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*the*

# PLAIN TRUTH

*a magazine of understanding*



## Where Is West Germany Headed?



## Personal from...

*A staggering turn in world events is due to erupt in the next few years.*

**I**T WILL INVOLVE violently the United States, Britain, Western Europe, and the Middle East.

It's already rather late for the Free World to come awake to the real meaning behind current world events!

World leaders do not see clearly what is coming. WHY? Why are the best minds not seeing—leaders in the United States, heads of state around the world—scientists, educators, editors, news analysts—bankers, industrialists, leaders in business and commerce? WHY?

They are all the product of modern education. They have been falsely educated in a system where the most important dimension in knowledge is unknown and untaught. They have been deceived into closing their minds to the basic CAUSES of present events and trends.

The world has been falsely educated to ignore CAUSES and deal with EFFECTS! There had to be a CAUSE of present and coming EFFECTS. There is a CAUSE that has produced strife, violence and war—poverty, wretchedness, human suffering—crime, widespread immorality, the decadence in the basic foundation of any healthy and stable society, the FAMILY UNIT! But the leaders do not know, and certainly do not correct the CAUSES!

### **World Explosion to Erupt!**

There has been a fatal missing dimension in the dissemination of knowledge. Leaders do not know *what man is*, or the purpose and meaning of life! They were not taught to distinguish the true values from the false. They did not learn the real CAUSES of troubles, nor THE WAY to peace, happiness, abundant well-being for all.

They know nothing of the overall PURPOSE being worked out here below! Consequently they guide humanity in a course in conflict with that purpose! Lacking knowledge of THE WAY to peace, we have no peace. Leaders talk of peace, they profess to work for peace, they fight for peace, while they

give approval and blind acceptance of THE WAY that produces WARS!

This world is giving civilization's acceptance to THE WAYS that are the CAUSES of all the world's evils!

And now we are approaching the final grand smash explosion. It will stagger the mind of man beyond the bounds of sanity! Forces are at work today on plans, conspiracies that soon will erupt into a violence and chaos such as never occurred before and never shall again! Men now are tampering with forces of nature they lack the prudence, knowledge, ability and wisdom to control!

In this folly of educated ignorance it has become fashionable and intellectually titillating to ignore the basic Mind and Power over all—the PURPOSE being worked out here below, and the master plan for its working out—the invisible but Supreme Power now soon to intervene and END the impending world chaos. It will be done *to us*, before mankind blasts itself out of existence!

Unreal though it may seem to those steeped in today's educational deceptions, some 2,500 years ago the Supreme Power of the universe inspired a man named Isaiah to quote Him, saying, "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning . . . saying, 'My counsel shall stand.'"

The great world powers are formulating their plans and policies. But the next few years will see astounding events explode in a manner very different than they plan.

WHY? Because there does exist the great God who says: "The Eternal wrecks the purposes of pagans, he brings to nothing what the nations plan; but the Eternal's PURPOSE stands for ever, and what He plans will last from age to age. . . . The Eternal looks from heaven, beholding all mankind; from where He sits, He scans all who inhabit the world; He who alone made (Continued on page 45)

# Part Eight:

## A Voice Cries Out Amid Religious Confusion

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*How could the world have become so mixed up? Out of this spiritual wilderness, a voice cries out in clarity and power, with the reassuring truth of the world's only and sure hope!*

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by Herbert W. Armstrong

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*Editor's note: We are printing here, serially, the new book by Herbert W. Armstrong with the same title as this article. The book will appear later in bookstores.*

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### Chapter 7

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#### Part One: WHAT AND WHY THE CHURCH?

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**D**OES ANYONE KNOW WHY there are churches? Just what IS the CHURCH as an institution? Is there a REASON for it? People take the existence of churches for granted.

Most think of the CHURCH as a building with a sharply sloping roof, a steeple pointing heavenward atop and a cross on its face. Indeed Webster defines the word *church* as a building. It was something altogether differ-

ent when originally founded.

People suppose a church is a building to which people—some of them—flock on Sunday morning for “worship.” They think *people* go to the *church*. As founded in the New Testament, the *Church* went to a *building*, at first a private home. And the Church assembled on a Saturday, not Sunday.

How the churches of today have changed from Christ's pattern! But for WHAT PURPOSE did Christ found the Church? What has happened to it since?

