

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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"SATAN DECEIVE AND USE ME?

N E V E R ! !"

by Herbert W. Armstrong

For the moment, I was much discouraged and grieved. If you had lost a half dozen, a dozen or more of your "loved ones" how would you feel? It seemed for the moment that we had lost from the Church more than half of the top-ranked evangelists. The result of Satan's intensified wrathful attack against Jesus Christ and the Church at this END time! I mourn more over such a loss than one by death. Don't you?

Yet when I stopped to jot down the names of those evangelist-ranked, those still loyal and solid outnumber those gone two to one!

Yet I loved those who are now outside the Church. Jesus would understand. He suffered the same experience when "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:66-68). And even one of Jesus' twelve apostles betrayed Him!

But if even Jesus suffered persecution, so must we who follow Him. And if He had to suffer seeing those who had been with Him turn away, so must we who are faithful in His Church today.

In actual fact, of those now out I would shift the major guilt from them to the real enemy, Satan. He is the only real enemy. He is furious right now, intensifying his attack! I again warn all of you!

Yet if I say to one who is now out, "The real blame is not yours. Satan got to you--deceived you and thus used you against Christ and the Church," he would bristle up in self-righteous anger. He would say, "Satan deceive and use me? NEVER! You accuse me of being a minister of Satan? Satan could never deceive ME!"

No, I don't falsely accuse--I don't accuse such a former minister at all! I merely remove the principal blame from him and lay it where it belongs--on SATAN!

But do you think YOU are immune from the wiles and subtle deceptions of Satan? Are YOU stronger than Satan? DON'T SO UNWISELY UNDERESTIMATE SATAN! Satan is the strongest being or personage God ever created, except the other two archangels Michael and Gabriel. Satan DID get to the more than a half dozen top-ranking ministers in God's Church! Even though they themselves do not realize it.

But HOW? That is the important question. HOW? For if Satan could be cunning enough to have gotten to them, perhaps he could get to you or me--UNLESS we understand HOW, and WHY he got to them.

Let's think about that a while! Let's be sure the rest of us do not fall into Satan's trap! In what way did those now on the outside let their guard down? If we understand that--if we understand HOW Satan gets through to us, then we CAN be secure in Christ and in His Church!

There are certain ways in which we may "let our guard down"--make ourselves susceptible to being deceived and used by Satan, and also certain ways in which we may open the door for a demon to enter and possess us.

God's Word warns us to be constantly ON GUARD against Satan's wiles.

Let me give you some examples.

For instance, consider a man who was consciously pained by a feeling of inferiority. Everyone of us experiences an uncomfortable sense of inferiority at times. I'm grateful that God caused me to read some place, when I was only 18 or younger, that it is indeed a wise man who knows his own weaknesses, his shortcomings and limitations, as well as his talents, abilities and strengths. I have ever since tried to know my own weaknesses as well as abilities--to correctly and properly assess myself. Where there were lack of strengths, and inadequacies, I have relied on the POWER OF GOD or avoided those fields or endeavors I was unfitted for.

But consider a man who did not do that. This man, troubled by a feeling of inferiority, tried to find a way to "kid himself" out of it--to convince himself that he was not inferior. He decided to become a "scholar." If he could regard himself as one of the elite scholarly, he reasoned, he would not have to suffer the feeling of inferiority. One talent this man certainly lacked was that of sound scholarship. He let a sense of VANITY lead him into this. Now vanity is the very foundation of Satan's philosophy. It is self-centeredness. It leads naturally to coveting, competition, resentment of authority over one.

So this man began to think of himself as a "scholar." He began to work on that which he was not fitted to do. He began a "scholarly" check-up on the doctrines of God's Church. In his "scholarly" research he began by misunderstanding Acts 17:11, where those at Berea "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness (openness) of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were SO." This man did not search the Bible to see that God's truths were SO. He tried by UNScholarly human reasoning to prove the Church doctrines were NOT true.

This self-centered attempt led to doubts instead of faith, and to a spirit of competition against God's Church. Without perhaps realizing it, he had started himself out on Satan's way of vanity, coveting, competition, resentment of authority within God's Church and God's GOVERNMENT in His Church. He went out of the Church.

