

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

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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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Vol. 36 August 2006 No. 8

Guest Editorial

*"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD,
that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine
of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the
words of the LORD."*

Amos 8:11

*"Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that
fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To
deliver their soul from death, and to keep them
alive in famine."*

We are living in a day when the preaching of the pure Word of God is becoming very scarce. You cannot hear the clear sounding of the trumpet in many places any more. In the vast majority of churches throughout our land, there is a spiritual famine. The Prophet Amos did not portray this famine as being one of a physical nature, where a lack for literal bread and water exists. Instead, he described this famine as a terrible spiritual condition. It is caused when the pulpits of our land become silent on the commandments contained in the Word of God. More effort is being placed on the material issues of life than the spiritual realities. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It is the Word of God coupled with faith that saves man from sin and teaches him how to live a righteous life before God.

Before a soul can ever be saved from sin, he or she must first hear the message of faith and deliverance preached. In Romans 10:17 Paul said that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." However, if people do

not hear the Word of God, how then can they know or obey it? Sad to say, too often the ministry fails to teach people God's requirements for full salvation. Therefore, men and women have not been taught how to live holy lives or shown those things which please or displease the Lord. Whenever a ministry neglects their responsibility to preach the Truth as God directs, you can rest assured, it will bring about a spiritual famine.

In the midst of spiritual famine today, it is good to know there are yet congregations where the Truth is being heralded. There is a ministry that is true to God and faithful to the souls of men. God sees all those who love Him and are striving to obey all His commands. He knows those who trust Him and hope in His mercy. Although times look dark, you need to remember that He is committed to His people and has promised to keep them fed in the famine. The Lord still has a faithful ministry upon whom He can depend to spiritually feed His children. These men of God pray and seek the will of God, and they deliver His Word to the souls of

[continued on page 27]

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of

the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter

also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Presumptuous Sinning



Brother Roger L. Decker

Are You Hardening Your Heart?

I want to focus on verse 13 of our Scripture text. Notice that the Psalmist said, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." The word *presumptuous* simply means "deliberate." Therefore, presumptuous sinning is deliberate sinning. This verse brings a serious

thought when it comes to living for God.

The Psalmist was not talking about one committing sin through weakness, or falling into temptation and then having godly sorrow. He was talking about sinning against light, against judgment, and against conscience. He was speaking of sin that one commits with purpose and deliberation, or premeditated sin.

The Psalmist said to the Lord, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." In other words, he was saying, "Do not let that type of sin get hold of me. Do not let it have dominion over me and rule me."

God hates all sin, but He especially hates sins that are premeditated, sins of pride, sins of self-confidence, and sins from reliance on one's own strength. Presumptu-

ous sins are not committed through frailty, but they are the offspring of thought and purpose; they are sins against judgment. The Psalmist was saying, "Do not let me get so used to sinning that I do so habitually; keep me back from it."

One who sins presumptuously will soon harden his heart through the deceitfulness of sin. One who sins through habit will lose the feeling of conviction. You need to feel conviction, dear one. If you do something wrong, you want God to convict you. If you commit sin, you should want God to talk to you. However, when you sin presumptuously, you are in danger of losing that feeling of conviction.

Consider the words of Jesus found in John 15:22, which says this: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak [or covering] for their sin." Jesus was saying that knowledge and privilege bring responsibility. Until Jesus came, men never had the opportunity to really know God in a personal relationship. They had never fully heard His voice, and they had never witnessed the kind of life that He wished them to live perfectly demonstrated.

God moved on certain individuals and leaders in the Old Testament, but they never had the opportunity to really know God. Saint of God, there was a time in your life when you were without strength and you did not know God. When it came to living right, you were powerless. Romans 5:6 says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." You can get no greater proof of God's love than the fact that Jesus died for us. Getting a man to die for a just man would be difficult, and it might be possible for a man to be persuaded to die for a great and noble principle; but the wonder of Jesus Christ is that He died for us when we were nothing but sinners. We were hostile against God. Love can go no further than that. He died for us when we were yet without strength, when we were ungodly.

Are You Lining Up With God's Standard?

Under the Law men could scarcely be blamed for being as they were. Now, we allow some things in a child that we would not tolerate in an adult. Why is that? A child does not know any better. You are training that child, so you put up with things that you should not have to put up with in an adult. Also, you might overlook some things in someone who has not had a good upbringing, but those things would not be acceptable in someone who has been raised in a Christian home or in a Church of God congregation. No one expects the same kind of conduct from a savage that one would expect from a civilized man. The more knowledge a man has, the more privileges he enjoys, and with it brings greater responsibility. Church of God, we are a responsible people.

We need to take a closer look into the Word of God. We need to take a closer look at what the Spirit teaches. We are right into summertime, and the world is turning up the heat, so to speak. The standard of the Church of God is being attacked. As you get more light, you will look more like Jesus Christ. You should not look more like the world. If you do, I am afraid your standards are coming from the world, from Paris or Hollywood. God still has a standard for the church. Some say the Christian should not look different from the world; nevertheless, the Scripture says we are not to conform to this world.

Some people who claim to be Christians do not want to accept the Bible standard of wearing modest apparel, yet they would really get upset if a doctor or an airplane pilot did not wear the proper uniform. For example, if you were in the hospital and a doctor walked in wearing blue jeans and a sloppy shirt with a stethoscope around his neck and said, "I am Doctor So-and-So," you would probably say, "You don't even look like a doctor."

The world is dressing sloppier and sloppier, but that should not affect the way the saints of God dress. It is hard even to get people to dress up when they go to the house of God. They are not going to a football game; they are going to the house of God. If you were going to apply for employment before a dignitary, you would wear the best clothes you had. Well, you are not going before any higher dignitary than God. If you want to work for Him, you ought to dress right, act right, and be right.

Some places that call themselves the Church of God have a sign over the door, but you cannot tell them from the world. God looks on the heart, but man looks on the outside. What does that tell you? You have to keep them both right.

When a person sins presumptuously, he may say something like this: "Oh, God will forgive me; He always does. So what if I mess up! God's grace is sufficient." Yes, it is, but God has not given His grace as a license to commit sin. He has given His grace so that you do not have to commit sin.

Ignoring the Warning Signs

Jesus did two things: First, He exposed sin. He told men of the things that grieve God and the way in which God wished them to walk. Jesus set the true way before men. Second, He provided the remedy for sin, and He did that in a double sense. He opened the way to forgiveness for past sins, and then He provided the power to enable a man to overcome sin and do right. These were the privileges and the knowledge that Jesus brought to men.

I want to illustrate a point to you. We see lots of detour signs, especially in the summertime. We see signs that read: "CONSTRUCTION AHEAD" or "SLOW DOWN." Suppose some signs read, "BRIDGE OUT AHEAD. USE DETOUR." If you were to ignore those signs, then the liability and the responsibility would lie with you. You could not

blame the state and sue the government, because you are the one who acted irresponsibly. Why? You ignored the warning signs.

Ignoring the warning signs that God sends your way is possible while you are living for Him. Not many people are really hostile toward Jesus Christ, but many people live their lives as though Jesus had never come. Few people even think about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Even many who profess to be Christians do not think His coming will happen in their generation. Nevertheless, Jesus could come anytime.

Too many people disregard Jesus. They act as if He has never even come. The Bible is full of examples of people who sinned presumptuously. Some people sin through self-confidence. Their thoughts are, "I have been around the Church of God for years, so I know how to handle myself; I have seniority." Friend, you do not have any seniority around the Church of God. The church does not function as a labor union. You need God if you have been saved for thirty years as much as the person who has been saved for only one day.

Some people think, "If I mess up, I'll just ask God to forgive me, and I'll go on as before." Friend, such thinking is dangerous. You will harden your heart if you sin presumptuously. This message ought to be a warning, especially to young people who are dating. Someone may ask, "What age should one begin dating?" Well, it should be an age when the person is mature enough to know how to date. Dating is not for children. One should be mature enough to understand how to control his or her desires, passions, and thoughts.

Young person, you need to be careful. Do not think for one minute that you can overstep decency in your dating and that God will turn His head. A young man needs to know enough to keep his hands to himself. A young lady should not have to fight him off; that would not

be a good courtship. You have desires and passions, and you are not spiritual enough to keep them under if you place your hand in someone's lap or anywhere else it should not be.

Presumptuous sinning is sinning against your knowledge. One does it, thinking, "God will forgive me. I know better than to be where I am and to do what I am doing, but I know this much: God loves me, and He will forgive me." Friend, you need to be careful. The Psalmist wanted to keep away from that. He did not want to get in the habit of sinning. He did not want presumptuous sins to have dominion over him.

Some young people may say, "Oh, we went too far last night. God, forgive us. Let's go on now. We don't have to tell anyone. God will forgive. He loves us, and He understands that we are human." God understands something else: He has given them knowledge, and He has given them a conscience. What God does *not* understand is, where is His grace? Their attitude should be, "God forgive us; we should have known better." If they do not get victory over that situation, they are going to end up praying an old formal prayer and be void of the Spirit of God.

If you commit sin, you ought to have godly sorrow, which leads to repentance. Godly sorrow is not repentance, but it leads to repentance. If you are truly sorry, it will lead you to repentance, and you will change your life. The difference between King Saul and King David when they sinned was that King David had godly sorrow. You have not hurt another person or your conscience; you have hurt God. I repeat, godly sorrow leads to repentance.

Defilement Comes From the Heart

If you have overstepped your conscience and committed adultery, you need to straighten out things.

Some people believe that adultery is the initial act, but that is not so. Jesus said in Matthew 15:17-20: "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart [out of the center of your affection] proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man."

In this chapter we read that Jesus faced the never-ending accusations of the Pharisees and the scribes again, and they held the tradition of the elders. They had placed their traditions as a higher priority than the commandments of God. In verse 2 of the same chapter they said, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Here they spoke of the tradition of the elders. To the Jew, the Law was divided into two sections: *the written Law*, which was contained in Scripture and the commandments given by God, and *the oral law*, or the spoken law, which consisted of such things as washing the hands and those things the scribes and the Pharisees had practiced generation after generation.

All those developments were the tradition of the elders and were regarded as much, if not more, binding than the Law. They held the washing of the hands in higher esteem than the commandments of God. Matthew 15:1-3 reads: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"

To the Orthodox Jew, all the

rituals and ceremonies were their religion. They believed that God demanded those things and that to do those things was to please God. They figured that one would be a good Jew if he kept all the traditions of the elders. Jesus was patient and long-suffering, and He clearly showed His accusers that defilement comes from the heart. True religion does not merely consist of external regulations and observances. If that were all that religion consisted of, conforming to a certain standard would be easy. For example, washing your hands is much easier than loving your enemy after that person has given you a tongue lashing.

