

Education, The Bane Of This 'Enlightened' World

"The LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery, They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed. Therefore the land will mourn; And everyone who dwells there will waste away With the beasts of the field And the birds of the air; Even the fish of the sea will be taken away." (Hosea 4:1-3).

Year 2004 began with an intense debate about the teaching of values in education in Australia. It all started when the Prime Minister made a statement that public schools have become "too politically correct and too values-neutral", that parents wanted schools to impart values as well as the three Rs, and that that is why they were taking their children away from public schools and moving them to private education (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 Jan. 2004).

As one might have expected, advocates of both public and private education went to the parapets, each extolling the virtues of their kind of education. A day later, the same newspaper wrote:

"Australia is moving towards a national charter for values education after federal and state ministers agreed that going to school is "as much about building character" as learning academic skills. A draft values education framework will be sent to school principals "to guide debate in this important area" ahead of a national forum on April 28 – 29 in Melbourne, a spokesman for the federal Education Minister, Brendan Nelson, said yesterday.

The Values Education Study, released in November, was commissioned by Dr Nelson and was supported by all state education ministers. It found **confusion** in schools about what constituted values and said research showed that a partnership between schools and parents could help reinforce attributes as tolerance, social justice, inclusion, and freedom."

Pardon? Reinforce attributes as tolerance, social justice, inclusion, and freedom? Have we reached the stage in which our people need 'attributes' that totalitarian regimes deny to their peoples?

The next day, in a nationally televised current affairs program by Australia's national broadcaster, (*ABC*, TV, 23 Jan. 2004), the headmaster of a top private Anglican school was asked what values his school was teaching to the students. He couldn't list a single one. He prevaricated and avoided giving a direct answer, saying only that he was happy that the PM had raised the issue so that both private and public schools could '**explore**' the values that they need to teach.

Three days later, again in a nationally broadcast program, the Prime Minister himself was asked about the values he complained public schools were not teaching. It was his chance to set the record straight, but he too prevaricated and changed the subject. He spoke of the need for 'cooperation' between parents and educators in **deciding** the values that all schools ought to teach.

Now isn't that extraordinary? People complain that schools do not teach values, yet when asked about them, they change the subject and invoke the need to 'explore' 'cooperate' and 'decide' on the values that schools ought to teach. In other words, we are going to invent the wheel once again.

After two thousand years of Christianity you'd think that people would instinctively know the values that make for good character. Isn't this what religion is supposed to be all about? It only shows what happens when religion is relegated to the back burner: the entire society is thrown into confusion about the values it ought to live by.

One of the best commentaries on the merits of public versus private education came from a local community newspaper.

"Prime Minister John Howard sparked a debate over schools last weekend when he suggested parents were shying away from public schools because they had become "too politically correct" and "values neutral". In the days that followed there was an angry and justifiable backlash from teachers and parents. Many people would argue the only positive result of Mr Howard's comments was it put the issue at the forefront of public debate.

How is it possible to be too politically correct? The Macquarie Dictionary defines correctness as "conformity to current beliefs about correctness in language and behaviour with regard to policies on sexism, racism, ageism, etc." Aren't these the values children should learn? Private schools do not have a monopoly on values.

According to NSW Education Minister Andrew Refshauge, public schools strive to impart values such as inclusiveness, tolerance, diversity, striving for academic excellence, democracy and a "fair go".

Why is it almost 40 per cent of teenagers attend private secondary schools and one in three children do not go to a public school? It is a misconception a child will get a better education solely because he or she attends a private school, but it is something increasing numbers of parents including the Prime Minister appear to believe.

Many seem to think private schools have higher academic results, but the 2004 HSC results clearly show seven of the 10 performing schools were State schools.

Better discipline is often given as a reason why parents send their children to non-government schools. But private schools cannot be judged to have better discipline simply because they can more easily expel troublesome students or they have a stricter uniform code. Government schools turn out many fine well-rounded young adults who go on to make productive and honourable contribution to society." (*Central Coast Express Advocate*, 27 Jan. 2004).

The State Education Minister touched somewhat on the values schools should 'impart', but even his list is not definitive.

Going back to the Federal Minister's Report on Values in Education, one may be tempted to ask what is wrong with the 'attributes' of 'tolerance, social justice, inclusion, and freedom' that he listed? Nothing wrong, except that these are the very 'attributes' that Canadian and American Courts have invoked to demand the legalisation of homosexual marriages. It is the kind of 'attributes' feminist and homosexual lobbies have used from the beginning of their campaign all over the world.

Politicians do not make statements they know are going to be controversial unless they have a certain aim in mind and want to channel the discussion in a certain direction. Can you see where this whole debate is heading and what purpose it

serves? Can you see the mire and stupor into which the whole world has fallen? And see how easily these lobbies have entrapped both the Education Minister and the Prime Minister? After declaring these to be desirable attributes for character building they cannot now turn back and repudiate them. And the mass media has fallen headlong for this trap too.

Our politicians know the storm that the notion of homosexual marriage has caused in Canada and America and that before long this storm will reach these shores too. It helps them to be seen to be on the right side of this vocal lobby, without them saying so. Talking about such 'attributes' in the context of education is their way of doing it, but a very dangerous way. It is absolutely deadly for any society to embark upon this road.

When we discovered that our leader was listed among the wicked spirits that came up on the River Euphrates from the East, we were greatly surprised ('Another End Time Prophecy Unveiled', in *TCH 12*). Not any more. God know people's minds, hearts and intentions, better than we do. He does not condemn them for freeing the people of Iraq from tyranny, which the United Nations should have done long ago, but for delivering them the 'freedoms' that they do not want or need.

It is an extraordinary fact that it should be the Liberal Party, the party of lawyers, that is being used as a Trojan Horse by homosexual lobbies to introduce their agenda into public life, not the Labour Party, which is more sympathetic to its cause.

So what are the values that every child should be taught in school, and every parent should teach at home? We will come to them shortly, but first let us look at what we wrote as early as 1995. We pick up the story at one of Jesus' lessons to His disciples about His return to this earth and the end of this age.

Mat 24:3 "Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Mat 24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

Mat 24:5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

Mat 24:6 See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Mat 24:7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines,

Mat 24:8 pestilences, and earthquakes in various places." All these are the beginning of sorrows. "Then they

Mat 24:9 will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

Mat 24:10 "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

Mat 24:11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Mat 24:12 "And because **lawlessness will abound**, the love of many will grow cold.

Mat 24:13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved. "And this gospel of the kingdom

Mat 24:14 will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

Mat 24:32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth

Mat 24:33 leaves, you know that summer is near. "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near; at

Mat 24:34 the doors! "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

Mat 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Mat 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Mat 24:37 "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

"How could the world be taken by surprise by these events, as it was taken by the flood of Noah, if everyone is aware of the work of the two witnesses? Something isn't right. Could it be that we have been sold another fib by those who tell us to keep our eyes on Jerusalem? There is only one way to find that out, and that is by going back to the Bible. Here is the entire story of the two witnesses from the book of Revelation:

Rev 11:3 "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days,

Rev 11:4 clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the

Rev 11:5 earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if

Rev 11:6 anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

Rev 11:7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them,

Rev 11:8 overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Rev 11:9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.

Rev 11:10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another,

Rev 11:11 because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Now after the three-and-a-half

Rev 11:12 days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

Rev 11:13 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Rev 11:14 The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

"Did you notice that the word "Jerusalem" is not found anywhere in this passage? But what about "Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified", doesn't this refer to Jerusalem? Herein lies another of the great biblical mysteries: this sentence does not refer to Jerusalem. We cannot have Jerusalem referred to as "holy city" in one place, and as "Sodom and Egypt" in the next.

The word "Sodom" refers to homosexuality – no question about that. The word "Egypt" refers to idolatry – no question about that either. Which means that the city in which the bodies of the two witnesses will lie for three and a half days is a city given to homosexuality and idolatry. Jerusalem, in its present condition, may not be exactly a holy city, but it is by no means one given to homosexuality and idolatry as are New York, San Francisco, Sydney, and a dozen other major cities around the

world. But what about the sentence, "where our Lord was crucified", could that refer to any other city than Jerusalem? This astonishing mystery had thrown everyone off the right track for nearly two thousand years. Take a look at this:

Heb 6:4 "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have

Heb 6:5 become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age

Heb 6:6 to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since **they crucify again** for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."

"Those who have fallen away after they have "tested the good word of God... **crucify again** for themselves the Son of God". They could be anywhere in the world, not just in Jerusalem. Which means that if we want to find the city from where the two witnesses will take the Gospel of the Kingdom to all nations, we must look for a city in which homosexuality is rampant, idolatry is widespread, and Jesus Christ is being "crucified again" by those who ought to know better.

"There are a number of such cities around the world, but we can't speak about them. We can, however, speak of the city of which we have first hand experience, from where we have been sending these magazines to the world, and that is Sydney.

"Our readers would know about the homosexual festival called "Gay and Lesbian Mardi Grass" which takes place in this city annually, and of which we have written in the past. It is an open display of vulgarity and obscenity that would make any decent person sick just by watching it. This is only one aspect of a wide range of homosexual activities that take place in this city all year round.

"Regarding idolatry, Sydney resembles Egypt more than any other major city in the world. Those who have visited Sydney may have noticed a figure, like the Sphinx of Egypt, in the very heart of the city. Flanking one side of the famous Sydney Harbor Bridge, the ugly face of a woman more than four stories high – the Luna Park mascot – stares wanly towards the city center. In other parts of Sydney and around Australia there are similar monstrosities in the shapes of humans, animals, fruits, and other things.

"As for those who crucify Christ, all our leaders – political, religious and academic – have done it. The political leaders have done it by turning this State from Christianity to paganism. The official religion of New South Wales is now homosexuality. One can say anything he wants about Christianity, or blaspheme against God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and nothing will happen to him. But if he speaks in public against homosexuality, if he "vilifies" homosexuals, he could lose his property and spend twenty years in jail.

"Earlier this year we had an election in this State. The Coalition government, formed by the Liberal and National Parties, lost the election. That is the good news. This was the government that gave New South Wales the "gay anti-vilification law" which in effect turned Christians into outlaws.

"The bad news is that Labor Party won the election. This party has been described by a Member of Parliament as the homosexual party. One of the first acts of Parliament, signed by the new Premier, enshrined into legislation the "right" of gay couples to be regarded as families. Then on June 22, 1995, the *Sydney Morning Herald* carried the following headline: "Hayden backs euthanasia and gay marriages". It went on to say that, "In a radical and wide-ranging speech, the Governor-General, Mr. Hayden, last night declared his strong support for active euthanasia and the right of homosexuals to marry and adopt children." Hayden, our current Governor-General, is Her Majesty's representative in Australia. He is a former Foreign Minister in a Federal Labour Government. He wants to extend this law to all of Australia, not just in NSW. Any wonder that the monarchy is in such deep trouble.

"The "right" of homosexuals to marry and adopt children? Who gave them this "right", the United Nations? The Creator says that this is not "right" but wrong, so wrong that they will pay with their lives for it. Unfortunately, other people suffer as a result of their abominations too. Our leaders would never accept that the current disastrous draught, the astronomical national debt, the unemployment, the epidemic of youth suicides, the decay of cities and many other social evils, have anything to do with their policies, their attitude to, and especially their legislation on, homosexuality.

"First, it was the law against homosexual "vilification". Then gay couples received the 'right' to be regarded as normal families. Now, our highest office demands that homosexuals have the 'right to marry' and adopt children too. What next? Are they going to pass a law that everyone become a homosexual? Thank God they won't have time for that.

"Those who want children should exercise their 'right' to conceive and rear children, not adopt them after other people have labored with them, then inculcate them with their vile ideas. All those 'rights' are being granted to homosexuals while Christians are being denied the right to speak against such abominations and against the offensive vulgarities that pass as cultural events in this city. This is how our political leaders '**crucify again**' for themselves the Son of God." ("Would The Real Witnesses Please Stand Up", *The Christian Herald* No 5).

The expressed desire of our Governor General in 1995 has been overtaken by events in the USA and Canada. It looks like Australia was caught napping, because after passing legislation against homosexual 'vilification' it did not do much to legalize homosexual 'marriages'. But now it is determined to catch up, and go further: it will 'explore', 'debate', 'cooperate' and teach the 'attributes' that make 'good character' to the whole of the education system.

If you get the impression that this 'exploration' is nothing more than the back door by which they can introduce more un-Christian, anti-God, concepts and laws, you are not wrong.

The efforts of the homosexual lobby has shifted from the United Nations and the Courts, which they have largely conquered, to the churches, some of which are still opposing their practices. Now do you think that they want to become priests and ministers because they love the Gospel of Jesus Christ and want to preach righteousness, truth and holiness? Or rather because they want to neutralise and silence this institution too. Churches and religious institutions are still allowed to speak on this matter, and condemn homosexuality without penalty, but not for long. The United Nations will see to that.

"The U. N. Human Rights Commission is scheduled to meet March 15 to April 25 in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss "a historic opportunity to advance [homosexual] issues in international human-rights law." "This would be the first United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution to connect the full range of human rights to sexual orientation, and to condemn discrimination on its basis," said Paula Ettlbrick, IGLHRC's executive director.

"IGLHRC [the San-Francisco-based International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission] called last April's introduction of the resolution by Brazil "unexpected." After prolonged debate, the 53-member commission, chaired by Libya, voted to postpone further discussion on the resolution to this year's session.

"At the 2003 session, Pakistan distributed a memo to commission members on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference which stated the "resolution directly contradicts the tenets of Islam and other religions," and its approval would be "a direct insult to the 1.2 billion Muslims around the world."

"Last year's resolution, according to the IGLHRC, had the support of Canada, New Zealand and several European Union countries. This year, key countries the homosexual-rights groups are urged to lobby include South Africa, India, Costa Rica and the United States. (. . .)

"The resolution, IGLHRC asserted . . . would "provide activists with another tool to hold states accountable to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered] people."

However, some opponents contend the remedy proposed by the resolution will have worse societal implications than the alleged disease, "homophobia." "It is highly likely that gay-rights advocates will use this resolution, if it passes, to advance their agenda to legalize gay marriage and to create hate-crimes legislation," contended A. Scott Loveless, associate professor of law at the World Family Policy Center at Brigham Young University.

"In their quest to legitimize homosexuality, many of these countries have actually limited some of our most fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech," Loveless said.

In Canada, provincial human-rights commissions already have penalized people for discrimination based on sexual orientation. A court in Saskatchewan upheld a 2001 ruling that fined a man for submitting a newspaper ad containing citations of four Bible verses that address homosexuality. Three years ago, the Ontario Human Rights Commission penalized printer Scott Brockie \$5,000 for refusing to print letterhead for a homosexual advocacy group. Brockie argued that his Christian beliefs compelled him to reject the group's request. (. . .)

The draft resolution presented last year by Brazil . . . stresses that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, that the universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question and that the enjoyment of such rights and freedoms should not be hindered in any way on the grounds of sexual orientation."
(WorldNetDaily.com, February 4, 2004)

Isn't it extraordinary? It was a Muslim nation, Pakistan, which objected to those 'fundamental freedoms' being inserted into the UN charter, because "the resolution directly contradicts the tenets of Islam and other religions," and its approval would be "a direct insult to the 1.2 billion Muslims around the world."

American evangelists never tire telling their followers that Islam is a religion of the Devil. We are not quite sure that that is how the Almighty sees it. When we pointed out that Islam is as much a religion of Abraham as is Judaism and Christianity, each with its own role and purpose, we received some of the most virulent criticism ever. They forget that individual acts of suicidal madness, by the kind of minorities that all religions have, do not invalidate the basic tenets of a religion. They have also forgotten what God had told Abraham about Ishmael, his son by Hagar, who became the father of the Arabs and of Islam.

Gen 16:10 "Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude."

Gen 16:11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction.

Gen 16:12 He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Gen 17:18 "And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"

Gen 17:19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.

Gen 17:20 "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation."

These are the words of God, of the Holy Spirit, not of the Devil. Those who say otherwise commit an unpardonable sin.

The Americans would never admit that the Almighty would allow the kind of devastation they suffered on September 11, 2001 at the hands of Muslim extremists. They cannot say they have not been warned, for we told them on more than one occasion, beginning with our very first edition. ("What Is The USA's Vital Interest?" *TCH 1*, 1990). Unfortunately, since they have not learned the lesson, worse things will come upon them, and upon the whole world.

It should not be left to Muslim nations to oppose resolutions on homosexuality at the United Nations, for they are an insult not only to them, but to true Christians and to the whole civilized world. If a foreign body imposes such abominable resolutions upon any nation, it should be mercilessly thrown out of the country without delay, and never be heard of again.

Rumours have it that the United Nations considers moving its headquarters to Baghdad. Good! Let them try to bring out such resolutions there and impose them upon the Muslim countries, beginning with Iraq.

Ishmael was a mirror mage of Jacob, each with twelve princes, but on opposite sides of the fence. Isn't this what is evident in the world at present: a wild man, with wild descendants, against the whole world, and the world against them?

Those American 'evangelists', blinded by their hatred of Islam, betray their own ignorance of the Scriptures by failing to see the hand of God and prophecy at work in their own nation.

These then are the 'freedoms' that our political leaders would like to 'impart' to our students, freedoms that the United Nations regard as 'the birthright of all human beings'. Of course, the United Nations was there when God created the first human beings and heard Him say, 'your fundamental birthright freedom' is to debauch yourselves with all sorts sexual perversions? They have forgotten the lessons of history and what happened to those who abandoned themselves to these kind of 'freedoms'. Sodom and Gomorrah mean nothing to them anymore. Until they learn the lesson at their own expense. But this is not a topic that people want to hear these days, even in churches. Do their preachers cry aloud the sins of their people, informing them and the world of the unavoidable consequences a life style that demeans, degrades and profanes the 'temple of the living God'? If they do, we do not know where they are. If they were honest about it they would have joined us long ago, for that is what we have been doing from the beginning of this work, with our limited resources. On the contrary, they are angry with us for not keeping silent, for reminding the world what is in store for it if it does not mend its ways.

Over the years, we have not spared other religions either, making our voice heard in their lands too. Yet, we have never had a word of condemnation from these people, only from Christians, and from the Jews.

Our message to the people of the world is that they are God's people too, only that they follow a wrong path and worship wrong gods, just as Christians did before they turned to Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 8:5 "For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many

1 Cor 8:6 lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord

1 Cor 8:7 Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. However, there is not in everyone that knowledge;

1 Cor 10:19 "What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?"

1 Cor 10:20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons;

1 Cor 10:21 You cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."

What then are the values that create good character, which all peoples should teach to their children?

For thousands of years, the God-given standard that has formed the back bone of western civilisation until it started falling apart under the onslaught of modernism, was the **Ten Commandments**. It is from this standard that all other character building values proceed – **diligence, honesty, respect for the law, honour for the elders, charity, humility, love, and faith**. These are the forgotten values in our society today.

You cannot have 'attributes' outside these parameters. You cannot 'tolerate' law breakers, you cannot 'include' deviant, anti-social, elements, you cannot have 'social justice' by justifying the unjustifiable, and you cannot have 'freedom' without responsibility, freedom beyond the limits of decency and common sense.

The Judeo-Christian Scriptures have proven over and over again that they are divinely inspired and provide the best practical solutions for true character building. The problem is that religion today suffers from a massive crisis of credibility.

