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Frank W. Nelte

A RESPONSE TO THE CALENDAR ARTICLES WRITTEN BY KENNETH HERRMANN IN THE 1950'S

The Radio Church of God (later the Worldwide Church of God) published a number of articles about the Jewish calendar in the 1950's. Prior to that references had repeatedly been made in the literature of the Church to the Jewish calendar, but the subject was seemingly never thoroughly discussed in article form. It is a subject that was not presented to the general readership of the Church's literature (i.e. the PLAIN TRUTH readership). Rather, this subject was dealt with in a publication intended primarily for baptized members of the Church (i.e. in The GOOD NEWS Magazine).

In the March 1953 GOOD NEWS Magazine there appeared an article on pages 7-10 entitled "GOD'S SACRED CALENDAR", written by Kenneth Herrmann. The GOOD NEWS Magazine of February 1957 carried an article on pages 3-8 entitled "WHICH IS THE CALENDAR CHRIST USED?", also written by Kenneth Herrmann. Then the October 1957 edition of The GOOD NEWS Magazine carried another article by Kenneth Herrmann, on pages 5-6 with a concluding section on page 10, entitled "PROVE GOD'S CALENDAR CORRECT!"

When Kenneth Herrmann wrote his first article in March 1953 only a handful of men had graduated from Ambassador College (first graduation was in 1951), including Herman Hoeh and Raymond McNair. Kenneth Herrmann had a background in science, and these 3 articles of his became the foundation for future explanations of the calendar question. Thus Dr. Herman Hoeh's April 1981 GOOD NEWS article entitled "THE HEBREW CALENDAR — AUTHORITATIVE FOR GOD'S CHURCH TODAY!" is clearly based on Kenneth Herrmann's previously published articles.

Now Kenneth Herrmann's February 1957 article was simply a rerun of his March 1953 article under a new title. The February 1957 article did NOT present any new or additional pertinent information. It was nothing more than a very slightly edited version of the earlier article. So no new information was made available in the February 1957 article. The October 1957 GOOD NEWS article, however, was a response to the question by some people regarding the correctness of the new moons of the Jewish calendar; thus it presented some new information, and was not a rewrite of any earlier article.

Since these articles by Kenneth Herrmann are really foundational to all the explanations that have been put forward by the Church in support of the Jewish calendar since that time, I have now carefully studied those articles. In this article I present an assessment of those articles by Kenneth Herrmann. We will see that many of the flaws repeatedly presented in current arguments of support for the Jewish calendar can be traced back to Kenneth Herrmann's original articles.

So let's now examine those articles.

[Comment: The practice of starting some words with a capital letter was not employed consistently as the years passed. So some words that started with a capital letter in one article are not necessarily capitalized in the other articles. I have tried to present the quotations as they were published.]

"GOD'S SACRED CALENDAR" by Kenneth Herrmann (GOOD NEWS, MARCH '53)

The article opens with the premise that God GAVE Israel a calendar, that God PROVIDED a calendar for them. Then it refers to Genesis 1:14.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: (Genesis 1:14)

This is presented, CORRECTLY SO, as the foundation for "God's calendar". The movements of the earth around the sun and of the moon around the earth are presented as the deciding factors for "God's calendar".

It is then explained that:

- A) The "DAY" starts and ends at sunset.
- B) The "WEEK" starts and ends at sunset on Saturday evening.
- C) The "MONTH" starts with the sunset after each "new moon".
- D) The Hebrew word for "month" is the same as for "moon" and for "new moon".
- E) The "YEAR" starts in the spring, not in the middle of winter, as in the Roman calendar.

All this is PERFECTLY CORRECT!

On page 8, top of column I the article states:

"The first day of this month — which occurs at the beginning of spring — then would be the first day of the year". (This statement also appears in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article on page 5, column I.)

MY COMMENTS:

This is the way it really SHOULD BE, that the first day of the first month should occur "AT THE BEGINNING (in the early part) OF SPRING"! However, Kenneth Herrmann does not mention that in the Jewish calendar the year does NOT ALWAYS start in the spring! It also sometimes starts IN THE WINTER. This means that the actual present Jewish calendar contradicts a point that Kenneth Herrmann himself is stating at the very start of his article.

On page 8, also column I, the article states:

"God's months begin with the new moon. However, these months may seem to begin a day or so following the actual new moon because of special considerations. The observation of the new moon is to be made from Jerusalem, not from the North American continent. The seven to ten hours difference in time between Jerusalem and the part of the country (i.e. United States) you live in will make actual observation of the new moon from America misleading." (Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article)

MY COMMENTS:

Here Kenneth Herrmann seems to be under the impression that the Jewish calendar attempts to achieve FIRST VISIBILITY of the new moon crescent! This is, however, simply not the case! The entire calculation of the Jewish calendar is based on establishing THE INVISIBLE CONJUNCTION, "the molad". Visibility never enters into any considerations one way or the other! Kenneth Herrmann proceeds to explain why the first crescent will often be visible in North America BEFORE it will be visible in

Jerusalem. That explanation, as far as it goes, is perfectly correct, but visibility is simply not a consideration in the Jewish calendar.

HOWEVER, Kenneth Herrmann seems to be assuming that the molad calculations arrive at the true new moon conjunctions, which they do NOT! The molad calculations are up to 15 hours in error, even for the Jerusalem area! This error of up to 15 hours is a further major reason why the new moon is frequently visible BEFORE the Jewish calendar starts a new month.

On page 8, top of column II the article states:

"Passover varies from about March 26th to April 22nd over a ten year period." (Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article on page 5, column II)

MY COMMENTS:

I am puzzled why Kenneth Herrmann would make reference to "a TEN year period". What he is talking about is the EARLIEST year for all the Feasts and the LATEST year for all the Feasts in every 19-year cycle. The earliest year in the current Jewish calendar is year #9, and the latest year is year #17. Thus there are either 8 years or 11 years between these extremes.

In actual practice in the Jewish calendar Passover is scheduled to be on:

- April 23rd in 2005, and April 24th in 2043
- March 25th in 2013 (as also back in 1861) and also in 2089

Thus the range for Passover dates in the Jewish calendar is actually 3 days greater than Kenneth Herrmann states. Instead of being only from March 26th to April 22nd, it is actually from March 25th to April 24th. The range is thus clearly a full 30 days, and not only 27 days as the article implies.

On page 8 in column II the article states:

"Thus we have established ... the yearly cycle beginning in the spring with the first day of the month in which the early harvest would take place. The day, month and year are easy to follow by watching the sun in its daily path, the moon in its phases, and the seasons as they progress. The signs in the heavens were intended for this purpose." (Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article, Kenneth Herrmann's own emphasis)

MY COMMENTS:

Again Kenneth Herrmann mentions CORRECTLY that the yearly cycle should BEGIN IN THE SPRING! But in the present Jewish calendar IT DOESN'T ALWAYS DO THIS!

In actual fact SIX YEARS OUT OF EVERY NINETEEN YEARS START IN THE WINTER in the present Jewish calendar! Here are THE FACTS for when Nisan 1 falls.

Remember that in each case NISAN 1 will actually start at sunset THE PREVIOUS EVENING.

Year #17 of each cycle (1994 = March 13th, 2013 = March 12th)

Year # 6 of each cycle (1983 = March 15th, 2002 = March 14th)

Year #14 of each cycle (1991 = March 16th, 2010 = March 16th)

Year #3 of each cycle (1980 = March 18th, 1999 = March 18th)

Year #11 of each cycle (1988 = March 19th, 2007 = March 20th)

Year #19 of each cycle (1920 = March 20th, 2015 = March 21st, 2053 = March 20th)

[These dates are all based on ACCEPTING the Jewish postponement rules. Without those postponement rules the earlier dates for each year of the cycle apply. Thus year #19 would also always fall before the equinox.]

It is one thing to point out that the Bible makes clear that the year SHOULD start in the spring. But it is another point altogether to acknowledge that OVER 30% of the time the present Jewish calendar starts IN THE WINTER. It needs to be acknowledged that this is simply not right!

Next, notice the author's admission that the calendar is actually EASY TO FOLLOW! Note that! In other words: you don't really NEED any kind of "specially revealed calendar"! All you NEED is to know the facts about WHEN a day, a week, a month and a year should start. Then, as Kenneth Herrmann points out, they are easy to follow "BY WATCHING"! That's all you really need!

The dates for the equinoxes are well known. Armed with those dates (March 21st = the start of spring, September 23rd = the start of autumn) all you need to do is WATCH the progression of new moons. The FIRST new moon on or after the spring equinox marks the start of a new year. Mostly there will be only 12 new moons between one spring equinox and the next, but occasionally (7 times in every 19 years) there will be 13 new moons between one spring equinox and the next. You don't need to know any 19-year cycles; you don't need to know which years are supposed to have 13 months; all you need to do is WATCH the new moons between March 21st this year and March 21st next year. (Instead of "watching" the new moons you can also just look them up in accurate astronomical tables.)

Having already been given all the necessary keys (the way to identify the start of a day, week, month and year) THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANY "DIVINELY REVEALED CALENDAR"!

Referring to the need for a 13th month for 7 out of 19 years, to avoid the calendar slipping about 11 days behind the seasons each year, the article states on page 8, column II:

"This (the slipping behind) could not be allowed for the feasts throughout the year have a definite relationship with the harvests. Note Leviticus 23:4, 'These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.'"

MY COMMENTS:

It is correctly stated that the feasts have a definite relationship with the seasons; Tabernacles must ALWAYS be in the autumn! But in the present Jewish calendar this is simply not the case!

For example, in the current cycle:

Year #17 = 1994 = Sept. 20th, and 2013 = Sept. 19th for 1st Day of FoT

Year #6 = 1983 = Sept. 22nd, and 2002 = Sept. 21st for 1st Day of FoT

(In each case the 1st Day of FoT starts the previous evening at sunset.)

