DECEMBER 1986

The Good News
OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



ASTROLOGY—
Should You Look to the Stars?

The Good News
OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

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No Room at the Inn? No Way!

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COVER: Millions of people rely on astrology for guidance in their lives. But what does God say about this practice? The article beginning on page 14 explains. Photo by G.A. Belluche Jr.

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GOOD NEWS PERSONAL

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

A Model for Christian Fathers

The fact that humans can produce children does not mean that parents are automatically capable of raising those children properly!

Humanity today, to its chagrin, is experiencing the truth of that statement.

Today the lack of right child rearing is contributing to the erosion of the family unit, and the decline of the family is a major cause of the societal collapse we see taking place around us. Juvenile crime, drug abuse, psychological problems and even suicide are on the rise.



So where do we turn for answers? Notice what God intends to do: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6). In this end time, God is guiding His called people, through the preaching and leadership of His one true Church, to better fulfill their parental responsibilities to their offspring.

Are you as a parent allowing God to work through you?

Malachi's message, quoted above, specifically singles out fathers. Of course, fathers and mothers must work together to provide godly upbringing for their youngsters. But in this "Good News Personal" we will concern ourselves with the special part God says the father, as head of the home, must fulfill for his children.

Actually, the most important example human fathers can look to is that of God the Father Himself! The human family is a model of what God's Family — His Kingdom — will be like. And God is the model of the perfect father. Human fathers need to develop the qualities God the Father exercises in caring for His Family. Let's look at a few.

A vital quality Christian fathers need is *right leadership.* Notice God's command: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

This task requires that your children maintain proper respect for you as their father. In this day of "children's rights" and "letting kids decide for themselves," real respect for parents may sound old-fashioned. But this is the relationship that must exist if you are to lead your children properly.

Some men have misused this concept of "respect," and have succeeded only in terrorizing their children and their wives. To be truly respected you need to display compassion, courage, godly understanding *and* firmness. Yes, your decisions as head of the family will stand, but you will use wisdom in making them, and you will carefully consider the input your wife and children offer.

On the other hand, some parents think they need to be their children's "friends." The last thing a normal child needs is a middle-aged man or woman "buddy." Your children don't have your years of life

Photo by Hal Finch

experience. By bringing yourself down to their level, you compromise your position and destroy their respect for you. Your children desperately need mature, loving leadership from you.

A firm resolve to obey God, along with an outgoing, compassionate personality — that is what makes for true leadership.

God the Father is a *good provider* — He supplies all His Family's needs. He is the giver of every good thing (James 1:17). In this, too, He is the model for human fathers.

During the wedding ceremony in God's Church, the man vows, before God, to provide for his wife. This responsibility extends to any children they produce. God shows His scorn for any able-bodied man who refuses to work when He says, "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10).

But this responsibility for human fathers to provide for their families extends beyond physical needs.

A father must give of himself personally as well. This means spending time with your family, especially at meals. When was the last time you took your family on a special outing? Do you plan ahead to spend meaningful time with your wife and children, fellowshipping with them, teaching them and enjoying each other?

God has given you charge of them — you are to care for them as He would. God is always available for us to call upon, and we fathers should always be available to our families. A father must provide emotional and spiritual support for his family.

What do all these provisions add up to? Love. Fathers, love your families. This is pleasing in the sight of God, the Father of us all.

Your children look to you fathers for *guidance.* God the Father teaches His children the right way to live, and He commands you likewise to train up your children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). That means instructing them about God's laws (Deuteronomy 6:7).

Train your children to respect their elders. Teach them to take care of their belongings and the possessions of others. Expose them to the finer things of life.

Don't let your kids decide for themselves in moral matters — that would be like a gardener refusing to pull the weeds out of his flower patch, reasoning that it is up to the flowers to choose their own companions. Your children do not naturally know right from wrong. You do, if you are yielding to the Holy Spirit, and you must teach them.

Learn to exercise discipline properly. Remember that your children are not mature and don't have your level of character and understanding, mercy and compassion.

Remember, too, that the example you set as head of the home teaches your children more than any number of lectures does. Do your children see you practicing God's way of life? Do they hear you belittle your wife — their mother? These things register in young minds.

You as a Christian are to be a light to the world, and a major part of your particular world is your family. Are you a godly light to them? You will be blessed if you are: "Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord" (Psalm 128:1-4).

God the Father is consistent. He has existed from eternity, and has never deviated from His purposes. His Son Jesus is just like Him, "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). This quality of *consistency* must be present as well in the makeup of a Christian father.

Do your kids know where you stand on the issues that affect them? Do you need to say "No" only once for them to get the message? Are your views even predictable? If so, your children will learn that they can rely on you for the support and solid foundation they need.

Don't, however, make yourself a god to your children. They must learn to be independent. They need to be strong emotionally and morally regardless of the actions of others — even you.

A major part of your responsibility as a parent is to help your children see the value of living God's way of life. If you are consistent, your children will see that you really believe, live and reap the rewards of what you teach them.

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (I Corinthians 14:33). In a consistently peaceful and reliable environment, your children can develop a right confidence in themselves and God's way of life.

Raising children properly in this world is a real challenge. God lays much of the responsibility on fathers. But you as a father can meet this challenge!

God Himself is your model. If you stay close to Him and practice what He teaches you in His Word, you can produce some fine young people who may be leaders in the world tomorrow. Try to become more like God, the perfect Father, and you will see positive results in your family.

Paul encourages, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like *men,* be strong: Let all your things be done with charity" (I Corinthians 16:13-14, King James). You can be a truly Christian father, and God will be well pleased with your effort.



Pastor General
Worldwide Church of God



No Room at the Inn? NO WAY!

Traditional Christmas scenes give a false picture of the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. The Bible account makes more sense.

By Philip Stevens

Consider, for a moment, the traditional Nativity scene:

Center stage is a small crib holding a baby. Next to this manger are the figures of Mary and Joseph. Pull back a little farther from the scene and you'll probably see a group of shepherds, with a couple of sheep thrown in for good measure.

Farther back still there'll be the three wise men, perhaps with some well-placed halos to give a little bit more piety to the occasion. Move back some more and there's probably a donkey and a couple of cows munching lazily on some straw.

And, of course, the whole scenario is being played out in a drafty stable against the backdrop of a starry sky.

Familiar, isn't it? Every year cards, window decorations and television shows depict the Christmas story in this way.

But is it a true picture?

Just one record

It's not the purpose here to discuss the season of Christ's birth. There is ample secular and biblical evidence to place the time of the birth during the early autumn — it was definitely *not* on December 25. But no matter what the time of year, there are a number of points about the picture described above that contradict the biblical record.

Surprisingly, there is just one account in the whole Bible that describes the actual event of Jesus' birth. That, in itself, should indicate that the facts about Jesus' birth are less important than, say, the ceremony of blessing the children, or the baptism of Christ, both of which appear three times in the gospels. Yet the world in general takes little or no notice of these two events.

The one place where Christ's birth is described is in Luke 2:7. Remember, this is the verse from which all the sentimental Christmas scenes are supposedly derived:

"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

Responsible parents

When God was selecting the couple who were to act as guardians to His Son, He would have looked for people who were sensible, thoughtful, caring and wise — people who planned their lives and who knew and obeyed God's commandments.

Joseph would have been aware, therefore, that God expects a husband to display concern toward his wife. Does it make sense, therefore, that the man God chose for this vital mission would allow his wife to have her first child — and the Messiah at that — in a drafty stable? Of course not! And if you reread Luke 2:7 — the only account, remember, of Christ's birth — there is no mention of a stable.

But consider this, also: Bethlehem was Joseph's hometown (Luke 2:3). On returning there for the Roman census and taxation (verses 1-2), he would have undoubtedly known of friends

Photo by Hal Finch

and relatives with whom he and his pregnant wife could stay. Indeed, Middle Eastern custom would have demanded that the couple stay with relatives.

But even if, for some reason, this had not been possible, others in the city would have provided shelter. It would have been considered an act of grave omission for residents to allow strangers to spend a night on the streets. (See Genesis 19:1-3 and Judges 19:20-21 for two biblical accounts of the accepted form of hospitality.)

Is it conceivable, though, that with nearly nine months to plan for Jesus' delivery, Joseph would leave the place of birth to chance? Any husband with the slightest concern for his wife's welfare would have taken adequate precautions.

Yet the traditional picture of Christmas would have us believe that a travel-weary Joseph turned up in Bethlehem just minutes before Mary was to give birth. In panic, Joseph hurried from door to door, vainly seeking a room for the night, only to be eventually offered an animal shelter.

Surely, one would have to stretch the imagination a long way to believe that there was not one innkeeper in the whole city who would offer some kind of reasonable accommodation.

Common sense demands that Joseph would have prepared for this event with considerable care. But, what's more, the Bible indicates that Mary and Joseph *did* arrive in Bethlehem in good time for the birth: "So it was, that while they were there [suggesting an extended stay had already taken place], the days were completed for her to be delivered" (Luke 2:6).

No room

But, you may be saying, what about the fact that there was "no room for them in the inn"? It's true, the English translations of the Bible do read that way, but a study of the original Greek reveals a significantly different meaning.

The word that Luke the doctor used for *inn* is *kataluma.* This Greek word appears three times in the gospel accounts — in Luke 2:7, Luke 22:11 and Mark 14:14. In these two latter references, the translators rightly used the English term *guest room,* meaning a room, usually on the upper story, where visitors were accommodated. In some cases, this was just a temporary structure placed on the flat roof to provide sleeping quarters.

One such situation is recorded in II Kings 4:10. Here Elisha was entertained by a married couple in the city of Shunem. The woman of the house said to her husband: "Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

When Luke wanted to convey the idea of a hotel or inn, such as in the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:34), he used another Greek word, *pandocheion.*

Quite simply, Luke's account of Jesus' birth reveals that the guest room in what was quite probably a relative's home was small and filled with others who had also journeyed to Bethlehem for the census. Undoubtedly, the lower quarters were better, more private and provided extra space in which the other women could assist the young mother.

Surely, though, the very mention of Mary laying her newborn baby in a manger would suggest the stable in a barn? But this was the Middle East. Mangers were, and are, to be found inside ordinary Middle Eastern dwellings. Frequently, animals were allowed into certain parts of the house at night, both for safety and shelter.

The placing of the child in a manger holds no more significance than that it made an ideal crib. Indeed, once cleaned and filled with a generous amount of fresh, dry straw that was then covered by a blanket, the manger would make a snug, warm bed where His mother could be close at hand.