Three or four other ministers made the mistake of treating cheaply the GOVERNMENT OF GOD in His Church. They did not consider carefully the real meaning and significance of a very pivotal and key statement of Scripture, in Acts 3:19-21. The heaven must receive Christ "until the times of restitution" (restoration) "of all things." What is to be restored is centered around the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, which Lucifer made inoperative. The Government of God has not yet been restored to all

the world. It soon will be. Meanwhile, in this short "END time" that Government has been restored WITHIN GOD'S CHURCH! It is THAT GOVERNMENT Satan is wrathful against.

These ministers thought they had discovered a new truth, contrary to the teaching of God's Church. They knew well they should have come with it first to headquarters or to me personally, to make it official doctrine. Thus it might--if true--be shared with the whole Church world-wide. But they allowed a spirit of vanity, self-centeredness and competition to enter. They kept it from headquarters, but began preaching their "new truth" to their own churches.

But their "new truth" was gross and harmful error. They misled brethren--for the time being. They opened their minds for Satan to DECEIVE and to USE them!

If you allow a bit of self-centeredness, vanity, covetousness, envy or jealousy, spirit of competition or resentment of authority--especially that of the Government of GOD in His Church--to enter your mind--if you begin to act on such impulse, you have already started in Satan's way. For those attitudes and desires are ways of TRANSGRESSING God's Law--OF SIN!

And where does it lead?

You take one such false step, accept one false "truth" and refuse to REPENT of it at once and turn from it, you will then go on into more and more error.

For 54 years now, I have seen this happen--all too often to those I have loved. If people mourn and weep over a loved one who dies, HOW MUCH MORE have I had to mourn and suffer over the SPIRITUAL loss of a brother or sister in God's Church!

Let me illustrate. One is walking along in a thickly-wooded forest on a moonless pitch-dark night. But just ahead of him is an experienced guide with a lighted lantern. If he follows that lighted lantern he will be led safely out of the woods. But if he turns aside just a step or two and hesitates, the light continues on out of his sight. Then he is really lost. If one turns aside from God's truth on just one point, or one doctrine, and does not quickly repent, the light of God's truth moves on. In his self-centered effort to find the light of truth, he now walks blindly in wrong directions. He takes more and more steps in the wrong direction. That is, he proceeds on into more and more error, all the while losing more and more of what truth he had.

God's Word, the Holy Bible, is "a lamp unto our feet" to guide us out of the darkness of error and into the daylight brightness of TRUTH. The oil that produces the light in the lamp or lantern, causing it to light up to our understanding, is the Holy Spirit. (c.f. Ps. 119:105, Matt. 25:1-13).

So comprehend the illustration. We all were lost in the dark woods of sin. On first realization of it, with repentance and belief, we received a first portion of God's Holy Spirit. The Bible begins to light up. It is as many as are led by the Spirit of God that are the

begotten sons of God (Rom. 8:14). The Spirit of God, by lighting up the Bible, leads us a step at a time into more and more truth, and a step at a time out of error and sin. But if and when you reject one point of truth, it is like stepping aside in the dark woods. You are no longer being led by the Spirit of God opening the Bible to right understanding. The light--the Spirit of God--leaves you. God's TRUTH marches on! It leaves you behind. You are in darkness again. Lost again in the darkness of sin! You stumble around in the thick dark woods trying to find the lighted lantern. But every step you now take is taking you farther away from the lighted lantern, proceeding on the SURE path out of the woods.

In other words, if you reject one point of truth, or take one step aside into a point of error--unless you repent immediately and get back to the light--you will take more and more steps into erroneous beliefs, and one by one give up the points of TRUTH you had seen and accepted.

Take the example of some ministers who left God's Church. Some tried to incorporate new "churches" of their own. But they were not GOD'S churches. These men had all rejected one or more points of truth, or Church doctrine. They almost immediately began to add new points of false doctrine of their own--not of God. Soon they began rejecting points of TRUTH. Perhaps it was tithing. Perhaps healing. Perhaps voting in this world's governments. Perhaps it was God's Government in the Church. Soon they were rejecting God's annual holy days and feasts. Soon they were rejecting more and more of GOD'S TRUTH and turning to more and more FALSE doctrines and errors. THEY, PROFESSING TO FOLLOW CHRIST in their new way, WERE GOING FARTHER and FARTHER AWAY FROM HIM. They were going closer and closer to Satan and Satan's WAY.

