

February 2000

Frank W. Nelte

**A REPLY TO THE 2 CALENDAR SERMONS GIVEN BY JOHN RITENBAUGH ON JANUARY 1 AND
JANUARY 8, 2000**

Dear John,

On January 1 and January 8, 2000 you gave two sermons, in which you took a very strong stand in total and unconditional support for the present Jewish calendar as being the one God wants His people to use today for the purpose of determining the annual Holy Days. Then, on January 25th, while on your visit to Johannesburg, South Africa, you gave a very clear and biblically sound Bible Study on the subject of "FAITH AND WORSHIPPING GOD" in our home. What you said and explained about "faith" in that Bible Study has an obvious application to what you said in your calendar sermons.

While I respect your sincerity in wanting to faithfully hold fast to the things we were taught by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, I also feel that on THIS issue of the calendar you have made a major mistake. So I will present the evidence, which I believe shows up the flaws in your thinking on this subject. Then that evidence will have to stand on its own feet, not on any reputation of any man.

I don't think you realize it, but in your first sermon you actually presented what I believe is the greatest and most devastating evidence AGAINST the present Jewish calendar that has thus far come to light. This I will comment on later.

I have made a verbatim transcript of your first sermon (about 20 pages long), and in the remainder of this article I will present quotations from that sermon under the header "YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING", and then give my comments under the header "MY COMMENTS".

[COMMENT: Those of you reading this article can download the audio versions of those two sermons from the website of the Church of the Great God. The address of the website is: <http://www.cgg.org>.]

John, I have repeatedly tried to make as much information about the calendar as possible, and the problems inherent in the present Jewish calendar, available to you. Thus far you have never yet responded to any of it. Previously you did acknowledge publicly that you could actually see some real problems with the present Jewish calendar. However, with your two recent sermons you have hardened your stance. You concluded your first sermon by saying: "I think that you can clearly see that we are not going to make any change".

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong took a similar stance about keeping Pentecost on a Monday, something he then defended vigorously for the next 30 years. Eventually he reluctantly acknowledged that Pentecost really is always on a Sunday, and NOT on a Monday, though he continued to defend his wrong way of "counting FROM ..." as having been the correct way to understand the Scripture, blaming the translators for his wrong understanding.

What will you do IF I can show that there are some real problems with THE FOUNDATION on which you have built your stand in this matter? Will you actually face up to such evidence, or will you ignore it in favour of "having faith"?

In preparation for this response to your two sermons, I have already written three specific articles in the past few weeks. One article presents the whole calendar problem in a nutshell, as it were. The next

article carefully examines Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's 1940 GOOD NEWS letter, the one Dr. Hoeh quoted in his article, and which you also refer to in your sermon. THIS 1940 letter by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong really became the foundation for the Church's stand on the calendar question. The third article carefully examines all three of the calendar articles Kenneth Herrmann wrote in the 1950's. It was essential for me to examine what Kenneth Herrmann had written about the calendar, because in your sermon you quote so extensively from a letter he wrote.

As you have obviously taken a very firm stand in favour of the present Jewish calendar, I don't know how else I could point out the weaknesses in your presentation, without actually "pointing them out"? I have gone to the trouble of writing this article, and also the above-mentioned three others, because I am convinced that you have made a mistake in your assessment of this whole matter. It is most emphatically not anything personal against you. How else can "iron sharpen iron", unless someone points our errors out to us? If you see any errors in MY presentation here, I would be most grateful to you if you would point them out to me, as I too would really MUCH PREFER to be able to go along with the present Jewish calendar in an unconditional way; it would make my life so much easier! But, based on some of the things I will present in this article, I simply cannot with my present understanding do that in good conscience.

I hope you can see that my fervent desire in writing this response to your sermons is to point out flaws and weaknesses in your approach to the calendar question, which question you sometimes refer to as "the Cancerous Calendar Controversy". IF it really were to turn out that you are wrong in your views on this matter, THEN I assume you really would like to know that. Therefore I ask you to carefully examine the analysis and the evidence I will present in this article. If you honestly believe that you can refute the evidence I present, then I am more than willing to listen.

I also believe that we ministers are accountable for what we preach and teach. And I further believe that ANY sermon given to any group of God's people must be able to stand up to close scrutiny and examination. This also applies to your sermons which are available for downloading over the Internet.

So here goes

1) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now in researching that first article I came to the conclusion, on my own, that there is no calendar in the Bible. I have since found confirmation of that in several places. But without ever saying that directly in that original article, it nonetheless became the basis for much of the material that was in that article.

MY COMMENTS:

Here you state that "the basis" for your approach to this subject is that "THERE IS NO CALENDAR IN THE BIBLE". Your assessment is only partially correct; but it is also partly WRONG! It really depends on what conclusions you intend to draw from this statement that "there is no calendar in the Bible".

IF you intend to state that God has not anywhere in the Bible said words to this effect: "Here is My calendar for you, which calendar I want you to always use for determining when to observe My Holy Days", then you are quite correct.

BUT IF you intend to draw the conclusion that "THEREFORE we don't need to consider ANYTHING that the Bible has to say about a calendar", then you are most assuredly wrong! If you intend to use your "basis" as a justification to COMPLETELY IGNORE ALL BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A CALENDAR, then you are obviously wrong.

The very fact that the Bible has A GREAT DEAL to tell us about a correct calendar should make abundantly clear to us that God does indeed want us to consider, take note of, observe and implement ALL the requirements for a calendar that He has seen fit to include in the Bible.

Now since in BOTH of your sermons you totally and completely ignore and avoid ANY AND ALL INSTRUCTIONS FOR A CALENDAR that we find in the Bible, it seems to me that you have used your "basis" to justify a total ignoring of all biblical calendar requirements. Thus, for all practical purposes, the Jews could be observing the Chinese calendar or the Indian calendar or the Roman Julian calendar, and your sermons make it a matter of faith to accept whatever calendar the Jews happen to have accepted. What the Jewish calendar actually looks like in a real life situation never enters the picture in your messages.

You know the principle of "try the spirits whether they are of God". Surely the very least that God REQUIRES of us is that we "try the Jewish calendar whether it be of God, by evaluating it against the biblical requirements for a calendar"?

So it seems to me that right up front, at the very start of your sermon, you have built your stance on a wrong foundation.

Furthermore, your statement: "I have since found confirmation of that IN SEVERAL PLACES" sounds very strange to me indeed! Where else, other than in the Bible itself, could you POSSIBLY find out "whether or not there is a calendar in the Bible"? You have read the Bible from cover to cover many times, so do you need some OTHER BOOK or some OTHER AUTHORITY to tell you whether or not there is a calendar IN THE BIBLE? What non-biblical book could possibly "CONFIRM" what is in the Bible? Or did you just make this statement to support your approach of totally ignoring all BIBLICAL evidence for a calendar?

2) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now some people have the mistaken idea that Herbert Armstrong was uninformed regarding the calendar; but that is very far from the truth. Now there is nothing new under the sun. The Church, like mankind, is going through the same general tests over and over again, with the same general material. And in each case where we are tested on this material, it is a test of our faith.

MY COMMENTS:

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's own 1940 GOOD NEWS letter proves beyond any question that there were NUMEROUS things about the Jewish calendar that he did not understand at that time. Kenneth Herrmann's 1953 and 1957 GOOD NEWS articles about the calendar also prove beyond any question that even as late as 1957 (!) neither Kenneth Herrmann nor Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong understood the major ways in which the present Jewish calendar violates clear biblical instructions. I have already written two separate articles examining both, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's 1940 letter and Kenneth Herrmann's calendar articles of the 1950's.

Later in this article I will present SPECIFIC things none of the leaders in the Church understood as late as 1957, about 30 years after Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong started to observe God's Holy Days based on the present Jewish calendar.

3) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now the material for these tests is simply re-presented about every 20 to 40 years or so, and it seems new to those who have never heard it before. There is a saying that "what goes around comes around".

There is another saying that "the more things change, the more they stay the same". Now both of these generalities are generally true, and thus, some are lead to think that Herbert Armstrong's contact with the calendar was passing at best, because they feel that it took place so long ago; and that these things that have come up in the last, let's say, year or two, are new and that he never had to face them.

Oh yes, he did!

MY COMMENTS:

Popular "sayings" don't prove anything. They only appeal to our biases. The sayings you quote here certainly don't have ANYTHING to do with what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong understood about the calendar, as I will show later. Further, following these popular sayings with "and thus ..." shows that you are using them TO DRAW A CONCLUSION. But that is illogical! Popular sayings never constitute "proof" for anything. "Both these generalities are generally true" is an unfounded assertion, and does not really apply to the calendar question. On top of that, you make no attempt to address any of the evidence that is presented against the present Jewish calendar.

4) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now that he came into contact with the calendar they do not doubt. But they believe that neither he, nor anybody else with him was qualified to really evaluate the matters bearing on whether or not this issue is valid.

But again, this is not the case. He and those helping him saw right through to the heart of the issue.

MY COMMENTS:

THE FACTS will show that they didn't really see the heart of the issue AT ALL until some time AFTER 1957. And once SOME OF THEM did see the heart of the issue, they didn't do what you and I would have expected them to do! The mystery is about to be unravelled. Read on.

5) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

First of all, I want you to remember that Herbert Armstrong was baptised all the way back in 1927 and he fellowshiped with The Church of God, 7th Day and continued to fellowship and cooperate with them all the way up into the late 30s and into the early 40s. He was introduced to the calendar by them, because they kept Passover on the 14th day of Nisan according to the calculated Hebrew calendar.

MY COMMENTS:

Some things to take note of here.

A) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong didn't think of using the present Jewish calendar himself; this was something "GIVEN TO HIM" by the Church of God 7th Day. So a question is: was God going to use the Church of God 7th Day to put "correct teachings" into the phase, or era, of God's Church that He was going to start through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong? Simply because the Church of God 7th Day used the present Jewish calendar, that doesn't mean it was what GOD may have wanted His people to use.

B) You mention the date of 1927. It is interesting that, as I will shortly show, it was about 40 years from the year of 1927/1928 until Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (or the Church of which he was the human leader) became aware of the real problems with the present Jewish calendar.

6) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Furthermore, he came to understand that he was to keep the Holy Days very early in his conversion, and for 7 years he and Loma kept them according to the dates on the calculated Hebrew calendar. In fact, until he found differently, he followed it so closely that he kept Pentecost on Sivan 6, according to the Pharisaic custom. And when he discovered that that was in error, he changed when he was keeping Pentecost by counting more accurately, but he didn't change the calendar.

MY COMMENTS:

It took Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong about 13 years to find out that the Jewish way of determining Pentecost (i.e. Sivan 6) is wrong. Further, a careful examination of the 1940 GN letter indicates that he himself hadn't come to see this problem at all; it was something SOMEONE ELSE had brought to his attention. See my article about that 1940 GN letter for more details.

However, he assuredly did NOT change to keeping Pentecost "by counting more accurately"!

All that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong actually did do in 1940 is: CHANGE FROM ONE WRONG WAY OF DETERMINING PENTECOST TO A DIFFERENT, BUT EQUALLY WRONG WAY OF COUNTING FOR PENTECOST!

Keeping Pentecost on a Monday was just as wrong as keeping it on Sivan 6.

If we are going to stick with the facts, we need to acknowledge that from the time he started observing the Holy Days in 1927 by using the present Jewish calendar, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong did NOT make ANY corrections until 1974 — 47 years later! — when he corrected his wrong way of "counting FROM ..." to at last come to the right day of the week for observing Pentecost. It took him pretty well HALF HIS LIFETIME to correct ONE error with the Jewish way of determining the Holy Days.

Furthermore, keeping Pentecost on Sivan 6 has NOTHING AT ALL to do with following the Hebrew calendar "more closely" than keeping Pentecost on a Monday or on a Sunday. Keeping Pentecost on Sivan 6 was not "a calendar issue" but a matter of accepting the Jewish INTERPRETATION of specific Bible instructions (i.e. Leviticus 23:15-16). The JEWISH calendar is not a Bible issue, it is not based on any biblical instructions. Since Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong first started to observe the Holy Days in 1927 the Church (as well as the major splits in recent years) has ALWAYS accepted the Jewish calendar 100%, and 100% is all you can have. Thus far the Church has NEVER expressed any reservations about the present Jewish calendar. So the line of reasoning: "in fact, until he found differently, he followed it so closely that ..." is not really justified. It has thus far ALWAYS been followed "ever so closely"!

7) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Then, late in 1939 and early 1940, the calendar itself arose as an issue, because an elder of some prominence in the Church of God, 7th Day, published a date for the first day of the year different by one month than what the Church of God, 7th Day officially published. Now the members inquired of Herbert Armstrong as to who was right.

MY COMMENTS:

I have thoroughly examined Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's 1940 GOOD NEWS letter. The article is over 30 pages in length. An examination of that GOOD NEWS letter makes quite clear that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's examination of the calendar question really MISSED ALL THE REAL PROBLEMS.

8) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now in the Good News letter of 1940, a full report of Herbert Armstrong and this whole experience is given and this letter, is quoted by Herman Hoeh in a Good News magazine article of April 1981.

Now if any of you are able to get that article, and you are interested and concerned regarding the calendar at all, I would urge you to get that. April 1981. Now Dr. Hoeh, quoting Herbert Armstrong, writes:

MY COMMENTS:

I have also examined Dr. Hoeh's 1981 article. In it he repeats the assumptions Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong accepted about the calendar. He also repeats Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's illogical and unwarranted deductions.

However, Dr. Hoeh in that 1981 article did something that YOU have very meticulously avoided doing! Dr. Hoeh actually admitted openly that Exodus 34:22 ("the feast of ingathering at the 'tekufah' of the year") is a clear instruction that the correct calendar simply MUST comply with. This you have thus far not been willing to admit. Why not?

9) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now in addition to this we must also remember that all of this took place before Ambassador College was founded, that after Ambassador College was founded, Herbert Armstrong was joined by men who had the academic background in mathematics and even in astronomy to assist him. Perhaps most notably, Kenneth Herrmann, whose training was in mathematics and astronomy, Herman Hoeh, and later on, when we get into the computer era, John Kossee. But they all kept arriving at the same answer.

MY COMMENTS:

No matter how great the qualifications of these men may have been, THE FACTS show quite clearly that they did nothing more than repeat Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's wrong line of reasoning. This is clearly exposed in my article about Kenneth Herrmann's three GOOD NEWS articles in the 1950's. Specifically, Kenneth Herrmann with his "training in mathematics and astronomy" did not realize many vital things about the Jewish calendar. I will mention more of this in a little while, and I will present proof for what I will say. But Kenneth Herrmann was also willing to state in clear terms the biblical requirements for a correct calendar. Why have you not quoted Mr. Herrmann in this regard?

10) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now listen to this:

The issue on the calendar is not a mathematical, astronomical one. But, like everything else in the lives of those who are called, it is A BIBLICAL FAITH ISSUE.

MY COMMENTS:

This is AN UNFAIR SLANT AND UNFAIR PRESSURE on those who hear this message!

In the Bible Study you gave in our home on the subject of faith, you referred to Romans 10:17 and you said that FAITH "comes by hearing God's Word AND NOTHING ELSE!" You further said: "If God hasn't said anything, THERE IS NO BASIS FOR FAITH". You further said: "HAS God spoken about ...

(anything)? THEN we can have faith and hope ... (in whatever God has spoken about)".

You further said: "Better check up on us (ministers) to see IF we are saying what our Father in heaven is saying". That is exactly what I am doing! This article is a direct response to your exhortation to us to "check up on you".

You referred to Jeremiah 7:21-23, 27 and said: "... but they made up THEIR OWN WORSHIP OF GOD". The "they" referred to the Jews and the Israelites as a whole in Jeremiah 7; and the Jews have continued doing that EVER SINCE! They were doing it in the time of Christ, and they did it even more so after the time of Christ. That's what the whole Jewish religion is, people who have "made up their own worship of God". AND THEIR CALENDAR IS A PART OF WHAT THEY "MADE UP"!

You further told us that the difference between real faith and a false faith is: REAL faith believes what God says! A false faith, by contrast, believes WHAT MAN THINKS.

The point of all these quotations from your faith sermon is simply this:

When it comes to the calendar, you are making A FAITH ISSUE out of something that is not even in the Bible! You yourself concluded that the calendar is NOT in the Bible. You also stated that faith has to be based on the Word of God and NOTHING ELSE; yet you are asking us to have faith in something that is not found in the Bible. WHY?

Furthermore, in asking us to have faith in the present Jewish calendar, you are also asking us to TOTALLY IGNORE all the biblical instructions that apply to the calendar. How can we possibly ignore plain and clear biblical instructions for the calendar, and then somehow feel that we are "acting in faith"?

So your appeal to faith is a little unfair, because we are all very vulnerable to appeals to have faith. None of us want to think of ourselves as lacking real faith. Appeals to faith should always be, in your own words, "based on God's Word and nothing else". But the present Jewish calendar is not based on God's Word. Therefore it CANNOT be "a faith issue"!

11) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Just from the things that I have given you here. He clearly saw that there are not enough rules in the Bible to establish a calendar. A calendar is not the simple device that you and I tend to think of it as something that you just hang up on the wall.

MY COMMENTS:

Here you are saying THE DIRECT OPPOSITE of what Kenneth Herrmann said in his articles. Do you realize this?

In his 1953 GN article, and again in his 1957 GN article, Kenneth Herrmann stated ALL the rules from the Bible, that are needed to establish a calendar. Did you realize this?