That Luke makes no more of this than is recorded suggests that the occasion was commonplace enough that no further explanation was necessary.

Although Luke is the only one of the gospel writers to chronicle the actual birth of Jesus Christ, Matthew's account of the events surrounding the Nativity also shows the fallacy of a hastily prepared maternity ward in a cold, unhygienic stable.

In Matthew 2:1, we read that the wise men — the Bible nowhere indicates how many — came to Jerusalem looking for Jesus. Inquiries in King Herod's court revealed scriptural evidence that showed the place of birth as Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Accordingly, Herod sent his visitors to that city.

When the travelers arrived in Bethlehem they were not led to a stable, but to a house: "And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him" (Matthew 2:11).

Follow the Bible

The traditional picture of Jesus Christ's birth is just another attempt by a Satan-influenced world to focus our minds away from the role our Savior is playing today. Instead of the image of a strong, glorified Christ working through His Spirit-led Church, we are left with a helpless babe in some dark and uninviting animal shed.

What a travesty! Yet for those who have eyes to see, the truth is plain and easy to comprehend.

Our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Christmas* reveals more shocking facts about this cherished holiday. You need to request a copy immediately.

The day is not far hence when the traditions and fables of men will be completely replaced with the truth of God. And a great number of people are going to have their eyes opened to what really happened in biblical times — not just in Bethlehem, but in many other places and circumstances, too.

No warm room for your Savior's birth? No way! □

Get Ready — Stay Ready!

Are you fulfilling your spiritual responsibility as you wait for the return of Jesus Christ?

By John Halford



Illustration by Ken Tunell

They had no illusion about what they were doing. This was either a historic document — or their death warrant. There was no turning back now.

So John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, took up a pen and boldly signed the Declaration of Independence. He was followed by 55 other brave men who shared his dream.

It was the beginning of what has become the most powerful nation the world has ever known — the United States of America.

By signing the Declaration of Independence, these men were committing an act of treason in the eyes of the British government. The punishment was death, so they were irrevocably committed to their course of action. The revolution would either be successful or it would be the end of them. There could be no turning back, no matter how hard or how long the course.

There is a lesson here for all who have declared independence from this world ruled by Satan, and who are now seeking the Kingdom of God.

Yes, that is what you do when God calls you and you heed. You turn your back on Satan and his way, and you pledge allegiance to a new ruler, Jesus Christ. You promise that you will obey Him, serve Him, work for Him and make His goals your goals. And you promise you will do this until His Kingdom comes.

He will return

Ever since Jesus said He would come again, His people have been waiting for Him. They have waited now for nearly 20 centuries. Now another year has gone by, and the final crisis at the close has not yet begun.

Perhaps it is understandable that God's people sometimes get weary, sometimes frustrated and even discouraged while they wait for the fulfillment of their dream. Jesus knew this would happen.

He is not playing games with

us to see how long we can wait. Neither is He hanging around in heaven procrastinating. He is eager to come back. He, like us, can hardly wait to get on with the challenges of the Millennium, and the massive task of bringing all mankind to salvation.

But He, like us, is under the authority of His Father in heaven, and only the Father knows when the time is right.

Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 24, starting in verse 35: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." In other words, there is no question that He is coming back. That is not in doubt. It is the *when* that the Father chose not to reveal.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (verse 36). The Father of the Family of God has reserved for Himself the responsibility of judging the exact moment in the end-time sequence of events for Jesus Christ to return. It may not be a precise, predetermined calendar date.

The final events that will lead to God's intervention in man's affairs are rather like a giant whirlpool. Already we can feel the current tugging at us, pulling us closer and closer to the end. The closer we get to the end, the faster events will move, whirling ever closer to the last desperate plunge into a disaster from which only God can rescue humanity. But in the last giddy spin, it is hard to predict exactly which time around will be the last.

The faithful servant

Jesus is not delaying the date of His return to tease us or try us unnecessarily. He is trusting His Father in heaven to let Him know the right time. Then He will return without delay. And He will expect to find those of His people who are alive at that time ready and waiting for Him.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods" (Matthew 24:45-47).

The faithful servant uses the time of waiting to prepare himself to serve in the world tomorrow, by diligently fulfilling what is expected of him today.

Some get tired

But another kind of servant gets tired of waiting. "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards [that is, to let down his standards and abuse his responsibilities], the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of" (verses 48-50).

Time and again Jesus warned that however long the wait might be, we must be ready. He warned that there would be false alarms and that Satan would try to deceive God's people into following false messiahs (Matthew 24:23-26). The apostles warned against those who would try to deceive the Church into losing interest and giving up (II Peter 2:3, Galatians 6:9).

There is another danger, too. Some, while not actually giving up, might be tempted to relax in their spiritual growth, thinking there is "still plenty of time." They run a real danger of being caught unaware.

Jesus warned that His Second Coming would occur in a time like that just before the Flood (Matthew 24:37). What were those days like? "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (verses 38-39).

"Watch therefore," Jesus urged, "for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (verse 42).

When you consider all the things Jesus said about His return, you see that it is going to take longer than we think, but when it happens it will happen sooner than we expect.

Our responsibility

Even as close to the end time as we are, we cannot be certain exactly how long we have to go. This is for God to decide. It is *His* responsibility.

Our responsibility, once we have truly committed ourselves to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth, is to get ready and stay ready! There really is no alternative. Like the men who signed the Declaration of Independence, the true Christian has placed his life on the line. The Christian has staked all on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

People today remember July 4, 1776, as America's Independence Day, but it was really only the beginning. It took many more years before the American colonies won independence.

Some of the events of those years have become legend: Paul Revere's ride, Washington crossing the Delaware River, the decisive battle at Yorktown. The whole story of the American Revolution was made up of thousands of individual acts of sacrifice, as the colonists put their farms, their fortunes and their lives at stake for their new nation.

Sometimes it must have seemed as if independence would never come. In the winter of 1777-78, when Washington's army lay exhausted at Valley Forge, some may have thought the dream was over, but they could not turn back. They had risked everything. So they endured, and in the end, they won.

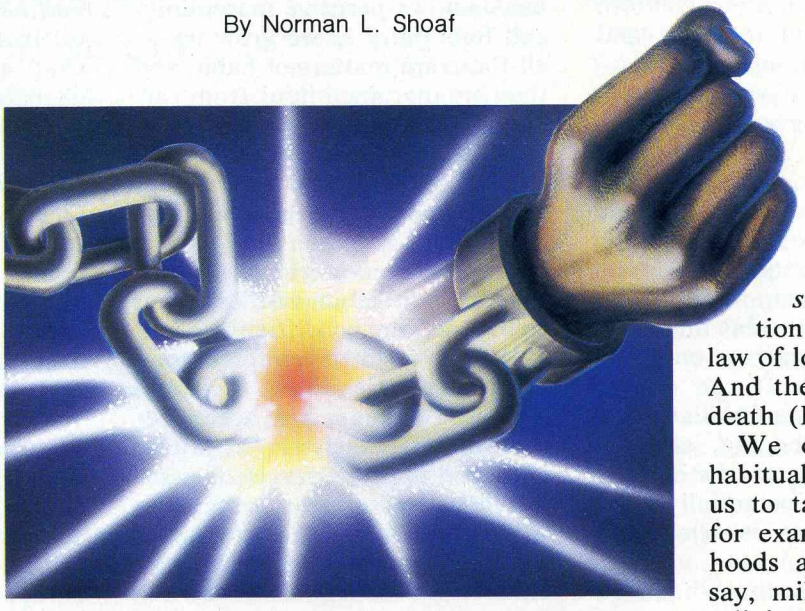
When the battles were over, many of the men who had signed the Declaration of Independence were well prepared to become the founding fathers of the nation for which they had worked so hard. Their patience was rewarded.

So will ours be. We must get ready and stay ready. Then, when the end comes — and it will come — we will *be* ready. □

You CAN Break That Bad Habit!

Are you plagued by a troublesome habit? Do you want to overcome it? Here's important information you can use!

By Norman L. Shoaf



You may have heard the old saying: "Nothing is permanent but change." Well, to a certain degree that's true. Change is constantly taking place all around us.

Yet, when it comes to changing habits — especially bad ones — it seems that no struggle can be more fierce.

Creatures of habit

Stop and think: Much of what we do in our everyday lives is, to a tremendous extent, a matter of habit.

We eat at certain times, and the types and amounts of food we eat are fairly consistent. We sleep, whether too much, just enough or too little, at the same times — and most of us lie in certain positions when we sleep. We travel to work or school or the store usually by way of the same routes. When a relative, friend or fellow employee greets us, we most likely respond in the same certain way.

We humans are, in short, creatures of habit.

And that's not bad. Without habits, we could hardly function normally, let alone accomplish much.

But unfortunately, we also allow ourselves to develop bad habits — conditioned patterns of doing things the wrong way. Bad habits can range from stuttering, squinting and nervous twitches to dangerous driving techniques, smoking and drug abuse. They can ostracize us socially, overburden us with guilt and, in the more serious cases, harm us physically and even cost us our lives.

These serious, harmful habits — smoking, drug abuse and shoplifting among them — are what the Bible calls *sin* — the violation of God's great law of love (I John 3:4). And the result of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

We can even *think* habitually. This can lead us to take for granted, for example, that falsehoods are true. Sad to say, millions of sincere religious people accept false doctrines and practices because of lifelong conditioning or careless assumption.

Wrong thinking is the deadliest kind of bad habit. When it comes to matters like repentance and conversion and salvation, wrong thinking can be a matter of life and death!

How habits form

A habit is a learned pattern of acting — a way of behaving that has become routine.

Mathematicians comparing the human brain to the computer have calculated that in an average lifetime of 70 years, the human being can take in and remember

Illustration by Monte Wolverton

about 100 billion bits. A bit is a measure of information — the simplest form of data capable of being stored in a computer.

That enormous number represents far more information than even the most advanced computer can handle.

A computer, when it receives as much information as it can deal with, simply quits receiving information. It cannot take in and process any more.

The human brain reacts similarly. When it has received as much information as it can cope with at once, it "turns off" — stops paying attention.

But this marvelous mechanism has the ability to receive and store, in long-term memory, information about how to perform routine tasks, and to recall and use that information without having to think consciously about it. We call these routine actions *habits*.

Consider: We normally don't have to think about tying our shoes, riding a bicycle, walking or remembering our address.

