

A NEW GOLDEN AGE, OR A PARADISE LOST?

Seldom in modern history has there been an avalanche of good news as we witness in the media these days. Newspaper headlines proclaim it, television commentators confirm it, and the people believe it.

And why shouldn't they? For the average Australian, American, and a few other nationals, things have seldom been better. The era of "peace, progress and prosperity" it seems has finally arrived.

"Dawn of a Golden Age." "Shortly after the last Budget, Peter Costello saw a vision of the future, or rather a glimmer of a halcyon past. The Treasurer became convinced of the proposition put by some of his top economic advisers that Australia was on the cusp of a new golden age." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, July 26, 1997).

A Brave New World? "Many investors in the USA shares and bonds have accepted the view that it is a "brave new world" – and one in which the cycle has been abolished. People have become confident that the combination of technology, productivity growth and globalisation will enable the US economy to continue to grow at a comfortably modest rate, in coming years, without inflation." (*The Australian*, August 21, 1997).

Onset of New Era? "A STRANGE contagion is spreading across the land: the belief that technology and globalisation promise unbounded prosperity and render old rules redundant has infected US managers, investors and politicians with remarkable speed. Magazines articles endlessly document the onset of a new era." (*The Economist*, *The Australian*, September 18, 1997).

"US companies do much better than predicted." "The economy continues to grow more rapidly than people thought,' said Mr Mark Vitner, an economist with First Union Corp. 'It's all about the strength of the US economy and the strength of exports.'" (*SMH*, 17 July 1997).

And when the American economy is doing well, the whole world breathes a sigh of relief. Given its dominant position in the global economy, good news from America means good news for the world. With growth at over 5 per cent, unemployment under 5 per cent, inflation under 3 per cent, the stock market setting new records and company profits going through the roof, the Americans could hardly complain that life has not been good for them. There has hardly been a field of endeavour in which the Americans have not done well in recent years.

"Forget the chess match of Garry Kasparov v IBM's Deep Blue. A much more interesting battle between man and machine is playing out in today's media. In one corner is the Mars Pathfinder and its roving companion, Sojourner, which slowly is prodding about on the "Red" planet. And in the other, the Mir, Russia's accident-prone space station, retreading the same orbit just above Earth every 92 minutes.

"No contest. For better and (largely, I'm afraid) for worse, victory goes solidly to the humans, who handily have trounced Pathfinder on the evening news and on front pages.

"Remember Pathfinder? When it reached the Martian surface on July 4, the intrepid spacecraft rightly was lauded as a triumph of a revitalised space-exploration program. The official Pathfinder Web site logged 80 million hits in one day. And *Time* and *Newsweek* made temporary stars out of NASA's tech nerds. . ."

"Which brings us to Mir's latest and most ignoble function, a stage for space tragi-comedy. By now, it is hard not to be aware of the staccato sequence of odd and sometimes pathetic mishaps that have struck the Russian space station this year. Unfortunately, the smirks and sad shaking of the head tend to distract from the larger lessons of Pathfinder v Mir. From its inception, NASA has been keenly aware of the enormous public relations advantage that manned missions have over unmanned ones. But Mir's woes illustrate how easily that edge can turn against you." (*SMH*, August 27, 1997).

To illustrate the success of the American science, we gleaned a few comments from a discussion panel analysing the Mars rover expedition:

"We are at the beginning of another golden age."

"The solar planetary system could become our second homes."

"Mars serves the way to study the earth."

"If we are not looking for life, it is not worth doing it."

(*Newshour with Jim Lehrer*, SBS TV, July 15, 1997).

The notion of a *new golden age* extends beyond the economic and scientific fields. At a recent NATO Heads of State Summit, President Yeltsin of Russia stunned his hosts by declaring that Russia's nuclear missiles aimed at their countries would now be dismantled. The media greeted the news with the appropriate headlines:

“Yeltsin’s pledge on missiles stuns NATO”

“Moscow’s decision a bold symbol for peace” (SMH, May 6, 1997).

“The End of The Cold War” “Boris Yeltsin’s announcement in Paris that Russia’s nuclear arsenal will no longer target NATO countries is a reminder of just how far the world has moved from the frightening days of the Cold War. ‘Today we can say the Cold War has definitely come to an end’, a NATO spokesman said.” (*The Weekend Australian*, May 31-June 1, 1997).

There was good news on the environment too. This year, New York was the venue for the Second Earth Summit in which leaders from around the world committed themselves to important measures to restore the ecological balance of the earth.

Then we had tremendously good news in the religious field too. The Pope went to Poland where he blessed that country with yet more ‘saints’; the head of the Anglican Church declared that he had no objection to women being ordained to the priesthood; the Presbyterian Church elected a new Moderator who vowed to make that church “relevant to the kind of society we live in”, and the ministers in the Churches of God rejoiced that our prediction about their impending doom did not materialise.

Which raises the question, where do all these things leave us? Up in the air, someone might say.

Year after year, for seven years now, we have preached that the world is heading towards catastrophe, yet what do we have now? Good news all around. Which explains why we have not been very popular.

The prophets of doom have never been welcomed by this world. Virtually all of God’s people have had to contend with mockers – people who did not believe in their prophecies. There is no better example of that than Jeremiah the prophet. When his prophecies about the impending doom of Judah did not materialise as expected, he vowed never to speak in the name of God again.

“O LORD, You induced me, and I was persuaded; you are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; everyone mocks me. For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, “Violence and plunder!”

Because the word of the LORD was made to me a reproach and a derision daily.

Then I said, “I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.” But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not. For I heard many mocking: “Fear on every side!” “Report,” they say, “and we will report it!”

All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying, “Perhaps he can be induced; then we will prevail against him, and we will take our revenge on him.” (Jer. 20:7-10).

Jeremiah’s contemporaries did prevail against him, and threw him into a muddy dungeon where he would have died if one of the royal servants, who believed in him, had not managed to save him at the last moment.

He was lucky that at least one person believed in him, but who would save us if we were to face a similar situation? Of all the people we have contacted since the beginning of this work, not one has repented and turned to God.

We know of people who started a religion at about the same time, who have attracted thousands of followers by now. They preach doctrines which are demonstrably un-Scriptural, yet we, who preach nothing but what is in the Bible, have attracted no one. This work started with two people in 1990; seven years later two people are still doing it. But then, this was not entirely unexpected, for we knew what the Bible says about those who would do the work of God at this particular junction of world history: 1) They would be poor people (“clothed in sackcloth” as the Bible puts it), and 2) No one would help them.

How marvellously accurate prophecies which have been written thousands of years ago are proving out to be in our own time. And they say that there is no God, or that He does not care about what happens in the world at present.

Jeremiah’s prophecies proved true shortly afterwards, and those who disdained him paid with their lives in the end. The question is, could this also be the case with us? Could it be that those who rejoiced at our demise, did so a bit too soon?

WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU GET

**“An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land:
The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power;
And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?” (Jer. 5:30-31).**

Few people have not heard the song that says: “what you see is what you get, there is nothing more to it”, or words with that effect. Well, there is a lot more to it than meets the eye this time, because what you see in the headlines and hear in the news is not what you get, nor the whole truth. Let us look at those “good news” again.

SCIENTIFIC NEWS

The American scientists who assured us that, “the solar planetary system could become our second homes”, seem to have forgotten that human beings have not even flown to the nearest planet let alone colonise the rest of the solar planetary system. And on which planet would they like settle if they could reach it? Would it be much of a life if they had to live in a space suit or in a closed environment all their lives? There would be no rivers, no trees, no mountains, no pastures, no roaming animals, nothing but barren wasteland. Would anyone call that a “golden age”?

Has it never dawned on these people that this planet was uniquely prepared and positioned to foster and preserve life on it, that no other planet in the whole universe is like it? It has the right distance from the sun, so that we neither freeze nor scorch ourselves; the right size, so that winters and summers are not decades or centuries long; the right gravitational field, so that we do not fall off the planet nor get squashed by its strength; the right length of days and nights, so that we can work during the day and regenerate at night; the right distance from the moon, so that the tides create just enough movement in the oceans to flush the shores without flooding the planet; it spins on its axis at the right speed, so that inertia does not send us into space nor flatten and disorient us; the list could go on and on. Everything is just right on this planet, and there is no scientific or religious reason to indicate that any other is like it in the whole universe.

Our scientists can search for life in the outer space all their lives, they will never find anything anywhere. That is because this planet, and this only, has been created for the purpose of sustaining life, and all the other astral bodies have been placed in the sky for no other reason than to be signs and wonders for this world. That is what our Creator God says, and that is the truth, believe it or not.

The assertion that humanity is on the brink of colonising other planets reminds me of an environmental poster I had in my school library. It showed the globe with the caption: “When we are finished with this planet, we have a whole galaxy to choose from”. Indeed, why should we stop at the solar system when we can colonise the entire universe? Given our prolific rate of reproduction, before long we would run out of space in this planetary system too, so we should not limit ourselves to just one planetary system, or just one galaxy.

The scientists - the people who are telling us that humanity is on the brink of making the solar system our second homes - are the same ones who are telling us that humanity created itself, that God had no role to play in creating the world or life on this planet.

Does that thrill you? Does the thought that 50, 70, 100 or 150 years, is all there is to human life? Would you rather believe that your life is nothing but an accident of nature, than that there is a higher purpose to life, and something exhilaratingly beautiful and promising beyond this temporary existence?

Science does not operate at the spiritual level, the one that reveals the existence of God and a wonderful purpose to human life. Of course, the handiwork of God can be seen at the physical level too, but only if you open your heart to the sixth sense, the inner voice that reveals realities that cannot be accessed through the five senses.

You are doing yourself a great disservice by looking at one side of the coin only. If you come out of your shell and look through history, and acquaint yourself with what the great thinkers of mankind have said, you will discover truths that make your heart jump with joy. Things that can hardly be uttered or explained by human beings.

Those people have given their lives rather than miss out on the things they have discovered through the exercise of all their faculties, not just the five senses. Yet, for some extraordinary quirk of nature, and reasons which only they can explain, scientists are now telling us not to believe anything that is not “logical”; nothing that cannot be detected through the five senses, or cannot be confirmed through empirical research and experiments. The world has taken that as the new gospel. The world is much the poorer for it.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

A United Nations report presented at the Second Earth Summit said that conditions in the world are now far worse than they were five years ago at the first Earth Summit in Rio. How could it be otherwise when the forests are being destroyed faster, carbon dioxide emissions are greater, fresh water is getting scarcer and more polluted, mountains of solid waste are getting bigger, agricultural land keeps shrinking, population continues to increase, marine food stocks continue to diminish, the weather is turned up-side down, and natural disasters continue to play havoc around the world.

The warming of the planet as a result of the greenhouse effect is no longer a hypothesis, but a fact. This realisation came frighteningly fast upon the world. We have played our role in this too. When we started this work seven years ago, no one, outside a small circle of scientists, paid much attention to the greenhouse effect. Yet, there has not been a single edition in which we have not dedicated page after page of proofs of environmental degradation, of the greenhouse effect, of warming of the planet, etc. We said all along that things will get worse, much worse, and they did. Now how did we know these things? From watching world developments and correlating these with the biblical prophecies. In other words, we have done what our Lord told us to do:

"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--lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

"And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:35-37).

"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that 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." (Matt. 24:37-39)

And what did the world leaders do with all those facts, what decision did they take at the Second Earth Summit? To recommend a reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions by 15 per cent of their 1990 levels by the year 2010. Now what exactly do they think they will achieve with that? The natural absorption cycle of carbon dioxide, the main culprit in the greenhouse effect, is between one hundred and two hundred years. Which means that what we see in the world right now, is not the result of gas emissions accumulated in the last few years, nor indeed in the last few decades, but the effect of carbon dioxide emissions since the beginning of the industrial revolution, which occurred in the middle of the last century.

And you know what? They could not even agree on that. In the end, they settled for a reduction in these gases of under ten per cent. And not all the countries agreed to that either. You can be absolutely sure that they will keep these promises just they kept the ones they made at the First Earth Summit in Rio.

"Greenhouse gap too wide for bargains" "The 1992 Rio Environmental Summit, which committed nations to try to stabilise emissions at 1990 levels by 2000, has been an abject failure – with virtually every nation substantially increasing greenhouse gas output since then." (*The Australian*, October 24, 1997).

ECONOMIC NEWS

We can do no better on this topic than to quote world leaders on their view of the future.

"YOU'RE SACKED" WORLD-CLASS dreams are at home in San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel. Like a cathedral of affluence, it stands on Nob Hill in solitary splendour overlooking the famous city, a Californian showpiece of all the superlatives, an unselfconscious mixture of *fin de siecle* and postwar boom. Visitors are suddenly hit by the view as they float outside in the glass lift to the restaurant in the hotel tower. . .

At this site steeped in history, the man welcoming the world's elite in late September 1995 is one of the few who has himself made history: Mikhail Gorbachev. When the Cold War came to an end, American patrons gratefully fitted out a foundation (with Gorbachev of all people as president) on an abandoned military area south of the Golden Gate.

Now he has flown in 500 leading politicians, businessmen and scientists from every continent - a new "global brains trust", as the last president of the Soviet Union and Nobel prize-winner calls it, which is supposed to point the way to the "new" civilisation" of the 21st century.

Such experienced world rulers as George Bush, George Shultz and Margaret Thatcher are here meeting the new lords of the Earth - men of the likes of CNN boss Ted Turner, who has merged with Time Warner to form the largest media business in the world, or the South-East Asian magnate Washington Sycip. The idea is for them to spend three days in intensive discussions with the global players in computers and finance, as well as with the high priests of theoretical economics from Stanford, Harvard and Oxford. Emissaries of free trade from Singapore and (naturally) Beijing also want their voices to be heard when the future of humanity is at issue. . .

No one has come to brag and bluster. No one is allowed to stop the participants from speaking freely and the hordes of journalists have been screened off at considerable expense. There are strict rules designed to minimise rhetorical ballast: those introducing a subject for debate, are given just five minutes and no contribution is supposed to last for longer than two.

Not a murmur passes through the room. The prospect of previously undreamt-of armies of the unemployed seems to go without saying. None of the highly paid career managers from the company divisions of the future believes there will be enough new, regularly paid jobs in any sector of the economy in the technologically demanding growth markets of hitherto affluent countries. . .

The Fairmont pragmatists sum up the future in a pair of numbers and a concept: "20 to 80" and "tittytainment". In the next century, 20 per cent of the population will suffice to keep the world economy going. "More manpower won't be needed," thinks Sycip. One-fifth of all job-seekers will be enough to produce all the commodities and to furnish high-value services that world society will be able to afford. This 20 per cent, in whichever country, will actively participate in life, earnings and consumption--to which may be added another 1 per cent or so of people who, for example, have inherited a lot of money

And the rest? Will 80 per cent of those willing to work be left without a job? "Sure," says the American writer Jeremy Rifkin, author of *The End of Work*. "The bottom 80 per cent will have almighty problems." Gage stirs things up again and refers to his business head, Scott McNealy. The question in the future will be "to have lunch or be lunch".

From this point on, the top-class group discussing "the future of work" concerns itself with those who will have none. The firm

conviction is that these will include tens of millions who have so far probably felt closer to the everyday bliss of the San Francisco

Bay area than to the struggle to survive without a secure job. A new social order is being sketched out at the Fairmont - one of rich countries with no middle class worth mentioning – and no one disagrees. . .”

“In any event, the business leaders expect that, soon, in the industrialised countries, people will again be sweeping the streets for nest to nothing or finding a meagre shelter as household helps. For futurologist John - Naisbitt, the industrial age and its mass prosperity will eventually become no more than a “blip in economic history”. The participants in these three memorable days at the Fairmont imagined themselves to be on the road to a new civilisation. But the route envisaged by the assembled experts from top management and science leads straight back to pre-modern times. In the 1980s, Europeans and others feared the coming of a “two-thirds society”, but the new model is of a 20 to 80 world, a one-fifth society in which those left out will have to be pacified with tittytainment [tittillate and entertainment equals tittytainment].” *This is an edited extract from The Global Trap, which has just been published in Australia by Pluto Press. (The Weekend Australian, Nov. 1-2, 1997).*

So, “on the road to a new civilisation . . . the question will be ‘to have lunch or be lunch’”. A golden age and a brave new world indeed. And now some “good news” on the American economy.

“Icemen come in with the cold. Stephen Roach of Morgan has argued that the idea that the US economy, in particular, had entered a new era or paradigm of low inflation, low unemployment, steady growth and high profits was no more than wishful thinking unsupported by hard evidence.

Ultimately (early in 1998 according to Roach) inflation would come surging through, forcing the US Federal Reserve to tighten monetary policy, with adverse implications for equity prices, and the non-financial economy.

On the other hand there are “icemen” such as Martin Barnes, the managing editor of Montreal-based Bank Credit Analyst, who believes the new paradigm style of market commentary has “been on a par with the ‘What, Me Worry?’ of *Mad Magazine’s* Alfred E. Neuman”. Barnes has in the past focused on the overvaluation of US equities as a result of treating on off factors such as reduced taxes, low interest rates and reduced depreciation as being recurrent in estimates of forward earnings. He now sees the recent global sharemarket upheaval as a symptom of gathering deflationary forces that will worsen the inevitable correction to Wall Street. Those forces are already at work in Asia but the full extent of what is happening in those markets, according to Barnes, will “only become apparent over the coming year as real estate markets crumble, undermining banking systems and consumer and business confidence and as their domestic demand contracts, leading to a major downturn in 1998-99”. Because of the excess capacity in these economies they will try to export their way out of recession, thereby transmitting the deflationary forces to other competing emerging economies and then into the large but weakened Japanese economy. Deutsche Morgan Grenfell’s chief economist, Dr Ed Yardeni, and hitherto one of the leading lights of the new paradigm movement is now warning that “the Asian meltdown could trigger a global recession in 1998”. He is now forecasting that real GDP will grow by only 2 per cent in 1998; down by a full percentage point from his previous forecast of 3 per cent. Yardeni sees the probability of a US recession as 25 per cent in 1998 or 40 per cent by 2000.

While Yardeni is concerned about Asia’s impact, that is not his only worry. He points to recent interest rate increases by central banks in Europe and Canada, stating that they “are provoking the forces of Deflation and Darkness”. While arguing that these banks should be easing and not tightening, Yardeni says: “Recent events in Asia suggest that global deflation may be inevitable even with easy money.” (*SMH*, Nov. 13, 1997).

So, is it going to be a golden age and an era of “peace, progress and prosperity”, or “the forces of Deflation and Darkness?” We shall see, but I wouldn’t count on the first. Not in the short term anyway. That is, not before the Millennium.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

But, not to worry, we can always count on “good news” at the international level. After all, who can deny the “good news” that came from President Yeltsin? No one, that is, except President Yeltsin himself.

“The Russian President, Mr Boris Yeltsin made clear yesterday that Russia would no longer target nuclear missiles at NATO countries, recovering from an apparent slip of the tongue at the signing of the Russia-NATO pact in Paris when he told Western leaders that Moscow’s missiles warheads would be removed, effectively disarming his nation. “In order to strengthen the atmosphere of trust, I took the decision: Russian rockets will no longer be aimed at NATO countries,” Mr Yeltsin said in a radio address to the nation.” (*Reuter, SMH*, May 31, 1997).

Now why did he change his mind when his promise drew so much universal approval? This is why.