For example, on page 8 and in column II of the March 1953 GN article "God's Sacred Calendar" Kenneth Herrmann stated:

"Thus we have established the daily cycle beginning at sundown, the weekly cycle beginning at sundown following the Sabbath, the monthly cycle beginning with the new moon and 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. (Kenneth Herrmann's own emphasis)

Did you notice Kenneth Herrmann's statement that:

"THE DAY, MONTH AND YEAR ARE EASY TO FOLLOW"?!

Exactly on what do you base your statement that "there are not enough rules in the Bible to establish a calendar"? Exactly what other rules do you feel are still missing?

PLEASE SPELL THIS OUT FOR US!

Do you feel that you can't establish a calendar without having some "rules of postponements"? Do you acknowledge THE RULE contained in Exodus 34:22 about Tabernacles never falling into summer? Dr. Hoeh acknowledged the validity of this rule. Do you acknowledge THE RULE that Unleavened Bread may NEVER be so early that no barley would be available for the wave offering? Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and Kenneth Herrmann both acknowledged the validity of this rule. Do you acknowledge THE RULE that the year must start in the spring? Kenneth Herrmann acknowledged the validity of this rule. Do you acknowledge THE RULE that the month must start with the new moon? Kenneth Herrmann acknowledged this rule.

Exactly what rules do you feel are still needed IN ADDITION TO the ones Kenneth Herrmann spelled out in his article, as quoted above?

I put it to you that NO OTHER RULES ARE NEEDED IN ADDITION TO THIS INFORMATION WHICH WE FIND IN THE BIBLE!

12) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

A calendar must operate on full days. But the heavenly bodies upon which the calendar is based, do not operate on full days. They have their own schedules. You are very familiar with the solar year which is 365 and one-quarter days long. What do you do with that one-quarter day? Every four years you have to add it to the calendar to assure that the chart on the wall matches the heavenly bodies that are up there circling around.

But the Hebrew calculated calendar is much more complex, because it also involves the movements of the moon. And the movements of the moon are far more irregular than the movement of the earth around the sun. The moon in its orbit averages 29.53 days. We'll just say 29 days and a little over half of a day. Again, its not a full day. But when you are keeping a calendar you have to operate with full days and that half a day has to be made up somewhere, in some way, in order to keep the chart on the wall accurate with what the heavens are doing up there.

Putting the moon in makes things a great deal more difficult. So you need A LOT OF RULES in order to keep the chart on the wall accurate with the heavenly bodies that are spinning around up there.

MY COMMENTS:

WHY are you trying to make the whole question MORE COMPLICATED? WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVE IN DOING THIS??

Kenneth Herrmann did his best to state the whole question in simple terms, but you are trying to create confusion. WHY?

Do you understand that Kenneth Herrmann has answered ALL of the questions you are trying to artificially raise? Why would a minister of God, in trying to teach something to God's people, possibly EVER want to make a subject more complicated than it really is? Kenneth Herrmann was telling the truth when he wrote: "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." There is not even the slightest hint in Kenneth Herrmann's articles that calendar matters are really "COMPLICATED", and you acknowledged that Kenneth Herrmann was more of a calendar authority than you are. So why are you presenting them as "complicated"?

I suspect that you have never thought this through, but in your desire to support the present Jewish calendar have simply repeated arguments you have heard OTHER PEOPLE use, arguments that sounded plausible to you because they agreed with your bias.

13) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay, NUMBER TWO:

He saw that God had given no authority to anyone outside of the Bible to establish a calendar. He had given no authority to anyone outside the Bible to establish a calendar. And brethren, this even includes you and me, as we will see later on in the sermon.

MY COMMENTS:

It is correct to say that God has not given anyone outside of the Bible specific "authority" to establish a calendar. However, you have OMITTED TO SAY that "IN THE BIBLE God has not given anyone authority to establish a calendar EITHER!"

The truth is that "God has not given authority" to anyone specific, in the Bible or outside of the Bible, to establish a calendar. So exactly WHAT should this tell us?

It should tell us that "establishing a calendar" has nothing at all to do with having to be given AUTHORITY to do so! IF it had anything at all to do with requiring "authority from God", THEN God would surely have spelled this out in the Bible. But there are no Scriptures in the Bible that "confer authority" to establish a calendar on anyone!

There is no indication anywhere in the Bible that the calendar is "an authority issue"! That is simply AN ASSUMPTION Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong made, one he received from the Church of God 7th Day; and it has been accepted by everyone who has supported the present Jewish calendar since then. The fact that ALL of the requirements for a correct calendar are found in the Bible, as clearly presented in Kenneth Herrmann's articles, shows that it is simply not required for God to somehow confer "special authority for a calendar" to any group of people.

As long as a calendar meets ALL of the biblical requirements, it doesn't really matter who has devised it. That is why God's servant Ezra had no problems with instituting the Babylonian calendar, that was in use throughout the Persian Empire, in the area of Judah. There was, from a biblical point of view, NOTHING AT ALL WRONG WITH THE BABYLONIAN CALENDAR; it met all of the biblical requirements, as listed by Kenneth Herrmann.

14) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

AND THREE:

He saw that it was to the Jews that the oracles of God had been committed.

MY COMMENTS:

That is correct. But we really need to examine what meaning GOD wants us to attach to the word "oracles", or "logion" in Greek. The claim that "logion" includes the calendar is **TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY WITHOUT ANY BIBLICAL SUPPORT!**

The claim that "logion" refers to some things that are not recorded in the Bible is without foundation. It is nothing more than people attaching their own meanings to the word "logion". It is simply not right to put something that is not even recorded in the Bible (the present Jewish calendar) on a par with those things that **ARE** recorded in the Bible. That is what **THE JEWS** did; they put the sayings of their "wise" Pharisaical leaders on a par with the written Word of God. But we, God's people, are not supposed to do something like that.

15) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now: what if one feels that the Jews made some mistakes in their past handling of the calendar? Let's look. Let the Bible give a simple and a basic answer to that. Turn with me to the book of Acts, chapter 7, and in verses 38 and 39. Acts 7:38-39. "This is he (meaning Moses) that was with the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mt. Sinai and with our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us. To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them and in their hearts turned back again to Egypt."

and ...

THE SECOND THING that I want you to note here is in verse 39. "To whom our fathers would not obey". Okay, we're dealing with a faithless people here, who were given the living sayings of God, but they would not obey. They were a faithless people, a people who were prone to make, what we'll call them, to make mistakes. So you don't trust the Jews, because they make mistakes. They're human.

MY COMMENTS:

This is a misrepresentation of the **REAL** concern people have!

It is not at all a matter of "the Jews having made **SOME MISTAKES** in their past handling of the calendar". Nor is it a matter of the Jews "having sinned" and having refused to obey God. The focus is not on "the Jews" at all!

Don't take the focus away from **THE CALENDAR!**

The problem is simply: **THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR VIOLATES AND TRANSGRESSES CLEAR BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS!**

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and Kenneth Herrmann and Dr. Hoeh have all acknowledged **SOME** of these biblical requirements for a correct calendar. Why don't you acknowledge these same biblical **REQUIREMENTS?**

Why try to lower the real violations of God's instructions to the level of "MISTAKES"? If a man "makes a mistake" and commits adultery with another man's wife, having committed this mistake once already, is it okay for him **TO CONTINUE** committing "his mistake" of sleeping with another man's wife? Likewise, **IF** we want to refer to the violation of God's instructions by the present Jewish calendar as "mistakes", does

that mean that it is then acceptable TO CONTINUE living with that mistake? If there is no attempt to rectify and to resolve past mistakes, but rather to simply continue in those mistakes, WHERE IS REAL REPENTANCE?

Furthermore, the way you refer to ""the Jews having made SOME MISTAKES in their past handling of the calendar" is at least a tacit acknowledgment that they HAVE indeed made "mistakes", and "MAJOR mistakes" at that! But not just "in their PAST handling of the calendar"; they are STILL TODAY making those "MAJOR mistakes"! Why don't you address what God's people need to do when the Jews RIGHT NOW are making serious mistakes with the way they handle the calendar? Does faith ignore "present faults" with the present Jewish calendar?

What you have presented is NOT "a simple and basic answer" from the Bible at all! The Scriptures you present have nothing to do with PRESENT AND CONTINUING CALENDAR PROBLEMS! You have incorrectly applied these Scriptures to the calendar.

Furthermore, your statement: "So you don't trust the Jews, because they make mistakes. They're human" is a subtle way of misrepresenting the facts! It is not at all a matter of "they make mistakes because they are human"! It is actually a matter of: "THEY ARE CARNAL AND THEIR MINDS ARE ENMITY AGAINST GOD! AND SO THEY HAVE DEVISED A CALENDAR THAT TOTALLY DISREGARDS GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS!"

THAT is the correct picture, rather than "they make mistakes because they are human".

16) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay, what if the Jews were without faith and they made mistakes? Shall their lack of faith make the faithfulness of God of none effect? No, God is going to be true, regardless. People do. People to whom God gives responsibility can sin, not being faithful to that responsibility. But that doesn't change God. And in this case: regardless of the sins of these people, He will preserve His oracles in spite of them!

MY COMMENTS:

Whether or not the Jews "sinned" is not the issue! Whether or not the Jews have tampered with the text of the Bible, NOW THAT IS AN ISSUE!

Exactly what do you do when you find out that the TEXT of the Old Testament has been tampered with? Why, you CORRECT the problem text.

And YOU, John, have already done that at times. Want an example?

YOU were the first one I ever heard explain that the Jews TAMPERED WITH, and corrupted, the text of Deuteronomy 16:1-8. YOU are the one who explained that the word "Passover" in verses 1, 2, 5 and 6 was changed by some unfaithful scribe or scribes, and that these verses are NOT speaking about the Passover at all; they are really speaking about THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. And I believe that your explanation of these verses, and of the tampering that was involved, is correct!

[Comment: I had heard others explain, and I had done so myself in the past, that these verses speak about the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But you are the first one I ever heard, who stated unequivocally that this text had been TAMPERED WITH by unfaithful scribes.]

This is not simply "a translation error" we are speaking about. This is really "a corruption" of the Hebrew text. And you, once you saw it, set about correcting the problem.

In the same way:

What do you do when you find out that the present Jewish calendar, when you compare it to clear biblical requirements, has been CHANGED from the calendar that was in use during Christ's time? Why, you correct the problem! You make sure that the calendar you use does NOT break biblical requirements.

As far as "authority" is concerned: you had no "authority" to change Deuteronomy 16:1 to read "Feast of Unleavened Bread" when the Hebrew text reads "Passover" ... since Deuteronomy 16 is CERTAINLY a part of "the oracles of God" — that is beyond question — and they have also not been delivered to YOU. But you had no hesitation in changing it, once you realized that "Passover" in these verses is a corruption of the original text.

Yes, God preserved "His oracles"; but you know that "Passover" in Deuteronomy 16:1 is a corruption of the original text. You have likewise tacitly acknowledged that the Jews have made "mistakes" in their handling of the calendar, mistakes they are STILL making TODAY. But here you refuse to do something about the problem. Why?

No one is saying anything about "changing God"! You are the one who has made this unwarranted deduction from your own statements. Technically that type of argument is known as "building a strawman", to give you something that is easy to knock down. The correct focus is: there are problems with the present Jewish calendar TODAY, which biblical revelation requires us to reject.

Furthermore, in many of your sermons you are fairly casual in your treatment of "THE ORACLES" God has preserved through the Jews (i.e. Old Testament Scriptures), by the way you will present Scriptures. Are you aware of this? [Comment: many other ministers are equally casual in this regard, you are not alone by any means.]

For example:

Regarding the Old Testament, God inspired the Jews to preserve the Hebrew text. Now the Hebrew text has a specific meaning. While it is not without its faults, on the whole the King James Version is fairly faithful to the original Hebrew. Now when you want to make a point about some verse or other, you will not uncommonly quote ANOTHER TRANSLATION, or you will quote SOME COMMENTARY OR OTHER!

There is no problem with quoting other translations or even commentaries, PROVIDED THAT you FIRST check that this other translation or this commentary is in fact AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT! And this is something you usually don't do.

We don't want to know how unconverted translator "X" translated a specific verse; we don't want to know what unconverted commentator "Y" believes a specific verse may mean. What we want to know is: WHAT DO THE WORDS GOD HIMSELF INSPIRED ACTUALLY MEAN? The words God inspired (and their faithful translation into our languages!) constitute "the oracles of God", not the ideas of translators or those who prepare paraphrases or commentators. In some cases the other translations you quote fit very nicely into the message you have in mind, BUT they don't give a faithful translation of the words God actually INSPIRED; they only give "their opinion of what they THINK the verses mean". (We are back at your faith sermon about "what God actually SAYS" as opposed to "what man THINKS God is saying".) Those translators have NOT dealt faithfully with "the oracles of God"; yet you sometimes use their unfaithful rendition of specific verses because that happens to fit in with what you have in mind.

So if you REALLY want to treat "the oracles of God" with respect, then you will always do the following:

A) In any verse that may be a problem translation, or that you feel needs to be stated more clearly, you will FIRST check up what the original text (Hebrew or Greek) actually says! This is easy to do today with computer concordances, etc. and this can be done (in most cases) without knowing either Hebrew or Greek. You simply look up the dictionary meanings of the Hebrew or the Greek word or words.

B) THEN, and only then, do you look for another translation, or for a commentary. And what you will be asking yourself is: does this other translation ACCURATELY reflect what the Hebrew (or Greek) words actually mean? You will NOT be asking yourself: does this translation render it in a way that I myself really like? You want to know the mind of God. Therefore you have to start with the words GOD inspired, not with paraphrases or loose translations of what God inspired.

C) THEN, if you find a translation or a commentary that ACCURATELY reflects what God originally inspired, THEN you can present this translation or this commentary. Then you can have the confidence that you are not reading your own ideas into the words of God.

Any time you skip step #1 above, you are in danger of dealing carelessly with "the oracles of God". And while 60 years and 70 years ago this process would have been very slow and difficult and time-consuming for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, TODAY you can accomplish this step with a few keystrokes on your computer keyboard, without even knowing anything about Hebrew or Greek. Today we really have no excuse for accepting incorrect and unfaithful translations.

AS FAR AS "ORACLES" ARE CONCERNED:

Have you really made a thorough study of this subject? I mean, since the New Testament term "logion" is Greek, but the Old Testament was inspired in Hebrew, is there a way to find out what "logion" would have been in Hebrew? Do you know that there are TWO different Hebrew words that are translated as "word" into English? Do you know that the main and stronger Hebrew word is "DABAR", and that the weaker word is "EMER"? A study will show that "emer" refers to short sayings (like the proverbs of Solomon, etc.). A study will further show that the Hebrew "dabar" is basically equal to the Greek word "logos", and that the Hebrew word "emer" is basically equal to the Greek word "logion" (the word translated "oracles"). The Greek Old Testament LXX version, though by no means inspired, renders the Hebrew word "emer" into Greek as "logion", which is further indication that "emer" is really the equivalent of the Greek "logion".

So when the New Testament authors Peter and Paul and Luke used the Greek word "logion", what Old Testament Hebrew equivalent were THEY thinking of, "dabar" or "emer"? It should be obvious that these three New Testament authors would all have thought of the Hebrew word "emer" when they used the Greek word "logion".

If you REALLY want to know what these authors meant by "the logion of God", then you will make a thorough study of how the words "dabar" and "emer" are used in the Old Testament. And you will find that "dabar" refers to the total revelation of God to mankind, including all of God's dealings with man, whereas "emer" always refers to only a part of that total picture. It is a smaller term, just like "logion" is THE DIMINUTIVE of "logos". "Logion" is not more than "logos"; "logion" is always LESS THAN "logos", a scaled-down version of "logos"; that is what a diminutive is. It follows that "logion" includes less than "logos", not more.

It follows that if the present Jewish calendar is not a part of "the LOGOS of God" then it is ALSO not a part of "the LOGION of God"!

What meanings you may be able to find for "logion" is besides the point! The only thing that counts is: what did PAUL, THE AUTHOR OF ROMANS 3:2, have in mind when HE used the expression "the

logion of God"? We have a responsibility to try to understand what THE AUTHOR of any specific passage was trying to tell us. Nowhere in the entire Book of Romans is there the teeny-weeniest hint that Paul was thinking about "the calendar" and "the preservation of the Sabbath". So how can we possibly read these things into Romans 3:2? Can you picture yourself facing the Apostle Paul in the resurrection and telling him how you really appreciated him endorsing the present Jewish calendar by his "oracles of God" statement, and the Apostle Paul turning to you and saying: "THE CALENDAR? That's not what I meant by 'oracles of God'. The only time I ever talked about THE CALENDAR in any of my letters was when I instructed the Colossians to make sure they kept a faithful record of the passage of every new moon (Colossians 2:16) so that they would know when to keep the Feasts and the Holy Days. But I certainly wasn't thinking about 'the calendar' when I wrote my letter to the Romans."

17) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

BRETHREN, THE CALENDAR IS, AT LEAST PARTLY, A SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE!

MY COMMENTS:

This claim is NOT SUPPORTED BY THE BIBLE. There is not one single verse anywhere that supports trying to turn acceptance of the present Jewish calendar into "a sovereignty issue"! This is simply an appeal to our biases. When Ezra implemented the Babylonian calendar in Jerusalem in the middle of the fifth century BC, this was NOT "a sovereignty issue". The calendar has NEVER been "a sovereignty issue". WHY should it ever have been such?

Did you never hear Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong explain that after Adam and Eve had sinned, God in effect said to them: "I NOW SENTENCE YOU to 6000 years of being cut off from Me. Go form your own societies with your own laws and customs and ways (and calendars?)."? God then made His truth AVAILABLE, only to a very few people at first, then to the whole nation of Israel, then in still wider terms in the New Testament, but always leaving people the choice whether to live by HIS laws and ways or whether to do their own thing.