Thus the human mind, freed from having to consider mundane details, can concentrate on more demanding tasks. It can devote its attention to unfamiliar, and thus more challenging, stimuli. Habits enable us to distinguish what is new and potentially dangerous from what is tried and true or expected.

Apparently, from what researchers can determine, we record each experience we have — each response we make to various stimuli. The more times we respond to certain stimuli in the same way, the more "worn" the neural circuits and pathways in the brain and nervous system become.

At last the memory is able to trigger an automatic response, thought or feeling to a specific stimulus. Repetition is essential.

It follows, then, that doing something the right way enough times — properly executing a tennis stroke, picking up after ourselves or refusing that extra drink — builds good habits. Conversely, if we choose the wrong option enough times — procrastinate about doing needed jobs, eat too much, become impatient quickly when our children don't understand instructions — we will form bad habits.

Interestingly enough, the earlier the conditioning, the stronger the influence. In other words, it is easier to make a good habit in the first place than to break a bad one later on.

Reinforcing habits

The implications of this conditioning process, as far as habits are concerned, are tremendous. Consider, for instance, their application to the important subject of child rearing.

How we learn, how we remember, how we perceive masculinity and femininity as we grow up — all these are matters of habit, and they are ingrained in us from earliest childhood. Even a syndrome of failure can be built into a child's psyche by unwitting, though perhaps well-meaning, parents.

And after we grow up, unlearning bad habits instilled from childhood can be difficult.

Parents need to reinforce good habits in their children: curiosity, patience, willingness to accept responsibility, eagerness to study. If a good family response is associated with the right action, the willingness in the child to perform the right action is strengthened, and the right action becomes habitual.

Still, no small child can — or should — be completely conditioned like some preschool Pavlov's dog. Each child's own independent thinking processes and experiences come into play. But loving parents can steer a child away from developing habits that will harm him or her later.

If an inexperienced parent, for example, gives a child something to eat (or puts a bottle in the baby's mouth) every time the child cries, the child learns that food is the cure for problems. Later in life when the child experiences sadness, depression, pain or other unpleasant feelings, he or she will be prone to develop a harmful habit of overeating.

If, on the other hand, a small child is taught by wise parents to put toys, clothes and dishes away in the proper place as soon as he or she is through using them, and is praised for doing so, the child will develop a habit of neatness and a desire to take good care of others' possessions.

You can apply this idea of reinforcing good habits (and discouraging bad ones!) to many other child-rearing situations.

How to produce change

Here are several steps, to be followed in order, that can help break bad or harmful habits:

• *We must admit we have a bad habit.* This can be extremely difficult. But it is prerequisite to that elusive goal of personal change.

Habituation is the natural enemy of change; our habits actually program us to resist change. Once a habit is ingrained, it becomes invisible to the conscious mind, and the brain, free of paying attention to the action, will notice only if we do something different than we are accustomed to doing.

• *We must see why we do whatever wrong action we are doing.* Honestly evaluating ourselves is important.

How specific habits form is the subject of much debate, and in the space of this article we cannot attempt to examine the origin of every bad habit. But numerous factors come into play: childhood conditioning, subconscious desires, rational or irrational fears, peer pressure.

The downward pull of human nature affects us all; we are all constantly bombarded with the negative thoughts, ideas and attitudes broadcast by Satan the devil, the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). Satan's evil influence is a root of every harmful habit mankind practices — warfare, sexual promiscuity, lying.

• *We must realize that there is a way to break the bad habit.* No matter how powerfully motivated

we are to follow some wrong pattern, it is possible for us to change course.

In the case of those bad habits the Bible calls sin, the urge to lie or give up and keep smoking, overeating or indulging in sexual lusts can seem overwhelming.

The apostle Paul described this struggle with sin this way: "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:19-20).

No matter how powerfully we are motivated to follow some wrong pattern, we can change. God made us of matter so we could. We call this developing *character.*

One psychologist terms the battle to overcome a bad habit as a "struggle between the old and new order."

Habit forming is highly conservative; change is profoundly disturbing. Trying to change the self into something different threatens the self, and the self sends up danger signals to try to get us to give up.

We may be dieting or trying to stop drinking to excess or trying to quit smoking. In every case the self — what Paul called the "old man" (Romans 6:6) — tries to rear itself. A large part of us as human beings is programmed to resist change.

But we can change! God made us of matter so we could. We humans can, after deciding to reject negative behavior, learn to follow right ways and ingrain these right ways into our minds and motivation. We call this developing *character.*

• *We must be convinced that breaking the bad habit is worthwhile.* Motivation is paramount. As one authority has written: "No one can master a habit who does not want to and who cannot find within himself or herself the resources and the determination to do so."

This, however, is not entirely true. To change from the selfish, inflowing way of *get* to the way of proper concern for ourselves and true, outgoing love for others ultimately requires God's help, in addition to resources we find in ourselves. But we must first want to change. If we don't seriously want to change our bad habits, we never will.

• *We must cease the habit immediately, not gradually.* Completely halting the negative behavior immediately is by far the most effective — though sometimes difficult — method of breaking bad habits.

You've read of heroin addicts who tried methadone and ended up addicted to methadone, or smokers who tried to beat smoking by eating candy and ended up addicted to candy.

There are far better ways to beat bad habits!

For instance, a person may create a new, competing habit to compete with the old. But the competing habit must be a positive one. Instead of eating to cure feelings of sadness, one could jog or play a strenuous game of tennis, for example.

Certain behavior modification therapies attempt to wear out the bad habit until personal disgust and exhaustion weaken its hold. If a person is addicted to a certain food, the therapist may attempt to associate the food with some unpleasant experience. This is known as aversion therapy.

Its merits are debatable, though, in the absence of strong motivation on the part of the person with the habit. As the old saying goes, "A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

It may be that a person will simply have to learn to tolerate a negative stimulus. For example, a person prone to overeating may simply have to steel himself against having an extra dessert — or any dessert at all — even if everyone around does indulge. After all, the temptation to overeat is going to be present throughout life. One can't eliminate the temptation — food — so one's habit of abusing it must be changed.

• *When we have broken our habit, we should be willing to help others who have the same habit.* When someone who has "been there" helps someone who is still there, the motivational benefits to both are great.

Requires God's help

The steps outlined above can be applied to overcome any bad habit — again, however, only by someone who really wants to change.

Changing from a negative, harmful way of life overall to a happy, productive, outgoing way involves changing human nature, and that requires the additional power of God's Holy Spirit.

God is interested in developing strong, right character in every one of us. He wants us to live the *give* way instead of the *get* way, and the way of *give* is the way to every happy, wonderful result man desires.

No one who has been overcome by bad, sinful habits — no one incorrigibly steeped in a selfish, harmful way of life —- will ever enter God's Kingdom (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

To fulfill God's purpose for us, we must make sure that we "record" in our character the finest, most positive, most beneficial and *give*-oriented habits possible, rejecting everything that harms, is selfish or does not achieve right goals. For, in God's Family, there will be no bad habits!

When we live God's way we can say with Paul, in response to life's every challenge, including bad habits, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). □

Impostor — or True Prophet — Which?

Jesus warned that false prophets would deceive many in this end time. How can you tell an impostor from a true servant of God?

By L. Leroy Neff

A letter from a subscriber in the Philippines reads:

"Jesus speaks of false prophets and false Christs that will come and deceive many, including the chosen ones. When I read this, I was terribly confused and this made me write this letter to you.

"I have a question. How will one be able to tell a false prophet from a true one? I know very well that the true prophets of Jesus are here in our world and are spreading the Gospel. But Jesus said the false prophets will deceive many. This means that these prophets will deceive many. This means that these prophets are good impostors.

"So, how will one distinguish the impostor from the real one?"

Knowing the answer to this question is vital for all Christians today, as Jesus was primarily warning His followers about events of our time — now!

Do you know the answer from the Bible? Many think they know and do not. You had better be sure, as your salvation could depend on whether you have the right answer.

How can you tell the impostor from the true servant of God? The answer will probably be quite surprising to many people, because they are using an unscriptural basis for evaluation.

Jesus said, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:5, King James).

This text says that these deceivers would come in Christ's name. If they come in His name, they claim to come by His authority. Secondly, they say that He (Jesus) was the Christ (Messiah). They come in His name, say He is Christ and yet deceive the many, not the few.

To do this, these deceivers must come as the ministers, teachers and prophets of Christ. But how will they succeed in deceiving others?

Some people have assumed that the large church denominations who come "in Christ's name" must be right, simply because they have many members, are accepted in the religious community, have a long history or are well respected. But Christ's statement makes it obvious that these are not the criteria for determining who is false and who is true!

What are the credentials?

Some people would look to a prophet's or minister's credentials. He would be accepted if he were educated at a recognized theological institution. Others would look for a minister's popularity, his charisma, his personality or his speaking ability.

But the Scriptures show that God's servants have sometimes not had these qualities or credentials. They were not graduates of the recognized theological institutions of their day. Moses had trouble speaking in public (Exodus 4:10). Jeremiah was "too young" (Jeremiah 1:6). Paul lacked certain speech abilities (I Corinthians 2:1, II Corinthians 10:10). Even Jesus Himself had no outstanding personal characteristics that set Him apart from others, as the religious leaders had to pay Judas to point Him

out among the 11 disciples (Matthew 26:47-49).

Some would expect to find a true minister or prophet in a large and beautiful church building. Yet, during the history of the early Church, there is no mention of church buildings. Instead we read that the Church was not a building at all, but the *people* who were called out of this world to become the Church. The people (the Church) met in various buildings, sometimes in Church members' homes (Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, Philemon 2). Paul preached for two years while under house arrest in rented facilities. He probably had both living quarters and a meeting hall of some kind (Acts 28:30-31).

Jesus said His followers would not be many in number, but would be comparatively few: "Do not fear, *little* flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

At the same time, the adversary, Satan the devil, has his own ministers who appear to the world to be true ministers of Jesus Christ. They are now in the majority! "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:13-14).

Do his prophecies come to pass?

Some people believe that if a minister or prophet foretells an event, he is a true prophet. Or, in similar fashion, if he performs what is believed to be a miracle, he does so by God's power and is a true minister. What does the Bible say?

Notice Deuteronomy 13:1-3: "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder of which he spoke to you comes to pass, saying, 'Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

In this passage God's people are warned about those who may foretell a future event, or even perform miracles. Usually such events relate to religious faith or belief and confirm, in the mind of the beholder, that the "prophet" and his religious teachings are therefore true. This text shows that just because someone foretells a future event or performs some miracle does not prove that he is a true prophet of God.