“The Yeltsin announcement came as a surprise in Moscow and created a flurry of confusion, with contradictory statements from different officials. A spokesman for the Ministry of defence said that if Russia wanted to re-target Europe, it would take “only hours”. The process involved erasing the targeting programs in the missile warheads and programming them with “zero flight missions”. Russia currently has around 4300 nuclear weapons targeted at NATO countries. . . However, Russia remains strongly opposed to the NATO expansion, a point Mr Yeltsin made several times in recent days. Even as he flew out of Moscow, he was urging NATO to rethink its expansion, warning it was “fraught with the risk of destabilising Europe.”

The Russian decision comes just days after Moscow made it clear to the world it was prepared to unleash a first nuclear strike, a significant shift on its previous no-first strike commitment.” (*SMH*, May 6, 1997).

Russia says that it is now “prepared to unleash a first nuclear strike” on the West, and our media people take this to mean a “bold symbol for peace” and “an end of the Cold War”.

Do you see now what we mean by “what you see is not what you get”? People go to bed content in the belief that the Cold War is over and there will always be a world tomorrow, when in fact we are now closer to a nuclear catastrophe than we have ever been.

“Yeltsin’s offer does not mark end of the Cold War” “To bill the agreement signed between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Russia as “the end of the Cold War” (Yeltsin Ends Nuclear Threat, 28/5), is a nice bit of spin, but, as usual, the spin is pretty close to 180 degrees from reality.

In fact it's probably misleading even to refer to the initiative as a "security agreement". Russia will now be consulted about NATO's moves, but will not have any veto. While President Yeltsin put on a very brave face at the signing ceremony, he won't fool any of his citizens (any of the time) into seeing this as a positive for Russia.

Based on the work carried out by my organisation's affiliates in Moscow, I can assure you that Russians view it as a colossal humiliation. It is reviving their ancient, deeply held paranoia about the predations of a more advanced militarily stronger, richer, exploitative West . . .

Despite making a spur of the moment gesture on disarming weapons aimed at NATO States (in reality he meant de-targeting, an action that takes minutes and a few strokes on a commander's keyboard) Mr Yeltsin had only weeks earlier been talking about the conditions in which Russia would consider a first use of nuclear weapons.

What exactly is NATO thinking? If the Cold War really is over, why continue to expand a military alliance designed to counterbalance Russia's (now greatly diminished) conventional military power, right up to Russia's border. Russia couldn't even stop a rebellion in Chechnya – what makes anyone think it's about to invade Poland? Far from the end of the Cold War, the expansion of NATO shows that in some military planners' minds the "war" continues unabated." (Greg Berber, Abolition 2000 Project Officer. Medical Association for the Prevention of War. Preston, Vic. (*The Australian*, June 2, 1997)).

What happened to the bonhomie that was evident at the recent meeting between the leaders of the seven leading industrialised nations also attended by President Yeltsin?

"The Cold War may be over, but there is no shortage of conflict about the expansion of NATO and the degree of influence Europe should wield in it, writes Christopher Henning. Boris Yeltsin is partial to a good summit. The leaders of the world's seven leading industrialised nations – the G7 – obligingly made room for him so he could indulge his taste. For a few days, every so often, he can forget the troubles he has at home, fly to somewhere pleasant and talk to leaders like himself as an equal. He can call them Bill and Helmut and Jacques and Tony, and they can call him Boris, and the Russian media can portray him as a statesman and Russia as a superpower.

But this week, even though Bill and Helmut and Jacques and Tony were at a summit in Madrid, their friend Boris ignored an invitation to join them and pointedly went to Karelia, near Russia's border with Finland, for a holiday. Or was it a sulk?

For this was a NATO summit, and as far as Russians are concerned, despite the end of the Cold War, NATO is still Lucifer incarnate. It used to be capitalism ganging up against the Soviet Union; now, though ideologies have changed, the basic centuries-old conflict – West versus East, wealth versus poverty, Catholic versus Orthodox, sophisticated and Macchiavellian Europe versus simple, honest Russia – has not. The word, and the symbol – that cold white star encircled on a blue background, rather like a prettied-up version of the crosshairs in a gunsight – are still enough to arouse every ancient Russian paranoia of rejection, victimisation and encirclement.

Apart from the populist opposition to NATO expansion on the grounds of cost, there is the intellectual opposition on the grounds of diplomatic good sense. George Kennan, a former ambassador to Moscow and the man who virtually invented the strategy of the Cold War, is a chief proponent of this view. In a recent article in *The New York Times* he warned against enlargement as "the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post Cold War era". Enlargement would, he said, inflame Russian nationalism, restore the atmosphere of the Cold War and militate against future reductions in nuclear weapons.

Dr Paul Cornish, a lecturer in defence studies at King's College, London, and the author of a forthcoming book on the future of NATO, agrees that enlargement is a dangerous procedure.

"I think that enlargement has been, is, and will be a very risky undertaking, simply because Russia is too uncertain and volatile. With anything as big and nasty and smelly as Russia with all those nukes, you have to be very careful." (*SMH*, July 12, 1997).

Alexander Lebed, former general and presidential candidate, said this about the Russia-NATO accord:

"Russia's agreement to sign the deal was a "total capitulation". The only honourable way out for Russia was to refuse to sign the document. The agreement may somehow save Yeltsin's reputation, but not that of Russia." (*SMH*, May 28, 1997).

And Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Russian Communist Party, the largest in the Russian Duma, and another presidential candidate, called it an "act of treason".

But it is not only the Russians that have changed their mind about the West. Hollywood has changed its mind about the East too.

"Reds are back under the bed." "When Hollywood scriptwriters think villain, they're likely to think Russian – it's just like the bad old days, writes Bernard Weinraub.

"The commies are back! After several years during which Hollywood studios have been locked in a desperate quest for screen villains, veering from Colombian drug lords to Arab terrorists to murderous space aliens, the newest bad guys in movie theatres turn out to be some very old foes – the Russians and the Chinese. "It's post-Cold War, but it's the same area codes," said Joel Silver, a producer of action films. "You're always trying to find real villains out of the headlines; you're always trying to find real tigers as opposed to paper tigers." Jon Avnet, director of *The Real Corner*, one of several films opening later this year that deal harshly with China, said: "It's so hard to find a good guy to hate now. And certain Chinese and Russians seem to fit that bill now." (*SMH*, August 7, 1997).

The Pentagon has brought us its own bundle of "good news" too.

"Pentagon close to success with Star Wars missile net" "The United States strategic missile defence program made an important technologic breakthrough last month, achieving the first successful testing of a space-based sensor that tracks and identifies incoming missiles, the Pentagon said yesterday.

The test was designed to keep within the new limits imposed by the Helsinki summit between the US and Russian presidents last March, by which interception may not be tested against targets travelling at more than 5 kilometres a second, or which have ranges above 3,500 kilometres. These limits were devised to ensure that new anti-missile systems would "not pose a realistic threat to the strategic nuclear force of the other side", and to maintain the force of the key arms control agreement, the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty of 1972.

The latest test suggests the US is close to the capacity to protect its land mass against incoming missile attacks, sufficient at least to question traditional theories of nuclear deterrence. The US is developing a "thin" anti-missile defence system, due to be deployed by 2003 and capable of protecting the US against a small-scale missile attack of the kind that could be mounted by a rogue State. Such a system would also decimate the Chinese strategic nuclear force of less than 20 inter-continental ballistic missiles able to hit the US targets." (*The Guardian*, *SMH*, July 4, 1997).

What is so important about this development that we included it here? Well, when President Reagan announced the feasibility of the Star Wars technology in 1983, the Soviet Government went into panic.

In a recent television documentary, Marshall Akhromeyev, Chief of Soviet General Staff at that time, said this: "We examined the economics of it, how much an SDI programme [Strategic Defence Initiative – as the Star Wars system is officially called] would cost the Soviet Union, and we concluded we couldn't afford it."

And Aleksander Yakovlev, Politburo member at that time, added: "This SDI system would have nullified all our nuclear missile capability. . . We needed a programme to crush the SDI... a block of concrete that would completely flatten it. So we offered total nuclear disarmament by the year 2000. SDI would be history."

So they arranged a meeting between President Reagan and President Gorbachov. This took place in Geneva in 1985. After agreeing to a range of mutual arms reduction measures, Gorbachov told Reagan: "If we're beginning these massive arms reduction... then we must not take the arms race into space. So we must confine SDI to the laboratory."

But Reagan's aids, sensing what Gorbachov was aiming at, told the President: "This would kill the SDI system because you could never test it shooting down a missile." After which Reagan told Gorbachov: "I am not prepared to give up testing the SDI in space".

They promptly parted company without the accord. On the airport tarmac, Reagan said to Gorbachov: "You've sabotaged our deal". But Gorbachov replied: "No, Mr President. If you agree to prevent an arms race in space... we can go right back in and sign this treaty now." "Well, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" said Reagan and took his plane home. (*Inside Story: The Reagan Legacy – Star Wars Pt 2*, ABC TV, Sept. 2, 1997).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States felt no need to continue spending billions of dollars on a system that many said was no longer needed. So what happened now? Why did they change their mind?

They say that they need this system against the Chinese missiles. Who are they kidding? China is a long way off from being in a position to threaten the continental USA. But Russia is a different story. It is not a mere coincidence that soon after the Russians abandoned their no-first nuclear strike commitment, the Americans readied their Star Wars system.

The world may no longer think of Russia as a superpower, but that is not how the Russians see themselves. As long as they retained their nuclear capability, the status of superpower was always within their reach. But now that the Americans threaten to nullify that, are they going to take it sitting down? This might give us the answer:

"Russia finds a comrade it arms" "As Russia fades off the map of great world powers, it has plenty to sell to the rising superpower, China. Although its military forces are demoralised, poorly equipped, riddled with corruption and even lacking in basic food and clothing, Russia is still a leader in military technology. Now Moscow is selling the heritage of decades of military supremacy to the Chinese. The arrival of the Chinese President, Mr Jiang Zemin, in Moscow this week further cements the warm relationship between the powers. Russia and China are cosying up as NATO plans its eastern expansion, a move which is opposed by both. Their warming relationship has created speculation about the potential for a great new strategic alliance, with Russia turning to China for succour, disillusioned with the West.

Could NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe send Russia fleeing into China's arms, and cement a new global balance, with China and Russia lining up against the United States of Europe? And will China's arms and weapons purchases buy it the status of a global military power as well as being an economic giant? . . . These questions are being raised not only in the West, but also within Russia. Since the days of the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s, there has always been some Russian anxiety about what is delicately termed the "Chinese demographic overhang" – the proximity of populous China to the vast empty wastes of Siberia." China is not the biggest buyer of Russian weapons – that is Iran – but as it strives to upgrade its weapons base, it is becoming more important. . . If Russian military sales continue at their present rate over several more years and if China produces large numbers of Russian weapons under licence, it will build an advanced military machine. Such a transformation could inevitably alter the strategic balance in the region." (*SMH*, April 24, 1997).

Now both Russia and China are feverishly arming Iran.

"Tehran Building Arsenal Of Cruise Missiles" Iran has started test-firing new cruise missiles designed to strike ships, the United States Defense Secretary, Mr William Cohen, has revealed.

Warning this was sinister intent in Iran's military build-up, Mr Cohen said Tehran was testing Chinese-made anti-ship missile which can be launched from aircraft, in addition to the cruise missiles Iran already has on shore and aboard ships. . . "Iran poses a danger to its military weaker neighbours and does not deserve to be treated as a full member of the world community." Mr Cohen also pressed the case for keeping sanctions on Iraq.

"Iraq and Iran violate international norms of good behaviour," he said. "Iran continues to sponsor terrorism. In addition, it is developing weapons of mass destruction, improving missiles that can strike neighbouring nations, and boasting of its ability to close the Straits of Hormuz. . ."

The US is concerned about Tehran's increasingly sophisticated military arsenal, particularly its cruise missiles. Because they fly too low, they are difficult to detect on radar." (*SMH*, 19 June 1997).

"Israelis warn on Iranian missiles." The Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr Yitzhak Mordecai, warned yesterday that Iran was on the verge of developing ballistic missiles that could strike Israel, Asia and Europe, fundamentally altering the region's military balance. He said Iran had nearly completed the missiles program with Russian aid, despite intensive diplomatic efforts to persuade Moscow that such assistance was a dangerous threat to world security.

Mr Mordecai based his assessment on intelligence reports from Israeli and US security officials, which found that Iran's weapons program was developing at a much faster rate than previously anticipated. Such programs had only been made possible by Russia, which had violated its pledges to stop providing military aid to Iran. . . Such promises were made to the US President, Mr Bill Clinton, the Vice-President, Mr Al Gore, the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, and others who visited Russia.

"We were surprised to learn that the opposite took place: that Russia and Russian companies have accelerated the process, that Iran can achieve independent capability in these areas as fast as possible so they won't be under pressure." (*SMH*, Sept. 29, 1997).

Iran has never made a secret of its hatred of Israel, and support for the Palestinian people. Earlier this year its military forces carried out massive military manoeuvres. They called them, "The road to Jerusalem".

RELIGIOUS NEWS

Now some "good news" from the religious people. We begin with the Uniting Church.

"Pressure on Uniting vote as minister outs herself" "One of the Uniting Church's most senior office-holders, the Rev Dorothy McRae-McMahon, has "outed" herself as a lesbian on the eve of the Church's crucial vote on the ordination of homosexual clergy. Ms McRae-McMahon, national director of mission of the Uniting Church, told its 261-member assembly

meeting in Perth this week that her ordination would be in question if they voted against the proposal for openly homosexual clergy.

Ms McRae-McMahon, a divorced mother of four who is now in a relationship with a woman, said her homosexuality had not been an issue for her at the time of her ordination. "It has been an issue for around 10 years," she said. "It is something I recognise in myself which explains many things in my life going back to childhood." Ms McRae-McMahon, 63, said it had been a "hard decision indeed" to talk openly about homosexuality, and that it had taken a long time to decide to talk openly to the Church's eight national assembly. "I was shaking as I said it. . . I found it a very hard thing to do," she told the ABC Radio. Ms McRae-McMahon, who describes herself as a "radical evangelical", said that after she had "quietly and painfully" made the decision about her homosexuality she had sensed "an amazing sense of the grace of God and her ministry" (*SMH*, July 10, 1997).

The decision of McRae-McMahon to "out" herself, was not an isolated case, but a well co-ordinated manoeuvre designed to influence the assembly into voting for homosexual clergy.

"Homosexual clergy row ravages Uniting Church" "A split within the Uniting Church – Australia's third-biggest – is inevitable following its decision to delay voting on a proposal for the ordination of homosexual clergy. This leaves in doubt the future of 10 openly homosexual clergy who "outed" themselves during this week's Uniting Church assembly in Perth, including its national director of mission, the Rev Dorothy McRae-McMahon.

Aboriginal and ethnic congregations called on the 261-member assembly to defer decision for three years because they were not ready to discuss the possibility of ordaining homosexuals." (*SMH*, July 11, 1997).

"Assembly defers vote on clergy" "Tears, joy and bitterness as debate on homosexuals in the Uniting Church ends with no clear vision for the future. The Uniting Church has bowed to pressure from Aboriginal and ethnic congregations and voted to defer indefinitely a vote on homosexual clergy.

After an emotional debate yesterday, in which many of the 261-member assembly were in tears, the Church failed to take a position on homosexual leaders within the Church. Aboriginal and ethnic congregations had called on the assembly to defer its decision because they were not ready to discuss the possibility of ordaining homosexuals. In what was described as a "small victory for gay and lesbian ministers" by the Church's director of mission, the Rev Dorothy McRae-McMahon, conservatives have warned many congregations will leave the Church in disgust. "I think we've moved just a little bit, because most of the Church probably wasn't aware that there was a freedom to bring to ordination people of different sexual orientation," Ms McRae-McMahon said. In a resounding show of support from the assembly, Ms McRae-McMahon, who revealed she was a lesbian during the congress, received two standing ovations during the final session on the Church's report, *Uniting Sexuality and Faith* (*SMH*, July 12, 1997).

Is it not interesting that it was the Aboriginal and ethnic members that prevented their assembly from voting for homosexual clergy? The most despised and least privileged people in the country turned out to be the ones with the courage to stand up for their beliefs and for what is right. Can you see now what God means when He says this?

"I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' to a nation that was not called by My name. I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts." (Isa. 65:1-2).

Now let us hear the "good news" from the Anglican Church.

In August this year, Dr George Carrey, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Church, visited Australia. When he came to Sydney, he conducted a televised religious service attended by many local and national dignitaries. During his sermon, he spoke about Christian unity, Christian love, Christian service, Christian challenges, Christian contribution to society - the kind of platitudes people like to hear in their Sunday sermons.

He said nothing about the contemporary scourges that afflict our society: unemployment, crime, homelessness, illicit drug use, violence, etc. Nothing about the warming of the planet, the unprecedented floods that ravaged the world this year; nothing about the tragedy at Thredbo in the Australian Snowy Mountains in which 18 people were buried alive in a mud slide; nothing about the epidemic of youth suicides, nothing about the suicide bombing in Jerusalem which killed 15 people and injured 170 - all of these events making headlines in the Australian media at that very moment.

That is how Dr Carrey obeys the command of Jesus Christ to "Watch!" and keep himself and his followers informed of what is happening in the world, and prepare them for the return of their Lord.

He did however make several references to the "freedoms which we enjoy in the Anglican Church".

It wasn't clear then what freedoms he was referring to, but that became apparent in another television interview. "I do not object to women priests, nor to homosexuals serving in the priesthood, though the Anglican Church does not support a homosexual lifestyle" he said. Surprised by this logic, the reporter asked him to elaborate. The Archbishop merely repeated that statement and left it at that. The interviewer got the message and changed the topic. Few people in the audience would have understood what was going on. Not long before his visit to Australia, homosexual circles in Britain were threatening to expose high-ranking Anglican officials unless they came out openly and declared their sexuality. To which the Bishop of York promptly obliged and declared that for him homosexuality was a "grey area". (Was he the one who antagonised his parishioners a couple of years ago with denials of the virgin birth and of the resurrection?)

Dr Carrey was caught between defending his church's position on homosexuality, with the reality of homosexuals in its hierarchy. During the television interview, he made another statement that apparently caused quite a stir in Britain. He said that if Prince Charles were to marry Camilla Parker-Bowles it would become an issue for the church.

Homosexuals in his church's hierarchy are not an issue, but the Prince's marriage to a divorcee would become one. Any wonder that people are abandoning this church in droves?

Now, in an attempt to stem the exodus, they are desperately trying to reunite with the Catholic Church. Like jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

But let us hear the "good news" from the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church - the one who is determined to make his church "relevant to the kind of society we live in". And what kind of society do we live in?

"These days you can hear not only the "f" word on television, but that ultimate taboo, the "c" word, as well. On any night you can see feature films or drama full of simulated murder and sex. On Network Ten's *Sex/Life*, you can even see soft pornography, marketed under the guise of infotainment.

It looks as if the boundaries of taste on television are expanding at a faster rate than Elle Macpherson's tummy. The question no longer seems to be what we will hear or see next, but what we won't.

This increasing permissiveness is a worldwide trend, says Madeleine Chincotta, the head of the division of language and linguistics at the University of Western Sydney.

"If you look at television throughout Europe, the trend is amazingly consistent. There is this relaxation of standards and what used to be taboo is now deemed acceptable," she says. But why? In one way, it's just part of a general blurring of standards.

Professor Pam Peters, a professor of linguistics at Macquarie University, says that as swearing has become more acceptable in public places or in mixed company, so too is it more acceptable to find them on television.

