
THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF
DAVID C. PACK

VOLUME ONE

This book was prepared by staff of
The Restored Church of God including contributing writers,
researchers, editors and graphic artists.

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David C. Pack has held a variety of leadership roles throughout his dynamic, event-filled life: author of more than 20 books, scores of booklets and a vast array of articles—Pastor General of The Restored Church of God—voice of *The World to Come* program—founder of Ambassador Center—and publisher/editor-in-chief of three magazines. *The Authorized Biography of David C. Pack* tells the life story of a man who was carefully prepared by God for a unique position.

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Foreword

I have often thought that my entire life has been one most privileged. Of course, living in a modern Western nation is enough in itself to make this true. Just the list of extraordinary *physical* blessings enjoyed is nearly without end. I had wonderful parents, an unusually productive first marriage of over 36 years, with God blessing us with three children—and many grandchildren. There has now been the very happy, and quite unexpected, blessing of a second wife, also completely committed to God's Way. I have traveled the world, and met many remarkable people along the way.

Obviously, the greatest blessing in my life has been God's calling into His Church, Work and truth now well over 40 years ago. Nothing could compare to the gift of learning and understanding the marvelous doctrines of God. My calling almost immediately involved a decision that altered the course of my life more than any other: the opportunity to attend Ambassador College. This in turn led to being placed into the ministry of Jesus Christ now approaching 40 years ago. Such a life-altering additional calling meant a host of diverse assignments, always in interesting cities and regions of the country, and working with and

assisting many thousands of people, including leaders, in a ministerial setting.

These became the foundation for many of the events experienced and lessons learned related throughout these volumes.

Since an unusually wide range of experiences has enriched my life, a certain problem was created for the writers: which stories and encounters should be included in the biography. Of course, there were certain ones that had to be incorporated because of their transcending influence or impact on my life. The biography would fail in purpose if it did not contain them, coupled with an explanation of why they were important. This alone meant a lot of material needed to be included.

There was also a desire to relate stories that are of lesser importance, but that have had a role in shaping me nonetheless. It is not the biography's purpose to make every one of these seem overly important or to present them as in every case having brought dramatic transformations in my thinking. Of course, some did. Both I and the many writers who participated struggled with how many, and which, stories to include, as well as when to cut off stories with the overall length of the biography in mind!

It was not the goal to bring in every story in my life, or every experience I have had. But, we believe that every one chosen adds to the overall picture of what shaped me, and it is my hope that the reader benefits and is left motivated, better informed and even inspired for having read them.

When the overall picture is seen, it becomes evident that God had His hand on me as a young man, and, as with Herbert W. Armstrong, there were times His guidance was very clear in my life. This was most obvious when looking *back*, rather than *around* from the middle of an ongoing experience or trial. Taken together, the stories and accounts chosen either carried significant lessons or in some fashion helped define me.

As a young boy, my mother characterized me as “a child with great capacity for enjoyment.” This personality trait probably most summarizes my approach to everything and still describes me today. I have always seen life in brilliant colors. This had an automatic effect on how wonderfully blessed I have felt myself to be during the over six decades of my life. To this day, those closest to me marvel at the enthusiasm with which I seem to embrace almost everything before me.

This introduces and explains the many *other* accounts that are best described as human-interest stories. These demonstrate a lifelong desire to explore and take on all kinds of new adventures—to experience as broadly as humanly possible at all phases of my life.

It is recognized that other people have lived in parallel some of the “recent history of the Church” events described throughout these volumes. Of course, they will have seen these moments from *their own* perspective and come to their own conclusions. This biography details events from *my* perspective, things that were experienced (or endured) from *my* vantage point—and of course from that of the contributing writers. It is not this book’s purpose to create a comprehensive historical record or to simply recap events chronologically in the Worldwide Church of God and various breakaway groups in order to establish a clinical, historical record of everything that should be known about the apostasy. Such a book would require multiple volumes and more closely resemble an encyclopedia! (Ten books totaling over 2,100 pages have been written about all crucial aspects of that prophesied time.)

Over the years, much, in fact most, of what has been written and spoken about me is either completely false or badly distorted. Through the Internet, these stories have proliferated and multiplied. That much of this information has been negative comes as no surprise. It is human nature to pass along gossip, true or false. But it is human nature to

suppose that most of the stories are true, if only because this is easy. I had to eventually accept that this may be partly because there is no factual alternative to which to turn. I also had to recognize that some in the splinters of the Worldwide Church of God could miss out on participation in the true Work and Church of God if we did not do this.

We had a duty.

Therefore, one of the primary goals of these volumes has been to cut through all of the confusion and falsehoods, and offer the *true* story of my life, and from time to time in my own words. At a minimum, I hope what you read accomplishes this much. At times, in some areas often, the Biography contains many of my impressions, recollections and descriptions, set apart in my voice. At least in this sense, part of the story is *autobiographical*.

To some who might think this biography will portray events of my life as a collection of negative experiences due entirely or largely to injustice, this will be seen not to be the case. Although it is natural that anyone looking back on the events of their life would consider times of adversity, trial and persecution to be the periods that most shaped them, these experiences also provided the best opportunities to learn and grow. I am no exception. So it is these events, more than the “good times,” that have brought me to where I am today. The hope is that the biography makes this clear.

The writers tried as hard as humanly possible to make these experiences helpful and uplifting where they could. However, hopefully, the tone will be understood to reflect what the apostasy showed the spiritual condition of the Church to have been for a long time prior.

My entire life has been a series of tests of faith. There have been numerous health trials, and more than the average person. There have been almost nonstop slander and persecution, coupled with demotion and unexpected transfers. Then there has been the challenge of having been drafted into the

military after God had called me, the trials *and blessings* of paying third tithe, in addition to tests in the workplace for one year associated with taking time off to observe God's Holy Days. And there are the many—and often severe—financial trials that God always saw me through. I also worked directly under several ministers who did not have God's Holy Spirit, and almost seemed to set out to prove it—their later decisions before or during the apostasy plainly evidenced this. There was of course also the long, protracted illness in 2006 and 2007, culminating in death, of my first wife.

This book is not an autobiography, but rather an authorized biography. Many people participated. A team of writers and researchers on staff worked a great many long hours. They sought to use descriptive language to make the book as interesting as possible. But, above all, these volumes had to be truthful. The writers were charged with bringing complete honesty. Of course, there was always the challenge of battling with the frailty of human memory—in some cases, mine!—but contributing writers and I strove as much as humanly possible to be completely accurate. I was regularly consulted for the facts and for how to maintain the overall purpose and vision of the project.

Some will say the stories and relationships described are embellished and/or exaggerated. They are not. They come from real events. They happened! (In fact, many punches had to be pulled just to keep certain names out.) The accounts of those I met and associated with involved real people inside and outside the Church.

There is no intent to bash people or include names. It does not matter if some wish to attack what is written here—it is not the biography's purpose to harm anyone, alive or deceased. This carries no value. While very special care was taken to avoid this, it was not possible to retain the true story and picture of certain matters if *all* names were to be dropped from *all* accounts. It is simply impossible to tell the story of a minister who was for decades in the WCG and journeyed

through an apostasy without including certain names, dates, places, specific events and specific circumstances that took place. This was not always easy to balance. Because of this, some names have been left out, and others were left in. Sometimes titles of men are used. Other times their role is used in order to make the text plain—the meaning of the story clear—while at the same time writing it in a way that excludes names. Some of the ministers involved are in the splinters today and are causing terrible damage with their teachings, and sometimes conduct. It can be in some instances valuable to know what went on with them.

Because of their high profile in both the Church and my life, the names of Herbert W. Armstrong's successor and of the leader of the organization I entered after the Worldwide Church of God cannot be avoided. There are a few other names.

In any case, value judgments had to be made each time. The intent was to outline what shaped me, not others—to cover the areas where I, not others, made mistakes and had to change—to show lessons that I, not others, had to learn. Sometimes this did mean, however, a description of an error must be graphic.

Finally, the biography has been written so that it speaks to as many as six separate audiences. First would be members of The Restored Church of God. Second are those who were once in the Worldwide Church of God. These may be in or out of the splinters today, but are trying to find where God's Church, Work, Truth and Government continue.

The third group consists of those God is calling now who may have the same interest in my background as I and so many others did in Mr. Armstrong's preparation and training. Fourth would be the public press. These should at least have an opportunity to read an alternative to what God's enemies state about His Church and its leaders.

Fifth would be young people in the Church who might benefit in the same way that Mr. Armstrong felt his early life

experiences benefited young people of decades ago. Many will recall he excerpted into a small booklet his “Early Years” solely for this purpose.

Sixth are all true ministers of God today. The experiences recorded here become a guide of helpful counseling tools, organizational tips, methods used and painful lessons learned involving mistakes to be avoided that hopefully can be useful for the remainder of these last days. We live in a complicated age, and any additional assistance and voice of experience that can be offered can only help.

Every year or two another chapter could be added to Volume Two to reflect additional important events. Mr. Armstrong stopped writing his autobiography in 1963, with it having only covered up to the year 1959 when he was still just 67 years old. This was largely because he eventually did not have enough regularly scheduled time to continue the narrative to completion. This meant the Worldwide Church of God membership missed his telling of the last almost 27 years of his life—or about one-half of his entire ministry and conversion—surely what was the most important, productive and eventful period of his work. These years had to be described after Mr. Armstrong’s death solely through the compiling by another writer from among his hundreds of Brethren/Co-worker letters written during that period.

My story is different, since it is one that others are putting to paper. If it is deemed that there is worthy material, it is possible to extend Volume Two once or twice.

I believe that what the reader will encounter captures the extraordinary life I have lived, and it offers an opportunity for others to learn from my experiences. I certainly did.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David C. Pack". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

David C. Pack

Why This Biography?

Year after year, millions of Internet users throughout the world visit the websites of The Restored Church of God—*rcg.org* and *realtruth.org*—and are struck by the sheer volume and quality of the written and audio material available. Although the information on the websites answers the question, “What is The Restored Church of God,” many inquiries also arrive asking, “Who is David C. Pack, its Pastor General?”

Before Mr. Pack’s ministry began, the twentieth century saw a remarkable leader, visionary, and servant of God, Herbert W. Armstrong. As the Pastor General of The Worldwide Church of God, he took Christ’s gospel—the message of the coming kingdom of God—to millions around the world through *The Plain Truth* magazine and *The World Tomorrow* radio and television broadcast. Tens of millions recognized Mr. Armstrong’s name, and this included more than one-third of the world’s heads of state with whom he had a personal audience, in some cases many times. At its zenith, The Worldwide Church of God maintained regional offices on six continents, administered three colleges, involved a dozen international corporations and hosted an an-

nual international conference, with an attendance of over 150,000.

To answer questions about the background of the man behind this well-known ministry, and the Radio Church of God, Mr. Armstrong wrote an extensive autobiography that carefully chronicled his life. It included stories from his childhood and detailed his family and career before God called him. Also included were a behind-the-scenes look at his ministry and his life as leader of the end-time Work that God was doing through him.

After Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986, everything he had worked for and been used by God to build, spanning most of a lifetime, was systematically—and rapidly—dismantled and destroyed. This included throwing out every one of God's doctrines and standards, closing what became decadent, degenerate Ambassador Colleges, most of the corporations and regional offices, selling off properties, and trying to completely erase an immense international Work and all that the Church had once stood for.

David C. Pack was personally trained by Mr. Armstrong during the last 15 years of his life. (This was in addition to four years of Ambassador College.) In part because of this unusual training, Mr. Pack was in a position that God could use him to restore everything that had been lost. Today his ministry is a continuation of the same Work.

Currently, Mr. Pack's extraordinary worldwide ministry includes his role as the voice of *The World to Come*[™] broadcast and of hundreds of sermons given in The Restored Church of God, which are posted online. This biography reveals the life of the Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of *The Real Truth*[™], *The Pillar* and *Ambassador Youth* magazines, and the author of many books, booklets and articles also published free of charge on The Restored Church of God's websites.

The idea of a biography of Mr. Pack's life first arose in late 2003 or early 2004. It took Mr. Pack a long time—about

two and a half years—to come to grips with the fact that the book *needed* to be written.

Similarly, it took a long time for Mr. Armstrong to permit his picture to be taken and his photograph to be released to the public. He thought it created a wrong focus, one toward himself rather than God’s truth and Church. Finally, a man wrote him and said something to the effect of “Mr. Armstrong, we have a right to know what you look like—we have a right to see a picture of the man who represents God. What are you trying to hide?” He could not disagree. More than anything else, that single letter convinced Mr. Armstrong to admit the truth, and he and his wife had the now well-known formal portrait taken in 1966 or 1967.

Mr. Pack also did not want a focus on himself. Over time, his thinking grudgingly evolved to the understanding that he should at least permit the presentation of a short story. The Foreword explained the duty we—and he—came to understand. After Mr. Pack finally agreed to have the biography written, he realized it would need to be done correctly.

The actual project of writing Mr. Pack’s biography began in the summer of 2006, and soon after it became clear that any “short story” version was neither realistic nor even possible. He had lived too long a life of rich experiences. The recounting grew first from a short story to one volume, until it was discovered that even this was not large enough. The writers came to understand *why* Mr. Armstrong’s book was over 1,000 pages just to the point of 1959, and almost 1,300 pages (plus over 100 more counting pictures) after it was expanded upon his death.

Similar to the reasons for Mr. Armstrong’s autobiography, these volumes introduce the man behind The Restored Church of God. It documents the events that shaped and molded his life—the people he has met and been influenced by, the events he has experienced, the childhood environment in which he was reared, and his unique training.

Until now, people have been familiar with Mr. Pack's life only in isolated snippets, scattered throughout the hundreds of sermons and thousands of pages of literature he has produced. This biography is a compilation of these accounts and draws upon hundreds of additional hours of interviews from a variety of sources, naturally including Mr. Pack, but also numerous members of his family. (These include his children, son-in-law, brother, uncle, and deceased wife, as well as second wife.) But there were several others.

The reader will see that these accounts demonstrate that faith is not merely a "warm, fuzzy feeling" or a vague religious notion, as so many millions of professing Christians believe. Rather, true faith is *LIVING*—it involves works, actions, deeds and conduct. Those who put God first—who "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7), and many times in the face of the sorest of trials, the kind involving severe persecution and injustice—*will* be delivered. The God of the Bible *always* provides for the needs of those who *OBEY* Him, as the examples in these books will make plain.

Many fail to comprehend that God works through flesh. While all people are imperfect and all people make mistakes, it is vital to recognize that God has always chosen to work through human beings—flawed "clay pots." But when a man determines to yield himself to Christ—when he dedicates his life to following the will of God *no matter what*—God can use that man to accomplish the impossible (Matt. 19:26; Phil. 4:13).

As you read this biography, you will see that God tries, tests and proves His servants time and time again—over and over and over—and He has to do this, not only because trials both reveal character and build it, but He must know and understand the heart and mind of the human instrument through whom He is working.

How much more and greater become these trials and tests if the man at their center has been chosen for extraordinary and difficult responsibility?

Similar lessons are reflected time and again in Herbert W. Armstrong's autobiography, just as they are in *The Authorized Biography of David C. Pack*. Yet this book is different from Mr. Armstrong's autobiography due to the many differences between the life of Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Pack. First, recognize that Mr. Armstrong wrote his own life story. Obviously, it carries his voice in first-person throughout. Mr. Pack largely participated in what others wrote. This makes the two stories different in style and manner of writing.

Then, God called Mr. Armstrong when he was already 34 years old and married for 10 years with two children. He first opened Mr. Pack's eyes to the truth when he was half as old—a teenager of just 17. Then, Mr. Armstrong had very little time to prepare for the role of leading the Church, while Mr. Pack was blessed with many years of comprehensive—and intensive!—preparation before coming to the same position.

There is also the length of the Work that God required of these men. The twentieth-century Work carried out through Mr. Armstrong lasted 52 years. God's final Work will be much shorter due to the time left in the age—although it may grow to similar or even greater size because of what is at stake today for a world of now much greater population. A related difference is that Mr. Armstrong was given much more time to learn on the job—as the established leader of the Church—*before* the Work grew to immense worldwide proportion, while Mr. Pack had much less time because so many were spilling out of the apostasy and its splinters looking for the right place to be.

Even the photographs from each man's childhood and early years into adulthood are very different in style. Mr. Armstrong came from a more formal time, when people seemed to dress for a photographic portrait every day. This is in contrast to a man who was born over 56 years later into a much less formal post-Depression and World War II

culture. Pictures generally appear more spontaneous and casual.

Finally, Mr. Armstrong was Mr. Pack's teacher, not the other way around. Mr. Pack *attended* Ambassador College, while Mr. Armstrong *started* and *led* it.

However, there are similarities seen throughout the two men's biographies, with the most notable being that both men led lives of submission to God's will, coupled with a unique determination not to compromise any of His truth, no matter how seemingly "small" or "minor" the point.

It is the writers' hope that what is written provides an inside look and gives deeper meaning to what shaped the man who leads The Restored Church of God and God's final Work in this age.

Penelope Van Princes

Personal experiences, environment, exposure to good teachers, and the influence and examples of countless numbers of other people shape the lives of every human being. The story of one person's life is often best covered after an introduction to the people who shaped him or her, and can begin with that of just one other, born sometimes generations before.

A Voyage Across the Atlantic

In 1622, Penelope Thomson was born in Amsterdam, Holland. Her mother was Dutch and her father was an English minister who fled from Britain to escape religious persecution. Penelope eventually grew up and married a fellow Dutchman, Kent Van Princes.

Shortly after exchanging marriage vows, 18-year-old Penelope and her husband joined other Dutch emigrants and boarded a ship in 1640 bound for the New World—America. Their destination was New Amsterdam, a thriving Dutch settlement at the lower tip of Manhattan Island that later became part of New York City.

During the two-month voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, Kent became deathly ill, suffering from a high fever and delirium. Though he survived the grueling journey, the vessel ran aground on a rocky shoal near Sandy Hook, a peninsula jutting into the ocean approximately 40 miles south of Manhattan in present day New Jersey. Most of the travelers survived the wreck, but were forced to abandon ship. Passengers and crew members aided Penelope and her husband safely to shore.

Shipwrecked on an exposed and desolate sandbar, the settlers feared for their lives. They were well aware of the fighting between the European colonists and the Delaware Indians that inhabited the area. Quickly gathering any available provisions from the wreckage, they decided to head for New Amsterdam and seek protection at its fort. However, the travelers knew that carrying the sick would slow them down greatly, and, fearing that bringing along the now-unconscious man would risk all their lives, they made the difficult decision to leave him behind. Before departing, they hid the helpless man and his spouse, who refused to leave his side, in the nearby woods. They tried to make them as comfortable as possible, promising to send help as soon as they reached the New Amsterdam fort.

Abandoned and with her husband near death, Penelope's worst fears were realized when Indian warriors discovered the couple the next morning.

Although historical accounts slightly differ, the Indians—due to their markings, clothing, feathers and general appearance—were most likely not of the Delaware tribe, but rather part of a traveling Mohawk war party. The heavily armed savages attacked the helpless pair and stripped them. Kent was killed instantly by a tomahawk blow to the head. The warriors slashed Penelope across her abdomen so deeply that her intestines were exposed. Then they left the young woman for dead—her skull partially scalped and fractured, and her shoulder and arm badly mutilated.

Mustering just enough strength to crawl into a nearby log to hide from possible future attacks, Penelope awaited what would be certain death. Fearful, grief-stricken and in agonizing pain, she hid for several days, able to survive by eating moss, tree sap and parts of the decaying log, all while holding together the gaping abdominal wound with her hand.

As her husband lay dead nearby, Penelope clung to life in the hollow tree. The hours passed as she sorrowfully contemplated the journey to the New World. Thoughts that were once filled with hope now brought tears of despair. Famished, weak and near death, it seemed as though her demise was inevitable.

On the eighth day after the attack, however, she spotted a deer passing nearby with arrows buried in its hide. Indians! Penelope found herself now hoping they would find her. If they did not help, she reasoned, they would at least end her misery.

Almost immediately after seeing the deer, a hunting dog sniffed her hiding spot, and two hunters found her. As the younger of the men moved toward the defenseless woman—his weapon ready to strike—the older Indian intervened and saved her life. He wrapped Penelope in deerskin and hoisted her over his shoulder. The pain was so intense, she fainted.

Bond Formed

Regaining consciousness, the young woman awoke to the sounds of children playing in a strange place—a wigwam—without any knowledge of how long she had been there. She soon discovered that the pain had lessened, mudpacks now covered wounds, and gashes were stitched together by fish-bone needle and vegetable fiber. Someone had cared for her, but who? The last person she had seen was a warrior.

She learned the man who rescued and nursed her back to health was Chief Tisquantum of the Lenni Lenape tribe and the Algonquian language. Along with his native tongue, he

spoke some English and the two were able to communicate. Penelope spent many weeks under the chief's care gradually regaining her strength. During this period, Tisquantum learned more of the English language from her, and slowly a strong bond of friendship grew.

After a full recovery, Penelope and Chief Tisquantum made the journey to New Amsterdam, where her unbelievable tale of survival shocked fellow passengers from Holland. They were stunned to learn she was alive.

A few years after settling in the New World city, Penelope married Richard Stout in 1644. Born in Nottinghamshire, England, in 1604, Richard settled in the Dutch colony after his seven-year enlistment expired in the British Royal Navy.

The Stouts eventually moved to Gravesend, Long Island, later known as Brooklyn, New York. Some years later, the couple helped establish a small colony in southern New Jersey near the location of the shipwreck years before.

Over the years, as Richard and Penelope raised their seven sons and three daughters, Penelope never forgot Chief Tisquantum's kindness.

In fact, their strong bond again saved Penelope's life—and the lives of her family in 1664. After hearing of an impending attack on the family's small settlement by a rival Indian tribe, Tisquantum quickly alerted her to the danger. The settlers took action, with the men gathering the women and children, including Penelope, into canoes. They ordered them to paddle offshore and hide in the dark waters overnight. Richard organized the men of the town, with rifles ready, to spring a trap on the attackers.

As expected, the Indian warriors struck. But to everyone's surprise, Richard Stout bravely walked up to them and, without a single shot fired, negotiated with them. His efforts resulted in a peaceful treaty that lasted for decades. That same treaty with the Delaware Indians prompted the original Monmouth Land Patent, a community founded for religious freedom. Richard was one of the original 12 landholders.

Without Tisquantum's warning, the Stout family would likely have been killed. They remained lifelong friends until his death many years later.

Many Descendants

More than 90 years after the savage attack and her rescue, Penelope died—at the age of 110! Astonishingly, at the time of her death in 1732, she had more than 502 direct living descendants.

Penelope and Richard Stout's eldest daughter, Mary, married Captain James Bowne (also known as Bound). Their son John married Lydia Holmes. Their daughter Sarah married Richard Salter, who had a daughter named Hannah. Hannah Salter married Mordecai Lincoln, who had a son named John. John Lincoln married Rebecca Flowers, who had a son Abraham. Abraham Lincoln married Bersheba Herring, who had a son Thomas. Thomas Lincoln married Nancy Hanks, and on February 12, 1809, in Hodgenville, Kentucky, the couple had a son whom they named Abraham—the man who became the 16th President of the United States.

Penelope and Richard Stout's third child, James, grew up to marry Elizabeth Truax. Their son James Stout II, born in 1700, married Johanna Johnson. Thomas, the couple's firstborn son, and Jannetje Vroom Van Stee, his second wife, had a son, whom they named Richard. This Richard Stout married Elizabeth Van Nest and their daughter, Jane, born in 1826, married George Cowl.

This couple's fourth child, Frank S. Cowl, married Emma Matilda "Tillie" Smith in 1882. Frank and Emma's oldest son, Ralph, married Marie Hitchens, and the only daughter of this couple, Jane Cowl, married Randall (always known as Ran or Buddy) Edwards Pack in 1944. Randall and Jane Pack's first son, and second child, was born December 7, 1948 in Kenton, Ohio.

His name was David Cowl Pack.

Additional Genealogical Discoveries

One of Mr. Pack's first cousins discovered there were a variety of remarkable and influential people in the family line that in some cases go back hundreds and even thousands of years.

Herbert W. Armstrong was excited to learn at a point that he was a direct descendant of the ancient King David of the Bible. David, who died in approximately 962 BC in Jerusalem, was the renowned king of the 12 tribes of Israel. Mr. Armstrong shared this knowledge with the membership of The Worldwide Church of God, who found it fascinating.

Mr. Pack learned that he was also a direct descendant of King David, and that this could be traced through two separate branches of the Davidic line, one through Mary, Jesus' mother. This was made plain through the well-known genealogy of Queen Elizabeth II, coupled with other historical sources.

This link was made clear when genealogical research revealed that Mr. Pack is a direct descendant of the royal line of Wessex kings. Wessex was an Anglo-Saxon kingdom in England from the sixth century to the 10th century. For instance, Cerdric King of Wessex, who founded Wessex and died in AD 534, is Mr. Pack's 47th great-grandfather. Other examples include Cynric King of Wessex—Ceawlin King of Wessex—Ceowald Prince of Wessex, and a great many more.

After this information was found, Mr. Pack's cousin also learned that they are related to certain kings of Scotland. For instance, Eochaid IV King of Scotland (lived AD 747-819) is Mr. Pack's 37th Great-Grandfather. He is also related to Kenneth I MacAlpin, the Conqueror of Scotland (reigned AD 843-858) and King Kenneth II of Scotland (reigned AD 971-995).

This royal line also included some of the kings of England, such as Henry II, Mr. Pack's 24th Great-

Grandfather. Henry II became king in 1154 and occupied the throne until his death in 1189.

Early historian and politician, Sir Winston Churchill (1620-1688), ancestor of the famous 20th-century British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, wrote that Henry II was "...the very greatest king that England ever knew..." (*Divi Britannici*, 1675). Historians record that he had tremendous energy, an incredible memory, a love of history and is seen by many as one of the most effective English monarchs. He is also credited for founding English Common Law due to his care for and attention to justice, which was virtually unknown during his predecessor's reign. Mr. Pack can also trace his roots to William I (1028 to 1087) and Henry I King of England (reigned 1069-1135).

Tying into Elizabeth II's genealogy by itself means one can trace his or her roots directly to Adam and Eve. The reader may enjoy perusing Elizabeth II's royal genealogy, posted on the Internet on various websites.

Tracing the line much further back, it also came to light that Herod the Great, king of Judea (lived 73-4 BC) is Mr. Pack's 63rd great-grandfather (and Henry II's 37th great-grandfather). Considered the wealthiest man in the world in his day, Herod married into the lines of the Caesars. Within the Roman Empire, Emperor Marcus Aurelius (lived AD 121-180) is Mr. Pack's 56th great-grandfather. Commodus, Marcus Aurelius' son, becomes his 55th great-grandfather. Many other Roman emperors after Commodus are in a direct line to Mr. Pack's family as well. The same is true of Mr. Pack's 38th great-grandfather, Charles Martel (AD 688-741), a Frankish military and political leader who "reunited and ruled the entire Frankish realm and stemmed the Muslim invasion at Poitiers in 732" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

Much more could be included here. However, this genealogical information serves as background in understanding the life of David C. Pack.

Every Family Has a Story

David Pack was blessed to be born into a remarkable and diverse family of corporate leaders, military officers, literary authors, winning salesmen and successful entrepreneurs, as well as others who brought an unusual sense of cultural training and refinement. Most important, it was an extended family whose men and women exhibited special strength of character and vision, often in the midst of severe trials, which would prove to be a continuing theme even to the present day.

David's father served as a U.S. Army officer and pilot at the European front in the Second World War. Having survived three aircraft crashes and heavy rounds of enemy fire, he returned to civilian life after the war and started several successful businesses, and this included an award-winning 19-year career in sales.

"Uncle Bill," Dave's paternal uncle, who fought as a Navy pilot in World War II, was a captain in the U.S. Navy (equivalent to a full colonel in the army). He was at Pearl Harbor during the infamous December 7, 1941 attack, and in his career he went on to command several major naval air bases across the United States. It was in New Brunswick, Maine,

that he had the opportunity to host President John F. Kennedy on several occasions, and it is thought also President Dwight Eisenhower. Later in life, the retired naval captain went on to serve as the President of the American Golf Foundation for about two years, before returning to Jacksonville, Florida.

The two veteran pilots fascinated the little boy as he sat listening intently to war stories—his father crashed and was forced down in Western Europe, and his uncle was reported to have lost or damaged as many as seven aircraft in the Pacific theater. The boy envisioned planes spiraling toward the earth with a trail of thick, black smoke, as the men periodically reminisced about how many of their own United States aircraft they had *personally* destroyed.

Young Dave's Uncle Frank (his mother's younger brother) served in the Second World War as a high-speed radio operator. After the war, he directed the sales and marketing operations of the prestigious Encyclopaedia Britannica Corporation for more than 20 years. He also was the President of World Book Encyclopedia for three years. He has accumulated what is "unofficially" perhaps the largest or one of the largest privately owned libraries in existence today on the Civil War, as well as on President Lincoln and General George Armstrong Custer.

The diversity of relatives, with such varied backgrounds of experience that influenced him, afforded a young boy an interesting childhood, to say the least.

Yet perhaps the relative whose life exhibited the greatest vision, resourcefulness and natural business savvy was Ralph S. Cowl, maternal grandfather.

An Entrepreneur in the Making

Ralph Cowl was born May 12, 1890, in East Liverpool, Ohio, a city along the Ohio River where Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia intersect. At the time, the city was known for its pottery manufacturing companies.

At the turn of the century, the family moved to Marshalltown, Iowa, so that Ralph's father could continue pursuing his profession in china sales. The town and surrounding rolling countryside offered many adventurous explorations, such as skiing during the snowy months (on skis Ralph made by hand), and learning how to make and fly kites on breezy warm days. These and other activities provided endless fun-filled afternoons for the young boy and his friends during summer and winter breaks from school.

While he received good marks during the school session, Ralph preferred to be elsewhere. (In third grade, in a one-room schoolhouse, it was discovered through careful research that one of his fellow classmates was almost certainly a first-grader named Herbert W. Armstrong.)

At the start of his final year of high school, Ralph's father decided to move the family again, this time to Madison, Wisconsin. This conflicted with Ralph's driving passion—football. In fact, the 16-year-old had just been selected to captain the high school team, a position he was determined to keep.

The teenager was told that if he wanted to remain behind in Iowa and play football, he would be on his own, without assistance from the family. Surprisingly, Ralph decided to stay, and from this decision, a new business and successful career were born.

To support himself for the year (remember, he was but a *young* senior in high school), Ralph established a company that manufactured women's beauty products, one of which he called "Rose Silk Cream." (The name derived from his initials: RSC.) At first, the young boy sold his product door-to-door, but soon expanded into a much larger sales operation, which gave him financial stability throughout his senior year. The new enterprise was so successful that townsfolk referred to him as the "Boy Wonder of Iowa."

Ralph Cowl graduated from high school in 1907, and then joined his family in Wisconsin to work with his father

as a salesman in the china/dinnerware business, before attending the University of Wisconsin.

Rather than joining a fraternity like most incoming freshmen, Ralph started a school newspaper (which still exists today) and served as its editor and business manager. He joined a fraternity by his junior year, continuing his involvement with the campus newspaper and becoming business manager of the college yearbook.

Meantime, he published his own book, *Beautiful Wisconsin*, a photographic collection of 100 pictures taken from across the state. Book sales earned him \$12,000 to 14,000 (approximately \$286,000 today). This from a college student!

Years later, in describing his experiences at the University of Wisconsin, Ralph Crowl declared, “Most people work their way through college, but I got *rich*.”

Ralph was more than just a highly motivated businessman. He was also a prolific playwright, authoring as many as 30–40 completed scripts, some of which were sold and made into plays. All of these are still in the family’s possession.

The young man’s early successes gave him the experience and confidence needed to launch a host of future business ventures.

As well as attaining numerous achievements while at college, Ralph also led an active social life, making a great many friends. Still, the most important event of his life occurred in his final year at the university, when he was introduced to a beautiful young co-ed in his “sister” sorority, Marie Hitchens. She hailed from a well-to-do family in Dubuque, Iowa—her father was co-owner of the successful Hitchens Foundry. Economic prosperity had afforded Marie’s family the opportunity to send their daughter to an eastern finishing school in Irvington, New York, and later the University of Wisconsin, opportunities most young girls in the early 1900s seldom received.

Ralph and Marie became good friends, and their relationship grew, continuing for a lifetime. At her parents' home in Waterloo, Iowa, Ralph and Marie were married December 2, 1915.

Crushed by the Great Depression

After college graduation and his wedding, Ralph Crawl was hired by Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance, where he quickly became the firm's top salesman. During this period he had occasion to write a book on how two salesmen should work together to sell insurance. It became an industry standard.

After a three-year stint at the insurance company, Ralph decided to pursue his interest in construction and development. By the early 1920s, he owned a thriving construction company in Madison, Wisconsin, with another of his ventures (a bonding company) providing financing for many projects as well as his other business. Both companies were responsible for the design, building and financing of fraternity buildings at every one of the "Big Ten" campuses across the American Midwest—the universities of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Chicago (at that time), Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Michigan State, Ohio State and Purdue. By the end of the decade, Ralph had 11 building projects underway, with several others in the planning stages.

But on October 24, 1929, calamity struck. "Black Thursday," better known as the day of the infamous Stock Market Crash, plunged the country into economic turmoil. While this dark day did not instantly usher in the Great Depression (its impact was only fully realized in succeeding years), it did trigger a financial "wake-up call" for Ralph and his business colleagues.

Despite the country's uncertain economic situation, Ralph Crawl forged ahead with optimism, starting five more

fraternity building projects after the crash. Ultimately, however, all the fraternities went bankrupt, defaulting on their construction loans—many of which Ralph’s bonding company held. He was forced to stop all projects and sort out the financial mess.

It was not until two years after the initial market crash that the Crowl family felt the full economic sting of what would be the Great Depression. Ralph could no longer afford their magnificent colonial lakeside home in Madison, Wisconsin. He had to dispose of one of his two cars. He lost 5,000 acres of northern Wisconsin farmland he had purchased through other business ventures in real estate. In addition, Ralph had to borrow money to pay off debts. He lost approximately 2.3 million dollars of that time in investments, property and cash.

With the business and home lost, a new era and life began for the Crowls. Reluctantly, Ralph decided to move his then family of five into an apartment in Indianapolis, Indiana. Feeling he had let his family down, he borrowed \$500 to take his family on a final Wisconsin vacation, a steamboat trip up the Mississippi River. The family spent several days camping along the river, exploring its banks, and watching and waving as ships passed, their paddlewheels churning the expansive waterway.

Years later, Ralph joked that suddenly losing more than \$2 million was such a painful experience, he never wanted to earn that much money again. He determined to limit himself to accumulating “only” \$700,000–800,000 at any one time, for fear of losing it all and having to again rebuild from nothing.

Creative Skillful Salesmanship

Not only did Ralph Crowl’s early financial achievements define him, so did his innovative ability to recover from seemingly overwhelming obstacles. Despite difficult financial

setbacks, he was determined to use experiences and contacts from his fraternity construction days to create a new type of life insurance policy.

Ralph merged two concepts into one: people who wanted life insurance, and alumni who wanted to support the institution from which they graduated. His plan was to sell an \$11,000 life insurance policy—\$10,000 as a death benefit for a person’s family, with an additional \$1,000 university endowment attached for the school or university of that person’s choice.

Ralph proposed this relatively simple yet brilliant idea to American United Life Insurance, which underwrote a special policy for him to sell. He then traveled the Midwest visiting “Big Ten” universities and certain military academies, presenting the policy to large groups of alumni.

Ralph sold millions of dollars worth of life insurance, and was American Life’s top salesman for three consecutive years. In less than two years he was able to move his family into another beautiful home, this time in Lebanon, Indiana, on a golf course, where his three children—Richard, Jane and Frank—spent the majority of their childhood.

Truly an entrepreneur at heart, after only a few years of selling life insurance, Ralph was ready for a more challenging opportunity.

One soon came.

Another Extraordinary Setback

Ralph Crowl’s reputation in Lebanon as a successful businessman led to becoming good friends with brothers Herman and Carl Winkler, chief engineer and president, respectively, of the Winkler Stoker Co., which manufactured the first automatic-feed coal stoker stove.

Unlike heating a house today, which only involves adjusting an electronic thermostat, people in the 1930s heated their homes with coal. The fuel had to be shoveled into a

furnace several times a day—a very messy, dirty task. The Winklers manufactured a newly designed automatic stove that revolutionized the process: It only required loading once a week.

Ralph explained to his friends that they were producing a wonderful, innovative product, but that it suffered from poor sales because they did not know how to market it effectively. It took some time for him to persuade the Winkler brothers, but one day Carl gave in. “Well, Ralph,” he said, “if you think you can sell them so well, go ahead and try.”

With that, Ralph Crowl was hired. His salary was low, but it came with a large, specially designed performance-based bonus he had written into his agreement. In less than three years, Ralph *tripled* sales—and Winkler Stoker (later renamed U.S. Machine Corporation) became the largest stoker stove company in the country—quite a feat, considering stoker stoves were at that time the primary source of heating for homes throughout the United States.

In his final years with Winkler Stoker, Ralph Crowl received a bonus of more than \$250,000 (worth at least \$3 million today). In a complex legal maneuver, he put nearly all of it into real estate options, which included a rustic old mill in Sugar Creek, Indiana. His plan was to rebuild the property, including the mill, into a new state park.

After investing the rest of his money and paying taxes, Ralph had a “disagreement” with the Internal Revenue Service over the taxation of his bonus money. He had paid taxes on it based on the capital gains rate of about five percent (technically, and according to current tax law, correct). However, the IRS did not agree, calling the bonus “income.” In short, Ralph was stuck with a tax bill of more than \$80,000 (over \$900,000 today)—and had only three months in which to pay it!

