



Issue No. 2: 3rd December 2008

Greetings brethren!

I am writing to you from London, England where I am on personal business. For several years now, I have been spending between four and five days in early December in the English Capital, and I must say that this time I have witnessed some notable differences or, maybe I should say, alarm signals. The first thing that struck me were signs on shop windows advertising Sales of up to 50% off, and even more in some cases. This usually happens following the “Christmas season”, certainly not before. The other thing I noticed was that when I went to one of my favourite restaurants for lunch, I didn’t have to wait at the bar for 20 to 30 minutes, as I usually have to do. This time the restaurant had some empty tables! Of course, I had no complaints but again, this confirmed the perilous state of the British economy.

Let me share with you excerpts of an article that I read on the freely distributed “Metro” newspaper: “Thousands of jobs are lost as recession bites harder”, screamed the title. Then, “Thousand of job losses were announced yesterday as banks, Halfords and the James Bond car maker shed staff. The day started with banking giant HSBC cutting more than 500 jobs, citing ‘current economic conditions’... That announcement was followed by news that London Scottish Bank had become the first British bank in the current economic crisis to go into administration. More than 700 jobs are at risk at the Manchester-based group which offers fixed-rate saving accounts and lends money to people with poor credit histories... In London, Credit Suisse said it was to cut about 650 jobs – almost 10 per cent of its British workforce. Founded in 1856, Credit Suisse is Switzerland’s largest bank and employs more than 48,500 people in 50 countries. Halfords, the cycle sales and car maintenance chain said it was cutting around 250 jobs as the economic downturn bites. And then Aston Martin announced it was laying off up to 300 workers. It was, it said, ‘responding to the unprecedented downturn in the global economy.’” Other stories carried in the Business and Finance section of the paper were entitled “Moss Bros warning” and “US fears see FTSE slump” The article stated that: “Moss Bros has reported a sharp drop in sales and warned that annual profits would be short of

market expectations. The menswear chain said like-for-like sales were down 5.2 per cent for the past 18 weeks, compared with a 2.6 per cent fall in the first half of its financial year. Shares fell by 12 per cent yesterday as the company admitted that conditions in the sector were likely to have an ‘adverse impact’ on expectations for its full-year profits. CEO Philip Mountford said the retailer – which posted pre-tax losses of £1.6 million in the six months to July 26 – would now focus on reducing costs.” The other story related that “the FTSE 100 Index slumped by five per cent last night after last week’s spectacular gains were erased by a post-holiday hangover on Wall Street markets.”

Brethren, this is the world we are living in, in this “hour” of the Day of the Lord.

Before signing off, I want to thank those of you who have written or called me to express their support for this CGF Newsletter. Apart from another insightful article from Mr. Frank Borg, this second edition also includes Part 1 of an article, which Mr. Ardis made reference to in his last Sabbath’s announcements, written by Mr. Andres Yparraguirre, a long-time loyal member in the Philippines, who has been faithfully serving as deacon since December last year.

As we continue to redeem the time, in these exciting days when we may possibly even be about to see the Two Witnesses begin their 1260 days of prophesying, let’s stay close to God our Father and to Jesus Christ our Head as we continue to internalise the new truths and as we build closer bonds with one another.

With much love, in Christ’s service

Daniel Frendo

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Let not that Day overtake you as a thief

By Andres N. Yparraguirre, Jr.

WHERE ARE WE NOW IN BIBLE PROPHECY? Is it true we are now in the day of the Lord, the day of Christ's return upon this planet earth? If Christ has come already, where is He? And how can we know if He has come? Do not the scriptures say that He would come as a thief in the night on a day and hour that no man knows, not even the angels nor Christ, but only the Father in heaven? You should know the answers to these questions to make it to God's Kingdom.

Two Ways of Christ's Coming: One Requires Faith to Believe, the Other Does Not

In the parable of the persistent widow, Jesus Christ said, "... Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect ... I tell you he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:6-8). We find the definition of faith in the book of Hebrews.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things that are seen were not made by things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:1-3).

Faith requires that the thing or object believed to be true or existing is not seen. For example, we believe that God exists although Jesus Christ had said that "Ye have neither heard His voice at anytime, nor seen His shape" (John 5:37). He also told one of His disciples, named Thomas, "... because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Jesus Christ is coming visibly in full power and glory (Matt. 24:30; rev. 1:7; I Thes. 4:16-17), to be seen by every eye. This will not require faith because He will be seen. Besides, this particular event shall not come as a thief but be known ahead of time as this will happen 1264 days from the time the two witnesses begin their ministry (Rev. 11:3,7,11).