Now HOW DID IT ALL START?

It started, in every case, by taking one first step in Satan's direction--compromising--becoming "liberal"--or resenting and rebelling against GOD'S GOVERNMENT in His Church--or letting a spirit of SELF enter in--it could be self-righteousness, or self-centeredness in COVETING P O W E R. More than one has been led into spiritual darkness by coveting POWER in God's Church. Unfortunately, conferring on leading ministers such rank or titles as "Evangelist" or "Vice-President" went to some heads, sparking a coveting of POWER in the Church. It almost seems strange--it was NOT in these men a lust or greed for more money--it was a coveting of POWER--of the TOP SEAT--of AUTHORITY--or of the resentment of authority over them.

This makes me think of our little shortlegged dachshund, "Sir Hans Armstrong," who wears a badge (around his neck), as "deputy sheriff." He "owns" our home, and always wants the chief seat. He will leap up into it and curl up in it. These men wanted "the chief seat"--at least in a certain department or part of the Work, and wanted to build their own little "empire."

HOW, then, do we "let our guard down" to let Satan deceive and lead us out of the Church?

It all gets back to THE LAW OF GOD, and the "SIN QUESTION." Sin is the transgression of the Law" (I John 3:4). The Law is Spiritual (Rom. 7:14). It is A WAY OF LIFE!

The churches of traditional "Christianity" teach that "the Law was DONE AWAY." Adam and Eve TOOK TO THEMSELVES the reasoning of the KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL--that is they decided for themselves what is sin. The world's "Christian" churches do the same. They cannot REPENT of sin when they do not know what sin IS! Or, have a false definition of what is sin!

The Holy Spirit of God is given to those who have REPENTED of--TURNED FROM--sin. A begotten son of God is one who IS LED BY the Holy Spirit--the lighted lantern (or lamp) in the dark woods. If we do not FOLLOW where God's Spirit leads, the "lamp"--or its light (the Holy Spirit) leaves us.

God's LAW is a WAY OF LIFE. It is the WAY of outflowing LOVE--to God, and to fellowman. It is OBEDIENCE to God and His law--even when that Law is the BASIS of God's GOVERNMENT in His Church! It is reverence and worship of God, keeping God's Sabbath; and it is love to neighbor. The transgression of the Law--SIN--is irreverence to God's Law IN HIS GOVERNMENT in the Church, vanity, self-centeredness, coveting, resentment of authority (especially of God's GOVERNMENT in God's Church), spirit of rivalry and competition and self-desire.

YOU LET DOWN YOUR GUARD, AND ALLOW SATAN TO DECEIVE AND USE YOU when, once you have known the truth, repented, received God's Spirit, started on GOD'S WAY, you take a step away from that way, begin to liberalize, compromise with Satan.

Now what about DEMON POSSESSION?

Let's UNDERSTAND the difference between being DECEIVED and USED BY Satan, on the one hand, and being demon POSSESSED on the other hand.

It all has to do with the human MIND. Few, even psychologists, understand the makeup of the human mind. Like animals, man has BRAIN. The brain is composed of physical substance. The brain, whether animal or human, sees through the eye, it hears through the ear, smells through the nose. Thus it receives knowledge through the five senses of eye, ear, nose, palate for taste, and sense of feel through nerves.

The brain alone, however, cannot think, except in the most elementary way. It cannot store up multiple millions of bits of memory and give itself instant recall to put these selected bits of stored-up knowledge together in the THINKING and REASONING process. Animals, with brain alone cannot think, reason, make choices and decisions like a human. The human mind-output is millions of times greater than that of animals.

WHY? There is a portion of spirit in humans which imparts the power of intellect to the human brain. This "human" spirit acts as a computer. Whatever knowledge enters the brain through senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste or feel is automatically "programmed" and stored in the portion of spirit within the person.