Outward observances cannot atone the heart filled with sin. Jesus said out of the heart proceeds adulteries, fornications, thefts, and so on. You do not have to commit the outward act of adultery to be guilty of it. It comes out of the heart, before the act is committed.

The starting place for sin is the heart. That is the reason you receive a new heart in real salvation. The reason people in false religion do not believe in holiness is that their hearts have not been changed. If you get a changed heart, you will not fight holiness.

The Terrible Price of Sinning Against Light

There is too much presumptuous sinning today. You may say, "Oh, God will forgive me if I mess up." With that thought in your mind, you need to watch out. You certainly will mess up, because you already have the way planned. The Psalmist asked the Lord to keep him from that. Dear one, do not let the habit of sinning have dominion over you.

If you are guilty along this line, what if you died before you got to utter another word? It could happen, and it probably has happened to others. It would be terrible to be lost because you thought that whenever you messed up God would take care of it, especially after you had

lived for God for many years and had given your money, your time, your effort, and your labor. Would it not be better if, before you commit that sin, you thought about what would happen if God should call you into eternity while you were committing sin?

Daniel 5:22 says, "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this." In this chapter Daniel gave Belshazzar the interpretation of the handwriting on the wall that came to Belshazzar right while he was sinning. They were not having a revival. In their partying they were sinning. In Belshazzar's drunken stupor, he became bold. Drunkenness always causes one to become bold and do things he would not otherwise do. Today drunkenness can cause one to drive his car too fast on the highway and do daring acts.

Belshazzar overstepped his knowledge and disregarded the things of God. He was partying and feasting, and he disregarded the vessels set aside for the Lord. He was not an ignorant king; he had knowledge. He knew the judgment that came upon his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, yet he disregarded that. Daniel told of Belshazzar's doom. The king failed to take warning of the judgments upon his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. He insulted God, and he was pleased with gods that could not see, hear, or know. Therefore, God, who knows all things, judged him. Nothing escapes His sight.

Daniel read the sentence written on the palace wall. At death God has numbered and finished the sinner's days, just as He did with Belshazzar. After death is the Judgment, when one will be weighed in the balance. Belshazzar was weighed and found wanting. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Belshazzar knew about the judgment that fell upon his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, but he failed to let it restrain him and be

a buffer to keep him from sinning. He sinned presumptuously, and it cost him his throne, his life, and his soul. He overstepped knowledge, and he paid a terrible price for sinning against light.

Belshazzar was lifted up in pride. In a drunken stupor that men usually have to sleep off, God sobered him up quickly. Belshazzar went from a drunken stupor to fearing for his life. Though he did not understand the handwriting on the wall, he knew it was divine, and he also knew that whatever God had to say to him was not good. Why did he know that? He had never sent anything good up to God, so he knew the message was not going to be good. It is God who puts men up and sets them down.

Heed the Warning

The prayer of Hannah is very encouraging. She was the mother of Samuel. She prayed in 1 Samuel 2:3-9: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

Presumptuous sinning will harden your heart. If you sin presumptuously, you will lose the

tenderness and the softness of heart that you once had toward the things of God. It will cause you to be in a personal "confession booth" every day, merely saying words without godly sorrow.

David said in verse 13 of our Scripture text, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." What was David talking about when he mentioned "the great transgression?" I have read many interpretations of it. Some people feel it is blasphemy or this and that, but David was not talking about one certain sin. He was talking about many sins that could occur if God did not keep him from sinning out of habit. David did not want to fall into the category of sinning without godly sorrow, or sinning habitually, because he knew that one sin would lead to another; next, he would be committing many transgressions. Then he would have no righteousness and no godliness.

If one sins presumptuously, he will go deeper into sin, and his heart will become harder. It takes godly sorrow to repent, and godly sorrow is foreign to a hardened heart. David finished the Psalm in verse 14 with the words, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." If you are doing things that you know you should not be doing and you are calling on God after you know that you are going to commit sin, you are sinning presumptuously. In essence, the Psalmist said, "Don't let that have dominion, or rule, over me, and then I will be innocent from the great transgression."

If you have been sinning habitually, sinning against light and knowledge, and using God's name as a scapegoat, then that is no different from going to a confessional booth in a Roman Catholic church. Friend, God wants to help you, and He can help keep you back from that

if you will give up to Him completely. You need to turn your whole life over to Him—your heart, soul, mind, and strength—give it all to God. No one is more miserable than the one who is worldly and tries to be a Christian at the same time; that is a miserable life to live.

If you have a need in your soul, won't you obey God? He is not against you. God did not send the

message to make you feel bad. He sent the message to help you see that you need to get control of those things in your life or they will be your doom. They will take you down. God wants to deliver you from sin completely. You do not have to sin another day if you will humble your heart to Jesus Christ.

(Cassette C-5224E)

America, To Your Knees

America, to your knees!

Your only hope is prayer.

The world is filled with strife,

Confusion, and despair;

But God is still in Heaven,

His power is over all.

America, to your knees!

In supplication call.

America, to your knees!

Night shadows lengthen fast;

Soon judgment will descend,

The day of mercy past.

Our only hope is God,

In Him we must rely.

America, to your knees!

He still will hear your cry.

America, to your knees!

Your forefathers of old

Loved God and served Him faithfully,

For righteousness were bold.

They read and lived God's Word,

Honored the Sabbath day.

America, to your knees!

Confess your sins and pray.

America, to your knees!

Now is no time for pride;

In humble pleadings call,

"O God, be on our side";

You've sinned and disobeyed,

And wandered far astray.

America, to your knees!

Return to Christ today.



Selected

Luke 17:5 *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

6 *And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.*

7 *But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will*

say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 *And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?*

9 *Doth he thank that servant*

because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 *So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

Increase Our Faith



Brother Allen Polston

Learning to Endure Hardships

God created each of us with a natural desire to want that which is good, and He did so for a definite reason. Friend, we can look to our example, Jesus Christ, who also went through much suffering.

The Roman writer stated in Romans 8:21, "Because the creature itself [talking about you and me] also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Saint, one day God will forever liberate us from every trial, every problem, and every sickness if we stay true to Him. At a future time the Lord will deliver us from the bondage of corruption into the glori-

ous liberty reserved for the children of God. He was not speaking of sinful corruption. We have already been delivered from that. He was speaking of deliverance from the elements and the conditions that bring hardships.

Verse 22 reads, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Whether you are a Christian or not, you are going to face hard places in life. God allows these difficulties so that you will desire, hope, and yearn for those good times. As you go through hard places, you have a desire to get better. In Romans 8:20 the Apostle Paul wrote, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by

reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." The writer was saying that man is subject to having things go wrong from time to time. Whether you are a Christian or not, you are going to run into trouble along life's road.

Paul let us know that we are subject to vanity, but not willingly. If we had our choice in matters, we would never suffer adversity. Though we try to make good decisions, seek God for direction, and take precautions, we still have problems while living in this time world. This is true of people who have plenty of money as well as the poor.

God has created us to be subject to vanity because He knew it was best. We each will go through

illnesses, because it is in the design of God. We all will experience great hardships. God permits setbacks along the road of life so that we might know what it means to hope for something better. He wants us to learn to endure hardships.

God has a reason for allowing us to go through difficulties. The Bible lets us know that all temptations and tribulations are common to man. Others experience the same types of problems you face. Even Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, but thank God He was without sin.

The problems, difficulties, and illnesses you face should never cause you to commit sin. They should not cause you to act ugly, nasty, mean, or hateful. We yearn to be relieved and to get beyond hard places. To attain good things in this life and to prepare to go to Heaven, we must be willing to suffer and endure hardships and battles. Although the devil brings hard trials on us sometimes, we are willing to endure it because we want to go to be with God.

Seeking the Face of God

In our Scripture text in verse 5, the Apostles said, "Lord, Increase our faith." They were yearning for something better, and that is a natural desire. We have received a taste of God's blessings here on earth. We have tasted of salvation and know how wonderful it is, and we have felt the earnestness of the Spirit of God. Therefore, we want to experience the full blessing prepared for us. God has promised us a new incorruptible body forever in Heaven.

The disciples put forth a request to God for more faith. Often people are only interested in gaining worldly wealth or fame of some sort, and they have no desire whatsoever for increasing their faith. Some people want their faith to increase, but they are not interested in seeking the face of God so that He might smile upon their lives.

Second Chronicles 7:14 states, "If

my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." God wants you to seek His face so that you might have His smile of approval upon you. He will smile upon you when you are right where you ought to be, but *you* must lay aside unnecessary and ungodly things. Thank God, He can do that.

Consider King Solomon. The Bible has much to say about him, and God used him in a mighty way. Solomon did not ask God to make him wealthy, but he asked Him for wisdom and knowledge to know how to rule and help the people of God. God said that because he had asked for those things, He would give him what he asked for and much wealth.

It was commendable that the disciples asked the Lord to increase their faith, and if you approach God in this manner, that is good. You need to evaluate your motives to find out the reason for your asking God to work out this or that. You need to seek His face to make sure that He is pleased with the way you are conducting yourself, to see if He is pleased with the company you keep, and to see if He approves of the places you go. A saint should not go some places. Certain places are not respectable, and the people of God should avoid them.

Acts 10:34 lets us know that "God is no respecter of persons." Friend, God loves you, and He is concerned about you. God's Son came into this world and suffered immensely for you. He loves you very much, and when you get discouraged and feel that you are all alone, I want you to know that the Lord has not forgotten you. He knows right where you are, and He knows the things you are facing. God is love, and He loves you very much. Having knowledge of this is wonderful.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For all the prom-

ises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." All the promises of God are sure. What God has done for others, He will do for you, if you will meet His conditions. It is a wonderful assurance to know that all the promises of God—the promises of deliverance, of victory, of love, of never being forsaken—apply to you and me. Friend, God will be the best friend you have ever had. He will walk beside you and help you throughout your life. He is no respecter of persons. This causes us to say, "Glory to God! He is wonderful!" He will do the same for anyone who will meet His conditions. That causes Him to be glorified in our hearts and minds, and we exalt Him.

Some people in this world will not have anything to do with you if you do not have a certain skin color, if you are not a certain nationality, or if you do not have a certain amount of wealth. Our world is filled with people who divide people into groups of this and that, but the promises of God are the same to all people. His promises are for you, dear one.

