



Zion Assembly Church of God  
**MINUTES**

*6<sup>th</sup> Annual  
General Assembly*

*Theme:*

*“God’s Church:  
Called to Embody, Proclaim,  
and Manifest His Glory”*

*September 8-13, 2009  
Cleveland, TN*

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Wade H. Phillips  
*Presiding Bishop*

## Welcome Delegates!

The theme for this 6th Annual General Assembly--**“God’s Church: Called to Embody, Proclaim, and Manifest His Glory!”**--is of profound significance, for it brings to our attention what the

apostle calls the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Think of it! We are called to embody God in this world---to manifest His glory! This means that the ministers and members in Zion Assembly should personally and corporately “adorn the doctrine of God,” not just proclaim it. Yet, at the same time, we are called to proclaim the fullness of His Gospel to all nations. This includes explaining the teachings of Christ and teaching believers (by precept and example) to observe the “all things whatsoever” that He and His apostles taught and practiced. Only a body of people who are seriously committed to these principles will manifest the fullness of God’s glory. This is the “high calling” that we are now endeavoring to answer in Zion Assembly. Certainly it will be answered only by a consecrated body of ministers and members---a body who is willing to submit to His government and to walk together by the “same rule” of faith and practice.

We have fervently prayed that this Assembly will be up-lifting and inspirational to all who attend and for its effects to overflow into our churches around the world. Then also we want the inspiration of this Assembly to reach out to the lost of this world and the scattered sheep of God’s kingdom. I remember that the atmosphere in our last Assembly was so heavenly that many did not want to go home after it was concluded. Some lingered for quite a while before finally departing. We want this good spirit to continue to increase until the church is a dynamo of God’s love and power. O it would be wonderful if the fellowship of the church in this Assembly was so charged with God’s grace and power that not a cross word would be said nor a cross spirit be given place by any minister or member. When the church reaches this plateau of God’s manifest glory, we may expect the words of the prophet to be fulfilled: “. . . and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths” (Isaiah 2:2,3).

# Zion Assembly Church of God

*International Ministries Center*



## United Christian Church

(assembly site)



# Greetings

*“O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods . . . O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker” (Psalm 95:1-3, 6).*



E.A. McDonald  
Superintendent of Operations

The invitation to worship given by the psalmist here suggests that bowing before the Lord our maker is both a joyous and a sobering experience. As we gather once again in a general assembly, we trust that you will sense the awesome presence of our Creator and rejoice together in what He has accomplished in the church this past year.

We are indebted once again to the United Christian Association for making their facilities available to us for the 6th Annual General Assembly. Our appreciation will be best expressed by being careful to take care of the property and equipment which they have provided.

The following information is given so that this Assembly may be remembered as a joyful occasion. Personnel have been appointed to address any problem that may rise during this Assembly. Please consult with these authorized persons to make any adjustment or change in the facility or equipment. Ushers will be stationed during each session at entrances inside the auditorium. If you have a need or encounter a problem please report it to one of the ushers.

A nursery has been provided for your convenience. It is located down the east hallway. Children should not be left alone in the nursery or anywhere in the building. Parents are encouraged to have their children sit with them in the auditorium during worship services. Maintaining order and discipline in the house of God is always becoming to the saints. Let us show diligence to be prompt and ready to worship, so that each session will be on schedule and edifying. Those on the program are encouraged to be prepared and ready to fulfill their appointed part in the service.

We trust that the Holy Ghost will be manifested mightily in this Assembly and that it can be said afterwards of those in attendance, “And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:20).

# **Pre-Assembly Programs**

## **Assembly Business Committee Monday, September 7, 2009**

The Assembly Business Committee will meet beginning at 6:00 p.m. to finalize its report to present to the 6th Annual General Assembly. Anyone who has relevant questions or presentations may do so at this time. Personal interviews with the Committee should be arranged through the chairman.

## **Ministers' Meeting (Tuesday, September 8, 2009) 9:00 a.m.**

Beginning at 9:00 a.m. the annual ministers' council will convene in the sanctuary of the International Ministries Center. All ministers are encouraged to attend and participate, including mission directors. The purpose of the meeting is to promote unity and understanding through prayer and discussion. The Assembly Business Committee report will be read and discussed. Also the floor will be open to discuss all relevant issues that might need clarification.

## **Ministers' and Companions' Luncheon (Immediately Following Ministers' Meeting) 12:30 p.m.**

All ministers and their companions are honored guests at the ministers' luncheon. This is sponsored by the international offices. The luncheon will be held at the Holiday Inn (on the hill north off 25th Street). Special singing: Reginaldo Duarte. Guest speaker: A.B. White. Dress code: most of the men prefer to wear suit and tie for this occasion.

# The Sixth Annual General Assembly

Zion Assembly Church of God  
September 8-13, 2009

## Administration

**Presiding Bishop**.....Wade H. Phillips  
**Superintendent of Operations**..... E. A. McDonald

**Chief Clerks**.....Marie Crook/Julia Massey  
(Sandra Moore, Brenda Reitler, Rita Goodrum,  
Billie Smith, Shirley Kimble, Helen Little, Leann Pounders)

**Chief Usher**.....C.R. Gregory  
( Milford Kimble, Jack Little, Byron Harris,  
Cecil Pounders, Trevor Graves, Dave Ashley, Tod Deakle,  
Bruce Wilcox, Carlos Brock)

**Chief Registrar**.....Eunice Gregory  
(Chris Phillips, Heather Melton, Daren Childers, Katie Busbee,  
Matthew McDonald, Travis Graves, Ashley Reitler)

## Assembly Business Committee

**Chairman** .....William Crook  
**Secretary**.....Zachary Snyder  
Members: A. B. White (Alternate Chairman), Ron Massey,  
Ricky Graves, Joshua Amara, C. R. Gregory.  
(Alternates: Ray Dickson, Reginaldo Durate)

**Video**.....Scott Neill  
**Sound Equipment**.....Preston Parris  
**Photography**.....Marie Crook

## Other Committees

International Properties: Wade H. Phillips, Sidney Whitlock, A.B. White, Gene  
Tingler, E.A. McDonald, Todd McDonald, Ray Dickson  
Construction Committee: Wade H. Phillips, E.A. McDonald, Sam Monday, Jack  
Little, Clifton Kelton, Ricky Graves, C.R. Gregory

## **Note:**

**The Pre-Assembly Programs and the Assembly Programs were carried out as scheduled with the exception of the following changes or modifications:**

### ***Tuesday Evening:***

The overseer of Southeast Asia was not present to report.

### ***Wednesday Morning:***

The Ladies Ministries director was not present to report.

### ***Thursday Afternoon:***

Rosie Ramirez directed the Ladies Ministries Program in the absence of Jeannie Quillen.

E.A. McDonald's message was delivered on Saturday Evening.

### ***Friday Evening:***

Ron Massey delivered the message "*Called and Anointed to Serve*" in the absence of Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria

# Assembly Program

## Tuesday

6:30 p.m.

Praise & Worship---Davis & Sandy Webster, IN  
Special Songs---Zachary & Kari Snyder, TN  
Ten Minute Message---(Psalm 126:1-3)---Tim Pounders, MS  
Expectations of Glorious Things!---Tim Kelly, SC; Robert  
Ramirez, CA; Carlos Garcia, Nicaragua; Elijah Wafula, Kenya

### Official Opening of the Assembly

Welcome!---E. A. McDonald, Assistant Presiding Bishop  
Prayer for this Assembly and the church throughout the world in  
Seven Languages---Spanish, Swahili, English, Luo, German,  
Tagalog, Thai

Special Singing---Jim and Heather Melton, TN  
Assembly Expense Offering  
Special Songs---Gina Brooks, MS

**Message**—“*Called and Empowered to Proclaim the  
Full Gospel*”

---Joel Brooks, MS

Altar Service

[**Note: Kidz’ Konvention** schedule is: Friday: 10:15—11:45 a.m.  
2:00--3:30 p.m. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Saturday: 8:30--9:30 a.m. 2:30--4:00 p.m.  
6:30--7:30 p.m. A special Children’s Program is scheduled also on Sunday  
morning in the main auditorium.

*And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came . . . And his voice  
was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his  
glory . . . And the glory of the Lord came into the house . . . And  
the glory of the Lord filled the house (Ezekiel 43:2-5).*

## Wednesday

9:00 a.m.

Praise & Worship---Ruth & Gene Tingler, VA  
Special Songs---Nicole Pounders & Alicia Harris, MS  
**Message**---“*All that the Lord hath said will we do,  
and be obedient*” ---William Crook, TN

### General Treasurer’s Report

Other Reports:

- Presiding Bishop
- Assistant Presiding Bishop
- Assistant World Mission Secretary
- Field Secretary
- Shepherding Ministries Director
- Evangelism Director/Voice of Zion Booster
- Youth Director
- Sunday School Director
- Children’s Ministries Director
- Ladies Ministries Director

---Lunch Break---

1:00 p.m. **Musical Prelude**

### Reports from Around the World

*(Overseers, have your region organized and ready to march on time.  
Turn in your written reports to the Presiding Bishop as you leave the  
stage.)*

#### United States

1:15 **Midwest Region**

*Ron Massey, Overseer*

- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Indiana

Ohio  
West Virginia  
Virginia

**1:45 Southeast Region**

*E. A. McDonald, Overseer*

North Carolina  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Georgia  
Florida {Contacts}

**2:15 Southcentral Region**

*Ricky Graves, Overseer*

Alabama  
Mississippi  
Arkansas {Contacts  
Louisiana  
Kansas  
Missouri {Mission

**2:45 Western Region**

*A.B. White, Overseer*

California  
Oregon  
Nevada  
Washington {Contacts  
Utah

**3:15 Northwest Region**

*A. B. White, Overseer*

Montana  
Wyoming  
North Dakota {Contacts  
South Dakota  
Idaho

### 3:25 **Southwest Region**

*Joseph A. Steele, Overseer*

Texas {Contacts

Arizona

New Mexico

Oklahoma

### 3:35 **East Africa**

*Joshua Amara, Overseer*

Kenya

Tanzania

Uganda

Sudan

### 3:50 **West Africa**

*Joshua Amara, Overseer*

Nigeria

### 4:00 **United Kingdom**

*Joshua Amara, Overseer*

England

### 4:10 **Central America**

*Ricardo Valenzuela, Overseer* (absent due to Visa)

Reports given by: Wade H. Phillips, Rocky Dalton, Carlos Rodriquez

Guatemala

Nicaragua

{Contacts

El Salvador

### 4:20 **West Indies**

*Miguel Garcia, Mission Representative*

Dominican Republic

### 4:30 **Mexico**

*Alejandro Garcia, Mission Representative*

4:40 **Peru**

*Carlos Rafael Rodriquez, Overseer*

4:55 **Philippines**

*Domingo Resurreccion, Overseer*

5:10 **Southeast Asia**

*Boonyong Bureenok, Overseer*

(was not present to report)

**Report given by:** Wade H. Phillips

Thailand

Cambodia

Myanmar (Burma)

Laos                    {Contacts

Vietnam

5:30 **Middle East**

George Assi, Mission Representative

(unable to attend in person due to Visa)

**Report given by:** Wade H. Phillips via telephone

(The mission representative addressed the Assembly, George Assi)

**--Supper Break--**

## **Wednesday Evening**

7:30 p.m. Praise & Worship—Cleveland, TN

Praise Reports—C. R. Gregory, KY; Charles Fields, AL

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Singing---Reginaldo Duarte

**Message**—“*Called and Commissioned to Go to All Nations*”

---Miguel Garcia, CA

## **Thursday**

9:00 a.m. Praise & Worship—Robert & Marie Llana

Trevor Graves in Concert  
Camp Reports—J.J. & Ashley Davis (Mideast);  
William & Marie Crook (Southeast);  
Cliff & Becky Kelton (Southcentral);  
Pete & Francis Sarry (Western)

### **School of Ministry Program**

—Wade H. Phillips

Special Singing---Juan Lopez, CA

**Message**---E.A. McDonald, Assistant Presiding Bishop

### **—Lunch Break---**

2:00 p.m. Special Singing—Billy Summerlin, MS; Andy Davis, SC  
Juan Lopez, CA

**Voice of Zion Boost**—Zachary Snyder

**Message**---“*Called to Walk by the Same Rule*”

---Reginaldo Duarte

### ***In Memorial***

Ordination Service

[Note: Ministers and their companions should be seated near the  
rostrum in preparation for the ordination service.]

### **---Supper Break---**

6:30 p.m. Praise and Worship—Caledonia, MS

Special Singing—John & Wanda Stamper, VA;

Mark Spangler, Ga

Praise Reports—Barbara Rivera, CA; Tina Stephenson, SC

**Senior Ambassadors’ Program**---William F. Jones, VA

**“Remember the days of old . . . ask thy elders, and they will tell  
thee”**

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Songs—Gina Brooks

## **Evangelism Program**

---Zachary Snyder, director

### **Friday**

9:00 a.m. Praise & Worship—Bayou la Batre, AL

[Note: **Kidz Konvention** schedule today is 10:15---11:45 a.m.

2:00-3:00 p.m. 6:30-7:30 p.m.

## **Sunday School Program**

—Todd McDonald, director

Assembly Choir

## **Ladies Ministries Program**

—Jeannie Quillen, director

[Jeannie was unable to attend; program  
given by Rosie Rameriz]

Special Singing---Darlene Miller, SC

## **Shepherding Ministries Program**

---Rocky Dalton, director

—Afternoon Break—

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10:1-5).*

## Friday Evening

6:30 p.m. Praise & Worship—Little Binghamon, WV

Praise Reports--- Kerry Bryant, OR; Roger Barbour, TN  
Special Songs—Zion’s Melodies, AL; Nichols Family, MS  
**Message**—“*Called and Anointed to Serve*”  
---Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria  
(Yomi Adekunle was not present to preach, message by  
Ron Massey, WV)

Barry McDonald in Concert

### Healing Service

Danny Ramirez---Field Secretary

*And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Matthew 8:14-17).*

*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the work with signs following. Amen (Mark 16:17-20).*

## Saturday

8:15 a.m. Morning Prayer Service---Tim Pounders in charge

[Note: Kidz' Konvention will be held today at  
8:30–9:30 a.m., 2:30–4:00 and 6:30-7:30 p.m].

9:00 Praise & Worship---Sam & Sherrita Monday

Special Songs---Lee Brown, WV

Assembly Choir

**Message**—“*Sanctified and Meet for the Master's Use*”

---Chris Phillips, TN

Recognition of Special Guests

Special Singing---Brenda Whitlock

**Presiding Bishop's Annual Address**

**---Lunch Break---**

2:30 p.m. Praise & Worship---Rialto, CA

Special Singing---Michael George, SC;

Jeff & Sarah Nichols, MS

**Assembly Business Committee Report**

**---Supper Break---**

7:00 p.m. Praise & Worship---J.J. & Ashley Davis

[**Note:** The front three rows of seating have been reserved  
for the Youth Program. All youth [12-35] meet now in the  
hallway corridors in preparation for the Youth March].

Special Singing---“Juda,” CA

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Singing---Kim Irwin, KY

## **Youth Program**

—Scott Neill, director

### **Sunday**

8:30 a.m. Sunday School Lesson---Ricky Graves

9:00 Special Singing---Travis Graves, KY

## **Children's Ministries Program**

---Cheryl McDonald, director

Assembly Choir

## **World Mission Program**

---Joshua Amara, director

### ***Ordaining of new ministers:***

Trevor Graves, KY, Daren Childers,  
Ky; Elijah Wafula, Africa

### ***New Members taken in church at the Assembly:***

Derek and Jennifer McBride, KY

## **Parade of Nations**

**Announcements**

**Appointments**

**Consecration Service**

## Closing of the Assembly

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned . . . So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen (Mark 16:15-20).*

**Registered Attendance: 378**

**Actual Attendance (Estimation): 410**

# **International Staff Reports**

**September 9, 2009**

## **Presiding Bishop's Report to the Sixth Annual General Assembly**

**September 1, 2008---August 31, 2009**

*But what things were gain to me, those things I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss [but dung] for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend . . . [and] forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:7-14).*

These words by the great apostle express my sentiments and commitment here today. I count all things but dung in comparison with the grace and glory I have found in Christ Jesus my Lord. Neither do I count myself to have apprehended . . . [and] forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark . . . ”

I give honor and praise to the Lord today, for the strength and grace He has given to me again this year to serve in this sacred position. I want also to thank all of our wonderful ministers and workers for your confidence and prayers and encouragement. I can say in good conscience that we have done our best to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities of this office. Accordingly, I have answered all correspondence and calls that have come into the office this year (roughly 600 letters and e-mails); kept up a monthly correspondence with the overseers and ministers; served as the editor-in-chief of our church paper, the Voice of Zion. This has included writing the editorials and messages in most of the issues. I want to thank Sister Marie Crook for her assistance, and Dale for her assistance in packaging and mailing the paper. This has required a lot of time and patience and energy.

Hundreds of hours have been spent in counseling with the ministers and churches, both in the office and on the field. I have worked with the

General Staff, the Assembly Business Committee, the overseers, pastors, and ministers to promote the work in all of the departments and operations. I want to commend Bishop McDonald for his untiring labors in assisting me in this office. Also I want to commend the regional overseers, all of whom have been cheerfully cooperative with the Presiding Bishop in the promotion of the work. Some of these have made extraordinary sacrifices to advance the work of the church in their regions.

Besides the responsibilities mentioned above in connection with this office, I have again this year served as the president of the School of Ministry; directed the mission work; and planned and moderated the General Assembly. In regard to missions I made trips to Guatemala in Central America, Tijuana, Mexico, Peru in South America, and many trips within the United States. Bishop Amara was appointed last year as Assistant World Mission Secretary and promoted the work the best he could. He made several trips at my direction to three nations in Africa, including representing the International Offices in the national convention in Nigeria. This was besides his duties as regional overseer. I want to commend also Bishop McDonald for his assistance in helping to direct the mission work, and mention should be made of Brother Danny Ramirez and Miguel Garcia for their labors and sacrifices in assisting me in preparing for the missionary trips in Central America, Mexico, and South America. Pastor Reginaldo Duarte also assisted in the School of Ministry in Peru, interpreting and ministering to the people. Bishop Scott Neill represented the International Offices in the national convention in the Philippines, and Bishop Ricky Graves represented Headquarters in the East Africa regional convention.

The work as president of the School of Ministry included organizing and planning materials for the schools in Guatemala and Peru, the third term of the school in California for the Western Region, including their first graduation ceremony, and the second term of the school in Cleveland. Sister Norie Garavito was especially instrumental in assisting with the planning and execution of the California school and the graduation service. The Cleveland school included organizing and planning for the third graduation ceremony.

It was my privilege to attend all of the regional conventions in the United States this year, except for the Mid-East convention in West Virginia.

I worked also with the Sunday School director, Todd McDonald, in planning the Sunday School lessons and assisted with the final edits.

We had the opportunity again this year to preach on radio. We are looking forward to launching our own international radio and television

programs in the near future.

Finally, I want to give praise to the Lord for the successes that have been realized this year; yet so little seems to have been accomplished in comparison with what needs to be done. I have felt at times like a failure; and many times inadequate for the challenges of this great work. I can only say with the great apostle, “nevertheless, I am what I am.”

The following are some statistics of my personal work:

Sermons Preached.....	189
Revivals conducted.....	5
Converted.....	16
Sanctified.....	11
Holy Ghost Baptisms.....	5
Added to the church.....	70
Baptized in Water.....	0
Tithes paid.....	\$3025.00
Offerings given.....	860.00

Miles traveled 54,000....(approximately 26,000 by air, 28,000 on round).  
(in behalf of work)

Churches organized.....(assisted)...	3
Churches visited.....	31
Regional Conventions Attended....	3
General Assembly .....	1
(Moderated)	

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for the many kindnesses and gracious words you have expressed to Dale and me. So many of you could be mentioned in this report if we had the time. In some ways this office--the office of Presiding Bishop---is the corporate expression of the whole church: for so many of you have supported and sustained it. May the Lord continue to bless and keep all of you in His great grace and power.

