



THE WORLD BRACES ITSELF FOR THE COMING ECONOMIC WOES, ARE YOU READY ? Or is this just another - "The Sky is Falling?" Buckle up, it's going to be a bumpy ride

By Tom Kerry

The sky is falling, the sky is falling!

Growing up we've all heard the story of Chicken Little. She would run around yelling, the sky is falling, the sky is falling.

After she said it so many times no one ever believed a word she said. We all know the end of the story and the moral that followed. When something finally did happen no one believed her. Reporting prophecy in light of current events can be a lot like that.



WHAT IS FIRST LOVE?

By Ian Hufton

*Bible Verses on
First Love*

Jesus rebuked the church members at Ephesus for turning away from their first love.

Rev 2:4 "Nevertheless I have this against you that you have left (863) your first love. Greek word [number 863] (left)

Cont. p. 2



As the credit crunch worsens, the stock market continues to tumble. Many companies fail, others bought out, over a trillion dollars in bail outs, nothing seems to be worsening. This year could be very difficult for millions.

If I started this article with Matthew 24 or Luke 21, and cover wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, pestilence and famine, would I have lost you? Would you have heard the sky is falling, the sky is falling? Well, I'm not going there, so hopefully you will keep reading. With God's help, the information I share here may

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Editors Note: Every election, members of God's churches from all over the globe ask important questions about voting. In this article by **James Summerville** he gives you some useful insight and pertinent information from God's Holy Word. The article begins on page 8.

"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

1 Tim 2:1-5



What is First Love?

The Greek word [number 863] (left) means (forsake, lay aside, leave, let go, put away)

Jesus then explains how they should change this situation in verse 5 (below).

Rev 2:5 “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; . . . repentAnd. . . . do. . . . The first works, or else I will come to you. . . .quickly and remove your lamp stands from its place; unless you. . . . Repent.

NOTE: Christ tells us that the LAMPSTANDS represent the churches.

Rev 1:20 “The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

Above, Ephesians saints are told to repent and do the first works or have their church removed. Earlier they had first love but they left it behind. Christ tells them they need to change their approach (repent) and to get it back by doing similar works as at the first. The word fallen (verse 5) means (to drop away, to be driven off course, to become inefficient, to take no effect.)

Jesus commanded them to remember their first state and consider how they had fallen away from it.

What was their first love?

NOTE: The Greek word behind “first” (4413) can also be rendered (foremost in importance, best, chiefest, first of all,) ie. . . .of highest priority.

Mat 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Christ inspires Paul to write (1 Cor 13:3) that without love (the love of God) doing good actions does not count.

1 Cor 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have

not love, it profits me nothing.

Jesus encourages His people to always do the first works which are motivated by first love (the FIRST PRIORITY. . . . love of God).

Jesus, Paul and the other Apostles all continuously promoted the two major aspects of the faith. . . .ie. ('You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind.'

Mat 22:38 “This is the first and great commandment.

Mat 22:39 “And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

Mat 22:40 “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

When a person comes to understand God's ways and purpose, they experience a passionate zeal to become God's spiritual child for all eternity. Rev 21:7 “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and

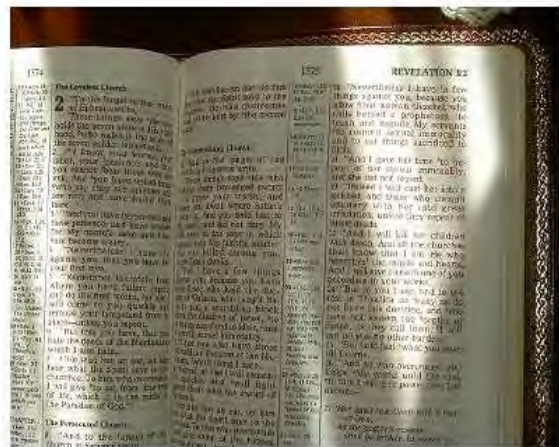
he shall be my son.

The Ephesians members had started well and commended by the Apostle Paul in the letter he wrote them.

Cont on p. 3

DO YOU STILL HAVE YOUR FIRST LOVE?

Christ warned the church at Ephesus that He was about to remove his candlestick from their presence. We're told they lost their first love. How does this warning relate to the modern Church?



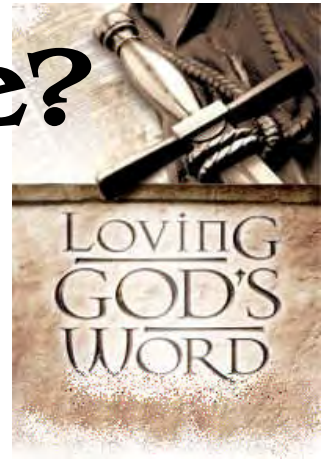
IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION, chapters 2 and 3, God comments on the spiritual condition of seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. These churches were on a common mail route and each congregation is mentioned in the order in which the letter was to be delivered. The first church on this route was the congregation at Ephesus. In this article we will focus specifically on that congregation.

Founded by the apostle Paul, the Ephesian church was thoroughly grounded doctrinally, and Christ's comment in the second chapter of Revelation reflects that fact. "I know your works, your labor and your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary" (Revelation 2:2-3). These positive and encouraging observations could lead some to conclude that the brethren at Ephesus were spiritually sound; however, they had a serious spiritual deficiency. Christ, the spiritual head of this congregation, actually threatens to remove His lampstand from their presence if they did not repent.

God's warning and subsequent correction of the Ephesian church seems, at first glance, to be disproportional.

The Ephesians were told to "remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent" (Revelation 2:5). Jesus Christ cautioned them to consider the magnitude of their problem. What did they fall away from? What lessons can the modern Church learn from this ancient congregation?

What is First Love?



Cont' from p. 2 Eph 1:15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, they began by loving the God-head (Father and Son), and as a result, doing LOVE-WORKS towards other saints (church members).

Paul then explained..... Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that..... we should..... Walk in them.

Paul then directs them to be rooted and grounded in love.

Eph 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, Eph 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Eph 4:2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Eph 4:32 and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Eph 5:1 therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

Eph 5:2 and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to



Rev 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer : behold , the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

1 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.



God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Eph 6:23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who..... Love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (unending existence.) Amen. To be saved into eternal life we must passionately love truth and be rejecting deception.

2 Th 2:10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Jesus expects our love-works to grow greater than at first.

Rev 2:19 "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. Like the Ephesians, we too, need to be sure we consider our first love condition and strive to have love-works greater than at the first.