Some may know that Christ is supposed to have started it. Yet in the Western world today there are many different churches—Catholic, Protestant, independents. And within them many denominations, sects and divisions or congregations, each with its differing beliefs, teachings, rituals and programs.

Institutionally the CHURCH is thought of as a religious organization, association or society. One—if “good”—is supposed to

join the “church of his choice.” Of course there are the “good guys” and the “bad guys” and the “good” go to church.

I am reminded of an incident of more than 40 years ago. I was still in Eugene, Oregon. An ex-minister came to me who had just recently been married. His wife had money, but he was too proud to let her support him. He had not been employed in the ministry for some time but now needed a job.

“Do you know of any pulpit vacancies in Lane County?” he asked. “I want to support my wife, and she wants to remain here in Lane County.”

“Well, yes,” I replied. “I do know of one vacancy, but that wouldn't help you because that is a Christian church, and you are a Methodist with different practices.”

“Oh, that won't make any difference,” he assured me. “I'll preach whatever doctrines they want me to preach.”

The church seems to be some-

thing concerned with worshipping with others. Supposedly it refers to the worship of God.

But if GOD is related to the Church, what is His relationship? How did the Church start?

Back in the early part of 1927 when my intense Bible study was bringing me toward conversion, I asked myself such questions. I supposed questions of that sort never enter the average mind.

The first mention in the Bible of the Church, in time of existence, is Acts 7:38: where it speaks of "the church in the wilderness" at Mount Sinai, under Moses. So Old Testament Israel was the "Church." Most generally in the Old Testament, Israel, as a church, is referred to as the "Congregation of Israel."

Actually, in the New Testament Greek, it is called the *ekklesia*, a Greek word meaning an assembly, a congregation, a gathering, a group. There is no sanctity to the word *ekklesia*. The name of the Church, however, used 12 times in the New Testament is "Church of God," which denotes that it is GOD'S Church—which NAME attaches sanctity.

The first place in the New Testament where the word *church* appears is Matthew 16:18, where, speaking to Simon Peter, Jesus said, "I will build my church," And in Ephesians 5:23 it is stated that Christ is the Head of the Church.

So this we know. Whatever the Church is, it belongs to GOD and its name is the CHURCH OF GOD. Jesus Christ is its founder, and He its living HEAD.

That brings us back immediately to the theme we have been covering in this volume.

I have said before, if one enters a motion picture theater or tunes in a movie on television at a point where the movie is about two-thirds along, he simply can't understand what he sees. He doesn't know what went before—what sequence of events led up to the point where his eyes entered the picture.

If we "tune in" on the world in

this latter half of the 20th century, observe the churches and church customs of our day, not having known what went before—what led up to the present—we simply CAN'T UNDERSTAND!

But if it is GOD'S Church—if Jesus Christ founded it and today heads it—it is something IMPORTANT TO GOD, and therefore VITAL THAT WE COME TO UNDERSTAND!

We must bear in mind what *went before*—what led up to it—to understand *WHY* the living Christ created it—*WHAT* it is, and where it fits into the divine PURPOSE being worked out here below.

*And that is something not even the theologians and church leaders of our day understand.*

Back now, therefore, to an abbreviated synopsis of events leading up to the founding of the Church.

When the earth was first created (Job 38:4, 7) God placed angels on the earth. Over them He placed the Government of God. On the throne of the earth was the mighty cherub Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-14). But Lucifer led the angels into rebellion (II Peter 2:4). The Government of God no longer was administered on earth. Lucifer became Satan the devil, and his angels demons.

The earth had become—through angelic rebellion—chaotic, waste (Genesis 1:2), and in six days God renewed (Psalm 104:30) the face of the earth for MAN (Genesis 1:3-27). God was going to reproduce Himself through MAN!

The first man, Adam, was given the opportunity to reject Satan and his way, to accept the Government of God and restore that Government to earth. But Adam rejected God as Ruler, Revealer of spiritual knowledge, and Giver of eternal life. God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and barred human reentrance lest humanity regain access to the tree of LIFE and gain immortality in sin and its resulting anguish.

Since MAN had rejected God's Government, God's revealed knowledge, and the gift of immortality, God CUT OFF ALL MANKIND, except the infinitesimal FEW He would specially call, UNTIL the second Adam, Jesus Christ, should overcome Satan, and RESTORE the Government of God over the earth!