Chincotta sees us moving into public domain those that used to be in the private domain, such as sex or swearing. The flipside is that people's morality becomes their own business. "We used to have a culture which was homogenous, where people shared values . . . but we are no longer willing, in many cases, to make judgments about other people's behaviour. And if you can't condemn people, then more and more is tolerated." Professor Peter Putnis, a professor of communications at the University of Canberra, says that television and radio have to now represent a much more diverse society and a broader range of social attitudes. "The networks are expanding their programming to reflect the changing taste and the range of attitudes out there," he says." (SMH, *The Guide*, October 20-26, 1997).

So how is the new Moderator of the Presbyterian Church going to make his church more relevant to this society?

"Female Ordination Moves Back On Agenda. The controversy over the ordination of women in the Presbyterian Church is likely to be resurrected following last's night's appointment of a new pro-female ordination Moderator of the NSW Church, the Right Rev Dr Lindsay Ferrington. . .

"We now have to look at making the Christian Church relevant to the kind of society we live in," he said.

As part of the move to modernise the Church, Dr Ferrington feels it has to deal with the issue of female ordination, which he says is confronting all Christian denominations.

"My faith is based on the scriptures, and in 35 years as a minister I have never found anything in them that says women should not be ministers," he said." (SMH, 1 July 1997).

In 35 years as a minister he never found anything in the Scriptures that says women should not be ministers. We don't know what he means by "the scriptures", but this is what Macquarie Concise Dictionary says: "The sacred writings of the Old and the New Testaments or of either of them (often called **Holy Scripture** or **the Scriptures**); Holy Writ; the Bible".

Now this is what these Scriptures have to say about women:

"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." (1 Tim 2:8-15).

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church." (1 Cor. 14:33-35).

And in the Old Testament we find this:

"A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God." (Deut. 22:5).

Now what does this have to do with the ordination of women? Well, the terms "priest" and "minister" are gender terms, and refer to males only. For a woman to become a "priest" is tantamount to her wearing a man's clothes. The question is why do they want to become "priests" and "ministers" instead of "priestesses", which would be the correct term for them? The answer is that God never had "priestesses" in His congregations. The terms "priestess" and "priestesses" have always been associated with pagan religions, hence their desire to become "priests".

Since in many churches women's ordination seems to be closely linked with homosexual ordination, let us see what the Bible has to say on both these topics.

"If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.

"You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them." (Lev. 20:13, 22-23).

"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. **For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.** But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.' See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:1-16).

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man-- and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." (Rom. 1:18-32).

Now some "good news" from the Catholic Church. In this church it is easier for a woman to become a "saint" than a "priest". Why? Because the Catholic saints do not threaten male priests, nor the status quo.

The Catholic "saints" are very different from the Biblical ones. The Bible never applies the term "saint" to dead people, only to living ones. The God of the Bible "is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32), but for the Catholics the Bible is not as important as the word of their Pope – their infallible "Holy Father".

When the Romans converted to Christianity, they retained most of their old practices. In the ancient Roman religion, the priests were being served by the "vestal virgins". After the advent of Christianity, these became nuns.

The leading priest in the Roman religion, Pontifex Maximus, used to "deify" important people after their death. But after Christianity, he makes them "saints".

The Catholic Church is notorious for doing the exact opposite of what the Bible says: sanctifying the dead, acquiring the titles "Father" and "Holy Father", worshipping images, changing the Holy Days, restrictions on food, etc. Is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit seems to be missing from this church, and that its priests fall victim to these kinds of perversions?

"Evil priest jailed for 12 years" "Dublin: Ireland's Roman Catholic Church has opened a special telephone help line for victims of child abuse by the clergy. The line went into operation on the day a priest, Brendan Smyth, 71, started a 12-year jail term for series of child-molesting offences committed over 36 years.

Judge Cyril Kelly said the case, involving 74 counts of indecent and sexual assault, was one of the most serious ever dealt with by his Dublin court. Many cases of priests using their prominent position in Irish village and town life to sexually abuse children were exposed after Smyth was charged four years ago, helping to bring down the Government of Mr Albert Reynolds. Lawyers said Smyth's victims could expect up to 100,000 punts (A\$230,000) each in compensation based on payments already made by the Catholic Church in Ireland to victims of sexual abuse.

In the United States, a victim's support group is predicting that a record \$US 120 million damages award last week against the Catholic diocese of Dallas, Texas, for victims of sexual abuse would unleash a flood of claims worth at least \$US 500 million from other people molested by priests. Linkup, a Chicago-based organisation which says it has a database of 3,800 US priests against whom allegations of abuse can be corroborated, expects a huge new wave of litigation. Mr Tom Economus, a former Catholic priest who runs Linkup, said: "The phone has been ringing off the wall since the Dallas decision. This is going to act as a lightning rod. Other victims are going to come forward and lawsuits will be filed." (SMH, July 28, 1997).

In Australia, 100 priests were removed from the pulpit for the same reason.

"The front-page news story, "100 Priests Forced Out Over Sex Offences" (26/8/97), raises some interesting questions on the teachings of the Catholic Church. Bishop Geoffrey Robinson suggests that "the Church should consider allowing priests to defer their celibacy vows until they reach the age of 40". But would these priests be allowed to marry? In which case they would then need to get divorced to become priests (married to the Church).

If they were not allowed to get married, would they be allowed to live in sin? Would the Church allow them to use contraceptive methods other than the rhythm method allowed to parishioners? Would any nuns throughout Australia have a case to put to the Equal Opportunities Commission? And most importantly, what does it say about the infallibility of God's "Bishop on Earth"? Or did God himself make a boo-boo?" (D.P. Banner, Coolbellup, WA.)

"One hundred priests out over sex, and Bishop Robinson's reported statement that the Church has now introduced a policy that bars clergy from being alone with children unless they are chaperoned by an adult, scares me. I am absolutely bewildered when in the next breath the Church is considering relaxing the celibacy laws to overcome sexual abuse of mainly male children by allowing priests to marry. Does the church expect me to believe that priests who abuse boys do so because they don't have a wife with whom they would, I assume, have a marriage built on love, trust and respect?

As the Church forbids contraceptives no doubt before long there would be the patter of many little feet, which fills me with horror. It is absurd for the Church to put forth the hypothesis that priests who have been trusted by the community to nurture and guide young children – then consciously destroy the very souls in their care – are fit to be husbands and fathers. These ghastly men are then left in charge of their own offspring! Where, I wonder, will the 100 let go by the Church surface? Will the Church provide psychiatric services for these creatures or will they be let loose on an unsuspecting community? I fear the latter. (Pamela Macdonnell, Scarborough, WA, Letters to the editor", *The Australian*, August 29, 1997).

As Jesus Christ said: "There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known" (Matt. 10:26). Now a look at the Orthodox Church. In this church homosexual scandals are very rare, and this no doubt has to do with the fact that its priests are allowed to marry. Given the structure of the Orthodox Church, it would be almost impossible for an Orthodox priest to maintain his position if he has been condemned of child molestation, as it has happened in the Catholic Church. Orthodox priests are normally appointed with the approval of the community in which they serve. Once appointed, they must retain the good graces of these communities. But this does not mean that they have remained unstained from the problems around them. Being so close to their people, they tended to identify themselves with, or get involved in, narrow-minded parochial and national concerns and politics. This might explain what is happening in Russia.

"RUSSIA. Yeltsin, vetoes religious law. The Russian President Boris Yeltsin faces a likely rebellion by both Houses of Parliament after he vetoed a bill severely restricting religions in Russia.

Although Mr Yeltsin's action will win praise overseas, it will be unpopular in Russia, particularly in the powerful Russian Orthodox Church, which had strongly pushed the bill. Both Houses of Parliament passed the bill overwhelmingly. The Parliament can overturn the presidential veto with a two-thirds majority – so a major struggle between the Parliaments and the President is now likely. The law would give the Russian Orthodox Church and three other religions a favoured position. All others, including

the Catholic and Protestant faiths, would face a lengthy bureaucratic struggle to be registered. Unregistered religions would be banned from owning property, preaching in public or publishing religious texts.

The Orthodox Church, jealous of its territory, is bitterly opposed to the operation of foreign missionaries in Russia. The Church leader, Patriarch Alexei II, compared the flood of missionaries into Russia with the expansion of NATO towards Russia. Pope John Paul II sent a message to Mr Yeltsin praising his veto of the bill, which he had earlier criticised as trampling on the rights of believers. The legislation was also attacked in the United States Senate, which voted to cut \$A260 million in aid to Russia if the law went ahead. Mr Yeltsin said criticism abroad was one factor in his decision. But his main concern was that the bill undermined the rights of religious minorities and gave some Churches more rights than others. Most importantly, he said, the law could lead to religious strife in Russia. "There can be no democratic society where the interests of any minorities among our citizens are not protected," he said, calling on the parliamentary deputies to support the bill." (*SMH*, July 24, 1997).

Before the last presidential election Yeltsin was way behind in the polls until the Church intervened and gave him its blessing. Now what do you think will happen at the next presidential election? Whoever aspires to that position would have learned to toe the line of the Orthodox Church first. And what is that line? "The Church leader, Patriarch Alexei II, compared the flood of missionaries into Russia with the expansion of NATO towards Russia". What an extraordinary statement from a religious leader. In Russia, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church is more influential than the President. Now how long do you think a Russian President could stand against the wishes of his Patriarch? This is how long President Yeltsin did.

"Yeltsin backs curbs on religion" "Moscow: The Russian President, Mr Boris Yeltsin, has swept aside objections from United States officials and human rights advocates and signed into law a bill to restrict religious practices in Russia. Critics contend that the law in effect overturns Russia's constitutional guarantee that all religions are equal and that it marks the waning of liberal democratic euphoria that gripped Russia in the early months and years following the collapse of the Soviet Union nearly six years ago. Russian Orthodoxy is listed first among "traditional" religions that include Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Despite the inclusion of these groups, individual faiths that were not registered officially 15 years ago, during the repressive era of Soviet rule, now face complicated bureaucratic requirements to become legal. The limitations will affect the use of property, tax relief, public assembly and the ability of foreign missionaries to proselytise.

Mr Yeltsin's action followed a last-minute appeal last week from the US Vice-President, Mr Al Gore, to reject the measure. The US Senate had threatened to cut off aid if the bill became law. Russian politicians urged Mr Yeltsin to stand up to US "meddling". The Kremlin issued only a terse announcement of Mr Yeltsin's signing. Kremlin officials helped draft the law, which was a revised version of a measure Mr Yeltsin vetoed earlier this year. They said it "did not contradict either the Constitution or international obligations". The Russian Orthodox Church supported the measure from the beginning. Patriarch Alexei II compared the threat posed by foreign religious groups to NATO's expansion towards Russia's borders." (*SMH*, September 29, 1997).

Now remember not all churches and religions are the same. The Bible tells us that the true Church of God would be a small church right up to the end of this age and the return of Jesus Christ. This is why so few people are doing the end-time work of God. The Bible also assures us that anyone who seeks the truth of God would find it.

"And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12:29-34).

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." (Matt 7:7-8).

PROPHECY ALIVE

When NATO leaders decided to expand their alliance eastward in spite of strong opposition from Russia, they did not do it to please Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. They did it because they know that sooner or later they will have to face a revitalised Russian bear once again. If they did not take their chance now, when this "beast" is down, they would come to regret having missed their opportunity.

The Russians know this too, and are not happy about it. What none of them realise though is that the present international developments are proceeding exactly as the Biblical prophecies say they should. And not only in Russia and Europe, but worldwide.

When the American Secretary of State, Dr Madeleine Albright, went to the Middle East, she conferred with the leaders of all the major players in that region's power politics.

"Egypt summit for Albright" "Damascus: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has arrived in Egypt to begin talks with President Hosni Mubarak designed to revive Middle East peace-making.

The US Secretary of State came from Syria, where she met President Hafez al-Assad. She also visited Israel and the West Bank as part of her first Middle East tour since taking office. . .

Earlier, Albright urged the Palestinian people in a direct radio address to join in the battle against Islamic militants bent on wrecking the peace process.

"The forces of terror simultaneously deny you your dreams for the future while increasing your present suffering," she said. "That is why the average Palestinian has no greater enemy than Hamas or Islamic Jihad."

Albright also called on Israel to resume withdrawals on the West Bank, to turn over territory to Arafat's group, and to remit to it the taxes paid by Palestinian workers.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dismissed the territorial demand as unacceptable, saying Israel has to defend itself against terrorism. And he has said there were more attacks after some taxes were handed over. A spokesman, David Bar-Illan, said last night the settlements would keep growing naturally with growth of the Jewish families who live there." (*The Sun-Herald*, September 14, 1997).

Egypt, Syria, Israel and Palestine, together with Russia and its allies, feature prominently in the end-time prophetic developments. Here are some of these prophecies, as they are written in the Bible. They are self-explanatory, so there is no need for additional input from us.

"O you children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a signal-fire in Beth Haccerem; for **disaster appears out of the north**, and great destruction.

Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a people comes from the north country, and a great nation will be raised **from the farthest parts of the earth**. They will lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy; their voice roars like the sea; and they ride on horses, as men of war set in array against you, O daughter of Zion.'" (Jer. 6:1, 22-23).

"Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops-- many people are with you. Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. After many days you will be visited. **In the latter years** you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you. . . ."

"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it? Then you will come from your place **out of the far north**, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. "You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be **in the latter days** that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.'" (Ezek 38:1-9, 14-16).

"Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. [*The prophet saw the modern versions of armoury: tanks, aeroplanes, helicopters, motorised army carriers, etc. and described them as best as he could. He gave them animal characteristics from whose mouths and tails came fire, smoke and brimstone. Ed.*] "By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts." (Rev 9:16-21)

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (Matt 24::21-22).

"The burden against Damascus. 'Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap.

The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they will be for flocks which lie down, and no one will make them afraid.

The fortress also will cease from Ephraim, the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria; they will be as the glory of the children of Israel,' says the LORD of hosts.

"In that day it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob will wane, and the fatness of his flesh grow lean.

It shall be as when the harvester gathers the grain, and reaps the heads with his arm; it shall be as he who gathers heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it, like the shaking of an olive tree, two or three olives at the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in its most fruitful branches," says the LORD God of Israel.

In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel.

He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands; he will not respect what his fingers have made, nor the wooden images nor the incense altars. In that day his strong cities will be as a forsaken bough and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel; and there will be desolation. Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, therefore you will plant pleasant plants and set out foreign seedlings; in the day you will make your plant to grow, and in the morning you will make your seed to flourish; but the harvest will be a heap of ruins in the day of grief and desperate sorrow.

Woe to the multitude of many people who make a noise like the roar of the seas, and to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters; but God will rebuke them and they will flee far away, and be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, like a rolling thing

before the whirlwind. Then behold, at eventide, trouble! And before the morning, he is no more. This is the portion of those who plunder us, and the lot of those who rob us." (Isa. 17:1-14).

"Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, before the decree is issued, or the day passes like chaff, before the LORD'S fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you!

Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger. For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon desolate; they shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines: "I will destroy you; so there shall be no inhabitant." The seacoast shall be pastures, with shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks. The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed their flocks there; in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening. For the LORD their God will intervene for them, and return their captives.

"I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon, with which they have reproached My people, and made arrogant threats against their borders. Therefore, as I live," says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah-- Overrun with weeds and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation; the residue of My people shall plunder them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them."

This they shall have for their pride, because they have reproached and made arrogant threats against the people of the LORD of hosts. The LORD will be awesome to them, for He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; people shall worship Him, each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations.

"You Ethiopians also, you shall be slain by My sword." (Zeph. 2:1-12).

"And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. *[Only nuclear and neutron bombs can produce this kind of devastation].*

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. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: 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.

"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."

[They will not go up to Jerusalem to observe Christmas, Easter, Halloween, birthdays or other pagan holy days, but the Feast of Tabernacles, a Feast of which the vast majority of Christians have never even heard of. Ask yourself why. If you can find the answer to this question, you will understand where the deception that has enveloped the world comes from, and why this world is marching unstopably towards its own doom. Ed.]

"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. 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. 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. In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts." (Zech. 14:12-21).

It is God's custom to give people a warning before He sends disaster upon them. He gives them the chance to change their life, to repent and turn to Him. The warning has gone out to the whole world. No one can complain that they have not been warned.

FUNDAMENTALIST "GOOD NEWS"

When all other things have failed, we can always count on the fundamentalist Christians to deliver us the "good news". Earlier this year, a number of evangelists went to Jerusalem with the avowed intention of solving the seemingly insurmountable problem of the Dome of the Rock – the Muslim Mosque which has been built on the site of the ancient temple of God. These people believe that Jesus Christ cannot return before a new temple is built in Jerusalem.

The year 1997-98 has an added significance. This is the 6000th year since the creation of the world - according to the chronology of the Irish Archbishop Ussher (1581-1635) - and as such this is the last year of the age of man's (miss) rule on earth. A thousand years of Sabbatical rest is to follow for the earth – the Millennial Kingdom.

Two major prophecies must occur before this transitional period is over: two witnesses of God must preach the Gospel as a witness to all nations, and the "abomination of desolation" must defile the holy place.

Fundamentalist preachers believe that both these events are connected with a new temple in Jerusalem. Our readers know that we do not subscribe to this theory. The two witnesses will not do their preaching from Jerusalem, and the holy place is not to be found inside any temple, because it is the place which holds the blood of Jesus Christ – the place of His crucifixion.

The idea of a new temple in Jerusalem is not new. After the six day war in 1967, when Israel took control of Jerusalem's old quarters, Herbert W. Armstrong put his reputation on the line by predicting that a new temple would soon be built there.

Thirty years later, and more than a decade after his death, his followers are still waiting, hoping and praying for this prophecy to be fulfilled.

When troubles erupted in Jerusalem earlier this year between the Jews and the Arabs, after the Jews opened a tunnel near the Dome of the Rock, many people thought that that was the end of the current stalemate and the beginning of rebuilding the new temple. So they rushed to Jerusalem to offer a helping hand, and to make themselves available for the work of the two witnesses, just in case God chose them to do that job.

Some even went in pairs and prepared with proselytising literature, believing that the Israeli people would convert en masse to their brand of Christianity once they began their work. But then the unthinkable happened. The conflict ended almost as soon as it started, and the Israeli Government, sensing what was happening, passed a law prohibiting the possession and distribution of proselytising materials in Israel. That threw a spanner in the works of these zealots. Now they are all in a state of confusion, not knowing what to believe or expect anymore. What none of them seem to have asked themselves is if a new temple is needed in Jerusalem why must it be built on the exact site of the ancient temple of God when that site is now taken by the Muslim Dome of the Rock? Why can't a new site be sanctified and dedicated to God, as they did it in ancient time, and resolve all these problems? This would save them from coming up with ridiculous explanations about the site being to the east, the west, north, or whatever side of the Dome of the Rock. Are there no more holy people in the world who could dedicate a new site for the temple of God? Jesus Christ said this of His followers:

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:13-16).

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--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. But the Helper, **the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things**, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:16-17, 26).

If Christians are the salt of the earth, and the Holy Spirit dwells in them, then they are holy people and perfectly capable of sanctifying a new place for the temple of God. The problem is, those "Christian" evangelists do not believe the Scriptures, nor that there are holy people capable of performing such a service.

The Bible makes it clear that God does not dwell in temples made by human hands, and that Jesus Christ returns to this earth to take His people to Himself, not to live in temples built by people who do not even believe in Him.