Feast of Tabernacles Trinidad/Tobago



Editors Note: At the time of the printing of this Newsletter we did not receive an article. But we did receive the pictures and wanted to let you know they had a wonderful Feast.



Bracing for Economic Woes



additional food make it almost disease to mil-treme? Maybe, but money, food, or the epidemics.

Cont. from p. 1 help you with being able to weather the coming economic storm that is already affecting, and will continue to affect billions of lives. Economists are predicting that this crisis will continue to cause and water shortages, and will begin to impossible to prevent the increase in lions of third world countries. Ex- there simply may not be enough medicine to wage the war in prevent-

No religion here, these are economists reporting on facts that are “at our door, right now!” Not prophecy that is predicted to take place before the return of Jesus Christ. But wait a minute; didn’t that just sound like the economists were quoting Matt. 24 or Luke 21?

Let me give you just a few of the startling statistics that “WILL HAPPEN” if the so-called experts can’t get a handle on things **immediately**. Unemployment is at a ten year high at just over 5%. In the next 12 months it is expected to rise to 7% or to as much as 10%. Some are predicting higher without more stimulation. Without government help the big three auto makers will be filing for bankruptcy protection. (More on the big three at a later time.) Nearly all of the largest banking financial institutions are in danger of failing. This affects the airlines, hotels, motels, restaurants, and every area related to the tourism industries, “all walks of life.”

Without jobs, the tax base upon which the local, state, and federal agencies operate will begin drying up. Presently, all agencies are gearing up for a tough year ahead. Plans are under way to cut hours and employees. Pension plans will begin drying up, 401k’s are disappearing, retirements are dwindling, and on it goes. This is just a tip of what is actually happening in advance of the potential firestorm. Businesses “know” they have to brace themselves for what is going to happen if they are going to survive.

What about you, what are you doing to get ready? My point is, you and I are going to be affected, we just don’t know to what degree.

The degree may have to do with you. I could bring in scriptures here, but I don’t want to lose you yet.

Many are saying this is just a cycle. While I agree many of these things are cyclical for example; remember 1983, not long after that the economy took another serious downturn 1987, there were a couple of difficult times in the 90’s and the last one was in 2001. Let us not forget the depression of 1929. Is the current crisis just another cycle, or is there more to it?

Back in August of 2007 I did a sermon message entitled, “Financial Meltdown.” If you haven’t heard that message, please write for it. This article and the next sermon on this subject is a direct result of that message. I’ve been getting many emails, letters, and phone calls asking about the current crisis. Every one wanted to know if we were going to put anything out in reference to the current crisis.

Note: There isn’t sufficient space to put all that needs to be said in this Newsletter. With God’s help I hope to have a

longer more detailed article and another sermon by the next newsletter to offer as an article and DVD. I’ve not done that before, and I don’t claim to be a prolific writer, but I feel there is much to be said and I believe it can help our members and future members in weathering this crisis. I would appreciate your prayers to accomplish this task that I feel so strongly about.



Financial Meltdown was delivered in August 2007, the stock market had been shattering records almost daily and the economy was booming. I was watching CNBC one morning and began to notice that there was a fire storm in the making. At first all the news was very quiet; in fact most of the news networks never said a single word. The Feds had quietly met during the middle of the night and began pumping in billions of dollars into the banking system. Suddenly all sense of stability had disappeared. The next day European banking system began doing the same thing, then came China and Japan. On each day, everyone praised themselves for averting a crisis. The next seven days that followed were nothing short of horrific. By that time things began to settle down, many news agencies began reporting. The following Sabbath, I delivered the sermon Financial Meltdown here in New Orleans, many here did not hear about what was going on either.

The problem was, the crisis wasn’t over. It had only been temporarily stabilized. The crisis would be hungry again, and wouldn’t be long. Shortly after that, Sub prime mortgage failures began to surface, then like a house of cards, the financial meltdown began. Institution after institution began to fold, banks began shutting down, financial institutions were closing. There were mergers, failures, and government intervention. Things *Cont. on p. 5* settled down again and new round of cheers went up, but only briefly as the cheers weren’t over when another leg of financial failure surfaced.

The Fed chief announced without immediate bailouts to the tune of \$700 Billion the financial picture in America would seize up. I’m afraid this is not your ordinary run of the mill cyclical recession.

At the end of August of 2007, things settled down and everyone sighed a sense of relief, the world was breathing easier. We at Ministries International didn’t. I watched daily with great zeal as

FAMOUS QUOTE

“To grant that there is a supreme intelligence who rules the world and has established laws to regulate the actions of his creatures; and still to assert that man, in a state of nature, may be considered as perfectly free from all restraints of law and government, appears to a common understanding altogether irreconcilable. Good and wise men, in all ages, have embraced a very dissimilar theory. They have supposed that the deity, from the relations we stand in to himself and to each other, has constituted an eternal and immutable law, which is indispensably obligatory upon all mankind, prior to any human institution whatever. This is what is called the law of nature....Upon this law depend the natural rights of mankind.”

-- Alexander Hamilton



Bracing for Economic Woes



Cont. from p. 4 scriptures kept running through my head. This was not just another cyclical environment. What was shaping up was new, it was global, and no one had ever experienced what was only then in its infant stage.

What was going on was just the beginning of huge debacles that has worsened over the past year. To date, everything that has been done to stabilize the crisis has not worked. Why? Governments around the world have been throwing TRILLIONS of dollars to fix the crisis, hundreds of meetings of the most educated minds in the world; plans were put in place, programs were developed, there have been congressional meetings, but nothing is working. Why! Let me be fair, not working yet! But what will work, and if it does, how long will it take? Are you ready for a financial drought, most of America is not! Or put it another way, are you ready for seven years of lean if that is where we are going.

Why isn't anything working? Well, is it possible that the solutions being thrown at the problem is identical to what I have done thus far in this article? Got any ideas? Actually it's simple; God has been left out of the picture. Up until now I have deliberately kept the scriptures out of the picture. You may be wondering, what has all of this financial mess have to do with God! That's my point; God's way has been left out of the picture, which is what got us into this mess. God is also being left out of the picture as a cure, which is why we can't get out. Sure we can continue to throw money and more money at the problem, which we don't have. The problem is, we can't solve the problem that way, it can only be delayed; collapse is inevitable.