So God MADE AVAILABLE the knowledge of the true Sabbath, but left it up to people whether they would keep His Sabbaths or not. Likewise, God MADE AVAILABLE the knowledge of His Feasts and Holy Days, but left it up to people whether they would keep these Feasts and Holy Days or not. From the time of Abraham onwards until the start of the New Testament EVERY NATION in the Middle East followed a calendar based on each month starting with a new moon. The calendar Israel followed was no different from the calendar observed by the nations around them. New moons were COMMONLY taken note of (or "observed") in that part of the world.

In the general Middle East area the Hebrew calendar, the Babylonian calendar, the Macedonian calendar, the Old Persian calendar and the Achaemenid Elamite calendar (to name a few) all followed the new moons, even if they sometimes disagreed as to which new moon was to be the first month of the year. The Babylonian year began in the spring and the Macedonian calendar began six months earlier in the autumn. The matter of when a month starts was the same in all those areas; it was always the first visible new moon crescent. I have new moon dates for the Babylonian calendar which go back to the start of the reign of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, in 626 BC, or about 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem, before any Jews were ever taken to Babylon.

Further, as far as "a sovereignty issue" is concerned: can you not see that we are today faced with IMPERFECT cycles? A lunar cycle of 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes 2.8 seconds is simply NOT "a perfect cycle". And a solar year of 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 46 seconds is also NOT "a perfect cycle". Do you realize that THE ONLY LENGTH OF A MONTH mentioned in the Bible is "30 days"? Do you realize that THE ONLY LENGTH OF A YEAR mentioned in the Bible is "360 days"?

Now think about this for a moment:

WHAT IS GOD TELLING YOU when He in the Bible never refers to a month by anything other than 30 days, and when He in the Bible never refers to a year by anything other than 360 days (and you have to agree that THOSE figures are indeed PERFECT), while at the same time THE REALITY IS that a month is actually less than 30 days and that a year is actually more than 360 days? What is God telling us by this obvious discrepancy between the way HE talks about time and the facts that confront us in real life?

WHY would God possibly have a difference between "a prophetic month" and a REAL month, and "a prophetic year" and a REAL year? Why? Is God the author of "IRREGULAR LUNAR CYCLES"?

I put it to you that the fact of the imperfect heavenly cycles that confront us today is PROOF that the calendar is certainly not "a sovereignty issue"! The imperfect cycles we have to live with today are PROOF that God has ALSO allowed these cycles to somehow become CORRUPTED because of our (humanity's) sins, even as EVERYTHING ELSE in our environment has also become corrupted by our sins. There is NOTHING that we human beings have preserved in the state in which God originally created it. WHY should it seem strange that as a part of the penalty for human sins God has ALSO allowed the annual cycle and the monthly cycle to become corrupted? Now the fact that these cycles ARE corrupted (compared to the perfect numbers mentioned for these cycles in the Word of God) should tell us that God has given US human beings THE RESPONSIBILITY to come to grips with this imperfect reality. Therefore it is NOT "a sovereignty issue" at all!

God has in effect said: "Since you have rejected My rule over you, therefore YOU go and sort out your own way of running a calendar, and make sure that you do it THE RIGHT WAY! Because of your sins, the whole process has become far more complicated than the way I had originally designed it. But that is YOUR problem. YOU just make sure that you abide by ALL of the requirements for a calendar that I have revealed to you."

Think about this whole matter.

Can you not see that "a sovereignty issue" and "obviously imperfect cycles" are mutually exclusive? Does God rule over imperfection? What is THE TRUTH?

18) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now I don't know whether you are aware of it, but the Jews officially rejected the New Testament as Scripture, at a conference at a little town called Jebneh in Judea in AD 90. I only bring this up because, in this case, they didn't have the opportunity, once they rejected it. God turned to somebody else.

MY COMMENTS:

This is very interesting evidence you are presenting here. You draw the conclusion that therefore God had the Greeks preserve the New Testament, instead of using the Jews. I agree with your conclusion. However, did you know that the present Jewish calendar was not developed until well AFTER this date of 90 AD? The starting molad of 3761 BC can conclusively be led back to a document (the Seder Olam) that could not have originated before the next destruction of Jerusalem in the 130's AD, because that destruction is mentioned in that document.

YOU SAID: "God turned to somebody else" after 90 AD. The present Jewish calendar was only developed well after 150 AD, and not finalized until 359 AD by Hillel II. This present Jewish calendar was thus only developed anywhere from a very minimum of 50 years up to 250 years "AFTER GOD TURNED TO SOMEBODY ELSE" (to use your own words). So how do you explain God still using the

Jews for developing a calendar after He, God, had already turned to somebody else? Where is consistency in this approach?

19) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

He preserved the Old Testament, AND ALL THE ORACLES OF GOD committed to the Jews in spite of them. And so you can read the Old Testament and the New Testament, and have confidence in the things that are there, because of the sovereignty, because of the faithfulness, because of the Providence of God for His people.

MY COMMENTS:

The preservation of the Old Testament and the New Testament is not questioned and has nothing at all to do with SUPPOSEDLY preserving something that is NOT a part of the Bible. How do you reconcile your claim that something that is NOT in the Bible is also divinely preserved with God's concluding statements at the end of the whole Bible:

"For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, IF ANY MAN SHALL ADD UNTO THESE THINGS, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18)?

Doesn't a Scripture like that AT LEAST make you think twice before claiming that something OUTSIDE OF THE BIBLE is also "divinely preserved"? What I get from that Scripture is that GOD takes claims of divine revelation for anything very seriously. Am I misunderstanding Revelation 22:18? It is, after all, the way God chose to CONCLUDE His revelation to mankind, and the present Jewish calendar was only developed AFTER the Book of Revelation had been written.

The real "oracles of God" are not questioned in any way. But your BIBLICALLY UNAUTHORIZED designation of "the present Jewish calendar" as a part of these "oracles", that is what is being questioned. How can we possibly claim divine inspiration and preservation for ANYTHING that was developed after Revelation 22:18 was written? At no stage have you in your sermons examined the proof for the fact that the present Jewish calendar was only developed more than 100 years after the ministry of Jesus Christ. Why are you AFRAID TO EXAMINE SUCH EVIDENCE?

20) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now the Jews, then, are responsible to God for the calendar; and the reason is the Holy Days cannot be kept without it. In other words: THE CALENDAR IS AN ATTACHMENT TO THE OLD TESTAMENT! Even though there is no calendar in the Old Testament, THE CALENDAR IS A NECESSARY ATTACHMENT TO IT IF THE HOLY DAYS ARE GOING TO BE KEPT ON THE CORRECT DATES.

MY COMMENTS:

WOW! That is a staggering claim! On whose authority do you claim that something that is NOT in the Bible is "AN ATTACHMENT" to the Bible, elevating this non-biblical thing to an equal status with THE BIBLE?

Do you really understand what you were saying with those words?

Does God ANYWHERE tell us to be on the lookout for "ATTACHMENTS" to His Word? Why did God inspire the Bible in the first place, and then limit it at its conclusion with a statement like Revelation 22:18, when He would ALSO ADD ATTACHMENTS to the Bible?

IF GOD really wanted the present Jewish calendar to have an equal status as the Bible, and to be considered by His people as being "an attachment to the Bible", GIVE ME ONE GOOD REASON WHY GOD DIDN'T SIMPLY INCLUDE THIS CALENDAR IN THE BIBLE ITSELF. WHY MAKE IT "AN ATTACHMENT"? WHY WOULD GOD POSSIBLY CREATE THAT KIND OF CONFUSION FOR HIS PEOPLE?

Let's remember that there is nothing special or secret or unusual about the calendar Israel followed in Old Testament times. All the nations around them followed exactly the same calendar. The calendar was simply "not a big deal" to people in Old Testament times. Everyone, the Israelites and the nations around them, knew that every new moon signaled the start of a new month. And that is clear from what we DO have in the Old Testament.

The facts are: The Bible actually contains EVERYTHING we need to know in order to construct a correct calendar. There is no additional knowledge we need to have. Kenneth Herrmann acknowledged this in his GN calendar articles when he wrote: "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." They are EASY TO FOLLOW! So WHY would we possibly need "attachments" to the Bible?

Further, do you understand what kind of a Pandora's box you are opening by claiming that something is "AN ATTACHMENT to the Old Testament?" If we make allowances for even ONE such non-biblical "attachment", where would we ever draw the line? If YOU have the right to pronounce something to be "an attachment to the Bible", what is to stop someone else from making a similar claim for something else? Do you understand that THE PHARISEES basically took that approach, that the things THEY THEMSELVES thought up were by the Pharisees given the status of being "attached" to the Word of God?

Next, your justification for elevating the present Jewish calendar to the status of "an attachment to the Bible" is because YOU FEEL that this is "NECESSARY"! Where has GOD told us that this is "necessary"? Can ANYONE be so bold as to elevate something to the status of being "an attachment to the very Word of Almighty God" without being given a clear mandate from God to do so? Is "our reasoning out process" sufficient justification for such a mandate from God?

We need to clearly keep in mind that before God it is not a light thing to claim that something is "an attachment to His Word". This is a claim that can have very serious repercussions!

21) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now this whole issue is A QUESTION OF GOVERNMENT, whether God is capable of ruling, whether God can intervene in the affairs of His people to correct their errors. So can we have faith in God's faithfulness? Did God correct the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God regarding Pentecost? He did, didn't He? But, He had 50 years to correct the calendar while there was an apostle alive, and He did nothing! That ought to tell us something.

MY COMMENTS:

Here you are, consciously or unconsciously, directing the focus away from the REAL "issue"! Focusing on "God's capabilities" draws attention away from the real issue. God's powers and capabilities have never been questioned. However, focusing on God's capabilities is a very effective way of getting God's people to be on your side in this matter; it is a very persuasive tack.

THE REAL ISSUE IS:

The Bible contains very clear requirements for a correct calendar. These real requirements have been acknowledged to one degree or another by all the previous writers about the calendar (i.e. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Kenneth Herrmann, Dr. Hoeh), primarily because those writers did NOT, at the time they were writing, realize that the present Jewish calendar actually CONTRAVENES these requirements. A close examination of the present Jewish calendar reveals, not "mistakes" as you would like to call them, but A FLAGRANT DISREGARD for clear biblical instructions. And so the REAL issue is: how can we possibly have faith in something that, in addition to not being a part of the Bible, actually TRANSGRESSES, and continues to do so, very clear and plain BIBLE INSTRUCTIONS?

That's the real issue, John.

I believe that you are in danger of elevating something that is NOT in the Bible (by calling it "an attachment to the Bible") to be ABOVE things that ARE in the Bible. How can you possibly refuse to look at Scriptures that ARE in the Bible (Exodus 34:22, etc.) and instead appeal to something that is NOT in the Bible?

As far as "correcting the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God regarding Pentecost" is concerned: yes, God DID correct that issue. HOWEVER, it took a full 47 years (from 1927 till 1974) before Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was prepared to correct that ONE error!

We also need to understand exactly HOW God "corrects" our wrong ideas and beliefs. It doesn't just happen as many of us may think it happens. Here is a brief explanation:

HOW GOD CORRECTS WRONG TEACHINGS:

Some people seem to think that God simply "put" all the right teachings into the Church by putting them into Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's mind. But that is simply not how it ever worked! Mr. Armstrong himself acknowledged at various times that the doctrines he taught were NOT given to him by divine revelation in the same way God worked with Moses and the prophets and the apostles Peter and John and Paul. He stated that he had used HIS MIND IN THINKING ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES.

Jesus Christ very clearly said: ASK and it shall be given to you, SEEK and you shall find, KNOCK and it shall be opened to you (Matthew 7:7). The "ASKING" is for help and for intervention, the SEEKING is for knowledge and understanding, the KNOCKING is for opportunities and open doors. And UNLESS we are actively "asking ... seeking ... knocking" we simply will NOT "receive, find, and have doors opened for us".

Now understand this!

THE ONLY DOCTRINES GOD PUT INTO THE CHURCH IN THIS AGE THROUGH MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG ARE THOSE WHERE MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG WAS ACTIVELY SEEKING UNDERSTANDING!

There are basically TWO ways God put doctrines into His Church today through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong:

EITHER Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong studied into A SPECIFIC SUBJECT (e.g. healing, the Sabbath, etc.) and then God opened his mind to understand the truth.

OR Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was simply doing CAREFUL BIBLE STUDY WITH AN OPEN MIND to receive new understanding from whatever he may have been going through. If his mind was open, God could show him various things. But if his mind was closed or oblivious to any possible different

understanding on something, then God couldn't work through him. Throughout the entire time (around 60 years or so?) that God worked with him, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong always remained a free moral agent with a mind that could accept or reject whatever he was confronted with. He was never a mindless pawn who had no control over what to say and what to believe and teach.

Now as far as "the calendar" is concerned:

A) When he first came into the Church (around 1927) he didn't dream of looking into the calendar one way or the other. He simply ACCEPTED WITHOUT EXAMINATION the Jewish calendar which (as you have pointed out!) the Church of God 7th Day was using to determine the dates for "the Lord's Supper", as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong continued to call it for the next 15 years.

B) At no stage did it occur to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to study the calendar one way or the other. So he also kept Pentecost along with the Jews on Sivan 6.

C) In early 1940 a study into the calendar was precipitated, not by an interest in the calendar, but by the wrong "Lord's Supper" dates elder Dodd had published, which wrong dates threatened to divide the group.

D) I have separately examined Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's 1940 GOOD NEWS letter in another article, already referred to earlier. That GN letter makes quite clear that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself had not in any way looked into the "nuts and bolts" of the Jewish calendar; he had simply tried to figure out which of two specific new moons should be used for Nisan 1.

AND HE DIDN'T SEE WHAT HE WASN'T LOOKING FOR!

He himself wasn't even the one who saw that Sivan 6 is NOT the day God wants us to use for Pentecost! That was something someone else pointed out to him, someone whom Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong chose to leave unidentified. Yet he DID in 1940 change over to observing Pentecost on a Monday, which was just as wrong as Sivan 6.

E) NOW UNDERSTAND SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT HERE!

The fact that "his thorough and intense study into the calendar in 1940" resulted in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong ONLY SUBSTITUTING ONE ERROR WITH ANOTHER ERROR (i.e. replacing Sivan 6 with a Monday for Pentecost observance) IRREFUTABLY PROVES ONE THING: That particular study into the calendar in 1940 was very obviously NOT guided by Almighty God!!! You simply cannot claim "God's guidance" when you come up with a biblically WRONG answer!!! So the fact that this 1940 study into the calendar produced a BIBLICALLY WRONG conclusion (i.e. a Monday Pentecost) is IRREFUTABLE PROOF that God was not involved in that calendar study in 1940!

There is simply no way around this conclusion. To attempt to claim God's guidance on that calendar study of 1940 amounts to claiming God's guidance for a Monday Pentecost, which is in actual fact based on an incorrect understanding of the instructions in Leviticus 23:15-16.

F) However, that 1940 calendar study became the foundation for all of Kenneth Herrmann's calendar articles in 1953 and in 1957, as well as being the foundation for Dr. Hoeh's 1981 article. Yet that foundation, as we have seen, could not have had God's guidance or inspiration, since it came up with biblically unsound conclusions. This means that ALL the articles about the calendar that the Church has published since 1940 are based on AN UNSOUND FOUNDATION!

It is very easy to establish that Kenneth Herrmann's articles and also Dr. Hoeh's article are based on

what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in 1940; you simply have to compare those articles with what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in 1940.

G) It was another 3 years (till June 1943) before Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong felt ready to fully explain his wrong way of counting Pentecost. It took him that long to digest some truth that someone else had been used to bring to his attention (i.e. that the Bible actually requires us TO IN SOME WAY 'COUNT').

[Comment: Someone else pointed out to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong that Leviticus 23:15-16 requires us to count. But it was MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG HIMSELF who came up with THE WRONG WAY OF COUNTING!]

THE FACT THAT HE DID NOT CORRECTLY UNDERSTAND LEVITICUS 23:15-16 PROVES THAT HIS MIND WAS SIMPLY NOT OPEN TO THE TRUTH ON CALENDAR QUESTIONS AT THAT POINT IN TIME!!

H) Had his mind been open, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong could have understood the truth about how to count for Pentecost as far back as the early part of 1940! But his mind was CLOSED by his own ideas of what "counting FROM ..." had to mean.

I) There is no evidence that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself EVER studied into the calendar question again after that June 1943 GN letter about his explanation for his wrong way of counting Pentecost. Even in 1974 Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong still didn't really want to study into the matter of Pentecost; he was PRESSURED into doing so because it had become very evident that his way of counting was simply unbiblical! And he then RELUCTANTLY acknowledged that he had been wrong, all the while putting the blame for his mistake on the translators who had rendered the Hebrew text into English as "count FROM ..." instead of as "count BEGINNING WITH ..."!

So note!

Apart from ONE effort at looking at the calendar, which effort was clearly NOT "guided by God" because it resulted in a biblically wrong conclusion (to keep Pentecost on a Monday), there is no evidence in ALL of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's voluminous writings that he ever again himself studied into the calendar. That explains WHY "God didn't show him" what is wrong with the present Jewish calendar ... because he really never made an effort to LOOK into this matter. "Seeking" is a prerequisite for "finding", if we believe Jesus Christ. Had Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong really at some point actually made a thorough study of the present Jewish calendar and potential problems with it, THERE IS NO WAY THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE WRITTEN IN SOME WAY ABOUT THIS STUDY INTO THE CALENDAR! Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong always wrote about every area that he happened to make a special study of. He never made a thorough study of something, only to let it then slip into obscurity. Writing about a subject was his way of clarifying the matter in his own mind.