"However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands." (Acts 7:48).

"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.'" (2 Cor. 6:16).

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3).

Among those who showed up in Jerusalem earlier this year were two Doctors of Theology: James D. Tabor and Ernest L. Martin. They were so enthusiastic about their work, they decided to keep us informed about it too, in spite of the fact that we told them we were not interested in their publications.

We wondered why they kept sending them to us until we noticed that much of their writings were directed against us. These educated people have taken it upon themselves to oppose us and they made sure that we knew about it.

We are delighted that at last, people who know what they are talking about have decided to correct us and show us where in the Scriptures is it that have we gone wrong. Here is part of what they wrote:

"A few nights ago I sat with Dr Ernest Martin in the lobby of this hotel and we discussed many fascinating matters of historical and Biblical research related to the geography of this place. I think we were both moved by the idea of *where* we were as much as with the topics we were discussing. Dr Martin and I both ended up in Jerusalem at the same time, though we planned our trips separately, and neither of us knew the other was coming here until a few days ago. He had come to investigate his latest insights as to the location of both the first and second Temples—that of Solomon and Herod. As some of you know, he is convinced both Temples lay to the south of the traditional location where the Golden Dome of the Rock is today, over the Gihon Spring in the ancient City of David.

Although I made my trip for other reasons, related to my own Biblical, historical, and archaeological research, having heard about Dr Martin's new theory I was quite interested myself in taking a new look at the area he proposes, doing some measurements, and walking all around the parameters of the ancient *City of David*. All of these matters of history, geography, and archaeology have great relevance and application in providing an accurate translation of the Scriptures, both of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament."

(*The Original Bible Project*, June 22, 1997).

Dr Tabor and Dr Martin have been close friends and collaborators for years, yet this time they failed to tell each that they were going to Jerusalem until they nearly bumped into each other on its streets. We believe them.

After they met, they wasted no time before getting down to serious business. They discussed "many fascinating matters of historical and Biblical research related to the geography of the place", then walked "all around the parameters of the ancient *City of David* . . . to investigate [Dr Martin's] latest insights as to the location of both the first and second Temples". We will have more to say about Dr Tabor's *Original Bible Project* later, but now let us turn to Dr Martin's newsletter.

"Most of you have seen my growth into the truth and rejoiced in it. You can easily observe how I have abandoned (rightly so) some of my previous beliefs written in some of my early writings. One of the main reasons I put copyright dates on my books, articles, and cassette tapes is so that you will understand that what you read or hear is what *I believed then*. Most of what I taught was correct, but some was wrong. But I am still growing in grace and knowledge. Indeed, I have a brand new book coming out in a pre-publication issue for all of you on the mailing list titled: "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot." I hope to have it ready for you in two or three months time. That book will be a bombshell of new historical and biblical truths that will change the way people understand the history

of Jerusalem and the Temples. It will rock the religious world of Judaism and the Muslim believers. It will also shock Christians when they find out the truth about the site of the Temples. . . With this new information (much of which I only understood beginning in May this year), the world will finally comprehend the Bible and its prophecies" (*The A.S.K. Communicator*, September 1997).

It is a sign of a noble spirit for someone to acknowledge publicly that he made mistakes. The problem is, one is not "growing in grace and knowledge" from one error to another. The Holy Spirit does not lead people into error but out of it. Those who find that they have been in error all their lives should ask themselves what spirit was it that guided them.

God does not appoint people to preach His Gospel until He knows that they are capable of doing it safely; until they have the foundation from which they can successfully do so. Dr Martin has been preaching and publishing religious literature most of his life. Now, at a relatively advanced age, he discovers that he was wrong, but does not have the moral fortitude to say he is sorry, or to apologise to those whom he has misled.

They bought his books in good faith, believing that they contained the truth of God and the way to salvation. Yet, now they are being told that they contained no such things. What they might want to know is, do his books, like all good books, carry the money back guarantee if not fully satisfied?

He offered a novel explanation why he put copyright dates on his books. He did not do it to safeguard his authorship, but to show people what he believed at any particular time in his life. Why anyone would want to know that he does not tell us. But his new definition of the copyright law entitles him to a prize for originality and inventiveness.

This year he produced a new publication - a "bombshell" of a book which will rock the religious world of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. No one could accuse him of false modesty. Now he wants people to buy his new book too. No doubt there will be a stampede for it, particularly from those who bought his previous books.

In his newsletter, Dr Martin took issue with our preaching on the doctrine of the Trinity. He wrote:

"The doctrine of the Trinity, however, is *not* biblical. It is a strained doctrine that tries to combine Greek theological opinions (not found within the pages of the Holy Bible) with statements made in the New Testament that can only be understood by reference to Hebrew concepts of theology, not Greek. The Trinity is really a "church doctrine."

Does this make sense to you? Does he mean to say that the theology of the New Testament is different from that of the Old Testament? These two parts of the Bible complement each other - one is built upon the other.

The word "Trinity" is not in the Bible because when the Bible was completed this word was not in existence. The Apostles felt no need to explain the Trinity in one word because this was not an issue in their time. This became an issue centuries later when theologians could not explain it, particularly the role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.

The Apostles knew exactly what Jesus Christ meant when He spoke of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This topic became a major issue in modern times when people denied the personality of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, the Trinity becomes a Duality.

The concept of the Trinity permeates the Bible from the beginning to the end, even though it was clearly enunciated for the first time by Jesus Christ at the beginning of the New Testament. This is what He told His disciples before He rose to heaven:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen." (Matt. 28:19-20).

If this is not a Trinity then what is it? Dr Martin said, "The Trinity is really a "church doctrine"". A church doctrine? Of course it is a church doctrine – a doctrine of the true Church of God, on whose behalf Alpha and Omega Christian Foundation speaks. By denying the Trinity, one denies the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of salvation. Without the Holy Spirit one simply cannot be saved.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you." (John 16:7-15).

Dr Martin calls the Old Testament, "Hebrew theology", and the New Testament, "Greek theology", and says that it was wrong of us to use the Old Testament to prove this doctrine. Does he not know that Jesus Christ and the Apostles referred to the Old Testament hundreds of times? The early Churches of God had nothing by which they could be guided except the Old Testament. Notice what Apostle Paul told the Corinthian Church:

"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became **our examples**, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted." (1 Cor. 10:1-6).

The experiences of Moses and the people of ancient Israel "became our examples". Whose examples? The Gentile Churches of God. So then, the Old Testament was written not only for the Jews, but for the Christians too – the new Israel, the spiritual Israel, the spiritual Jews, the true Jews, and true Christians.

The Apostles would have had no problem with us using the "Hebrew theology" to prove the Trinity, but Dr Martin has, and he knows better for he is Doctor of Theology.

We have said it before and say it again: denying the Trinity means denying the personality of the Holy Spirit, means denying one's own salvation. And it cannot be otherwise, for this a major blasphemy.

Jesus Christ made it clear that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit can never be forgiven.

"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit 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"(Matt. 12:31-32).

Without the Holy Spirit what is one is left with? Nothing! Or, better said, with the self. While making just one passing reference to the Holy Spirit, Dr Martin could hardly contain his own self: "I have been true", "I have tried", "I have done", "I didn't know", "I finally turned to God", "I began to learn", "I began to grow", "I have been successful", "I am still growing", "I, only, understood", "I", "I", "I", on and on he goes, forty-four times in a single page.

One of the very first things people learn when they go through a tertiary institution is to avoid the pronoun "I" like the plague. Unless absolutely necessary, one simply does not speak in the first person. Now what academia did Dr Martin attend that taught him to write this way? Is that where he learned his theology too? Was that the Ambassador College of the Worldwide Church of God? We don't know, we just wonder. If we knew we would send them a copy of his newsletter and ask them to comment on it. They might revise their teaching methods. After telling us how great he is, he then took the high moral ground and said:

"It is time to abandon man's teaching, and return to the real doctrines of the Bible.

Look at that *one major principle*. It means that one can be wrong on one's teaching on a particular doctrine, but still be right in regard to this proper *principle*. As for me (Ernest L. Martin) I have been wrong on a number of doctrines in the past but I have still been true to the *one major principle*."

Pretty smart, isn't it! Turning necessity into virtue. Or is it vice into virtue? Not many people can be right and wrong at the same time. Can one be wrong "on a number of doctrines" and still be true to the Bible? What did the Apostles say about those who preach different doctrines?

"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia-- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach **no other doctrine**, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm." (1 Tim. 1:3-7).

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have 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? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:6-12).

Those who preach other doctrines or other gospels should be accursed, says Apostle Paul. He also says that his Gospel came from the revelations of Jesus Christ. Where did the one preached by Dr Martin come from? He does not tell us, nor is he telling us what caused his sudden spurt of "growing in grace and knowledge". But he angrily denounces someone's writings as being "highly intellectual and sophisticated" as if this was a vice. Unfortunately he does not tell us who that might be, so we will die and our curiosity will never be quenched.

When one becomes aware that he has misled people, he has two choices: (1) Repent, go before God and seek forgiveness, then tell the people about his errors and how they may be corrected. Or (2) Cover up his mistakes with self-serving explanations, then come up with new doctrines in place of the old ones. It is obvious which path Dr Martin has taken. The problem is, his new doctrines are even more dangerous and more subversive to the Gospel of Jesus Christ than the old ones. He says:

"1) The Gospel of salvation, (what salvation is) showing that we humans are destined to become the very members of the Family of God with Father as the head and Christ Jesus as the firstborn Son, and that all of us will be "Firstborn" children in the same Family by being "in Christ".

2) The New Testament teaches unequivocally that all humanity (without the loss of a single person) will eventually through the efforts of Christ Jesus become members of that Family."

In the first point he reinforces his denial of the Trinity. He speaks of the Father and the Son only, leaving out the Holy Spirit. We all know what happens to the people who deny the Holy Spirit: they cut the branch from underneath their own feet. Salvation is not possible without the Holy Spirit. Here is Jesus' promise again:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7).

The second point clearly shows what happens to the people who deny the Holy Spirit: they go off the rails altogether. The idea that all human beings will become members of the God Family goes against the very substance of the New Testament. It is contrary to just about everything Jesus Christ and His Apostles have preached. It is an entirely new gospel, and a very dangerous one at that.

What one might want to know is what redeeming features does he find in people like Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Satanists, evil people who commit serial rape, murder and cannibalism, that he wants to save them? Would you like to have any of these people as neighbours in the Kingdom of God knowing that you could never get rid of them?

I don't think anything would be more abhorrent to a Jewish person than the thought of spending eternity with Hitler? If the Israeli people knew what he is preaching, I doubt they would let him step foot in their land, let alone permit him to lecture them on the temples and their site.

Here are a few examples of Scriptures which show just how far from the truth Dr Martin has derailed.

"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit 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" (Matt. 12:31-32).

Not so, says Dr Martin. All blasphemies will be forgiven men, and all people will be saved. Jesus Christ said that there would be a judgement which will separate the righteous from the wicked.

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:31-46).

Not so, says Dr Martin. No one will burn in the everlasting fire. All human beings, righteous and wicked alike, will become members of the God Family. Apostle John said that there are sins that cannot be forgiven.

"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death." (1 Jn. 5:16-17).

Not so says Dr Martin, no sin leads to death. All human beings will be saved. Jude said that there are people "like brute beasts" who will suffer the "vengeance of eternal fire".

"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." (Jude 1:6-13).

Not so, says Dr Martin. All "dreamers that defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries" will be saved. No one will be "reserved for blackness of darkness forever".

Apostle Peter said that there are false prophets who bring upon themselves their own destruction.

"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. 2:1).

Not so, says Dr Martin. No false prophet will perish. All of them will become members of the God Family. We already saw what Apostle Paul thinks of those who preach false doctrines and false gospels.

Dr Martin has decided that he knows better than all the writers of the New Testament. His preaching should be popular with a lot of people, particularly with those who want to be absolutely sure that they will be saved. He guarantees them all that they will be saved. Unfortunately we cannot give such guaranty. We can only assure those who keep God's righteous commandments that they will be saved. This places us at a great disadvantage. Who would want to follow us?

Talking about God and His commandments is a sure way of getting yourself ostracised these days. But then, how many people of God since the time of Jesus Christ have been popular with this world?

BORN AGAIN OR RESURRECTED?

Since Dr Martin has changed the meaning of salvation, we are not surprised to find that he has also changed the means by which people can be saved. He has done away with the need to be born again. This is what he wrote in one of his books:

"Is the Christian "born again" now? Peter said that Christians were "born again" by the word of God. (1 Peter 1:23). Some have thought this may mean that Christians are only begotten (that is, conceived) but that the process of spiritual birth has not yet occurred to them. However, in the next chapter Peter gives a further illustration that surely cinches the fact that he meant born (that is, out of the womb) rather than a simple conception and still in the womb. Peter said: "as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

This context given by Peter obviously shows that he considered Christians as already "born again." Indeed, a person cannot partake of his mother's milk unless the person is truly *born*. However, in the Gospel of John (chapter 3) where Christ spoke of being born "from above" (as the original Greek has it, and not "born again"), this is the spiritual birth that Christ is talking about that occurs at the resurrection from the dead. This is because Christ said that anyone born of the spirit from above is indeed spirit (and he went on to say that spirit cannot be observed by humans). John is speaking about something very different. It is the resurrection to spiritual life that will occur at the resurrection when Christ returns at the Second Advent." (*101 Bible Secrets that Christians Do Not Know*, ASK Publications, 1993, pp. 93-94).

He quoted well 1 Peter 1:23 ("having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever"), and 1 Peter 2:2 ("as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby"). He also said well that Apostle Peter considered Christians to be already born again in this life. But then, for reasons which only he knows, he based his conclusion on a statement from the Gospel of John which purportedly contradicts Apostle Peter. He says that John chapter 3 proves that being born again, or born from above, means to be resurrected to spiritual life. Let us look at that statement:

"There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again.' "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:1-8).

If being born again means being resurrected to spiritual life, what does the role of water play in this process? Are people resurrected into the Kingdom of God out of water?

Jesus Christ clearly said that being born again means to be born of water and the Spirit. He even gave us a personal example by being baptised in the Jordan by John the Baptist. When that happened, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the shape of a dove. That is what He meant by being born of water and the Spirit. All human beings are expected to come to a point in their life when they repent and change for the better. They confirm this conversion through baptism and laying on of hands, which results in them receiving the Holy Spirit. If Dr Martin is right, Jesus Christ contradicted Himself in a single paragraph. First He said that "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (one has to be born again BEFORE he can see the Kingdom of God), then He is alleged to have said that being born again means to be resurrected to spiritual life. Jesus' first statement is straightforward and unequivocal. It deals directly with being born again. His second statement however contains neither the words "born again" nor "resurrection": "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit". What then did Jesus Christ mean when He said that a person that has been born of the Spirit could not be seen? Did He mean that people cannot be born of the Spirit and still be in this world? Certainly not and here is the proof of it.

"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: **who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**" (John 1:11-13).

There are people in this world who were "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". These people are still in the world and still in their body, not in the Kingdom of God, yet they are born of God. Being born of God means to be born of the Holy Spirit. This happens when people repent and are baptised. This is what Jesus Christ meant when He said that unless one is born of water and Spirit he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

Being born again means to undergo a process of internal transformation. But you cannot distinguish a person who has been born again from one who has not been born again because there is no outward change. In other words, the spiritual element that causes people to be born again cannot be seen. You can see the physical person and you can see the fruits of the Spirit, but you cannot see the Spirit Himself. When one is born again, or born from above, God implants in him His own seed – the Holy Spirit – and from that moment he is a new person.

This is the purpose of adult baptism – to allow God to change one into a new person through the Holy Spirit.

"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. In Him you were also

circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, **buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God**, who raised Him from

the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross . . .” “Therefore, if **you died with Christ** from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations . . .?” “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since **you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge** according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” (Col 2:6-14, 20; 3:1-11).

Could anything be clearer? “Buried with Christ in baptism”, “raised with Him through faith”, “you died with Christ, have put off the old man, and have put on the new man”. If this is not being born again then what is it?

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is something to be said here about the manifestations that accompany the arrival of the Holy Spirit?

“Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marvelled . . . (Acts 2:1-7).

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”
(Acts 10:44-46).

There was a very good reason why the first gifts of the Holy Spirit were speaking in tongues. Their mission was to take the Gospel to all nations, and they needed to speak in those languages. But these days we have different needs. Since the Bible is universally available in virtually all languages of the world, the Holy Spirit imparts different gifts, such as wisdom, knowledge, ministering, discerning of spirits, etc.

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.” (1 Cor. 12:1-14).

Notice how all these gifts come through baptism. When you are immersed into a watery grave, you die with Christ and rise with Him into a new person. Every person who repents and is baptised receives at least one gift from the Holy Spirit – the gift of spiritual understanding. Without this gift people would have no idea what salvation is all about. We should not be too surprised that Dr Martin does not believe in being born again. Since he denies the Holy Spirit, he has to deny being born again too, for without the Holy Spirit no one can be born again.

The implications of denying the Holy Spirit are truly horrendous:

- You deny the Holy Spirit, you have to deny that human beings are the temples of the living God. So what do you do? You look for a temple built by human hands.
- You deny the Holy Spirit, you have to deny the Trinity. So what do you do? You create a duality of Father and Son only.
- You deny the Holy Spirit, you have to deny that human beings can be “born again”. So what do you do? You tell them that their renewal will take place when they are resurrected to a spiritual life.
- You deny the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of salvation, you have to deny the judgment of God. So what do you do? You tell people that the judgment serves no purpose for they will all be saved anyway.
- You deny the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of salvation, you have to deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So what do you do? You invent a new gospel.

TIMES OF THE RESURRECTIONS

Says Dr Martin:

“As a result of my “growing in grace and knowledge,” I have some brand new biblical information about the time periods of the resurrections that humans will experience in the future. . . You will want to find out just when *you* will be resurrected (and when all other people will be resurrected, including infants who died, those who did not express a faith in Christ in this life, or those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit, etc.). . . Also, I want to offer for the audio lecture this month, my lecture on Micah. . . If you want a written transcript, please send an extra \$7 to help us cover the cost of transcription.”

We have reached the end of this age and did not know “the time periods of the resurrections” until Dr Martin came along to enlighten us. So what are these periods? He does not tell us, but he gives us the option of buying his book to find it out for ourselves. But there is another way of finding out his precious “truth”. Given the fact that almost everything he preaches is identical to what the Worldwide Church of God used to preach in the days of Herbert W. Armstrong, when Dr Martin was an evangelist in that church, we can safely assume that this is identical too. So all we need to do is look into an old booklet entitled, *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?* which speaks about these things.

Before we do that, it is worth pointing out that Herbert W. Armstrong was very successful at inculcating his ideas into the minds of those who passed through his school of thought, but he failed in one particular point: He did not impress on them the need to acknowledge the source of their ideas and give credit to whom credit is due. Hardly anyone acknowledges a debt to him anymore, even though they all preach his theology or versions of it. This is not entirely surprising for apparently he himself was a great plagiariser. He borrowed from right, left and centre, but mostly from fringe groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses. Yet he hardly mentioned these people in his writings, let alone acknowledge a debt to them.

The booklet, *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?* is made up of two parts. The first and smaller part was written by Roderick C. Meredith and copyrighted in 1986, while the second and main part was written by Herbert W. Armstrong and copyrighted 1957 and 1973. Since Meredith merely parrots Herbert W. Armstrong, we will concentrate on the second part.