Over a million jobs have been lost over the last year. It is expected that the current unemployment rate will double in in the next year. President Elect Obama stated on Nov. 24, 2008; "If we don't move swiftly, millions of jobs will be lost. This is definitely NOT, the sky is falling, this is for real.



Look at what God told the Israelites before going into the Promised Land: Deut 4:1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers give you. **2** Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

The statutes and judgments were the laws that gave the Israelites the way to peace and prosperity. If they obeyed them they would be blessed, if they disobeyed them, the blessings would be withheld. Take a moment and look at the U.S. Can anyone say that we are continually being blessed?

Moses went on to say: Deut 4:5-9 "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. **6.** Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in

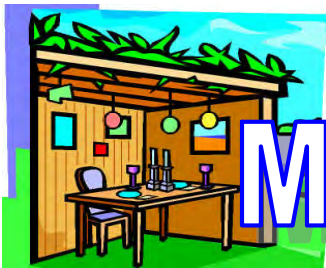
the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. **7.** For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? **8.** And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? **9.** Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;"

Since the days of the monkey trials in 1925, the battle to allow Darwinism into the schools, our nation has systematically removed God from nearly all walks of life. Now, in public schools, our children are not allowed to pray, and God cannot be taught. All resemblance of God is being removed from all public edifices, public officials have been fired and others risk being jailed for not following "orders" by the courts to remove and refrain speaking about God. I'll have more to say in the full length article later.

Let me leave you with just one thought, if you did something and it turned out horribly wrong, what makes you think if you did it again you would get a different result? The financial crisis is not the problem. It is a result of the problem. The reason our so called leaders can't fix the problem is, they are totally "BLINDED" to the root cause of the problem. If you don't know what the problem is you are doomed to keep repeating the same mistakes that got you there in the first place.

Someone needs to tell congress, when you find yourself in a hole, it's time to stop digging! With God's help, maybe God will give us that chance. This may not be the seven years of lean, God may intervene and give us more time, however, in the meantime, tell your friends, tell your family, it's time to get your house in order. The sky is falling, and it's real. It's time to hunker down, and buckle up; it's going to be a bumpy ride. Pray that God will grant this work the wisdom, and the resources to get this warning message out. Be on the look out for Financial Meltdown 2009 next month.





Feast of Tabernacles Myrtle Beach, SC



112 Attend the Feast Site at Myrtle Beach, SC

Seven Baptisms, and one ordination to the ministry are highlights of the Feast

Look mom, we found the kids,

Normally the Feast site in Florida is the gathering for families with kids. That changed this year as most of the kids found a way to convince the parents to head off to Myrtle Beach, SC.

This was the first year that the church has held a Feast at this popular site, where many of the other churches of God meet annually for the Feast of Tabernacles. It turned out to be a very successful site and everyone there had a wonderful time. For some, it was an

opportunity to meet and visit with other brethren they haven't seen in many years.

The task for finding and coordinating this new Feast site fell on the shoulders of Mr. Elwood Woodcock. This was his first time as a coordinator, he did such a terrific job it won't be his last. Someone once said the reward for doing a good job, is more work.

Special thanks to the Tallahassee congregation for helping with the activities for many of the youth. This was a special year for them and many of those who were baptized were from their congregation. Congratulations and thanks to all there.

Another special time was the ordination of Mr. Steve Council as a Minister of Jesus Christ. (See story on page 11) Powerful messages, inspiring fellowship, joyful meetings, and a time that will be remembered by all who attended, a time that will not be forgotten.



Appreciation from the Grand Shores Festival Hostess

Dearest Mr. Elwood and Group,

I would like to "Thank You" so much for the card and gift card. When they say the words "Blessings from Heaven" I'll think of you and your group. I can't tell you how I felt when I used the card — after grocery shopping I swiped the card and to my surprise went (Sort of loudly) "Thank you God." I could not believe my eyes—my heart jumped and a tear from my eye fell to my cheek—the people around looked at me as I said, "it's like a blessing from Heaven" I thank you again so much—to me I was just doing my job and my kindness is who I am. Thank all who made this "Blessing from Heaven" fill my heart with gladness and joy.

Thank you again also for being so special, kind, and thoughtful. You touched my life with the first hello.

God Bless,
Wendy



The Feast was filled with many activities on the agenda. Unfortunately the big activity all the kids were hoping for didn't happen. The week before the Feast, the Hard Rock theme park decided at the last minute to close down for the season. What a disappointment for the kids. (And a few of the adults.) Nevertheless, they found plenty of other things to fill the time.



Seven Baptisms at the Feast in Myrtle Beach

Congratulations to all those baptized this year at the Feast in Myrtle Beach, SC. All Praise and Glory goes to God for His goodness and mercy for allowing Ministries International to be a part in this.

Baptised were: Shelly Bockman-Plymouth, IN; Edward Bartlett-Philadelphia, PA; Charles (Chuck) Baker-Quitman, GA; Lisa Baker; Francis Baker-Tallahassee, FL; Josh Baker-Quitman, GA; and Tammy Mead-Hastings, MI. May God continue to bless them all in their discovery of His ways.





Feast of Tabernacles Panama City Beach, FL



Back in Panama City Beach, FL after Four Years in Ft. Walton

For many years Panama City Beach, FL has been a favorite for Feast goers. Several years ago the church was forced to move down the road. Churches split and the Festival locations prices escalated. However in the



past few years, PCB has undergone massive building, adding many new facilities for sleeping accommodations. Many of the new locations now have

meeting halls that weren't available just four years ago.

God blessed us this year with an exceptional location with a cost that was reasonable to handle.

In addition to the reasonable cost of the meeting hall, members and their guest were afforded a terrific price at the same location which included a continental breakfast and maid service daily for just \$65.00 per night.



Mr. Tom Kerry opened the Feast with announcements followed by Mr. Ian Hufton who delivered a very exciting and uplifting message. From then on it was like a marathon of inspiring message and days filled with a variety of



activities to keep every one involved. Thanks to all who attended and worked so hard to make the Feast in PCB a tremendous success.

Branson, MO

Branson is another of the favorite sites for the churches of God. For decades many of God's brethren have met in Branson to enjoy the Fall colors, cool weather, and the many activities that the area has to offer.

In recent years the Springfield, MO congregation have added a new touch that everyone looks forward to having. "FOOD" Not that the area didn't have food before, but they have found a location that gives the brethren complete kitchen facilities. The Branson site takes full advantage of that opportunity as they cook different meals for "all" the Feast goers.

Each night has a different theme. During the past few years, Mr. and Mrs.