Ralph Crowl—a man with a proven ability to overcome what would look like insurmountable obstacles to most—was undaunted, summoning his natural entrepreneurial

skills to devise a solution. His son, Frank, remembered the day his father made a statement that became legendary in the family history: The three children played nearby as Ralph sat in the living room working out a plan to pay the tax bill. No longer able to concentrate due to their commotion, he said, “Quiet children! I’m trying to figure out how to make \$80,000 in the next three months!”

Amazingly, he did it. An article he read in a business journal, regarding the abundance of Holstein calves in Wisconsin, inspired him. Farmers often sold their extra stock to produce veal for as little as \$20 per calf. At the time, all calves, especially premium Wisconsin calves from the “dairy state,” were in great demand in the lower Midwest, particularly Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, where farmers paid \$50 or more per head of cattle.

Recognizing this as a lucrative business opportunity, Ralph bought hundreds of calves at a time for \$20 each through a corporation he established, the Farmers & Dairy Cattle Breeders Association. Selling hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of calves at a time earned him between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per week. He quickly paid off his tax obligations, and began to build a new small fortune through the few years he worked in the cattle business.

Introduction to Parents

Of Ralph and Marie Crowl’s three children, their daughter, Jane, was born November 19, 1921, at a local hospital in Waterloo, Iowa.

Shortly after Jane’s birth, the Crowl family moved to a large country estate on its own private cove on the shores of Lake Mendota in beautiful Madison. (The governor of Wisconsin later asked her father for permission to model the governor’s mansion, about a mile away, after this home; that mansion is still used today.) There little Jane enjoyed a wonderful childhood with her two brothers, Richard, the

oldest, and Frank. She was especially close to Frank, who was exactly 15 months younger. The two spent summers swimming in the lake and winters playing on its frozen surface.

After moving twice with her family after the 1929 Stock Market crash, Jane graduated high school in Lebanon, Ohio in 1940. That fall, she entered Western College for women in Oxford, Ohio.

Chance Meeting

Three years later, as World War II waged on, Jane Crowl accompanied Frank to a homecoming football game at his school, Wabash College, an exclusive men's college in western Indiana. One of Frank's close college friends joined them, bringing with him his fraternity brother, Ran E. (Bud) Pack.

Prior to the war, Ran had also attended Wabash for two years, where he had been a standout all-state halfback. But like many other young men of his time, he prematurely left school and, following his brother, voluntarily enlisted in the U.S. Navy. "Washing out" of naval pilot training school, Ran wanted to serve his country so badly that he actually misrepresented what happened so that he would be accepted into the army's pilot training school. The 23-year-old completed his training and was made a second lieutenant, waiting to be deployed to Europe, when he and Jane Crowl first met in the car on the way to the game. Jane was immediately taken by his charm, wit—and military uniform!

Afterward, Ran Pack returned to base in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, awaiting assignment to Europe. While stationed there, he and Jane corresponded for months. Their relationship blossomed into engagement just as Ran (who had been promoted to First Lieutenant) prepared to ship out to France (and later Germany) for the Allied invasion

in the spring of 1944. Just days before his departure, Ran and Jane were married at the Hattiesburg army base on April 8, 1944.

Ran was an artillery pilot—flying a tiny “canvas and wood” Piper Cub, with a top speed of 70 miles an hour—who would fly at the Battle of the Bulge. His plane—what he called “little more than kindling”—took heavy German fire during an assignment in which he replaced six consecutive pilots who were all killed before him fulfilling the same duties.

Eventually the war ended and Lieutenant Pack returned home safely in the summer of 1945. Armed with more than \$3,000 he had won playing poker on the Queen Mary returning from Europe (Ran was known as a master poker player), he was unsure how he would make a living, support his wife and start a family “stateside.” (Ran later taught his three children to play “matchstick” and “penny” poker around the dining room table from the time Dave was as young as six. This was done to carefully teach them the value of money, even pennies, and that they should only play poker for fun at home with the family—among other lessons related to card playing.)

Mr. Pack senior did not have to wait long for an opportunity to present itself.

Opportunity Knocks

Upon his return, Ran’s new father-in-law asked him to enter his already successful cattle operation. Full of optimism, his son-in-law jumped at the chance. He and his young wife moved back to Crawfordsville, Indiana (he had previously lived there in college and she had lived just outside the city on her father’s farm for a time), where he helped organize the business under Ralph’s direction. Ran took orders for calves and made deliveries by truck across the lower Midwest. He earned a then staggering \$3 per

calf, about \$3,000 a week—an enormous income for 1946.

Since farmers paid in cash, it was the most money Ran and Jane had ever seen at one time.

There is a long-held family story in which the newly-weds had “thousands of dollars spread out in a pile all over the bed in a motel room,” and were “throwing it in the air” and playing with it in disbelief that the calf business permitted anyone to make so much money so quickly. It was considered a signature moment that captured the pervasive post-war optimism of the nation.

Ran gained valuable experience from Ralph Crowl that served him for the rest of his life in running successful business ventures of his own. One of the life lessons he learned had to do with humility. When Ran determined he should earn \$5 per calf from his father-in-law—who was receiving \$20 each—he (in his own words) “got a little big for his britches.” Overestimating the value of his role in the operation, Ran confronted his father-in-law over the matter. When Ralph Crowl told his son-in-law he would only be paid \$3 per calf, Ran “bit off his own nose, to spite his face” and quit—and his lucrative income came to a screeching halt.

For the remainder of his life, Ran Pack never forgot this painful experience. By having too high an opinion of himself—his abilities and contributions to his father-in-law’s business—his self-importance and impetuosity cost him his job.

It was stories such as these that young Dave heard time and again while growing up.

Raising a Family in the Great Depression

One reason that Ran was able to accept his significant “business” setback was due to his own extremely humble beginnings.

In contrast to his mother's comfortable upbringing, Mr. Pack's father (in his own words) "had it very difficult!" on the inner city streets of Indianapolis, Indiana. Although Ran's parents both came from relatively affluent families, times for their oldest son (Ran Pack's father, William R. Pack) were personally difficult later during the Great Depression.

Ran's father, William Randall, was a World War I veteran, born in Syracuse, New York. (Not a weakling, he would later tell his grandchildren that he was able to do 13 pull-ups with his full gear on.) His own grandfather, Lieutenant Randall Lower, also of Syracuse, was killed in the Civil War on the first day of battle at Gettysburg (July 1, 1863). Lt. Lower, whose daughter went on to marry William's father, Charles L. Pack, is the first known *Randall* in a family that later even had girls named Randi. David Pack's first son would be given this name.

Returning home from the war, William, in 1917, married Mary Johnston, one of 11 children who had grown up on a large and successful farm outside Bedford, Indiana. The newlyweds started a family in Indianapolis.

William Randall Pack was basically a "ne'er-do-well" who bounced from job to job due to his laziness and volatile temper. Though having been reared a privileged son of very successful parents, as were all of his four siblings, he spent more time visiting pool halls and bars than at home. William deserted his wife and family numerous times for extended periods. And even when he was around, the husband and father barely provided for them.

Worst of Times

More than once, young Ran (nicknamed "Buddy" or "Bud" throughout his life) and his older brother Billy returned home from grade school only to discover the family had been evicted—yet again—with their furniture and clothes

cast aside on the front lawn. On one desperate occasion, the family was left homeless, standing outside in the rain with their belongings, and nowhere to go. But there were other situations almost the same. These heartbreaking experiences were burned into the little boy's mind. These challenges caused his very hardworking mother, brother and himself to forge an unusually close bond that would help them survive continued adversity.

These personal experiences were so important to Ran that, years later when Dave and his younger brother Bill were early teenagers, he would take his two boys to Indianapolis so that they could walk through the neighborhood of tenement houses where he had lived as a boy. It was Ran's intention that his children never forget how privileged was their own upbringing.

During William's bouts of familial neglect in the early twenties and late thirties, he periodically left Ohio and returned to Buffalo, New York, where he would reside for extended periods, and then would return to his family. This happened numerous times. In 1935, during the middle of the Great Depression, he finally deserted Mary and his two teenage sons for good, without even a good-bye to the sons who were away at camp.

Ran Pack's Humble Beginnings

Ran's family, left on the brink of abject poverty, resorted to extreme measures to survive. Although they received some assistance from Mary's relatives—free dental work and occasional housing—times were difficult nationwide.

For more than three months, young Buddy and Billy ate nothing but bologna and peeled potatoes (with neither salt nor pepper)—the only two staples their family could afford. This left Buddy so constipated and sick that he had to be taken to the hospital and given enemas on more than one occasion. Several times his young body became so toxic and

full of infection due to a lack of nutrients, he had to have big clusters of carbuncles (large boils) lanced. These left visible scars he carried for the rest of his life—he (thoughtfully) made sure his children understood what had happened.

At one point, circumstances were so grim that Mary, who almost always had to work two jobs, sent Ran to temporarily live with his aunt and uncle in Bloomington, Indiana. It was a difficult trial for an eight-year-old because he was forced to spend his entire third grade year far from his brother and mother.

The following summer, circumstances permitted Ran to return home. Though times were still very hard, Mary Pack took her boys to the neighborhood hardware store and bought seeds, which Ran, aged 10, and Billy, 12, used to help support and feed the family. The boys used the fertile soil of the city dump, adjacent to their home, and grew vegetables in a small, closely kept garden they created in the rich soil to supplement their meager diet. Despite having to endure severe hardship for years, Mary Pack did all she could to provide her boys with every opportunity to succeed.

The day-to-day experiences of the Great Depression forged a toughness in families such as the Packs, an attribute rarely found in later generations. This early suffering also created a special bond between young Buddy and Billy in a way that most siblings seldom share.

Such grim childhood experiences would influence Ran Pack to strive in giving his children opportunities he never had, yet never in a way that would make it “easy on them.” Years later when Dave, age nine, heard about his father and uncle having kept a garden in the city dump (Ran had taken his sons to visit the spot where the vegetables were grown), the boy was so inspired that he planted his own vegetable garden—“specializing in overgrown (10-foot-high) asparagus”—in the Packs’ corner backyard.

Though William Pack was largely absent and failed to provide for his family, he did ingrain certain positive charac-

ter traits in his sons. Strangely, before disappearing, he had always instructed them to be strong—to absolutely never quit—to never back down from a fight—and to “stand up straight like a man.” Ran Pack deeply internalized these lessons into a personal resolve to surmount whatever hardship he faced as he entered his teenage years.

These would be lessons Ran revisited with his son(s) on many occasions.

At age 16, Ran worked during summer vacation at his uncle’s bakery in Indianapolis. He sliced bread by hand eight hours a day, six days a week, including 16 hours every Friday preparing for the weekend. This brought the young teenager to a career-defining moment.

“It was the greatest job I ever had,” he said looking back, “because I hated it the most.” The experience motivated him to strive for success—so that he would *never* have to work in such a dull, monotonous position again! He later taught this lesson to his sons, deliberately requiring them to perform a host of repetitive, and sometimes very boring, tasks and chores throughout their childhood. (Subsequently, these words of wisdom were encouraging later in life for his oldest son, when working in Ambassador College’s Mailing Department, tediously stuffing envelopes and repeating certain “assembly line” tasks for hours at a time.)

Ran’s determination and “grit,” perhaps the biggest reason he developed into a star athlete, caught the attention of a wealthy sponsor in Indianapolis who put him on full scholarship, anonymously, to the Park Preparatory School in 1939—an honor given to only one graduating senior each year from each Indianapolis high school. (Ran’s Indianapolis high school was the second largest in America, with 5,000 students!) Ran achieved acceptable marks academically at the school, and at 6’ 2 1/2” was the star running back on the football team and the leading scorer on the basketball team, which won the Midwestern Championship. His achievements led to his receiving a scholarship to prestigious Wa-

Wabash College—the event that would lead to his meeting Jane Crowl’s brother. David Pack recalls,

“In the spring of 2004 I finally got to visit Wabash College for the first time. It was only then that I truly understood how special had been my father’s and two uncles’ education there.

“I stopped my car in the college common and asked directions of three students walking by. When I explained that my father and two uncles had attended there 65 years earlier, this was overheard by two other groups of students who were walking by. Both groups immediately approached me incredulous that I had three family members who had attended their school. They had more questions for me than I had for them, wanting to know details about the three men. I found myself sort of holding court in a very strange, but inspiring, setting. I had even more respect for my father and uncles, even though two of them were gone.

“This speaks volumes to how elite this school is, as well as to how the students there both understand this, and reflect it in their respect to the relatives of alumni even so long ago.”

Merging Differences to Build a Happy Marriage

After leaving the cattle business, Ran took the money he had saved while working for his father-in-law, pooled with the money he had won playing poker (and had wisely saved) returning from the war, and purchased a juice bottling business in southern Indiana.

However, his days in juice bottling were short-lived. After purchasing a large amount of inventory and establishing a customer distribution, the final step involved leasing storage space for his newly bottled juice products (basically carbonated orange-ade). But the Packs did not properly analyze

and completely understand the correct method of storage for their product.

Lying in bed in the rented apartment above the plant one Friday evening in the summer, the Packs heard popping sounds coming from the warehouse below. Going down to investigate, they discovered thousands of exploding bottles of juice! Because the rented facility was not air-conditioned, the building had slowly heated like an oven, causing all of the freshly bottled juices to explode. The explosions were also partly due to Ran and Jane not knowing they should have left enough room for natural expansion due to carbonation within the juice.

The couple was numbed by the sight of their new business literally broken and destroyed on the floor in front of them. The huge pile of sticky wooden crates, glass and goo left them wiped out. Just as Ran's days in the cattle business had quickly ended, so did his days in the juice bottling business. But it was merely another time to start over.

Following the fiasco, Jane Pack gave birth to their daughter, Deborah, on November 7, 1947, in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Not long after their daughter's birth, Ran and his wife, now pregnant for the second time, moved in the middle of 1948 to Kenton, Ohio, where Ran had been assigned as a salesman for Kurfees Paint Company, a large regional firm headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky.

Like many other couples in the first years following WWII, Ran and Jane Pack were excited to finally focus on settling down and rearing a family.

Early Childhood

On December 7, 1948, just 13 months after their daughter's birth, the Packs welcomed their firstborn son—David Crowl Pack—into the world at Kenton's McKittrick Hospital. Because the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbor had forever made December 7 “a day of infamy,” Jane would nickname this child her “Pearl Harbor baby.”

Almost three years after Dave was born, the family having moved to Lima, Ohio, a year after his birth, Jane again gave birth, this time to the Packs' third and final child, William Randall, on September 15, 1951.

The Packs enjoyed rearing their young children in Lima, where they could work together to instill in them morals and wholesome values. Though they came from very different backgrounds, Ran and Jane merged their differences and built a strong marriage over the course of nearly five decades. They would later cite their calling into God's Church (at the beginning of the 1970s) as the biggest reason their marriage was successful.

While Ran Pack was a “streetwise,” business-savvy salesman, his wife, though still young and not yet practical, was extremely logical. Jane Pack was well-versed in the

rules of debate and “Greek logic,” and was a disciplined thinker. As a senior in 1940, Jane, with her brother Frank, won the Indiana High School debate championships. The same year, she also won the state speech championship—an astonishing dual feat for any high school student, never mind a female student, and of that time.

These and so many other unusual parental character traits had a profound impact on the Pack children.

Early Parental Influence

Together, Ran and Jane sought to develop in their children discipline, an unwavering sense of honesty and, above all qualities, *truthfulness*—in every occasion and circumstance. They placed a constant emphasis on things such as “square your shoulders and admit when you are wrong,” as this was the “sign of a big man.” Because his parents had emphasized upholding ethics and integrity, Mr. Pack today looks on his parents as two of the most principled people he has ever known.

For many years, Ran enjoyed the career of a highly successful salesman who frequently traveled. Each time he returned home, Jane immediately stopped what she was doing to listen to him recount his latest trip and the sales prospects he had pursued. Their discussions always ended with him showing interest in her day, and how the children had behaved.

“I have this memory indelibly burned into my mind of my mother *always* dropping whatever she was doing the moment my father entered the home from an overnight trip so that she could hear about his sales exploits. I can still see them in our living room. My mother would curl her toes on the couch in her unique way and they would both enjoy a refreshment as my father would unwind.”

Jane had a magnetic and captivating personality. About average in height, she was incredibly energetic and spent much of her life organizing social events, often involving large numbers of women who found her conversation and broad range of interests “fascinating.” She also enjoyed exposing her family to a wide variety of the same kinds of cultural experiences that she had enjoyed as a child.

Tutoring Taste Buds

Her desire to broaden her children prompted one of her favorite sayings: “Tonight, children, we are going to tutor our taste buds.” As a housewife, Jane was a rare gourmet cook who prepared meals that broadened her family’s horizons. (Her daughter, partly inspired by her mother, went on to write a book on how to use sauces to elevate the quality of anything you eat.)

Because of her vivaciousness, Jane wanted to ensure that her children made the most of every single day. Young Dave and his siblings were awakened by their mother every morning with a paraphrased scripture she used (perhaps unknowingly): “Rise and shine [Isaiah 60:1], it’s a new day. Up and at’em.”

Jane also instilled in her children the rules of proper etiquette and the importance of displaying manners at the dinner table. For instance, while teaching them how to correctly use a spoon in a bowl of soup, she often reminded her son such things as, “Now David, as the ships go out to sea, I spoon my soup away from me,” and “The sign of a gentleman is how he eats when he is alone,” as well as “Get your hand back in your lap!”

Of course, the exact placement of silverware at the start of and during a meal was a matter of constant reminder and requirement. Jane Pack had been taught impeccable manners and grooming from her mother’s (Marie) experience attending the private finishing school. Mr. Pack has often

referred to his mother as “someone who probably could have taught Emily Post.”

Still, because of her background in debate and speech, the majority of Mr. Pack’s early memories of his mother are of her relentless emphasis on the value of the right word choice, executing careful and proper logic, and always using the most accurate communication possible. Jane consistently stressed enunciation, grammar and precision of thought. (Decades later, he often referred to his parents in their presence as “Grandpa” and “*Grammar*.”)

“My mother was a stickler for not using filler words such as ‘You know,’ and she would always stop me and say, ‘No, I do not know—that’s why you are telling me.’ She would occasionally do this several times as I related a single story. It was at times frustrating, but I am thankful she did it.”

Jane Pack *always* prodded her children to draw logical conclusions and to use careful reasoning to dissect and understand difficult concepts. She taught them not to merely regurgitate information, but to form careful opinions and to learn lessons from all experiences. These were strict disciplines in the home.

“I attribute the majority of whatever are my speaking and writing skills directly to my parents and Grandfather Crowl, with the remainder to Ambassador College training.”

Growing Up at Shawnee Country Club

In one sense, Jane Pack brought refinement to her husband, who considered himself a “boy from the other side of the tracks.” This did not mean he was socially backward or uneducated—far from it, having attended a prestigious prepa-

ratory school and an elite private college, as well as having been a military officer.

While her husband's family had often lived a hand-to-mouth existence during the Great Depression, Jane's family had never gone without. Her father's entrepreneurial skills enabled the Crowls to afford a beautiful home and exclusive country club membership, even during trying times for the rest of the country.

Ran and Jane desired the relative peace of a typical suburban lifestyle. Hence, they joined the Shawnee Golf and Country Club in the summer of 1953. There young Dave and his siblings attended club events and spent his summers swimming and later occasionally golfing. He also did some caddying to make extra money. He would wade in "hog creek" (the nickname for the Ottawa River cutting through the golf course) to find golf balls for use or sale.

A Family of Golfers

Golf seemed to be in the family's blood. His Uncle Frank was a "scratch" player—he routinely shot par for 18 holes, and would often play 36 holes before lunch during high school summers. His Uncle Bill, also a very good golfer, oversaw the construction of golf courses at each of the three naval bases he commanded (in Pensacola and Jacksonville, Florida, and Brunswick, Maine). Again, he served as President of the American Golf Foundation for two years during the late 1960s, interacting with all the well-known professionals of that time.

Because he grew up listening to his uncles' golf stories, young Dave took an early avid interest in playing golf at the club. But learning the game was not easy, and his mother was very particular about the way her children played. From the outset, Jane felt it was important that her son learn to golf properly, using her secondhand clubs. For several years, she

allowed him to carry only irons in his golf bag. This was until she was satisfied he had learned how to “chip, putt and use long irons.”

Starting from age nine—when he shot a whopping 216 for 27 holes on the very first day he played—Dave was not permitted until age 16—seven years!—to use a driver to tee off. Nor could *any* woods be used. Jane challenged her son to use his size and strength to compete with and equal his friends who were using woods. While this embarrassed her son when he played with his friends, it also taught him a lesson in skill development and overcoming.

“I loved playing golf growing up. It was a game played at one’s leisure, meaning only on occasion, rather than another team sport like football, so my father and mother did not mind me playing. Many of my friends did, and my parents made sure I understood that I knew I was playing a ‘gentleman’s game.’ This meant understanding that there were points of ‘course etiquette’ to be followed at all times. This sport was a good discipline. My sons also grew up to love the sport. But it does take a lot of time I no longer have.”

“You have us”

Golfing introduces another element of his childrearing. Whenever Dave talked to his parents, no matter the issue, about what “the other kids’ parents allowed,” his parents, particularly his father, would repeat, “We’re not trying to run a popularity contest. And besides, you’ve got us, not ‘other parents.’” Ran and Jane Pack never yielded to the peer pressure their children experienced.

Enjoying a country club was not the only thing the senior Packs imparted to their children. As Dave grew up, his father taught him to become “street savvy,” meaning to

“smell what’s really happening,” and helped his son acquire broad, real-world experience. This was another constant theme in the home.

Through Ran’s sales career, he had learned to successfully communicate with a wide variety of people; he was truly considered a master salesman. Both he and his wife worked together to teach their children the ability to communicate with “every kind of person.”

These skills contributed to the unusually strong bond that father and son shared until his death. Although Ran Pack was usually gone for one to three days on sales trips, young Dave treasured each moment spent with him while he was home.

In addition to becoming a good communicator, Ran taught his son to develop a strong work ethic and to be self-motivated—to “demonstrate industry.” Every summer, Ran required all three children to work in the yard for at least half an hour every day—an iron-clad rule!—*before* swimming or playing with friends. Ran Pack encouraged his son to spend his time wisely. If Dave ever complained that he was bored, his parents invariably replied, “There is *always* something to do. Be creative and find something. Read a book. Build something. Play a game. Shoot baskets in the yard by yourself. Play croquet by yourself. Play ping-pong with each other.”

From the time their children were young, the Packs wanted them to learn the value of maintaining an active mind.

Prosperous Fifties and Sixties

Considered a medium-size, peaceful Midwestern city by most, Lima, Ohio, was in reality quite prosperous. It was headquarters for companies such as Superior Coach, Lima Baldwin Hamilton, Lima Locomotive, Standard Oil and others.

In the 1950s, Lima high school residents had a saying: “There are the north end boys, east end boys, south end boys—and the *rich* boys.” The wealthier residents generally lived on the west side of town.

The Packs lived in a beautiful, two-story brick home, uniquely designed and with a slate roof, French doors, and wide windows and shutters, at 2222 West Spring Street on Lima’s far west side, an established neighborhood, but just one block from open fields. Though the Packs lived comfortably, they were not wealthy like almost all others in the neighborhood. Ran and Jane were very careful not to spoil their children.

Instead of owning top-of-the-line models, Jane drove used cars, including a five-year-old Ford, then a Volkswagen Beetle, followed by a 1965 Ford Mustang, the latter two of which the teenaged Dave learned to drive. On the other hand, Ran drove company cars. (After obtaining his license, the 16-year-old was sometimes given the special privilege to drive his father’s newer, larger model Ford Galaxy.)

However, many of Dave’s childhood friends grew up very differently. The family of one neighborhood friend owned the local Ford dealership. Another neighbor, the father of his closest friend, drove a 1958 Silver Cloud Rolls Royce, the only one in town. Even as a young boy, Dave appreciated the high quality of this finest of automobiles, in which he rode on numerous occasions throughout his boyhood.

“My best friend throughout my childhood lived three houses away. We met in the first grade, a few days after I had moved into the neighborhood, and were friends into high school. His parents owned a Rolls Royce, the only one in town. It was quite an experience spending much of my childhood getting to ride in a car that today would cost several hundred

thousand dollars. They were absolutely wonderful to me, and in more ways than I could count. I had a virtual standing invitation to ‘sleepover’ Friday night with my friend—when my parents gave approval.”

Always Be Thankful

Though the Pack family lived in relative prosperity, unpleasant memories of growing up in the slums of Indianapolis remained in Ran’s mind. He never wanted his children to lose sight of those who were less fortunate, nor did he want them to feel as if they grew up “born with a silver spoon in their mouth.”

Whenever Ran felt that his children did not appreciate their many blessings, he had his own way of bringing them back to reality. He drove the family to the Chipmun Addition—the slums in the worst part of town. As they stared at tiny, tarpaper-roof shacks and people living in such dreadful conditions, Ran reminded them to be grateful for their home. Many were the times the children suddenly heard their father tell them to “Get in the car. You’ve forgotten your blessings. It’s time again to see others who don’t have what we do.”

These experiences were burned into the Pack children’s minds. It drove home appreciation for having what so many in the world lacked. It made them realize that though their parents wanted their lives to be comfortable, they would not permit them to be spoiled.

When he would later hear Mr. Armstrong say to God’s Church that “the greatest sin is that of ingratitude,” it was much easier for Mr. Pack to appreciate this—whether it applied to physical blessings, attending Ambassador College, being given special doctrinal truths that so few understand, being a minister of Jesus Christ, or being able to participate in the Work of God in any capacity. To this day, every one of Mr. Pack’s daily prayers almost automatically, he reports,

begins with the fullest list he can recall of the previous day's many blessings.

“Considering my father’s childhood, it should not be surprising that he absolutely despised an unappreciative attitude. If there had been an unforgivable sin in our house, this would have been it. Without my father teaching this principle so strongly, my life would have been very different. Of course, later, I would load my own children in the car for the same purpose when they needed it.”

Energetic Child

Mr. Pack's parents and family remembered him as a perpetual "bundle of energy" and an inquisitive, always buoyantly happy child. His mother often proudly referred to him as her "smiling baby boy." As a child, he seldom cried and was extremely outgoing. Jane Pack frequently told him that he seemed to have a unique ability to enjoy whatever was happening, and referred to him until her death in 1992 as "my child with a great capacity for enjoyment."

While visiting grocery or department stores, or crowded swimming pools with his mother, the 18- to 24-month-old toddler often ran up to children he had never seen before and spontaneously hugged them—sometimes falling on them because he was a big child. Other parents were pleasantly surprised at the youngster's openness. Looking back, Mr. Pack believed he inherited this trait from both his parents, who balanced their roles as tough disciplinarians against being outgoing and affectionate.

"My mother's description of me is true. But of course most mothers' descriptions of their children are true, even when they do not want them to be. In this

case, I am happy to accept the description my mother assigned me. I do very much remember as a child that I loved every minute of every day. I jumped out of bed almost ‘spring-loaded.’

“Her description of my approach to other small children when she was out shopping is also still with me today. She told the story often. I love little children, and everybody knows this. Sometimes I have seemingly almost had to leave services and ask myself if I had talked to more children than I did adults. I still like to hug them by the way—but I can report that I am much more careful not to fall on them than I once was. Happily, I now have seven grandchildren to hold.

“One of my earliest jobs making money, when I was 10 years old, was as a babysitter for a little five-year-old girl, Debbie, who lived around the block from us. I asked her mother if she needed someone to watch her daughter. The little girl was born with a serious hole in her heart, and was very thin and frail. She died suddenly a while after I had become her babysitter. I recall being devastated at the news.”

This same enthusiasm for everything, however, sometimes landed the boy in trouble. If the old saying “Cats have nine lives” is true, then little boys must have at least as many, in light of the numerous near-fatal accidents he experienced while growing up.

Miraculous Protection

In the late summer of 1949, the family took a trip to northern Wisconsin to meet with Jane’s parents. Ran and Jane sat in the front seat of the car, while their young daughter Deborah sat between them, and eight-month-old Dave was asleep in a bassinet in the back. (The government had not

yet enacted laws regarding car seats and seatbelts for small children.)

As the family drove through the countryside, traveling about 55 mph, they made a sharp turn and suddenly found themselves facing a railroad crossing—just as a train was barreling into the intersection before them! Unable to stop in time, the car ahead of them sped through the crossing and just missed being crushed. Ran, realizing it was too late to brake, yanked the wheel to the right. The car swerved into the ditch and slammed into a mound of fresh construction dirt piled in it. The mound caught the automobile's undercarriage and instantly jerked the car to a halt—within about a foot of the passing train.

The abrupt stop launched the infant from his bassinet. He sailed between his parents, over his sister's head and slammed into the windshield, shattering the glass! Amazingly, he bounced down into his mother's lap completely unharmed. Ran was unable to drive for the next half hour he was so shaken.

“This was among the most often told stories in our home. My father could not tell the story without struggling to get through it. In fact, usually my mother had to relate most of the details when we would want to ‘hear it again.’ Imagine the mental trauma of dealing with the idea of four people left unscratched who ALL should have been killed instantly! The car that went through the intersection ahead of my parents quickly turned around and came back, expecting that disaster had occurred.

“This incident left my father with a sense that God had protected his family. The notion was somewhat vague in his mind, but he was absolutely certain that what had happened was not an accident. I have always viewed the fact that I was unscratched in this as a ‘miracle within the miracle.’ After all, I had become a

human missile. This would not be the last time direct intervention protected my life.”

“Taking a Bath”

About two years later, Dave experienced another close encounter with disaster.

His mother often took him and his sister to Mirror Lake, near Lima. Although the two-and-a-half-year-old could not yet swim, he enjoyed splashing on the shore. One summer, he ventured too close to the end of a long dock. Hearing a splash, his mother looked over the edge and realized her son had toppled into the water. She rushed to grab him as he disappeared into the murky lake, but he had “gone under.”

Moments later, the boy briefly resurfaced, bumping his head on the underside of the dock. Jane stretched out to reach him, but the distance was too far. By the time she had prepared to dive into the water, he had already again disappeared into the darkness. This time he did not reappear. She was unsure where to jump in.

Jane searched frantically until she finally spotted the top of his head just below the water’s surface. Now within reach, she grabbed him by his hair and pulled him onto the dock. Relieved, she took off his clothes and dried him off, with her child’s trembling lower lip out merely exclaiming, “I don’t want to take another bath.”

Forgetting His Parachute

Young Dave not only found adventure in public places, but also within the confines of his house and yard. At ages four and five, one of his favorite activities was playing on a swing set his parents had purchased for the backyard. He loved the thrill of swinging higher and higher until he reached the uppermost point—before jumping off. Every time his mother

caught him doing this, she scolded him for being reckless and paddled him. This happened repeatedly. But Dave would not heed her warning.

Once, while leaping from the seat of the swing, the entire steel structure tipped over. (Swing sets were *much* heavier then, but this was a very big little boy.) As Dave hit the ground face down in the grass, the crossbar landed directly on the small of his back, pinning him. The weight and crushing blow should have paralyzed or even killed such a child.

Trapped and with no way of escape, he screamed. Jane Pack heard her son's panicked shrieks, and rushed from the house and struggled to free him. After working to remove the steel top beam, Jane removed him from underneath the structure. Incredibly, he walked away unharmed. His mother carefully checked him over to make sure he was not hurt... and then brought him into the house and paddled him for disobeying her once again.

Yet even discipline from his mother could not keep Dave out of trouble. Like most boys, he always seemed to devise new ways of finding exciting "mischief."

"I was a far cry from a perfect child. But it is fair to say, however, that our parents did not have any serious 'trouble' with their children. However, I certainly *was* an *adventurous* child. I simply could not do enough different kinds of things. In my mind, exploration and trying new activities were never to be missed."

More Glass Breaks

Before he started attending school, one of Dave's "best friends" was the Pack's family dog, a three-legged collie named Sally. (An accident with a tractor mowing machine had cost her a leg from the shoulder down.) One summer, Sally gave birth to a litter of puppies, which she nurtured

and cared for inside a shed in the backyard. Ran and Jane instructed their son to leave her alone. Even though Sally was a wonderful pet, the parents knew that intrusion could make the dog feel threatened.

But the eternally inquisitive child had never before seen a litter of newborn puppies. His curiosity got the best of him. He disregarded his parents' instructions and went into the backyard, entered the shed, climbed onto a workbench next to a window, and leaned forward to get a good look at the newborns hidden behind the dog.

But he bent over too far, lost his balance, spun around—and fell through the shed window head first, blowing out the glass! Helpless, he looked around and saw still attached jagged shards encircling his neck, his head stuck through the frame where a pane had been.

In a traumatic situation such as this, a child's normal reaction would be to immediately yank back his head—but that would have sliced into or pierced the child's neck, probably in multiple places. In fact, it would have likely killed him. Incredibly, he remained motionless.

Jane heard her son's frantic screams, rushed out of the house and saw that her little boy's life was in danger. Keeping him still, she carefully plucked the glass from around his neck, and then pulled him to safety. She was relieved to see that Dave had only suffered a half-inch cut.

To this day, Mr. Pack has a scar within his right eyebrow, reminding him of the time he was miraculously protected.

Still More Glass Breaks

Another incident involving broken glass also occurred at the age of three. It occurred at the entrance to the same shed. A football was thrown to him a little too hard and knocked him backwards onto a milk bottle that broke on impact. The fall severely cut the inside of his right wrist.

This time he was rushed to the hospital where the wrist was stitched closed.

Given little Dave's tendency to find adventure in unlikely places, Jane often wondered exactly how her son would make it to adulthood!

“I remember the last three of these events as though they were yesterday, including my mother's, and probably my father's, worry that I might never survive childhood. And there were more accounts than those just listed. My mother used to tell stories of me as a baby in the yard crawling beyond the boundaries of my blanket toward the road whenever she looked away while she was hanging her wash. It was not until I had two sons that I realized the daily trauma that little boys give to their mothers. A couple years ago, I returned to this childhood home to revisit all of the ‘scenes of the crimes’ from so long ago. The shed is still there, and so is the shelf I fell from.”

Raining Money

Although young Dave had demonstrated a tendency of experiencing “close encounters of the worst kind,” one of the stories that the parents loved to share about their energetic son involved the time he “threw money out of the window.”

One summer afternoon, Jane instructed her four-year-old to head upstairs to take his daily nap. Young Dave (according to his mother) had just heard one of his father's war stories. As he grudgingly marched up the steps, Jane could tell he did not have sleep on his mind.

Moments later, she heard noise coming from his room. Peering through a crack in the bedroom door, Jane saw the four-year-old hanging out the window making pretend sounds of combat and explosions. She soon discovered Dave

had dropped almost all the contents from his piggy bank, one coin at a time, into the bushes below. The little boy pretended his pennies, nickels and dimes were soldiers falling off a cliff as they were shot in battle.

Not only was Dave in trouble for disobeying his mother and not taking a nap, he had also wasted his money. Later that day, his mother taught the boy a valuable lesson when she made him crawl through the bushes and dig in the dirt for a long period to retrieve the coins. For the rest of his life his mother would have fun telling people about her son who “threw money away.”

“I remember too well digging around under a big evergreen bush, sifting through the dirt, looking for the coins I had ‘lost.’ I marveled ever after that I found so few of them. I knew that I had dropped a lot of pennies, nickels and dimes from the window, but could never understand why I could not find very many. The lesson stuck, and so did the story.”

A Growing Boy’s Appetite— and Confusing Salt with Sugar

Even when small, Dave had a big appetite. His mother would tell the story that when he was three years old, he “ate 16 pancakes.” He can still vividly remember standing beside the table, unable to sit down because of the excitement as she piled his plate with more pancakes. These were not plate-filling pancakes, but neither were they silver dollar size. Two at a time, the little boy ate 16 in one sitting (standing). From that point on, his mother would affectionately refer to him as her “big eater.”

As is probably not surprising at this point, this was a curious child. From time to time, he would sneak sugar from the kitchen. On one occasion, age four, his parents were not watching and he opened the top of the salt shaker, thinking

it to be sugar. Instead of the typical reaching into the cookie jar, he filled a spoon with the “sugar” and swallowed it. Partly because he had a full stomach, he immediately started vomiting. Realizing he would soon be in trouble, he ran throwing up again, out of the kitchen and out of the house. As he ran out through the garage he vomited again—and again and again—until he arrived at the side of the garage. He finally stopped at the coiled up hose, throwing up for the last time upon it.

The boy essentially had left a trail—but not exactly crumbs along a trail in the woods—for his mother! When she found out, the little boy was in trouble, but not as much as usual.

“This is another story I remember so well. I was much more concerned about being found out and punished than I was about the fact that I was violently throwing up over and over as I ran from the house. The biggest thought I remember is that my mother felt I had had punishment enough.”

Quarantined for Tuberculosis

On a more serious note, it was during this same period that Jane Pack contracted a mysterious respiratory ailment, one the doctors had trouble diagnosing. Because tuberculosis was rampant at that time (and life-threatening), physicians decided the safe thing to do was to quarantine her in a tuberculosis ward for several weeks, meaning away from her family.

Though Lima’s metropolitan area had a population of perhaps about 75,000 then, the tuberculosis hospital where Jane was quarantined was just a short walk through the woods from the Packs’ house. Young Dave would hold his sister’s hand while running across the street from their home, and head down a ravine through the woods to peer through

the bushes outside the hospital. Being so young, he was confused as to why he could not “see his mommy,” and was not permitted to enter the facility where she was in isolation. Standing in front of the hospital at age four is another event never forgotten.

(In 2005, Mr. Pack returned with his sister to look for the hospital after having not seen it for over 52 years. He reported that this was one of the most surreal moments of his adult life. They found the facility, abandoned, burned out, covered in graffiti, and overgrown—but exactly where he recalled it having been as a toddler, and for the *first time* entered it to see where their mother had stayed. Just a year later, the building was bricked-up so no one could any longer enter it.)

“Grandma Miller”

Since Ran Pack frequently traveled on business during the week, he was unable to stay home with the children. Therefore, before Jane was quarantined, she and her husband enlisted the help of an elderly woman, Nora Miller, whom the family knew well, to care for the children. Mr. Pack first remembered reading and learning about the Bible from this woman. Regrettably, his first memories of the Scriptures were not pleasant—at least from a small boy’s perspective.

