

The Philadelphia Witness



International Region

Issue No. 4: 22nd December 2008

Greetings brethren!

Following an exchange of correspondence with Mr. Ardis in which a few suggestions were put forward, the name of the *CGF Newsletter* has been changed to *The Philadelphia Witness*. I know you will agree that this is a more appropriate name as it acknowledges the truth that the Church of God's Faithful is the remnant of the faithful Philadelphia Candlestick (Rev. 3:7-13), which is also about to be represented by one of the two witnesses, who will also represent God the Father and Jesus Christ (Rev. 11:3-4).

It now seems very evident that we're not in the 1335 days of Daniel 12:12. God's Word is very clear that these days must be counted back from that day when Daniel is resurrected on a future Day of Pentecost (Dan. 12:13) and that the two witnesses will be given power to prophesy for 1260 days (Rev. 11:3); and the math doesn't tally.

Now, at this time *even more than ever before*, we must be careful to give Satan no room to discourage us. Although we may be disappointed, we must not allow ourselves to be disappointed in a negative way. We must count our manifold blessings and *be thankful* for the abundance of new truth that Jesus Christ has been restituting since 1997, through our Pastor General Robert Ardis. One of these fundamental new truths includes the clear understanding that the First Resurrection will occur on a future Day of Pentecost, which is the key that has enabled Mr. Ardis to put together the numbered days of Daniel 12 in a way that hitherto, nobody has ever been able to do.

Like God's end-time apostle Herbert W. Armstrong, as well as the first century apostles and God's faithful begotten children through the ages, *we too* desire the Kingdom of God to be established on this earth. The next applicable Timeline period, based on Jesus Christ's revelation thus far, indicates that we must await the year 2025 for the two witnesses to begin their 1260 days of prophesying. Has God determined to allow forty years to go by, following Mr. Armstrong's death, before this momentous event occurs? Of course, we cannot say so at this stage because it's very possible that *there may be something*

that we still don't see... that we perhaps don't yet understand. Let's remember that we must *continue* to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Jesus Christ may well be about to reveal *further new truth* that may throw *more* light on the numbered days of Daniel 12. This means that we must continue to patiently wait, knowing that this helps us to "become perfect and entire" (James 1:4).

As we ponder these things, world events continue to demonstrate the unabated ride of the four horsemen of Revelation 6. I encourage you to continue to daily look at the World Watch section on our website, or to read the week's top news stories via the World Watch Newsletter, which you may receive upon request.

On Wednesday 24th, I shall be flying to the Philippines where I have planned to spend a week with our faithful brethren there. This will be my third visit to the Philippines in just over a year. Next Sabbath, together with Local Church Elder Rodrigo Matabaran, I will be conducting services at Angeles City, near Manila. The next day, Mr. Matabaran and I will be flying together to Davao on the island of Mindanao. There I shall be holding a Bible Study, which over twenty persons are expected to attend. Please be praying that all will go well on this important trip and that our loving Father will guide and direct all that is said and done.

Before signing off, I wanted to thank you for the many encouraging messages that you've been sending me about this publication. Apart from expressing appreciation with exclamations like "it's wonderfully inspiring", members have stated that this is "just what is needed"; others wrote that they will be passing it on to some of those "outside in the synagogue of Satan and the Laodicean Church of God". Again, thank you!

With much love, in Christ's service

Daniel Frendo

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Matthew 5:13: “You are the Salt of the Earth!”

by Frank Borg

Throughout the pages of the Bible, God calls His people by a number of different names and titles. He calls us a ‘chosen people’, ‘a holy nation’, ‘kings’, ‘priests’, and in many instances He even compares us with special treasure or jewels. On one occasion, Christ called His true flock the ‘salt of the earth’ (Matt. 5:13)

Why would Christ compare us to *salt* – of all things? There has to be good reason! Salt has many physical attributes and He wants us to *deeply* understand them so that we can identify the spiritual parallels of these attributes and make sure we are attaining them in our lives.

For the purposes of this article, we will look into five of the many physical attributes of salt.

1) Salt is a preservative

This is possibly the most important physical attribute of salt. Long before refrigeration was invented, salt was used to keep food from decomposing and spoiling. In ancient times, salt stood between healthy living and famine because salt was what kept food wholesome. It protected the food and maintained its nutrients by preventing it from external decay. No matter how old salt is, it will never lose its taste or its ability to *preserve*! Salt is incorruptible and stands the *test of time*! Because nothing compromises this quality, it is the best preservative of all time.