Humbly Submitted

*Wade H. Phillips*

**General Treasurer's Report**  
**6th Annual General Assembly**  
**Zion Assembly Church of God**  
**September 9, 2009**

**Note:** On the following page is the breakdown of the yearly receipts, expenditures, and balances ending June 30, 2009

GEN. CHURCH YEARLY RECEIPTS, EXPENDITURES, BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2009

	TITHES	VOZ-SUB	ORPHAN	EXPENSE	MISSIONS	BLD. FUND	SC OF MIN	E. FUND	YOUTH	MISSION	OTHER	TO TALS
FIRST QUARTER												ALL FUNDS
BALANCE FORWARD	48159.55	-14271.41	3413.01	-18742.6	9832.9	-33995.87	-2629.29	660.35	2832.27	23858.22	13564.51	32681.64
RECEIPTS	35364.31	2113.86	1687.87	9232.45	8812.71	820.8	10789.17	579	1205.01	0	8040.38	78645.56
EXPENDITURES	-26565.21	-6914.19	0	-14938	-6955.91	-16392.97	-217.89	-8.34	-2188	-9884	-9225.88	-93290.39
BANK BALANCE	56958.65	-19071.74	5100.88	-24448.15	11689.7	-49568.04	7941.99	1231.01	1849.28	13974.22	12379.01	18036.81
SECOND QUARTER												
BALANCE FORWARD	56958.65	-19071.74	5100.88	-24448.15	11689.7	-49568.04	7941.99	1231.01	1849.28	13974.22	12379.01	18036.81
RECEIPTS	40812.17	5522.26	11790.53	2875.23	11166.88	212969.32	1016.56	405	2075.9	31881.86	1064.44	317210.15
EXPENDITURES	-32124.05	-5427.42	-6000	-9965.33	-6842.24	-227728.75	0	-67.6	-4224.36	-24326.24	-146.07	-316356.06
BANK BALANCE	65646.77	-23946.9	10891.41	-31542.25	16014.34	-63827.47	8958.55	1568.41	-299.18	21529.84	13897.38	18890.9
THIRD QUARTER												
BALANCE FORWARD	65646.77	-23946.9	10891.41	-31542.25	16014.34	-63827.47	8958.55	1568.41	-299.18	21529.84	13897.38	18890.9
RECEIPTS	34963.61	4157.5	4147.98	1000	4576.83	5400	923.15	456.78	972.9	645	10358.42	67602.17
EXPENDITURES	-29198.9	-5836.01	0	-7716.36	-12402.37	-111500.65	-1374.34	-300	0	-6897.65	0	-74876.28
BANK BALANCE	71411.48	-25625.41	15039.39	-38258.61	8188.8	-69578.12	8507.36	1725.19	673.72	15277.19	24255.8	11616.79
FOURTH QUARTER												
BALANCE FORWARD	71411.48	-25625.41	15039.39	-38258.61	8188.8	-69578.12	8507.36	1725.19	673.72	15277.19	24255.8	11616.79
RECEIPTS	39264.16	853	5004.03	393.2	4741.13	400	6881.11	838	964.38	42220.51	1676.55	103236.07
EXPENDITURES	-33725.8	-4219.94	0	-2213.96	-11334.95	-13722.41	-5036.6	-100	0	-2250	-11236.4	-83840.06
BANK BALANCE	76949.84	-28997.35	20043.42	-40079.37	1594.98	-82900.53	10351.87	2463.19	1638.1	55247.7	14695.95	31012.8
YEARLY SUMMARY OF ALL FUNDS RECEIVED, EXPENDITURES, AND BALANCE IN TREASURY JUNE 30, 2009												PAGE 6
BALANCE FORWARD	48159.55	-14271.41	3413.01	-18742.6	9832.9	-33995.87	-2629.29	660.35	2832.27	23858.22	13564.51	32681.64
RECEIPTS	150404.25	7676.62	22630.41	13500.88	29297.55	219590.12	19609.99	2278.78	5218.19	-4747.37	21739.79	566693.95
EXPENDITURES	-121614	-23397.56	-6000	-34837.65	-37555.47	-268494.78	-6628.83	-475.94	-6412.36	-43357.89	-20608.35	-568362.79
BANK BALANCE	76949.84	-28997.35	20043.42	-40079.37	1594.98	-82900.53	10351.87	2463.19	1638.1	55247.7	14695.95	31012.8
												BALANCE

# **International Evangelism Director**

Zachary Snyder  
159 Chelsea Dr.  
Crossville, TN 38558

## ***Greetings to this 6th Annual General Assembly***

***I give honor and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the privilege of serving his church as International Evangelism Director.***

I attended and preached one sermon at the Youth Convention in Cleveland in November 2008.

I attended and preached in the Southeast Regional Convention in Cleveland, Tennessee in June 2009.

I attended and preached in the Mideast Regional Convention in Cabin Creek, WV in June 2009. I was also the Headquarter's Representative for this convention.

Along with my pastoral duties, I have held revivals or preached in the following places since the 2008 General Assembly: Bingamon, WV; Greenville, SC; Ft. Oglethorpe, GA; Metz, WV; Columbus, MS; Goshen, IN; Adolphus, KY.

### **Personal Statistics**

Revivals Conducted: 6  
Messages Preached: 34  
Results: Saved 3; Sanctified 2  
Offerings for 2008-2009: \$4755.00  
Mileage: 6850

Respectfully Submitted,

*Zachary Snyder*

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## **International Sunday School Director**

Todd D. McDonald  
5512 Waterlevel Highway  
Cleveland, TN 37323

### ***Greetings to the 6th Annual General Assembly***

As the International Director of Sunday School Services, my primary work is writing and electronically publishing the Faith-N-Focus adult curriculum. In the past year, two studies were written and published: a six-month study on the Doctrines of Salvific and Subsequent Grace; and a six-month study on the Doctrines of Sin and Grace. The email or electronic method of subscription has worked well for another year. Currently, we have over 100 subscriptions to the Faith-N-Focus curriculum: 87 subscriptions to the English lessons, representing approximately 40 churches/regions; and 23 subscriptions to the Spanish lessons, representing approximately 15 churches. It's worth noting that most of the subscribers to the Spanish subscribe also to the English.

In addition to writing the curriculum, I made one international trip, accompanying our Assistant Presiding Bishop to Thailand for a minister's conference. While there, I preached during the evening services of the conference and also visited some of the area churches on that trip. Finally, I was privileged to serve on staff as a teacher in the School of Ministry, teaching "Biblical Interpretation." I appreciate the opportunity to serve and represent the church as the Sunday School International Director. I praise the Lord for all that has been accomplished through the Sunday School ministry in the past year.

Humbly Submitted,

*Todd McDonald*

# **International Children's Ministries**

Cheryl McDonald  
214 Circle Dr.  
Cleveland, TN 37312

## **Greetings to the 6th Annual General Assembly**

In the Children's Ministries Department, we are continuing to develop a network of communication through email and the quarterly newsletter. Through the "The Chalkboard" newsletter, children's ministers and teachers are kept up-to-date with upcoming events and promotions in the church. It has proven to be an effective way to communicate the vision and direction of this ministry. Networking seems to be essential to the development of this ministry and its continued success.

This year, we extended networking into the ministry of the local churches. I assisted Sister Cindy George at the Greenville, SC church in conducting their first Vacation Bible School. I also assisted Kara Spicer at the Chestnut Hill, TN church in conducting their Bible School. In turn, the Spicer and Snyder families came to the Cleveland, TN church to assist us in our Bible School. I know of at least one other Bible School where there was a cooperative effort between churches, but I am confident there are others. We need to work together to grow our children's ministries in the local churches. Again, networking is essential.

We celebrated our second Annual Children's Day in Zion Assembly on Sunday, June 7, 2009. Good reports of successful Children's Day celebration continue to come in from our local churches.

In the past year, I worked in numerous children's events such as: the Eastern Youth Convention, the Southeast Winter Retreat, the Southcentral Youth Camp, the Southeast Youth Camp, and of course the General Assembly.

Respectfully Submitted

*Cheryl McDonald*

# **International Shepherding Ministries Director**

Bishop Rocky E. Dalton  
1622 Powder Mill Road  
Ivanhoe, Va. 24350

## ***Greetings to this 6th Annual General Assembly***

I give honor and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and thanks for the privilege of serving his church as International Shepherding Director.

I would like to recognize and honor our Presiding Bishop our Assistant Presiding Bishop, and all my fellow servants in the ministry and this whole assembly. I would like to thank also all of you that prayed for me and encouraged me this year.

This year has given me a greater and more in-depth look at the work of the Shepherding Ministries and a greater appreciation for it. I was blessed and privileged to fly on an airplane for the first time in my life and to visit another country for the first time. (I also learned on another occasion what it is like to miss a flight and be put on standby for 8 hours in a large airport.)

I was honored to attend two conventions as International Offices representative and to see the west coast of the United States for the first time in my life. It was truly a thrill and a great blessing to fellowship with the saints of God in these regions. Truly the work of the church is greater than we realize if we look beyond in our own back yard.

### **IN THIS PAST YEAR I HAVE ----**

Attended the Minister's Conference and 5th General Assembly

Attended work day at the International Offices

Attended the East Coast Youth Convention

Attended Mid-East Winter Retreat and spoke there.

Traveled to Guatemala and taught in the School of Ministry there.

Attended the 2 week School of Ministry in Cleveland as a post-graduate and received a certificate.

Gave the commencement address to that graduating class at the school.

Attended the Western Region Convention as Headquarter's representative.

Attended the Oregon State Convention as Headquarter's representative.

Attended the mid-east convention and boosted the Shepherding Ministries and School of Ministry.

Wrote and mailed letters to various Shepherding leaders.

Mailed out Shepherding brochures and membership cards to 2 different churches that requested them.(This year they are available in Spanish.)

I was the guest speaker at the Chestnut Hills, Tennessee homecoming. I wrote one message for the *Voice of Zion* publication.

Study, prayer and planned for the Shepherding Program for this assembly.

**In these engagements I preached;**

8 sermons

Traveled approximately 4,730 miles in a car.

Air miles (just to the west coast on 2 separate occasions) 4,532 miles.

Air miles to Guatemala 4000

(All this is besides my regular pastoral duties at Fries, VA)

I covet the prayers of this assembly that I may be a faithful and trustworthy servant of Jesus Christ as I represent you as the International Shepherding Ministries Director. Thank you all for your prayers and co-operation in the continued establishing and working of this great ministry.

Your servant for Christ Jesus and His church,

*Rocky E. Dalton*

## **International Youth Director**

Scott Neill  
114 Ridge Rd.  
Greenville, SC 29607

### ***Greetings to this 6th Annual General Assembly***

I'd like to take this opportunity to give glory and honor to the Lord for the opportunity to be able to serve in this position this past year. It has been a blessing to minister alongside our young people.

I planned and conducted the Eastern Regional Youth Convention and Western Regional Youth Convention in November 2008.

I attended and preached in the South Central Regional Convention in Mississippi in June 2009. I was the Headquarter's Representative at this convention.

I attended and preached in the Southeastern Regional Convention in Cleveland, Tennessee in June 2009.

I attended and taught in the School of Ministry in Cleveland, Tennessee. Streamed live Bishop Phillips' classes.

I attended National Convention in the Philippines. I heard what Brother Phillips said and I bleeped that out.

Prepared for live streaming during this year's General Assembly session.

E-mailed "Thought For the Day" ---21,000.

### **Additional Information:**

Revivals Conducted: 3

Messages Preached: 26

Results: Saved 31; Sanctified 20; Holy Ghost filled 12

Mileage 28,400 air miles: 2800 land miles

Sincerely,

*Scott Neill*

## **Assembly Business Committee Report**

*We, the Assembly Business Committee for Zion Assembly Church of God, after prayerful and careful consideration, make the following recommendations to the General Assembly for your consideration and approval:*

### **Section 1: The Anti-Christ is Coming**

We would like to take this opportunity to commend our Presiding Bishop's annual address to this Assembly. Within his address he mentioned the political climate of the present day, both in America and in the world at large. Because of this climate we have seen a major divisiveness between parties and the factions that it has caused. Therefore, we recommend to this Assembly that no member line up too zealously behind any political party: for all political parties, perhaps some more than the others, are being led to one degree or another by homosexuals and morally bankrupt men and women who are infected by the spirit of Antichrist. We recommend that you vote your Christian conscience, but that you avoid partisan politics--- and by all means do not bring the spirit of the world into the church.

### **Section 1-A: Walking in the Light: Our Abstract of Faith**

In being true to our commitment to "walking in the light" we the Assembly Business Committee give full endorsement to the Presiding Bishop's annual address section titled, "The Antichrist" subsection, "Walking in the Light, Our Abstract of Faith." We further

## **Assembly Business Committee Report**

recommend that the Presiding Bishop appoint a committee to study and develop a more comprehensive explanation to our Abstract of Faith. This comprehensive explanation will be useful to the ministry and to those whom feel it necessary to be more enlightened as to the beliefs of Zion Assembly Church of God. This committee will then present their findings to the Assembly Business Committee to then be presented to the Assembly. Obviously, this will take some time to complete.

There are a number of issues that are pertinent to the times in which we live that must be studied and added to both the Abstract of Faith and the more comprehensive explanation. We recommend that these particular issues be discussed by this committee in the upcoming year to be presented to the 2010 Assembly.

In addition, each minister or member who has a reasonable topic or issue that they would like to see discussed by this committee should be presented in written form to the Committee by March 31 of each Assembly year. .

### **Section 2: Outreach and Mission Subsection 2-F**

We recommend that this Assembly go on record endorsing the Presiding Bishop's belief that the church has been overlooking the valuable resource contained within our young ministers. We further recommend that our more seasoned ministry work with these young ministers encouraging, giving counsel, experience, and wisdom.

## **Assembly Business Committee Report**

### **Section 3: Communications/Media Ministries**

In order to accelerate our outreach efforts and to help fulfill our worldwide mission, we want to use every means available, including the latest technological advancements. A good place to start will be in radio. This will be no small undertaking. It will require much planning, work, and money. The initial cost for implementing this outreach will be minimal. However, the more financial support this ministry receives the more areas that will be able to be reached.

We ask that those individuals whom desire to become a “Partner in Media Ministry” can make contributions of \$1,000.00, \$500.00, \$250.00, \$100.00, \$50.00, and \$25.00 per year. This yearly contribution will be collected throughout the Assembly year. In addition, if an individual feels the need to make a contribution that exceeds the \$1,000.00 mark or a one-time contribution may do so. The official name for this radio program will be the “Voice of Zion.”

### **Section 4: International Ministries Center**

In the 2008 General Assembly we gave the Presiding Bishop the authority to look into the cost factors of adding a wing onto the existing building that would answer the need for more library and archive space, and for a kitchen and fellowship hall. In consultation with this committee, the Presiding Bishop has requested more time to more thoroughly think through this project and to consult with the necessary city officials, architect, engineer, etc. in order to present a reasonable and workable plan of construction.

## **Assembly Business Committee Report**

### **Section 5: Stay on the Message**

There are several pillars in our tradition of the faith that give us our distinction and peculiarity. It was the erosion and removal of these pillars that necessitated the restoration and reorganization of the church in 2004. These are the same pillars that were at stake in the 1920's, that necessitated the restoration and reorganization of the church in 1923, and these same pillars were at stake in 1886 when R.G. Spurling led a handful of enlightened mountain believers to come out of men-made religious organizations to restore the church of the Bible. And it was these same pillars that changed forever A.J. Tomlinson in 1903, and founded his life and ministry once and for all on the solid rock of revelation. These same pillars must necessarily be sustained in Zion Assembly, if we are going to be triumphant in the end.

Now the primary pillar is the doctrine of Christ and the church itself. Pillars such as the institution of marriage, sanctification and holiness, true repentance, etc. will be weakened and will eventually crumble if this pillar is destroyed. Our fellowship stands or falls on this pillar. The devil knows this, and this is why he fights so hard to destroy or obscure our understanding and vision of the church. It is this vision in particular that God entrusted to our illustrious fathers in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, that they in turn handed down to us as a sacred trust.

We would like to encourage our ministers and members to remain vigilant in the proclamation of the church's message.

## **Assembly Business Committee Report**

### **Section 6: General Financial System**

We recommend that we continue to operate the same financial system for this upcoming Assembly year. We also recommend funds be transferred between accounts to bring all funds into a positive balance.

### **Section 7: Reporting**

We recommend that each local church clerk as well as all of our ministers have their reports post marked by the first Saturday immediately following the last Sunday of the month. This will be of a great benefit to the General Treasurer in record keeping.

### **Section 8: Emergency Fund**

We want to once again bring to the attention of this Assembly of an important recommendation that was resolved in the 2007 Assembly concerning the Emergency Fund. That resolution was expressed in this way: *“We recommend that each member of the church contribute at least \$5.00 per year to an Emergency Fund that would be used to assist ministers and local churches in the event of an unforeseen emergency. Non-members may also contribute. Requests for emergency help would be directed to the General*

## Assembly Business Committee Report

*Treasurer who would then consult with the Presiding Bishop and the General Finance Committee to disperse the funds for emergencies. All Emergency Funds will be received and sent to the General Treasurer with the local Treasurers monthly report within the period of January 1-December 31. Until new report books are printed and distributed these funds should be listed in the section called "other" and marked as 'Emergency Fund.'*" Please be sure and implement this as much as possible in this upcoming year in your local churches.

We further recommend that the Emergency Fund be boosted through the local cell group (Shepherding Ministries) leader.

Humbly Submitted,

William Crook, Chairman

Zachary Snyder, Secretary

Ricky Graves

Ron Massey

A. B. White

Joshua Amara

C.R. Gregory

Presiding Bishop's Annual Address  
to the  
6th Annual General Assembly

September 12, 2009

Introduction

*“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer . . . making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel . . . Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ . . . I have you in my heart . . . For God is my record [witness], how greatly I long after you all in the bowels [deep in the being] of Jesus Christ. And I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment [insight] . . . that ye may be sincere and without offence [blameless] till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness . . . unto the glory and praise of God.”*

These opening words by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians swept over me about three weeks ago while I was praying about the Introduction for this address. They came to mind perhaps because they express so well the thoughts and affections I have for you all here today. I, too, “thank my God upon every remembrance of you, [and] in every prayer for you all making request with joy.” But, more importantly, these words of the apostle capture the spiritual dynamic that was at work in the New Testament church, a dynamic that we are endeavoring to recapture in this present restoration; namely the sincerity and genuineness of brotherly love, and the intimacy of being “members one of another” in the body of Christ.

The church in the New Testament was clearly more than an organization, more than a fellowship based on an outward covenant: for that in itself would have amounted to no more than a denomination or a club or lodge. The church we see in the New Testament held in common more than a body of rules and regulations, political structures, bureaucratic departments, and a treasury. Rather, that fellowship---founded by Christ and the apostles---consisted primarily in its love and spirituality and prophetic vision. This is what gave it its depth and special worth---a worth so profound that the ministers and members were willing to die for it!

It was indeed a corporation, but one which was “being knit together in love,” and “growing up together in the grace of God.” Luke, the inspired historian of the New Testament church, tells us that they “had all things in common” and “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul” (Acts 2:31, 32). How was this possible? The answer is: they were all “filled with the Holy Ghost” and “they loved one another.” It was this love that “knitted them together” like so many threads in a single piece of cloth. This is what made them “of one heart and one soul.”

Now we find ourselves in this late hour endeavoring again to capture the dynamic of being the “family of God” and the deeper intimacy that God has called us to in the body of Christ. We want a genuine closeness that binds us together in the Holy Ghost. The apostle is bold to say, “I long after you in the bowels [*en splanchnois*] of Jesus Christ.” Paul claims here to be so engrafted together with Christ in the Holy Ghost that his life and affections and Christ’s had become one, so that they together were giving birth to babes in the Gospel. And this is not an isolated instance in his teaching. He wrote to the fallen and bewitched Galatians and told them he was in “travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19). He saw himself as a co-laborer with Christ in giving birth and life to souls. He reminded the saints at Thessalonica that he had been with them as “a [*nursing mother*] who cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us” (1 Thessalonians 2:7,8).

It seems to me that Paul sees himself and his ministry in the light of two metaphors: one as a co-partner with Christ in the masculine sense of fathering children. It is in this sense that he calls Timothy his son, and writes to the Corinthians, saying, “for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:15). On the other hand, he see himself in the feminine sense, being part of the body of Christ, the bride, giving birth to children and nourishing them up to full maturity.

This is this kind of special relationship between the ministers and members that we are seeking to restore and cultivate in Zion Assembly. And when we do so, you may be sure we will grow in numbers and in love and spirituality. The prophet wrote: “for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children” (Isaiah 66:8), and again, “thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side” (60:4). Rachel cried out, “Give me children or else I die!” Jesus on one occasion was teaching in or about the temple, overlooking Jerusalem, and lamented, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.” This is the spirit that we are

seeking for in this present restoration of the church---to be a body reaching out in love through the Holy Ghost, to bring forth children, and to nourish them up in Jesus' life and tender graces. But also to be a body that is self-enriching and self-edifying in love (Ephesians 4:16).

You can see then that Zion Assembly represents more than a restoration of the church. It is indeed a restoration in the sense that this vision was restored and rekindled in the minds and hearts of our fathers and mothers in the nineteenth- and twentieth century, and restored again in the 1920s, and still again in 2004 by many of the ministers and members present here today in this General Assembly. But, still, we are after something in this present restoration that was never attained by the church under the earthly ministries of Christ and the apostles, nor under the leadership and guidance of our fathers and mothers in the last century. We are seeking for a more glorious church: one that was envisioned by the prophets in the Old Testament and restored and set in motion by Christ and the apostles under the grace and power of the New Testament. This is that betrothed church that the apostle Paul said "that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). Well, you say, "But Paul died before he could see it perfected and before he was able to present to Christ glorious in holiness." But wait! Who do you think is coming up first in the resurrection. Paul! And as he comes up he may very well have the privilege of presenting the church to Christ as a "chaste virgin" in glorious holiness (Psalm 45:13-15; Song of Solomon 6:7-10).

Almost all of us here today were given new life and a renewed vision when the church was reorganized in April 2004. What happened basically on that historic occasion was a sincere re-commitment to return to the genuine fellowship of the Gospel. Since then, others have joined with us and we are now seeking together to go deeper "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." We are not interested in forming some sort of social arrangement or in building just another man-made organization. We want genuine fellowship in God's love and holiness, in a faith that has foundations, and a vision that pulls us forward with thrilling expectations of eternal glory. I am confident also that this is what the multitudes out there are longing for. They are looking for the graces and perfections of Christ to be manifested and embodied in a "peculiar people"---a people who will "show forth his praises" (1 Peter 2:9). They are looking for the real body of Christ, not another run-of-the-mill denomination. They are "asking their way to Zion" and "looking for a city whose builder and maker is God." May the Lord help us to be that city---the prophetic "Zion of the Holy One" (Isaiah 60:14).