In the antedeluvian world prior to Noah, only one man, Enoch, is reported having walked God's way. God mercifully blotted out all humanity from further violence, suffering and anguish, to be resurrected in the next second of consciousness in the postmillennial world of the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-12).

After a few generations in the new world, God called ONE MAN, Abraham, who walked the way of God. God gave him the promise of Christ as his descendant, and ultimate salvation of the world through Him.

Four hundred thirty years after the covenant with Abraham, God chose ONE MAN, Moses, to lead the two or more million descendants of Abraham out of Egyptian slavery into the Promised Land. They professed to accept the Government of God, but rebelled. Yet the Holy Spirit of God was not offered them. God's Spirit could not come for God's people UNTIL Jesus had qualified to restore the Government of God and had been glorified in heaven (John 7:37-39).

In due time, Jesus was born of a virgin Mary, having been begotten NOT by a human father, but by GOD. Jesus QUALIFIED to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD and set up the KINGDOM OF GOD, by overcoming Satan (Matthew 4:1-11).

The time then was fulfilled when the GOOD NEWS (Gospel) announcing the coming KINGDOM OF GOD should be proclaimed as a witness to the world.

At this juncture it is important to notice FOUR very important "UNTILS."

1) Except for the very few specially and individually called  
(Continued on page 39)

# Voice Cries Out

(Continued from page 6)

by God, ALL HUMANKIND WAS CUT OFF FROM ACCESS TO GOD OR HIS HOLY SPIRIT UNTIL the second Adam (Christ) had qualified and actually RESTORED THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD, RULING THE WORLD BY THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Jesus said plainly, "No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him" (John 6:44).

2) The Holy Spirit was not yet given, even for the Church, UNTIL Jesus, having conquered Satan, had been glorified in heaven (John 7:37-39). Therefore the Old Testament Israel could not receive God's Holy Spirit. Only their specially called prophets did.

3) Even the GOSPEL—good news of the coming KINGDOM OF GOD—could not be proclaimed UNTIL Jesus, the second Adam, had QUALIFIED by overcoming Satan while He was human (Mark 1:14-15). So, during Old Testament Israel, "the law and the prophets were UNTIL John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16:16).

4) Even now, today, the heavens have received Jesus "UNTIL the times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). That is, the time of RESTORATION of the Government of God over the earth at Christ's now soon coming!

Old Testament Israel had a function preparatory to ultimate establishment of the KINGDOM OF GOD. But the Gospel could not be proclaimed to the world, nor could God's called congregation of people have the Holy Spirit UNTIL Jesus a) had qualified by overcoming Satan, and b) had been glorified after ascension to heaven.

But NOW we come to the CHURCH of the New Testament. The time had come when 1) the Gospel announcement could go to the world, and 2) the congregation or CHURCH could receive the Holy Spirit.

So now we can explain, in a man-

ner that makes SENSE, WHAT and WHY IS THE CHURCH!

## Founding the Church

First, what nearly all "Christians," including theologians, do not realize: Jesus was born to become a KING!

On trial for His life before Pilate, Jesus was asked, "Art thou a king then?" And Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world . . ." (John 18:37).

Prior to the begetting and birth of Jesus, God had said to His mother-to-be, Mary, by His angel: ". . . thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He

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*Jesus Himself was  
to be not only Founder  
but head and chief  
'corner stone' of the  
Church (Ephesians  
2:19-21; 5:23).*

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shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his KINGDOM there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33).

Jesus was born as a human, to become a KING, ultimately to establish the KINGDOM OF GOD, ruling the whole earth with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! But that RULE required more than the individual JESUS.

Jesus came for DUAL purposes! He came also as spiritual Savior, to save God's people from their sins, that they might be BORN into the very Divine FAMILY OF GOD (Matthew 1:21), that they might share in that Government RULE!

Neither professing Christians nor their scholarly theologian leaders today comprehend either

of these two major PURPOSES for which Jesus Christ came!

His human birth was the arrival of the "second Adam." He had come 1) to qualify, where the first Adam failed, to replace the former archangel Lucifer on the THRONE OF THE EARTH, ruling with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. He had come 2) to announce the future establishment of the KINGDOM OF GOD and teach that prophetic good news (Gospel) to His chosen future apostles. He had come 3) to take on Himself, as our direct Creator, the penalty for our sins by His death on the cross—that we might share in that world. And He had come 4) to be resurrected from the dead by God, making possible ETERNAL GOD-LIFE for the people of God. And He had come 5) to establish GOD'S CHURCH!

