled to God, then you need to stay right with Him.

Again, the prayer in verse 20 reads, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." This is a petition with which God's people are familiar. We plead this way with loved ones, co-workers, neighbors, and friends. This is what our lives are all about.

### **Serving as Ambassadors for Christ**

Unfortunately many people do not understand what the Gospel call is all about. The Bible says that "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4). Too often people think when someone speaks to them about salvation, that person is against them and trying to ruin their lives, but that person is trying to help them find real life, to enhance their lives beyond what they can comprehend until they experience it.

There is no substitute for salvation. One must experience it to really understand it. In essence, Jesus told Nicodemus when he came to Him by night, "Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." You can begin to learn a little about it, but you have to be willing to give your all to experience it. You have to be willing to say goodbye to the world and turn to God wholeheartedly. It is not just a matter of saying, "Well, I will try it for a few days." If you are just trying it for a few days, then you are holding reservations in your life. God

cannot be your Lord if you hold reservations in your life and have set your affections on other things.

One reason that some people do not live for God very long is that they only want Him on a trial basis. Friend, you need to forget getting Him on a trial basis and get Him for good. You must choose to serve God forever and bid goodbye to the world. You must turn your heart and life over to Him without reservations and without thoughts of ever returning to the world.

God has commissioned the efforts of His children to reach out to others to try to bring them to Christ. That means we always have something to do. The Christian life never has to be boring. We must study God's Word so that we will be equipped to stand before the lost and compel them to come to Christ, and we must pray that God will deal with them. Also, we should call and visit people and invite them to attend the church services and revivals. We always have things to do for God, because He has given us a commission. We are ambassadors for Christ. God gives the child of God a special call. Through His people, He is calling out to others.

Imagine what it would be like if you were to receive a telephone call from God. He is holding your life in His hands right now. Your next heartbeat, your next breath, and your ability to think and move about is contingent upon whether God grants you the ability to do these things. With that understanding in mind, if you knew that you had a telephone call from God, even if you were not saved, I am sure that you would be very careful of how you spoke to Him. You would not be arrogant, as some people are when they begin to blame God for this and that. You would not be lifted up with pride.

I am talking about the One who created the world, who causes the sun to come up in the morning, who has kept everything in motion, and

who will require us to stand before Him one day. If He were to call for you individually, if He had something to say to you, you would be unwise to walk away and refuse Him or to be arrogant or unkind.

### **The Call of God**

The Bible tells us in verse 20 that it is "as though God did beseech you by us." Friend, God is calling you through the preaching of the Word and by the lives His people live. God is sending a personal call for you to awaken and do something about your spiritual condition. He has made you responsible for what you do, and He is holding you accountable. God is calling you through the dear Christian who has set an example before you, living a good, clean life. You have seen that person keep the right spirit and live a holy life. That is how you can receive a call from God.

Sometimes I think people get confused and think that when God calls them, they will feel some kind of electrifying force go through them. The truth of the matter is that God is calling precious souls through the avenues that I have just mentioned.

Through the preaching of the Word, He is calling to you: "Be ye reconciled to Me." Do not take the chance of dying lost. You should not be so foolish as to follow the natural course of many who have gone on in their sinful conditions. Do not be so proud or so hard hearted that you end up in a lost eternity and suffer the torments of hell forever. What foolish decisions many people have made! What a terrible thing it would be to hear the words, "Depart from Me; I never knew you." There is a message in the words of God. Departing from God is separating yourself from everything good and enjoyable, from everything that is loving, kind, and beautiful.

Although many have rejected the Lord and continue with their daily routines, God in His faithfulness, love, and mercy is calling still.

Again, Paul wrote to the Corinthians in verse 20 of our Scripture text, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

I want you to use your imagination again. If it were possible for Christ to make a personal appearance and interview you, I believe you would be very careful of how you would enter that meeting. You would be careful, knowing that He shed His blood for your transgressions and loved you so very much that He was willing to go to Calvary for you, though He did not deserve to die such a death. He was willing to go and be the propitiation for your sins and to make atonement.

The church is here in Christ's stead. The Word of God is going forth in the place of Christ, because according to the way God set up His divine plan, it is not possible for Him to come and have a personal meeting with you in the flesh. If He could, He would tell you everything about your life. He could name everything you did yesterday and mention every time you turned away from doing what you ought to have done. He could tell of everything that is going on in your heart, your life, and your mind.