I want to take this opportunity to commend all of our wonderful

ministers and faithful workers for all of your sacrifices and labors of love this year. You have excelled in many things to the glory of God, and all of you share to one degree or another in all that has been accomplished in the church this year. And we have much for which to rejoice. The church has been established in four new countries this year, which we will celebrate on Sunday morning during the Parade of Nations, and we have had increases in almost every department of the church. We can rejoice together that we now have 7034 members, 182 churches and missions, and 215 ministers in 18 countries and 18 states. There are also approximately 10,000 attending our services on a regular basis. We are pleased to report also that the finances of the church were sustained this year, in spite of the severe economic recession that troubled America and world.

## **Section I**

### **“The Antichrist is Coming”**

Probably no one in this great Assembly will question the assertion that we are living in the very last days---days in which Jesus and the apostles predicted would be dangerous [“perilous”], filled with religious and political deception, sorcery, and the spirit of error and moral corruption. They warned us in fact that a great “falling away” would take place just before the “man of sin” is revealed and the end-times period of judgment and tribulation begins. The Holy Ghost himself had “spoken expressly,” saying, “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron . . .” (1 Timothy 4:1,2). The apostle Paul warned that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3). And again this same apostle prophesied, “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent [uncontrolled indulgence of the passions], fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” And then he adds, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”

Who can deny that this day is now upon us. Lawlessness and moral degradation has sunk to an all-time low. Even as we speak, powerful forces---“principalities and powers”---are at work to seduce our minds and affections and bring us into captivity to the spirit and political scheme of

the end-times “beast.” Even in America---a nation that was founded on and grew up under the influence and inspiration of Christian principles, and which has served as the seat of God’s government for His people now for over a hundred years---even here, these powerful forces have advanced in recent years with amazing speed. The fundamental building blocks of this nation are being systematically removed by shrewd politicians and social activists, acting under the influence of demons. Make no mistake, the same spirit that inspired Egypt’s Pharaoh in Moses’ time, Rome’s Nero, Caligula, and Domitian in the apostles’ days, and Mussolini and Hitler and the fascist dictators of Europe in the twentieth century, is behind the powerful current now moving the world to unite against the sovereign will and purpose of God in the earth. This is the spirit Antichrist, the same spirit behind the political and social contentions in America right now. And behind this spirit stands Satan.

The homosexual agenda to change America has advanced with remarkable success in recent years. It is winning the fight through political activism and infiltration into our public school system. The organization, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), now has more than 2500 clubs on junior and high school campuses around the country. Its target is children. And of course the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is in bed with GLSEN and is serving as an enforcement arm for their agenda. In the political arena, homosexuals have made big gains in same sex marriages and in their overall aim to make homosexuality an acceptable “lifestyle.”

We have been warned by Supreme Court Justice, Antonin Scalia, that if we lose the legal battle going on right now about same sex marriage, there will be no stopping homosexuals from fulfilling their whole plan and vision. Paula L. Ettlbrick, Adjunct Professor at Barnard College in New York and executive director of International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, said, “Being queer is more than setting up house, sleeping with a person of the same gender, and seeking state approval for doing so . . . Being queer means pushing the parameters of sex, sexuality, and family; and in the process, transforming the very fabric of society . . . We must keep our eyes on the goals of providing true alternatives to marriage and of radically reordering society’s view of reality.” What Professor Ettlbrick and other homosexual leaders mean in specific details I cannot mention here in the presence of children and gentle minds, for the details are too despicable and shameful. It is why the apostle said, “it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done of them in secret.” Take my word for it, as your Presiding Bishop, that homosexual activists, and all of the political and social agencies and the liberal media that are

supporting them, have in mind nothing less than a complete revolution of life as we have known it. They aim to turn traditional morality on its head. And make no mistake, this new reality of which Professor Eittlebrick speaks, is even now sinking society into unspeakable and unthinkable filth, and giving place in America to fellowship with demons and unclean spirits.

The apostle John warned late in his ministry, “that [the] antichrist [is coming]” (1 John 2:18), and that already in his own day he declared “there are many antichrists.” The phrase, “ye have heard,” tells us that the saints in the New Testament church were expectant and watchful for the antichrist, for Jesus already had taught about the coming of this “wicked one,” and Paul had written much on the subject. The fact that “many antichrists” were already prevailing in some places in the apostles’ day tells us that the church was destined to always have to contend with the spirit and deceptive doctrines of antichrist. It is apparent also in the teachings of Christ and the apostles that just before the coming revelation of “*the Antichrist*” in the very last days, this defiant and deceptive spirit will proliferate and intensify in the earth. In fact, this great world leader soon to emerge will be both the product and inspiration of the end-times antichrist spirit and system---a system designed to “take the place of” Christ and propagate a false salvation.

The reason for this is plain to me. The Antichrist and False Prophet will be demon-possessed (Revelation 16:13), but before these two particular individuals come on the scene, the same demons that will possess them will be active in preparing the way for them. Even at this very moment, they are at work behind the scenes pulling people into acceptance of the antichrist agenda now being promoted in America: for they know that America is one of the last, and certainly the most powerful nation now on earth, to oppose the spirit of Antichrist. Like John the Baptist in preparing the way for Christ, these demons are preparing the way for these two end-time instruments of Satan. It seems to me that the apostle John makes this plain when he says, “and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it shall come; and even now already is in the world” (1 John 4:3). This spirit is at work right now seeking to possess the “man of sin.” It is very possible, even likely, that the same demons that possessed or influenced Pharaoh, Jezebel, Nebuchadnezzar, Nero, Caligula, Domitian, and Mussolini and Hitler are the same demons that will possess the end-times Antichrist and False Prophet. They are part of that old horde that turned from God in heaven and pledged allegiance to Satan. And these are the same “principalities and powers”---God knows them all by name!---that we are contending with right now in this present “falling away.” We

are not wrestling against flesh and blood. Our battle is not primarily with Ahmadinejad, Kim Jong-il, Gadhafi, bin Laden, and that loud mouth in Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, or with the socialists and antichrists and perverts of God's law and authority that have gained powerful positions in America in recent years. All of these are mere instruments in the hands of our real adversary, the Devil.

It is for this reason I want to pause here for a moment and admonish and warn all of us to not line up too zealously behind political parties in this country or in any country. Here in the United States, the two major political parties, perhaps one more than the other right now, are being led to one degree or another by homosexuals and morally bankrupt men and women who are infected with the spirit of Antichrist. We encourage you therefore to vote your Christian conscience and stand on Biblical principles, but to avoid partisan politics, and by all means do not bring the spirit of the world into the church. Political parties are fickle and change with the whims of men, but God's people must be steadfast in the spirit and principles of the Gospel!

What we are witnessing today is the same spirit and scheme that moved the people in the plains of Shinar over 4000 years ago to build a political and religious system to overthrow and replace God and His plan in the earth. That generation revealed in Genesis 11 set themselves up against God in a powerful union under the seductive influence and headship of the world's first dictator, Nimrod, the son of Cush and grandson of Ham (10:8-14). This man it is said was "a mighty one" and "a mighty hunter [warrior]" before the Lord," that is, he conquered peoples throughout Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) and united them together in rebellion against God (cf. 6:11; 9:1; 10:8-11; 11:1-9). And under the seductive power of his spirit and vision, they built them a tower "to heaven" (a great religious temple) that manifested their idolatry and rebellion against the Lord. But, look, behind Nimrod and those people in old Iraq was the same Old Dragon and the same old horde of demons.

Still, what we are witnessing today is more than just history being repeated; we are seeing the end-times Antichrist and prophetic Babylon of John's vision coming into the formation to fulfill their last days' purpose. Nothing that has ever come before in human history can compare in size, power, and depth of evil to this last days' Babylon and Antichrist system. It is Satan's masterpiece---something that he has been working on for thousands of years.

Unwittingly, the news media and journalists and radio talk show commentators of our day are giving us a day by day update of the events leading up to this Antichrist and formation of this end-times Babylon.

Interestingly, some of the media commentators and journalists take issue with many of the ideas and trends that are giving rise to this Babylon, particularly those who are called “Christian conservatives.” Yet even most of these so-called “conservative” observers and analysts say and do things that help support the religious and political ideas of this developing end-times prostitute and antichrist system. On the moral side, they promote, for example, social drinking, the use of tobacco, gambling, profanity, divorce and remarriage, and many idolatrous and damnable heresies. On the religious and political side, they encourage a New World Order through the lens of Roman Catholicism and the false ecumenism now at work in the World Council of Churches. So, while we could say some positive things about these “Christian conservatives,” particularly over against liberals, yet, when all is said and done, they too serve Satan’s subtle scheme.

The reason for this is obvious to me: for in the end only men and women who have been quickened by the Holy Ghost and are truly transformed by God’s grace and power into “new creatures” in Christ, and illuminated and guided by the Word of God in Scripture, will be able to discern and interpret the signs of the end-times and identify the subtle principles of antichrist at work (cf: John 3:3-8; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16). For these reasons, even “Christian conservatives” will fall into the powerful grip of this developing system, the same as “liberals!” This is why the terms “conservative” and “liberal” are inadequate and rather confusing. It is clearer to use Biblical terms. In the language of Jesus and the prophets and apostles, there are only the truly justified and the unjustified, the blameless and the blamed, saints and sinners, truth and error, right and wrong, Christ and Antichrist. According to Holy Scripture, you are either in Christ or you are not! You are either born again or you are not. You are either proclaiming the truth or you are propagating error and damnable heresies. It is that simple! Without realizing it, millions of Christians today are already in Babylon---in the Babylonian system---and are playing ball with the antichrist spirit and helping to build the last days’ antichrist system. This is why that great “voice from heaven” in John’s vision, cries out, “Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

## **Challenges in Interpretation**

Before we go further into this examination of the Antichrist and his last days’ system, we should state the reasons why it seems expedient to do so at this time. First, because the time for the revelation of this end-times “man of sin” is near, and we would be amiss in our duty as overseers

if we failed to give understanding and guidance---and warning!---to our ministers and precious people against what the apostle calls, “that day” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Second, though the church will be “caught up to meet the Lord in the air” before the end-times Antichrist is fully revealed and empowered, yet the church will have to contend with the spirit of antichrist and the pillars upon which he will establish his reign of terror before the Rapture. In fact, the church is called to identify and expose these things now. Third, this subject and related subjects, have for many years been the focus of attention of a great number of preachers and religious groups, and some of these have set forth many wild and fantastic claims about the Antichrist, the False Prophet, “the mark of the beast,” Babylon, and other end-time themes and events. Hundreds have identified the Antichrist with one prominent or renown person after another in history, and have set dates for his appearance on the scene of action, only to have been embarrassed when their predictions failed and their accusations were proven wrong. One man, for example, wrote a book in the 1940s proclaiming that Mussolini was the Antichrist, but before he could sell the first copy Mussolini was dead and the Axis powers were defeated. Overzealous and unwise proclamations and accusations damage one’s credibility and confuse many gullible and unlearned believers. Further, the sheer amount of so many delirious and self-contradictory interpretations has tended to weaken and trivialize the importance and seriousness of these subjects.

We should be careful therefore in God’s church to avoid being presumptuous and heady in approaching these subjects, and rather to be sober, prayerful, and “slow to speak.” The fact that our forefathers gave comparatively little attention to the subject of the Antichrist and his end-times system was due in part to their cautious disposition. They avoided speculation and spoke in proportion to what they actually knew. This is a good rule of thumb for us to follow today, and, more importantly, it is an apostolic command. The apostle Paul said we should, “prophesy according to the proportion of faith” (Romans 12:6). It is better therefore to say, “I don’t know,” in regard to some things, than to postulate error and a false witness. Sobriety, gravity, and accountability should guide what we preach and how we interpret prophetic events.

Notwithstanding the need for caution, the time for the end-times Antichrist and his system is near, and, accordingly, it seems incumbent upon us now in these very last days to make a thorough study of these subjects and prepare ourselves against “that day.” This will require patience, study, and prayer. Some of us have been familiar with these subjects and themes for more than forty years, and in recent years have been peering deeper into the prophecies; yet we do not pretend to have a perfect understanding

of all the specific details. In fact, some of the things revealed will not be understood perfectly until they are actually fulfilled, for this is the way God's prophetic revelation works. The apostles themselves were not able to interpret many Old Testament prophecies until they were fulfilled (cf. Acts 1:15-26; 2:14-21; 10:9-48; 15:7-19).

Our intention then is this: 1) to know what God desires for us to know at this present time; 2) to discern what we do not need to know at the present time; 3) to be patient and to accept the Lord's appointed times for the full illumination of things that remain hidden or blurred (cf. Acts 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2).

Interpreting end-time subjects and events through the visions of the prophet Daniel and the apostle John can be difficult; for some of their images and visions go back in history and cover the entire span of man's experience on earth since his fall in the Garden, and some reach back even into angelic creation (Revelation 12). In other words, in some visions all of history is collapsed into what seems to be a single action. Other visions seem to point to a specific time period of seven years in the very last days that will be fulfilled just before the second coming of Christ. (Note: Daniel's prophetic "week" [Daniel 9:27] signifies almost certainly a week of years, that is, seven years). Further, this period of seven years is divided into two three and one-half year periods (Revelation 11:2; 12:6, 14). Added to these difficulties in interpretation is the fact that 1) some things are meant symbolically and some things literally, 2) some images point to a person, some to a system, and 3) some of the images and visions have more than one application in history.

Four major views of interpretation have emerged in regard to the book of Revelation: (1) "*Preterists*" hold that the visions were fulfilled with the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 (assuming the book was written earlier than A. D. 70); if not, they hold they were fulfilled with the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century. (2) "*Futurists*" hold that the players and events in the visions will be fulfilled in a period of final crisis just before the second coming of Christ. (3) "*Historicists*" hold that chapters 6-18 are basically a chronological outline of church history from the first century until the second coming. (4) "*Idealists*" argue that the players and events depict general principles of spiritual warfare throughout the ages, and that these have had multiple embodiments and repeated fulfillments.

There is some truth in all of these views, yet none of them is satisfactory in and of itself. Of these four views, the Idealist seems to be the most compatible with our overall theological view of things in Zion Assembly. This view gives us a broad framework in which to understand and interpret the prophecies of the last days. God and Satan, Christ and

Antichrist, false prophets and true prophets, Babylon and Zion, are the principal players in the book of Revelation, but they also form the principal antitheses throughout history. It seems only natural for the prophetic Spirit to so construe the visionary scenes of Daniel and John so that they could be applied by the saints of God to their own circumstances in every age of the church, even by saints during the Dark Ages. Thus, the players and events in the prophetic visions had relevance to the church in the first centuries, even as they do for us now in Zion Assembly. And they will have relevance also for the saints in the final crisis before Christ's second coming. In this way, the church and saints in every age have been comforted, enlightened, and encouraged by the prophetic visions of Daniel and John.

There is one more important factor to consider in prophetic interpretation; namely, the difference between the way God sees things from His infinite perspective in heaven and the way we see them on earth. Accordingly, the Lord sees the whole picture all at once, whereas we see only in parts and sometimes in disjointed chronological-time segments. Prophetic visions for the most part reveal God's perspective on the specific men and events in history and prophecy. They show us what was going on behind the scenes, as it were, in the sight of the Lord---scenes that were hidden from men on earth. Consider the difference, for example, in what God was seeing in the developments leading up to and following the birth of Christ and, on the other hand, what men were seeing on earth relative to these events. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give us the earthly view of Christ's birth in Bethlehem, with scenes of Mary, Elizabeth, and Joseph, the shepherds, magi, and so on. But the vision of John in Revelation 12 reveals a war going on in heaven between Satan and his angels and Michael and his angels, with Satan being cast out of heaven to the earth. Further, it depicts not Mary in particular giving birth to Christ but the whole church under the Old Covenant, and the dragon seeking to destroy her seed, which is Christ and the church under both Covenants (12:1-17 and cp. Galatians 3:16, 29; see also Isaiah 54:1-8; 66:7-13; Micah 5:3).

We see also in John's vision the providential hand of God at work to preserve Christ and the church during the persecution of the dragon throughout history. Thus, within this single vision of John in Revelation 12, the most important events in history and the prophetic future are collapsed and seen together, events that include Satan's rebellion in heaven (v. 4), his casting out to the earth (vv. 7-9, 13), the birth of Christ and His resurrection and ascension back to the Father (vv. 4, 5), and the preservation of the church throughout history (vv. 6, 10, 11, 13-17).

Taking all of these factors into consideration, we can see why a sound interpretation of prophetic events in these very last days will require

patience, diligent study, prayerfulness, spiritual consecration, the anointing of the Spirit, and the collective wisdom and insight of the church.

It is for these reasons that I propose a principle of interpretation for the book of Revelation that can give deeper insight into and help to qualify the major views of interpretation. This principle I will call the Prophetic-Dynamic principle. It requires us to enter with John through the Spirit into the dynamics of the visions in the Revelation. In other words, through the Holy Ghost we become immersed into the same spirit of prophecy, and thereby are enabled to gain insights that we could not otherwise. The Prophetic-Dynamic principle thus adds a Pentecostal dimension to our discipline of interpretation. It seems fairly clear that each vision has within it a message of its own, though it is otherwise connected with the overall revelation of the book. Some scenes recapitulate other scenes in the unfolding revelation, but, through a variety of scenarios, provide additional information and deeper insight into the symbols and events of the end-times. This is why we cannot follow too strictly to any one of the four views of interpretation mentioned above, 2particularly the Preterist, Historicist, and Futurist.

## **Harmonizing Daniel's and John's Visions**

The prophet Daniel's prophecies must be interpreted with a two-fold application in view: the first was fulfilled in Antiochus IV [Epiphanes] (215-163 B.C.) and his interaction with the Old Covenant church in the time of the Maccabees after the Babylonian Captivity; the second application has in view the end-times Antichrist and the events leading up to him. John's vision, on the other hand, focuses more clearly on the Antichrist and the events connected with his rise and fall since the time of Christ, with a special focus on the very last days Antichrist and his system. John's vision thus expands and perfects Daniel's.

Still, we can learn a great deal from Daniel's vision, for he furnishes us with some specific details about the last days' Antichrist that John does not; including the fact that the Antichrist will come to prominence through intrigue and "flatteries" (Daniel 8:23-25; 11:21-32); create international commerce and trade; and give the appearance of being a man of peace, with the world's best interests at heart (vv. 21-24). He will reach the pinnacle of his popularity and power by creating a "league" of nations and negotiating a covenant of peace between them (9:27; 11:23), and by his ability to create economic prosperity, the two things that will make the whole world subject to his deception.

This end-times Antichrist will be exceptionally intelligent and

cunning. According to Daniel's vision, he will have the ability to make "craft prosper in his hand." The prophet says he will understand "dark sentences" (8:24), signifying, it seems to me, his connection with sorcery and a *wisdom to do evil*. He will be a shrewd operator, able to manipulate existing political and social structures to serve his antichrist purposes (like education systems), and create new ones to fulfill his aims. The prophetic Spirit has shown us also that down deep in his spirit the Antichrist is a compulsive liar and full of "mischief" (11:27). He is a megalomaniac, double-minded, double-tongued, and a double-crosser---a covenant breaker. He is evil on steroids! Yet he is cunning and crafty---a master of "spin." He knows how to make a "fair show in the flesh."

It is amazing to see in history how often the world has been attracted to and beguiled by arrogant and self-assertive men. There is something mysteriously seductive in the very nature of some men who embody the "mystery of iniquity." Worldly people have often allowed power-hungry madmen to lure them into a destructive and fatal rebellion against the King of heaven. Some nations in history were brought into bondage by the charisma and craftiness of a man, when they could not be enslaved by force. Satan himself has been more successful when he has appeared as a subtle serpent than as a roaring lion. A subtle wit and oratorical skills are often more dangerous in the hands of a madman than the weapons of brute force. And peace and prosperity are sometimes more dangerous than war and persecution. We have seen how often in history that peace and prosperity drew nations and churches into insidious temptations and vile corruptions when force and persecution could not.

Make no mistake, the Antichrist hates God and God's people (in a similar way and for similar reasons that Esau hated Jacob), but he will at first disguise his true self and wrap his hypocrisy and political policies in a cloak of deceit, so that he may achieve his aims and ambitions (7:11-13, 23-25, 9:27; Revelation 6:2; 13:4-7). He is the "lawless one" but will make himself appear to be the personification of law---for his intention is to "change laws and times" to suit his own purpose (7:25). In due time his true identity will be fully exposed and he will exalt himself "above every god, and shall speak marvelous [impudent and astonishing] things against the God of heaven (11:36-38). In a word, this "man of sin" is more or less the personification of Satan, full of pride and conceit, and therefore, like Satan, desires to be worshipped as God. In order to achieve his deceitful aims, he will have the ability, like Satan, to "transform himself into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15). Like the Son of God, he will ride in on a white horse (a symbol of peace), adorn a crown (a symbol of power) and arm himself with a bow (a symbol of war) (Revelation 6:2).

His scheme is to imitate the Messiah and appear as a savior to the world with the ability and means to conquer, disguising his true intentions under the utilitarian principle of uniting humanity together for the benefit of the majority.

## **The Names of the Antichrist**

The prophetic Antichrist is given many names by the inspired writers of the Bible. He is called “that Wicked,” the “son of perdition,” the “lawless one,” “the antichrist,” “the man of sin,” and the “beast” in the New Testament, and “the little horn” in the book of Daniel. He is also prototyped in Daniel as and “king of the north.” He is described in prophecy as a king, a prince, and a ruler, and also as a man and a beast. The reason behind these several designations is to expose the full nature and purpose of this great end-times tyrant and demagogue.

John is the only inspired writer who uses the term, *antichrist*, to describe the end-times world leader, who will set himself in opposition to Christ and His law and government in the world. Yet John’s visions of the “beast” in the book of Revelation is in reference to the same person and spirit. John’s *antichrist* is also the same person whom Paul calls the “man of sin” “that Wicked,” “son of perdition,” and “lawless one.” Thus, through all of the inspired writers, the Antichrist is more broadly defined and understood. He represents not merely a spirit that is “against” Christ but doctrines and religious practices that are instituted to “take the place of” Christ.