On page 8 in column II the article states:

"The Passover had to be at the time of the early grain harvest for the high priest waves a sheaf of the new grain crop on the morrow after the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread." (Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article)

MY COMMENTS:

Kenneth Herrmann readily acknowledges this REQUIREMENT for the calendar! This is something that many proponents of the Jewish calendar would like to ignore. However, Kenneth Herrmann does NOT mention that in Palestine this barley harvest is NEVER ripe until at least well into the first week of April! This is a fact that can be proved. There is simply NO BARLEY ripe in Palestine during the month of March. Yet the present Jewish calendar repeatedly places the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread into the month of March.

Examples:

1964 = Sunday, March 29th

1975 = Sunday, March 30th

1991 = Sunday, March 31st

1994 = Sunday, March 27th

2013 = Sunday, March 31st

2021 = Sunday, March 28th

2032 = Sunday, March 28th, etc.

It is pure luck that some of these dates are not earlier. IF the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread falls on a Saturday or on a Sunday, THEN the wavesheaf is required on the 1st or the 2nd Day of Unleavened Bread. The calendar must be PREPARED for this possibility, that the wavesheaf may be required very early in the Days of Unleavened Bread. Never starting the year before the spring equinox (northern hemisphere) AUTOMATICALLY resolves this problem.

Anyway, Kenneth Herrmann mentions this requirement and simply ASSUMES that this is fulfilled by the present Jewish calendar, which it is NOT, as demonstrated above. Did Kenneth Herrmann know and understand that the present Jewish calendar sometimes places the start of the year TOO EARLY for this requirement to be met?

On page 8, bottom of column II the article states:

"The appearance of the new moon in the western sky just after sunset is used to determine the beginning of a new month."

The February 1957 GOOD NEWS article has changed this to read:

"The appearance of the new moon in the western sky just after sunset is the approximate beginning of a new month."

MY COMMENTS:

Kenneth Herrmann is clearly thinking of FIRST VISIBILITY! But the Jewish calendar does not even concern itself with "first visibility". Was Kenneth Herrmann aware of this?

However, since he DOES focus on "first visibility" it should be made quite clear that the present Jewish calendar only achieves "first visibility" on a very loose "hit-and-miss" method.

Further, Kenneth Herrmann's comments indicate quite clearly that HE ASSUMES that the Jewish molad gives us the CORRECT time for the invisible conjunction. BUT THAT IS NOT TRUE! The molad is anywhere from 15 hours TOO LATE to 3 hours TOO EARLY, when compared to the real conjunctions.

Is it FAIR to point out this 15-hour error, or should we "IN FAITH" just overlook such errors?

Nowhere in any of his three articles does Kenneth Herrmann indicate that he understands that the molads are in fact up to 15 hours removed from reality! He makes clear that he understands that the molad is (supposed to be!) the same as the invisible conjunction, though he still claims the Jewish calendar actually achieves "first visibility".

On page 8, bottom of column II to top of column III the article states:

"A keen eyed observer might note this first faint sickle a day earlier than his neighbor. Is he justified in starting the new month with that day while his neighbor waits till the following evening?" (Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article).

MY COMMENTS:

This makes clear that Kenneth Herrmann is very much focused on FIRST VISIBILITY! But that is not at all what the present Jewish calendar is about! It doesn't concern itself with visibility.

This focus on first visibility shows that Kenneth Herrmann was under the illusion that the present Jewish calendar attempts to establish first visibility in the area of Jerusalem, which is not at all the case! SO MR. HERRMANN WAS WORKING FROM A WRONG ASSUMPTION!

On page 8, column III the article states:

"This need for a true central authority concerning the calendar is absolute proof that such authority existed. Add the fact that God requires us to keep His holydays today and we must conclude that some SUCH AUTHORITY ON THE CALENDAR EXISTS FOR US TODAY. God never fails to provide man with knowledge that he must know and can not find out for himself." (Author's own emphasis. The February 1957 GOOD NEWS article has the same statement, but has replaced the phrase "and we must conclude that ..." with the phrase "and we can only conclude that ...".)

MY COMMENTS:

THIS IS THE KEY ARGUMENT OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE JEWISH CALENDAR!
Whatever evidence against the Jewish calendar they are confronted with, when everything else is said and done, when any number of facts expose the major flaws in the present Jewish calendar, THIS IS THE ARGUMENT THEY WILL ALWAYS TURN TO!

For example, Raymond F. McNair, who had just barely graduated from Ambassador College when

Kenneth Herrmann wrote this article, wrote two articles about the Jewish calendar for the July-August 1996 GLOBAL CHURCH NEWS, in which he made the following opening statement in the one article:

"SINCE God commanded Israel to keep His weekly Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11), and His seven annual Holy Days (Lev. 23; Ezekiel 20:12-24), OF NECESSITY HE WOULD ALSO HAVE GIVEN HIS PEOPLE A RELIABLE CALENDAR showing when to observe those Sabbaths." (July-Aug. 1996 Global Church News)

Raymond McNair here in 1996 presents the same argument which Kenneth Herrmann had presented 43 years earlier. By 1996 this argument was a part of Mr. McNair's CONDITIONED RESPONSE to any questions about the calendar. Others have also used the same line of reasoning. It is common to those who subjectively defend the Jewish calendar. And so Raymond McNair simply restated the argument Kenneth Herrmann had presented more than 40 years earlier. Nothing had changed.

This argument becomes AN ISSUE OF FAITH for such supporters of the present Jewish calendar. And their "FAITH" will not permit them to openly accept the facts that expose the flaws with the present Jewish calendar. They will fight to retain this "faith". And against this "faith" reason and logic cannot make any inroads.

Note this approach very carefully. Here are the steps:

- 1) They perceive A NEED for something.
- 2) They have a fixed idea EXACTLY HOW THIS NEED SHOULD BE MET.
- 3) But they have NO PROOF, NO EVIDENCE that their idea is actually correct.
- 4) So they turn THE EXISTENCE OF THE PERCEIVED NEED into the proof that this need is indeed being met EXACTLY AS THEY EXPECT IT IN THEIR MINDS.
- 5) This in turn enables their minds to dispense with the need for any REAL proof that their idea is actually correct.
- 6) Therefore all forms of REAL proof which contradict their idea are dismissed and labeled as "lacking faith".
- 7) OTHER SCRIPTURES, which have nothing to do with the issue at hand, are called upon as further "PROOF". A multitude of Scriptures is intended to overwhelm all objections, even though those "other Scriptures" don't really apply to the subject at hand.

In its simplest form this approach looks as follows:

BECAUSE I know that we have an absolute NEED for something, THEREFORE the existence of this need is IN ITSELF PROOF that GOD will provide for this need exactly as we know that it must be met! On top of that look at all these OTHER SCRIPTURES that also appear to support our case.

This line of thinking is based on a misapplication of Philippians 4:19, which reads: "But my God SHALL SUPPLY ALL YOUR NEED ...".

So where is the problem with this approach?

- 1) They have ASSUMED something to be a specific "need".
- 2) They have ASSUMED "the only possible solution".
- 3) Both these assumptions become "non-negotiable" issues.
- 4) Any number of "other Scriptures" are interpreted in the light of the assumed solution.
- 5) Even though they are NOT able to refute the objections to their idea, they simply DISMISS all objections on the grounds that their "other Scriptures" have sufficiently proved their case.

And they have forgotten the lesson Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong so often tried to teach us. For example, on pages 11-12 of "Mystery of the Ages" Mr. Armstrong wrote:

"Most people ACCEPT CARELESSLY WHAT THEY ARE TAUGHT from childhood. And, coming into maturity, they accept that which they have repeatedly heard, read or been taught. They continue to go along, usually without question, with their peers. Most people do not realize it, but THEY HAVE CARELESSLY ASSUMED WHAT THEY BELIEVE WITHOUT QUESTION OR PROOF. Yet they will defend vigorously and emotionally their convictions. It has become human nature for people to flow with the stream--to go along with the crowd--to believe and perform like their peers around them. Further, most people STUBBORNLY REFUSE TO BELIEVE WHAT THEY ARE UNWILLING TO BELIEVE. There's an old saying, 'He who is convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.' I was no different." (pages 11-12)

Regarding the calendar, Kenneth Herrmann first presented this flawed line of reasoning in March 1953, nearly 47 years ago. Since that time this has been a regular part of our mental diet, something we have accepted as true without ever questioning it; it seems so self-evident. It has been around so long that our minds have been conditioned to accept this as a truism.

Can we see that WE OURSELVES are also like this? It is not just something that affects "other people", but from which we ourselves are somehow immune. We too are like this, even as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong could see that he was like this.

So let's carefully examine this line of reasoning as first presented by Kenneth Herrmann, and as followed and used by many other people since that time.

Here is the situation with the calendar question:

- 1) Kenneth Herrmann explained that the Bible presents us with ALL the basic components for a calendar: the definitions of a day, a week, a month, a year. He also explained exactly when a month should start (with the new moon) and when a year should start (in the spring).
- 2) THIS UNDERSTANDING DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY "ADDITIONAL REVELATION", ABOVE WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE IN THE BIBLE.
- 3) Kenneth Herrmann also explained that this process is EASY TO FOLLOW, simply by watching the sun in its daily path, the moon in its phases, and the seasons as they progress. (This last step has been done already very accurately for us by others, so that we know without hesitation the dates for the two equinoxes and for the two solstices.)

4) Again, something that is "easy to follow" DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY "ADDITIONAL REVELATION", otherwise it would not be easy to follow.

5) So we are here NOT dealing with "essential knowledge that man can not find out for himself simply by carefully reading the Bible". Kenneth Herrmann has in fact spelled out ALL the facts which are needed in order to construct A CORRECT CALENDAR.

6) These "facts" would include evaluating all new moons in terms of "Jerusalem time", something he also spelled out.

