



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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"Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13)

Summer 2016

Introducing the Work In the Philippines

A Trip Report from Bill Watson and Jeff Reed

Recently, during the first week of March, Bill Watson and Jeff Reed embarked on a visit to the Philippines. The trip was planned and confirmed back in January of this year after approximately 21 years since the last visit. At that time, Messrs. Garner Ted Armstrong and Benny Sharp, Business Manager, visited this archipelago to meet with the leadership, hold meetings, and conduct Sabbath services, as well as administer some ordinations in Manila.



Bill and Jeff in Tagaytay

Since that time, the work in the Philippines has been moving right along and growing on a regular basis in both size and scope. It has provided a variety of services and ministries to many areas of this sprawling island habitat. So, Bill and Jeff were anxious to get back over there to visit and get a first hand look and feel for what has been, and currently is being accomplished on behalf of the ministry of Jesus Christ, as represented by the Church of God International (CGI).

From the time we landed, the pace and diversity of events and functions that were planned was seemingly non-stop. The Filipino ministry, working together to coordinate a measured mixture of meetings, visits, and projects to accomplish, was well balanced between work and fellowship—even including a 300 mile side-trip via an inter-island flight to Naga City for a special Sunday meeting with the brethren and the invited public living in the area. It was quite the experience!

The Objectives

Approximately two years ago, Bill brought up the idea to elder Rene Corpuz of the Manila office of the CGI to see if there was a possibility to visit back then. However, due to financial restraints and other demands at the time, the trip was postponed. This time, however, discussions commenced right after the Feast of 2015, which afforded plenty of time to plan and make arrangements for what turned out to be a very rewarding and fruitful reunion with the Manila office, field ministry, and brethren there in the Philippines.

Over the course of the planning, two main objectives were considered. The first was to simply reconnect with the Filipino work and get to know the ministry and additional leaders in the area, along with the brethren from as many congregations that could meet during our eight-day visit. Secondly was to film enough material that could provide adequate information to produce a professional video documentary designed to introduce the work in the Philippines to the CGI and the greater body of the Church of God around the world. Both objectives were accomplished.

Admittedly, the maturity of the work in the Philippines was rather surprising, and the size and scope of their operation was pleasantly encouraging. The enthusiasm of those employees working at the home office was a real treat to experience. Everyone was so friendly and accommodating. Elder Rene Corpuz was our primary contact who made our arrangements, and was kind enough to coordinate with the Filipino ministry the eight-day agenda that allowed us the time and means to accomplish all we did. Our thanks goes out to him and all those who were so instrumental in helping make this trip possible and so mutually beneficial for everyone.

The Adventure Begins

The first day was filled with visiting the home office, located in the IBM Plaza, Eastwood City Cyberpark, Bagumbayan, Quezon City, up on the 8th floor. Here in this office of about 2,000 square



Home Office Employees

feet is where much of the distribution of booklets, articles, and video and audio materials are printed, packaged, dubbed, and mailed. Requests for literature and other products, including visits, are received at this location where Elder Corpuz and Elder Eleno Mellomida, both full-time ministers employed by the Filipino work, review these inquiries to determine and arrange the most appropriate response to the requests.

On this particular day, Bill conducted interviews with Elders Corpuz and Mellomida throughout the day, with Jeff doing the videography. These interviews were conducted to gather some context of the history concerning the work and the personal stories from both of these elders. Additionally, Elder Corpuz shared with us an overview of the history of the Filipino church and work—from how they started to how they got to where they are today.

He also took the time to review how they reprint all the written materials there to save the CGI money by eliminating the high cost of shipping overseas. He explained how they have been regularly publishing an *Armor of God* full-color magazine for many years, with about six issues a year—an issue every other month. Along with this, many varieties of all the CGI literature are made available through this office and distributed throughout the archipelago for those inter-

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www.cgi.org

Open Church Policy

The Church of God International is an open church. We have many people attending who are new in the faith. Some will not always keep each of God's laws as they should, and some will not believe everything we teach. We pray that they may be strengthened through the services we render and the examples we set as they come to a closer walk with their God. We request that you be neither judgmental nor base your standard for obedience on what you see your brother do. Christ is our standard, not weak and sinful men. Always remember that you will be judged for what *you* do, not what others do. Your job is to pray for them, set the right example, and please the Father in all that you do. □

God's Holydays 2016

New Testament Passover

April 21, 2016 (Observed at sundown)

Feast of Unleavened Bread

April 23–29, 2016

Pentecost

June 12, 2016

Feast of Trumpets

October 3, 2016

Day of Atonement

October 12, 2016

Feast of Tabernacles

October 17–23, 2016

Last Great Day

October 24, 2016

Holydays are observed beginning sundown the previous evening and end at sundown on the days listed. Passover is observed at sundown on the day listed.

Download the *Holy Day Calendar 2015–2017*
<http://cgi.org/holy-days/>

Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if *you*, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800–1000 words in either .doc, docx, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson@cgi.org or lloyd Cary@gmail.com or, preferably, to *both*.



DEADLINE for the next issue is August 15th 2016.

We look forward to seeing you soon... *in print!*

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11:00 Central Standard Time
 at www.cgi.org

Simply go to the website, choose "Media," then click on the link for "Weekly Webcast." Best results are achieved with a high-speed Internet connection. *Please be patient and be prepared to retry the link until you connect.*

All of our materials and services are offered to the public *free of charge*. Many naturally ask us how we can afford to send out thousands of booklets and CDs each month. The answer is simple: On a regular basis, prayerful friends and members of the *Church of God International* voluntarily support us with tithes and offerings to further the advancement of the Gospel to the world. No financial obligation is ever demanded, but if you are moved to support this work of God, donations are gratefully accepted. Simply click on the "donate" tab on the homepage of our website (www.cgi.org) and follow the links to donate via credit card, or you can mail a check or money order to the following:

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NOTICE: *The International News* welcomes submissions of articles, features, church news, pictures, or manuscripts. However, it cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited materials. Materials submitted can sent through the postal service, but electronic submissions are preferred.

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Bill speaking at the Manila Campaign

ested. It's quite an undertaking for just a handful of people who are working full-time to make sure all the requests are met.

That evening, the ministry arranged a "meet and greet" opportunity that included a six-course meal. It was served in a private room that was very nicely decorated. The cuisine was a diversity of foods from the culture of the Philippines, complete with drinks and dessert. A lot of good conversation, fellowship, laughs, and sharing of stories and background of each other's lives complemented the evening. It was a great time well spent, "breaking the ice" and getting to know each other.

On the Sabbath, services were held at the very beautiful EDSA Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City. Everyone was just so excited, and greeted us with a show of enthusiasm that was almost overwhelming. To the credit of all the congregations, the arrangements were just exceptional, and the choirs and special music performances were outstanding. The atmosphere was charged with a great amount of energy. Jeff went ahead and addressed approximately 130 congregants who attended the morning web-cast services, covering the topic concerning the proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After enjoying a fully provided multi-entrée buffet for lunch, Bill conducted a second web-cast presentation to a group of about 230 people in attendance, of which about a third were brand new, having never before attended any CGI-sponsored event. The Philippines ministry wanted this presented as a Public Campaign, open to all. Invitations went out, as well as some local advertising. Bill spoke on the *Voices of the Prophets*, which focused on current geopolitical events that appear to be prophetically developing in our troubled times. It seemed everyone enjoyed the presentation, since a Q&A session was conducted, affording the audience to allow Bill to field questions, and this continued for almost an additional hour.

The following day, early in the morning, both men met up with Joshua Mordeno and Elder Corpuz and boarded an airplane bound for Naga City. About an hour later, we landed 300 miles south of Manila, only to be driven to the Avenue Hotel in Naga City where about 60 people were waiting for services. The local congregation arranged this also as a Public Campaign, which attracted about 10 or so first-time attendees. Bill's message this time was on the destiny of mankind and what God expects from us as Christians. Again, a Q&A session was afforded to all those in attendance, which resulted in a lively inter-active event for almost another hour. It, too, was an afternoon filled with a great amount of enthusiasm, combined with very warm fellowship.



After some time to freshen up, the "Manila Entourage" took to the streets of Naga City to make their way to the Luntok family's home for dinner and fellowship with the local congregation. Messrs. Corpuz and Mordeno waved down a "Willy" for transportation and the "Entourage" boarded the vehicle. This was a customized 1940s Jeep that has been modified into a small bus seating about 20 people. It was graphically painted (think "hippy bus" of the 1960s) and was quite the experience to ride. They arrived to an enthusiastic crowd who greeted them with open arms, surrounded by the cultural melodies of Filipino music and the aroma of cooked bananas, coconuts, and tables full of fresh cuisine right from the kitchens of those in our company. What a night of fun and discussion! It was great getting to know all who were there and sharing laughs, good conversation, and learning about the local culture in this area of the Philippines.