The Bible warns about an end-time religious leader referred to as the "false prophet" who will do signs and wonders. Some of his miracles are mentioned in Revelation 13:13: "He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."

Jesus also spoke of false ministers or prophets who would, by showing signs and wonders, deceive the very elect if possible (Mark 13:22).

Jesus spoke of false ministers who would, by showing signs and wonders, deceive the very elect if possible. Satan has his own ministers who appear to be true.

Then there is the prophet or minister who says something will come to pass and it apparently does not. Such a one would certainly be labeled false by most observers. This is one reason, but not the only reason, why almost all of God's prophets throughout history have been labeled by many as false!

Consider such men as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. They sometimes prophesied for many years, and yet what they said would happen did not come to pass immediately. Why didn't these prophecies come to pass?

The answer was that it was not yet God's time for their predictions to come to pass. At the proper time, sometimes years or decades later, the prophecies were fulfilled. And in some cases, what they prophesied has not yet come to pass even in our day, but will be fulfilled in God's time. There is a time, after ample warning, when God will finally say, "None of My words will be postponed any more" (Ezekiel 12:28).

There are other examples where God's true servants expected certain events to occur in their lifetimes. During his earlier ministry, the apostle Paul apparently expected Christ to return during his life (I Thessalonians 4:17, I Corinthians 15:51). Later, he realized that it would not occur until later (II Timothy 4:6-8). Paul was criticized and labeled "false" by accusers, but the members of God's Church knew he was a true servant of God.

Would Christians reject Christ?

If Jesus Christ were to come again in our day, live the same way and teach the same message He did almost 2,000 years ago, many of His "followers" of today would reject Him as false.

Why? Because He would not live the same kind of life they live. He would not observe the same religious days they observe. He would not eat many of the foods they eat. His teachings about and from the Old Testament would be considered Jewish and unchristian by some who reject that part of Holy Scripture. He would not fit the mold of what many consider to be a true Christian.

In short, they would reject Him as a heretic and the leader of a new sect, just as some labeled his servant Paul "a ringleader of the sect of the

Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). Undoubtedly some would call His religion a cult, as some label His true religion today.

So far we have mostly seen how *not* to recognize a true prophet. How, then, can you tell a true prophet from a false one? That is the important question we must now answer from the Scriptures, and not from human reason. To start, we should go back to a text referred to earlier:

"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder of which he spoke to you comes to pass, saying, 'Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

In this case, if the sign or the wonder came to pass, and the prophet said, "Let us go after other gods," then you should not listen to him.

Some people think that the phrase "other gods" refers to pagan idolatry and could not refer to any "Christian" religion. They should think again!

There are other gods — another Jesus!

Paul warned the Corinthians: "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it" (II Corinthians 11:3-4).

The New International Version translates the last phrase, "You put up with it easily enough."

We read elsewhere that Jesus Christ is God. This passage should make it plain that a minister or prophet can preach Christ, but it can be a different Christ — a different God than the one of the Bible.

How can this be? If the message is different from that of the Jesus Christ of Scripture, and different from that of the original apostles, then the minister or prophet is preaching how to "go after other gods which you have not known."

It is therefore vitally necessary that we prove which ministers preach Christ's same Gospel and which preach a different gospel and a different message.

Isaiah makes it clear

"To the law and to the testimony!" proclaims Isaiah 8:20. "If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

This expands on what we saw previously. If a prophet or minister does not speak according to God's Word, according to His law and His testimony, there is no light in him, or, in other words, no truth in him. His message is false.

Many claiming to represent God try to "do away" with God's laws and commandments. They only accept a part of God's Word and reject the rest.

As Isaiah also said: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

When God's law is rejected or assumed to be "done away," there remains no standard for good and evil. Every person is left to decide for himself or herself what is right or wrong. But only God can define sin, and He does so through His law. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, King James).

Some have misunderstood the scriptures that show that you cannot earn salvation by keeping the law or by works. They conclude, erroneously, that it is unnecessary to obey any of the laws God has given. To understand this vital point, request our free booklet *What Will You Be Doing in the Next Life?* It explains the subjects of law and grace in detail from the Scriptures.

Isaiah's comment about speaking according to the law is also mentioned, in principle, in the New Testament. "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

Some ministers claim to "know the Lord," and yet do not keep God's commandments. This scripture says they are liars and there is no truth in them.

Ezekiel also commented about this subject in a prophecy for the end time. In this text he refers to ministers or prophets by the religious title "priest": "Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:26).

Hosea also writes about this: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children" (Hosea 4:6).

We have seen that just because someone may perform a miracle or accurately foretell a future event does not mean that person is a true prophet or servant of God. A true prophet or servant of God will speak according to God's law. He will speak according to God's commandments. His way of life will be that of a commandment keeper, not a commandment breaker. He will not just be preaching a gospel *about* Christ, but he will be preaching the same Gospel that Christ and the original apostles preached — the good news of the coming Kingdom of God on earth.

That is the way to determine who are impostors and who are God's true prophets, ministers and teachers. □

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Is it true that many American colonists refused to keep Christmas and New Year's Day because both were derived from paganism?

Not only did most American colonists reject the pagan customs of observing Christmas and New Year's, but so did the king of England!

During the 16th century Henry VIII of England abolished the observance of Christmas with its attendant revelry. In 1542, the licentious customs of paganism were still firmly welded to December 25. After criticism over the disorders during the Christmas season, Henry proscribed the festival for 12 years. It was restored in 1554, after Mary, Queen of Scots, a zealous Roman Catholic, took control.

In his book *Survivals of Roman Religion,* Gordon Laing reports: "Apparently the compromise made by the early church in adapting the customs of Saturnalia [Roman solar festival] to Christian practice had little or no effect in checking the license of the festival. This continued through the whole Christmas season and sometimes lasted till the day of Epiphany [January 6]" (page 65).

To escape religious oppression and persecution, many people were forced to escape England and settle in the new world.

Francis X. Weiser comments, "In the colonies of New England, however, the unfortunate and misdirected zeal of the Puritans against Christmas persisted far into the 19th century" (*Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs,* page 65).

Then how did Christmas become the biggest, most expensive holiday in the world?

Weiser puts his finger on the source of Christmas customs in the new world: "It was not until immigrants from Ireland and from continental Europe arrived in large numbers toward the middle of the last century that Christmas in America began to flourish. The Germans brought the Christmas tree" (page 67).

The Roman Catholics of southern Ireland and German Protestants and Catholics finally overbalanced objections to Christmas and New Year's observance by the Puritans and others.

Today, many professing Christians openly acknowledge the pagan origin of these seasonal festivals. But most people think it doesn't make any difference where Christmas or New Year's came from.

Don't you make that tragic mistake!

God long ago warned His true people not to appropriate pagan customs to use in worshiping Him: "Do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way" (Deuteronomy 12:30-31).

Of man's false festivals such as Christmas, God thunders, "Your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them" (Isaiah 1:14).

For more information, send immediately for our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Christmas.* Just mail the literature request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you.

Who are the 24 elders who are mentioned in the book of Revelation?

Some teach that the elders, mentioned in Revelation 4:4, are taken from among saved mortals. This assumption is primarily based on a mistranslation of Revelation 5:8-10.

Verses 9 and 10, according to the original inspired Greek in which Revelation was written, should read: "For You were slain and have redeemed them [not us] to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made them [not us] kings and priests to our God; and they [not we] shall reign on the earth."

How clear! The 24 elders rule with God in heaven. The resurrected saints rule on the earth.

The 24 elders are not saved humans at all, because no man has ascended to heaven except Jesus Christ (John 3:13).

All saved human beings — those who are Christ's true servants — will be given immortality at Christ's coming, when He returns to the earth to rule and establish the Kingdom of God (I Corinthians 15:23).

These 24 elders, then, are spirits, part of the created heavenly host of beings. They have been given responsibility as advisers in the government of God through which He rules the universe.

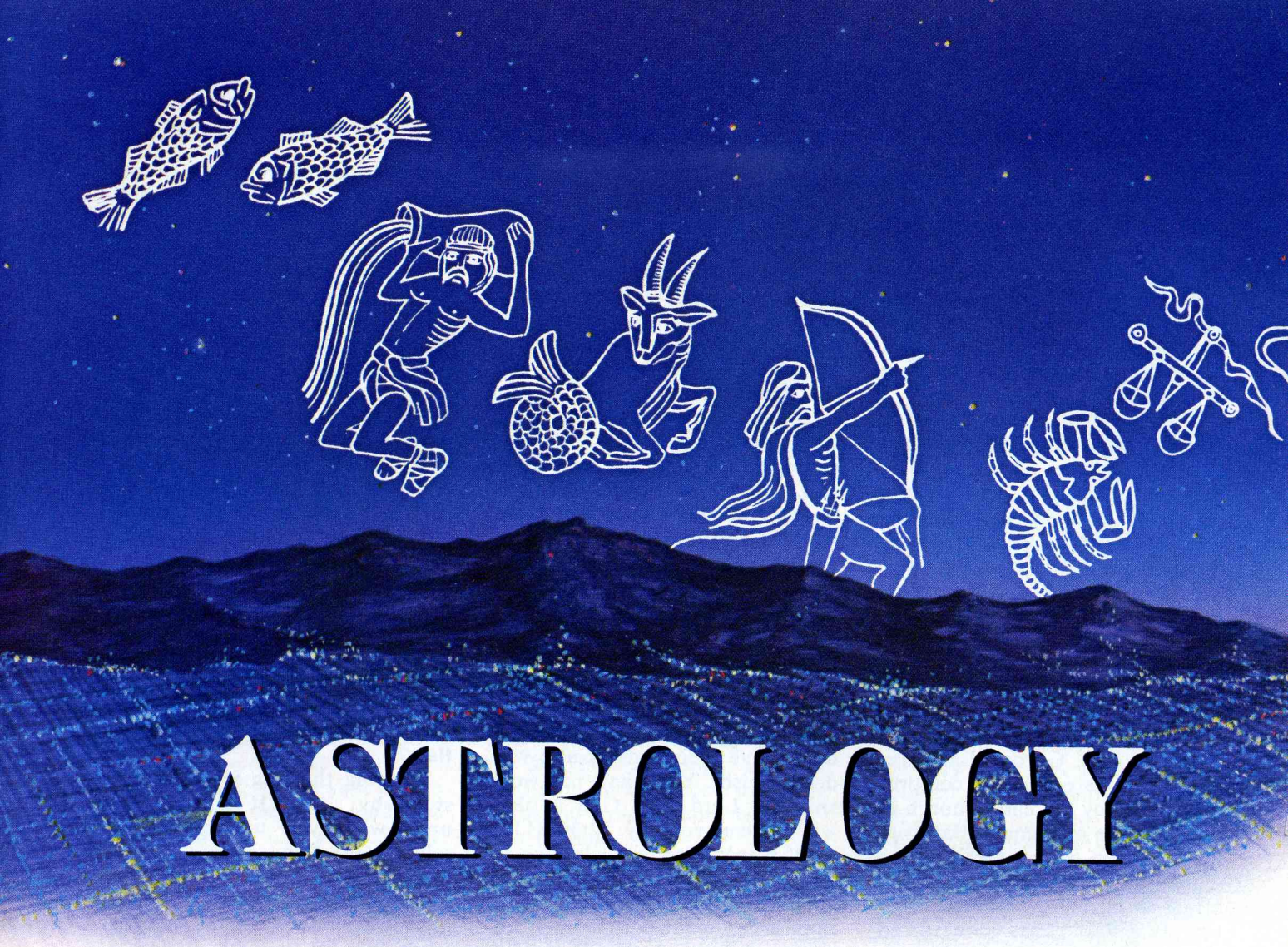
Is it idolatry to salute the flag?