### **The Final Consummation**

The Bible lets us know that one of these days there is going to be an extremely loud, audible sound, so piercing and so enormously intense that no one is going to miss hearing it. Everyone is going to hear, even those individuals who have their boom boxes and their car stereos cranked up as loud as they can go. Some have them turned up so loud that you can feel the vibrations when you pull up beside them at a traffic light. Even those individuals will not escape hearing this sound. Jesus Christ is going to come from where He is with the Father and call even those who are dead in the graves to come forth.

The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 that "the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive

and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." One day we are going to have that meeting with Christ, but He is never going to set a foot on this earth again. He is coming one of these days, and He is going to send forth a shout and the sound of the trumpet. He is going to send forth such a piercing, alarming noise that no one will escape hearing it. He is going to make His presence known. Wherever you are, whatever you are engaged in, wherever you may be at that point in your life, you are going to know that it is all over.

I think this event is not going to be too far down the road. Though it is hard to fathom exactly how everything is going to transpire, I cannot imagine it being very much longer. Jesus is going to split the clouds and call us, and we are going to meet Him in the air. First Thessalonians 4:17 says, ". . . so shall we ever be with the Lord."

### **The Power of the Word of God**

Christ is present, not in a physical form as you and I are, but through the people of God and through His precious Word. Verse 20 of our Scripture lesson states, ". . . we pray you [or plead with you] in Christ's stead [in place of Christ] be ye reconciled to God." Since He is not here in the physical form and He cannot take you by the hand and say, "Let us have a little talk," He has left His people and His Holy Spirit to do that very thing, in Christ's stead. He also allows us to be put through the same hardships and trials as the lost world. We go through some of the same kinds of pressures, problems, and tribulations. Sometimes sadness, heartaches, and difficulties come. As the children of God, we are children of the King; we are royalty, yet God leaves us here in Christ's stead so that others might also see the needs in their hearts and lives.

If Jesus were here in the physical form, He could take you aside and say, "This is your need. You need to

forsake this and get that straightened out." We cannot see inside people's hearts. However, the Bible lets us know that the preaching of the Word is very powerful. Hebrews 4:12 reads, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Though Jesus is not here to personally tell you all that is not right, He has left something that can, and that is the Word of God. The Word of God is unchanging, powerful, quick, and sharper than any two-edged sword.

The Word of God does not beat around the bush, so to speak. God's Word can accomplish what nothing else can. I have heard people say, "How is the Bible different from the story of Peter Pan? It is just another story." They do not realize that the Bible has power and that it is sharper than any two-edged sword. It uncovers all falsities and cuts through all the barriers. It reveals needs in your life. It can reveal your condition and the very intents and motives of your heart. It can tell you if your intentions and motives are getting out of line with the Word. Although Jesus is not here in a physical body, through the Word and through His people, He is sending out an invitation to you.

Friend, when you stand before the judgment bar of God, you are not going to be able to say that God did not warn you that the life of sin was destroying you. Ungodliness takes you further and further away from God. You need to make a clean break from sin and never return to it. It is by the calling of God through His Word, the Holy Spirit, and His people that the plan of salvation is revealed to you. This is the way God has set it up.

### **Why Are Many Called But Few Chosen?**

The Bible says that many are called, but few are chosen. That Scripture should alarm you. That means a great number of people are called. If you think of all the people, from Adam until the closing out of

time, that will be a great number. I believe there are approximately six billion people on the earth right now. Many are called, but few are chosen.

Why is it that a huge number of people receive this call, but only a few are chosen? One reason is that they listen to the Gospel message, and it seems to touch their hearts, yet they think, "I will make things right another time; I will have another opportunity." That kind of thinking is a lie from the enemy. They might have another opportunity to make things right; but it will not be any easier than their present opportunity. If you are lost without God, you need to turn to your Maker this very day. It will not become easier or more convenient by waiting.

The enemy of souls tries to tell individuals that another time will be more convenient. However, as long as we live, we are going to have a flesh that does not want to be brought under, and that is what it requires to be a child of God. The flesh must be brought into submission; it has to be crucified. If you wait until you are a few years older or until you are married or until you get your career in order, your flesh will still resist turning away from this old world.

Consider Christ just hours before He was nailed to the Cross. His flesh did not want to go through all of that and endure that suffering, but He did it because it was the will of God. "Not my will, but Thine be done" was His prayer. That is the place to which each of us must come to get saved and make Heaven our home. To be a child of God, to have the peace and the happiness that you have longed for, to be cleansed and forgiven of your sins, and to have a new and wonderful life, you must turn away from the world and sinful pleasures.