This spirit empowers the physical brain with intellect. It enables the brain to have instant recall of any one or several pieces of stored-up knowledge from the spirit, and thus enables the brain to utilize these bits of related knowledge in the process of THINKING and REASONING.

This spirit is NOT the person or any part of the person, but something INSIDE the person. It is not a "soul." The person, made of matter, is the soul while breathing air and circulating blood by the heart. Human LIFE resides in the blood and the breath of air. The portion of spirit added to every human person from birth does not supply human life. Of itself, it cannot think or reason--the physical BRAIN does that. When a human dies, the portion of spirit leaves the body. It is preserved intact by God (Eccl. 12:7) until the resurrection.

Since all knowledge enters the brain through the five senses, only knowledge of the physical and the material is programmed and stored in the human spirit. The human, with this one portion of spirit residing within him from birth, cannot KNOW or comprehend spiritual knowledge. The normal human mind can deal with physical and material matters. But his PROBLEMS, troubles, evils, are spiritual in nature, and he CANNOT SOLVE THEM.

MAN WAS MADE TO NEED ANOTHER SPIRIT--the Holy Spirit of God. Just as a human could not KNOW the things of human knowledge except by the portion of the spirit of man which is in him, SO he cannot know the things of God--spiritual knowledge--except by the addition of the Holy Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:11).

Adam had the "spirit in man," and access to the Holy Spirit (tree of life). What happened to Adam? He used his MIND with its "spirit of man" to CHOOSE a WAY OF LIFE contrary to the Law of God. His mind became carnal. SATAN SWAYED IT. Satan has been swaying all human minds from birth ever since--all EXCEPT THAT OF JESUS!

That is not demon possession. It is a voluntary CHOOSING to follow a WAY OF LIFE contrary to God's Law--the way of SIN. All have sinned. But such a person is IN HIS RIGHT MIND--HIS HUMAN MIND! He is deceived and used by Satan, but NOT demon possessed!

A demon-possessed person is just that--possessed by the demon. The demon has ENTERED, and taken POSSESSION. The person no longer has control of his own mind. The demon has taken possession of it!

When Jesus talked to the demon-possessed, He did not talk to the man at all. He talked to the demon. The demon-possessed cannot of themselves cast out the demon. They are no longer in possession of their own minds! Jesus by His authority cast demons out. So did the apostles.

Now HOW does one come to be DECEIVED by Satan and used by him? And HOW does one become demon-possessed? We are talking about two different things.

ALL, except Jesus, since Adam, have been DECEIVED and led by Satan from earliest life. Satan begins working on and deceiving the human mind even during the first year of life--injecting his attitude of SELF-CENTEREDNESS, vanity, coveting, competition, resentment of authority. But what about a top-ranking minister? He is one who, supposedly, had previously become aware of that, had REPENTED of that self-centered way of sin, and turned to GOD'S way.

He, if deceived by Satan and used by him, is one who, like Lot's wife, began to "look back"--even if just a little at first. He may have

been willing to compromise on a minor point. He became a little "liberal" on some point. Or he let vanity, covetousness, desire for personal POWER, or self-righteousness, or disagreement on a doctrine, introduce a wrong ATTITUDE against the Church or God's WAY. I have explained all this above. One step in the wrong direction leads to another. He becomes "lost in the dark woods," so to speak. He is for the moment not being "LED BY GOD'S SPIRIT." Soon he will be misled on another point, then another. Or, he comes to a new "truth" and allows it to ignite a wrong attitude. He will go farther and farther away from God's REAL truth, and farther and farther into error. But HE IS STILL IN HIS "RIGHT" BUT CARNAL MIND--not necessarily demon possessed.

Humans were created and born with the "spirit in man" so as to NEED the addition of a second Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God. Now when one receives the Spirit of God, it DOES NOT POSSESS HIM! It does not TAKE OVER CONTROL of his mind. It OPENS his mind to NEW and to SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. It is the spirit of a SOUND MIND (II Tim. 1:7).

HOW, then, does one open the mind to let in a demon?