J) There is no evidence that he ever examined the Jewish calendar ITSELF against any biblical calendar requirements. THEREFORE God didn't at any time show him the flaws in the present Jewish calendar; he wasn't looking or seeking!

It is the same thing that happened to Israel in the days of Joshua. God always helped Israel when they asked for help and guidance. But when the inhabitants of Gibeon (in Joshua 9) disguised themselves as being from very far away in order to OBVIOUSLY deceive Israel, God ALLOWED Israel to be deceived, because their minds weren't open to input from God; they thought they didn't need to ask God's guidance about these strangers who had come to them. They thought the answer was so obvious that they didn't need God's guidance on this one! And the consequences of that one time not being open to God's guidance changed the course of history! People who GOD had intended for them to either drive out or to destroy were allowed to stay in the land which God had intended for Israel. Turning these

Gibeonites into "hewers of wood and drawers of water" didn't really solve the problem they had created; that solution was nothing more than an exercise in "damage control". Now WHY didn't God just "inspire Joshua" to see that these disguised ambassadors from Gibeon were OBVIOUSLY being dishonest? Why did God allow this deception of His chosen leader at that time? The lesson should be clear: God doesn't show us things in areas where we are self-confident, where we aren't looking for input from God, where we are not really "seeking".

K) In 1953 Kenneth Herrmann wrote about the calendar, and he became the recognized "authority" on the calendar in the Church at that time. But he simply perpetuated the wrong ideas Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had accepted (i.e. in 1953 Kenneth Herrmann also still accepted Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's wrong way of counting Pentecost, etc.). He also ASSUMED that the present Jewish calendar was "God's sacred calendar", even as the Israelites ASSUMED that the Gibeonites were indeed from a far away country. This is also explained in my other article which I referred to earlier. THEREFORE God also at that time (in 1953 and in 1957) didn't show Kenneth Herrmann the flaws in the present Jewish calendar; his mind wasn't open to there POSSIBLY being problems with the present Jewish calendar.

L) Since Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong from that time onwards till the time of his death NEVER again examined the present Jewish calendar itself, never considered the actual features of the present Jewish calendar and compared them to biblical requirements, THEREFORE God at no time showed Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong that the present Jewish calendar goes against biblical instructions. If you don't "seek", then you also don't "find"; that's how God has set things up. Remember Israel and the Gibeonites.

A later part of your sermon will require a continuation of this topic here. So let's move on in your sermon.

22) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now it's interesting, but Herman Hoeh says in that article, there's something I want to read here. And it's on page 28 of this article in the April 1981 Good News. And he said that God corrected those who were failing to preserve the calendar correctly. He says this: "So the Romans finally put an end to visual observations by the Jews. The Jews chief leader, Hillel II, whose responsibility it was to regulate the calendar, was forced to issue a decree for the years AD 358/359, to reinstitute the authority of the fixed calendar we know today as the Hebrew calendar."

MY COMMENTS:

Do you realize what this quotation is telling us? It is clear from historical records that at the time of Christ the Jews regulated the calendar based on visual observations, something Dr. Hoeh is tacitly acknowledging.

**IT WAS THE PAGAN ROMANS WHO PUT AN END TO "VISUAL OBSERVATIONS BY THE JEWS"!
AND THAT WAS MORE THAN 300 YEARS AFTER CHRIST'S MINISTRY!**

Where on earth did God command THE ROMANS to preserve "His oracles"? If the Romans hadn't pressured the Jews, they might have carried on using a calendar based on visual observations until today?

Further, Dr. Hoeh's statement is a clear admission that this change from visual observation to the present calculated Jewish calendar wasn't made till the 350's AD. So none of the original apostles, including Paul, would ever have been exposed to such a "fixed" calendar. So how could Paul possibly have included the thought of "the fixed calendar" in his expression "the oracles of God" when he wasn't even aware of a "fixed calendar"?

Dr. Hoeh's use of the word "REINSTITUTE" is simply an unsubstantiated assertion that this same "fixed calendar" had supposedly existed before, which it had not. He offers no proof for his assertion. The only proof actually proves the opposite, that this present Jewish calendar could not have existed prior to 150 AD, well after the death of Paul and all the other apostles.

23) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

I want you to listen while I read a major portion of a letter that I have here in my hand. And how I came to have this letter is kind of interesting, because it was given to me in 1969 when I was a local elder in the Long Beach congregation. It was given to me by a member who wrote a question to Kenneth Herrmann at Ambassador College. And what I have here is Kenneth Herrmann's reply. Now don't ask me why I chose to save this letter. I mean, an obscure, esoteric subject that I would not be doing, especially back in 1969. But I'll tell you: I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT GOD MADE ME SAVE IT, because He knew that it was going to be an issue in my life and your life at some time. Kenneth Herrmann catches the essence of this problem about as well as anybody I have ever seen.

MY COMMENTS:

Now we are coming to the really interesting part!

I TOO BELIEVE THAT "GOD MADE YOU SAVE THAT LETTER"!

This is going to be a long section. It is probably one of the most vital sections of this whole article. It is going to reveal THE HEART AND CORE OF OUR WHOLE CALENDAR PROBLEM TODAY! Are you, John, really prepared to accept the information this letter in your possession reveals? YOU are the one who has revealed the evidence which I am about to explain.

For a start, let's see the setting of this situation:

A) It is the year 1969 ... 16 years after Kenneth Herrmann's original calendar article in the GOOD NEWS magazine, and 12 years after that article was rerun with the identical information.

B) A member of God's Church had written an honest and sincere question about the calendar to Kenneth Herrmann, the Church's "calendar expert".

C) The letter represents Kenneth Herrmann's reply to this sincere question.

Let's now see how Kenneth Herrmann answered this honest question from the member in the congregation you were serving at that time.

24) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

He begins: [Quotation]

"The problem of producing a calendar from observations is not at all a simple one. Mr. Albert (that was Dave Albert) brought in your letter and we discussed a number of the variables that enter in. It is easy to look at a table and conclude that maybe God's Church is keeping Holy Days several days late. But consider the basis of time-keeping."

"When would you begin a day: at sunrise, at noon, at midnight, at 6 p.m., when the sun is due west or when the sun is due east? Revelation is needed. We need an oracle from God to keep time His way. What advantage has the Jew? Much every way. Romans 3. But let's continue with the problem.

"When would you begin the week: with which day? It would have to be revealed. Note, when would you begin the month: with the full moon or the new moon, with the sunset that preceded the molad, which is the conjunction, or with the sunset that followed it? Man can observe, but he is going to need revelation to carry out time-keeping God's way."

"Search out the problem further. When would you begin the year: with the spring equinox, with the summer solstice, with the fall equinox, with the winter solstice or with the new moon preceding or following which of the above four? Or would you allow the Passover to wander 40 days in the wilderness of the other days of the year, as is the present rule?"

MY COMMENTS:

WHAT AN ABSOLUTELY ABOMINABLE REPLY!!

What kind of hypocrisy is this??

Here is the man who 16 years and 12 years earlier had CLEARLY SPELLED OUT FROM THE BIBLE that:

- A DAY begins at sunset,
- A WEEK begins with the sunset after the Sabbath,
- A MONTH begins with the sunset after the new moon,
- A YEAR begins with the first new moon in the early spring.

Here is the man who in the past had REPEATEDLY given the correct answers to these questions in print ... and NOW he tries to confuse the issue!

WHY DID HE DO THAT?

I'll tell you why.

Consider our recent history, when in late 1993 Kyriacos J. Stavrinos gave 12 "Bible Studies" in an attempt to defend the new teaching about the nature of God. The only good thing about those 12 tapes was that the questions were excellent. But his answers either ridiculed the question, or tried to make light of the question, or tried to confuse the issue, or claimed that the question was "a non-question", etc.; anything but actually provide a true answer to the sincere questions that had been asked. His goal very clearly was TO CONFUSE people about the real issue, and in that he succeeded to a large degree; many people came to me saying that after listening to some of those tapes they were more confused than ever before.

This 1969 letter from Kenneth Herrmann shows that he did exactly the same thing 24 years earlier than what Kyriacos Stavrinos did in 1993.

Here are the reasons WHY in 1969 Kenneth Herrmann tried to confuse an issue which he himself had 16 years earlier expounded with great clarity:

A) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong never examined the actual workings of the present Jewish calendar. In 1940 he simply ASSUMED (like Joshua with the Gibeonites) that the present Jewish calendar is so accurate that it achieves the time of first visibility. That is clear from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's appeal

to an almanac and the actual time of the REAL new moon. He knew nothing about "postponement rules" designed to avoid "inconvenient days of the week". He really believed the present Jewish calendar was ACCURATE and in harmony with all biblical requirements.

B) In this he was sincerely deceived. He acted in the integrity of his heart, not knowing any better.

C) The same was still true 13 years later, when Kenneth Herrmann wrote his first calendar article. His REPEATED references to "visibility" make quite clear that in 1953 Kenneth Herrmann also was still DECEIVED! He was under the wrong impression that the present Jewish calendar really DID abide by all the BIBLICAL instructions for a calendar. Because he did not realize that the present Jewish calendar does NOT always start in the spring, and that the month does NOT always start with the new moon, THEREFORE he was quite free in spelling out these biblical requirements for a correct calendar. He was innocently providing the very information (just like you are doing with quoting this 1969 letter!) that would EXPOSE THE WAYS IN WHICH THE JEWISH CALENDAR BREAKS GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS!

D) Even as late as 1957 Kenneth Herrmann did not realize that the present Jewish calendar does not meet the requirements and conditions he THOUGHT it met. He was still deceived in 1957. Thus his article AGAIN presented the very information that condemns the present Jewish calendar.

E) THEN, some time after 1957, Kenneth Herrmann learned that the present Jewish calendar in actual fact doesn't do at all what he had thought all along. It DOESN'T always start the year in the spring; it DOESN'T always start the first month with the sunset after the new moon; etc. This may very possibly have been at some point in the late 60's.

F) THEN he realized he could no longer defend the Jewish calendar by appealing to biblical standards for a correct calendar, as those biblical standards only condemned the present Jewish calendar.

G) SO THEN, when he received an honest question in 1969, then he tried to confuse and to complicate the whole matter, much like what Dr. Stavrinides did in 1993. It seems like he succeeded in doing this in 1969, as you don't indicate that the man was in any way upset with the letter he had received from Kenneth Herrmann?

H) THE VERY FACT that Kenneth Herrmann took the approach of trying to raise questions about SIMPLE MATTERS, to which he himself had previously published the correct biblical answers, IS PROOF that he knew that he could no longer defend the present Jewish calendar by appealing to the biblical requirements for a correct calendar. He knew that IF the clear biblical instructions were examined, the present Jewish calendar would have to be rejected!

CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THIS?

There is no other reason for trying to obscure and to confuse a simple subject, to which he had 16 years earlier with the greatest clarity given biblical answers. He simply was not dealing honestly with information HE had at his disposal in 1969.

I) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was in charge at that point. I don't believe that Kenneth Herrmann would have intentionally kept any information he had away from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. It must have been brought to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's attention in some way or other. And the response must have been: we will stick with the present Jewish calendar REGARDLESS OF THE FACTS you may have found out.

AND FROM THAT TIME ONWARDS GOD STOPPED BLESSING THE CHURCH!!

As long as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was acting in the integrity of his heart, God blessed his labour with 30% growth per year for 35 years! But once Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong refused to change on something that had been pointed out to him, then that 30% growth per annum stopped! And it was never again, right up to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's death, achieved!

God is not a respecter of persons. God used a sincere, but deceived, man to heal people back in the 1920's. Even Mrs. Loma Armstrong was healed by God through this man's prayers. Yet once this man rejected truth that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong brought to him, God stopped answering the man's prayers. The thing to also remember is that this man could never understand WHY God had stopped using him, even though Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong tried to explain this to him.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was likewise very sincere and deceived in his acceptance of the present Jewish calendar. It wasn't till 1969, 35 years after starting this phase of "the Work", that real problems with the present Jewish calendar were brought to his attention. It would be another 5 years before he was willing to face his personal error with counting Pentecost. But from 1969 onwards God withdrew his blessings, BY MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG'S OWN WITNESS!

Notice.

A) Co-Worker Letter: November 5, 1975

Dear Co-Workers with Christ:

Let's GIVE OUR FINAL SUPREME EFFORT from now on to finish this great Work to which the Creator GOD has called us. PRAY earnestly that God will again give us an increased income for His Work of 30 percent a year, as He did FOR 35 YEARS!

B) Co-Worker Letter: Tucson, Arizona December 19, 1980

Dear Brethren and Co-Workers with Christ:

Soon we were on a very large number of the nation's most powerful radio stations SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. The radio program was going out over more wattage of radio power than any program on earth. We became first, worldwide, in our field. Church membership became worldwide with hundreds of local churches pastored by hundreds of Ambassador-trained ordained ministers. The Church's Work grew at the unmatched incredible rate of 30 percent per year on the average FOR 35 YEARS!

C) Co-Worker letter: Pasadena July 14, 1981

Dear Brethren and Co-Workers in Christ:

YOU RESPONDED LOYALLY! Financial income began to increase. We were nearing 30 percent increase once again for the first time in 12 years. I stepped up the recording of TV and radio programs in advance of airing.

COMMENT: "We were NEARING 30 percent increase ..." for a short time, BUT NEVER ACTUALLY ATTAINED IT. As the following letter shows.

D) Co-Worker Letter: Pasadena December 20, 1982

Dear Brethren and Co-Workers with CHRIST:

Do you realize that with the ending of 1982 we are completing 50 YEARS in the PHILADELPHIA era of the CHURCH OF GOD! Nothing could have started smaller. But God's Church and its work grew at the rate of approximately 30 percent a year FOR 35 YEARS.

COMMENT: The 30 % hadn't been achieved in 1981 at all. Now it's back to the "35 years", FROM 1934 - 1968 INCLUSIVE.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was able to see very clearly that for 35 years (1934 to 1968 inclusive) God had blessed him with 30% growth per year. THEN IT HAD STOPPED!

It stopped with the year in which Kenneth Herrmann, on behalf of the Church at that time, gave AN EVASIVE ANSWER TO A GENUINE QUESTION from a sincere member of the Church about the calendar. The articles he had written previously make clear beyond any doubt that Kenneth Herrmann knew better than to try to raise totally artificial questions about the calendar. He used these questions in order to avoid giving a clear answer to the man.

The crafty thing is that Kenneth Herrmann hadn't actually said anything (and he was speaking on behalf of the leadership of the Church at that time) that was wrong! He had simply managed to put off the questioner without actually ever answering the question, a question to which he himself had the correct answer at his fingertips. He had managed to create some confusion in the questioner's mind.

And from then onwards the Church was no longer blessed as previously. From then onwards Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had to contend with rebellions and other problems till the day of his death.

Until 1968 the Church followed the Jewish calendar in ignorance, which God "winks at", but NOW commands us to repent. For over 40 years Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had never been motivated to PERSONALLY examine the present Jewish calendar against the standards of the Bible itself. But by 1969 the Church's "calendar expert" knew there were problems with that calendar. But that knowledge was never acted upon. Five years later, in 1974, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong reluctantly came to grips with his wrong way of counting Pentecost, but he never did examine the present Jewish calendar as a whole.

He looked everywhere for a cause for God having withdrawn His blessing of 30% per year. But he didn't consider that HE HIMSELF WAS REJECTING NEW UNDERSTANDING, even as the Billy Sunday tabernacle caretaker (the man who prayed for Mrs. Loma Armstrong) had done in the late 1920's. He never understood the real cause for the split-offs that started around 1970 or so. He couldn't see WHY God had withdrawn His blessings.

However, can YOU now see what really happened back in 1969, the year in which God by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's own acknowledgment withdrew His blessings?

It is simply incorrect to claim in a carte blanche way that "God blessed Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's work". The truth is that God blessed Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's work FOR 35 YEARS, until he was faced with problems with the present Jewish calendar. From 1969 onwards Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's work was NOT really blessed in the same way as before. From then on there were problems on a large scale, one major problem came on the heels of another. His efforts at "putting the Church back on the track" never really succeeded. And in the last years of his life he didn't really have too many men around him, whom he could really trust. On one occasion he referred to those around him being "like circling vultures waiting for him to die". Perhaps Aaron Dean was the only one around Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong who didn't have some kind of personal agenda? At any rate, those last years were at best a struggle for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, hardly a blessing. That is not intended as a criticism but as an objective observation. By no means do I somehow think that I am "better" than Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. But his last years were certainly not what could be called "a blessing".

I believe Kenneth Herrmann's 1969 letter shows that THE CHURCH WAS KNOWINGLY IGNORING FACTS ABOUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR that had come to light since the last article had been written in 1957, facts that contradicted many of the things which had until then simply been ASSUMED about the present Jewish calendar. And by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's own admission it is a fact that from 1969 onwards God no longer blessed the Church in the same way that He had blessed it before then. IF you want to claim that the withdrawal of God's blessing from 1969 onwards is NOT related to the Church ignoring the truth about the present Jewish calendar, THEN the onus is on you to tell us ANOTHER REASON for why God withdrew His blessings. There HAS TO BE a cause, and it cannot be some insignificant unimportant thing. It MUST relate in some way to acting or not acting in integrity and good conscience, because that is what God is always looking for in us human beings.

Also, I don't mean to be unduly hard on Mr. Kenneth Herrmann. He in one way was no different from everyone else who was willing to defend the Jewish calendar against any and all criticisms. But I don't accept it when a simple issue is intentionally made confusing and complicated for God's people. He knew full well, better than anyone else in the Church at that time, that the biblical principles that apply to the calendar are easy to understand and to apply. And I am most thankful for the existence of this letter, because THAT LETTER PROVIDES THE MISSING LINK in the whole calendar question.