“Grandma Miller,” as she was always called, was a devout woman who felt that every young child under her care should memorize certain biblical passages, some long. Before she allowed Dave to play in the backyard, she required him to recite long passages such as the 23rd Psalm, the 100th Psalm and the “Lord’s Prayer,” all of which he learned to recite at age four.

The elderly lady realized he had an aptitude for memorizing Scripture. But Mr. Pack believed his ability was more a reflection of a young boy’s zeal to play.

“I recall Nora Miller very well. My mother must have been sick when it was summertime, because I remember being inside the house and desperately wishing that I could go outside—it was hot weather. ‘Grandma Miller’ understood this so she figured it could be motivation for me to learn Bible verses faster. She made me sit in a chair until I could repeat certain long passages, including entire smaller Psalms, just from hearing her read them to me, repeating many times. I did inherit my mother’s memory, so maybe it was already working a little bit at an early age. While it was hard work for me, of course it was also a (hard) labor of love for this woman who was teaching children who were not her own, or even her grandchildren.

“It was actually this early period that underscored the importance of being able to know from memory certain Bible passages, some of them fairly long, that I could use in visiting situations if I did not have a Bible available. It has helped many times that I could bring exact verses to a given moment—sometimes very long passages—where otherwise I would be left to talk in only general scriptural principles. When people hear verses quoted exactly, or even close, they more easily understand that they cannot wiggle out of what God expects them to do. In this regard, Nora Miller did more for me than she would know. I look forward to meeting this sweet lady again in the Resurrection.”

Thankfully, several weeks later it was discovered that his mother did not have tuberculosis—but rather a severe respiratory infection—and she returned home.

Getting Glasses

By age three, Dave was burdened with a “handicap” most other preschool boys do not have. His mother saw that he

had difficulty seeing certain things. An eye examination showed that he needed glasses. This is not unusual, except for children age three.

Wearing glasses proved to be a challenge for the active boy. Dave strongly disliked wearing them, and went through a long struggle of taking them off, being disciplined by his mother for disobedience, and then being forced to put them back on. Then there was how often his glasses broke.

One hot summer day when he was 11 years old, a young “centerfielder” raced on his 3-speed bicycle to a little league baseball game. Running late, he pedaled harder, sweating profusely in the heat. He arrived at the baseball diamond with just moments to spare. As he leapt off his bike, bent over and laid it down, his glasses slid—shot!—from his sweaty face into the spokes of his still-spinning back wheel! The glasses were instantly mangled. Horrors!

Later, he was not sure what was worse that day: trying to play centerfield while squinting into the sky to see if the ball had been hit to him—or the dread of telling his mother he had broken his glasses (yet again).

Learning to Swim

One of the few times Dave was permitted to “play” without wearing his glasses was when swimming with his siblings at the country club pool. He first learned to swim at the age of three, and enjoyed getting into the “baby pool.” As his mother stood by watching, he repeatedly kicked across the small pool, often going too far and bumping his head. Jane decided to register him for swim lessons the following year.

The beginning of David Pack’s athletic career was a far cry from how it ended years later; he did not start off a strong swimmer. Because he was later extremely thin, it would take several years for him to experience any measure of success.

“For some years, the thickest part of my arms and legs were my knees and elbows. My thinness prompted one of my father’s favorite encouragements: ‘Don’t worry, son, someday the meat will catch up with the bones!’ Apparently, my skull bones were especially thick because I bumped my head so often kicking across the pool in ‘sailor dive’ position. I can remember wearing my mother out having her watch me do the same thing multiple times.”

First Big “Race”

The boy’s first day of “competitive” swimming began at an early age, a year after taking beginning lessons. He participated in “The Youngest Swimmer” competition at the Shawnee Country Club. A prize was awarded to the youngest child who could finish the race without assistance.

As the family drove to the event, four-year-old Dave, sitting in the backseat, according to his father, confidently predicting he would beat his competitors *and* take home the “Youngest Swimmer” prize.

But when he arrived, he realized he was competing against more than a dozen other children, each five, six and seven years of age.

At the sound of the starter gun, Dave dove into the pool, immediately swallowed water—and, according to his father, “was so slow they had to use the hour hand on the clock to time him.” How far was he behind the other swimmers? “Spectators wondered if I would finish, my dad reported.”

Though he placed behind the other competitors, Dave’s swimming career did begin with a “victory” of sorts: He became the youngest swimmer to finish the event—not quite the glorious outcome the overconfident four-year-old had expected.

Regardless of his “speed” (meaning, lack of it), it was a proud moment for both his father and mother.

Storytelling—and “Big Bear”

Salesmen are often great storytellers. It was no different for Ran—and he told many to his children. But there were other games and surprises.

“My father often sat his three children before him and told stories—usually because we begged him to ‘tell us another story.’ They all started the same—‘We went walking, walking, walking into the woods...’—but every one ended differently. We knew when he had not yet figured out how the story was going to go, because he would continue to add extra ‘walkings’ to the introduction. My father was a spellbinding storyteller.

“But the earliest memories I have of him are when he would play ‘Big Bear’ with us. He would lie down and pretend he was sleeping, a bear in hibernation. We would climb on and try to ‘secure’ him. He would slowly begin to rouse himself, growling as he did, and we would squeal with excitement, battling to hold him down so he could not ‘eat us.’ I am not sure whether we asked him more to tell stories or play ‘Big Bear,’ but these were right up there with taking us for ice cream.

“My mother was also involved in special childhood moments. One of the most exciting was when she would have all of us bury our heads in our father’s chest, with him covering our ears with his hands, while she quietly left the room to bring a surprise. We had to patiently wait until a point when she would say, ‘You can open your eyes.’ There would be brownies, popcorn balls, taffy or special candy she had made. The surprise was always her creation.

“This biography could not contain all of these kinds of things from my childhood.”

Middle Years

The Packs wanted their children to receive a well-rounded education, one involving more than sports. Jane required them from a young age to read numerous books, well beyond the amount most other children would read. Even during summer breaks, she required Deborah, Dave and Bill to read at least one book per week. This may have seemed burdensome in grade school, but Dave later grew up very thankful he was forced to become an avid reader in his youth.

Over the years, beginning at an early age, he asked his mother many times about the meaning of new words he discovered in the books she assigned or that he chose to read. But Jane would send her children to the living room to look up the definitions in the exhaustive dictionary her brother, Frank, had given the family. Time and again, she required Dave to look up a word and report its definition to her. Sometimes he found himself weighing whether he should ask about a word's meaning, certain of the response it would evoke.

As a young boy, Dave enjoyed books such as *Smoky the Cowhorse* by Will James, *The Adventures of Lad the Dog* by

Albert Payson Terhune (with the others in this series), and classics such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. Through such literature, he discovered reading was fun!

To help motivate his grandchildren to read as much as possible, Ralph Crowl ("Gramps") paid each of them a dollar for every book they read. To ensure they completed the task, he required them to read a book report to him over the phone of at least 300 words.

Reading was extremely important to the entire Crowl family. For instance, Grandma Crowl ("Nonie"), confined to a wheelchair for the final 10 years of her life, read 10 books *every week* through this period until she died. Her son Frank has literally thousands of books in his home, and has read virtually every one, some several times.

Beloved Uncle Frank

The parents and grandparents were not the only ones who fostered an environment of learning as the Pack children grew up. Jane's younger brother Frank also enjoyed teaching his nephews and niece.

Throughout his childhood, young Dave shared a close relationship with his Uncle Frank, and in retrospect has considered him one of the most positive and influential people of his life. Mr. Pack still regularly counsels with his 86-year-old (at this writing) uncle concerning publishing, writing and other issues.

The young boy often spent time listening to his uncle recount war stories and childhood memories, as well as detailed descriptions of individual Civil War battles.

"My uncle once spent 30 days walking every knoll and trail of just the battle of Gettysburg during a year that he took off from work. And this was just one of six trips that he made to this battlefield. Then

there were so many others he visited and knew better than the guides who lived there. He talked of so many battles and details of them, and I sat enraptured when he did.”

Graduating from the same high school as his sister, and a year ahead of his class, Frank attended Wabash College, and then enlisted in the military during WWII. Mr. Crowl became a high-speed radio operator for the U.S. Army Air Force, after receiving technical training when he had showed a special aptitude for a difficult task.

After training, Frank received instruction that his unit would be deployed to Europe. However, as he prepared to board ship, he discovered he had made an innocent mistake. Soldiers who wore eyeglasses (as Frank did) were required to bring two pairs of military-issue glasses—one for wearing, the other for backup; both had to have metal frames. Frank, unaware of the latter requirement, had brought along plastic-framed eyeglasses as his backup pair. When his commanding officer discovered the error, he would not permit Frank to board.

Denial to the European warfront was a major turning point in young Frank’s life: his unit, which set off without him, almost immediately lost nearly half its troops fighting in Italy.

Frank Crowl was stationed with a group of eight other soldiers on the tropical island of Tobago (a small island adjacent to the larger island of Trinidad) for the duration of the war. There he coordinated plane landings and relayed radio communications to destinations across the world.

His stories filled Mr. Pack’s childhood and, in a family that loved storytelling, new ones are sometimes told to this day. (His uncle still tells these stories, seeming to add new details each time.)

When the war ended, Frank returned home and enrolled at Indiana University, from which he earned an accounting

degree. He later gained a wealth of experience working for the accounting firm Arthur Andersen, the typewriter manufacturer Remington Rand, and the large retailer Montgomery Ward as an auditor.

Frank spent several years with each company, and then went to work for the prestigious Encyclopaedia Britannica Company in 1957—a corporation he quickly came to love. There his business skills and abilities did not go unnoticed. He was soon promoted to National Sales Administrator—then Director of Sales Administration the following year—and then Vice President of Sales Operations one year later, a promotion that allowed him to pass his business insight to others, aiding thousands of Britannica sales representatives.

His next position, as Executive Vice President of Marketing and Sales, made Frank Crowl the highest-level executive in Encyclopaedia Britannica under the President. Over the course of his tenure in this position, the company went from \$200 million in annual sales to over \$900 million. Corporate presidents came and went, but it was generally understood that Mr. Crowl was the “authority” on how to run the company. His “frankness” kept him from being the President, but again he was President of World Book for a period.

Given that Uncle Frank worked for a company that valued education and the written word, he believed in the same principles as Jane regarding learning and rearing children. This included the importance of providing them with a proper education from a young age.

Uncle Frank often gathered the children around the dining room table for a “contest.” With a pile of dimes in hand, he quizzed the children on geography, history and the contents of books they had recently read. This was his fun way of teaching them the importance of accumulating knowledge on a variety of topics.

Mr. Pack remembered a specific occasion when he was about nine years old. His Uncle Frank had asked, “Children, what explorer discovered the Pacific Ocean—?”

Before his uncle could complete the question, Dave blurted out, “Balboa!”

His uncle was amazed. “Wow, Dave!” he said. “That was fast!”

Bursting with pride, Dave happily accepted the dime his uncle slid to him across the table. At the time, it did not occur to a young boy that Uncle Frank always managed to equally distribute the dimes between all three children so that an almost-three-years-younger brother could enjoy the game.

These kinds of games and the influences of his parents and relatives further developed Dave into an avid reader. He continued to crave knowledge while progressing from grade school to high school. Though he grew up enjoying fiction, he later developed a voracious appetite for reading factual stories, particularly biographies of great leaders of the past, real life accounts from which he gleans valuable life lessons.

An Erector Set!

In the late 1950s erector sets were still popular for boys. They had been around since the 30s. Dave received his first set at about age eight or ten. It was a size “2 1/2.” A neighbor’s parent decided their child should get a larger set.

“This friend usually had things that were ‘biggerer’ or ‘betterer’ than whatever I had. My parents usually did not care, and told me to appreciate what I had. For some reason, this time, my dad took a stand on my behalf. When my friend got a ‘4 1/2,’ my dad got me a ‘5 1/2.’ My friend’s parents continued with an ‘8 1/2’—each bigger size allows a boy to build more kinds of things. My dad had had enough and, because he traveled a lot, was able to scour around for what was reported to be the last ‘12 1/2’ set *ever made*. My friend’s parents could only get him a ‘10 1/2’ in response, then the biggest size still available.”

Special Trip to Green Bay, WI

One of the most memorable experiences of Mr. Pack's childhood was, at age 11, when his Grandfather Crowl invited his mother and him on a trip to Green Bay, Wisconsin. The vacation was during the last week of summer in 1961, just before entering the 7th grade. Driving up into Michigan to cross Lake Michigan from the northern part of the state, they arrived in Ludington, Michigan, where they would take a ferry to Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

But before the journey, his grandfather used the opportunity to teach Dave about prevailing winds. This approach to an activity was typical of the teaching style his grandfather and parents used. They often tied experiences to knowledge and learning, using everyday opportunities, no matter the circumstances, to teach their children.

Having brought bathing suits, they went to the beach at Ludington. The water was very warm on the Michigan side, because the wind comes onshore. Next would be to experience the water temperature on the Wisconsin side. After the exciting ferry ride, and watching the sun go down on the lake in front of them, they landed in Manitowoc.

The next morning, they went for another swim. It came as a surprise that the water was unbearably cold, so much that there were almost no swimmers and Dave could not stand it. Yet, it was the same time of year, it was still warm, it was the same weather pattern—and the same lake. His grandfather explained that wind blowing *offshore* in Wisconsin lowered the water temperature, while Michigan did the opposite.

Later in the trip, his “Uncle Dick” (older brother to his mother) took his nephew to see the famous Lambeau Field, home of the Green Bay Packers professional football team. Uncle Dick, who would later run the scoreboard at the stadium for 10 years, gave him an inside look at the team. They attended a team practice, and met several future Hall of

Fame players. Lastly, they went to a preseason game against the New York Giants.

Although his parents often vacationed in Wisconsin, this one was a very special trip. They went home via train and stopped in Chicago to visit Uncle Frank, who was by then working for Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Mr. Pack learned many years later, in the 1980s, that his father's first cousin, John Whinnery, born to his Grandfather Pack's older sister, had been the starting fullback for the Green Bay Packers for one year before a knee injury ended his career. He went on to become head coach of a Texas university football team. This came through long, fascinating genealogical research Mr. Pack began in the late 1970s. This research culminated in his father meeting every one of his living first cousins, *none* of whom he had previously met.

Many Pets—All Kinds

Another aspect of Mr. Pack's childhood were the many pets his family *always* owned—fish, hamsters, birds, many dogs and cats, including two Persians named Scotch and Soda by his parents because one was light-colored and the other was dark. He remembers being shattered when at around age 10 or 11, on separate occasions, each of the cats was found poisoned. Someone in the neighborhood had killed them and literally stretched them across the side doorstep of the house so the children would find them the next morning when leaving for school. For the young boy learning about death, this was a shocking experience.

His family also had a beloved blue parakeet appropriately named "Bluey" by the children. The memory of coming home from school and seeing a covering over the birdcage that hung in the dining room is still vivid. Mrs. Pack broke the news to her three children that Bluey had died. Solemn trips by each child to lift the covering followed.

On another occasion, Debbie put one of her hamsters in a filled bathtub to “see how long it could swim.” When the phone rang, she took the call and forgot the pet, and learned that hamsters can neither swim nor tread water very long—it drowned.

Another of her hamsters was shivering from the chill of having been outside. Putting the cold hamster in a warm oven seemed the natural solution. How better to warm it up?—until the family smelled baked hamster wafting through the house!

The Pack family also had a series of dogs, usually two at once. Sallie, the three-legged collie mentioned earlier, is the first pet of Mr. Pack’s early memory. A Pomeranian was added. Later came a miniature collie, Penny, and a German shepherd named Cappy. He and his brother had always heard their father tell them about his German shepherd, Captain, but called Cappy. (Mr. Pack’s father had especially loved his dog because this was during the time when *his* own father had left the family. The dog had been a comforting companion to him.) The children naturally wanted their “own Cappy.” At about age 10 or 11, their father surprised them and brought home a puppy—which went on to be beloved by the family.

A large doghouse was necessary for the new dog, and had to be built by the boys, right down to a shingled roof. They used mostly plywood for its construction, and the brothers carefully measured the doghouse, cut a hole for the door and built the bottom. Cappy loved it.

“I remember well the decision to build this doghouse. My brother and I wanted something of ‘quality.’ In truth, we had no idea what we were doing, so at all points of the construction we had to mark, cut and build very slowly. Our father was happy to buy the materials, even though there was some doubt in his mind that it really needed shingles. This was

the first time I had built anything, and I remember the sense of pleasure when we were done. I am pretty sure my brother would say the same all these years later.”

Riding His First Horse

Boy or girl, every child looks forward to riding a horse. Dave’s first experience was at age nine. He was small enough that he and a friend had to be helped onto the horse. But this “horse” was no bucking bronco, rather it was a much older animal destined for the glue factory—SOON! Dave got on and, just as the horse took its first steps, immediately fell off the back position behind the saddle. The cinch had broken. The young boy slid right over the south end of the northbound horse—with the saddle—landing on his backside, ending one of the shortest rides in history. Bucking broncos do not throw their riders as fast.

It was 10 years before he would climb on another horse—only to experience an even worse outcome.

These animal stories are just one of the many elements of a diverse childhood.

Overcoming Shyness

As he grew up, Dave was frightened of standing in front of an audience. Of course, most people are. But, partly because of his height and thinness, he had become uncomfortably shy and unsure of himself in this kind of a setting.

During second grade, his bashfulness overcame him. All the children in class were required to sing in front of their peers a song of their choice from the class songbook—a *cappella* and on their own.

Mortified at the thought, he was so nervous and embarrassed that he picked the shortest song in the book, one he

had sung previously with the class: “Hot Cross Buns.” It was only 15 words long, yet it seemed like an eternity to a seven-year-old. Only later, upon being called into the understanding of God’s truth, would he learn that hot cross buns were derived from cakes made to worship the “queen of heaven,” Ashtaroth (Easter).

Despite his acquired shyness, Jane would not allow her son to use this as an excuse for impolite behavior. For example, he often came home from school to a house full of ladies from his mother’s bridge club. Jane Pack hosted such events throughout the summer and winter, often with 30–40 women present, either in the house or the backyard.

She would occasionally require Dave to systematically and very properly introduce himself to the ladies, going from table to table addressing each woman while smiling and making eye contact. And he was not permitted to do this hastily.

“How do you do, Mrs. Jones?” he would say, only shaking hands if the woman extended hers.

The woman would respond, “Very well, thank you. How are you?”

“Very well, thank you,” he would reply. No other response was acceptable. If he failed to answer correctly, or without eye contact and a pleasant smile, Jane would make him repeat his response correctly.

With his mother observing as he made these courteous introductions, Dave learned demonstration of proper etiquette in social situations.

After several such occasions, he learned from his mother that her friends thought he was a “fine young man.” This training in manners and protocol gave the growing teenager a small measure of confidence, which he could build upon in later years.

Learning Manhood

Another important part of his childhood was his father's emphasis on maintaining good posture. The tall former military officer regularly told his son, "Dave, if you're going to be tall, do not be ashamed of it. *Be tall*. Accept your height. Don't destroy your entire posture to be shorter by an inch."

He would add, "Men stand up. Don't be ashamed. *Stand up*."

Whenever he caught either of his sons slouching, Ran would have him fetch a broom, baseball bat or golf club, and make him sit with it behind his back for half an hour.

The discipline worked. After a few times, Dave never *wanted* to slouch again—and has hated slouching ever since. Today, whether standing, walking or sitting, Mr. Pack *automatically* keeps himself erect.

Tough Discipline

Telling his son to stand up straight was not the only discipline Ran administered. Often throughout his childhood, when Dave "earned" punishment, he would be told to "head

to the dining room.” Each time this happened, he knew he was in big trouble.

Like most parents of previous generations, Ran used corporal punishment, and would usually require his children to “pick their own switch.” They would have to march into the backyard and choose the branch to be used.

“Imagine the dilemma in a child’s mind: ‘If I choose a switch too small, Dad will go out and find one much bigger. But if I bring him one larger than he requires, my punishment would hurt more, and it would be my fault!’

“By today’s standards, most would probably view this as harsh. This is because we live in a world in which parents either *over* discipline—abuse—their children or *under* discipline them, allowing the children to rule the home. Few understand or employ the proper, and crucial, balance of sometimes tough, yet always loving, correction, so essential for all children to develop into successful human beings. My father and mother had a balance on these things.

“My father would invariably tell me he was spanking me because he loved me. I do not think he ever neglected this introduction. Later I always did the same with my children.”

Both Pack parents realized the value of proper punishment. Raised in less than desirable circumstances, Ran learned strict discipline from his years in the army, and was determined to instill a firm sense of obedience and mental toughness in his children.

Not Backing Down

Many times Dave and Bill heard their father recount a childhood story that vividly demonstrated how this initial tough-

ness was ingrained in him from a young age. Mr. Pack remembers it well:

“When my father was 12 years old, after an adolescent dispute, he stepped off the school bus only to be spat on by an older and bigger classmate. Instead of responding to the insult, he slowly walked toward his front steps, head down.

“His father, my grandfather, was sitting on the front stoop and witnessed the exchange. Watching his son wipe the spit off himself as he walked up the steps toward their house, my grandfather told him, ‘That boy spit on you and you allowed it. You’re no son of mine. You’re not welcome in this house.’

“My Dad understood that his father was not kidding. Without hesitation, he spun and sprinted toward the larger boy, tackling him to the ground. The ensuing brawl turned into an extended fight, with *my* Grandpa Pack looking on. When Dad finally walked back to the house, nose bloodied, his father let him enter the house. My Dad lost the fight, but was willing to pay this price because it was far more important in his mind to gain his father’s respect.”

Such was Ran Pack’s upbringing. He would later tell his son, “Dave, I had better never hear that you looked for, or picked, a fight—but I had also better never hear you backed down from one either if you were insulted!”

One day, five-year-old Dave *did* find himself in a similar situation when he and a six-year-old neighbor boy got into a minor disagreement. The boy knocked him down and Dave came home crying. In response, his father, having seen what happened, told him, “Son, you don’t allow him to do that. He knocked you down. Go defend yourself.”

Motivated, the boy ran back to the neighbor boy and tackled him the same way his father did years earlier.

Although this method was not the ideal way to resolve conflict, in retrospect, the *motivation* behind his father's instructions were appreciated. He simply wanted his son to be strong and to learn not to back down from challenges or obstacles.

(It is important to note that Mr. Pack's parents were not baptized into God's Church and way of life until early 1971. While his father often explained how he regretted some of the lessons he had been taught and passed on to his children before he had been called into the truth, he did recognize that the general principles he taught had helped build certain positive things into his son's thinking. Mr. Pack not only agrees, but still sees reasons in how God was actually bringing him important training that would be valuable for the task he would have to complete in this age. Extreme toughness would be vital.)

“White Glove” Inspections

Training and discipline did not merely come in the form of spankings and in teaching his son to defend himself. There was also the responsibility of cleaning the kitchen, which from an early age always fell to the Pack children. Ran's standing instructions were, “Since your mother cooks dinner for us every night, she should not have to clean the kitchen, too.”

“My mother was an absolutely wonderful, even amazing, cook. But the kitchen was always an unbelievable mess after she was done preparing the meal. Staring at piles of dishes and ‘mountains’ of pots and pans, it looked as if someone had rolled a hand grenade into the kitchen *every night* after our mother had finished preparing the meal.

“The only solution was to dive in ‘eyeballs and elbows.’”

Adding to this nightly chore was the pressure of getting the kitchen spotless once dinner ended. Using a method instilled in him during his army days, Ran periodically inspected the kitchen by (occasionally) putting on a white glove and running his fingers over the areas that were supposed to be “spic and span.” He especially did this when he felt the children did not pay sufficient attention to the task. These “inspections” taught them the value of cleanliness and doing things correctly, down to the tiniest detail. It also taught certain lessons about being efficient when cleaning a large, really messy area.

“When the Going Gets Tough...”

By now it should be obvious that Dave’s father had emphasized being strong in life. There were several phrases he said to his sons as they grew up, things they heard time and again that defined *how* their father wanted them to view difficult challenges, adversity and other harsh realities of life they would face.

Ran Pack used occasions to slowly and deliberately repeat, “When the going gets tough, the tough *get going!*”

Another saying he repeated was, “If you’re going to walk among lions, you must BE a lion!” He usually demonstrated this with a powerful fist gesture to drive home the point.

Using the same gesture, he often stated, “Son, you’ve got to know when to have the guts of a burglar.” (Mr. Pack has said that his father was one of the most scrupulously honest men he ever knew, and that he loathed thieves and liars, so this saying had only to do with “intestinal fortitude,” certainly not stealing.)

“My father was one of the mentally strongest people I have ever known. I am still learning from his example today. He may have been a little tough on me at times,

but it was always for my own good. Besides, I have often found that the best way that children can view parents whom they see as having been a little harsh was to try to take the parents' perspective in the sense of what they were seeing in their child—in this case, in *me*. My parents get all benefit of the doubt in this regard.”

The need to deal with life's inequities and unfairness was important to Ran—so important, he would occasionally tell his children that he was not trying to be fair with them! He would actually state that he was not interested in being fair, because “Life is not fair and you have to get used to this.” Hence his necessary emphasis on always being stronger, on never quitting (something else Ran Pack despised, having learned this in childhood), no matter how difficult it would be to go on in a matter or an undertaking.

Sense of Humor

But there was another very different, and contrasting, side to Mr. Pack's father. No description of Ran Pack's influence on his children would be complete without mentioning his truly extraordinary sense of humor.

This sense of humor was connected to his ability to put on a poker face, his natural salesmanship, and that he was somewhat of an entertainer, having been involved in, and having won, solo dance contests onstage from as early as age 10. He also used to talk of the greatest public speakers as having to be at least “part frustrated actor,” because acting was part of selling good ideas. His father could also sing and give impersonations, as well as relate funny stories he would hear as a salesman.

“My father was simply the funniest man I ever knew. It is hardly a stretch to say that I spent my entire childhood laughing because of his unique ability to act,

like an actor would, during moments of humor. I can actually start laughing again today at just the thought of some of the things he did.”

Learning the Hard Way

In addition to learning childhood lessons through parental discipline, at times Dave learned lessons on his own—the hard way—due to his penchant for minor mischief.

On a summer evening when he was around 10 years old, Dave was riding home on his bicycle at twilight after returning from a day at the swimming pool. He decided to stop near one of the more rural areas in Lima. He came to a point in the road where a local farmer let his milk cows cross from one pasture to another. For entertainment, Dave had the “smart idea” of chasing the cows with his bike, which can excite them and make them lose their milk. Nevertheless, it seemed like harmless fun for a young boy.

With the farmer watching what happened from a distance, Dave began to scare the cows, and as they ran—toward him—he saw headlights approaching. A car! Dave, fearing the people inside would recognize him and tell his parents about his prank, jumped off his bike and tried to hide. Almost dark, he landed in a ditch full of dense “weeds”—except that *these* weeds turned out to be poison ivy, and in the fast-growing, early summer sappy stage! Even worse, he was only wearing a swimsuit! He wound up covered with itchy bumps, literally from the top of his head to his feet. For almost two weeks, each excruciating scratch reminded him to never chase cows again!

More Learning the Hard Way

The Pack family had a rule in their home that the children were not to miss the light switch and get dirty fingerprints all over the area around the switch. At a certain point, Ran warned

his sons that they would have to paint the foyer of the home if he caught them missing the switch “one more time.”

“One of the most difficult lessons of my life was learned when my father saw me missing the foyer light switch upon racing into the house and bounding up the stairs. He immediately called me back down the stairs and told me about ‘all of the painting I was now going to do.’

“As the pictures will show, I grew up in a large home, and it had the biggest foyer and spiral staircase ever built in 6,000 years—from the time of Adam and Eve going forward to the present (of course, so it seemed). The tall window in the photo gives but a tiny glimpse of how much work I had to do. There was moving ladders around with my father as I did all of the painting up the stairs, down the hallway, around all the doors, as well as the big window in the front of the house—only to start over because two coats of paint were necessary.

“This was a lesson I never forgot. To this day, I am ‘religious’ about light switches. When I enter a room, even in the dark, I will only lightly brush the wall with the back of my hand feeling for the switch, and only then if I know almost exactly where it is in my mind.

“Sadly, few parents any longer have the ‘guts’ to enforce upon their children such lessons.”

Still More Learning the Hard Way

There was to be another painful experience painting, but this was from an incident of another kind.

“My father had a saying when it came to painting—‘I sell it, you apply it.’ At a certain point, he was willing to let me work high on a ladder outside painting (or

cleaning leaves from the gutters), as long as he was there when we moved the ladder together.

“On one occasion, when no one was home but my father, who was inside taking a nap, I learned that coat hangers were not as strong as they looked. I was on a ladder at the particularly high peak of our screened-in porch off the side of the house. I had a new bucket of white paint hanging from a coat hanger, which was hanging on a rung of the ladder. As I painted higher and higher, lifting the bucket one or two rungs at a time until I reached the top, I repeatedly spun it to give myself a better angle to put the brush in the paint. Suddenly, the stressed out hanger snapped—and I watched with horror as the bucket seemed to very slowly fall *aaaaaaaalllllll theeeeeee waaaaaaay* until it hit the ground and ‘blew up!’

“The beautiful furniture inside the porch was flecked with thousands of dots of white paint that had exploded through the screen. The dirt turned white, two bushes turned white, the grass turned white, and later died—and I turned dogwood white without the help of paint. Walking in to awaken my father to show him what I had ‘wrought’ was, shall we say, ‘exciting.’ He was more understanding than I thought he would be, or than he should have been.

“I remember this as a great childhood story—with a lesson. But coat hangers would never look the same.”

Meeting “Grandpa Pack”

Mr. Pack viewed his boyhood years as a wonderful childhood in nearly every way. However, one gap in his family life was the absence of his paternal grandfather.

The story goes back decades earlier: Already mentioned, without notice and without saying goodbye to his sons, William Pack walked out on his wife and children in the sum-

mer of 1935, while the 15- and 17-year-old boys were away at summer camp. The next time Ran saw his father again was in 1956—21 1/2 years later!

However, Ran sought to rise above any negative feelings he felt toward his father, and never spoke openly to his children about any animosity he held from having an “absentee father.” In fact, even though he had not seen his father for more than 16 years, Ran in 1951 named his youngest son, William Randall, after him.

Prior to a family vacation in December 1956 in Fort Myers, Florida, the family stopped in Miami, where William had moved. There Ran saw his father for the first time since 1935. He had every reason to shun the man who walked out on him as a young boy, yet Ran took him out to dinner and even bought him a new suit. He also permitted the older man to take his then five-, eight- and nine-year-old children to the Orange Bowl football game. It was the only time Dave met his Grandfather Pack.

(The encounter was also the last time Ran saw his father, who died just six years later in Miami. He had his father’s body brought to Lima for burial. He also kept his father’s 48-star World War I American veteran’s flag, which now sits encased on Mr. Pack’s mantel beside Ran Pack’s encased 50-star flag.)

“The memory of my grandfather from this only occasion that I met him was that he looked exactly like my father, except was shorter and older. And his talking was sort of an inaudible rasp because surgeons had accidentally removed his voice box during cancer surgery, due to his smoking. And I remember well sitting with him in the Orange Bowl with a hotdog that he bought me.

“I probably remember him more for the array of successful people in his family all around him and for those he descended from—the French Marquis

de Laforge and Jonathan Edwards, the famous 1700s preacher from whom my father got his middle name—than for anything else.”

In reality, the man Dave recognized as his grandfather while growing up was his paternal grandmother’s second husband, Robert “Bobby” Moscrip. He owned a hardware store in Lima with his brother and his brother’s wife, who young Dave called “Uncle John” and “Aunt Ev.”

The couple had two sons older than Dave who were thought of as cousins. (One, Jack, became a captain in the army and served in Vietnam. The other, who attended the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Bill, taught a very nervous third-grade Dave to dance in preparation for his first formal dance.)

Speaking fondly of his grandfather-through-marriage, Mr. Pack recalled this:

“I remember Bobby as being one of the kindest, nicest human beings I ever knew. He more than filled the void left by my biological grandfather’s absence, and a biography of my life could easily carry many anecdotes about him.”

Going to Church and Family Traditions

Along with desiring their children to learn the importance of making decisions, the Pack parents also wanted to instill in them the necessity of hard work, and to rear them with a certain religious upbringing.

During his middle teenage years, Dave had a daily newspaper route. Though it was sometimes difficult for Dave to drag himself out of bed to deliver papers, Ran wanted his sons to make a few extra dollars, understand the value of having a job, and gain the experience of earning and saving the money needed to buy the things they wanted.

Every Sunday morning, Dave (and Bill) awoke at sunrise to deliver newspapers around the neighborhood. Once finished, he would climb back into bed, hoping his father would sleep in and thereby get up too late to take the boys to church. However, they usually heard his voice from the bottom of the stairs, telling them to get ready for services.

Still dressed in his housecoat and pajamas, Ran would drive his children to the Market Street Presbyterian Church, where they attended Sunday school. Their father would return home, and then come back to pick up the boys after the regular church service had ended.

Ran was reared in the Christian Science religion, while Jane's family was Presbyterian. Both parents decided to sporadically attend a Presbyterian church, since it was conveniently close to their home.

The Packs held the common belief that their religious denomination did not factor into how they would raise their children. Their thinking was that as long as they learned about God and were "churched" in some way, it did not matter when or where they attended.

Ran frequently told his sons about his childhood adventures of skipping church in Indianapolis. After his mother dropped him and his brother at Sunday school, the boys often went to see a movie or play sandlot football with neighborhood children. The Pack boys made certain to contrive a Sunday message for their mother so they could survive her "sermon quizzes" after returning home.

Hearing these stories made Dave realize his father was wise to all the tricks of skipping Sunday school. Fearing punishment, he and his siblings attended diligently, though often grudgingly.

Jane and Ran had good intentions in wanting their children to grow up regularly with church involvement. However, their own record of attendance and listening to sermons represented hypocrisy. Even at an early age, this stood out in a child's mind.

Father and mother expected their children to meet certain moral standards, though they themselves were not especially religious. Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday were among the only times Ran and Jane attended church together. Dave's father often "said grace" at special meals, but neither parent prayed regularly, nor did they have a family Bible to display in the house, as many families did back then.

"It was a curious thing in our household. My mother was barely religious, but my father was very 'religious'—even though this did not translate to attending church with us, or anywhere else."

Regardless of their religious affiliation, one of Ran and Jane's favorite annual traditions was singing Christmas carols around the neighborhood. Christmas was a big event in the Pack household. They were the only family in the neighborhood who went caroling, walking the streets and singing songs such as "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!"

While embarrassed to be seen singing by friends whose parents would open the door to listen, the Pack children at least benefited by having a certain amount of shyness reduced.

Ironically, Sunday church attendance, celebrating Christmas and caroling had nothing to do with obeying God. As with most professing Christians, these were simply traditions that held no real meaning beyond the physical act.

In the end, however, the Pack parents were sincere in what they thought was best for their children in regard to religion. That was never in doubt in Dave's mind.

Grandfather Crowl's Death

On October 29, 1963, just before Dave turned 15, his Grandfather Crowl died in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

“This was really the first time I had truly lost a grandparent, and felt a sense of loss. My Grandfather Pack had died the year before, but again, I had only seen him once when very young.

“My Grandfather Crowl was larger than life in our family. He had told me endless stories growing up, and had played and joked with me as a child. There were trips to Gatlinburg, Tennessee—I found a knife not long ago that he bought me there when I was nine. His death, occurring just 24 days before John F. Kennedy was assassinated, forever seared the memory of his loss into my mind. His son-in-law, my father, would die 32 years to the day after his father-in-law.

“I still wear my Grandfather Crowl’s mother’s wedding band, now as my own. Inside is inscribed a message ‘From Grandpa (my third great grandfather) to Tillie (my first great grandmother) 1887.’”

Biggest Sunday Tradition

There *was* a “family tradition” that held more meaning for the Packs than any religious tradition, by far—and it took place after church services, in the afternoon. For 10 consecutive years until he left for college, Dave joined his father and brother in watching the Cleveland Browns play football on television every Sunday in the fall.

Dave watched one of his first Browns games “live” at the old Cleveland Municipal Stadium on December 12, 1960. He saw his favorite player, Browns running back Jim Brown, when Cleveland beat the Chicago Bears 42-0. For several years Ran took one or both sons to a live game, an almost three-hour drive from Lima to Cleveland. When watching the team on television, Ran and the boys played catch football in the front yard during halftime—every Sunday!

The Pack family took the games so seriously that a cloud of sorrow hung over the household for the rest of the day

when the Browns lost. During this 10-year period, the father and sons missed only two games—one because a parents' party required the children to go to the movies, the other because Dave would go skeet shooting for the first and only time in his life.

Learning to Drive

As with most boys approaching their later teenage years, one of the milestones in Dave's young life was getting his driver's license. Within days of turning 16, he obtained his learner's permit. That same day he drove home with his mother in her four-speed Volkswagen Beetle. He familiarized himself with operating the clutch and gas pedal, but did not yet have complete control of the brakes.

Driving through the neighborhood, Dave prepared to turn onto the street of their home. But with only 20 minutes of driving experience, he was unaware that a 90-degree turn in a car involves controlling the steering wheel *and* the brakes! He attempted to shift gears, turning at 35 mph, but neglected to hit the brakes. The car hit a patch of gravel on the road. As his mother froze in anticipation, the car spun sideways and slid toward a mailbox on the front lawn of a house on the corner. The car skidded to a halt in front of the house, with the mailbox literally jutting into the open passenger window—six inches from his mother's face! And this was where the superintendent of all Lima schools lived.

Despite this traumatic first driving experience, a few days of practicing gave enough confidence to once again conquer the road—this time with his father in the passenger seat. Naturally, the 16-year-old was nervous, yet he wanted to impress his father, so he drove cautiously, especially as they approached an intersection. He slowed down perfectly and came to a complete stop—but the traffic light was *green*! As soon as the light turned RED, he accelerated smoothly through the intersection.