Do All to the Glory of God

When the disciples requested an increase in their faith, Jesus responded to them in verse 6 of our Scripture text, "If ye had faith. . . ." This is the first breakdown I want you to consider. The question is, What would you do with more faith? This is something that you need to consider. What would you do if God were to increase your faith? There is a growth process through which you can advance spiritually and get closer to God. You can become more of a vessel that God can use.

I want to illustrate this point to you. A person would not try to teach a little child how to drive an automobile, because doing so would be vain. The instruction and the time that one would spend showing the child and working with him would be useless. A child could not steer

and reach the pedals, and the results would be disastrous. The age restrictions placed on operating motor vehicles are for this reason. Similarly, I want you to know that God is not in the business of being wasteful.

Just as it would be a waste of time and effort to work with a young child to try to teach him to drive, so it would be a waste for God to give gifts that would not be put to use properly, because a growth process must take place in the life of a child of God. As a child grows and becomes older, then it will become appropriate to teach him how to drive a vehicle. The time will come for that.

God is not wasteful, and He teaches us in the Bible that we should not be wasteful either. Romans 12:10-11 says: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." First Corinthians 10:31 states, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." God does not want you to be slothful or wasteful; that is not characteristic of godliness.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:5-7: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." He was simply telling you to do your best as you labor. To do a good job and not to be wasteful or slothful is good admonition.

The principles that you have read in these verses of Scripture reveal the principle that God does not give that which might be used carelessly. What He administers, He wants put to good use. God wants us to use what He gives us in a positive way. We teach our children to use the things we give them in the

proper way. Likewise, God wants us to learn to use that which He gives us in a very positive way for the work of God.

What Can Faith in God Do?

When the disciples asked the Lord to increase their faith, they were asking for something very commendable, so Jesus proceeded to tell them, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed. . . ." Faith in God can move a mighty mountain. Faith in God can do miraculous things. Friend, when you have faith in God, that is your connection to God, and He is over all things. None is above Him—not the President, kings and queens, dictators, or corporate executives. God is supreme, and faith in God gives you a connection to One who can do all things. He created this world by simply speaking it into existence. God is Almighty; He is all powerful. Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." We fully understand that Jesus is a victor; He overcame all things and defeated all things, even death. He was in the tomb for three days, but it could not hold Him. He defeated death, and He is victorious over all things. He is our glorious example.

Jesus is greater than worldly stars, worldly singers, and worldly people who have risen high on the ladder of success. Friend, they cannot even compare with Jesus. He has risen far beyond them. They might be held in high esteem by the world and win coveted awards or be part of a team that has won a championship, but the day is coming when others will take that place of honor, and they will fade from people's memories. However, there will never be a day when someone else overtakes Jesus Christ. He is the Supreme Ruler. He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and He will never be defeated. He is alive forevermore, and nothing can change that. The last enemy Christ had to face was death, and He even conquered it. That is one reason He is so

glorious. Friend, He ought to hold a high position in your life.

Faith in God can cause many wonderful things to happen. It can cause things to take place that are uncommon in this world, and it has been the means of miracles being wrought. Do you need a miracle in your life? Do you need some divine act performed? You can have it through faith in God. I repeat, faith in God can move a mighty mountain. You might have things in your life that you are facing and battling. Faith in God is your answer.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." What is that power? It is the power of God through faith. God can do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think, according to that power.

What Would You Do With More Faith?

Faith is really a serious and powerful thing. What would you do if you had an increase in faith? What would you do with such power if it were at your disposal? Knowing that faith is the means through which miracles occur, what would you do with it? Would you use it in a way that would benefit God's church? Would it be consistent with the will of God if you had that much power at your discretion or would you let it go to your head? Sometimes, power has a way of going to people's heads, and they become exalted and feel they are something great. Nebuchadnezzar did. He had much power, riches, and glory, and he was a mighty ruler. He really thought he was something, so God had to show him that he was nothing without Him.

I believe God withholds some blessings from some people because He knows it would destroy them. God has our best interests in mind, and He is not willing that any should be lost. Before God can re-

spond to a request to increase faith, He first wants to get a person in the right condition to receive the blessing. If you are in the right spiritual condition before Almighty God, He will increase your faith, and it would benefit the Church of God as a whole; otherwise, it would be inconsistent with the will of God.

What would you do if God were to bless you by increasing your faith? Faith is a mighty, powerful thing. Again, Jesus said in verse 6 of our Scripture lesson, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." Through faith it would have to obey you, because even a sycamine tree is subject to the power of God. Jesus walked on water, and even the winds and the seas obeyed His voice. Friend, all things in this world are subject to Him: diseases, illnesses, and problems of all kinds. If He says, "Go," they must go. Also, the devils are subject to God. Jesus cast the devils out of the man who dwelled among the tombs, and the devils had to ask Him for permission to enter a herd of swine. Why? Even the devils are subject to His command. All things are subject to Him; He is in complete control.

God can turn around the things you are facing. He may be getting ready to do that for you now. He can do it with no problem whatsoever. Through faith you can be equipped to do much. You need to stop and consider why you want more faith. Sometimes you may not think you would do certain things, but if you had the power to do them, you might. Jesus was simply saying that you need to think about this matter.

You may think, "If I had plenty of money and no problems financially, I would really go to work for God." You need to be careful, because you might get the money, but you might realize that your needs and wants change as power increases; then you might not really be as devoted as you thought you

would be. Sometimes people change their minds when they get blessed with increased power, whether it is financially, physically, or another way. Jesus was trying to cause the disciples to think about what they would do with an increase in faith.

Meeting the Right Conditions

We are serving a God who can bestow abundant blessings upon His people. He still has great things in store for the true Church of God, the bride of Christ. God's children are the apple of His eye. Friend, God wants to pour out His blessings upon you, but you need to be in the right condition to receive them. He does not want to pour out His blessings on you and then you lose out. That would be vain.

God knows when He bestows more faith upon you that you will be ready to use it for His glory and for the upbuilding of His kingdom. You may not understand why things are as they are, but one thing you can know is this: God is the same as He has always been; He has not changed. He is still interested in His people. His hand still has blessings if you will meet the right conditions.

In the worldly sense, increased power could give you the potential of being looked upon favorably by the world. Many people may hold you in high esteem, yet you can be lost throughout eternity. That would be sad. You may be strong, popular, and nice-looking, and you may be a wonderful person and rich in this world's goods and yet be lost.

God wants you to be in good spiritual condition so that as He blesses you, He knows it will not cause you to go astray. God wants you to be in the right condition to receive His blessings and an outpouring of His Spirit. Friend, the outpouring of the Spirit of God was not intended only for the Day of Pentecost or for another time. God can still pour out His Spirit and bless you immensely. We could still see a great revival across the land and even around the world. We

need it in this day and time. More people need to get on fire for God and get down to the business of soul winning as in times past. We need much more of that today.

In verse 7 of our Scripture lesson Jesus said, "But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?" God is asking you to examine yourself. A servant was not necessary to live, but having a servant certainly made life easier. Look at what the servant was doing. He was working for his owner's benefit. He was out in the field plowing or feeding cattle. He was doing things for someone else's benefit. Likewise, many people in our land today, even professed religious people, have things that God has blessed them with, but they are putting it to use for their own benefit. This servant was being used at the disposal of his owner, for the owner's own fleshly benefit.

Jesus asked in verses 7-8 of our Scripture lesson: "But which of you, having a servant . . . will say unto him . . . when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? [Do you have things that God has granted you over the years that you are using fully for your own benefit? This is an examination from God's Word, which is necessary to condition you for the blessing. If you would really be honest, you would acknowledge that you have many things just for your benefit, things that you could be using for God.] And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?"

This is a description of what many people are doing with the things they have. They are using them totally for their own benefit. This servant was plowing the field and doing the chores, and then when he came in, he was not given any time for rest or relaxation. He was put right to work serving his master's supper. This master

thought only of himself.

Not only did that master demand much service, but in verse 9 Jesus asked, "Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not." Not only did he have the servant at his own discretion to use however he wanted, but he was unthankful. God had blessed him in allowing him to have this servant, but he thought only of himself. He was used to having so much, and his blessings were so commonplace that he saw no reason to be thankful for those things.

Consecrate Yourself to the Lord for His Service

Do you use what God has given you for His glory? You know, you can put an automobile to good use for God. Most families have at least one, and some people have two or three. Nothing is wrong with having more than one, but are you using them for the work of God?

Your physical health can be used to glorify God and to benefit the work of God. You can use the hands that God has given you. You can shake someone's hand and encourage that person or you can write

with your hand and be used of God. You can do many things for the Kingdom of God. You can walk through a neighborhood and invite people to come and worship God and hear the Gospel. You can labor wholeheartedly with that which you have to help see people saved. Whatever God has given you, whether it is your voice, your hands, or your feet, you can consecrate yourself and that which you have to the Lord for His service.

The servant in our Scripture text was being used to plow and feed cattle and then upon returning from the field, he prepared supper and served his master. Some people unfortunately do everything to take care of self and then try to slip in just a couple of minutes of prayer and spend only a few seconds to scan a couple of verses in the Bible. They just hurriedly rush through it out of obligation, after they have been well taken care of.

Jesus said, "Which of you . . . ?" Are you as that master was? If so, that is not grounds for an increase in faith or for God to bestow an abundance of blessings upon you. Why? It might be that you would put your blessings to work the same way. God does not want it put to work

that way.

God does not want you to be lost. He wants you to be saved. It is too dangerous to live unsaved in this world with all the accidents, death, terrorism, and all the things that are happening.

If you are already saved, you need to take inventory and make sure that you are putting all the many blessings that God has given you to use for Him.

Friend, when you get to the place where your life and the things God has given you are wholly dedicated and consecrated to God, then you are in condition for a blessing to be bestowed upon you. God wants you to consecrate everything about your life to Him. If you are not a Christian, you need to repent of your life of sin and turn from that wrong; then consecrate yourself to God. If you do not know the Lord, I want to urge you to think seriously. This could be the day that changes the rest of your life and that changes eternity for you. This could be the beginning of a wonderful life with God for you.

(Cassette C-4989E)

Forget each kindness that you do as soon as you have done it.

Forget the praise that falls to you the moment you have won it.

Forget the slander that you hear before you can repeat it.

Forget each slight, each spite, each sneer, whenever you may meet it.

Remember every promise made and keep it to the letter.

Remember those who lend you aid and be a grateful debtor.

Remember all the happiness that comes your way in living.

Forget each worry and distress, be hopeful and forgiving.