## **The Beast**

Now this Antichrist is often referred to as “the beast” in prophecy, both in the Old Testament and the New. Why so? First, because “the beast” is used symbolically throughout Scripture to represent the enemies of God and God’s people (Psalm 74:19; Jeremiah 12:9; 51:34; Ezekiel 29:3; Daniel 7). This is also why he is depicted as rising from the sea, for the depths of the sea in the Old Testament is the dwelling of monsters, particularly the dragon (Psalm 89:9, 10; 148:7; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9; Ezekiel 29:3). Second, because the Antichrist is revealed to Daniel and John in visions under this image (Daniel 7; 8; Revelation 13). The symbol of a beast is used by the Holy Ghost to depict important characteristics in the “man of sin” and his government. Therefore he is said to be “like a leopard,” “as a bear,” and “as a lion.” Each of these animals depict something of the character and dramatic actions of this end-times dictator. These animals represent strength and voraciousness (the bear), fierceness and boldness (the lion),

and speed (the leopard). The spots on the leopard may also depict the multi-national and universal nature of the end-times beast and his system.

The “beast” in John’s vision is quite obviously a composite of the four beasts in Daniel’s vision (7:2-8). The successive empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome are thus represented. The first three kingdoms were swallowed up and incorporated into the great Roman Empire, the fourth beast, which is depicted as “dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong,” with “great iron teeth” and “ten horns.” The beast in John’s vision represents therefore the restoration and expansion of the old Roman Empire, which corresponds more or less to the modern-day European Union, and will include in the end perhaps some of the nations spawned by European nations, such as the United States.

But the Antichrist is depicted as a beast also because he thinks and acts like a beast more than as a man. His lust for power, wealth, and fame drives him to animal-like madness. Like a beast, he is self-indulgent and driven by the baser passions. This is perhaps why Paul says “he fought with beasts at Ephesus” (1 Corinthians 15:32), and why Jude calls last days’ apostates “natural brute beasts” (Jude 10). High and holy things are beyond their knowledge; they are driven only by the appetites of passion and the desire to satisfy the flesh. These are the things that drove men into apostasy in Noah’s day before the flood (Genesis 6:1-6) and later in Lot’s time (18:20-32; 19:24-28), both periods significantly, Jesus tells us, are foreshadows and prototypes of the last days apostasy (Luke 17:26-28).

The beast and his followers will have no regard for the sacredness of human life. To them, human life is expendable for the gratification of selfish desires and the fulfillment of temporal pleasures. When beasts take over, everything is reduced to a wilderness. In Disney’s animation, *The Lion King*, the kingdom comes to ruin after Scar and the hyenas take over. We may expect then as this last days’ apostasy deepens and the spirit of the beast increases and spreads in the earth, that abortions, infanticide, euthanasia, genocides, and the recent practice related to them, embryonic stem-cell research, will also increase, and fully flourish during the reign of the coming “man of sin.” The expendability of human life will be seen in the latter part of the reign of the Beast and his followers when they kill those who withstand the Beast’s fascist government and refuse to receive his “mark.”

The end-times Antichrist will set himself to seize total authority through any means---including the use of the most insidious and horrifying inventions of torment and destruction---to fulfill his tyrannical aims and evil ambitions. He is Machiavellian to the core, *The Prince of Satan*. His conscience has been “seared with a hot iron,” so much so that he thinks and

acts like a beast, that is, without a consciousness of God's presence and judgment. Satan is his master; hence his defiance and blasphemy against God (Revelation 13:5, 6). His thoughts and actions are controlled by Satan (v. 4); he says and does therefore what Satan bids him. And he inspires and leads the whole world to embody this defiant and blasphemous spirit (vv. 3, 4, 8, 14-17).

This is why we should fight to maintain the freedoms we have in America---particularly the freedom to express and proclaim our Christian faith---for an ounce of truth is a powerful influence and an effective restrainer against evil. The more we lift up "the voice" of the Lord (Isaiah 52:8) and live out the principles of the Gospel and manifest the glory of God's holiness and power, the more we will be able to restrain the tide of evil and ungodliness.

### **The Lawless One**

Perhaps no term describes and identifies the Antichrist better than the "lawless one." The term "man of sin" in fact may be better translated "man of lawlessness." This "lawless one" not only defies and breaks God's laws but makes an open display of his defiance and blasphemy. Moreover, he comes into power with a mind set to change the laws of men that are compatible with God's laws, in order to achieve his sinister aims (Daniel 7:25). But again this spirit of rampant lawlessness will precede him and give rise to his power and fame. Even in the first century, the apostle Paul was able to say, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work." And a little while later the apostle John wrote, "even now there are many antichrists." We have seen in history that both emperors and popes changed God's laws and man's in order to achieve their worldly aims. We should not be surprised then that this end-times "man of sin" will fully embody and personify the wicked and lawless spirit that has sought to prevail in the world since the first century, and as far back as the Garden of Eden, and even in heaven itself. Yes, Satan withstood God in heaven and he was there in the Garden, whispering to Eve, "Yea hath God said" (i.e., "God is a liar"). And Eve listened and yielded to the "father of lies," and Adam yielded to Eve, and the human race plunged headlong into apostasy. Thereafter, "every imagination of the thoughts of [man's heart] was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

But, observe, rather than destroying man, God set in motion His eternal plan of love to redeem man through a Savior. Now this knocked the socks off of Satan! He was left standing there in the Garden with his mouth open, completely confused by God's rebuke and the first Gospel

proclamation: “And the Lord God said to the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly thou shalt go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:14, 15). But Satan doesn’t believe this. He is not only a liar but self-deceived. He believes his own lies. He has always believed in his own blasphemy, that he can raise an army and overthrow God and His plan. He tried it in heaven, and he has been trying it in the earth ever since. He tried it in the Garden, and afterwards in Cain’s day, in Noah’s day, in Nimrod’s time, in Moses’ time in Egypt and during Israel’s apostasies in the wilderness, and later under human kings, then at the birth of Christ and during Herod’s slaughter of the babies, at Golgotha during the crucifixion, and at the Council of Nicea in A. D. 325 during that infamous event that plunged the church into apostasy and the world into the Dark Ages. His aim was to destroy Christ, particularly the righteous lineage that would bring Christ into the world; and when his efforts failed in that, and Christ was born in spite of him, and was caught up to the throne of God, he has ever since sought to destroy Christ’s seed---those “born again” through the Holy Ghost. But his ultimate target has always been the church! Why? Because the church is God’s special instrument for redeeming grace. In her was deposited the “ministry of reconciliation”---a ministry that includes saving the lost and bringing together all of God’s sheep into one great army under Christ to defeat Satan’s end-times “man of sin” and his armies.

### **Abounding Blasphemy and Filth**

We have seen the antichrist spirit work throughout history, yet nothing in history compares with the stage that is being set for Satan in these very last days. Never has he had such an advantage. Never has there been such an acceleration of the lawless and beastly spirit in the world. Sin and blasphemy have far exceeded in recent years anything in our lifetime, and in the lifetimes of our fathers and grandfathers. It has never been so thorough and universal. Never has there been such blasphemy of sacred things. Never such filth and profanity and obscenity. “The mystery of iniquity” is mightily at work. Christ is mocked and ridiculed in unimaginable ways today, and the Father of glory is openly blasphemed. And this is often done under the pretense of comedy. The multitudes are literally laughing their way into hell. They foolishly mock and blaspheme the only One who can save them!

Satanic forces are at this very moment organized for an all-out

offensive to seduce and manipulate men to completely ignore God's moral laws and to cast off all self-restraints, and to "go about to establish their own righteousness." Jesus said that a marriage is a sacred bond between one man and one woman, and that death alone can end a lawful marriage (Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2,3). But this lawless spirit in the world today, not only contradicts Jesus' teaching but encourages divorce and remarriage. And those infected with this spirit do so by twisting the Word of God and giving the lie even to the Holy Scriptures, claiming that the Scriptures themselves support divorce and remarriage. O the blasphemy and deception!

The Word of God says that homosexuality is a horrible perversion of the flesh and an abominable indulgence of the spirit, yet the lawless spirit condones it and says it is natural. Those infected with this spirit, in fact, say that God created homosexuals. The Word of God says Jesus died for our sanctification, to crucify the "old man" and give us power over all sin, but the lawless and apostate spirit says men cannot be delivered completely from sin in this world, that men cannot stop sinning. They therefore are proclaiming not the Good News but a defeated Gospel! It is Antichrist! The lawless spirit says that a woman's body is her own and that she can do with it what she wills, but the Word of God "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost . . . ye are not your own . . . For ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 10). See here, the baby inside the woman belongs first of all to God; for "children are an the heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). And since our bodies are temples for the Holy Ghost we should not defile them with alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and fornication; nor with the old pagan practice of tattooing that has become popular again in this generation. The Word of God says that "one tenth" of all of our increase belongs to God but the lawless spirit says, "it belongs to me." The Word of God says, "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," but the lawless spirit says, "I will do whatever suits me." The Word of God says we should adorn ourselves with the graces of the Holy Ghost and the doctrine of God (Titus 2:10), not with gold and precious stones, nor with the high and expensive fashions of the day (1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3), but the rebellious and lawless spirit says, "I will dress and adorn myself as I please, and spend my money anyway I want! No one is going to tell me what to do!"

Both Peter and Jude warn that in the last days this lawless spirit will accelerate and cause men to "despise government and speak evil of dignities." We may be sure of this: the lawless spirit will not rest until it has cast off the basic principles of God's moral laws and established a New World Order.

## The False Prophet

This Antichrist (“the first beast”) will be supported and promoted by the False Prophet (“a second beast”), a man of religion and pretentious spirituality. This False Prophet will disguise himself also as an innocent lamb (Revelation 13:11). Yet, he will “speak as a dragon.” Like Satan and the Antichrist, this man is a compulsive liar and deceiver. Observe, many will believe a religious leader when they will not a secular one. Religious deceivers, says the apostle, “serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:18). This False Prophet will be able to “do wonders,” even to make “fire come down from heaven” (Revelation 13:13). These powers enable him to give “life to the image of the beast” (v. 15) and to enforce the idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist. This is why the Antichrist empowers the False Prophet, for he serves his own interests (v. 12, 14). The pretense of a holy office and sacred pulpit will thus be used to help create the great delusion of the last days. And we have every reason to believe the technological means for this great deception will be television and satellite transmission.

The nature and function of the False Prophet are not unprecedented in history. Priests and false prophets (pagan and Christian) played a role in giving rise to Roman emperors in the early centuries. In the fourth century, the bishop of Rome, Sylvester I, and Christian preachers with oratorical skills helped to fabricate and exalt the image and power of Emperor Constantine. Why did they do this? It had a lot to do with the money---the “god of mammon”---of buying and selling, and of enhancing the temporal prestige and power of the developing Roman Catholic Church.

Reflecting on the last century, in the developments leading up to the Second World War, we get a glimpse of how all of this could come together quickly and fully. Europe gave birth to two powerful dictators--Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler--and both were assisted by the Pope of Rome. Most are familiar with the historical developments in regard to Hitler and the Third Reich, but somehow the more fascinating story in regard to Mussolini has faded from memory. “El Duce”---as Mussolini was called---seized power in Italy under a Fascist banner in the 1920s, with a vision to reestablish the old Roman Empire and to rule the world. He was a skilled and fascinating orator and hailed by the public as a “Man of Destiny.” With their economy in shambles, the people of Italy wanted to believe Mussolini’s rhetoric and vainglorious promises, and this gave place to his ascent to power. But he was hailed as a genius and superman also by leaders all over Europe and in the United States, being compared

to Caesar and Napoleon. Even Churchill said he would have joined Mussolini's fascist regime if he had been an Italian. Roman Catholic Cardinal O'Connell of Boston declared that Mussolini was a genius given to Italy by God.

In his rise to power, Mussolini was wise to work closely with the Pope of Rome (in this instance Pius XI). In fact, it was necessary! But Mussolini hit on a stroke of genius in February 1929. He worked out a deal with the Pope to establish Vatican City (all one hundred acres of it!) as an independent and sovereign state under the Pope, and gave the Vatican a huge sum of money, somewhere between \$30,000,000 and \$100,000,000, in exchange for the fascist regime's control of the Papal States and the city of Rome. The Roman Church was thereupon declared to be the only official and recognized religion in Italy, but this relationship also allowed Mussolini to use the hierarchy of the Roman Church to advance his antichrist policies and vision of world conquest.

Notwithstanding Mussolini's benevolent facade and flatteries, his policies were based on force and supported by his infamous black-shirt military. After firmly establishing his totalitarian dictatorship in Italy, he began to extend the tentacles of his power and influence into Africa and Europe. In 1935 he invaded Ethiopia, and in 1939 occupied Albania. He then gloated, "Italy is an empire."

These developments caused many at the time, even in the Church of God, to see in Mussolini and his relationship with the Pope and Roman Church the possible fulfillment of John's visions of the Antichrist and the False Prophet. For a moment it appeared that the "great whore" had mounted the "beast" (Revelation 17:3). But Mussolini made a huge mistake during the course of his aggressions: he allied himself with Hitler in the mid 1930s. Then he made a greater mistake in 1940, declaring war on the United States and the Allies. You know the rest of the story. The Axis powers were defeated, and Mussolini was shot by his own countrymen in 1945. The time for the fulfillment of Daniel's and John's visions simply had not yet come. But an amazing drama had been played out on the world scene that had in it many parallels of the coming Antichrist and end-time events.

The union of church and state is a foreign idea in the United States, but as Europe continues to rise and solidify and expand, this country will probably be pulled into her union, and the radical Reformation idea of separation of church and state will seem more or less outdated and an obstruction to human progress. As we speak, Roman Catholicism and the World Council of Churches, and these together working to forge a great Ecumenical Union, are preparing themselves (even if unwittingly)

to mount the beast (Revelation 17:3). We have every reason to believe the False Prophet will be the personification of, if not the head, of this blasphemous ecumenical organization---MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

### **The Mark of the Beast**

*“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six (Revelation 13:16-18).*

Many silly interpretations and fantastic speculations have been set forth in the last century in regard to this symbol---“666.” Will there be a literal visible mark? It is possible, especially in view of recent computerized technology. But still it is unlikely and almost irrelevant: for “it is the number of a man” (v. 18). Just as the number seven represents deity and perfection (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6), so the number six represents man and his limitations. It seems to represent also, however, the fullness of man’s capabilities in knowledge, wisdom, and power---especially under the inspiration and guidance of evil spirits---in order for man to achieve his loftiest aspirations in science, culture, and social development. In such a state of pretentious human perfection, men will hold Christ and Christianity in contempt and utter disdain. Knowledge and prosperity will give occasion for unparalleled blasphemy. The number will thus mark the exalted humanism of the followers of the end-times Beast and his system. The number six in triplicate perhaps symbolizes the counterfeit Trinity---Satan, Antichrist, and False Prophet (see below); but, in any case, we are to know by this number, whether it be actual or merely symbolic, that the Beast is human and thus not to be worshipped, and that he will be defeated in the end by the actual perfections---glory, wisdom, and power---of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether the mark is actual or symbolic is therefore not so important, for, in either case, it represents the Antichrist’s ability to control the world, including his power to regulate buying and selling. His means of doing this is thus almost irrelevant. What is important to know now is that the number is connected with a tyrannical ruler, who will come on the scene in the last days, embody the spirit of antichrist, deceive the world, exalt

himself above God, persecute the saints, and raise the greatest army in history to wage a final war against the King of kings.

It should not be dismissed lightly that the Greek letters that spell “Nero Caesar,” when transliterated into Hebrew and added together, equal 666. This number then could be symbolic of the Roman emperor. Nero was a madman and the first Roman emperor to persecute Christians. He was followed later by Caligula and others. Domitian was probably the emperor when John received his vision and wrote the book of Revelation. It was widely held in John’s day in the church that Domitian was “Nero revived”: for Domitian embodied the spirit and disposition of Nero. The fact that Nero had killed himself with a sword added weight to the prevailing view in John’s day to identify Domitian with Nero (see Revelation 13:14). Thus it was thought the Beast’s “deadly wound was healed.” Domitian usurped the title, “Our Lord and God,” and like several of his predecessors, including Nero, was a vile persecutor of the church. He thus resembled in many ways John’s description of the Beast. The end-times Antichrist may therefore already be identified. He will be the head of the developing European Union, the old Roman Empire. In any case, of this we may be sure, like Cain, God has already marked the Beast and determined his end, and the end of his followers!

Again, what is most important to grasp is that the “spirit of lawlessness” will precede the revelation of the end-times Antichrist. “Already there are many antichrists!” This spirit is here now, increasing and engulfing the world! Moreover, the means to control men is already available through modern technology. Everything seems to be falling into place, awaiting the revelation of the “Wicked One” to fulfill his diabolical purpose.

## **The Image of the Beast**

The “image of the beast” is mentioned ten times in the book of Revelation (13:14, 15; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). This image could mean in the literal sense the head of the Antichrist minted into coin (Mark 12:16) or woven into a banner or printed on postage stamps; or it could signify his bust being chiseled in stone or burned into medal; or point to a gigantic statue erected in his honor (Daniel 3:1-3). Notwithstanding these possibilities, the advancements made in recent years in technology make it more likely that his physical image will be connected somehow with satellite television or perhaps a more advanced technology. Perhaps it will include all of these.

More significantly this “image” points to the moral character

and universal influence of the Antichrist. Accordingly, the Beast, with the able assistance of his chief propagandist, the False Prophet, will press his corrupt philosophy of life into the consciousness and behavior of the world. It will be a beguiling and mysterious transformation! Billions will be changed through the image of the Beast into the likeness of Satan. The stamp of Satan---pride, rebellion, disobedience, idolatry, blasphemy, hatred, malice, envy, jealousy, profanity, lusts, uncleanness and impurities of all kinds---will be etched into the minds (*in* the foreheads) and actions (*in* the right hands) of the citizens of the New World Order. Just as the stamp of God is on the foreheads of His people (Revelation 7:3; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4), so the mark of the Beast will be upon his followers (13:16; 20:4).

In this sense, the “image of the beast” is already revealed. “Already there are many antichrists.” The questions we should be asking ourselves then are these: “Are there any traces of this image in Zion Assembly Church of God today? Is there any evidence of this corrupt and God-despising world on us---in our behavior, our speech, our daily walk? Is the “mark of the beast” on us? Are we laughing at the world’s jokes? Are we entertained by the thousands of its obscene representatives? Satellite television has invaded our homes with the image and mark of the Beast. Millions of sleepy-headed Christians, in this sense, already have his mark on their foreheads, having been duped by his despicable representatives in the world of entertainment. I could name you 100 shows and programs on primetime television that are not fit for Christian viewing, that demoralize the human spirit and corrupt moral decency, yet millions of professing Christians sit with their children and watch these shows on a regular basis and celebrate the spirit of the Beast! They participate in the foolishness of the Beast’s forerunners and make light of the blasphemies and corruptions? Whatever is antichrist and blasphemous and demoralizing these primetime celebrities support and promote.

### **A Counterfeit Trinity**

It is plain to see in all of this that Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet represent a delusion created by Satan to imitate the divine Trinity and the bride of Christ. It is consistent with his mockery of God and God’s people, and his desire to usurp the place of God over all of creation. At the pinnacle of this unholy trio stands Satan himself, mimicking the power and glory of the eternal Father. This unholy trinity is unmistakably revealed in Revelation 16:13,14. “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of [demons],

working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.”

Consider the following parallels:

A. Satan himself counterfeits God the Father. He creates the illusion that as God created the heavens and the earth and moved upon the chaotic waters in Genesis 1:1, 2 and brought forth life out of the waters (v. 20), so he himself now brings forth the beast, the Antichrist, from the sea and empowers him (Revelation 13:1, 2), and brings forth also the second beast, the False Prophet, from the earth and empowers him (vv. 11-15). Observe, Satan hates God and resents His authority and power---the same power that judged him and cast him out of heaven. He despises God’s holiness and justice. He himself is stigmatized with the honor of being the first liar, yet he goes about trying to pin this label on God (Genesis 3:1, 4,5). He resents the Fatherhood of God and seeks to claim that honor for himself. Though he himself is no father in the proper sense---for he cannot create nor procreate life---yet, because he is the first creature to fall and the first cause of all other fallen creatures (angels and man), he claims the title. He creates the illusion that he is creator and sovereign over the universe. It was on the basis of this self-deception that he tempted Christ to worship him and claimed ownership of all the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:1-9). That is Satan’s inner desire---to be worshipped as God---which was exposed by the prophetic Spirit in Isaiah 14:12-14. He has been more or less successful in history in fulfilling this desire, seducing men into false worship. But he will realize his greatest triumph in the very last days through the Antichrist, False Prophet, and the great Prostitute (Revelation 13:3-15; 17;18).

B. The Antichrist is a counterfeit Christ. Just as Christ is the express image of the Father, begotten by Him (Colossian 1:15; Hebrews 1:3), so the Antichrist is brought forth in the image of Satan (Revelation 13:1). The Antichrist has ten crowns, just as Christ has many crowns (19:12). The Antichrist has blasphemous names written on him, while Christ has a worthy name written on Him (19:12). The Dragon gives the Beast his power, throne and great authority (v.2), just as God gives Christ His power, throne and authority (3:21; 4:11; 5:12,13; 12:10). The Antichrist has a seemingly fatal wound from which he recovers (13:3). This is doubtlessly a counterfeit enactment of Christ’s death and resurrection. But it is also a defiant pretense---an “in your face”---against God’s pronounced judgment

in Genesis 3:15. It is Satan's way of saying to the Lord, "You cannot destroy me," and to the world, "See, God is a liar."