His father said nothing for several seconds. Then he calmly turned and said, "Next time, Dave, why don't we go ahead on through when the light is green, and stop when it's red."

"He knew I was semi-terrified, so he recognized there was no sense in making it worse. The only remaining question was whether the light or my face was redder."

Wrecking Motorbikes

After having his license for several months, Dave became accustomed to driving and determined that his daily paper route would be easier with a motorbike. The two-wheeled "vehicle" would be inexpensive, he reasoned, and give him a certain measure of independence, since the likelihood of his parents buying a car for any of their children was out of the question.

Before making the purchase, he consulted with his father, who warned, "Remember, if you buy a motorcycle, it's very dangerous and you must be responsible."

Still, his father gave permission. But instead of a motorcycle, Dave bought a used (and not as powerful) moped that had seen too many years. However, he could not get it to run correctly, due to a scored piston. Wanting to learn more about it, Dave completely took apart the engine, laying all the pieces across the basement floor of an entire room. When finished, it occurred to him he had not the faintest idea of how to put it back together!

Quickly thinking like a "captain of industry," Dave was determined to "snatch victory from the jaws of defeat." He advertised the moped and sold it to a man for five dollars; the new owner had to carry the engine away in a box.

Next, the teenager purchased a slightly bigger, more powerful motorbike. Driving it one day while delivering papers,

he signaled to turn left around a boulevard, but an impatient motorist in a Cadillac (a very big car back then) cut around him on the left. Dave suddenly heard the screech of brakes behind him, and turned just in time to see the front bumper of the car slam into his rear wheel. The next moment, the car launched him and the motorbike 40 feet in the air into the front yard of an adjacent house—where a huge, solitary bush miraculously cushioned his fall!

Although he escaped serious injury, he still carries a small scar on his left knee, the result of the tailpipe of his mangled motorbike scorching him in the accident. The vehicle had only seen 147 miles of service (the number visible on the shattered speedometer) before it was “totaled.” A second motorbike was now ready for a box.

Undeterred, the other driver’s insurance bought an identical replacement. However, that same summer, as he hurried to get to work as a lifeguard at the country club pool, he experienced another motorbike accident.

In the 1960s, many secondary roads were made of tar, as opposed to today’s roads, usually paved in concrete or asphalt. Country roads had a slightly bigger crown to them, allowing water to drain more efficiently. While driving too fast in the rain, Dave’s bike suddenly “laid down” on the country road. The inexperienced driver swung his leg up and rode the side of the bike until it skidded to a stop.

Once again, he escaped serious injury, but the accident marked the end of his motorcycle days. His father quietly told his son he had had his last chance. Another small scar on his left elbow is a permanent reminder this was best.

Walks and Talks with His Father

Even though his childhood was filled with a myriad of exciting experiences, some of Mr. Pack’s fondest memories were of times he spent with his father, listening and learning from him.

Starting at age six, he accompanied Ran on regular walks together. Since his mother and siblings did not enjoy such walks, he and his father often headed out with their German shepherd, “Cappy.” Dave enjoyed sharing countless hours with his father, absorbing information and listening to non-stop stories of life lessons Ran Pack had learned. (They continued this practice for 40 years, literally into the very final days of his father’s life.)

These walks often lasted five to 10 miles, and occasionally this was done in deep snow down long country roads. He can remember often walking a road that was two miles to its end, before returning. Then there was the half mile just to reach the road, and another to return, plus wherever else they walked in addition. Mr. Pack talked with his father “man-to-man” for hours about almost everything.

Ran often asked, “Davey, what’s on your mind? Do you have anything you want to ask me? Ole’ Dad will do his best to answer anything.” He consciously did not want his son to feel the tremendous void that he himself had experienced as a virtually fatherless teenager. Ran took every opportunity to provide guidance and teach his son as a mentor and a friend.

The time they spent together was among Mr. Pack’s happiest early moments, and greatly influenced him later in life. He knew he could always talk to his dad—and he did. Taking routine “walks and talks” became a tradition that continued with his own family.

These benchmark experiences characterized Mr. Pack’s childhood: a focus on sports, another on books, playing in the neighborhood with friends, and maintaining a close family bond.

Turning Point— Summer of 1966

Since young Dave spent much of his childhood with friends at the country club pool and the adjacent golf course, he joined the Shawnee Swim Team for children ages six to 17, as he entered grade school.

He first did this merely because his friends were on the team, not because of his swimming ability. He enjoyed the sport, despite seldom experiencing success early on. Eventually, though, after six years of competitive swimming, Dave officially won his first race in fifth grade. It would not last.

In addition to his fondness for swimming, however, he also dreamed of playing football as his father had.

Difficult Decision

At age 10, Dave played wide receiver in Lima's midget football league. At the end of the season, the coach told Ran Pack that he wanted Dave, because of his size, to play half-back on the sixth grade team the following year. The fifth-grader was excited; this was the same position his father had played in college! He would be "carrying the ball" from the backfield, a desirable position.

The exciting news led to a pivotal conversation between himself and his father.

“Son,” Ran said, “you can’t play midget football *and* continue on the swim team. You must choose between the two. I don’t care if you choose swimming over football. Decide what you really want! Don’t pick football just because I played it. *You* think about what you enjoy and decide what you really want to do.”

While Ran allowed his son to play various sports with neighborhood friends, he wanted Dave to dedicate himself to excelling in just one. He also felt that playing on multiple teams would divert time from the boy’s studies and other activities.

Deciding between his two favorite sports was tough, and even brought the young boy to tears. Since he had just won his first swimming race and had been on the team for five years, he decided to dedicate himself solely to swimming. Little could he know that the seemingly small decision would have such a long-term effect on his life.

During the summer breaks of sixth, seventh and eighth grade, Dave continued to compete on the Shawnee Country Club swim team outdoors. In the winter months, he swam on the Lima YMCA team indoors. Still, he struggled to find success. By the time he was in the eighth grade, he was only the fifth-fastest swimmer *just on his own team*, and of course was not winning races anywhere else either.

Discouraged, he went to his father and wondered for the first time in nine years of competitive swimming if he should quit. His father encouraged his son to continue, reminding him to not worry: “The meat will soon catch up with the bones. I promise.”

The teenager determined to dedicate himself to becoming the best swimmer he could.

Just one year later, near the end of ninth grade, Dave’s height shot to 6’3” and his weight began to fill out. It was a turning point. He now started to take his swimming career

much more seriously. This same year, the now less gangly swimmer suddenly vaulted to becoming the second-fastest 15-year-old in the state, swimming in the YMCA Championships' 50-yard freestyle, with a time of 24.3 seconds.

In this speed event, competitors would dive into a 25-yard pool, swim to the other end, sometimes without a single breath, execute a flip-turn and race in an all-out sprint to the finish. This was Dave's strongest event.

However, because of his size, he executed his turn poorly, missing the wall in the difficult shadows of the Ohio State University natatorium in Columbus. This mistake haunted him, leaving him to wonder, *If I had nailed my turn, would I have won the state (YMCA) championship?*

Swimming at the Next Level

In a short amount of time, Dave's speed increased and his times dropped. He realized that he was becoming fast—*really* fast!

By his sophomore year, the teenager qualified for the state championship, and swam 22.8 seconds in the 50-yard freestyle. This was a high school competition, meaning the sophomore was competing against juniors and seniors.

Despite not winning, his times were still fast enough to receive "All-American" honors at the end of his sophomore year in 1965. He was only 16.

In just two years, he had gone from the fifth-fastest on his team to one of the fastest high school swimmers in the United States. He had now "arrived!" In his young mind, and certainly in the small city of Lima, this changed his life.

These swimming achievements slowly drew national attention—and with it, a seed of ambition was planted in his mind. From that moment forward, he devoted himself with single-mindedness to his swimming career. He wanted to become the fastest swimmer in the state and rise in All-

American status, goals that helped him to push himself even more.

Grueling Routine

The ambitious teenager developed for himself a rigorous training routine as a junior.

Dave woke up every day at 5:15 a.m., and drove himself to the practice facility at the YMCA in downtown Lima while it was still dark. There he met the janitor at 6:00 a.m., when the building was empty and dark. No one was permitted to use the pool before hours, but the YMCA management and the school faculty made an exception for the aspiring swimmer.

Morning workouts began with tying a rubber strap (from an old inner tube) in a figure eight around his ankles. Restrained from kicking, he then swam 66 laps, the equivalent of 1,650 yards—or over 16 football fields! He did this day after day with his legs immobilized, pulling himself through the water as he relied only on upper body strength.

Next, teenaged Dave propelled himself through the water with a kick-board for an additional 40 laps (1,000 yards), using his legs only.

Imagine: Before some of his friends and classmates were out of bed, he had already swam more than the distance of 26 football fields and logged almost two hours in the pool! Only after this daily workout did he head to class.

This rigorous training schedule was practiced most mornings. In part, his routine raised his profile locally, as word quickly spread of how “dedicated” Dave Pack was to his swimming career.

After school, he practiced for another two hours with the rest of the high school swim team. A typical practice included a 200- to 400-yard warm-up, followed by routines such as fifty 50-yard “repeats” (races) with only a five-second break in between each, or thirty 75-yard repeats with

10-second breaks. There would be other elements of the practice, which would end with a several-hundred-yard “cool down,” or “swim down,” as it was called.

All of the hours spent practicing in the pool occurred without any protection for his eyes, since these were in the days before most swimmers wore goggles. Consequently, he spent years with blurred vision from the typical light-induced “halos,” which were a result of heavily chlorinated water and salt that accumulated in the pool from the swim team sweating in the water.

After practice, Dave would return home for the evening. Once his parents excused him from dinner and he had completed his schoolwork, he followed with yet another grueling regimen on an “Exer-Genie,” which could be used to simulate swimming. Usually attached to a doorway, it mimicked the swimming motion of the upper body, maximizing muscle strength, endurance and flexibility. The innovative machine was invented in 1964 as a training tool for astronauts. Three NASA Apollo missions had used it to maintain muscle tone in weightless conditions. The scientific principle behind the device was to tire the muscles by permitting no time for relaxation. Setting the machine for maximum resistance, this was the most strenuous workout of the day. His brother often joined him in this.

Misery loves company.

Mr. Pack estimated that he swam approximately 1,500 miles during each of the last two years of high school. He also estimated that, from ages five through 19, he swam at least 7,000 miles in his career—the equivalent of swimming from New York City to the French coast, back to New York, and halfway back to France again.

“Looking back, I knew that, in the sense that athletes use the term, I had become addicted to pain. Many athletes who compete at the highest levels recognize that the only way to become the best is to push through

mental barriers and physical limitations that other athletes are unwilling or unable to push through.

“I would later realize this was an unbalanced approach. Because I did not understand God’s Way, I was driven to accomplishment in *physical* pursuits. The only path to achievement and success I could see at that age was through a career in swimming. I had no idea this thinking was about to change almost overnight.”

By the close of his junior year, Dave lowered his times even further, clocking in at 22.3 seconds in the 50-yard free-style. Just as his father had promised, the meat had—finally!—caught up with the bones. The ambitious teen could hardly wait for another chance to compete for a state championship.

However, circumstances did not work out in his favor: just days before the state meet, Dave developed a serious case of the flu, eliminating his chance to compete at anywhere near his best.

Disappointed but undeterred, he pushed forward with renewed resolve. The harder he pushed himself, the better his times became. Dave was determined to win the state championship in his senior year.

Training on the Shores of Lake Erie

In early June 1966, the aspiring athlete was invited to join the Coca-Cola sponsored Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Lake Erie Silver Dolphins Swim Team. There he trained for the first time in a 55-yard pool (almost Olympic-sized), in Lakewood, Ohio, just west of downtown Cleveland.

Dave realized that, in order to rise to the next level, during the summer he needed to train with a larger organized team instead of with his country club team. Swimming with the Dolphins pushed him a step closer to greater achievement.

The young swimmer rented a room in the Lakewood home of an elderly woman. Nearby, he worked as a life-guard and swimming instructor at the exclusive Cleveland Yachting Club.

“This part of my summer ‘excursion’ was a very interesting and maturing experience. People sunning themselves around the pool were literally the ‘who’s who’ of Cleveland. One morning, another instructor gave me the ‘Campbell children’ to teach, explaining that these were of the Campbell Soup family.”

Dave trained and competed with the Dolphins every day, beginning at 6:00 in the morning, in a pool in Heritage Park. From the 57-degree temperature pool, outdoors, he could see Lake Erie 100 yards away, from which chilly breezes blew early in the morning, in days that were at first in the still late spring. It was cold! At this pool he tied the then *national* age-group record for 15- to 17-year-old boys in the longer 55-yard freestyle category, with a time of 25.9 seconds.

Tumultuous Late 60s—Questioning Everything

In general, growing up in the Midwest in the 1950s and 60s was idyllic. The end of World War II ushered in an almost immediate sense of prosperity. Life was in a sense wholesome and simple; most children could reach adulthood retaining a greater degree of innocence, compared to our modern age.

However, the 50s also saw the dawn of the atomic age and the Cold War. Humanity faced new concerns. School-children routinely went through civil defense drills to prepare for the growing Soviet threat. Tensions between the Democratic West and Communist East simmered to a boil—eventually leading to an ideological showdown with the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The world’s problems—the war

in Vietnam, race riots, poverty, the violent overthrow of governments, political assassinations, the growing tide of illegal drug use—seemed to be spinning out of control.

Perhaps like few other periods in American history, the late 1960s represented a time of questioning and distrust among youth. The shortcomings and limitations of democracy in the United States were laid bare. Students, realizing government's inability to solve humanity's problems, took to the streets by the thousands to protest the war in Southeast Asia and to support the blossoming civil rights movement.

While he did not participate in sit-ins and violent protests, these tumultuous and uncertain times led Dave, as with his peers, to begin only mildly questioning the reason socio-political-driven violence erupted throughout America. He wondered how *any* of mankind's forms of government could work. Few of the world's problems directly affected his relatively sheltered life in Lima. Still, as the teenager approached adulthood, the provocative question of how humanity would ultimately solve its problems was not much on his mind. But young Dave Pack was becoming more aware of the world around him.

Meanwhile, as the pressing issues of the day weighed a little more heavily in his thoughts, the swimming champion had already received All-American honors for the second year in a row.

Discovering *The World Tomorrow* Program

About two weeks after arriving in Lakewood, Dave was sitting in a lifeguard's chair when he heard a booming voice on the radio that would forever change his life.

Up to this point, the teen did not have any real interest in religion, despite his Presbyterian upbringing. But what he heard from this radio program—*The World Tomorrow*—was different. Its presenter spoke of the Return of Jesus Christ and the government He would establish—the soon-coming

kingdom of God, which would solve all of humanity's troubles, problems and ills! And Dave learned that *he* could be a part of this solution.

Although (both) Mr. Armstrong(s) spoke about Jesus, it was a much *different* Jesus from what the teenager's obligatory Sunday school and services had taught him.

Over the following weeks, Dave listened diligently to *The World Tomorrow* on Cleveland's WIXY 1260 super-radio. He heard Mr. Armstrong proclaim that the returning Jesus Christ would establish a unified, world-ruling SUPER-GOVERNMENT, and that man's incredible potential was that he could be born into the kingdom of God!

Dave had certainly heard nothing in his high school civics classes about "one world government!" Yet he did learn that certain secular leaders, including Winston Churchill, Douglas MacArthur and Abraham Lincoln, acknowledged there needed to be a kind of "strong arm from somewhere" that could come and save mankind.

As he listened intently night after night, the Lima teenager came to understand that *only* a world government could truly put an end to all violence and strife. Mr. Armstrong's message seemed to speak of the solution leaders so desperately sought after, but never found. They were some of the most capable men democracy had ever seen, but, *Why had they not spoken of this coming government of God?*

Unlike the boring, empty messages Dave had heard for years in Sunday services, Mr. Armstrong answered basic questions: "Why were you born?"—"What is the true gospel Jesus Christ preached?"—"Does God exist?" Even more intriguing, the elderly spokesman (and his son at the time) explained, with unbelievable clarity, that God was a *Family*, not a three-in-one "mystery"—that Bible prophecies could be understood—and that they specifically revealed the future of the United States, Britain and other Western nations!

Dave was amazed by the extraordinary knowledge he was learning!

Attempting to Follow Newfound Truth

With each broadcast—which Mr. Armstrong delivered with an unusual commanding authority—spiritual knowledge and understanding were growing, and on a wide variety of topics. For the rest of the summer, Dave absorbed information from *The World Tomorrow* program while on his life-guard stand during the day or in his rented room at night.

Each broadcast shattered perceptions about the basic foundations of mainstream Christianity and convinced him that the only way to true happiness was through obeying God’s Law. He learned that Christianity was not just something people practice at Christmas and Easter, or once a week on Sunday. He was hearing the true meaning of life in simple terms. Herbert W. Armstrong taught that every day all people make a choice to either live the way of “give” (outgoing, selfless concern for others) or the way of “get” (selfishness, lust, greed, competition).

To a young mind struggling to grasp purpose in the world, the “give” way of life made perfect sense—in fact, so much sense that by the end of the summer Dave made his first attempt to obey God.

One of the first laws he decided to keep involved the guidelines of clean and unclean meats, as taught in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. However, it would soon become clear he did not yet fully understand exactly how to apply these new truths to his life.

Upon learning the shocking fact that pigs were unfit for human consumption, he informed the elderly woman with whom he was staying that he would never again be able to eat pork. But, he reasoned, he would enjoy one last meal of pork chops.

His landlady, Gladys (who happened to live on Gladys Drive), was a wonderful cook, so the teenager requested she make him pork chops. She prepared and spiced them so per-

fectly that he ate *nine!* Dave later recalled, regretfully, that they tasted “unbelievably good,” although the enjoyment was dampened by his conviction that he would never taste them again. That night he ate so much that Gladys called his father to request a larger food allowance for the remainder of the summer. (Yet, just a year or so later, the very smell of ham or porkchops made him sick.)

Returning Home with a New Outlook

The summer on Lake Erie, training with the Silver Dolphins and the Yachting Club job, ended in early August. Though sad to leave, he looked forward to his senior year in Lima and to the future.

He wanted to return home living the new way of life Mr. Armstrong taught him through *The World Tomorrow*. After having listened to dozens of broadcasts, he was hooked! Dave could not get the powerful messages out of his mind—nor did he want to.

Mr. Armstrong’s words had completely altered the young man’s thinking and dramatically changed his outlook on everything. He could hardly wait to hear more, and planned to request the free literature offered during each broadcast when he returned to Lima.

Yet when the young man arrived home, he was frustrated to learn he could not find the program. For weeks he scanned the radio dial, until finally he heard Mr. Armstrong’s voice again, initially on CKLW (but later out of Cincinnati), a radio station near Detroit, and Windsor, Ontario, Canada. He rushed to tell his father.

“Dad, this is the program I’ve been telling you about!” he said.

“Oh, I know that voice,” his father replied. “I listen to him from time to time.”

His father was already familiar with *The World Tomorrow* program from his time on the road as a traveling sales-

man. Ran Pack included it among the rotation of religious programming he had been listening to regularly.

In late August 1966, Dave was pleasantly surprised to receive a package from the Church. It contained seven booklets and articles. He still remembers *Why So Many Denominations?—Why Were You Born?—Does God Exist?—The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*—and *1975 in Prophecy!* were in the mailing. He also received his first issue of the Church's flagship magazine, *The Plain Truth*.

Ecstatic, Dave (and now with his brother) continued to listen to Mr. Armstrong and was deeply intrigued as he explained in plain language the simple—yet universally misunderstood—truths of God.

“I had completely forgotten that while I was still in Lakewood I had written to the Radio Church of God [renamed Worldwide Church of God in 1968] with questions, and requesting literature. I forgot that I had written (the first of many letters) for guidance as I continued to learn the truth. The first letter had been something very brief, similar to, ‘My grandmother is a Christian Scientist and she thinks I should attend the Christian Science Church. What do you think?’ I do recall that my second letter was to ask about UFOs.”

The brothers were pleasantly surprised to have radio logs (listings of when and on what stations the program was broadcast) arrive from Pasadena. To their delight, they discovered *The World Tomorrow* program also aired in the evenings and was broadcast across the U.S. seven days a week on WLW Cincinnati at 11:05 p.m.

“Easy Sell”

One night after listening to Mr. Armstrong's son explain the truth about the theory of evolution, Dave and Bill Pack lay

in their beds and discussed in the dark what they had heard.

Dave said, “Bill, we didn’t evolve.”

“I think we did,” his brother replied.

“No, Bill,” he said firmly. “God created Adam and Eve.”

After a short pause, Bill said, “Okay...I believe in creation now.”

Bill Pack fondly remembered, 40 years later, that this was the last time he would be such an “easy sell” for his older brother. From about September 1966 forward, both brothers listened and studied together at times.

While most 17-year-olds focused on college plans, high school friends, social events and parties, young David Pack’s thoughts centered on studying the Bible, and at every possible moment. He had learned a valuable, lifelong lesson: Having always heard preachers and ministers of traditional Christianity teach, “All you have to do is give your heart to the Lord,” he learned from Mr. Armstrong that God *calls* individuals to the truth, as Jesus explained in John 6:44.

“The broadcasts truly stunned me. What I heard was unbelievable. The answers were logical. They made sense. I had *never* heard anyone talk with that kind of authority. Mr. Armstrong answered life’s greatest and most important questions so clearly. And he was also answering questions I did not even know that I had. He made complex topics simple to understand. I was absolutely on fire and could not get enough of these new truths.”

Requesting Literature—Meticulously Proving

As he continued to hear truths he had never been taught, Dave became much more interested in following God’s

Word. He had a burning desire to learn and understand how to apply the Bible's teachings.

The Church back then had a policy of sending only up to seven items per literature request. However, Dave in his eagerness wanted to read as much literature as he could as quickly as possible. He decided to devise a way to "beat the system."

During each broadcast, Mr. Armstrong promoted certain booklets and articles; so did each issue of *The Plain Truth*, as well as did the other literature received. Dave recorded every title and compiled a large list of available publications. He then sent his requests, seven pieces of literature at a time, on the same or next day. He hoped that a different staff member at Pasadena Headquarters would open his requests.

His plan worked! Over the course of several months, he quickly accumulated virtually every booklet and article the Church published, including the *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*. (Computers today prohibit anyone from copying this method.)

Determined not to take anything at face value, Dave took the tremendous drive he had developed in competitive swimming and applied it to reading the Church's literature and completing the correspondence course. When the literature referenced a Bible verse or passage, he looked it up for himself, wanting to thoroughly "prove all things" (I Thessalonians 5:21) from his own Bible, just as Mr. Armstrong repeatedly urged.

The new Bible student used colored pens and magic markers to jot meticulous notes inside the booklets and articles. (He still has much of this literature.) When he had additional questions, or if the literature prompted Bible study ideas, he made notes for future personal study. Additionally, as was required of all enrollees, he wrote all of the scriptures in the *Bible Correspondence Course* by hand. By actively engaging the literature and doing the included assignments, the basic truths of God were ingrained into the mind.

All that was absorbed through *The World Tomorrow* program and the Church's written works made God's purpose for mankind's existence abundantly clear in his young mind for the first time. As he learned these monumental, incredible truths, the Bible student realized he could not merely believe another man's word—he had to prove the truth for himself. Again, too much was at stake. He knew there was no middle ground—no “halting between two opinions” (I Kings 18:21). These truths led the young man to make some of life's most important decisions.

Juggling schoolwork, swimming practice and maintaining his strenuous workout regimen, while also learning and studying God's truth, proved to be a challenge. After completing the final workout of the day, Dave would spend hours in his bedroom poring over Church literature before finally going to sleep late at night.

The extensive self-examination process triggered by this new knowledge seemed like a long, arduous trial for the high school senior. Yet it forced him to face decisions that would determine the course of his life: *What college or university will I attend? What career or profession will I enter? What kind of person will I become?*—everything flowed from proving God's existence and whether the Holy Bible was His divine Word.

In retrospect, Mr. Pack considered these initial intense months of study one of his greatest blessings—they contributed to, and served to fortify, the depth of his conviction, which would be so crucial in the difficult years ahead.

“I had to prove the truth in a way that most other people were not required to prove it, because I had so much at stake. I had to know completely—*absolutely*.”

In one trial, observing the Sabbath came in direct conflict with a potentially life-long swimming career, and con-

sequently a prominent future position, in addition to the prominent profile of his parents.

Proving the truth beyond any doubt and committing to God's Way would force Dave to give up everything for which he had worked so hard for so many years.

Parents Try to Understand

For the most part, Dave's parents were supportive and willing to accept that he had new beliefs—although they did not expect them to last. As time passed, Ran and Jane found that their son's dedication was not merely a phase.

One muggy afternoon shortly after returning home from Lakewood, Dave had an interesting exchange with his father. While he was mowing the lawn, he heard his father call from the side door, "Dave, lunch is ready! I have boiled hot dogs ready!"

Armed with his new understanding of the Old Testament's dietary laws, Dave asked his father what was in the hot dogs, explaining he could no longer eat pork.

After going inside to check the ingredients, Ran Pack emerged from the house with package in hand. "No problem," he said, going on to explain that the hot dogs were "all meat."

"Dad," his son replied, "it has to say *all beef* on the package."

"Oh, I'm sorry. I understand. Just eat these and in the future we will be sure to get all beef."

Dave respectfully refused to eat the hot dogs, which angered his father. What the teenager saw as commitment to God's laws came across as ingratitude to his father.

"To my father especially, it was as if I was making an issue where there was no need to make one. He was trying to be understanding and helpful, and I appeared unnecessarily rigid."

One of the things that most frustrated his father about his son's new beliefs was that Ran usually learned of them through confrontation. After he had already boiled the hot dogs for lunch, Ran learned that under no circumstances would his son eat pork. When some time had passed, his father accepted this belief. Then the teenager informed him he could not cut the grass on the Sabbath. After Ran accepted this next belief, Dave unnecessarily went on to tell him he would not be voting—or keeping Christmas—or fighting in the military—along with other newfound convictions—on top of statements such as “And I'm done forever with the Presbyterian Church!”

Obviously, Ran Pack was initially unhappy about his sons' adherence to this new understanding of God's Law. Imagine coming home from work to find that the meal your wife exerted time and effort to prepare—deep fried shrimp!—suddenly did not meet your children's new standards. Or that, because they now understood the Sabbath to be on Saturday, they refused to perform yard work on that day. These were trying times for the family; but to their credit, they handled them with a measure of patience and understanding.

There was never anything close to outright war in the home, but there were certainly moments of contention. Ran and Jane felt as though they were put on edge, waiting to hear what “wild” new belief their son would spring on them next, sometimes Bible and Church literature in hand. The fact his brother stood firm with Dave made it easier; it sometimes softened his parents' response. Yet, for a time, they at least somewhat reduced their younger son's commitment to a natural desire to follow an older brother. They would later learn this was wrong.

Starting with the day a son told his father he could no longer eat pork, the Pack household became divided over clean and unclean meats. In a family where the mother loved shrimp and ham, imagine her children suddenly telling her they will no longer eat dinner if it contains these items!

Jane tried to be sensitive to her sons' new religious beliefs. However, as an accomplished gourmet cook, these newly learned dietary restrictions were, at best, confusing.

"What is this about 'fins and scales'?" she asked them. "I thought it was only shellfish you couldn't eat?"—"No catfish? They have fins, don't they?"—"But you can eat grasshoppers because John the Baptist did? What?"

Another instance of these new convictions colliding with long-established family traditions happened after Dave proved the pagan origins of Christmas. Although he did not yet know about God's fall Holy Days, he made the decision not to observe Christmas. He used the opportunity to show his parents Jeremiah 10:3-4, and explain to them the error of putting up a Christmas tree.

By this time, Ran and Jane were becoming more accepting of the adjustments their sons had been making to their lives. Since their daughter had already left home, and the boys refused to celebrate the holiday, the parents were more than happy to save a little money that year by skipping Christmas.

Even Dave's Uncle Frank joked that his annual monetary "Christmas gift" was no longer for Christmas. Rather, it was a gift "that just happened to arrive around the turn of the year." The first time he sent this "new" gift he called it a "Winter Solstice gift." He had read about the holiday's origins from an early edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Frank Crowl had fun with the gift he sent each December, always in some way referencing Christmas' link to the Saturnalia and its pagan roots—all while reminding the family that what he was sending was not to be taken as a Christmas gift.

"Thumping" the Bible

As he grew in spiritual knowledge, the teen became more and more zealous about his understanding. The Bible was real to him—it came alive when he read it.

As with many people excited about learning God's truth for the first time, Dave did not yet *fully* understand that *only* God opens the minds of people and calls them. True knowledge that seemed so simple and logical to the one called was a mixed-up jigsaw puzzle to others. With his exposure to his mother's constant logical argument and debate, he approached family and friends ready to explain this new understanding.

On more than one occasion, Dave tried to explain the Bible to his mother, especially portions about prophecy, and attempted to get her to read certain passages.

He also showed her Church literature, which in the early years included graphic illustrations by WCG illustrator Basil Wolverton. Some were vivid drawings of people struggling and suffering during the coming Great Tribulation, prior to Christ's Return. Other images portrayed people dying from plagues and war, in mortal anguish from famine and pestilence sweeping the earth.

"Mom, this is going to happen!" Dave warned. "These times are coming soon!"

Imagine his mother's reaction, returning home from the golf course, shopping or from a relaxing afternoon with the Bridge Club ladies, only to find her son desperately begging her to heed dire warnings from a man in California prophesying the end of the world! To Jane Pack, the powerful illustrations and compelling literature were merely effective artwork and stories.

On another occasion, Dave showed his mother the Church-produced article "How Would Jesus Vote for President?" As a staunch conservative Republican, she silently rolled her eyes, as if to say, "Here we go again!"

Exasperated, his mother said, "I suppose you think Jesus would vote Democrat."

"No mom!" he replied, to her surprise. "Jesus wouldn't vote at all!" She found this more interesting.

Dave also had a conversation with his mother about John Calvin's view of predestination and how silly the premise

was—from a *logical* standpoint. But in this case, mother and son agreed.

“I have a hard time believing,” Jane Pack said, “that if I make the decision to consciously run up and down the stairs to the point of inducing a heart attack that this was known and pre-ordained by God in advance. If that is the case, then we are all automatons.” To her delight, they both agreed with this perspective.

Dave even tried to convince a few schoolmates of his newfound knowledge, but they were less than receptive. “My new understanding fell *really* flat with my friends,” he recounted.

Several times during his senior year, he brought before the classroom an opposing view, an objection or he raised questions regarding his new understanding. One day in biology class, he commented on the faulty logic of evolution. As Dave explained his point of view, it became clear to him that the teacher was in lockstep with the popular belief that creationism was an antiquated way of thinking. This predominant view of the 1960s was the genesis of the U.S. education system’s march toward the secular liberal thinking of today.

“My class was going one way and I was definitely going another. This much I quickly learned.”

He soon recognized he was making no headway with his peers, so he decided to say nothing more. It became evident it was not profitable to evangelize or proselytize. He learned he was not supposed to singlehandedly convert his friends and family. He recalled, jokingly, that he badly mishandled matters with family and friends as he first learned the truths of God.

Decision to Leave Presbyterian Church

Dave from an early age did have a vague belief that God existed—but God had not been real to him. Until he first

heard Mr. Armstrong on the radio, the young man had never attempted to build a personal relationship with God or find His true Church, nor did he pray or study Scripture for guidance and doctrinal instruction.

Before he listened to *The World Tomorrow* radio program in the summer of 1966, the two or three times David Pack read the Bible, he never got very far. He could not make sense of its seemingly cryptic passages. For this reason, he was not actively seeking God when he first heard Mr. Armstrong's broadcasts.

The closest he ever came to exploring religion (besides attending Easter, Christmas and weekly Sunday services) was when he visited a Christian Science service in Lima with his paternal grandmother. Even then, he only attended to please her. A devout member of the Christian Scientists, she was initially thrilled to have her grandson attend with her, but disappointed when he did not stand up, sing and participate in the service.

Upon turning a certain age, Dave was confirmed into the local Presbyterian Church. He explained years later:

“This involved briefly appearing in front of a panel of deacons to answer questions before gaining membership. I no longer remember the exact details of this cursory examination, but I do recall making some kind of general affirmation about the denomination. I was not concerned in the least with whether I was in the right church, or if I was fulfilling the Bible definition of a Christian.”

This defined Dave's spiritual state of mind prior to hearing Mr. Armstrong's voice on the radio a year and a half later, when he received his first introduction to Christ's statement, “I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The young man immediately realized the true Church of God had to exist, and that

in light of Christ's promise it could not be destroyed. But where was it located?

When he came to full enough understanding of what it meant that God was calling him, Dave told his parents he planned to inform his pastor, Dr. W. Wood Duff, that he was relinquishing his membership in the Presbyterian Church. They initially reacted badly, still not fully grasping the depth of their son's new convictions. Ran and Jane Pack convened an emergency meeting with Dr. Duff, hoping he could talk their son out of leaving. The pastor, instead of accepting the young man's resignation, although polite, dug in his heels, saying the teenager was confused and that the church would keep him on the membership list for another full year, no matter his request to be removed from the church's rolls. If at that point he were still of the same mind, his name would be deleted.

This did not matter. He knew from that moment he was no longer a Presbyterian. He could not ignore the new knowledge and understanding that was becoming clear to him as he pored over the literature and continued daily hearing *The World Tomorrow*.

Senior Year— Difficult Decisions

Unlike today, an age when people from virtually every corner of the world can instantly communicate and exchange ideas via the Internet, it was not as easy to obtain information in the 1960s. Facts and information were not “mouse clicks” away.

When Dave first heard *The World Tomorrow*, he thought it was solely a radio ministry, and that one could only attend The Radio Church of God if the person lived in Pasadena, California. It never crossed his mind that there might be a local Ohio congregation, or that the Church had congregations in cities and towns across the country, and others around the world.

Unlike other religious programs, *The World Tomorrow* did not surround itself with advertisements calling for new members. Instead, Herbert W. Armstrong simply announced the gospel of the kingdom of God. He understood this is where the Church’s responsibility stopped—it was up to God to open people’s minds and draw them into His Church (John 6:44, 65). Only then did the person begin to have a choice, and begin to have an obligation to examine and prove what he was hearing.

Observations at a Football Game

For some time, Dave thought Ambassador College was merely part of the *Bible Correspondence Course*'s name. When he found out it was an actual place, an institution of higher learning—with not just one, but three campuses—he was ecstatic. From that moment, he began to seriously consider attending Ambassador.

However, although he continued to grow in spiritual understanding, like many newly called by God, Dave often wrestled with, or missed entirely, how to correctly apply the truths he was learning.

One Friday evening during the fall of his senior year, he and his brother went to a high school football game. In Lima, this was the place to be on a Friday night. The home team was having a good season, and several of the top players were Dave's friends.

They sat among a crowd of about 10,000 people when the magnitude of the hidden knowledge that he was learning really hit home for the first time. Dave and Bill Pack talked about how amazing it was that they were the only ones in the entire stadium that understood God's truth. Ironically, Mr. Pack commented years later, this revelation came as he and his brother were in fact *breaking* the Sabbath by attending a Friday-night football game!

“I do remember actually pinching myself in that stadium at the thought of what I knew. It was then that I realized that the truth was more than just an exciting idea—it required ACTION. But I was not yet ready to keep the Sabbath.”

This was perhaps the most difficult time for the teenager to be called—particularly for an All-American athlete whose life had always centered on sports. With the majority of

swimming meets taking place on Saturday, Dave struggled with the idea of having to give up all organized sports to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

Making the life-changing decision to obey God's Law would be difficult. The young man knew this. It had been relatively easy to give up eating unclean meats, refrain from doing yardwork on God's Sabbath and to no longer keep Christmas. However, for the 18-year-old, it was a completely different matter to give up a future successful athletic career.

The young man, severely conflicted about participating in athletics on the Sabbath, did continue competing on that day for a time.

Scholarship Offers

As the first semester of his senior year concluded, Dave received about 40 letters, plus phone calls, from colleges and universities interested in him due to his swimming accomplishments. These included many of the "Big Ten" universities across the Midwest, along with dozens of other prestigious institutions nationwide.

To the excitement of his parents, extended family and friends, Dartmouth College and Cornell University also expressed serious interest. Dave formally applied to Dartmouth. At the time, the Ivy League school was hailed (it still is) as one of the best institutions for higher learning in America. Cornell is also an "Ivy."

One of Jane Pack's friends from the country club was married to a Dartmouth graduate. Since the college's policy mandated that each applicant first interview with an alumnus, the Dartmouth acceptance committee assigned the friend's husband to interview the young swimmer.

Dartmouth did not offer athletic scholarships at the time. However, communication with a school representative clarified that there was a tacit understanding: While students

were not technically required to compete in sports with an Ivy League acceptance, it was tacitly understood that if offered an academic scholarship, Dave would represent the college on its swim team.

The parents were thrilled that their eldest son, after he had dedicated himself to years of hard work, might receive a scholarship at such a prestigious academic institution, and one with a respected swim team with which he could continue his training and follow it wherever it would lead. It was an opportunity that the Packs had long hoped for their children.

Revisiting a Promise

Shortly after submitting his application to Dartmouth, Dave, without his parent's knowledge, requested an application from Ambassador College. He familiarized himself with the admission process and returned his application, along with a copy of his high school transcript.

With both applications submitted, the young man faced an important crossroads. Learning the truth for the first time not only led him to reconsider his entire future, it forced him to deal with a promise he had made to his father years earlier. After his sophomore year, the Lima teen and his father had an important "man-to-man" talk. The conversation was a defining moment:

"Dave, you just received high school All-American status. I am proud of you and I do not mind you continuing to focus on swimming. I played sports during school, too, but I *worked* my way through high school.