We have to abide by what God tells us in His Word. Jesus is not here personally to say, "This is the way you ought to live." His Word is

the authority in our lives. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He must be given full control of our lives, and we must comply with His will.

### **Answering God's Call**

I remember the night I was sitting on the back row of a little church when God began to knock on my heart's door. I knew that He was calling for me. I was very much aware that God in His faithfulness was reaching out to me one more time. As I stood there, I did not know exactly how things would work out. I wondered, "How could I leave all my friends and never keep company with them again?" I knew that I had to quit running around with them and doing the things that I had been doing. It seemed like a difficult thing, yet I knew what God would require of me. One thing I did know was that I wanted to do the will of God. His will was that I surrender my all to Him without any reservations. While I did not understand many things, I wanted help for the life that I was living; I wanted something better. That life was filled with disappointments and sadness because of sin. Sin was already beginning to bring pain and torment. I cannot imagine what it would be like to pass from this life and be lost forever.

Friend, you may not understand everything, but I can assure you that if you will be reconciled to God, He will help you get things in place. He will help you with one problem at a time. He will help you to work through things. I do not know of one child of God who has ever regretted getting saved. The testimony of every true child of God is, "I wish I had gotten saved sooner."

It is possible for children, when they come to the age of accountability and realize they are lost, to be reconciled to God. They do not have to wait and go out into deep sin or become like the world. To be *reconciled* means "to be brought

back, or to be restored." A young child who is not defiled is innocent; there is no sin in his life. I am glad that I know the Truth that when babies are born into this world, there is no sin in their lives. They are not guilty of sin because their parents had sin in their lives or because Adam sinned. When they are born, they are created perfect, as God would have them to be, and they live that way until they become awakened to right and wrong.

The Bible says in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." When a child comes to the age of accountability, he has no grace to keep him from yielding to wrong. The Bible says grace comes by Jesus Christ. When a child realizes that he has yielded to wrong and he repents of that, he is then reconciled to God and restored to innocence, holiness, and cleanness. All the wrong, if it was one thing or many things, God washes away and wipes the slate clean; He makes him perfect.

### **The Works of the Flesh**

Sinner friend, think of the wrong that you know you are responsible for, the ungodliness, and the condemnation in your life. God can take it all away and make you clean. You can be set free to enjoy life. You can experience the joy of living when you turn your heart and life over to God.

People living in sin are living to themselves, living to please themselves. People are doing whatever feels good and going after whatever looks good. They work to build themselves up and gain the approval of their peers and others in the world.

Recently I read an article concerning plastic surgery. According to the article, it is becoming popular for people to change the looks of their faces. It used to be rarely heard of, but it is becoming popular because people want to have everything just right so they will be approved by others. It is no



wonder the Proverb writer said in Proverbs 13:15, "The way of transgressors is hard." Keeping up with the many styles, fads, and fashions of the world is hard. Trying to please the flesh is hard. Why? Because it is impossible. Just when you think you have things the way you really want them to be, it will not be long until the flesh becomes dissatisfied and wants more.

Paul wrote to the Galatians and said the works of the flesh are manifest, and then he listed several things. Galatians 5:19-21 reads: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." As soon as the flesh gets comfort, satisfaction, and

happiness, it will see something else or want the approval of someone else, and away it will go again, trying to find satisfaction in someone else or something else.

Again, it is no wonder that God inspired the Proverb writer to say that the way of the transgressor is hard. Friend, living in sin and trying to keep up with the fashions of the world is difficult. God is sending a call for you to step away from that kind of life and never return. Paul said in verse 17 of our Scripture text, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." As a new creature, one no longer lives to please everyone else and his own flesh. No longer is he living to try to win the approval of coworkers or family members. He is living to please God, because he knows that Christ

died for him. He is living to win the approval of the Maker of all men, the Creator of all things. He is no longer following the world; he is following God. He is reconciled to God, brought to a place of peace, happiness, everlasting joy, holiness, and cleanliness.

Friend, won't you be reconciled to God? If you have begun to go away from Him, His loving kindness and mercy is calling out to you, knocking on your heart's door. Will you accept the love that He is extending? God's people are concerned about you. You need to get back in favor with God, back to the blessed old Bible, back to the city of God, and back to where you really belong.