The Return Back to Manila

The morning of the next day, the "Manila Entourage" boarded a plane back to Manila to continue the well-planned agenda. Upon landing at the Manila airport, they were reunited with Elder William Co, who accompanied us for a trip to Tagaytay. This is the area where one of two Feast sites is held. This Tagaytay site will usually accommodate about 300 people,

and is a beautiful destination site for anyone considering the Philippines for the Feast.

Upon arriving at Tagaytay, Elder Co's wife, Menchu, joined the group. Together they toured this Feast site, located about 50 miles outside of Manila, in the country. It is located on the cone of a volcano—a beautiful area surrounded by mountains, grass-covered rolling hills, and a wonderful facility to meet in with plenty of restaurants and shops in the area. The highlight of this location is the lake that is inside the cone. Much like Crater Lake in Oregon, USA, this crater has a lake inside of it too, but about 10 times the size. It's Crater Lake on steroids! Gorgeous! There are many water sports and functions available for your full enjoyment on the water. It really is a well-suited location for the Feast, and has to be one of the most beautiful Feast sites one could attend.



The crater within a crater at Tagaytay

After touring the area with the Co's, we were taken to the beautiful "Spa and Lodge at Tagaytay Highlands Resort." This hotel sits on a hill overlooking the landscape of the Tagaytay area. Needless to say, it was stunning! After a full day of flying, driving, and touring, and an evening dinner, sleep was a welcomed experience.

In the morning, everyone returned back to Manila to check back into the Eastwood Richmond Hotel, where arrangements were made by Elder Winston Co (William's brother) for the remaining ministerial interviews, meetings, and additional fellowship. The next day was spent interviewing many of the ministers who came from a variety of areas to share their stories about the ministries they manage and the service they provide for the Work of God in the Philippines.

That evening was pleasant, happy, and encouraging, but sad at the same time. This was due to the fact Bill and Jeff were departing the next morning, and this would be the last opportunity for fellowship. It signified the last time for seeing the many new friends they came to know and appreciate on this trip. But regardless, the evening was filled with a lot of food and drink, laughter, and discussions about the events that took place over the last eight days, and provided opportunity to express gratitude for all that was arranged and accomplished by the planning committee and ministry of the Philippines. It was decided not to say *Good-bye*, but instead, *Until we meet again*. They had to leave, but not without good reason to return and revisit this beautiful part of the world at some time in the near future.

As Bill and Jeff departed, they couldn't help but reflect on and consider all they saw, heard, and did along the way, along with the many new friend-ships they experienced. The eight days went by so quickly—much like the Feast does once it gets underway. Many memories were captured in so much of the video and pictures taken. We hope to share extensively with as many as possible once the documentary we intend to produce is completed.



Elder William Co and his wife Menchu at the Feast site in Tagaytay

Let us know if you are interested in receiving your own personal copy of this wonderful and interesting introduction to *The Work of Jesus Christ in the Philippines*. Simply request it at: info@cgi.org or call 903-939-2929 in the USA between the hours of 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM Central. Leave us your mailing address, and as soon as it becomes available, we will send it out to you.

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Photos From the Philippines



Elder Rene Corpuz (left) and
Joshua Mordeno



Jeff Reed and
Elder Corpuz



Bill Watson and Elder William Co
having lunch



Jeff, Bill, Elder Rene Corpuz,
and member Joshua Mordeno at
the airport traveling to Naga City



Naga City members at the potluck
at Mr. and Mrs. Luntok's home



More members at the Luntok's home



Elder William Co at the hotel
we stayed at in Tagaytay



Cityscape of the greater Manila area



Cubicles at the CGI home office



The landscape of the Feast site at Tagaytay



The gardens of Tagaytay



The "farewell fellowship"
before Bill and Jeff departed



Advertising banner for
the Manila Campaign
at the hotel



Literature displayed at the Philippines
CGI home office

Photos From the Philippines



More members at the Luntok party after the Naga City Campaign



Leaders from the greater Manila area



Elder Corpuz at his desk in the CGI office



Bill talking to a member at the Naga City Campaign



Dinner with the Co's



Jeff sitting with General MacArthur



Bill and Jeff having lunch with Elder William Co



Philippines Cuisine



Visiting a WW II memorial with Elders Reed and Corpuz, along with Manila members Alex and Malou Zehcnas



Jeff having lunch with Elder Corpuz and Manila members Alex and Malou Zehcnas



Tagaytay Feast Site Meeting Room



Bill and Jeff on tour with Elder Corpuz and Manila members Alex and Malou Zehcnas



Typical city traffic



A “Wiley” (modified Jeep used for public transportation)

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Bill interviewing the Elders



Elder Eduardo Rodrigo interviewed



Bill interviewing Elder Eduardo Rodrigo



Elder William Co being interviewed



Bill interviewing Elder William Co



Bill interviewing Elder Corpuz

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”

(Matthew 28:19–20)



Elder Melchor Arcinas (left), Elder Eleno Mellomida (middle), Elder Eduardo Rodrigo (right)



Jeff behind the camera



Bill interviewing Elder Eleno Mellomida

Congregations

The CGI Philippines has many congregations and always welcomes visitors and newcomers. Worship services are open to the public and there is no pre-screening or interview conducted prior to your visit. We hope you'll join us for Sabbath services soon.

Manila Alabang
Iloilo City Malolos
Cebu City Naga City
Mindanao and
Int'l Negros Occidental



Winston Co being interviewed



Bill interviewing Winston Co



Elder Melchor Arcinas being interviewed



Bill interviewing Elder Melchor Arcinas



Bill interviewing Elder Eleno Mellomida



Bill interviewing Elder Eleno Mellomida

ISLAM—A PROPHETIC CONSIDERATION?—PART III

Many do not understand Islam is actually a theocracy because, central to its core, it is a political movement—but is more dangerous than most realize, because it's driven by religious ideologies and supported by Islamic Fundamentalists who are beholden to a demented religiosity. This makes it much more complicated than Socialism, Communism, or Fascism.



Bill Watson

ling the hegemony of the hosting culture.

Let us be reminded there are *two distinct strategies* used by Muslims to conquer their targets for dominance. Obviously, Jihad is *one* method used by this theocratic fundamentalist movement. But *secondly*, and often underestimated, is that of embedding in the culture they migrate to, and then integrating so as to gain influence within the *political* segment of the culture.

This second method or strategy can be executed in a few different ways. First, it can be accomplished very legally and consequently seamlessly, with a degree of uncontested acceptance by simply assimilating as is necessary to acquire the influence and favor for election into a political office via the normal and natural means of a democratic system. This has been done for many years and is still done in the United States. As a matter of fact, there are currently two Muslim Congressmen, Muslim mayors in Florida, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and a Muslim majority running the city of Hamtramck, Michigan, which now conducts the call to prayer multiple times a day throughout the city. All of this was voted in by the people within those districts and communities. Clearly, in time, their numbers will grow into a majority that can be very threatening and ultimately detrimental for maintaining the laws and traditions of the hosting nation or culture. Hamtramck, Michigan is a *perfect example* of how a Polish community has been essentially replaced by Islamic culture. It's no secret that even the most moderate, non-violent Muslims will favor Islamic law—Sharia—over a nation's constitutional law, thereby eventually becoming the domineering hegemony through peaceful compromises and concessions. Even the city of London, England recently voted in their first Muslim mayor, thereby substantiating this exact strategic method!

In addition, we see something happening that most Muslims call Hijra. This is the Arabic word describing what Mohammad did when moving to Medina from Mecca. This term of migration, or “moving” is now being assigned as a facsimile to the migration of literally millions of Muslim refugees to Europe and the rest of the world. However, it is nothing more than a civilian *invasion* of Islamic influence and culture with the intent to *dominate*—as was conducted by Muhammad when he fled to Medina. It's the same principle being applied today and labeled as such by many Muslim leaders. This often results in what we are now witnessing throughout Europe, and in particular areas of the United States, where certain long established indigenous ethnicities and cultures are required to concede and compromise their values and traditions to accommodate Islamic laws and lifestyle requirements, even going so far as to ban certain holidays, celebrations, and foods in school, dress, or any other items Muslims might find offensive. As mentioned before—it's what they do! They become very assertive, somewhat xenophobic, and bigoted toward anything considered foreign or strange to Islamic law. Islam, at its core, is very intolerant and prejudicial toward *anything* contrary to Islamic thought and its theological ideas—and that is why it's considered so pugnacious, pernicious, and *perilous*!