"So, I am going to make you a deal. I told you when you were young, 'The meat would catch up with the bones,' and it has. I'm not going to require you to get an after-school job—*if* you promise that you will

put all your effort into your swim training so that you can pursue an athletic scholarship for college. Your mother and I will continue to pay all of your bills during high school. Then, if you don't get a scholarship after working as hard as you possibly can for the next two years, we will understand. Your best effort will have been good enough for us. Your mother and I will pay the majority of your college education, with you working your way through as well.

“On the other hand, if you are not going to give it your all, then you need to get a job! We are not interested in giving you a free ride. You know I didn't get one growing up.

“If you decide not to seriously pursue athletics, then after your schoolwork and job commitments are fulfilled, you may swim as much or as little as you like.”

The youth had not needed time to consider his options—he had already made a decision. Without hesitation, he had promised to put his all into swimming. But “I would have done this anyway,” he said.

Dave then intensified his efforts, starting with the grueling training routine that he would continue for the next two years of high school. The swimmer was determined to obtain scholarship offers from the best schools, and did his best not to disappoint his parents.

Nearly two years later after having given his word to his father, the young man's swimming career had taken off. And his accomplishments led to many collegiate letters, which he was confident would turn into scholarship offers.

The agreement he had made with his father had seemed perfect—that is, until hearing *The World Tomorrow* broadcast. Now his whole life's focus was radically changing. He realized that following the truth meant taking a stand, no longer competing on Saturdays, which in turn meant giving up any hope of an athletic scholarship.

Dave knew he had to make a decision. The more he learned and understood, the more conflicted he became. He did not want to break the deal with his father, but neither could he continue breaking God's Law.

Also, another dilemma weighed heavily in Dave's mind: *Should I tell my parents that I'm considering attending Ambassador College instead of pursuing an athletic swimming scholarship?*

He knew that the next step after leaving the Presbyterian Church would naturally have been to tell his parents he was thinking about alternative career plans—that could even lead to the ministry, but that no one could be sure of this in advance. (Up until the early 1970s, nearly all Ambassador College graduates either entered the ministry or were hired in a non-ministerial function into the Church's operations, called "The Work.")

However, given the deal he made with his father, Dave could not bear the thought of breaking his word. Instead of immediately telling his parents about Ambassador, he thought about waiting to see if the college accepted him. Only then would all elements of his path be clear.

Visiting a Congressman

Probably because of a school recommendation, Dave soon learned he was also being considered for an appointment to the United States Naval Academy, in Annapolis, Maryland.

Dave's father and three uncles were veterans of the Second World War, and his Uncle Bill had formerly served as the naval base commander in Pensacola, Florida (which was also the location of the navy flight museum under his oversight). A son going into the armed forces after high school would have brought a great deal of pride to a family that held the military in high honor. Attending the U.S. Naval Academy would have meant so much more, as it would have guaranteed Dave a career as an officer in the armed forces.

However, he understood his new religious beliefs meant that entering the armed forces or a military academy was not an option. His father also came to understand this of his son's convictions.

Still, the consideration came with a required personal interview with his United States congressman, Mr. William McCulloch. Mr. McCulloch had previously served in the Ohio Congress as the House minority leader from 1936 to 1939, and then served as the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives until 1944. Later, from 1947 to 1973, he served as one of the most distinguished and respected members of the United States House of Representatives.

Here was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear Mr. McCulloch's thoughts about one world government, which Dave had heard Mr. Armstrong address numerous times—the gospel message about Jesus Christ soon returning to establish the world-ruling government of God. The young man wanted to hear the national lawmaker's thoughts on the matter.

He was asked to meet with Congressman McCulloch. This was perhaps largely due to his swimming accomplishments, but also because of recommendations from certain school instructors.

The interview came and, as it ended, the young interviewee asked the congressman about his view of one-world government in the hands of men, one that would carry authority over all nations—and whether he felt this might be the answer to the current uncertainty in the world.

The answer was immediate and emphatic. "I do not believe it would work," the lawmaker said. "But if I thought it would, I would shout it from the housetops."

Another part of the process was a mandatory physical at a military base in Columbus, Ohio. When Dave chose not to have his scheduled physical, he had assumed this automatically ended his chances. But some weeks later, when he was

home from school with the flu, the congressman phoned to notify him that he had been appointed to the Naval Academy. In the course of the conversation, Rep. McCulloch explained that the question about one world government was one of the most interesting questions he had ever been asked, and that it played a role in his decision to grant the appointment.

Though he was honored, Dave made it clear he would not be attending the Naval Academy, for reasons of conscientious objection. Mr. McCulloch was surprised, yet impressed with his honesty.

“Young man,” he said, “almost everyone tells me they are going to think about the decision, so they can see their name in the paper. No one rejects an appointment on the spot. Thank you for your honesty.”

He went on to recount stories about how other young men had done this. Sure enough, the next day after the phone call, a fellow athlete and track star at Lima Senior High School also declined a similar offer—but only after making an announcement with pictures provided of the appointment in the local newspaper.

Although attending the Academy had not been an option, the experience left a lasting impression.

A Visitor from Ambassador College

About this same period, in late February 1967, Dave received a surprise visit while practicing with his swim team after school. His coach motioned him to leave the pool, pulled him aside and said, “A representative from Ambassador College is here to see you.”

“A *representative from Ambassador College* is here to see me? Are you kidding, coach?”

“No, he’s from San Jose State,” his coach shot back sarcastically. “Yes, Ambassador College.” (This was the exact exchange.)

Naturally, the young athlete was both surprised and delighted—it would be his first face-to-face contact with a representative of God’s Church and college! But his joy was soon mixed with embarrassment when, standing by the pool dripping wet, he realized he was about to enter a potentially life-changing visit while wearing only a Speedo swimming suit!

The representative, sensitive to the teenager’s concern that he was making a bad first impression, told him, “That’s all right, don’t worry. I’ll wait while you get dressed. I can drive you home from practice and we can talk.”

At the time, it was not understood that the visit was an official interview, part of the Ambassador College application process. He did, however, recognize this was his chance to make a good first impression.

His parents sat in on the visit and were willing to be supportive. The changes they had seen their son make over the past year, beginning with observing God’s Sabbath, made it apparent he was committed to this new way of life.

After the interview was complete, Ran remarked to the representative, “I must admit my son is dedicated to this. If he is giving up his swimming career, it is because he is moving toward a positive goal—even if this isn’t the religion the family chose.”

Walking back to his car with the teenager, the representative, also a minister, said, “By the way, we have a Church congregation in Toledo, Ohio, with 400 brethren.”

What? Dave thought to himself. He had assumed the Church’s California headquarters and college campus was the only congregation in the world. It had never crossed his mind there might be Church brethren outside Pasadena.

“Four hundred people? Are there any brethren close to me in Lima?” he asked.

“Why, yes,” the man replied. “There is an 85-year-old widow who lives across town.” The minister said his next visit would be to another high school student, a name with whom Dave was very familiar.

The young man was thrilled with the possibility of meeting Church brethren and learning much more of God's truth at an actual Sabbath service. Yet the state championships were scheduled to be held on the Sabbath. Dave—still unbaptized and therefore not yet with the power of God's Spirit converting His young mind and strengthening him to overcome weaknesses in the flesh—was again conflicted. The teen was not yet 100 percent committed to God's way of life, so he focused on preparing for the state finals, just a month away.

“I was in conflict over what to do with a career that had lasted so long, and that had taken so much of my time, to the point that it had almost been my life. While only 17, then 18, I did procrastinate for a few months in what was an important matter of obedience in my life. When Jesus spoke of counting the cost before baptism He presented two options, take an army of 10,000 against 20,000, meaning go forward—or sue for peace, essentially meaning to wait for a time before making a decision. While the latter is *never* preferred, it does permit one to ‘buy time’ to think. I suppose it could be said that I sued for peace.”

“Altercation” with Swimming Coach

After failing to win a state title despite being a favorite the previous year, Dave set his sights on finally winning the event for which he had trained so hard: the 50-yard freestyle. This would be his last shot at the state title.

Having also qualified to race in the 100-yard freestyle event, he hoped to win two events in the spring 1967 state finals.

Before moving to Denver, Colorado, the previous summer, Dave's former coach (under whom the teen had practiced during his sophomore and junior years) had stressed to the swim team the importance of arriving early on the day of

the event and using warm-up time to get familiar with the pool before the meet. For this reason, he had for years made certain his swimmers arrived at the Ohio State natatorium one day before the championships.

However, the new coach told the team, two days before the state championships, that they would arrive at the meet without any time to practice and familiarize themselves in the university pool.

Everyone on the team who had qualified had put in many extra hours preparing. With so much at stake, young Dave could not understand his coach's decision. This had never been the custom before.

"Why aren't we going down early to practice?" he *respectfully* asked. "We've always arrived a day ahead of the meet. Should we not go early?"

"That's it!" the coach said. "You are off the team! Get out of practice! You are not going!"

Absolutely shocked beyond words and feeling by the coach's rashness, the young man left practice extremely upset, and returned home heartbroken, tearfully pouring out the story to his father.

As he listened, Ran Pack made a determination: His son had sacrificed for more than 13 years, logging over 7,000 miles to pursue his dream. The WWII veteran, father and successful businessman was not about to let this injustice stand. Would any father?

He immediately walked down the street, three houses away, to the home of the superintendent of all schools in Lima, and the firestorm that ensued showed the magnitude of the coach's outlandish decision.

Hearing Ran Pack's brief explanation, the superintendent said the situation would be immediately resolved. If the coach's foolish decision were permitted to stand, the school stood to lose the prestige it would have otherwise gained. The superintendent then called the principal of the high school, who at once told the coach to reinstate Dave.

Nevertheless, because Ran was a man of principle, he wanted his son to learn a valuable lesson. Instead of coddling him, he forced Dave to swallow his pride and go back to his coach and apologize for any disrespect he *might* have shown. Dave knew he had done nothing wrong, but he learned from this the value of humbling himself anyway, and apologizing. It would be a lesson worth its weight in gold later.

The coach made a scene in the front foyer of this huge, busy high school with students everywhere hearing him screaming at Dave that this had almost gotten him fired. (It was reported that the same coach was terminated two years later for personal problems, and disappeared.)

“This was one of the strangest moments of my life to date. After the apology the coach said that he would ‘think about it.’ Yet I knew the decision had already been made above his head. But I did what my father told me to do. He was called into the principal’s office for a short time. He emerged momentarily literally crying and screaming across a busy high school foyer. He yelled, with scores or hundreds hearing, ‘You almost got me fired!’ Moments later, he came back from the principal’s office a second time, and was meek as a lamb.”

In the end, the team did not arrive in time to practice. Technically therefore, the coach had won. And, without having familiarized himself in what was a difficult pool—Dave lost the 50-yard race, placing second again. He did, however, manage to post the fastest preliminary time that same morning in the 100-yard event. Yet, in another of the most humbling experiences of his young life to that point, he finished a close second in the finals. He had yet again lost his last two shots at winning a state championship.

Despite his status of being a two-time All-American swimmer, and having now posted another honorable-mention

All-American clocking in the longer 100-yard race his senior year, he had lost the title to a mere *sophomore* from Cincinnati.

Last Swim Meet

Several months had passed since Dave had applied to Ambassador College, yet he still had not been notified whether he had been accepted. Pressure was building—time was running out! If he waited too long to hear from Ambassador, only to learn he had not been accepted, he might miss the short window of time to attend another college.

The Lima teen had received numerous visits from various college coaches, some of whom had flown in to recruit him for their swimming team. Dave sought to wait patiently to see if Ambassador College would accept him.

The pressure to make a decision about his future education was becoming almost unbearable. He could not delay finalizing his college plans for much longer.

Meanwhile, at least partly because of the national record he had set the summer before in Lakewood, Dave was given the opportunity to compete in an AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) meet at the Indiana University, in Bloomington, Indiana. As he warmed up in the pool the day before the meet, Dave met the university's head swim coach, James "Doc" Counsilman, considered the most famous—and greatest—swimming coach in the world. Dr. Counsilman had coached the 1964 Olympic swimming team in Tokyo, Japan. He also reached international acclaim in 1961 by becoming the oldest man to swim the English Channel, at age 58.

Coach Counsilman, aware of the Lima athlete and his All-American status, introduced himself and then asked if he could time the young man in a short sprint.

Dave could hardly contain his excitement—he was about to personally swim for the ultimate giant in the swimming world, with several Olympic gold-medalists and other notable

swimmers nearby. He briefly warmed up—and proceeded to swim the fastest time ever recorded for 25-yard freestyle!

“No one has ever swum the 25-yard freestyle in 9.2 seconds!” the amazed coach said as Dave jumped from the water. “And I have it on my stopwatch!” (Just a week after a sophomore had beaten him when it counted.)

The coach then introduced him to Charlie Hickcox, standing nearby. Mr. Hickcox had won seven national titles at Indiana University, and would later, after winning three Olympic gold medals, become a member of the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

“Charlie,” coach Counsilman said, “this kid just swam a 9.2 right in front of me!”

After a brief discussion, Dave told the Indiana coach that he planned to study theology at Ambassador College, but that he was still waiting to hear back from the school.

Mr. Counsilman responded, “Young man, you are barely 18 years old, and look at what you just did.”

This was one of the most dramatic moments in his young life.

Undeterred, Mr. Counsilman immediately left for the university’s theology department and spoke with several professors about Dave’s college ambitions.

The coach returned to the pool and told the young man that Indiana University had a “wonderful theology department”—but this was *not* the theology Dave had in mind.

To make matters worse, Ralph Crowl, Dave’s maternal grandfather, had built most of the existing fraternity houses on campus, and his Uncle Frank was an Indiana University alumnus, from later after the war. The young man’s familial connections to the institution made it even more difficult to respectfully decline further interest from the school.

Mr. Counsilman shook his head in disbelief, disappointed that the talented teen would turn down a chance to attend the university and receive world-class training for the Olympics. The young man’s rationale made no sense to him.

The gentlemanly coach smiled, graciously shook Dave's hand, told him he respected his decision, and walked away.

Lessons About the Sabbath

Dave reflected on his recent swimming performances and defeats. He concluded that losing—two straight years!—was one of the best things that had ever happened to him. It left him sobered over a wrong course of conduct into which he had fallen. Dave had continued swimming on the Sabbath because he wanted to win the state championship. Now that his high school swimming career was over, the magnitude of his compromise with God's Law came crashing down on him.

He was zealous for the truth when it first came to gaining *knowledge*, but he now realized he had put his swimming career ahead of *obedience* to God. He also wanted to avoid embarrassment before his schoolmates and teachers of being an All-American swimmer who quit in the middle of the season, something that would have reflected badly on the high school.

From the beginning, Dave fervently applied changes to other areas of his life. He no longer ate unclean meat, and refused to observe worldly holidays or join the military, among others. But when it came to the Sabbath, even though conflicted, he had still continued to compromise. The bitter experience of losing forged a lesson that would not be forgotten.

Today, Mr. Pack can reflect on this critical period with even more clarity:

“Practically everyone resists God's calling in some way when first being drawn out of the world, and I was no different. At the beginning, the path of least resistance is to obey the easiest or most convenient of God's laws. Many are caught between disbelieving

family members and the excitement of learning the truth of God. The consequences are that some never make it out of this critical first stage and submit themselves completely to God. Eventually, pressure pushes them to turn their back on God's Way. I would not have for a moment entertained going this far, but, again, I did very briefly delay obeying God. That would not happen again."

In a strange irony, later that summer, in the last race in which Dave would compete before going away to college, he tied the fastest time that had ever been recorded in the 50-yard freestyle.

The lesson was not lost on him: When the win did not matter, it was as though God permitted him to have this special moment, with a large crowd witnessing what happened. This served to further underscore in Dave's mind that he had done the wrong thing by placing his swimming career ahead of obeying God's Sabbath command.

Preparing for Graduation

Several weeks had passed since Dave learned there was a congregation in Toledo, and the young man's curiosity about attending had only increased. With his swimming career behind him and the painful lesson of breaking the Sabbath fresh in his memory, he contacted the minister again and this time about attending his first Church service.

A local deacon, Mr. Andrew Prettyman, from near Findlay, some 20 miles northeast of Lima, unselfishly drove to meet with Ran and Jane the Friday evening before he would pick up Dave and take him to Toledo. He wanted to set their minds at ease and assure them their son would not be traveling almost 160 miles (roundtrip total) each Sabbath with someone who was irresponsible.

Witnessing His First "Miracle"

The next morning, April 1, 1967, in Toledo, Dave entered the main hall for services and was greeted by a Church member, who handed the young man a hymnal.

Almost simultaneously, another man hooked Dave's arm and pulled him aside. In a halting, affected voice dripping

with syrupy pretention, the older man declared, “Young man, you have *come*...to hear the *milk*...of the *Word*. The rest of us...have graduated to *meat*. *However*, you are here...to receive MILK.”

Taken aback, the new visitor thought, *Wow, what a deeply spiritual man!* (In time, he would learn that no others put on such pseudo-spiritual phoniness.)

Strange first encounter aside, the whole congregation warmly welcomed the new prospective member from Lima.

Following services, some men in the congregation, having noticed Dave’s height (then 6’6”), immediately drafted him to play on the local Church basketball team. A game was scheduled the very next Saturday evening against the team from the Akron, Ohio congregation. Dave agreed, even though his past commitment to swimming had left no room for playing basketball, beyond a few neighborhood pick-up games years before.

He returned home from his first service, unsure of his basketball skills and worried he would disappoint his new teammates because he had not played in a long time.

Dave certainly had zeal for learning God’s truth, but he still lacked knowledge (Rom. 10:2). For instance, because he did not fully grasp how to properly observe God’s Sabbath, the young man spent much of his first Sabbath afternoon shooting baskets in a neighbor’s driveway.

The next Saturday evening arrived and Dave, having prepared himself for the activity, rode with the same Church family to the Toledo-Akron game in Sandusky. Before playing, Dave was warned to be careful about guarding too closely a certain senior minister on the opposing team, as he was “an evangelist.”

An “evangelist”? Dave wondered. *What do they mean an evangelist? Like Oral Roberts or Billy Graham* (both of whom Ran Pack listened to periodically)?

In the heat of the game, Dave watched a player severely dislocate a finger. The evangelist calmly approached the

man, who was in obvious pain, carefully gripped his hand, as he distracted him, and jerked the finger into place. The player let out a scream.

Impressionable and still growing in knowledge and understanding, Dave thought, *I have just witnessed my first “miracle”! Now I understand evangelists.*

The injured player continued playing, still in some pain, but noticeably improved.

Following the game was a bonfire, at which Dave, while socializing, overheard a conversation between his pastor and the district superintendent (the evangelist), who seemed interested in the young man’s accomplishments, and whether he planned to attend Ambassador. Although the Toledo minister was aware of Dave’s swimming career, this was the first time the Lima athlete realized anyone else in the Church knew about it. The brief exchange encouraged him, since he still had not heard if Ambassador College would accept him.

He returned home and reported the details of his first Sabbath to his brother. From then on, they attended every Sabbath service and Friday night Bible Study together.

This meant that Mr. Prettyman had to regularly drive out of his way at times on many weekends. He would do anything for anyone, going above and beyond in the way that cemented brethren in the earlier years of the Worldwide Church of God. The deacon’s faithful dedication and service became one of the most powerful examples of the give way of life that Mr. Pack would ever see.

“I have never met finer servants than Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Prettyman. The hours and miles they were willing to put in just for an 18-year-old kid were of hall of fame proportions. I lost track of them, and I do believe that both are deceased. It did not surprise me to hear that Mr. Prettyman went on to be a local church elder. One just could not wish for a finer first example of service, and with kindness, than his whole family.”

Mrs. Armstrong's Death

Two weeks after his first service, Dave heard that Mrs. Loma D. Armstrong—Mr. Armstrong's wife of nearly 50 years—had died after an extended illness at age 75. The young man did not then fully grasp the impact that her death had on all congregations, but it was a solemn and sad day for the brethren.

Almost exactly four decades later, Mr. Pack would find himself revisiting the circumstances of Mrs. Armstrong's death, as that event would carry a much greater and personal meaning to him.

Days of Unleavened Bread

Though certain friends in Lima grew more distant because of his new religious beliefs, both brothers were excited about what they were learning, which brought them even closer. They each had someone with whom they could share the understanding about God's truth.

In the spring of 1967, the two boys observed God's Holy Days for the first time. Although they understood the command to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread, they did not yet know exactly *how* to keep the annual festival. They soon learned that not only did they have to avoid leaven, but they were also required to eat unleavened bread on each of the seven feast days.

One evening while finishing dinner, with sunset drawing near, the boys realized they might not be able to eat unleavened bread before sunset. The Pack brothers pleaded with their mother to bend the long-standing rule of them having to clean the kitchen after dinner, so that they could leave and purchase unleavened bread before sunset. But she would not give them permission. They decided that they could do the dishes and still "make it."

The boys rushed to clean the plates, cups and utensils. As soon as they were finished, they jumped on their bikes and raced about one mile to the grocery store. With only a minute or two to spare, they tore open a package of *rye crisp* and began eating the dry, unleavened crackers—while still standing in the checkout line! The scene brought curious and puzzled looks from the checkout clerk and other customers. It was as if they thought, *What kind of strange, sweaty teenage boys could possibly be so hungry for boring, joyless rye crisps?*

“How ironic today that some people in the splinters now claim that one does not have to eat unleavened bread *every* day during the spring festival, but rather only *avoid* leavened bread during this period, as though this is what the Church or Mr. Armstrong always taught. This is ridiculous, and my story carries that message from over 40 years ago. My brother and I still laugh at a moment we could not possibly ever forget.”

Accepted to Dartmouth—then Ambassador!

On April 15, 1967, Dave received a letter from Dartmouth: He had been accepted—and with a special one-of-a-kind grant-in-aid included! In fact, it was explained as the largest similar grant ever offered to a student accepted to Dartmouth College.

The news was bittersweet. The Dartmouth letter stated that Dave had to accept or decline the offer by May 1, or else the school would rescind it. Meanwhile, he still had not received a response from Ambassador College.

The young man was not sure what to do: *Should I wait for Ambassador's response until after the deadline—and miss an opportunity to attend an Ivy League school? What if I am not accepted by Ambassador? Should I accept Dart-*

mouth's offer in 15 days and thereby forego the incredible opportunity to attend God's college?

The driven teenager grew anxious as the Dartmouth deadline approached. He knew he would be intensely disappointed if not accepted to Ambassador and “forced” to attend Dartmouth.

A decision had to be made! Dave decided to write the Ambassador College Admissions office and explain his predicament. He worried this could come across as impatient and pushy—but it was a risk he simply had to take. He *had* to know Ambassador’s decision, or he might lose the option of attending either school.

Dave did not have to wait long for an answer. Unbeknownst to him, his father had decided to himself contact the office of the Registrar. The Registrar listened to the inquiry and the circumstances, momentarily left the phone, only to return and report “Your son’s paperwork all seems to be in order, and he is accepted.” Ran Pack walked in and with a kind of triumphant confidence declared, “You’ve been accepted to Ambassador College.”

His son was ecstatic!

College Tuition Assistance

Attending Ambassador meant that Dave’s life was on a thrilling new course. Thirteen years of training in the water, and a childhood that, in at least a sports regard, had been an extremely difficult grind, was now over. He was relieved that the exhausting, never-ending training regimen *had* ended—and it was behind him forever.

But another obstacle loomed. Dave realized that turning down the Dartmouth grant meant he would have to pay for his own education—entirely.

In 1967, the annual cost of attending Ambassador was about \$2,000 (for tuition, room and board). But the actual expense was more than \$13,000 per student. The difference

of over \$11,000 was underwritten by the Church. This expense was justifiable because the school was an intense training ground for those who would upon graduation either enter the ministry, or join the Headquarters staff or the college faculty. Students were taught to see their time at Ambassador as an unparalleled privilege available to but the tiny few blessed to attend. The Church's willingness to put in such a huge investment in individual futures also put a certain pressure on the students to live up to all it meant to be an "Ambassador."

Dave's decision to attend Ambassador was difficult for his mother to accept. Not a sentimental or emotional woman, she acknowledged crying about his decision to decline the prestigious Dartmouth.

However, his parents soon surprised him when they offered to pay \$500 each year (25 percent of the total college expenses), plus help with travel costs—despite the fact that he had turned down Dartmouth and "broken the terms" of the agreement the high school senior had made with his father two years earlier. (They would later double this amount to \$500 per semester his junior year.)

Ran Pack, also speaking for his wife, who was present, told his eldest son, "I have to admit, you never stayed out late, you never broke curfew, you never got in trouble on the streets, and you were not a problem to your mother and me. We are proud of your commitment and respect your decision."

The friends Dave had chosen had, in certain ways, shielded him from many of the problems to which young people fall prey—and his parents had noticed.

Humiliated

Unbeknownst to Dave, Dartmouth had notified administrators at his high school of his acceptance to the college. The principal, Howard Scharman, entered the classroom, interrupting the English teacher, Mrs. Johnson.

“I have exciting news!” he said. “We have a young man sitting right here in this class who has been accepted to Dartmouth college—Mr. David Pack.”

Everyone turned and stared at the teenager of the moment, who sat near the back of the room. The teacher, Mrs. Johnson, rose and congratulated him, with some of the class lightly clapping.

“Of course, you are going to attend, aren’t you?” the principal asked.

Thirty sets of eyes were now on the too-big-to-hide student. The news was more than just a “feather in his cap”—it was also a “feather in the cap” of the high school. Further, a number of teachers and administrators had gone out of their way to write strong recommendations on his behalf.

“No, sir,” he answered, “I am not,”

The principal paused, incredulous to what he just heard.

Without asking why, he responded, “Then you are a *very foolish* young man!”, before wheeling around and marching out of the room.

This was horribly embarrassing. After the incident, Dave quickly went from being the local athletic hero to practically the school outcast. Many felt betrayed. His teachers felt they had invested in this “All-American swimmer,” who had now turned his back on them. No one could understand why he was choosing this “strange” new path.

His peers ridiculed and mocked him openly in class. Knowing he turned down the Naval Academy, and now considering him a pacifist, and realizing he would not retaliate, they called out, “Here comes Jesus!” when Dave was coming. Or, because of his height, they said to him, “How’re you doing, Mt. Sinai?”—all because they learned that he planned to attend a religious college.

Considering his competitive nature and having been taught to defend himself, biting his lip was one of the most challenging things Dave had ever faced.

But time passed, and friends moved on, deciding it was easier to distance themselves. The high school senior soon found he was alone. Thankfully, school was out a month later.

In the end, being taunted and shunned by certain people only intensified Dave's burning desire to turn the page in his life. He looked forward to moving on to the next chapter: attending Ambassador College and participating in the Work of God.

Draft Board Battle

As graduation approached, and the taunting and social persecution continued, Dave faced a more pressing issue: He had been drafted to serve in the Vietnam War. As required by law, he had registered on his 18th birthday, December 7, 1966. But God's truth had already taught him that he could not fight or engage in warfare in any fashion. He would have to claim conscientious objector status.

Avoiding the draft in the 1960s was no small feat. Many of the men who chaired draft boards had watched their own friends die in the Second World War. These seasoned veterans were not impressed with pacifists and draft-dodgers. They were tired of seeing America becoming socially and politically polarized with riots in the streets and sit-ins protesting the war in Southeast Asia. Draft boards considered most objections as an excuse for cowardice.

With this as a backdrop, Dave prepared to defend his conscientious objector stance. The board examined his written request for exemption, and in light of what they viewed as a "recent conversion" to this "religious thinking," disputed the sincerity of his request. It seemed to them that the young man was using "beliefs" to insulate himself from the war.

Dave was adamant. Appearing before the board, in the spring, he said, "Wait a minute. I've *given up* scholarships. I

turned down an appointment to the Naval Academy. I am going to go to a religious college—and I am *not* going to fight.”

Yet, no matter how solid his logic or determined his stance, the board ignored the request.

But in a turn of events, their decision to dispute his status was essentially nullified because all male Ambassador College students received automatic “4-D” status. Attending the religious school was considered ministerial training. Granting a 4-D status meant he had at least four years until his case would be revisited.

Commencement

Two weeks later, the senior wore his cap and gown, and graduated from high school. He watched 534 other seniors walk across the stage, all embarking on a new phase of their lives.

Sitting out on the field of the football stadium, where graduation was held, it struck Dave that he was in the same place he had been when, one Friday evening nine months earlier, he had realized the unbelievable gift with which he had been blessed—that of understanding the precious truth of God.

His classmates could still not understand why he was giving up his athletic career, and virtually all association with them ended with the conclusion of the ceremony.

Dave felt overwhelmed with his new calling. In the truest sense, *this* was a commencement: He was leaving behind his old life and starting a new one. Relieved that school was finally over, he could now focus on preparing for Ambassador College.

Pawning Trophies

With his parents promising to cover 25 percent of his college costs, Dave set out to earn as much as possible before he left for Pasadena.

During his years of competitive swimming, Dave had won 43 trophies; many were large and very beautiful, and of much better quality than the trophies given today. He carefully put them into a box and took them to a pawnshop. He asked the man behind the counter, “How much will you give me for these?”

“I’ll give you one dollar for each trophy,” the man answered.

The college-bound student did not hesitate. He left the shop with \$43.

Though he wished decades later he had, perhaps, kept just one trophy, he was excited back then about starting a new life. The trophies meant nothing in comparison to the awesome path that lay ahead.

“I had no intention of looking back. Yes, I do wish I had kept just one trophy to show my children. But I still have all or most of my medals—and I have never even once, since 1967, taken the time to examine them, even though they hang on the wall in a display prepared by my wife. (I think there is a picture of a display of them in the biography.) In fact, telling this story is the first time I have even *thought* about these medals in decades. I have never for one minute regretted that my swimming career was over and that most symbols of it are gone.”

Selling his hard-earned awards also provided a sense of closure—and relief. The belittling grief from friends and acquaintances, the pressure of proving the truth, having finally gained the support and respect of his parents, the tense anticipation over his acceptance to Ambassador—it was all finally over!

As he did not net much from the sale of the trophies, Dave spent the summer working as the head lifeguard at a new local swim and tennis club.

Details and Timeliness

Dave's summer job meant he was usually responsible for closing the pool at the end of the night. This set the stage for one of the greatest early lessons he would learn.

One summer evening, at exactly one minute before the 9:00 p.m. closing time, he scanned the wide open fields completely surrounding the pool, glanced down the street, and saw that no one was approaching. Though anxious to get home, he slowly left the complex, locking the door behind him.

The next morning, a call came from the club manager, who asked, "Did you close the pool early last night?"

Dave answered, "There was no one anywhere near the pool when I left at, perhaps, a few seconds before closing, literally."

"That's not what I asked," his boss shot back. "One of the board members claims he arrived last night right before nine o'clock, and wanted to jump in the pool to cool off. He claims he would have had time to quickly hop in, but it was locked for the night and he saw you riding away."

Dave explained that there was no possible way the man could have arrived at 8:59 p.m. His supervisor acknowledged the probable exaggeration, and agreed there was no way he could have been at the pool before nine.

Then he asked, "What time *did* you close?"

"At a few seconds before nine o'clock."

"Well, regardless of whether the man was there or not, you knowingly broke the rules. You are fired."

The 18-year-old was stunned. He had been trying to save every penny he could for the upcoming school year, and now had lost his job—with a full week left in the summer.

The club manager was also a member of the high school faculty. There was little doubt that the termination was at least partly retaliation for the decision to end his swimming career.

A sobering lesson was learned that day: the importance of being on time and paying attention to detail, in addition to the cold reality that religious persecution can come in subtle forms.

Final Advice

Summer ended and Dave was ready to depart to California. Meanwhile, his parents wanted to ensure he was prepared for the life-changing path he had chosen—to squarely face the challenge and learn as much as he could along the way.

His mother had, for 18 years, prepared him for social situations, and continually focused on logic, vocabulary, grammar and proper etiquette. Not only did she offer words of encouragement before he left, but she also wanted his appearance to be proper.

Having long stressed the importance of quality, Jane Pack took him to a local tailor and had a beautiful navy suit and custom-tailored sport jacket made for him—his first of each. She wanted her son to present a proper appearance at college.

“Dave, you must realize that you are a tall man,” she told him. “This means you should always *follow* (classic) styles, never try to *set* them!”

She taught the young man to choose conservative clothing—helpful guidance for which he was grateful.

His father also gave him sound counsel in a meaningful conversation that took place on a walk just days before his son left for college. As the two walked together, Ran Pack spoke words of advice still seared in his son’s mind today: “Son, 50 percent of college is being away from home. Never forget this.”

His father was not diminishing the importance of academic achievement, but rather stressing the necessity of becoming *independent*—of standing on one’s own feet. College—being away from home—would force more learning.

He continued, “Dave, beginning with leaving for college, you have to ‘cut the mustard’ on your own.”

From his earliest memories, the son had heard this phrase, but now the words hit home.

The elder Pack reminded his son that he had declined scholarship offers to the Naval Academy, Dartmouth, and other schools, and now had to forge his own way.

He said, “If this is truly the path you have chosen, son—go succeed! You know your mother and I will always be encouraging and supportive, but beyond helping with tuition, our support is over. You are on your own! Failing and returning home is *not* an option!”

His father’s words sobered him. There was a reason he spoke as he did—he knew his oldest son well. Ran Pack had always taught his son to rise to the challenge before him and to do the best he could, realizing that no one could do more.

Ran had also repeated to his children, time and again, during their growing years Harry Truman’s adage, “There is plenty of room at the top in life. It is the bottom that is crowded.”

Dave took his parents’ advice to heart. He was motivated. He came over time to recognize that the time and energy he had expended preparing for an illustrious swimming career might now help him achieve success at Ambassador College.

Arriving at Ambassador

Recent high school graduate David Pack did not know what to expect when he would arrive in Pasadena, California. His excitement had increasingly grown over the summer as he looked forward to studying and living on campus at God's college and Headquarters.

In the back of his mind, the youth hoped he might one day be considered for service in the ministry. However, because he had only recently started attending services, the process of becoming a true minister of God was largely a mystery to him. He had recognized that one had to be *called* by God, which meant being selected by His servants at Headquarters. Therefore, David concluded it was wrong to actively seek or even hope to be in the ministry.

The Purpose of Ambassador

At his last Sabbath service in Findlay, Ohio (on this congregation's first Sabbath as a new congregation) before leaving for Ambassador, the minister very carefully explained a scripture that forever changed the soon-to-be student's attitude.

His pastor, with Bible in hand, turned to I Timothy 3:1 and said, “Look at this verse: ‘If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good *work*.’”

The student to be had not noticed the scripture before.

“You’re going to go to Ambassador College,” the man said, “and you’re going to hear, ‘Oh, you would never want to *seek* the ministry. It’s a calling. You should flee from it like Jonah; then wait to be drafted by God.’ That thinking is false.

“Now I’m not disagreeing with other ministers, but I see a tremendous desire in you,” he continued, “so I’m going to tell you to go out there and believe what the Book says. He that desires the office of a bishop desires a good *work*. Don’t covet the office, the power or the influence. But desire, ‘covet,’ the work and the service when you get there.”

Hearing the minister explain the verse was a life-changing moment—it was as though a switch had been flipped in his mind. From then on, he decided to do everything he could to prepare to become a minister, because he desired to serve. If the opportunity would someday come, he wanted to be ready—*whether* it came was to be left to God to determine.

Understanding the correct message in the verse left the young man feeling confident that the path he had chosen was indeed the correct one. He *knew* without a doubt he had made the right decision to attend Ambassador College.

Arriving in California

The next morning, Jane Pack drove her son to the Toledo airport, where he boarded a plane headed for California, three time zones away. Two other Ambassador-bound students were also on the flight.

By the time the plane landed at Los Angeles International Airport, the sun had already gone down, yet the weather was still hot and muggy.

Having lived in Ohio the first 18 years of his life, Mr. Pack was struck by how strange the Southern California

landscape appeared, as the shuttle to Pasadena drove by pumping oil derricks and towering palm trees. This was the first time he had been west of the Mississippi River; the surroundings were quite a change from the Midwest.

The Lima native was picked up at a hotel drop-off point by a junior student—a young man who would become a friend and fellow minister. (Sadly, 26 years later, this very person would do all he could to help get Mr. Pack fired from employment in the Worldwide Church of God.)

The new freshman arrived on campus late Sunday night and was taken to Manor Del Mar, a beautiful, historic old mansion that had been converted to student housing. *I'm going to be living here?*, he thought.

However, some of the fire of enthusiasm quickly dampened when, upon entering the room assigned to him, the “long” student saw his bed—a small upper bunk barely six feet long! He spent his first night trying to sleep in a bed that (he joked years later) “was obviously designed for Mickey Rooney.”

The dorm monitor, the first person who greeted him upon campus arrival, happened to be the student body president. He listened to the young man plead his case that, at his height, he would have an impossible time sleeping on such a small bed. The next day, the dorm monitor took the new arrival to the Student Housing Department and found a special extended-length (and width) bed. The student from Lima would use it for the next four years until graduation.

With “bed reassignment,” David was transferred the next day to a different dormitory, at 360 Grove Street, for the duration of his freshman year.

First Days on Campus

On his first morning, an excited student awoke with the full realization that he was away from all that was familiar, in-

cluding his family—and he only knew two people on campus, the two fellow students from Toledo.

But homesickness only lasted for about a day as he began to meet fellow students and faculty. Mr. Pack adjusted to his new surroundings, drinking in the sheer joy of finally being at Ambassador College, now with most of the pressures from family and friends behind him.

Unsure of what to do next, the All-American swimmer went where he knew he would be instantly comfortable: the college natatorium.

Next, he decided to visit the gymnasium to try basketball at a higher level. He hoped that, similar to his first Sabbath in Ohio, he would quickly make friends through the sport. Though he was nervous his height might cause people to automatically expect him to be a better player, he laced up his shoes and headed to an open gym. There Mr. Pack saw for the first time Garner Ted Armstrong, Mr. Herbert Armstrong's son, and introduced himself to other students.

During his first few days on campus, the young student became acquainted with the faces of senior ministers at Headquarters—Roderick Meredith, Al Portune, Dibar Aparthian and others—men who had to this point only been names on booklets or articles in the Church's publications. Like other freshmen, the new student was wide-eyed, thrilled to see these men in person; he almost "thought the earth would shake when they walked past."