This great illusion will be one of the main features that attracts followers to the Antichrist, just as the death and resurrection of Christ is the attraction of the Gospel. Worship is directed to both the dragon and the Antichrist, just as Christians worship the Father and the Son. The Antichrist attracts the worship of the whole world, just as Christ is worshipped universally. The Antichrist utters blasphemies against God and His Word, while Christ utters praises to God and honors His Word (John 7:16; Hebrew 2:12). The Antichrist makes war against the saints, while Christ makes war against the Antichrist and his armies (19:11-21). The praises sung out to the Antichrist in 13:4---magnifying him as a mighty conqueror (see also 6:2)---imitates the song to our warrior Christ in Exodus 15:11. The juxtaposition of Christ and the Antichrist in 19:11-21 is conclusive proof of this. Christ is the divine warrior, and the saints form His armies; the Antichrist is the counterfeit warrior, and unbelievers and apostates form his armies. Compare Daniel 7 with Revelation 19:11-21. See also Isaiah 59:16-18; 63:1-6; Habakkuk 3:3-15; Zechariah 9:13-16; 14:1-5).

C. The False Prophet counterfeits the Holy Ghost (Revelation 13:11-17; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). Just as the Holy Ghost is said to be "another Comforter" (John 14:16), so the False Prophet is said to be "another beast" (Revelation 13:11). The Holy Ghost witnesses to Christ, the False Prophet witnesses to the Antichrist. The Holy Ghost promotes the worship of Christ, the False Prophet seduces and tricks people into worshipping the Antichrist. The Holy Ghost glorifies Christ, not Himself (John 16:13-15), so the False Prophet magnifies the Antichrist (v. 13), not himself. He also performs counterfeit miracles ["signs," Greek, *semeion*] (vv. 12-15), imitating the miracles of the Holy Ghost. He forces the "mark of the beast" on the foreheads or right hands of his subjects (v. 16), just as Christians are sealed with the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 1:13), and bear the mark of Christ and the Father on their foreheads (3:12; 14:1; 22:4).

Observe, in the first-century, pagan priests were used to seduce the people into emperor worship, and later in the fourth century the church apostatized when the bishops exalted Constantine as the head of the church on earth. This was Satan's doing and is consistent with the pattern of his scheme throughout history. We may be sure then that the last days' Antichrist and False Prophet will conform to this same pattern.

## **A Counterfeit Bride**

Another counterfeit figure is Babylon, the great religious Prostitute. She is the negative image of the Bride of Christ. The Bride is universal, the Prostitute “sits upon many waters” (Revelation 17:1, 15). The Bride is the City of God (Isaiah 60:14; Matthew 5:13), the Prostitute the City of the World (17:18). The Bride is connected with Christ, the Prostitute with Antichrist. The Bride is betrothed to Christ forever, the Prostitute says in her heart, “I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” (Revelation 18:7). The Bride is undefiled and a virgin (Song of Solomon 6:9; 1 Corinthians 11:2), the Prostitute a fornicator (18:3); the Bride is plain and pure, “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white” (19:7, 8), the Prostitute is gaudy and impure, “arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls” (17:4); the Bride is righteous (19:8), the Prostitute full of all filthiness and uncleanness (17:4; 18:2, 5, 6); the Bride is faithful (17:14), the Prostitute unfaithful; the Bride is the pillar of truth (1 Timothy 3:15), the Prostitute full of sorceries and deception (18:23). The Bride is fair and meek (Song of Solomon 6:8-10), the Prostitute loud and extravagant (18:4-7, 22); the Bride sober and innocent (1 Thessalonians 5:8; Titus 2:12), the Prostitute a drunk and murderer (17:6); the Bride stands beside and below Christ; the Prostitute rides the Beast ((17:5). The Bride willingly submits to Christ in all things (Ephesians 5:24), the Prostitute is stubborn and reluctantly submits to Antichrist. In fact, they have a strained and troubled relationship, and down deep the Beast hates the Whore (17:16). The Bride inspires and directs worship to the holy Trinity, the Prostitute “glorifies herself” (18:7); the Bride has the name of Christ and God on her forehead (3:12; 7:3; 14:1; 22:4), the Prostitute has on her forehead: MYSTERY, BAYBLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (17:5); the Bride’s mouth is full of praises (19:7), the Prostitute’s of blasphemies (17:3); the Bride’s cup is full of blessings (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:25); the Prostitute’s “full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (Revelation 17:4).

## **The Methods of Deception**

The apostle Paul’s description of the Antichrist is indispensable for a clearer and more full view of his nature and actions in the end-times. It may be seen in his prophecy that the world will be completely deceived. Make no mistake, only he who is deeply rooted in a personal revelation of Jesus Christ and who knows the sober truths of Biblical prophecy will

escape being pulled into the current of the great delusion in these last days.

*“For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God . . . And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed . . . Whose coming is after the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12).*

It will be noticed in Paul’s prophecy that the Antichrist does not cause the apostasy in the last days, but the apostasy brings on the Antichrist. He will be in large measure the product of the “falling away” of Christianity in the end-times---a falling away that is gaining momentum even as we speak, and which we may expect to continue until the complete fulfillment of this prophecy is realized. The “man of sin” will move in and fill the vacuum where Christ and His truth once prevailed. For this reason the Antichrist may himself be an apostate Christian, certainly one brought up under the influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Daniel says, “Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers” (Daniel 11:37). Some think because of this verse that he will be an apostate Jew, but this does not fit best with all that is said about this end-times tyrant. It is possible however that the “lawless one” will be an apostate Christian Jew. In any case, we may expect the rise of this great dictator to come from the western world, Europe, or from the vicinity of Palestine.

### **“Lying Spirits”**

Observe, “lying spirits” will prevail in the last days. Bewitching spirits and subtle sorceries will “deceive the nations” (Revelation 18:23). Paul says, the Antichrist will perform “lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Jesus said Satan is the “father of lies,” and John saw the “spirits of demons” going forth in the earth, “working miracles” [performing signs]

to defy and contradict God's law and authority (Revelation 16:14). Like the Jewish sorcerer and false prophet, Elymas, who withstood the apostle Paul (Acts 13: 6-10), and Pharaoh's magicians, Jannes and Jambres, defied Moses and deceived the people with their illusions (Exodus 7:11; 2 Timothy 3:8), so the Beast and False Prophet and all of Satan's ministers in these last days will go about "deceiving and being deceived." We should bear in mind the ancient admonition: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder. And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord thy God proveth [is testing] you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice . . . And cleave unto him" (Deuteronomy 13:1-4). Remember also the apostle's warning: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 6:8, 9).

### **The "Wonders" of Modern Technology**

Modern science is on the verge of some major breakthroughs in technology that may very well provide the means for the Beast's ability to build the most powerful and intelligent military the world has ever known and, at the same time, provide the means for the False Prophet's ability to create his "lying wonders"---even to "make fire come down from heaven." Recent advances in the knowledge of physics and astrophysics are startling and mind-boggling. Some advances have already made atomic and nuclear power as a means for war and social advancement seem primitive and outdated. What was until just recently considered fantasy (like some images in "Star Wars") have become a reality. These new technologies have given men the ability to manipulate electro-magnetic waves---light rays and gamma rays---to completely revolutionize the world. On the positive side, these advances may be able to kill bacteria, cure diseases, and increase the quality of life. On the negative side, they open the door for the invention of the most terrible engines of war and human destruction imaginable. And they provide the means also for great deception.

A precursor to all of this may be seen in the invention of cell phones and computers. The energy in a cell phone capturing signals from

thousands of miles away is why we are asked to cut them off during air travel. They contain within them the ability to short-circuit and bring down a gigantic 747 jet. For this same reason we are asked to cut them off during visits with patients in ICU's in the hospital. The possibility of short-circuiting sensitive computerized equipment that keep patients alive is at risk. In a similar way, whole cities, the size of New York, Paris, London, Beijing, or Moscow in the near future may be shut down with the push of a button. Recent discoveries have opened the way for the creation of laser cannons capable of producing power a thousand times greater than the atomic bomb. Experiments are being conducted now to channel energy through ray guns that can dissolve buildings and melt human beings. These weapons will be able to reduce men and skyscrapers to a few specks of dust in a millisecond.

There are also major breakthroughs in the field of genetics. Scientists now have the ability to manipulate embryonic cell construction to mimic creation with clones. They can also manipulate human chromosomes and sperm and eggs to determine the sex of a child. A clinic out of Britain has been set up recently here in the United States for this purpose. And this can all be done in a test tube without the normal sex act between a man and woman, to say nothing of the fact that it can be accomplished outside of marriage. This option gives parents, over God, the power to determine if a fetus will be a boy or girl. You can see where this is headed: two homosexuals can put an order in for a boy or girl, and claim to be the parents! A report made international news recently that told of a child that had two mothers---one provided the egg, the other the womb. Another report, fully legitimate, revealed a photo of a "pregnant man." Oprah Winfrey interviewed this "man" and his "wife" on her television show this year. Actually this was a woman who had a sex change operation, reportedly became a man, yet had retained some of her female sex organs, including her womb. She was then impregnated, carried the fetus to term, and gave birth to the baby.

In addition to these abominable things, scientists can now through the process called *amniocentesis* genetically alter and engineer the physical traits of a developing embryo. In a word, they have the ability now to "play God," as it were. Who knows what kind of monsters and freaks will soon appear on the scene!

Science is also on the brink of major breakthroughs in the knowledge of plasma---the stuff of which the sun and stars are made---and may soon be able to manipulate this cosmic material to create "force fields"---walls of protection---for the purposes of war and a futuristic cosmic lifestyle. These things will doubtlessly factor into the making of the exalted "image

of the beast” and his ability to control all of humanity with his “mark.” They will also serve his purpose in developing the most awesome military power in history, so that the citizens of the New World Order will say, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?” (Revelation 13:4). In other words, the stage is being set for the Antichrist and the False Prophet to give the appearance of infinite power and omnipresence.

In all of this, we can see how plausible it will be for the commentators of CNN, NBC, MSNBC, FOX, EWTN, et al. and the writers of the New York Times, Washington Post, Vatican Review, U.S. News & World Report and Time magazines to explain away the mystery and chaos that will surround the Rapture of the church (including the millions of missing persons). They might simply connect it with a phenomenon of modern technology, perhaps blame it all on a laser ray or a micro-wave of energy.

## **The Big Lie**

We have seen that the world in the last days, both before and during the reign of the Antichrist, will be filled with lying spirits, sorcery, divination, witchcraft, “lying wonders,” and “all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” But Paul identifies this Antichrist and the apostasy that leads up to him with “the lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:11). Our English Bible translates *toi pseudei* as “a lie” but the article is present and thus is better rendered “the lie.” This is an important point, for the apostle is speaking here of the lie that Satan has told from the beginning, a lie that redefines the whole of reality as we have known it. This lie---“the lie”---redefines the basic truths about God, about human life and experience, and about what is normal. It contradicts what God has said in regard to where we came from, why we are here, where we are going, and how we should behave. It says that man evolved, and is therefore not the result of divine fiat; that there is no created order that distinguishes between male and female; that many of the moral laws recorded in the Bible are man-made and outdated, and in fact that the Bible itself is more or less man-made and outdated. It says we need to look in the last days for a Messiah but not to Jesus Christ. In fact this lie says that Jesus Christ is no more than a man, and that He imposed upon men laws that are unbearable and contrary to nature. Some who fellowship this lie go so far to say that Jesus was a homosexual, and others that He was married and had a child. This is “that spirit of antichrist.”

Now “the lie” is not only accounted to all who “believe not,” but to those who will not confess Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 4:3; 5:10). Why? Because “[they believe] not the record that God gave of His

Son.” In fact, the unbeliever makes God the liar. This is the blasphemy of Satan and of all those who buy into “the lie.” It separates the unbeliever forever from God and identifies him with Satan! This is why Jesus called the unbelieving Jews liars, and added, “Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44, 55).

Observe, a particular or specific lie might be forgiven, but this lie is unrepentant; it is fixed and defiant. It was born in Satan, the father of it; and because the vast multitudes in the last days will receive it, they are made partakers of Satan’s lie and also of his reward. “And all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Revelation 21:8).

This Big Lie, believed by the multitudes under the “strong delusion” that God will send upon the earth, is the result of man’s rejection of Christ and the Gospel. More particularly it is the denial and contradiction of the witness of the Holy Ghost in the world and in human consciousness. This is the unforgivable blasphemy that Jesus so sternly warned against--“blasphemy against the Holy Ghost” (Luke 12:10). It is “the lie” that cannot be forgiven! The apostle says this powerful delusion from the Lord will come because men “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Men cannot be free to have pleasure in unrighteousness unless they abuse their consciences, deny the true God and His laws, and throw off all self-restraints.

This lie---“the lie”---is necessary also in order to pave the way for the end-times Antichrist and false worship. In order to have an Antichrist, the true Christ must be denied and replaced! In order to have a False Prophet, the True Prophet, the Holy Ghost, must be denied and replaced! The witness of the False Prophet will contradict the witness of the Holy Ghost and the world will receive it! This is the “mystery of iniquity” of which the apostle warns. But, observe, Jesus said, “and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Accordingly, we may be sure then that the present apostasy will increase “unto more and more ungodliness,” and the faith of many will be weakened. We are forewarned that countless millions will be pulled (even as they are at this very moment!) into the powerful current of apostasy in these last days. Some of your long-time friends and neighbors in the faith will perish in this great delusion. These all together, with Satan, the Antichrist, and False Prophet, have been assigned their place in everlasting darkness and damnation.

## **The Horrible End of Satan and His Followers**

The “great red dragon” is exposed in plain view in John’s vision as the real engineer and inspiration behind the last days’ Babylon, False Prophet, and the Beast and his global antichrist political system, just as God the Father is the head of Christ and the inspiration behind the last days’ Zion. The Beast, False Prophet, and the Great Prostitute are all under the seductive power and influence of Satan, being manipulated like chess pieces to fulfill his ancient desire. Lucifer’s fall in the beginning was his pride---his desire to be like God, to be worshipped and exalted. This was the thing that drove him down the road to apostasy (cf: Isaiah 14:12-14). And he has ever since been in rebellion against God and has labored to raise an army to “make war against the saints” and to overthrow the government of God (cf: Revelation 12:1-9; 13:3-8). He will not submit to God, and the spirit of his rebellion is now spreading like a deadly virus throughout the world (cf: 13:8; 16:13-16). It is this spirit that God must destroy in the end, and everyone who is infected with it must perish and be cast out into everlasting torment. Why this casting out into “outer darkness? Because the spirit of this rebellion can be cured only through faith and spiritual regeneration; it cannot be civilized and tamed to conform to the will of God.

Thus, if it rejects Christ, it must be cast out and destroyed! Observe, the souls of men cannot be annihilated, for they are immortal and everlasting, and therefore they must be cast out from the presence of the Lord into this place Jesus called “outer darkness.” This “outer darkness” is apparently some kind of cosmic phenomenon, perhaps something near the image in modern science of a “black hole,” a kind of whirlpool in outer space whose mass is so intensely concentrated that it becomes infinite at its center, so that everything made of matter is pulled into the vacuum of its gravitation force. Some of these black holes, they say, are 5 to 20 miles in diameter, and capable of sucking a dying star a hundred times larger than the earth into its powerful vacuum. In any case, be all of this as it may, the unsaved will be cast out forever from the presence of the Lord and God’s people into outer darkness, and in the center of this cosmic darkness is the “lake of fire.”

## **The Good News**

The good news is that Jesus is the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). There will be no surprises for the Lord, nor for us who are awake in the Spirit and armed with the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9). God has already in His prescient mind seen all things

from the beginning, and has predestined all things accordingly (Ephesians 1:4-11). Satan is already defeated! (Revelation 19:11-21; 20:1-11). The Antichrist and False Prophet have already been assigned their place in the “lake of fire” (v. 20). And the church and the saints have already been declared the ultimate victors and have been given the glorious kingdom (Daniel 7:14, 18, 22, 27; Revelation 20:4-6). Yes, the church is the “apple of His eye,” and He has prepared a place for her beyond the millennium, in New Jerusalem, and in the new heavens and the new earth (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-4, 10-27; 22:1-5). Praise God!

God is in control. Hear the apostle:

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor thing to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:28-39).*

Now listen to the prophet’s words, which were spoken right in the middle of his vision of the Antichrist and his reign of terror: “but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many . . .” (Daniel 11:32, 33). Whether this verse should be applied only to Antiochus IV in the time of the Maccabees or also to the very last days’ Antichrist, we cannot be certain. But to whatever degree believers must suffer and experience persecution and tribulation in this age, and in any age, they shall “be strong and do exploits.” Jesus promised, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Revelation 21:7).

## **The Rapture**

The only thing preventing the full revelation of this last days' Antichrist and his New World Order is the restraining power of the Holy Ghost in the church and among the saints (2 Thessalonians 2:7). When the church is perfected and "caught up" to Christ with the resurrected saints in the Rapture (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58), the Antichrist will then be fully empowered and revealed. This does not mean, of course, that the Holy Ghost will be removed literally and fully from the earth: for He is omnipresent, in time and eternity. He is also active throughout the book of Revelation (1:10; 2:7; 3:6; 5:6; 11:11; 14:13; 21:3, 10; 22:17). The phrase---"only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way"---must signify therefore that what the Holy Ghost had been preventing, he now allows, and this according to God's appointed time. It is true that the Spirit's dwelling place is in the church, which after the rapture is in heaven, but the Spirit will still be active in the earth to oversee and prosecute the will of God, both in judgment and redemption.

After the rapture of the church, lawlessness and blasphemy will then be allowed to rule and reign without restraint and fill the earth for a short period of time. This period is of seven years duration, it seems, but the wickedness and violence will intensify in the last 3 1/2 years of the Antichrist's reign [see Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:2,3; 13:5]. This will bring on God's wrath and judgment, and the plagues described in the Revelation. The Good News is that Christ will descend from heaven with the church and the saints at the end of the seven-year period to defeat and capture the Antichrist and False Prophet and destroy their armies. He will then bind Satan (20:1-3), cast the Antichrist and False Prophet into hell (19:19-21), and set up His glorious kingdom (His millennial government) on earth.

### **Will People Be Saved After The Rapture Of The Church?**

Many cite the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1-5 as a proof text to show that some will be saved after the rapture of the church. Some commentators also maintain that the 144,000 are Jews who repent during the Great Tribulation. But it is almost certain that this group is the same as that mentioned in 7:4-8 and represents the church, the true Israel of God: for the church is made up of true Jews, that is, believers who have accepted Christ by faith. Ethnic Jews who reject Christ are therefore not true Jews. This is obviously the meaning in 2:9 and 3:9 and agrees with Paul's theology in Romans 2:28, 29; 9:6-8, 24-33; 10:11-13. The true descendants of Abraham are therefore

Jews and Gentiles who believe in Christ and walk by faith. All believers are therefore spiritual Jews, and when incorporated together in the church they become the true “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16).

There are several other factors that lead us to this conclusion. First, the 144,000 is almost without question a symbolic number that represents the multitudes of the church in both Old and New Testaments. This may be inferred from the fact that the number is exact, which makes it highly unlikely that it is to be taken literally. If it is depicting an actual historical narrative, it would probably say about an 144,000, as Luke does in his narratives---“about 120” (Acts 1:15) “about 3000” (2:41), “about 5000” (4:4). Moreover, the number is exact with each tribe (12,000), which is meant to symbolize perhaps the unity and equality of the church throughout the world. Secondly, the number 144,000 is a multiple of the number 12, which is used symbolically throughout the Bible to denote divine order and government---“twelve tribes,” “twelve patriarchs,” “twelve wells,” “twelve pillars,” “twelve cakes,” “twelve chargers,” “twelve bowls,” “twelve spoons,” “twelve apostles,” etc. Thus New Jerusalem has 12 foundations and 12 gates, with 12 angels, 12 tribes, and 12 apostles (21:12-14). The city also is four-square:  $12,000 \times 12,000 = 144,000$  (vv. 16-17). The 24 elders (2x12) almost certainly represent the 12 elders in the Old Testament church and the 12 apostles in the New Testament church (4:4, 10; 5:8, 14; 11:16; 19:4). Together they symbolize the church throughout the ages. The 144,000 is the multiple of  $12 \times 12 \times 1000$ . It represents almost certainly therefore the full number of the church in all ages.

It will be noticed also that the 144,000 are identified with the Lamb on Mount Zion (14:1), and they are “redeemed” and “virgins” and holy and devout followers of the Lamb (vv. 3-5). These features clearly identify 144,000 with the church (see Hebrews 12:22, 23). It will be noticed further that those who are numbered are distinguished from the great multitude in 7:9 “which no man can number.” We may infer from this that the church throughout the ages is distinguished from the kingdom saints at large: for the church has always kept records of its own ministers and members (Exodus 30:12; Numbers 1:1-54; 2 Chronicles 17:14-18; Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4; et al), whereas only God has the record of believers at large (2 Timothy 2:19). Thus, Paul says, we judge those within the church, God judges those without (1 Corinthians 5:12, 13).

We have noticed that the “great multitude” in 7:9-14 that “came out of great tribulation” are distinguished from the 144,000. We have every reason to believe therefore that this “great multitude . . . of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” are the saved of all ages, and includes Jews and Gentiles. This great multitude seems to be identical also with

the apostle Paul's description of the "dead in Christ" raised up in the first resurrection and caught up together with the living saints and the church in the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The great multitude and the 144,000 appear also to be in heaven: for they are with the Lamb before the throne of God (7:1-17; 14:1-5).