Saluting the flag is misunderstood by some. It all depends upon what you understand by saluting the flag.

To salute is not in itself an act of idolatry. It is merely a matter of showing respect — the same as when men lift their hats before a head of state or bow their heads at a solemn occasion.

Through Paul, God commands us to show respect and honor where they are due (Romans 13:1-7). This means, for instance, that we should be willing to pay taxes. Jesus Christ did (Matthew 17:24-27, 22:17-21). Showing respect means we pray for our national leaders, that we may live in peace to carry out the Work of God (I Timothy 2:2).

Our allegiance to our nation is pledged only so far as the country is under God's authority in obedience to His laws. The Bible commands us to be good citizens in whatever country we live, but our allegiance first belongs to God. Then we are to obey all the laws of the land that do not require us to break one of the commands of God (Acts 4:19, 5:29). □



ASTROLOGY

Should You Look to the Stars?

Millions rely on horoscopes — but what does God say about this practice?

By Clayton D. Steep

Are you "Capricorn" or "Scorpio"? Should you avoid strangers today? Should you contemplate marriage?

Are you and your dog or cat compatible? Is this a bad day to start a new job? Should you postpone trying to overcome a bad habit? What do the stars and planets indicate?

Millions of people daily check their horoscopes to find out. Contracts are signed, employees hired, business ventures started, life-styles changed, occupations chosen, friendships altered, diets formulated, bets made, trips planned, babies named — yes, sometimes, even government policies and political decisions arrived at — all based on various astrological readings.

Even if you yourself do not believe in astrology, you may still be directly or indirectly affected



because of the decisions others in all walks of life make under the influence of zodiac charts.

What is astrology?

Briefly put, adherents claim astrology is a method of anticipating or foretelling events by calculating the effect the sun, moon, stars and planets have on human activities.

Supposedly, the relative positions of the heavenly bodies at the moment of a child's birth influence the child's character and personality. Plotting the movements of those heavenly bodies, it is thought, reveals an individual's destiny.

As to whether astrology really works, the debate has been intense. A few years ago 186 eminent scientists, among them 18 Nobel prize winners, signed a declaration that scientific evidence to support astrologers does not exist.

Armed with this and similar statements made by other scientists and astronomers, many have sought to debunk astrology. On the other hand, devotees and practitioners respond, "Don't knock it if you haven't tried it!" They insist the principles work regardless of certain charlatans and fakes who have given the study of astrology a bad name.

And so the arguing goes on and on, some claiming there is nothing to astrology, others insisting there is. Numerous books and papers have been written giving both sides of the story. There is no need to go into all the arguments here because they are voluminous and, for the most part, inconclusive.

Why astrology?

God intended that the heavenly bodies be used by man to measure time and seasons (Genesis 1:14). Nowhere does the Bible indicate He intended that they be looked to for guidance in making decisions and evaluations in our personal lives. We have God's written laws for that.

"Your word [not the sun, moon, planets, stars or horoscopes, palm readers, crystal-ball gazers, diviners, mediums or fortune-tellers!] is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Of course it is evident that the sun and moon wield considerable physical influence upon the planet earth, both for good and, potentially, for harm. But Psalm 121:6 promises the righteous, "The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night." However, no scripture speaks of the remote influence of distant stars and planets.

And certainly no scripture tells us to look to the heavenly bodies for personal direction!

The heavens declare God's glory (Psalm 19:1-6). But wisdom, guidance, understanding and the forming of an individual's character come from the laws and statutes of God, not from signs in the skies (verses 7-11).

We are to judge others "by their fruits" (Matthew 7:20), not by their horoscopes. "Do not judge according to appearance," Jesus declared, "but judge with righteous [according to God's laws] judgment" (John 7:24).

We are not forced to suffer, throughout life, from certain character weaknesses merely because we were born when the planets and stars were in a particular configuration. Through effort, with the power of God's Spirit, personality traits can be changed or overcome. "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon

Illustration by Mike Rider

you, and you will . . . be turned into another man," Samuel prophesied to Saul (I Samuel 10:6).

When God's Spirit works with a person, he takes on a whole new nature (II Peter 1:4). Regardless of his horoscope!

Our minds were given to us so we can weigh facts and come to our own conclusions. When it gets right down to it, many of those who consult their horoscopes daily are really trying to avoid the responsibility of decision making. They want to be told what to do. They feel more secure that way.

The American Society of Psychological and Social Studies made this point: "Faith in astrology is harmful, for it encourages an unhealthy evasion of the permanent problems of real life. . . . The astrologers, who offer the public a horoscope, which takes the place of conclusions drawn from serious reflection, are guilty of encouraging the human tendency of choosing facility rather than the difficult way."

Why do millions eagerly refer to their horoscopes every day? Because they feel a need for something to guide them through the complexities of life — something they can look to for direction and advice.

Those who look to God, however, have a different guide, one that never fails. Jesus promised that "the Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

Don't let the stars get in your eyes

Psychology Today (February, 1976) focused on the crux of the matter when it referred to the conclusions of science writer Lawrence Jerome:

"Arguments against the irrationality of astrology's claims miss the point, he says, because astrology isn't based on science or logic. It is a system of magic. . . . Astrologers since Greek times have tied their art to whatever scientific facts came to hand, Jerome said, 'more and more ascribing astrology to physical influences and obscuring the *magical* principles upon which it was based.' But *the basis is still magic*" (emphasis ours).

The Bible concurs. It groups astrologers along with magicians and soothsayers (Daniel 1:20, 2:2, 10, 27, 4:7).

The Bible nowhere says magic does not sometimes work. It worked, remember, for the sorcerers in Egypt (Exodus 7-8). We should not assume that soothsaying and astrology do not also work — sometimes. The same holds true for ESP experiments, hypnotism, water witching and other unexplained phenomena.

But just because they may at times work does not mean God's people ought to become involved with them. The source of these powers is definitely not God.

The Bible is clear as to how Christians should view astrology.

Just the knowledge that the practice of astrology began among the ancient pagans, particularly in Babylon, and that it pays special attention to a person's birthday ought to make any true Christian suspicious.

(If you aren't afraid of surprises and would like to know

What's Ahead for 1987 — and Beyond?

By Keith W. Stump

"Watch therefore, and pray always," advised Jesus Christ in His Olivet prophecy, "that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, it is time to focus attention on the major trends now bringing this world's society to a catastrophic climax — just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is time to watch world news — and to watch with understanding!

Today's conditions were dramatically foretold by Jesus Christ nearly 2,000 years ago. Armed with an understanding of His prophecies and related prophecies of the Old Testament, we can make sense out of the seemingly overwhelming barrage of news bombarding us daily by means of television, radio, newspapers and magazines.

Revealed in Bible prophecy

Bible prophecy — not the predictions of astrologers and soothsayers — is the only sure source of knowledge about the future!

Jesus Christ warned of an upsurge in religious confusion and deception, of wars and violence, of famines, disease epidemics, earthquakes and other natural disasters as we draw closer to the end of this present age (Matthew 24). And — even now — these and other prophecies are coming to pass.

Worldwide, scientists report an increase in the number and severity of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions — with even greater upheavals to come, according to prophecy.

And unpredictable shifts in weather patterns, such as those responsible for this year's record heat wave and drought in America's Southeast, will remain a source of growing concern to scientists and

what the Bible says on this subject, write for our free article reprint "Should Christians Celebrate Birthdays?")

Originated in paganism

The heathen were the first ones to look at the heavens and to react to portents they thought they saw there. However, God commanded *His* people: "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them" (Jeremiah 10:2, Authorized Version).

Isaiah prophesied that even though astrologers originated in Babylon, they would be unable to help Babylon in its ultimate time of trouble:

"It was your own magic craft and cunning that misled you . . . Therefore shall evil assail you . . . Go on with your spells! Practise all your magic arts [notice once again the connection with magic]! . . . You have worn yourself out with them all; let the astrologers come forward now, let the stargazers save you now, who calculate the future, month by month! They fare no better than the straw burned by a fire; they cannot save their own lives . . . and there is none to save you" (Isaiah 47:10-15, Moffatt).

There are numerous biblical condemnations of those who "observe times," as an astrologer must do (Deuteronomy 18:9-14, AV), those who worship "the sun, the moon, and the stars" (Deuteronomy 4:19, II Kings 23:5) and those who serve the "host of heaven" (II Kings 17:16, 21:3).

Of course, many adherents of astrology protest that they are not worshiping and serving the heavenly bodies.

Maybe not according to *their* definition of "worship and serve." But people do obey their horoscopes, and the Bible warns, "To whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey" (Romans 6:16).

For many, astrology is indeed a "religion." "We are modern priests," one practitioner declared, "clearing up people's doubts about the way their lives are going."

Our true guide

Before making a decision, a Christian does not have to be concerned about whether the planets are in a favorable position. He needs only to be concerned about what God's law says. Then he can make the decision with confidence.

"Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. . . . Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee . . . Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways" (Job 22:22, 27-28, AV).