Far more exciting, all freshmen students had the opportunity to spend their first Sabbath service on campus, where they saw the man who was the voice millions of listeners heard on *The World Tomorrow*: Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

Landscaping—then "Faculty"

During orientation week, one of the first and most important responsibilities of incoming freshmen was to apply for a job on campus. Usually first-year students were assigned to the

entry-level, physical tasks: kitchen duty, janitorial work or gardening. The menial labor of washing dishes, cleaning bathrooms (and toilets) and landscaping duties in the hot summer sun and smog of Southern California helped new students develop a strong work ethic. It also helped them to understand the effort and organization needed to support campus operations and maintain the beautiful environment.

The Personnel Department assigned David to work in the Landscaping Department to help maintain the magnificent campus grounds and gardens. He accepted the simplicity of the assignment, which would allow him to use some of the skills his parents had forced him to hone while working in the yard.

Just hours after receiving his landscaping job, the young man decided to get some exercise swimming in the gymnasium/natatorium complex. There he met Dr. Floyd Lochner, a former world record holder in the 3,000-meter steeplechase from 1932-1935. (Dr. Lochner broke his leg just prior to Adolf Hitler's controversial 1936 Berlin Olympics. Two weeks before competing in the Olympic trials, his cast was removed and he placed fourth—just missing one of the top three places necessary for being selected to the U.S. Olympic team.)

“So *you* are David Pack,” he said to the freshman. “What is your job here on campus?”

Naturally, the young man was taken aback that Dr. Lochner knew his name.

When he mentioned his new job in landscaping, Dr. Lochner seemed surprised. He promptly told him he would no longer be an employee of the Landscaping Department, but rather would work as a physical education faculty member. He added it had “already been worked out.” (In fact, the 18-year-old was unaware that, due to his accomplishments back home, he had been assigned to the faculty before he even set foot on campus.)

What?, the freshman thought. *I'm on the faculty?*

After this assignment, problems began.

Human Nature Surfaces

The majority of staff and faculty understood they were on campus to serve. But a few individuals, who misunderstood the true purpose and correct administering of God's government, sought opportunities to "humble people on God's behalf." This minority practiced a controlling style of "leadership," harshly correcting students unnecessarily. After orientation week ended, David immediately ran into this.

Although most in the Physical Education Department might have been excited to have him on campus, some were determined to "humble him."

David reported early for his first day of work to where Dr. Lochner had directed him to go—to "take a seat in the gymnasium foyer area." However, the instructions had been brief; the student was unsure of exactly what to do. Entering the complex, he sat in the lobby and waited. A staff member walked by, saying, "Come downstairs and change clothes."

David trailed him toward the locker room, relieved at being pointed in the right direction. On the way, they passed the open door of the faculty locker room, where they saw one of the coaches, whom David had not yet met. The coach, his feet propped up as he ate a sandwich during his lunch break, called out gruffly, "Why aren't you dressed?" The entire Physical Education department was seated on the floor eating lunch.

David answered, "I was waiting upstairs, but I wasn't sure where to report or what to do, so I—"

The coach cut him off mid-sentence and yelled, "Don't pull that All-American (expletive) with me!"

The freshman from Lima stood dumbfounded, shocked that a faculty member at *Ambassador College* would ever use *foul language*! Plus, David had done absolutely nothing wrong, yet this man was so quick to accuse and humiliate him.

Rather than get angry, the student hurriedly entered the locker room to do as instructed.

A few hours later, the coach apologized for his outburst, saying he regretted what he had said. Someone had apparently taken the coach to task.

The immediate sobering reality that Ambassador was not the expected “Millennium on Earth” hit home. David was learning that, even though this was God’s college, human nature was still very much present.

First Task

His first assignment as a “member of the faculty” was to teach a softball class comprised of senior students—but there was a problem: The 18-year-old had never taught a class of any kind, plus he had played very little softball back home. As a softball instructor, he literally did not have a clue of what to do.

As chance would have it, the student body president (recall the dorm monitor from David’s first night on campus) was in the class. Since David was unsure of how to proceed, the man mercifully helped him organize the class.

Next, David learned he would be instructing a badminton class. This presented another problem: He knew what “bad” meant, and he knew what “mittens” were, but he had little idea how to teach “badminton.”

David was then assigned to lead physical education classes, despite lacking proper guidance and teaching experience. Mr. Pack looked back later, realizing this could not have been by accident. He was being deliberately tested.

Thus, his faculty career began inauspiciously and without much instruction whatsoever—punctuated with verbal abuse and foul language.

The utopian expectation of Ambassador College was further shattered after the small town Ohio native learned that “locks were used on the campus.” *How could there pos-*

sibly be a need for locks among God's people?, he asked himself. It had, almost literally, never crossed his mind that fellow students and faculty members, though privileged to study and work at God's college, still possessed human nature, and that a few might give in to the temptation to steal—or that outsiders could come on campus for this purpose.

Social Situations

Although shy earlier, David did not have a hard time meeting people. He found the majority of students friendly and welcoming, which was reassuring to a young man who had recently come into the Church and left his family three time zones away.

“Before I arrived, I heard that only one in eight applicants were accepted and it made me feel incredibly grateful. Largely due to my lack of social confidence, I didn't see myself as special in any way. I think because of my height and athletic history, some mistakenly assumed I might be quite arrogant or overly confident. As a younger man, there were of course certainly elements of these, but the reality was that I was very insecure and uncertain of myself, and felt I had a tremendous amount to measure up to.”

Although he met many helpful students, he also came to realize that some were disingenuous in their offers of friendship. Even several Imperial School students (those who attended the K-12 school for children of Church members, college faculty and staff) sought his friendship because of his previous athletic accomplishments in a world in which they had not participated. A few hoped that since he had only recently learned God's truth, he would be worldly, “cool” and more inclined toward what was always their borderline behavior.

Those who thought this way could not have been more wrong. If David had intended to live a worldly lifestyle, he would have accepted a scholarship to one of the many secular universities that had pursued him in high school. He chose to study at Ambassador because he chose to learn, practice and experience a *different* way of life—God’s Way.

Attending Classes

Upon attending his first class, David realized how different it was from his high school curriculum. High school had revolved around the importance of accumulating general knowledge and information—but classes at Ambassador focused on teaching young people how to live, and the details of God’s ultimate plan for humanity. Lectures on Bible prophecy and the answers to life’s greatest questions immediately captivated him. David took meticulous notes, which he still refers to on occasion, even today. (His notes would one day prove to be helpful in a way he could never imagine.)

Unlike high school, amazingly, *everything* made sense and any freshman student could prove the truth he or she was learning directly from the Bible! Administrators did not teach “book knowledge” students were required to “regurgitate” only once on a test—rather, they emphasized logical thinking, intense analysis and precise articulation. One knowledge-hungry freshman from Lima could not get enough!

To help effectively retain the information he was rapidly learning, David determined to rise each morning between 6:00 and 6:30 a.m. to study. Through all of his freshman year and beyond, he went through the entirety of the Old and New Testaments highlighting his Bible according to subject and summarizing each book and chapter.

“In my sophomore year I arose at 5:00 a.m. every day to carefully highlight every verse in all of the

Old Testament prophets. I was very serious, and I determined I was going to continue recording the full biblical proof of absolutely everything. I was going to focus on all of the doctrines, and continue doing this in different ways through all four years. I diligently dug into God's Word, and when I was told that 'You need to study, research and know these things,' I took it seriously and did it every time."

The Bible from which he preaches still carries the notes he gained from a priceless, four-year Ambassador College education.

Developing a System of Bible Marking

It was during his freshman year, but the process also continued into his sophomore year, that David came to recognize the importance of having a systematic, working system for effectively marking his Bible. Above all, he wanted to thoughtfully develop a system because first, Bibles were expensive, but also because it would be difficult to start over as he had already once had to do, and further that whatever method he chose would be used for years to come.

He first began by carefully querying ministers, as well as many senior students and upperclassmen, about how they put notes in their Bibles. He had heard different people use different methods so he asked them if he could see their Bibles.

First, it was immediately obvious that all different kinds of Bibles and translations were used. Some had wide margins, and others had no margin. He observed that some people used a coloring system, while others never used colors. Others wrote over the top of the text, while some only wrote in the margins. Some underlined; others used symbols next to different topics. For instance, anything on *Christ's millennial reign* would have a "1000" next to it or over it, de-

pending on available space. Anything regarding *marriage* would be marked with an “M.” He also learned, painfully, which pens were not good to use, that some quickly bled through the pages of the Bible. Avoid red at all cost.

After examining a wide range of note-taking methods, early in his sophomore year he concluded that there was no *one* correct way to mark a Bible, with all others wrong. Although he saw many elements he could use, he knew that his system had to work for *him*. In the end, David’s system was a *compilation* of other people’s systems, using colors, notes over text and in small print in the margins, and a handwritten topical index in the back, coupled with his own ideas. He also chain-referenced much of the old *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course* through his Bible.

Later in his ministry, his heavily marked Bible allowed him, if asked, to give a sermon or sermonette at the last minute. And in-depth study of certain Bible chapters or books enabled the delivery of much richer and more interesting sermons. Messages on Jonah, Philemon, Romans 12 and the series on I, II and III John are all examples of this. (Later, a complex color-driven system was developed for sermon notes.)

After developing this specific system, notes from class lectures were systematically transferred into his Bible. In classes when the lectures moved slowly enough, notes would be written into the margin of his Bible. Although many students did this, David found that, in most classes, not all, he could not move fast enough to cover enough material and still be legible later. He wondered, *What is the best system to include these crucial notes into my Bible?*

The young college student’s conclusion ultimately cost him vast quantities of hours, but it is one that he does not regret. He decided to carefully write his notes into his Bible *outside* of class. This meant spending mornings before class, time in the evenings, as well as extra hours during the Sab-

bath. This process lasted for years, and in some ways continues to this day.

Since the goal was as much information as possible on a page, while still being legible, the notes had to be extremely small. To do this meant writing as fast as humanly possible in a notebook during class, and then later, slowly, painstakingly installing the best summary of wording into the Bible.

A near entire Ambassador College education now exists in the margins of one Bible. Through his years at AC, and after, Mr. Pack did see a few other Bibles with full margins, but this was rare.

Ambassador Club

Although he enjoyed almost every class his first year, there was one that he, at first, dreaded—public speaking. The thought of speaking in front of others seemed frightening. From the very first time, singing “Hot Cross Buns” in grade school, he had come a ways to merely being nervous about doing his best.

David realized that, to his initial dismay, public speaking was not just a required class—it was considered an integral part of Ambassador College training. As a freshman, he spoke in front of an audience in both the required Basic Speech Class (part of the college curriculum), and Ambassador Club, an extracurricular formal speech club required for all male students. The club’s purpose was to train potential leaders to be effective speakers. Five officers under a director, and sometimes an assistant director, led each club of up to 30 members.

The Ambassador Clubs were a picture of precision and order. All members learned that one of the three purposes of club was to “show Church members God’s government in action.”

It was here that David gave his first speech, an “ice-breaker,” an assignment in which he had to introduce him-

self to fellow students and to elaborate on his background, likes, dislikes and general family history.

Speaking in front of others, especially before strangers, did not at first come easily. There was a time or two when the young man was unable to finish a sentence before trailing off and trying to start another thought. One time, the instructor interrupted him in the middle of a speech, asking the freshman to finish the rest of the sentence. While this made David more nervous, it did serve to make him think through where his speech was going at all points within it.

Thankfully, the young speaker soon recognized that careful preparation alleviated almost all the anxiety in public speaking; the material covered and structure of the speech generated its own confidence.

At a later point, David was assigned a “humor” speech. Dreading the day he was to give it, he prepared a speech titled “What in Health’s Going On?” It centered on natural foods, since his parents had recently become intensely interested in natural health—and would about two years later purchase a business selling natural food products.

For one of his second year assignments, an “unusual experience” speech, David went to downtown Los Angeles to attend a Pentecostal revival. He witnessed a shocking scene of thousands of people reeling and screaming in the aisles. Conservatively reared, he had never seen anything like it.

His freshman year drew to a close, and he had gained enough confidence and improved so much as a speaker that he won the Ambassador Club Cup for a speech about a highway accident. This acknowledgement of growth meant the world to him—a young man who initially had lacked confidence in expressing himself verbally before his peers.

The “West Point” of God’s Work

From the moment David set foot on campus, almost every aspect of the school’s operation amazed him. The high cali-

ber of all the events, organizations, activities, classes, food and beauty of the environment was *very* impressive.

Mr. Armstrong always stressed the importance of excellence in *everything*. Even the food provided to the staff and student body was no exception. The quality of meals served in the Ambassador Dining Hall was of the highest standard. The food service staff went out of their way to provide wholesome and natural foods. All meals were prepared, cooked and baked on campus to ensure this level of quality.

Also, Mr. Armstrong wanted college life to reflect a certain standard, yet include a wide variety of activities. Administrators expected students to maintain a rigorous schedule: working several hours a week, maintaining a full course load, participating in sports, and dating fellow classmates, in addition to sufficient, regular deep personal Bible study, prayer and meditation. And these were on top of the intense speech and leadership training of Ambassador Club, held weekly.

Due to a continuously hectic routine, there was very little opportunity for the mindless entertainment with which many college students waste their time today. In fact, David watched only three or four movies his entire college career. The college's rigorous schedule served as a "pressure cooker" to define and develop leaders. Those who experienced Ambassador College firsthand often referred to it as the "West Point" of God's Work.

Mr. Pack looked back decades later and recognized even more how true the "West Point" and "pressure cooker" analogies were.

"There was no question that the schedule was demanding, and in almost every sense. By contrast to worldly colleges, one day a week was gone to the Ambassador student simply because of the Sabbath. Then there were the prayer and study that worldly counterparts would also not be doing. Working usually

about 20 hours a week, plus Ambassador Clubs, chorale or band for some, intramural sports, and almost mandatory dating would all have been on top of what any student in the world would be required to do.”

The physical and spiritual demands required of everyone on campus made the Sabbath a very special occasion. Resting and reflecting on the seventh day of the week made it evident why God had originally made the Sabbath for man—and why He *commanded* its observance.

All male students began the Sabbath enjoying a specially prepared Friday-evening meal, followed by male students usually escorting female counterparts to the weekly Bible study, where Mr. Armstrong or senior ministers spoke and reported news of the Work. The following day, services were held on campus morning and afternoon to accommodate the large number of Church members in the area.

Outside of organized activities, most students spent Saturday nights in their dorms fellowshipping, or using the unscheduled time to catch up on studying. Others used the time to socialize, occasionally going out to dinner with friends.

As often as not, David used this free time to reflect on the path his life had taken—and where he was headed. On hundreds of occasions, he strolled through the lush gardens and fountains of the college campus, sometimes sitting on a bench and meditating. Before leaving for college, his father (as well as those who had previously attended Ambassador) counseled him to “Take time to *think!*”—opportunities he did not want to miss.

He spent many Saturday nights under the stars, contemplating and meditating. He knew if he did not regularly pull back from the daily grind, life would come at him too quickly.

“Some of the best advice I ever received was the ‘take time to think’ counsel given me by my local pastor

just before I boarded the plane for Pasadena. In fact, I still make sure that I find time to do it today. This kind of meditation has a powerful ‘grounding effect’ that must be experienced to be appreciated. King David meditated in the night watches (Ps. 63:6), and Isaac walked in the fields at eventide (Gen. 24:63). I walked and sat throughout the campus in isolated places uncounted times, regularly reminding myself of why I was born and why I was attending God’s college.”

Other times, Saturday nights were occupied with a variety of college-sanctioned activities. In the winter, two class and faculty intramural basketball games were played, the biggest social event of the week. The entire faculty and staff gathered in one location to watch the six basketball teams play (freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior, faculty and Imperial High School). In addition, the pep band performed at the games. In January, the college hosted a tournament with an additional team arriving from the sister campus in Big Sandy, Texas.

Students used Sundays to catch up on assignments or study. Others played sports, went shopping or even worked all day to fulfill their student labor requirement.

Then it was back to the “pressure cooker” on Monday morning every week.

As he grew accustomed to the intense learning environment, the AC student concluded he would not have it any other way.

Life-threatening Trial— and Olympic Training

Settling into a routine at Ambassador, David prepared for the most exciting event of the year: the Feast of Tabernacles. This annual eight-day fall festival foreshadowed the soon-coming wonderful world tomorrow—a time when, after Jesus Christ returns to establish the government of God upon the earth, mankind would experience the peace, prosperity, good health, abundance and justice resulting from obeying God’s laws. Each year, brethren across the world traveled to Feast sites, where they listened to sermons reminding them of their special calling (developing righteous, godly character in preparation to become teachers, priests and rulers in the kingdom of God), as well as enjoying wholesome family-oriented activities.

David very much looked forward to attending his first Feast of Tabernacles, in Squaw Valley, California. There was a mysterious anticipation about meeting and fellowshiping with such a throng of unknown brethren, and being able to “dine” on so much spiritual food.

With the busy schedule of classes and activities, the few weeks until the Feast seemed to fly by—and before he knew it, the time had arrived.

First Feast of Tabernacles

Before arriving at the Feast site, the student body visited the world-famous Yosemite National Park on the way. On the trip's only free day, David and six other students decided to hike up a mountain. At a point, they purposely left the trail to take a shortcut in the interest of saving time—but became lost. The trail was not where they anticipated it would be. Frightened and unsure of how to reach safety before darkness arrived, the seven freshmen and sophomores fought through thick mountain laurel and brush trying to relocate the path as they slowly ascended treacherous terrain.

Hours later and near dark, the group, having had to split up, found the trail once again. In the meantime, concerned faculty chaperones had called the park service. When everyone arrived back in the valley, the group was scolded and “written up” for their carelessness.

The students put their experience behind them and prepared for the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles. All students were assigned to lodge at the dormitory used by the international competitors in the 1960 Winter Olympics.

On opening night, those from the college joined perhaps 7,000 other brethren for services in the Olympic ice skating rink. Other than the Pasadena congregation, the Feast was the first time David had seen so many members gathered in one place.

In one sermon, a minister brought a flashlight to the lectern and, with the lights out, informed Feast-goers that they were the “lights of the world,” regularly flashing the light at key moments. These kinds of messages drove home how different members were from the world around them.

One of the new student's main goals at the Feast was to meet as many brethren as possible, especially the elderly. At AC all freshmen were instructed to try to sit with older people and talk with them. The college student decided to take

this instruction seriously, and to talk with as many elderly people as possible. He noticed that many of them were largely ignored.

At 18, and only having been at AC for six or seven weeks, he began to see the value of such discussions. The Feast in Squaw Valley was the first of many times he made an effort to learn from those older than he.

Talking with one woman from Nebraska was particularly memorable and left a distinct impression on the young student. She had lived a rich life, and was absolutely full of stories of divine protection she had experienced. So much so that he asked her to write a letter about her life so he could give a speech about it. She did, and the letter documented her incredible experiences. (Mr. Pack still has it.) She survived her house being burned down, violent automobile crashes, a flood and two tornadoes, with one of them lifting and throwing her a mile away. Mr. Pack still recalls details of the discussion with this unique woman left out by virtually everyone.

“I sat for hours talking to older people who had been in the Church for years. In those days (1967), many brethren went back to the 1950s, with more than a few going back to the 1930s and 40s during Mr. Armstrong’s ‘Oregon Years.’ I still remember names of people I met. I was in awe of the entire experience.”

David returned to Ambassador College rejuvenated, incredibly inspired by the experience of an eight-day “sermon/fellowship feast.” Careful note-taking left him more enthused than ever to take the lessons of the Festival and employ them.

Deadly Infection Strikes

Although he had acclimated to teaching a variety of sports, shortly after returning from Squaw Valley, David’s faculty

responsibilities shifted to his area of expertise: swimming. In addition to teaching water polo, he taught swimming classes, giving lessons to both Ambassador College and Imperial School students and to faculty. His new duties gave him enough time to get in some personal swimming.

Some weeks later, David caught a minor cold that resulted in a small sore on the inside of his nose. Because he was constantly in and out of the water, and blowing his nose, the scab slowly worsened due to constant submersion in the pool and the drying action of the highly chlorinated water.

Unknown at the time, what had quickly become painful soon developed into a life-threatening staph infection that began to consume cartilage and tissue inside the right side of his nose! David realized its severity only when his nose turned beet red and swelled terribly. The pain was the worst he had ever experienced, and he eventually had to be taken to nearby Huntington Memorial Hospital.

David learned that the area of infection had spread dangerously close to his brain, the physician explaining to him that it had already passed behind his forehead. He was told that meningitis would likely soon strike, meaning almost certain death.

It was on a Wednesday when the doctor informed the young man that, unless treated, he had less than one week to live.

“This was without a doubt the most dramatic moment of my life to date. When I refused any medication, the physician (Doctor Hunnicutt) spoke to me in the bluntest terms he could muster, his exact words being, ‘Young man, this is Wednesday and you will not SEE *next* Wednesday if you do not take one of these sulfa compounds.’ I refused. So he brought in a nurse, while pulling out a list of 37 different options—I still remember—that could save my life. He told me to, literally, ‘close my eyes and pick any one.’

“It was a surreal moment.

“I was not yet baptized, but I was strangely calm at the thought that God would heal me. Baffled and frustrated, the doctor required that I sign a release in front of a nurse, stating that I understood the risk and would not hold the doctor or hospital responsible for what was perceived as a ‘death wish.’ The release statement that was signed is included in the book. I asked a minister to anoint me, and I do know that he called my parents to report the circumstances. Of course, I prayed more fervently than ever before.”

The nurse at the infirmary contacted a Seventh-day Adventist doctor known to students and faculty. He lanced the infection *four nights in a row* at his office until nothing more came out. Finally, the absolutely excruciating pain subsided. The skin on his entire nose literally fell off.

Mr. Pack still carries thick scarring from the damage from the infection, marking the first time he recognized God’s direct—and dramatic!—intervention in his life.

“Called in”

Due to his illness, David missed two weeks of work. His immediate supervisor determined that the freshman’s time in the chlorine-laden pool caused the infection and intensified it. David was told that since the illness was work-related, he would be paid for the time he had missed.

Naturally, the young man was relieved to hear that his time away had not jeopardized his job or cost him hours of work.

When he returned to his regular work schedule, the Personnel Department noticed that some hours turned in for pay were from the weeks he had been in the infirmary. The Personnel Manager, a high-ranking minister, with a staff assistant present, called David in for a meeting. These men

were under the misinformed impression that this “arrogant” 18-year-old had dodged his assignment to the Landscaping Department and had angled for a job on the faculty. They were convinced that his All-American status made him feel he was “above” customary freshman jobs.

As he sat down to meet with his superiors, David was unsure of what to expect.

“You have been stealing!” the manager charged.

The student was at a loss for words.

“I’ve been stealing?” he said. “What do you mean?”

The manager repeated, “You have been stealing—and I expect you to confess!”

Imagine. He had given up his long-held dreams and athletic ambitions to answer God’s calling and attend Ambassador College—he had just recovered from a life-threatening illness—he had left all family and friends behind—he had turned away from many scholarship offers—and now two men were accusing him of being a thief! David Pack was learning that the path he had taken toward the kingdom of God would be laden with intense trials and tests.

The freshman had no clue to what his accusers were referring. He repeatedly asked them to explain, but they refused to give details of the accusation.

“I do not know what you are talking about,” David said.

“You’ve been stealing! Don’t add lying to what you have done!”

The minister grew even more insistent and impatient, now believing the young man was lying to cover up his presumed theft.

The freshman burst into tears as he feverishly racked his brain for what they could possibly be talking about—yet he could come to no conclusion. The last thing on his mind would be stealing from anyone! In fact, he had been so conscious about honesty with finances and tithing that, during his last summer in Lima, he had unnecessarily penalized himself for a perceived slight to God’s Work in tithing.

Mr. Pack recounted the story:

“While working back home as a lifeguard, I earned \$571.42. Because of what happened, I have never forgotten the exact amount I earned in my last summer at home. That summer was the first time since learning the truth that I was able to tithe. I was excited to apply God’s financial principles. I carefully saved my tithes in an envelope, intending to pay them when I arrived in Pasadena. I did not yet understand that the funds should have been sent to Headquarters as I earned them.

“A few days after arriving on campus, I had not yet turned in my tithes. I happened to begin a personal Bible study on tithing, and came across several passages in the Old Testament. I was appalled at what I thought was an apparent misappropriation of God’s tithes. So I gave an extra 20 percent of the part thought to have been ‘stolen.’”

His study took him to Leviticus 27:31: “If a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof.” David did not realize the passage was referring to borrowing from second tithe. Fearing he had *stolen* from God by merely *delaying* his tithe payment, he carefully computed the penalty for his infraction. He “docked” himself by immediately turning in \$57.14—the tithe—plus an additional \$11.43!—20 percent more than the tithe. Horrified at the thought he may have sinned, David erred on the side of paying too much, rather than too little. He had acted with good intentions (though he later came to understand that he had misinterpreted the scripture). This was mere weeks before the confrontation.

Now that he was charged with being “a thief and a liar,” he sat before his accusers wondering what he could have inadvertently stolen or taken.

Finally, the Personnel Manager offered a vague clue. “Well...it has to do with when you were sick,” he said, still leaving out any detail.

Confusion had entered when David had turned in the missed hours as regular payroll instead of filing the required worker’s compensation claim. No one had given him any instruction on how he should have proceeded, and he had neither heard the term before nor been told about it. He had simply been told, “You will be paid for the time you missed.”

Naturally, new students generally possess little real job experience. Few teenagers would know of workers’ compensation, or the rules and regulations accompanying it. David mistakenly believed he should just “turn in his hours for time missed.”

The minister eventually ended the meeting with no further comment.

Confused, and unsure of what he had done wrong, as well as uncertain of how to proceed, a shaken freshman left the office—without specific instructions of what to do next.

This incident became just one of many painful examples in which a young student’s eyes would slowly open to the realization that some in the Church were far from Christian in the most basic conduct, and could even be vengeful—with an innocent person.

Two weeks later, the terrible infection returned, this time surfacing in the young man’s throat, which swelled almost completely shut. God, however, intervened once again. After another torturous battle, David recovered, able again to swallow normally.

Seeking Baptism

Contracting an illness that twice threatened his life—and then God healing him two times—deeply sobered the young man. The intervention had been a powerful faith-builder. He

set his mind to press forward spiritually. He began an intensive study of baptism. On what happened to be his 19th birthday in December 1967, he went for counsel.

The minister said he was “not quite ready” to be baptized, and offered some points to think about. He counseled the young student to slow down and dedicate additional time to deep repentance, to ensure he truly understood the gravity of the decision from a more personal and less academic perspective. The minister explained that God was using recent events to knock him down, adding that God cannot humble an individual, but He can provide circumstances and trials from which one can *learn* humility, and humble himself.

Everyone who comes to repentance and goes through the process of conversion has much to learn from his past mistakes. As is common, there are personal characteristics a teenager simply cannot fully see by himself, and will not for perhaps years. But other people can see them. Mr. Pack said of that time in his life:

“Besides being just 19 years old, my childhood focus on knowledge and logic got in the way of a deep visceral understanding of real repentance. The minister wanted me to be less ‘academic’ in approach to conversion—able to more than just quote relevant scriptures—and to reflect that I was ‘broken up’ about my human nature more than I was evidencing.

“In this regard, certain ministers really helped me—they taught me. There is no doubt of this. Perhaps they saw I was a driven young man. Several did acknowledge this to me, and perhaps this was a reason they sincerely wanted to help. When you think about it, this is the biggest reward that teachers get. I certainly did want to learn, and as much and as fast as possible.”

After intense Bible study and self-examination, the zealous young man returned to counsel a week later.

The minister asked, “Do you see vanity in yourself? How about jealousy, lust and greed? Do you see envy, resentment, hatred, pride, anger and the deceitfulness of the human heart?”

Through continued counseling, “counting the cost” and coming to more deeply understand the decision, David Pack was baptized December 14, 1967.

Olympic Training

In February 1968, Dr. Lochner summoned David to his office and told the freshman that leaders at Headquarters wanted him to resume the intense swimming training he had done prior to coming to Ambassador, and to prepare to qualify for and to compete in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics.

The Games are traditionally held during the summer months, but this was not possible in the blazing heat of central Mexico. Instead, the Olympic Committee rescheduled them for early fall—providing David with eight full months in which to prepare. But in order to recapture his former competitive level, and qualify for the United States swim team at the Olympic trials, he needed to start training *immediately*.

The freshman was not looking forward to revisiting the grueling routine he had left behind almost a year earlier. With his life now completely redirected, the focus was on receiving an Ambassador College education. Baptized, he was beginning to make strides spiritually and socially, and had enjoyed the now five months of campus life—without the burden of a near-torturous schedule of competitive swim training.

Although honored, David told Dr. Lochner he did not mind giving swimming instruction, but preferred to leave competition in the past. After 14 years and 7,000 miles in the water, and in many ways *underwater*, he wanted to focus on his college life above the surface.

Dr. Lochner emphasized that *many* senior figures in the Work wanted the freshman to compete in the Olympics—including (he said) Mr. Herbert Armstrong, his son and much of the faculty. And there was only a limited timeframe to resume training.

“I was puzzled when I learned that my swimming career might not be over. In my mind, once I chose Ambassador, it was a clear choice to end my career. However, there were two things that I now became aware of: I had not only made at least an impression with some senior ministers, but also with certain other officials at Ambassador College.

“I was unaware that at the time there was a consensus already forming in Pasadena concerning the possible impact my career could have in raising the profile of the Church and college. That this was even thought of as something that could benefit the Work as a whole surprised me. I was told that Mr. Armstrong and other senior leaders believed that my possible participation in the Olympics could bring Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God from relative obscurity to being more widely known.

“But I had grave doubts about whether God was in this decision, and whether I was really either fast enough in the first place or had enough time to still get ready.”

David returned to his dormitory to pray and meditate about the situation. He wanted to do as instructed—especially if Mr. Armstrong felt it was the right decision. That would change everything if true.

Virtually everyone on campus seemed to have an opinion about one of their own competing in the Games—and many freely voiced it. Some pressured David to “win an Olympic medal for God” or “Mr. Armstrong” or “Ambas-

sador College” or “the youth of the Church,” etc. A few others, certain prima donna, “big man on campus” types, resented the opportunity before the student, focusing on what they perceived as preferential treatment because of his athletic status.

Conflicted About Training

Regardless of the opinions of others, David thought there were several problems with what he had been asked to do. After days of trying to get comfortable with God’s will, he constructed a list of reasons that pursuing the Olympics might be a bad idea. Armed with this list (still somewhere deep in Mr. Pack’s files today), he returned to the Athletic Department for another meeting with Dr. Lochner.

The first reason against resuming training was how the department requested that the employee restructure his job. Incredibly, the stated plan was for the 19-year-old to reduce his teaching and lifeguard responsibilities, and to count hours spent privately training as payroll hours! (Remember what he had just been through on the matter of being paid for sick leave.) The Olympics were for *amateur* athletes, yet his superiors wanted to pay David to train—essentially making him a *professional* athlete—in violation of Olympic rules.

The young man asked how this problem would be rectified.

He was told, “Don’t worry. You’ll still be a lifeguard and sometimes teach a few swimming lessons. But primarily, you’ll practice. Just think of it this way—you’re not a professional in *God’s* eyes.”

Even to an inexperienced 19-year-old, this logic did not entirely compute. Yet he had been told the ministry was behind it. But did they understand what they were behind?

Another issue was that the Olympics were to be held in the fall, and the dates of the competitive swimming events

threatened to overlap with the Feast of Tabernacles. Intent on following God's laws, David questioned how this apparent conflict could be resolved. How could he keep God's commanded annual Holy Days *and* compete at the same time?

In response, he was told that he would be flown from the Squaw Valley Feast site to Mexico City! David was incredulous. Such treatment was usually reserved for Mr. Armstrong and senior evangelists traveling on Church-related business. But Dr. Lochner assured him the plan had already been cleared at the "highest levels."

When the young athlete expressed concern that some of his events or even other meets before the Olympics might conflict with either the Sabbath or Holy Days. He was told, "God will work it out."

A final obstacle—which at this point was beginning to seem less important—was that his training was to occur at the college natatorium. Although it was a beautiful facility, the pool was the wrong size—Olympic events were measured in *meters*, not yards. For anyone considering international competition, training in the correct pool size—50 meters instead of 25 yards long—was an absolute necessity. This objection was also raised.

In light of this, Dr. Lochner (and others?) decided David should begin his training during the spring at the campus natatorium, and then complete it at the University of Southern California pool over the summer.

"Many years later, my wife would remember and tell me that it was announced in a forum or at services in Brickwood in the spring of 1967 that 'there was this swimmer who was going to come to the college and make the Church famous,' as she recalled it. Upon learning this, I wondered if it had been predetermined from the beginning that I would swim again, but that they were going to wait some months to tell me."

The U.S. Olympic Coach

With all obstacles seemingly “resolved,” the reluctant swimmer believed he had no choice. He complied with the Church’s wishes and resumed the intense physical training he thought was in his past.

Several weeks later, the resurrected career began with a meet in Southern California. Some faculty attended it, including Ted Armstrong. Most students were encouraging, with many saying they prayed for success so that his performances would shine a positive light on the Church. The student went from being a “regular” student to (at least briefly) being identified as “the swimmer.”

In May 1968, after several rigorous months of renewed training and competition, Dr. Lochner once again called for an important meeting. He had exciting news: a workout session was scheduled at the USC natatorium with the United States Olympic swimming coach, Peter Dayland.

David was amazed that a door to the Olympics could actually be opening, but he was still somewhat conflicted about what walking through that door meant.

Tense with nerves and burdened with the pressure that this would be the only chance to follow through on the hopes of so many, he briefly warmed up in the water for Coach Dayland. It was a Friday.

The coach cleared a lane and prepared to time the Ambassador swimmer in a 50-meter sprint. (Many believed that this would be the event where the most realistic shot at securing an Olympic medal existed—if the Olympics had held it. It did not appear until 1984.)

After the sprint, Coach Dayland calmly pointed at the entire French Olympic Team (who were in America and happened to be training in the adjacent lanes). David had “just beaten the times of their best swimmers with almost no warm-up,” he commented.

The coach smiled broadly, shook the young man's hand and welcomed him to return 10 days later, on a Monday, to train for the U.S. Olympic trials. This would occur after finishing final exams, which would begin three days later.

Another Personnel Department Conflict

David returned to campus and received a message that the Personnel Manager wanted to meet with him again—immediately! At their last meeting, the man was somewhat calm. This time, he was visibly angry as David walked into the office. Two witnesses were even brought in.

“Now, when I called you in last December, I told you to resolve this situation,” he said. “You still haven't! You lied to us and stole! I could have you thrown out of college right now.”

Horrified, David was still unaware of how the situation had been improperly handled. The manager seemed so determined to “convict” him that he still refused to explain exactly what had been done incorrectly.

As penalty for the (supposed) wrongdoing, the young man was required to study every scripture in the Bible that referenced thieves, stealing and repaying debt. The manager instructed him to bring the written study back as soon as possible. Confused, but wanting to obey orders from those over him, David carried out the instruction.

Another Brush with Death

But an unexpected and monumental trial was about to begin.

Beginning Sunday night, and intensifying by Monday morning, the staph infection suddenly returned for the third time—this time in the prostate. Struggling through intense pain all during finals week, while also trying to study, David finished his exams, and then boarded a plane home to Lima.

The stewardesses tried to make him comfortable by helping him lie across three seats on an unfilled overnight flight.

Much worse than before, the infection ravaged his whole body, even shutting down bodily functions. As soon as he entered his family home, he collapsed on the couch in agony. This was the first time the Packs had seen their son since returning to college in January—and, thinking the health problems were behind him at that time, they were stunned at what they saw.

“David, what is going on?” his father asked.

But his son could hardly speak. Moments later, he passed out. Jane and Ran were startled to see their child so pale and terribly sick, not yet knowing he had lost an astonishing 32 pounds within the last 84 hours, dropping from a weight of 214 to 182. Seeing that he was dehydrated and in excruciating pain, his parents rushed him to the hospital.

The last thing David said to his father and mother before passing out was that he did *not* want surgery; he trusted God to heal him.

However, once at the hospital, his parents and doctors determined that surgery was necessary. Hospital attorneys were quietly brought in. The procedure was implemented upon the unconscious student.

Afterward, the young man regained consciousness, thankful to learn that simple surgery had brought success. A much less invasive procedure was able to be performed.

David slowly recovered in his parents’ care. He had to drink a glass of water or juice every 30 minutes for three straight weeks to ensure a complete flushing and healing of the prostate. (It should be noted that staph infections never fully “clear” the body, which is why three infections struck in a seven-month period. Victims usually carry a dormant “colony,” often in a leg bone.) But still another life-and-death battle had taken an intense physical toll.

Meanwhile, those who had expected him to compete in the Olympics realized the severe illness signaled an end to

his swimming career. Many were disappointed. All that the Olympic Games would have meant to the Church was gone.

“I am convinced of two things: God knew this training was not going to produce what men thought, but He permitted it for a time so that I could be delivered from it through an intense trial from which I could learn. The only other choice would have been to rebel against what I was asked to do—not an option. I believe God delivered me through more disease that could serve His purpose in teaching me even more about longsuffering. A young, thick-headed student was slowly learning to say, ‘God’s will be done!’”

Lessons Learned

Having spent so much time swimming, Mr. Pack, in retrospect, questioned whether he would do it again if given the choice. While he had learned many valuable lessons through such intense training, he recognized that years “in the water” cannot be retrieved for use “on land.”

At the time, the teenager was not fully able to appreciate the value of the training, but it did serve a dual purpose: it had built within him an intense DRIVE and determination to succeed.

The focused training had prevented him from participating in basketball, football, sledding, ice-skating and recreational activities during his latter high school years. David, along with his friends and family, accepted this because it was in pursuit of an admirable goal. And the time devoted to swimming had kept the teen from many of the temptations and vices of adolescence.