7) BUT THEN he goes on to imply that "ADDITIONAL REVELATION" is needed in order to have a correct calendar. This "additional revelation" is NOT FOUND IN THE BIBLE!

8) THE REASON FOR THIS CLAIM is that the present Jewish calendar contains FEATURES THAT ARE NOT SUPPORTED BY THE BIBLE! These "non-biblical features" include:

A) An error of up to 15 hours in the calculation of "the molad", the conjunction.

B) Ignoring REAL fluctuations of from 176 to 178 days between the new moons of the first and the seventh months, resulting in one day errors in selecting the first day of the year, which the present Jewish calendar always places exactly 177 days before the Day of Trumpets.

C) Starting the year in the winter.

D) Starting the Feast of Tabernacles in the summer.

E) Having "postponement rules" to avoid Holy Days falling on "inconvenient days of the week".

9) Since this "additional revelation" is not found in the Bible, THEREFORE the only possible non-biblical source could be THE JEWISH "ORAL LAW", which is another name for the Jewish "Talmud". There is actually nothing "oral" about the Talmud at all!

10) THE JUSTIFICATION for looking to such a non-biblical source for DIVINE INSPIRATION is sought in New Testament references to "ORACLES". Since most people's understanding of "oracles" is rather vague, they are a convenient "catch-all" for things that cannot be supported by the Scriptures. Thus the "oracles of God" are simply ASSERTED to include: the written Word of God (correct), the preservation of the weekly cycle (FALSE!), and the preservation of the 'sacred' calendar (ALSO FALSE!).

11) A careful examination of EVERY SCRIPTURE that mentions "THE ORACLES OF GOD" makes very clear that this is NOT a reference to some "extra-biblical" revelation!

Here are the facts!

The expression "THE WORD OF GOD" (Greek is 'the LOGOS of God') is used 37 times in the New Testament. The expression "THE ORACLES OF GOD" (Greek is 'the LOGION of God') is used 3 times in the New Testament. The Greek word "logion" is the diminutive form of the Greek word "logos". Thus "logion" is something SMALLER than "logos".

When the New Testament writers wanted to refer to ALL of God's revelation to mankind, THEN they used the expression "the LOGOS of God". This appears 6 times in the Gospels (as used by Jesus Christ Himself), 12 times in the Book of Acts, 1 time each in Romans, 1 Corinthians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and 1 John. It appears 2 times each in

2. Corinthians and in Hebrews. It appears 5 times in the Book of Revelation.

So this expression "the word of God" is liberally spread throughout the Gospels, the Book of Acts and the writings of Paul. It is also used in the epistles of Peter and John. It refers to ALL of God's revelation and instructions to mankind!

The expression "THE ORACLES OF GOD" (Greek is 'the LOGION of God') is used only 3 times in the New Testament. It is used 2 times by Paul (Romans 3:2 and Hebrews 5:12) and 1 time by Peter (1 Peter 4:11).

A careful examination of these 3 passages makes VERY PLAIN that neither Paul nor Peter had anything extra-biblical in mind when they used the expression "LOGION of God". When they used this expression neither Paul nor Peter were thinking of "THE PRESERVATION OF THE WEEKLY CYCLE" or of "THE PRESERVATION OF THE SACRED CALENDAR"!! These two concepts (preserving the weekly cycle and preserving the 'sacred' calendar) NEVER FEATURE IN ANY WAY IN ANY OF THE WRITINGS OF ANY NEW TESTAMENT AUTHOR!

And they certainly don't feature anywhere in the context of Romans or of Hebrews or of 1 Peter, the 3 books in which the expression "the oracles of God" appears.

But this factual information, this objective assessment, simply cannot be accepted by a mind that works from the assumed premise that there is A NEED for "a true central authority concerning the calendar". Accepting this factual information would create great insecurity in such a mind; it would be perceived as a threat to previously accepted views.

I have taken some time in commenting on this point in Kenneth Herrmann's 47-year-old article because this point lies at the heart and core of ALL those who defend the Jewish calendar against every valid criticism. A simple appeal to FACTS will not overcome this "faith" of those who defend the Jewish calendar. It is their mindset that has to be understood.

Let's now move on in Kenneth Herrmann's article.

On page 8, column III the article states:

"While no mention is made in Scripture [concerning which months should have 29 days and which months should have 30 days, etc.] ... the facts of astronomy — the exact measurement of the length of the day, month and year — taken with the commands of the Scripture prove that this must be necessary."

MY COMMENTS:

Kenneth Herrmann here freely admits that "THE COMMANDS OF THE SCRIPTURE" must obviously be applied to any calendar that is established. What do you do when "the commands of Scripture" are NOT taken into account in a calendar? Do you just "accept on faith" that it is GOD'S responsibility to sort this out, and that until God does so He expects us to go along with this calendar that VIOLATES "the commands of Scripture"?

Or do you reason that "since God has not seen fit to correct this for the past 1600 years" that THEREFORE it must be something that God simply accepts? Do you reason that "since God didn't correct it during Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's more than 50 years as the human leader, that therefore it must be okay"?

EXACTLY WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE CALENDAR DOES NOT ADHERE TO THE
COMMANDS OF THE SCRIPTURES?

On page 9, bottom of column I the article states:

"Certain men specialized in this field of astronomy. Their decisions, guided by Scriptural instructions, were accepted by the nation."

MY COMMENTS:

Again it is admitted that the calendar MUST be "guided by Scriptural instructions". The question is: when it can be clearly PROVED that the present Jewish calendar is NOT at all guided by Scriptural instructions, that it is really guided by human traditions, THEN WHAT DO YOU DO?

On page 9, bottom of column I the article states:

"If God's calendar is lost, God's commandments in regard to these feast days are impossible to keep!"
(Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article)

MY COMMENTS:

This seems like a very odd way of reasoning to me. Kenneth Herrmann has ALREADY told us everything that we need to know in order to have a correct calendar (i.e. when a month should start and when a year should start and using the Jerusalem time standard), and NOW he talks about "IF God's calendar is lost"? All of the essential information is PRESERVED in the pages of the Bible! What else do you need to have a correct calendar, one that God will accept?

On page 9, bottom of column I the article then states:

"But since God doesn't command the impossible THE CALENDAR IS PRESERVED!"

MY COMMENTS:

NOTICE THIS FLAWED LINE OF REASONING! THERE IS NO REASONING FROM ANY POSITIVE PROOF! IT IS NOTHING MORE THAN REASONING FROM AN ABSENCE OF PROOF! The reasoning is NOT "here is the positive proof that it has been preserved". Rather, the reasoning is "SINCE IT COULDN'T BE OTHERWISE, THEREFORE it simply must have been preserved".

Reasoning from an absence of positive proof is always exposed to the danger of being misused by prejudice. Preconceived ideas easily dispense with the need for positive proof.

We have already seen that Kenneth Herrmann himself has listed ALL the factors needed for having a correct calendar. Those same factors are all any of God's people in the first 1800 years of the Church of God ever had IF they understood about the Holy Days and desired to observe them. Since the second century AD the Church of God has NEVER been a part of "the Jewish religion"; and God's people were forced to "observe the passage of new moons" in order to know when to keep God's Holy Days. Since the Jews were doing more or less the same thing (the Jewish practice of calculating the molads and then determining the Holy Days), for any outside observer these "true Christians" were keeping "the Jewish days". Whether the true Christians differed by a day or two at various times would never have been noticed, since the Jews have about 17 religious days, and not just 7 days as we see in the Bible. The Jewish practice of having TWO days for every one that is commanded in the Bible (except for Atonement) would blur 1-day differences in religious observances between the Jews and true Christians,

as far as uninformed outsiders would be concerned.

On page 10 in column I the article states:

"If they [the Jews] did not fulfill this God-given commission, we have no real basis for calculating the Holy Days of God"

"The authority for keeping the calendar was delegated to the Jews and THEY DID PRESERVE IT."

MY COMMENTS:

This is a BLIND faith. No proof of any kind is offered for this bold assertion. ONLY REASONING is offered to support these claims. The only reason we know that the priests should be Levites of the family of Aaron is BECAUSE THE BIBLE TELLS US THIS! And the only way we could possibly know that the Jews have a "GOD-GIVEN commission" for preserving a calendar would be IF THE BIBLE WERE TO TELL US THIS! But the Bible is TOTALLY SILENT about anyone having some responsibility to "preserve" some calendar! Instead the Bible only clearly spells out HOW a right calendar should be constructed.

Earlier Kenneth Herrmann told us that God doesn't command the impossible. Agreed! Now IF God Himself had indeed given the Jews A COMMISSION to preserve one specific calendar, WHY would He possibly have been so silent about this commission in His Word to mankind? WHY would God have expected us TO DEDUCE this commission by having to reason from, at best, Scriptures that are really vague on the calendar question? WHY?

WHY would God have "inspired" the Jews to accept the calculations devised by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus in about 146 BC, when those calculations are up to 15 hours removed from reality for the new moons of the 7th month? WHY would God have "inspired" the Jews to devise a system of calculating the new moon of the 7th month, when GOD HIMSELF very plainly told Israel "THIS MONTH shall be ... THE FIRST MONTH of the year to you" (Exodus 12:2)?

Kenneth Herrmann showed that the Bible requires months to start with the new moons. IF the Jews supposedly "PRESERVED" something God gave them, then WHY are the start of the 1st month and the start of the 7th month so often REMOVED FROM THE NEW MOONS? There is a contradiction here somewhere: "something being PRESERVED" and yet "something being REMOVED FROM the new moons".

On page 10 in columns I and II the article states:

"Writers of profane history only contradict themselves. They can not be depended upon to preserve this essential knowledge. God has in no way used them to preserve His Sabbath or calendar".

MY COMMENTS:

That is not fully correct! WHO PRESERVED THE WEEKLY CYCLE IN 1582 AD, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OR THE JEWS??

Most people in God's Church have never thought this through!