But Christ said, "... shall He find faith on the earth" when He comes? Christ must be referring to a different coming when He said those words because His visible coming does not require faith. In his first letter to the

Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul wrote, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:1-2). In his second letter, Paul wrote that the coming of Jesus Christ and the day of Christ "... shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed ..." (II Thess. 2:1-3). These are the only signs that Paul gave the disciples to settle the controversy surrounding the day of the Lord. In Matthew 24:15-30, Jesus Christ has given visible and up-to-the-minute signs about His coming so that His disciples could keep watch. But as you will notice these signs lead to Christ's visible coming and not as a thief in the night. Had Paul referred to Christ's visible coming in his second letter to the Thessalonians he would have just quoted some of the signs given by Christ. But he did not. Instead he gave them entirely different signs. This is because Paul was referring to a different event wherein Jesus Christ shall come not visibly but as a thief in the night. **In time order, the signs given by Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians should happen after the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God throughout the world (Matt. 24:14) but prior to the seeing of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (verse 15). It is here between these two events (which are signs) that the two signs given by Paul regarding the coming of Jesus Christ as a thief in the night should occur.** In early 1990, four years after the death of God's end-time apostle Herbert W. Armstrong, Mr. Gerald Flurry began preaching to the Church about the falling away and the man of sin. The preaching of the gospel throughout the world was completed on January 16, 1986 at the death of Mr. Armstrong. And then on October 1, 1997, Jesus Christ came as a thief in the night. Christ coming as thief in the night can't occur later than the event described in verse 15 because the major event that would follow after the abomination of desolation is seen standing in the holy place is the great tribulation. However, from that point in October 1997 everything that happens in this world takes place in the day of the Lord. Now the question that needs a plain answer is – can we know when that day comes?

Watch That You May Know

Mark 13:33-36 has this piece of advice for us today. "Take heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know

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not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.”

Why are God’s people admonished to watch? Many have said that nobody can know when the day of the Lord comes because it will come as a thief in the night. If so, why watch? What’s the use of watching? Is there something here that we do not understand deeply? Please read Revelation 3:2-3. “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou has received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

The reason why those of the church of Sardis did not know when Christ came to them as a thief was because of their failure to watch. The reason why most of those of the splits and splinter groups that came out of the WCG and PCG do not know that we are now in the day of the Lord, that Jesus Christ has come already as a thief, is due to their failure to watch. (It’s not too late though. However, time is running out.) Matthew 24:48-50 supports this statement. “But and if that evil servant, shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of ...”. When God raised Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), revealing to him and restoring to the Church, little by little the lost truths, only very few of those of Sardis paid attention. And then, when God removed the candlestick from the church of Sardis and lit the 6th candlestick church most of them did not understand and were not aware that Christ had come as a thief and that a new era for God’s church has been opened. On page 525-526, volume 1 of his Autobiography, recounting the crucial point in the history of the church in his time, HWA wrote:

“This was the crossroads...

“I did not fully realize, then, that this was a crucial turning point in the history of the Church of God. My wife and I did not leave the Church. This was God’s Church. Of that I was not, then, completely sure. They came closer to the Biblical truth than any other – but I was seriously disturbed by their lack of power and accomplishment.

“What actually was happening, though we did not understand it then, was that a NEW ERA

was dawning in the history of the Church of God.”

This happened again in our time. Jesus said, “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”(Rev. 3:11) This time He did not say He would come “as a thief” but “quickly”. (Please consider that a thief does not usually stay long in a house he is robbing but leaves quickly.) Jesus Christ came four years after the death of HWA and lit the 7th candlestick representing the 7th church, with Gerald Flurry as its messenger, but only a handful that watched came to know about it. The book *Malachi’s Message to God’s Church Today* written by Mr. Flurry and John Amos, is basically a message of holding fast. Those of the brethren who have failed to watch this particular event in the history of the Church of God are in danger of losing their crown. And then again, when Mr. Flurry and the PCG changed course and departed from the original commission of warning the Church and admonishing to hold fast to the Philadelphia standard, Jesus Christ came again as a thief, for the last time (before he comes and is seen by every eye) to knock on the door of every Laodicean. The booklet, *Elijah’s Message to the Philadelphia Church of God* written by Mr. Robert Ardis, Pastor General of the Church of God’s Faithful, started that knock. The knocking on the door of the Laodiceans is about to end, as Jesus Christ through His faithful servants, has shifted its work to bring those of the synagogue of Satan – the various splits and splinter groups of the Church that say they are Christ’s but are not (Rev. 3:9) – back into His spiritual Body, represented this time by the Church of God’s Faithful. That work started with the sounding of the midnight cry (Matt. 25:6), through the *Midnight Cry* booklet published and distributed in October 2007. Yes, it is now midnight for most of God’s called-out-ones. That night came when the WCG under the leadership of Joseph W. Tkach destroyed the work that Christ did through HWA and started replacing the truth restored to the Church with the false doctrines of this world. That night continues unto this day and reached midnight when Mr. Flurry, the messenger of the Laodiceans began to disregard the laws of the land and of God, declaring himself as That Prophet and becoming the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (Matt. 24:15).