The grueling routine also toughened David mentally. His mother’s insistence on applying logic and thorough analysis, coupled with his father’s admonishment that decisions should be faced “with your shoulders squared and your

chin up,” prepared him for adversity and the extremely difficult years to come.

“I was not a superstar athlete. I had a certain amount of ability, but it was through driving myself that milestones were reached. There were others with plenty of ability, and I knew this, but they would not pay the price to achieve. Still, on balance, would I do it again? It is good that I do not have to make this choice.”

Young David counted the days until he would fly back to California, similar to the anticipation he felt the previous summer. Relieved that his briefly renewed swimming career was over, he looked forward to returning to campus life at Ambassador.

Summer Educational Program

Instead of immediately returning to college, David was supposed to fly directly to Orr, Minnesota, to teach swimming and water polo at the Church’s Summer Educational Program (S.E.P.). A mistake in communication brought him to Pasadena where he learned that he was to immediately board a plane for Minnesota.

The annual Church youth camp was held in three successive sessions during the summer. At its pinnacle, it was considered one of the finest in the world. By the mid 1980s, S.E.P. was held at three camps in North America, with additional locations in New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, France and elsewhere.

International ministers flew to the camps to instruct staff and teens, and Ambassador students served as camp counselors, athletic coaches and staff, providing them with unparalleled leadership training. Spending the summer at camp in Minnesota was one of the best experiences a college stu-

dent could have. There, all endeavored to live God's Way, surrounded by people of like minds in a picturesque, secluded setting.

It was a wonderful summer for the now sophomore. While it started badly, it ended as one of the great adventures that he had experienced to that point. Northern Minnesota is a place of almost unparalleled beauty, although the joke in camp was that the huge, swarming mosquitoes were actually the "state bird." It was also there that David saw for the first time in the wild full grown black bears—scavengers looking to rummage through camp garbage!

It was at S.E.P. that David rode a horse again for the first time since age nine. Recall the early misadventure. This time it was on a long trail with a saddle that was too small. It took the skin off his back, and created a large sore just below the beltline. (But after his first two unsuccessful attempts at horseback riding, there were many other times he enjoyed riding horses. He often rode while in Rockford, Illinois, and later on mountain trails and galloping through fields. His brother has owned horses for a number of years. Although Mr. Pack never took riding lessons, he learned as he went. He certainly enjoyed the experience on many occasions, including some wild races. Probably enough said.)

Though summer camp was a wonderful experience, it was not without trying circumstances.

Two Rescues—at the Same Time!

The young swimming staff was to teach both beginners and advanced swimmers. David instructed a group of "beginner" boys to jump into Pelican Lake and do "20 bobs" in the water in order to get used to the idea of being in the water. One boy rashly jumped into the water and immediately sank, with only a hand appearing above the dark surface, waving for help. The camper had neglected to tell anyone he could not swim. The beckoning hand was a strange sight.

David shouted to his supervisor, who stood on the dock, and then dove into the lake. Midair, he realized his glasses were still on. He snatched them off and threw them toward the dock, before splashing into the lake. He then swam to the struggling boy and hauled him to safety.

As the instructor pulled the teenager toward the dock, the supervisor yelled, “Dave, there’s another one in trouble over there!”

A distance away, a second boy floundered in the water, on the deeper side of the large swimming area. David feared that if the second boy went under in the murky water, he would be unable to locate him.

Pulling the first boy to safety, David yelled to the supervisor, “Can you get the other boy?”

“No,” the man shouted, “*You* get him!”

Amazingly, the supervisor—*wearing a swimsuit*—did not want to get wet!

David pushed the first boy onto the dock, and sprinted across the swimming area to the other boy, returning him to safety.

In all of his years lifeguarding, it had only been necessary for him to assist one other person, before or since. So it was rewarding to assist two boys in trouble at the same time. But the instructor’s lazy selfishness sent its own message.

Tough Crossroads

Along with gaining teaching experience, S.E.P. provided opportunities to develop socially and to practice leadership skills. The Church’s summer camp also afforded David, through healthful living and physical activity, the time and environment necessary to fully regain his strength and recover from the staph infection. He wanted to return to Pasadena healthy, brimming with vigor and ready for another year. The young counselor may have never eaten so much as

he did at the camp, more than a little because he still had to put so much weight back on.

Toward the end of camp, one of the older staff members noticed David working on the Bible study assignment regarding stealing and debt repayment. The story of the project soon made its way to Headquarters. Upon returning to Pasadena, the young man rushed to Personnel to deliver the paper. Surprisingly, the previously angry and accusative department head calmly told him not to worry about turning it in. Apparently, the dispute with Personnel had been resolved; someone had intervened on Mr. Pack's behalf.

He never learned who it was.

But it had finally become clear that a reputation as an All-American athlete could ruffle feathers.

David was determined to never again accept anything remotely resembling preferential treatment. It came at too high a price. He decided that his only course of action was to seek a transfer from the faculty position as quickly as possible, and request an entirely new assignment. Although it was difficult to give up something so enjoyable—and frankly it was a much easier work assignment than almost all other freshman experienced—he decided it was the right thing to do. He wanted to work his way up the ladder of opportunity for increased service like everyone else.

In a sense, this was another application for his father's advice: "When the going gets tough, *the tough get going*."

David resolved to never again take the path of least resistance. From this point forward, whenever he faced a challenge, instead of looking for the easy way out, he forced himself to ask, *What am I supposed to learn from this experience?* He was no longer the naïve boy who had first walked onto campus. His eyes were beginning to open to the pulls and influences of human nature that existed—even at God's college and Church Headquarters, including in himself.

After having been near death several times, yet healed when he placed faith in God's intervention, the young stu-

dent knew God's hand was guiding events in his life, but down a path completely unknown.

“I realized looking back that I could not have known the vortex that my student career would pull me into. In fairness to certain ones in Pasadena, they probably had not seen someone of a similar background come to college. I must have been a kind of novelty. But I learned deeply about the many angles of politics and resentment against me for a (swimming) career I had not wanted to ever revisit, but had been forced back into. Yet others wanted to use a resurrected sports career for obvious personal advantage. It was strange. But I did feel vindicated about my prior feelings toward the ‘you must swim again’ project when my career finally ended as it did.”

By the end of the summer, David returned from Minnesota to Pasadena determined to begin a completely new Ambassador College experience.

Catching Fire

One of the first priorities at the beginning of David's sophomore year was finding a different job. In deciding to avoid the appearance of receiving preferential treatment, he felt that by taking a lesser job, others on campus, including certain members of the Physical Education faculty, would see he was making every effort to be a regular student—not some “prima donna star athlete,” as some had apparently perceived him.

In a difficult, tearful discussion, David sought out Dr. Lochner and requested to be reassigned. Though met with some resistance, the young man's request was granted.

Ironically, there were still a few, such as the Personnel Manager, who saw David's request as an opportunity to finally “humble” a perceived attitude problem.

Personnel assigned the sophomore to interview for one of the most physically demanding jobs on campus: moving furniture for the Shipping and Receiving Department, and packaging large shipments that were too big for the Mailing Department. Literally, the *only* question his prospective manager asked in the interview was whether he had “a strong back.”

A friend confirmed that Personnel now intended to punish David by placing him on the lowest rung of the employment ladder (they were unaware he had already determined he would voluntarily start from the bottom). At the same time, a number of other sophomores were promoted to “more important” jobs, as the student body understood them to be. As far as David was concerned, he had already received his “promotion” from the moment he had arrived on campus.

Shipping and Receiving

David’s new job in the Shipping and Receiving Department involved hours of physical labor, usually moving boxes and furniture; he sometimes drove a forklift. The sophomore found his coworkers to be pleasant, and considered himself privileged to have a cheerful, hardworking supervisor who encouraged a strong work ethic.

Working in Shipping and Receiving turned out to be his second favorite job during all four years at Ambassador. Department duties included wrapping, stuffing, taping and packaging boxes for large shipments. The department continually received requisitions for things they needed to ship—a special package, international shipments of literature or a big shipment of a family’s entire furnishings loaded onto the Church’s tractor-trailer/“18-wheeler”—to help ministers who had been transferred across the United States.

Whenever ministers arrived for one-year sabbaticals in Pasadena, David and his coworkers unloaded their belongings. And when ministers left the Sabbatical Program, the movers would load their possessions back on a truck headed to the new transfer destination.

Certain individuals in the Personnel Department may have intended this to be a humbling job, but the sophomore student thoroughly enjoyed the work, partly because of his particular fellow employees, and God used the position to

bless him. The months spent there were productive, and David built lasting friendships among his coworkers.

“I saw this as my third job since coming to college, with the S.E.P. position the second one. I wanted as much broadening experience as I could possibly get. This pattern of different jobs—both summer and academic year—would continue all through college. While I was supposed to be feeling discouragement and being ‘humbled,’ the opposite was occurring.”

Black Widow Spiders

Besides the constant movement of goods and furniture, the Shipping and Receiving Department was not without excitement. One day when some of its employees were locking the 10-foot high, ivy-covered exterior gate of the complex, a spider’s web was spotted within the swinging gate.

Someone asked, “What type of spider is that?” Another saw the red hourglass marking on the underside on the small spider and said, “That’s a black widow! They’re poisonous!”

Someone suggested capturing it, so it was put into a one-gallon glass jug and taken inside the warehouse to be kept as an on-the-job “pet.” It was learned some time after that the spider was pregnant—and soon approximately 100 baby spiders were scrambling about within the jug.

Not long after, someone accidentally knocked the jug off the shelf. It crashed onto the concrete floor and shattered—releasing all of the baby spiders to scurry all over the floor! The workers ran about, stomping and killing them, until the last trace of movement was gone.

Having a black widow for a pet proved *not* to be the best idea.

“It was quite a moment. I have never stomped and swatted so hard and fast in my life. For weeks after,

we were watching all the areas near the ‘main bench’ where we worked for little spiders that had survived and grown bigger. Eventually we were sure they were all dead or gone.”

Catching Fire

David’s college career came to a crossroads. Now that he knew more about college life, he saw more clearly what he wanted to achieve.

With his swimming career behind him, David’s sophomore year began on a new path. He took the self-motivation that had led to sports success, and refocused it, throwing himself into his studies and on improving his speaking ability. He diligently employed what his father had long taught: “You put your head down and use industry!” This, coincidentally, was similar to the fourth of Mr. Armstrong’s “Seven Laws of Success”—DRIVE!

That year, the student’s early ministerial training began. Inspired by Mr. Armstrong’s autobiography, he decided to establish a habit of waking much earlier each morning. Instead of rising more lazily within the range of 6:00 to 6:30 a.m., he disciplined himself to rise at exactly 5:00 a.m. each day. This was to better stay on top of transferring notes to his Bible, as well as working on himself—a greater need that second-year students were encouraged to develop by all their instructors. He used the early hours of the morning to study the Bible for an hour and a half every day, and then going on to work on projecting his voice in the Gymnasium at about 6:30.

Partly to compensate for low grades received the previous year due to his extensive illness during finals week, the sophomore wrote a number of extra-credit papers and authored an extensive summary, chapter by chapter by chapter, of every one of the Major and Minor Prophets in the Old Testament.

“I made the decision not to go to any of my instructors to ask them for leniency on my very bad marks on the finals at the end of my freshman year. This was not the way my father had taught me. Everyone knew I was very sick, and I figured if they wanted to give me some kind of break on my grades they would have done it. At least I found that I no longer had to take German class.”

The obvious was before him: the need to work extremely hard to improve his overall grade-point average over the next three years. (Diligent study would eventually pay off, resulting in much higher marks for his last three years of college, especially the sophomore year.)

Drive and Determination

When the young man was not focusing on his classes, he turned to a wide variety of recreational pursuits, including basketball. Everyone expected the 6’7” student to play basketball. In fact, he had spent his first year playing on the freshman intramural basketball team, though he mostly sat on the bench.

David had spent his life building a physique for swimming, a muscle “elongation” sport, while ball-oriented sports are muscle “contraction” activities, such as impact-and-explosion sports like basketball, racquetball and baseball. Although in the best physical shape of his life, the sophomore was not in any condition to play basketball. Despite his height, he was barely able to touch the rim of the basket his freshman year, even with a running start. This was pitiful—and very, very embarrassing!

Competitive drive spurred him to remedy this. He started by working on leg strength, performing 100 one-legged full squats with each leg every day until his “vertical leap” improved to 34 inches. The future “basketball player” was de-

terminated to be able to dunk a ball! Within months, he had pushed so hard that he could easily do this with two hands, and from a standstill.

Friends were amazed at his persistence to be the best. He was told, “Dave, I have never seen someone with so much desire to succeed at absolutely everything.”

Determination allowed him to achieve success, but it also took a physical toll on his body. The one-legged squats were to bring left knee surgery on destroyed cartilage 15 years later.

Part of David’s new-found interest in basketball also stemmed from the coincidence that three of his classmates were also tall. In fact, he was only the fourth tallest among them. The one who would be his closest friend at Ambassador College for four years was over 6’9”. One of his other friends was 6’9 1/2”, and another was 6’7 1/2”—and all of these were in a class of less than 150 students, half of whom were women.

Other college students became accustomed to seeing the four “giants” around campus, and joked about having wandered into the “Sequoia National Forest.” A number of the faculty gave them the nickname of the “Nephilim,” referencing the pre-Noachian-Flood giants. Mr. Pack likes to explain that “We should have been called the *Rephaim*, who were giants in stature, not giants in strength as were the Nephilim.”

Halfway through his freshman year, David went from beginner level to being a starter on the intramural team. He was even selected for the annual All-Star team.

But his zeal was not limited to scholastics, sports and recreation. Another example was evidenced on a study date with a young lady student. He was amazed to learn that she had not yet read all of the literature that the Church published—and made a point of telling her so. Sometimes, other students found this misdirected zeal strange—or worse, offensive.

Mr. Pack has come to realize that early in his Ambassador College experience he was somewhat unbalanced. Today he understands why:

“I had to learn that just because all of my fellow students didn’t approach every task, assignment and opportunity with the same intensity that I carried over from my swimming career, it was not necessarily an indication that they were lackadaisical. In some regards, I was at least a little bit unbalanced at times when it came to sports. I only knew one way to go—overdo it!”

“However, in retrospect, it is clear that most students *did not* take things as seriously as they should have. In order to come to Ambassador College, I had to give up absolutely everything—friends, college scholarships, and at one point, it seemed like my family—whereas in many cases other students gave up practically nothing. To many who grew up in the Church, with their family and friends also attending, coming to Ambassador College was an easy decision—the path of least resistance. They didn’t necessarily see it as anything special. I did. I remember vividly when I learned that I had been accepted—and the feeling of unparalleled exhilaration.

“I believe deeply that this gratitude affected the entirety of my Ambassador College experience in a positive way.”

Almost every instruction that his teachers and the ministry uttered was taken literally—almost as a direct *order*, not merely a *recommendation*. When an instructor said, “Start preparing a sermonette notebook now, because someday God could use you in the ministry,” the sophomore did so. When a minister said to keep a prayer notebook or visit the sick—he did it! Taking simple instructions as clear com-

mands, and not as suggestions, served in a multitude of ways, helping the young man to learn and grow as a Christian.

Stolen Hairspray

The day-to-day training at Ambassador College across a wide array of activities was a very broadening experience, and David could see improvement in his personality and character development as he diligently sought to make the most out of every AC experience. (Mr. Pack has stated that Mr. Armstrong “certainly knew what he was doing when he designed the four-year, liberal arts, lots-of-diverse-activities approach to training leaders.”)

But not every student was of this mindset. Sometimes this included those whose parents held high offices in the Church. Several times David noted a clear double standard for well-known, high-ranking ministers, which was also extended to their friends and family members. In fact, many saw this to one degree or another. Instead of having enthusiasm for God’s Work, a few students used their connections to put forth less effort or get themselves out of trouble, as well as positioning themselves to be chosen for additional opportunities solely because of skillful political maneuvering.

Early in David’s junior year, a small incident seared this reality into his mind. One day while rummaging through his personal care products, the young man could not find his hairspray. Several days later, he saw a dorm-mate (the son of a minister) in that student’s dorm room spraying his hair with the missing item.

He asked, “What are you doing with my hairspray?”

“What do you mean?” the student retorted. “This is *my* hairspray.”

“Look on the label,” David said, “It says, ‘11th Hour Hairspray, made in Lima, Ohio.’” The container happened

to be of a distinctive brand, personally manufactured by Ran Pack, who at the time owned a successful wig and hair products company.

Grudgingly, the young thief gave back the item, yet acted as if he had done nothing wrong.

David went to the Dean's Office to report the incident. At the time, stealing had become a small problem on campus and students were to make known what they observed. Fellow students had been expelled for similar episodes of theft. The value of the item was inconsequential—it was the commandment-breaking act itself that was inexcusable.

David came across the campus to the egrets fountains with the Dean at his side, and relayed the details of what had happened. As they walked, they encountered the offending freshman.

The Dean confronted the boy and asked, "What's this about you having David's hairspray? It's apparently the only one of its kind in captivity [his exact words]."

The young man simply looked down and shrugged his shoulders. He did not offer either excuse or apology. The Dean merely gave the student a mild reprimand and cautioned against repeating the infraction.

David said nothing, but took note: A transgression that meant expulsion for one student could mean a mild scolding for another—it could depend on the student's last name. This unrepentant thief went on to hold extremely high office.

Disturbing Trend

Favoritism seemed to be a disturbing trend developing at that time, yet it was unknown to Mr. Armstrong. More than 20 years had passed since God had used him to found Ambassador College; by the late 1960s, it had become a much larger campus in physical size—major new buildings were opened every year of David's four years on campus, with

two opening in one year (1969). There were now three campuses, and the student body of each was bigger than just Pasadena had been for many years. The Worldwide Church of God and the Work were growing so large, so fast, it was impossible for the Pastor General to know about *every* incident, even those that were more important—just as a CEO of a growing international corporation could not be expected to know every detail in every division, department and office in the company.

As time went on, David witnessed more of these incidents of preferential treatment on campus. However, he did not allow bitterness or resentment to fester. Instead, he took these events as reminders that “ministers are not God in the flesh”—as fallible human beings, they make mistakes just like everyone else. This applies to their children as well. But it is also not fair to ministers to expect perfection of them. These early incidents also taught that some did not have their hearts in the Work or their minds yielded to God.

David now had a much more realistic way of viewing things (vastly different from his naïve freshman impression of Ambassador). He now *knew* that students and ministers were not perfect—and some were far from it.

Accepting this reality was sobering. David promised himself that he would never use small injustices, such as the favoritism he witnessed time and again, as an excuse or reason to leave the Church, get offended or lose sight of the big picture.

“I saw many things, but then I had plenty of things to work on myself, and this made it easier to accept certain frailties in others. I also think God somehow shielded me to some degree from getting bitter during natural opportunities for this. Sometimes naiveté bought me time and space.

“There was a saying about new people entering either the Church or the college: When you first come

to Ambassador College, you think that all the students are perfect, but you learn they are not. Then you think that the ministers and faculty must be without sin. Again, you learn that the ministers and faculty are also not perfect. This leaves Mr. Armstrong. Then you realize over time that Mr. Armstrong also makes and admits to mistakes. Finally, you realize only God is perfect. There is a parallel of this for everyone who enters the Church.

“It was the *truth* that made the Worldwide Church of God Christ’s Church. Think of the corrective letters that the apostle Paul had to write to the Corinthians. If people living there used others in the congregation as their measuring stick, EVERYONE would have left the Church.”

Reflection and Self-examination

Instead of returning home to earn much-needed extra money as his junior year ended, David accepted a temporary job in the spring clearing brush for a reservoir to be built in the Southern California foothills northeast of Pasadena on the edge of the desert. His father had required him, from a young age, to do outside manual labor, so it was not difficult to do it again. There was always value in this kind of hard day’s work—“in all labor there is profit”—and there was *money*!

Working for a private contractor in the Pasadena congregation, the job required little more than a strong back and willingness to work long Sunday hours in baking 90- to 100-degree weather. His time in Shipping and Receiving was a good conditioner for heavy lifting, manual labor and long hours.

But the job did free one’s mind to organize thoughts. Over two years of Ambassador College were now behind him—or more than half of his time there. In a little over one year would come graduation and the hope of entering ser-

vice in the Church, possibly the ministry. This was not something to forget at any stage of the academic journey.

Starting in the spring of his sophomore year, he carefully recorded his observations as he went through an intense period of self-examination.

Keeping a Journal

Growing up, David learned the value of keeping a journal. He decided to return to this practice during, through and after his sophomore year, making entries at any point that a life lesson had been learned. This would be helpful if done on a regular basis. Certain entries, which demonstrate exactly how he viewed his Ambassador College training, paint a vivid picture of his mindset at age 20.

Following are just a few excerpts over a short period from David's journal. Their existence presents an extraordinary insight that few others could look back and appreciate in the same way. They are recorded word for word as they appeared, including punctuation and emphasis:

April 6, 1969: "Where I am put in the Work is ultimately going to be where God wants me, even if temporarily. Christ might allow me to be in a wrong spot because men made a mistake."

April 10, 1969: "(1) I have learned that no matter how we want it otherwise, change comes very, very slowly. It is a grind-it-out, inch-by-inch process. (2) I have learned that whenever a man has a weakness, God will someday, somewhere, challenge, once, twice or more, that weakness in order that the man overcome it. Particularly in the case where a man thinks he has a 'natural strength of character.'"

April 12, 1969: "I have learned that to learn lessons, one must be *attuned* to lessons and be constantly looking for them."

April 21, 1969: “I am slowly looking to take things easier in general when I hear them. Chances are, few things are as urgent as I seem to make them. Spiritually ‘wringing my hands’ usually does nothing more than alarm me.”

May 7, 1969: “I am learning that before God will ever put a man in a position where he rules or guides others, that man has to have learned how to rule *himself*.”

May 10, 1969: “I have learned that no matter how clear a sermon, forum or lecture is when I heard it, it will flow right out of my mind unless I force myself to create some key to remember it.”

May 14, 1969: “I am seeing more and more that the Work of God is plainly and simply people. No phase of it can be separated from people. There is no room for selfish introverts in the Worldwide Church of God. I am not saying I was one, because I wasn’t, but whenever that tendency wants to take hold, try to nip it in the bud.”

June 1, 1969: “(1) I have learned that the time for action is NOW on whatever is planned and that always being in the process of waiting for something and living accidentally will never work in the end. (2) Success on the job emotionally comes from forcing myself to look ahead and taking a grip on myself. (3) Life must not be a series of ‘not-quotes.’”

June 12, 1969: “(1) I am only worth as much as I can give to and help others. (2) I must search for opportunities to help and serve others and not wait for them. (3) My Bible study is only as effective as it helps me to serve and help others. (4) I have learned that real love is breaking up ‘my schedule’ to take time for others when I see they need it or if they have asked for it.”

June 19, 1969: “(1) I am seeing that ‘the grass will always look greener at the other job’ until I get

there and look back. (2) I have learned that when Satan robs a Christian, he is too smart to steal a dollar so he steals a dime 10 times because he knows that (A) it is easier, (B) he has all the time in the world, literally, and, (C) in the end, he still has your dollar. Although I mean this in terms of prayer and meditation, it can apply to any area of spiritual character development one could name. (3) I have come to see that the area I work in, study in, sleep in, eat in, etc. forms my own little stewardship over which I shall one day be called into account. As God expands my stewardship to a greater realm of control, I shall also be held accountable for this. (4) I am reading autobiographies now. I am coming to see that everything in the world, in the Church and everything under heaven, revolves around character and the necessity of having it. The only difference between us and 'them' though is that we orient it toward God to be used in His service not toward ourselves to be used in getting ourselves ahead. Yet character toward God will get us ahead because *God* will get us ahead. (5) I have come to see that true conversion and a *willing attitude* are inexorably bound one to another."

June 20, 1969: "Learn to follow the beaten trail in the Work and don't try to be a trailblazer. It occurs to me that the well-beaten trail up a mountain or within a department has considered *most all* other ways. Learn to sit on a new idea while examining it in light of why the old path was put where it was. Changes should be evolutionary not revolutionary."

June 25, 1969: "(1) Solomon was right when he said do everything with our might. At work I notice how time flies when doing a harder but faster moving job like bagging, sorting, etc. A bigger principle to see though is that I need to concentrate, play ball,

study, pray, converse, work, read and think *with my might!* Surely they all hold true and Solomon said, ‘Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might’ (Ecc. 9:10). (2) Since the fear of the LORD is to hate evil, and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil, and we are told to choose the fear of the LORD, then the only way to hate and leave evil (sin) is to pray for God to grant us this hatred in light of our mind hating God’s Law and loving the pleasures of sin. Am I choosing the fear of the LORD and praying to see the ugliness of sin?”

July 28, 1969: “What may be funny to me may be very serious to the other person. Laughing at someone with a cutting, bitter, sarcastic, belittling intent would of course always be wrong, but even laughing with them if the other person may take it very seriously, what to me is humorous, is wrong. Watching someone else wrestle with what looks like a simple problem can be funny, but he may have cried bitterly in prayer over it. So always ask, ‘How would it affect me if someone laughed and what type of person is this I am dealing with?’”

December 27, 1969: “One can never force another man to learn a lesson or to see a lesson. This is true even if the man *wants* to see it but God is not yet ready to let him fully, really see it and apply it to *himself*.”

This short sampling of private journal entries become their own statement about what was going through a young man’s mind as he passed through and beyond his third full year from the time he first began to learn the truth in June 1966.

“I recall keeping the journal, but did not recall having made so many detailed entries until I found it in preparation for the biography.”

Junior Year—Mail Processing and Guided Tours

The intense summer of additional work was over; David's third year at Ambassador was about to begin. He was transferred from Shipping and Receiving to the Mail Processing Department, where the upperclassman would work for the entirety of his junior year. His new job involved sorting and bagging *Plain Truth* magazines for mailing, as well as sending out literature requests, and filling other orders. During the late 1960s, the Church mailed over one million issues of *The Plain Truth* 10 times a year.

“I took great joy in directly assisting in this effort. Of course, it would later help when a Mailing Department had to be established in The Restored Church of God. I enjoyed all but the most monotonous parts of the job. It was doing the Work in the most direct sense.

“Such typically monotonous jobs were usually reserved for underclassmen. It was unusual for a junior to be assigned to this position. I later learned that even after two years had passed, there were certain people in the Personnel Department, and maybe elsewhere, who held me in contempt and who were still trying to ‘humble’ me. Believe me, it was sobering to know that these kinds of things could happen in the Church. But I must admit that I could not yet fully grasp that there were outright carnal minds high in the Work. After all, Mr. Armstrong was not yet seeing this on any large scale, so how would I?

“I came to realize at some point that the intended punishment was actually God giving me a wide variety of jobs as part of early preparation and training for the years ahead. Working in different departments each year, including as I said different jobs each summer, gained me priceless experience. I learned to appreciate

how crucial it is that each branch and department of the Work function together smoothly to accomplish God's purpose.”

Special Opportunity—and a Promotion!

God was guiding the overall process of David's development and lesson learning. The AC student desired to serve, and had worked hard on continuing to improve in key points of personality.

Despite laboring in a job usually reserved for younger students, apparently David's growth and training in manners were noticed. Having developed more as a speaker, the Dean's office also noticed that he carried himself well, and thus selected him for the task of campus tour guide.

This was special.

Many visitors to Headquarters wanted a complete tour of the expanding and Garden-of-Eden-like campus and its award-winning garden landscapes. The college needed guides who could reflect the quality found throughout Ambassador College. This new position was in addition to his job in the Mailing Department.

“It was a high honor to give campus tours to Church members visiting Headquarters from outlying areas or to people in the community who were curious about the ‘beautiful college on the hill.’ Most of the few tour guides chosen were seniors, and I was a junior, so I found that God could advance me in any time or way that He wished.

“I loved to give campus tours. I have described myself as having ‘come out of retirement’ today upon being able to give them again at times at our Headquarter office complex. I did everything in my power to make myself available for tours back then because I enjoyed it so much more than my regular job,

or any job that I held at Ambassador. I made a point of telling the receptionists at the Hall of Administration to try to call me first whenever they needed a guide.

“Taking our staff on a Pasadena campus tour in March 2008 was like old times. I am still like the retired firehorse who smells smoke and wishes he could get to the fire. I wish we could make such a tour a field trip in the future with every incoming student class.

“In any event, the exposure and experience I gained giving tours was almost without end.”

Strangely, most other students did not seem to enjoy the interaction of such tours, or having to race back to their dorms from work or after class in the heat to put on a tie in order to be presentable for the tour.

During his junior and senior years, David never turned down leading visitors on a tour of Ambassador College.

“Opportunity” Presented

Early or midway through his junior year, David was called in for yet another meeting with the head of the Personnel Department—the same man who had, two years earlier, falsely accused him of stealing. Wary of what would come next, the junior entered the manager’s office, wondering about the purpose of the meeting.

“We have a special opportunity for you,” the stone-faced manager said. “Are you a man who is interested in special opportunities?”

“Well, sir,” David said, “it depends on what the opportunity is.” Understandably, his answer was guarded.

The man frowned. “Don’t you have faith?” he said.

He played the same cat-and-mouse game from previous meetings. His goal was to teach the junior a lesson and make him uncomfortable in the process.

After pausing, David said, “Well...yes sir, I have faith.”

“We have a job opportunity for you that could lead to *major* advancement...”

Still hesitant, David answered, “Well sir, that’s wonderful. Thank you. What is it?”

“Don’t you trust God’s government?” the man questioned. “I’m surprised you would even ask. Aren’t you willing to step out in faith and take the job we are going to offer you?”

“May I not have an idea of what it entails before I respond?”

Leaning back in his chair, the head of Personnel said, “No! Now it’s too late. The opportunity is gone. You obviously have no faith in the government of God.” He acted triumphant.

“However,” he continued, “now that you have lost the opportunity due to your lack of faith, I want you to think about what you have missed out on—we were preparing to train you to take over and run the entire campus Security Department.”

“Supposed to be saddened, boy was I relieved. The position would have led toward physical responsibility instead of *spiritual* growth and opportunity—the primary reason I had come to Ambassador. I recalled the conversation with my first pastor, back in Ohio, who had told me there was nothing wrong with desiring the *work* of a minister. I have never been so glad that I ‘lacked faith’!”

No “Yellow Pencils”

By the third year of school, anyone paying attention appreciated the carefully planned, well-structured way of life that Ambassador College offered. The organization and order that Mr. Armstrong had meticulously implemented since the beginning of the school in 1947 gave every student opportu-

nity to build the right foundation for a successful future based on the Word of God.

Nevertheless, most or all administrators, as would have all the students, recognized that the system should not stamp out clones, but that it should allow for the natural development of individual people who were in every case unique.

“We’re not yellow pencils in a box,” they said. “We shouldn’t let the college force us to all be the same.”

Up to a certain point, that was true. Each student *was* unique from another. Each personality and background was seen to add to the diverse cultural environment that was Ambassador College.

However, it was Mr. Armstrong’s goal that all students who graduated from the college be identical in one way: they were to have the exact same *foundation* of truth, and thoroughly understand the Work and government of God, and in the same way. After students graduated, Mr. Armstrong wanted students to understand God’s purpose for their lives—and be able to teach such critical understanding to others.

In a way, Ambassador College was a production facility for ministers and other leaders and specialists who would eventually participate in the Work of God. Its efficiency worked well in training effective leaders in the Church who could help assist God’s flock or become administrators at Headquarters.

After having attended secular high schools, many students were thrilled to receive the unique and intense education AC provided. David was one of them. Many did want to unlearn error and become effective people.

Encountering a King

One day while walking through Grove Terrace, the large men’s dormitory on campus, the young man opened a door—and, to his surprise, found he was holding it for Mr. Arm-

strong and King Leopold III of Belgium. The Pastor General was giving the king a personal tour of God's college. A couple of the king's bodyguards were following them.

Both Mr. Armstrong and King Leopold kindly acknowledged the student with a slight nod, and continued walking. It was the first time David had been in the presence of a king. A thought raced through his mind: *An apostle and a king just walked past me one foot away!*

Although it was a seemingly small event at the time, the brief encounter left a strong and lasting impression upon the young man. It motivated him to strive to live by Proverbs 22:29: "See you a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings." Mr. Armstrong was fulfilling this.

The encounter cemented into his mind the reason God expects quality from His servants, which is why Ambassador maintained such high standards of quality in everything. Over the years, several heads of state would walk its grounds, events Mr. Armstrong could have never known when he began requiring quality in all aspects of the Work. One never knows what can happen when God's standards are maintained.

From this and other seemingly small experiences, David learned that, whether giving a tour, visiting ministers or Church members, or stuffing envelopes in the Mailing Department, one must always be prepared. Who would expect to run into the Pastor General and a king?

Still unsure of the future, David hoped God had plans for him upon graduation. He continued with the mundane Mailing Department job, but he did not stay in this position for long.

"Drive" Pays Off

As his junior year ended, David strongly desired to go into the field. He hoped to work with brethren in a local congregation. Possible candidates for the ministry were usually

sent into the field as ministerial assistants during the summer prior to their senior year. But that summer, the Church's financial condition prevented this from happening.

In 1970, the Worldwide Church of God entered a year of financial austerity. It was the first time in at least recent memory that the Work could not afford to send *any* students for summer assignments.

“I was undeterred. I contacted the minister who had interviewed me three years earlier for acceptance to the college. He was now a senior pastor in Indianapolis, Indiana. I wrote this man, asking if it would be acceptable to serve as his ministerial assistant over the summer on the conditions that I could financially support myself and had received approval from Headquarters.”

Several long weeks later, the eager young man received a reply, a letter approving his idea. He rushed to the Dean's Office and asked, “If the Work could afford to send out assistants this summer, would I have been on the list to go?”

The Dean of Students, who was privy to who would have been sent out, answered, “Well...yes, you were on the list.”

“Well, what if I could find a way to pay my own way, could I still go?” David explained that, since his father had taught him how to paint professionally, he was confident he could support himself while on assignment by painting houses.

This surprised the administrator, but he said, “Yes, you could go. Not only would we allow it, but it's a good idea!”

Summer Assistant!

At the end of the school year, the exuberant student traveled to Indianapolis and served there for nine weeks as a ministerial assistant. David had intended to paint houses all summer

in order to support himself—but, remarkably, he made enough money in just three very, very long days to cover *all* expenses for the *entire summer*.

A local member who lived in Kokomo, Indiana, hired him and paid him well enough to make this possible. David located a rooming house in north Indianapolis, whose owner happened to have a 65-cc Honda motorbike that the young ministerial assistant could borrow in order to make the 60-mile roundtrip commute to Kokomo.

The money David earned enabled him to devote full-time hours as an assistant. That summer, he gave his first two sermonettes, did paperwork, visited the brethren and prospective members with the pastor and associate pastor, observed planning a picnic, attended his first deacon and elder meeting, observed baptismal counseling—and traveled with the pastor on vacation to Arkansas.

The summer of 1970 was the first time a student had gone into a summer assignment and paid his own way. The blessings were numerous, some immediately evident and others to be seen later.

“I recall that my very first sermonette was to explain the meaning of Romans 1:17, and what it means for a Christian to go from ‘faith to faith.’

“I absolutely loved the experience of serving in Indianapolis, Indiana. The pastor was the same one who had sent me to Ambassador College. He was a very kind, pleasant man and always tried to include me with his family. How many people would take a 21-year-old single man on vacation with them?—and it was a fantastic vacation.

“I was able to do all the kinds of things that are common to the field ministry, of course from an observing assistant’s point of view. But this set the stage for my senior year. I had a vision. It came from a clear picture in my mind of what I had now done—and

absolutely wanted to do again. I could, in a sense, see the rest of my life before me—if I continued to grow and if I got a good evaluation, and, most important, if it became absolutely evident that this is where God wanted me to be.”

The Personnel Department would soon be instructed to promote David to opening and reading mail, that is, mail containing money. These can be letters of a more spiritual nature, the kind those in training for the ministry would usually handle.

After having worked in so many college positions, this was the first time in three years that David felt he was truly on a clear track. He desired to be used in Christ’s ministry, but was still uncertain of exactly what God might have in mind. Then there was the matter of the Church’s finances, as well as whether God would provide a wife.

Senior Year—New Focus

David's senior year had finally arrived. While there were still many questions, there were also beginning to be some answers.

When he first arrived at Ambassador, David worked to overcome a lack of confidence in social situations. He knew that to be used in God's Work in any meaningful way—particularly if he entered the ministry or another position of leadership—effective communication would be essential, whether in front of classmates, a couple dozen Ambassador Club members or later audiences of many hundreds or thousands.

All Ambassador College sophomores took second-year Speech, while juniors and seniors participated in Homiletics (commonly referred to as Advanced Public Speaking). In this class, students were given more difficult assignments than the tasks in Ambassador Club. These included delivering sermonettes and advanced research speeches.

Strangely, David was made an Ambassador Club officer in his sophomore year. This was unusual, since many juniors never became officers and some seniors never did. So it provided an early opportunity for extra growth. The responsi-

bility of Club Treasurer included organizing Club dues and giving verbal reports at each week's meeting. These tasks helped instill in him a greater measure of confidence. But, because most thought he had too much confidence, by his senior year he would only serve as a vice president.

“I was actually thankful that I was never selected as a President. Some men only served as presidents and nothing more, meaning that they had an office for only one year. I had three different offices over a three-year-period. The vice president conducted every third or fourth meeting as the President for the evening, anyway. Besides, so many other opportunities came to me that few others received, I made myself conclude that it was not important. The Psalms make clear that promotion comes from God. God had given me three offices.”

Pasadena Visiting Program

In another happy turn of events, the Dean of Students called him into his office.

“You received an exceptionally good recommendation from the man that you worked for as an assistant over the summer,” he congratulated. A glowing endorsement from the Indiana pastor suggested that Headquarters use the young man in the ministry. David realized immediately that, had the recommendation come in perhaps about three days sooner, he would have finished his college career as a Club president. But never mind.