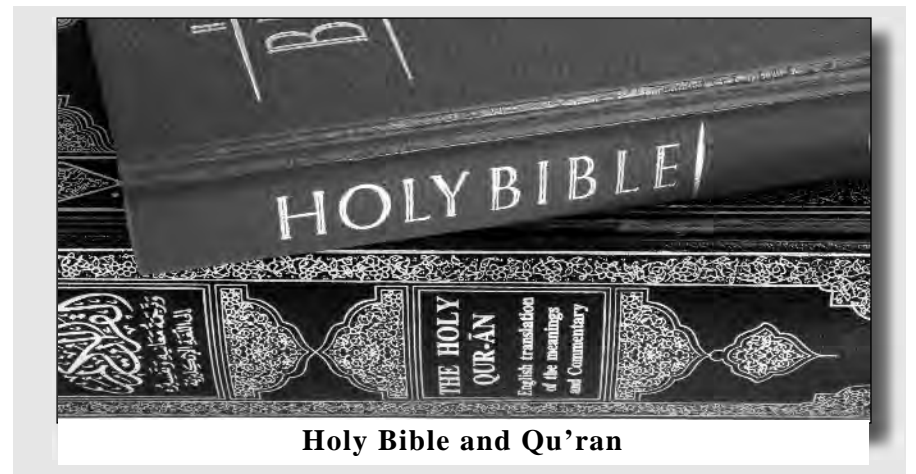
An Additional Compounding Threat About Islam

Make no mistake: Islam is *absolutely* not a friend of the Christian Church. Though there are some who argue the God of the Old Testament is the same as Allah, this simply is just not true! Let's take a moment to compare some fundamental differences to prove this point and thereby establish the following: Allah and YHVH are *not* the same, nor does the Qu'ran agree with the Old or New Testament. These are two important premises to establish going forward in clarifying the definition of Islam and what it teaches.

What the Qu'ran teaches and claims is quite different from what the Bible heralds, discloses, and authentically institutes. Notice:

Muhammad wrote the Qu'ran over a period of 20 years. He received his first revelation at the age of 42 in A.D. 612 and died in A.D. 632 at the

age of 62. During that period, he claimed the angel Gabriel gave him revelations while in a trance, which allegedly revealed and established him as Allah's prophet. These revelations were first presented to the Arabs of Arabia and then spread throughout the world. Historically, Muhammad's initial method of converting others was by ruthless military action (Jihad), forcing the non-believers to either accept Islam or die. He was known for his forceful military conquests using robbery, murder, and terror as his most common methods of persuasion. The Old and New Testaments of the Bible do not teach any of this.



The five pillars of Islam are: 1) There is no God but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah—his prophet; 2) Prayer is to be performed five times daily, facing Mecca, on Fridays in a mosque; 3) Alms and offerings are to be given to Allah as acts of piety; 4) Fast during the month of Ramadan; 5) Make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in your life. The Bible also does not teach any of this.

According to *Differences—Bible vs. The Koran* by Ben J. Smith, the Qu'ran teaches the following: (S=Sura)

Muhammad is Allah's prophet above all others (S-5:75)

Jesus Christ is only a prophet (S-5:75)

Jesus is not the Son of God (S-3:59, 9:30, 10:68-69, 19:35)

Jesus did not die on the cross (S-4:147)

Jesus did not resurrect from the dead (S-4:158)

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the *sister of Aaron*, the brother of Moses (S-19:27-28)

Muhammad came as the Messiah of the Old Testament (S-7:158)

Muhammad came as the Holy Spirit of the New Testament (S-61:6-7)

The Jews backslid and lost their right to the Old Covenant (S-61:5)

Christians backslid and lost their right to the New Covenant (S-9:30)

Believers (Muslims) shouldn't be friends with Jews or Christians (S-5:51)

Note: The Qu'ran doesn't mention the 10 Commandments

Enemies or adversaries of Islam should be killed (S-9:73)

No religion has the right to exist but Islam (S-2:256)

The world will be conquered by Jihad (S-48:27-28, 61:9)

Men are allowed to have as many as four wives (S-4:34)

Muhammad could have as many as he wanted (S-33:51)

Rebellious wives can be beaten (S-4:34) (S-3:139-140, 42:39)

20 percent of all war booty goes to Muhammad for Allah's good (S-8:44)

Men should take revenge and remain unforgiving.

Obviously, the above list illustrates some glaring differences between the teachings of Islam and the teachings of the Christian Bible. It's important for all of us to begin recognizing Islam is not similar in any way, shape, or fashion, and has *nothing* in common with Christianity—from its origins and who wrote it, to the theology and god it advances. Allah and YHVH are *two different concepts*, and only YHVH is God, *not Allah*!

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A true Muslim will argue the Bible has been corrupted and presently is a misleading and fraudulent document. This is how they justify not conceding to the blatant contradictions the Qu'ran has with the Bible. Many Muslims, especially the Imams, firmly believe both Jews and Christians lost their right to the Covenants due to their disobedience toward God by abandoning His ways! And they believe the Old and New Testaments are mischaracterizing the story of Ishmael and Israel, as well as the record of what Jesus went through and His announcement and claim to be the Son of God and mankind's living Messiah.

We see very serious differences of belief and teaching in these two documents. Fundamentally, Islam is at *variance* with the Bible, and therefore the Qu'ran is *unacceptable* as a credible document for consideration. This presents quite a dilemma when attempting to debate these two religious views, or come to an acceptable understanding about the differences between Islam and Christianity.

A Dangerous Complication: The Eschatological Factor

What most of the West doesn't realize, is many Shiite Muslims believe a Messiah is promised, confirmed in the Hadith (an oral Islamic commentary of the Qu'ran and life of Muhammad, much like the Talmud is to the Jew). It's known as the return of the 12th Imam, or the Imam al-Mahdi. This doctrinal teaching underscores much of the motivation behind what is played out in the terrorist attacks around the world. Many Muslims believe we are witnessing the "natural course" of the signs of the end times. This adds an *eschatological dynamic* to these terrorist activities that cements the reason for this hate and violence. Why? Because Muslims who adopt this view believe they're doing God a favor by helping to set up the *conditions of chaos* for the al-Mahdi's return. This translates to a motivational factor that provides those Jihadis the sense of urgency and reason to sacrifice consistently, at all costs, for the "cause of chaos" that allegedly precedes the coming of this Islamic Imam al-Mahdi. In other words, this is central to the "psyche" of the Jihadist!

Iran has about 75–90 million people living in the country with about 90 percent being *Shia* Muslims who believe the 12th Imam, or al-Mahdi, is *alive today*. Their belief describes the al-Mahdi as being alive, and is in occultation (hiding) since A.D. 869, until the Day of Judgment. That's right, they believe he is alive *right now*, and has been for some 11 to 12 centuries. At the time of judgment, he will reveal himself as Messiah, or Guide, and show humanity the right path to follow for achieving world peace and brotherly love. This is at the core of the eschatological teaching of how Islam will finally become the world's religion and save mankind from self destruction.



Jihadist

This eschatological factor is a *significant* belief in the Islamic religion in general, and goes back to the idea of the 12th Imam. Interestingly, some scholars, including Bernard Lewis, Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Studies, *Princeton University*, confirms this teaching and references that this Shia Imam is in occultation (hiding and seclusion), since A.D. 869, and explains it is not a new teaching, but actually can be traced back to about A.D. 873.

There is a *Sunni* version of this teaching, but with a slight difference. They believe the al-Mahdi will come from Muhammad's family, but is *not* currently in hiding or living in seclusion, but rather has yet to come and is only known by Allah. He exclusively knows who this al-Mahdi is—and when the Imam al-Mahdi returns, he will come back with Isa (Jesus Christ)—and together, they will subdue the tyranny and evil of the world from the infidels and set the world "right" by establishing Islam as the global religion. This is the *objective* of the non-violent (moderate) and the violent (Jihadist) Fundamentalist Muslim.

However, this is the important point we should recognize: We're dealing with a *faith*—Shia or Sunni—it is a faith! This is what makes the Islamic Jihadi terrorism so difficult and enormously menacing when compared to contending with the "standard" political ideal like Communism, Socialism, or Fascism. We can't forget: When facing off with the *secular* political world powers of the Soviet Union and Red China during the days of the Cold War of the 50s through the 90s, there was a well ingrained understanding: "Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD). This "gentlemen's understanding" kept everyone in check, frozen in the position of "stalemate."

But in the case of an Islamic nuclear armed Shia Republic of Iran, there is no idea of "Mutual Assured Destruction." Instead, their worldview is simply, "Israel is the little Satan and the USA is the big Satan; and both need to be obliterated!" This presents a far more treacherous, threatening condi-

tion! Frankly, this is a radical difference which can only be described as an *apocalyptic* worldview; and due to the underpinning hatred they have for the West, combined with a *fearless* disregard of retaliation, fueled by their theology of the return of the al-Mahdi Messiah—we should easily and plainly see the menacing threat and risk this presents to the United States, Israel, and the rest of the world—especially since the current Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, and President Rouhani are both supporters of the 12th Imam, or the al-Mahdi, as is also former President Ahmandinejad.