In Matthew 24, Jesus Christ described to the disciples events, which are signs to watch, prior to his coming. But we are not limited to these signs alone. Other scriptures were also given as signs to watch such as those in the book of Malachi and in II Thessalonians

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2:1-3. The preaching of the gospel throughout the world was the first sign of how close we are to the end of the world (Matt. 24:14). The abomination of desolation is a sign how close we are to the great tribulation (verse 15 & 21). During the great tribulation, many will say, "Lo, here is Christ, or there" and we are admonished not to believe. These are signs that are yet to happen during and not before the great tribulation that will be coming not very soon. And these are signs for the visible coming of Christ and not when He comes as a thief in the night.

Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 Ceased To Be True at Revelation

Those who say that the coming of Christ as a thief in the night or the coming of the day of the Lord as a thief can't be known will quote the above verses to support their belief.

These are words that Jesus Christ Himself told His disciples.

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36).

Similarly, Mark 13:32 states,

"But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but my Father only."

Based on the above verses alone, it might not be clear which day Jesus Christ referred to. But Matthew 24:37-39 tell us that this day of Christ's coming is "... as the days of Noe were ... before the flood ..." when people "... were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came ...".

At Christ's visible return it will not be as in the days of Noe. The scriptures say that "... all the tribes of the earth..." shall mourn because of great suffering or tribulation (Matthew 24:21, 29). It is clear therefore that Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 refer to the day when Christ shall come (not visibly but) as a thief in the night. Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 were true at the time Jesus Christ uttered those words. **But did these scriptures tell the disciples and us today that that day can never be known? Or was it the will of the Father not to reveal the day and hour of Christ's coming to anyone even on the very day and hour that He (Christ) was to return?** The answer to both questions is no. What Jesus Christ said in these

verses is a plain and simple statement declaring that **at that point when He was asked about the signs (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4) of His coming (whether visibly or as a thief), only the Father knew the day and hour when to send Him (Christ) back.** In other words, no date had been set yet and the matter was still in the power of the Father to decide. Acts 1:6-8 would help us understand that this is so.

"When they therefore were come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea ...".

The decision to set the date of the coming of the day of the Lord belongs to God the Father only. However once the decision was made regarding that day, would not the Father inform the Son whom He was going to send, as a matter of duty and courtesy? And wouldn't He also inform the Church of God to whom He was going to be sent? "Surely the Lord will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all things that He saw. Blessed is He that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:1-3).

To be continued...

Do not reject God's Voice!

by Frank Borg

We are living in very exciting yet dangerous times. Those in the Church who stay close to God and closely observe events in the Church and on the World scene (Luke 21:36), know that we are on the threshold to beginning God's family!

In this Laodicean era many of God's people are in danger of not finishing the race the way they know they should (Rev 3:16). In most cases, brethren have become spiritually lazy and have fallen into a state of deep sleep (Matt. 25:1-5) while others have become blind (Rev 3:17; 2 Thess. 2:11). It is evident that the Laodiceans (PCG) are increasingly clinging onto the coattails of their physical leaders which has led them to dangerously exercise *blind faith* in the mistaken belief that they will end the race just as God would have it. In reality, these are running the race without knowing *how* they will finish it (1 Cor. 9:26)! All of God's people are admonished throughout the pages of our Bibles to acknowledge personal weaknesses so that we can know our own areas which need special attention.

If we are to *qualify* and *finish* the race, we must discipline ourselves and build *Godly character* so as to be able to stand *on our own*. 1 Cor. 9:27 tells us that we must '*keep our body*' and '*bring it into subjection*'. The original Greek for the phrase '*bring it into subjection*' means that we must *slave-drive* our own selves out of our spiritual and physical comfort zones and into total *submission* and *obedience* to God and His ways, clearly indicating that we must not allow ourselves any room to succumb to the least bit of temptation. This is never easy and requires that we constantly apply *optimum vigilance* and exert *maximum effort* in our spiritual calling; otherwise we run the fatal risk of slowly letting up!

The Bible tells us that the Ephesus Church faltered and slowed down in the middle of the race by 'leaving their first love' (Rev. 2:4). This essentially means that they stopped testing their leaders, began to rely on those same leaders, and as a result failed to prove all things as scripture admonishes. What they needed to do was heed the admonition to resist carelessness and *recapture their original zeal*. Sadly they didn't, and God removed their candlestick! This trend seems to have repeated itself in one form or another over the different eras of God's Church! Today, in this final era, we see an equally disturbing situation having developed in the Laodicean Church.