John, in the interest of honesty and accuracy I would like to request that you make the text of this entire letter, in unedited form, available to all of us for downloading from your internet website. There will be many people who would like to check that letter out in detail. Since it is the Church's answer to a Bible-related question, there is nothing of a personal nature in that letter that would preclude it from being shared with the whole Church; you have already quoted a large part of it in your sermon, which is also available for downloading.

So now let's put the whole picture about the calendar together:

A) In 1927 Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong simply accepted the Jewish calendar just as he simply accepted the trinity doctrine at that time. But he was sincere and didn't know the problems associated with the present Jewish calendar.

B) So God blessed Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's efforts with 30% annual growth for the next 35 years (from 1934 - 1968).

C) When circumstances forced him in 1940 to examine which of two new moons should be used for the first month of the year, he still did not really see the actual problems with this calendar; he only correctly discerned that one new moon was too early.

D) At that same time someone pointed out to him that Sivan 6 simply could not be the right way to determine Pentecost. So he changed the date for Pentecost, but STILL ended up counting the wrong way. It took him three years before he finally explained his reasons for his wrong way of counting to the Church, and he stuck with this wrong way of counting for another 34 years after 1940. But he was still sincere. His prejudice towards his way of interpreting "count FROM ..." precluded him from understanding the Scripture concerned correctly. And because he was still acting in sincerity, therefore God continued to bless his work.

E) However, the very fact that this 1940 "study into the calendar" resulted in a biblically wrong conclusion (having Pentecost on a Monday) is PROOF that this study did not have God's guidance. It was a sincere effort, but relying on their OWN understanding, like the Israelites in the matter with the Gibeonites; but God was not involved in the conclusions that were reached.

F) When Kenneth Herrmann wrote his calendar articles in 1953 and in 1957, he was just as sincere and

just as deceived as was Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong at that point in time. Because he was oblivious to the real problems with the present Jewish calendar, therefore he freely presented most of the biblical requirements for the calendar, simply assuming that the present Jewish calendar would "OBVIOUSLY" be in agreement with all of those principles.

G) At some point in 1968 or 1969 Kenneth Herrmann came to understand that the present Jewish calendar actually goes against clear biblical instructions. This must have been discussed in some way with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. It was decided to stick with the present Jewish calendar regardless; Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was never one to act quickly on new understanding that someone else understood before he himself came to also understand it. He only acted QUICKLY on new understanding when he himself was the one who had thought of it.

H) So when someone wrote in with a calendar question in 1969, then, instead of honestly answering the question with the answers he had provided in his earlier articles, Kenneth Herrmann tried his best to create confusion and uncertainty in the mind of the questioner.

I) THIS GOD DID NOT APPROVE OF! THEREFORE GOD STOPPED IMMEDIATELY WITH THE 30% P.A. BLESSING HE HAD PROVIDED FOR THE PREVIOUS 35 YEARS!

J) From then onwards Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's efforts were plagued by rebellions, dissension, strife, intrigue and hardships, which made his life unpleasant. He did not readily discern how many people used him for their selfish ends. He recognized that God was no longer blessing his efforts with 30% p.a. growth, but (like the Billy Sunday tabernacle keeper) he himself never did figure out WHY God had withdrawn His blessings. His last few years were anything but a joy to him.

K) Since the Church had actually REFUSED to act on correct knowledge about the calendar in 1969, THEREFORE the calendar itself became a cause of division, and has continued to be such right to the present.

L) The only real solution to the problem is: the Church must squarely face up to the clear biblical requirements for a calendar, and then make whatever changes are needed, in order to be in agreement with all biblical requirements. NOW God holds us accountable for what we know; NOW we can no longer plead ignorance. It is adherence to the errors of the present Jewish calendar that is the cause for division. Eliminating those errors is the road to unity. God's people can only rally around something that is true and correct, not around something that is flawed and in violation of biblical instructions.

Let's now move on in the context of your sermon.

25) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

I also read in another technical book that it is possible, mathematically it is possible, to have five 30-day months in a row. Figure that one out.

MY COMMENTS:

WHY are you trying to make the whole matter more complicated? You know full well that the present Jewish calendar, which you are supporting, doesn't IN ANY WAY deal with such a supposed 5 months period of 30 days each. What is that comment supposed to achieve? Are you really trying to say: "WHO CARES ABOUT REALITY? WHO CARES ABOUT WHEN THE NEW MOONS REALLY TAKE PLACE?" What is your comment supposed to achieve?

WHY have you not presented any PROOF for this claim? If you read this in a "technical book", give us

the title of it, the author's name, the publisher, page number, etc.. Where, IN THE PAST 2000 YEARS, was there actually such a period of 150 days for exactly 5 lunar cycles? Where is the proof for this claim? Why are you trying to create doubts and confusion without actually presenting anything concrete or specific? That is not an honorable thing to do.

Don't you understand that people have a very strong ULTERIOR MOTIVE for wanting to believe that there could be 5 consecutive lunar months with exactly 30 days each? They desperately want to try to assert that this could happen, because of there having been 150 days equal to exactly 5 months IN THE DAYS OF NOAH. Their ulterior motive is blatantly obvious.

I have in my possession the dates and times for all 4 phases of the moon for the years 1582 AD to 3000 AD. That's a period of over 1400 years. And in that 1400 year period there are no "5 months equal to 150 days"! So exactly WHEN is something like that (5 lunar months equal to 150 days) supposed to happen or to have happened? The approach of "it is POSSIBLE ..." is immaterial to the issue at hand! Yes, ALL things are possible to God! If God would so choose, we could have 5 months equal to 150 days at ANY time! But there is no proof that this has ever happened (apart from in the days of Noah and before!) in the past 2000 years, i.e. since Christ's ministry. The present Jewish calendar doesn't even go back as far as 2000 years; so there is no reason to even try to examine dates earlier than that.

26) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

(Still quoting from Kenneth Herrmann's letter, you said:)

"Now all that remains is the question of why. The new moon dates on God's sacred calendar will at times FOLLOW A DAY OR TWO AFTER the astronomical new moons. The question of whether God's Church might just be keeping God's Holy Days a day or two or a month late is not just the proper question."

MY COMMENTS:

The reasoning of: "the question of ... IS NOT JUST THE PROPER QUESTION" sounds identical to what we heard repeatedly in 1993 from Dr. Stavrinides, when he tried to defend the Church's new teachings about the nature of God.

I'll tell you WHY Kenneth Herrmann didn't want these questions asked.

IT IS BECAUSE HE HAD NO ANSWERS FOR THESE QUESTIONS!

If you read Kenneth Herrmann's 1953 and 1957 articles, you'll find quite clearly that AT THAT TIME Kenneth Herrmann actually tried to explain any discrepancies in terms of time differences between Jerusalem and the North American continent. It should be obvious that NOW, in 1969, he understands that that line of reasoning simply does not agree with the facts of the present Jewish calendar. Therefore NOW he avoids the questions which he would have answered 12 years earlier. NOW he evades giving an answer by appealing to "the oracles". Clearly he has learned something that he didn't know in 1953 and in 1957, but he is not letting on exactly what that "something" he has learned is. It should be clear to us that what he had learned is that the present Jewish calendar is not what he had THOUGHT it was; he had learned that the present Jewish calendar DOES NOT agree with clear biblical requirements for the calendar.

The present Jewish calendar doesn't really place the Holy Days "a month LATE", but it does at times place the Holy Days a month EARLY! Now what is possibly wrong with asking WHY? WHY are we sometimes keeping God's Holy Days one whole month EARLIER than the Scriptures indicate we SHOULD be keeping them?

WHY is that possibly JUST NOT THE PROPER QUESTION TO ASK?

How can anyone possibly use one Scripture (Romans 3:2) TO ARGUE AGAINST AND TO FIGHT AGAINST ANOTHER SCRIPTURE (Exodus 34:22, etc.)?

27) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now Kenneth Herrmann caught the major portion of the essence of this issue for us. That despite the clouds of reasoning being put forth by those seeking a calendar change, THE CENTRAL ISSUE for us is to FIND TO WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN THE AUTHORITY to construct and preserve a calendar, and THEN for us to HAVE FAITH in God's faithfulness.

MY COMMENTS:

Regarding your comment: "the clouds of reasoning being put forth by those seeking a calendar change": All that YOU have to support the present Jewish calendar is: CLOUDS OF REASONING! You yourself have ADMITTED that the Jewish calendar is NOT in the Bible. THEREFORE the only thing YOU possibly have recourse to is: REASONING! You have "reasoned" that the calendar simply MUST be a part of "the oracles of God". Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and Kenneth Herrmann have "reasoned" that the calendar MUST have been preserved by the Jews. Reasoning is the only thing you POSSIBLY have to support the present Jewish calendar. You are "reasoning" when you say in the same breath that we need ... "to find to whom God has given the authority to construct and preserve a calendar".

Yes, in stating that the Jewish calendar is biblically wrong we do use some "reasoning". But we ALSO present CLEAR BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS, which have been freely acknowledged by people like Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Kenneth Herrmann and Dr. Hoeh, as real requirements for the correct calendar. And we are NOT reading our meanings "into" the Scriptures; we are simply accepting the Scriptures at face value, just like Kenneth Herrmann did back in 1953 and in 1957. Was it wrong for Kenneth Herrmann to freely acknowledge these biblical requirements? Was it right for him to years later be extremely evasive in answering the same questions?

And your whole case is based on your ASSUMPTION, which you didn't find in the Scriptures, but which you "reasoned out", that "God MUST HAVE given the authority to construct and to preserve a calendar to the Jews". You have not one shred of proof for that assumption!

Next, you have rather subtly changed the original premise by saying: "the authority TO CONSTRUCT AND to preserve a calendar". This reveals that you are WELL AWARE of the major problems with the present Jewish calendar and that you understand very well that the Jews haven't really "PRESERVED" some calendar from ancient times. Others before you, who also supported the present Jewish calendar, only claimed "PRESERVATION" of some "divinely given" calendar. YOU understand that the Jews have in fact CONSTRUCTED a calendar according to their own whims and ideas (e.g. we don't want Atonement on a Friday, so ..., etc.); therefore you have EXPANDED UPON the premise others before you assumed.

IF you feel the Jews have the authority "to construct and to preserve THE CALENDAR", do you also believe that they have the authority "TO CONSTRUCT and to preserve THE SABBATH" and the authority "TO CONSTRUCT and to preserve THE OLD TESTAMENT"? Exactly how much fiddling with "constructing" would you accept from the Jews regarding "the Sabbath" and regarding "the Old Testament"? I ask this in view of your belief that these three things make up "the oracles of God".

28) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now turn with me to the book of Lamentations. I'm going to string 3 Scriptures together here, because we are looking at the major issue here in a nutshell. Lamentations 3:21-22): "This I recall to my mind. Therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed". Apply that principle there to this issue, that we are not consumed by this issue, the calendar, consumed by confusion, consumed by doubt, having no conviction about whether we're doing things right.

MY COMMENTS:

They are great Scriptures, John, but they have NOTHING AT ALL to do with accepting a Jewish calendar that violates clear biblical instructions. Facing up to biblical instructions has nothing to do with "being consumed" by something.

29) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now go with me back into the New Testament, to Hebrews the 13th chapter. Hebrews 13. And in Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today, and for ever." Drop back to Hebrew 13:5, "Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, for He has said I will never leave you nor forsake you." He is faithful. He has not left us without a calendar. Now back to Romans 3 again. And I will reread Romans 3:1-2.

MY COMMENTS:

More great Scriptures, but they too have nothing to do with a calendar that transgresses biblical instructions. Also, your biblically unjustified interpretation of Romans 3 is really THE ONLY SCRIPTURE THAT YOU HAVE! That is precisely why you have to go back to it "over and over and over and over ... AGAIN"! Can you see your "clouds of reasoning" when you reason your way into believing that "He has not left us without a calendar"? Why don't you just ACCEPT ALL of the calendar instructions found in the Bible, which Kenneth Herrmann laid out so clearly in his original articles? Why turn a blind eye to all of these SCRIPTURAL requirements?

30) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now considering these 3 verses, and of course much more besides, I cannot, for the life of me, look out over God's creation, and understand, and understanding how marvellously He has been providing for His creation, down to the most infinite detail. He generously provides for the irrational birds and beasts of the field all that they need for life. He just has equipped them so that they can survive. He has created some animals that have symbiotic relationships, so that one cannot live without the other. And yet there they are together, so that they can survive. He has done this so that we will understand how lovingly thoughtful and providential He is, and yet somehow, we are led to believe that He didn't provide a calendar for the very pinnacle of His creative efforts to use to worship Him. His own children.

MY COMMENTS:

All you are doing here is "reasoning" from assumed premises. When you say: "we are led to believe that He didn't provide a calendar": WHY don't you look at the Bible and specifically at the things in the Bible about a calendar that He HAS provided? We are not saying that "God hasn't provided a calendar"; THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE SAYING! Remember the premise you stated at the very start of your sermon! It seems like you DID state that premise for the express purpose that you may be able to then "knock it down".

KENNETH HERRMANN SPELLED OUT ALL THE ESSENTIALS FOR A CORRECT CALENDAR, AND HE DID SO FROM THE BIBLE, BACK IN 1953 AND IN 1957!

Why have you given two full sermons on the subject of the calendar without making the slightest effort to look at ANYTHING the Bible has to say about a calendar and the conditions it must meet? Why have you ONLY used Scriptures that clearly have nothing to do with the present Jewish calendar and its transgressions of biblical instructions?

Consider what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in "The Mystery of the Ages" on pages 11-12:

"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)

These are NOT my words! These are the words of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong!

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong understood very well that "most people stubbornly refuse to believe what they are unwilling to believe", and it certainly applied to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself, as he admitted in the last sentence.

Please examine yourself and your stance towards the present Jewish calendar, to be sure that these words don't apply to you. At the very least you simply MUST be willing to examine all BIBLICAL statements that actually DO apply to the calendar.

31) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

What kind of a God is this who leaves the Church, His children, without a calendar to worship Him for at least 1600 years?

MY COMMENTS:

I would feel most uncomfortable making a statement like that, because I don't believe that God would be pleased with it.

What if God turned around to you and said: "son, WHY don't you look at and accept all of the information I HAVE given you in the Bible? What more could you possibly have wanted? I have told you in My Word (as spelled out by Kenneth Herrmann) that: A DAY starts at sunset, A WEEK starts with the sunset after the Sabbath, A MONTH starts with the sunset after the new moon, A YEAR starts with the first new moon in the spring. That is all the information My people have ever needed. Don't you understand that THAT is why My servant Paul told the Colossians: "let no man therefore judge you ... in respect of ... THE NEW MOON" (Colossians 2:16), that ALL THEY NEEDED TO DO was to keep an accurate track of the passage of new moons? You already KNEW that in New Testament times I have not instructed My people to observe new moons as religious days, because YOU didn't keep them yourself. So WHY couldn't you understand that with this reference to 'new moons' Paul was telling My people to keep track of new moons FOR CALENDAR PURPOSES? Was that too difficult to understand? WHY would you have thought that I want My people to look to the Jews for leadership in matters of the calendar, when I so VERY CLEARLY referred to them as "hypocrites" and as "blind leaders of the blind", and when I had Peter tell the same Jews that 'we ought to obey GOD rather than men'?"

Do you understand that THE REASON why Paul included "new moons" in Colossians 2:16 is because

for the Colossians that would have been THE ONLY WAY they could have known when to observe God's feasts and "Holy Days" (mentioned just before 'new moons')? They couldn't really go to some local Jew and say: "Can you tell me when the Feast of Tabernacles will be this year?" They had to keep track of the passage of new moons, which are ignored in the Julian calendar then in use in the Roman Empire.

32) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Every reference that we are able to find on the true church from that period on to the present, we find them celebrating, observing, at least Passover on the same date as the Jews. What calendar, pray tell, were they using? And often times, they were confused with being Jews because they were keeping that date.

MY COMMENTS:

This is a completely unsound way of reasoning.

Where do you get the idea from that the Jews observe the same days God's Church observes? Do you understand that the Jews observe the following days:

- Pesach
- Yom Hashoah
- Yom Hazikaron
- Yom Ha'Atzmaut
- Pesach Sheini
- Lag B'Omer
- Yom Yerushalayim
- Shavuot
- Fast of Tammuz
- Fast of Tisha B'Av
- Rosh Hashana
- Fast of Gedaliah
- Yom Kippur
- Succoth
- Hoshana Rabba
- Shemini Atseret
- Simchat Torah

- Chanukah
- Tu B'Shevat
- Purim Katan
- Fast of Esther
- Purim
- Shushan Purim

Depending on which group of Jews you are looking at, you may have up to twenty different days and more in the year that have some religious significance to that group. On top of that many of these have TWO days attached to them (Pesach day 1, Pesach day 2, etc.). As an outsider there is NO WAY you would know the difference between which of those days are biblical, and which of those days are actually non-biblical in origin.

Here is the situation:

A) You have a Jewish community in the Middle Ages somewhere in Europe. They observe about 20 different religious days each year, and some of these are observed over a 2-day period (a 1st day and a 2nd day for all the Holy Days except for Atonement). They follow a calendar regulated by new moons, as far as any outsider is concerned, but in actual fact it is Hillel's fixed calendar that they use.

B) You live in that same area, but you grew up in the Catholic Church and later became a part of God's true Church. So you observe all of the feasts and Holy Days of Leviticus chapter 23. You do so based on keeping track of the REAL new moons, taking the first new moon in the spring as the start of the first month. You go by first visibility, since that was all you could possibly do. You also obviously keep the weekly Sabbath days on Saturdays, just like the Jews. You have also rejected the observance of all the pagan days observed by the Catholics around you.

