

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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ARE WE THANKFUL IN TRIALS?

When problems surround us, what is our attitude? Fear? Anger? Frustration? Thankfulness?

By Gregory Dullum

Lawrence Beesley lived about a hundred years ago. He did not DIE about a hundred years ago.

That's significant, because Lawrence Beesley was a MALE passenger aboard the *R.M.S. Titanic* on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, to New York City in April 1912.

The Greatest Ship

"The *Titanic* was the last word in ship building and she set forth on her first voyage, the pride of an admiring world. Her luxurious appointments were beyond criticism, beautiful salons, reading and lounging rooms, palm courts, Turkish baths, a gymnasium [with a mechanical horse and a mechanical camel], swimming pool, a ballroom and billiard hall, everything one could imagine as making for comfort. Her mechanical construction was thought to be as perfect, and in the minds of her passengers was a faith in her 'unsinkable character almost unshakable' " (*The Story of the Wreck of the Titanic*, 1912, p. 20).

The passengers and crew who boarded the *Titanic* fully expected her to take them safely to New York. They had no idea a disaster awaited them.

Leaving the Ship Behind

That gigantic ocean liner struck an iceberg at 11:40 p.m. on Sunday night, April 14, and started to sink. Women and children were the first to be ordered into the lifeboats. On one side of the *Titanic*, the orders were, "Women and children only." On the other side of the *Titanic*, the orders were, "Women and children first." When there were no more women and children nearby, men were allowed into the lifeboats. Lawrence Beesley survived because when there were no more women and children around him,

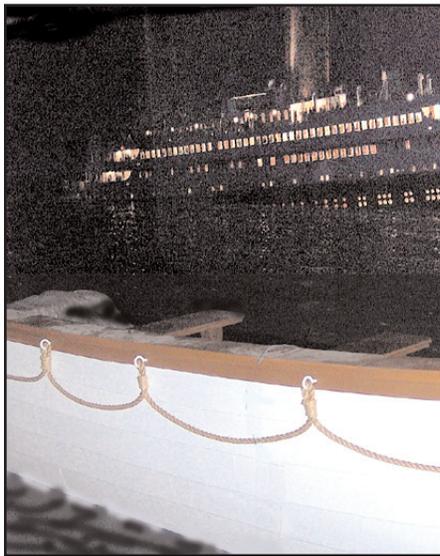


Photo by Gregory Dullum

What would our attitude be if we had to leave everything behind, climb aboard a tiny lifeboat, and wait for hours in the frigid darkness to be rescued? Here is the tale of one of the survivors of the *R.M.S. Titanic*, which sank 105 years ago this past April.

he was told to get into Lifeboat "B."

Imagine leaving the warmth, light, and stability of a massive ocean liner to climb into a tiny, creaky, wooden lifeboat, dangling from ropes and swinging precariously some 70 feet above a black, ice-cold, unforgiving North Atlantic Ocean. Imagine leaving behind almost everything we brought with us—money, jewelry, clothes, artwork, and so forth—but most importantly, saying good-bye forever to friends and family members who were not allowed in the lifeboat with us.

Conditions on the Lifeboat

Imagine being dressed in skimpy night-clothes or street clothes under our life-jacket when the cold night air was below freezing and, according to Commander

Lightoller "felt somewhere around the zero of Canada" (*The Story of the Titanic as Told by Its Survivors*, p. 293). Imagine how it felt for some of the passengers who jumped into the 28° ocean water and were later pulled into a lifeboat, soaking wet and shivering from the cold. Imagine that cold water swirling around our feet as we sat or stood in a lifeboat for hours.

Imagine seeing the black silhouette of the *Titanic* against the starlit sky, its stern lifting high out of the water as the bow sank lower and lower. Imagine the lights flickering one last time and going out forever. Imagine hearing a loud rumbling, crashing noise that sounded like explosions or boilers breaking loose from their bolts and crashing down through the ship—but may have actually been the ship tearing apart.

Imagine watching the black silhouette sink quietly beneath the waters to her final resting place 2 miles below the surface.