Spiritually speaking, isn't God using us, as the salt of the earth, to preserve and maintain His Truth (1 Thess. 5:21)? As the salt of the earth, we have the responsibility to keep and obey the law which preserves it for the whole Church, for those called in the World Tomorrow and beyond! God wants His truth protected *forever*! Do we realize the huge responsibility assigned to each of us? *Everything* we say and do demonstrates to God how much we love, and how well we are preserving, His Truth! We must be sure to think before we speak and before we act ensuring that we do everything to the best of our ability and in a way that is becoming of a member of God's family, always asking God for help along the way. At the end of *each day*, we should prayerfully evaluate our performance and take stock of any areas in our lives that need improving. Our eternal life depends on this!

“Should ye not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the Kingdom over Israel to David forever, even to him and to his sons by a ‘*covenant of salt?*’” (2 Chronicles 13:5). God gave the ‘Kingdom over Israel’ to David forever! This scripture links the word ‘*forever*’ with the ‘*covenant of salt?*’! In other words, the ‘covenant of salt’ signifies an *everlasting* covenant or agreement. Salt is everlasting and uncompromising, that's why it was used to ratify, bind and preserve this covenant! As God used salt to bind this covenant forever, we are bound to protect, preserve and maintain God's Truth forever. Just as salt, in history, was the best thing that prevented food from spoiling, we should be the defense against any form of evil that tries to corrupt God's truth – no compromising allowed! God's *true* flock will stand the test of time!

2) Salt is enduring

Salt is an *enduring* mineral. Not only does it stand the test of time, but it also stands the *test of pressure* without losing its taste or being destroyed! *Genuine* salt is indestructible!

Salt will only dissolve if it is heated to 1474 degrees Fahrenheit. That's how hot it has to get before salt even begins to melt. However, even when it *does* melt, it still maintains its ‘saltiness’, or its taste – this is how enduring it is! It can be ground through the most intricate processes, sprinkled on hot, cold or frozen food, and *still* keep its saltiness! *Nothing* will change this enduring mineral.

We, as God's salt of the earth, are promised *great* trials and tribulation if we are to enter into the Kingdom: “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue [or, to endure] in the faith, and that we must through *much tribulation* enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Acts 14:22). This is what Christ is talking about when He says that we are the ‘salt of the earth’. If we truly represent *genuine* ‘salt’, we will endure the fiery trials of life which are promised us, standing extreme tests of pressure. We must *rejoice* in our trials and see them as God-allowed opportunities for our personal spiritual growth and character building: “My brethren, *count it all joy* when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith works patience” (James 1:1-2). This attitude is what helps us strive to be *indestructible* in face of any trial we might have to bear and, importantly, helps us build the righteous character God so wants to see in each of us.

We have to endure *much* if we are to pass the test of endurance! This also includes, at times, enduring grief and suffering wrongfully (1 Peter 2:19), just as Christ endured so much for the love of His brethren.

3) Salt is a stimulant for life and growth!

In many places in the Middle East the land is very acidic, and the *only* way for that land to become productive is by spreading a small amount of salt on the ground. Salt acts like a fertilizer and promotes life! It balances the acidity of the land, creating the right surroundings to promote growth.

Apart from promoting life and growth on the land, even the human body *needs* salt to live and grow. If it wasn't for the small amount of salt in our blood and body cells, (about 4 ounces), human beings would die! Without salt, the human body ceases to function.

As the salt of the earth, we are also expected to *grow* in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). God has blessed the Church of God's Faithful with much New Truth since the beginning of the Day of the Lord. This demonstrates that God's Church is alive and growing (John 17:17)! Accepting this New Truth, inculcating it in our minds, and applying it is what helps stimulate life and spiritual growth in our own life.