I knew a woman, so far as I knew until demon possession, an admirable woman. She became happily married. In pregnancy there was a miscarriage. She made a terrible mistake. She blamed it on God. She became bitter and emotionally enraged and angry against God. This opened her mind to let a demon enter and possess her. I was called to cast out the demon. She was restored to her natural mind. She became pregnant again. Again there was a miscarriage. Again she accused God, in emotional almost uncontrollable anger and rage. Again she was demon-possessed--only this time by several demons. (Read Matthew 12:45). I was called again. A demon was using her voice and speaking. In the middle of an unfinished sentence, the voice commenced speaking about something else altogether. That voice was interrupted and another began speaking with her voice about an altogether different something, and yet none of it made sense. It was many demons, each interrupting the other.

Some Pentecostal people get to desperately seeking "the spirit." I have noticed they often say "the spirit"--not the HOLY Spirit, or the "Spirit of GOD." They cry out desperately to receive "the spirit." They say certain words, or short phrases, over and over hundreds and hundreds of times, like "Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory," etc. Or, "Hallelujah," hundreds of times--or "Praise you, Jesus" over and over hundreds of times--until the words become meaningless and mere sounds. Their minds are virtually BLANK by the time the words by repetition become utterly meaningless. Sometimes a demon has entered in when they lost control of their minds.

Or, if one allows himself to go into an emotional rage so intense he has lost his mind, a demon could then enter and take control.

But a normal person, keeping a sound mind control, has not opened the door to allow a demon to enter and possess the mind.

I would never want to put myself into the hands of a psychiatrist or a hypnotist. If one would ask me to totally relax my mind and let my mind go blank, I would immediately rise up and walk away. If I should obey I might open the door of my mind to a demon.

Under normal circumstances, however, NO ONE NEED FEAR A DEMON MAY TAKE POSSESSION--unless you open your mind by letting it be blank, or under control of another, or you lose your mind in an emotional, angry rage.

But we do need to be ON GUARD against the wiles and deceptions of Satan. He deceives people by SELF-centeredness, vanity, lust and greed, especially of power, envy and jealousy, hostile competition, resentment of any kind, and especially resentment of authority, and most especially resentment of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD!

Satan is going about seeking WHOM he may destroy from God's Church and Kingdom. Don't let the one he destroys be YOU!

We CAN be secure in Christ and in His Church.

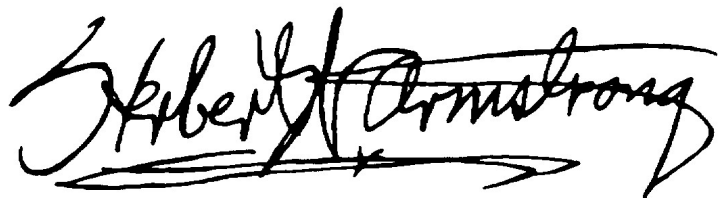
Let me close, as the Apostle Paul did his second letter to the Church at Corinth:

Brethren, Ministers, and even chief Evangelists in God's Church, "EXAMINE YOURSELVES, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test YOURSELVES."

I have covered here IN PRINCIPLE, what OTHERS did that caused Christ to take them out of GOD'S CHURCH! Don't think, "Well, all that applied to THEM--not to ME!" Be sure YOU do not start, even so little at first, in Satan's direction. Let no jealousy or contention of any kind against another--whether another member or another of YOUR RANK in the Work, even start to kindle in your mind! For GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS. For if God spared not even the ANGELS that sinned (II Peter 2:4), He would no more spare YOU! I did not write this article in order to speak AGAINST those who are OUT, but to warn YOU who are still in, from the very TOP in the Church to the least.

We say we are back on the track now. We say we have TEAMWORK and harmonious cooperation at Pasadena. That had come at great COST. SEE THAT WE DON'T LET SATAN GET TO ANY ONE OF YOU!

If I had to take the MOST difficult action against even my own son, as Paul wrote, be zealous that "I may not have to be severe in my use of the AUTHORITY which the Lord has given me for BUILDING UP and not for tearing down" (II Cor. 13:5, 10).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Herbert Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

TO ALL MINISTERS

by

Herbert W. Armstrong

I am reminded, in line with the above, of one problem of the past. Many of our ministers, from about 1967, apparently began to feel that the organizational structure in God's Church, from the top down, had a different meaning than it does.