In 1582 AD at the instruction of THE CATHOLIC POPE GREGORY 11 days were simply dropped from the calendar. Thus THURSDAY OCTOBER 4TH WAS FOLLOWED BY FRIDAY OCTOBER 15TH!

IT WAS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THAT PRESERVED THE WEEKLY CYCLE IN 1582 AD!

Until these 11 days were "dropped" from the calendar, October 15th was scheduled to be a MONDAY! Can you imagine what problems we today would have if the Catholic Church had NOT preserved the cycle of the week in 1582 AD? If the Catholic Church had ruled that Thursday October 4th would be followed by MONDAY October 15th? It would have meant that TUESDAY OCTOBER 16TH would really have been A SABBATH! Can you imagine the problems God's people today would have if we had to go to Church EVERY WEEK ON TUESDAYS? Because the Catholic Church had decided to "change the weekly cycle"?

It should be quite obvious to all of us that, when in 1582 AD a definite calendar change was made in central Europe (this was made at a later stage in Britain, North America and various other countries), God "USED" the Catholic Church "to preserve the weekly cycle". That should not be strange at all. After all, didn't God "USE" the Persian king Cyrus to do His will (Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 45:1)? Didn't God "USE" the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar to also do His will? Didn't God "USE" the Assyrians as the rod of His anger?

When the Catholic Church changed the calendar in 1582 AD, but nonetheless PRESERVED the cycle of the week, this also PRESERVED the knowledge of the true Sabbath! Furthermore, the Catholic Church has made very sure that everyone understands that SUNDAY is the FIRST day of the week, and that SATURDAY is the SEVENTH day of the week. This is made very clear in the writings of the Catholic Church.

FROM THE TIME OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY UNTIL TODAY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS DONE AS MUCH AS THE JEWS OR AS ANYONE ELSE TO PRESERVE THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SATURDAY IS THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK! SPECIFICALLY, IN 1582 AD IT WAS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THAT ENSURED THAT THE WEEKLY CYCLE WAS NOT BROKEN!

It follows that the claim that THE JEWS have preserved the cycle of the week (which on the surface seems so self-evident that no one would think of questioning it) is nothing more than a red herring, something thrown out in the discussion of "the oracles of God" that is supposed to lend more credibility to the claim that the Jews have ALSO preserved the calendar.

Just think of the MAJOR problems they would have created for us, had the Catholic Church not preserved the cycle of the week in 1582 AD. But they DID preserve it.

So Kenneth Herrmann's claim that God has "IN NO WAY" used others to preserve His Sabbath is not true.

On page 10 in column II the article states:

"At first, observation was the chief method for the determination of the beginning of a new month or new year. Gradually, after years went by, a definite pattern began to emerge in the insertion of the extra days and extra months. ... But observation continued to be used in connection with calculation by keen-eyed men stationed on the heights about Jerusalem to watch for sign of the new month."

MY COMMENTS:

Kenneth Herrmann is here implying a process of evolution. However, he is NOT describing A PROCESS OF PRESERVING SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN DIVINELY GIVEN!

Can you understand this?

IF a process, ANY process, has been divinely given by God, THEN that is not supposed to evolve into something else! By saying that "AT FIRST" observation was used to determine the start of a new year, he implies that THIS is what God originally "gave" to Israel, and therefore THIS is what Israel theoretically SHOULD HAVE PRESERVED! IF something is indeed "divinely given", then we human beings really have no right to change that. WHY didn't God give Israel "THE BEST WAY TO DO IT" to start with? Does it sound like coming from GOD when after a while it has to be done differently?

Next, the statement that "a pattern began to emerge" clearly implies a lack of divine revelation! WHY would God give "extra-biblical" information to the priests, with rather intricate and complicated calculations being involved, and then somehow withhold "THE PATTERN" of leap years? Without the correct "pattern" the calculations produce totally wrong results.

Further, the 19-year cycles were discovered by the Greek astronomer Meton in around 450 BC, or about the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. From 450 BC onwards it was not a matter of any "definite pattern" having to emerge; 19-year cycles became well-known. Similarly, the precise calculations that are employed in the Jewish calendar, including a very small error, were discovered by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus about 300 years after Meton. Since about 146 BC these calculations have also been known.

HOWEVER, Hipparchus' calculations are only "averaged out" for all the lunar months in the year. They are NOT accurate when applied to any one specific month alone, as there are considerable fluctuations in the lengths of lunar cycles. So these calculations devised by Hipparchus are NOT ACCURATE AT ALL in trying to determine ANY specific new moon in the year! And these are the calculations the Jews have accepted for determining their calendar. So IF God supposedly originally "GAVE" the priests the instruction to use observation for determining the new moons, THEN we have to conclude that the Jews EXCHANGED those instructions for a set of Greek astronomical calculations that will result in an error of up to 15 hours in determining the new moon of the 7th month, and that may result in A FURTHER ERROR of up to one full day when working back to the 1st month, since sometimes there are actually 178 days between the new moons of the 1st and the 7th month.

It really doesn't make sense to claim that the Jews have "preserved" something (the calendar) when they have exchanged what they originally had for a set of calculations that may produce an error of up to two days for the new moon of the 1st month.

And this is totally apart from any "postponements"!

Furthermore, the statement that "observation continued to be used in connection with calculation" also does not make any sense. The calculations (not our modern ones, but those employed by the Jewish calendar) can easily contain an error of one day! So IF you attempt to use BOTH methods together and you then have a disagreement — your calculations tell you the new moon should be visible on one specific day, but those "keen-eyed men", two or three of them together, state very clearly that they saw the new moon one day earlier or one day later than determined by your calculations — WHAT DO YOU DO? Do you accept the irrefutable witness of perhaps four different men, ALL of whom agree with one another? Or do you dismiss their witness and insist that your calculations must be correct? IF you rule in favour of your calculations, THEN those "keen-eyed men" are nothing but window-dressing, a meaningless ritual, even though THEIR WITNESS is correct and YOUR CALCULATIONS are in error.

At any rate, it should be obvious that Kenneth Herrmann is not describing any process of "PRESERVATION" at all. However, the article does make quite clear that Kenneth Herrmann is talking about "first visibility" and not about any "invisible conjunction" (or "molad"). But the Jewish calendar today is not at all concerned with "first visibility". Should the Jewish calendar perhaps have "preserved" first visibility?

On page 10 in column II the article states:

"Foreseeing world conditions ahead where the Church as well as the Jews would be scattered, GOD GUIDED THESE MEN TO SET UP A CALENDAR based on the laws of mathematics and astronomy — the very physical laws God set in motion — a calendar that could be prepared far into the future — for our day — one that would be ACCURATE. NOT A NEW CALENDAR, but a mathematical continuation of the original one based on observation of the signs of the heavens over a period of nearly 2000 years; a calendar that would lead to order and harmony among God's people in the matter of keeping time." (Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article)

MY COMMENTS:

This is a vivid example of the blind faith, in the total and complete absence of any proof of any kind, that the supporters of the Jewish calendar are required to have.

First, the reference to "nearly 2000 years" makes clear that Kenneth Herrmann is referring to the timespan from Moses (about 1500 BC) to Hillel II (about 359 AD).

So this tells us that Kenneth Herrmann is saying that "GOD GUIDED HILLEL II TO SET UP A CALENDAR" in 359 AD. He is also implying that the Jewish calendar is still true "far into the future", that it would remain correct. Was Kenneth Herrmann aware of the Jewish calendar's shift AWAY FROM THE SEASONS by nearly 5 full days for every millennium? Exactly how far into the future did Kenneth Herrmann feel this Jewish calendar "would be accurate"?

The facts are that it is impossible to have a fixed lunar calendar that will remain "ACCURATE" for 2000 years! In that time ANY fixed lunar calendar will have shifted 9 FULL DAYS away from the seasons. If the calendar was correct in every respect at the start of that period, then long before the 2000 years are up it will HAVE TO BE ADJUSTED, to avoid some years starting too late (i.e. starting after the 2nd new moon after the equinox). That is simply a fact! However, a calendar that follows the simple rule of: ALWAYS start the year with the first new moon ON OR AFTER THE SPRING EQUINOX will never need adjusting; this rule has a self-adjusting effect.

Next, the claim that "God guided Hillel II" is PATENTLY WRONG! The very year after Hillel II set up the present Jewish calendar (i.e. 360 AD), Hillel II placed THE ENTIRE FEAST OF TABERNACLES INTO THE SUMMER! NOT A SINGLE HOLY DAY WAS IN THE AUTUMN THAT YEAR! The Last Great Day, according to this "God-guided" man, was on September 18th, a full 5 days before the end of summer. That is a plain, irrefutable direct violation of God's instructions in Exodus 34:22, that Tabernacles is to be at or after the autumn equinox.

The facts PROVE that Kenneth Herrmann was wrong in claiming God's guidance for the calendar Hillel II set up. And we haven't even talked about the fixed calendar's unbiblical "postponement rules"!

Next, Kenneth Herrmann's claim that this was "not a new calendar, but a mathematical continuation of the original one based on observations" is also incorrect! What Hillel II set up was emphatically NOT a continuation of the calendar that had been in use during Christ's ministry and during the lives of the original apostles! The facts prove this beyond any question.

For the Jews Hillel's calendar really was "A NEW CALENDAR"! Here are some of the facts:

A) The Talmud proves that during the 1st century AD (i.e. during Christ's ministry and while the original apostles were alive) the Day of Atonement was NOT postponed away from a Friday or from a Sunday. The postponement rules were a NEW feature in Hillel's fixed calendar.

B) The starting date of Hillel's fixed calendar (i.e. 3761 BC) can be traced to a document (i.e. the Seder Olam Rabbah) which had its origin at some point AFTER the destruction of Jerusalem in the 130's AD. That is already 100 years after Christ's ministry. So the starting date of the fixed calendar is based on a FLAWED historical document, the content of which displays a total lack of understanding the preceding 500 years of Jewish history. In actual fact the Seder Olam has deliberately altered the historical record for the Persian period, with the explicit intention of obscuring the fact that Jesus Christ's ministry fulfilled the 70-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9. And this deliberately altered date is used as the foundation of the present Jewish calendar.