Remember good, remember Truth, remember Heaven is before you.

And you will find, through age and youth, that God will richly bless you.



IN MEMORIAM

Charles H. Dickerson



April 15, 1920 – June 6, 2006

It is with deep sorrow and grief that we have had to say goodbye to one of God's faithful warriors of the Cross. Brother Dickerson departed this life for the portals of glory Tuesday, June 6, 2006. He has fought the good fight of faith; he has run his course with victory and gained his promised crown. He now enjoys the bliss that awaits all the pure in heart. The robe of flesh in which his soul was clothed for some eighty-six years has been laid aside. All the trials, burdens, and heartaches that he carried have vanished away. Never again will he have to suffer pain or affliction. He has moved into the heavenly phase of God's kingdom called eternity.

Brother Herb Dickerson was born on April 15, 1920, in West Carlisle, Ohio. He was the son of Joseph D. and Florence (Barcus) Dickerson. In 1932 the Dickerson family moved to Jacksontown, Ohio, to look for work. Approximately a year later, the family moved to Newark, Ohio. Their home was very close to the Church of God congregation located at the corner of Sixth and Locust Streets. The Dickersons felt an emptiness in their hearts and a need to know God in a personal way. After visiting several different churches in the neighborhood, they often heard the beautiful singing coming from the Church of God. As they heard the joyful singing of the songs of Zion, a tender chord was struck in their hearts. Young Helen Dickerson was the first to visit the services. When she came home after a service, she told her parents and family, "This is just what we have been searching for!" The following Sunday, the entire family was in the services and heard Brother W. A. Wilson proclaim the Gospel. Their hungering and thirsting for spiritual food was being satisfied.

Brother Herb Dickerson was called to active duty in the United States Military and served in the European Theatre. He was among the many soldiers who invaded Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. There were hundreds of lives lost in that battle, but no doubt, God spared this dear brother for a special reason. God sees the end of our lives from the beginning and realizes the potential that each soul has if he or she will only yield to Him.

When Brother Dickerson returned home after the

war, his spiritual condition was not good. However, the Lord kept His eye on this young man and began to work with him. In the meantime he became reacquainted with a dear young lady with whom he fell in love. Brother Dickerson and Sister Kathryn Price were married January 2, 1946, with Brother Harry Craig officiating the ceremony. In just a short while, Brother and Sister Dickerson came face to face with the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. At an altar of prayer they surrendered their hearts to God and to His service.

Brother Dickerson taught a Sunday school class, where he labored faithfully while under Brother W. A. Wilson's ministry. Not long afterward, God began to deal with Brother Dickerson regarding preaching the good news of the Gospel. For a period of time, he preached wherever he was needed.

Soon God began to burden Brother Dickerson's heart for the full-time ministry as a pastor. In 1955 he pastored his first congregation, located in Goshen, Ohio. Later he was called to pastor at the Black Run Church of God. In 1966 God saw that the congregation of saints at Medina, Ohio, was in need of a pastor to lead them. Brother and Sister C. H. Dickerson followed the call of God and labored faithfully in that work for forty years, until Brother Dickerson passed on to his reward. Through their efforts, many precious souls found their way into the Kingdom of God through the new birth.

Brother Dickerson did not shun to declare all the counsel of God as the Lord revealed it to him. His departing certainly has left a great void in the Medina congregation and also in the fellowship of other congregations. However, our loss is Heaven's gain. He is now enjoying the things that yet await all those who remain faithful and true to the cause of God. He is enjoying the fruit of his labors.

In Brother Dickerson's last few months of affliction, he often said, "I have nothing to complain about." His burden was for the congregation in Medina, Ohio, to stay together in unity. His last message to this dear congregation was on unity.

To his precious, grieving congregation, let us encour-

age you. Although your skies may seem to be very dark at this time, keep looking up! God has a purpose in all things that come our way. We may not see the purpose now, but we will understand it better farther along. The Lord will not forsake you in this hour of great grief and heartache. He will make a way for you as He has made a way for others. Our prayers are with dear Sister Dickerson and the congregation. We trust that God will grant grace, strength, and comfort in the days to come.

A funeral service for Brother Dickerson was held at the Medina Church of God on Wednesday, June 8, 2006, with Brother Roger L. Decker officiating. A second funeral service was held at the Church of God at God's Acres on Saturday, June 10, 2006. The pallbearers were Brothers Earl R. Borders, Ronald Cummings, George Gordon, Irwin L. Seshier, Marty Simpson, Daniel Webster and Bernard Wilson. Brother Dickerson was then laid to rest at Wilson Memorial Gardens in Newark, Ohio, with

full military honors. Brother Dickerson was a part of D-Day on June 6, 1944. This year, on the anniversary of when the Battle of Normandy began, God called our dear brother home at the conclusion of his last battle.

Brother Dickerson is survived by his wife of sixty years; daughter, Sharon Lahmon; sister, Helen Dickerson; and brother, Austin Dickerson. In addition to his parents, Brother Dickerson was preceded in death by daughter, Becki Runion; sister, Blanche Dumm; and brother, Raymond Dickerson.

Some of Brother Dickerson's favorite Bible verses are found in Job 23:10-12, which read: "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips."

You may view this article and additional pictures online at www.GospelTrumpeter.com/pg.memorial.html.



2006 Trip to La Ceiba, Honduras



For the first time, the convention, normally held in Roatan, Honduras, was held in the city of La Ceiba. La Ceiba is located on the northern Caribbean shore of Honduras, Central America, and is the third largest city in Honduras.

Attending the convention from the United States were Brother David Stegmeier, Brother Chris Wakefield, Brother Larry and Sister Nancy Kaiser, Brother Roger Decker, and also Brother Jeff Harris.

The convention began on Thursday morning, May 25, 2006, and ended on Sunday evening, May 28, 2006. The order of services was as follows: 6:30 a.m. Prayer Service; 10:30 a.m. Morning Service; 2:30 p.m. Afternoon Service; 7:00 p.m. Evening Service.

Brother Stegmeier, Brother Kaiser, Brother Brooks, and others preached the morning and afternoon services. Brother Decker was the evening evangelist.

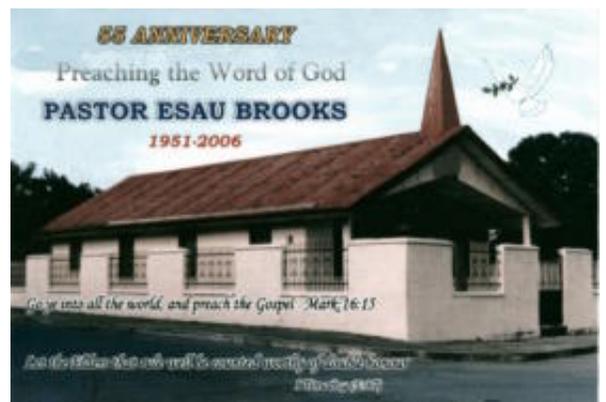
The last service of the convention, Sunday evening, was an anniversary celebration for Brother Esau Brooks who has pastored for the past fifty-five years. During the service, Brother and Sister Brooks were presented with a banner and a plaque commemorating their many years of service. Some members of the congregation participated in the service by singing songs. Others expressed words of gratitude to Brother and Sister Brooks, who have given fifty-five years of dedicated service to the work of Honduras and have expanded to the Cayman Islands and to Miami, Florida.

In addition to those attending from the United States, other saints in attendance were from the Cayman Islands, Miami, Florida, and several cities in Honduras, including the island of Banaca.

The Spirit of God was certainly present during the meeting. Many souls wept their way to an altar of prayer and were gloriously saved. Truly God is working in a wonderful way in these congregations.

To read this report and see pictures from the convention, you can visit us online at:

<http://Church-of-God-Online.com/pg.missions.2006.Honduras.html>



Card Commemorating 55th Anniversary
Church of God in Roatan, Honduras

Confusion—How to Find Your Way Out of It



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Stand on the Side of Truth and Righteousness

You do not have to be confused about what is right and what is wrong or about what is the right way and what is the wrong way. You can know for certain. God will make it very plain to you, if you really want to know. Many times during the past forty years that I have spent teaching school, students have inquired: "Mr. Stegmeier, many things are so confusing. The religious world is very confusing to me. Which way is right? Which church is right?" These questions open the door of opportunity through which I walk boldly and share some nuggets of Truth with them. I thank God for the Truth! As God's people, we are so privileged and blessed to sit in heavenly places. We are blessed above all people in the world to know the Truth. You may feel that you do not know much, but you ought to take advantage of all the opportunities that God is affording you to hear the Truth, to learn and to

grow spiritually, and to be used of God.

When I think of the Gospel songs that we often sing, I realize that the words of the songs are far more important than the tunes. One song says, "You cannot be a lazy bones." When you know what is right, you need to do it. Someone once said, "If you want to be noticed, stand up. If you want to be heard, speak up. If you want to be appreciated, shut up." We need to stand up for God and let people know what we believe and which side we are on.

In an article that I read about the Civil War, it stated that as General Lee was marching north toward Gettysburg with his large rank of men, a little German lady was in her house baking bread. When she saw them coming, she went to the fireplace, grabbed a poker, and ran out the house toward General Lee. She was going to get him. He just brushed her aside gently, as did all the men behind him. Someone who saw her asked, "What were you trying to

prove?" She said, "I wanted them to know which side I was on."

Christian friend, you need to tell others which side you are on. You ought to be on the side of Truth and righteousness. I want people to know which side I am on. One older brother, who has gone on to be with the Lord, used to say that when he was a boy, the people who came out of the Babylonian churches into the Church of God took bold stands for the Truth. Today we each need to take a bold stand for God. Do not be "a lazy bones." You must study the Bible and pray.

The children sing a song that says, "Get behind me, Satan." We need to get rid of Satan. Sometimes he whispers to me, and I say, "Get behind me, Satan." The children also sing, "There is victory for me." I love to have the victory, don't you? You can have it. I would not want any kind of religion that would excuse sin and cause confusion. I want to know what is right. I like to live, and I enjoy being happy. I enjoy

living a fulfilling and rewarding life, and the Christian life is just that.

What Is Confusion?

Confusion is typical of evil, sin, and ungodliness. James 3:16 says, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." I like to be where there is a wonderful spirit and atmosphere. Once I presided as mayor over the little city where I reside. When people asked me why I would not run for mayor again, I said, "Not on your life." When they inquired why, I said, "There is too much envy and strife."