When running a race, the temptation is to slow down in the middle of it and not finish it with the same 'gusto' as was registered in the beginning. Similarly, when involved in a project, the temptation is to rely on others when things seem to get complicated or tedious. Sadly, God's people in Laodicea have allowed this most subtle temptation to appease their human nature. Instead of applying 'optimum vigilance' with their leaders and exerting 'maximum effort' in their Bible study by proving all things at this most crucial stage of the race, they have opted to apply blind faith and rely on their physical leadership (Rev. 3:17-18), oblivious to the fact that their leadership has run off the track and is leading them to an undesirable end (Rev 3:16).

What a shame that the lesson of Church history hasn't been learnt! What is worse is that these brethren are resisting Christ's knock and as a result cannot even recognize His Voice (Rev. 3:20). They have been programmed to respond solely to the voice and command of their *physical* leader which has led them to forget the Voice of their true Master! This is history repeating itself! By their actions, the Laodiceans demonstrate that they love God less! Christ is knocking and watching which Laodiceans will hear and respond to His voice. He is examining us (Mal. 3:3), seeing who will recognize the New Truth He is giving to His people through the Church of God's Faithful.

Not responding to Christ's voice is tantamount to not coming under His authority and reaping the disastrous consequences (Rev 3:16). This is a serious offense to God! To understand this, let us take a close look at Christ's reaction when Peter briefly *refused* and *rejected* New Truth directly given by Christ to His disciples.

"From that time forth began Jesus to *show* unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21). Christ was here giving His disciples New Truth! He was being intimate with them, privately explaining events that were to come to pass. Verse 22 is interesting in that it gives details about Peter's reaction: "Then Peter *took* Him and began to *rebuke* Him saying, 'Be it far from you, Lord: this shall not be unto you'." One other Bible translation indicates that Peter actually 'took Him in hand'. Whether this happened or not, it is clearly evident that Peter *protested, refuted and rejected* this New Truth which came right out of the mouth of

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Christ! We need to all extract a deep lesson from this exchange between Christ and Peter. Shouldn't the Laodiceans meditate on these scriptures more than ever and glean the intent of what is being said?

It is important to carefully note Christ's reaction to Peter, when he refuted New Truth. This will help us begin to understand Christ's view of those who today fight against 'special revelation' given to them by God. In Matthew 16:23 we see Christ's response to Peter: "But Christ turned, and said unto Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men*". Read these words again and understand what Christ is saying. It is clear that at that moment, Peter had a disbelieving mind which greatly offended Christ. Christ said that Peter 'savored the things of the world' rather than which was coming directly from Him! "Get thee behind me, Satan" was Christ's immediate reaction to Peter's disbelief. Shouldn't the Laodiceans be so careful and fearful of rejecting Christ's voice as they seem to be *passionately* doing today? The Laodiceans today focus on the things of this world, building projects and such (Rev 3:17). This is leading them to spiritual blindness (2 Thess. 2:11; Rev. 3:17), and a lukewarm state (Rev 3:16). As a result, Christ's spews them out of His mouth and into the Great Tribulation.

Peter, of course, was *always* quick to realize the error of rejecting what Christ told him and immediately changed attitude. (We can even see this in John 13:9). Christ loved Peter for this. Evidently, he learnt this deep lesson which led Christ to later tell him: "Blessed are you Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). Peter learnt to hear God's voice instantly which led him to great things (verse 18, 19). It is this attitude and character trait that brings great joy to God, yet this is in stark contrast to the attitude of many of the Laodiceans today. Their stubbornness in resisting and rejecting God's voice and truth means that only the fires of the Great Tribulation will bring them to repentance.

Having already looked at 1 Cor. 9:26-27, we must be reminded of the importance of keeping our "bodies in subjection". That means we must continue *doing* through *resistance* and *endurance*. We must *strain* to reach our goal and do everything possible to finish the race so that we can reach out for the prize. Our best help would be to always listen out for God's voice!

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will come after me [*listen to His voice*], let him deny himself [*bring it into subjection*], and take up his cross, and follow me [*by submission and obedience*]" (Matt. 16:24).

We have been given a very high calling with eternal life at stake. God is pleading with the Laodiceans for them to listen to Him as He continues to 'knock' on their door through the Church of God's Faithful (Rev 3:19). All of God's people must remember the lessons of recent Church history, and be diligent in 'proving all things' (1 Thess. 5:21) and 'testing their leaders' (Rev 2:2) so that they can rightfully 'keep their bodies in subjection'. God is curiously seeing which individuals love Him and His truth as opposed to those who blatantly reject Him and rely on the edicts of a man. Time is fast running out for the Laodiceans to recapture their original zeal, hear His voice and positively respond to Christ's knock.