What Does This Tell Us?

Now we have the inherent concern, that since inclusive to this theology is the understanding this 12th Imam will return during a time of great calamity, unrest, and chaos, there just might be *other* motivating factors behind Iran's seemingly relentless pursuit of nuclear development and the necessary ballistic missile delivery systems they are currently designing. These eschatological beliefs should raise concerns that perhaps, the possibility exists that what's *really* behind Iran's initiatives for nuclear development is a desire to *cause* the disruptive circumstances generating the cataclysmic conditions that will bring the al-Mahdi's return. That is an unnerving thought to consider, but unfortunately, extremely *plausible* considering the theology that underscores the mentality of the Islamic Fundamentalist!

Yet incredibly, Western leadership will not address this fight for what it really is—a *religious* conflict, deeply imbedded with theological differences providing fuel for a relentless war of *potential mass destruction* of biblical proportions. The West insistently refuses to recognize these *real possibilities*.

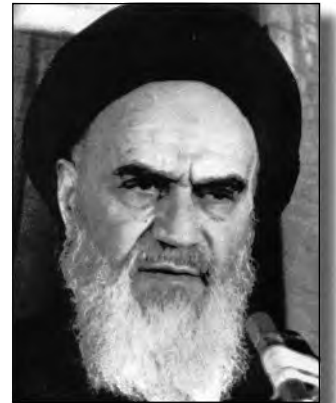
Sadly, many in the West have ignored the plain statement of Shaker Assem, representing the Islamic Liberation Party, when he said, "People who say there is a conflict between Sharia and Western democracy *are right*." Now what is so difficult or hard to understand about his statement? What is it we don't understand?

In 1998, Omar Ahmad, Board Chairman of the *Council on American Islamic Relations* (CAIR) at the time, said, "Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant. The Qu'ran should be the highest authority in America, and Islam the only accepted religion on earth." CAIR spokesman Ibrahim Hooper was just as forthright when he said, "I wouldn't want to create the impression that I wouldn't like the government of the United States to be Islamic sometime in the future. But I'm not going to do anything violent to promote that. I'm going to do it through education." This goes to the *second strategy* we mentioned: embedding into the hosting culture and *through legal and natural means* using the freedoms provided by the hosting nation's laws to advance the propagation of Islamic law—which is Sharia!

What must clearly be understood is the *agenda*, which is to restore a *caliphate*, since Islam makes *no distinction* between the religious and secular arms of the Islamic theocratic movement. As mentioned, it's their *intent* to relieve mankind from what Muslims perceive as "humanities infringement." In their minds, this is idolatry—encroaching on God's sovereign right to guide human affairs. Therefore, they see it as their responsibility to *set the stage* for the return of the Imam al-Mahdi, and the construct of a caliphate is key to the success of their empowerment to accomplish this objective.

We cannot forget the deep anguish many Jihadis have at the loss of the most recent caliphate that was dismantled in 1924, after the Ottoman Empire fell at the end of WW I. It occurred when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (the father of the Turks), the first President of Turkey, announced the establishment of a secular "Turkish Republic"—officially abandoning the caliphate structure. This sealed the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and the government's separation from the strong connection and influence of Islamic law—it was the death of the last caliphate of our modern day.

So where is all this leading? Will Islam continue to play a role in the prophetic scenarios that are building? And if so, will it play a *major* or *minor* role in the developing circumstances that are sure to result in a global "Babylonian System" that is destined to influence and affect mankind on a worldwide scale (Daniel 7:23–27, Revelation 18:9–11, 15–18)? We'll explore some of these questions in our next installment about whether Islam is a prophetic concern.



Ayatollah Ruhollah
Khomeini



President of Iran
Hassan Rouhani

The Coming One-World Religion

by George Ramocan



George Ramocan

The Bible prophesies that in the end time, a false prophet will arise displaying all sorts of counterfeit miracles that will deceive the world and cause the inhabitants of the earth to follow after Satan. In reference to this coming time, the apostle John writes in Revelation 13:11–15:

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein

to worship the first beast.... And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”

The “Second Beast” in this passage is evidently a counterfeit Christian leader, because “he had two horns like a lamb”—a depiction of Christ, the “Lamb of God,” the “Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29, 36). Also, the Prophet referred to in this passage is counterfeit and Satanic, because Revelation 13:11 says “he spake as a dragon,” depicting Satan, who is described in the Bible as a “dragon” (Revelation 12:9).

Note also in Revelation 16:13–14 that both the Beast and the False Prophet are inhabited by demonic spirits: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

So the leader of the coming one-world religion will be a False Prophet under Satan’s control who will perform great wonders and counterfeit miracles that lead the world into worshipping Satan the Devil.

What Significance Does This Prophecy Have For the Church and For You as a Believer?

The Bible warns that the coming time when the Beast and the False Prophet will rule the world will be the most horrific and painful time in human history. Referring to the “Beast,” Revelation 13:7 says he was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. Speaking of this time, Jesus said in Matthew 24:21 that it will be a time of great distress unequalled from the beginning of the world until now, and never to be equaled. Revelation 13:8 says that he (the Beast) was given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation.

This means that God’s people will be persecuted, tortured, and killed for “keeping God’s commandments and having the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The challenge therefore is that those who are not grounded in the faith will be easily swayed when tribulation comes upon them. Many false teachers will arise from the leadership within the church—men who were once faithful to the truth and are now swayed.

The apostle Peter says, “false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words...” (2 Peter 2:1–3). To withstand these terrible times that lie ahead, believers must learn to contend for the faith (Jude 3) and be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks a defense for their faith (1 Peter 3:15) and expose false teachers and teachings designed by Satan to deceive them (Romans 16:17–18).

Is the Church an Organization?

by Adrian Davis



Adrian Davis

I think we can all agree that the Church of God is a living organism; we are all members of the body of Christ. But is the church also an organization?

Some say no. They believe organizations are inherently evil. Others think the church is both an organism and an organization.

To answer this question, let’s first define what we mean by an organization. Businessdictionary.com provides a thoughtful definition:

“A social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals. All organizations have a management structure that determines relationships between the different activities and the members, and subdivides and assigns roles, responsibilities, and authority to carry out different tasks.”

Some would like to argue that God’s church is not a business. However, when we look at this definition, it accurately captures the work of the church. We are a social unit. We have a management structure ordained by Christ (who is our Head, and we are led by a plurality of elders who in turn are supported by a diaconate); enabling us to carry out our work. Moreover, God likens Himself to a businessman who makes investments and expects returns on His investments. God is running a family business. It has a mission, and He has a vision for it.

When we look at Acts 6, we see that as the church grew, organization became necessary.

“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost 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 6:2–4).

This gets to the heart of why organization is necessary. It speaks to division of labour. Countries, economies, families, and every other social structure perform more highly when members can divide their labour. Division of labour becomes increasingly important as the church grows in size. The church’s growth is directed by God. God added thousands of believers to the church as the apostles boldly preached the Gospel. It became untenable for everyone to do everything. The church had a purpose, and lack of organization interfered with its ability to achieve that purpose. God says, through the prophet Isaiah, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isaiah 58:1).

The fragmented church is unable to cry aloud. The church’s volume grows as we can pool our resources. When we comprehend the urgency of the times we are living in, agape love should drive us to cooperate with each other in order to warn the world. Christ tells us in Matthew 24 that as our world unravels, this Gospel message will be preached in all the world as a witness.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

It will require training, encouragement, and cooperation to successfully overcome the persecution and obstacles ahead. Home fellowships are wonderful, but they do not enable us to do the work of warning at scale. Those who rail against organizations generally do so because they’ve been abused by organizations. That is the inherent danger of social organizations. When broken human beings come together, there is always the risk of abuse. This is as true of home fellowships as it is of organizations. Size doesn’t protect us from human nature. Obedience to Christ does. Christ commands us to avoid this abuse by instructing us to commit to servant-leadership and willing submission.

Ephesians 5:21: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

Matthew 20:26: “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister”

Now, even though it is clear that the church must be organized, it is not true that the church must be one monolithic organization.

Organization, continued on page 14

Brace Yourself! Stormy Weather Is Coming!

by Lloyd W. Cary



What would you think of a meteorologist who would forecast only *good weather*? Can you imagine a weather forecaster who ignored any inclement weather coming your way, whether it be winter storms, summer drought, tornadoes, earthquakes, or hurricanes? You would probably fire him and hire a *faithful* weatherman! And rightly so! He would be misleading his hearers with *half-truths*.

The same is true of a news broadcaster who would report only *good news*, ignoring wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, and so on. He would not be trustworthy because he would only give you *part* of the news—the part he thinks you would want to hear. He might make you feel euphoric for a while, but you would probably soon change the station to hear “the rest of the story.”