Since the beginning of time, religion has played a crucial role in education and in people's lives, but with the advent of modernity this is no longer the case. In the last couple of centuries religion has been continuously undermined and subjected to attack from what has wrongly been called science and enlightenment. The great educational institutions of our time are no longer centres of discovery and honest quest for truth, but hotbeds of radicalism, negativity, dissent, and ridicule.

Years ago, I was overjoyed when a top Anglican school in Sydney offered me the position of audio-visual librarian. I was given a generous budget and told to stock the library with the best I could find. Before long, I had a collection of several thousand educational programs from all over the world that became the pride of the school. Among these were a few creationist materials. Being an Anglican school, I assumed that teachers would jump at the opportunity of introducing students to such thought provoking materials. To my dismay no one showed any interest in them. When I inquired why, I was bluntly told that these materials were not part of the curriculum studies, and that introducing students to them could only confuse their minds and disrupt their preparation for the final exam. Academic results take precedence over character building in these schools too.

Teachers careers in those schools are determined by exam outcomes. Parents, who pay exorbitant sums of money for their children's education, want to see tangible results. Character is not as easily measured as are curriculum subjects. Any wonder that so many good students end up as unscrupulous, greedy, professionals. They lack moral education, and true character building values. No subject teaches these values, not even scripture lessons.

Even the Priest, who was taking religious instruction classes, would not touch creationist materials that extolled biblical values. Being a librarian, I had the chance to observe him at work. His lessons were a joke to say the least. He had a horrendous time controlling his classes and motivating students to take him seriously. He was paying the price for his own convictions, for he was an evolutionist too. Students did not expect that from him. They respect a man of conviction who stands up for his principles, not one who vacillates between two positions that are incompatible with each other.

I don't think he had proper teaching qualifications either, for his lessons were unstructured and poorly prepared. For all intents and purposes, he did not quite seem to know what he was talking about either. Students are not stupid; you can fool them once or twice, but if they perceive that you keep going before them without much of an idea what you are going to talk about, they tear you to pieces. Heaven help you after that, because even a school management with the strictest code of discipline can't help you anymore.

It is wrong to assume that a preacher is naturally a good teacher too. A class full of students is not a church congregation that listens quietly to nonsense for an hour or so, then thanks the preacher for it.

The Bible tells us that there are many people in the world who ought to do anything but preach Scriptures.

Rom 16:18 "For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."

Phil 3:17 "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Phil 3:18 "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the

Phil 3:19 enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is

Phil 3:20 in their shame; who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we

Phil 3:21 also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."

For two thousand years impostors and incompetent hypocrites have wreaked havoc with the Christian Gospel, giving people a sour taste of what religion is all about. The Apostles saw it coming and warned their followers about it in the strongest terms. That is why they spoke of the need for a restoration of all things before the return of Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

Acts 20:30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that **times of refreshing**

Acts 3:20 may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to

Acts 3:21 you before, whom heaven must receive until **the times of restoration of all things**, which God has

Acts 3:22 spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says Acts 3:23 to you. 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"

For a long time I wondered how such people could preach from the Bible on Sundays, then teach students during the week that the story of creation is a myth and the book of Genesis is not to be taken seriously. And they still wonder that when children grow up they do not believe in God and would have nothing to do with the church.

Many of the problems in today's education can be traced directly to the intrusive government legislation that forbids any kind of corporal punishment. They say that they do it for the good of the children, but evidence is mounting that children brought up without discipline become adults without discipline too.

No corporal punishment, no rote learning, no speaking harshly to students, no external examinations, no lowering the students' self-esteem, nothing that might incommode our 'little angels'. The problem is, we are not dealing with 'little angels', but with many intrinsically disruptive elements that do not know the meaning of discipline anymore.

After a few years in private education, I moved to a public school that was more easily accessible for me. That school introduced a laudable program of 20 minutes quiet reading for all students first thing in the morning. I had year 11 in the library's instruction room. That was supposed to be a more disciplined and diligent class, as all senior student classes are supposed to be. Yet even in that class there was a group of four students who did their best to live up to their fame as bullies and trouble makers. After trying every method at my disposal to quiet them down, without success, I wrote a memo to the Deputy Principal, who was in charge of discipline in the school, inviting him to come down to the library to discuss their case with me, or tell me when I could go and discuss it with him in his office. He did not answer me; he knew their case very well, and that nothing more could be done with them short of expelling them. But expelling students from a school does not look good on the school administration record, and so they let the staff grapple with unruly students the best they can.

However, I did not give up for I could see the disruption they were causing to other students. I wrote two more memos, and when the Deputy Principal still did not answer me, I expelled them from the library and sent them to the Principal to deal with them. It was only then that the Deputy Principal reluctantly made his way to the library. A heated discussion followed. His point was that we had to do everything in our power to keep them in school, 'because we could not throw senior students out in the street'. And my point was that not only were they not getting any benefit out of it, but were causing major inconvenience to other students. I pointed out that we were not a correctional institution to deal with perennially recalcitrant juveniles, but an educational one with responsibility to the majority of students and to parents who expect the best possible education for their children. In the end I had to accept his viewpoint, for he was my superior, but he promised to have a serious discussion with them warning them that unless they changed, their behaviour would not be tolerated much longer.

Whether he did that or not, I do not know, but what I do know is that a few days later, during a school social occasion for our senior students, they got into a major brawl with some strangers. One of our good students who went to their help, was stabbed and killed on the spot. Two of the bad ones ended up in hospital fighting for their life. They survived, but that was the end of their association with our school. Far too late in my opinion.

Somehow, the school administration and the Education Department managed to keep the whole incident out of media headlines. No school wants to see its name associated with that kind of record. They made my life miserable after that, undermining my position whenever they could and wanting me out of the school, mindful of the fact that if my attempts to have those incorrigible juveniles dealt with earlier had come to light they may well have been held criminally responsible for the death of that good and innocent boy. They were a time bomb ready to explode anytime; and it did. But the school's interest and the administration's record demanded that they be kept in school at all costs. And the costs turned out to be very high indeed. Fortunately, my association with that school did not last long after that. Unfortunately, it came for the wrong reason: a car accident caused by another irresponsible youth, who did not respect traffic laws, caused me severe injuries that forced me into an early retirement.

There would have been no room in private schools for those students, and there should have been no room for them in public schools either. But they were in school because the current educational guidelines work in their favour. Teachers who want to advance their career are judged among other things on their ability to deal with unruly students. Rather than have their record spoiled, when nothing else works, they let the rascals rule the roost in the class. And so, public education gets a bad mark, and other students suffer as a result of it.

As a Teacher/Librarian, who did not care for further career advancement I could afford to be firm with them, but other teachers put up with it, always hoping that the next year would bring them better students.

The problem comes mainly from the inane notion that all children must stay in high school until late teens. For many of them school is nothing but a drudge and a vexation of spirit, and so it is for anyone who has to deal with them.

So what should be done about it? Apprenticeships, that's what! Every qualified tradesman should have a helper, an apprentice who in the beginning would receive a certain remuneration from the Government.

The Government provides substantial amounts of money to families for the upkeep of their children, as they should, and to schools for their education. Part of this money should be split between tradesmen and apprentices in the early days, until apprentices become productive and self supporting. Everyone would benefit from such a scheme, and would spare the schools from having to work as baby sitters, or correctional institutions, for students that have no reason to be there.

Less than a quarter of high school students go on to university. And for that, all children must be subjected to trudging education that leaves little mark on them. Just think how much you remember of your high school studies, and whether you would not remember just as much if those studies were more judiciously spread out and combined with practical work.

The push for university education for everyone and everything helps neither society, nor individuals who have no stomach for it. It merely reinforces the misplaced concept that education to be worth anything must be at the university level.

The school of life and practical training still offer the best education for the vast majority of people. Just think how many people you know who have no university education and yet have done very well in life and are pleasure to deal with. And just the same, how many people you know with university education whom you wish you had never met. If you have never met such a person, happy are you. Pray to God that you stay that way and that you'll never have to put your foot in a Court of Law for example.

When Labour was in Government at the Federal level, they took nursing education from hospitals and put it into universities. Then they had to invent a new position, nurses' help, to deal with what the nurses used to do before. The result is that the country has a chronic shortage of nurses.

Universities are conservative institutions. Because they operate on fixed budgets, they cannot expand and shrink at will according to the market principle of supply and demand. They cannot expand quickly enough when there is a certain shortage in the labour market, then close down departments and lay off staff when that demand has been fulfilled or diminished. That is why hospitals and other institutions that can take care of their own needs, must be allowed to do so on the basis of well established, verifiable, national guidelines and standards, and not be subjected to the whims of politicians and bureaucrats that more often than not have little idea of what they are talking about.

Most children are not meant for, and do not care for, university education. They would benefit infinitely more from practical training that could start as early as the end of their primary school, or elementary school as it is more commonly called in Europe. Year seven belongs to primary school, not to high school, as another educational bureaucrat with a half baked idea decided not long ago. Its another example of misguided attempts by powerful interests to lower the age of maturation for children and deny them their childhood years. Children of ages 12 and 13 do not belong in classes that are set up for students of 17 and 18 years old, who need educational exhibits and sexual education of a totally different kind.

At the end of primary school, all education should be two streamed: one stream for academically inclined students, and another for those that love practical training. Sport should play a bigger role in both streams, but more so in the latter. Basic subjects such as Literature, History, Geography, Mathematics, Science, Physics and Chemistry, should be staple menus for all students, each stream however with its own emphasis and degree of complexity. In the practical training stream, these subjects should be gradually reduced until they take no more than two days per week.

This, however, is considered elitist education, and in a world gone mad on egalitarianism it is unlikely that the powers that be would consider such a scheme. One of the arguments against it is that students are too young to take life long decisions at that early stage. But opportunities for further education should not stop there. Further education through evening or correspondence courses should be available throughout life.

At the end of my elementary school, I undertook three years vocational training that qualified me as electrician. Then I completed my high school through evening classes while working as a tradesman. I was aiming towards electrical engineering at university when my life took a radical turn. I escaped from communist Romania and emigrated to Canada, where I had to learn a new language. It was only in my thirties that I felt confident enough to enrol at University, but by then I was no longer interested in engineering. My new passion had become the study of humanity subjects – ancient history and the study of religions in particular. I began those studies in Canada and completed them in Australia. After graduation, I worked as a Teacher/Librarian, but even then I never stopped studying privately my favourite subjects.

More than a decade passed, and although I felt well versed in Scriptures and history, I did not rush to do anything with my knowledge, always thinking that if God wanted me to do something with it He would provide the opportunity. And He did, but not in the manner or the time that I expected. Originally, I thought that my knowledge and experience would be harnessed through an existing church. But rather than making use of my knowledge and cooperating with me in enlightening the world on the malaise that was destroying churches worldwide – lack of Scriptural knowledge – I found myself on a collision course with these same churches. In desperation, I began an independent work by publishing *The Christian Herald*. I produced the first seven editions on evenings, weekends and school vacations while working as a Teacher/Librarian. Then I had the accident that forced me into an early retirement. Since then, I managed to maintain the rate of one edition per year while convalescing at home. It so happened that the Internet came into vogue at about the same time. Without the Internet I would have had to give up on this work, for I would not have been able to carry out the almost interminable research work that some of the articles required.

Now, why am I telling you these things? To show you that with all the twists and turns that my life had taken, and the physical, psychological, and emotional pain that I endured, and still do, there are few people in the world that would be happier than I am. I have the right relationship with My Maker, I know where I stand, what I do, and where I go, which is what few other people could honestly say.

That is why a decision taken at the age of 13 or 14 is not the end of the road as far as one's career and happiness are concerned. Indeed, I am convinced that getting work experience and practical training for some years after primary school, is the best possible outcome for students of that age. It would teach them valuable skills and the value of honest work, it would give them the satisfaction of earning their own upkeep and would lessen the burden on families; and it would be a lot less costly for the Government too.

Let those who aim to become doctors, teachers, lawyers and the like, take the academic stream, but let others who like working with their own hands not be castigated for not getting a university degree for it.

God certainly does not do that. He extols the virtues of honest diligent work in whatever field.

Luke 10:7 "The labourer is worthy of his wages."

Prov. 22:29 "Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings, . . ."

Eccl. 9:10 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."

Eccl. 12:14 "For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."

The value of one's life is not measured by its length, but by its quality. And that quality is measured by the provision one makes for eternity, for peace and tranquillity of mind, and the degree of spiritual union with God.

Jesus Christ was only thirty three years old when His life came to a violent end, yet He left us an example and a legacy that changed the world. There is no better ideal or example that anyone can have than that of Jesus Christ. That ideal begins at home with proper parental upbringing that involves a degree of corporal punishment if needed.

Prov. 19:18 "Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction."

Prov. 13:24 "He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly."

Prov 23:13 "Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die."

Prov 23:14 "You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell."

Prov 29:15 "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."

Prov. 15:10 "Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, And he who hates correction will die."

Prov. 20:11 "Even a child is known by his deeds, Whether what he does is pure and right."

Prov. 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."

Prov. 15:5 "A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent."

Psa. 119:67 "Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word."

Psa. 119:71 "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes."

Psa. 119:75 "I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me."

These days, it is alright to imbue children with chemicals that affect their minds in order to subdue them, turning some into virtual zombies, but it is illegal to touch the little angels' bottoms or palms for misbehaviour. That is Satan's way – destroying the mind and the soul in order to preserve the body, the very opposite of God's way – sacrificing the body in order to save the mind and the soul.

Rom 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be

Rom 12:2 transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Heb 12:7 "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"

Rev 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Rev 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. **"To him who overcomes**

Rev 3:21 I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

He who overcomes will reap the rewards of salvation, not he who has no discipline and no control over his impulses.

Some children certainly need medical attention, and who wouldn't after growing up on the kind of deficient diet that is common today, but most suffer from lack of firmness, from being spoiled, from not being disciplined **in the right manner, at the right time**. Worst offenders are parents, who expect teachers to recover what they had neglected in their children's early formative years.

At least a quarter of the Bible is about putting the body through agony in order that the soul may reach ecstasy. A life-long quest for betterment is best exemplified by the Scriptures that referred to Jesus Christ.

Heb 10:5 "Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a

Heb 10:6 body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

Heb 10:7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; In the volume of the book it is written of Me; To do Your will, O

Heb 10:8 God.' "Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold,

Heb 10:9 I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

Heb 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb 10:11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can

Heb 10:12 never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at

Heb 10:13 the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool."

Human beings have but one choice: to become Jesus' friend, or His enemy; to stand by Him, or become His footstool.

The wise of this world have turned the purpose of life on its head. They destroy the soul and preserve the body because this life is all they know about. They have blocked their minds to spiritual enlightenment because they do not believe in God and in His salvation, and then condition children to think in the same way. This 'wisdom' dominates our educational institutions to their core. And they wonder that children grow up aimlessly, and society is in such a chaotic state.

Today's children grow up in a highly unnatural and unhealthy environment. After spending most of their waking hours in front of one screen or another, they cannot relate to each other and are unable to appreciate the beauty and wonders of the natural world. The story of the New York children who thought that milk came from the neighbourhood store has become legendary.

Should people wonder then that the western world finds itself in the midst of a youth suicidal epidemic? (At least they do not take other innocent lives with them as do their Islamic counterparts). Nobody seems to know why, or what to do about it. It never crosses their mind that what they offer children, the world in which they grow, the valueless education they receive, is not good for them. It leaves them empty and desirous for spiritual fulfilment which they cannot find in this materialist world.

You think that leaders would have learned the lesson by now that there is no substitute for spiritual fulfilment, that material things, good food, and fashionable clothes, do not provide lasting satisfaction. If they did, wealthy people would be the happiest, yet their rate of suicide is higher than that of the average people.

When I was young, in Romania, we were poor and persecuted, but the thought of suicide never crossed our minds. Our hope that things would get better one day kept us alive and focused on the future. While our parents struggled to make a living, all we children cared for was kicking a ball whenever and wherever we could. In my teenage years, I only heard of about two suicides, both old people who seemed to have grown tired of life. These days kids get bored sitting around doing nothing, spend time and money in darkened pinball parlours, engage in premature sex before knowing how to handle such powerful feelings and relationships, and when they still feel unfulfilled, they get a last kick out of committing suicide. The Scriptures say that people cannot play with fire and not be burned by it, but does anyone teach them that anymore?

Prov. 6:27 "Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?"

Prov. 6:28 "Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared?"

Prov. 6:29 "So is he who goes in to his neighbour's wife [or daughter]; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent."

Prov. 6:26 "By means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life."
Eccl 7:26 "And I find more bitter than death The woman whose heart is snares and nets, Whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her."

Prov. 5:1 "My son, pay attention to my wisdom; Lend your ear to my understanding,
Prov. 5:2 That you may preserve discretion, And your lips may keep knowledge.
Prov. 5:3 For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil;
Prov. 5:4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.
Prov. 5:5 Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell.
Prov. 5:6 Lest you ponder her path of life; Her ways are unstable; You do not know them."

Prov. 5:7 "Therefore hear me now, my children, And do not depart from the words of my mouth.
Prov. 5:8 Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house,
Prov. 5:9 Lest you give your honor to others, And your years to the cruel one;
Prov. 5:10 Lest aliens be filled with your wealth, And your labors go to the house of a foreigner;
Prov. 5:11 And you mourn at last, When your flesh and your body are consumed,
Prov. 5:12 And say: "How I have hated instruction, And my heart despised correction!"

Prov. 5:13 "I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me!
Prov. 5:14 I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the assembly and congregation."
Prov. 5:15 Drink water from your own cistern, And running water from your own well.
Prov. 5:16 Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets?
Prov. 5:17 Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you.
Prov. 5:18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth."

Prov. 5:19 "As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love.
Prov. 5:20 For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress?
Prov. 5:21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths.
Prov. 5:22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin.
Prov. 5:23 He shall die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray."

Prov. 9:13 "A foolish woman is clamorous; She is simple, and knows nothing.
Prov. 9:14 For she sits at the door of her house, On a seat by the highest places of the city,
Prov. 9:15 To call to those who pass by, Who go straight on their way:
Prov. 9:16 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here"; And as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him,
Prov. 9:17 "Stolen water is sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant."
Prov. 9:18 But he does not know that the dead are there, That her guests are in the depths of hell."

Children, as much as adults, need spiritual fulfilment. The values that our heavenly Father enshrined for us in the Bible produce not only true character and peace of mind, but guarantee eternal life as well.

Psa 119:9 "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.
Psa 119:10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
Psa 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!
Psa 119:12 Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes!"

Psa 119:93 "I will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have given me life."
Psa 119:97 "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.
Psa 119:98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me.
Psa 119:99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.

Psa 119:100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts."
Psa 119:104 "Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way."
Psa 119:115 "Depart from me, you evildoers, For I will keep the commandments of my God!"
Psa 119:119 "You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross; Therefore I love Your testimonies."
Psa 119:21 "You rebuke the proud; the cursed, Who stray from Your commandments."

Psa 119:126 "It is time for You to act, O LORD, For they have regarded Your law as void.
Psa 119:127 Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold!"
Psa 119:137 "Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are Your judgments."
Psa 119:142 "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth."

Psa 119:160 "The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever."
Psa 119:176 "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; Seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments."
Psa 120:1 "In my distress I cried to the LORD, And He heard me.
Psa 120:2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips And from a deceitful tongue."