Meanwhile, for 4,000 years since the first Adam, the wily and evil Satan had been invisibly swaying and ruling a mankind CUT OFF from all contact with and knowledge of GOD! He still sits at that throne of POWER—though not administering God's Government.

Immediately after the birth of the Christ-child, Satan sought, through the Roman-appointed King Herod, to physically slay the future KING (Matthew 2:13-15). But God warned Joseph and Mary to flee with the Christ-child into Egypt until King Herod was dead.

When Jesus was about age 30, He was ready to begin choosing His apostles, and proclaiming and teaching them His Message from God to man—His Gospel. But first, it was imperative that He QUALIFY to replace Satan and set up the KINGDOM OF GOD, by overcoming the devil.

This perhaps was the most important, momentous, decisive confrontation and battle ever fought in all time in the universe. It is described in detail in Matthew, chapter 4.

Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights—with neither food nor water. But in His physical weakness He was made spiritually strong. Satan now used his most

cunning, subtle, masterful powers of deception. He must have thought he really could outwit and spiritually strike down the Christ. Satan knew well he was now fighting to prevent his dethroning over all the earth.

He struck his first blow at what Satan regarded as the most vulnerable points both physically and spiritually. Surely a man without food or water for 40 full days would be weakened to yield to almost any temptation for food. And the most vulnerable spiritual weakness is VANITY!

"IF," sneered Satan tantalizing,—he used that effective little word *IF*—"IF thou be the Son of God"—a normal human would have been insulted, indignant. He would have defiantly hurled back: "What do you mean, *IF* I be the Son of God? I'll show you that I am the Son of God!"

But Satan in this first attack, said, "*IF* thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." In other words, the Son of God can produce miracles. PROVE to me you are the Son of God! You are desperately hungry. Perform a miracle. Feed yourself by a miracle!

But Jesus only answered by quoting and obeying the Word of God, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Satan's first and most effective strike was parried. But Satan never gives up. He took Jesus into Jerusalem and sat Him on a high pinnacle of the Temple. He continued to QUESTION that Jesus was the Son of God.

"*IF* thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Now Satan quoted Scripture. But *he misapplied* it, twisted its contextual meaning, just as Satan so frequently influences scholars to do.

Jesus came back to him, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." This is quoted from Deuteronomy 6:16

and refers to tempting YHWH (Hebrew), who became Christ.

But still Satan did not give up.

Next he took Jesus atop a high mountain, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Jesus did not deny that Satan was now over the nations of this world. This was a temptation for gaining immediate power. Satan well knew Jesus would inherit all these kingdoms more than 1,900 years later. But he tempted Jesus to take Satan's word that he would turn them over and give Christ world power IMMEDIATELY. But Jesus decided it was time to END this titanic battle for the rulership over the earth.

Jesus now snapped out an ORDER—a COMMAND showing that He was MASTER over Satan!

"Get thee hence, Satan!" He commanded with supreme AUTHORITY! Satan slunk away defeated. But Satan did not give up. Nor has he given up yet. He battles against God's CHURCH still today!

Jesus Christ, the "second Adam," had QUALIFIED! Never until that minute could the GOOD NEWS of the coming KINGDOM OF GOD be announced to the world. Now the Son of God resisted and conquered Satan—had QUALIFIED to reestablish GOD'S GOVERNMENT and set up the KINGDOM OF GOD on the earth! But now the CHURCH must also qualify to rule with Him!

Now at last the GOSPEL could be proclaimed.

#### **Now Further Revealed: WHO and WHAT Is GOD?**

But before we come to Jesus' proclamation of that Gospel and building His Church we have here a further revelation of WHO and WHAT is GOD! This further revelation is necessary to comprehend WHAT and WHY is the CHURCH!

It has been shown that the very fourth word in the beginning of the King James and other translations of the Bible is *GOD*, trans-

lated from the Hebrew *Elohim*. It is a collective noun (in this case NAME) meaning more than one Person forming the ONE God. God, we must bear in mind, is not only an individual Supreme Being, but also the Supreme Eternally Living Divine FAMILY.