Both the meteorologist and the news broadcaster are classes of “watchmen.” There is a spiritual parallel here for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. The God who says He cares for His people said, “Also I set *watchmen* over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, *We will not hearken*” (Jeremiah 6:17).

Yes, there are millions of people who do not want to hear the bad news—“doom and gloom,” as they call it. Yet God speaks of much gloominess in the future for those who will not read and heed His words (Joel 2:2; Zephaniah 1:15).

On the other hand, the masses are, in effect, “sticking their finger in God’s eye” by wallowing in sins of Sabbath breaking, adultery, lying, stealing, murdering, (even passing laws permitting abortion), homosexuality, and gender confusion. They think they are getting away with sin. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The Scriptures warn, “... behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23).

God, in His mercy, always gives men warning and a space of time to repent (Luke 13:3,5). He sends “watchmen” to warn His people.

“So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a *watchman* unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me” (Ezekiel 33:7). Read the entire 33rd chapter in your own Bible. If men hear but do not heed God’s warning messages, their blood is upon their own head.

Yet, human nature being what it is (Jeremiah 17:9), people seem to think if they do not listen to the warning of the watchman, they are not held accountable, and it will all go away.

I’ll Take a Smoothie, Please!

There are those who would want to hear only *fair* weather forecasts, and those who would rather hear only *fair weather sermons*. There are those who would “cherry-pick” what kind of messages they hear from God’s ministry. *We’re sick and tired of all the gloom and doom messages*, they complain. *These headline theology messages are depressing. Preach to us s-m-o-o-t-h things. Tickle our ears with good tidings. Tell us how great we are and how God loves us no matter what and forgives all our sins unconditionally.*

Jesus told His disciples of many hard-to-listen-to events that were soon to come to pass in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Reread them for yourself. And while you’re at it, reread Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. All of these chapters—they’re all part of God’s Word, not to be ignored.

After making many dire predictions, Christ said, “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:32–33, KJV throughout).

What’s Ahead?

Be prepared; more fair weather sermons are coming your way. “Political correctness” is a slow-acting cancer that is invading our

“Political correctness” is a slow-acting cancer that is invading our media, our nation, and even our churches.”

media, our nation, and even our churches. We don’t need to be a meteorologist to know bad weather is coming. Hopefully, when we hear the bad news, we will make preparations to be safe, whatever it takes.

Jesus amazed the religious do-gooders of His time, saying they could look at the sky and read the signs to know what kind of weather was coming, but they couldn’t read the signs of the times foretelling what lies ahead prophetically. He said, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

It is easier to read weather signs than spiritual signs. Jesus’ remark about seeing a red sky is also expressed in an age-old sailors’ adage: *Red sky at night, sailors’ delight; red sky at morning, sailors take warning.*

Far more chilling is the forecast for God’s church. Unless one lives in a cave, it is safe to say that everyone knows the world is *not* changing for the better. “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars,” Jesus said, “see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:6–13).

The apostle Paul wrote, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that *in the latter times* some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1–2; Acts 20:29–30).

Some self-deluded souls will predict, “But if we are righteous as a church, these evil things will not come our way.” “After all,” they quote, “if there had been even ten righteous men in Sodom and Gomorrah, God would not have destroyed them” (Genesis 18:32).

But human nature has not changed. Paul wrote, “This know also, that *in the last days* perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, un-

thankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a *form* of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1–5.) He added, “But evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

Will you, Dear Reader, heed and believe these grim predictions of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, or will you be like the five foolish virgins who slumbered and were not prepared for what was coming? Or will you be like the five wise virgins who were prepared ahead of time (Matthew 25:1–13)?

What is so chilling about Jesus Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 24 above, is that brethren with *agape* love (a love that is only fully possible with the receipt of God’s Holy Spirit) will allow their love to grow lukewarm, then ice-cold; and instead of loving God’s people, they will betray God’s people. What is even *more* chilling, Jesus doesn’t say it will be a few. He says “many” will allow their *agape* love to wax cold (Matthew 24:10).

What Is the Latest Spiritual Weather Forecast?

Certainly we *should* watch ourselves to take our spiritual temperature. That goes without saying. It is expected of us to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). However, this does not negate he warnings of Christ to be alert for the signs of the times (wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, etc.) Are we prayerfully growing, changing, and overcoming? Is there a *fire* in your bones to do the *work* of God (Jeremiah 20:9)? The *good* news is that we have a future ahead of us that is exceedingly great and precious, and one that is eternal. The *bad* news is the stormy weather that’s coming our way.

Every Sunday morning, tens of thousands of sermons are preached across our nation that God’s law is null and void—done away—and they are eternally secure, and as long as they have “their Jesus,” they

Brace Yourself, continued on page 11



Brace Yourself, continued from previous page

will be raptured out of all tribulation. The “R” word—repentance—is seldom mentioned. Instead, they will be churched in the doctrines of immortality of the soul, heaven, ever-burning hellfire, pagan holidays, and the health-and-wealth gospel.

A dire warning for God’s church is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:10–11: “...because they received not the love [*agape*] of the truth [John 17:17], that they might be saved. And for this cause, [because they did not have a godly love for the Word of God] GOD shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” *Awesome!* Look around you. Do we see a falling away from the truth of God? “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come *a falling away* first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). More and more unsuspecting people are deceived by *New Age*, *watered down Bibles*, *politically correct sermons*, and will stop up their ears for fear of what *people* will say. But what does *God* say?

While there may not be any weathermen or newscasters who mention only the *good* news, there are thousands in worldly churches who avoid prophecy and “the rest of the story” like the plague, preaching instead marshmallow-soft sermons to lull their followers into a fantasy gospel that does not even exist in light of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (see 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6–9 and 2 John 10). What is a true Christian to do?

God commands His servants to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and SHEW my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their *sins*” (Isaiah 58:1). The Bible defines sin as “the transgression of the Law” (1 John 3:4). How could sin be defined as breaking the law if the law is “done away” as so many preach? *Ding! Ding! Ding!* ARE WE AWAKE YET?

In a time when the morals of the country are breaking down and everyone goes primal and can only think of themselves, God will have a people on display, a light and a witness (Philippians 2:15), who truly love one another and will never let their *agape* wax cold. As we begin to feel a chill in the air, let us be clear that stormy weather is coming. The world is crowding in on us. Brace yourself—stormy weather is coming! Let us prepare now for what must shortly come to pass.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35).



Dear Sirs,

According to Bible prophecy, we are the final generation that will witness the return of Jesus Christ? A generation is approximately 40 years? Is this correct?

Also, does the Bible point to Christ’s return being between the 2020’s and 2030’s? How can we tell roughly how many decades maximum Christ’s return will be? I look forward to your reply.

God bless you, V.

Dear V,

Thank you for writing. We love hearing from our readers and viewers. Your inquiry means a lot to us.

You asked, in effect, “How long is a generation?” Good question. There are different ways to think about this.

Actually, a generation is considered to be the time between when you were born and when your first child is born. The older definition of a “generation” (the average interval between the birth of an individual and the birth of its offspring) was 20 or 25 years. However, genealogical

studies have revealed that this is too simplistic and can result in large inaccuracies during statistical calculation. Truth is: nobody knows.

You also asked if we believe we are in the final generation that will witness the return of Jesus Christ.

People have always wondered, “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world” (Matthew 24:3)? Christ never answered that question directly. Instead, He itemized certain worldwide events. In Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, He said to be on the lookout for wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes in various places, persecutions, false prophets, the need for endurance, the Gospel of the Kingdom being preached worldwide, and certain prophecies in the book of Daniel being fulfilled. Do we see any of these things going on around us?

Jesus told a parable: “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall *see* all these *things*, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Matthew 24:32–34). Do we see “the leaves on the tree,” the world events, coming to pass?

The apostle Paul followed up by prophesying, “This know also, that in THE LAST DAYS perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a *form* of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1–5). Do we *see* any of these things going on today? Certainly!

These events have been manifest throughout human history, but will *increase in INTENSITY and FREQUENCY* as we get closer and closer to Christ’s imminent return.

We hesitate to speculate where the Scriptures are silent. People have speculated about Christ’s return for millennia and they have all been wrong—no exceptions. It seems Christ never took away the *hope* from any generation that He might return in *their* lifetimes. *Why?* Because if people thought, centuries ago, that His return would be thousands of years in the future, they would have undoubtedly lost much of their drive, zeal, edge, and sense of urgency to change, grow, overcome, and do the *work* of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the whole world (Matthew 28:19–20). That is our mission, and we must be urgent on ourselves and not slumber.