No need to consult horoscopes, zodiac charts or astrological computations.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him [not a horoscope!], and He [not an astrologer's predictions!] shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). □

farmers worldwide through the year of 1987 and beyond.

Deaths from malnutrition and hunger and resultant disease epidemics will continue to plague much of the Third World in 1987. And in the developed West, dread new plagues such as AIDS will remain a major preoccupation of health authorities.

Political developments

In Western Europe, the movement toward economic and political unity will continue to pick up momentum, portending the ultimate emergence of a militarized united Europe as a third major power in world affairs.

Also look for an upsurge in interest in religion in the communist bloc countries of Eastern Europe — and a corresponding loosening of ties with the Soviet Union. And expect dramatic new steps toward church unity throughout the Christian-professing world, as ecumenical efforts continue to be a priority of the Vatican.

The turbulent Middle East — focal point of Bible prophecy — will continue to experience the violence and instability that has characterized that region through much of this century.

Political and religious extremism in Israel, the ongoing Syrian-Israeli confrontation, the protracted Iran-Iraq conflict and internal crises in Egypt will feature prominently in the headlines of 1987.

Terrorism is also certain to increase throughout the world, as lawlessness proliferates in the "perilous times" prophesied for the end of this present human civilization (II Timothy 3:1).

Watch world events

Bible prophecy also foretells mounting crises for the countries of the English-speaking world, accompanied by the decline of their economic, military and political fortunes. (Request our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* for full details. Just mail the literature request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you.) Of immediate concern: Events in southern Africa may erupt into major crisis in the months just ahead!

Also look for more news of the worsening world-debt crisis, with its potentially dire consequences to the international economic order.

Continuing conflicts over trade policy will also remain a major concern in relations between the United States and its trading partners in Europe and Asia.

For an in-depth analysis of current events from a biblical standpoint — and a look at where we are heading from here — be sure to read the February, 1987, issue of the *Plain Truth* magazine (a free subscription is available upon your request).

Since 1934, *The Plain Truth* has announced *in advance* many of the major developments of our time, based on the sure word of Bible prophecy. And each month *The Plain Truth* continues to explain what the Bible says lies just ahead for this world — and the good news beyond! □

But Do Men Really Understand Paul?

One of the most abused and misunderstood concepts about marriage is a wife's submission to her husband. Anyone who has read the Bible knows what it says about this subject.



"Let's face it; if you'd really loved me, you'd have married someone else!"

But not many know what it means.

My wife and I have four daughters and one son. We want what is best for them to develop their full potential. We want them to be educated, healthy and happily married.

We want our daughters to succeed in life. But we don't want them to be brazen, hardened and rebellious. We hope for them to be properly submissive when they marry.

We want our son to be a positive leader, one who understands the needs of his wife and children, one who will be a pillar of strength — but a man who is sensitive and understanding.

Regarding a capable woman, Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of this magazine, used to say: "I would never want to marry a woman who couldn't wear the pants. I just always must be capable and caring so she doesn't have to."

That is the way it should be. But not many in this society achieve it.

Why male and female?

At probably no time in human history has the marital relationship between husbands and wives been fully understood and properly practiced. Because there are so few positive examples, the truth has often been distorted.

Frankly, throughout most of human history women have been put down, impeded in development and even abused.

Therefore, to many feminists, the Bible has appeared to be a male chauvinist book exalting men and degrading women. Some women's liberationists have totally misunderstood the writings of the apostle Paul regarding the marital relationship and believe he hated both marriage and women.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Paul hated neither women nor marriage. But he did teach God's way of life regarding marriage. And to have a happy marriage, that way must be followed!

We first need to understand God is not a male chauvinist. In the beginning, God made mankind male and female. By design. With forethought. Woman was not a second consideration. The order of creation implied no superiority in quality or value. The female was not, is not, never will be a subspecies to the male.

For at least two great purposes, God designed mankind male and female.

The most obvious reason is for human reproduction. When God made Adam, He permitted Adam to be alone for a few hours — long enough for Adam to discover that in all the rest of creation, "there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:20).

Adam alone would never have been able to reproduce. But God placed mankind on earth to multiply and replenish the earth. So God took of the same body and bone, Adam, and made that suitable, comparable, missing dimension — woman. Together, male and female could reproduce.

But in addition to reproduction, God made the man and woman capable of the greatest possibility of all — love. The very

creation is an expression of God's love. The apostle John said it in the most eloquent but simple fashion: "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (I John 4:8).

God, then, placed that greatest of all qualities within humans. It can be expressed in many ways, but none greater than love that can be shared between husbands and wives.

Equal but different

From creation, the ultimate spiritual potential of male and female has been exactly the same. When Jesus spoke of this great expectation, He said, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

But in the flesh we marry. We are male and female — and quite obviously different. There are physical differences. Emotional differences. Personality differences. Different needs. Different responses.

The differences between male and female were designed to complement one another. A husband and a wife should form a team. Two individuals become one in marriage.

In the first marriage ceremony, God said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

When Peter instructed husbands in the marital relationship, he said, "Likewise you husbands, dwell with them [your wives] with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the [physically] weaker vessel" (I Peter 3:7).

Women are not mentally inferior. Not emotionally inferior. Not inferior in any way. But by design women are, in general, physically not as strong as men.

Husbands are to provide for the family and supply strength and leadership. Deep down, most women have to admit they yearn for a man of such stability.

Peter continued in the verse we just quoted, "Giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." Husbands and wives should spend their lives together striving for the same spiritual goal — to be in God's Kingdom for all eternity.

So in spiritual potential men and women are all equal. In many physical ways we are different. But *different* in no way implies *better* — just *different*.

So what's this about submission?

If we are equal but different, why does the Bible talk about submission? Here is the misunderstood part.

The apostle Paul wrote the famous verses so many have not really understood. It's in Ephesians 5:22-23: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body."

Taken out of context, twisted and distorted, many have assumed this verse allows husbands to become dictators.

That is not what it says at all.

You see, it is a matter of responsibility. Paul uses Christ and the Church as a teaching analogy. The Church of God should be subject to Christ. Members should want to obey His instruction — live by His example.

Submit is not a horror word. This scripture does not by any means give any man the right to abuse a woman.

Notice, in the same context, what Paul told men: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" (verse 25).

Jesus died for His Church. Any husband who really loves his wife should be willing to die for her. If more husbands conveyed that kind of feeling, care, warmth and love, fewer wives would have trouble with the word *submit*.

For that reason, before marriage, a young woman ought to think long and hard about the man with whom she is going to spend the rest of her life. If a certain young man to whom she is attracted turns out to be indecisive, weak, lacking character and self-discipline, it will be hard to respect him — hard to submit, yield or defer to him.

On the other hand, if a man is dictatorial, cruel, demanding and abusive, who would want to submit to that kind of life?

It's not easy — finding the right man. But ladies, if you are not married and hope to someday be married, think about the kind of man you can respect, love and, in the right way, submit to.

A matter of government

God is over Christ and Christ is over the Church. Someone has to be in charge. Nations have kings, presidents or prime ministers. Cities have mayors. Families have husbands and fathers who are responsible.

In that context, a wife submits to the God-given authority of her husband, who should set an example of loving care. The husband and wife then become an example to their children, who grow up understanding the proper role of husbands and wives.

So *submit* does not mean to give up identity. It doesn't mean to remain uneducated and unfulfilled and unhappy. But to properly respect and submit to a husband is the God-given responsibility of a wife.

Even in this modern age, it is possible to live by the principles, teachings and laws of the Bible. It may not be easy. But with a great deal of prayer and effort, it can be done.

It's the only way a marriage will truly work. □

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create with your child!

Creativity is essential to our well-being as humans. You can nurture your child's creativity from his or her earliest years.

By Joan C. Bogdanchik



Creativity is part of our nature as humans. It is a quality of the human intellect, that unique mix of physical brain and spirit essence that raises man above the level of mere animals and makes him, in mind, like God Himself!

Have you noticed how fulfilled you feel when you have created something? No wonder! We are born with minds and bodies capable of growing into thinking and planning individuals who produce and then enjoy the fruit of our labors.

We were made to experience these rewarding activities. They were bestowed upon us by our Father, the great *Creator* God. We as thinking individuals are capable of choice and production.

We are all different — special in our way. We vary in parentage, cultural backgrounds and geographical locations, contacts we all have and in experiences that follow. We have our own unique vision of the world. No one else is exactly the same or will express himself in exactly the same way.

But we all had a beginning, with our parents. Our future is shaped in large part by them. And now we who are parents (or will be) will shape our children's future.

How best can we do it?

Creativity is an essential part of learning for all children. This valuable resource begins to be developed early. Play helps to nurture it. That's why the right kind of play is so necessary.

Children need the experiences of playing alone and with others. When they play alone, they become more self-reliant as they

must draw upon their own resources — resources they will be building with your help. By themselves, this drawing upon resources encourages creativity.

When playing with others, children learn how to share, give and receive, get along and make up activities. Emotional, physical and intellectual stretching takes place.

Creativity helps a child to be more flexible and not to fear change. This is important, as so many factors in life can bring about transition in a family's situation. Exposure to, and real involvement in, a tremendous amount of play is necessary. Play with parents and others is a stimulus. With stimuli, spontaneity flourishes.

Learning at home

The home is an ideal place for a child to begin to develop creativity. Have you ever considered how many opportunities are to be found there?

As you talk to your child from birth (and before), and as he or she observes you doing household tasks, learning takes place. Learning goes on as he or she watches you cook and bake, clean house and do laundry.

The child sees a meal or pie being created — the organizational process in housecleaning — the way Mother creates a shirt out of a piece of material. He or she watches and feels the soil as Daddy digs into the earth and plants seeds. As he or she waters the seeds, he or she is helping to make the new creation emerge.

As Daddy and Mommy sing songs of their own creation, the child learns creativity. As they whirl him or her around the floor in time to the music, creativity and coordination are learned.

With each story that is read, your child develops imagery (seeing pictures of the words) in his or her mind. Later, parents should make up simple stories and have their child finish them. What wonderful practice in creativity can be going on!

To not expose your child to these activities and others does a great disservice — far greater than many have begun to realize. Lack of creative stimulation can do much damage to a child's intelligence. You see, internal imagery must be present in the mind. It is vital to symbolic thinking skills.

The first six years of life are known as the formative years. During these important years, the child is *learning how to learn.* Does it not make sense that he or she should have the best possible teaching? If we are doing our proper job as parents, we must provide this.