The saints of God must work together. I do not like envy, strife, confusion, and bickering in my classroom, in the city counsel chambers, in my home, or in the church. Such behavior is foreign to the Church of God. Whenever those conditions are going on, the atmosphere is ungodly. God's church is a peaceful habitation.

What is confusion? The definition of the word *confusion* is "a state of being confused mentally; a lack of certainty, orderly thought, or power to distinguish or choose to act decisively." In other words, to be confused is to be uncertain about what you need to do. If you are confused, you can be misled. You may ask the questions: "Why is there so much confusion in the religious world? Why is there so much fighting going on in Ireland, yet they all claim to be Christians?" The answer is, they all are not Christians. God's people fight the devil, not one another.

Why is there so much confusion in that which is called Christianity? I believe the Bible gives an answer to that question. Do you think God's intent was that anyone should be confused about what is right? Oh, no! To me that is almost blasphemous. God wants us to know what is right. If your relationship with God and your desire to know the Truth is the highest of your priorities, He will show you. Do you think the Bible was written to be a divisive book? No!

Psalm 27:1 reads, "The LORD is my light and my salvation. . . ." He is

my light. There comes a time in life when you have to look to God solely. Sometimes people may confuse you. Even your mother and father may confuse you. They may stray from God a little. You should follow them as long as you are living in their home under their authority. However, there comes a time when you grow up, and you need to know what is right.

I had wonderful parents, but for a period of time they got off on "Bypath Meadow," which is an allegory in the book entitled *Pilgrim's Progress*. Have you ever read *Pilgrim's Progress*? In this book Pilgrim got off on Bypath Meadow because he thought it was an easier way. There is always someone out there who will tell you that the Church of God is too hard, too restrictive, and without freedom. They say we have no freedom and can have no fun, but in reality Church of God people enjoy life to the fullest while others are just half-living. They do not know what living really is. My father and mother came back to Truth and gloriously returned to that which was right. However, if you are not careful, it is easy to get off on "Bypath Meadow" and enter a state of confusion. I thank God that I am not confused.

"In the Time of Trouble He Shall Hide Me"

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 27:1-14: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, [I can honestly say that I have not desired material things such as houses, land, or large bank accounts, or worldly friends. I have heard many people say, 'But they are my friends.' I have heard many excuses in the years that I have pastored. God must

come before your friends. I have had many friends throughout my life, and many of them have said goodbye to me because I have chosen to go God's way. I want to be a friend of Jesus, and if being His friend means separating with someone, then that is the way it must be. In John 15:14 Jesus said, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Do you want to be a friend to Jesus?] that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, [The Word of God is powerful. We all do not sing or preach, but we all must worship God in Spirit and in Truth and get involved in the work of God.] to behold the beauty of the LORD [seeing what God is doing in people's lives that were once wrecked and ruined by sin is beautiful], and to inquire in his temple.

"For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me [and God will]. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek [you need to respond in a positive way when He says you have a need, and He will take care of it].

"Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. Teach me thy way, O LORD [He is the best teacher there is], and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD [if you are in a situation where you do

not know what to do, wait on the Lord]: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

We do not know why David wrote this psalm. He wrote many psalms because of adverse situations through which he was passing. David might have written this psalm when he was going through the hard trials that he met before he became king. Though we do not know why he wrote it, many people in hard places and trials have used it. It has been of great encouragement to many of us.

God Can Be Your Sufficiency

Again, in verse 1 of this psalm David wrote, "The Lord is my light." The Lord can be your light, friend. You need to know how to get out of confusion. If you were to walk through a building at night, you would probably stumble and fall, and you could get hurt. You need light to see your way. For any deficiency in your life, God can be your sufficiency. If you are lacking in any area of your life, He can help you. If you are hot-tempered, God can calm you down.

Since David was not a priest, he was not permitted to enter the tabernacle; however, he could abide in God's presence. God was his refuge. This is equivalent to what Jesus was saying in John 15:7, which reads, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you. . . ." You can abide in Him. God can be with you wherever you are and wherever you may go if you are living in His will. Should you step out of the will of God, you are taking a terrible chance. David sought the Lord's help.

As I was studying for this message, I thought about how Stephen received power and strength to go through that horrendous stoning, and he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The Lord will be with you in every situation of life. The enemy is out to ensnare, deceive, mislead, and destroy you. He is working against you, but God will give you strength for the battle. You should not run

ahead of God or lag behind. If you do either one, you will become perfect prey for the enemy. You need to wait on the Lord.

You do not have to be in confusion. Isaiah 40:31 states, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." I repeat, you need to wait on the Lord.

Again, in Psalm 27:11 David said, "Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path. . . ." God can help you to understand the circumstances that happen in your life, and He can give meaning to things that happen in your life. You do not have to be misled. You need to be careful of putting too much confidence in the flesh. Man can fail. You should take your Bible to church with you and study it; then if the preacher gets off the Word or the principles of the Word, you will not be easily misled. The Bible was not written to be a divisive book.

Paul, writing to a Church of God congregation that was having problems, said in 1 Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion." Wherever Truth is going forth, the devil will try to cause confusion. This is one reason that studying the Word of God, yielding to the Holy Spirit, and listening to your godly pastor are so important. Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." May God help us.

Do You Know the Lord Personally?

In Matthew, Chapter 22, you can read about three groups of people having differing viewpoints: the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducees. Verse 15 tells us the Pharisees took counsel how they might entangle Jesus in His talk. Some people sit in church time after time, hoping to hear a man of God misquote something. That is not the right attitude to have. You should not be hunting and picking for something accidentally misspoken.

The Pharisees took counsel concerning how they might entangle Jesus in His talk. Their objective was not to learn the Truth. They had a hidden motive. They should have been like the Bereans, spoken of in Acts 17:11, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." They searched the things that Paul and Silas were saying concerning the Word of God.

How can you get out of confusion? You need to search the Word of God with an open mind and a heart that is not prejudiced. Some people are prejudiced before they even enter a Church of God service. They do not want to hear what the pastor has to say. They close their minds and pull down the shades, so to speak; therefore, they do not see the light.

You need to walk in the light that you have, and when you are ready for more, God will reveal it to you. How do you keep out of confusion? You need to walk in the light as He is in the light. Jesus gave the all-important answer about how to get out of confusion and how to stay out of confusion. In Matthew 22:29 Jesus said to the Sadducees, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." Many people are like that because they lack a personal experience with God.

Most individuals in confusion lack understanding because they do not have a personal experience with God. They know about God, but they do not know Him personally. I know about President Bush, but he does not know anything about me. I appreciate our president. I know about Abraham Lincoln and like what I have heard and read about him, but I never met him. You can know the Lord personally. There is a difference between knowing about God and knowing Him personally.

David said in Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Many people in the realms of Christianity feel that living free from sin is impossible. They "err, not knowing the scriptures,

nor the power of God." The power of God can lift you out of sin and keep you out. The Church of God is unique in that it is the only institution in the world that is living without sin. The line of demarcation is drawn right there. If you sin, you are living in sin. If you are saved and living free from sin, you are in the Church of God. It takes the power of God.

Jesus Can Give You Power Over Sin

I think of the little boy who went to Sunday school and decided to stay for church. When he returned home, his father asked why he was so late. He said he wanted to stay for church because the other children were staying. The father asked what happened. His son replied, "They sang and shouted for a while and had a good time. Then the minister got up and spoke."

His father inquired, "Well, what did he talk about?"

The son answered, "I don't know."

"Don't you know anything about what he said?"

"Well, he talked about sin."

"What did he say about sin?"

"I don't know. I don't remember, but I'll tell you one thing, I know he hated it." I hate sin, and you ought to hate sin.

I like the old song that says:

*Would you be free from your
burden of sin?*

*There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in
the blood;*

*Would you o'er evil the victory
win?*

*There's wonderful pow'r in the
blood.*

*Would you be free from your
passion and pride?*

*There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in
the blood;*

*Come for a cleansing to Calvary's
tide;*

*There's wonderful pow'r in the
blood.*

*Would you be whiter, much whiter
than snow?*

*There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in
the blood;*

*Sin stains are lost in His life-giving
flow;*

*There's wonderful pow'r in the
blood.*

*Would you do service for Jesus your
King?*

*There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in
the blood.*

*Would you live daily His praises to
sing?*

*There's wonderful pow'r in the
blood.*

Pride keeps many people from really selling out to God and being all that He wants them to be, but Jesus can give you power. In John 1:12 John wrote, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Nicodemus was a religious leader, a master in Israel, and an expert in theology, but he did not understand salvation. One can be an expert in theology and yet be ignorant about Truth. Nicodemus knew the doctrines of the Jewish religion, but he had no experience with the power of God. He had merely a head knowledge. In John 3:10-11 Jesus said to him: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." From this we understand that being highly religious but utterly confused is possible.

I was in the military service during the Vietnam War. I was determined that by the grace of God, I was going to live a consistent Christian life. When I arrived at the reception center, the first opportunity I had, I ran to the chapel and knelt at the altar to ask God to help me. (That was a horrible place. I had not grown up with cursing and swearing and hollering, and that bothered me.) As I was kneeling and praying there, soon I sensed that someone was there.

I looked up and saw a tall army

chaplain. He asked if he could help me, and I said, "I am just praying. I want God to help me." He wanted to know if I would talk to him a little, so I told him my background and said that I was a Church of God boy, that I was saved, and that I wanted to live a holy life. He looked at me and said, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Next, he said, "I am afraid of you." I was afraid of him, and I was shaking like a green leaf over a fire, so I said, "It was nice to meet you, sir," and then I went out the door hurriedly. I wanted to live a holy life while I was in the military.

God can save and keep you from sin. Religious leaders are teaching people from an intellectual understanding. They have been educated in theology, and they know the proper words to say, but most of them have never experienced salvation or the power of God. They are still living in sin, darkness, and confusion.

Spiritual Understanding

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Many people read the Bible but lack understanding.

Isaiah, in speaking of Jesus in Isaiah 11:2, penned, "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD." The fear of man will bring you into a snare. You need the Spirit of God to guide you. Colossians 1:9 reads, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." There is a difference between reading the Bible and understanding what you are reading.

The eunuch from Ethiopia had gone to Jerusalem looking for something, but he did not find it

among the educated religious leaders. As he was journeying home, he read from the Book of Isaiah. Meanwhile, an angel of the Lord told Philip to go to a desert area. Then the Holy Spirit told him to join the eunuch in his chariot. Philip asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading. In Acts 8:31 you can read that the eunuch said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" The Spirit of God led Philip to that man.