In order to understand this topic, we need to look into the Bible first to see what it has to say about the resurrections. Not surprisingly, it does not say a lot. That is because there is no need to say a lot – this topic is simple and straightforward. Apostle Paul made the following general statement about the resurrections.

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1Thes. 4:13-17).

Then there are the statements which tell us when the resurrections will take place and who will be in them. We assume everyone knows that the first resurrection was that of Jesus Christ - the Supreme King and Ruler in the Kingdom of God. “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20).

The second resurrection will be that of the “kings and priests” who will rule under Him. This will take place not far from now, at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Rev. 14:1-5).

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.’” (Rev. 5:9-10).

The reason these people are resurrected at the beginning of the Millennium is that they need to be trained to be kings and priests. One thousand years has been allocated for this purpose.

The third resurrection will take place at the end of the Millennium and will comprise the rest of humanity. These people will be judged and assessed whether they can be entrusted with eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

““Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This

is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

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 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.

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:1-15).

This then is what the Bible says about "time periods of the resurrections". But this is not what Herbert W. Armstrong and his evangelists said. They have invented a forth resurrection which supposedly gives a second life to the wicked people who have not repented during this life. How they can escape the judgment of God and reach that resurrection is anyone's guess, nevertheless this is what Herbert W. Armstrong wrote:

"And so it follows, now, that most of our loved ones who have died unsaved in all probability did not die lost. In all probability they were not called, during this age. But their call is coming later. They shall be resurrected back to life, and given their chance. And you, if you are called – if God reveals this wonderful truth to your one and only chance *now* – your chance to prepare and fit yourself to be used of Christ in the labor of helping to save them, *then!* Oh, what great meaning we begin to see in the Christian life! What glorious meaning we begin to see in the Christian life! What glorious purpose! What grave responsibility! Will you make your calling and election SURE? And now, in the light of this wonderful revelation of truth, we should be able to understand this matter of "predestination." (p. 23).

"Wonderful revelation of truth" he called it. That it has no Biblical foundation and goes against the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Apostles never bothered him. Now how do you think a sinful person would feel to hear that he has nothing to fear now, that he has another life in which he can repent of his sins? And what will Jesus Christ say, when both He and John the Baptist told their contemporaries that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and they needed to repent then and there?

"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!'" (Matt. 3:1-2).

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

Apostle Paul was prepared to give his life for his countrymen if only they repented. He did not have Herbert W. Armstrong to enlighten him that they would have another chance in a second life.

And as if this was not enough, HWA linked the second life with the concept of predestination. You may have guessed it, because the Bible preaches predestination, he denied it.

"PREDESTINATION-Does the Bible Teach It?" "The very fact of wartime casualties and accidental deaths has caused a great deal of added sorrow and grief that is entirely unnecessary - if we understand! Many have grieved in the belief that loved ones died eternally "lost" - when, if they understood the truth, these probably were not lost at all. Several years ago, a man, quite worried over the subject of predestination, went to a certain minister. "Do you believe in predestination?" he asked. "The Bible teaches it, brother," was the minister's reply. The minister tried hard to explain. "But that doesn't really mean," he said, "that *you* have nothing to do with your own salvation. It doesn't mean that it is all set - your decision and eternal fate all determined for you in advance. You are to make your own decision. But God knows all things, even in advance. And so he knows beforehand how you are going to decide." This didn't satisfy the troubled man at all. "If God knows beforehand how I am going to decide," he reasoned, "then it is all predetermined, if he knows in advance I am to be LOST, then that's the way I'll have to decide in the end. And since I'll lose out anyway, why try? On the other hand, if he knows now I'm going to repent and accept Christ and be saved, I'll have to do it in the end anyway, whether I try or not. Then my ultimate fate *is* predetermined. Isn't that what predestination *means* - that the ultimate fate of each one is PREdestined - destined, or determined, in advance? And if that's so, then we simply are not free moral agents, and we have nothing to say about it.. The poor man was more discouraged than ever. And no wonder. Neither could convince the other, because both were arguing from a false premise-that predestination has to do with whether each individual shall be lost, or saved. Does the Bible teach that your ultimate fate is already predestinated? Neither the preacher nor his perplexed questioner had read carefully what the Bible does say. What confusion we are in today-what Babylon! Let's understand this!" All unsaved not finally lost" (pp. 10-11).

In this passage, HWA is trying to kill two birds with one stone. He is denying predestination while preaching free moral agency. He is using some clever arguments to support his theory. If our fate is determined in advance, "then we simply are not free moral agents". Now who said that we must be free moral agents? I do not want to be a free moral agent; I want God to be in total control of my life, for I know that if He leaves it to me I will not make it into His Kingdom.

The Bible does not support either the idea of free moral agency or that of a second life. It so happens that there is one Biblical passage which resolves both questions: repentance now or in a future life, and free moral agency or predestination.

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the

covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.'

That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.'

As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.'

So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.' Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?' But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, 'Why have you made me like this?'

Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Rom. 9:1-24).

Apostle Paul decried the fact that his own countrymen did not repent now in this life. He would have given his own life for them, if only they believed the Gospel and repented. He knew nothing about repentance in a future life, and he should have known for he was taught directly by Jesus Christ Himself (See 1 Cor. 15:8).

As for the question of free will versus predestination, what does this mean? "For the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.' Did the fates of Jacob, Esau and the Pharaoh depend on their own free will or were they predestined for their roles before they were born? Can the Supreme Potter do what He wants with His clay? HWA says no; he wants God to make all vessels for honour.

Now what did Apostle Paul say about those who did not repent? Was it because they were not called, because they have never heard of Christ, or because they were not children of Abraham, even though they were born from his lineage? One can give these people ten lives not two, and they will still be doing what they do now.

Herbert W Armstrong starts from two wrong premises: that all human beings are equal, and that salvation is a right not a gift. He wants to save people not on the basis of righteousness, but on whether they have been "called" and heard of Jesus Christ. God desires that all human beings be saved, but He knows that all cannot be saved. If you use the Scriptures selectively you can "prove" almost anything. For example, if you take the following two passages from Apostle Paul's epistle to Timothy, you can "prove" that all human beings will be saved.

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:1-4).**

"For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is **the Savior of all men**, especially of those who believe." (1 Tim. 4:10).

But if you put these verses in their proper context, you get an entirely different picture.

"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."**

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach." (1 Tim. 1:18-20; 2:1-4; 4:1-11).

Did Apostle Paul say that all human beings would be saved regardless of what they do in this life? He himself delivered two blasphemers to Satan. You would not want to be in that kind of salvation.

And do you think that these people will be saved? "The Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared

with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth?"

This is why one cannot take verses out of context and create new doctrines. Those who do so are the very people who preach doctrines of demons, for both HWA and Dr Martin preached what Apostle Paul called doctrines of demons: abstinence from foods, forbidding interracial marriages, etc.

The Scriptures tell us that it is impossible to save those who turn back from the truth:

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'" (2 Pet. 2:19-22).

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age 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." (Heb. 6:4-6).

How could these people ever be saved when they "crucify again for themselves the Son of God"?

Apostle Paul said that: "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ."

Neither Dr Martin nor Herbert W Armstrong has instructed the brethren in these things. On the contrary, they have preached the very opposite: they have given false hope to the wicked that they would have another life in which to repent, and that all human beings will be saved regardless of the kind of sins they have committed in this life.

The following parables of Jesus Christ refute both these ideas.

"On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: 'Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'

And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?'

He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: "Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.'" (Matt. 13:1-23).

"Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

So the servants of the owner came and said to him, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?" He said to them, "An enemy has done this." The servants said to him, "Do you want us then to go and gather them up?" But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.'

Another parable He spoke to them: 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.'

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things

kept secret from the foundation of the world.' Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.'

"He answered and said to them: 'He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!' (Matt. 13:24-43).

After hearing all these parables, the disciples came back to Jesus and asked Him to explain to them the one about the tares. They had no problem understanding the ones about the grain seeds, the leaven and the mustard seed, but they could not understand the one about the tares. Why? Because this contained elements which were new and radical for them.

Jesus Christ told them that the world was made up of two kinds of people: children of God and children of the Devil. He elaborated on this when He spoke to the Jews later on.

"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." (John 8:44).

Apostle Paul spoke of children of God and children of the Devil too.

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Rom. 8:16).

"O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10).

And so did Apostle John.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." (John 1:12).

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 Jn. 3:8).

The children of the Devil cannot be saved not because God does not want to save them, but because it is not in their nature to repent, change, and overcome their trials to the end?

So does God know in advance who will be saved and who will not, who will repent and who will not?

The question should be, does He know in advance who are His children and who are not?

Of course He does! He sees their heart and knows which ones are circumcised and which are not. Those whose hearts are circumcised – through pain and suffering – have the strength and stamina to overcome to the end.

Those who want to be saved must keep "the righteous requirements of the law" (Rom. 8:4). Those who do so, will be saved; those who do not will be damned. Now where is there unrighteousness with God in this?

If the Devil's children want to be saved let them keep the commandments too. But these people are like the seeds that fall on the side of the road, on shallow ground or among thorns. They just don't last. And if they don't last, they cannot be transformed into sons of God that could be entrusted with eternal life in His Kingdom.

This is why Jesus Christ said repeatedly that only those who "overcome to the end" would be saved.

"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." (Mat. 10:22).

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7).

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." (Rev. 2:11).

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." (Rev. 2:17).

"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26).

"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." (Rev. 3:5).

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name." (Rev. 3:12).

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

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

"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." (Rev. 21:7-8).

Therefore salvation is attained through repentance, changing one's life, keeping God's commandments, and overcoming to the end. This message is clear, simple and universal. The problem is that Herbert W. Armstrong invented a new definition of salvation.

"The majority of human beings have never *heard* of Christ! They simply do not know about salvation from sin - God's plan for eternal life - have never heard the true *gospel*. They cannot be saved!" (p. 12).

Where did he get this idea? From the following two verses probably:

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the "stone, which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is

there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:8-12). "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

If you look at these verses carefully, you will notice they do not say that people cannot be saved if they have not heard of Christ. They say that Jesus Christ is the only person who can save them, which is not the same thing. There are many examples in the Bible of people who have repented and been saved before they heard of Christ. The prophets and the Patriarchs have had the promise of salvation long before Jesus Christ was even born. Here is a more recent example:

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always." (Acts 10:1-2).

You could read the rest of this story in the book of Acts. You will find there that this devout man was brought to Christ after he repented. He was directed by God to contact Apostle Peter, who then baptised him and his household, and they all received the Holy Spirit. Yet Herbert W. Armstrong assures us that people in the far corners of the earth cannot be saved because they have never heard of Christ.

"What of the Ignorant Heathen?" "We know, of course, the Bible plainly says there is but one name given under heaven among men whereby we may be saved - the name of Jesus Christ. Over in China, India, Japan, other parts of Asia and Africa and many islands, are hundreds of millions of people who, in spite of the comparatively few missionaries sent to heathen lands, have never so much as *heard* that *only* name! Think of it. The majority of human beings have never *heard* of Christ! They simply do not know about salvation from sin - God's plan for eternal life - have never heard the true *gospel*. They cannot be saved! And now let us ask, can we believe that a God of love brought these individuals into the world without their knowledge or consent, permitted them to live and die without ever having heard the precious gospel - that God has simply consigned them to eternal punishment because they never had a chance? Or, do we believe that in some manner God saves them, if they live up to the best they know, without having known and accepted Christ - without having been converted? Is there, then, some other name - some other way to salvation and life eternal, than through Jesus Christ our Lord? Certainly we can find no such teaching in the Bible. (*Is God Trying to Save the World Now?*, p. 12)

When a young man asked Jesus Christ: "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16), He did not say: "Well young man, if you have heard of Me there is nothing more you can do - you will be saved. But if you have not heard of Me, you are in trouble, you cannot be saved". Preposterous to say the least! This is what He told him:

"Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to Him, 'Which ones?' Jesus said, 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' The young man said to Him, 'All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack? Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, 'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'(Mat 19:17-26).

We are being brought back over and over again to the same eternal truth: keeping God's commandments is what saves people. Just by hearing of Jesus' name will not do anyone any good. Jesus Christ said that even calling on His name without doing the will of God, will not save people:

"But why do you call Me "Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matt. 7:21).

So can the people of China, India, Japan, and other parts of the world who have never heard of Christ be saved? Of course they can. Do they know about these commandments? Of course they do. All religions of the world are compatible with these commandments. It is worth repeating that conversation here:

"Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to Him, 'Which ones?' Jesus said, 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honour your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' The young man said to Him, 'All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.'"

No one can say that the people of China, India, or any other nation, did not know about not committing murder, adultery, theft, lying, or honouring their parents. These people will be judged by their own laws, and if they are found to be worthy of salvation, they will hear of Christ and the true God right then and there. Just like the thief on the cross.

"Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:39-43).

If Herbert W Armstrong had been there at Jesus' feet, he would have shouted: "You cannot do that, You cannot save this man, he has never heard of You." In the short time that that man hang on the cross beside Jesus Christ, he not only repented of his sins, but saw the monumental travesty of justice that was taking place then and there. In his anguish, if he could, he would have shouted at the people below: "You are making a colossal mistake, you are killing an innocent man". But he realised that it would have made no difference, so he turned to Jesus and said: "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom". Jesus, perceiving that he understood what was happening and that he had repented of his sins, promised him: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise". That man was the first true Christian. He was saved even without baptism and laying on of hands. Which tells us that there are attenuating circumstances in which exceptions can be made. Exceptions were made in the Old Testament too. That is how the major Patriarchs and prophets received the Holy Spirit and were promised salvation. Here is just one example:

"Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till 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 understand. But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days." (Dan 12:8-10,13),

So how long did it take the thief on the cross to repent of his sins and be saved? Minutes or at most hours. That is why people do not need second lives to repent, be judged and be saved. The difference between one thief and another was that one's sins were not too grievous and had not become too much of a burden to be repented off. The more one sins, and the later he leaves his act of repentance, the more difficult it becomes to repent. As Apostle John said, some sins lead irreversibly to death, others do not.

"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death." (1 Jn. 5:16-17).

It will be the same at the time of the judgment. All human beings will be assessed on the merit of their life, and if they are found worthy of eternal life they will be saved right then and there by Jesus Christ, not by Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, Vishnu, Krishna or whoever. In the final analysis, it is the heart that determines whether a person will be saved or not.

"Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deut. 5:29).

"Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. "But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD." (Ezek. 11:19-21).

"And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God." (Ezek. 36:23-28).

The land promised by God to the Patriarchs is in the new world - the Kingdom of God - not in this world. It is there that they will be changed into new people and God will live among them and be their God. But the preparation for that event takes place in this world. Each one's judgment is done on the basis of the works done in this world.

"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, "These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: "**I know your works**, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary." (Rev. 2:1-3).

"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, "These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: **I know your works**, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:8-9).

"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, "These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: **I know your works**, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells." Rev. 2:12-13).

"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, "These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: **I know your works**, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first." (Rev. 2:18-19).

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, "These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: **I know your works**, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead." (Rev 3:1).

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, "These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens: **I know your works**. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name." (Rev. 3:7-8).

"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, "These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: **I know your works**, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"-- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (Rev. 3:14-19).

Notice how "works" are associated with perseverance, patience, tribulation, poverty, truth, love, service, faith, etc., and how all these come up to nothing when people become lukewarm as a result of riches, comfort or carelessness.

TAILOR-MADE THEOLOGY

A neutral observer would have an impossible task in deciding from the myriad of churches in the world today which ones preach the truth of God and which do not. Few of these churches seem to care that their theologies are not compatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the Kingdom of God.

Their doctrines are more a venue towards attaining wealth for their leaders than a path towards salvation for their members. One of the most successful churches of modern times - the Worldwide Church of God – is one such church. Its evangelists have been very prolific in devising doctrines which have little to do with saving their followers and more with saving their own skins. Their doctrines are so un-scriptural, it makes one wonder whether they really ever believed them themselves. Yet in spite of this, and of the turmoil that has torn that church apart in the last few years, they continue to attract large number of followers. The explanation can only be that their tailor-made theology taps into something that is appealing to human beings.

Most people are attracted by promises of spiritual fulfilment, and this church certainly provided it, particularly in the days of Herbert W. Armstrong, when I myself was fortunate enough to have been briefly a member of that church. Now it may sound curious that after demolishing its theology and after suffering grievously at the hands of its ministers, I should give it eulogies now. The truth is, had I never been a member of that church, I would not be doing this work now. And there is nothing in the world that I would rather be doing than what I do now.

If I had to pick a moment that best describes the way I feel towards these people now, it would be the moment Jesus Christ looked down from the cross at those who rejoiced at His demise and prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34).

About two and a half decades ago, while being a dedicated member of that church, I went to its headquarters in Pasadena, California, to discuss with the leaders what I thought were major doctrinal errors in their preaching.

Now having to cope with all the burdens of that church: first, second, and third tithing, mandatory Holy Day offerings, special offerings, etc. it was very hard for me, as for all members of that church, to save anything. However being a bachelor and holding a reasonably well-paid job (I used to work as an electrician those days), I managed to put aside some savings.

On the basis of those savings, I calculated that I could safely fly to Pasadena, spend a couple of days there, and then fly right back to Toronto, Canada, where I was living those days.

Unfortunately, things did not develop the way I expected them. When I arrived there, they refused to see me. Believing that it was a matter of mistaken identity, I insisted on seeing someone from the leadership. But the more I tried the more an impossible task it became. By the time I realised what was going on, I had passed the critical point and I no longer had enough money to get back. In desperation, I went to their reception area and told them that unless I saw someone from the leadership, I would go to the police and there will be a scandal in the media about the way they treated me. Soon afterwards two evangelists saw me. As expected, they showed no interest in what I had to say, but at least I took the opportunity to tell them about my condition and asked them to lend me some money to get back home. After giving to that church thousands of dollars in the previous three years, I thought that the least they could do for me under those circumstances was to lend me some money.

After some deliberations they agreed to my request. They told me to go back to my hotel room and wait there until I heard from them. The next day, two people showed up and led me to a bus stop. There, they asked me to board the bus, after which they handed the tickets to the bus driver and told him something that I did not hear. To my surprise, the bus did not take me to the airport as I expected, but on the way back to Canada by road.

Four days later, and several bus changes, I arrived home filthy and famished. All I wanted to do was to have a shower, eat something and sleep. But the church leaders were not yet finished with me. They had instructed the two "brethren" with whom I used to share a flat, to lock me out and confiscate my belongings. What happened afterwards is described at length in *The Christian Herald* No 3. Sufficient to say here that after enduring difficulties that might have killed other people, I decided to get away from them as far away as I could go. So I immigrated to Australia where I carved out for myself a new career and a new life.

But God had different plans for me, and just as He brought Jonas back to finish the job from which he fled, He did the same with me. But not before He ensured that I had the base from which I could finish the job this time.

In Australia, I undertook studies in Religions and Ancient History at the University level, and then continued with these studies privately for many years afterwards. In fact, this has remained an ongoing interest to me ever since.

Then, unexpectedly, nearly two decades after leaving that church, God turned events around in such a way that I came in conflict with those people once again. When I discovered that they were still preaching the same doctrines and keeping their members in the same bondage, I could not hold it anymore and I decided to do something about it. It took me a long time of thinking and debating within myself what I could do to cause a change in that demonic regime.