Psa 119:163 "I hate and abhor lying, But I love Your law.
Psa 119:164 Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments.
Psa 119:165 **Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.**
Psa 119:166 **LORD, I hope for Your salvation, And I do Your commandments."**

The Challenge Of The Orthodox Church

People would not be caught dead answering questions raised in our magazines, right? Right! Except when truth cuts too close to the bone and the wound is too painful to be ignored. As the Scriptures say:

Heb 4:12 "For **the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword**, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Heb 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**"

We were not a little amused to find that the Romanian Orthodox Church took it upon itself to challenge us on our writings. We were amused because as a church that bases itself mostly on tradition, we thought it would be the last to challenge us on the Scriptures, which we consider to be our strength. Nevertheless it did it, and we are only too happy to answer it. Let us begin at the very beginning by establishing what the doctrines of salvation are. This I where we find them.

Heb 6:1 "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to **perfection**, not laying again the foundation of **repentance** from dead works and of **faith** toward God,

Heb 6:2 of the doctrine of **baptisms**, of **laying on of hands**, of **resurrection** of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**.

Heb 6:3 And this we will do if God permits."

Did you get them? The seven doctrines emphasized here are: repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, eternal judgment, and perfection. Perfection is mentioned first, but by right it is the last, as the statement, 'let us go on to' clearly indicates.

Now how many of these doctrines does the Orthodox Church preach and practice? None! At least none in the manner proscribed by the Scriptures, the manner taught by the Apostles of Jesus Christ in the early Churches of God. Repentance, baptism and laying on of hands are outward expressions of one's faith, an indication of a mature desire to change one's life according to God's will. Resurrection, judgment and perfection are prerogatives that come from God at the judgment time.

Since these doctrines are foreign to the Orthodox Church, which ones does it preach and practice? Infant baptism, immortality of the soul, judgment after death instead of after resurrection, and going to heaven or to hell immediately after judgment. None of these things are in the Scriptures, and none are part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, the Apostles of Jesus Christ spoke very strongly against any departure from the right Gospel.

Gal 1:6 "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different

Gal 1:7 gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of

Gal 1:8 Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have

Gal 1:9 preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any

other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God?

Gal 1:10 Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Gal 1:11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

Gal 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Those who preached a different gospel were to be accursed, not once, but twice. Now does the Orthodox Church take note of this curse? Neither this, nor any other Church, has received the commission to depart from the Gospel taught by the Apostles, and preach its own gospel. Jesus Christ Himself gave a strong warning against those who would dare to do so.

Rev 22:18 "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

Rev 22:19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Where then do mainstream churches draw their doctrines from? Mainly from the pagan ancient Egyptian religion which introduced the notion of an underworld and judgment after death. Jesus Christ and His Apostles preached judgment after resurrection, and entering the Kingdom of God of the living, not of the dead. Some people may well say, 'judgment after death, or judgment after resurrection, what's the difference, it is still a judgment, isn't it?' Well, the difference is that one cannot judge dead people. The God of Jesus Christ is the God of the living, not the God of the dead.

Mark 12:24 "Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage,

Mark 12:25 but are like angels in heaven. "But concerning the dead, that they rise,

Mark 12:26 have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

Mark 12:27 "He is **not the God of the dead, but the God of the living**. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

God does not judge dead people. He resurrects them first, then looks at their record and determines whether they are worthy of eternal life in His Kingdom, or eternal damnation in a Lake of Fire. Only the memory will remain of those who have been destroyed in the Lake of Fire as a remembrance of what happened to those who have defied God and never repented.

The notion of purification in purgatory after death, is nothing but a fallacy. It was never part of the Bible, either in the Old, or in the New Testaments. It was precisely to distance people from such noxious beliefs that God brought a new religion to the world which He gave to a chosen people. The Israelites were supposed to be an example to the world, but instead they made a mess of it. So God chose a new people, and made a New Covenant with people chosen from many nations.

Unfortunately, the Christians made a mess of it too, having taken to the world an entirely different gospel than the one given by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, one that Rome preached when it took over Christendom. It is this religion that mainstream churches are still preaching today, the Orthodox Church among them, not the one given by Jesus Christ.

The people of ancient Israel found their neighbor's religions more tempting because it contained tangible idols which they could see and touch, whereas God's religion required belief and worship of an invisible God.

Now although Rome imposed its will on Christendom in the fourth century, the first idolatrous images appeared in the churches only about the eighth century. From then on churches competed with each other in the display of idols. Those that claim to represent Jesus Christ have no resemblance whatsoever with the real Man, let alone with the risen Christ. What they are presenting to the world these days are nothing but caricatures of Him, both in images and in their teaching about Him. For even on the cross He was not a defeated or heartbroken man as they would have you believe. What do these words tell you?

Luke 23:28 "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. "For
Luke 23:29 indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore,
Luke 23:30 and breasts which never nursed!' "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to
Luke 23:31 the hills, "Cover us!" "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

Who do you think needed more pity, the Man who thundered those lucid words, or those who were swarming, weeping or rejoicing around Him? A few minutes later, He turned to God and said: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). Are these the words of a defeated and broken man? Why then does the Orthodox Church continue to present a lifeless image as a Savior? The risen Christ CANNOT be represented by anything human beings can do, and they should stop trying to do it. Here is an image of the glorious Christ. Let them represent Him that way if they can.

Rev 1:10 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying,

Rev 1:11 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Rev 1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

Rev 1:13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands **One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.**

Rev 1:14 **His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;**

Rev 1:15 **His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;**

Rev 1:16 **He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.**

Rev 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not

Rev 1:18 be afraid; I am the First and the Last. "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

We hope those who have been portraying Christ as a lifeless image are ashamed of themselves. The Orthodox Church should never forget what the Second Commandment says, for that was valid for all times, not only for the Old Testament, for God does not change, and Jesus Christ was God.

Exo 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

Exo 20:5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Exo 20:6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

Mal 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob."

Mat 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

God Himself says, do not try to represent Me, only imagine Me according to the description that I give you of Me, for it is not possible for you to represent Me in My glory. We cannot even see Him, let alone represent Him.

Exo 33:20 "But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the LORD said,

Exo 33:21 "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. "So it shall be, while My glory passes by,

Exo 33:22 that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

Exo 33:23 "Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

And if that is not enough, here are more injunctions against idolatry.

Psa 97:7 "Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols."

Psa 106:34 "They did not destroy the peoples, Concerning whom the LORD had commanded them,

Psa 106:35 But they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works;

Psa 106:36 They served their idols, Which became a snare to them."

Psa 115:3 "But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.

Psa 115:4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands.

Psa 115:5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see;

Psa 115:6 They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell;
Psa 115:7 They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter
Psa 115:8 through their throat. **Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.**"

Those who make idols, and those who worship them, are like their idols. Unless they turn to the living God while they have a chance, they are doomed forever.

When the people of Samaria turned back to the pagan religion of Egypt, and embraced the idolatrous religion of their Canaanite neighbors, God became tired of correcting them and let them to their own devices. They lost the protection of God, their identity, and were taken into captivity. They were thought to have vanished from History, but recent discoveries identified them as being none other than the people of old Europe. (See *TCH 10*). How extraordinary that the two nations of Israel, Judea and Samaria, should end up representing the Old and the New Testaments respectively. How did the Samaritans lose their identity? By abandoning the sign that identified them, the sign of the Sabbath, and embracing the sign of ancient Egypt, the sign of the Sun, Sunday.

Exo 31:13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

Exo 31:14 'You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

Exo 31:15 'Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever

Exo 31:16 does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.' Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

Exo 31:17 'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"

Now what day is Jesus Christ expecting his followers to observe when He returns? Not Sunday, for sure.

Mat 24:20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath."

That flight will take place at the very end, just prior to His return. Those who claim to be Christians, must observe the day that identifies them as the people of God. Does the Orthodox Church observe that sign? You know the answer. Now notice what will happen shortly after that flight.

Mat 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Mat 24:30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Mat 24:31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

The angels of God will be going around the world to gather the elect of God. Now how are they going to identify them? Are they going to stop and ask every individual whether he is an elect of God or not? Certainly not! They will be looking for the sign that identifies the people of God. God can read people's minds and hearts, and so can His angels. They will be looking for the sign of the Sabbath, just as they looked for the sign of the blood on the door posts that identified the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt.

Exo 12:11 "And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

Exo 12:12 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

Exo 12:13 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

Exo 12:14 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Exo 12:15 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from

Exo 12:16 Israel. 'On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat; that only may

Exo 12:17 be prepared by you. 'So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance."

Blood on the doorposts identified the people of Israel until the sign of the Sabbath became their new sign.

It is interesting to note that the blood on the doorposts sign was associated with the Passover, the Holy Day that Jesus Christ specifically told His disciples to observe in a particular manner.

Luke 22:14 "When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.

Luke 22:15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

Luke 22:16 "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves;

Luke 22:18 "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Luke 22:19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying,

Luke 22:20 "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

Luke 22:21 "But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. "And truly the Son of Man goes

Luke 22:22 as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

The blood of Jesus Christ, spilled at Passover, represents the New Covenant. Does the Orthodox Church observe this Holy Day? Its members have hardly ever heard about it, let alone observe it. They say that this is a Jewish Holy Day, and yet, this is what Apostle Paul told the members of the Corinthian Church, a Gentile Church?

1 Cor 11:17 "Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but
1 Cor 11:18 for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you,

1 Cor 11:19 that **those who are approved may be recognized among you.**

1 Cor 11:20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating,

1 Cor 11:21 each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

1 Cor 11:22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

1 Cor 11:23 **For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you:** that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said,

1 Cor 11:24 **"Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."**

1 Cor 11:25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**

1 Cor 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

1 Cor 11:27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

1 Cor 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

1 Cor 11:29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not

1 Cor 11:30 discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep."

Those who are approved by God must observe the Passover in the manner described here by Apostle Paul. Those that keep it in an unworthy manner, or not at all, are not approved by God. And if they are not approved by God, they have no chance of being saved, no chance of inheriting eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

When Rome imposed its will on Christendom, it forced Christians to adopt its beliefs and customs and forbade them from 'Judeizing' anymore. That meant that Christians were no longer allowed to practice the doctrines of the Gospel of salvation and observe the Holy Days that they were accustomed to. The Romans said that they were Jewish Holy Days, but just because the Jews observed them it did not make them Jewish. They were God's Holy Days, they were observed by Jesus Christ, by the Apostles, and by the early Churches of God.

The time has come for all churches to return to the roots from which they had departed at that time. Ignorance is no longer justifiable, especially now that this information is freely available, and people can observe them without hindrance. This is what this work has been all about: restoring the long lost Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have gone to great lengths and great expense to restore the Gospel of Jesus Christ and inform people about it. And yet, those who have been peddling false gospels have had infinitely more success than we have had. People refuse to believe that anything good comes freely these days. Well, the Gospel of Jesus Christ does. Those who impose burdens on their followers do not preach the right Gospel. As Apostle Paul said:

2 Cor 11:19 "For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise!

2 Cor 11:20 For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if

2 Cor 11:21 one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. To our shame, I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold; I speak foolishly; I am bold also."

The trials that precede the return of Jesus Christ, much too obvious in the world at present, are meant to shake people out of their somnolence and bring them back to the right path.

Zec 14:13 "It shall come to pass in that day That a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand; Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.

Zec 14:14 And the wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered together:

Zec 14:15 Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. Such also shall be the plague On the horse and the mule, On the camel and the donkey, And on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.

Zec 14:16 And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Zec 14:17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.

Zec 14:18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Zec 14:19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."

Now which Holy Day will survivors of the Great Tribulations from all nations come to observe at Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom? Not Christmas, not Easter, not Halloween, not birthdays, nor any other pagan holy day, but the Feast of Tabernacles. Now does the Orthodox Church observe this Holy Day nowadays? As with the Passover, most of its members have most likely never even heard about it, let alone observe it.

Now if people want to go churches that work like neighborhood clubs, it's fine with us. It is their privilege. But if they go to church in order to find God and be saved, then they deserve to be told the truth – what the Gospel of salvation is all about.

This is what we have been doing from the very beginning, and yet, the Orthodox hierarchy is angry with us for doing a work that itself should be doing.

That all people will convert to the religion of Jesus Christ when He makes His triumphant return there is no doubt. The Orthodox Church, however, would have a great advantage if it took the initiative and did so now, for to it, or its Greek predecessors, has been given the New Testament, not to the church of Rome. Like the Jews, who have scrupulously preserved the Old Testament for us, the Greeks have done a marvelous job in preserving the New Testament. The Orthodox Church therefore ought to preach what it has preserved.

Now there is a reason why Jesus Christ has restored His Gospel at this particular junction of world history. At no other time could two people have done this work and taken that Gospel to the world. This is what prophecy said that it would happen, and this is what it has happened. How? Through the means of modern technology.

When we began this work, we had no idea where it would take us, or that it would put us at odds with virtually the entire world. All we wanted was to expose some cases of hypocrisy and blatant exploitation of believers with false doctrines about tithing and offerings. As we were preparing to do that, we expected opposition from some people, but not from the whole world. It came as a shock to find ourselves being castigated by the very people we thought would support us. But it was not to be. Wickedness, hypocrisy, and exploitation of believers are far more widespread than we could have possibly imagined. In speaking against it, and against the false doctrines that are being peddled as doctrines of salvation, we found ourselves doing the work of the two witnesses of the book of Revelation.

It took us some time to realize that witnessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to an unbelieving world did not mean converting the world to it too. Not that we did not want it, but this world is so deeply steeped in falsehood, people get disturbed by the truth and would rather not hear about it. Well, hear they will, because this is our job.

Now we believe that there may be some lessons for our readers in knowing the evolution of this work.

Our first edition was produced on a portable typewriter. It nearly drove us mad, for every single mistake or alteration required the retyping of the entire page. When one uses a number of sources – Bibles, compendiums, historical books, print media, television, etc., as we did – one needs flexibility, which we did not have then.

We got some flexibility with the daisy wheel typewriter which we used for our next edition. We could make minor corrections to a paragraph without having to retype the whole page.

Then came a big step forward with the electronic typewriters with which one could edit an entire page.

Not long after that came the first computers. We could write and edit articles of up to twenty pages long – an unbelievable progress at that time.

Now we experienced all these changes and advances in technology during the time we produced our first seven editions. The pace of progress, however, was speeding up faster than we could keep up with it.

For then came the revolution that really changed the world – advanced computers and desktop publishing. No limit on the size of articles, or on what one could do with them in terms of editing, style, format, etc.

Up until then, we were still using printed versions of Bibles and compendiums, the backbone of this work. People in a number of libraries in Sydney knew me personally due to the hours of research that I often carried out there.

Then came the electronic Bibles and encyclopedias, and not long after that, the Internet. I seldom set my foot in any library after that. The whole world is at my disposal from my own office.

Now all these inventions and phenomenal progress occurred in less than two decades. If these are not miracles, we do not what they could be. Which proves that human beings are still capable of miracles. Well, miracles or not, one thing is certain, without these inventions few people would have known about us and about this work. But now we have reached, and exchanged correspondence, with people from virtually every corner of the globe, including with some very respectable academics.

Some people may have thought that we were cold by not engaging in lengthy personal correspondence with them. Friends, we simply could not do it. This has been an almost impossible task for us. Plus we had to cope with some pretty horrific trials along the way too. What we have done instead, was to provide people with all the information they needed to work out their own program of spiritual growth. We are able to provide, at least for the time being, initial counseling for those who desire it.

As for the Orthodox Church, instead of confronting us, it ought to search the Scriptures to confirm that what we say is true, then take the initiative to correct its errors and become an example to other churches that need to do the same. It should call a special Council to discuss these matters, and then make the necessary adjustments to its teachings and doctrines. It can thus return to the Gospel from which it had departed long ago.

Earlier this year, we read an interesting announcement from the Anglican Church. It said that it was reviewing Sunday as a day of worship because people were no longer using it for that purpose. They did not say what day of the week they were considering, but what day could serve that purpose better than the Sabbath? We think this is a roundabout way of saying we want to return to the day of the Lord, without acknowledging a debt to those who have been advocating this for a long time. The Orthodox Church could join ranks with the Anglican Church and return to the Sabbath of the Lord together, for people in the Orthodox world are not observing Sunday as a day of worship either.

Heb 5:12 "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Heb 5:13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

They need to start from scratch, from the very beginning, with a fresh call to repentance, like that of John the Baptist.

Mat 3:1 "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

Mat 3:2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Mat 3:3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"

When John the Baptist was no longer on the scene, Jesus Christ continued with exactly the same message.

Mat 4:12 "Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

Mat 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun

Mat 4:14 and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

Mat 4:15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the

Mat 4:16 Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

Mat 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

John the Baptist lost his head for the work of God, yet Jesus Christ began His ministry knowing full well that He too would pay with His life for it. So should we be surprised, or panic, that we might face a similar prospect? It was Jesus Christ Himself who told His disciples not to expect a different treatment.

John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

John 15:21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who

John 15:22 sent Me. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. "He who hates Me hates My Father also.

John 15:23 "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin;

John 15:24 but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.

John 15:25 "But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me

John 15:26 without a cause.' "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

John 15:27 "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. "These things

John 16:1 I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. "They will put you out of the

John 16:2 synagogues; yes, **the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service."**

We have already lost one person as a result of this work. So should we panic and run from it? This is not an option for those who are called to do the work of God.

Now although both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ began their missions with a call to repentance, the first Church of God based on the Holy Spirit was set up by Apostle Peter. Take careful note how he did it, for he set in motion certain procedures and rituals that all Churches must observe.

Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our

Acts 2:40 God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from

Acts 2:41 this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day

Acts 2:42 about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Apostle Peter called his contemporaries a 'perverse generation'. What would he say if he lived today?

His congregation was a thoroughly Jewish one, but notice what happened later when he went to the Gentiles.

Acts 11:2 "And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying,

Acts 11:3 "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" But Peter explained it to them in order

Acts 11:4 from the beginning, saying: "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision,

Acts 11:5 an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me.

Acts 11:6 "When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts,

Acts 11:7 creeping things, and birds of the air. "And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.'

Acts 11:8 "But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.'

Acts 11:9 "But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.'

Acts 11:10 "Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven.

Acts 11:11 "At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea."

Acts 11:12 "Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me,

Acts 11:13 and we entered the man's house. "And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said

Acts 11:14 to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter,' who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' "And as I began to speak,

Acts 11:15 the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. "Then I remembered the word of the Lord,

Acts 11:16 how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 11:17 "If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ,

Acts 11:18 who was I that I could withstand God?" When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

God granted repentance to the Gentiles too. Repentance means life, and lack of it means death. Repentance is closely associated with faith. A man without faith is a walking corpse, as a wise man once said.

Now notice what Jesus Christ told one of His disciples who had an emergency in his family.

Mat 8:21 "Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

Mat 8:22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Death in the Orthodox and Catholic Churches is one of the most celebrated rituals. Yet Jesus Christ would not allow one of His disciples even to go to bury his own father: "Let the dead bury their own dead." What does that tell you? The same that the verse about idols told you earlier: "Those who make [idols] are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them."

There are people in this world who appear to be alive, but who are in fact quite dead. Anyone who is not among the elect of God and member of a true Church falls into that category. Anyone who follows, practices, and believes doctrines other than those approved by Jesus Christ is a member of a congregation of the dead. This is the time to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit, so that you too may join a Church of Jesus Christ, a Congregation of the Living God.