C) The majority of the people in your community are still Catholics or perhaps members of the new Protestant movements that have recently sprung up. They follow a religious calendar with even more annual days than the Jews, but it is based on the Julian calendar, and later the Gregorian calendar. Their churches are distinctly anti-Jewish and anti-anything that hints of any Jewish connections.

IN THIS CONTEXT:

By the very fact that you keep the weekly Sabbath, you will ALREADY be labelled as "a Jew" by your Catholic-oriented community even before you ever keep your first Passover and your first Feast of Tabernacles. That label will only be reinforced when people find out that the days you keep come from the OLD Testament.

The fact that you observe 7 days in the year and the Jews observe 25 or even 30 days in the year will make no difference to this label your community will put on you. YOU are to them "a Jew" because you have Church services on Saturday and you also keep OLD Testament days. On top of that YOUR days are also based on new moons, just like the Jews do for their days.

Now in actual PRACTICAL TERMS: If you observed God's Feasts and Holy Days based on starting the 1st month and the 7th month with the first visible crescent of the new moon, then AS MUCH AS ONE THIRD OF THE TIME you could end up with exactly the same days as those derived from Hillel's fixed

calendar. The rest of the time you might actually observe the Holy Days one day earlier or one day later than the Jewish community. BUT THIS WOULD GO TOTALLY UNNOTICED BY YOUR CATHOLIC COMMUNITY, since the Jews so often have TWO days anyway. And occasionally you might even have all the days you observe a full month later than the Jews around you. This too would GO UNNOTICED by those around you.

Understand this: Outsiders will only notice SIMILARITIES between two different groups which are both foreign to them. Outsiders won't really notice THE FINER DIFFERENCES between two groups that are both foreign to them. A simple illustration of this: we may think of all Muslims as being the same and we are unlikely to notice differences between different factions amongst the Muslims. Muslims, on the other hand, will be hard pressed to know the differences between Catholics, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Church of God people. Most of us would be hard pressed to notice the differences between different sects amongst the Jews.

In the past, even so-called "Christians" in our communities had a hard time differentiating us from 7th Day Adventists or from Jehovah's Witnesses or from Mormons. That is why Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had to write short articles titled "No! I never was a Jehovah's Witness", etc..

You specifically refer to "the Passover". Do you understand that the Jews actually DO NOT KEEP NISAN 14!?! That's right, they do NOTHING AT ALL on the 14th! Their Pesach days are on the 15th and the 16th. So IF a true Christian in the Middle Ages had followed Hillel's fixed calendar and used that calendar to keep the Passover on the 14th, THEN the outsiders in his community would have noticed that he ALWAYS kept his Passover one and two days before the Jews kept THEIR Pesach. However, IF that true Christian followed a calendar based on first visibility of the new moon crescent, THEN fairly frequently he would have observed his Passover (at the start of the 14th day of the month for HIM) on one of the two Jewish Pesach days (the start of the 15th and the 16th days of the month for THE JEWS).

So IF outsiders could see true Christians and Jews keep Passover and Pesach ON EXACTLY THE SAME EVENING, what "pray tell" would that tell you about the calendars they were using, when for the true Christian it was the start of the 14th day, but for the Jews it was either the start of the 15th or the 16th day? It would have to tell you that they had calendars where Day 1 of the month was not the same in both calendars; that's the only possibility for Christians who kept their Passover at the start of the 14th day.

Anyway, it is EXTREMELY UNLIKELY that outsiders (i.e. Catholics) would have noticed the finer differences in the dates for religious observances between Jews and true Christians. This is so because about a third of the time the fixed calendar of Hillel comes up with the correct dates, and for the rest of the time it is mostly just a 1-day difference, which becomes obscured by the Jewish custom of having TWO days for most Holy Days. And if people TODAY mistake us for Jews because we keep the Sabbath, or for Mormons or for Jehovah's Witnesses, how much more so could that have happened in the Middle Ages? Keeping the Sabbath was sufficient to be labelled "a Jew", and to set outsiders LOOKING FOR other similarities with the Jews. Would you have expected Catholics in the Middle Ages to understand the differences between the 7 annual days observed by God's people and the more than 20 days observed by the Jews?

33) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now did God mislead His people by giving them a calendar that was not applicable for worshipping Him, one that He was displeased with? Did He let it go on for 1600 years while they were out there sinning, trying to keep the Holy Days, and God never corrected it until now? Until this latest, smartest generation came along?

MY COMMENTS:

You keep assuming that God "GAVE" His people some calendar other than what the Bible reveals. Building another strawman here, one that is easy to knock down.

You now ASSUME that God's people kept the Jewish fixed calendar. The people in the Colossian Church didn't keep the Jewish calendar even before the destruction of Jerusalem; they kept one based on when they, in Colossae, could see the new moon crescents. IN PRACTICAL TERMS it was identical to the calendar observed in Jerusalem at that time. But they didn't have the Jews in Jerusalem sending them a message each month regarding which day was to be declared the start of the new month. That wasn't possible. So they "kept new moons" (Colossians 2:16) and Paul told them not to worry if their pagan neighbours ridiculed them for keeping track of the lunar calendar.

34) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

The issue here, brethren, is: do we see God? Has He been left out of the picture?

MY COMMENTS:

How can you possibly claim that those who "search the Scriptures" for God's instructions regarding the calendar, even as Kenneth Herrmann did in his first calendar article, are "leaving God out of the picture"?

Is the shoe not on the other foot? Is it not correct that those who willingly ignore clear biblical instructions for the calendar, they are the ones who are "leaving God out of the picture", since the Bible is, after all, HIS Word.

35) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

You know brethren, we are never going to have enough proof from the world that this calendar we're using is accurate. You understand? IT'S ALWAYS GOING TO BE A FAITH ISSUE. Your faith in Romans 3:1-2 and other Scriptures which I'm going to continue to show you.

MY COMMENTS:

We're not talking about "enough proof from the world". We're talking about ENOUGH PROOF RIGHT IN THE BIBLE! But that goes against the foundation you started out with, so you don't really like that.

And you are admitting the truth here: IT IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE BASED ON A WRONG EXPLANATION OF ROMANS 3:1-2, AND ON NOTHING ELSE! The "other Scriptures" you refer to have nothing at all to do with the calendar that the Jews have "CONSTRUCTED"; they are nothing more than padding, to give the appearance of "more body" to your arguments, like a frightened animal that puffs up its fur to look bigger and more threatening. But it always comes back to Romans 3:1-2.

Further, your statement "we are never going to have enough proof from the world" should NOT be used to justify REJECTING PROOF FROM THE WORLD! Whatever "proof" we DO have should certainly be examined and considered. You are using this appeal to faith as a cop-out to justify REJECTING PROOF that shows that "this calendar we're using" is in fact "INACCURATE"! That is not right.

36) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

So where is our faith when we allow ourselves to be drawn away into an area of mathematical

technicalities? Well, it's no different from the addictive power of any other sin, except that it tends to be an intellectual rather than a quote "fleshly one".

MY COMMENTS:

That sounds like a double standard to me.

FIRST you try to make a point out of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong being ably assisted by qualified mathematicians (like Kenneth Herrmann), and now you criticize mathematical exactness? Are you also critical of the mathematician Kenneth Herrmann? How can you possibly refer to mathematical correctness as "A SIN" with addictive powers?

First you try to make the calendar an EXTREMELY COMPLICATED THING, one that obviously would require some mathematical skills. But once people use those skills and then find the blatant flaws in the present Jewish calendar, then they have supposedly succumbed to the addictive powers of sin?

HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY CLAIM THAT IT IS A SIN TO POINT OUT THE FLAWS AND THE VIOLATION OF BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS BY THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR?

Your statement reveals that you actually ARE aware of problems with the present Jewish calendar. Why don't you face up to and confront those problems?

37) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now this calendar that we are using now, I feel, from the thing I'm able to see in God's Word, has been in operation since, at least, the days of Hezekiah.

MY COMMENTS:

You have no real proof of any kind for this claim. What you "feel" is obviously not "real proof"! The real PROOF shows that the calendar even only 2000 years ago did not have any "postponement rules". The real PROOF shows that the calendar 2000 years ago was determined by visual observation of the new crescent, and this is ACKNOWLEDGED BY KENNETH HERRMANN in his articles, and that is what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong TOOK FOR GRANTED in his 1940 GN article.

So you are ignoring REAL proof in favour of your "feelings". But feelings are very deceptive, or "sinister like the moon".

The facts are that the present Jewish calendar calculations do exactly two things. First, they establish THE DAY OF THE WEEK for the molad of Tishri (the supposed lunar conjunction of the seventh month). This calculation PRESUPPOSES and totally depends on the existence of the 7-day weekly cycle. Without the existence of the weekly cycle this calculation simply could not exist.

The second thing the Jewish calendar calculations do is establish THE DAY OF THE MONTH IN THE JULIAN CALENDAR for that molad of Tishri. This calculation PRESUPPOSES AND TOTALLY DEPENDS ON THE EXISTENCE OF THE JULIAN CALENDAR!

Understand that the only purpose of the Jewish calendar calculations is to determine the exact time of the molad IN ANOTHER CALENDAR! If the Jewish calendar is the only one in existence, then the present Jewish calendar calculations would be TOTALLY USELESS!

So in the days of Hezekiah you wanted to know "when will the year 4 years from now start?". What

would have been the point of your calendar expert (a priest?) telling you: "4 years from now the molad of Tishri will be on Wednesday, Tishri 1, at 8 hours and 561 halakim"? What if the priest had told you: "And 5 years from now the molad of Tishri will be on Sunday, Tishri 1, at 18 hours and 947 halakim"?

In terms of the Jewish calendar Tishri 1 will ALWAYS be on Tishri 1! There is no other possibility! But that doesn't tell you when Tishri 1 is REALLY going to be. The question and the answer cannot be the same thing. The question is "when will Tishri 1 be?" Therefore it would be meaningless to receive the answer "Tishri 1 will be on Tishri 1".

Can you grasp that THE ONLY PURPOSE the present Jewish calendar calculations serve is to establish a date for the Jewish year IN TERMS OF THE ROMAN CALENDAR? But this obviously ASSUMES the existence of the Roman calendar.

The Jewish calendar calculations, as they exist today, could not possibly have existed before Julius introduced his calendar in 45 B.C.; and every Jewish astronomer knows this very well. Therefore no Jewish astronomer would ever dream of claiming that the present Jewish calendar existed in B.C. times.

38) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

It may go, I have recently been shown, I was reading an article that was written by a man with Church of God connections, showing that there is the possibility that it goes all the way back to the beginning, at least before the flood.

MY COMMENTS:

You seem to accept any claims for great antiquity for the present Jewish calendar without any need to examine real proof. The claim by this "man with Church of God connections" that the present Jewish calendar goes back to "AT LEAST BEFORE THE FLOOD" is utterly absurd! The Jews themselves don't even remotely make such a claim! And THE FACTS all contradict such a claim. BUT ... this man with "Church of God connections" certainly appeals to YOUR biases; so you will listen to his claims without needing too much in the line of real proof to support them.

39) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay, back to Romans 3 again. Now brethren, my faith is in the fact that God has provided and preserved the calendar for His Church today in the end time. Now, if you want to look it up, and it would probably be good for you to refresh your memory in this, that God assigned temple responsibilities to the Levitical families, and it has never passed from them. He has never rescinded those things. Everything, including the sacrifices, the offering of the incense, all of those things, including the calendar, they have never been rescinded.

MY COMMENTS:

That's right, back to Romans 3 again!

That's the ONLY Scripture you really have. When you have to go back over and over to ONE Scripture to make your point, it shows very clearly that you are pinning EVERYTHING on the interpretation you have assumed for that one Scripture. That's what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong did with his "Monday Pentecost"; he pinned EVERYTHING on his wrong way of "counting FROM".

Furthermore, "temple responsibilities" have NOTHING at all to do with determining a calendar. That is one of your totally unjustified ASSUMPTIONS!

ALL of the "temple responsibilities" for the Levites are spelled out in the Bible in the greatest detail! They simply did not have ANY "temple responsibilities" that are not very clearly spelled out in the Bible. Assuming ANY "temple responsibilities" above and beyond what is clearly stated in the Bible is presumptuousness, a rather dangerous sort of thing. It is one thing to claim that the priests oversaw the practice of having a correct calendar; it is another thing altogether to claim that the priests had the right "to CONSTRUCT" a calendar of their own devising. And furthermore, the present Jewish calendar was NOT "constructed by Levites at all". The present Jewish calendar is the product of the NON-levitical sect of the Pharisees, of whom Hillel II was the chief leader in the 350's AD. The present Jewish calendar simply does NOT go back to any "levitical" connections.

So, to follow your argument, IF God has never rescinded temple duties from the levitical priesthood (thus EXCLUDING you and me and the Church in general today from doing anything with the calendar), then it must ALSO exclude Hillel II from in any way "CONSTRUCTING" a calendar, since Hillel II was not a priest, but a non-levitical Pharisee! Did you know this? Hillel II was NOT a priest!

So how can you possibly put your faith in what some "non-levitical Pharisee" constructed in the 350's AD , when you know quite clearly that temple responsibilities have never been rescinded from the Levites?

40) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now some would like to limit this word "oracles" in Romans 3:2 to "writings". But the word simply does not mean "writings". It is the diminutive of the Greek logion or logia. It means "sayings, utterances, declarations, even little or small words, that might be understood as whispers, or inspirations". Every synonym for this word has to do with what is spoken. It is only by extension that it includes writing because some of what God originally spoke was indeed written. Thus the Scriptures.

MY COMMENTS:

Your reasoning here is again unsound.

First of all, the Greek word translated "oracles" IS "logion"; it is not "the diminutive of logion" (or the plural logia).

Secondly, "logion" is in fact the diminutive of "logos", by way of the adjective "logios" which means "eloquent".

Next, for you to say " the word simply does not mean 'writings'" would have to mean that it would be EQUALLY WRONG TO CLAIM THAT "LOGOS" MEANS "WRITINGS"! This would mean that you would have to conclude that "THE WORD OF GOD" also "SIMPLY DOES NOT MEAN WRITINGS"! But surely you don't want to claim THAT?

Now if "the LOGOS of God" is a clear reference to what we today have "in writing", then the diminutive of that cannot refer to anything other than A SMALL PART of that "logos of God", or a scaled-down version of "the logos of God". Do you understand that you can NEVER divorce the meaning of the diminutive of a word from the meaning of the parent word? Whatever the parent word (in this case "logos") means is an automatic limitation on what THE DIMINUTIVE (in this case "logion") can mean. It is incorrect to find "additional meanings" for the diminutive of a word, meanings that somehow don't apply to the parent word.

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament is a recognized authoritative work on the meaning of New Testament Greek words. Thayer's defines "logion" as follows:

"Properly a little word, a brief utterance, in prophetic authors a divine oracle (doubtless because oracles were generally brief), of any utterance of God, of the prophecies of God in the Old Testament, of the ten commandments of God in Philo, in the N.T. spoken of the words or utterances of God, of the contents of the Mosaic law".

Where did you get the idea of "WHISPERS" from? Do you really believe that God "WHISPERED" something in somebody's ear, information that is not found in the Bible? You seem to be inferring that "oracles of God" could refer to SECRET INFORMATION?! If this is what you really want to imply, then you are certainly wrong!!

Check Thayer's definition above. Logion is ALWAYS something smaller than "logos", or "a part of what constitutes logos". It is never something in addition to "logos".

Furthermore, in presenting your meanings of "logion" you very obviously have made no attempt whatsoever to try to establish what PAUL, the author of Romans 3:2, had in mind when he used this word. You are trying to read your own interpretation of "oracles" INTO PAUL'S WORDS! That is not good, John.

Yes, both "logos" and "logion" refer to spoken words. But WE TODAY have no way of hearing the words that were spoken 2000 years ago and 2500 years ago and 3500 years ago. We today have ONLY the written "words" available to us. By using the expression the "logion of God" Paul most assuredly was not talking about any EXTRA-BIBLICAL revelations from God! Paul wrote 14 books of the New Testament, and in NONE of them does he ever so much as hint at some kind of "extra-biblical revelation" that we, the people of God, should be on the lookout for; it just isn't there.

YOUR attempt to read some kind of "extra-biblical revelation" into Romans 3:2 is simply not justified by anything God tells us anywhere in the entire Bible! The only thing in this regard that we find in the Bible is that we are to be ON OUR GUARD against claims of this nature. Your claim is motivated by your assumed premises. But your claims are not supported by the Bible itself.

41) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

In other words, the word oracles is broad enough to include, not only what is written, but what does not necessarily appear in writing, also those things that is nonetheless inspired of God.

MY COMMENTS:

How can you possibly claim "inspiration from God" for anything that is not found in the Bible? You are forced TO ASSUME that something is "inspired of God". Furthermore, the word "logion" is not "BROAD" at all! It is "NARROWER" and "MORE RESTRICTED" than its parent word "logos"; it is a diminutive not an enlargement of the parent word.

Further, your statement shows that you don't really care what PAUL was trying to convey with this word; you are content with what you have found to be "a broader application".

42) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay now, think of the word "oracles", and definitions and usages I gave of that word. It has to do with the sayings of God. It can even include the whispers or the inspirations of God. Now you apply that to the service of God that is in this verse, because to the Israelites was given the service of God.

MY COMMENTS:

What examples of "USAGES" have you given us? None! You haven't quoted one single example, biblical or non-biblical, that we can verify. You could have given examples from the Greek LXX of the Old Testament, or you could have given examples from the classical Greek authors, but you have given none. All you gave is some "definitions" without telling us the source.

But with this statement you are laying the groundwork for reading your own ideas into Paul's words in Romans 3:2. This is again not good.