In the end, I came up with the idea of publishing *The Christian Herald* and sending it to the leaders of all nations. Without me realising it, what started out as a work of protest against religious deception and exploitation, ended up by being an important prophetic work - restoring the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and preaching it as a witness to all nations.

It is not a mere coincidence that Dr Martin has decided to stand up against this work. He was a leading evangelist in the Worldwide Church of God when I visited its headquarters in 1973. We have reasons to believe that a number of evangelists from that time are behind him now in an effort to discredit us. Apparently they chose him as their front by virtue of his high profile and claims to prestige and scholarship. We wish them good luck!

ORIGINAL BIBLE OR ORIGINAL GOSPEL?

As promised earlier, we are now returning to the *Original Bible Project*.

"It is not a matter of arrogance for me, to make this statement because I will present to my readers some of the most common sense evidence that anyone could ask for. It is time to look at the Bible in a new and proper way that will dispense with much of the *guessing* that prevails in the theological world today about this subject. This book concerns the need for people of the world to take an interest in and to do their part in "Restoring the Original Bible."

You might think that these words come from Dr Tabor's *Original Bible Project Newsletter*, but they don't. They come from Dr Martin's book, *Restoring the Original Bible* (ASK Publications, Portland, OR, 1994, p. i).

Why then do we begin with the words of Dr Martin instead of those of Dr Tabor? This might give you an idea.

"Four years ago, when I officially began work on the *Original Bible Project*, with the encouragement and support of people like **Ernest Martin** . . . I remember that I began to speak of this particular Bible as a "translation for the 21st century."" (*The Original Bible Project*, November 8, 1996)

"We expect to have the preliminary translation work on the Hebrew Bible [*like Dr Martin, he calls the Old Testament, "Hebrew Bible"*] with notes completed by the end of this calendar year. 1998 will be devoted to work on the Greek New Testament [*it is not "Greek New Testament" it is God's New Testament. Just because some of the books were written in the Greek language does not make it Greek*]. Our intentions are to have a preliminary edition of the Bible with notes available by September 1998. As I have discussed in previous letters, this particular date has a special significance historically in that it is the actual marker of the New Millennium – 2000 years since the birth of Jesus of Nazareth (as documented by **Ernest Martin** in his book, *The Star that Astonished the World*)." (*The Original Bible Project*, April 6, 1997).

"The work that we have begun at "Mt. Zion" in Jerusalem, particularly based on the archaeological and Biblical research of Bargil Pixner, offers great promise in terms of understanding and properly translating the early chapters of Acts. For example, who were the mysterious "devout men" who buried Stephen and where did they bury him (Acts 8:2)? We now have a Syriac text which preserves an early source of Acts, that indicates the burial was in the Judean Desert, below Jericho.

As many of you know, one could hardly ask for a more precise description of the Qumran area, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Why did Jesus eat the last supper in an "upper room" in a select part of the city, to which his disciples were led by following a man carrying a jug of water (Mark 14:13)? These and many more related matters, all of fascination to students of the New Testament, are slowly coming to light in our day. As Dr **Ernest Martin** has shown in so many ways, one must read the Bible (and translate it as well!) with a map in one hand, a copy of Josephus in the other, and any available archaeological reports laid out for careful study. By paying the most careful attention to place names, locations, distances, and geography, many important matters of theological and doctrinal interest can be clarified." (*The Original Bible Project*, January 30, 1997).

We already quoted his June 22, 1997 newsletter in which Dr Martin's name appears four times.

It is clear from these examples that Dr Martin's relationship with Dr Tabor goes beyond mere influence - it borders on possession. The man can hardly say anything without mentioning his mentor. He is not merely his junior partner, he is his mouthpiece as well. One would be entitled to ask why do they publish two newsletters and double their expenditure seeing that they co-operate so closely? The answer may be found in the fact that academics get credit by quoting and being quoted by others. So it serves them well to keep publishing two newsletters. Kind of mutual admiration society: you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. Dr Tabor says that, "by paying the most careful attention to place names, locations, distances, and geography, many important matters of theological and doctrinal interest can be clarified." Well, given Dr Martin's record with the doctrines, we can well imagine how "clarified" one could be by "paying the most careful attention" to these matters.

There isn't really much more we can say about his "*Original Bible Project*" than to quote an edited version of a letter which we sent him earlier this year.

"Dear Sir,

I have just received your newsletter of January 30, 1997 in which you once again call me an "Original Bible associate". I did not reply to your previous letter, hoping that you would get the message.

I am not an "Original Bible associate" and do not intend to be one.

At a time when people are called to wake-up and prepare for the return of their Lord, when the world is on the brink of unprecedented calamity, this could be nothing but a work of distraction and deception.

Talking about a new Bible at such a time is like playing the fiddle on the roof while the house is burning.

I have been able to find the truth of God in the existing translations. You too could have found it if your mind was more on the work of God and less on yourself.

Considering that all the major translations – from the Septuagint to the King James, New King James, New International Version and others – have been produced by groups of scholars working together over long periods of time, it is remarkable that you should think you could produce a better translation in such a short time. Given your theology and that of Dr Martin, no doubt you will produce a masterpiece.

Just what is the significance of the "mysterious devout men" and Stephen's burial place as far as the Bible and the Gospel are concerned? Are you going to turn his remains into religious relics, as the Catholics do? Your

readers could well get the impression that this is what is required of them.

And what is the significance of the Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Scriptures? If academics would spend on the Bible a fraction of the time they spend on the Dead Sea Scrolls, they too would find the truth of God. As it is, they tear the Bible to pieces, and transform irrelevant documents into a new bible. Virtually all the things you mention in your newsletters are nothing but red herrings. They have no relevance to the main message of the Gospel, and can only have the effect of leading people astray from the right path.

The Holy Spirit has preserved for us what we need to know about salvation, and any claim to the contrary is a deception. I advise you to read Revelation 22:18-19. You are not merely translating the original scripts, you are adding to them. That is dangerous and places you on a collision course with Jesus Christ.

Preaching a return to the "Original Bible", which you do, is not the same as preaching a return to the original Gospel which we do. For while the Bible has been in the world at all times, this has not been the case with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Over the centuries, this Gospel has been hidden behind a veil of tradition and deception to the point that it is now all but completely lost. This is why Jesus Christ said that before His return, Elijah must come and restore all things. Restoring all things does not mean restoring the Bible but the Gospel, for without the Bible nothing could be restored. Therefore, since we have no desire to be part of your "Original Bible Project", we ask you to remove our name from your mailing list."

We sent a similar request to Dr Martin, yet none of them have complied with our request. Had they done so, this edition would have been written on different topics. But they were determined to challenge us, and now we hope they are pleased with our reply. Now we would like to conclude this article with the words of Dr Tabor:

"In the four years I have been sending out these reports we have never once resorted to any hard-sale methods to raise funds. You have never gotten any dire appeals, emergency letters, or begging pleas from us and you never will. Not only would I be unwilling to use such methods, but thankfully, they are entirely unnecessary."

This was on page two of his November 8, 1996 newsletter. But on page seven of the same newsletter he wrote:

"Finally, please keep our Project in mind as you plan your end of the year giving and particularly as we move into 1997 with our increased expenses. All contributions are tax deductible. As always I thank you for your faithful support and interest in this vital Project."

There is nothing like truth and honesty. But then, you wouldn't condemn a man for not remembering everything he wrote in a seven-page newsletter, would you?

CREATION SCIENCE AND THE TROJAN HORSE SYNDROME

If I had to nominate another organisation, which I felt did a reasonable job in spreading out the World of God, it would have been the Creation Science Foundation.

When I laid my hands on their publications for the first time some two decades ago, I was pleasantly surprised by the complementary nature of their work to my own studies of the Scriptures. But after spending considerable time on their publications, I began to detect certain cracks in their foundation, but trying to tell them about it proved to be an impossible task. You see, the Creation Science Foundation was no longer an infant organisation, willing to accept criticism and correction from just anybody, but a fully-fledged religious organisation, and like all such respectable organisations it had to preserve its integrity. And so for years I watched how brilliant scientific work was compromised by a theology that had nothing to do with science or the Scriptures.

I remember how at one time, during one of their seminars, which I used to love attending, I brought to their attention a book written by one J. W. G. Johnson, entitled, *The Crumbling Theory of Evolution*. I thought that it was a good book, full of useful information in the battle against evolutionism, but they showed no interest in it at all. Their attitude remained a mystery to me for a long time until I understood that the creationist movement was largely a Protestant offshoot.

The Catholic Church does not support it because it does not like its reliance on the Bible, particularly its literal interpretation of the Genesis account of creation. In the Catholic Church, the Bible plays a secondary role to tradition and the edicts of the Pope. The problem with J. W. G. Johnson was not only that he was a Catholic, but that he had no postgraduate titles. Anyone who has read *Creation Ex Nihilo*, the magazine of the Creation Science Foundation, would know how boisterously its writers displayed their titles until quite recently.

I once asked them about that too, and they said that it was done not for personal aggrandisement, but to show the world the high standard of their contributions. That their scientific contributions are of a very high standard there is no doubt, but unfortunately one cannot say the same thing about their theological contributions. To show you what we mean, we go to the most influential book of all the creationist literature, the "Bible" of creationism as it is, published by none other than Dr Henry M. Morris, the doyen of creationism, entitled, *The Genesis Record* (Baker Book House, 1975).

"**Origin of evil**" "Cause-and-effect reasoning accounts for the origin of the concepts of goodness, truth, beauty, love, and such things as fundamental attributes of the Creator Himself. The origin of physical and moral evils in the universe is explained in Genesis as a temporary intrusion into God's perfect world, allowed by Him as a concession to the principle of human freedom and responsibility, and also to manifest Himself as Redeemer as well as Creator." (p. 19).

No such explanation is found in Genesis, or anywhere else in the Bible, for the simple reason that it is not true. This goes against the very purpose of creation and against the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, both of which are misunderstood and largely speaking missing in the creationist literature.

As for "God's perfect world", this does not come from the Bible either. On the contrary, the Bible makes it clear that this world is not perfect, was never perfect, and that human beings are to strive to improve themselves and seek a better world.

Regarding "the concepts of goodness, truth, beauty, love, and such things as fundamental attributes of the Creator Himself", Dr Morris assures us that they are a result of human "cause-and-effect reasoning". In other words, God's attributes originate from human beings. Putting it differently, the concept of God is a result of human reasoning.

But what does the Bible say about these attributes?

"So the LORD said to Moses, 'I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.' And he said, 'Please, show me Your glory.' Then He said, 'I will make all **My goodness** pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'" (Exod. 33:17-19).

"Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for **His goodness**, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Ps 107:15).

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (**for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth**), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord." (Eph 5:6-10).

"I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has **made everything beautiful** in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end." (Eccl 3:10-11).

"He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**." (1 Jn. 4:8).

So then, the concepts of goodness, righteousness, truth, beauty and love originate from God Himself, not from human beings. And no, the origin of physical and moral evil in the universe is NOT a concession to the principle of human freedom and responsibility. This statement reflects a belief in free moral agency, and we know now how true and Biblical this is. A thorough discussion on free will versus predestination can be found in *The Christian Herald* no 6.

Why then was evil allowed into the world? This is what God says:

"The LORD has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom." (Prov. 16:4).

"Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?" (Lam 3:38, KJV)

"I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand." (Deut. 32:39).

"The LORD kills and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and brings up.

The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and lifts up." (1 Sam 2:6-7).

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."

Some of these statements horrify people, but we cannot dismiss them just because they do not conform to our preconceived ideas. Yet no one needs to fear them because behind them is the most noble feeling and intention human beings could ever hope for. Our Creator God is telling us that He created the wicked one because He needed him to chasten us, to bring out the best in us, to create the right character in us, so that we could become His spiritual children worthy of eternal life in His Kingdom.

"And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?" (Heb. 12:5-9).

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 Jn. 3:1-2).

So human beings are destined to become fully-fledged sons of God in the same way that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. This idea is missing in the creationist literature because their theology is based mainly on the book of Genesis, and this book does not deal with the purpose of creation or with the destiny of human beings.

Their theology revolves around the notion that Adam was perfect, the creation was perfect, and that was it not for the unfortunate intervention of the wicked one, human beings and the world would have remained forever.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Adam was neither perfect, nor was he ever a spiritual son of God. He was a fully-fledged carnal human being, and as such he could not please God nor attain eternal life.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 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. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors-- not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 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, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Rom. 8:1-14).

But if Adam had not sinned, things would have been different, someone might say. Not true. Adam had little choice. He did nothing that was not expected of him. We will expand on this shortly, but now let's go back to Dr Morris.

“When God's six-day work of creation was complete, everything in the world was “very good”. There was nothing out of order, no pain, no suffering, no disease, no struggle for existence, no disharmony, no sin, and – above all – no death.” (TGR, p. 105).

Here we have a big leap of faith. From “everything being very good” to there being “nothing out of order, no pain, no suffering, no disease, no struggle for existence, no disharmony, no sin, and--above all--no death”. Well sorry, this is neither Biblical nor scientific. Where are the proofs for them? They are non-existent because they are not true. We shall prove all these shortly, but first let us resolve the problem with Adam being “very good”, one of the main tenets of creation scientism. If Adam was “very good” then he was better than Jesus Christ.

“Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.’” (Mark 10:17-18).

If Jesus Christ Himself, a Man who was imbued with the Holy Spirit and had never sinned, did not think that He was “good”, how much less was Adam, who never had the Holy Spirit, “very good”? What then do we make of the following statement?

“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” (Gen. 1:31).

To understand this, imagine a man who had just finished a house. He goes aside, looks at it and says: this is very good. Does he mean that the house itself is very good, or that everything involved in its creation - the work, the choice of materials, the colours, the general aspect of it, the conclusion of the work, etc. - is very good?

It was the same with God. He looked at His creation and said that everything was very good. That must be taken as a general statement, applied to everything as a whole, not as a specific statement applied to any individual item, because if you do, you end up with all sorts of problems. Would God have said that Adam was “very good” when He knew what he was made of and was subject to all the foibles of human nature? What does this mean?

“But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.” (John 2:24-25).

Remember, the God of the Old Testament became the Christ of the New Testament, therefore all these statements - Genesis 1:31, Mark 10:17-18, John 2:24-25 - were made, or inspired, by the same Person.

The idea that God created a “perfect world” is simply not in the Bible. A perfect creation would not have been derailed from its track so easily and so soon after its inception by the wicked one.

When Jesus Christ told His followers to, “be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48), He did not mean that they must aspire towards a condition from which they had fallen, but to one in which no human being had ever been, including Adam and Eve. One becomes perfect as a precondition for something that human beings cannot even imagine.

“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.’” (1 Cor. 2:9).

Has Adam seen those things before he sinned? If he was “very good” and perfect, why not? Doesn't this tell you that neither Adam nor this world were meant to last forever, that God had intended from the very beginning that human beings must aspire for something higher than the human level, something that transcends this world? Says Dr Morris:

“The problem of the existence of evil in a world created by a holy, loving God is one that has exercised the minds and hearts of philosophers and theologians through the ages. If God is omnipotent and holy, why does He permit such things? How, indeed, could evil ever have appeared at all? These questions do not have easy answers. Atheism, in fact, is largely founded on the pessimistic belief that such an evil world proves either that God

is not good (condoning evil as He does) or not omnipotent (and therefore unable to correct and remove the evil)." (TGR, p. 105).

Atheism is not founded on these beliefs at all. Atheism is a denial of God for no logical reason. Saying these things about God is not atheism, but blasphemy. The demons do not like God either, but they do not deny His existence: "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!" (James 2:19).

"The philosophy of dualism tries to solve the problem by proposing an eternal principle of evil in the universe, as well as one of good. But such answers as these are, of course, neither Scriptural nor do they satisfy the needs of the human heart. God is omnipotent and He is perfectly righteous. Only His revelation, therefore, can enable us to understand the source and significance of evil in the world. The only true and reasonable answer to this problem is found here in the third chapter of Genesis. The apostle Paul, referring to this chapter, says, "Wherefore by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).

But before man could bring sin into the world, he must be persuaded to sin by an agent external to himself, since there was as yet nothing within his own nature to lead him in such a direction." (TGR, p. 106).

Dr Morris berates the philosophers who come up with explanations that are not Scriptural, yet how Scriptural are his explanations? First, he is trying to be nice to God by absolving Him of any evil in the world. In so doing he contradicts God Himself, for as we saw, God takes responsibility for everything that happens in the world. God clearly told us that He created the wicked one and let him lose in the world, not because He liked to torment us, but out of necessity. He is using him to teach us lessons, to create the right character in us so that we may qualify for eternal life in His Kingdom, something Adam failed to do. What else do these Scriptures mean?

"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Rom. 8:19-23, NIV)

Yes, we groan and wait for the adoption as spiritual sons. The following Scriptures confirm this too:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation." (2 Cor. 1:3-7).

This raises the question, did God know in advance that Adam would fall? Of course He knew it. He knew it because everything was predestined to happen as it did before the world was created, Jesus Christ Himself being predestined to die for our sins before the world was.

"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.' And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." (1 Pet. 1:13-21).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:3-6).

"For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: 'So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,' although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." (Heb. 4:3).

Apostle Peter quoted the Scripture that says, "Be holy, for I am holy." Now we know that Dr Morris thinks that Adam was "very good", but does he also think that he was holy? Unless one becomes holy, controls his impulses and abstains from the temptations of this world, he cannot please God and cannot be saved. Being saved means to be granted eternal life in the Kingdom of God, not in this world.

Adam himself needed to be saved. Saved from what, if he had not yet sinned? Saved from himself, from his own nature. Because he did not place himself totally at God's disposal (he wanted to do his own thing, to find out "the truth" for himself), he ended up by cutting his spiritual link with the Creator God.

If salvation is achieved in heaven, and if everything was foreordained to happen as it did before the foundation of the world, how can anyone say that Adam could have lived forever in this world? This world was not created to last forever, but only for a relatively short period of time.

"For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth." (Rom. 9:28).

So God will finish the work and cut it short. But has He not finished His work at the end of the creation week? Creation scientists say that He has; the Bible says that He has not.

The Scriptures tell us that both God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son are still working.

"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.'" (John 5:17).

"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work." (John 9:4).

"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:4-5).

Why is God still working? Because although the physical creation was finished at the end of the creation week, the spiritual creation had only just begun. In other words, this world was created so that another creation - a spiritual one - may take place. What does this spiritual creation mean? Here it is once again.

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain." (Phil. 2:12-16).

We are not yet, but we become children of God if we work out our own salvation according to the will of God. This has nothing to do with the sin of Adam. We would still have had to become children of God, and qualify for His Kingdom, even if Adam had not sinned. What that sin merely showed us is that on our own, without the Holy Spirit, we can achieve nothing. And the Holy Spirit is not given to those who love this life, and disobey God.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor." (John 12:24-26).

"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." (Rom. 12:1).

Could anything be clearer? In order to produce much grain, the original one must die. That was true of Jesus Christ, as it is true of you, and me, and as it was true of Adam.

Adam was never meant to live forever in his natural human condition, but he was required to present his body "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" too. And did he do it? No, he ran away from God.

Dr Morris said that before Adam sinned there was "no pain, no suffering, no disease, no struggle for existence, no disharmony, no sin, and--above all--no death" in the world? Once again, this is neither true nor Scriptural.

What do we make of the following Scriptures then?

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many." (Rom. 5:12-15).