Imagine hearing the cries of hundreds of people who fell or jumped into the ocean after the lifeboats had all departed, as they bobbed on the surface of the ocean; most were slowly freezing to death but some were drowning. Imagine the silence when the last of those survivors succumbed to the freezing water and could moan no more.

Imagine the feeling of being all alone in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean in a wooden lifeboat packed with strangers, and nothing but the smooth black ocean as far as you can see in every direction. Little light. No food. No water. (At least none were found in Beesley's boat.) No bathroom facilities. Billions of brilliant stars overhead reflecting on the smooth surface of the water. Imagine waiting.

THANKFUL IN TRIALS

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Thankful in Trials

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Waiting for hours. Waiting for rescue.

What would our attitude be? Would we be sad? Would we be sorry? Would we be angry? Would we complain that we were cold, hungry and thirsty? Would we be worried? Would we be anxious? Would we be afraid?

Waiting for Rescue

When the survivors in the lifeboat thought they saw the faint glow of dawn on the horizon, they eagerly awaited the light and warmth of the sun, but they were disappointed to learn it was just the Northern Lights. It was only about 3:30 a.m. Dawn and rescue were still hours away.

The survivors kept searching the horizon for lights of a rescue ship coming toward them. Many times they thought they saw them—only to realize after awhile what they saw were only stars, or their reflections on the water, or lanterns from other lifeboats scattered across the ocean surface. They went through periods of eager anticipation only to be met with bitter disappointment. How did the people handle all this loss, all this disappointment, all this discomfort?

The Attitude on the Lifeboat

Lawrence Beesley was there. His words tell us what it was really like in his lifeboat:

“But notwithstanding these hopes and disappointments, the absence of lights, food and water (as we thought), and the bitter cold, it would not be correct to say we were unhappy in those early morning hours: the cold that settled down on us like a garment that wraps close around was the only real discomfort, and that we could keep at bay by not thinking too much about it as well as by vigorous friction and gentle stamping on the floor (it made too much noise to stamp hard!). I never heard that any one in Boat B had any after-effects from the cold—even the stoker who was so thinly clad came through without harm.

“After all, there were many things to be thankful for: so many that they made insignificant the temporary inconvenience of the cold, the crowded boat, the darkness and the hundred-and-one things that in the ordinary way we might regard as unpleasant. The quiet sea, the beautiful night (how different from two nights later when flashes of lightning and peals of thunder broke the sleep of many on board the *Carpathia*!), and above all the fact of

being in a boat at all when so many of our fellow-passengers and crew—whose cries no longer moaned across the water to us—were silent in the water. Gratitude was the dominant note in our feelings then” (*The Story of the Titanic as Told by Its Survivors*, p. 52).

The people in lifeboat B could have had all sorts of dominant notes of feeling—and rightly so—cold, hungry, thirsty, sadness, anger, disappointment. But the DOMINANT feeling was GRATITUDE! *They were thankful!*

A Similar Boat

We Christians today are in a similar boat.

As the people in lifeboat B left the huge *Titanic* for a tiny lifeboat, we have come out of a huge world into a small church. The people in the lifeboat watched helplessly as the *Titanic* sank out of sight. We are watching helplessly as our world—our society, our country—sinks deeper into godlessness and eventually into destruction.

The people in the lifeboat did not know when rescue would come. But they were sure it would come eventually. At times they thought they were close to rescue only to be disappointed. They kept watching all night for signs of the coming of a ship called *Carpathia*. We don't know when our rescue will come. At times we thought we were close to Christ's coming, but they were false alarms. We must keep watching—not for a ship called *Carpathia*—but for our Savior called Christ.

The people in the lifeboat had a lot they could have complained about. So do we. Our life as Christians in this church is not easy. The Apostle Paul warned us, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). How do we handle our tribulations?

If the people in Lawrence Beesley's lifeboat could be thankful after what they went through, can we be thankful in spite of our trials and tribulations we are going through?

Paul tells us, “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20). We are not to give thanks only in the good times, but ALWAYS. Even in bad times, there are some things for which we can be thankful. We must focus our thoughts on the POSITIVE things *instead of* the NEGATIVE things. It will help us make it through.