This is also the opening statement in what some believe originally was the very *first* book of the New Testament. In John 1:1-3, 14, as previously covered in this volume, in the beginning were the TWO originally eternally existing Persons forming the GOD Family—the "WORD" (Greek, *Logos*) and God—and the "WORD" was also GOD! This "WORD," (verse 14) was made human flesh—became by human birth, JESUS CHRIST.

So at this juncture we must bear firmly in mind that Jesus Christ was (and is) *GOD*—just as God the Father who begat Him is *GOD*—and as you and I potentially may *become* GOD! For GOD is a collective FAMILY—the DIVINE Family—into which THE CHURCH is to be born!

Therefore, at the outset of understanding *WHAT and WHY is the CHURCH*, it is vital to bear in mind: That all who were to form and compose the CHURCH had been human—that all humans (Christ excepted) have SINNED and brought upon them the supreme DEATH PENALTY (Romans 6:23).

Jesus Christ was the very GOD. With the Father He had existed eternally. He came, among other purposes, to call out of the world His CHURCH. Those called out had been in—and OF—this world. Each had brought on himself by sin the supreme DEATH PENALTY. But God had created ALL THINGS by the *WORD* who became Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus' life was greater in value than that of all humanity collectively!

Picture a human son of the wealthiest, most powerful man on earth. The tycoon's son is his heir—to inherit his immense wealth. He has been allocated a sizable portion of it already while an heir. This young man feels deep affection for another young

man. His friend has committed a crime, plunged into debt for millions of dollars, which he cannot pay. In compassion for his friend, the son pays the multimillion-dollar debt out of his own money. His guilty friend's debt is PAID IN FULL. His guilt—his tremendous obligation—no longer hangs over him—he is freed from that obligation and its heavy penalties!

All humanity had followed father Adam—had brought over it the supreme DEATH PENALTY. Before Jesus (the "WORD"), now the Son of GOD, could found His CHURCH, those called out of the world *into* that CHURCH must be freed from the supreme DEATH PENALTY, so that they might inherit ETERNAL LIFE!

One of the purposes for which Jesus came as a human to earth was to PAY THAT PENALTY—that supreme DEATH PENALTY—for those called into His Church not only, but ultimately to free ALL HUMANITY!

But since that DEATH PENALTY He would pay for sinning humanity would END His human life, paying it was reserved as His final human act after all other purposes of His human life had been finished.

Nevertheless this gives the reader a grasp of *HOW GREAT* is the Jesus who came to found the CHURCH OF GOD!

Continually bear in mind that, although His earthly ministry began when He was barely 30 years old (in His HUMAN life) yet He was the EVER-LIVING—the ETERNAL—who had ALWAYS existed. *HOW GREAT* was that 30-year-old human life!

And this Jesus, who had grown up in the town of Nazareth, had since human birth resisted and overcome SATAN—had rejected Satan's self-centered way of "GET," and in the final titanic confrontation had QUALIFIED to RESTORE the GOVERNMENT OF GOD and to establish on earth the KINGDOM OF GOD, to rule that Government!

Immediately after the decisive battle to overcome Satan, two of the disciples of John the Baptist saw, with John, Jesus. Jesus

asked them to follow Him to His home. One of these was Andrew, son of Jona. He called his brother Simon-bar-Jona.

Jesus looked on Simon, and said to him, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas (in Greek, PETER)," meaning a stone.

In Mark 3:14, 16, we read: "And he [Jesus] ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. . . . And Simon he surnamed Peter." A surname is according to Webster, "an added name derived from occupation."

The surname Peter had for centuries been a surname or TITLE, designating a religious LEADER, HEAD OF HEADQUAR-



*The Kingdom of God is not the Church. It is to be the world-ruling Family of God, ruling earthwide with the Government of God!*



TERS. Peter was the first and chief apostle. An apostle is "one sent forth to proclaim or preach."

So, at the very beginning of His earthly ministry, preparing the FOUNDATION for the Church, Jesus Christ chose His chief human apostle and the other original 11. They, with the prophets whose writings were preserved from the days of God's first chosen Congregation (and NATION), Israel, were to form the very FOUNDATION of God's CHURCH. Jesus Himself was to be not only Founder but HEAD, and chief "corner stone" of the CHURCH (Ephesians 2:19-21; 5:23).

Prior to age 30, Jesus had been a carpenter—probably building with stone rather than wood. He well knew the FOUNDATION should be laid first, before the structure itself.