C) The fixed calendar of Hillel II was a move AWAY FROM REALITY! As long as the calendar had been based on observation, it was very intimately linked to REALITY! Further, in a calendar based on observation there is simply no room for "postponements"! If you decide to postpone the year by 2 days (as is sometimes the case in today's Jewish calendar) HOW WOULD YOU POSSIBLY DO THAT? Would you tell those "keen-eyed men" for 12 successive new moons that their observance of the new crescent was "two days too early"? When you have visual observations there is simply no room for "postponements".

Further, even without any postponements the calculated new moon of the 1st month (i.e. going 177 days before the new moon of Tishri) could be up to 2 days removed from reality! Simply calculating ONE new moon for each year (and with an error of up to 15 hours!) and then extrapolating for the other 11 or 12 new moons for that year removed the entire process from reality! It became a hit-and-miss affair; you were lucky if you got the right day for some years. It reminds you of the Jewish way of counting Pentecost; they occasionally actually get it right, namely, whenever Sivan 6th happens to fall on a Sunday. But that is hardly a satisfactory way of dealing with Pentecost. The fixed calendar of Hillel II does the same thing with all the new moons in the year as Jewish traditions have done with Pentecost.

So removing the start of each month from the actual new moon dates is indeed A NEW CALENDAR, when compared to the one used during Christ's ministry.

Next, the claim that the Jewish calendar would "lead to order and harmony among God's people" is also not correct. It is actually THE cause of major divisions amongst us! It was inevitable that at some point Hillel's calendar would become a source of division, simply because it rejects biblical instructions in favour of Jewish traditions, and because it is so obviously removed from reality.

On page 10 in column III the article concludes with:

"How very clear it is that God has provided mankind with His holy Calendar. He preserved that calendar through the Jewish people. Through them God has given you His sacred calendar so you would be able to observe the days He commands." (Also quoted in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS article)

MY COMMENTS:

This conclusion is nothing more than blind faith in what the author WANTS to believe. Using the adjectives "holy" and "sacred" for the calendar is supposed to lift the subject above being questioned; how could you possibly question something that is "holy" and "sacred"?

A SUMMARY OF THE POINTS MENTIONED IN THIS ARTICLE:

1) It is admitted that the year SHOULD start in the SPRING. But this is not the case with the present Jewish calendar, where 6 years out of every 19 years start in the winter.

2) Kenneth Herrmann throughout his article gives the impression that the present Jewish calendar aims

to achieve "first visibility of the new crescent in Jerusalem". But this is incorrect. The present Jewish calendar is not at all concerned with first visibility. It should have been OBVIOUS to him that first visibility is impossible for all those years when the day of the molad becomes Day 1 of the new month, since first visibility is only possible immediately AFTER SUNSET, which is the start of a new day.

3) Kenneth Herrmann seems to assume that the calculation of the molad of Tishri accurately reflects the time of the new moon conjunction. But this is also incorrect. In actual fact the molad calculations are as much as 15 hours in error compared to the real new moon conjunction.

4) Kenneth Herrmann claims that Passover dates may vary in a 27-day range. This is also not correct, as Passover dates may in fact fluctuate by a full 30 days, as viewed from a solar calendar.

5) Kenneth Herrmann acknowledges that the day, month and year are "EASY TO FOLLOW". Taken together with his statement that the Bible shows that the year is to start in the spring, this means that we have ALL the information needed for constructing a correct calendar. Therefore NO FURTHER ADDITIONAL REVELATION is needed. This he does not seem to realize?

6) Kenneth Herrmann also points out that the Feasts are to have a definite relationship with the harvests and the seasons. But this is simply not true for the present Jewish calendar, where the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread sometimes falls well before any barley is ripe, and where the Feast of Tabernacles at times starts in the wrong season (i.e. in summer).

7) Specifically, Kenneth Herrmann acknowledges the need for the calendar to accommodate the wavesheaf. But he does not mention that the present Jewish calendar at times starts the year TOO EARLY for this need to be met. One may correctly say that here we "HAVE A NEED"!

8) The claim that THE NEED for a central authority is in itself ABSOLUTE PROOF that such an authority must exist is circular reasoning, designed to avoid any demands for REAL proof. This "need" is very artificial, in view of the Bible already providing all the information we need for a correct calendar.

9) Kenneth Herrmann acknowledges that "the commands of Scripture" must be obeyed by the calendar. But gross violations of "the commands of Scripture" by the present Jewish calendar are totally ignored. Can we turn a blind eye to such an ignoring of biblical commands?

10) The "IF God's calendar is lost ..." reasoning is totally unjustified in view of the article having clearly spelled out everything needed for constructing a correct calendar. It is based on the unproven assumption that additional revelation was somehow needed, and that this additional revelation must somehow have been preserved OUTSIDE of the context of the Bible.

11) Kenneth Herrmann then argues from AN ABSENCE OF ANY PROOF! It is not logical to make deductions from an absence of any positive proof.

12) NO PROOF is offered for the bold assertion that "the Jews DID preserve the calendar".

13) Specifically: AT NO STAGE is the Jewish calendar itself ever examined! IF it was indeed a God-given calendar, THEN this could be proved by THE FEATURES of the present Jewish calendar. So the article simply talks ABOUT the Jewish calendar, but never actually examines the calendar itself! This is TYPICAL of all attempts since that time to defend the present Jewish calendar; NONE OF THEM actually show how and why THE FEATURES of the present Jewish calendar themselves make quite clear that it must have been divinely revealed and preserved. Instead, all of them only attempt TO DEFEND THE OBVIOUS FLAWS in the present Jewish calendar.

14) The claim that God has exclusively used the Jews to preserve the Sabbath is not correct. In 1582 AD the Catholic Church very clearly preserved the weekly cycle. They very clearly point out that Saturday is the 7th day of the week. For the past 2000 years the secular calendar has been controlled by the Catholic Church, and they have thus far ALWAYS preserved the knowledge that Saturday is the 7th day of the week.

15) The present Jewish calendar is based on Greek astronomical calculations which result in an error of up to 15 hours for the molad of Tishri. It seems strange to claim "divine revelation" for such an error.

16) The claim that observation of the new moon and calculation of the molad were used TOGETHER is difficult to believe, when we realize that the calculations will at times result in a one or even a two day error for the new moon of the 1st month, an error that visual observation would clearly expose.

17) The claim for God's guidance on Hillel II when he constructed the present Jewish calendar is also most unlikely, in view of Hillel II THE VERY NEXT YEAR placing the entire Feast of Tabernacles and even the Last Great Day well into the season of summer.

18) The claim that Hillel's calendar would be accurate "far into the future" is also not correct. Was Kenneth Herrmann aware of the seasonal shift of 9 days for every 2000-year period? This seasonal shift shows that ANY fixed lunar calendar only has a limited lifespan, before it needs to be adjusted. For proof of this seasonal shift see "The Comprehensive HEBREW CALENDAR" by Arthur Spier, published in 1952 in New York by Behrman House Inc. Publishers, page 226, where Spier writes: "The difference between the traditional length of the sun year and the respective astronomical figure S* is, however, not negligible and causes the Hebrew months to advance against the sun approximately 4 days in a thousand years. For example, we celebrate Pesah 4 days later, on average, than our ancestors did 1000 years ago at the time of Saadia Ha-Gaon."

19) The claim that the present Jewish calendar is not a "new" calendar but only a continuation of the one used during Christ's ministry and before is incorrect. The "new features" of the present Jewish calendar prove that it is indeed A NEW CALENDAR, one that was NOT used during Christ's ministry. What Kenneth Herrmann has described in his article is not at all "a process of PRESERVATION"; it is really "a process of EVOLUTION", something evolving into something new over a period of "almost 2000 years".

20) At no stage is it pointed out WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION God "must have given to the Jews" — information not contained in the Bible — without which a correct calendar could supposedly not have been constructed. What is supposedly "still missing" in information needs to be clearly spelled out, so that it can be objectively assessed.

Now let's look at Kenneth Herrmann's next article about the calendar.

"WHICH IS THE CALENDAR CHRIST USED" by Kenneth Herrmann (GN, February '57)

This article is a rerun of the one we have just examined. Apart from the change of the title, very few other changes were made. This article shows quite clearly that the view on the calendar had not changed in any way since 1953. It also makes quite clear that whatever information Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had back in 1939/1940 when he addressed this question, is reflected in and incorporated into this article by Kenneth Herrmann. If Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's understanding of the calendar question had in any way differed from Kenneth Herrmann's view, then this would have been reflected in some change in the 1957 article.

So, although we are examining an article written by Kenneth Herrmann, we are in effect dealing with the

understanding that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong also had of this subject. The article reflected the Church's official teaching.

One quotation from the article will suffice.

On page 5 in column II the article states:

"Each new month begins with the discovery of the crescent of a new moon in the western sky just after sundown following the 29th or 30th day of a preceding month."

MY COMMENTS:

That's the way it was during Christ's ministry and up to at least the destruction of Jerusalem. So this is how the calendar was determined when the New Testament Church was started. This is the system that the Apostle Paul would have been familiar with, the man who wrote about "the oracles of God" being committed to the Jews.

But the 1st century AD is NOT the issue at all! The real issue is with THE CHANGES that were made with the calendar AFTER Christ's ministry and AFTER the original apostles had all died!

When each month begins "WITH THE DISCOVERY OF THE CRESCENT OF A NEW MOON", as Kenneth Herrmann so clearly points out, THEN you obviously:

- A) Don't have any postponements.
- B) Don't have a problem with incorrect calculations.
- C) Don't have a problem with starting the year in the wrong season.
- D) Are very closely linked to reality.