Paul gives these additional instructions: “Now we exhort you brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to any-

one, but always pursue what is good for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ for you” (1 Thes. 5:14-18).

As brethren in the Church of God, we are in this boat *together*. Let's HELP and ENCOURAGE each other as we wait for Christ's return.

Their Future vs. Our Future

What did the people in Beesley's lifeboat have to look forward to? Once they were rescued by the *Carpathia*, they were taken to New York City. And then what? They had to put their lives back together or start new lives without their belongings, family and friends they had lost.

We have a GREATER future ahead of us! We have *so much more* to be thankful for, because our future *far outshines* theirs!

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. The Spirit [it]self bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Rom. 8:18, 14, 16-17).

In this life, we will have trials and tribulation. Don't let them get us down. Remember to be THANKFUL *in everything*. Let's help everyone in our boat make it through the dark days ahead, comforting and encouraging each other. Let's keep watching for our coming Savior. We don't know when He'll arrive, but He is coming just as sure as the *Carpathia* arrived at dawn to rescue Lawrence Beesley and his lifeboat full of thankful survivors.

The SABBATH SCOOP

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THE COAT OFF MY BACK

A lesson learned from the parable of the good Samaritan.

By Gregory Dullum

The parable of the Good Samaritan used to bother me. When I read what the Samaritan did for the man who fell among thieves, I thought, *I should be willing to do this for others, but I'm not sure I can.*

For one thing, I had no first-aid training to properly treat someone bleeding on the side of the road. The good Samaritan “bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine” (Luke 10:34).

But what bothered me the most was the Samaritan paying for the man’s stay in the inn and saying to the innkeeper, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you” (vv. 34-35).

For most of my life, I have barely had enough money to take care of my own family. I couldn’t afford to pay for some stranger to stay in a motel, and then pay for his care until he recovered. My spirit was willing, but my wallet was weak.

One wintery day more than 20 years ago, I had my own good Samaritan situation. I was working at the time for a company that sometimes traded goods and services for its advertising. Some restaurants advertised with us, but instead of paying us money, they gave us “free” meals. Motels paid for their advertising by giving us “free” rooms. We did this so our advertising representatives had places to stay and food to eat while on the road doing their jobs.

Desiring a romantic getaway with my wife, but having little money, I decided to use some of this “trade-out.” I planned to drive about three hours from home, stay for one free night in a motel, and



Photo by Gregory Dullum

I once gave the coat off my back to a cold, bleeding little girl who had been in a car accident.

enjoy a free dinner in a restaurant. We planned to leave after church one Sabbath and come back on Sunday. I would be back in time for work on Monday.

We left our two children with a babysitter and we started out for our destination. Before long, we were heading down a two-lane highway through the frozen Missouri countryside.

After two hours of driving, we came to an intersection with another highway in the middle of nowhere. Cars were stopped along the side of the road. We slowed to see what was happening. There had been a bad accident.

Had I seen first responders on the scene—police, fire or ambulance—I would have kept going, knowing everything was in good hands, and that if I stopped, I’d just be getting in their way. But the accident had just happened, and there were no first responders in sight, so I stopped to offer what little help I could.

Talking to other motorists who had stopped, I learned that a young mother had not seen a big pickup truck coming, and had pulled out into its path. The collision sent her small car crashing into a grassy field. They told me that the mother, who was still sitting behind the wheel, was in shock.

I was told that her baby had died in the accident, but no one wanted to tell her. People crowded around the mother’s open door, talking to her about other things.

I noticed a young, blonde-haired girl

crying in the back seat. I asked her if she was okay, and she said she was cold. I took off my winter coat and placed it over her.

Within minutes a trooper arrived. I told him about the girl in the back seat and asked if he had a blanket. He took one from his trunk and placed it around the girl. As he did, I took my jacket. She no longer needed it and it was the only one I had with me. The jacket was streaked with blood, so I didn’t wear it again until we washed it in a laundromat.

My wife and I continued down the road to the motel, but the romantic mood was broken. We felt bad for the woman who had lost her baby and we wondered how she and her other daughter were doing.