Nicholas of the New Orleans congregation have been with them and brings a special Cajun night meal for everyone. Last year Mr. Nicholas won the N.O. annual cook off with his own recipe of Cajun Corn Soup. Everyone was able to enjoy that dish as he prepared it for the MO. Site Each day the brethren were given powerful and uplifting messages to begin the day. One of the days, services were held later to give the brethren the opportunity to have a prayer breakfast.

Mr. Ian Hufton traveled from PCB to

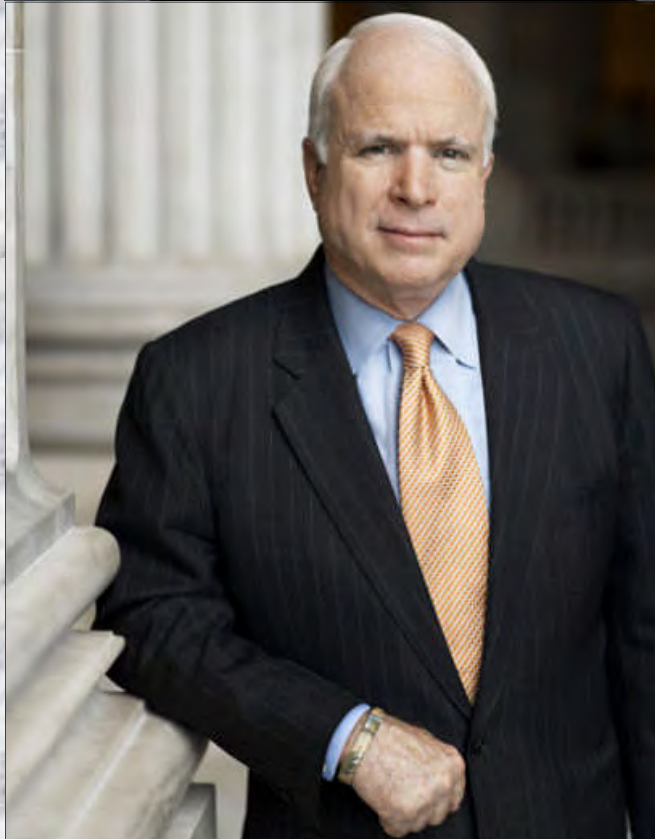
speaking on two of the days, and Mr. Mike Gladden traveled from Myrtle Beach, SC and spoke on two of the days. Our thanks to Steve Hicks and his wonderful congregation who spent the Feast with Ministries International. Their participation was a tremendous value to the site.

Despite having to undergo a serious operation about a year and a half ago, God blessed Mr. Dale Murphy's health to serve again this year as Festival Coordinator.

If you haven't had the opportunity to travel away from your home Festival site you might want to consider Branson next year. You won't be disappointed.



I Voted for...



Presidential Candidates: Top picture - Barack Obama
Bottom Picture - John McCain. Now that the election is over, where do we go from here? The world awaits to see.

By James Summerville

The views expressed in this article are mine. The Church of God Ministries International (COGMI) and its ministry do not necessarily share my views.

Yuck – what an ugly introduction! Typically I’d begin with a story to prepare the reader for the article’s subject. This time, however, I feel compelled to begin with a disclaimer that I’m not writing on behalf of the ministry or the COGMI. Instead, I’m writing on behalf of me.

Who am I? I’m 37 years old, a New Yorker born to two parents, Larry and Carmen, who met in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG). They left the WCG when I was nine, when my world consisted solely of the NY Yankees, baseball cards, and an annoying big sister. Many years later, when I cared, I learned that my parents left the WCG because they disagreed with the church’s direction in the late 1970s. In short, they disliked Stanley Radar. They liked Garner Ted Armstrong. Enough said.

I’m a product of genes and my environment. For the first nine years of my life, my environment comprised family, friends, school, and the WCG. Family has remained while friends have changed. School is out, thankfully. The WCG? Though I left the WCG at nine years old, unfortunately the WCG has not entirely left me.

After leaving the WCG, my family meandered until we joined the Church of God, International in the mid-1980s. Since then we’ve been with the Intercontinental Church of God, The Church of God, Worldwide Ministries and, now, the COGMI. Last month we enjoyed the best Feast of Tabernacles in years, at Myrtle Beach, North Carolina. We hope to return next year.

The paragraphs above encapsulate over twenty years of epochal history. The Soviet Union, the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, Ronald Reagan: no more. Insert instead China, globalization, 9/11, Barack Obama. The world has changed so much; contrary to the instincts of many brethren, sometimes for the better. And yet despite the many years gone by, every so often I’m reminded of my religious heritage, that is, the old WCG.

In the past decade or so, invariably when hosting brethren, my parents have unpacked a suitcase containing a dusty 1969 edition of *The Envoy*, the annual yearbook from WCG’s Ambassador College. Fascinated in general by old pictures, I saw *The Envoy* as a relic of my unborn but very real past. In other words, *The Envoy* provides a pictorial glimpse into the culture that molded my parents and eventually me.

The pictures of the smiling graduates in *The Envoy*: everyone looked the same. I can’t recall one Black, Hispanic or Asian face. The men mimicked each other. They wore the same suits; they shared the same hairstyle and hair-length. Perhaps their mimicry isn’t surprising, given that most men lack style, including me. On the other hand, usually women try hard not to imitate each other. But the women of *The Envoy*: they, too, looked alike. They shared the same style of dress, their hemlines were the same length, and many of them must’ve had the same hairstylist.

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I Voted for...

These smiling graduates seemed happy and proud to be part of the WCG. But they also unwittingly convey a disturbing cultural characteristic of the old WCG: conformity. Unlike their non-church peers entering adulthood, these graduates lacked individuality, at least in the setting of the old WCG. Their uniformity in appearance is disquieting. It's indicative of an organizational culture that encouraged conformity and suppressed individuality and dissent.

Perhaps I'm over-generalizing. After all, I was only nine when I left the WCG. Thus I don't have any first-hand experience to support my observations. Yet I've talked to many people who have decades of such experience, including my parents. While they have fond memories of the WCG, many of them agree that dissent was not tolerated.

Conformity is useful. Without some degree of conformity, no organization can survive. Thus members should adhere to a set of fundamental beliefs and practices, such as the holy days and Sabbath observance. However, individuality is likewise necessary for a healthy organization. For example, circumstances change. Policies that applied in 1960 don't necessarily apply in 1965, never mind in 2008. Therefore, people and organizations must adapt to change; otherwise they become outdated and out-of-touch. Without encouraging an atmosphere of individuality and dissent, people are reluctant to speak out against outdated or wrong policies and doctrines. Consequently, the organization suffers and ossifies. Over time, the organization becomes irrelevant.