John 6:69 "We have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

2 Cor 6:16 "What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore

2 Cor 6:17 "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

Rom 9:26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."

1 Tim 3:15 "I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

1 Tim 6:17 "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

1 Tim 6:18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for

1 Tim 6:19 themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. O Timothy!

1 Tim 6:20 Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what

1 Tim 6:21 is falsely called knowledge; by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you."

When God granted repentance to the Gentile, He opened the way for them to become part of His elect. But for that they need to repent and undergo the rituals of the Church of God – baptism and laying on of hands. Baptism and laying on hands by whom? By people who already have the Holy Spirit, so that He may be passed on to them too. People receive the spirit of the church in which they are baptized. That is why they need to be baptized anew in the Church of the living God. Now notice what happened to people who were baptized only, without having had hands of the elders laid on them.

Acts 19:1 "And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

Acts 19:2 So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

Acts 19:3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Acts 19:4 "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who

Acts 19:5 would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the

Acts 19:6 Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

Apostle Paul gave them a new baptism and laid his hands on them before they could receive the Holy Spirit. See how important it is that people follow the correct doctrines of salvation, doctrines that come from the Scriptures, not from tradition! In his epistles to Timothy, Apostle Paul went on to say:

1 Tim 4:14 "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership."

2 Tim 1:6 "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

Now how could Orthodox people, and those of other religions for that matter, be saved when they never undergo those doctrinal rituals? A Christian is not one who goes to church on Sundays, but one who has received the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Rom 8:5 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Rom 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,

Rom 8:9 if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now **if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**

Rom 8:10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom 8:11 **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**

Rom 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

Rom 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body,

Rom 8:14 you will live. For **as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**"

If the Spirit of Christ is not in you, you are not a son of God and cannot inherit eternal life. You do not have immortality in yourself as present day churches wrongly preach. You must qualify for it by first becoming a member of a true Church of God.

At one time, when I was engaged in a discussion with the minister of a certain church who was annoying me with his interpretation of the Scriptures, I decided to cut the discussion short. So I told him that I was a son of God. He promptly turned his back on me and walked away.

They think you are mad when you tell them that you are a son of God, and yet they often recite the Lord's Prayer which says, "Our Father who are in heaven." Now if God is our Father, then we are His sons, aren't we? Or is it alright to recite the Lord's Prayer by heart as long as you do not believe it?

Mat 15:7 "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me
Mat 15:8 with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.
Mat 15:9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"

What about those Scriptures above? **"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."** Do you believe them? If not, ask yourself why not? I will tell you why not: because you are not a son of God. Once you receive the Holy Spirit it is no longer a case of believing it, it is a case of knowing it. You know that you are a son of God, and no one can take that knowledge away from you. People can claim to be sons of God, but not God, not the Holy Father Himself, as a certain individual does. Even Jesus Christ did not do it, even though He could have done it.

Mat 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, **"God with us."**

Isa 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." "He will pass through Judah, He will overflow and pass over,

Isa 8:8 He will reach up to the neck; And the stretching out of his wings Will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.

Isa 8:9 "Be shattered, O you peoples, and be broken in pieces! Give ear, all you from far countries. Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces; Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces.

Isa 8:10 Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; Speak the word, but it will not stand, For **God is with us."**

Now did the Jews believe those Scriptures any more than Christians believe them today? It is for this very reason – their lack of belief – that they killed the Son of God, their Messiah.

John 10:24 "Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt?

John 10:25 If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.

John 10:26 "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

John 10:29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My

John 10:30 Father's hand. "I and My Father are one."

John 10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them,

John 10:32 "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

John 10:33 The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and **because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."**

John 10:34 Jesus answered them, **"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, 'You are gods'?"** [Psa. 82:6].

John 10:35 "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

John 10:36 "do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I

John 10:37 said, 'I am the Son of God'?" "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; "but if I do,

John 10:38 though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me,

John 10:39 and I in Him." "Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand."

Unbelief has led to many a people's downfall. The Holy Spirit that dwells in people after their conversion grants them the faith and the strength to stay on the right path from then on. The Scriptures even say that after you receive the Holy Spirit, it is not you that speaks, but He that dwells in you.

1 Cor 3:16 "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone

1 Cor 3:17 defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

Luke 12:11 "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say.

Luke 12:12 "For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

The Orthodox, the Catholic, and virtually all other Churches urgently need to reform themselves if they are to save their followers from oblivion. It is not only we who say that they have been derailed from the right path; the Apostles of Jesus Christ saw this apostasy coming even in their own time.

Acts 20:26 "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

Acts 20:27 "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. "Therefore take heed to yourselves

Acts 20:28 and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God

Acts 20:29 which He purchased with His own blood. "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come

Acts 20:30 in among you, not sparing the flock. "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Acts 20:31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with

Acts 20:32 tears. "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

3 John 1:9 "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.

3 John 1:10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the

3 John 1:11 church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God."

Apostle John was Jesus' most loved disciple, yet even he was being isolated from the Church of God, which most likely he set it up or helped in its establishment. How much more would they do it these days? And they still call themselves Churches of God. Great has been the mystery that has enveloped those Churches from the very beginning.

2 Tim 3:1 "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 Tim 3:2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to

2 Tim 3:3 parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

2 Tim 3:4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

2 Tim 3:5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

2 Tim 3:6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with

2 Tim 3:7 sins, led away by various lusts, **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

2 Tim 3:13 **But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.**

2 Tim 3:14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you

2 Tim 3:15 have learned them, and that from childhood you have known **the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

2 Tim 3:16 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,** and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

2 Tim 3:17 instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good

2 Tim 4:1 work. I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at

2 Tim 4:2 His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke,

2 Tim 4:3 exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

2 Tim 4:4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

2 Tim 4:5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

2 Cor 11:13 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

2 Cor 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Cor 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."

Strong words, but unfortunately never more true than now. We emphasized the fact that the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration of God, are able to make one wise, and that those who continue to live in sin are 'always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Those who preach other than the correct doctrines of salvation fall in this category.

The Scriptures not only tell us what we must do to be saved, but how to avoid being derailed from the right path once we embark upon it. For unlike other religions, which promise salvation by simple membership, Christianity requires a life long process of overcoming and perseverance. Christians have powerful enemies that want to derail them from the true path.

Eph 6:12 "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and

Eph 6:14 having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the

Eph 6:15 breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Eph 6:16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Eph 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints; and for me, that utterance may be given to me,

Eph 6:19 that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Eph 6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

In other religions, simple manifestations of the spirit are regarded as signs from God. Not so in true Christianity. Christians are supposed to test the spirits and be able to discern the true and holy from the false and wicked.

1 John 4:1 "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Here is an example of wicked spirits.

1 Ki 22:19 Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left." "And the LORD said,

1 Ki 22:20 Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in

1 Ki 22:21 that manner. "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.'

1 Ki 22:22 "The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' "Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit

1 Ki 22:23 in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

It is clear that even wicked spirits have a role to play in God's scheme of things. He is setting them on the people that depart from His path. Next time you see an apparition, a medium, or some other sign from beyond, do not run to worship it, but test it by the standard of the Scriptures, asking yourself what purpose does it serve. Is it beneficial and genuine, or dangerous, secretive, wicked and costly? Bear in mind that wicked spirits work through the agency of human beings. The prophets that opposed Micaiah were human beings, yet they were doing the work of the Devil, allowing demons to act and

speak through them. Christians must never allow that to happen. They can stay on the right path by always referring to the Bible. But Bible study in order to be effective must be accompanied by prayer and meditation.

Christians will always have stumbling blocks set on their path, but the Holy Spirit will never abandon them.

John 14:18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever;

John 14:17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

Mark 10:29 "So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's,

Mark 10:30 "who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time; houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life."

2 Th 1:3 "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

2 Th 1:4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God,

2 Th 1:5 that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;

2 Th 1:6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you

2 Th 1:7 who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

2 Th 1:8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the

2 Th 1:9 gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the

2 Th 1:10 presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

2 Th 1:11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill

2 Th 1:12 all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Without the Holy Spirit, no one can reach the Kingdom of God. That is why tradition must never take precedence over Scriptures. Without the lessons that the Holy Spirit has preserved for us in the Bible, we would never know right from wrong, true from false, holy from unholy, and the true Gospel from the plethora of false ones. One must be able to distinguish at all times between spiritual truth and what wrongly passes as spiritual enlightenment. True enlightenment cannot come from within either, as the new wave religions preach. Human beings are not born with an encyclopedias of knowledge in their mind. True knowledge comes only when the Scriptures are combined with divine revelation and life's experiences. And it comes only to those who have attained spiritual union with God; never to sinners, practitioners of witchcraft, or followers of other religions.

At birth, people's brains and hearts are blank like a video tape that has nothing on it. The moment one takes the first breath, a recording process begins. God created the world in such a way that all human beings are supposed to come to a point in life in which they desire more than just eating, drinking and being merry – an yearning for an innermost satisfaction of the soul. It is at such a time that the Spirit of God touches people. Some people grasp that moment, and perform the necessary changes; others do not. That is why Jesus Christ said that, "many are called, but few chosen." (Mat 20:16).

When people repent, are baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit, the old record is being wiped out, and a new record set in motion. It is this record that determines their fate at the time of judgment: eternal life in the Kingdom of God, or eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire. Now in spite of the tribulations that we must endure along the way, beginning a new life, and creating a new record, is neither harsh nor unpleasant. On the contrary, one experiences inexpressible joys that compare with nothing that this world has to offer.

Why not try a short test to see if this is so: set aside one week during which time you will do nothing evil. You will be good, patient, generous, friendly, and kind to everyone that comes in contact with you. You will be surprised at the power that emanates from you and how people around you change too. At the end of that week you will most likely feel better than you have ever felt.

Young people often say that they will get married when they find the right person. Some of them do, but quite a large number do not. Of those that marry, almost half discover that they have not married the 'right' person and end up in divorce. The problem is, more than half of the second marriages are not 'right' either and end up in divorce too.

Now could it be that people expect the other person to be 'right', without thinking whether they themselves are 'right'? You can only have a lasting marriage if both partners are 'right'. But being 'right' does not mean being perfect. It only means being understanding and tolerant towards the shortcomings of the other person. As Apostle Paul said:

Rom 15:1 "We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Rom 15:2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please

Rom 15:3 Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."

Rom 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

When looking for the right person, make sure that you yourself are right too. You will find out how 'right' you are by taking our test. Chances are that you will not be happy with yourself, as it is almost certain that you will fail a few times before you manage a full week without shortcomings. You may then be a lot less judgmental of others, a lot more tolerant and understanding of them. You will then be in a much better position to find the 'right' person too. You may even be surprised by how many people may appear to be right for you then. Do not be surprised to find that God may use that occasions to touch you and call you to repentance too. You never know what transpires in the end. Bear in mind that all big things have a small beginning. In any case, you will lose nothing, but could find the key to the Kingdom of God.

Those that come with an old record before God at the time of judgment, can expect nothing but damnation. Is your life worth that much that you would not want to give it up for something that is infinitely better and more satisfying? Make no mistake about it, there is a judgment of God that no one can escape.

2 Tim 4:1 "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

God will judge the living and the dead at "His appearing and His Kingdom." Whence then did the Orthodox Church get the idea of judgment after death? While other churches hold similar beliefs, the Orthodox Church has a greater responsibility for to it has been given the New Testament. We ask nothing more than that they honor what they have given us.

Now if judgment occurs at the appearance of Jesus Christ, what happens to the people when they die. Nothing! They are asleep, to use the biblical vernacular, or dead and unconscious, to use a more common one. When they come to consciousness again, after the resurrection, they will find themselves facing the judgment of God.

Priests and ministers of religions rush to the bedside of dying people in order to give them the 'sacraments' that ensure their place in heaven. Pity those that died in wars, on the seas, in wildernesses, in deserts, etc. Will they ever go to heaven, or suffer forever in hell because a priest could not administer last minute sacraments? This charade has gone on for too long. It is time to put an end to it, and follow the scriptural way to salvation. It is not what people do in the last minute of their life that determines their fate, but what they have done with the whole of their life. If they have not repented, changed their life, and created a new record for themselves, they can have a thousand priests at their bedside, it will not make an iota of difference.

Rev 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Rev 22:13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Blessed are those who

Rev 22:14 do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."

See that? Jesus Christ – 'the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last', in case you did not know whose work this is – determines people's fate according to their work, not according to what the priests do for them at, or after, death. People cannot begin to keep the Commandments of God at the last minute of their life so that they may have the right to the tree of life. They must prove themselves, and bring works worthy of salvation, over a longer period of time.

Being by someone at such a time, in order to ease the person's pain and sense of loss, is worthwhile, but the notion that anyone could be saved by priestly 'sacraments' at the last minute is dangerous, for it lets people believe that they can postpone their moment of repentance until a more convenient time.

Who gave 'sacraments' to Jesus Christ, to John the Baptist, to Stephen, to Apostle Paul, to other Apostles, and to the millions of Christians who died in Jerusalem, in Rome, throughout Europe, and in many other parts of the world? The word 'sacrament' is not even in the Bible, and if it is not in the Bible, it is not necessary. No addition or deletion is allowed to what the Bible says under any circumstance.

Tradition has a role to play in Christian life, but only when it is based on the Scriptures. The Pharisees of old failed because they followed a human tradition. Modern day Christian 'Pharisees' are doing exactly the same thing.

Mark 7:6 "[Jesus] answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

Mark 7:7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

Mark 7:8 "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men . . ." He said to them,

Mark 7:9 **"All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."**

The Romanian Orthodox Church chose an unknown provincial monk to do its bid in challenging us. We would have liked to answer him point by point, but we can't because: 1) it serves little purpose in airing his banalities, and 2) much of what he said falls under the category of blasphemy, which we could not repeat even for a critical assessment.

None of the things he said invalidate anything we have written so far. The question is, how did he know about us? The answer is found on the page following his diatribe. A picture of the Romanian Orthodox Patriarch, in company of the Pope, carried the following caption:

"As proof of the hope in Christian unity stands the witness of the first visit by a Pope in an Orthodox country. The great historic event, which took place on 7– 9 May 1999, when His Holiness Pope John Paul II visited Romania at the invitation of the Most Reverend Patriarch Teoctist, confirms once again the spiritual mission of the Romanian people."

Ooh! "The spiritual mission of the Romanian people?" And what exactly might that be? Are we going to see twenty million Romanian missionaries crisscrossing the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ under their arm, preaching it to all and sundry? Well, we better let the world know what the Romanians have in store for it, for we would not want it to be taken by surprise by such an earth shattering event, would we?

We just wonder what happened of that mission as far as other Orthodox countries are concerned? Why have no other Patriarchs invited the Pope to their lands if his visit is such a blessing for their peoples? In particular, why has the Russian Orthodox Church resisted all attempts by the Polish Pope to visit their land?

This Pope has visited more than one hundred and twenty countries around the world, but he would gladly have given them all away for just one visit to Russia. Why? So that he could dedicate that country to his 'Blessed Virgin Mary'. That was one of the 'secrets' revealed to the children of Fatima, supposedly by virgin Mary, as a condition for peace in the world.

The reason the Russian Orthodox Patriarchs have resisted it so far is that such a visit would mean an acknowledgement of the Pope's supremacy over Christendom, a role they have reserved for themselves ever since Moscow became the centre of the Orthodox world after the Ottoman hordes conquered Constantinople. Russian Patriarchs consider themselves to be the true leaders of Christianity by virtue of the fact that it was the Greek Church that gave the New Testament to the world, not the Church of Rome.

The Vatican was able to make inroads into the Orthodoxy of Romania by virtue of the common Latin roots, but no such virtues exist in regard to other Orthodox nations. Even if such a visit would take place, as it appears likely after President

Putin's visit to the Vatican, it is doubtful that a permanent rapprochement will occur between Rome and Moscow. Prophecy tells us that in the times of the end they will find themselves on opposite sides. We are living in those times now. In the Scriptures, Rome is symbolically referred to as 'Babylon'. Notice what they say about it.

Psa 137:8 "O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, Happy the one who repays you as you have served us!
Psa 137:9 Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones against the rock!"

Isa 46:12 "Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, Who are far from righteousness: I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off;
Isa 46:13 My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.

Isa 47:1 "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate.

Isa 47:2 Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, Take off the skirt, Uncover the thigh, Pass through the rivers.

Isa 47:3 Your nakedness shall be uncovered, Yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, And I will not

Isa 47:4 arbitrate with a man." As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.

Isa 47:5 "Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; For you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms.

Isa 47:6 I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, And given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.

Isa 47:7 And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,' So that you did not take these things to heart, Nor remember the latter end of them.

Isa 47:8 "Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, Who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, Nor shall I know the loss of children';

Isa 47:9 But these two things shall come to you In a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness Because of the multitude of your sorceries, For the great abundance of your enchantments.

Isa 47:10 "For you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, 'No one sees me'; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me.' Therefore evil shall come upon you; You shall not know

Isa 47:11 from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; You will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, Which you shall not know."

Isaiah had a lot more to say about Babylon. Read the rest of it in the Bible. Now let us see what the other major prophet of the Bible, Jeremiah, had to say about Babylon.

Jer 50:41 "Behold, a people shall come **from the north**, And a great nation and many kings Shall be raised up **from the ends of the**

Jer 50:42 **earth**. They shall hold the bow and the lance; They are cruel and shall not show mercy. Their voice shall roar like the sea; They shall ride on horses, Set in array, like a man for the battle, Against you, O daughter of Babylon."

Jer 50:43 "The king of Babylon has heard the report about them, And his hands grow feeble; Anguish has taken hold of him, Pangs as

Jer 50:44 of a woman in childbirth. "Behold, he shall come up like a lion **from the floodplain of the Jordan** against the dwelling place of the strong; But I will make them suddenly run away from her. And who is a chosen man that I may appoint over her? For who is like Me? Who will arraign Me? And who is that shepherd Who will withstand Me?"

Here are some interesting identifying signs about the forces that come against Babylon in the end time. They come from 'the ends of the earth' in the north, and from the 'floodplains of Jordan'. Those that come from the ends of the earth in the north could be none other than Russia and her allies. But who might those from the 'floodplains of Jordan' be? The Islamists, that's who! Suicidal Islamists have put the fear of God in the hearts of many people. You have to remember that modern 'Babylon' is not only a mighty religious centre, but for prophetic purposes it is also the centre of the 'Lost Ten Tribes of Israel' (See *TCH 10*). Present day Israel is part of those people too. Now back to Jeremiah.

Jer 50:45 "Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Babylon, And His purposes that He has proposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out; Surely He will make their dwelling place desolate with them.

Jer 50:46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon The earth trembles, And the cry is heard among the nations.

Jer 51:1 Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, Against those who dwell in Leb Kamai, A destroying wind.

Jer 51:2 And I will send winnowers to Babylon, Who shall winnow her and empty her land. For in the day of doom They shall be against her all around. Against her let the archer bend his bow,

Jer 51:3 And lift himself up against her in his armor. Do not spare her young men; Utterly destroy all her army.

Jer 51:4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, And those thrust through in her streets.