In most every home, however, is a source of instruction that can run contrary to the above.

This source of instruction encourages the child to do little but *watch,* when he or she should be *doing* — exercising skills that will be needed to be successful in school and later life.

As a child sits and stares at one small area, he or she *passively* absorbs information instead of doing so *actively.* Curiosity should be developing. The child should begin elementary analyzing and thinking critically, and solving problems that arise — by doing. He or she should be learning to explore possibilities and scan other areas. These skills will be needed later in reading.

But here the child is — in the midst of the most vital years of life — sitting in front of a television set! Will your child absorb the 6,000 hours that the average American child does during the critical years? Is it any wonder that children have difficulty in school?

A reader must scan, not stare at one small area. The mind must actively turn the printed information into understanding. This is done while in control of reading material — holding it, turning its pages, thinking analytically while attempting to solve the problem. Children need to exercise curiosity, pose questions and explore, pay attention, use imagination — yes, work — to find answers.

With TV, learning tends to be passive. Little imagination is required. The flickering of the screen tends to shorten the attention span. Books, properly used, can lengthen it. In reading, the eye, brain and hand must be coordinated. Right play activities offer practice in this area. TV, generally, does not.

Give your child carefully limited exposure to TV. Keep the bulk of learning *active.*

But don't think every play experience must count for something specific. Let your children be children! Let them have fun and use their imaginations. Show them how to use toys, but don't take over. Remember, informal instruction is effective for the young child. Don't turn fun into pressure.

We should build right habits in our children in all they do. If they learn them properly, they will have a tremendous head start in life.

Your child can play with the same games and toys for years if they are the "open-ended" kind of toys — construction sets or blocks, for instance. You'll have the pleasure of seeing your child's creations grow in complexity as he or she grows in age and ability.

Continue to spend much time talking with your child and showing how much you think about his or her ideas. Be sure to encourage when he or she comes up with originality. This way the

Photos: Warren Watson; Nathan Faulkner; G.A. Belluche Jr.

child will continue to use creativity to learn and produce yet more.

Be sure, too, that you don't overprotect as the child attempts some new experience such as climbing or balancing on a beam.



Be near to watch and help, if needed, but let the child have realistic exploration freedom.

And don't smother a child with sympathy when he or she gets a scrape. Just a kiss (though sometimes a bandage, too, will be necessary) should set the child off again to continue with activities.

A child's creativity should not fly so free as to have no guidelines. The child must be taught the difference between the function of wall space and drawing paper, for example. To have a child develop within the rules of law and order is necessary.

But parents need to be sure they themselves know and understand those rules. Preparation for parenthood, understanding how children learn to develop, is essential for parents. Balance and good common sense are basic. They make for happy, creative, productive and useful citizens — both today and tomorrow.

Growth through art

Art activities occupy a strategic place in the development of creativity. As the child views the world, certain things become special. We need to know what is important to a child at the different stages of development.

A child begins to "make his or her mark" by scribbling. And how vital this is. It is necessary to get to writing (which we will cover in the next article in this series on early education).

Children vary in the time it takes to get to controlled scribbling, as they grow in the coordination between visual and motor skills. But to have more success in this connection, have your child avoid pencils at the very early stage, as points tear. This disturbs thoughts and discourages creativity. Crayons of the jumbo variety, rather than the thinner ones, are helpful during preschool years. Remember, the smaller the child, the bigger the materials. This will help coordination and eyesight.

As your child scribbles, you will notice that horizontal and longitudinal directions emerge. These will also be seen in cutting. Be sure your preschooler has many opportunities to cut paper. Help him or her use scissors. Paper-cutting activities go a long way in helping develop motor control and coordination.

Horizontal, longitudinal and circular directions represent attempts to control mark-making. Soon you will find your child naming his or her creations. Have you noticed how important the head is to a child? Before long, feet will be coming out of it in his or her illustrations! So will arms! You will notice, too, that the figures will float. This is because the environment isn't of concern in the art creations yet.

But soon the figures will be long-legged and have a ground line. The part of the drawing in which the child is fully involved will be exaggerated, and natural colors will begin to be used. A child who has good emotional health will usually draw himself or herself in the picture.

Art is a means of understanding and furthering growth. But remember, you must see the growth over time. Do not misjudge on limited performance.

But if a child's work is minimal, if he or she is not personally involved, if it is always messy, more help, guidance, love and exposure are needed. Encourage and help in a positive way. Show how we always do our best in what we do. The child will then begin to do this as a way of life.

We should be developing these right habits and approaches in our children in all they do. They must become quite fixed during these early years. If they learn them properly now, they will have a tremendous head start on what they need to perform properly throughout life.

But if we let these habits slip, we shouldn't be surprised when negative marks appear on our children's report cards concerning work habits and citizenship. Failure to grow in these areas lowers scholastic achievement. As an elementary schoolteacher, I have seen this time and again.

More ways to creativity

Making collages can be valuable in developing creativity and manual dexterity. Have your child paste torn, cut or ready-made shapes on cardboard to create creations. Macaroni, beans, foil or other materials of your choosing may be used, too.

A different kind of thought takes place as a child uses clay

and creates in three dimensions. Finger strength develops.

Paint should be thick enough to prevent running. Paper and brushes should be large. Be sure you have a work space for your child in an easily cleaned area where he or she can be creative and not need to be concerned about splashes on carpet, furniture or his or her art shirt.

Children love the repetition of activities and will experiment and explore. Let them know you appreciate their work. Display some of their results.

But much of their work is experimental. Every piece need not have a story. But at times you could say, "Draw or paint the time we went to the zoo," for example. This can stir your child into action and clarity.

Do box sculpture work with your child. Place paper plates on sticks. Children enjoy painting the spools from your thread and then stringing them to make a caterpillar. This presents a challenge to finger dexterity. Creativity is heightened if some of the stringing is done with wheels or macaroni.

Make prints by using string or pieces of fruits and vegetables. These can be inked by dipping them in paper that has been saturated with thin paint. Press them on paper.

Work with empty paper-towel rolls and fabric remnants of velvet, lace, silk, satin, corduroy or burlap. Have shells, pebbles, beads, paper of many types (corrugated, transparent, containing patterns), scraps of foil, plastic or Styrofoam, paper cups or Popsicle sticks. Do some work with wood.

Groundwork for later

Remember, the home is a natural place for learning. A rich variety of materials encourages flexibility and creativity. From these materials can come unique collages and colorful mosaics.

See that your child has much personal experience in working with different types of materials. Skills in art and other areas grow out of it. Simple weaving gives your child experiences to help develop his sence of touch.

Involve your whole family in these activities. Besides increasing a loving bond, you are helping your child's art. Children tend to stay with a project longer if you are there with them, and stick-to-itiveness is what you want to develop in a child.

You will notice your child's stick-to-itiveness as he or she shapes clay, searches for the right piece of material or works to finish his or her picture. He or she is putting the whole being into the task. And that is good!

Watch how your child handles the setbacks as the paint drips or the thread twists when working by himself or herself (and he or she should have much opportunity to work alone). You will see, if these experiences and a variety of others are made available, perseverance that will please you.

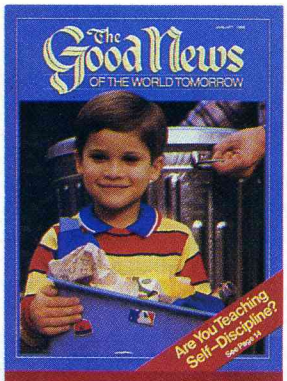
This should be accomplished during these preschool years. How basic and vital it is to future success! A child who will stick to schoolwork despite frustrations and setbacks is on the road to success. Look in a mirror to see who helped the child develop this. Art experience is essential to creative and mental growth. Feelings and emotions will be mirrored in it. Future reading ability is enhanced by it, also. This is nurtured by the awareness of detail that art requires.

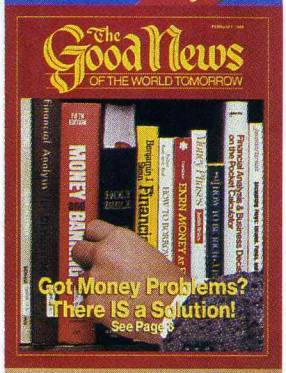
Help your child become observant of details, increasingly aware of his environment. Any outing will help in this, especially trips to the supermarket, beach, park or woods. Observe the detail of flowers, insects, grass and tree bark. Note the time of day and shadows. Comment on the detail in fruit and vegetables, on buildings and clothes.

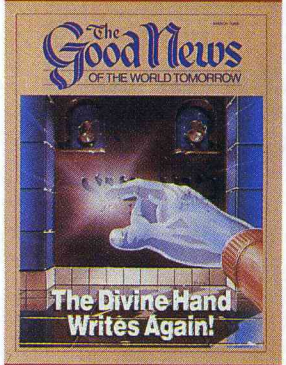
Take special delight in rainbows. How beautifully the promise to Noah can be tied in with the seven colors of the rainbow. A discussion of color itself and what it means to the beauty, excitement and wonder of the world can be launched. Important lessons can be taught through color, design and creativity.