It's inevitable: organizations make mistakes. But organizations – really, the leaders – are stubbornly slow to identify and

correct their mistakes. An organization that emphasizes conformity and suppresses (at least subconsciously) individuality and dissent is in danger of not identifying and correcting such mistakes, or perhaps correcting them too late. Take the old WCG, for example. For some inexplicable reason, the church promoted the theory that significant history unfolded in 19-year time cycles. From this theory, the church taught that the Great Tribulation would begin in 1972 and that Jesus would return in 1975.

The 19-year time cycle theory is kooky. I'm sure that not everyone subscribed to this theory. However, given that the old WCG emphasized conformity and discouraged individuality and dissent, this theory was not challenged until it was too late. Many brethren point to this failed prediction, predicated on a nonsensical theory, as the beginning of the end of the old WCG. Such disastrous mistakes (there were more!) could've been avoided had the old WCG tolerated individuality and dissent.

That Was Then; How 'Bout Now?

Unfortunately, some organizations have not learned from WCG's mistakes. Periodically I'll hear pejorative comments that particular organizations are becoming "just like Worldwide." To these commentators, such organizations are repeating WCG's mistakes, such as over-emphasizing conformity and suppressing individuality and dissent.

I'm proud that the COGMI is not repeating the mistakes of the past. We encourage individuality; we tolerate dissent. In fact, I would not write this article if I thought that the



In Some Nations, People look to Obama as President of the World

Barack Obama's election on November 4th set off international celebrations and ignited a fervor for the United States that has been unseen since the days immediately following the September 11, 2001, terror attacks.

To some observers, the international reaction has elevated America's president-elect to an unparalleled post: president of the world.



Above: the above picture is a sampling of news headlines from around the world praising the results of the election with president elect Barack Obama.



A resident of Obama, Japan holds Obama fish burgers to celebrate Barack Obama's victory in the U.S. presidential election. Obama is being embraced worldwide as a symbol of a new beginning for relations with the U.S. (AP photo)

I Voted for...



Cont. from p. 9 COGMI leaders are intolerant of different views. For instance, most ministers and brethren instinctively believe that we're living in the end-time. Perhaps they're right. I hope they're right, for Jesus will return soon. However, I don't know if we're living in the end-time because the Bible provides few definitive clues—e.g. the abomination of desolation, the formation of four blocs of nations, armies compassing Jerusalem, martyrdom. Until I see these clues come to pass, I hesitate to proclaim that we're living in the last days.

Some time ago, while in the Church of God, Worldwide Ministries, I wrote a bible study on the nature of God. The study referred to the story of Job. I posited a theory – just a theory – that contrary to popular belief, Job's children had not died. I offered biblical clues to support my theory. Unfortunately for me, the president of that organization disagreed with my theory and strongly encouraged me to withdraw it. My theory is inconsequential and, in the end, unimportant. It's a mere footnote to the story of Job. Nonetheless, the minister pressured me to remove it, and after some time I caved.

I'm confident that the leaders of the COGMI, particularly the editor of this newsletter, are much more tolerant of different views. (I'm not referring to fundamental doctrines, such as the Sabbath and holy days. Instead, I'm referring to views that are not fundamental to our salvation, such as the end times or governing philosophies, etc.) In fact, among Tom Kerry's many admirable attributes, I admire most his willingness to cultivate new leadership in the church. By encouraging people to develop their talents and to form their own views, Mr. Kerry has (consciously or not) promoted the development of a diversified, tolerant church. I'm not, for lack of better word, brown-nosing. Instead, I'm giving credit where credit is due. The COGMI is a small, fledgling church. Yet it's a church that I can be proud of.

In the Spirit of Dissent

I'm unsure whether the COGMI has formed an official position on voting. I'm unsure of the opinions of the ministry on voting. I do know, however, that other organizations encourage their members not to vote. For example, one of the largest organizations "maintains its traditional teaching that a Christian should avoid voting and participating in political elections and running for political office." This organization cites the old WCG's stance on voting: "Since we are NOW ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, we relinquish the right to vote or to take part in the politics or the government of this world" (*The Plain Truth*, October 1960).



"the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will and sets over it the lowest of men."
Daniel 4:17:

This organization admits that the Bible provides no explicit guidance on voting: "The Bible does not have a command explicitly targeting participation in secular politics by Church members." However, the organization agrees with the old WCG that "as ambassadors and citizens of the Kingdom of God, Christians are no longer to be involved in

man's systems of government" and that "the true Christian is one who follows Christ, and Christ did not vote!" Besides, voting is useless because God appoints rulers, not men. The organization cites a few supporting scriptures, such as Daniel 4:17: "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will and sets over it the lowest of men." Therefore, this organization declares confidently that "today the fact remains – the authorities that exist are appointed by God."

Really?!? Did God appoint Hitler, Mao, Stalin, Lenin, Pol Pot, Julius Ceasar, Nero, Caligula, and Genghis Khan? Are humans mere pawns in the hands of God, or do we exercise free will in the selecting our leaders? The cited scripture alludes to Nebuchadnezzar, particularly God's sovereignty over him. The scripture should not be taken out of its historical context to mean that God appoints all rulers, period. If so, God appointed Hitler.

Similarly, other scriptures in Daniel should not be applied indiscriminately, such as "He removes kings and raises up kings" (Daniel 2:21). The context of this scripture affirms that God is sovereign, that He's the ultimate Ruler of the world. But it does not affirm that God establishes all rulers. Rather, it affirms the principle that ultimately God is in charge.

The organization's contention that "the authorities that exist are appointed by God" contrasts with the implication of God's everlasting covenant with Noah. God made an "everlasting covenant" with Noah (and by extension, mankind). The "everlasting covenant" gave man the right to self-government. In other words, by commanding man to punish sinners (for instance, the death penalty for murderers: Genesis 9:5-7), God gave us the right and obligation to enforce God-given and God-inspired laws. "The declaration of the Noachic Covenant subjects humanity to a new test. Its distinctive feature is the institution, for the first time, of human government—the government of man by man.