On our way home the next day, we stopped at the hospital where the woman and her daughter had been taken. I told the desk attendant that we had stopped at the accident to help and we had worried about them all night. When we were told they would be okay, we were relieved.

I wished I could have helped more at the accident. All I did was help keep a little girl warm. When we got home, we bought a first-aid kit to keep in our car, and packed an old blanket with it. We have never had to use them.

I now realize the parable is not about how much money the Samaritan spent. He was obviously a man of means who could afford to spend what he did. (God asks us to give only what we are able—Deut. 16:17).

The parable teaches us to stop thinking only about ourselves and to have compassion for others. We must do more than feel sorry; we must do what we can to alleviate their pain. Sometimes that means bandaging wounds with oil and wine, transporting them on our own animal, and caring for them in an inn. Sometimes it’s just offering our coat to give warmth to a cold, bleeding little girl.

The people we meet most often are not hurting from an attack of robbers or a car accident. Many are hurting emotionally. Perhaps all it takes from us to ease their pain a little is a pleasant smile, a kind word, or some small act of kindness. We must not neglect to do the little things that are within our power. When we do these things, remember Jesus’ words: “inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me” (Mat. 25:40).

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. Who will be sent away when the Day of Atonement is fulfilled?
2. What is the name of the day Christ died?
3. What does leaven symbolize?
4. Who wrote the account of the valley of dry bones?
5. What does it mean to afflict your soul?

(Answers on page 5)

DEACONS: HELPERS IN THE CHURCH

As 20th century ends, deacons are still an active part of the church.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 7

Harold Jackson Ordained

At a time when the United States was racially segregated, the Church of God ordained a black man as a deacon. He went on to become very instrumental in the church. His name was Harold Jackson.

Mr. Jackson was ordained a deacon in November 1957 and a local elder in 1959. He was then transferred to Chicago, Ill., where he served for 12 years (except for five months that he served in New York in 1960). He was made a preaching elder in May 1963 and a pastor in 1966.

In 1971, Mr. Jackson was transferred to Ministerial Services in Pasadena. From there he conducted baptizing tours in Africa. In 1973 he moved his base of operations to Bricket Wood, England, and continued baptizing tours in Africa.

When the English campus closed, Mr. Jackson moved to Lagos, Nigeria, and was instrumental in starting churches in Ghana and Nigeria. Later he was made regional assistant for East and West Africa. In 1980, he was ordained an evangelist by Herbert Armstrong and Joseph Tkach. He died Dec. 14, 1991 ("Evangelist dies at 80," *The Worldwide News*, Dec. 23, 1991, pp. 1, 8).

Funeral services were held in Ambassador Auditorium. This great man, who began his official service as a deacon in the church, would later be honored by having a college building named after him.

The Church of God grew tremendously under Herbert W. Armstrong, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. (In the years immediately following his death, there were about 130,000 people attending the Feast of Tabernacles around the world and the church's magazine, *The Plain Truth*, had a circulation of 8 million.)

Not everyone who became involved with the Church of God during those years of growth had the church's best interests at heart. Some were in it for personal gain. They saw millions of dollars in tithes and offerings coming into the Church's headquarters in Pasadena, Calif., and they wanted a piece of that pie!

Some wanted to water down the truth of God, to make it more like the religions of this world, in an effort to gain more members and more money. When Mr. Armstrong set the Church back on track in 1978, some of these men plotted to have the State of California take over the church!



Photo by Greg Dullum

A deacon helped set up a lectern so church services could be held in the Hall of Administration during the receivership of 1979.

Deacon Assists During Sit-In

"Late in 1978, several dissident, former church members trooped into the law offices of Hillel Chodos in Beverly Hills with a list of so-called improprieties they said were occurring within the Church. After hearing them out, Chodos went to see Lawrence R. Tapper, deputy attorney general of the state of California, and recited to him the accusations made by his clients.

"Tapper listened. Then, without investigating or verifying any of the charges, without notifying Church officials and giving them their Constitutionally guaranteed right to refute or explain them, he set into motion legal machinery for seizure" (*Against the Gates of Hell* by Stanley Rader, 1980, p. 76).