It is worth noting that the phrase "came out of great tribulation" may be rendered "came out *from* great tribulation" rather than "out of the midst of it," for so the term *hoi erchomenoi ek* is used elsewhere. The sense then is determined by the context. If these are the saints of all ages, this distinction makes no difference: for all believers have come out *from* Great Tribulation. But if it is in reference here to the last days seven-year period of time, then it could be interpreted either way, either in support of a pre-Tribulation rapture or a mid-Tribulation rapture. Again the context must be considered and the sense of the passage discerned.

Notwithstanding the fact that Revelation 7:1-17 and 14:1-5 are insufficient to prove that some may be saved after the rapture of the church, there are several other passages in Daniel's and John's apocalyptic visions that seem to indicate this possibility (e.g., Daniel 7:21, 25; 11:31-35; Revelation 11:3-13; 13:7-10, 15). And otherwise, all things considered, the weight of evidence seems to come down on the side that some may be saved. The weightiest argument is the fact that the spirit of Antichrist throughout history has persecuted the saints. It would seem inconsistent then that the end-times Antichrist would be any different. If this be the case, then it seems certain that many believers during the Great Tribulation will suffer martyrdom under the Antichrist's reign of terror. Moreover, some believe that the saints during this period may be only a remnant of Jews, whose eyes have been opened to the true Christ by the unfolding revelation and acts of the Antichrist that prove him to be a false messiah. If this be the case---that John indeed envisioned the salvation of a remnant of Jews during the Great Tribulation---it should be accounted to God's foreknowledge and the believers' freewill, and not, as some believe, to a special dispensation pre-necessitated for Jews following the Rapture. This latter doctrine is a complete contradiction of the Gospel and Biblical teaching in both Old and New Testaments. God does not have one covenant of salvation for the Jews and another for the Gentiles. The Old Covenant is null and void (Galatians 3:16-29; Hebrews 8:6-13), and the New Covenant, now in force, includes both Jew and Gentile believers in one Gospel faith. All are now included together in Christ, or excluded together without Him, and those in Christ are being formed together into one visible body of Christ (John 10:16; 11:49-52; 17:20-23; Ephesians 1:10; 2:11-22; 3:6; 4:4-6, 11-16).

On the other hand, there are several passages that seem to indicate that the end-times seven-year period is a time of judgment and indignation, and that the “day of salvation” is passed (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 9:20, 21; 16:9-11). If this be the case, then the passages cited above to support the view that some may be saved during the Great Tribulation become all the more difficult to interpret and to harmonize with the overall message of the book of Revelation.

The difficulty in determining with certainty the answer to this question---“Will men be saved after the rapture”---is two-fold: 1) Are the passages dealing with the martyrdom of saints under the reign of the Beast in Daniel’s and John’s visions speaking of the particular seven-year period of time before Christ’s second coming? Or are they speaking of periods of persecution and martyrdom throughout history? 2) Are the passages that seem to indicate that some may be saved speaking of ethnic Jews in particular---“Israel after the flesh”---or of the Gentiles also?

### **When Will The Rapture Take Place?**

Will the Rapture take place at the beginning of the seven-year period (pre-Tribulation view), or in the middle of the Tribulation period (mid-Tribulation view)?

This is another question that is difficult to answer with certainty. We have already shown

above that some passages typically used to support the mid-Tribulation view (e.g., Revelation 7:14; 14:1-5) may be interpreted as easily to prove the pre-Tribulation view. Notwithstanding that there are indications that might lead us to see it one way or another, the weightiest evidence in my view seems to come down on the side of a pre-Tribulation rapture. The fact that the Antichrist will be revealed in the beginning of the seven-year period (Daniel 9:24-27) and Paul is emphatic that the church will be gone when he is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), is our strongest argument. Still it does not seem necessary to take a dogmatic position on this point. What must be heeded with certainty is Jesus’ admonition: “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:40).

In regard to the book of Revelation itself, the Rapture is assumed throughout much of the book and seems to have taken place sometime between chapters three and four. We base this not on a chronological-historical interpretation of the book (mentioned above), but on the fact that the twenty-four elders, who almost certainly represent the church throughout history, in both Old and New Testaments, are always seen in

heaven (4:4,10; 5:8, 14; 11:16; 19:4). Further, Revelation 4:1-11 describes a scene in heaven that includes many of the symbols (voices, trumpet, praise, white raiment, crowns of gold, etc.) and the rapture language in general that Paul uses in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 and John uses in regard to the bride and the marriage supper in Revelation 19:4-9.

Be this as it may, the questions in regard to the specific time of the Rapture and salvation after the Rapture will require further study by the church, and, after all, we should not be surprised if we cannot answer these questions with certainty and finality. What is clear is that “now is the day of salvation” and “the night cometh, when no man can work.” The Rapture is our goal! It closes out the present dispensation of the church. Listen to the apostle: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Romans 13:11, 12). Let us then evangelize and move forward to fulfill our mission in the world with this profound sense of urgency. For if, after all, men are saved after the Rapture, during the Great Tribulation period, they will be someone else’s responsibility, and their salvation will be secured only under persecution and/or martyrdom.

### **Antichrist Doctrines**

Now, observe, the Antichrist not only desires to supplant Christ but also to pervert and replace His teachings. The apostle John labeled both those who denied that Jesus had a real fleshly body and those who denied His deity and pre-existence as antichrist (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:1-6). Many early sects in the first three centuries fell into these heresies, but we are told that they will flourish in these last days. But, observe, John extends his view of antichrist to include perversion of Jesus’ and the apostle’s teachings (2 John 7-10). The apostle Paul and other inspired writers in the New Testament also identify the spirit of apostasy in the last days with the perversion of Christ’s teachings. This is why we boldly declare now in Zion Assembly that any preacher or teacher who twists and perverts true worship, distorts God’s name and nature, denies His self-existence in three eternal persons, corrupts the doctrine of the Cross and the power of Jesus’ transforming grace to pardon, regenerate, and wholly sanctify believers and perfect them in holiness, is to one degree or another antichrist. Why? Because for every truth of Christ that is perverted or negated, a false one is put in its place. See how important it is to “continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42)! “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself,

and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16). Jesus said, “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine . . .” (John 7:16, 17). O what a high calling we have! What a holy office we hold! It requires sobriety and gravity to fulfill it. See here: if anyone causes a person to think that he is saved when he is not, that person is a deceiver and a tool of the antichrist spirit. If anyone perverts the Bible, the Word of God, and the church, “the pillar and ground of the truth,” that person is more of an instrument of Satan than Christ.

Observe, antichrist teachings find a host only in those who are ignorant of Christ and His teachings, and in Christ’s relationship with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Lack of sound doctrine about God (the Trinity) and a genuine experience in regeneration is what will give place to the forthcoming Antichrist. It is clear that only a people who have been born again, who are consecrated in the Spirit, and who are armed with the Word of God, will be able to discern the spirit and know the principles that give rise to and identify this forthcoming deceiver. Only those who are actually in Christ and trust in and obey His words in Holy Scripture will be saved and delivered out of the hand of the beast and his tyrannical government!

Why is it that Jesus said, “If you don’t believe Moses’ words, ye will not believe My words?” Why is it that if you don’t believe the Old Testament, you cannot truly believe the New Testament? Why is it that if you don’t believe all prophecy in the Sacred Book, you cannot truly believe in any prophecy of the Sacred Book? It is because, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10)---that is, the Lord is the author of it all! The same Holy Ghost that quickens our ability to believe in Christ is the same Holy Ghost that moved on the prophets in a special way to write all of the prophetic Scriptures (cf. 2 Timothy 3: 15-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21). The Holy Ghost does not speak of Himself but of Christ! Jesus said, when He comes “he shall testify of me” and “glorify me” and “show you things to come” (John 15:26; 16:13-15). This is why in Zion Assembly we judge and measure all prophecy, doctrine, and practices by the Holy Scriptures.

## **The Light of Zion**

Now since the spirit of Antichrist and Babylon are destined to fulfill such prominent roles in the world in these last days, it seems imperative for us to become as informed as possible about their identities and global strategies. After all, this Babylon is the very system and force that God’s church will be contending with in these last days. It is interesting to note that the Old Testament prophets had more to say about this last days’

Babylon than did the apostles (with the exception of John in the book of Revelation). The reason for this seems to be this: the apostles were preoccupied in their day with the early formation and development of the church, that is, they were called to lay the foundation of the church and to get it going; whereas we have been called and raised up in these last days to finish the work of the church. No doubt much of what the prophets wrote about in their day was not understood by the apostles, particularly prophecies not being applicable to their day; but now these prophecies are coming to light and are applicable to our current situation in the world. Accordingly, it seems incumbent upon us in this last days' Zion to research the Scriptures and study diligently with prayer these things, until we are illuminated and have as clear an understanding as possible. After all, we are Zion, and "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:4). The world will be depending on our light in Zion.

Jesus said the church is the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:13) and the prophet foretold that the nations will be drawn to her light (Isaiah 60:1-3). We see then our calling and responsibility: to prepare ourselves to let His light shine forth in the church. We must be ready in this last days' Zion "to give every man a reason for the hope that is in [us]." All of our ministers must be taught and drilled in sound doctrine and all be "workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). We all should arm ourselves with the Sword of the Spirit, and go forth to do battle. It is time to speak up, to fight, to do battle! Why? Because the lost of this world and confused Christians in denominations and independent sects are depending on us. We must therefore in meekness be able to instruct even those who oppose themselves (vv. 24-26). The things that were taught by Christ and the apostles, and handed down to our faithful fathers in the last century, we must now also "commit the same to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others" (v. 2).

Observe, we need to be able to argue the case of Christ before the world, but also our own case in Zion Assembly before the other sheep. We must get to the place that we can explain our doctrinal positions with sound Biblical interpretation, and prove the superiority of our doctrines against others. This approach has been taught to us by precept and example by Jesus and the apostles. The apostle Paul "reasoned" and "disputed" with the Pharisees and pagan philosophers of his day, demonstrating with conviction the truth and power of the Gospel (Acts 9:29; 17:17-32; 19:8-10). Yes, there is power in the simple proclamation of the Gospel, but we are also called and gifted by God to teach, instruct, correct, and exhort (1 Timothy 4:6, 13-16; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; 3:14-17; 4:1-5).

In studying the last days' Antichrist and the subjects connected with his global system, there is a rule of interpretation that can be used to measure against everything else---namely, the preeminence and sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether it is in politics or religion or economics, Christ is ordained by the Father to be "preeminent in all things," and to be the true mediator between God and man. Any other person or system of government that claims preeminence is antichrist! Right here is the crux of the matter. Satan desires to be the ruler of God's creation (cosmic and earthly, including men and angels). He desires to take over, to highjack, what belongs to God. His scheme is to raise up substitutes in place of them whom God has appointed and ordained---namely, false christs, false prophets, and a false church. In a word, he is endeavoring to substitute a global system of human government (that he can control) in lieu of Christ's government and authority; he is scheming to install his "man of sin" and his corrupt system of authority to take the place of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over the affections and affairs of men. But God is a jealous God. He is Almighty and can never be satisfied with anything less than being acknowledged as the sovereign Lord of all. He is the God of the universe--of all creation, including all the nations of men. He will not be placated nor relegated to a mere figurehead in religion or politics. He is not just the head of the church but the head of everything. Yes, I know what Jesus said about God and Caesar, but God is also the God of Caesar. Jesus is "King of kings and Lord of lords!"---and His glory will never be fulfilled until "every knee bows and every tongue confesses!"

## **Waking in the Light Our Abstract of Faith**

The method of contrast illustrated above, between right and wrong, truth and error, is employed by Biblical writers in regard to almost every subject and theme in Scripture. Error is brought to light by the truth, and the truth is better understood in light of error. It is for these reasons that I propose we move forward to expand our *Abstract of Faith* to include several biblical subjects and themes that we believe are important and need to be understood by our ministers and members, particularly important subjects and themes that are misunderstood and corrupted by the majority of professing Christian groups in the world today. At the same time it would be good to elaborate a little more thoroughly on some of the subjects and themes already addressed in our *Abstract*. This is important, not only for our own benefit in Zion---to keep us in unity and walking by the same rule of faith---but to enable us to minister more effectively

with one voice to others. Our School of Ministry also should address and develop these subjects and themes so that we can more comprehensively educate our ministers and workers and keep them updated and abreast with prophetic developments in the world.

It seems to me that any doctrine we consider to be “important” or “prominent” should be incorporated as part of our Abstract of Faith, and anything that is procedural or material in nature (like resolutions regarding administration, property, finance, etc.) and anything of a doctrinal or biblical nature not addressed in our Abstract should be recorded in our Assembly Minutes for reference. It may be that a short or concise form and a long or expanded form of our Abstract can be developed, that is, our present Abstract can remain more or less as it is, adding only concise statements on subjects deemed wise to include in the future, for example, the doctrines of *sin*, *guilt*, and the *millennium*. Then to make our *Abstract* more thorough and convincing to both our ministers and members within the church and to those who may be “asking their way to Zion,” we would have the more extended version. I am requesting therefore that the Assembly Business Committee give this subject further thought and, if deemed wise, to make the necessary recommendations for consideration.

## **Section II**

### **Outreach and Missions**

In addressing the subject of the Antichrist in Section I, we can see there is no room to play church in these last days. What is at stake is the everlasting souls of men---eternal life or everlasting damnation! We are on a mission---the most important mission in the world! It is urgent! Souls are being weighed in the balances. Thousands are perishing every day in a sea of corruption and darkness! We must hurry and throw out the lifeline! We must hurry and “send the light!”

To emphasize the urgency of our mission, I will call upon two faithful witnesses, one a prophet, the other an apostle. Isaiah said, “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles . . . (Isaiah 54:1-3), and again, “For thy waste and desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The

children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give me place that I may dwell. Then thou shalt say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried on their shoulders” (49:19-22).

The apostle Paul confirms in Galatians 4:27 that these passages apply not to the Old Testament church, or to the fleshly nation of Israel, but to the church under the New Covenant. Now, behold, neither the church in the days of the apostles, nor the church at any time since, has completely fulfilled these passages. The full glory of this great inflow into the church is yet to come! This is why the same apostle urges us to “[reach] forth unto those things that are before, [and] to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:13, 14). Part of this “high calling” is to reach every nation and tribe in this world with the “all things whatsoever” message of Christ. What a vision! What glory! It is thrilling!

This is why it is so disturbing to see ministers and local churches sometimes lose the vision of the church’s worldwide mission, for we know that at the same time they must lose also some of their joy and victory. When you turn your eyes away from the great harvest fields out there---in disobedience to the very words of Christ---and begin to look only to your local needs, you will begin to lose the favor of God. Listen to the heart of your pleading overseer: this error will injure the fellowship of your local church and hinder the church in general. It creates distance between the ministers and members here in the United States and diminishes our ability to reach out and fulfill our mission in the world. So everyone suffers. But who suffers the most? The millions of souls out there that need to be saved, crying out of their misery for help, crying out to be rescued!

We can be thankful that most all of our ministers and local churches are faithful in mission giving and contributing to our world outreach efforts. In consideration, I want to pause here to commend all of our pastors, ministers, mission directors, and faithful workers who have worked and boosted the Second Sunday mission offerings and the March and October World Mission drives in your local churches. Your generous giving and labors of love are recorded in heaven, but they are also greatly appreciated by the Presiding Bishop and the leaders at headquarters. But, most of all, no doubt, they are appreciated by our workers and people on

the mission fields. The results of your sacrifices and labors of love are clearly manifested and represented here in this Assembly. See all of the overseers and ministers that are here because of the funds you have raised. These funds have provided the means for them to be here. And they will take back home all of the knowledge and inspiration they have received in this Assembly to build up the church in their respective fields of labor and spread the word of the Kingdom!

### **Winning Souls and Attracting the “Other Sheep”**

What does Zion Assembly have to offer that other religious organizations do not? This is an important question to ask ourselves, for our life and future growth will depend a great deal on our uniqueness. What is different about Zion Assembly? What do we have that is appealing and attractive?

In considering these questions, there are two groups that we should have in mind---believers (“other sheep”) and sinners. First, let us consider what we have to offer to sinners. The obvious answer is Christ and His Gospel. But are we unique in this regard? Do not other Christian groups proclaim Christ and His Gospel? We answer: we are unique to the degree that our ministers and local churches in Zion Assembly are committed to proclaiming a purer and fuller Gospel. We have made a sacred promise not to “water-down” (dilute) the transforming power of the Cross of Jesus Christ! We hold one another accountable to an uncompromising proclamation of the Gospel and the responsibility of bringing sinners to true repentance and deliverance. The Holy Ghost convicts and draws sinners to the Father through the Son, and the Son pardons and cleanses from all unrighteousness. This is what we proclaim. We don’t preach a weak and defective Gospel. We believe in the power of Jesus’ blood to sanctify instantly and wholly, and that the grace of God through the Holy Ghost can perfect believers in the image of Christ. We believe in divine healing and in the power of God to bind Satan and break every fetter of sin and sickness, to set captives free! We are committed to proclaim with power, perfect freedom in Jesus Christ! The message of true holiness is becoming increasingly scarce among Christian groups, but Zion Assembly is committed to remain steadfast in the faith and in the discipline of the Gospel!

But see here: we need more than just the right message, we need the anointing of God on our proclamations. Our ministers must become a “flame of fire,” and our local congregations must be charged with the

ecstatic power of the Spirit. There is a lot of truth in the saying, “Fire in the pulpit will put fire in the pew,” so our preachers must lead the way in building spiritually dynamic churches. People will be drawn to Zion by the Holy Ghost working in and through the ministers and members. Someone has said that if the church catches on fire, people will come out just to watch it burn. The fire of the Spirit is therefore indispensable in helping us to fulfill our mission. The success of our evangelism efforts depends on the Spirit’s empowerment and anointing.

The Holy Ghost must be given preeminence and be allowed to work among the people, for He is the change-agent of the Godhead. Hear the Lord: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . .” (John 16:7-8), and again, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). And hear the apostle: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

### **Cheerfulness and a Spirit-filled Disposition**

We need also a right attitude and disposition. Lost souls and the other sheep in general are seeking for a people whose walk matches their talk, whose profession of faith and practice are consistent. They want to be around a people that is victorious over sin and excited about the things of the Lord. Excitement is contagious!

The song says, “Zion is a place of worship, Zion is a place of praise.” But Zion must be also a place of joy and beauty in the Holy Ghost, a place where friendship and fellowship can be found. People are looking for a church that is genuinely good and sincere and cheerful. A few words of admonition from our old Advice to Members still ring in my ears: “Show love and fellowship to everyone without partiality. Don’t wait for others to greet you, but you greet them. Show special courtesy to strangers who may chance to fall in with you in your meetings . . . Be cheerful and happy and try to make others the same.”

## **“Be Filled with the Spirit---Go!” No Place for Sluggards**

Clearly then the spirit of slumber and laziness should be shunned like a deadly virus. “Awake to righteousness, and sin not!” Listen, it is impossible to be filled with the Holy Ghost and to be lazy at the same time: for the very nature of the Spirit’s energy in a believer propels him/her into God’s work! Observe, you may have been baptized with the Holy Ghost ten years ago, but are you filled with the Holy Ghost now? I make this distinction here---between being baptized and filled with the Spirit--because the Bible does (at least in some instances). It is only when the Holy Ghost rises up within you (when you are “filled!”) that you feel the anointing to prophesy and witness. This is what the Scriptures mean in saying that Elizabeth was “filled with the Holy Ghost” and prophesied (Luke 1:41, 42). Elizabeth was not baptized with the Holy Ghost, no more than John the Baptist and the prophets of old were, but, like John and the old prophets, she preached when the Holy Ghost came upon her and filled her. John the Baptist was “filled” (not baptized) with the Spirit before he was born (Luke 1:15), hence the witness of the Spirit in Elizabeth’s womb (vv. 41-44). It is when the Holy Ghost “comes upon you” that you feel that electric charge to preach and witness and work for God! I don’t want to make too much of this distinction here, but even on the day of Pentecost this distinction may be indicated: for we see first that “cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them.” Their Spirit-baptism may have occurred at this time; then they were all “filled” with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in “other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4). The first was unknown tongues (perhaps corresponding to 1 Corinthians 14), the second was prophecy in known languages (“other tongues,” vv. 6-11). Both were uttered through the Spirit and witnessed to their Spirit-baptism, but the latter included the gift of “other tongues” in operation.

Be that as it may, what we need today are ministers and members filled with the Holy Ghost. When you are filled with the Holy Ghost, you can’t lay around on the couch and eat potato chips and watch television, especially when the church building needs painted and repaired and the grass needs cut. You can’t be filled with the Spirit and be preoccupied with fishing, golf, and sports at the same time. In a word, you can’t be filled with the Holy Ghost and be preoccupied with leisure. Hear the apostle’s command, “Be filled with the Spirit!” It is the same as to say, “Go!”---go witness to sinners, go visit the sick, go restore a backslider, go encourage the discouraged, go start a Sunday School somewhere or build up one already organized, go get subscribers for the Voice of Zion, go get children

for Children’s Church, go pray, go preach, go baptize, go teach, go raise funds for missions, go work in the fields for the Lord. “Get up! Go do something for God and the church!”