How about stimulating spiritual growth in the lives of those in the Church? As the 'salt of the earth' we must fellowship with one another! The Bible is replete with examples and admonition to apply this important tool. The Greek word for 'fellowship' used in the New Testament is "koinonia" (Strong number 2844) and means "*partnership, participation, social intercourse, communication, communion, contribution and fellowship*". This doesn't mean that we are to only talk about superficial or mundane things that go on in our lives. It means making a *genuine* effort to get to know each other making everyone in the body of Christ feel involved and loved. Fellowshiping means *rejoicing* with each other, *helping* each other in face of problems, *encouraging* each other, contacting each other especially scattered brethren and, most importantly, deeply *discussing* the Word of God, doctrines and Church teachings with each other. This is how we, as the salt of the earth, can be an effective stimulant for spiritual life and growth in others. "Iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Prov. 27:17).

4) Salt is white and pure!

Salt is *pure* – no microbes or germs can live in it! Leviticus 2:13 and other scriptures demonstrate that

salt was to be a part of all meat offerings in the Old Testament. Salt was needed to indicate that the offering was pure before God.

Spiritually speaking, we are admonished to have pure hearts (1 Tim 1:5, 1 Peter 1:22). To reach this level of purity we must guard against the ways of this world, wrong pursuits and desires (Prov. 30:12). We must fight every facet of human nature, strive to come out of this world (Rev 18:4), and do all we can to develop a mind-set that is in a state of constant repentance. We must do our utmost to conscientiously live by every word of God: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but *by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*" (Matt 4:4). Doing this will ensure that we will be clothed in fine linen – clean and white (symbolic of spiritual purity) – when Christ returns (Rev. 19:8-9)! How are we measuring up?

5) Salt is valuable!

Salt was not easily and readily available to everyone in the past. Those who lived close to the sea perhaps had easier access to it, but those that lived inland found it very difficult to come by - probably because of difficulties in transport and communication. In this sense, salt was a symbol of wealth. It used to be traded for gold, silver and fine cloth. And in Old Testament times, it was something kings and the rich had access to (Ezra 4:14).

We are told that today, surprisingly, there are still a few parts of the World where the use of salt is considered a luxury.

Interestingly, because of its value, salt was used as 'money' as a form of payment. In fact the English word 'salary' comes from the Roman word 'salarium', meaning 'salt'. In times past, people actually got paid with 'salt'! History books show that ancient governments collected salt as a form of tax revenue. Salt was valuable!

When Christ called His people 'the salt of the earth', He had its 'value' in mind. Christ makes a connection between 'valuable salt' and His *true* followers! Our obedience and submissiveness to Him and His Word are what makes us valuable to God.

"You are the salt of the earth, *but* if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). This is a warning about the danger of *not* living and functioning as spiritual 'salt'. We need to understand that 'genuine salt' will never lose its value – it will never lose its

taste or any of its other fine qualities. 'Imitation salt', on the other hand, will lose its taste – and once it's lost, it will be gone forever! When *we* are no longer different and separate from the world, when we no longer work to *preserve* God's truth, when we no longer *endure* and act as a *stimulant* for life and spiritual growth, *then* we are no longer valuable to God, and are only good to 'be trodden under foot of men'.

Salt that loses its taste isn't genuine. Once it loses its taste, at best it's only good to clear frozen pathways and get trampled on as people walk on those paths.

As the salt of the earth, we must think of the outstanding physical qualities of genuine salt, and as we do that, we should look out for, take note of, and ensure the spiritual parallels in our own lives! It's the spiritual parallels found in us that renders us to be the 'genuine salt of the earth' that Christ compares us with in Matthew 5:13! How are we measuring up?

Teach the Truth in Love

by *Joselito Q. Torrecampo*

Have you ever asked yourself why we keep God's Feasts? Why do we need to keep these annually, year in, year out? Have you ever asked yourself why we need to keep God's Holy Days in these last days? For sure, most of us will quickly reply that it is commanded by God. However, did you ever ask at this present time *what is the relevance or importance* of keeping God's Feast Days in these last days or prophetic times? Why focus on world events and not just on our spiritual lives? We were taught since we came into the Church of God that all Holy Days are *God's* Feasts and not ours, yet all Feasts are made for us who truly fear and worship God.

We understand that God's Holy Days picture God's master plan of salvation. As we come to understand more deeply the Day of the Lord, we are also given the inspiration to understand the deeper things of God and His master plan of salvation. The understanding of these deep things of God also demonstrates the revelation of more new truths given to those who sigh and cry at the abomination and the turn of events in the history of the Church of God.