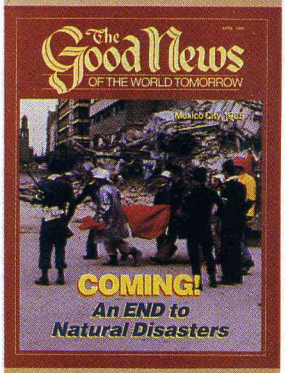


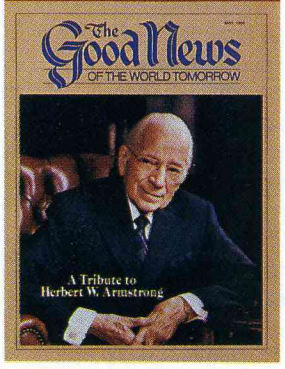
Is creativity important to develop in your child? Without it, your child will be handicapped for life! You created your child — now create *with* your child! □







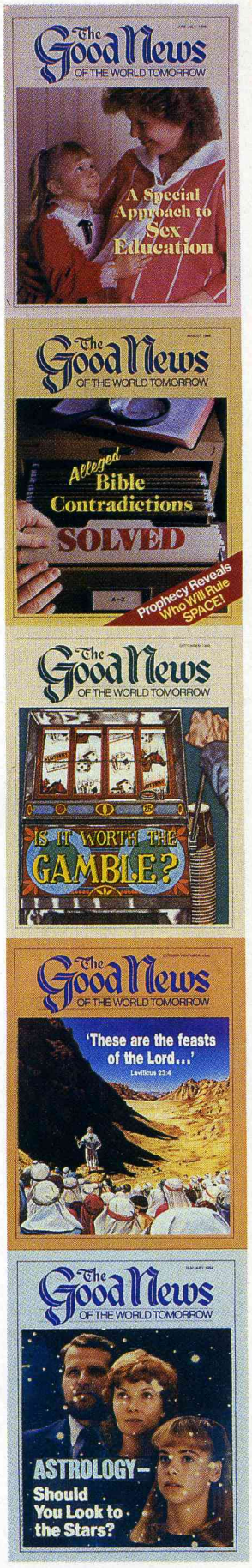


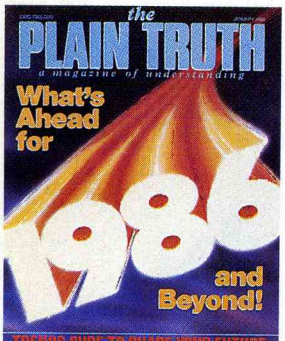


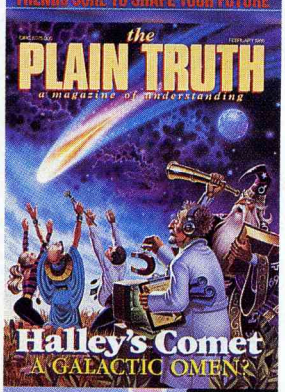
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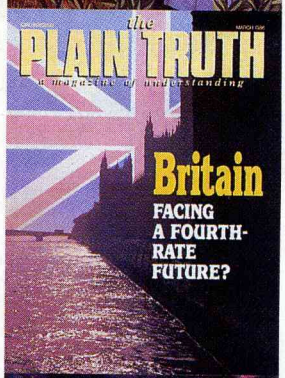
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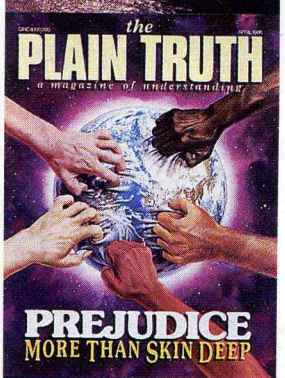
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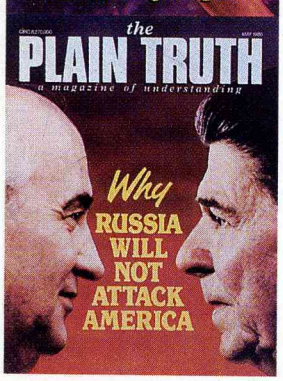








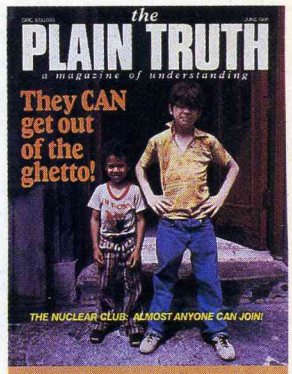


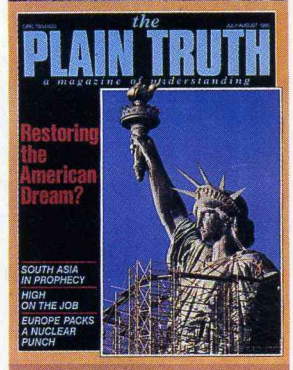


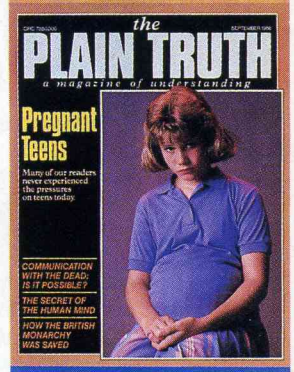
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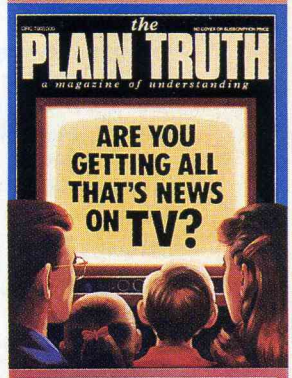
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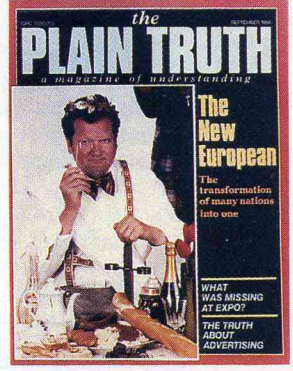
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LETTERS

"How to Convert Lemons"

I appreciated "How to Convert Lemons" by Editor Dexter H. Faulkner [September], especially the comparative reference to "rugs." But I have my own view which may be of interest.

A commercial rug is made for one good reason: profit — or the hope thereof. But the "real" Oriental or Persian rug, as opposed to the multitude just produced in the Orient or in Persia, is made as a continuity of respect and tradition. This tradition expresses the feelings, the moods, the beauty, the requirement for practical needs and usages, and it also contains a portion of the weaver's self-esteem.

Of course the weaver must have the technical skills, but these are often a little better than basic necessities — and only at best do they become pure and excellent craftsmanship.

Yet the art and the value is laid down by the individuality, the honesty, the beauty and the observance of accepted laws.

There exists a tremendous difference between the commercial — produced purely for the money — and the rug which is produced as a need for true self-expression.

This point should be thought about and understood by each one in his own way. This is the meaning, or one of the meanings, of a true Oriental rug.

Alexander Juran
London, England

"Are You Dull of Hearing?"

I'm commenting on your article entitled "Are You Dull of Hearing?" [August]. I've been a reader of *The Good News* for about a year now, and I've been reading *The Plain Truth* for about 21 years now, and I have yet to find either magazine dull, uninteresting or lacking the milk or meat necessary to remain strong in my daily walk with Jesus Christ. Yes, I have found a lot of repetition in some of your articles, booklets and reprints, but praise God, in almost all cases when I've gone to the Bible and re-read the repetitive scripture I have learned something new or have had my faith in the Church and God strengthened.

Martin V. Conover
Arcadia, Fla.

I heard an analogy about being dull of hearing in a sermon once.

One of the brethren lives near a railroad crossing. Many times in the day and night he hears the train whistle blowing. His friend visiting him said, "Don't you get tired of hearing that day and night?"

He said, "No, I know the whistle is warning others who have never heard it before."

Lewis E. Hoffman
Bethlehem, Penn.

"Put Your Christianity on Trial"

I just wanted to let you know that your latest article in *The Good News,* entitled "Put Your Christianity on Trial" [August], was very interesting and enlightening and positive, especially when you categorized what we should be doing, i.e., prayer and Bible study, keeping God's commandments, good works. Sometimes it's very easy to get bogged down with things, that we forget what's important. Thank you for keeping us in tune to what's really important, in a simple, straightforward way. These articles are very important to God's people.

Garry Stadnyk
Vancouver, B.C.

I especially enjoyed "Put Your Christianity on Trial." It really made me think. One day we may have to openly defend God's Word and principles in public in this confused, deceived world. Would most of us be able to stand such a test? I certainly hope so. We best be seriously preparing now. Time may be shorter than we think.

Vickie E. Wattjes
Lincoln, Neb.

"Your Child's Musical Heritage"

I would like to commend Joan C. Bogdanchik on her excellent article, "Your Child's Musical Heritage" [August]. It is accurate and well-written. Mrs. Bogdanchik's suggested uses of music in children's development are excellent.

I would like to add that music is now being used for all ages (pre-natal through geriatric) and abilities (including physically and mentally handicapped) of people, in an exciting field called music therapy. Just as music is used therapeutically to aid in normal development, it can also be used to help handicapped individuals achieve more normal functioning. It can help persons express themselves, become oriented to reality, exercise, analyze themselves, learn academic skills and learn self-help skills, as well as many, many other skills.

I have recently graduated from Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, Mich.), majoring in music therapy, and am expecting to begin an internship this fall, after which I will receive my bachelors degree. At this stage I am not an expert in the field, but I am simply so excited about learning to use God's gift of music in such a beneficial manner that I wanted to share it with you.

Kimberlee Carpenter
Sturgis, Mich.

Marriage articles

I was especially impressed by two articles in the August edition of *The Good News,* "Family Sharing: How Important Is Marriage?" and "Husbands and Wives! Your Marriage Can be Happy."

Both articles are thought-provoking and they brought to mind a poem I'd like to share with you:

Woman was made from the rib of man.
She was not created from his head to top him,
Nor from his feet to be stepped on.
She was made from his side to be equal to him,
From beneath his arm to be protected by him,
Near his heart to be loved by him.

Richard Hayes
Los Angeles, Calif.

I'm a teenage girl (almost 16) who is blessed to have two parents who are still very much in love, after just celebrating their 22nd wedding anniversary. I understand what the words *love, honor* and *cherish* mean. I think people are getting married for the wrong reasons, and they end up divorced, and you know who really suffers — the children. I know. *Most* of my friends are in broken homes. Maybe if people go into a marriage with an open and optimistic mind, and understand "We're all only human," there may not be so many divorces.

Elizabeth Brown
Medford, Ore.

New member

I wanted to take a moment to tell you how much I appreciate the wonderful job you are doing. The magazine continues to be filled with inspiring and enlightening articles. As a fairly new member of God's Church, I am especially thankful for this area of the Work. I have learned so much about living God's way through your efforts in publishing *The Good News.* Keep up the good work!

Ann Bradford
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

COMING
IN THE GOOD NEWS

◆What You Should Know About Dating

A new generation of young people has redefined the concept and practice of dating. A special series of articles will examine the practical aspects of this lost art, the traditional foundation for successful marriages.

◆"Why Do You Want War . . .?"

After a trip to the Soviet Union, a *Good News* correspondent offers a unique perspective on the Russian people — and on the ultimate peace that will soon grip this entire earth!

◆Here Is Prophecy Fulfilled!

Did the first Christians see Christ's Olivet prophecy fulfilled? Did prophesied events in the book of Revelation ever come to pass? Here are remarkable reports, from both Scripture and secular history.

◆"Please Talk to Me!"

Many married couples believe their problems are about money or children or sex. But often the real issue is communication.

◆But What If God Makes You Wait?

What if your prayers about some problem or need in your life are not answered right away?

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