The entire question about the present Jewish calendar is not about questioning the calendar used in the 1st century AD. It is solely a question about THE CHANGES that were introduced at some point AFTER the 1st century AD, after the original leaders of God's Church had all died.

Let's now look at Kenneth Herrmann's next calendar article.

"PROVE GOD'S CALENDAR CORRECT!" by Kenneth Herrmann (GN, October '57)

This article was aimed at addressing a specific problem. That problem was as follows:

- 1) Kenneth Herrmann had SPECIFICALLY stated that the start of each month is based on the appearance of the first faint crescent of the new moon in the western sky. [This is in fact not correct. The Jewish calendar does NOT claim to achieve first visibility of the new crescent; it is only concerned with "the molad", the invisible new moon conjunction.]
- 2) During the half a year since his previous article was published some Church members had noticed that they could see the first faint crescent of the new moon one day and even TWO days earlier than the dates published by the Church. So they wrote with questions to Pasadena.
- 3) In response to those questions — to explain this apparent anomaly — Kenneth Herrmann wrote this present article. And so in this article he mentions things that did not feature in his previous article, which

was published twice under different titles.

Let's examine what this article tells us.

On page 5 in column I the opening sentence states:

"Almanac dates for the new moon sometimes disagree with those on the Sacred Calendar."

MY COMMENTS:

This is Kenneth Herrmann's purpose statement for the whole article. He will explain why the start of each month in the Jewish calendar (which he calls "the Sacred Calendar", a title the Jews themselves have NEVER AT ANY STAGE claimed) frequently differs from the "new moon dates" that are commonly published in calendars and in almanacs.

THE HONEST ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) The Jewish calculation of "the molad" is supposedly a highly accurate calculation of the new moon conjunction for the 7th month.
- 2) HOWEVER, in actual fact the molad time is almost always INCORRECT. It is at times as much as 15 HOURS LATER than the actual new moon conjunction of the month of Tishri.
- 3) The Jewish calendar calculations then ASSUME that the new moon of the 1st month is exactly 177 days earlier.
- 4) HOWEVER, sometimes that new moon is actually 178 days earlier. At other times it is only 176 days earlier. Often it is actually 177 days earlier.
- 5) This situation (molad of Tishri being 15 hours late, plus only going 177 days earlier instead of sometimes going 178 days earlier) MAY result in the new moon of the 1st month possibly being two days earlier than the Jewish year would place the 1st day of the 1st month.
- 6) ADD to this that the Jewish calendar MAY on top of all this invoke a 1-day or even a 2-day "postponement" to avoid the Day of Atonement falling on an "inconvenient" day of the week. A 1-day postponement will generally not be perceived as a problem in a calendar that is trying to establish "first visibility". But a 2-day postponement could compound this problem by "postponing" the start of the month still one day further after first visibility.

So, for a combination of any of these reasons, FIRST VISIBILITY of the new moon crescent may sometimes actually be TWO days ahead of when the Jewish calendar pronounces the start of the 1st month (i.e. Nisan 1). This is for the area of Jerusalem.

- 7) This problem may appear to be even worse for people living in North America, where the new moon crescent will fairly often be visible one day earlier than in Jerusalem. [This is a point Kenneth Herrmann explains quite clearly in the article.]

Let's now notice the next statement in the article.

On page 5 in column I the article states:

"One member will look for the first faint crescent of the new moon in our western sky and actually see

this 'new moon' a day or two ahead of the date divinely appointed as indicated on our Sacred Calendar. ... Are these individuals justified in being skeptical of our work in publishing this calendar? Or have they failed to read the instructions that go with it?"

MY COMMENTS:

First of all, there is not one shred of evidence offered for the claim that the dates published by the Church were "DIVINELY APPOINTED"! However, the use of these words is intended to silence all opposition. It is a demand for a blind faith, one that will ignore reality.

In effect it says: NEVER MIND REALITY! Never mind what you can "see"! Who cares when the new moons REALLY take place? Don't worry if our "sacred" calendar is at variance with the actual new moons. Just have faith that we have published the "divinely appointed" dates.

Is it wrong for God's people TO QUESTION WHY a month (especially the 1st and the 7th month, which determine all of the annual Holy Days) only starts a day or two after they were able to see the new crescent? Do they have to be silenced with appeals to "DIVINELY APPOINTED" days?

On page 5 in column I the article states:

"The Bereans ... searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so."

MY COMMENTS:

1) That is precisely what I am also doing, searching THE SCRIPTURES for proof that the Jewish calendar is divinely inspired. And the Scriptures simply don't contain any proof of inspiration for the Jewish calendar.

2) A question: WHY were the Bereans not instructed to search "THE ORACLES OF GOD" as well? Why were they limited to searching ONLY "the Scriptures", if the "oracles of God" are supposedly some additional extra-biblical inspired information? Where on earth would anyone FIND a copy of "the oracles of God", if they are something in addition to the Bible?

Let's move on to the next quotation. In reference to Romans 3:1-2 and "the oracles of God":

On page 5 in column I the article states:

"These must be our final authority in the problem with regard to new moon dates."

MY COMMENTS:

THIS is the crux of the whole calendar question! We are expected to IGNORE REALITY! Never mind when the REAL new moons take place. Our authority simply MUST BE the new moon dates revealed by "the oracles of God". So the "oracles of God" supposedly reveal "new moon dates".

But to claim divine revelation for those "new moon dates" determined by the Jewish calendar is to claim that GOD also doesn't really care about having the "new moons" in "HIS" calendar on the REAL "new moons"; i.e. when the new moons really take place.

On page 5 at the top of column II the article then asks the question:

"Is the Jewish calendar such an oracle?"

MY COMMENTS:

The answer the article will provide is a foregone conclusion. Everything hinges on accepting this premise! Without the claim that the Jewish calendar is indeed "such an oracle "ALL SUPPORT FOR THE JEWISH CALENDAR COLLAPSES! Everything depends on THIS premise.

Kenneth Herrmann then goes on to assume that the present Jewish calendar goes back to Moses, which it most assuredly does not. If it DID, we would today MOST CERTAINLY be keeping the Feasts after the wrong new moons.

A quotation from "The Comprehensive HEBREW CALENDAR" by Arthur Spier should demonstrate this. On page 227 Arthur Spier writes:

"From the two tables following, it is evident that the advance of Nisan towards May, at a rate of 4 days in a thousand years, has postponed Pesah (i.e. the Passover) already in the 8th and 19th year of the cycle more than a month from the astronomical spring equinox."

This quote from Arthur Spier's work shows that you simply CANNOT take the present Jewish calendar back to the time of Moses without shifting the Feasts into different seasons. So Kenneth Herrmann's assumption that the present Jewish calendar DOES go back to Moses runs into serious problems.

On page 5 in column II the article states:

"The knowledge of the inner working of the Calendar was retained by God's appointed physical priesthood until the year 360 AD. In that year the Jewish leaders published the information for all to know, so the broken and scattered Jewish nation (and Christians as well) would be able to continue the observance of God's Feast Days in accordance with the new moons as calculated from Jerusalem."

MY COMMENTS:

This is simply not true!

1) In his previous article Kenneth Herrmann had already spelled out very clearly ALL the requirements for a correct calendar, all of which are found in the Bible. There was no need for any "inner workings", which GOD would somehow keep secret from His people in general and only reveal to some "initiated" group. That is simply not the way God works!

2) GOD CLEARLY SPELLED OUT ALL THE DUTIES OF THE PRIESTS! The Book of Leviticus spells out very clearly, for everyone in the nation to know, what duties the priests were expected to perform. It wasn't as if God gave the priests some "additional duties", the details of which God simply wasn't going to let the people in general know about.

3) Furthermore, if THE PEOPLE only had the knowledge that every month should start with the new moon, but THE PRIESTS had some additional "inside information" about "POSTPONING" the start of the month by one or by two days under certain circumstances, this would have created an ENORMOUS amount of confusion for a people who clearly saw every new moon for 40 years that they wandered in the wilderness. How would they possibly have reconciled "postponements" with what they could so clearly see in the desert sky immediately after sunset, every single new moon crescent for 40 years?

4) Another contradiction is as follows: the priests were all of the tribe of Levi, and more specifically, of the family of Aaron. But in his earlier article (Good News March 1953, page 9) Kenneth Herrmann had claimed that the men of the tribe of ISSACHAR specialized in the field of astronomy (referring to 1

Chronicles 12:32), and that THEIR decisions were accepted by the nation. The men of Issachar were NOT "Levites".

So the claim that "the inner working of the calendar was retained by the priesthood" CONTRADICTS the earlier claim that the men of Issachar were the real specialists when it came to the calendar. Now IF the men of Issachar had access to these "INNER WORKINGS", then it certainly was not restricted to "the priesthood", and then there is no reason why it should not have been accessible to ALL in the nation.

5) Kenneth Herrmann does not seem to be aware of the fact that "the priesthood" was simply no longer around in 360 AD! The priests ceased to have ANY influence in the religious arena before the end of the 1st century AD. Here is some proof for this.

In his book "The History of the Talmud", published by New Talmud Publishing Company in 1903 in New York, Michael J. Rodkinson writes the following in volume I on page 7:

HEADING: CHAPTER II

SUB-TITLE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TALMUD DURING THE LAST CENTURY OF THE SECOND TEMPLE'S EXISTENCE ... (i.e. from 30 BC to 70 AD)

QUOTE: "After the triumph of Simon b. Shetah over the Sadducees, when he had finally cleared the Sanhedrin of them, and ONLY THE PHARISEES REMAINED THERE, the development of the Talmud progressed rapidly, for the number of the sages, the adherents, reverers, sanctifiers of the Talmud, increased greatly ..."

The "Sadducees" were THE PRIESTS! The "Pharisees" were non-levitical laymen, who took upon themselves the right to develop and embellish the religious customs of Judaism, and to write the entire Talmud.