## **A Special Word to Preachers**

Now let me say a word here especially to the preachers. I have observed in the last few years a trick of the enemy. No doubt modern technology has improved life for us in many ways, including the inventions of cell phones and computers. But like anything else, some technologies can become hindrances, even curses. Too many ministers today waste away hours of precious time on cell phones and computers when they could be using the time to study the Word of God, visit homes and hospitals, build and repair places of worship, and do the real on-hands work of the ministry. We should be watchful lest the enemy rob us of the blessings of doing the real “work of the ministry.” Jesus said, “Herein do you glorify the Father, that ye bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.” Hear the apostle: “And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Corinthians 7:31).

But someone will say, “But I’m retired.” What do you mean by that! Retired from what? You may retire from a secular job, but you cannot retire from divine service. God does not retire anyone. O you may retire from a particular office or appointment in the church but you cannot quit working for the Lord, not if you expect to go to heaven. Be not deceived! You can’t spend your so-called retirement years gallivanting around the country in a motor home or Winnebago, going to and from Disneyland and Grand Canyon and one golf course and fishing hole to another, “goofing off” with the kids and grand kids, without expecting to lose some of your victory and heavenly reward, and perhaps all of it! Heaven is our resting place, brethren. Listen to the apostle: “Work while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.”

## **Enlistment Evangelism**

Once a sinner comes to Christ and experiences pardon and regeneration he becomes a child of God and at the same time one of the “other sheep” (John 10:16). These “other sheep” are designated by Jesus as such because they have not entered into the corporate fellowship of the church and began to participate in its life and mission. The “other sheep” then are also within the focus of our outreach and mission efforts.

Now what do we have to offer the other sheep out there that are

“asking their way to Zion?” First, many of the things we just referred to in regard to our outreach to sinners are applicable to the other sheep. We should be cheerful and maintain a Spirit-filled disposition. We do a great disservice to our brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as to sinners, when we do not keep prayed-up and keep ourselves immersed in the dynamic life of the Spirit. I say this because a Spirit-filled life is attractive and a powerful witness for the Lord and the church. Secondly, we have the “all things whatsoever” message that Jesus taught and commissioned us to “teach them to observe” (Matthew 28:19). Thus we have a complete discipleship program in the fullness of the faith. Thirdly, we have the Support Ministries system. The Support Ministries not only edify the church within itself (Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 2:19), and enable us to raise funds to reach out to the lost around the world, they give us a unique method of outreach to the “other sheep.” Through them, we can enlist sinners as well as other sheep into some aspects of the ministry and work of the church. Thus, though they are not members of the church, they are brought into the “outer court” of the temple, so to speak, and in this way are little by little brought under the powerful influence of the church’s worship, fellowship, and teachings.

Now I don’t believe our people have fully caught on to the possibilities of outreach and church growth through the Support Ministries. These ministries give us a wonderful means to put into operation the apostle’s method to “make [ourselves servants] unto all, that [we] might gain the more” . . . and [become] all things to all men, that by all means [we] might save some” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22), and again, “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved“ (10:33), and again, “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification” (Romans 15:2). And who was the apostle’s model but the Lord himself, who “pleased not himself” (v. 3). So, not only can we do like Jesus and eat at the table of tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2:15-17), but in this way we bring them to our table. Jesus loved the people of the world, though He hated the world in the people.

This is why we urge all of pastors and workers to organize the Support Ministries as soon as possible and put them into operation. Reach out through them locally and enlist the people in your communities (saints and sinners) into the outer court of the church, as it were; befriend them; minister to them. In this way, you will also at the same time be participating in the worldwide outreach of the church that is going on through the Support Ministries.

## Utilizing Our Youth

I have been awakened by the Spirit this year to a valuable resource that we have been overlooking. I speak of our young ministers. I don't mean that we have completely overlooked them, not at all; for we have done our best to encourage them and to use them as much as possible in various ways in the church. But we have, nevertheless, relegated them to positions and ministries that are subservient in the government and administration of the church. It is in this regard that I have been checked by the Spirit in recent months. After the Lord began to speak to me about some of our young ministers, I at first wrestled with Him and resisted the counsel that He was whispering to my spirit, not knowing for sure that it was the Lord. I thought I was reasoning within myself, but it turns out I was actually arguing with the Lord. I reasoned they needed more experience, and more time to prove themselves. But the more I resisted and argued my side of it, the more the Lord insisted on His side of it.

It was not until about five weeks ago, that I surrendered to what I'm now confident is the will of God. He has shown me that the strength and zeal to do the ground work in soul winning, visitation, new field work, and planting new churches is in our young people, and that they need to be appointed to responsible positions of authority to fulfill and accomplish this work. Some are being called into pastoral ministries and into missionary service. But a few are being called into overseer work and responsibilities. I plan therefore in this Assembly to make a few appointments in this direction.

This does not mean that these young ministers know it all. Far from it. It means rather that God has laid this kind of calling and responsibility upon them. I'm asking therefore that our elders and experienced ministers understand this, and work with them, encourage them, and help to bring them along. And I'm asking the young ministers to accept these appointments and responsibilities in humility, with gravity and sobriety.

As we go along, I suspect that these young ministers will be tapping into the wisdom and experience of the elders and asking for their counsel, and the elders with their love and grace will hold up the hands of these young leaders and support and encourage them. And this is as it should be and will be well pleasing to the Lord.

### Section III

## Communication/Media Ministries

In order to accelerate our outreach efforts and to help fulfill our worldwide mission, we want to use every means available, including the latest technological advancements. A good place to start will be in radio. Wouldn't it be wonderful to take this first big step and begin to broadcast our message in Zion Assembly to thousands and millions around the world in the months ahead. Perhaps we will be able to get a radio program off the ground this year, and be able to give an exciting and encouraging report in the next General Assembly, or even sooner in the *Voice of Zion*.

This will be wonderful because Zion Assembly is committed to proclaim the "all things whatsoever" message of Christ to all nations---the same message that Jesus taught and preached while He was here on earth. We want to be that voice, don't we?---the "voice of prophecy." Hear the inspired prophet: "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (Isaiah 52:8), and again, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet . . . (58:1), and again, "exalt the voice unto them . . . Go into the gates of the nobles" (13:2). Certainly one way to exalt His "glorious voice" is through radio.

There is a passage by David in a certain Psalm that extols the Word of God in nature. He says "The heavens declare the glory of God . . . Day unto day uttered speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Psalm 19:1-4). But we know that God's Word in Scripture is more powerful and clear than God's Word in nature---and it is this Word in Scripture that Jesus commissioned us to preach to all nations. What Christ is doing in nature then, He has commissioned us to do more perfectly and effectively in person---through His body.

This will be no small undertaking. It will require planning, work, and money. But who can deny the possibilities within reach through such a ministry in the church. We have been going along now for over five years since we reorganized in 2004, and we feel especially impressed by the Spirit now to take this big step forward.

In regard to financing the radio program, we do not want to put any further burden on the shoulders of the local churches. It will perhaps be wisdom therefore to solicit volunteer partners in the radio ministry. The system could be called "Partners in Media Ministries" or something to that effect. The details in regard to the name of the radio program and how to

finance it can be worked out by the Assembly Business Committee and reported to this Assembly for consideration and action.

If the Assembly deems this ministry prudent and expedient to advance the work of the church in the world, the Presiding Bishop will then appoint a Minister of Communications/Media Ministries.

## **Section IV**

### **Expansion of Our International Ministries Center**

Last year in the Fifth Annual Assembly, the Presiding Bishop was asked to look into the “cost factors of adding a wing onto the existing building that would answer the need for more library and archive space, and for a kitchen and fellowship hall.” After much consideration of this, and consultation with the General Staff and some other brethren, it seems that it may be a little premature to present something to the Assembly this year. I say this for the following reasons: 1) We are not sure right now exactly what amount of space is needed and how best to utilize it. Certainly, we will need more library and office space (we need this even now) and we will need a kitchen and fellowship hall. But it seems that we may need in the near future also more office space and additional restrooms. 2) It may be necessary because of city building codes to construct a separate building and connect the two buildings with an enclosed breezeway. 3) It seems best to wait until we grow in numbers and until more funds are coming into the International Offices to begin this project. Right now we could not finance an addition this extensive, and also the demand for it is not especially pressing on us.

We do expect to need additional space and equipment in the near future to move the church forward, and so we need a blueprint and plan of action for this project. In consideration, I am asking for the indulgence of this Assembly for another year in order to think through more thoroughly this project among ourselves and to consult with the necessary city officials, architect, engineer, etc. in order to present a reasonable and workable plan of construction.

## **Section V**

### **Stay on Message**

Notwithstanding all that we have said in this address about the prophecies of the Antichrist and Babylon and end-time events, these

things are not our message. Fascinating as they are, they are not what we are called to proclaim. Again, we are given the prophecies in God's Word about these end-time agents of Satan and the events connected with them, and we are able to draw contrasts with them against the truths of God, but they are not our message. Our message is Christ and the church!

Look, how can you preach, explain, and build up the church, if you don't have a vision of it. What good is it to know all about Babylon, if you don't understand hardly anything about the true nature and purpose of the church. After all, the Lord is coming back for the church, not Babylon. It is Babylon that is going to go through the Great Tribulation, not the Bride of Christ. It is Babylon that will be burned and destroyed, not the church. And when Jesus returns to the earth, it will be His church that comes with Him, and that rules and reigns with Him for a thousand years, not Babylon.

There are several pillars in our tradition of the faith that give us our distinction and peculiarity. It was the erosion and removal of these pillars that necessitated the restoration and reorganization of the church in 2004. These same pillars that were at stake in the 1920s, that necessitated the restoration and reorganization of the church in 1923, and these same pillars were at stake in 1886 when R. G. Spurling led a handful of enlightened mountain believers to come out of men-made religious organizations to restore the church of the Bible. And it was these same pillars that changed forever A. J. Tomlinson in 1903, and founded his life and ministry once and for all on the solid rock of revelation. These same pillars must necessarily be sustained in Zion Assembly, if we are going to be triumphant in the end.

Now the primary pillar is the doctrine of the church itself. If this pillar is removed, all the other pillars will be weakened and will eventually crumble. Our fellowship stands or falls on this pillar. The devil knows this, and this is why he fights so hard to destroy or obscure our understanding and vision of the church. It is this vision in particular that God entrusted to our illustrious fathers in the late nineteenth- and twentieth century, that they in turn handed down to us as a sacred trust.

It is not too much to say that this vision is our "reason-for-being" in Zion Assembly, the same as it was for our fathers in 1886 and again in 1923 after the disruption occurred. Without this vision, we will be scattered, or, worse, we will become mundane and just another man-made church. This vision gives us our special sense of identity with God--"a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people," and our identity in the world. How else will the other sheep one day exclaim, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." How else will the "daughters

see her, and bless her, and the queens praise her” (Song of Solomon 6:6-10)? Why else will her virgin companions follow her (Psalm 45:14)? Why else will they say, “O thou fairest among women?” Why else will they desire to cloth her in royal apparel (Psalm 45:13; Song of Solomon 1:11)? Why is the King himself jealous for her and “greatly desires her beauty” (Psalm 45:11). Why will the Father himself “exalt her above the hills” and give her His eternal city in glory (John 14:1-3)? Because she will be “all glorious within” (Psalm 45: 13) and “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (Ephesians 5:27). Because she is, in this sense, His daughter-in-law, the bride of His beloved Son. Because He knows that she completes His Son--fulfills the reason for His incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection! This is why the multitudes in heaven will lift their voices like the sound of “mighty thunderings” and say, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints” (Revelation 19:6-8).

You see how sanctification and holiness are inseparably connected with the vision of the church and her victorious end. These graces are God’s witness to the world through the church, and are connected with His everlasting glory. The church is the glory of God! “Unto [God] be glory in the church by Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 3:21). She is His workmanship--His masterpiece! The nations of the world come to know God more perfectly through the church (2 Corinthians 3:2,3; 1 Peter 2:9). As God exalts the church with His presence and power, the nations will be drawn to her (Isaiah 2:2, 3; 60:1-5).

You see, then, the importance of how we dress and behave ourselves. We are His ambassadors, His representatives in the world (2 Corinthians 5:16-20)---His bride! Think of it! Hear the apostle: “These things write I unto thee . . . That thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:15).

**International & Regional Assembly Appointments**  
**International Staff**  
 2009-2010

Presiding Bishop.....	Wade Phillips
Assistant Presiding Bishop.....	E.A. McDonald
Field Secretary (Africa, England).....	Joshua Amara
Field Secretary (United States, Mexico, Central America).....	Danny Ramirez
Field Secretary (South America).....	Miguel Garcia
Field Secretary (Southeast Asia).....	Boonyong Bureenok
Mission Representative.....	Tim Pounders
General Treasurer.....	E.A. McDonald
Office Assistant/ <i>Voice of Zion</i> Lay-out & Design.....	Marie Crook
Shepherding Ministries Director.....	Rocky Dalton
Sunday School Services Director.....	Todd McDonald
Youth Ministries Director.....	Cheryl McDonald
Children’s Ministries Director.....	Cheryl McDonald
Camping Coordinator/Advisor.....	Cheryl McDonald
Evangelism/Public Relations Director.....	Scott Neill
<i>Voice of Zion</i> Booster.....	Zachary Snyder
Communications/Media Ministries.....	E.A. McDonald
Ladies Ministries Director.....	Rosie Ramirez

***(Note: The appointment of the Ladies Ministries Director  
 was made following the Assembly)***

**Regional Overseers:**

**United States**

***South-Atlantic***

(North Carolina, South Carolina,  
 Georgia, Florida).....Scott Neill

***Mid-East***

(Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia,  
 Maryland, Pennsylvania).....Ron Massey

***Mid-Central***

(Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri).....Ricky Graves

***South-Central***

(Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana).....Joel

Brooks

***North-West***

(Idaho, Montana, North Dakota,

South Dakota, Wyoming).....A.B. White

***South-West***

(Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma).....Joseph Steele

***Pacific Coast***

(California Nevada, Oregon, Washington)

.....A.B. White

**Central America**.....Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez

**South America**.....Miguel Garcia

**East Africa/England**.....Joshua Amara

**Middle East**.....George Assi

**Southeast Asia**.....Boonyong Bureenok

**Philippines/Guam**.....Domingo Resurreccion

**National Overseers:**

Cambodia.....Boonyong Bureenok

Dominican Republic.....Rafael Ventura

England.....Joshua Amara

Guatemala.....Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez

India.....Padma Rao Talari

Kenya.....Joshua Amara

Mexico.....Danny Ramirez

Myanmar.....Boonyong Bureenok

Nicaragua.....Carlos Garcia

Nigeria.....Yomi Adegunle

Pakistan.....George Assi

Peru.....Carlos Rafael Rodriquez

Philippines.....Domingo Resurreccion

Sudan.....Elijah Wafula

Tanzania.....	David Gomba
Thailand.....	Boonyong Bureenok
Uganda.....	Joshua Amara

**Committees**

**Assembly Business:**.....Charles Fields, Chairman  
A.B. White  
Joshua Amara  
C.R. Gregory  
Miguel Garcia  
Zachary Snyder  
Joe Steele  
Alternates: Reginaldo Durate  
Ray Dickson

**Adjunct to Assembly Business Committee...**Todd McDonald,  
Wade H. Phillips  
E.A.McDonald  
William Crook  
Zachary Snyder  
Ricky Graves  
Jim Melton

*(Note:The appointment of Jim Melton was made after the Assembly)*

**Other Committees**

**Construction Committee:** Wade H. Phillips, E.A. McDonald, C.R. Gregory, Clifton Kelton, Sam Monday, Ricky Graves

**International Properties:** Wade H. Phillips, Chairman  
E.A. McDonald, William Crook, Gene Tingler, Reginaldo Durate, Joseph Steele, Charles Fields

**General Trustees:** Wade Phillips, E.A. McDonald, William Crook, Ricky Graves, Todd McDonald

**Churches/ Pastors/ Missions**  
*United States*

Adolphus, KY.....	C.R. Gregory
Anaheim, CA.....	Juan Avila
Bakersfield, CA.....	Juan Lopez
Bayou La Batre, AL (West Mobile).....	Charles Fields
Butte, MT.....	Gary Perdue
Caledonia, MS.....	Clifford Kelton
Chestnut Hills, TN .....	Zachary Snyder
Cleveland, TN.....	Todd McDonald
Clinton, TN (Jacksboro).....	Ray Dickson
Colton, CA.....	Daniel Urcadiz
Columbus, MS.....	Tim Pounders
Dallas, OR.....	Kerry Bryant
Ft. Oglethorpe, GA.....	Harold Reed
Fresno, CA.....	James Parker
Fries, VA.....	Rocky E. Dalton
Glendora, CA.....	Reginaldo Duraté
Goshen, IN.....	Jim Webster
Greenville, SC.....	Scott E. Neill
Hartsville, TN.....	William Crook
Herminston, OR.....	Brian Norquist
Hesperia, CA.....	Jose Lozano
Las Vegas.....	Jorge Pino
Little Bingamon, WV.....	Tom Brown
Lompoc, CA.....	Pete Sarry
Lompoc, CA (FCI).....	Vicente Garcia
Lompoc, CA (UOP).....	Vicente Garcia
Madera, CA.....	Matthew Carrasco
Okolona, MS.....	Bobby Pounders
Pulaski, TN.....	Jim Melton
Rialto, CA.....	Danny Ramirez
Roanoke, VA.....	William Jones
Salisbury, MD.....	Buddy Quillen
Santa Ana, CA.....	Luis Mazariego

San Jose, CA.....	Barbara Rivera
Sheridan, WY.....	Gary Larsen
Taylor, SC.....	Raymond Stonell
Vallejo, CA.....	A.B. White
Van Nuys, CA.....	Miguel Garcia
Ware Shoals, SC.....	Andrea Faye Davis
Wilmington, (Leland) NC .....	Robert Llanaza

**Missions**  
*United States*

Aldento, CA.....	Jose Lozano
Arroyo Grande.....	Judy Ramos
Cabin Creek, WV.....	Ron Massey
Flintville, TN.....	Roger Barbour
Gainesville, MO.....	Jerry Tingler
Glendale, CA.....	Miguel Garcia
Kosciusko, MS.....	Joel Brooks
Little Rock, CA.....	Rebecca Pereira
Medota, CA.....	James Parker
Saticoy, CA.....	Gilbert Zanales
Sheridan, WY.....	Gary Larsen

**New Fields**  
*United States*

Bellingham, WA.....	A.B. White
Roseburg, OR.....	A.B. White
Salem, OR.....	A.B. White
Vancouver, WA.....	Trevor Joselyn

## International Churches/Missions

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Churches</b>	<b>Missions</b>
United States	38	11
Cambodia	2	1
Dominican Republic	1	
England	2	
Guatemala	3	8
India	1	
Kenya	32	9
Mexico	3	2
Myanmar	1	1
Nicaragua	1	1
Nigeria	7	2
Pakistan	1	2
Philippines	4	2
Tanzania	13	3
Thailand	19	2
Uganda	5	1
Total	134	45

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# ABSTRACT OF FAITH

**Note:** The following was read before the entire Assembly on September 26, 2004, and was accepted by unanimous agreement.

## INTRODUCTION

Zion Assembly Church of God is a Spirit-filled body of believers who have covenanted themselves together with God to accept and obey the teachings of Christ and His apostles (Exodus 19:3-6; John 14:6, 8; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:24-32). This commitment is firm, even in this present time of apostasy, when so many are “falling away” and “[departing] from the faith” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2; 3:1-12; Jude 3-19).

The ministers and members of Zion Assembly have committed themselves to live and worship together in this “most holy faith,” to walk in truth, to “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” “and to cultivate among themselves the graces of love and holiness.” They seek for the perfections of Christ in their fellowship, and by His grace and power to conform to the image of Jesus Christ so completely that when He appears they shall be like Him (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:1-17; 1 John 3:32).

Besides this internal disposition to cultivated mutual love and care within the household of God, the ministers and members of Zion Assembly have committed themselves to labor for the unity of all believers, until all “see eye to eye,” “speak the same thing,” “walk by the same rule” (Isaiah 52:8; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 3:16). In this manner, they seek to carry forward the apostolic vision: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Zion Assembly has further obligated itself to publish and to proclaim the full gospel into all the world in obedience to Christ’s commission to the church (Matthew 28:19).

## Church Membership

Membership in Zion Assembly Church of God is open to all believers whose testimony is evidenced by the fruit of the new birth, and who are willing to covenant themselves together with Christ and the church to walk in the light of the gospel. Candidates become members by

the following solemn obligation:

*Will you sincerely promise in the presence of God and these witnesses, that you will accept this Bible as the Word of God, believe and practice its teachings rightly divided, with the New Testament as your rule of faith and practice, government and discipline, and agree to walk together as one body in the light of the gospel to the best of your knowledge and ability?*

In response to this covenant formula, the candidate answers, “I will by the grace of God.” The minister then lays hands on the new member and offers prayer for divine guidance and strength; the congregation follows with an affectionate welcome, and extends the right hand of fellowship.

### **Prominent Teachings in the Scripture**

**Note:** The following statements are not meant to form a creed, or to be thought of as an exhaustive statement of beliefs upon which the church is built. They are simply an abstract of some of the important and fundamental teachings and principles set forth in the Holy Scriptures, which form an essential part of the church’s Rule of Faith.

**The Trinity**—The Bible teaches that the one eternal God exists in three persons: namely the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three have distinct identities, yet they form one undivided Godhead, subsisting in the same nature (Romans 5:5; 15:16, 30; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 5:19; John 3:5; Ephesians 2:18; Titus 3:5). The Father is God (Ephesians 4:6), the Son is God (John 1:1-3; 10-1; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 1:8), the Holy Spirit is God (John 14:17; 16:13; Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 2:10), yet there are not three gods, but one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three persons of the divine Trinity work together in perfect unity for the salvation of man (John 3:5; 6:44; 14:6, 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 5:19).