Do you REALLY believe that God "WHISPERED" something to some people, things that are not included in the Bible? Do you really believe PAUL was trying to imply some "whispers of God" in Romans 3:2? Did God WHISPER to the Levites with: "Pssst, this is how I want you to do something in service to Me?"

Don't you understand that the Bible CONDEMNS "whispering"? Having himself just previously CONDEMNED whispering in Romans 1:29, how can you POSSIBLY infer that barely 34 verses later Paul attributes some "whispering" TO GOD? Don't you understand that in the Bible "whispering" is a synonym for "deceiving"? To use your own words: "now you apply THAT to the service of God"!

43) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now does God inspire, does He speak to and through those who are in His service? It doesn't matter whether a person is a minister. If God is using him, God will inspire that person. God will speak to that person. They are sayings of God to that person.

MY COMMENTS:

WOW! Now you are really going out on a limb!

You are here equating "God inspiring someone" with "God SPEAKING TO someone". Yet Jesus Christ said very plainly: "you have NEITHER HEARD HIS VOICE AT ANY TIME, nor seen his shape" (John 5:37). This would mean, by your definition, that God had not ever inspired anyone during Old Testament times as they had never heard His voice.

This is a desperate attempt to justify including the non-biblical Jewish calendar in "the oracles of God". However, by claiming that God speaks PRIVATELY TO ANY NUMBER OF PEOPLE, and that THIS is what Paul included in Romans 3:2 under "the oracles of God", you are reading your own ideas into the Scriptures.

Furthermore, your reasoning above (what was that about "clouds of reasoning"?) still does not permit you to include the calendar in Romans 3:2. You would have to know WHO God actually "spoke to" about the calendar, and WHO then asserted that God had indeed spoken to him about this subject. You cannot attribute God speaking to some ANONYMOUS person, not referred to anywhere in God's Word, as being then responsible for God's people implementing these "whispered instructions" God had supposedly given to this anonymous person, who happened to be "in God's service". God simply does not give MAJOR INSTRUCTIONS secretly, outside of the context of the Bible, to someone who then has to make them known to all mankind. That smacks too much of Mohammed or Joseph Smith or someone like that receiving secret instructions from God.

44) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Let's go to Ezra. I'm just doing this so you will understand the usage of the word "oracle". IT IS VERY BROAD, and includes FAR MORE THAN SIMPLY THE OLD TESTAMENT.

MY COMMENTS:

You are here turning the whole matter upside down. What you are in effect claiming is that "LOGOS" (the Word of God) IS THE DIMINUTIVE OF "LOGION" (the oracles of God)! You are making "logion" "VERY BROAD", much bigger than the "logos" (the Old Testament at the time Paul wrote Romans 3:2).

How can the diminutive POSSIBLY include "FAR MORE" than the parent word? That is just totally illogical.

What we read in Ezra has nothing to do with the calendar question. It is really totally unrelated to what we are talking about, i.e. whether THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR has God's approval or not.

45) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Leviticus 23:4: "These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their seasons." The Levites were to proclaim when those days were year by year, because they were keeping track of the calendar.

MY COMMENTS:

There is a vast difference between "KEEPING TRACK OF THE CALENDAR", which all of us could and should be doing, and "CONSTRUCTING A CALENDAR" to conform to your own traditions and preferences. When Hillel II introduced his fixed calendar with postponement rules and with all of the Feast of Tabernacles sometimes in the summer, he wasn't really "keeping track" of anything; he was presenting something that was NEW.

46) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay. The simplicity that is in Christ on this issue is that God has already provided a calendar. It's that simple.

MY COMMENTS:

YES, YOU ARE CORRECT!

The calendar God has "provided", all its necessary components, are found right in the Bible, as Kenneth Herrmann clearly demonstrated in his articles back in 1953 and in 1957. But you are very meticulously avoiding that information.

47) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

That is a little bit of an aside, but it is true. Nobody who has ever attempted to change the calendar away from the calculated Hebrew calendar and used another calendar has prospered. I don't mean that God strikes them dead. I only mean they simply fade from view and become ineffective to the Church.

MY COMMENTS:

Okay, let's view this matter objectively and factually. By Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's own admission his work was no longer blessed after 35 years, when the Church gave evasive answers about sincere calendar questions. And from then onwards Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's own life was one of severe tests and trials, and what he had worked for his whole life WAS SHATTERED AND DESTROYED!

You and I today are LIVING TESTIMONY that God withdrew His blessings from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and all he had done! Where is the work Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong accomplished? Where are the converts he was used to bring into the Church? Where are the physical blessings God had poured out on the Church? The properties are in disuse or they have already been sold, and the people have been scattered to the four winds. How has the Church "PROSPERED" for holding to the present Jewish calendar? Where is the fruit of a total income that exceeded one billion dollars during Mr. Armstrong's lifetime?

SO EXACTLY "HOW BLESSED" WAS MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG FOR HOLDING ON TO THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR?

What happened to Kenneth Herrmann after evading honest calendar questions in 1969? Did he "simply fade from view"? How "effective" has he been since 1969? I don't mean to be against Kenneth Herrmann, but if you want to compare "blessings" and "fading from view", then you have to apply that evenly across the board, and not just to one side of the argument. And for that matter, even Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong has by now, the year 2000, also already overwhelmingly "faded from view". Of all his world travels, WHO still remembers him? WHO still remembers what he told them? WHO amongst the people who heard him could even recall what he actually said? What did all of his travels actually achieve, in real terms? What of the things he did and achieved has actually ENDURED, even for a mere 14 years since his death? Of all of the people that attended the Church during his time, HOW MANY still hold fast to the biblical teachings he explained to us? How much of his work has "survived" for even 14 years?

How "blessed" are all those church of God organizations that are holding fast to the Jewish calendar? How "blessed" is your particular group? Has Dr. Hoeh, who also wrote in support of the Jewish calendar, not also "faded from view"?

When you talk about "blessings" be sure you are not just looking in one direction. Look also in the direction of those who held fast to the present Jewish calendar. One side has thus far hardly been blessed more than the other.

48) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now this is just a little bit of an aside, but some people find the Chaldean names on the calendar to be offensive. Are you aware of how they got there? Well, when the Jews went into captivity, remember Nebuchadnezzar conquered them and they went into captivity, and who did they take with them? Well, they took away real brains, you see, like Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Daniel and others who then God stirred up the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar and made sure that those young men were right in the government.

Who do you think revealed the calendar to the Babylonians? Well, I think we've got a pretty good indication that it was Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who revealed it first to the Babylonians and the Babylonians said, Hey this is a better calendar than we have. And so it became their calendar too.

MY COMMENTS:

First of all, that line of reasoning (another cloud?) is totally ridiculous! Do you understand that the Babylonian calendar PRECEDES the captivity of Daniel? Babylonian calendar records (i.e. new moon records) go back to 626 BC, the father of Nebuchadnezzar. Next, do you understand that ALL THE NATIONS IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD HAD THE SAME CALENDAR? They all looked for the first new moon in the spring to start the year. And NONE of them used a calculated calendar that was totally

divorced from the real new moons that were observed every month. And NONE of the nations there got their calendars from Israel or from Judah! They ALL simply took note of each new moon day. They didn't NEED any information from anyone else in order to observe when each new moon first became visible.

Secondly, THE NAMES are not "offensive" or a problem at all! All they do is reveal the true ORIGIN of the present Jewish calendar.

Next, in around 604 BC Nebuchadnezzar took a group of Jewish teenagers to Babylon. These teenagers weren't Levites but were of the extended royal family. They were non-levitical Jews. So they would not have had any exposure to "the things God had whispered to the Levites about how the calendar should be constructed", right? The knowledge about the calendar was kept secret by the Levites, right? So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not have known anything more about the inner workings of the calendar than all the other teenagers who freely ate of the king's polluted food, right?

The claim that the Babylonians somehow supposedly looked to these Jewish TEENAGERS for a correct calendar is absurd! Why is a calendar with rules for postponing the Day of Atonement supposedly "BETTER" than one without such postponement rules, especially when the Babylonians couldn't have cared two hoots about the Jewish Day of Atonement falling on a Friday or on a Sunday?

I have here in my hands a record of ALL THE OBSERVED NEW MOONS IN BABYLON from 626 BC (i.e. before Daniel was even born) up to 75 AD, a total of OVER 8500 CONSECUTIVE NEW MOONS!

Next, your statement: "Who do you think revealed the calendar to the Babylonians?" shows that you understand that THE BABYLONIAN CALENDAR WAS INDEED ACCEPTED BY THE JEWS after they returned from captivity. You are simply trying to imply that the Babylonians had gotten it from the Jews in the first place, which is not true!

But your statement "who do you think revealed the calendar to the Babylonians?" also shows that YOU DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CALENDAR IS ALL ABOUT! It is not a matter of anything "having to be REVEALED"! All the Babylonians did was OBSERVE one new moon after another, and they kept a record of these, which record you can find in the book "Babylonian Chronology 626 BC - AD 75" by Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, published in 1956 by Brown University Press, Providence, Rhode Island. Even Dr. Hoeh referred to this book in his 1981 article.

And this record PROVES that the Babylonians did not apply the "postponement rules" that are a part of the present Jewish calendar. This is irrefutable! So this proves that they did not get their calendar from these captive Jewish teenagers! The record goes to before these teenagers were even born. So another of your premises proves to be incorrect.

49) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay, I want to expand on at least one more point here, and that is in Romans 3:1.

MY COMMENTS:

As expected, we are back again at Romans 3. That's the only Scripture you really have. Therefore that is the one you have to get the greatest mileage out of. But it doesn't make your interpretation of "logion" correct.

50) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Remember the oracles were given to Judah. Now this goes on to say: "the sceptre shall not depart from

Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet ..." Lawgiving, that includes the calendar, "... until Shiloh come".

MY COMMENTS:

"Lawgiving includes the calendar" is YOUR ASSUMPTION! The calendar has nothing to do with "lawgiving" one way or the other! IF it was indeed a part of "lawgiving", THEN God would most assuredly have included it in the Bible! God has not given ANY LAWS to mankind to live by OUTSIDE OF THE BIBLE!

The calendar is not a matter of "law" at all! It is simply a matter of "OBSERVING", watching and taking note of the passage of sunsets and the passage of new moons and the passage of the seasons. THAT'S ALL! Then all you need to know is when to start the 1st day of each month and when to start the first month of the year. THAT IS ALL THERE IS TO IT! And all the ancient nations in the Middle East understood this quite clearly, and so their calendars all functioned the same way.

51) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

In other words, the tribe of Judah, Judah as a tribe, has been given that authority by God to be the chief administrator of His law.

MY COMMENTS:

DO YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU HAVE SAID HERE?

"His law" most certainly includes all of the ten commandments! Do you REALLY believe that the Jews today are THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATORS OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, THE LAW OF GOD? In any dispute over how the ten commandments are to be applied by us today, have you EVER looked for advice or for "ADMINISTRATION" to the Jews?

When you want to know how best we today should observe the Sabbath, a key component of "His law", do you look to the Jews to tell you how to keep the Sabbath, if they are supposedly "ADMINISTERING" that law? Do you really go to the Jews to tell you how and when you should keep the Passover and when to keep Pentecost, other parts of "His law"?

You don't really mean "the LAW of God" at all with your above statement. You have simply made that statement in an effort to justify the Jews supposedly having authority over THE CALENDAR, which you would like to view as "THE LAW of God", earlier calling it "AN ATTACHMENT to the Bible".

The way you have always tried to put God's ten commandments and God's other biblical LAWS into practice in your own life shows quite clearly that you have NEVER believed or accepted that Judah has any kind of authority to administer this law at all! You have never accepted the rules they require for Sabbath observance; you have never accepted the rules they have attached to the observance of the annual Holy Days; you have never accepted their ruling to declare TWO days for every one biblical Holy Day (except for Atonement); you have never accepted their ruling that the law requires certain prayers to be said at certain times; you have never accepted their ruling that you may not mix certain foods in the same meal, etc..

This shows quite clearly that you yourself don't really believe that Judah is "the chief administrator of God's LAW"! But for something that is not even a part of the law, the calendar, for THAT you want to claim that the Jews are appointed by God as "the chief administrator".

Furthermore, when you think about what I have just mentioned, it should become apparent that the Jews have ATTACHED things to ALL of God's laws:

- they have attached rules to Sabbath keeping,
- they have attached rules to keeping the Holy Days,
- they have attached additional days to be observed,
- they have attached rules to God's dietary laws, etc.

Isn't it obvious that they have also ATTACHED their own rules to the calendar? Is there any law of God to which they have not attached additional instructions or requirements? Why should the calendar be any exception?

52) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

The oracles were given to Judah. It's the Church's responsibility to recognize that and to have faith in it and to conduct ourselves accordingly.

MY COMMENTS:

Again, "the oracles" is what you base EVERYTHING on. YOU HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO APPEAL TO. We fully recognize that "the oracles of God" have indeed been given to the Jews. That is not in any way disputed by anyone!

THE PROBLEM is simply your biblically unjustified claim that THE CALENDAR has to be a part of those "oracles". The way you keep coming back to this one Scripture shows that you realize only too well that EVERYTHING COLLAPSES IF IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THE CALENDAR IS NOT A PART OF "THE ORACLES OF GOD".

You have nothing else that you can appeal to for support of the present Jewish calendar, not one tiny shred of other evidence. When your interpretation of Romans 3:1-2 falls, then EVERYTHING FALLS WITH IT! It is an identical situation to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's case for a Monday-Pentecost; EVERYTHING there depended on Mr. Armstrong's wrong interpretation of "count FROM ...", and when THAT fell, then the Monday-Pentecost fell too.

53) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay, let me summarize here very quickly. And I can see that some of this I'll have to give next week. But I think that you can clearly see that we are not going to make any change. We are going to hold fast to what we have been given, because it is right!

MY COMMENTS:

After all the errors I have shown in your presentation, will you still say: "We are going to hold fast to what we have been given, because it is right"?

54) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Okay, the two most significant pieces of understanding that I feel regarding this issue:

NUMBER 1: There is no calendar in the Bible.

NUMBER 2 is: That the real issue is God's faithfulness.

AND CLOSELY ATTACHED IS: That the oracles have been given to Judah.

MY COMMENTS:

Your "number 1" is A FALSE PREMISE! Kenneth Herrmann's articles make that quite clear. Your real premise, if you are going to be honest with yourself, is: A REFUSAL TO LOOK AT ANY BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A CORRECT CALENDAR. And since you have refused to look at the biblical requirements, which glaringly expose the problems with the present Jewish calendar, therefore you are required to have A BLIND FAITH, turning the issue into a matter of "GOD's faithfulness". God has indeed been faithful, and we have THE BIBLE we can have faith in, not some supposed "attachments"!

What you call "closely attached" is really your only point, the one you stake everything on.

55) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Something very interesting at the tail end of that letter (by Kenneth Herrmann), and said to this man to whom he wrote it, he said: "It's not our responsibility to steady the ark".

MY COMMENTS:

Don't use this "it's not our responsibility to steady the ark" quotation to encourage God's people to IGNORE CLEAR BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CALENDAR! If you were "rightly dividing the Word of God" here, you would be quoting Peter who said: "WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN" (Acts 5:29).

56) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Just very quickly, a couple of Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 4:6-7. I'm going to pluck this principle out of here and apply it to the church, apply it to the calendar.

MY COMMENTS:

That's what you have done throughout this sermon, "plucked principles" out of their context and tried to apply them to the calendar. The principle here has nothing to do with accepting the present Jewish calendar with its violations of clear biblical instructions.

57) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Now let's look at a direction, a command that is given to me, as a minister, in 1 Timothy 6:20. "O Timothy, keep (that means, guard, preserve) that which is committed to your trust." What was committed to my trust? That which I received. "... avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of knowledge, falsely so-called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith." That's what the issue is.

MY COMMENTS:

That's a copout! When you clearly KNOW that something is wrong, if you insist on holding fast to it, THEN you are sinning, John. Don't hide your eyes from clear biblical requirements with the excuse that it

is MORE important for you to hold fast to what was committed to you by a man, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. You have seen OTHER things you believe Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong didn't have fully correct, and you have made changes accordingly.

Are you saying that "the issue" is about "profane and vain babblings"? If so, is it "VAIN" to look at BIBLICAL requirements for the calendar? Why do you hide your eyes from what THE BIBLE DOES HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE CALENDAR?

58) YOU STATED THE FOLLOWING:

Well, that same Jesus Christ who inspired the Old Testament and made sure that a workable calendar was given to His people in the Old Testament and continues right on through. He is the One that we would trample all over if we reject what He has been faithful in providing us with. That may seem strong to you, but I feel it very firmly that I am on solid ground in saying things like this.

MY COMMENTS:

What God has been "faithful in providing for us" is HIS WORD! He has not really provided us with any "ATTACHMENTS" to that Word. After reading this assessment of your sermon, do you STILL feel that you are "on solid ground"?

That about concludes the comments on your first "calendar sermon", given on January 1, 2000. The following Sabbath you gave another sermon on the subject of "FAITH AND THE CALENDAR".

Here are some comments on that sermon.

You actually said nothing at all about the calendar itself. Your focus was basically that we are supposed to have faith in the present Jewish calendar. You reasoned that, BECAUSE Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was an apostle, THEREFORE we ought to have faith in the calendar he accepted.

My comments about Kenneth Herrmann's 1969 letter apply here.

You also reasoned about "the good fruit that the calendar has produced", though you didn't actually tell us WHAT those "good fruits" are? So exactly what are those "good fruits" supposed to be?

I put it to you that IF the Church under Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's leadership back in 1969 had acknowledged the faults and problems with the present Jewish calendar, and had made the necessary changes, THEN we would have avoided a great many of the problems that the Church HAS had to face in the past 30 years!