But Jesus had Himself chosen His apostles. He said to them

later, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16, 19).

Now Jesus began proclaiming the Gospel MESSAGE God the Father had sent into the world by Him as God's Messenger (Malachi 3:1).

We read of it in Mark chapter 1: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God; . . . Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:1, 14-15).

And, from Matthew, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom" (Matthew 4:23).

This prophetic Message (Gospel) of the KINGDOM OF GOD was explained in detail in Part 7. It was the GOOD NEWS of the future establishment on earth of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, restored and administered by the Divine GOD FAMILY—the KINGDOM OF GOD.

Jesus' proclaiming of this amazing future NEWS—combined with His miracles of healing, turning water into wine and others, caused great excitement. Immense crowds followed Him and His disciples. He was teaching His disciples to become the future apostles, while He preached this Message to the public.

The news proclamation had spread to Jerusalem. There the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees became alarmed by it. The Pharisees were a Jewish religious sect some of whom occupied minor—yet to them important—government offices. The Roman Empire then ruled over Palestine. The Romans sent a district king and a limited occupation army to supervise rule in Judea. But the Romans set some of the Jewish Pharisees in offices of lower civil rule, under the Roman king. These were well-paying political jobs, and these Pharisees did not want to lose their jobs or their power over the people. These Jewish rulers and their chief

priests completely misunderstood Jesus' Gospel Message. They knew He proclaimed a Government that would take over and rule ALL NATIONS of the earth. What they MISUNDERSTOOD was the TIME and NATURE of that Kingdom of God. They assumed Jesus was a subversive, intending Himself, immediately in His human lifetime, to overthrow the Roman Empire and set up His own Kingdom.

Immediately they feared being accused of sedition and disloyalty, losing their jobs and probably being executed as subversives. So they opposed and denounced Jesus.

The world has really never understood this basic reason for Pharisaical opposition and persecution of Jesus. The Pharisees included unscrupulous politicians.

At the time of the first Passover to occur during Jesus' ministry, the spring of A.D. 28 (almost exactly 100 time cycles—1,900 years—before I kept my first Passover), Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

While there, a notable Pharisee named Nicodemus came to see Jesus secretly by night. He feared having fellow Pharisees know he had talked personally with Jesus.

Nicodemus said, "Rabbi, we know [we Pharisees know] thou art a teacher come from God."

The Pharisees KNEW JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH! They were familiar with Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 53. The Pharisees KNEW Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. But they understood only one Messianic appearance. So they supposed He was planning to overthrow the Roman Empire *then!*

Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking. So He launched immediately into the fact that the KINGDOM OF GOD, ruling all nations, could not be set up UNTIL the time of the NEW SPIRIT BIRTH—the time of the RESURRECTION!

Jesus answered immediately, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

But Nicodemus did not understand this. He knew that being born again was an actual BIRTH—parturition from the womb of the mother. Today's theologians do not know even that!

Nicodemus said, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus now made the meaning PLAIN—but Nicodemus did not receive His PLAINNESS of speech, nor do theologians or religious leaders today.

"Verily, verily," replied Jesus, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh IS FLESH; and that which is born of the Spirit IS SPIRIT" (emphasis mine—John 3:5-6).

The Pharisees knew about water baptism. They had used it for years in converting gentile proselytes to Judaism. They knew of John the Baptist's baptism—a baptism of repentance "for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). Jesus' meaning should have been PLAIN to Nicodemus—that water baptism was an initiatory rite preparatory to the start of being BORN of the Spirit.

Jesus made it doubly PLAIN when He said, "That which is born of the flesh IS flesh." That which is born of humans is mortal HUMAN—composed of flesh and blood—composed of MATTER from the ground. That which is born of the Spirit IS SPIRIT—no longer human but composed of SPIRIT, immortal! No longer composed of matter or flesh.

Jesus explained even further.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Then He compared one born again to INVISIBLE WIND—invisible to human eyes. "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8, Revised Standard Version).

But Nicodemus did not understand such plainness of speech, nor do religious leaders today!

Our free booklet *What Do You*

*Mean, Born Again?* should be read by every reader of this book.

To this representative of the Pharisees Jesus referred to the "salvation" or "spiritual" phase of the Kingdom of God. *That Kingdom will NOT be composed of mortal humans!* It is NOT composed of mortal flesh-and-blood persons who have "accepted Christ" and joined a church of their choice! Yet millions of church members are deceived about that today.