Jer 51:5 For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, By his God, the LORD of hosts, Though their land was filled with sin

Jer 51:6 against the Holy One of Israel. "Flee from the midst of Babylon, And every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, **For this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He shall recompense her.**

Jer 51:7 Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine;

Jer 51:8 Therefore the nations are deranged. Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed. Wail for her! Take balm for her pain

Jer 51:9 ; Perhaps she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, But she is not healed. Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country; For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies.

Jer 51:10 The LORD has revealed our righteousness. Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

Jer 51:11 Make the arrows bright! Gather the shields! The LORD has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes. For His plan is against Babylon to destroy it, Because it is the vengeance of the LORD, The vengeance for His temple."

This is a long prophecy too, and you can read the rest of it in the Bible. The ancient Medes, who together with the Persians, have conquered and destroyed ancient Babylon, have moved northward. They are currently inhabiting the lands of Ukraine and parts of Russia. Babylon's end time destruction comes from the north, as repayment for the evil that it has done to Zion. What evil? Destroying the temple and sending its people into an exile that lasted two thousand years. Is it a mere coincidence that Babylon's destruction will come when those exiles are brought back from the countries in which they were exiled by Rome and settled again in their ancient land? We are that close to the completion of those prophecies.

Can you see why the Vatican has fiercely opposed the two Gulf Wars against Israel's implacable enemy, Iraq? While we are at it, let us remind those who seek to settle the Middle Eastern conflict what they need to do in order to succeed.

Gen 15:18 "On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates."

Josh 1:3 "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.

Josh 1:4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory."

The world would be so much better and safer if people stopped opposing God by devising "road maps" that prevent Israel from taking possession of the lands given to it by God. The reason Israel has not been able to take possession of all those lands yet is that they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God, clinging tenaciously to a righteousness by law.

Rom 9:30 "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness,
Rom 9:31 even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of
Rom 9:32 righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written:
Rom 9:33 "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."
Rom 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.
Rom 10:2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being
Rom 10:3 ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the
Rom 10:4 righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Jews would do well to take note of the following Scriptures too.

Gal 3:27 "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek,
Gal 3:28 there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Gal 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
Gal 4:1 "Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,
Gal 4:2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.
Gal 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.
Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
Gal 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."
Gal 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"
Gal 4:7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."
Gal 4:19 "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,
Gal 4:20 I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.
Gal 4:21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?"
Gal 4:22 "For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.
Gal 4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through
Gal 4:24 promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives
Gal 4:25 birth to bondage, which is Hagar; for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is,
Gal 4:26 and is in bondage with her children; but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written:
Gal 4:27 "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband."

Isn't it remarkable how well the sons of the bondwoman have been fulfilling their prophetic role of persecuting the sons of free woman, and how especially well they are doing this job now? Unfortunately, they have gone well beyond just persecuting them, they are committing mayhem with their penchant for suicidal homicides. But God sees their actions and shall reward them accordingly. Those who choose death, shall be rewarded with death, while those who choose life, shall be rewarded with life, especially if they repent and turn to God now while they have their chance.

Gal 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according
Gal 4:29 to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.
Gal 4:30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."
Gal 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Stand fast therefore
Gal 5:1 in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

What we have in the Middle East at present is a race between two peoples – who enters the grace of God first. If the Palestinians were to convert to Jesus Christ now, they would inherit God's promised land. Prophecy, however, tells us that they will not do it, and rather go from bad to worse. One thing is sure, no man will ever attain Paradise through acts of suicides that take the lives of many more innocent people. God gave life, and He alone can take it away.

The sons of Ishmael were supposed to persecute the sons of the free woman, not kill them altogether. This is where Islamist leaders have failed their people miserably. If they feel so strongly about Jihad, they should take their 'dirty war' (not 'holy war', for there is nothing holy about their kind of war), to pagan lands, and convert them, not to the people 'of the Book'.

Christian Churches have failed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but even so they still value life and the virtues that make life worth living and create good character: truth, love, faith, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, etc.

A Muslim man came to us recently, desperately requesting help to go back to Indonesia to marry his fiancé. A friend of his had run away with his money and he was left without plane tickets for his own wedding. We did not have that kind of money at our disposal, but as he solemnly promised to return it we arranged a loan for him. He never showed up again. When he returned, he changed both his address and his place of work. We later discovered that he was already a married man with children. His religion had taught him that it is alright to lie to, and rob, Christians. And for that seventy two virgins are waiting for him in Paradise. That is what they teach in the Mosques these days. Talk of people needing to return to God.

Would the forefathers of Islam, Abraham, Ishmael, and Mohammad, approve that kind of religion? We don't think so. God certainly doesn't. God is life; He is the God of the living not of the dead. Those who think that they please God by destroying life, especially innocent life, are gravely mistaken.

God's promises to Abraham were of two kinds. The first referred to the earthly inheritance of his descendants by blood, and the second to a heavenly inheritance of his descendants by faith. Now although Ishmael, his first born son, was to receive substantial blessings too, Abraham's birthright inheritance passed on to Isaac. The lands Israel is to inherit from the Nile to the Euphrates, are not inhabited by Abraham's children. Although they are of the same faith, the Syrians, Jordanians, Lebanese and Palestinians are not of the same blood line as the Arabians – the descendants of Ishmael.

The Jews thought that a visit to their land by the Pope would placate that man and give them legitimacy in the eyes of the world. And what happened instead? Tribulation, and nothing but grievous tribulation. And shall we say, 'just as we told them'?

Catholic leaders are doing their best to change the course of history and prevent biblical prophecies from taking their course. They know that Zion and Babylon can never live together peacefully in this world. When one rises, the other must diminish. We just happen to live at this important junction in world history.

Those who think that the term 'Babylon' refers to the ancient capital city of the Chaldean empire should remember that similar prophecies are found in the book of Revelation too. That book was given to Apostle John when Babylon was a mere shadow of its former past. The city was first destroyed by Medo-Persians, then by the Greeks of Alexander the Great.

And yet, the book of Revelation speaks of a Babylon the Great, a 'Mother of Harlots', in the very end time.

Rev 17:1 "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me,

"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, "with whom the kings of the earth

Rev 17:2 committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Rev 17:3 "So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Rev 17:4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written:

Rev 17:5 MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Rev 17:6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

Rev 17:7 And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

Rev 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and

Rev 17:9 is not, and yet is. "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits."

Rev 17:15 "Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations,

Rev 17:16 and tongues. "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat

Rev 17:17 her flesh and burn her with fire. "For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

Rev 17:18 "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

An institution of worldwide renown, which rules over many waters (obviously peoples), has the identifying signs of seven heads and ten horns. We have discussed this 'Mother of Harlots' in many of our editions (*TCH* 3, 4, 10, etc.). The seven heads are the seven hills of Rome, and the ten horns are the Ten Tribes of Israel that formed the nation of Samaria.

The extraordinary thing is that although this 'woman' rules over the ten horns, from among which it rose (See *TCH* 10), those horns still hate it. Isn't this what is happening in the world at present? On the one hand, people are in awe of the Vatican, and on the other they hate its teachings and practices. Those that do not believe in God hate it even more. And yet, leaders from all over the world still flock to the Vatican to seek the Pope's blessing. Now notice Babylon's fate is in the end.

Rev 18:1 "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated

Rev 18:2 with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"

Rev 18:3 "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." And I heard another voice from heaven

Rev 18:4 saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. "For her sins

Rev 18:5 have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. "Render to her just as she rendered to you,

Rev 18:6 and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.

Rev 18:7 "In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' "Therefore her plagues will come in one day;

Rev 18:8 death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

Combining this prophecy with the following one from Zechariah, we come to some pretty ominous developments.

Zec 9:13 "For I have bent Judah, My bow, Fitted the bow with Ephraim, And raised up your sons, O Zion, Against your sons, O Greece, And made you like the sword of a mighty man."

The sons of Judah, Ephraim, and Zion, against the sons of Greece? Everybody knows who Judah is today, but not too many people know that Ephraim represents the countries that inherited Joseph's birthright – the British Commonwealth of nations and the United States of America. As for the 'sons of Greece', who could these be but members of the Orthodox Church, of which Russia is now the leader. The term Greek Orthodox Church encompasses all Orthodox Churches, for from it proceeded all of them. So in the end time we have Israel, British Commonwealth and the USA facing the 'sons of Greece' – Russia and its "Commonwealth of Independent States". Plus whatever allies they may gather on their sides.

Can you see now what is in store for the world in the very near future? East against West, and North against South, just as the Almighty said that it would happen in the end.

Zec 8:10 ". . . For I set **all men**, everyone, against his neighbor."

Isa 19:2 "I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; Everyone will fight against his brother, And everyone against his neighbor, City against city, kingdom against kingdom."

Now where is the 'spiritual mission of the Romanian people' in this context? Me thinks rather that the mouse has roared. Instead of spending its resources on the poor, with which the country has been so bountifully blessed, and improve the country's disastrous image, the Romanian Orthodox hierarchy went to great lengths to reach us with its angry message.

Since ancient times, it has been the role of the people of God to keep a close watch on peoples' morality, and bring them and their leaders back to the right path.

Isa 58:1 "Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgressions. . . and their sins."

Although Romanian media is awash with stories of corruption in the country, including at the highest levels of the Government, the Orthodox Church takes issue with our work instead of the work of its leaders.

Ceausescu brought the nation to its knees with his megalomania. While people groaned, he built a monument to himself – the People's Palace – the second largest building in the world. Now his erstwhile friend, the Patriarch, wants a monument to himself too: a new massive 'Cathedral' in the heart of Bucharest to rival the best in the world.

The nation's roads are a disgrace, pensioners are starving, yet the leaders can think of nothing but glory to themselves.

Prov 29:2 "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan."

When I visited the country two years ago, I wanted to see that Palace for myself. To my dismay, I found it out of reach of tourists. What should be the nation's premier tourist attraction, was being kept under armed guards. They are still gripped by fear and suspicion as if people would demolish it and take souvenirs out of it as they took out of the Berlin Wall. The nation should be so lucky. It might save itself heaps of money by not having to pay an army to guard it.

They might want to come to Australia to see how in a true democracy people have access to their nation's Parliament without much hassle. Is that because the Australian Government is slack in protecting its Parliamentarians? Certainly not! Rather, it is because the Government trusts its people, and because those in charge of security do so discreetly. You can hardly see them. I suspect that many pose as ushers, guides, gardeners, etc., not as in-your-face armed sentinels. And Australia has infinitely more reasons to guard itself against terrorists by virtue of its overseas military ventures.

About Christmas 2003, Prime Minister, Adrian Nastase, went into a hunting escapade with a party of friends that included his Agriculture Minister and the leaders of Romania's two information agencies, the SRI and SIE. The Agriculture Minister was grievously injured in a shooting incident, barely surviving with his life. He must be thinking it was his lucky day that the party did not contain lesser professionals. Any wonder that Romanians still dread the thought of having to deal with these people.

The party returned without any trophies, but at least the leaders of the two information agencies discovered a new vocation for themselves. They should join Romania's target shooting team at Athena's Olympics. Given their shooting prowess they may not win many medals, but they would certainly put the fear of God in the hearts of those in the Olympic village. God would like them for that, for He likes everyone who works for Him in whatever capacity. God knows, the Greek Orthodox Church, like its sister Romanian Orthodox Church, needs an infusion of fear of God in the heart of its followers, and who best could do that than a couple of 'professionals' from up north.

Romania's other professionals did not fail to notice their leader's infatuation with hunting either.

"Psychiatrist Florin Tudose, explained yesterday that hunting is another kind of manifestation of what is more 'archaic' and wild in our human nature: aggressiveness. Those who go hunting have greater latent aggressiveness in themselves than those that do not. This crave is not patently obvious. It comes to the surface when they go hunting."

"Hunting is also an effective compensation: the man feels free to kill. But for a man to become like a beast, to feel the smell of fresh blood, and to see his victim writhing to death in front of him, is dreadful".

The Psychiatrist considers that we are dealing with "cowardly aggressiveness", because no matter how fierce an animal may be, it has no defense in the face of a man with gun.

"Hunters are not courageous people. When you wait with a rifle in your hands, you risk nothing. [Except the bullets of your fellow 'professionals']. Moreover, the Psychiatrist believes that these people are without any feeling of mercy. "I have never seen merciful hunters."

Regarding the appetite for hunting of those that govern us, the Psychiatrist is of the opinion that they like shooting animals because they consider themselves to be a privileged class. "The privileged class before '89' had similar habits".

"I don't know why in our modern age hunting is connected with dictators. All were hunters; Ceausescu was sanguinely bloodthirsty, killing out of pleasure. Hunting was the "endowment of certain members of the Government and Securitate".

"Hunting is part of the 'dreadful scenario of man's fight against nature', specific to communism", said Tudose.

Another Psychiatrist, Alina Voaides, added: "It is very hard to explain why hunting is still in fashion in a country like Romania, which had a poet like Labis". (Marius Mitrache, "Evenimentul Zilei", 31 Dec. 2003. Translated from Romanian).

Larger and wealthier countries have just one information agency; Romania has two. It has mountains of treasures that need to be protected. Either that, or Ceausescu's 'Securitate' was too big to be incorporated into just one organization.

Bulgaria dismissed its secret service agents outright when it embarked upon the road to democracy. Romania could not afford to do that. Why? Because, we are told, Bulgaria's disgruntled agents joined the ranks of professional criminals, and now the country reeks with crime. Now we would not want that to happen to Romania, would we? We just wonder, since Romania compensated its Securitate agents with cushy jobs to keep them out of trouble, why does the country reek with crime too? Who commits the crimes of Romania, and why are perpetrators seldom caught and brought to justice? Romanian media often points the finger at the very people that are supposed to be catching the criminals.

The country paid a high ransom to rehabilitate its Securitate agents, and how did they repay that trust?

1) They 'improved' the country's political, judicial, and military system by placing their acolytes in key positions.

2) They set out to 'educate' media people on the virtues of 'original democracy'. Wayward journalists who thought that they could just report on anything they want whenever they want were taught a lesson they could not refuse. The balance for 2003 was one death and twelve assaults. ("Evenimentul Zilei", 26 February, 2004).

3) They put the fear of God in the hearts in émigrés who thought that they could just pack up and go back home whenever they want. They had to learn the lesson that in an 'original democracy' things are different. An increasing number of people who enthusiastically went back home after years of exile, hoping to help the country out of its misery, are deserting it again, as are the country's young professionals. Romania can ill afford that. But it cannot hold them because they do not like what they see; they do not like what is happening with their country. Other European nations would be happy about that, except that with the cream comes the dross too. It is unfortunate for Romania that those who engage in crime make bigger waves than those who are honest, professional, and law abiding.

4) Instead of blending into the community and forgetting about their shameful past, Securitate men are brazenly, ostentatiously, and spitefully setting themselves up in posh clubs, exclusively reserved for former Securitate superior officers.

All 'reigns of terror', that began with the French Revolution, came to their deserved ignominious end. Romania's agony continues a decade and a half after it was supposed to have ended. Why? Because those who stole the Revolution of 1989 have deeply entrenched themselves in power. That may not have been all that bad, for they were supposed to have experience in governing, if they did it honestly and did not make recourse to crooked methods to hold on to power. Somehow, the gap between those that govern and those who are governed has not been bridged in Romania. The age old suspicion between the exploited and the exploiters is as wide as ever. The governing cliques still behave as if they are a class apart.

A country that is rich in human and natural resources, with a highly educated work force, is the tail of Europe in almost every measurable criteria. How is that possible? It is possible because those in power have learned the art of siphoning off the country's wealth without being detected and brought to justice.

It must be heartrending for Romania's intellectuals to see how little progress they have made in neutralizing the deeply entrenched poisonous ideology of state dependency that remnants of the old regime are still feeding to the masses.

When the European Parliament put a caveat on Romania's entry into their Union, until it reforms its judicial and administrative systems, President Iliescu overruled his own Prime Minister and hurriedly appointed a super-minister to oversee the reforms. People breathed a sigh of relief that finally the Government was serious about joining the ranks of true democracies. Ulterior developments, however, indicated that the President may have been more concerned with ensuring his murky past remains uncovered than with reforms. Appointing a former Securitate General to that position confirms this too.

In his very first declaration he said that he will put priority in solving the crimes against journalists. Now why are the crimes against journalists more heinous than other crimes, and why must they be solved first? Because that might placate a disgruntled media that is increasingly critical of the Government. There is a crime that has been waiting to be solved since 1991. We wrote about it in our previous edition. Are they going to solve that one too, or are they going to commit another one in order to cover up the first? We know pretty well what they are going to do. We just hope they know the implications of it, for they are playing with fire. More than the lives of a few people are at stake here; the destiny of the entire nation is at stake.

If they have not done enough, let them fill the cup. The whole world knows, or will know, about it.

Mat 10:26 "Therefore do not fear them. For **there is nothing covered that will not be revealed**, and hidden that will not be known.

Mat 10:27 "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

Mat 10:28 "And **do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**"

It took less than a month for the Romanians to see the kind of reforms they can expect from their new supper minister.

"The vice president of National Liberal Party, Gheorghe Flutur, sent a letter to the European Parliament requesting an urgent analysis of the 'grave situation' created in Romania by the Government's non-observance of the free speech and political pluralism. Flutur maintains that State Institutions are being used as "political police as they used to do before 1989", against him and his party colleagues who try to tell the truth and expose grave corruption cases. "I have proof that PSD has ordered State authorities to invent incriminating files for the Liberal leaders." (EVZ, 21 March 2004).

People have been complaining that they have no access to their files from communist times. Well, there, PSD has access to them. And if they haven't got a file, what's a big deal about creating a new one. Many people have found themselves with new files in recent years. You never know when they may come handy. Like at election times.

"PSD plays murder. It no longer supports any adversary. It has unleashed itself against the press and against the opposition. It behaves as if it is mad. Today – tomorrow, it is the first battle – for the local and regional Councils.

(. . .) In the next few years, EU will channel fat funds, tens of thousands of euros, through SAPARD programs, towards the country's municipalities. The PSD has developed a taste for euros. Europe's regulations are of no interest. The Europeans are busy with other problems. The PSD has developed a fear of the electors, lest they be sidelined from the honey jar.

When *Evenimentul Zilei* began to publish, at the beginning of last week, the serial entitled 'Vilas of the PSD Bosses', they went crazy. They simply censured the newspaper. They put State Institutions in motion against it too. Very grave. Unprecedented attack against freedom of speech and freedom of the press. But because the press cannot be silenced as long as the opposition is still alive, they began an attack against it too. Their campaign, however, is shoddily put together. For two days, the 'State-Party' has been compiling lists of so-called bosses of PNL and PD [Liberal and Democratic Parties], which they promptly passed on to the Anticorruption Prosecution (. . .)

How could the PSD do that when all EU reports deplore the lack of judicial independence in the country? Since none of those things have occurred, isn't the PSD guilty of blackmail? (. . .) The Opposition does not have the power to pass on to the Anticorruption Prosecution its own findings (. . .) It is not the Opposition, which was in power only four years [last decade], that has created a semi-Mafioso State based on clans of barons and putrid corruption. The Opposition has had, at most, a contribution in the falsification of democracy in Romania, but the great disaster was started, and it is now being completed, by those who are in power at present." (D.Tapalaga, Isteria, EVZ, 21 March 2004).

Most of these things would be hardly more than dirty electoral tricks, the sort of which are common in virtually all democracies, except that Nastase's Government does not merely want to embarrass its opposition, he is using State Institutions to vanquish it altogether, leaving it no more than a stump – an opposition in name only, as in Putin's Russia.