Do you believe that "there is a CAUSE for every effect", as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong used to put it? He believed it! So this means that there must be A CAUSE for why God stopped blessing the Church with 30% per year growth. There must be A CAUSE for all the many problems the Church has had to contend with since 1969. There must be A CAUSE for the sad state the scattered Church of God is in right now. There must be A CAUSE for why God allowed Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to be deceived by people who wanted to succeed him as the leader of the Church (on the human level).

It is not as if God somehow WANTED Israel to be deceived by the Gibeonites in the days of Joshua. Nevertheless God ALLOWED them to be deceived BECAUSE they (Israel) didn't handle this situation correctly. And the consequences of that deception affected them for centuries to come. I don't believe that back in the 1960's God WANTED Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to end up being deceived by people 15 - 20 years later. But God ALLOWED it because Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong hadn't handled something the

right way; it has to be a matter of "cause and effect". And I further believe that this has to be something that we should be able to come to see. That's the record of the whole Bible, that God always makes clear what the sins or errors were that resulted in the withdrawal of blessings.

You also referred to Jeremiah 7:11-14, 25-26 where God says that He spoke but that the people did not respond to Him. And you then asked if we are repeating this pattern?

YES, WE ARE REPEATING THIS PATTERN! EVER SINCE 1969 WE HAVE BEEN REPEATING THIS PATTERN, WHEN THE CHURCH REFUSED TO ACT ON NEW UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR THAT HAD COME TO LIGHT!

God had made known new information to those in positions of responsibility, but the leadership REFUSED TO LISTEN to what God was showing the Church, and God then withdrew His blessings.

You also said that: "we have a responsibility to be faithful to our father in the faith, Herbert Armstrong". And then you applied Luke 10:16 to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong ... "he that hears you hears Me, and he that despises you despises Me, and he that despises Me despises Him that sent Me".

That's fine PROVIDED THAT what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was teaching us was actually in agreement with the Word of God. But at no stage did you address the difficulty of how to deal with a situation where what the leader of the Church may urge us to do is actually IN CONFLICT WITH THE WORD OF GOD. What do we do then: be faithful to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and continue to transgress biblical instructions, or disagree with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong because we desire to obey biblical instructions?

You quoted Luke 2:49-51, where Jesus Christ as a boy was subject to Joseph and Mary. They obviously never asked Him to transgress any biblical instructions. There is a vast difference between that situation and you asking US TODAY to "be subject" to a calendar that we now understand blatantly violates clear biblical instructions.

You also quoted Ephesians 2:11-13 and stated that in coming into God's Church those non-Jews also became "citizens AND SUBJECT TO THAT CALENDAR". You overlook that the calendar used by the Jews at Paul's time was based on the visual observations of the new moon crescents, something Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong understood quite clearly in 1940, and something that Kenneth Herrmann understood equally clearly in 1953 and in 1957. You overlook that the present Jewish calendar is NOT the same as that calendar used in the days of Paul.

You also said that we reason about various issues (like tithing, the Sabbath, the calendar, etc.) by saying: "Here's the way I see it ...". ACTUALLY THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE DONE WITH ROMANS 3:1-2. You have told us: "HERE'S THE WAY I SEE IT ... the calendar simply has to be a part of the oracles of God". In so doing you have NOT asked: how does GOD see it? How did PAUL intend for us to understand the word 'oracles'? What does GOD tell us about requirements for a calendar?

No, you haven't asked those questions. You have simply ASSERTED: here's the way I see it, the calendar must also be a part of the oracles.

You further referred to Genesis 22:1-2 and tried to get us to ignore any conscience problems we may have. You reasoned about Abraham's trial and said: "TALK ABOUT A CONSCIENCE PROBLEM!" You implied that OUR conscience problems with the present Jewish calendar are by comparison very insignificant.

THAT WAS A VERY FOOLISH THING TO DO, JOHN!

While I don't in any way wish to diminish the magnitude of Abraham's trial, it is very clear that Abraham KNEW WITHOUT HESITATION that the One speaking to him was Almighty God! That is something with the Jewish calendar that is vastly different. With the present Jewish calendar we KNOW that it is certainly NOT GOD speaking to us through that calendar. The historical evidence makes clear that the Jews totally disregard biblical instructions when it comes to their calendar, as they do with every other biblical doctrine.

You know full well that "whatsoever is not of faith is SIN" (Romans 14:23). So how could you possibly urge us to willingly overlook the present Jewish calendar's transgressions of biblical instructions in favour of "just having faith"? How can you possibly EVER try to lead people to go against their consciences? Do you really believe GOD would want you to reason like that?

In your zeal to get us to accept the present Jewish calendar, in spite of transgressing biblical instructions, you have here made A VERY SERIOUS MISTAKE! Please consider this very carefully. If you ever again try to lead people to go against their consciences, you can know for a certainty that God will not bless you for doing that!

When you were going through this section of your sermon (Genesis 22:1-2 followed by Hebrews 11:17-19 and then followed by Genesis 22:10-12) you were very evidently speaking with anger, as anyone who will listen to that sermon will readily notice. And IN ANGER you were urging us to suppress our conscience problems with the present Jewish calendar because Abraham's conscience problem must have been so much greater.

Do you understand that whenever we compromise our own consciences, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT IS INVOLVED, then we are SINNING!? We can have a conscience problem, because of our personal background, about something that is not at all wrong in the sight of God; yet if we compromise our own consciences THEN WE SIN!

God cannot use people who compromise their own consciences. He will not have people who compromise their consciences in His Family. When we compromise our own consciences, irrespective of whether the actions involved are sin or not, then OUR CHARACTER is destroyed!

Can you perhaps now see that this handling of "Abraham's conscience problem" and the implication that we should therefore just put down our own conscience problems, was THE GRAVEST MISTAKE YOU MADE IN THIS SECOND CALENDAR SERMON? Don't ever try to persuade people to compromise their own consciences.

It is because of this point that I felt I should comment on this second sermon as well, even though you didn't really say anything directly about the calendar in this sermon.

Well, that's all I wanted to bring to your attention.

I have certainly not enjoyed writing this article. I feel rather uncomfortable in having to point out the weaknesses and errors in your approach to this whole question. And since I dislike the approach of "beating around the bush", therefore I have said what I mean openly and without malice or ulterior motives of any kind. That does not mean that I think that I am better or greater or smarter, etc. than you. I don't. I look upon you as a man who is "senior to me in the faith".

But for over a year now I have tried to make as much information about the whole calendar question as possible available to you. I have repeatedly offered to explain questions and to help in any way that you might want help. Most of the things I have written about the calendar in the past 14 months have come from a motivation of wanting to help YOU SPECIFICALLY, JOHN, to understand the real problems in

this whole calendar issue. The driving motivation behind all of my calendar articles in the past 14 months has been: "How can I make this really clear to John Ritenbaugh?"

In spite of having previously publicly acknowledged that you can see problems with the present Jewish calendar, you decided to take a hardline approach in your two calendar sermons. I sincerely and fervently hope that in so doing YOU YOURSELF did not have to resort to squelching your own conscience problems with the present Jewish calendar, because that would have devastating consequences. If you in any way DID have to suppress your own reservations about the present Jewish calendar in that process, then PLEASE do something right away to rectify that.

In view of the hardline approach you took in your sermons, and in view of having tried to help you personally with this subject for over a year now, I saw no other option open to me but to expose the errors in your approach to the calendar question in a public way, via this article. I had heard from several people who had received your sermon from the Internet. For example, one man wrote:

"On another note, did you listen to the John Ritenbaugh sermon given on 1/1/2000 on the calendar. I picked it up from their web site. I have listened to 40 minutes of it so far and he makes some compelling arguments." (Unedited comments received)

Another man wrote:

"I just listened to the sermons you referred to of 1/1 and 1/8. It is a shame how easily people are willing to twist Scripture. I'm not going to attack this man. That would be wrong. I only say, I'm thankful I didn't make the move last year to go to his group." (Unedited comments received)

Either way, your sermons, being available over the Internet, ARE affecting some of God's people. And my motivation is the fear of God. I fear to not speak out against something that is wrong in the things that are taught to God's people. While I was still in the Worldwide Church of God, I didn't speak out to the congregations I pastored; instead I wrote up strong refutations of the doctrinal changes that were being introduced, and then passed those refutations "up the line of authority" to headquarters. But in front of the congregation I simply totally avoided even "mentioning" the doctrinal changes that Pasadena was introducing (except for two or three sermons where I explained the teachings as they had always been explained, and for which some people reported me; it wasn't a big deal one way or the other). Instead I was posting article after article on the Internet, while still attending the Worldwide Church of God, refuting the changes that were being introduced.

I now believe that that was the wrong approach. I really should have been more direct in spelling out to the entire congregation where the new teachings were in error, rather than only making that available to those who asked privately.

The upshot of that is that I don't intend to do it that way again. Now, when I can see error being taught to the people of God, I will try to openly expose those errors. I believe that is what God would expect me to do, rather than to act upon a misguided sense of "loyalty" to those over me. Yes, I make my own mistakes as well. And yes, I have at times written things that I later came to see were wrong. And yes, on occasions I have posted my apologies for such mistakes. And yes, I will probably be wrong again at various times in the future, and I may again have to post some apologies?

But when I see things being taught that I understand are wrong, then I have no choice but to make those errors known. To now "hold my peace" would just create another "conscience problem" for me.

Now there is really no one else that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong could blame for the wrong way of counting Pentecost; it was his own fault. And for 34 years (from 1940 till 1974) he vigorously defended his wrong

way of counting. When Ernest Martin finally pointed his error in counting out to him, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong reluctantly and under great pressure eventually changed from a Monday observance to a Sunday observance. From 1927 until 1974 his understanding about how to count for Pentecost had always been wrong. And he disliked intensely having had Ernest Martin point his error out to him; and for the next few years, whenever he spoke about "counting for Pentecost", this intense dislike came through loud and clear.

THAT WAS VERY SAD!

You see, God had chosen NOT to inspire Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself to see the error in his way of counting. The reason is that his mind simply wasn't open to the possibility that his way of counting could POSSIBLY be wrong. And so God instead allowed some other man to see this error, and then to present it to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. And THAT Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong disliked intensely. He simply refused to believe the man (i.e. Ernest Martin) who had presented ALL THE EVIDENCE TO HIM. He accused Ernest Martin of having a wrong attitude in this process. The problem wasn't Ernest Martin's attitude at that time; the problem was that Mr. Armstrong hated to admit that he had been wrong in his way of counting all these years. And so he instead looked to some of the Jewish people he had come to know in Jerusalem for an explanation. These learned Jewish people provided him with the correct answer, but all it did is confirm what Ernest Martin had been trying to tell him all along, that HIS way of counting was the problem! He then accepted reluctantly that he had been wrong, all the while blaming the translators for having used the expression "count FROM ...", because these Jewish people told him the correct way to count. But he NEVER accepted that Ernest Martin had been right, and he never gave Ernest Martin any credit for having brought his wrong understanding to his attention.

That was very sad. For me it took something away from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's stature.

How does this apply to you, John? The evidence against the present Jewish calendar only keeps on mounting. With every passing day there is more evidence that exposes the problems with the present Jewish calendar. And the more evidence against the present Jewish calendar comes to light, the more restricted become the defences of those who support the present Jewish calendar.

The less informed the people who defend the Jewish calendar are, the more likely they are to present some real evidence that actually indicts the Jewish calendar. Thus Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong back in 1940 naively appealed to the World Almanac for real new moon times to support the present Jewish calendar. He really didn't have the faintest idea that REAL new moon times expose the errors in the Jewish calendar. The very fact that in that 1940 study into the calendar he came up with A WRONG WAY OF COUNTING PENTECOST proves beyond any doubts that God was not guiding that 1940 calendar study. The fact that Kenneth Herrmann in 1953 and in 1957 naively presented all the biblical requirements for a correct calendar, something he refused to do in 1969, shows that back then he too didn't really understand the problems with the Jewish calendar; he too naively thought it actually establishes the time of first visibility. The fact that Dr. Hoeh in his 1981 article was still willing to state that Exodus 34:22 imposes a clear restriction upon the calendar shows that he at that time didn't really understand what the Hebrew word "tekufah" really means. This word "tekufah" means TWO things: it refers specifically to one of FOUR "TURNING DAYS" in the year (i.e. two equinoxes and two solstices), and then it also means THE FOUR SEASONS which each start on one of those four days. In Exodus 34:22 it is not referring to one of those four days; in Exodus 34:22 "tekufah" is referring to THE SEASON of autumn, the season that STARTS on the day of the equinox.

You, John, have learned from their mistakes. You still believe the same things they believed, but you now understand that you simply CANNOT defend the Jewish calendar the way THEY tried to defend it.

You understand that the Jewish calendar today doesn't care about whether the year starts in the spring

or not. You understand that the Jewish calendar doesn't care about whether Tabernacles starts in the summer or in the autumn. You understand that the postponement rules didn't exist at the time of Christ and the early apostles. You understand that the Jewish calendar is totally unconcerned with first visibility. You understand that the start of the first month and of the seventh month is not necessarily tied to the new moons at all. You understand that a discussion of any of these things will only expose the problems with the Jewish calendar, that such a discussion could NEVER help the cause of those who wish to defend the Jewish calendar.

Therefore you have been wiser than all those before you who attempted to defend the Jewish calendar. You have REFUSED POINT BLANK to even examine any of these things, even if they ARE mentioned in the Bible.

Instead you have chosen to focus on the one thing you believe cannot be refuted, the oracles of God of Romans 3:1-2. That Scripture is the last bastion, the Masada of those who try to defend the present Jewish calendar. But Masada DID fall in the end, didn't it?

But one thing you didn't know! You didn't know that "the letter GOD made you save" provided the missing link in an otherwise carefully concealed cover-up about THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FAULTS with the present Jewish calendar. And so you too naively presented this evidence, which so forcefully condemns the very thing you are fighting to preserve, the Jewish calendar. The differences between Kenneth Herrmann's approach in his 1953 and 1957 articles on the one hand, and his 1969 letter on the other hand, are transparent! It becomes so obvious that in 1969 he desperately wants to hide the very things he had explained with great clarity many years before.

It is no coincidence that the 30% per annum growth stopped in 1969. It is, as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong explained so often, a simple matter of cause and effect.

You, John, have not really openly considered that from that time onwards Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wasn't really "blessed"; from then onwards he always had to struggle.

David was a man after God's own heart. Yet David, because he made some wrong decisions, faced ENDLESS TROUBLES from a certain point in his life onwards. As God told David through the prophet Nathan:

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I WILL RAISE UP EVIL AGAINST THEE out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. (2 Samuel 12:10-12 AV)

This was a harsh penalty, one that lasted for the rest of David's life. But it didn't mean that God stopped working with David. And the very fact that GOD chose to include this in His Word means that GOD wants us to take note of it.

Now I have never been a "Mr. Armstrong-basher". I have never tried to seek out Mr. Armstrong's faults or weaknesses; I have enough beams in my own eyes to work on. But neither am I a Pollyanna who sees nothing but good, even in the worst of curses. I try to be realistic about life.

An objective assessment, I believe, shows that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong went through trials that were very similar to the penalty from God that Nathan pronounced to David. For Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong "evil also rose up against him" out of his own house. And while "the sword" never departed from David after that specific event, even so rebellions and trials, and even persecution from the State of California,

never departed from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong from the early 70's onwards. Nor were Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's efforts from then onwards really "blessed". Very few of the large number of people that actually came as far as Church attendance ever really repented, and Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself actually KNEW this!

You talk about his work "having been blessed". You know the Scripture that says:

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15 AV)

How much of what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong achieved has ALREADY "been burned"? How much of what he achieved "still remains" today, a mere 14 years after his death? We, who remain in God's Church today, are a part of that work; but for every one of us still here today, how many have already "been burned", i.e. totally disappeared from the scene? How FEW are the people who still today understand and practice the things the Church under Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong taught and disseminated, when you think of the HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of magazines and booklets and articles that were sent out by the Church, and the HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of people who at one time or another listened to a broadcast or watched a telecast with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong expounding the Bible?

When viewed from today, 14 years after his death, how "blessed" was Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's work really? I don't believe the answer to this question is as clear-cut as you want to make it out to be.

I have no interest at all in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's "sins or problems", and I don't read that type of junk when it is sent to me. But I do have an interest in the things that pertain to the calendar. And the letter in your possession has exposed the missing link in this whole issue. That letter makes the whole picture a whole lot clearer.

I also have no desire to come down hard on Kenneth Herrmann. Back in the 60's he was as indoctrinated with the idea that the Jewish calendar is "sacred" and that's all there's to it, as were all the rest of us (perhaps some few of you reading this already knew better even then?). So he defended what he believed was "God's calendar". I don't doubt that he was subject to whatever Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong may have decided on the calendar as well as on all other issues. But he DID resort to trying to confuse matters that were actually quite clear to him. And THAT type of conduct always exposes an ulterior motive.

I had intended to conclude with a perhaps 40-point or 50-point summary of what has been covered in this article. But now thinking about it, that may be nothing more than "overkill". I do think that the major weaknesses in your sermons have been addressed.

A final thought:

You can't keep God's people together by retaining the present Jewish calendar. It will only produce more divisions and more scattering. Jesus Christ said that THE TRUTH is what makes us free. If you have the courage to ACCEPT THE TRUTH, then you have the greatest chance of keeping God's people from scattering further. God's people are always attracted by the truth. And making some CORRECT AND WISE changes to the Jewish calendar will attract many of God's people and could therefore become a rallying point in this time of dispersion.

Please reconsider the stand you have taken on the calendar question.