The understanding God has given us of so many truths, together with the events now happening both in this world and in the Church, are also a sign to us that the Lord's return is imminent. The number one

question now being asked among us is, shall we focus more on understanding God's revealed new truths, or shall we focus more on overcoming and spiritual growth? Shall we continue growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and neglect our spiritual duty? What is the duty of man? In **Ecclesiastes 12:13** we read "**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.**" Keeping God's commandments is a way of showing our love and reverence (fear, respect) to God and our neighbor.

The truth of the matter is we do need to keep both and we also need to continue to hold fast to past instructions and foundational teachings of overcoming, changing and developing God's holy, righteous and perfect character of God. However, we also need to grow in understanding of new truths relevant to our times and God's will in these last days, especially since we have entered the time of the Day of the Lord. Our Lord's days will continue to reveal more new truths to God's one true Church, which demonstrates that God is in control of everything and that the time is ripe for God's supernatural intervention. This is now possible because everything happens in God's good timing.

The Ten Commandments are subdivided into 2 major parts: love toward God and love toward our neighbor. If we truly love our brethren, then as we are to follow God's will and commission, we should help Christ in knocking on the doors of our brethren who are ensnared and trapped in the Laodicean church which is now off-track. We show our love to them *if we warn them* and not just let them discover the error in being part of Laodicea. Remember that a deceived person does not know that he/she is deceived. One former brother said that if we are still new to the truths in the CGF then we should not make these known and that we should not divulge things we have learned and discovered regarding the state of the Laodicean church to our members! Obviously, right from the start, this person did not really understand what is happening inside the Church because he did not truly love the truths restored by God through Mr. Armstrong. This statement actually runs contrary to the commission given to us to cry aloud and proclaim the spiritual abomination happening within God's church.

Another person said that sincerity inside the church is not important. People who are not sincere in their faith will actually justify their belonging to 'their church' by doing good works. These people find themselves in a very difficult situation. Actually, they are trying to

fool God more so than man for they are not fully converted and are dishonest in their Church membership and attendance. People naturally want to do things their own way or what seems right in their own eyes. But God is our true measure of righteousness. It is not for us to determine and set our standard of love and righteousness for our fellow man but God alone does this through His Word.

In the real world, man naturally is a respecter of persons. Physical and tangible things are more real to man than the spiritual things of God. Being carnal and human means that physical things appeal more; things that can be felt by the five senses of man appeal more than the spiritual things of God. But God said that spiritual things are more real than physical because physical things are only temporary whilst that which is spiritual lasts for eternity. So that is why, to some, an outward show or act of love is more appealing than spiritual things, which to them is not evidence of good works or love.

One good example is the instruction in the Holy Bible to pray for one another and continue to discern the Body of Christ. Prayer is one powerful tool for spiritual growth but, it is a thing that one cannot see or witness until it is answered by God and produces results. God is no respecter of persons and He condemns those who exhibit partiality because of physical and outward vanity. They believe it is all that matters regardless of truth. They think it is a license for them to be saved, even if they have different beliefs or doctrines. Some brethren fall prey to this kind of doctrine of love making it fine for them to abandon and forsake God's truth. But, if they really love God and are truly converted, they will continue to abide by God's laws.

In this time of discernment by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle John was inspired to write to those who embrace the liberal teachings of this world in **1 John 2:19**, "**They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**" The evidence is out there for us to see what has happened to the former Church of God during the Philadelphia era.

The Knocking

What is the primary commission of the true Philadelphia remnant Church in these days? **Revelation 3: 20** "**Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the**

door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The mere fact that Christ is on the outside and knocking through us is a show of love and concern to our spiritually blind brethren who are still ensnared in a Church gone off-track and no longer doing God's work. Let us also remind ourselves that not all who become members and are baptized inside the Church are truly converted or grounded to the truth restored by God through Mr. Herbert Armstrong. Indeed we may be surprised by some of our brethren who reacted differently to the apostasy that happened inside the Church of God. Some were shocked and offended while others were not bothered by the changes in the true doctrines of God. They reason that the church is still teaching about love and teaching about good works and has charitable works which is what really matters.