God's Spirit is speaking to us today. The church is a spiritual institution. If everyone heard from God directly, there would be no confusion. Too many people are listening to man's opinion when they should be seeking God. Many years ago my pastor was traveling around the United States to visit many camp meetings. During that time, I was taking care of the home congregation and preaching in his absence. My younger brother and I held cottage prayer meetings and went to various communities in the surrounding area. We evangelized during the week, and then Friday and Saturday nights, we held services in the neighboring towns.

One evening we held a service beside a lake. We were both young. He was about nineteen years of age, and I was twenty-two years of age. We were holding a beautiful service alongside the lake, and a Lutheran young lady attended that service. The Holy Spirit came in and many young people knelt down by the logs and got saved.

After the service was over, we took her home and she said, "Something really got hold of me." After she arrived home that night, she knelt down beside her bed and prayed and asked God to reveal His Truth to her, and she became a Christian. God will help you too.

There is much evil corruption in the world, and it is even going on in religion today. Horrible things have taken place. I remember hearing a young woman's testimony on tape of going into a convent. In her testimony she said that she was disillusioned about religion. It was a

beautiful story of how she had gotten free from the convent and went to St. Louis, Missouri, and became a nurse. Later, she cared for a Church of God minister's wife. After the doctor discharged the minister's wife from the hospital, the nurse went to their home to visit. She went to church with them one Wednesday night and heard that Church of God minister preach. When she returned home, she got her Bible, placed it on a chair, and knelt there and prayed, "God, if You are real, if there is a God, save me," and she was saved. God will reveal the Truth to every honest person.

How to Study the Word

In 2 Timothy 2:15 the Apostle Paul admonished Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This verse lets us know there is a right way and a wrong way to divide the Word of God.

Jesus said in John 7:16-17: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." If you want to do right, God will show the Truth to you. On the other hand, if you are looking for a loophole, then in your heart, you really do not want to do what is right, and you would not do it; therefore you are not going to know it. Some people do not want to know the Truth, so God withholds understanding from them. I want to do what is right.

When the space shuttle, Challenger, blew up, that was a horrible catastrophe, but it happened because men did not tend to little things. I liken that to life. We ought to tend to the smallest details of our lives. If you are in doubt about something, then you should give God the benefit of the doubt. Again, Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine. . . ." Too many people are looking for little loopholes, or a means of escape. If you want to know the Truth and get out of confusion, you must accept the

Word of God in its entirety. You must study the Word of God in context; do not take it out of context. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." You must be honest and open minded when you study the Word.

I want to quote a short article, which I think is awesome. "The Bible. This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

"Here paradise is restored, Heaven is open, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory. Let it rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the Judgment, and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its contents."

Holding to Traditions

Many people are steeped in tradition. It is a terrible thing because it keeps people from knowing the Truth. Brother Emerson Wilson spoke about a young mother who was going to cook a ham, and she cut off part of the shank and placed the ham in the pan. When her daughter asked her why she cut off part of the shank, she replied, "Oh, I don't know. My mother always did."

So when they had Thanksgiving dinner, she asked, "Grandma, why is it that Mother always cuts off the shank? She said you cut off part of the shank when you cook a ham too. Why do you do it?"

Grandma said, "Oh, I don't know. Your great-grandmother is coming around Christmastime. Why don't you ask her?"

When great-grandmother came, little Susie asked her, "Momma cuts off part of the shank on the ham before she bakes the ham, and she said she did it because her mother did. So I asked Grandma, and she said she did not know why she did it. She said she did it because you did it."

"Oh," she said, "I did it because I never had a pan large enough to bake the whole thing."

Tradition is silly sometimes. I read about a Hindu man who would not eat meat. This Hindu vegetarian said he did not eat meat because of all the parasites in it, so when he got ready to eat, they got a microscope

and put his vegetables and greens under the microscope. He looked in and saw many little creatures crawling around. He broke the microscope and ate his greens and vegetables anyway. That is the way it is with people who hold to traditions.

Several years ago when I was teaching a junior high school English class, I was absolutely horrified. We were supposed to show a film entitled "The Lottery" about a little community in the Midwest. This community of approximately five hundred people gathered once a year in the spring of the year and had a lottery. The oldest member of the community carried a box filled with pieces of paper and gave a piece of paper to everyone in that community.

If the paper had a dark mark on it, the people took that person to the center of the square of the little village and stoned him or her to death, believing that insured their having good crops that year. That was a horrible

tradition! As I watched it, I said, "Why are they showing this film to seventh graders?" It was horrible! The woman with the marked paper screamed and hollered, "Why me? Why me?" In this story they packed a basket lunch and each person took a rock.

Tradition can be a horrible thing, but there is power in it. The lesson is, you need to be sure that what you are holding to is not merely a tradition. You need to be sure that it is the Word of God. Young person, you need to stay with God's people. Look at the experiences of others. Has it made them more spiritual and drawn them closer to God? If it has not, you should not follow their example. You should stay with the Truth. In John 8:31-32 Jesus said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

(Cassette C-5053M)

Upcoming Meetings

NEWARK, OH

Aug. 6-13

FALL CAMP MEETING: The Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055

The first service begins Sunday at 10:00 a.m. *Two Services Daily:* 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. Meals are reasonable priced. Meals for full-time evangelists and full-time pastors (with spouses) are half priced. Lodging is free-will offering basis. Come and worship the Lord with us! Holy Ghost preaching, inspirational singing, children's services, and divine healing. Call Bro. David or Sis. Ruby Bush for reservations at 740-345-1213.

For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 83 Decrow Ave., Newark, OH 43055

Telephone: 740-344-2543

CANBY, OR

Aug. 22-28

CAMP MEETING: The Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Ave., Canby, OR 97013

The first service begins Monday at 7:00 p.m. *Two Services Daily:* 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. Meals are reasonable priced.

We welcome everyone! Please make reservations in advance, if possible. For further information and to make reservations contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 103 Main St., Canby OR 97013. Telephone: 513-323-0485

NEWTON, KS

Aug. 30-Sep. 3

REVIVAL: The Church of God, Newton, Kansas

Evangelist: Bro. Earl R. Borders, Heath, OH. He will be preaching on The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets.

Service times: Wed.-Fri. 7:00 p.m., Sat. 10:45 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. Sunday Services: Sunday School 9:30 a.m.,

Morning Worship 10:45 a.m., Evening Worship 7:00 p.m. A meal will be served in the dining hall after the morning service.

For further information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil, 315 Old Main St., Newton KS 67114. Telephone: 316-842-5127

MEDINA, OH

Sep. 5

LABOR-DAY MEETING: Medina Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256

Service times: 10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. Meal will be provided by the local congregation. For further information contact:

Sis. Dickerson, 215 Montview Dr., Medina, OH 44256. Telephone (216) 725-6853 or 725-5993

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Church That Jesus Built



Brother Patrick Brower

Seeking Truth

Before I came to the Church of God, I was in secular religion. I was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. It is not the Church of God. The Church of God is divine, and she is the church that Jesus built. I saw the falsity of the Roman Catholic Church at an early age. As I was seeking the Lord and trying to gain understanding of the Lord, I came to have a little better understanding when someone talked to me. I knew there was a God, but I could not get the victory that I sought in my soul. That is hard to do when you are attending a congregation where those who claim to be living for God are not saints. They were unfaithful, still living in sin, lying, and cheating. The members went outside during the services to take a snort of liquor. They smoked tobacco, and even the preacher smoked. What kind of example was that? You can see that I did not find what I was looking for in that church.

My wife was raised in a holiness church. They had a high standard of dress; however, she had stepped away from that standard. When I married her, she was wearing slacks, had shoulder length hair, and wore earrings. After we were married, we moved to the state of Montana, and in our search for Truth, we attended several nondenominational churches, but we still could not find any satisfaction. Finally, I just gave up and decided that I did not need church. Needless to say, I did not fare too well.

My wife became hungry for the Word, and she knew there was a true church somewhere. Even with my lack of understanding and my lack of faith, I knew there was only one church. Jesus founded His church, and He has only one church. He did not want all this denominationalism in the world.

My wife kept searching for a church where she could worship with the people of God, those who truly believed the Bible and lived

holy lives. One Sunday as she was driving down a street, she noticed a little house with a chapel, and along the sidewalk was a wall of flowers. She admired the beautiful flowers and decided to go in and see what was going on. Inside the chapel were about eight people worshipping. The late Brother R. L. Mullen was preaching. There she heard the Truth go forth, and from that moment, she knew that was Truth. She could feel the love of the people, and during the preaching of the Word, she could feel the Spirit of God. She had never heard such singing! Those old hymns cannot be heard in the worldly churches.

My wife continued to go to church there, but I did not go with her, because at that time, I wanted no part of church. Finally, one day after much pleading and coaxing, I decided to go with her. Brother Mullen preached a very good message, but I said, "We'll watch. We'll wait and see." I continued to attend now and then.

One night my wife came home from a revival service and said, "You need to come to the revival tomorrow night. There is this preacher, and his wife and his seven children are with him, and they all sing. It is just so beautiful! They all play the violin. You have to come and hear this!"

I went the next night, and what I heard was just like a little piece of Heaven. I heard Brother David Stegmeier preach, and it was quite a service! As I listened, he said, "I love you all very, very much. I love each and every one of you."

I thought, "You don't even know me, and if you did know me, you wouldn't love me." Nevertheless, he continued to say it, and I continued to watch and listen. He came to Montana a couple of times a year to hold revival services, and I attended periodically. Meanwhile, I was watching the lives of Brother and Sister Mullen and the other saints in the congregation. First John 4:1 says to "try the spirits whether they are of God." Then the time came to have the camp meeting in Canby, Oregon. My wife and Brother Stegmeier pleaded with me to attend the meeting. So I drove over in the car and listened to the Word and rejoiced with the saints. It was just a little piece of Heaven there.

Then one day the Lord God spoke to my heart. He showed me that this is a church where the people are living righteous lives, and they practice what they preach. I yearned for that. During that service a brother became blessed in his soul and began to shout and praise God. I thought, "I want what that man has!" I got serious and went to the altar. There I poured out my heart to the Lord and said, "Lord, You have to help me! Take away my sins, forgive me of my sins, and lift me up, Lord. Save me and help me to live a righteous, clean life."

Pressing on for the Lord

A few years later, Brother Mullen, who was getting quite old, felt that it was time for him to stop

pastoring. We sent word throughout the church that we needed a pastor, and as a congregation, we began to pray that the Lord God would send us a man who would continue to preach the Truth.