Christ gave a similitude in Matthew 25:1–13 regarding the Ten Virgins (a type of the church) just before His coming to Judgment. Notice *all ten* of the Virgins went to sleep! “While the bridegroom tarried, they *all* slumbered and slept” (Matthew 25:5). Only *half* were prepared for His return. This illustration was designed to show and enforce His teaching as to watchfulness.

Indeed, Christ said, “Verily I say unto you, This generation [the generation being spoken of in the context] shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Matthew 24:34). And He added, “But of that day and hour knoweth *NO* man, no, not the angels of heaven, but *my Father ONLY*” (Matthew 24:36).

The *biblical* answer to your question, “How can we tell roughly how many decades maximum Christ’s return will be?” is that, *NO MAN KNOWS* the day or the hour—any man who *says* he knows is a false prophet, a liar, or both. But Christ gave us signs or *events* to watch to let us know His return is *near*. “So likewise ye, when ye shall *see* all these things, *know* that it is *near*, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:33; 25:13). It is encouraging to know, “...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13). It is not *Christianity* we must endure, but the corruption, ways, and sins of this present evil world (Galatians 1:4)!

To help you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), we encourage you to request our free booklets, *A World in Transition; The Way of Escape—Divine Protection in the Last Days* [WOE]; and *How to Be a Real Christian* [REL]. You might also benefit from our free CDs, *Assault on Christians* [C402] and *The Wandering Sheep* [C279].

Also, be sure to visit our updated web site at www.cgi.org. We have hundreds and hundreds of sermons, booklets, and articles posted here for your benefit and edification.

Thank you once again for writing, V. If you have any further questions or comments, be sure to send them in. We are here to help and serve you. That’s why we are here.

We pray that God will continue to bless you and keep watch over you in everything—for your health, your healing, and that God’s love and grace will be upon you.

Personal Correspondence Department

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
(2 Timothy 2:15)

The Church of God International (Philippines)

Who Are We?

Jesus Christ founded His church (Matthew 16:18), gave it His teachings (Matthew 28:20), proclaimed Himself its leader (Ephesians 1:22), and promised never to forsake it (Matthew 28:20).

The *Church of God International* is a human organization comprised of members of Jesus Christ's own spiritual church, and is faithful, so far as human frailty permits, to Christ's example, teachings, and directives as recorded in the Bible and further clarified by the influence of the Holy Spirit in the context of the modern world. These statements may sound similar to those made by many other Christian churches, but we of the CGI make one further claim which we challenge any other church to perform: to prove whether its statements are the truth. Let us see how the CGI came to be organized, what we do, and what we believe.

The *Church of God International* is based in Tyler, Texas, U.S.A. Incorporated in 1978, CGI has ministers and congregations scattered throughout the United States and Canada. We also have churches in Jamaica, the Philippines, and Australia. Our mission is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world (Matthew 28:19). We are blessed with four basic tools to accomplish this:

- Personal and local church evangelism
- Television broadcasting
- Booklets, brochures, and study CDs
- The Internet

A Very Brief Look at 2,000 Years of History

In the pages of the New Testament, you read of Jesus Christ founding His church, and of the early exploits of that church. Jesus Christ set the example of serving, teaching, and living according to the principles of the Old Testament, not merely on a physical letter-of-the-law basis, but on a higher level—that of a spiritual, mental intent.

He then opened the way for everyone to live at that level. First, through His crucifixion, death, and burial, each of us may obtain forgiveness of our own sins, our own disobedience to God and His commandments. Then, through His resurrection and ascension to the Father, each of us may attain to the glory of eternal life with the Father.

However, there is much, much more to Christ's personal teaching, and its further expansion throughout the pages of the Bible than that essential kernel. To spread this entire message, Christ selected His apostles, established His church, and sent out His people as witnesses and teachers of His way.

The latter books of the New Testament tell of many of their travels, and of the mighty works they performed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, it wasn't long before false apostles, false ministers, and pagan or perverse doctrines began to subvert the church. The true apostles had to instruct their flocks to "strive for the message once delivered to the saints." But it was a losing battle, so far as the bulk of Christianity was concerned. Down through the centuries, more and more of Christ's original teaching has been lost, and a great variety of pagan doctrines, customs, and ideas introduced. The result is that today there are hundreds of disagreeing "Christian" sects and denominations, some of which even go so far as to proclaim that one can entirely disregard Christ, His teachings, and all the Bible, and still be on the road to salvation.

On the brighter side, history records that there have always been small, often scattered, groups of Christians who have rejected pagan ideas and human hierarchies. They have clung loyally and tenaciously to the crystal-clear teachings of Christ and the Bible, and have resisted, often to death, the many attempts to expunge them. As sparkling lights across the dark centuries, one can see such names as the Nazarenes, the Bogomils, the Waldensians, the Church of God (7th Day), and many others.

Unfortunately, such groups do not last forever. They may simply die out; they may finally yield to the great pressures they are under; or they may forget that we are commanded to continue to "grow in grace and knowledge" and so lose their sense of direction and purpose. Nevertheless, Jesus stated that His church would always exist; the "gates of hell" would never prevail against it. Thus, even in this secular, materialistic, dangerous world, there are still true followers of Jesus trying their utmost to follow His leadership. It is of such that the *Church of God International* is composed.

The CGI: Are We Only a TV Ministry?

The most conspicuous members of the CGI are the ministers like Vance Stinson, Bronson James, Mike James, Jeff Reed, and Bill Watson, who are hosting the *Armor of God* television program. This leaves an impression that they are all there is to the church. Far from it. All over the United States and in many other parts of the world (such as the Philippines, Australia, Canada) there are local church groups meeting on a weekly basis. It is these local church groups which provide a considerable portion of the resources, enabling our TV hosts to speak out via the various media and proclaim Christ's Good News.

As is clearly stated throughout the Bible, and reinforced by the example of Christ and the apostles, the day of which Jesus is Lord, the day on which we are to rest from our labors and draw closer to God is the Sabbath (Saturday). So, each Sabbath, numerous CGI church groups meet to fellowship together and hear God's ministers expound the Bible to them. Other smaller groups watch videotapes or hear audiotapes of sermons sent from the CGI Home Office in Tyler, Texas.

Local groups may have other activities and programs as the Spirit leads them. However, all celebrate God's own annual commanded holydays: PASSOVER and the FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, PENTECOST, the FEAST OF TRUMPETS, and the DAY OF ATONEMENT (Leviticus 23). In particular, during the FEAST OF TABERNACLES and the LAST GREAT DAY, as many as are able to, the entire membership of the CGI meets at various locations to worship God, hear His Word proclaimed, and reinforce our commitment to the work of the church everywhere.

SOME QUESTIONS WE ARE FREQUENTLY ASKED:

Can I visit with a local church near me?

Certainly. Everyone is always welcome at our weekly Sabbath (Saturday) services. See Congregations. There is never any pressure to join, or to contribute money. Offerings are not taken up during church services except on the annual holydays, the time periods when they are commanded of God (Deuteronomy 16:16).

How can I become a member?

The Bible is very clear on this, and its instructions are straightforward: "Repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). To repent means to profoundly regret the way of life you have been living in disobedience to God's laws, and resolve deep down to live from now on according to both the physical and spiritual intent of those laws. To be baptized means to be immersed completely in water, as a picture of the death of your old way of life, your old self; then to be raised, in newness of life, accepting Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour who made this "resurrection from a watery grave" possible by His sacrifice for your sins.

The minister will then lay his hands on your head and pray, and God will give you the gift of the Holy Spirit, thus making you His child spiritually, and a member of His church.

What relationship do you have to other denominations?

We are in accord, or try to be, with everyone who is seriously, sincerely, and open-mindedly trying to follow the teachings of Jesus and the words of the entire Bible. We welcome such into our midst and recognize them as our brothers.

We are, however, no part of any "ecumenical movement" in which different denominations and sects are hoping to unite together by everyone compromising a little on what each person believes.

There are several church organizations which have similar doctrines to us in many respects. We have been closely associated with some of them.

Since the time of its founding in 1978, dedicated men and women have continued to perform the work they are called to do. The CGI holds *no* animosity towards its brothers and sisters in the Worldwide Church of God and in other "Churches of God," and maintains an open-door policy.

What are your main doctrines?

That's a tall order! How can we summarize what the Bible says, and all that the Holy Spirit has further revealed through historical research, scholarship, and the lives of people who are living according to God's Word? Nevertheless, here are some key themes you may want to look into further.



Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, was the God of the Old Testament. He was conceived, born, lived, and died as a human being. His suffering and death paid the penalty for our sins and obtained for us forgiveness. His resurrection to spiritual life and ascension to the Father has opened up for us salvation and eternal life. Jesus and the Father are one in attitude and intention, and form a family of which the human family is a representation.