Can you see the mistake Dr Morris and his creation scientists have made? They assumed that the sin of Adam has brought death to all the living creatures, when the Bible says that "death spread to all men" only. These people have failed to understand that this passage does not refer to a physical death, but to a spiritual one. This is proven by the fact that Adam did not die immediately when he sinned, but went on to live for more than nine hundred years afterwards. Yet God told him that the moment he sinned he would die.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" (Gen 2:16-17).

So did he "surely die" when he sinned? Of course he did it! Not physically, but spiritually. From God's point of view, our physical death is nothing. He can resurrect us any time, but when we die spiritually, we are finished, He is no longer interested in us. To die spiritually, means to die of the second death.

"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6).

"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev. 20:14).

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 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." (Rev. 21:7-8).

The second death comes after the judgment of God, and it is irreversible. People die of a second death when they commit blasphemy too.

"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men." (Matt. 12:31).

Blasphemy means to offend the Father. Adam offended his Father by disobeying Him, by running away from Him, by not repenting of his sin, and by blaming his wife for it. He just could not accept responsibility for what he had done. He could not bring himself to say: "I am sorry", which is a major fault with the people in the world today too.

Now let us continue with Dr Morris.

"But things are *not* "very good" in the world now! In the physical realm, everything tends to run down and wear out. In the living world, each animal is engaged in a perpetual struggle against other animals and against disease, as well as the universal process of ageing and death . . . Something has gone wrong with God's perfect creation."

"The fact that great physiological changes took place in both the plant and animal kingdoms at the time of the curse, as well as in man himself, is obvious from Genesis 3:14-19, and it is obvious also that changes of such degree are quite within the capabilities of God to produce." (*TGR*, pp. 105, 109).

Sorry, no such a thing is "obvious from Genesis 3:14-19" because it isn't true. Let us have a look at it.

"So the LORD God said to the serpent: 'Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.' To the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."" (Gen. 3:13-19).

Where are the great "physiological changes" in the plant and animal kingdom here? The snake was a snake before and after Adam sinned, as were the thorns and the thistles. That there weren't any "physiological changes" is proven by the fact that the snake is still not eating dust. Snakes do not live on dust. This was a highly symbolic language, and in the final analysis it referred to the battle between Jesus Christ and the Devil. As for death in the world before Adam sinned, is it not obvious from the natural world that death sustains life? The chain of life begins with micro organisms whose life span is minuscule - minutes, hours or days at the most. These multiply at an astronomical rate, so that if it weren't for their short life span, the world would be buried under mountains of them. Other forms of life then build on these. Even whales in the sea feed on marine microorganisms. Insects have a short life span too, but long enough to enable other species, such as birds, to live on them. And so it goes up the chain of life - some creatures must die in order that others may survive.

Creationists have made the mistake of equating the struggle for survival, which is evident all around us, with the evolutionary theory. Some evolutionists no longer believe in the struggle for survival. They say that evolution occurred through mutations.

It is not the struggle for survival nor mutations that uphold this theory, but the time element which the evolutionary scientists have tampered with. Take that away, and their theory crumbles and disappears.

This is precisely where the creation scientists have done a very good job. They have proven beyond doubt that the millions and billions of years, on which the evolutionary theory rests, are nothing but figments of imagination.

Unfortunately they did not leave it at that; they decided to delve into theology, an area of study in which they are obviously ill prepared. Their aim of combating evolution is laudable, but they have chosen the wrong ground on which to do their battle. They try to use the Bible to prove that because there was no death in the world before Adam, there could have been no struggle for survival and therefore no evolution. But there was struggle for survival, and there was death in the world before Adam sinned too. The problem with Dr Morris is that he takes the Bible literally when it suits him, and interprets it when it doesn't. Failing to understand the nature of Adam's death, he tries to explain his fall and its effect on the world in terms that have nothing to do with science or theology, and everything to do with fantasy.

"After the temptation and fall, God altered the vocal equipment of the animals, including the structure of the speech centers in their brains. He did this in order to place a still greater barrier between men and animals and to prevent further use of their bodies by demonic spirits to deceive man again in this fashion. The body of the serpent, in addition, was altered even further by eliminating his ability to stand erect, eye-to-eye with man as it were."

"Had the Fall never taken place, animal life would no doubt have remained constant at an optimum population by divinely directed constraints on the reproductive process." (*TGR*, pp. 110, 126).

Is this creation science? Where is the science, and where are Scriptures in all of this?

There is nothing in the Bible to suggest even remotely that God produced a second creation, or that He changed the physiological nature of the animal and plant kingdoms after the fall of Adam. Except for minor environmental adaptations, all living creatures are now exactly as they were when God created them in the first place.

"Something has gone wrong with God's perfect creation", says Dr Morris. Indeed it has, but not what he thinks. It is the lack of trust and faith in God that brought Adam down and the same that is bringing the world down now.

Under the guise of scholarship and erudition, Dr Morris and his creation scientists have introduced concepts which are neither scientific nor Scriptural, but extremely dangerous and damaging to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is what we call "The Trojan Horse Syndrome".

HEAVENLY SUPPER II

(Continued from *The Christian Herald* No 6)

“Father, now that we are coming to the end of an age and the beginning of another, how are the Churches going to be organised during the Millennial Kingdom?” asked one of the Apostles.

“Just as they were organised during the early years of Christianity, except that each Church will bring its contribution to the Headquarters in Jerusalem. As the Scriptures say:

“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” (Zech. 14:16).

“Right, Father, but what about Ezekiel 40 to 48? These chapters speak of a new temple in Jerusalem and of animal sacrifices. We thought that these came to an end with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.”

“They did, son, they did, but the Jews keep to their tradition.”

“Tradition?”

“Yes, tradition! Don’t you know what the Gentile Christians have done in the name of tradition? Have you ever spoken to an Orthodox Christian, for example, and asked him why he observes the things he does? They think that by changing the name of “idols” to “icons” they can fool God. Or that by placing the name of Christ on their pagan holy days they will bring Christ to their feasts. Have you not seen how, in spite of what Apostle Paul told them, they still keep the doctrines of demons?

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and **doctrines of demons**, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

One church does not eat meat on Fridays, another does not eat meat at all, another keeps the “lent”, another does not eat “unclean” meats - one wonders whether there is any use speaking to these people anymore?

Since the Gentile Christians have made a mess of the Gospel with their traditions, should we be surprised that the Jews have done the same? Besides, don’t you know that animal sacrifices served not only as sin and burnt offerings, but to feed people as well? If they are going to sacrifice animals, they may as well do it according to the hygienic and sanitary principles set up in the Bible.”

“But, Father, how could people sin during the Millennium if Satan will be locked away?

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Rev. 20:1-3).

“Satan will indeed be locked away during the Millennium, but don’t forget that human beings are not spirit beings. They will still have to contend with the pulls of their human nature. What do the Scriptures say?

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Rom. 7:22-25).

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. 8:6-8).

As long as human beings are carnal beings, they shall always have to contend with the law that is set in their bodies, so even though Satan will not be there to deceive them with false doctrines, they will still have to watch their relationships with each other and with God.”

“But what about the Scriptures which say that the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord?

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” (Rev. 11:15).

“This is where a lot of people have gone wrong. They have equated the Millennial Kingdom with the Kingdom of God. They have failed to understand that the Millennial Kingdom is still part of the physical world, and will be populated by human beings – those who survive the great tribulation - while the Kingdom of God is for spiritual beings only – for those who will be resurrected to eternal life. This is in a different location, and a different level altogether.

The two worlds and the two kinds of people do not mix. They cannot live side by side. Here are Scriptural examples of both Kingdoms:

“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. 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. 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.

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.” (Zech. 14:16-19)

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” (Rev. 14:1-5).

The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord in the sense that the 144,000 come from all tribes and nations, and represent all kingdoms of the world. But the ones who are still living on the earth are normal human beings.

“But, Father, how do we explain the Scripture which says that Jesus Christ will be “standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand?”

“Easy son. That Scripture does not say that Jesus Christ and His followers will be living there. They will be standing there temporarily, and that's all. Afterwards they will be coming up to heaven where they will be trained to be kings and priests over the whole world. And as you know, one thousand years has been allocated for this purpose.

Besides, which Mount Zion do you think the Scriptures refer to?

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’” (Heb. 12:22-26).

This Mount Zion is not on earth, but in heaven – the heavenly Jerusalem – where the innumerable company of angels and God the Judge of all lives. Put it this way, how could Jesus Christ, who is God, live on earth?

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,’ says the LORD. n’But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.’” (Isa. 66:1-2).

“So then, Jesus will go down to the earth at the beginning of the Millennium not to live in temples made by human hands, but to show His glory, to resurrect His people, and to bring them back up to heaven with Him and train them.”

“Precisely!”

“But Father, why was there so much confusion about these things in the world at that time. Did You not explain these things to them?”

“Of course I did it, son, but they did not believe Me any more than they believed Jesus when He was in the world. Don't you know what the Scriptures say? The whole world had gone after Satan.

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.” (1 Jn. 5:19).

“Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore . . . for your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.’” (Rev. 18:21, 23-24).

“So while the whole world was deceived, you restored the Gospel, preached it to the world, yet suffered persecution for it.”

“And what persecution, son. As the Scripture say: “The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him.” (Ps. 37:32). They not only sought to slay Me, they did it at the end of My mission too.”

“How long did it take You to complete Your mission, Father?”

“Seven years.”

“But does not the Bible say that this was supposed to be done in three and a half years?”

“It does, but what would you do if your partner cannot, or would not, do his/her share?”

“I see, so three and a half years for two became seven years for one.”

“That's right!”

“Did you tell the people why You worked for seven years instead of three and a half?”

“Of course not! I could not have finished the work if I did - they would have killed Me before My time.”

“But were You not supposed to tell them the truth?”

“I never told them anything but the truth, but where does it say that I had to tell them everything? They could have found it out for themselves if they had listened to Me and believed the Scripture.

I followed Jesus' example - He did not tell the Pharisees everything either, and that for a very good reason.

"And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?'

He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: "Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." (Matt. 13:10-17).

The Pharisees kept asking Jesus for a sign, yet when He gave it to them - the sign of Jonah – they did not believe it. The Christians kept looking at Jerusalem to see the two witnesses working from there. When I told them that their work had nothing to do with Jerusalem, they did not believe it. And why did they not believe Me? For the same reason that the Jews did not believe Jesus.

"Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, "They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest." Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you **an evil heart of unbelief** in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:7-13).

In other words, just as most of the Jews of Jesus' time were not My people, most of the Christians of My time were not My people either. And why not? Because their hearts were not right before God – they had "evil hearts of unbelief".

"You said, "most of the Christians were not My people", which means that some were. Where were these people then, why was there no one with You?"

"They were deceived or asleep. Remember the parable of the virgins? They were all asleep when the call went out for them to wake up. Half made it to the wedding chamber, the others did not. I personally gave them that call."

"Yet they still did not know who You were."

"That's right! They trusted their ministers, the "savage wolves" who kept them in bondage. The ministers knew who I was, but instead of telling them about it, they fought Me to the end. They claimed to be the ministers of Christ, but instead they were a synagogue of Satan. If they had paid attention to the Scriptures they would have known exactly who I was and in which church I would make My appearance. Have you ever considered these Scriptures?"

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens: I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie-- indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'" (Rev. 3:7-13).

"You know, before I showed Myself to this church, they told everybody that they were the Philadelphia Church of God, but afterwards they repudiated that claim."

"Why, Father?"

"Because they realised that if they were the Philadelphia Church of God they could only have been the synagogue of Satan within it. They realised that I was the one with a little strength, who kept the Word of Jesus, who did not deny His name, and persevered to the end even in the face of the difficulties they created for Me.

They had everything, yet not only did they not help, but also opposed Me, denigrated My name, and did everything in their power to make it impossible for Me to finish the job. Did you notice what the Scriptures say of this man?"

"I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."

"Do you understand what this means?"

"I think I do, Father, but I would rather let You explain it."

"First, Jesus Christ puts on him the name of His God. In other words, this man becomes God Himself.

Second, Jesus Christ puts on him the name of New Jerusalem. This is none other than the bride of Christ: "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2).

Third, Jesus Christ puts on him His own new name. In other words, this man becomes Jesus Christ Himself.

So what does this mean? What could one in three and three in one mean?"

"It means a Trinity of three equal members whose roles are interchangeable?"

"Bravo!"

IMPROVING ON GOD'S CREATION

"Father, did You know that the Islamists have found a way to improve on Your creation?"

"Oh! How?"

"Like this:

"Ban on female mutilation overturned. Cairo: A Cairo court yesterday overturned a year-old government ban on female circumcision, in a ruling hailed by Islamic fundamentalists but condemned by human rights activists. The Cairo administrative court ruled that the operation in which all or part of the clitoris is removed and, sometimes, the labia, can be done.

Judge Abdelaziz Hamada said the ruling "cancelled" the ban by the Health Minister, Mr Ismail Sallan, on female circumcision, which the court labelled an "abuse of power".

"God be praised, we have won and can apply Islam," said Sheich Yussef Badri, an Islamic clergyman who was party to the suit." (*Agence France – Presse, SMH, June 25, 1997*)

"O My daughters, what have they done to you? Gabriel, where are you?"

Archangel Gabriel, who was sitting nearby with Archangel Michael, answered:

"Yes, Father, here I am!"

"Is this what you've taught these people?"

"No, Father, I did not! These things are not from us, but from the Devil and their own imagination."

"What else have these creatures done in My name?"

"This, Father:

"Islamists massacre 63"

"Algiers: Sixty-three civilians, including women and children, were savagely murdered with axes, swords and bullets in the bloodiest such attack in the Algerian capital, Algiers, since the Islamist uprising erupted five years ago." (*The Australian, September 8, 1997*).

"Algerian massacre: 200 die"

"Paris: Attackers shot or stabbed to death at least 200 people and another 100 were wounded in Algiers early yesterday, according to hospital sources. The official APS news agency put the number of deaths at 85. If the 200 deaths are confirmed, the massacre would be the worst attack in nearly six years of violence." (*AP, Reuter, SMH, September 24, 1997*).

"Enough! We've heard enough of this! We cannot allow this to go on any longer. It's time to put an end to this madness, to this age, and to the Devil. Are you all ready for the final battle?"

"Yes Father, we are", answered Archangel Michael.

"Good! Then be ready to take your positions. It won't be easy - the Devil and his armies will fight to the death".

"No problems, Father! Our armies are stronger, bigger, and better equipped than his."

"I am sure you will do well, boys. When all this done and over, we will all sit down to a great celebratory feast."

ALPHA AND OMEGA CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION AND ITS AFFILIATED CHURCHES' CONSTITUTION

1. NAME: The name of the organisation is: **Alpha and Omega Christian Foundation**
(Hereafter it may be referred to as 'the Foundation' or 'A.O.C.F.')

Member Churches from different countries shall bear the name "Church of God", delineated by their respective localities.

2. OBJECTS

- a) Alpha and Omega Christian Foundation and its member Churches are non-profit, non-denominational organisations, dedicated entirely to researching, re-discovering, and disseminating, the original faith as it was delivered to, and practised by, the early New Testament Churches.
- b) The Foundation and its member Churches operate on the principles established by the Apostles of Jesus Christ, and recorded for us in the Bible.
- c) Each member Church is an autonomous entity, self-financed, self-sufficient, and self-governed.
- d) Administrative matters belong to the local Churches; spiritual matters belong to the Foundation headquarters.
- e) The Foundation and its member Churches, united by the Holy Spirit in a common purpose, respect and conform to the national laws of the countries in which they operate, as long as these do not conflict with the

- laws of God.
- f) The Foundation and its member Churches, oversee, assist and ensure the welfare and spiritual growth of their people in accordance with the teachings of the Bible.
- g) The Foundation and its member Churches also seek to help in the social and welfare activities of the broader community, in as much as their resources permit.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- a) A member of any A.O.C.F. Church of God is considered to be a member of this Foundation.
- b) Membership into this Foundation is obtained through repentance, baptism, and laying on of hands, and an ongoing commitment to the way of life espoused by Jesus Christ and His Apostles.
- c) Church Pastors are accredited and appointed by the Foundation headquarters.
- d) Church Pastors determine who and when one may become a member of their Church.
- e) The Pastor shall maintain a list of Church members with their name, address, date of membership, and their ongoing status in the Church. The confidentiality of this list must be strictly observed.
- f) A copy of this list must be sent to the Foundation headquarters, and updated accordingly.
- g) All members of the Church must be given the address of the Foundation headquarters, and encouraged to communicate freely on any matter of concern.

4. MANAGEMENT

- a) Overall responsibility for the affairs of a local Church, and for maintaining the Christian standards according to the Scriptures, resides with the Pastor.
- b) The direct management of the Church however is vested in a Council of Elders who are selected and appointed according to the Biblical principles established by the Apostles.

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’” (Acts 6:1-4).

- c) The Council of Elders may vary in numbers, depending on the size of the Church. For registration purposes however an A.O.C.F. Church of God should contain a minimum of five members, and a Council of Elders a minimum of four members.
- d) No member of the Council of Elders shall be appointed to a salaried office in an A. O. C. F. Church of God. The Church shall give no remuneration or other benefit to any member of the Council of Elders, except repayment of out-of-pocket expenses, and interest at the rate charged by the local Banks.
- e) The Council of Elders shall determine the remuneration package for the local Pastor in accordance with the possibilities of the Church. The Council’s proposals shall be discussed, amended (if need be) and approved by the Annual General Meeting of the Church.

5. OFFICE-BEARERS

- a) The Council of Elders shall consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers as shall be deemed necessary by the Annual General Meeting of the Church.
- b) The Council of Elders shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. Any casual vacancy occurring among the Council of Elders may be filled by the Council and the person so appointed to fill the vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired term of the member so replaced.
- c) The Pastor is responsible for officiating the religious service of the Church, and maintaining registers of baptisms, weddings, deceases, etc.

6. NON-DISTRIBUTION OF PROFITS

- a) The income and property of an A.O.C.F. Church of God, however derived, shall, subject to any obligations under charitable trust law or any other statutory requirements, be used and applied solely in the promotion of its objects and in the exercise of powers conferred upon it by the rules.
- b) No portion of this income and property shall be distributed, paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to or amongst the members of the Church.
- c) The requirement contained in (b) shall not, however, prevent the payment in good faith of:
 - (1) interest (provided it is based on the prevailing rate of interest charged by banks, building societies or credit unions for unsecured loans) to any such member in respect of money advanced by that member to the Church, or otherwise owing by the Church to the member; or
 - (2) any remuneration to any officers or servants of the Church or other person in return for any services genuinely rendered to the Church.

7. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

- a) The Council of Elders may meet together for the dispatch of business, adjourn and otherwise appoint and regulate its meetings as it thinks fit. The President may at any time, and the Secretary on the requisition of any two members of the Council, summon a meeting of the Council.
- b) Questions arising at any meeting of the Council shall be decided by a majority of votes of those present, and a determination by a majority of the members of the Council present shall for all purposes be a determination of the Council as a whole. In case of an equality of votes the Chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

8. **VACATION OF OFFICE** A vacancy in the office of a member of the Council occurs, if the member:
- a) dies;
 - b) becomes insolvent under administration within the meaning of the Corporations Law;
 - c) becomes of unsound mind or a person whose person or estate is liable to be dealt with in any way under the law relating to mental health;
 - d) resigns office by notice in writing to the Secretary;
 - e) is absent without the consent of the Council from all meetings of the Council held during a period of six months;
 - f) ceases to be a member of the Church;
 - g) is expelled as a member in accordance with rule 20;
 - h) holds any office of profit under the Church;
 - i) is directly or indirectly interested in any contract or proposed contract with the Church;
 - j) upon resolution being passed by a two-thirds majority of members present at a properly constituted general meeting called for the purpose, is removed from office.
9. **FINANCIAL YEAR:** The financial year shall conclude on the date established by national authorities of the country in which the Church resides.
10. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:** The Annual General Meeting of members shall be held during the month following the conclusion of the financial year. The Annual Report and audited financial statements shall be presented at this meeting.
- 11. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS**
- a) Any three members of the Council of Elders may at any time convene a Special General Meeting of the Church.
 - b) Special General Meetings shall also be convened by the Secretary upon the written request of not less than 10 per cent in number of the members of the Church, and shall be held within a period of one month from the date of receipt of the request.
- 12. QUORUM**
- a) At General Meetings a quorum shall consist of 1/3 of the members, and at a Council of Elders meeting a quorum shall consist of 2/3 of its members.
 - b) Should within half an hour of the time set down for a meeting to commence, a quorum be not present, then the meeting shall be adjourned to a place and to a time within one month of the date of such meeting, to be determined thereat. At such adjourned meeting a quorum shall be deemed of those present, provided their number is not less than three.
- 13. PROCEEDINGS AT GENERAL MEETINGS**
- (a) The President shall preside as Chairman at every general meeting, but if he is not present within fifteen minutes after the time appointed for the holding of the meeting, or is unwilling to act, then the members present shall elect one of their members to be chairman of the meeting, a simple majority sufficing.
 - (b) The Chairman may, with the consent of any meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall if so directed by the meeting), adjourn the meeting from time to time and from place to place but no business shall be transacted at any adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting from which the adjournment took place. When a meeting is adjourned for thirty days or more, notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given as in the case of an original meeting. Except as previously provided, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of an adjournment or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting.
 - (c) At any general meeting a resolution put to the vote of a meeting shall be decided on a show of hands unless a poll is (before or on the declaration of the result of the show of hands) demanded by the Chairman or by at least three members present. Unless a poll is so demanded, a declaration by the Chairman that a resolution has on a show of hands been carried, or carried unanimously, or by a particular majority, or lost, and an entry to that effect has been made in the book containing the minutes of the proceedings, shall be conclusive evidence of the vote in favour of or against the resolution. The demand for a poll may be withdrawn.
 - (d) If a poll is duly demanded it shall be taken in such manner and either at once or after an interval or adjournment or otherwise as the Chairman directs, and the result of the poll shall be the resolution of the meeting at which the poll was demanded, but a poll demanded on the election of a Chairman or on a question of adjournment shall be taken forthwith.
 - (e) In the case of an equality of votes, whether on a show of hands or on a poll, the Chairman of the meeting shall be entitled to a second or casting vote.
 - (f) Each member present and voting at a general meeting shall have one vote.
14. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS:** The Secretary shall give at least seven days notice in writing of all general meetings to the members of the Church specifying the place, the day and the hour of meeting and the general nature of the business to be dealt with at the meeting.
- 15. FUNDS**
- (a) The funds of the Church shall be deposited in the name of the Church in such bank, building society or credit union as the Council of Elders may from time to time direct.
 - (b) Funds raised by means of a fundraising appeal within the meaning of the Charitable Fundraising Act must be maintained in accordance with that Act.
- 16. MAINTENANCE OF BOOKS OF ACCOUNT AND RECORD**
- The Council of Elders shall ensure appropriate books of account and record are maintained, including those required to be maintained under the Charitable Fundraising Act.

17. AUTHORISATION OF ACCOUNTS: All accounts shall be presented to and passed for payment at a Council of Elders meeting and full details of all such approvals shall be entered in the Minute Book.

18. AUDIT

- (a) The auditor or auditors shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. They shall examine all accounts, vouchers, receipts, books, etc., and furnish a report thereon to the members at the Annual Meeting. Audits shall be conducted at regular intervals of not more than twelve months.
- (b) An auditor shall not be a member or closely related to a member of the Council of Elders.
- (c) Subject to paragraph (d) hereof notice of the intention to nominate an auditor to replace the current auditor shall be given to the Secretary at least twenty-one days before the Annual General Meeting. The Secretary shall send a copy of the nomination to the current auditor at least seven (7) days before the Annual General Meeting. The current auditor shall be entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting and if that person so wishes, will be heard at such Annual General Meeting.
- (d) Where the current auditor submits a resignation, or notifies the Secretary of the intention not to seek re-election as auditor, paragraph (c) hereof shall not apply.

19. MINUTES The Council of Elders shall ensure minutes are made:

- a) of all appointments of the office-bearers and members of the Council;
- b) of the names and of members of the Council present at all meetings of the Church and of the Council;
- c) of all proceedings at all meetings of the Church and of the Council;
- d) such minutes shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting at which the proceedings were held or by the Chairman of the next succeeding meeting.

20. EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

- (a) If a disciplinary action is deemed necessary against a member of the Church, the steps followed are those established by Jesus Christ.

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector." (Matt. 18:15-17).

- b) A member may be expelled from membership of the Church, by the Pastor, or by the Council of Elders if in their opinion, after affording such member an opportunity of offering an explanation of that person's conduct either verbally or in writing as the Pastor and the Council may decide, the conduct of the member is such as to be detrimental to the best interests of the Church, provided that:
 - i) such expulsion shall not be effective unless it is confirmed by a majority of members present at a Special General Meeting of members convened to consider the expulsion;
 - ii) such Special General Meeting is held within a period of one month from the date of the decision of the Pastor or the Council of Elders to expel the member;
 - iii) at such Special General Meeting the member whose expulsion is under consideration shall be allowed to offer an explanation of that person's conduct verbally or in writing at the option of such member;
 - iv) the voting of such Special General Meeting shall be by ballot if not less than five members present thereat so demand;
 - v) it shall be in the power of the Pastor or the Council of Elders to exclude such member from participation in the affairs of the Church until such Special General Meeting shall be held.

21. TRUSTEES

- a) Three Trustees shall be elected at a properly constituted general meeting.
- b) All property of whatever kind belonging to the Church shall be vested in the Trustees and they shall have the custody of all deeds and documents of title relating to the property of the Church and shall be responsible for the same and shall deal with and dispose of all the property of the Church for the time being vested in them and the income thereof in accordance with the directions of the Council of Elders provided that such directions are not in violation of the trusts upon which the property is held.

22. DEREGISTRATION

- (a) The Church shall cease to be registered in the event of membership less than 5 persons, or upon the vote of a three-fourths majority of members present at a Special General Meeting convened to consider such question.
- (b) Upon a resolution being passed in accordance with paragraph 22. (a) of this rule, the net assets or property available after satisfying all debts and liabilities shall, upon determination by the members of the Church be handed over to another A.O.C.F. Church of God. However, in making the distribution, the Church must ensure that it satisfies all legal obligations applying to any funds or property over which a charitable trust exists.

23. AMENDMENT OF RULES

- a) These rules may be amended by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of members present at any Annual General Meeting at which notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given or at a Special General Meeting convened for such purpose.
- b) The Foundation headquarters must be notified in advance of the proposed amendments, and its approval must be obtained before proceeding with such amendments.

24. INTERNAL DISPUTES

The Pastor in consultation with the Council of Elders shall ensure that a mechanism is established for resolving internal disputes within the membership. This may include:

- (a) the appointment of an independent person to arbitrate in the dispute;
- (b) a process to bring the parties together to resolve the dispute at an early stage;
- (b) a process to ensure that all parties receive a full and fair opportunity of presenting their case;
- (c) where the dispute cannot be resolved internally by arbitration or mediation, to refer the matter to a Community Justice Centre which functions as centre for dispute settlement.

25. COMPLAINTS

The Pastor in consultation with the Council of Elders shall ensure that a mechanism is established that will properly and effectively deal with complaints made by members of the public and grievances from members and employees.

HOUSE CHURCHES

When there are too few people to form an official church, or if they are unable to attend a church service because of distance, illness, or other legitimate reasons, they can form a small church in their own home. Jesus Christ said that: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). So if you want Him to come into your homes and in your lives, worship Him and the Father according to the following general guidelines:

1. Begin by playing or singing a hymn or two;
2. Recite the Lord's Prayer. Those present should be given the chance of reciting the Lord's Prayer too if they so desire.
3. Play or sing another hymn;
4. Read a couple of pages from the Bible or such a length as you are comfortable with. You may comment on them if you want to.
5. Play or sing another hymn;
6. Read the "Prayer and Blessings" page.
In a group, we recommend reading Prayer and Blessings (1) with the audience responding with 'Amen' and 'Alleluia' as required. If alone, Prayer and Blessings (2) is more suitable. When you are alone and you read P&B (1), you do not need to recite every "Amen" or "Alleluia", but only the last one.
7. Play or sing another hymn;
8. Offer your own personal prayer.
When you have your family or guests around you, it is advisable to write down the prayer ahead of time and read it. There is nothing wrong with that. Better that way than to become lost for words. This gives you the opportunity to include your guests and to think carefully about what to say. Don't rush your prayer. Speak slowly and thoughtfully about what you say.
9. Play or sing the final hymn(s).

We have used this formula for many years, and obtained wonderful results. We are sure you will too if you worship God in Spirit and truth. By the end of the service you will feel like a new person: relaxed, recharged, and with a glowing inner feeling of satisfaction and contentment. This is what Jesus Christ told a Samaritan woman about worship:

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.'

Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.'" (John 4:19-24)

Therefore you can worship God wherever you are without fear that you are at a disadvantage because you cannot attend an official church service.

Points 2, 6 and 8 should be done in a proper worshipful position.

Points 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 may be done in any comfortable position. You may sit on chairs, in a lotus position, or may lie flat on a prayer mat. Even Jesus Christ prayed in that position sometimes (Matt. 26:39).

Regarding the hymns for the service, there are many records, disks and cassettes on the market with wonderful music. Choose the ones you like. Avoid the ones that worship or sing praises to Mary the mother of Jesus, to angels and dead people. We know she is not in Heaven, for no one has risen to Heaven beside Jesus Christ, and no one will until after the resurrection.

John 3:13 "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

Neither does Mary have any mediating role between humans and God. That role is for Jesus Christ alone.

This formula can be used as a model for service in large congregations too. The reading from the Bible would be replaced by a sermon, and someone else would preferably offer the general prayer.

To create a more devotional atmosphere, you may transform a coffee table into a little altar. We have nine candleholders in a U format with a Bible in the middle on a top platform, and the "Prayer and Blessings" page on a lower platform. At its right there is a little container with anointing oil, and on its left, a little bell. You may find that, the atmosphere being so relaxing, some people may doze off. Use the bell to signal the transition to the next stage if need be.

You don't need to light all the candles all the time. One, two or three will suffice, but if supply is a problem, light them only during important Holy Days services.

If there is no male in the house, or if he cannot perform it for any reason, a female may conduct this service.

Let all human beings worship God in Spirit and in truth, and let every home become a place of worship.

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me." (John 15:4).

GOD'S HOLY DAYS

As you may all know by now, and as we have proven in *The Christian Herald* No 4, Jesus Christ and His Apostles did not change any of the Holy Days given by God to the people of Israel, nor the date of their observance.

But over the centuries, a great apostasy has taken place, which has replaced the Biblical Holy Days with counterfeit holy days which have nothing to do with the New Testament or the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Changing the times set by God for His Holy Days was foreseen in a major Biblical prophecy.

"Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms [*different because this is a religious kingdom, with the power of the Devil behind it. Ed.*], and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and **shall intend to change times and law**. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.'" (Dan. 7:23, 25)

Notice how this counterfeit work is associated with persecutions of the people of God by a "pompous" creature.

Now why did this "beast" target the Holy Days, which are part of the law of God and are as immutable as the law itself? Because they identify the people of God. By derailing them from observing the proper Holy Days, they lost their identity, lost knowledge of the proper Gospel, and no longer knew who they were, or why they were created. They were then easily deceived into observing pagan holy days and believing gospels that have nothing to do with the Kingdom of God.

"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths [*God used the term "Sabbath(s)" for all of His Holy Days including the weekly Sabbath*] 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.

"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.

"Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever 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.

"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.'" (Exod. 31:13-17).

In the New Testament, the "beast" which caused the people of God to lose their identity, is identified as "Babylon".

"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated 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! 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 saying, '**Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues**. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.'" (Rev. 18:1-5).

If you want to identify yourself with God's people, come out of Babylon and join them in observing God's true Holy Days. Here then are the correct Holy Days and their dates of observance for the next three years.

THE CHRISTIAN HOLY DAYS FOR THE YEARS 1998 - 2000

	1998	1999	2000
The Passover (Pesah - Nissan 14) Unlike the Jews, who used to kill the Passover lamb "at the twilight" of Nissan 14 (meaning in the evening towards Nissan 15), we, Christians, observe the Passover when our "Lamb" – Jesus Christ – was sacrificed. That happened on the afternoon of Nissan 14, before the twilight of Nissan 14, meaning that we keep it a little earlier than the Jews. We commemorate His death, not His supper, which occurred the previous evening, as some churches do. The time when His body was broken, not when He broke the symbolic bread.	10 April	31 March	19 April
Days of Unleavened Bread (Nissan 15 – 21) On the first and seventh days there shall be holy convocations. No work shall be done on these days.	11 – 17 April	1 – 7 April	20 – 26 April
Pentecost (Shavuot – Sivan 6)	31 May	21 May	9 June
Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah - Tishri 1)	21 Sept.	11 Sept.	30 Sept.
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur – Tishri 10)	30 Sept.	20 Sept.	9 Oct.
Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth -- Tishri 15 – 22)	5 – 12 Oct.	25 Sept. – 2 Oct.	14 – 21 Oct.

On the first and the eighth days there shall be holy convocations. No work shall be done on these days.

A few words here about the weekly Sabbath. Some people have made a major virtue out of observing it in the strictest sense. They forgot that the Pharisees were very strict Sabbath keepers, yet that did not prevent them from committing the greatest sin ever. They did not understand the truth of God because their heart and their attitude were not right before God.

Jesus Christ said that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, and that He was also the Lord of the Sabbath, meaning that He could make exceptions when these are needed.

"At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, 'Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!' But He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.'" (Matt. 12:1-8).

There is a great deal of difference between our modern society and the pastoral and agrarian society of ancient Israel when God gave them the commandment to keep the Sabbath together with their servants.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates." (Exod. 20:8-10).

It is virtually impossible in our present society to prevent all people from working on the Sabbath day. Your fridge, stove, oven, lights, radio, television, etc. work because some "servants" keep them going for you. There are electrical power stations that cannot be shut, programs that have to be broadcast, traffic lights to be operated, hospitals and emergency stations to be manned, police stations to be opened, etc.

The world can never return to a pure pastoral or agrarian society. The society of the future shall always need people to operate these things during the Sabbath and during Holy Days. These people perform a function that is similar to that of the priests who work during the Sabbath and during Holy Days, and take their rest in other days.

Therefore, we would be hypocrites to condemn those who make it easy for us to keep the Sabbath if they are unable to keep it with us. So let us worship God and give Him thanks that we can keep His Sabbaths and His Holy Days at the appropriate times, but pray for, and be forgiving towards those who cannot keep them with us. Let them worship God and take their rest in other days, but let these be as Sabbath days, not as a days of the Sun (Sundays) or days dedicated to other pagan gods. Let us conclude with the following words of wisdom:

"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. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh [has come in the form of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us] is of 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.

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. 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 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. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." (1 John 4:1-7).



PRAYER AND BLESSINGS (1)

Almighty Father, we come before You in humble worship, knowing full well that we are unworthy of the love and mercy You have shown us! Amen!

Lord God Almighty, we thank You that through the sacrifice of Your Son Jesus Christ You redeemed us from our sins and gave us the hope of eternal life! Amen!

Heavenly Father, we thank You that through Your Son Jesus Christ You made the Holy Spirit available to us that we may become Your children too! Amen!

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer and grant us Your peace and blessings! Amen!

Eternal God, we pray that You fill us with Your Holy Spirit that He may keep us in remembrance of You and our Lord Jesus Christ, and help us to overcome the trials and temptations of this world always! Amen!

Our loving Father, forgive our sins, purify our soul, and heal our sicknesses, that we may serve and worship You and our Lord Jesus Christ with a pure heart always! Amen!

Almighty God, place Your love and fear in our hearts that we may never depart from Your ways! Amen!

Lord God and Saviour, we beseech You take our heart in Your hand and lead us to Your heavenly Kingdom where there will be no more pain and suffering! Amen!

Our Father, help us grow in grace and knowledge, and fulfil the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to become holy and perfect as You are holy and perfect! Amen!

Everlasting Father, we pray that You place our names in Your Book of Life, that at the resurrection of the just You may grant us a place in Your Kingdom and be with You and our Lord Jesus Christ forever! Amen!

Wonderful Father, we bless You, praise You, honour, worship, and glorify You and our Lord Jesus Christ for Your greatness and goodness, and Your wondrous creation! Amen!

Eternal Father, we love You and our Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and shall continue to do so for the rest of our lives and for eternity! Amen!

Holy Father, we now humble ourselves before You, that we may receive Your blessings:

- The Lord God bless us and keep us!
- The Lord let His light shine upon us and pardon us!
- The Lord grant us His peace and blessings!

Amen! Alleluia!



PRAYER AND BLESSINGS (2)

Eternal Father, we come before You with great joy and humility, asking You to listen to our prayer not because we are worthy of Your attention, but because we know that You love those who repent and seek Your forgiveness. Alleluia!

In Your greatness and goodness, You have called us to follow in the steps of Your Son Jesus Christ, and given us the hope of immortality in Your eternal Kingdom. Alleluia!

Now help us Father be a light to those who seek to come out of the confusion of this world, and a guide to those who want to follow Your ways. Help us grow together in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the fellowship of Your Holy Spirit. Alleluia!

You have given us a great responsibility in taking Your Gospel to all nations. Now we pray that You bless those who hear Your Word and accept Your Gospel. Alleluia!

We pray for those who respond to this call and join us in this work of love and service to the world. We ask that You heal and strengthen them to overcome the trials and temptations that may come their way from this world that is hostile to Your Word. Alleluia!

We are grateful to You Father for Your love and mercy, and for the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of Your creation that You have given us. The world does not acknowledge Your great power and wisdom, but we do Father, for You have shown it to us. Alleluia!

Now we pray that You reveal Yourself to all those who accept Your Word, and turn to You wherever they are in the world. Alleluia!

Bless us Father, and bless everyone who joins us in this worship and service to You and to our Lord Jesus Christ. Keep us in good health that we may be able to fulfil our duties to the end. Alleluia!

We offer special prayer for our brothers in Christ around the world who live under difficult circumstances. We trust in You and know that You keep Your Word to bless and protect those who keep Your commandments and follow Your ways. Alleluia!

We also pray for those who are in authority over us, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." Alleluia!

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly". We are grateful to You Father for blessing us abundantly, not with the riches of this world, but with hope of eternal life in Your wonderful Kingdom. Alleluia!

We ask You to continue to keep us neither wealthy, that our hearts may depart from You, nor poor, that we fall into temptations. Do the same Father to all who understand Your ways, who lay their lives in Your hand, and who worship You in truth and in spirit. Alleluia!

We honour, worship, and glorify You and our Lord Jesus Christ wholeheartedly, in whose name we always come before You. Amen! Alleluia!