On Jan. 3, 1979, Chodos marched into the church's Administration Building and announced he was taking over under orders of retired Judge Steven Weisman, who had been appointed by the courts as a receiver of the church.

Stanley Rader, the church's attorney at the time, wrote, "Nobody expected the state of California to engineer a shocking and lawless takeover move to support the claims of a handful of former members. Nor one conducted with such a mind-boggling disregard of legal procedures and the civil rights of the individuals and the spiritual body against which it was directed" (Rader, pp. 27, 24).

The brethren unexpectedly stepped forward to conduct a peaceful sit-in to demonstrate support for the church.

"Then it began. Nobody knew what triggered it. There was no summons from Herbert Armstrong, none from me, or

from any of the Church officials or ministers. ...

"It started with a trickle of Church members on Sunday, January 21, just after the rebuff in the federal court. Soon the trickle became a flood—a massive outpouring of local members who converged on Church headquarters from all over California and neighboring states.

"By Wednesday, January 24, we were astounded to discover that more than 3,500 men, women and children had come to Pasadena to defend their Church. ...

"Watching them come, the headquarters staff was at first puzzled; then, realizing the significance of what they were witnessing, many felt the sting of tears behind their eyes; some wept openly at this remarkable spontaneous display of loyalty, courage, and trust.

"Soon the large open space on the main floor of the Administration Building was filled with the arrivals. Newcomers, greeted warmly by squatters already there, went to the upper floors and bunked down in the offices, the corridors, wherever they could find a little room. Some came with blankets, some with sleeping bags; they carried knapsacks, canvas bags, duffels, cardboard boxes, suitcases. They had coffee jugs, plastic coolers, picnic hampers filled with food.

"Almost at once, huge hand-lettered signs were fashioned and hung outside. One, above the door of the Administration Building read: 'You can't destroy God's Church.' Another said, 'Owned by the Creator God Not the State of California.' A third: 'Herbert Armstrong is God's Apostle.' They sat and lounged quietly inside, these faithful, reading Scriptures, talking among themselves. Children, who had brought school books, were trying to keep up with their studies under watchful parental eyes" (Rader, pp. 132-133).

On Monday, Jan. 29, when Steven Weisman and his aides arrived at the church headquarters, their way into the building was blocked by church members. They told the receiver he could not enter the nerve center of their church.

After Weisman had stalked off, Joseph Tkach, a husky, graying minister, and Joseph Kotora, a deacon, set up a makeshift pulpit near the main doors and through hastily arranged loudspeakers, began a church service.

Dean Blackwell, a top-ranking minister, gave the sermon. "We are here because

of the great oppressors,” he preached. “We’re in the process of being evicted out of the properties of God. The situation is a life-and-death struggle for the Church of God.”

Members kept coming. When the Administration Building was full, members began filling up the student center and then the auditorium. The food they had brought with them ran out and soon the church’s staff began fixing meals in the student center (Rader, pp. 133-135).

This receivership trial lasted nearly two years. It was on Oct. 14, 1980, that California Attorney General George Deukmejian announced the dismissal of the lawsuit against the church (“Milestones,” *The Worldwide News*, Feb. 10, 1986, p. 2).

Before Mr. Armstrong died Jan. 16, 1986, he named Joseph Tkach his successor. Perhaps he was selected for his efforts defending the church when it was attacked by the State of California. He was not so successful defending the church against heresy that arose from within.

DELS Begins Training Deacons

In February 1987, the Church began a “Deacon/Elder Lecture Series” (DELS) for ordained men and their wives. At monthly meetings in homes, pastors covered lecture material sent from Pasadena for an hour or so, with topics ranging from church government to organizing lives in order to better serve God. After the lecture was a 20-minute discussion on a difficult Scripture and then a 20-minute discussion on doctrine.

The difficult Scripture was assigned to one of the men as a sermonette topic. In this manner, the same difficult Scripture was explained in sermonettes in all churches the same month. The program was set up to last about two years and then start over (“Lectures just what we need, says minister about DELS series” by Thomas C. Hanson, *The Worldwide News*, May 25, 1987, p. 3).