This quotation makes clear that even before the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD ALL THE PRIESTS had been kicked out of the Sanhedrin by these laymen "Pharisees". The priests LOST all their religious influence from that time forward! By 360 AD, at the time of the Pharisee Hillel II the priests had been out of the picture FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS!! For 300 years religious CHAOS had ruled the development of Judaism! As Michael Rodkinson states on page 9 of his work:

"AS THE INTERPRETATION OF EVERY LETTER AND VOWEL POINT OF THE WRITTEN LAW HAD MULTIPLIED, AND LIBERTY HAD BEEN GIVEN TO EVERY LEARNED MAN TO CONSTRUE BIBLICAL TEXTS AT HIS PLEASURE, the differences of opinion multiplied ..."

Here we have it FREELY ADMITTED that those non-levitical Jewish leaders set about interpreting ALL of the Hebrew Scriptures "AT THEIR PLEASURE", with licence to construe any text as they pleased! This CHAOS of opinions is readily evident when one reads the Talmud, and Michael Rodkinson freely acknowledges this.

This Talmud with its doctrines (Halakhas) and legends (Hagadas) and morals REPLACED the Hebrew Scriptures as the source of authority. As Michael Rodkinson states, also on page 9:

"At the end of the first century it (i.e. the Talmud!) was to them A SUBSTITUTE for their destroyed Temple; it was their stronghold, their entertainment by day and by night."

A little later, on page 16, Rodkinson makes this replacement of the Scriptures by the Talmud quite clear. There he writes:

"In the short introduction to 'Shabbath' we have already described briefly the character of the Mishnayoth which Rabbi arranged, and HOW HE SUCCEEDED IN IMPARTING TO IT (i.e. to the Talmud!) THE SANCTITY OF THE PENTATEUCH ITSELF ..."

So to summarize this information: 300 years before Hillel II published his calendar, the priests had ceased to be of any influence. They had been methodically kicked out of every religious office. During those 300 years countless false interpretations of the Scriptures had been developed by the non-levitical Pharisees, and to these ideas was attributed THE SANCTITY OF THE BIBLE ITSELF! Yet Kenneth Herrmann would have us believe that "SOMEHOW" the levitical priesthood managed to make "the (till then secret) inner workings of the Calendar" known 300 full years after the priesthood had faded into obscurity?!

If we care to examine it, we find that in those 300 years the Jews had "TOTALLY LOST IT", when it comes to a correct understanding of the Scriptures (i.e. if they even "had it" at the start of that 300 year period, which is also somewhat debatable). Their religious confusion, as revealed in the pages of the Talmud, is absolutely staggering. But somehow, they were supposed to have access to a secret formula for "the inner workings of the Calendar"? To believe that requires an enormous degree of blind faith.

On page 5 in column III Kenneth Herrmann's article states:

"They then made public the system of calendar computations that hitherto had been an apparently guarded secret of the priesthood."

MY COMMENTS:

As I have already stated, the priesthood had ceased to be around for about 300 years by then. Furthermore, WHY should the "calendar computations" ever have been "a guarded secret"? WHY? The Greeks FREELY made their calendar calculations known. On top of that, these secret "calendar computations" that were then made known in 359 AD are really nothing more than calculations that had ALREADY BEEN KNOWN FOR 500 YEARS! They are the exact calculations that the Greek astronomer Hipparchus made known around 146 BC. So WHY should the priests possibly have kept those calculations "secret"? Especially so in view of GOD having made clear to all in His Word that: A DAY starts at sunset, A WEEK starts with the sunset at the end of the Sabbath, A MONTH starts with the sunset immediately after the new moon, and A YEAR starts with the first new moon on or after the spring equinox. What other esoteric knowledge could there possibly be?

On page 5 in column III Kenneth Herrmann assumes:

The calendar computations calculate ... "when the new moon would occur according to Jerusalem time."

MY COMMENTS:

This is simply not correct! The calendar computations calculate only ONE new moon for each year, the (supposed) new moon of the 7th month. But THE FACTS show that these computations are, for that specific new moon, IN ERROR anywhere from 15 hours too late to about 3 hours too early.

Yet Kenneth Herrmann's whole argument is built on the foundation that the Jewish computations are CORRECT for Jerusalem time. His claim for "correctness" is based on assuming that they were given to the priesthood by God, and GOD would not have given some incorrect calculations to the priests. If they were given by God, then they obviously MUST be correct, but they simply are not! And incorrect calculations means that they were NOT given by God.

Next in the article:

Kenneth Herrmann then presents the claim that "the oracles of God" in Romans 3:2 refer to:

the Scriptures + the Sabbath + the Calendar.

MY COMMENTS:

Two of those items refer to things supported by the Bible; only one of those three items has no biblical support of any kind.

"The Scriptures" are the Bible. So this is easy to accept. So yes certainly, the Jews have preserved the Scriptures committed to them.

"The Sabbath" is also clearly identified in the Bible. So here we don't have to accept anything that is not supported by instructions found in the Bible. As far as "the preservation" of the Sabbath is concerned, thus far there has never been an attempt by anyone to destroy the identity of the 7th day. As pointed out earlier, when the Catholic Pope changed the calendar in 1582 AD, he made very sure that the cycle of the week was not in any way tampered with, thus doing his part in PRESERVING the knowledge of which day is the 7th day of the week.

At the very best we could say that "the Jews have (in respect to Sabbath preservation) done NOTHING that is not clearly spelled out in the Bible!" It is THE BIBLE that tells us that the Sabbath is "the 7th day" of the week. There is NO EXTRA-BIBLICAL revelation involved in this so-called "oracle" that the Jews are supposedly "preserving".

A question: What if the Jews had lost the cycle of the week? Would that have meant that we today would have LOST the identity of the true Sabbath?? NO!! The cycle of the week can be traced back to the time of Christ's ministry even without looking to the Jews. THE CATHOLICS don't look to the Jews, and they clearly tell us that Sunday is THE FIRST DAY of the week, and they have never changed the cycle of the week in the past 2000 years. So IF the Jews had at some point lost the knowledge of the cycle of the week, the knowledge that Sunday is in fact the 1st day of the week (and therefore Saturday is the 7th day!) would nevertheless still have been available from the records of the calendar preserved by the Catholic Church.

The point is simply this: we are really not DEPENDENT on the Jews for knowing which day is the seventh day of the week.

A parallel situation: just because the Jews have changed the date for Pentecost, does that mean we have "lost" the knowledge of when Pentecost is to be observed? NO! Why has this not been "lost"? Because THE BIBLE reveals how we are to count for Pentecost. Similarly, if the Jews today were keeping Sunday as their "Sabbath", we could still know from many secular sources that Saturday is the 7th day, and from THE BIBLE we know that it is the 7th day we are to keep. So we are NOT dependent upon the Jews for knowing which day is the 7th day of the week! Thus the total argument that "the oracles of God" supposedly include THE PRESERVATION OF THE SABBATH is artificial and flawed. Its only purpose is to confuse us, to prevent us from seeing that THE CALENDAR is really THE ONLY THING that supporters of the Jewish calendar want the expression "the oracles of God" applied to! So, supposedly, when Paul and Peter wrote about "the oracles of God", what they meant was: THE CALENDAR! But this is simply not supported by any internal evidence in those books of the Bible; the subject of the calendar is simply not discussed.

Consider also all of Paul's epistles to various non-Jewish areas: WHY did Paul NEVER, at any stage,

instruct such congregations to contact THE JEWS for correct calendar information, so they would know when to observe all of God's Holy Days? Where does Paul ever hint that they were to seek ANY form of contact with the Jews, so they could have access to the "sacred calendar"? Never is any Church area in the New Testament instructed to look to the Jewish community for "any form of guidance"; it just isn't there!

So now let's look at "the calendar". Here, in reference to "the oracles of God", we are suddenly expected to accept something that is NOT SUPPORTED BY THE BIBLE! Here we are suddenly expected to believe something is "divinely inspired" and "God given", yet NO BIBLICAL PROOF is offered to substantiate this claim. Here we are asked "to have faith".

THIS IS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT THING FROM THE OTHER TWO "CATEGORIES" OF WHAT ARE CALLED "ORACLES OF GOD" BY KENNETH HERRMANN!

It is one thing to assert that the Scriptures and the Sabbath (which is nothing more than a part of the Scriptures!) are equal to "the oracles of God", and our faith in accepting this assertion is based on accepting what the Bible itself tells us. But it is something altogether different to assert that A CALENDAR (which can be shown to violate biblical instructions!), which has no proof of any biblical connection, is also equal to "the oracles of God".

THIS "ORACLE" EXPECTS US TO ACCEPT THAT "AN ORACLE OF GOD" WOULD VIOLATE INSTRUCTIONS FOUND IN THE WORD OF GOD!

Let's move on in the article.

Kenneth Herrmann next discusses:

Next the article discusses the matter of whether the Jews actually obey God or not. It points out that their disobedience has no effect on "the oracles of God".

MY COMMENTS:

Whether or not the Jews themselves obey God is not the issue at all! This focus is only a smokescreen!

The real issue is: whether or not THEIR CALENDAR obeys God's instructions!

There is a vast difference in this focus. The actions of the Jews don't matter one way or the other in this whole question. But whether the attributes OF THE CALENDAR ITSELF agree with God's instructions or not, THAT is the question!

And simply because the wrong conduct of the Jews has no effect on God's Word and its preservation, this does NOT mean that therefore it is okay for THE CALENDAR to violate clear biblical instructions. The violation of biblical instructions is NEVER acceptable as a standard to accept for conducting our lives.

Kenneth Herrmann next discusses:

The article then explains WHY the first faint crescent is often visible in California before it will be visible in Jerusalem.