In both I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 we find a chain of AUTHORITY in the Bible. God the Father is HEAD above all. Jesus Christ is next in line of authority. But GET THIS: UNDERSTAND IT! Although Jesus is the living HEAD of the Church, He has never CUT US OFF from going direct to the Father. In teaching us how to pray He did not say, "Don't you DARE take any matter to the Father. You DON'T DARE go past ME! Although I am under the Father in authority I am OVER YOU, and if you dare take it over my head and go to the Father direct, I will CUT YOU OFF!" No, Jesus said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father," etc.--go direct to the Father, but in Jesus' name--by His authority. That is, Jesus gave us AUTHORITY to go to the Father direct.

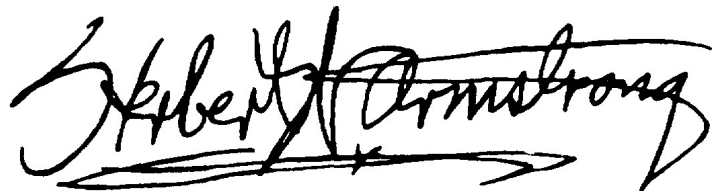
But many in the ministry FEARED to come direct to me. The chain of authority is, first God the Father, next Christ, HEAD of the CHURCH, next, on the human level, Christ's Apostle, then, UNDER, not over the Apostle, Evangelist, then Pastor, then Elder. But many FEARED for their jobs if they came direct about anything to the Apostle. The Evangelist-rank Executive Vice-Presidential office was considered the TOP and anyone above was CUT OFF! That really meant, if anyone stopped to consider it, that all above the office in charge of ministers, or the Executive Vice-President were CUT OFF! That means, actually, being CUT OFF from Christ and from God the Father!

Let me once for all make this CLEAR and PLAIN. NO ONE is CUT OFF from coming to me. No one is CUT OFF from going above my head to Christ, or above His head to the Father!

Any major problem may be brought directly to me. NO ONE MUST FEAR to bring any such matter to me direct! NO ONE IS CUT OFF FROM me!

On the other hand I do want you to understand I can't handle every routine matter, that's what other offices under me are for!

But NO ONE SETS POLICIES BUT THE APOSTLE! And all major problems may be freely brought to the Apostle. The door is open. But please just don't come to me with every little minor thing, for there are just not enough of me to handle so many matters. Use judgment and wisdom. "Nuff said"!!



I regret exceedingly the necessity to report to you the disfellow-shipment from the Church of another minister whom I have loved very much. Unless it is later made necessary I do not want to mark him before the entire membership.

But division and spiritual harm has come to the Church in Washington D.C. under the pastorate of Sherwin McMichael. Much of it centered around a misconception of what demon possession is, and how the ministry should deal with it. A certain "psychiatry"-related method was introduced which was harming and dividing the Church there. I may in a near issue go into some detail of the new supposed "Biblical" procedure introduced-- and explain demon possession and the ministerial dealing with it in more detail. But attitude and harm to Church were the main causes. I did and still do love Sherwin very deeply, and I hope you'll join me in prayer that he'll find his way back to the lighted lantern leading out of the darkness before it's too late that he might yet be received back.

--Herbert W. Armstrong

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Local Church Video Equipment

It has come to our attention that some of the men attending the Ministerial Refreshing Program inadvertently may have been given the impression that they should try to raise money locally and purchase video equipment for their churches. Please do not attempt to do this.

The cost of purchasing this equipment would be quite expensive for most of the local churches. Additionally, we feel if video programs are sent to the field we will purchase 10 or 15 sets of equipment and send the equipment around to all the churches along with the video tapes.

Using the Central Clearing Account to Pay Hall Rent

If it can be avoided, please do not use the Central Clearing Account to pay normal church hall rent. However, if a situation arises in which the C.C.A. must be used to pay hall rent, please attach the following information to the yellow C.C.A. Expense Record slip:

1. The name and address of the vendor. (This is of particular necessity if the check is made out to a deacon or other third party.)
2. The federal identification number of the vendor.
3. A receipt for the payment.

This information is needed by the Accounting Department so that they can properly report this information to the federal government for income tax purposes.

(Continued on page 12)