Deacon Involved in United’s Origins

As the Worldwide Church of God slipped deeper into heresy, ministers who wouldn’t preach the heresy resigned or were fired. They sought to preserve the truth by forming a new organization in April 1995. About 150 elders and wives showed interest in forming a new corporate entity that would be called the United Church of God. They needed a place to meet and get organized. A deacon came to the rescue.

Guy Swenson recalled: “Steve Durham, a deacon and an old friend, heard about the conference and offered to help in any way he could. He had been responsible for finding meeting halls in Indianapolis

for years. I explained the problem we had. We need a much larger hall than we originally planned. He asked me why I hadn’t called him in the first place. I apologized and said that I didn’t know where he stood and didn’t feel right about calling him for help. He spent days scouring the city for the right place to meet.

“By the following Wednesday, just days before the conference was to begin he found the perfect spot: Jonathan Byrd’s Cafeteria.

“‘A cafeteria?’ I asked. It was perfect for our needs. They had a beautiful setup with several huge meeting rooms. Total cost: free if our group would eat one meal a day there. I signed the contract. We joked about this being the ‘Credit Card Church of God.’ Ultimately, the costs were split between three newly formed congregations who had met during the days of Unleavened Bread and had received some holy day offerings” (“Events Leading Up to Indianapolis” by Guy Swenson, vic@kubik.org.).

The general conference was held April 30-May 2, 1995. The result of the conference was the formation of the United Church of God, an International Association, with David Hulme as president.

African Deacons Ordained

On Dec. 6, 1996, David Hulme, Steve Andrews and John Bartholomew visited African congregations. In Cameroon, the purpose was “to instruct the leadership from Cameroon and the neighboring countries of Gabon and Benin in ministerial and deacons’ duties, and to teach them business principles.”

The church had its own hall and home where its newly ordained elder, Isaac Nolla, lived. Mr. Hulme recalled, “During our visit we were able to ordain seven people—two elders, four deacons and one deaconess” (“The Church in Africa: Continuing to Coalesce” by David Hulme, *New Beginnings*, Jan. 13, 1997, pp. 1-2).

Remnant Church of God

On Jan. 4, 1998, Mr. Hulme and Mr. Alan Tattersall flew to Ghana to meet with leaders of the Remnant Church of God.

The Remnant Church of God was formed from people who had come in contact with the writings of Herbert Armstrong. They had no contact with the

DEACONS

Continued on Page 6

Know Your Bible Answers

1) Satan. 2) Passover. 3) Sin. 4) Ezekiel. 5) Fast.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The name for the herb called valerian comes from the Roman word *valere*, which means to be in health.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

Here is this month’s selection:

Life Is a Gift by Tony Bennett, Harper Luxe, 2012, p. 135.

Love Is Most Important

“I consider ‘Love’ to be the most important word in any language. It embodies my whole philosophy. Duke Ellington used to say, ‘God is love,’ and I abide by this notion. Everything you do should be done in love. It’s the greatest thing we can teach our children—to love people and to forgive them if they make a mistake. If you fill yourself with hate, you just shrink. But when you can give yourself up to love, you’re ahead of the game. That becomes the premise; not anger, not shrewdness. Pour your heart into your work, your friendships, and your family, and you’ll be rewarded a hundredfold.”

1 John 4:8, 1 Cor. 13:1-3, 1 Thes. 3:12

Quotable Quotes

“We know nothing of tomorrow; our business is to be good and happy today.” —Sydney Smith

Memory Scripture

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

—1 Peter 2:21

Deacons

Continued from Page 5

Worldwide Church of God as it slipped into heresy under Mr. Tkach. When they visited with a representative of Worldwide, they learned of the doctrinal differences and wanted no further contact.

When they learned of the United Church of God, they realized their doctrines were similar and eventually the Remnant Church became part of United.