Cont. on p. 11



Local CHURCH / HOST NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME ABOARD

Mr. Steve Councill was ordained to the Ministry at this year's Feast of Tabernacle in Myrtle Beach, SC

The Church of God, Ministries International is pleased to welcome aboard Mr. Steve Councill as its newest minister. We wasted no time in putting him to work at this year's Feast.

This year he was actively involved as he was the Sabbath teacher for the teens in Myrtle beach. Actually he has been active for many years in serving at God's Feast. This year for the first time, we are blessed to call upon his talents to have him deliver a PowerPoint sermon to the brethren at two sites. Myrtle Beach and Panama City, FL.



Above: Steve with his wife Sandy, and his grandchildren. Left: Ordination in Myrtle Beach. Right: Sons Scott and Seth.

to meet with Mr. Bruce Chapman and the Michigan brethren monthly statewide get together for services. Additionally he is an avid outdoorsman love camping, hunting and football.

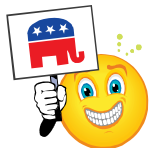
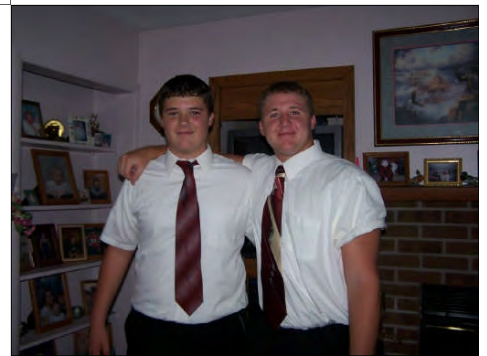
God also gifted Steve with a powerful, full, and deep voice. Ministries International has been blessed to be able to use Steve's voice to help us with our commercial and promotional material spots. Steve is one of the most humble people you will ever meet. He exemplifies what God looks for in a servant and we are blessed to have him. Welcome aboard.



While in Florida he was able to visit the brethren and take part in the Leadership Luncheon that followed services before heading back to SC.

Mr. Councill is a deeply devoted family man. He is married, has four grown children and four grandchildren.

He has served as a Deacon in the Michigan area for several years and presently pastors the congregation in Elkhart, IN. Once a month he travels



Continued from p.10 The highest function of government is the judicial taking of life. All other governmental powers are implied in that....Man is responsible to govern the world for God" (from the notes in the Scofield Study Bible, 1917 ed.). Thus mankind is ultimately responsible for the selection of its rulers.

By asserting incorrectly that God establishes "all authorities" and thus our votes are meaningless, this organization claims that our sole civic duty is to obey "government authorities." "Though abstaining from voting, the Church has taught that government authorities should be respected, regardless of their political affiliation." As proof, this organization quotes Paul: "Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinances of God and those who resist will

I Voted for...

bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:2). Unfortunately this organization indiscriminately applies this scripture to all situations. By applying this scripture to all situations, the civil rights movement, which preached non-violent civil disobedience, was wrong. Similarly, all other forms of rebellion, including the American Revolution, were inherently wrong.

Finally, suspend your disbelief for a moment and suppose that this organization fulfilled its mandate to preach the Gospel. Suppose that every American converted to this organization. Suppose, then, that every American accepted this organization's teaching to abstain from voting. By accepting this organization's stance on non-voting, America will necessarily become a dictatorship. Absurd but true.

What's My Point?

My immediate point is obvious: voting is

not wrong, it's not sinful. Voting is merely a civic privilege. By voting for either John McCain or Barack Obama, I did not harm my faith or my church.

My larger point is this: I have the freedom to dissent. I dissented from the teachings of the old WCG and of the much newer large organization. Moreover, I might've dissented from the (unpublished) views of some of the leaders of the COGMI. By dissenting, and by the leaders of the COGMI accepting my right to dissent, I have proved that the church is diverse and that no one should feel discouraged from asserting his or her individuality and right to dissent from time to time. By asserting our rights, perhaps we can avoid the disastrous mistakes of the old WCG.





God Blesses Ministries International With Increased Donors, Responses and Income for Second Year in a Row - Income up 22.1 % over 2007

Special thanks to all of you who helped make 2008 a very special year. With a month still to go, we are seeing increases over last year in all areas of the work. What is truly remarkable, this is going on during a time when nearly every thing is in a state of reduction. It is truly humbling to all of us, the love and the financial support that all of you have poured out in support to the work. On behalf of the entire ministry, thank you.

Its no secret to any one that the United States, and for that matter most of the country is going through a very difficult financial upheaval. However, during this time we have been blessed to be able to increase via our outreach via biblestudy.org and via many of you simply passing out materials to friends, we have seen increases in new first time individual donors. This pattern began to show up shortly after the 2007 Feast.

As a result of this, we have seen a 22.1% increase in finances over 2007; additionally we are up by 26% the number of individuals over the same period last year. In the box at the lower right of the page you will see the progress God has blessed us with during our past three years.

There is another area where God has blessed us with what we believe we will see growth in the years ahead. We find it in the way God has inspired the work to market itself. I know you've all heard me say this before, but it's true, we are small and we need to make every penny count on how we use God's Tithes. With a balanced approach to advertising, we are seeing powerful results in responses.

We chose biblestudy.org as our primary target to marketing because it reaches a mostly non-COG reader. In other words, we are not going after other church's members. The mission Jesus Christ left us was, to go to the world and make converts.

We ran two different ads. We offered Financial Meltdown and The Greatest Fraud Ever Perpetrated on Mankind. Both have brought very good response.

As of mid October; Financial meltdown received 648 request, and Greatest Fraud received 849 request. The request come in almost daily.

With God's help, following our Ministerial Conference in Feb this year, we hope to have a complete package to send to potential members. In it will be a brochure of who we are, what we believe, and their salvation. Along with that we will send a follow up sermon and offer a bible study if they are interested. We have to do it this way because of the cost factors. That type of package could run several dollars cost in follow up. When we consider how many request we receive, this could drain our reserves very quickly.

Please pray that God will put on the hearts of many more new donors to help be a part of this work and reach more people. This will be a critical year financially for many across the country we need to keep this in our prayers.