**Jesus Christ**—Jesus Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), and God’s “only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Through Him, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received into glory, and now sits on the right hand of God to make intercession for us (Acts 7:55; 1 Timothy 3:16). Through Him alone do men have access unto the heavenly Father. It is through His sacrificial and atoning death on the cross that we are saved. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under

heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). He is the spotless “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). He is also the head of the church and the savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23).

**The Bible**—The Holy Scriptures—both Old and New Testaments—reveal God and His will for man. They are inspired, inerrant, infallible, and unchangeable (2 Timothy 3:14-16; 2 Peter 1:16-21). The truths of the Scriptures are revealed by prophecy, type, precept, and example, illuminated through the power of the Holy Spirit. The teachings of the Bible, particularly in the light of the New Testament, are the Church’s final rule for faith, practice, government, and discipline (Acts 2:42; 2 Peter 3:1, 2). Walking in the light of God’s Word is the guiding principle and commitment of Zion Assembly Church of God. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

**The Church**—The church is a visible body of believers formed and incorporated by covenant with God to keep His commandments (Exodus 19:5-8; 24:3-8; Psalm 119:57; John 14:15; 17:6, 8, 14; 1 Peter 2:9). It is theocratic in form and function, providing order and government through the Spirit and the Scriptures for God’s people (Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:7; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 12:28). The church is presently imperfect, spotted with backsliders and “false brethren” (1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 2:4; Jude 4). It is thus distinguished from the kingdom of God, the latter being the spiritual realm of all born again believers (John 3:3-8; Romans 14:17; Colossians 1:13). One is “born” into the kingdom; he/she is “added to the church” (John 3:3-8; Acts 2:47). The church will succeed to proclaim the gospel into all the world (Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16); will be perfected “with the washing of water by the word,” and will be presented to Christ glorious in holiness (Ephesians 5:26, 27). The General Assembly is the highest tribunal of authority in the church of the interpretation of the Scriptures (Acts 15; 16:4, 5). The purpose of the General Assembly is to promote unity and fellowship among the saints, to search the Scriptures for additional light and understanding, and to resolve differences in interpretations, which tend to be divisive among the ministers and churches. All matters of faith, government, and discipline are discussed before the entire body of the church assembled, and resolved in one accord with the manifest approval of the Spirit (vv. 12, 22, 28), based on the precedent: “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.” All male members in good standing have an active voice in the Assembly. Women are a vital part of the church’s life and ministry. In matters dealing

with church authority, however, they voice their opinions through their husbands and church elders (1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-9; 14:34-36; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-17).

## **Salvific Work of Grace**

**Conviction** is a revelation to man by the Holy Ghost of the righteous judgment of God. Through conviction, unregenerated souls see themselves as sinners before God, experience guilt, and realize their separation from Him who is holy, just and good (Isaiah 6:1; John 6:44; Acts 2:37, 38). True repentance can be made only through the work of the Spirit in conviction (John 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 12:3; see also John 8:32; 14:6).

**Repentance** is the act of confessing one's sins before God, being willing to forsake them and to turn to Christ with all of one's heart, mind, soul, and strength. True repentance can be made only in the spirit of godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:9, 10). Repentance is manifested by certain fruit "meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8; Romans 6:2). The act of repentance should be followed by water baptism [see below] (Mark 1:4, 5, 15; Luke 13, 3; Acts 3:19; 5:30, 31; 1 John 1:9). Repentance is a prerequisite experience for justification.

**Justification** is the state of being void of offense toward God. It is made possible through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. It is the act of God in forgiving the transgressions of a penitent sinner. Justification is the result of repentance and faith (Romans 8:1, 2; 3:23-26; 1 John 1:7). The genuinely justified person has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:1, 2). Justification signifies the pardon (forgiveness) aspect of the new birth.

**Regeneration** (Born Again) is the act of God in creating new life in the heart of the believer through the Holy Ghost. It is a definite and instantaneous experience. Man is dead in sins and trespasses through Adam, and can be quickened or regenerated only through faith in Christ and His atoning sacrifice (Ephesians 2:1, 4, 5; Colossians 2:13, 14; John 5:24). Regeneration is the same as the new birth. "Born Again" is another term for regeneration. The result of this experience is that the believer becomes a child of God. It is through this new birth that one becomes a part of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said: "Ye must be born again" (John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23). The new birth is a prerequisite condition for the experience of sanctification.

**Fruit of the Spirit** is of divine origin. It is the very life of God poured

into the heart of the regenerate believer. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22, 23). We are admonished in the Scripture to walk in the Spirit and not to fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11).

**Divine Healing** is provided for all in the atonement. Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross provides healing for the whole man, including his body. Divine healing is effected by faith without the aid of medicine or surgical skills. In cases where one is healed through the assistance of physicians, medicine, herbs, etc., God is still to be praised: for it is God who heals in any case. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:2, 3; Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17; 2 Peter 2:24; James 5:14-16).

### Subsequent Grace

**Sanctification** is the second definite work of grace wrought in the regenerated heart by faith. In sanctification, the carnal nature is eradicated ("the old man is crucified") so that the believer no longer has the inclination or propensity to sin; that is, in sanctification the desire to sin is removed (Hebrews 10:10; 13:12, 13; Romans 6:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). Sanctification enables the believer to bring his/her body under subjection to Christ, and to live a life consistent with the spirit of holiness and in accordance with the Word of God. Sanctification is a prerequisite condition for the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

**Holiness** is the result of sanctification. It is a state of grace and purity in which perfect Christlikeness is desired and pursued (Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 7:2). God has called us unto holiness (Thessalonians 4:7). "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15, 16). "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14; see also Luke 1:74, 75; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:11, 12; Eph. 1:4; 4:13, 24). Paul expressed his desire to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). Christ is returning for a church that is glorious in holiness: "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27; see also Psalm 45:9-13).

## Practical Graces

**Restitution** is the act of restoring something wrongfully taken, or the satisfying of one whom otherwise has been wronged (Matthew 3:8; Luke 19:8, 9). This act alone does not save, but it gives evidence of a heart that has truly repented. Restitution glorifies the grace of God and supports the testimony of the believer. It also gives opportunity to reconcile with those who have been wronged. It is the fulfillment of the law of love (Romans 13:8). Some restitutions should be made only with great care and with pastoral guidance, in order to avoid further offense or injury.

**Sabbath** means rest. Observance of the Sabbath in the Old Testament (the seventh day) was instituted to point to the believer's spiritual rest in Christ under the New Covenant. The Old Testament requirement to keep the Sabbath holy is now superseded by the commandment: "Be ye holy," for in Christ the believer is enabled and required to live holy every day. Sunday is not the Sabbath, but is a day set aside by the church to give special attention to the worship of God and the fellowship of the saints (Hosea 2:11; Colossians 2:16, 17; Romans 14:5, 6; Hebrews 4:1-11).

**Meats and Drinks**—The prohibitions against certain meats and drinks in the Old Testament were not extended into the New Testament church. These ceremonial aspects of Mosaic legislation were "nailed to the cross" of Christ, and done away with in the covenant of grace (Colossians 2:13-17; Ephesians 2:15; Hebrews 9:8-11). What one eats and drinks (with the exception of intoxicating beverages) is now a matter of conscience, and does not violate the nature and principles of the kingdom of God (Romans 14:17). However, one should be mindful of the Scriptural injunction: "... whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (See also: Romans 14:2; 1 Corinthians 8:8; 1 Timothy 4:1-5).

**Tithing And Giving**—Tithing is the giving of one tenth of one's increase to Christ, our High Priest. It began as a voluntary act with Abraham, was required under the Mosaic law, and carried forward by Christ as a discipline for the New Testament church (Matthew 23:23). Tithes are to be brought to the house of God and properly distributed by the ministers having the charge of the treasury (Malachi 3:10). Freewill offerings are to be encouraged and regarded as a gift from the heart. Tithing and giving into the church are part of God's plan to finance His work through the church on earth. We are required in the Scriptures to be good stewards of that which God has entrusted in our care (See also: Genesis 14:18-20;

Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; Hebrews 7:1-21).

**Swearing and Profanity**—Taking an oath is contrary to the spirit of the New Testament. “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (James 5:12). Jesus said, “But I say unto you, Swear not at all...But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:34, 37; see also Exodus 20:7). An affirmation of the truth is sufficient; it is acceptable even in secular courts. Similarly, the use of profanity reflects an impure heart and has no place in the life of a child of God (Matthew 15:18, 19; Philippians 1:27; 3:20; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 2:7; James 3:8-10).

**Intoxicating Beverages and Drugs**—“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1). The Scriptures teach against the consumption of alcohol or other intoxicating beverages because God has called us to perfect sobriety (1 Peter 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Timothy 3:2; Titus 2:2). Believers are admonished not to “...give place to the devil.” So-called moderate or social drinking certainly gives place to the adversary and thus believers should totally abstain (Ephesians 4: 27; see also: Isaiah 28: 7; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; Galatians 5:21). Much of what is said about intoxicating beverages is true also of drugs. The use of drugs such as tobacco, marijuana, opium, cocaine, etc., impair the body and is not in keeping with the teachings and principles of Christ and the Scriptures. These things defile the body and are inconsistent with God’s call to soberness (2 Corinthians 7:1; Isaiah 55:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31, 32; Ephesians 5:3-8; James 1:21). Drugs used for medical purposes should be taken only under the care and direction of a physician, and then only in good conscience.

**Gambling** (“Gaming”)—Due to the increase of lotteries and other forms of gambling, we feel that we should make it clear that Zion Assembly Church of God is opposed to gambling in any form. Gambling brings with it a negative effect on society and is immoral (Exodus 20:17; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10). This sin is associated with wasting time, money, and possessions. It also carries with it the stigma of greed and covetousness (see Exodus 20:17; Psalms 10:3; I Corinthians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10; Hebrews 13:5). Gambling of any kind (lotteries, casinos, sports betting, video poker (slot) machines, on-line gambling, bingo, etc.) is denounced in principle throughout Scripture. It is also addictive, leads to increased

crime, and often destroys marriages and homes.

**Unequal Yoke**—The Bible teaches against the children of God being unequally yoked with unbelievers. Binding ourselves with unbelievers in organizations and secret orders with an oath is contrary to the Spirit of Christ and the plain teaching in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 6:14-17). As the espoused bride of Christ, we have covenanted ourselves to give undivided loyalty to Christ. “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2; Jeremiah 50:5). Membership in organizations which require an oath of secrecy should be dissolved before becoming a member of the church. “Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing” (John 18:20).

## **Spirit Baptism and Spiritual Gifts**

**Baptism with the Holy Ghost** is an instantaneous experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to entire sanctification. In this baptism, Christ is the agent; the Spirit is the element (Matthew 3:11). The baptism with the Spirit on the sanctified life is accompanied with speaking in tongues: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4; see also: 10:44-47; 19:1-6). The baptism with the spirit is a baptism of spiritual empowerment for service in the kingdom of God (Luke 24:49; John 15:26; Acts 1:8); it also enables one to minister effectively within the church for the self-edification of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 4:11-16).

**Speaking in Tongues** always accompanies the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The believer speaks in “unknown tongues” as “the Spirit gives utterance” (Acts 2:4). “Unknown tongues” is distinguished from speaking by the gift of the Spirit in “divers tongues,” that is, in languages that are known to man (Acts 2:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:2). In either case (“unknown tongues” or languages known to man), the manifestation of tongues (and interpretations) is always consistent with the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:26). The gift of tongues is a sign to unbelievers (vv. 14:21-23), but serve also for the self-edification of the believer (v. 4).

**Gifts Of The Spirit**—There are various gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The gifts of the Spirit were in operation

in the New Testament church, but thereafter the church began to “fall away,” and the manifestations of the spiritual gifts began to wane. After the apostasy in the fourth century, and the ensuing “dark ages” of Christian history, the manifestation of spiritual gifts (particularly tongues-speaking) were almost non-existent (manifested on occasion mainly among so-called heretics and unorthodox Christians). In these last days (particularly since early in the twentieth century) God is again pouring out His Spirit “upon all flesh” according to prophecy, in order to fulfill His eternal purpose through the church (Joel 2:28-32; 3:16-18; Acts 2:38, 39).

**Signs Following Believers**—Signs in the New Testament were mainly for the purpose of confirming the Word of God and Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. As believers went forth preaching the Word in Jesus’ name, the Lord worked with them and confirmed the Word with signs following (Mark 16:15-20). Miraculous signs follow believers in order to confirm the proclamation of the Word of God, to convict sinners, and to edify the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12-14).

## Ordinances

**Water Baptism** is the act of being immersed in water by the minister of the gospel in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is commanded by Christ and represents His death, burial and resurrection, which are experienced in the life of the believer (Romans 6:3-5). This ordinance has no power to wash away sin, but is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21). Water baptism is valid only when the candidate is actually born again (Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:8-10; 16:15, 16; John 3:22, 23; Acts 10:47, 48; 16:33). Water baptism is identified with spiritual regeneration; it is not the door into the church.

**Lord’s Supper** is a memorial meal, which calls to remembrance the sacrifice of Christ, who shed His blood for our sins. Jesus commanded that this sacred meal be observed “in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24). The broken, unleavened bread represents His body; the fruit of the vine (unfermented grape juice) represents His blood. This sacred ordinance should be observed with holy reverence, only after careful self-examination (1 Corinthians 10: 16, 17; 11:23-30). It is the outward sign of Christ’s covenant with the church (Luke 22:20).

**Feet Washing** is an ordinance in the church. Following the institution of the Lord’s Supper, Christ girded himself with a towel, washed the disciples’

feet, and said: “If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). This ordinance is distinguished from the cultural practice of feet washing in the Middle East; it has spiritual significance and is commanded to be observed by believers (1 Timothy 5:10). The purpose of feet washing is not fulfilled through charity and good works. It is to remind us that we have one Master and Lord, who is the head of the church, and we are all His servants, and servants of one another.

## **Divine Sanctities**

**Sanctity of Life**—Human life is sacred because it is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Taking of innocent life is thus strictly forbidden in Scripture, including abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, genocide, and suicide (self-murder). “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13). Whosoever sheddeth innocent blood will not be held guiltless before God (Genesis 9:6; Numbers 35:30, 31; Romans 13:8-10; Revelation 21:8).

**Sanctity of Marriage**—Jesus said, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4-6). Accordingly, marriage is between a male and female until death (Mark 10:2-12; Romans 7:2); as such it is a divine institution that should be held in the highest esteem among all men and women (Hebrews 13:4). Adultery, fornication, divorce and remarriage are sinful practices that violate the laws of God, and injure the home and family. Nevertheless, unfaithfulness (sexual relationships outside of marriage) is not grounds for divorce and remarriage, for “whosoever marrieth her which is put away committeth adultery” (Matthew 19:9). Therefore, those who remarry while their first companion is alive are not eligible for membership in the church (see Exodus 20:14, 17; Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 6:15-20; 7:2, 3).

**Sanctity of the Body**—Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are admonished to glorify God in our body (1 Corinthians 6:20-21). “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy” (3:16-17). We are also admonished to present our bodies “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1), and “...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31b). Incest, same sex unions, and all homosexual and lesbian relationships are strictly forbidden by the

Scriptures. These practices are an abomination to God, though they may be sanctioned by a state or religious institution (Romans 1:24-28; Leviticus 18:22, 23; 20:10-21). Practices such as “body piercing,” tattooing, mutilating and disfiguring the body are of pagan origin and contrary to the spirit of holiness and biblical principles. These practices should have no place in the lives of believers (Cf: Timothy 2:8-10; Romans 12:1, 2; Isaiah 3:16-22; 1 John 2:15-17).

## **Eschatology**

**The Rapture and Pre-Millennial Second Coming Of Jesus**—Christ is coming again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:27, 28). “The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; see also 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52). All who are caught up in the first resurrection will attend the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). Christ will then return to earth and reign with the saints for a thousand years (vv. 4, 6; see also Zechariah 14:4, 5; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Jude 14, 15; Revelation 5:10; 19:11-21).

**Resurrection**—There will be a resurrection for both the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will be raised at Christ’s first appearance in the clouds of glory. The resurrection of the wicked will occur after the thousand years reign of Christ on earth. “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15; see also Daniel 12: 2; Revelation 20: 4-6; John 5: 28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:12-23, 41-58).

**Eternal Life for the Righteous**—The reward of the righteous is everlasting life in the presence of God. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:46; Luke 18:29, 30; John 10:28; Romans 6:22; 1 John 5:11-13).

**Eternal Punishment for the Wicked**—Those who reject or disregard the call to repentance and salvation are doomed to eternal damnation (John 3:15-21). In hell there is no escape, no liberation, no annihilation. Hell is the “the second death,” and is a place of eternal torment. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8; see also: 20:10-15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14:15; Matthew 25:46; Mark 3:29).

## Principles for Practical Christian Living and Discipline

The following guidelines are explicitly revealed in the Scriptures, or else shown to be consistent with biblical teachings. They are brought to our attention to enhance our relationship with Christ and one another, and to encourage us to live in a way that will bring glory and honor to the name of Christ, and to support the witness of the church. We are admonished in the Scriptures: "...be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12b). Jesus instructs us: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

**Prayer**—Jesus' admonition to "watch and pray" (Matthew 26:41a) has never been more urgent than today. We live in "perilous times," and Christ and the apostles warned that the times will only worsen as we approach our Lord's return. Therefore, daily prayers and family devotions should be a priority in every church home. Maintaining a prayerful attitude is a key to spirituality for every individual and local congregation. Again Jesus said, "...men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1a), and the apostle encouraged believers to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We are also enjoined to "...pray one for another..." James 5:16a). Special prayers should be made for those in authority and for those who have given themselves in service to God and to the ministry of the Word (1 Timothy 2:1-3). Prayer is so essential to the life of the church that the church is called "the house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 21:13).

**Bible Study**—Reading and studying the Scriptures are invaluable to the spiritual welfare of the child of God. Every member of the church is encouraged to be a faithful student of God's holy Word. Paul instructs us to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God..." (2 Tim 2:15a), for "the holy scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (3:15). Further, he says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (v.16). The importance of the Word of God is eloquently expressed by Psalmist: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." And again, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:105, 11).

**Church Attendance and Worship**—Worship and fellowship with believers of "like precious faith" is a vital part of the Christian life. Worship

should be heartfelt in the Spirit, and in harmony with the Word of God (John 4:23b; Ephesians 5:19). Each member of the church is a part of the body of Christ, and thus the body will be hindered to the degree that one member fails to actively participate in its life and mission. Accordingly, members should actively support every function of the church, and participate as much as possible. The exhortation of the Hebrew writer is worthy of our careful attention: “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another: and so much more as we see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). Children should be instructed at home, and taught by precept and example to respect the house of God. Ministers and their families should be examples in their lifestyles and conversations. “And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane” (Ezekiel 44:23a). A prayerful attitude creates an atmosphere conducive for worship and the ministry of God’s Word. Believers should therefore be prayerful as the minister delivers the message, lest Satan come and steal the Word of God from their hearts (Mark 4:4, 15). God’s love “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” should fill the atmosphere of our worship services. Love should govern our every action and be shown to everyone without partiality (1 Corinthians 13). We should take special care to show love to visitors. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

**Walking Circumspectly**—Children of God should “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time for the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15,16). Living a consecrated life at home and abroad will give no place for anyone to justly think or speak of you as a hypocrite. Our manner of life and conversation should be holy in word and deed, as becoming to a child of God. As representatives of Christ in this world, and members of the Church of God, we should fashion ourselves with modesty and sobriety (Psalm 1:1-3; Philippians 1:27; Thessalonians 5:15-23).

**Entertainment and Worldly Attractions**—Christians should never participate in worldly attractions and entertainment where the principles of holiness may be compromised. Believers should participate in activities with unbelievers only with a guarded disposition, lest one becomes entangled or entrapped in the snares of Satan. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8; see also 2 Peter 2:19-22).

**Illicit Relationships**—Paul admonishes us to “give no place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:27). Forming too close an intimacy with the opposite sex, even if they are brothers and sisters in the Lord, creates an environment for temptation and gives opportunity for the “wiles of the devil.” Samson is a classic case of this unwise behavior, which led to his fall from grace (Judges 16); whereas Joseph wisely fled from a similar situation (Genesis 39). Paul perhaps had Joseph in mind when he exhorted, “Flee fornication” (1Corinthians 6:18). The words of James, the Lord’s brother, also come to mind: “Lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15). In view of these solemn admonitions, great care should be taken to avoid associations and situations, which could reflect upon one’s character and bring reproach upon Christ and the church.

**Outward Adornment**—Christians are ambassadors (representatives) for Christ in this present world (2 Corinthians 5:20). As such they should be careful to adorn themselves as befitting their Lord’s plainness and purity. Adorning oneself after a worldly fashion with facial paint, gold, pearls, costly apparel, etc. is inconsistent with the testimony of one professing a life separated unto God. “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel...But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Peter 3:1-6; see also 1 Timothy 2:8-10; Isaiah 3:16-24; 61:10).

**Corporate and Self-Discipline**—Self-examinations to evaluate one’s own faith and spirituality are healthy (1 Corinthians 11:28). Sincere concern for others is also good and to be encouraged. We are our brother’s keeper. Counsel should be given only in the spirit of love and with godly wisdom, and according to the rule of discipline outlined in the gospel (Matthew 18:15-20). (A harsh spirit of criticism is detrimental to the spiritual welfare of both the critic and the one receiving the criticism: Matthew 7:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 5:14, 15; Ephesians 4:30-32). Discipline should be administered only as a last resort, and always through prayerful counsel and with the ultimate good of the erring brother/sister in mind (1 Corinthians 5:1-7; Galatians 6:1-5).