As for those old Securitate files that still cause a lot of stir in Romania, people should no longer fret about them. They no longer have any relevance in today's world. Unless they have been used for criminal and legal purposes, they should be completely destroyed. If they have never seen the light of day, they are not worth keeping even for archival purposes. All they can do at this stage is defile the soul of the victims, and the conscience of the perpetrators, and prevent them both from full repentance before God. We must never be their judge. Let God judge them, not us, for we shall all face Him before long.

Among the former communist countries, Romania must be the last in harnessing the wealth of experience and moral capital of its exiles. When I visited the country two years ago, I was struck by the simmering hostility and suspicion that still burns in the hearts of many people towards those that escaped the communist system. "They run away from us, they left us behind to shoulder the burden of communism, and now they want to come back to take the cake away from us."

Well, well, well, they do not want us back, lest we take a bite of their cake.

In the aftermath of the 1989 Revolution, they used to say, 'we won't sell the country to foreigners', as a ruse to delay privatization. Now their slogan is directed against 'foreigners' who may deprive them of their slice of cake. Or is it rather to prevent them from bringing back dangerous notions of free speech, free press, and true democracy?

Friends, if that is how you see our sacrifice and the trials we had to endure to achieve anything in the West, and give the country a modicum of respect on the world stage, you can keep your slice of cake and eat it too. If you think that it was more honorable bending your back to the burden of that odious regime, than fight it in which ever way you could, you deserve more than your slice of bitter cake, you deserve your fate.

Years of university studies, and decades of experience in education, theology and desktop publishing, not to speak of general life experience in the West that could be useful in the current circumstances, brought nothing but ridicule from my former compatriots. And it wasn't even me who initiated the discussion along these lines, for it is not in my character to boast about my achievements. They ask questions about you, they want to know what you do, how you live, how wealthy you are, etc., and then they put you down. "I would have become a millionaire by now, if I had been in the West that long". Yeah, you would! Or you would be in jail as so many others who thought that they could become rich quickly by crooked methods. Everywhere in the West is El Dorado, or as an old proverb goes, even the dogs run around with donuts on their tails.

The majority of people in Romania are poor by any standard, yet a surprising number of them were building houses that were both beyond their means, and beyond their needs. Years of life under communist rule left a mark on them without them realizing it. I remember how in my early years in Romania, the virtues of communism were always heralded by everything big or first. While the communist world basked in gigantism, the West put its efforts in miniaturization. The advantage of this became obvious when the Soviet Empire collapsed. The communist countries were hopelessly behind in just about everything: in technological innovations, in electronics, computers, medical technology, automotive industry, etc. You name it, they were behind in it, except in the surveillance of their people. And to think that many still hunker after the 'good old days'.

Going back to my country of origin after three decades in an orderly country like Australia, I was struck by the sense of unreality, moral vacuum, and unethical behavior on the part of a disturbing number of people. Being able to cover the expenses of such a long journey, let them believe that I must be living in a palace back home in Australia. When I told them that I was living in an average three bedroom house like the vast majority of people, they wondered how I could be happy living like that. It made little sense to them that people would be happy 'living like that' and using their savings for other pleasures in life. What pleasures might there be other than material possessions, a large home, and unrestraint sex? Well, these pleasures.

Prov 22:1 "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver and gold."

Prov 22:4 "Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life."

Prov 28:6 "Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich."

Prov 28:8 "One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion gathers it for him who will pity the poor."

Prov 28:20 "A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished."

Ecc1 5:10 "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase."

Ecc1 7:1 "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth;"

Ecc1 7:2 "Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, For that is the end of all men; And

Ecc1 7:3 the living will take it to heart." "Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made

Ecc1 7:4 better." "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth."

1 Tim 6:7 "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

1 Tim 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

1 Tim 6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in

1 Tim 6:10 destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Tim 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness."

More than anything else, the country needs an infusion of new values, new morality, new attitude to law and order, and an awareness that material possessions produce only short term happiness.

No other institution is better suited to teach these values than the church, especially now that there seems to be a hunger for spirituality in the country. We saw many churches that could not contain all the people that wanted to go in.

This yearning for spirituality, however, needs to be channeled in the right direction, for it could easily go the wrong way too. The country's leaders need to get away from the notion that there is merit and profit in associating the country with Dracula. Let that remain in the realm of fiction, where it belongs, not in people's consciousness, for that could be their ruin.

The country needs a new attitude towards the environment too. We read with dismay declarations from Government ministers that they intent to transform the Danube Delta into a hunter's paradise. That way, they recon, foreigners with hard currency would come to hunt and leave their currency behind.

The Danube Delta is a unique wildlife refuge area of considerable significance to the whole continent. Long ago it should have been placed on the world heritage map. Far more tourists would come to shoot with photographic cameras than with rifles, as they do in Africa's safaris, if the area was advertised as such, and properly equipped to handle the influx of tourists. We hope European leaders will step in to put an end to this madness before that ecologically sensitive area is vandalized and the world is denuded of yet another wildlife refuge area.

We have reasons to believe that Romania's well educated new generation will rise to the occasion and recover the values exemplified by the nation's old culture. Like other countries, Romania too had a rich, flourishing, gentle, poetical, musical, and friendly culture, before the communists took over and created their 'new man' – the immoral, unconscionable brute that has become the terror of Europe. Should we be surprised that those who created them, who cling tenaciously to power, exhibit the same values?

The current Government should remember that being in opposition in a true democracy is not a disaster. Oppositions are treasured, not for the sake of opposing, but for providing alternative solutions that might serve the country better. When the current opposition had its short stint in power last decade, it did not seek to vanquish its opposition, and did not make recourse to illegality to stay in power. Neither did it seek to infiltrate overseas communities with its own acolytes.

Initially, the editors of the magazine that published the Orthodox Church's challenge to us, expressed the desire to publish articles from our magazine in their publication on a regular basis. We gave them our blessing, but it lasted only a short

time, until the Orthodox Church noticed it and stuck its nose where it ought not to. They quickly changed sides, and published its diatribes against us instead. It turned out to be a very profitable measure for them. Overnight they found themselves sitting on a fortune. Doors were being opened in the highest echelons of power. They soon boasted of meetings and opened doors to the President, the Prime Minister, the Patriarch and, pointedly, the heads of the country's two information agencies.

When these people put their name in a certain press, they do more than personal publicity; they pass on messages.

We expected the new missionaries to be more sophisticated than that. Do they think that they endear themselves to exiled communities by boasting free access to those who caused them to flee the country in the first place? Or that we would be intimidated by veiled threats to our life and property, the kind of which they never seem to tire of sending us?

If we were afraid for our life we would not be doing this work. We have learned to live with a sword over our heads for a long time. We only remind them what Jesus Christ told Pilate.

John 19:10 "Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You,

John 19:11 and power to release You?" Jesus answered, "**You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.** Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

Pilate misused the power that was given to him from above, as have the leaders of Romania so far, but if they think that they won't be held accountable for it they are grievously mistaken.

We cannot compete with anyone on the basis of power, popularity, or financial rewards. But then, do not the Scriptures tell us that people have been capable of selling their soul for a bowl of food? Nevertheless, we keep hoping that our friends' turnaround is not a reflection of their true character, but only blip in what otherwise seemed to be a good record.

We believe in people's ability to repent, change, and turn to God in due time. This is why we keep hoping that the country's leaders and their missionaries would see the light of day, and change their masters from the Devil to Jesus Christ while they can, because He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world.

1 John 4:4 "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
1 John 4:5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God
1 John 4:6 hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

Our prayers, and the prayers of the nation, are that Romania may come out of the nightmare into which powerful remnants of the old regime are still holding it. As the Scriptures say:

James 5:16 "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.
The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

Yes, 'the effective prayer of a righteous man avails much'. The effective prayer of an entire nation avails even more. But it needs to be told about it so that people know who to pray to, what to pray for, and how to pray about it. Their prayer will avail nothing as long as they continue to bow their heads and bend their knees before idols.

Psa 97:7 "Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you [peoples]."
Psa 106:36 "They served their idols, Which became a snare to them."
Psa 115:4 "Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands."
Psa 96:5 "For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens."

2 Cor 6:16 "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

The living God does not live in, and does not compete with, dumb and deaf idols. He does not hear the prayers of those who do not keep His Commandments either.

Prov.28:9 "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination."

James mentioned the need to confess our trespasses to one another. This is another thing that has irked the Orthodox Church a lot. Here is part of what we wrote in the article, "Confessing Your Sins, But To Whom?" (*T C H 11*).

"God showed us how we could reason with Him about our sins.

Isa 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

Isa 1:19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel,

Isa 1:20 You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isa 44:22 I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

Isa 43:25 "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins."

"Wonderful staff, isn't it? We confess our sins to God who blots them out both of our memory and His memory. Now if God does not want to remember our sins anymore, why would a human being want to dig deep into our subconscious and hear our sins confessed to him after we have been forgiven and washed by God and been made 'white as snow and wool'? Wouldn't that defile and trouble our mind and our soul and be contrary to God's principle?

The question is, did the Apostles really want us to unburden our conscience to one another in contravention to what God told us in the Old Testament? The answer is an emphatic NO. Let us consider the case of Apostle Paul. More than any other person in the Bible, he is used as an example of one who was sinful once, saw his errors, confessed his sins, was forgiven, and became a holy man. Now let us contrast him with king David [who confessed his sins to God and was forgiven].

Acts 22:3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

Acts 22:4 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also

Acts 22:5 the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished."

1 Cor 15:9 "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

Gal 1:13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it."

"He confessed that he was a sinful man by zealously persecuting the Church of God. What these Scriptures do not tell us here is that his sins were already well known to the Churches of God. Confessing them merely confirmed to the people he persecuted that he had repented of them and was now rehabilitated and accepted by both God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Gal 1:23 "But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he

Gal 1:24 once tried to destroy." "And they glorified God in me."

Now notice what happened when it came to personal sins of which he was even more loathsome.

Rom 7:15 "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I

Rom 7:16 hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

Rom 7:17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Rom 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but

Rom 7:19 how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil

Rom 7:20 I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that

Rom 7:21 dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my

Rom 7:23 members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which

Rom 7:24 is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank

Rom 7:25 God; through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

"When it came to personal life and the sins of his flesh, Apostle Paul was not as forthcoming as when discussing his well-known persecution of the Church. He was not happy with 'the law in his members' that was causing him to sin and feel so bad about himself, but did not think it necessary to tell people the exact nature of those sins. He had confessed them to Christ, who obviously had forgiven him, and that was enough. Mainstream churches place their priests as intermediaries between men and God, but we have no such custom because it is not scriptural. Our Intermediary and Advocate with the Father is none other than Jesus Christ, our Lord, who took our sins upon Himself in the first place.

1 John 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all

1 John 1:10 unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not

1 John 2:1 in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins,

we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (End of quote).

The Scriptures do not say that we must confess our trespasses to the priest, but to one another, and to God, and to Jesus Christ who is our Advocate with the Father. If the priest wants people to confess their sins to him, let him confess his sins to them too, for otherwise he takes the prerogatives of God and of Jesus Christ, and that is an unpardonable sin.

Only with God the Father and with Jesus Christ, who have no sins to confess, is this a one way street, not with the priests who more often than not are more sinful than the members of their churches.

Neither the Orthodox, nor any other Church, has received the commission to overrule the Scriptures, and place its priests in such highly blasphemous positions.

This is the time for all to repent and turn to the living God, for soon even repentance will no longer be possible.

Rev 22:10 And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

Rev 22:11 "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." "And behold,

Rev 22:12 I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Rev 22:13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Rev 22:14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs, and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

Rev 22:15 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

Rev 22:16 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"

Rev 22:17 And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Rev 22:18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these

Rev 22:19 things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He who testifies to these things says,

Rev 22:20 "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Rev 22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The End Of The World According to Newton

Everyone knows that Newton was a great man of science, but few people know that he was also a man of theology. Recently, the media made a big fuss when it discovered that he predicted the end of the world would occur in the year 2060. Coming after the hoopla of the year 2000, when just about everyone thought that if not the end at least big changes would occur at that time, many people breathed a sign of relief that they have a few more decades to get their house in order before facing their Maker.

The question is, where did he get the year 2060 for the end of the world? The answer is, from counting 1260 years from the year 800. And what happened in that year that made it so important for the history of the world? Nothing, except that is, if you are a Protestant. That year, Pope Leo the III anointed Charlemagne as emperor over the Holy Roman Empire. The Protestants believe that that was the beginning of the flight of the church to its place of safety in wilderness from the persecution of the Dragon as prophesied in the book of Revelation.

Rev 12:1 "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet,
Rev 12:2 and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to
Rev 12:3 give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads
Rev 12:4 and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon
Rev 12:5 as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was
Rev 12:6 caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days.**

Rev 12:7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his
Rev 12:8 angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

Rev 12:9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Rev 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day

Rev 12:11 and night, has been cast down. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Rev 12:12 "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Rev 12:13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave

Rev 12:14 birth to the male Child." "But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for **a time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent."

In biblical terms, 1260 days mean 1260 years. (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:4-6). The woman, of course is the Church of God. But while the true Church was miraculously preserved in that place of safety, which apparently was in the mountains of Europe, the Dragon made war with her remnants who continued to keep the Commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Rev 12:17 "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The problem with Newton's calculations, and with the Protestants' belief, is that the persecution of the Church of God did not begin in the year 800. That persecution began right at the time of the Apostles, as the New Testament epistles only too clearly show. However the Churches of God were still able to function, with difficulties, in various countries of the Roman Empire until about the year 325. And what happened in that year or thereabout? The Council of Nicaea which forbade anyone in the Roman Empire from 'Judeaizing' anymore.

Christians were forbidden, under penalty of death, from following any form of Christianity other than that dictated by Rome. The problem for the Church of God was that the Christianity of Rome had little to do with Jesus Christ and His Gospel of salvation, and more to do with Rome's pagan beliefs and practices, which trace their origin as far back as ancient Egypt. It was then that the Church of God had no choice but to flee to its place of safety in wilderness, making itself invisible to the ecclesiastical authorities of Rome. That flight lasted 1260 years until about 1585. Whoever tested the waters and came to the surface during that time, paid with his life.

Now what happened in 1585 or thereabout? The Protestant Reformation that freed the inheritors of Jacob's birthright from the shackles of the Catholic Church. We say 'about' because neither the Council of Nicaea, nor the beginning of the Protestant Reformation can be decided with pinpoint accuracy at this time.

The question is, why do the Protestants begin their count from the year 800 instead of the year 325? Don't they know that Christians were persecuted long before that time? Don't they know what the Council of Nicaea meant for the Church of God?

Of course they do, but going back to that date would raise questions about their own form of Christianity. The Protestants broke from Rome, but they did not return to the Christianity of the Apostles. That was a Christianity that kept the Commandments of God, and the Protestant, like the Catholics and the Orthodox Churches, do not keep them. In particular, they do not keep the fourth Commandment that is the very sign that distinguishes the elect of God from the rest of mankind. Their theology, holy days, and practices, are hardly different from those of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

What about the end of the world then? If it does not come in the year 2060, when will come? Or will it come at all? O yes it will! The Bible does not say that at the end of the 1260 days or years, the end would come. The prophecies that deal with the end of the world, are entirely different ones. It so happens that, like Newton, we too committed shipwreck in trying to

unravel them. We discuss these prophecies later, but before then it is important to make some important qualification about this subject. The Bible never speaks of the end of the world as such, but the end of one age and the beginning of another.

There are three stages, or ages, in the history of the world. The first one comprises the first six thousand years of history. This age has been given to men to experiment with all sorts of governments, religions, ideologies, social systems and the like, and learn the lesson that without God they cannot govern themselves. This age has lasted about six thousand years. We are now fast closing on the end of it.

The next age is a shorter one, just one thousand years of what has been called the Millennium Kingdom. This is a time when the earth will enjoy its sabbatical rest which it has been denied during the hectic age of man. For that to happen there is need for a drastic reduction in the world's population. The Great Tribulation will take care of that. Jesus Christ will make a brief appearance at the beginning of this age, to herald the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and take a certain number of God's elect to the throne of His Father in Heaven. (See detailed discussion of these ages and their ramifications in *TCH 1*).

The third age, will commence at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. That will be the proper Kingdom of God, and will be established on a new earth and a new heaven altogether. This age will last forever.

Rev 20:12 "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which

Rev 20:13 were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Rev 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Rev 20:15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Rev 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

Rev 21:2 Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of

Rev 21:3 heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Rev 21:4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said,

Rev 21:5 "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Rev 21:6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Rev 21:7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Rev 21:8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Many people have asked how many people would be left in the world after the Great Tribulation. It is not a question that has easy answer, but in most likelihood only about ten per cent of the current world population, or about six hundred million people, would survive. If you think that that is too few, remember that if it were not for God's intervention, no flesh would survive alive.

Mat 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time,

Mat 24:22 no, nor ever shall be. "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

There are three prophecies that speak of a drastic reduction in population. The first one comes from Ezekiel.

Ezek 5:7 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have multiplied disobedience more than the nations that are all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgments, nor even done according to the judgments of the nations that are all around you'; "therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

Ezek 5:8 'Indeed I, even I, am against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations.

Ezek 5:9 'And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of

Ezek 5:10 all your abominations. 'Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds.

Ezek 5:11 'Therefore, as I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish you; My eye will not spare, nor will I

Ezek 5:12 have any pity. 'One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. 'Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them,

Ezek 5:13 and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them. 'Moreover I will make you a waste

Ezek 5:14 and a reproach among the nations that are all around you, in the sight of all who pass by."

Here, one third of the population is being left. The context of this prophecy is too specific to refer to anything other than Israel. We believe that this prophecy has been fulfilled when Judah was scattered among the nations of the world. Another prophecy that says only one third of the population would survive is found in the Zechariah.

Zec 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," Says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Zec 13:8 And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die,

Zec 13:9 But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

This prophecy is specific for the Jews. It gives us the time of its fulfillment too – when the Shepherd is struck by the sword. Need we say who that Shepherd was? This is a continuing prophecy, whose fulfillment is yet to be completed, for God continues to put through the fire those whom He wants to save – the spiritual Jews, the followers of Jesus Christ, who are called from both Jews and Gentiles.

Isaiah, however, gave us a more general prophecy that could only be fulfilled during the Great Tribulation.

Isa 6:1 "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of
Isa 6:2 His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said:
Isa 6:3 "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"
Isa 6:4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with
Isa 6:5 smoke. So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."
Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs
Isa 6:7 from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:
Isa 6:8 "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."
Isa 6:9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing,
Isa 6:10 but do not perceive.'" "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed."
Isa 6:11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate,
Isa 6:12 The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
Isa 6:13 But yet a tenth will be in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump."

The last sentence, which speaks of the holy seed being left as a stump, correlates with Jesus prophecy about the elect of God being saved during the Great Tribulation. That tells us that this prophecy is about the whole world rather than just the Jews, for the whole world will be enveloped by that cataclysm.

Now will you be among the elect of God that welcome the return of Jesus Christ, or do you still wish that the end of this age is still a long way off? Remember, only a few will make it into the Kingdom of God.

Mat 20:16 "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

If you think that these are just idle words, you are grievously mistaken.