Written Response from Japan

Imagine our surprise this past month when we opened the mail and found a letter sent to us from Japan. There were several of us there, everyone sent up a sound of joy and happiness. To think, somehow God inspired that person to find our website, print out the form, and snail mailed it in to us. The person asked for the material offered on the web site, and asked to be put on our mailing list. That one letter was powerful testimony that God can reach people when and where He chooses. Even in the smallest of works God's Word can and does proceed, praise God. You never know where just one seed might fall, or what will come of it



The Church of God Ministries, Int'l			
Income/Expenses till October 31, 2008			
Income	YTD		
Income 2008	\$131,075.07		
Expenses 2008	\$108,219.39		
Cash Balance Oct 2008	\$58,417.31		
THREE YEAR COMPARRISSION			
As of October 31, 2008			
YEAR	INCOME	BALANCE	% GAIN
2006	\$94,731.09	\$30,115.29	1ST YEAR
2007	\$107,340.60	\$41,652.30	UP 13.3%
2008	\$131,075.50	\$58,417.31	UP 22.1%
<i>All figures are for up to Oct 31 of each calendar year</i>			
<p>Since we regrouped in 2006, God has blessed Ministries International with year over year growth. The first year was our year to regain our foundation. The second year allowed us to begin to develop our work. 2008 has been a year to evaluate our progress, focus on direction and begin our outreach to new potential children of God. Please see the results of our outreach in the section on news of the work.</p>			





LAST MINUTE FEAST HELD IN CHATTANOOGA, TN

By Rachel Conner

Serious health conditions of a few of the members prevented us from being able to travel this year's to COGMI's regular sites. Fortunately, we were able to pull together to provide a Feast for all of those that were unable to make the journey.



Our little Feast site was small in numbers, but not in love. We had 21 in attendance and had God's presence among us. We were blessed with

speakers everyday other than two of the days. On those days we played DVD's of Tom Kerry and Bruce Chapman. The men of the church pulled together and gave wonderful Bible Studies and sermons. For some of the men, this was their first time. With God's help, they all did a great job. Keep up the good work guys.

The women worked hard keeping the church fed. We ate breakfast on three mornings at church. We had lunch every other day and pizza and pop corn one night. We held a 50's costume karaoke night, Bible trivia night. We had a Bar-B-Que and lots of fellowship. On another night we made a trip to see the Chattanooga Choo-Choo comedy show. It was good clean comedy and music that everyone can enjoy. We had a great time and laughed till we



cried. The Feast was a wonderful time for all of us. Even though we were unable to travel, we were glad to be able to get together. It was a relaxing and enjoyable time for us all.



REACHING AROUND THE WORLD



32 New Sermons Just Added to the Web Site

The COGMI Web Site is having a Record year
thecogmi.org

2008 has been a banner year for Ministries International's web site. Please note the statistics listed below. We are

blessed to continue to receive new responses as a result of this out reach. The most recent surprise was the letter from the person who wrote to us from Japan.

When we look at the fruits, we can see a clear path of effective out reach via the web site. Plans are under way to be able to use this tool that God has blessed us with to be a more effective work in reaching potential new members of God's family. Please remember this area of the work in your prayers.

The web site has just been updated. We've added 32 new sermons with plans to add another 22 in the very near future. If you haven't visited the web site lately, now's the perfect time to do so. There are many new news items, messages and information.

HITS	NO OF VISITORS	FILES VIEWED
2006 2,253,278	2006 83,500	2006 983,000
2007 3,012,755	2007 168,758	2007 1,708,429
2008 4,042,685	2008 487,563	2008 4,042,685
AS OF OCT. 2008	AS OF OCT. 2008	AS OF OCT. 2008





IS IT IN THE "Prove all Things"
BIBLE Did You Know?