Time went on, and it seemed that no one had the call to come to Hamilton, Montana. We prayed for more than two years. One night the Lord laid a message on my heart. Brother Mullen, whose health was failing, said, "I don't have a message." Sister Mullen said, "Does anyone have a message?" I said, "Well, I have a message." Brother Mullen did not hear me, but the next week Sister Mullen and Brother Mullen came to me and said, "Do you still have a message?"

I said, "I still have the message that the Lord laid on my heart."

He said, "Why don't you bring it for us?"

So I got up before the church, sweating profusely and shaking, and delivered the message, and I have been preaching ever since. Some time after that, I felt that the Lord was calling me to pastor the church in Hamilton, although I had never aspired to such a position. I never wanted to be a preacher. Then one day Brother Mullen came to me and said, "What about you, brother? Do you think you could be the preacher here?" The Lord God worked on my heart, and He blessed me in a wonderful way. Now we continue to press the battle on in Hamilton, Montana.

Others who once despised the church are pressing on for the Lord today. I know another man who did not like the church once, but now he is a powerful man of God, leading the saints. Some did not like it when he became the pastor. Some did not like it when the Lord God called me. I struggled with that for a while. It can be difficult when God calls a man to pastor the same congregation that is he attending. Some people may become jealous or envious. Nevertheless, the Lord God will choose whom He pleases. When God appoints a pastor, does His choice

offend you? When a man of God has been given the authority to be the overseer of the church, does it offend you? Do you think, "Who does he think he is? Who is he to tell us what to do?" Well, he is the man who looks after your soul. He is the man who is concerned about your salvation. He is the man who takes on the burdens of the church and tries to make sure that everything is going as it should, but above all, he is one who hears from God.

I do not hear too well physically, but spiritually I seem to be doing much, much better. Sometimes when I preach messages, I do not even know why the Lord gives me a particular message, but I preach it. One night I preached a message about murderers. Did you know that the Lord God can forgive a murderer and even use that person if he will surrender his heart to the Lord completely? The Bible lets us know that before Paul was converted, he was a murderer. Moses was a murderer, and the Lord God lifted him up and used him mightily. I did not know why the Lord had me preach that message, but when the service was over, someone said to me, "I want to thank you for that message. My father was a murderer, and I was having a hard time forgiving him."

I owe my salvation to Jesus Christ. He suffered and died on the Cross for my sins and your sins. Friend, He is willing to take away all your sins. You can be washed whiter than snow.

The Rock of Our Salvation

The Lord Jesus Christ built the Church of God. Again, our Scripture text reads, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Peter was not the founder of the church. John 1:42 says, "And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." The name Peter

means "a stone." Let me make one point perfectly clear to you. Jesus Christ built the church; He is the Rock. When the Word of God speaks of Jesus Christ being the Rock in both the Old and the New Testaments, it is always capitalized. However, the word that was translated *rock* in the Scripture text is not capitalized.

First Peter 2:5 states, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Peter was telling the saints that they, too, as lively stones, were built up a spiritual house. Ephesians 2:19-22 reads: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

The Lord used Peter as an example when He said, ". . . upon this rock I will build my church." Acts 2:14-16 reads: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven [this was on the Day of Pentecost], lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."

On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down, and Peter told them that was what was prophesied by the Prophet Joel. Then he said in verse 38, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost fell only on the Jews. They were devout men of Judea. When the Apostles spoke, you can read in Acts 2:8 that the people wondered, "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we

were born?"

Later, when Peter was at Cornelius' house, the Gentiles also received the Holy Ghost. Acts 10:44-48 states: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Peter was the man whom Jesus used to explain to the people what the beginning of the Church of God was about. Was Peter the Rock? No, he was a man who was part of the foundation. Jesus Christ is the Chief cornerstone. The Apostle Paul, talking about the children of Israel after they fled from Egypt, said of that Rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Jesus Christ is the Rock of our salvation; He is the spiritual Rock. Jesus Christ built the church, and He continues to build up the church today. He built upon Peter, Paul, John, James, and the other Apostles. Every saved individual is a lively stone to build up a spiritual house.

The Name of the Church

The church that Jesus built has a specific name. I was talking to a man recently about the Truth concerning the name of the church, and he said, "I don't believe the church has a name, and I don't believe the church needs a name. We all are just Christians." That is contrary to the Word of God. Ephesians 3:14-15 tells us: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The Apostle Paul bowed his knees to the Father of Jesus Christ. Jesus called God His Father. God is the Father, and Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The Church of God is a family. How do we know it is really named the Church of God? Acts 20:28 says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves [he was talking to the leaders of the church], and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Jesus Christ died on the Cross to establish the church. Some say the name is unimportant. However, in human families, if you do not have your father's name at birth, you are an illegitimate child. Likewise, we, as the family of God, must have the name of our Heavenly Father, God. If you do not have His name, you are an illegitimate child.

Denominations bear other names. Today there are more than thirty thousand denominations in the world. Do you know what a denomination is? Do you know what "denominate" means? According to the dictionary, it means "to give a name to." Is that not what churches have done all over the land? They have taken some other name. You may talk to people who will tell you that their church is called by another name, but they are not the Church of God. If you discuss doctrines and tell them the Bible mentions only the Church of God, they say, "Well, we are the Church of God, but we call ourselves by another name." That does not make much sense, does it? Are you the Church of God or are you of another church? You cannot be both Church of God and something else.

A denomination is a particular religious sect or body with a specific name. A sect is a religious group that has broken away from an established church. If you were to buy a denominational chart at a Christian book store, you will not even see the Church of God listed, but you will

see that denominationalism started with the Roman Catholic Church and branched off to the Russian Orthodox. Underneath that you will see the Baptist, the Methodist, the Wesleyan, and all the other Protestant denominations. You will not see the Church of God listed on the chart because the Church of God is not Protestant. She is the beginning of the church, and she goes in a straight line all the way through time.

How Is Your Vision?

Proverbs 29:18 tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." You need to have a vision of the church. When you are in the Spirit, you can see the Church of God. I sat under the preaching of Brother Mullen for ten years and heard him preach on the Church of God many times, but I did not really see the Church of God until I began to preach it. You see, it is one thing to hear something, but when you really study it, you will begin to see it in a greater light. As you live holy, walk in the Truth, and watch the saints' lives, you will begin to see the church. I have grown to love the church. The church is not a literal building; the church consists of the saints of God.

I am beginning to understand what the brethren mean when they say, "I love each and every one of you." I love all people too. The Spirit of God within me causes me to love everyone. Do you have love one to another? You should have. Sectarianism is division. Again, a sect is a religious group that has broken away from an established church and has taken another name. All those churches have broken off into sects, and that is the reason there are so many denominations in the world today. Sometimes it comes about because of a lack of understanding of the Word of God, and sometimes it is due to pride, greed, or the desire for power. Other times a man wants to be in the pulpit. They are too eager to stand in the pulpit. The Lord God came down to the man of God,

Moses, and said, in so many words, "I want you to go back to Egypt and lead my people out."

Moses asked, "Why me, Lord? I can't speak well."

The Lord said He would send his brother Aaron to be a spokesman. Moses was eighty years of age when he went back to Egypt. God sent an 80-year-old man to Egypt to bring the children of Israel out of bondage.

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh, and because he ran away, he was swallowed by a whale. One reason I started preaching when the Lord called me was that I did not want to be swallowed by a whale, so to speak. Today some men are too eager to be preachers. Without a call from the Spirit of God, they cannot preach the Word. That is what is wrong in secular religion today. As one brother often says, "God does not call a man to preach in any church except the Church of God." That is the only place where He sets His overseers and calls men to preach the Gospel.

Jeremiah 3:15 says, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." It takes the Spirit of God to open people's eyes. Before I was saved, the Bible did not mean much to me. I thought it was almost like a history book, but when the Spirit of God came into my life, He revealed spiritual things to me that I had never seen before. I get excited when the Lord God opens my eyes to His ways.

Sectism is present in some so-called Church of God congregations, and that is a sad thing. The Bible says to feed the Church of God, the one church. God wants His church to be called by the name that He gave her, with nothing added and nothing taken away. If He wanted it to be called by another name, He would have named it differently.

You can read of examples in the Word of God concerning the church name. In Romans 1:7 the Apostle Paul wrote, "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul was writing to those who were "called to be saints" in Rome. We read in 1 Corinthians 1:2, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth. . . ." He wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." He did not write to the Corinthian Church of God; he wrote to the Church of God which was at Corinth. The Church of God is the one body of Christ. The members are in various locations throughout the world, but we are one body.

The Word of God mentions no other church but the Church of God. Ephesians 1:1 reads, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." As you read these letters, you can see that Paul wrote to the congregations at certain locations.

The seven churches of Asia mentioned in the Book of Revelation were not seven denominational churches. They all were one body, and they all were Church of God congregations at various locations throughout Asia. The candlestick with the seven candles in it represents the seven churches of Asia, but they are in one holder. The Church of God is one body.

I just explained the name of the church and a little about the church. The saints are the church. All who are living righteously are the church.

Having the Mind of Christ

Sectarianism is division. There will be no religious sects in Heaven. I am not saying that a sectarian person cannot go to Heaven. Only the saints of God can go to Heaven. You may ask, "Why would you bring that up?" Too many people spend too much time wrapped up in worldly religion and functions of denominationalism.

If you want to make Heaven

your home, you need to be involved in spiritual things of God. You need to study the Word of God, be spiritual, pray much, and be in the house of God whenever possible. Recently someone said to me, "I don't believe in going to church, but I'm spiritual." Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." This means that you ought to be in the house of God whenever you can.

Some people have itching ears, and they choose a minister who will preach what they want to hear. You may hear the Word of God and get angry because it touches an area of your life that you do not want to change. Although I have been preaching for only a short time, I have dealt with contention. Some people love to contend against the Truth. They love to buck up against the pastor, but in reality they are bucking up against the Word of God. Do you have a spirit of contention in your heart? If so, you need to get rid of it. You may not always understand everything you hear or see the light, but you should not contend against the Word of God.

Sometimes people get angry when the Word of God reveals what is wrong with their lives and lets them know they need to change. The flesh does not want to change. The flesh and the spirit war against each other. The flesh wants to go on doing things that the world does, but the spirit wants to be obedient to the things of God. Romans 8:6 tells us, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." You need to take on the mind of Christ.

We all may never agree on every point, but if we have the Spirit of God, we will be of one accord. The Word of God says to be of one mind. That does not mean that we all will love the color red and our favorite food will be spaghetti. That is not what the Bible is talking about. The one mind is the mind of Christ. We

must have our thoughts and our minds on holiness, righteousness, and the things of God. People will disagree about small things, but there will be harmony and unity if we allow the Spirit of God to direct us.