They may think that those who left the Laodicean church are bitter, or trying to destroy their faith or divide them. This is why some of our brethren and loved ones misunderstand us and think that we no longer keep and guard our spiritual lives but, rather focus more on watching or counting days and "setting dates". The truth is that keeping ourselves focused on God's calendar and Holy Days helps keep us focused on the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. This obviously helps us be more diligent in our effort to overcome and develop Godly character. In fact, the sense of urgency in overcoming and developing character is emphasised even further because of the imminent and sure return of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In **Luke 12:37**, we read, "**Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.**" Think about that! When we see that Christ's coming is so close, will we not be much more aware that we need to do good works, change and develop God's righteousness in our hearts? Will an act of good works or having love alone without any regards to true doctrines and teaching of Jesus Christ guarantee salvation? Let us turn to **2 Thessalonians 2:10** for one answer, "**And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**" It is clear here that turning away and neglecting God's true doctrines and the love of God's commandments will not get one saved.

This world is really held captive and deceived by Satan. Satan is the author of confusion who also misused love and good works to divide and deceive

God's people into believing that there is no true Church or true doctrine. He has deceived people into believing that one can attend any church one wants or that one could please oneself with regard to beliefs, perhaps finding a church where people have the same mindset as one's own as long as it exhibits love! People forget that the devil can actually misuse love and is capable of doing good works to deceive God's people. **2 Corinthians 11:14** "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Think about that, can Satan actually deceive the whole world by doing outright evil or forming a counterfeit Christianity? This is now indeed the way of this world's professing Christianity, that "love" is all that matters.

The Love of God

But again, make no mistake that a true, honest and sincere love that comes from above, is obtained by keeping God's laws and commandments, as Jesus Christ demonstrated during His earthly ministry. Notice **John 15:10** "If ye keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." Notice the conditional word *if*. Jesus Christ said that if we truly and sincerely love Him, we must keep His commandments, the way Christ demonstrated his love for the Father by keeping His commandments.

But how does God define love? After all, it is God, not professing Christians, who define what love is. Look at **Romans 13:10**, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." As you can see, true love as God defines it, is observing and doing God's laws and commandments. In **1 John 5:3**, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Professing Christianity will reason that the Law of God has already been done away with by Jesus Christ and nailed to the cross. They believe that Christ is the end of the law and therefore we are no longer obliged to keep God's law. They also believe that by accepting Christ alone as their personal savior, if they then "repent" and are baptised it will be enough for them to be saved.

To them showing an act of love is all that matters. We too also believe this but we also believe that one has to keep God's laws and commandments and that the two greatest commandments of God are to really show our love for God and for neighbor. There is a true Church that God has built and which has the true knowledge of Jesus Christ together with his doctrines. Keeping God's law means *doing God's will* and this includes

the keeping of God's Sabbath and Holy Days. Yet, the world still reasons that this is no longer binding and that it's applicable only to the Jews. Notice what the true disciples of Jesus Christ taught about God's commandments in **1 John 2:4**, "He that saith that I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." We truly love God and do good works by first establishing the truth of God, holding fast to past instructions whilst growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Continuing in **1 John 2:5**, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."

Real and genuine Christian love is only made possible by keeping God's commandments. The true love of God can only be perfected if we observe God's laws and commandments. Jesus Christ said that if one truly loves God, then you will find that that person keeps God's commandments. Commandments that include keeping God's Sabbath and Holy Days. God gave us a new commandment which is to love another. The only indication that we are truly God's people is if we love another and are true servants of God. Love is very important not only because it is the number one fruit of the Holy Spirit but because it also identifies us as the true disciples of Jesus Christ if we have love for one another.

Sanctified By Truth

God's true Church is sanctified by truth (**John 17:17**). Notice that it does not say it is sanctified by love. Acts of love and good works are the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of one's faith and belief. We certainly must produce good works because faith without works is dead. In this world all people and religions teach good works because their churches believe this regardless.

You cannot determine God's true Church by love or doing good works alone. Otherwise confusion arises because all religions claim that they have love and teach good works. Yet they all have different doctrines especially those who only believe in good works or acts of love. Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18** that He will build *His Church* and not many churches. God has only one true Church and it will be identified by Truth. That is why Jesus prayed to the Father that His Church be sanctified by truth. God's Truth will lead us to His True Church and God's True Church will teach us the true doctrines and teachings of Jesus Christ, which once again leads us to the true love of God... a love that comes from the Father. For God is love!