The Protestants believe that when the Pope anointed Charlemagne as emperor over the new Roman Empire, he committed a blasphemous sin by taking upon himself authority that did not belong to him. That is far from the case. The Popes have committed many sins during their long reign, but not in this regard. Ecclesiastical authorities have always been superior to secular authorities. All kings of Israel were anointed by the people of God. Those who took upon themselves that position without the anointing of God's people, were not approved before God and did not last long.

There are serious questions whether the Church of Rome was ever a true Church of God. The epistle to the Romans indicates that that church was dominated by deviant elements (homosexuals) from the very beginning, but that it also contained some good Christians. Until, that is, Pontifex Maximus forbade his followers from Judeaizing anymore.

It is interesting to note that the Church of Rome was not listed among the seven Churches of God named in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation, even though Rome was by far the most influential city at that time. If either of the two Apostles, Peter or Paul, had ever been leaders of that church, would Jesus have failed to mention it among His true Churches? Instead, the book of Revelation, speaks of a Mother of Harlots that has committed fornication with the whole world.

Rev 17:1 "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,

Rev 17:2 "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

Rev 17:3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Rev 17:4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Rev 17:5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Rev 17:6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

Rev 17:7 But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

Rev 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Rev 17:9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits."

Only a blind person would fail to recognize what institution has played the role of the 'Mother of Harlots' down through the centuries. Not by merely anointing kings over its domain, but by preaching falsehood and indulging in abominable practices.

'Physician, Heal Yourself'

"He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'" (Luke 4:23)

Is this is the proverb our nemesis would like to use against us, or the one about the beam in our eyes versus the speck in theirs? They have been hoping for this to happen for a long time, but now finally they've got us: our predictions have failed and we have become 'false prophets', just as they have been telling their followers from the very beginning.

We got it wrong in the year 2000 when, like a lot of other people, we thought that the world would undergo unprecedented changes. They never occurred. We humbly went before the Almighty asking what went wrong and why we had been put in that situation. He sent us back to the Bible, and when we did so, we found our error. We had failed to take into account Daniel's prophecy that after the 'abomination of desolation' defiled the Holy Place there would still be 1290 days until the 'time of the end'. So we updated our calculations and waited patiently another three years and nine months. Then, horror of horrors, our Lord failed to arrive again to rescue us from the hole which we had dug for ourselves a second time.

Our nemesis have been rejoicing and gloating ever since: 'He wiggled his way out of it the first time; let us see how he gets out of it this time. They have branded us 'false prophets', and yet, they still want to know what we have to say about it.

Now why do you think they might want to know that? Because they have used our writings in their work and now they find themselves in trouble too. And, obliging as we are, we would not want to cause them any further embarrassment, would we? We will give them the answer; we just wonder whether they will like it, for an astonishing answer we did find in the end. First, it is important that we establish what makes a 'false prophet'. Let us begin with Jesus Christ.

Mat 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous

Mat 7:16 wolves. "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from

Mat 7:17 thistles? "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

Mat 7:18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

Mat 7:19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Mat 7:20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. "Not everyone who says to Me,

Mat 7:21 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Mat 7:22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

Mat 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

So, false prophets are those that bear bad fruits, preach falsehood, and practice lawlessness.

Now, one may search our writings until he gets blue in the face, he will never find anything that would qualify us as such. Our teachings and preaching have been scrupulously based on the Scriptures. Neither have we done anything that would be classed as bad fruits. We have never taken advantage of anyone, or done anything that would not be expected of the disciples of Jesus Christ. We are sorry to disappoint our nemesis. Later, Jesus Christ added another characteristic to false prophets.

Mat 24:11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Mat 24:12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

Preaching deception and lawlessness will cause people to become hardened towards their fellow human beings. None of these apply to us either. We have been poor by any standard, and yet we have not only carried out this work with our own resources, but have done our best not to turn our back on people who were in genuine need. The Gospel of Luke, however, adds another characteristic to false prophets. Maybe that will satisfy our nemesis.

Luke 6:26 "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets."

Well, we do not know many good people who speak well of us, let alone the wicked. But maybe Jesus' apostles would come to the rescue of our nemesis. Let us begin with Apostle Peter.

2 Pet 2:1 "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

2 Pet 2:2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

2 Pet 2:3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."

Can anyone accuse us of having preached destructive heresies, denying our Lord, and exploiting people by covetousness? These are the very reasons we began this work in the first place: to expose the heresies, the hypocrisy and the destructive work of others. We have spoken against these things in virtually all our editions.

Once again we fail to make the mark of false prophets. But maybe Apostle John may bring succor to our nemesis.

1 John 4:1 "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of

1 John 4:3 God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."

We know of no one who has made a stronger case that both the Father and Jesus Christ continue to come in the flesh to dwell in Their people through the Holy Spirit than we have. We challenge everyone to search our writings to see how many times we have quoted Scriptures like the following:

2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? **For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them.** I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

Eph 3:14 "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Eph 3:15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you,
Eph 3:16 according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,
Eph 3:17 that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Eph 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height;
Eph 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Let us now go to Apostle Paul and see what he had to say about false prophets.

2 Cor 11:13 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.
2 Cor 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.
2 Cor 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. I say again,
2 Cor 11:16 let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little.
2 Cor 11:17 What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of
2 Cor 11:18 boasting. Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast.
2 Cor 11:19 For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise!
2 Cor 11:20 For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if
2 Cor 11:21 one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. To our shame, I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold; I speak foolishly; I am bold also."

Have we ever transformed ourselves into anything that we have not been? From the very beginning we have said that we were doing the work of the last witnesses of God on this earth. The evolution of this work has proven us right. We have reached to every corner of the earth and yet, to date, no one has come back to us to say that he was preaching the same things. Neither have we brought anyone into bondage with false doctrines about tithing and mandatory offerings, as do the very people who accuse us of being false prophets. Sorry, once again we fail to make the mark of false prophets.

But what about your failed prophecies, do they not qualify you as false prophets, someone might say.

Herein lies a mystery that has gone unnoticed so far. According to the Bible, **a false prophet is not one who fails on prophecies, but one who fails on doctrines.** We have never failed on doctrines, which is not what our nemesis could say. They have failed on doctrines, not on prophecies, because they do not bother with prophecies anymore. They have been wrong so many times, they have given up on prophecies altogether. That not only is NOT a virtue with God, it is a sin. Those who give up on the work of God because they have failed on prophecy, commit a sin from which it is very hard to recover.

God expects His people to tackle the prophecies of their time. That is why they are there for – to be unveiled at their appropriate time. If some people make mistakes along the way, it is because prophecies are set in contexts that almost guaranty failure before success. Such are the prophecies of Daniel that have given us the hillbillies. But having failed at them once or twice, is no reason to give up on them. That is because unless one unveils the prophecies of our time, people would never understand the importance of the times in which we live. And not understanding that, can make them lackluster in their preparation for the return of their Lord. Finding them asleep when He returns is deadly, as the parable of the foolish virgins only too clearly shows.

Mat 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet
Mat 25:2 the bridegroom." Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
Mat 25:3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,
Mat 25:4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
Mat 25:5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.
Mat 25:6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'
Mat 25:7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.
Mat 25:8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'
Mat 25:9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to
Mat 25:10 those who sell, and buy for yourselves. "'And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.
Mat 25:11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'
Mat 25:12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'
Mat 25:13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

In the Gospel of Mark, we have Jesus Christ saying: "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:37).

Watch what? Watch world developments and correlate them with biblical prophecies.

It is easy to sit on your laurels and watch how others do the work for you, then condemn them when things do not come perfectly on line. Before you do that, however, you should have all the facts, because a false accusation could land you in a lot of trouble. That is the situation in which the Jews found themselves when they accused Jesus of being possessed by a wicked spirit. Inadvertently, they committed an unpardonable blasphemy.

Mat 12:24 "Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Mat 12:26 "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

Mat 12:27 "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your

Mat 12:28 judges. "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Mat 12:29 "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?

And then he will plunder his house.

Mat 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

Mat 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit

Mat 12:32 will not be forgiven men. "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. "Either make

Mat 12:33 the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

Mat 12:34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the

Mat 12:35 mouth speaks. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man

Mat 12:36 out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they

Mat 12:37 will give account of it in the day of judgment. "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

These days it is easy to watch world developments as we are being bombarded with heart rending images from all over the world whether we like it or not. But placing them in their prophetic context is not as easy. It requires a good grasp of both Scriptures and history, and that require years of preparation.

I did not set up to do this job, let alone to make myself a 'prophet'. Life's circumstances brought me to where I am, and woe is me if I do not perform what is expected of me. In doing this work, I forfeited many a life's joys and rewards, but I do not complain, for with all its travails, this work has brought me infinitely more joys.

What I would like to ask our nemesis, and everyone else for that matter, is where else could they find a better correlation between world developments and biblical prophecies than in our writings? We have revealed at least one major biblical prophecy in almost every edition of this magazine. We have been correct in all except in the one from Daniel that spoke about the 'time of the end'. And even there we have not been altogether wrong, but only partly right. We were so excited about what we discovered, we rushed to tell everyone about it, before considering all the facts, and whether God wanted us to inform the world about it or not.

Jesus Christ said that the time of the end would take the world by surprise by the Great Tribulation and His return, just as the people of Noah's time were taken by surprise by the Flood.

Mat 24:37 "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. "For as in the days

Mat 24:38 before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that

Mat 24:39 Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

We acted contrary to this prophecy, and that is why God allowed us to fail, so as to guard such knowledge from the ears of those who were not meant to know about it. The question is, if this prophecy is not for general consumption, who is it for? It is for those who watch, as Jesus said:

Mat 24:42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."

If you tell this to those who do not watch, they not only would not believe you, but come back and tear you to pieces.

Mat 7:6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."

Our duty is to in form the world of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, and call people to repentance regardless of when the end comes: this year, next year, or three years from now. Since only the elect of God will be spared the troubles of the Great Tribulation that precedes the return of Jesus Christ, it stands to reason that such knowledge belongs to them and to them only.

Mark 13:20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days."

Without placing the prophecies about the end time in their proper biblical context, and letting people draw their own conclusions about the validity of the messages that God is trying to send to the world through His people, one may as well go about his work blissfully unaware of the disaster that is poised to strike the world at any time.

With all the prophecies that are being fulfilled before our very eyes, prophecies which we have discussed in detail in many of our editions, we are having a hard time convincing the world that it is on the edge of the precipice. For even if we have been wrong about the exact 'time of the end', it should be obvious to all that we were not wrong by very much.

Our nemesis have long wished that we would stop speaking about the prophecies regarding the time of the end, especially now that they think they have us in their hand. This is not an option for the people of God. Even if they fall, it is only temporary. They get up, dust themselves of, and keep going, whereas when the wicked fall, it is for good.

Prov 24:15 "Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not plunder his resting

Prov 24:16 place; For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity."

The people of God are commanded by their Savior to watch, and we are here to help them do just that. Those who can find others with a better prophetic record, good luck to them. We would like to know who they are too.

Getting some prophecies wrong in an effort to unveil them for the benefit of others does not make one a false prophet. The Bible has many examples of, not failed, but delayed, prophecies, just as in our case. People who were persecuted by their contemporaries and accused of being false prophets, were not considered false by God Almighty. Jeremiah and Jonah are only two such examples.

In cases of misread prophecies, it is not the immediate errors that count so much, as what people do afterwards. Do they examine themselves in an honest and open manner, or pretend that nothing serious had happened, and make recourse to phony explanations in order to sidetrack their followers?

This is what the Seventh-Day Adventists did in 1844, Jehovah's Witnesses in 1918, and the Worldwide Church of God in 1975, when their prophecies about the end time failed to materialize as expected.

Being coached in symbols and metaphors that needed to withstand the test of time, prophecies rendered themselves easy targets for misinterpretation. But while prophecies need interpretation, doctrines do not. This is where virtually all churches have failed, for they have all been indulging in interpreting doctrines, rather than prophecies. Those that still speak about prophecies, do so in general nonspecific terms that cannot fail in their lifetime.

Now, we are not excusing our errors, for we should not have made them. We should have been more careful, but we weren't. The Almighty saw it coming, and allowed it to happen. He did so because we were getting ahead of ourselves. We have had so many successes in the past, we were beginning to think we were infallible. We were sliding ever so close to the sin of arrogance. In order to bring us back, He allowed us have a taste of failure.

We were terribly perplexed when it happened for we could not see where we had gone wrong. We tended to think that the prophecy itself had failed, and that made it that much more difficult for us to find the answer to it. It became one of the most difficult trials that we have ever faced. But before being overwhelmed by it, the Almighty answered our prayers, and showed us our error. We were surprised to find that it was much closer home than we could have imagined.

Everything was in place, everything had been fulfilled as expected, and then, when it came to the crunch, instead of having the big bang – the Great Tribulation and the return of Jesus Christ – we had a sudden pause and an unexpected lull in the proceedings. That made us look as if we were false prophets. But why? Well, hard to believe as this may be for some, Daniel's prophecies contain the seed of their own failure, and the failure of anyone who tried to unveil them.

Now before we go back to Daniel's prophecies to show you the exact nature of our error, we need to take a detour back to the parable with which we began this article. We need to look at it in its entire context.

Luke 4:16 "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Luke 4:17 And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,

Luke 4:18 Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives,

Luke 4:19 And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Luke 4:20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

Luke 4:21 And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is

Luke 4:22 fulfilled in your hearing." So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.

Luke 4:23 And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'"

Luke 4:24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.

Luke 4:25 "But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent,

Luke 4:26 except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

Luke 4:27 "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the

Luke 4:28 Syrian." So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

Luke 4:29 and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built,

Luke 4:30 that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Luke 4:31 Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths.

Luke 4:32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

Luke 4:33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying,

Luke 4:34 "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us?"

Luke 4:35 I know who You are; the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves,

Luke 4:36 saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

Luke 4:37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region."

The day Jesus Christ began His ministry, He confronted His contemporaries with a warning that they were not going to believe what He was about to do, not in their midst, in Nazareth, but in another town. Why? Because 'no prophet is accepted in his own country'. An interesting choice of words. He did not say, no prophet is accepted in his own village or town, but in His own country. Now isn't that what happened in the end? Aside from handful of people, His entire nation rejected Him.

Now what about the people of Capernaum, whom He used as a benchmark, weren't they part of the same country? They were, and that is why they fell into the same trap. Although He did many miracles in their midst, they did not accept Him either.

Mat 11:23 "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Mat 11:24 "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Notice carefully, it will be more tolerable for sinful people in the day of judgment, than for nonbelievers and despisers. Why? Because given the chance, many sinners will repent, whereas cynics, despisers and nonbelievers hardly ever do. Those who do not believe in God and in His retribution, see no reason to repent, and without repentance there is no salvation.

When people depart from God and lose the fear of judgment, they depart from life and choose death. Henceforth sin becomes trivial and their life becomes a never ending quest for selfish gratification. Unable to grow old gracefully, the closer they get to the end of their life, the more miserable they become.

Why God Allows Evil In The World

During a recent television program by Australia's public broadcaster, people from both sides of the equation discussed the relevance of religion in today's society. Now we knew that when this station puts anything on air on religion, it does not do so to strengthen people's faith, but to undermine it. My interest was on how non-believers justified their stance.

The defenders of religion – high ranking clerics in local churches – were no match for the agnostics and the atheists. It became obvious after a while that they fell into a trap. They were sitting ducks to the arrows of the non-believers, who in most likelihood had prior knowledge of the questions they were going to be asked.

Now I expected that the atheists would make recourse to the much vaunted scientific 'proofs' of evolution, but instead they used a much older reason for their unbelief. "If there is a God", they said, "why did He not put an end to all the evil that has been perpetrated in the world for so long, often in His name?"

Well, why didn't He? It is a good question.

Unless people know the purpose of life, and believe that this world has been created as a preparatory stage on the road to eternal life, they will forever complain about what is happening in this world. The trials which the people of God must endure in this world, are necessary for the development of true character, without which no one could ever make it into the Kingdom of God.

Acts 14:21 "And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Acts 14:22 Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."**

Rom 5:3 "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;
Rom 5:4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope."

2 Cor 6:2 "For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

2 Cor 6:3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.

2 Cor 6:4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in

2 Cor 6:5 distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

2 Cor 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

2 Cor 6:7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

2 Cor 6:8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

2 Cor 6:9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful,

2 Cor 6:10 yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

2 Cor 6:11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.

2 Cor 6:12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.

2 Cor 6:13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open. Do not be unequally yoked together

2 Cor 6:14 with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light

2 Cor 6:15 with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore, "Come out

2 Cor 6:17 from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

2 Cor 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

2 Cor 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Yes, this world, this phase in our development, was necessary so that we may "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit", and that could not be done without pain.

2 Th 1:3 "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for

2 Th 1:4 your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of

2 Th 1:5 the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also

2 Th 1:6 suffer; since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who

2 Th 1:7 are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire

2 Th 1:8 taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus

2 Th 1:9 Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory

2 Th 1:10 of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed."

Rom 8:16 "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs;

Rom 8:17 heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Rom 8:18 **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

Rom 8:21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the

Rom 8:22 children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Rom 8:23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Rom 8:24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he
Rom 8:25 sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."

Is it clear now why God has allowed so much evil in the world?

- 1) To allow His people to develop the necessary character for eternal life in His Kingdom;
- 2) To sift the good from the evil, to render to each one according to their work;
- 3) To instill the mind of God into the minds of those who are destined to become Children of God.

Phil 2:5 "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God,

Phil 2:6 did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation,

Phil 2:7 taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as

Phil 2:8 a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Phil 2:9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

Phil 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of

Phil 2:11 those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

What mind was in Jesus Christ? The mind of God! How did He acquire it? From the Bible! The Bible is the mind and the word of God. That is why both the Old and the New Testaments say that the word of God is truth.

Psa 119:160 The entirety of **Your word is truth**, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

John 17:14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just

John 17:15 as I am not of the world. "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You

John 17:16 should keep them from the evil one. "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth.**"

By studying the Bible, and familiarizing yourself with it, you familiarize yourself with God, and acquire His mind. You achieve spiritual union with Him, a necessary condition for salvation.

2 Cor 6:16 "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: **"I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."**

Unless people understand that God has been reproducing Himself through this creation, they will always wonder why He had allowed so many tragedies to occur in this world. He cannot afford to bring disobedient and disorderly people into His eternal Kingdom. Only those that prove themselves by overcoming this world, by keeping under control the pulls of their nature and bringing their thought processes in tune with those of the Father and of Jesus Christ, can attain eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

God intervenes in the life of all human beings, but those who refuse His overtures are left to their own devices. God's principle, is a universal principle: human beings reap what they sow. Those who sow to the Spirit, inherit eternity, while those who sow to the flesh, inherit death. This is the lesson that comes out of the Bible.

Gal 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who

Gal 6:8 sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting

Gal 6:9 life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

1 Cor 2:9 "But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.

1 Cor 2:10 For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

1 Cor 2:11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no

1 Cor 2:12 one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

1 Cor 2:13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit

1 Cor 2:14 teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Cor 2:15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

1 Cor 2:16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

The reasons terrible things are happening in this world are: lack of faith, disregard for God's Word, wrong philosophy of life, and ignorance about the purpose of life.