The Holy Spirit, a power sent from God, enters each true Christian after repentance, baptism, and the laying-on-of-hands. It begets that person as a child of God, and is an earnest of the resurrection to eternal life, which will occur at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

Repentance and the Christian way of life are defined in terms of God's law, which is holy, just and good, and is summarized in the Ten Commandments and their spiritual intent, as explained in the Sermon on the Mount.

Man is to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, which in our day means the entirety of the Bible. Living according to the Bible means renouncing many pagan ideas and practices, such as Christmas, Hallowe'en, Easter, and Sunday worship. It also means obeying God's instructions such as observing the Sabbath and the annual holydays, following God's dietary laws, tithing, and living according to the spirit of the loving God with all of one's heart and mind, and loving one's neighbor as oneself.

The return of Jesus Christ to the earth will occur just at that instant in time when human life is about to obliterate itself from this planet. It will be preceded by many events prophesied in the Bible, in particular the "Great Tribulation," part of the "Day of the Lord." The Great Tribulation will be God's punishment for the sins of the modern-day descendants of the ancient house of Israel (long separated from the ancient house of Judah, the Jews). These modern descendants are the United States of America, Great Britain, many former British colonies, and many countries of North-western Europe. They are prophesied to be taken into captivity by a combined ten-nation superpower to arise in Europe, the final "resurrection" of the Holy Roman Empire.

With Christ's return, the righteous will be resurrected from their graves to eternal life; the devil will be thrown into a symbolic pit; and the Kingdom of God will be established on earth for 1,000 years. After this, Satan will be released for a little season, lead another rebellion, and eventually end with him being cast into a "lake of fire." Then all who did not have a chance for salvation in this life will be resurrected to a mortal life. They will at last be given their chance to repent and have an opportunity to become God's spiritual children. Finally, all the incorrigibly wicked will be killed, obliterated forever, when the earth is burned up with heat and all things are made new.

How can I find out more?

There is so much more that we could write, much of which we have already made available in other literature. Please request it.

Also, the *Armor of God* TV and radio programs may be seen or heard in many parts of the United States each week in addition to limited radio and TV coverage in foreign countries. The messages are always eye-opening, and often shocking. See www.cgi.org.

A final word. We cannot make you a member of God's church. God must call you, and you must accept His calling. However, we will do all we can to help you along the path to the glory of eternal life as a member of the family of God, with Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother and the Captain of our salvation, and God our Father, giver of all blessings.

Food For Thought...

Christians are like coals of fire—together, they glow; apart, they grow cold.

The one who serves God only for money soon becomes spiritually bankrupt.

We can amass much information on-line, but true wisdom comes from above.

If you want to know how to pay in the hard times, pray in the easy times.

When a man wants to believe something, it doesn't take much to convince him.

It is a sickly faith that is shaken because some frail human being goes wrong.

Nothing lies outside the reach of prayer except that which is outside the will of God.

Beware the Sin of Indifference



Murray Palmatier

We have recently completed another Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. After preparing and celebrating the Passover, and putting leaven out of our homes and lives for seven days, we should be keenly attuned to the subject of sin. While we can now return to the joys of eating warm, buttered bread, we mustn't fall back into our old, bad habits. Staying on top of sin is something that must be at the top of minds throughout the year.

When we consider the condition of the churches in Asia Minor as found in the second and third chapters of Revelation, we find Christ warning His flock about the dangers of compromise and being double-minded toward sin. As the world degrades around us, we must be sure not to sink with it. In His letters to some of these congregations, we find Christ acknowledging visible good works while taking them to task for inner compromise.

Take, for example, the church at Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17). They were commended for holding fast and not denying the name of Jesus Christ in the midst of terrible persecution. This strength is commendable, and is a shining example for us as we see many in this world being slaughtered for professing the name of Christ. But inside these seeming "pillars of faith" were hearts that tolerated sin and false doctrine.

The church at Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29) had similar double-mindedness. They were known throughout the Christian community for their good works, love, service, faith, and patience. In fact, they continued to grow in these areas as Christ noted their "last (works) are more than the first." Despite all of these visibly good results, Christ saw a group that allowed outside influences (represented here by "the prophetess Jezebel") to change their hearts and follow after sin and other gods.

These are just two examples of the many congregations in the Bible who are portrayed for us. John writes of seven in total in Revelation, and Paul specifically writes to seven others in nine of his epistles. As we exit this Festival season, we would do well to take heed of the warnings to these groups and continue the hard, life-long work of replacing our carnal, sinful natures with the mind of Christ. By way of reminder, Paul goes into great depths on this subject in Philippians 2.

One area worthy of mention as we consider this topic is that of social media. The continuing growth of instant communication through the many channels of social media present God's people with a serious test on this issue of compromise. There is a lot of filth, bad language, and morally wrong things posted throughout this new world of "the web." As we participate in these areas and connect our names (and reputations) to different postings through commenting, "liking," "sharing," and posting, we would do well to heed the words of James (James 3:5-12).

James talks of the power of the tongue. We can logically extrapolate from this to include not only the spoken word, but the written word and now the "posted word." He warns us that "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water bitter from the same opening?" We must never forget that as committed believers who have been made clean in the waters of baptism by the shed blood of our Saviour, we represent God in ALL that we do. Be ever vigilant as to what you connect your name to. Proverbs 22:1 reminds us of the value of a good reputation: "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold."

As we now proceed into the seven-week Feast of Weeks season, when we count the required 50 days until the Feast of Pentecost, let's move on from this year's Feast of Unleavened Bread with a dutiful purpose. Each year we are closer to the return of Christ. Our Bridegroom will return seeking a bride who has made herself ready. *Are we ready?*



John Reedy

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine (1 Timothy 5:17).

NOTICE: As a follow-up to the article in the spring issue of the IN, we are happy to announce that John Reedy was recently *officially* credentialed by the Ministerial Council as a CGI minister/elder.

My Prayer

by Johni M. Pernell



Johni M. Pernell

Whenever I kneel down and pray,
My Father listens to all that I say.
Through joy and pain, on and on to Him I talk,
Knowing never away from me will He ever walk.

My highlights and disappointments, both I share
About all of them my Father really does care.
I go to Him crying; telling Him my fears.
He gives me comfort and wipes away my tears.

Sometimes I lift my voice and give Him praise,
So blessed to know that by my side He stays.
Or sitting quietly I delight in the essence
Of knowing that I am in His holy presence.

When I tell Him what is in my heart,
From me He makes my troubles depart.
I take the time to seek His advice each day,
For where He leads me is in the right way.

Often I take time for reflection and meditation.
This keeps my soul in constant dedication.
I have learned to be quiet and to remain still,
For then He will reveal for me His perfect will.

I give thanks for every kind, thoughtful deed.
Truly my Father takes care of my every need.
Always I look to my Father above,
For His ever enduring peace and love.

Pray and trust Him; you too will be able to stand
No matter what betides; He will hold your hand.
So spend time with the Father every day.
Your life will be better in every way.



Organization, continued from page 9

The apostle Paul instructs us in Corinthians that there is one Lord, but there are different administrations and a diversity of operations. If we could all come together as one organization, we would have an enormous impact on the world scene. Eventually, under *Christ's* rule, we *will* be one organization. Today, however, it is unlikely and unnecessary to be one monolithic organization. Even the early church acknowledged that there were different administrations.

Acts 13:2, 3: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Paul and Barnabas developed a separate work from Peter and the other apostles. Today, we have many church administrations. That should not alarm us. We should be mature enough to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit can and does work across social organizational structures. What should alarm us is when we hear brethren in one organization (including home fellowships) speaking ill of brethren in other organizations. This should never be! Satan is the accuser of the brethren. Christ said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

As long as our brothers and sisters have the Holy Spirit, let us not speak ill of them. Let us understand that there is freedom in Christ. For various reasons, some brethren may choose to fellowship with another organization. They are still our brethren and we still love them!

Consider how the apostle Paul introduces how the Spirit works through various members of the body: "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is

Four Ordinations, 344 in Attendance at the Feast of Unleavened Bread

by Ian Boyne



There were 344 in attendance at Church of God International (CGI) services in Kingston, Jamaica, for the First Day of Unleavened Bread, witnessing the ordination of four deacons for four congregations.

The spirit and tempo was high as Messrs. Richards, Small, Samuels, and Scale, of the May Pen, Ocho Rios, Maroon Town, and Kingston congregations, respectively, were ordained into the diaconate by me. I stressed that service to the brethren, not status, was what this was about, and that these men, as the Bible had advised, had already been tested as servants of the people.

The church in Jamaica continues to grow, and the zeal of the brethren to preach the true Gospel and to grow in the faith is not flagging. On the Sunday before Passover, two precious souls were added to the Kingston congregation. They gave very moving testimonies at their baptism after a praise and worship session, of their delight to finally find God's true church. A number of their friends turned up for both the baptism and a special day of celebratory activities planned, beginning with a formal breakfast at a hotel.