(Cassette C-4811M)

# Winter 2002 Camp Meeting Tape List

TAPE NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	SPEAKER	COST
C-4962E	12-26-02	The Holy Spirit	Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50
C-4963M	12-27-02	Shall We Continue in Sin?	Bro. Allen Polston	2.50
C-4964E		The Four Types of Judgment	Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50
C-4965M	12-28-02	Is Your Lamp Burning?	Bro. Allen Polston	2.50
C-4966E		Sin	Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50
C-4967E	12-29-02	The Danger of Being Spoiled	Bro. E. David Stegmeier	2.50

*For music recordings, please specify Cassette or CD.*

095	Winter 2002 Camp Meeting Songs #1	3.50
096	Winter 2002 Camp Meeting Songs #2	3.50
097	Winter 2002 Camp Meeting Songs #3	3.50

Tapes may be ordered by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, Tape Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling (740) 987-5905, Brother and Sister Roger Allen. If no answer, call (614) 345-1312, the Print Shop. Make check or money order in U.S. funds payable to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

# The Progress of the Work of God in Kenya

The work of the Church of God in Kenya started at Brother Joseph Mbui's home in Itabua in Embu District in 1993. However, the way through which I received the Church of God truth was miraculous. It happened that back in 1987 a man left *The Gospel Trumpeter* magazine at the office where I worked at that time. After studying the magazine, I found that it had biblically-based messages that were soul stirring and spiritually enriching. When I read the anointed magazine, I was incited to search for more truth of the Church of God. I wrote to Brother Roger Decker, pastor of the Church of God, God's Acres, in Newark, Ohio, and editor of the magazine, the same year, requesting that he send more magazines regularly, a request which he accepted. Gradually, the biblical truths written in the magazine gave me and my four colleagues a Church of God vision, and we came out of Babylon in 1993 and stood for the truths of the Church of God.

Consequently, as the Bible says, "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time" (Isaiah 60:22). The truth of the Church of God spread rapidly. I, Brother Joseph Mbui, and my colleagues started six congregations, with the exception of Itabua congregation, which was the central office. The first congregation was Runyenjes, the second was Baricho, the third was Siakago, the fourth was Mwea, the fifth was Ciambu, and the sixth was Kiaganari.

Guided by the Spirit of God, we wrote to Brother Decker requesting that he become our missionary. Brother Decker agreed, and in June 1999, he invited me to attend a camp meeting at God's Acres in Newark, Ohio, USA. After two weeks, I returned with a very good report from the brethren in the USA. As a result, all agreed to work with Brother Decker and the brethren in the USA under the umbrella of the Church of God, Gospel Trumpeter Ministries. The ministry was registered in Registrar General, Nairobi, with the above name.

Later we invited Brother Decker to see how the work of God was going here in Kenya. In the year 2000, during the month of October, Brother Decker, accompanied by other brethren, visited the six congregations. The brethren who came with Brother Decker were Brother David Stegmeier, Brother Fred Barrows, Brother George Gordon, Brother Ronald Cummings, Brother Jeremy Boyd, Brother Allen Polston, and Brother Silvio Serra.

**The Beautiful Prayer House and Our Present Congregations:** Before the brethren left for the USA, they purchased one acre of land in Embu town as a camp meeting ground and the center of the work of God in Kenya. Also, they bought one vehicle, Pajero type, four-wheel drive to help me to run the work of God conveniently.

In the year 2002, Brother Decker sent Brother Jan Romine, Brother George Gordon, and other brethren from the USA to come and start the work of building the prayer house. They built a very beautiful building with central offices inside. The prayer house is situated at Muthatari-Siakago Road.

Before the prayer house was built, we had only six congregations, but now we have eighteen congregations with their devoted full-time pastors. In the year 2002, the Church of God, God's Acres, in Newark, Ohio USA, bought another vehicle, a Toyota van, which is currently a great help to the Church of God in Kenya.

**The Main Objectives and Thanks:** The first objective is to spread the Gospel, which is a great need in Kenya. People in most parts of Kenya have not heard the truth of God's church, so whenever they hear the truth, they receive it with a good heart.

Most of our congregations have no permanent buildings. Some hold meetings in renting houses and others gather under trees for worship. For that reason, our second objective is to see all our congregations have permanent buildings in order that the work of God may stand firm.

We want to thank Brother Roger Decker and all the brethren in the USA for the burden you have for the work of God in Kenya. The support you send regularly is a great help to us. The work of God is growing rapidly. We are sure that in years to come that the truth of the Church of God will spread to the neighboring countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and other parts of Africa.

Once again, we thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Brother Joseph Mbui Kibuchi