Daniel's Prophecies Revisited

Dan 12:9 "And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till
Dan 12:10 the time of the end. "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall
Dan 12:11 understand. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Look at these Scriptures again and think carefully what they might be telling us. What are the wise supposed to do with their understanding about the end time, if the wicked are not meant to know about it?

The wise shall know about the 'time of the end', but the wicked shall not know, and must not be told about it either. Now what do you think it might happen if, contrary to the will of God, they would be told about it? What did Jesus Christ say?

Mat 7:6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."

For more than a decade, we have been involved in a fierce battle with our nemesis. While they desperately tried for years to dissuade us from continuing with this work, we tried for just as long to convince them of our bona fides. Those from the Church of God, International – the late Garner Ted Armstrong's Church – were so angry with us at one time, they could not even call us by our name. They sent us a letter entitled, 'To Who It May Concern', in which they told us bluntly to stop the work we were doing. We were joyous that we found ourselves in a similar position to that of the Apostles in their early evangelistic work, and answered them accordingly.

Acts 5:17 "Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees),

Acts 5:18 and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

Acts 5:19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said,

Acts 5:20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

Acts 5:21 And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to

Acts 5:22 the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they

Acts 5:23 returned and reported, saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside

before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"

Acts 5:24 Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they

Acts 5:25 wondered what the outcome would be. So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" Then the captain went with the officers

Acts 5:26 and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

Acts 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them,

Acts 5:28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "**We ought to obey God rather than men.**"

For a while, the Apostles and their followers were able to move freely among the Jews, but not long after that the Christians were scattered both out of Jerusalem and out of Judea. In so doing, the Jews cut themselves off from the New Testament, and from the promises of salvation that came with it. They trampled under foot the pearls of salvation that the Apostles gave them, making themselves the Christian's deadly enemies.

The Jews ignored their own Scriptures which say that what a man sows, that's what he shall reap. Not long after that, they themselves were scattered from Jerusalem and Judea, being forced to carry that curse with them for two millennia.

We find it astonishing that the leaders of the Worldwide Church of God, Church of God, International, and other Churches of God, cannot see the parallel between what happened to the early Christians, and what they do in their churches these days. Just as the Pharisees of old persecuted the followers of Jesus Christ and put them out of their communities, Christian 'Pharisees' are doing the same by persecuting and putting them out of their communities in modern times.

After treating me in a most appalling way for no other reason than wanting to show them their doctrinal errors, I assumed that it was my duty to forgive them and to try to bring them back to their senses by showing them where the Holy Spirit was, and with whom He was working. Forgive them I did, but to bring them back to their senses I could not. Nevertheless, we continued to give them the pearls that the Holy Spirit was giving us. That turned out to be tantamount to giving pearls to the swine. It proved to be an error, and the reason why we failed with Daniel's prophecies. Because we were trying to reveal to the wicked what they were not supposed to know, the Almighty locked the prophecy for us too, until we learned our lesson.

Year after year we kept reaching out to them with the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, yet instead of assessing it in light of the latest scriptural revelations, they rejected it and kept pushing their own dishonest unscriptural gospels and doctrines. But there comes a time when even God's unbounded patience comes to an end.

Rev 22:11 "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

Rev 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

In order to prevent us from revealing to them what they were not supposed to know, the Almighty allowed us to fail, even though we had done our utmost to stay close to Him, close to the Scriptures, and close to our mission. That served two purposes: 1) It reinforced in the minds of our nemesis the notion that we were 'false prophets', thus blinding themselves to everything else we had to say. 2) It brought us down to earth with a thud. We needed that, as we were getting too confident of our work for our own good.

We had been sailing in calm waters for so long, we had forgotten the lesson of the early Christians. As we reach the apex of this work, we needed a reminder that as long as we are in this world we are on shaky ground, and prone to make mistakes.

Now hard to believe as this may be for some, Daniel's prophecies contain the seed of their own failure and the failure of anyone who tried to unveil them. God knew that the time of the end would be a time of trouble, and that His people, perhaps out of desperation, would try to reveal to their contemporaries everything they knew in order to convince them of the importance of the times in which they lived, so as to turn them back from their sinful ways, and back to God. But the last thing people who had gone overboard want to hear is talk about the end. That only sends them wild, making them dangerous for the people of God. In order to prevent His people from making that mistake, God inserted a twist in Daniel's prophecies, which could not be detected until one had failed at them first. Jesus Christ knew about it, and that is why He warned His disciples: "whoever reads, let him understand" when He sent them to Daniel's prophecies.

Mat 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand)."

When we discovered the identity of the 'abomination of desolation', we assumed that was the mystery that Jesus Christ was referring to. That was part of it, but by no means the whole thing. Daniel's prophecies contained many more mysteries. Have a look at the following prophecies, and consider how one might reconcile their apparent dichotomy.

Mat 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

Dan 12:11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

If one knew when the 'abomination of desolation' profaned the Holy Place, would he not know at least the day, if not the hour, of Jesus' return? That is what we thought, and turned out to be wrong. Jesus Christ knew that this would happen and warned us to be careful, but we weren't. Our first error was to assume that the Great Tribulation would erupt immediately after the 'abomination of desolation' profaned the Holy Place. We got that idea from the following prophecy.

Mat 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

Mat 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Mat 24:17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

Mat 24:18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Mat 24:19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Mat 24:20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Mat 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until

Mat 24:22 this time, no, nor ever shall be. "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

On the surface, it all seemed to be clear and straightforward. But when that event passed and nothing happened, we were perplexed, humbly going before the Almighty asking what happened. He sent us back to the Bible, and when we went we found our error. We had not followed Jesus' advise to go to Daniel's prophecies, which said that 'from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.' So we waited another three years and nine months, and horror of horrors, our Lord failed to come again to rescue us from the hole which we had dug for ourselves a second time.

As usual, God sent us back to the Bible, only that this time it was extremely difficult to locate the error.

Now let us look at Daniel's prophecy in its entirety, and see if we can first resolve the apparent dichotomy between Matthew 24:36 and Daniel 12:11.

Dan 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

Dan 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to

Dan 12:3 shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Dan 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and

Dan 12:5 fro, and knowledge shall increase." Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this

Dan 12:6 riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?"

Dan 12:7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

Dan 12:8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

Dan 12:9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Dan 12:10 "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

Dan 12:11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Dan 12:12 "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. "But

Dan 12:13 you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

It is a short chapter, one of the shortest in the Bible, yet one of the most complex. In a few words it speaks of 'a time of trouble' – which could be none other than the 'Great Tribulation' of Matthew 24; of many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth being awakened – which could also be none other than the minor resurrection that takes place at the return of Jesus Christ immediately after the Great Tribulation (see *TCH 1*); of the profanation of the Holy Place by the 'abomination of desolation' – which we now know to refer to the visit of Pontifex Maximus to the Holy Land (see *TCH 3*); and of the days that we must count after that profanation takes to know when the 'time of the end' comes.

Of particular importance to us is verse 11: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

We might never have known the exact meaning of this archaic language if we did not have Jesus' explanation in Matthew 24:15, which tells us that it means the 'abomination of desolation' standing in the Holy Place.

Our mistake was to assume that at the completion of one thousand and ninety days, we would have the return of Jesus Christ. That did not occur, and Jesus Christ knew that it would not. With the Bible, you must never take assumptions for facts.

Hence, no dichotomy between Matthew 24:36 and Daniel 12:11. They talk of different things. While Matthew 24:36 refers specifically to the return of Jesus Christ, Daniel 12: 11 does not. Daniel speaks of the 'time of the end', and that time contains more than one timeline for the Great Tribulation and the return of Jesus Christ. Look at it again.

Dan 12:11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Dan 12:12 "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days."

A cursory reading of these verses would lead one to believe that after one thousand and ninety days, the 'blessed' would have to wait another forty five days until one thousand and three hundred and thirty five days are completed. But what then? What would happen at the end of those days? The end, isn't it? Well, that is what we, and a lot of other people thought, but it wasn't to be. We anxiously waited another forty five days, and absolutely nothing happened again. Except that is, giving our nemesis what they always hoped for, proof of us being 'false prophets'.

Well, much as they may wish it to be so, it isn't. Because even if we made a mistake originally, we are still the ones to find the problem with it and correct it.

Consider this: is the expression, "Blessed is he who waits" a mere general statement or a warning? Everyone has assumed, us included, that this is a general statement. But why would the Almighty insert it at this particular junction, what purpose would it serve? God would never make a light statement, especially in this important prophetic context.

Who are the blessed? Obviously the wise who understand the time of the end. But if they are blessed why must they be reminded of it? Because they would find themselves in great strife. Why? Because their prophecy about the end time would not come as expected. The expression "Blessed is he who waits", serves two purposes: a warning against them losing faith, and an encouragement for them to be patient until another one thousand three hundred and thirty five days have passed.

The forty five days we were talking about earlier, have nothing to do with this prophecy. The 'blessed' would have to wait not another forty five days, but one thousand three hundred and thirty five days, until the time of the end. In other words, the two timelines – 1290 and 1335 days – do not run concurrently, as the first impression leads everyone to believe, but consecutively. No one could have known that until the forty five days had passed without anything happening.

This is where Jesus' warning makes true sense: 'whoever reads, let him understand'.

How wonderful that a prophecy written two and a half millenniums ago would contain both a proviso for its failure, and a solution for its resolve.

Keeping Up The Faith In The Face Of Adversity

It is our hope that our friends around the world would not have lost their faith in us altogether as a result of our prophetic misses. They should remember this:

Rom 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Even in the face of the greatest adversity, the people of God can turn misfortunes around to their advantage.

We came out greatly strengthened from that experience, and hopefully so have all those who kept their faith in us. The secret is never to despair and always go before God in a humble and contrite spirit. Whenever we did that, He always answered our prayers and pointed us in the right direction.

Psa 34:18 "The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit."

Psa 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart; These, O God, You will not despise."

Isa 66:2 "For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."

Without us realizing it, the multitude of revelations that the Almighty had given us and we to the world, was bringing us ever closer to the sin of arrogance. This needed correction, and the best way of doing it was to give us a taste of failure.

We were so confident of ourselves, we felt as if we were already in the Kingdom of God. But as Apostle Paul pointed out, as long as we are in this world, we must never discount the possibility of falling from the pedestal.

1 Cor 9:27 "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

Getting some prophecies wrong when trying to unveil them, is not analogous with becoming a false prophet. Many prophets and disciples of Jesus failed in premature expectations of His return, including His Apostles, and yet, God did not consider them to be false prophets.

People should be sophisticated enough in spiritual matters to discern between those who are trying to take advantage of them with false teachings, the real false prophets, and those who are honest but not entirely accurate with their prophecies.

It is not wrong to get people ready for their Lord, and then find that He delayed His return. This is exactly what Jesus Christ said that would happen.

Mat 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet

Mat 25:2 the bridegroom. "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Mat 25:3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

Mat 25:4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Mat 25:5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

Mat 25:6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'

Mat 25:7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

Mat 25:8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

Mat 25:9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to

Mat 25:10 those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

Mat 25:11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'

Mat 25:12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

Mat 25:13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

It is not possible for people to understand the importance of the times in which we live unless they understand the prophecies of our time. The danger of not understanding them is that they may be caught unprepared for the return of Jesus Christ. As these Scriptures clearly show, those that are caught unprepared, will almost certainly lose their salvation. That is why Jesus Christ told His disciples to watch.

Mark 13:35 "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming; in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning;

Mark 13:36 "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

Mark 13:37 "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

Now watch what? Watching world developments and relate them to biblical prophecies. Unless one understands the meaning of the events that take place in the world at present, he is wasting his life.

We do not know of anyone who has unveiled more biblical prophecies, and has a better track record in explaining world developments in light of those prophecies than we have had since we began this work. And yet, we must continually justify ourselves and face the accusations and the scrutiny of our nemesis.

Our prophetic errors are infinitesimal compared with the calamity of their doctrinal teachings. Yet instead of correcting themselves in light of our scriptural revelations, they have caused us untold problems. But then, our Lord warned us that this is what would happen if we did the work of God.

John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. "But all these things

John 15:21 they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me."

People whom He healed, fed, and taught, turned ferociously against Him when their leaders told them to do so. Now if Jesus Christ Himself made no headway with His contemporaries, how much less would we expect to make it with our contemporaries when our mission did not involve anywhere near the kind of miracles that He performed? Our mission has been to inform the world of what is in store for it if it did not return to its Creator, and then leave it to God to do the rest. He has amply done so, and supported us more than we expected. Leaving aside Daniel's prophecy, which we have not failed but only mistimed, virtually everything else has come to pass as we said it would.

Now we do not say this to boast of our achievements, for we have passed that, but to let people know that the Great Tribulation of which we have spoken so much, will unmistakably come to pass too.

This world calamity can no longer be avoided. Behind the scenes things are moving in that direction. While we cannot tell you its exact date, we are certain that within the next half a dozen years or so the face of the earth will be completely changed, and changed forever. Do not be caught unprepared for that event, for the Great Tribulation is closely followed by the return of Jesus Christ. Remember what He said about it:

Mat 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever

Mat 24:22 shall be. "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

For the elect's sake God will intervene to put an end to human madness, lest no flesh be saved alive. Here is the chance for those who are wise to turn this event to their advantage, and make it the greatest day of their life.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, if you love God and keep His Commandments, you have nothing to fear. But if you are not, and do not use this opportunity to turn to God while you can, you will rue the day that you were born.

Organizing Church Finances

We are beginning to be concerned that some people may find themselves in trouble for not doing the right thing as far as God is concerned. They use our writings without acknowledgment or attribution, and without making any contribution to it. We do not say this in order to benefit from people's largesse, for we have passed that stage now, but so that in the day of judgment we are not accused of failing to let people know what they should have done. We have an obligation before God to tell people when we think they are on the wrong path

James 5:19 "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that

James 5:20 he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

When we published the Constitution of Alpha and Omega Christian Foundation seven years ago (see *The Christian Herald No 7*), we received inquiries about the method of financing for our organization. We purposely left that answer vague, for we knew that whatever we said, people would use it for their own selfish purposes. Now, however, that we are preparing to enter the Millennial Kingdom of God, this question needs clarification. Up until now, we have followed the example of Apostle Paul and carried out this work without requesting support from anyone.

Acts 20:33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

Acts 20:34 "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.

Acts 20:35 "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Churches, however, need financing. It was Apostle Paul too who made it clear that those who do the work of the Gospel, are entitled to live of that work. He expected that people who attended church services would make a contribution to it.

1 Cor 9:3 "My defense to those who examine me is this:

1 Cor 9:4 Do we have no right to eat and drink?

1 Cor 9:5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

1 Cor 9:6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?

1 Cor 9:7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

1 Cor 9:8 Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?

1 Cor 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned

1 Cor 9:10 about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

1 Cor 9:12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who minister the holy things

1 Cor 9:13 eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

1 Cor 9:14 Even so **the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.**

1 Cor 9:15 But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of,

1 Cor 9:16 for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward;

1 Cor 9:17 but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel,

1 Cor 9:18 I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel."

Apostle Paul lived of the fruit of his own hands for as long as he could, but in the end, especially when he was in chains, he had no choice but to live off the offerings made by church members. The principle of free offerings however was always maintained. At no time did he impose burdens on anyone or any church by demanding tithes or mandatory offerings.

That principle was practiced even when tithing and offerings were mandatory in ancient Israel. No one went around checking to see whether people gave their exact tithe to the Levites. Those who received the tithes knew that people were responsible not to them, but to God for the manner in which they fulfilled their duty. They had God's promise that He would bless those who gave generously. Even at the time of Jesus Christ when the law of tithing was no longer in practice, the principle of freely given offerings was maintained.

Mark 12:41 "Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.

Mark 12:43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance,

Mark 12:44 but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

The temple and its religious life were financed by freely given offerings, just as churches should be financed now, and as they will be financed during the Millennial Kingdom.

After people make their contribution, and fulfill their obligation before God, it is no longer their concern how their gifts are being spent. Church Councils must always maintain proper accountability, bearing in mind that they work for God too.

We know that Jesus Christ and His disciples received offerings during their ministry too. But notice what happened because they did not have a committee which should have kept count of both income and expenditure.

John 12:4 "Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this

John 12:5 fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said,

John 12:6 not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it."

Of course Jesus knew what was happening, but He allowed it to continue knowing what Judas' destiny would be in the end. Now unless a receipt is required for taxation purposes, offerings are best made anonymously, in a box at the entrance or exit of the congregation, or by envelope. Never during church services, and never after being cajoled by a preacher to do so.

If a preacher interrupts his service to request donations, you are better off getting up and walking right out of that church, for it is certain that its doctrines are not right before God either. People must be allowed to give according to the disposition of their heart, always bearing in mind that, "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

Once this principle has been made known to the congregation, and perhaps repeated once or twice a year for the benefit of new members, usually in conjunction of a Holy Day celebration, preachers should not be carping about it all the time. Occasional requests for special gifts, such as those made by Apostle Paul for the brethren in Jerusalem who were under a severe draught, are all right, but that is not a justification for making it a permanent feature of every church service.

2 Cor 9:5 "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

2 Cor 9:6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

2 Cor 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

1 Cor 16:1 "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:

1 Cor 16:2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no

1 Cor 16:3 collections when I come. And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

1 Cor 16:4 But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me."

Preachers often combine this Scripture with the following one to justify both Sunday service and requests for donations.

Acts 20:7 "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight."

In both cases, the first day of the week was a working day. People were to gather and store gifts so that they would be ready when Apostle Paul arrived. Gifts in those days did not consist of money only, but of food, clothing, possibly animals, etc., all of which required transportation. That is why it was expected that other people would go along with Apostle Paul to Jerusalem to deliver those gifts.

In the second example, Apostle Paul was on one of his journeys when he happened to pass by that congregation on the first day of the week. As one might have expected, he made a stop and spoke to them. It must have been a keen congregation, for he kept going until midnight. Had it been a proper day of worship, rest and fellowship, he would have conducted a religious service in the morning, not at night. There are several places in the New Testament which tell us that the early Churches of God kept the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship, not Sunday. Here are just a couple of examples.

Acts 1:12 "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey."

Now why do you think the expression, 'a Sabbath day's journey' is being used here? If it is a working day, no one can stop you from journeying from morning till evening, or even longer, but on the Sabbath you can only travel so much. If it tires you, and takes your mind away from God, His creation, and the Scriptures, it is too long.

Acts 13:14 "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and

Acts 13:15 sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

Here, clearly Apostle Paul addressed a Jewish congregation on a Sabbath day. But when the Jews rejected him and he moved on to the Gentiles, he did not change the day of rest and worship. Indeed, it was the Gentiles themselves who asked him to speak to them on the Sabbath too.

Acts 13:42 "So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, **the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them**

Acts 13:43 **the next Sabbath.** Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

Acts 13:44 **On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.**

When the Apostles left the Jews and moved on to the Gentiles, they did not change the day of rest and worship from Sabbath to Sunday. That occurred more than two centuries later, when Rome imposed its will on the Christian world.

By using 1 Cor. 16:2 and Acts 20 :7 instead of Acts 1:12 and 13:42-44, mainstream churches are striking two birds with one stone: they justify changing the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday, and justify making requests for church donations at every Sunday service. A clever self-serving substitution, but a very dangerous one. Not so much because they put unreasonable demands on their members, but because it distances people from the sign that identifies them as the elect of God, the sign of the Sabbath.