A little boy was walking along the dam and saw a trickle of water coming out, so he stuck his finger in the hole to stop the leak. That is how we are today. The Church of God is in a great green valley and the dragon (the devil) is trying to destroy the Church of God by bringing in false doctrines, false teachings, and other things to affect the church. If we do not put a finger in that hole and stop the leak, the dam is going to break. Just a little trickle leaking out can cause a breach, and it will get larger and larger.

God's People Are a Holy People

Consider the dress standard. You may think that if we let down a little on the standard, more people would come. Surely they would, but we would no longer be the true Church of God. If we see cracks or little breaks in the wall, we need to stop them immediately, otherwise we will have a great flood of lukewarmness.

You need to remember that we have an enemy. First Peter 5:8 warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Satan is an evil spirit, and he wants to enter your heart and life to destroy you. He goes about seeking whom he may devour, but the Spirit of God goes about seeking whom He may save. The Spirit of God comes down from Heaven and searches the hearts of men. He will search your heart and show you what your problem is and what you need help with. What are you hung up with? Do you have sin in your heart? Do you have jealousy, envy, or contention in your heart? Do you contend with the pastor?

Are you having a problem with the Bible dress standard? Do you need to clean out your closet? Are

your skirts too short? Are your tops too low or too tight? Are your clothes too revealing? Saints are to dress modestly. First Timothy 2:9 says, ". . . women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." The Word of God will search the depths of your heart to see what you need to get rid of.

First Corinthians 11:14-15 declares: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." Do you have a problem with the hair standard? Is God talking in your heart about that?

When God searches your heart, does He find that you are into pornography? That used to just be in magazines, but now it is on the Internet. You had better stay away from pornography.

Do you have a problem with cursing? That was my biggest challenge when I got saved. I never smoked, drank alcohol, or used drugs, but I cursed. I went to the altar and prayed to the Lord God and asked Him to take it away from me. He helped me and gave me victory over it. The Lord God will give you victory over whatever it is in your life that is troubling you. God is offering you salvation. He does not want to destroy you. He wants to save you. When was the last time you poured out your heart to God? Have you ever poured your heart out to Him? Have you ever given up the sinful things in your life that you need to get rid of? What kinds of sins are in your life?

Consider the words you speak. James 3:5 tells us, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Do you speak against your brother or your sister? You need to be very careful that you do not say anything against your pastor.

God knows what is in your heart, and He does not want to destroy you

because of evil speaking. God is offering you a chance to make things right. Jesus Christ died on the Cross for your sins so that you might be saved. You need to think about that for a minute. They took Jesus Christ out, and He was the Son of God. He offered salvation. When He rode out of Jerusalem the week of the Crucifixion, He wept because the people would not turn to Him, Jesus Christ weeps for you today. If you are not turning to Him, if you have sin in your life, Jesus weeps. God's people are a holy people.

Is Your Life a Shining Example?

Romans 12:1 reads, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." They spit upon Jesus Christ, beat Him, put a crown of thorns upon His head, and mocked Him. Then they drove nails through His hands and His feet, hung Him on the Cross, and let Him hang there for six hours. In Matthew 27:40b you can read that they mocked Him and said, "If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross." Luke 23:35 says the rulers derided Him and said, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." Jesus Christ could have struck them all dead, but He had mercy. He is on the mercy seat today, saying as He said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Jesus said in John 14:27a, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Friend, Jesus Christ is offering you peace in your soul. You need to examine your heart. Do you have stubbornness and rebellion in your heart? Do you rebel against the pastor? Do you rebel against the Word of God? First Samuel 15:23a states, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." These things are sin. Do you deal in witchcraft?

Some people love Harry Potter, but the child of God should not read Harry Potter books or watch the movies. Do you read the horoscopes in the daily newspaper? You should not have anything to do with such things.

Do you hate your brethren? The Church of God is one body, one family. You are not to hate your family; you are to have love in your heart. Do you need more love in your heart? Jesus said in John 15:12, "This is my great commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." When I first began to preach, I did not know if I had enough love in my heart, so I went to the altar and prayed, "Lord, fill me with Thy love; give me compassion and mercy and a burden for the people." I do not want to see anyone lost.

Have you done something to someone that you have not made right? Have you taken anything and not made restitution? You may dress godly and appear to be righteous, but what does the inside of the cup look like? You know what is in your heart. Jesus said in Matthew 23:25, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." You may look beautiful outwardly, but what about the inside? What is in your heart? You need to get rid of things that displease God. Satan would like nothing better than to see you fall, but God wants you to stand on His promises, cleanse your heart, and be made pure.

Isaiah 4:1 reads, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." The bread is the doctrine. Many people want to eat their own doctrine and wear their own apparel, and the apparel is the filthy rags of sin. The saints of God wear the pure robes of righteousness.

If you want to be a part of the Church of God, you cannot continue to walk in sin. Jesus Christ can

forgive your sins and put you in the church. When you are born into the church, you are called to live a holy life. On the other hand, if you want to continue in sin, you are not in the church, whether you are a pastor, an evangelist, or whomever you may be. You need to get right with God. Christian friend, you need to let your righteousness be a light to the world. You need to be a shining example to those who are lost. People are watching everything you say and do.

Are You a Hearer and a Doer of the Word?

Brother R. L. Mullen preached and practiced divine healing. I have been touched in my body. Once I suffered for three days with a gallbladder attack. I had much work that I wanted to finish before I went in the hospital, so I did the work and suffered with that condition. When I had completed my work, I got ready to go to the hospital. As I was preparing to go, my wife was on the telephone with Sister Mullen, and they were praying for God to heal me. While they were on the phone, I felt something move, and then the pain was gone. I did not know until later that they had been praying. Afterward, I said, "Well, I feel pretty good, but I'll go and have them check it out."

I went to the hospital and they did an ultrasound and said, "There is nothing wrong with you. You have no gallstones."

I said, "Praise the Lord!" and I went home.

Do you have enough faith in your heart that the Lord God can touch your body? The Lord God has touched many. He has healed the blind, the deaf, the lame, the lepers, and many others. One woman touched the hem of His garment and was healed. Today you, too, can receive divine physical healing if you have faith.

At one time, before I began to preach, I struggled with the thought of paying tithes. My wife coaxed me to do so, but I said, "Forget it." The

next thing I knew I was on my back in my bed with gout. It was extremely painful, I had to use crutches to do anything. (Gout was a common condition during the old Roman empire. It was so painful that the sufferers had a very high suicide rate.) The Lord was talking to me about paying tithes. I said, "I am not paying tithes; forget it! There is no way." Well, after about three weeks of suffering in bed, I said, "Okay, Lord, You win. I'll pay tithes." The next day I was out of the bed, and I have not had gout since. I continue to pay tithes and offerings. Even a pastor must pay tithes. You should not rob the Lord of tithes and offer-

ings. You should want to be all that God calls you to be.

Sometimes the Christian life is not easy, because the flesh wars against the spirit. Do you have trouble with greed and the love of money? You cannot take your worldly possessions with you when you die. You are going to leave worldly pleasures behind. However, you dare not be without God. If you have greed, the love of money, or worldliness in your heart, you need to seek the Lord earnestly, repent, and ask for forgiveness.

Have you become lukewarm? You can become complacent in not moving forward in your Christian

experience. You should not let that come into your life. The Lord can give you great strength. He does not give you the spirit of fear, but He gives you power, love, and a sound mind. I want to encourage you to think about who you are, what you are, and where you are going.

If you want to be a child of the Lord, you must first repent and forsake all your sins, and then you must hear the Word of God and obey it. You must be a hearer and a doer of the Word. May the Lord be with you.

(Cassette C-5432M)

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]
men without fear or favor. In the midst of famine, the people of God are feasting bountifully. As David of old said in Psalm 23:5, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." While the famine is leaving many spiritually starving, God's people feast on the rich delicacies of heavenly manna.

The Spring 2006 Camp Meeting has now come to an end, yet it is a joy to reminisce of the glorious time we shared together with God's people. Oh, how we all enjoyed the sweet spirit that flowed from heart to heart! What a joy and a privilege it was to be together with some of God's wonderful people. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of being ushered into His presence and partaking of this heavenly atmosphere. The spirit of love and unity of His people was truly one of the highlights of this camp meeting.

Without thought of contradiction we must again express that this was the best camp meeting we have been in. This same statement seems to be made after every camp meeting. The question arises, "How can you always say that?" The only answer one can give is simply this: "That is the way it is supposed to be when God is having His way." The Apostle Paul told us in 2 Timothy 3:13 that "evil men and seducers shall wax

worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." As the world continues to decay and people go the broad way, the things of God are becoming sweeter and richer to the saints who truly love God. Paul, speaking in 2 Corinthians 4:16, said, ". . . though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Time after time, our hearts were blessed and our cups were made to overflow as the Lord poured His Spirit out upon us. This heavenly atmosphere blessed and encouraged our souls and uplifted our spirits as the Lord dwelt among us. The choir songs and the songs of the special singers were outstanding. Many souls came to the altar seeking salvation, help, direction, and strength. The main purpose of any meeting is to see souls find the help that is needed. It is always sad to see a meeting come to an end when we know there are souls who are yet in need of God.

The Word of God was sounded forth with great clarity. One young convert made the statement, "This is the best meeting I've seen yet." God has a way of showing Himself strong to everyone. The preaching was simply outstanding. Every message was to the point and brought enlightenment to all.

Yes, we could say that the Lord did prepare a fabulous table for each of us. There certainly was no famine in the camp! It was a time of feasting on spiri-

tual meat, wine, and honey for the mature saints and milk for the newborn babes. God surely spreads His table with everything we need. Praise His Holy Name!

Departing from a camp meeting is always a sad time. The sadness comes when we must part from precious brothers and sisters whom we love and respect. Being together with God's people causes ones to have a desire never to have to part and go back into the worldly atmosphere. We need to be reminded that our mission is to be in the world but not of the world. God needs us to be a light to those in darkness, to shine and to be a help in winning others to this precious experience that we so enjoy.

The Lord only knows how many more camp meetings and revivals we will be privileged to enjoy together. We are living in perilous times today. This is a day and time when the glorious light of the Gospel is going out in many places. Too many people want to water down the Truth to make it of no effect. When the Truth is rejected, it will bring about a spiritual famine, not only in individual souls but also where they worship. God commands us to keep the light shining brightly in our hearts and lives and to serve Him faithfully more than anything else.

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