During the visit in 1998, it was learned that the Remnant Church of God believed in deacons and deaconesses:

Wrote Mr. Hulme, “What do they believe and practice? In our discussions I believe it would be fair to say that Peter [Nathan], Alan and I were pleasantly surprised by the agreement we found. Perhaps it should not surprise us that their beliefs include baptism by immersion, the laying on of hands, the ordination of deacons, deaconesses, and elders, a correct understanding of the ‘soul,’ the preaching of the gospel, the authority of the Bible, tithing, and care of the needy in the Church” (“Revisiting the Remnant Church of God in Ghana” by David Hulme, *New Beginnings*, Jan. 12, 1998, p. 16).

Conclusion

Throughout the history of the Church of God, deacons have been helpers in the Work, serving where needed. At times they were preaching to the masses; at other times they defended the faith in public debates. Sometimes they were taking care of the physical needs of widows; at other times they were being martyred for their beliefs.

At times, deacons have offered their homes to be used for services.

During church services, deacons have been in charge of the collection of offerings, led in song services and assisted in the ceremonies where new members had hands laid upon them.

Rarely in the forefront of the Work, deacons usually have been content to serve in the shadows. Throughout history, that is where they have been found, men and women such as Stephen, Philip, Nicolas, Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche, Burrhus, Crocus, Euclus, Fronto, Sotio, Philo, Cilia, Rheus Agathopolis, Sanctus, Gérard de la Mothe, Arnald Hot, Mr. Fuller, Ed Smith, W.E. Conn, Harold Jackson, Joseph Kotora and Steve Durham, plus many others who are unnamed.

Serving under church leaders for the past 2,000 years, deacons have been content to serve where they can. They have lived up to the name of deacon, which in Greek, means simply “helper.”



7.1 Magnitude Quake Shakes Mexico

“A magnitude 7.1 earthquake stunned central Mexico on Tuesday [Sept. 19], killing at least 149 people as buildings collapsed in plumes of dust.

“Thousands fled into the streets in panic, and many stayed to help rescue those trapped.

“Dozens of buildings tumbled into mounds of rubble or were severely damaged in densely populated parts of Mexico City and nearby states” (“Quake collapses buildings in Mexico” by Mark Stevenson, Christopher Sherman and Peter Orsi, Associated Press, *Southeast Missouriian*, Sept. 20, 2017, p. 1A).

“Earthquakes in various places” are part of the “beginning of sorrows” leading up to Christ’s return (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).

Vaccines Are Losing Effectiveness

“Dr. Sharon Bergquist said about 10 percent of the patients she’s given the shingles shot have come back with the disease years later.

“No vaccine is perfect, and it can take many years to find out how well a new vaccine works and how long it lasts. Sometimes, health officials have called for an additional dose when it became clear the first round wasn’t cutting it.

“But disappointing performance is prompting drugmakers to pursue new vaccines for older patients, using new additives to boost effectiveness.

“The issue of waning protection is expected to be discussed when the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices meets in Atlanta. The two-day meeting opens today [Oct. 25]. ...

“In four of the last seven seasons, the flu vaccine didn’t work much at all in people 65 and older, who can be hit hard by the flu because of weaker immune systems. ...

“A mumps vaccine has been part of routine childhood shots for nearly five decades. Yet, there were 5,300 cases reported in the U.S. last year—the most in a decade—and so far the numbers this year are not far off” (“U.S. vaccine

panel to discuss waning effectiveness, new shots” by Mike Stobbe, Associated Press, *Southeast Missouriian*, Oct. 25, 2017, p. 7A).

Pestilences (disease epidemics) are a sign we are approaching the end time (Mat. 24:3, 7-8). In the vision of Revelation, John saw four horsemen riding. The first represented false religions, the second war, the third famine and the fourth deadly pestilences (Rev. 6:1-8).

God promised his people that if they disobeyed Him, they would be plagued with diseases. Our nation is becoming more sinful and we can expect to see more disease outbreaks.

“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: ...

“The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever

“The LORD will strike you with madness, and blindness and confusion of heart ... and there shall be no strength in your hand then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God” (Deut. 28:15, 21-22, 28, 32, 59-62).”

The prophet Jeremiah saw a time in our future when medicine and medical treatments will have no positive effect: “Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?” (Jer. 8:22).

He added later, “In vain you will use many medicines; you shall not be cured” (Jer. 46:11).