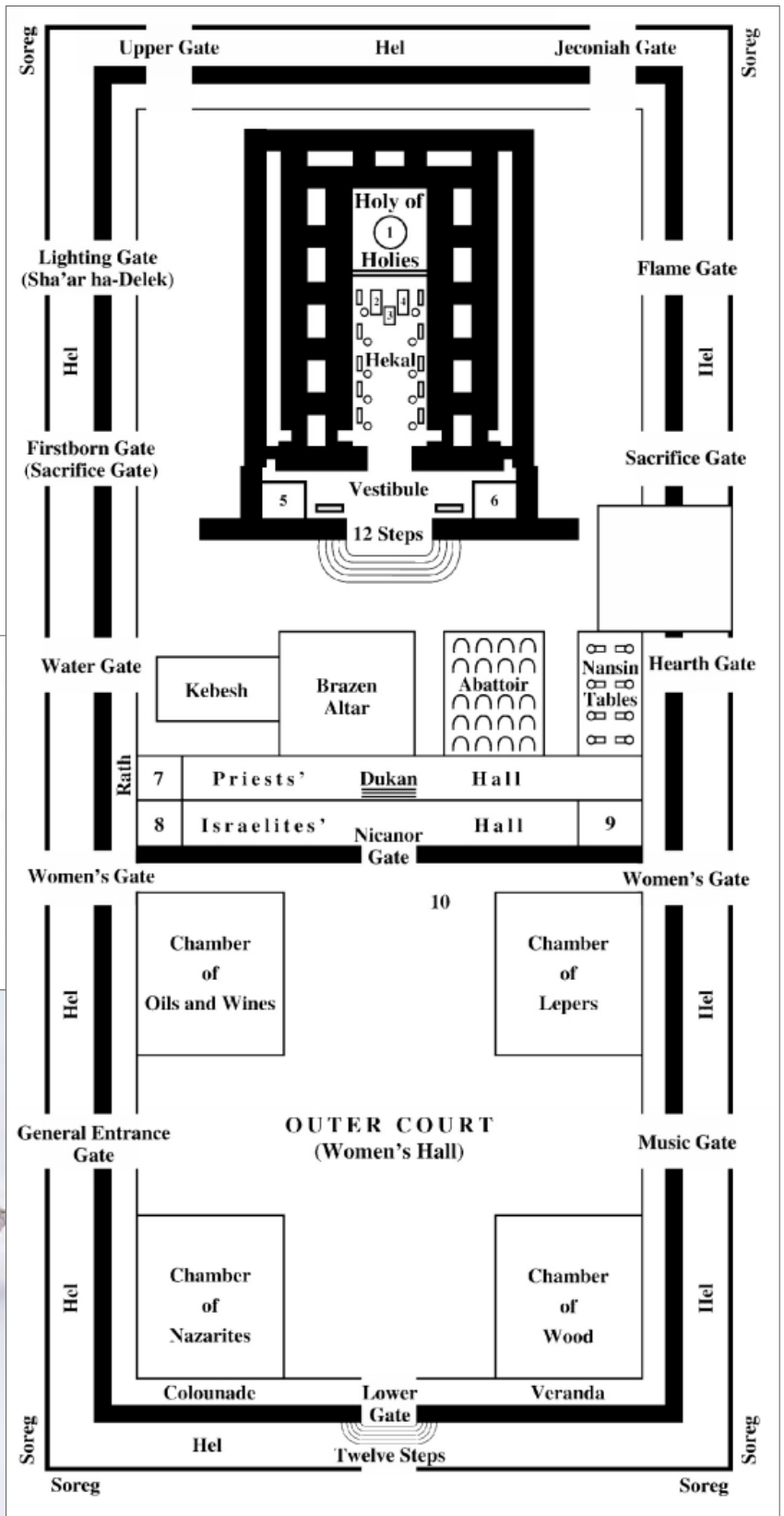
Interior Diagram of Jerusalem's Temple

The first Temple in Jerusalem was built by King Solomon, son of King David. Before his death David had "with all his might" provided materials in great abundance for the building of the temple on the summit of Mount Moriah (1Chronicles 22:14, 29:4; 2Chronicles 3:1), on the east of the city, on the spot where Abraham had offered up Isaac (Genesis 22:1-14).

The first temple was burned, pillaged and destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (2Kings 24:13; 2Chronicles 36:7), who carried all the temple's treasures with him to Babylon.

What is known as the second (Herod's) temple was built in the same location as the first temple. The foundations of the second temple were laid about 535 B.C. by Jewish exiles returning from captivity in Babylon. When Herod the Great became king of Judea the second temple had stood for about five hundred years. The building

Cont. cont on p. 15



Numbers Used in Temple Diagram

1. Eben Shetiyyah
2. Candlestick
3. Altar of Incense
4. Table of Showbread
5. Chamber of Knives
6. Chamber of Knives
7. Attic of Abtnas
8. Chamber of Pancake Makers
9. Chamber of Phinehas as Vestment Keeper
10. Twelve Semi-circular Steps



Scale model of the Temple built by Solomon





IS IT IN THE "Prove all Things"
BIBLE Did You Know?



What an Awesome God !

GOD'S ACCURACY

How lovely to think about the way our Creator God planned everything so carefully and perfectly, everything with a plan. As His highest creation, "we are fearfully and wonderfully made."

God's accuracy may be observed in the hatching of eggs.

For example, the eggs of the potato bug hatch in 7 days.

Those of the canary in 14 days.

Those of the barnyard hen in 21 days.

The eggs of ducks and geese hatch in 28 days;

Those of the mallard in 35 days.

The eggs of the parrot and the ostrich hatch in 42 days.

(Notice, they are all divisible by Seven).

God's wisdom is seen in the making of an elephant. The four legs of this great beast all bend forward in the same direction. No other Quadruped is so made. God planned that this animal would have a huge body, too large to live on two legs.

For this reason He gave it four fulcrums so that it can rise from the ground easily.

The horse rises from the ground on its two front legs first.

A cow rises from the ground with its two hind legs first.

How wise the Lord is in all His works of creation! God's wisdom is revealed in His



Thus, the Lord, in His wonderful grace, can arrange the life that is entrusted to His care in such a way that it will carry out His purposes and plans, and will be fragrant with His presence. Only the God-planned life is successful. Only the life given over to the care of the Lord is safe.

arrangement of sections and segments, as well as in the number of grains.

Each watermelon has an even number of stripes on the rind.

Each orange has an even number of segments.

Each ear of corn has an even number of rows. Each stalk of wheat has an

even number of grains.

Every bunch of bananas has on its lowest row an even number of bananas, and each row decreases by one, so that one row has an even number and the next row an odd number.

The waves of the sea roll in on shore twenty-six to the minute in all kinds of weather.

The Lord specified thirty fold, sixty fold, and an hundred fold - all even numbers.

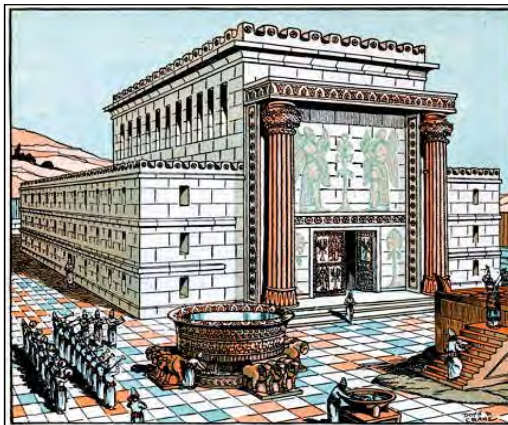
God has caused the flowers to blossom at certain specified times during the day, so that Linneus, the great botanist, once said that if he had a conservatory containing the right kind of soil, moisture and temperature, he could tell the time of day or night by the flowers that were open and those that were closed!

Thus, the Lord, in His wonderful grace, can arrange the life that is entrusted to His care in such a way that it will carry out His purposes and plans, and will be fragrant with His presence. Only the God-planned life is successful. Only the life given over to the care of the Lord is safe.

Author unknown

Cont. from p. 14 had suffered considerably from natural decay over the years as well as from the assaults of hostile armies, and Herod, desirous of gaining the favor of the Jews, proposed to rebuild it. This offer was accepted, and the work was begun (18 B.C.), and carried out at great labor and expense, and on a scale of surpassing splendor. The main part of the building was completed in ten years, but the erection of the outer courts and the embellishment of the whole were carried on during the entire period of Jesus' life on earth (John 2:16, John

2:19-21). The temple was completed in A.D. 65. The temple, however, was



An artist's conception of the Temple area.

not long permitted to exist. The Roman legions took the city of Jerusalem by storm, and notwithstanding the strenuous efforts Titus made to preserve the temple, his soldiers set fire to it in several places. The destruction of the temple began on the 9th of Ab (Hebrew month), the very same day the destruction of Jerusalem's first temple began in 585 B.C. The temple's demise was completed on Ab 10 in Hebrew year (civil) 3831, which corresponds to Sunday, August 5th in 70 A.D.



CHURCH OF GOD

Ministries *Int'l*

"Unsung Heroes"

By James Summerville



This powerful message was delivered Before a live audience in Myrtle Beach this year. It's gentle delivery comes across in a powerful and light hearted manner.

Be sure to send for your copy IT'S ABSOLUTELY FREE

We are sure it will leave you inspired and uplifted.

The Bible is filled with detailed prophecy. It helps you understand God's Holy Word, and God's plan for all mankind. It reveals the Eternal's plan for you, and how you can live a happy and successful life. To learn more visit us online at: **www.thecogmi.org**



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