They joined their other brethren on the First Day of Unleavened Bread to hear my sermon on *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Revelation*. I emphasized in the sermon that the church at Ephesus had not lost its first love in terms of zeal, but that they had lost "the love they had at first." I pointed out that this church was doctrinally pure, zealous, and steadfast, but that they had fallen down in love, and that put them in jeopardy of losing their lampstand. "You can be a church of doctrinal purity, standing up for the faith once delivered, like us, and testing and proving who are false apostles, like us; but if we don't have love, we are lacking in a critical area and will be judged by Christ." I then went to John 13, John 17, and 1 John 3 to stress the importance of love. It is not enough to just keep the Sabbath and Feast days and to pay tithes or to focus on doctrinal distinctives. "We must have love, brethren," I emphasized.

The sermon was highly appreciated and followed another very highly appreciated message given by Canadian Minister Adrian Davis, who spoke the previous Sabbath on *Discerning the Lord's Body*.

In the afternoon services, Deacon Stephen Scale spoke about the importance of staying connected—to God, to the church, and to one another. The church started the holyday season on a high, determined to keep the enthusiasm throughout the liturgical year.

We were especially delighted that this year, aided by our work, one Church of God 7th Day group with four congregations began keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread for the very first time, joining a similar group which started last year, too, to keep the Feast days after presentations I made to them.

God's truth is marching on in Jamaica!

the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Corinthians 12:3-7).

Verse 3 makes it clear that if a brother or sister has God's Spirit, even if I don't understand how God is using them, God's Spirit in me would never call them accursed because they are part of Christ's body and Christ's body would not curse itself. Cursing the brethren because they belong to a different organization is a work of the flesh as outlined in Galatians 5. Moreover, it is only by the working of the Holy Spirit that we will acknowledge and respect one another.

Back to our original question: Is the church an organism? Of course it is! Is it an organization? Absolutely not! It is *many* organizations! These organizations have different purposes and expressions of the Spirit. As we gather to celebrate the Day of Pentecost, let's rise to the challenge to learn to love and respect one another and find ways to support rather than disparage one another.

In loving memory...

Cinnamon Rebekah (Holley) Blackman died November 20, 2015, in her sleep. She was 44 years old. She was the first baby to be born in the Norfolk congregation of the Worldwide Church of God to Fred and Diane Holley, in 1971.

Cinnamon was known for her bubbly, outgoing personality and her friendly smile. No one was a stranger to her, wherever she went.

She was baptized by CGI minister Mike James.

She is survived by her husband, Brian Blackman; her two daughters, England Holley and Rumour Blackman; her sister, Michelle Lung, and brother, Brian Holley; her mother, Diane Holley, and father, Fred Holley; and her four-year-old grandson, Gabriel Michael Norris.

Submitted by Fred Holley



Cinnamon Rebekah (Holley) Blackman

John Brown

(May 22, 1937—May 18, 2016)

A long-time member of CGI, John Oliver Brown, age 78, of the Helenwood Community, passed away on Wednesday, May 18, 2016, at his home. He was born May 22, 1937 in the Low Gap Community to the late Eldridge Brian Brown and Mary Bernettie Sims Brown.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, Dean and William Brown; and his sisters, Joyce Brown, Lois Brown, Betty Brown, and Pauline Marie DeBord.

He is survived by his loving wife, **Wanda Jean Brown**; son, SSG. John Michael Brown (Ret.) and wife Janie; special granddaughter, Sarah Elizabeth Vanhook and husband Colby; great grandchildren, Jazlyn Williams and Jakoby Vanhook; brother, Donald Brown; sister, Jeanie Sue Williams; and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were Sunday, May 22, 2016, in the Chapel of Four Oaks Funeral Home in Huntsville with Ken Swieger and Wendell Hensley officiating. Burial was in the Black Creek Crossroads Cemetery.



Thy Word is Truth (John 17:17)

If a man die, shall he live again?

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my Appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands (Job 14:14–15).

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thesalonians 4:13–18).

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:51–54).

A report on the CGI Ministerial Conference, held May 13–15, will be in the next issue of the *International News*.

Scientific Facts in the Bible

- 1. Only in recent years has science discovered that everything we see is composed of invisible atoms. Scripture tells us that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.
- 2. Medical science has only recently discovered that blood clotting in a newborn reaches its peak on the eighth day, then drops. The Bible consistently says that a baby must be circumcised on the eighth day.
- 3. At a time when it was believed that the earth sat on a large animal or a giant (1500 B.C.), the Bible spoke of the earth's free float in space: "He...hangs the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7).
- 4. The prophet Isaiah also tells us that the earth is round: "It is he that sits upon the circle of the earth" (Isaiah 40:22). This is not a reference to a flat disk, as some skeptics maintain, but to a sphere. Secular man discovered this 2,400 years later. At a time when science believed that the earth was flat, it was the Scriptures that inspired Christopher Columbus to sail around the world.
- 5. God told Job in 1500 B.C.: "Can you send lightnings, that they may go, and say to you, Here we are?" (Job 38:35). The Bible here is making what appears to be a scientifically ludicrous statement—that light can be sent, and then manifest itself in speech. But did you know that radio waves travel at the speed of light? This is why you can have instantaneous wireless communication with someone on the other side of the earth. Science didn't discover this until 1864 when British scientist James Clerk Maxwell suggested that electricity and light waves were two forms of the same thing (*Modern Century Illustrated Encyclopedia*).
- 6. Job 38:19 asks, "Where is the way where light dwells?" Modern man has only recently discovered that light (electromagnetic radiation) has a "way," traveling at 186,000 miles per second.
- 7. Science has discovered that stars emit radio waves, which are received on earth as a high pitch. God mentioned this in Job 38:7: "When the morning stars sang together..."
- 8. Most cosmologists (scientists who study the structures and evolution of the universe) agree that the Genesis account of creation, in imagining an initial void, may be uncannily close to the truth (*Time*, December 1976).
- 9. Solomon described a "cycle" of air currents 2000 years before scientists discovered them. "The wind goes toward the south, and turns about unto the north; it whirls about continually, and the wind returns again according to his circuits" (Ecclesiastes 1:6).
- 10. Science expresses the universe in five terms: time, space, matter, power, and motion. Genesis 1:1,2 revealed such truths to the Hebrews in 1450 B.C.: "In the

- beginning [time] God created [power] the heaven [space] and the earth [matter] . . . And the Spirit of God moved [motion] upon the face of the waters." The first thing God tells man is that He controls all aspects of the universe.
- 11. The great biological truth concerning the importance of blood in our body's mechanism has been fully comprehended only in recent years. Up until 120 years ago, sick people were "bled," and many died because of the practice. If you lose your blood, you lose your life. Yet Leviticus 17:11, written 3,000 years ago, declared that blood is the source of life: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood."
 - 12. *Encyclopedia Britannica* documents that in 1845, a young doctor in Vienna named Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis was horrified at the terrible death rate of women who gave birth in hospitals. As many as 30 percent died after giving birth. Semmelweis noted that doctors would examine the bodies of patients who died, then, without washing their hands, go straight to the next ward and examine expectant mothers. This was their normal practice, because the presence of microscopic diseases was unknown. Semmelweis insisted that doctors wash their hands before examinations, and the death rate immediately dropped to 2 percent. Look at the specific instructions God gave His people for when they encounter disease: "And when he that has an issue is cleansed of his issue; then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean" (Leviticus 15:13). Until recent years, doctors washed their hands in a bowl of water, leaving invisible germs on their hands. However, the Bible says specifically to wash hands under *running* water.
 - 13. Luke 17:34-36 says the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will occur while some are asleep at night and others are working at daytime activities in the field. This is a clear indication of a revolving earth, with day and night at the same time.
 - 14. During the devastating Black Death of the 14th century, patients who were sick or dead were kept in the same rooms as the rest of the family. People often wondered why the disease was affecting so many people at one time. They attributed these epidemics to "bad air" or "evil spirits." However, careful attention to the medical commands of God as revealed in Leviticus would have saved untold millions of lives. Arturo Castiglione wrote about the overwhelming importance of this biblical medical law: The laws against leprosy in Leviticus 13 may be regarded as the first model of sanitary legislation (*A History of Medicine*, Grant R. Jeffery, *The Signature of God*). With all these truths revealed in Scripture, how could a thinking person deny that the Bible is supernatural in origin? There is no other book in any of the world's religions (Vedas, Bhagavad-Gita, Koran, Book of Mormon, etc.) that contains scientific truth. In fact, they contain statements that are clearly unscientific. Hank Hanegraaff said, "Faith in Christ is not some blind leap into a dark chasm, but a faith based on established evidence."

Source: *The Evidence Bible*, p. 1605



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