MY COMMENTS:

This explanation is very good. However, while that may have been an issue back in 1957, that is not really the issue today. The facts make quite clear that the time determined by the present Jewish calendar as the new moon time is wrong FOR JERUSALEM! Kenneth Herrmann laboured under the impression that the molad calculations were correct "for Jerusalem", which they are not.

On page 6 in column II the article states:

"A third question: Is the new moon noted on the Roman calendar or in an almanac or astronomy book the same term as the new moon on God's Sacred Calendar? Not at all. The term 'new moon' from these secular sources refers to the conjunction (or molad) of the sun and moon rather than the visible crescent which could first be seen about six hours later. ... "

"But remember that this conjunction occurs at least six hours before any observer anywhere can see the new moon crescent with his eyes. ..."

"God's new moon on the other hand is the beginning day of a month, a day that begins at sunset at least six hours after this conjunction. Both the conjunction and sunset must be calculated for the Jerusalem area, not for our local area. Then the first day of the new month moves west across the earth."

MY COMMENTS:

1) This is a mistake which I myself also made when I first looked into the calendar and when I was still hoping to be able to defend the use of the Jewish calendar; I assumed that 6 hours would be sufficient to bridge the gap between the conjunction and first visibility. But that is simply incorrect!

2) THE REASON for making this assumption is because the Jewish calendar has a postponement rule that postpones the month to the next day when the conjunction is deemed to occur in the last 6 hours of a day.

3) In actual fact there are at least from 16 - 20 hours between the conjunction and first visibility. In the context of Kenneth Herrmann's explanation this is important to take note of.

Kenneth Herrmann assumed that the present Jewish calendar attempts to establish first visibility, and THEREFORE the new moon date was postponed to the next day when the molad was calculated as occurring in the last 6 hours of the day.

A 16 - 20 hour lag between the conjunction and first visibility PROVES BEYOND ANY DOUBTS that Kenneth Herrmann was working from a totally false premise! In the present Jewish calendar when the molad is deemed to occur 7 hours before the end of the day (and assuming no other postponement rules come into play) THEN that very day becomes the Day of Trumpets. Yet that will still be AT LEAST 9 hours or more before "first visibility" is possible anywhere on earth (i.e. assuming that the molad established the correct time for the new moon conjunction, which it obviously does not do).

EXAMPLE: In 1947 (10 years before Kenneth Herrmann wrote this article!) The molad of Tishri was calculated to occur on Monday, September 15th at 11:36:46 a.m. (less than 6 hours and 25 minutes before the end of that day) and thus Monday, September 15th became Tishri 1st. However, this molad (assuming it accurately reflected the new moon conjunction which it did not, the molad was in fact over 13 hours and 48 minutes AFTER the lunar conjunction that year) was AT LEAST 16 HOURS BEFORE FIRST VISIBILITY! Yet Kenneth Herrmann would have assumed, based on the comments I have just quoted, that first visibility could be achieved after sunset on September 15th (the start of September 16th). However, since "first visibility" would not have been possible immediately after sunset on September 15th if the molad calculation had in fact been correct, therefore "first visibility" would only

have been possible immediately after sunset on September 16th, which is really THE START of September 17th. Yet Kenneth Herrmann, who was clearly focussing on "first visibility", would have accepted the September 15th date for Tishri 1st.

[Comment: Because of the error in the molad calculation, for the year 1947 it the Jewish calendar actually achieved the day of first visibility. That was pure coincidence, like Sivan 6 falling on a Sunday. In other years, like 2000 A.D., the Jewish calendar postpones the start of Tishri 1 to as much as 44 hours after the time of the lunar conjunction, and thus clearly to beyond first visibility.]

I present this example simply to demonstrate beyond any question that "first visibility" is NOT a concern of the present Jewish calendar. First visibility is simply not possible only six hours after the conjunction!

Consider another anomaly in Kenneth Herrmann's explanations:

IF the present Jewish calendar was supposed to achieve "first visibility", then it should NEVER have the 1st day of the month be the same as the day of the molad! It should always be either the day after the molad day or two days after the molad day.

The reason is, as Kenneth Herrmann explained, that first visibility is always IMMEDIATELY AFTER SUNSET IN THE WESTERN SKY! But "after sunset" is always the start of a new day. THEREFORE the timelag between the molad and first visibility would ALWAYS demand that either the day after the molad becomes Day 1 of the month (i.e. when the molad occurs between sunset and 2:00 a.m., thus 16 hours or more before the next sunset), or TWO days after the molad becomes Day 1 of the month (i.e. when the molad occurs between 2:00 a.m. and sunset, thus less than 16 hours before the end of the day, and thus no visibility immediately after sunset at the start of the day after the molad).

But the present Jewish calendar is simply not concerned with "first visibility" as Kenneth Herrmann apparently thought.

Next, notice the statement that "the first day of the new month moves west across the earth", implied is from Jerusalem. This is not fully correct.

Yes, the first day does move "west across the earth", but it does NOT start at Jerusalem!

It really moves west across the earth from the International Date Line, and has ALWAYS done so. Even when Kenneth Herrmann wrote this article. All Holy Days start at the International Date Line. It should be very easy to see that God's people in Australia have ALWAYS started every Feast and every Holy Day a few hours before that Holy Day or Feast is observed in Jerusalem. For example, last year, in 1999, the Day of Trumpets was Saturday, September 11th, and the people in Australia started this day a few hours before any of God's people in Jerusalem would have started this day.

On page 6 in column III the article states:

"One reason for delaying the beginning of a month is to prevent the day of Atonement (Annual Sabbath) from falling on a Friday which is a preparation day. Another is to prevent any of the autumn annual festivals from falling on a Sunday. All feasts which follow Pentecost [Comment: which the Worldwide Church of God was still observing on a Monday when Mr. Herrmann wrote this!] represent the second part of God's Plan. They must not fall on a Sunday which would represent the first part of God's Plan which began 1900 years ago."

MY COMMENTS:

Here we see Kenneth Herrmann reflecting the Church's flawed understanding at that time. The Church was desperately looking for SOME JUSTIFICATION for the unbiblical postponement rules. The idea that Trumpets, Atonement, 1st Day of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day must not fall on a Sunday for some SYMBOLICAL reason is absurd, and no longer even used by anyone wishing to justify these postponement rules.

The justifications Kenneth Herrmann offers in this article are without merit. And they do not take into account that the Talmud clearly reveals that during the 1st century AD (i.e. during Christ's ministry and throughout the lives of the original apostles) the Day of Atonement DID fall on Fridays and on Sundays! So how can anyone possibly claim "divine revelation" for such a postponement rule that none of the original apostles were aware of?

A final quotation from the article.

On page 6 in column III the article states:

The article first acknowledges that the Jews admit that the calculations are not perfect. Then, in relation to this lack of perfection, the article states:

"Yes, this is true [that the calculations are not perfect]. It would be more surprising if it were not true."

MY COMMENTS:

That is a very strange statement indeed! After claiming DIVINE REVELATION for the present Jewish calendar and its calculations, WHY would it possibly be "SURPRISING" if the calculations were indeed perfect? Would Kenneth Herrmann expect GOD to "reveal" something that was "less than perfect"? WHY justify a lack of perfection as being something we should EXPECT, when we are supposedly dealing with divinely revealed "oracles"?

Anyway, this concludes the analysis of the 3 calendar articles by Kenneth Herrmann that were published by the Church back in the 1950's. They form the foundation of all discussions of the calendar that have followed in the now more than 40 years since then.

I have already summarized the main points above, before we started the discussion of this last article. This present article has highlighted a few other errors.

IN CONCLUSION:

These 3 articles are the first ones published by the Church. They are also THE MOST HONEST discussions of the calendar question. The reason for this should be immediately apparent. With his first article Kenneth Herrmann naively presented ALL THE FACTS at his disposal, in addition to the obvious biases extant in the Church 40 years ago. As long as you are not aware that some of the things you are presenting actually DISCREDIT your own views, you may very well freely mention those things.

I had exactly the same experience when I first started to write about the calendar and various people published critical comments about my articles on the Internet. While some of the critical comments were certainly valid (I didn't know it all either), at the same time SOME of those comments, intended to express support for the Jewish calendar, in actual fact EXPOSED SOME OF THE FLAWS in the present Jewish calendar. They actually turned out to disprove the very things their authors were trying to support. Needless to say, once I actually focused on such information and exposed HOW that information challenged the credibility of the present Jewish calendar, the original authors dropped those items like hot potatoes, acting as if they had never even heard of this information (which they themselves had

brought to my attention).

And so, back in the Church in the 50's and the 60's, once comments started to flow in, focusing on THE IMPLICATIONS of what Kenneth Herrmann had written in his articles (i.e. exposing the flaws and the weaknesses as I have done in this article), from then onwards all those points that proved a lack of divine inspiration for the present Jewish calendar were simply dropped, hoping that no one would ever bring them up again.

Thus all of the information Kenneth Herrmann had presented, which upon closer examination actually worked against the claim that the present Jewish calendar is divinely inspired, was simply ignored and not presented in future discussions. Specifically: Kenneth Herrmann's spelling out of all the requirements for a correct calendar — specifically his statements that the 1st month should start in the spring — became extremely embarrassing, in view of the Jewish calendar starting so often in the winter. Similarly, his attempts to justify "the 6-hour postponement in order to achieve first visibility" and the "postpone autumn Holy Days away from a Sunday theory" were dropped, since they are obviously flawed.

And so THE BIASES were RETAINED! But THE JUSTIFICATIONS for those biases WERE CHANGED. If new justifications could not be found, then they were simply deemed to be covered by "the oracles of God" explanation. Ultimately everything was staked on the "oracles of God" as a way to justify the present Jewish calendar.

And that's where we are today. So when you today read any articles supporting the Jewish calendar, don't expect to find all of the things that Kenneth Herrmann freely stated in his 1953 GOOD NEWS article. Authors today will be much more inclined to hide information that exposes problems with the present Jewish calendar. They prefer not to face those issues.

Frank W. Nelte