These millions of church members do not understand WHAT the Church IS, nor WHY—its PURPOSE—the REASON for it!

Compare Jesus' explanation to Nicodemus with the "Resurrection chapter" of the Bible, I Corinthians 15: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living [mortal] soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God..." (I Corinthians 15:45-50).

It was shown in chapter 6 that the Kingdom of God is NOT the Church. It is to be the world-ruling FAMILY OF GOD, ruling earthwide with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! It will be a Kingdom of IMMORTALS!

I repeat again and again, GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF!

The popular teaching in churches today is that THE CHURCH is the Kingdom of God. But "flesh and blood [mortal humans] cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 15:50).

But WHAT then, IS the Church? And WHY is the CHURCH? Why should there be the Church of God? □

(To be continued)



## What Our Readers Say

### Terrorism

The article on terrorism in the September issue of *The Plain Truth* put across in plain language the dangers we face from terrorist groups around the world. Here in Northern Ireland we have seen how groups like the Provisional IRA (PIRA), the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) can drive two communities apart. Some way must be found to bring terrorism to heel. May I finish by quoting from a Northern Ireland magazine called the *Orange Standard*: "Many people placed their hopes in groups like the IRA and UVF hoping that by doing so they may realise their political views. They now realise that by supporting such groups they have only helped to bring misery to countless thousands."

J.A.  
County Down, Ireland

As regards your recent article "Experts on Terrorism Speak Out!" I would like to know why the person

interviewed did not include in his list of so-called terrorists certain countries which create terror on civilians, the only difference being they have an established uniform.

I know you are only publishing the results of an interview, but that means you agree with the answers when you present them with no covering opinion.

A.M.  
Oldham, Lancs.

### New Reader Comments

I had always been a bit of a skeptic as far as religion is concerned and indeed for the last four years I had given up going to church after leaving college. It was only a few days ago, however, that I stumbled upon a copy of your magazine dated November, 1976, and after reading it from cover to cover, I feel that it has transformed my whole life. Everything about christianity and the human race in general suddenly seemed to dawn on me for the first time in my life as having a definite

meaning (to say the least), and I found that I have just managed to appreciate who I am, what I'm doing here and above all, Christ's mission for mankind here on earth.

P.R.  
Dublin, Ireland

### Correction?

Your statement is wrong regarding author and publisher Elbert Hubbard. He went down with the ship [Titanic] on April 14, 1912. I am 78 now. I remember. It went down off Newfoundland coast 900 miles east of Cape Cod.

The British liner Lusitania [on which you said Hubbard died] was carrying supplies to the war zone and went down May 7, 1915—causing U.S.A. to go to war. I know.

Elinor A. Webb  
29 Palms, Calif.

• *Author Elbert Hubbard died at sea May 7, 1915. The Encyclopedia Britannica agrees with Herbert W. Armstrong.*

## Personal from...

(Continued from page 1)

their minds, He notes all they do."

Through inspired prophets, this same Eternal foretold, beginning 2,500 years ago, the world events of the future—zeroing in particularly on our time NOW! All events prophesied to occur up to now have happened!—without a miss! The rest—the climactic crisis of our END time—is certain—and SOON!

Yet the world's best minds are in total ignorance of tremendous impending events. Neither religionists

nor theologians understand!

WHY? Approximately one third of all the world's best seller is filled with PROPHECIES—mostly foretelling our immediate future! Yet the key that unlocks prophecy to UNDERSTANDING had been lost! That vital key has been found! But because it is NOT the doctrine they have been preaching, evangelical theologians ridicule it.

That vital KEY is the identity of the United States and Britain in biblical prophecy.

Where is the United States spoken of in biblical prophecies—especially those pertaining to our immediate future? Small na-

tions—Ethiopia, Libya, Egypt, Turkey—are mentioned. Russia is mentioned. How could such a great world power as the United States be ignored? IT ISN'T! What you have read on this page is taken from the introduction of this revealing book.

We will present it gratis to those whose unprejudiced eyes are willing to see. It is an eye-opening, intriguing book—230 pages. You may have an attractive paperbound copy, illustrated in color, gratis on request—with no follow-up. Or, if you prefer, you may buy (in the U.S. only) a distinctive hardcover copy at bookstores. □