Headquarters chose David to participate in the Church's visiting program in Pasadena, partly because of the experience he gained serving a local congregation over the summer. The visiting program involved traveling each Sabbath with ministers or elders to surrounding Southern Californian congregations, and observing as they conducted ser-

vices, visited widows, anointed brethren and presided at Church activities. (David was also added to the “anointing list,” meaning if local anointings occurred in the Pasadena area congregations, he would be called to participate if his schedule permitted.)

These few seniors regularly checked the list posted in the Student Center to see if they had been selected for the visiting program, but only a few were chosen weekly to take part. However, it was an honor to be on the list.

Self-will

David was called into the Dean’s office. One of the senior ministers there was a man with whom the senior was well acquainted. He had traveled with him on occasion to outlying congregations. The two men had developed a friendly bond.

David was told that some had commented in a meeting that they had seen positive fruits through the young man’s participation in the program. They believed he had strong potential for the ministry, with the exception of one shortcoming.

“David, we were talking about you and I want you to understand something,” the man said. “Everyone I’ve talked to feels that you’re qualified to go to the field at the end of this year. You’d make a fine minister, but there is one concern that has been expressed. You have been described as self-willed. Remember Titus 1:7.”

The young man felt like the proverbial anvil had fallen out of the sky and landed on him.

“Really?”

“Yes,” the minister replied, but he would not say how many had expressed this concern.

“Now I think you have shown great progress,” the man continued. “Therefore, I want to work with you this last semester, so that when you are evaluated for the ministry at the

end of the year, I can say that you are conscious of it, have been working on it, and that I have seen progress.”

David was not sure how to react. He was horrified that, after giving up so much to come to Ambassador College, he could still be exhibiting his own will.

He asked, “Where do you see it and what exactly do I need to change?”

The minister responded kindly, explaining that the whole point of conquering self-will was learning to recognize it through self-examination. He explained that if overcoming this problem were simple, where is the growth?

“The matter should be taken to God,” he advised. “He will make these areas known.”

David left the office uncertain of what to do—but knew he had to do something! He began perhaps the most intense Bible study he had ever undertaken. Parts of it lasted the whole final semester of his senior year.

Today, the back pages of Mr. Pack’s Bible contain many scriptures and detailed notes, titled “SELF-WILL,” similar to those in his journal. They bring to mind the above conversation and the many lessons learned—beginning with a man who cared enough to take the time to explain the problem *and* how to begin to overcome it.

This constant focus on lesson learning and overcoming all obstacles in the path ahead became extremely important over the decades.

A Wife?

The first semester of a student’s senior year was to move a person closer to completing all of his Ambassador education goals. Each student was to be addressing and completing the necessary finishing touches of a very special training, including pursuing with reasonable diligence the possibility of marriage at or just after graduation—if the right person could be found on campus.

It was January 1971, with graduation only five months away. From all indications, David was on schedule to be assigned to the field ministry as soon as he graduated.

It was long thought that one of the strongest indicators that a man was ready for the field ministry was whether there was an engagement or an impending one to a woman who was qualified to be, and interested in being, a field minister's wife. Church Administration took literally God's instruction from Genesis 2:18: "It is not good that the man should be alone." Unmarried Ambassador College graduates were sent to the field, but were rarely ordained before marriage.

A true servant of God, particularly younger, less experienced ones, needed the help and support that only a dedicated, loving, understanding wife could provide.

Dating Policy

David well understood that he needed to find a partner—he needed to be married.

Beginning in 1965, Mr. Armstrong believed that students needed sufficient time at Ambassador to absorb all that the college had to offer. The Pastor General determined that senior male students were no longer permitted to marry freshmen or sophomores. They could only marry junior, senior or graduate women. Men were required to attend a minimum of three years, and women for at least two—leaving early only if they married a senior.

The dating policy at Ambassador was radically different from other educational institutions. (Of course, most have no dating policy.) By the late 1960s and early 70s, the college administration had in place a carefully controlled dating schedule. Freshmen, sophomores and first-semester juniors could date the same person once per semester. From a junior's second semester to a senior's first, students could date the same person three times per semester. It was only from the second semester of one's senior year that students

could date the same person multiple times, and become seriously involved. This system was devised so that all students became acquainted with each other over a period of years, helping them to more effectively determine their best match for the future. It also broadened people socially.

The policy was publicly relaxed just prior to the 1970-71 school year to permit seniors to date a person as much as they wished *all through* the senior year.

Many students, including some of the prominent student body officeholders, would violate this policy. Certain couples would quietly “wait,” sometimes for years, with an “understanding” that they were a couple, until they could come out in the open and date publicly. Because of who was and who was not permitted to get away with this, at times it was again evident that politics were involved—more than one standard existed for those who could get away with it.

Of course, there were many who wanted to date and marry according to what they believed was God’s Way.

The first somewhat serious relationship David had at college occurred just before his senior year. It was short. Later, in January, five months from graduation, another relationship of several months ended. It was a devastating experience, in part because the girl broke it off unexpectedly.

He wondered, *What did I do wrong? What was missing in my assessment?*

In retrospect, he realized the young woman had not yet developed emotionally. Ultimately, the couple would have been a bad match. He had been unable to see this, he concluded years later, because he had been much too emotionally involved. Many years later, Mr. Pack wondered about God’s hand in her decision:

“I have long wondered whether God had been involved in her change of mind because He had someone entirely different in mind for me. If I could not see the relationship was not good, then he had to

bring the more humbling experience to me of having shown it to the woman first.”

David counseled with a faculty member on a Friday night. It did not take long for the senior minister to see that the young man had not truly sought God’s guidance in selecting a proper mate. The senior had made *his* choice without being certain it was *God’s* choice.

David took this counsel and returned to his dormitory to begin what would become a 48-hour fast (denying oneself food and water), accompanied with extra prayer and Bible study. It quickly became evident that the minister was correct: The college senior had not been fully seeking God’s counsel, but rather had *assumed* he had. Was this another form of self-will at work? David determined to diligently search for God’s will in any future relationship.

Within a couple of weeks, he thought of several graduates he should ask for at least one date. But this time, he determined to take things slowly. *Very* slowly. He wanted to allow enough time to meditate and seek God’s guidance toward a particular person, and whether there should be a second date, or more.

Additionally, he decided that no matter how interested he was in the girl after the first date, he would make himself wait *three full weeks* until pursuing a second date.

A Surprise Date

One of the women David considered was Miss Shirley Ochs (pronounced “oaks”), Mr. Armstrong’s executive secretary. The senior often encountered her as he led campus tours, but had never considered asking her on a date because she was three and a half years older than he, and had graduated as his freshman year ended. Also, since she was not at all an athlete, but rather a musician and a member of the college band, their paths seldom crossed socially.

Each year, the college rented over a dozen buses to carry students, faculty and other staff several hours east of campus to enjoy a wonderful day in the beautiful, snowy mountains of Southern California. That year, the soon-to-be-graduate (with a little encouragement from a friend) decided to ask Shirley, “out of the blue,” to the winter sledding party.

She said, “Yes,” and their first date took place in February 1971.

It was a different kind of date, unlike any either had experienced: *13 hours* of traveling on a bus, sledding, lunch, followed by dinner back at the campus. They each had a good time conversing for hours, never running out of things to discuss. Because Miss Ochs was older, she was more emotionally mature, and socially and culturally developed, than other girls David had dated.

The following Sabbath, she wrote a note thanking him for the date, and placed it in his student mailbox, along with a batch of freshly baked brownies. Later that night, after he played in an intramural basketball game (while she played in the pep band), she waited for him outside the Gymnasium. To her puzzlement, he warmly greeted her, but said nothing else, simply walking past straight to his dorm. He was interested in a second date, but she had no idea he was determined to wait *three weeks* before asking her out again.

Over the weeks, David avoided all interaction in order to stick to his plan. Naturally, Miss Ochs was mystified at the senior’s apparent lack of interest, unaware of his “plan.”

“Wow,” she thought, “we had a great first date. I wonder what went wrong.”

David spent the time praying for godly judgment and guidance to decide whether to pursue the AC graduate. Even though he had enjoyed their date, he was determined to wait on God.

Meanwhile, Miss Ochs did not know the senior planned to ask her to the upcoming spring dance, especially since he had not shown *any* further interest.

David's roommate happened to be a close friend of hers. Knowing that Shirley Ochs was oblivious to the "plan," he told him, "Pack, if you don't quit wasting time and ask her to the dance, I'm going to ask her myself!"

Almost two weeks had passed since the sledding party, and, feeling heat from a friend, David realized he could no longer wait. Besides, he wanted to spend more time with her; there was something different about Shirley Ochs that made her stand out from the other girls on campus.

He telephoned and asked for a second date, to which she happily agreed.

The Ochs Family

Much like the Pack family, the Ochs had a strong and unique influence on their daughter, Shirley.

The youngest child of Peter and Dorothy Ochs, who themselves were the children of German and Austrian immigrants, she was born on May 19, 1945, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her parents named her Shirley Mae.

Throughout Shirley's childhood, Peter Ochs owned and operated a small music store—the "Ochs' House of Music"—which his father had opened with him in 1932.

In every sense, the music store defined the Ochs family, and had an enormous impact on Shirley and her two older sisters, Dorothy ("Dottie") and Barbara ("Barbie")—as well as on the entire city of Milwaukee and beyond. At one point, the store had more than 50 employees, selling instruments and giving music lessons to hundreds of children each week.

Peter Ochs was well known and respected throughout the community. Starting in the early 1950s, he had a local radio show, *Pete Ochs & His Orchestra*, in which Shirley participated. Thousands of Milwaukee listeners enjoyed his traditional German music on the radio every Sunday afternoon. Because of his musical reputation, Peter Ochs became

known as the “Lawrence Welk of Milwaukee”—up to 250,000 people could personally call him by name.

Peter also had a dance band, which packed large halls on Friday and Saturday nights. People from across the region brought their families to listen to the band and delighted in nights of wholesome German entertainment. Some of Shirley’s fondest memories were of these evenings: dancing, singing and watching with awe as her larger-than-life father entertained crowds of 500 to 600 people or more, with dozens of his extended family in attendance.

In addition, Shirley’s father organized and directed several marching bands for different age groups. These were called “The Conntinentals,” named after the popular Conn brand of musical instruments made famous by C.G. Winn in the 1920s. Because the family store sold hundreds of Conn instruments a year, the company supplied them at a discounted rate.

The Conntinentals were a mixture of music students—senior, cadet and junior bands—and other adults in the community who traveled with bands that marched in parades and participated in national competitions. Under her father’s direction, Shirley marched in events in every state in the continental U.S. They even performed in the January 1961 inauguration of U.S. President John F. Kennedy in Washington, D.C. All of this gained them a measure of international fame, which opened the door to marching in the streets of German cities on tours in 1965 and 1968.

Peter Ochs also organized local concerts to share his brand of wholesome, family-oriented music with the public. In the early 1960s, Major League Baseball’s Milwaukee Braves gave him permission to rent the Milwaukee County Stadium to perform a “Strike Up the Bands” concert. At the time, the sole purpose was to give the city a marvelous—and free!—night of music. Participants, including young Shirley, raised money all summer to be able to serve the community. Such generosity defined her father.

Having been born into a large, musically talented family greatly influenced the little girl from the beginning. She learned to play the accordion and the flute from an early age. Every day after school, she went to the store, completed her homework, and then ran the cash register before preparing meals with her mother and sisters in the evening. As she reached her late teens, she helped by giving music lessons to children.

Shirley Ochs' unique, hardworking and creative social environment formed the backdrop of her childhood.

First Church Service

In addition to being locally known through his music store and bands, Peter Ochs was active in the local Mantel Club, a highly structured leadership/service club for men. On Sunday afternoons, they met together, addressing a variety of relevant topics.

One day in the summer of 1959, one of Mr. Ochs' closest friends told the group, "I think we might have the wrong day. I just listened to a man named Herbert W. Armstrong on the radio, and he makes a strong argument that Saturday is actually the Sabbath."

Soon afterward, a small group of families began to gather around the radio to hear Mr. Armstrong's tenor voice announcing the coming kingdom of God. They gathered each Friday night and talked about the Bible and Mr. Armstrong's preaching. The messages they heard from *The World Tomorrow* program had an immediate impact on the small group, including the Ochs family.

As he grew in biblical understanding, Peter challenged family members on their Catholic and Protestant beliefs regarding makeup, pagan holidays and the true gospel of Jesus Christ. He even went so far as to tell his two younger sisters that "only whores wear makeup!" But he was proving his beliefs. His unwavering commitment to the truth left a pow-

erful impression on his youngest daughter during the formative teenage years.

Since there was no local Radio Church of God minister or congregation at that time, the closest minister, Mr. Dean Blackwell, traveled from Chicago, Illinois, to visit the small group of families from the Mantel Club. The group began keeping the Sabbath, holding Friday evening services with a small congregation of about 80 people pastored by Mr. Blackwell.

The Ochs family attended their first Milwaukee Church service on December 24, 1959. Shirley was 14 years old. The next autumn, both of her two older sisters enrolled in Ambassador College, which had been founded 13 years earlier.

Their departure left Shirley alone in Milwaukee for three years before she could attend Ambassador herself. She spent those years paging through the *Envoys* (AC yearbooks), learning the names of faculty members and students, and listening to stories from her sisters. She and her parents also visited the campus several times, and witnessed it grow and develop. By the time she enrolled as a freshman in the fall of 1963, Shirley already felt like a student. Here is why.

As AC students, her older sisters, Dottie and Barbie Ochs, had previously become acquainted with Mr. Armstrong and his wife, Loma, beginning with the Feast of Tabernacles in 1960. This had led to their younger sister forming a friendly relationship with the Armstrongs that lasted through her Ambassador years.

Shirley faithfully kept the Sabbath during her high school years, and read *The Plain Truth* magazine and studied the *Bible Correspondence Course*. As she learned the truths of God, she left behind all but two loyal high school friends and focused on the Church, the family music store, and the marching bands her father conducted. Anxious to complete high school and move on to Ambassador, she finished all of her required classes in only three and a half years. This per-

mitted her to begin working full-time in January 1963 to save money for college.

She trained as a stenographer and worked as a secretary for an insurance company, until her acceptance to AC. Little did she know that deciding to enter the workforce early would forever change the course of her life.

Unique Training

As explained, incoming Ambassador College freshmen were typically assigned jobs such as gardening, janitorial and kitchen work. However, due to her prior experience, as well as a growing need in the expanding Work of God, Shirley Ochs was selected to work as a secretary. First, she served as a stenographer in the Mailing Department for IBM key-punch, with this eventually leading to part-time employment as Mr. Armstrong's secretary from 1963 to 1965, during her freshman and sophomore years.

Before her third year, Shirley, with a small group of other students, was selected to transfer to Bricketwood, Ambassador College's sister campus in England, to participate in a one-year study abroad program. She enjoyed—was thrilled with—the experience of the quaint English countryside, the British culture and historical influences, and the exquisite campus environment—so much that she requested to remain for her senior year. She received permission to finish her studies in England, but it came with a condition—a personal requirement from Mr. Armstrong: She had to promise to return to Pasadena for a fifth year—in effect, a second senior year. Mr. Armstrong wanted her to have exposure to more American men in the fifth year. As with the stenography training, Mr. Armstrong's decision would have a fateful effect on her entire life—she would overlap for one year with an incoming freshman from Lima, Ohio.

Shirley “graduated” unmarried from Bricketwood in 1967. Of course, she kept her word by returning to Pasadena.

There she took additional classes while working as a receptionist in the old Hall of Administration. She shared this position with a fellow graduate, who later served as the first stewardess onboard the Church's newly acquired jet. Shirley filled the void left by the woman's frequent absence at Headquarters whenever the stewardess traveled with Mr. Armstrong, as he was now meeting leaders around the world.

In January 1969, Shirley transferred to the recently constructed Hall of Administration continuing in Mr. Armstrong's office as one of his two executive secretaries.

God's Hand Guiding

Like most students, Shirley dated widely and built many close friendships. During the years after graduation, she had two relationships that began to develop into something more serious. However, looking back, she said, "It was obvious God intervened in my life. It's clear He closed my mind to pursuing either relationship any further, even though I didn't understand why at the time. Despite pressure from faculty, ministers, friends and family to get married, I ended both relationships on good terms."

In one instance, while interested in a certain man, she was called before a senior minister, who said, "The relationship is wrong. You will be unhappy if you marry this man."

She later saw this as direct intervention from God, instructing her to wait patiently for Him to reveal His will.

At times, she found it difficult to understand why she had not met anyone with whom a relationship could blossom into marriage.

Though lonely, Miss Ochs felt blessed to be Mr. Armstrong's personal secretary, a position she described as the greatest job for which one could ask.

As she prayed for God to show His will, she soon came to a decision: If God wanted her to truly be a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1-2) for His Work by not having a family,

she would accept her role, despite personal wishes. She was willing to remain unmarried.

Not long after deciding to place her future completely in God's hands, she received a phone call from a young man employed in the Mailing Department—to her surprise, it was David Pack.

Puzzled, she wondered, “Why would he call *me*? We don't really know each other.”

Recall that during her last year at Bricketwood she had heard about an “All-American swimmer” who had chosen to attend God's college, and the rumor had it that this freshman “was going to put Ambassador College on the map in the summer Olympic Games.”

When Shirley returned to Pasadena, she had met the student, but only casually. At most, they had spoken briefly a few times when she was looking for a tour guide. (When Mr. Armstrong was out of town, Miss Ochs would serve at the front desk of the Hall of Administration. This would be how David encountered her more regularly.)

Now, he had suddenly called her “out of the blue”—and with an invitation to escort her to the college snow party!

She kindly accepted and hung up the phone. Miss Ochs then turned to her co-worker and said, “You're not going to believe who just called me.”

Although she certainly knew of the tall student, and their brief interactions had always been cordial, it had been more than two years since they first met. He was one of the last people she thought would ever call her for a date.

Many men on campus were intimidated by Shirley, fearing the scrutiny that they expected would come from dating the personal secretary of the Church's Pastor General—and both of her brother-in-laws were very high-profile senior ministers. Mr. Armstrong was a grandfatherly figure who naturally felt protective of his young secretary—and wanted to make certain she dated and married the right person.

In late 1963, Peter Ochs and his wife had met with Mr. Armstrong on campus. With his unique blend of boldness and humor, for which he was known, he “charged” the senior-most leader of God’s Church to “watch carefully for who marries my youngest daughter.”

Mr. Armstrong laughed and promised to do this—an assurance he would relate with a chuckle years later.

Make no mistake. It would take an earnest, confident and resolute personality and strength of character to accept the pressures associated with dating Mr. Armstrong’s secretary. Most who knew David Pack were aware that, toward the end of his four years of AC, he lacked neither boldness nor confidence.

Calling Father-in-law-to-be

As he prepared for his second date with Shirley Ochs, David grew more convinced of his initial feeling that she was a special woman. The evening of the dance confirmed this in his thoughts. Following a wonderful dinner, the pair continued to have a delightful time.

Again, according to plan, he waited 10 days—half as long—for a third date, and, from that night forward, they spent almost every spare moment together. As the weeks went by and David’s graduation approached, serious interest grew between them. It was undeniable. Several weeks of dating had led to courtship, and thoughts of wedding bells began to ring in their minds.

After many dates and counseling with the ministry, David decided to propose to Shirley Ochs. However, it was standard practice to write a letter to the future father-in-law to ask for permission to have his daughter’s hand in marriage. What was not standard was how her father responded.

“I opened the letter with, ‘This letter is from a perfect stranger.’ I went on to tell him a little bit about

myself. I also wrote that I would be calling him, after which I did not give the letter a second thought.

“When I called shortly after, I said, ‘Hello, Mr. Ochs, this is David Pack.’

“I still remember his exact response, ‘I don’t know any *perfect strangers*.’

“Taken aback, I replied, ‘Excuse me?’

“He repeated, ‘I don’t know any perfect strangers. I have never met one.’

“I responded, ‘I’m sorry, sir, but I’m not following you.’

“‘You wrote to me and said you were a perfect stranger. I’ve known strangers, but never a perfect one,’ he explained—after which he belly laughed.

“I finally remembered how I had begun my letter and realized that this man had a unique sense of humor. He could not wait for my call.

“But he did give permission to propose.”

Engaged!

David Pack and Shirley Ochs became engaged during the Days of Unleavened Bread of 1971. They had hoped Mr. Armstrong would counsel them for and perform the marriage, but the Pastor General was scheduled to be in the Philippines, away from Headquarters on an extended trip. Instead, the newly engaged couple selected another senior minister to finish their counseling and to perform the marriage.

However, Mr. Armstrong did make time to personally counsel his secretary, via telephone. One day, the Pastor General had called the Executive Office from the Philippines concerning a Church-related matter. When he heard Shirley Ochs’ voice, he spoke extensively with her on the spot. The discussion turned into an almost two-hour marriage counseling session, which included aspects of how to be a good wife.

Mr. Armstrong did not yet know her fiancée well personally. They had spoken briefly, and David had also enjoyed the Senior dinner with him (sitting beside him) on one occasion. The Pastor General did recall the Ohio native's former athletic career, and had heard positive things about him. He supported their plans for marriage.

Mr. Armstrong had long taught that a minister's wife was "one-half of her husband's ministry." He also taught the proverb, he "who finds a wife finds...favor of the LORD" (Prov. 18:22). Upon further counseling, the ministry agreed that the two made a good match.

David suspected he would have big shoes to fill. Again, both of his fiancée's sisters were married to senior ministers, Church leaders who were Pastor-rank and also District Superintendents. The young man did not view his future family relationship through marriage as unwanted pressure. Rather, he realized it would afford many great learning opportunities.

"I remember being quite excited at the thought that I would have two such senior brothers-in-law. I do not know if they were excited about having me, but I was about being related to them. I knew I was hardly entering the family as an 'equal.' I determined to pepper them with questions at every possible opportunity. I am pretty sure that they would say that I stuck to my word on this."

During those years in God's Work, Mr. Armstrong and the Church understood that Ambassador College existed primarily for one purpose: to prepare "laborers" for the "harvest" (Matt. 9:36-38), properly trained and experienced men and women who would serve, protect and hold together congregations in the field. It appeared that this was now going to be the manner in which God would use the new Mr. and Mrs. Pack.

Surprise Telegram

On March 30, 1971, David received a wonderful surprise. The switchboard left a phone message for him and his brother in their campus mailboxes, stating, “You have a Telex here from your parents.” A completely unexpected Western Union Telex had arrived from his parents that simply stated, “Worldwide Church of God has two new members. All our love, Mom and Dad.”

Ran and Jane Pack were baptized! It was stunning news! David knew they had been attending services for some time and studying the Church’s literature, but he was unsure of the seriousness of their interest. There had been no hint of “baptismal counseling.”

Of course, initially, his parents had been mildly hostile to the “strange” doctrines their two sons had embraced. But after David, and later Bill, went away to attend Ambassador College, Jane and Ran’s curiosity about the “boys’ religion” slowly increased.

When David had visited home during his freshman year, his mother had asked, “I want to see what you boys do on Saturday. Could I visit your church?”

Excited, David had immediately called the Church of God local minister, who pastored the new local congregation in nearby Findlay.

“Could my mother come to Church?” the freshman said. “She wants to visit with us once.”

The minister said, “Sure. It’s no problem if relatives come and visit with you. But don’t get too excited. She’ll probably come once and never return.”

It *was* the ministry’s experience that such relatives usually came only a few times. However, in this instance, the pastor was wrong. After her first visit, Jane Pack *never* failed to attend another Sabbath service for the rest of her life unless she was ill.

After about one year of watching his wife leave their home every Saturday for services, Ran said to himself, “Wait a minute. I want to see what my wife is doing, and where she goes every Saturday morning!”

He accompanied his wife—and, like her, attended services every week without fail for the rest of his life.

Finally, after years of trying to understand their son’s “strange” beliefs, Ran and Jane Pack responded to God’s call into His Church. They were now baptized.

Their sons were ecstatic.

Upon learning God’s truth, both parents realized they would have to end their decades-long habit of smoking. For Ran, this was unbelievably difficult, having battled smoking for years.

For Jane, on the other hand, the situation was strangely different. When she learned that smoking was something Christians cannot do, she simply said, “Oh, these are wrong? Then I won’t smoke again.” She discarded her pack of cigarettes and never did.

In some cases, family and friends follow the Christian example they see brethren exhibit. They become curious about their loved one’s way of life—why he or she seems so happy. They want to find the same happiness for themselves.

David eventually realized that the best way to influence others, including his parents, was to focus on exemplifying the fruits of God’s Spirit, described in Galatians 5:22-23. (No more Bible and booklet thumping.) His parents stated that his personal transformation and practicing of true Christianity had, at least partially, prompted their decision to examine the Church’s beliefs.

In most situations, God called parents into His Church—their children might follow. But in the case of the Packs, the parents followed the children.

Entering the Ministry

Six weeks before graduation, the Personnel Manager called David in for yet another meeting, this time to discuss the senior's post-college future.

Having recently become engaged, Mr. Pack entered the meeting with hopes, and beginning plans of entering the ministry. All indications over the last semester pointed toward this role, yet the manager of Personnel had other ideas. He made it clear that the former competitive athlete would most likely not be going into the ministry. The man's recommendation would likely be that Mr. Pack was "not suited for the field ministry."

The Field Ministry?

While Mr. Pack understood that many more than the Headquarters' employee Personnel Manager were involved in the decision to send men into Christ's ministry, and that this did not mean "the end," he was still stunned.

This was because the sheer revenge and hostility of a Pastor-rank minister, prolonged over so many years, was almost impossible to accept. It had been the single greatest

faith-building experience of his college career—even including twice coming face-to-face with death.

“The Personnel Manager was a Korean War hero. Some loved his austere manner, and others despised him. There was almost no in between. He was without doubt the most joyless human being that I have ever been forced to encounter, and for so many times. But I am still thankful for the awful way that he treated me. He turned out to be the greatest single impetus permitting me very early on to learn that suffering kicks the mental learning mechanism into gear, and that this is often God’s way of teaching. See Ecclesiastes 7:14.

“Also, it was becoming personally evident to me—and certainly not just because of this man—that there were tares among the wheat. There was no mistaking the message here. I was to learn this time and time again at the highest levels of the Church. It was not surprising that this man left the Church as early as 1975 to form his own tiny group. He was upset with Mr. Armstrong for changing the date of Pentecost and the Church’s understanding of divorce and remarriage. So I was in good company. Mr. Armstrong had also displeased him.”

Mr. Pack did leave the office and tell his fiancée what could become grim news—that a future with him might not equate to service in the ministry. The couple sat in the upper gardens talking for hours on a late Friday afternoon. He wanted to be sure she was not in any way marrying him with this in mind. Instead, she offered encouragement and support. They agreed to patiently wait and trust God to lead them along His path. They determined that if this were God’s will, he would consider employment opportunities outside the ministry. She was fully prepared for that if it was to happen, and said so. The ministry could even come later.

Great News!

Almost immediately after, David and Shirley were invited to dinner at the house of the Director of Church Administration, Roderick C. Meredith. (He was related to Shirley by his marriage to the older sister of her brother-in-law, Carl McNair.)

“We received a fine recommendation for you,” Mr. Meredith said.

“Really?” Mr. Pack said. “I wasn’t sure I was going into the field.”

“Oh no, we got a very positive report, a good solid report and you are going back to Indianapolis. The pastor there is requesting you back.”

The final decision to hire Mr. Pack into the ministry occurred just days earlier in the scheduled “Manpower Meeting.” This formal discussion and evaluation process, typically held just as graduation drew near, determined which seniors were qualified to enter the Work, and included where would be each new hire’s assignment.

Mr. Meredith said that the consensus among Headquarters ministers was that Mr. Pack was well-suited for the ministry. (Years later, Mr. Pack learned that Mr. Armstrong had also personally recommended sending him to the field.)

In the end, the Personnel Manager’s evaluation was seen to be an isolated opinion. Mr. Pack could not help wondering if this had been his last gasp to either just frighten him or to block him outright.

Regardless, the “almost-Packs” were thrilled at the fantastic news—it was everything for which they had hoped.

Size and Impact of the Worldwide Church of God

With a future in the ministry now imminent, Mr. Pack gave much more realistic thought to the incredible Work into which he was being hired. Now it was real!

By 1971, the Worldwide Church of God had grown to well over 50,000 members worldwide, with regional offices on six continents.

The size and scope of the Church in North America alone was impressive. In the United States, hundreds of ministers and elders served many scores of congregations. In addition to weekly Sabbath services, congregations across the country shared regular combined services with sometimes thousands in attendance. Feast sites were gargantuan, 10,000 and even 15,000 in one location.

Due to regularly announcing the true gospel of the kingdom of God, through *The World Tomorrow* and *The Plain Truth*, the Church experienced unprecedented growth. The radio program was broadcast on some 400 radio and 99 TV stations, reaching millions by the fall of 1971. Two million subscribers read *The Plain Truth* magazine, which analyzed world news, trends and conditions in the light of Bible prophecy.

The Worldwide Church of God had become an immense globe-girdling organization with real international impact.

Yet Mr. Pack did not accept his ministerial position based on the organization's size or view his new pastoral assignment as merely a "good opportunity." It was a calling—from God. In his new role, he could help and serve local brethren in a much greater way.

Graduation

For most graduating students, the final week of college was an unforgettable, life-changing experience. It was not unheard of for some few students to graduate on a Friday, be ordained that Sabbath, get married the next day, Sunday, and then head straight for their ministerial assignment on Monday, sometimes sort of honeymooning "on the way."

Just before graduation (Friday, June 4), Church Administration announced that Mr. Pack and his soon-to-be bride

would serve in Indianapolis and Lafayette, Indiana, where Mr. Pack would become for the first time officially a full-time ministerial assistant.

Wow, my college career is over, he thought. Three years and nine months of jobs, classes and trials, and now I'm getting married and going into the field ministry.

He was thrilled!

Wedding and More!

Yet Mr. Pack was nearing another major milestone: marriage. He looked forward to starting a new life with his future bride. Days later, on June 6, 1971, at 10:00 a.m. Sunday morning, the couple became Mr. and Mrs. David C. Pack. Their wedding was held in the Lower Gardens below the old Cyrus McCormick mansion, the same location where graduation had taken place about 42 hours earlier.

Mr. Pack's parents flew in to see their oldest son graduate and get married. His great Aunt Bess also came from just across Pasadena to the event. Mrs. Pack's parents were unable to travel the distance.

Their first night together as husband and wife, the newlyweds traveled up the California coast for their honeymoon. Monday night, they stopped in the San Francisco Bay area, and enjoyed the beautiful surroundings and magnificent views of the historic Pacific Coast Highway.

After four days, the newlyweds returned to Pasadena on Thursday before flying to Chicago Friday afternoon. The Ochs received them at the airport and took them to their home in Milwaukee, where the McNairs and Antions had arrived by late Friday night.

“Driving to Milwaukee from the airport after we had arrived in Chicago, I referred to my new in-laws as ‘Mr. and Mrs. Antion’ and ‘Mr. and Mrs. McNair.’ As soon as my father-in-law heard this, he said, “No,

no, no! None of this ‘Mister’ business. They are Gary and Carl.’

“Not wanting to disrespect my new senior brothers-in-law, I asked, ‘Are you sure? I don’t want to be disrespectful.’ And ‘I don’t think I would be able to use their first name.’

“My new father-in-law said, ‘No, don’t worry. You won’t have to say anything. I will take care of this tomorrow morning.’

“My wife and I awoke early the next morning surrounded by all seven of my new nieces and nephews, who crowded around the bed to greet ‘Uncle David and Aunt Shirley.’ Each of the seven children stepped forward in little robes to introduce themselves by name.

“Immediately Mr. Ochs introduced me to my new brothers-in-law, ‘Gary and Carl, this is David. David, meet *Gary* and *Carl*. I don’t want to hear any of this “Mister” business.’

“They replied to me, ‘He’s the boss!’ And it was not uncomfortable.”

On Sunday afternoon, over 200 relatives from far and wide attended a wedding reception. This was the Ochs family way to introduce their daughter’s new husband to their large family.

His new extended family was warm and friendly, and they made him feel immediately accepted. He was overwhelmed to meet such a large and “social” family—so very different from the small, close-knit family of his childhood. It was an impression Mr. Pack never forgot.

Preparing to Enter the Ministry

The Packs stayed in Milwaukee for just three days before driving to Indiana. Naturally, Mr. Pack was eager to begin his new responsibilities as a ministerial assistant. He was

also optimistic about returning to Indianapolis to work and train under the man who helped send him to Ambassador. Dedication over the four years of college had paid off. Mr. Pack was finally in the ministry.

Though excited to get to work, he was unsure of what lay ahead. Regardless, he knew his training would serve him.

Faithful ministers of God are charged with feeding Christ's sheep (John 21:15-17)—members of God's Church and those whom God might be calling into His way of life. Worldwide Church of God pastors regularly visited brethren, usually at their homes, and provided them the counsel, guidance, instruction or encouragement each individual needed. Ministers were also responsible for visiting prospective members, people who were moved about what they read in *The Plain Truth* or heard on *The World Tomorrow* radio program and contacted Headquarters to request a ministerial visit.

Perhaps more than anything else, Mr. Pack looked forward to participating in these visits. He knew it would provide support to local brethren and a tremendous learning opportunity on his way to becoming an ordained minister.

Reality Check

Although initiated with high hopes, Mr. Pack's first year out of college proved frustratingly difficult.

“My arrival in Indianapolis was the real true beginning of being in the ministry, other than the previous summer. There were certain expectations every assistant had for his first assignment. Most of this simply came from a widely understood knowledge of ‘the way it was’ in the field ministry. So I had clear expectations going in. So did my wife.

“The minister I was coming to serve had been only too wonderful to me, and from the time he had first

sent me to college. He was a genial man, married to a person who was very nice to me. I had enjoyed their children from the summer before, and looked forward to seeing them again, this time with a wife.”

Almost immediately, the new ministerial assistant was instructed to perform various fix-it jobs for the minister: cutting grass, painting the garage, tilling the garden, and black-topping the driveway, instead of learning how to attend to the brethren’s spiritual needs. Once these personal projects were completed, the minister took his young assistant fishing, boating and weightlifting at the gym.

“Some of this was another part of the way it was in the field. But not all. I do not blame the pastor, but rather a misguided understanding of what was thought-to-be ‘teaching government’ that had grown up under the Director of Church Administration of the previous 10 years. Ministers were in charge, and one of their assignments was to make sure their assistants knew it. Horror stories abounded. While this was wrong in various regards, I accepted it and recognized that I was helping my boss in certain clear ways.

“Understand that in those days, however, certain things were still largely unthinkable, and thus were never questioned. I did not recognize that all of these odd jobs were the wrong approach to assistants.

“And my boss was certainly never a taskmaster over me in these duties. Rather he was kind, and always sought to include my wife and me in certain ways, and I was generally glad to help him.”

But there were times when Mr. Pack arrived at the pastor’s home intending to join him visiting. As he was about to walk out the door, his wife would ask, “Please stay home today.”

Strangely, the minister would relent. “I’m sorry, I guess you can head home. We will not be visiting today.”

But other things also got in the way of visiting God’s people. The result was that local brethren suffered.

It was very difficult for a ministerial assistant to go from the high-paced learning environment of the College to almost overnight backing into near inactivity at least in regard to the ministry. Mr. Pack was geared up to get going.

“The pastor must have wondered about this excited, driven, sometimes naïve, young man who was there to conquer the world. I had much to learn about balance. But we simply did not serve the people. Also, coming as a married assistant had changed the equation. My wife was the same age as his wife.

“These two women had been best friends during their freshman year at Ambassador. But eight years had passed since then, and their lives had taken very different paths. In fairness to the pastor, this must have been awkward for him—and her.”

Unexpected Adjustment

That first year in the field proved to be frustrating for Mrs. Pack as well. It began with comments such as, “I’m glad I’m married to a Pastor-rank minister. That’s important to me.”

Such status-conscious statements were at the least surprising.

On one hand, the pastor’s wife left AC after only one year of school, to become a homemaker at age 19. On the other, Mrs. Pack had gained five years of an Ambassador College education. She had studied abroad in Europe, broadening her educational and cultural horizons. She had been the Pastor General’s personal secretary, privy to the daily pressures and demands thrust upon the human leader of

God's Church. Again, Mrs. Pack was also related to, through marriage, two field district superintendents who each supervised multiple ministers and many congregations in the United States and Canada.

Years of training and working at Ambassador College produced in the former Shirley Ochs certain professionalism, grace under pressure and confidence. AC had prepared her to be a "help meet" to her husband—and *his ministry*.

For example, unlike some, Mrs. Pack did not ask her husband to do all the driving. She was more than willing to take over the wheel, even at the height of rush hour traffic, or if her husband needed to jot notes on the way to services or ministerial visits. She was not a woman who would freeze up or be easily intimidated.

Ironically, her willingness to drive and take an active leadership role among the women in the local congregation sometimes brought accusations from her former classmate of being "too independent." It was difficult for Mrs. Pack.

"Organize the File"

By September, after months of almost no visits to brethren and prospective members, the minister produced a shoebox filled with forms and letters.

"We have a bunch of visit requests," he said.

He handed the box to his assistant. "Go ahead. You can organize these."

Mr. Pack could scarcely believe it. He had spent his entire first summer in the field fishing, working in the garden or getting in shape at the gym with this man—all while over 30 prospective member households in the area were waiting for a minister to visit them! Clearly, ministerial duties were being neglected, leaving prospective members to potentially die on the vine.

Unsure of how to handle the situation or with whom he should talk, Mr. Pack called a new brother-in-law.

“I have a situation here,” he began. “We don’t do anything productive! At the same time, we have a large number of visit request forms and letters that have built up over time.”

The senior minister offered encouragement and suggested the ministerial assistant write a report to his supervisor, detailing the concerns. Mr. Pack’s brother-in-law stressed the importance of following God’s government and presenting concerns directly to one’s superior—not privately to someone else.

“My wife and I had somewhat overreacted. Yes, there was a clear problem in what was occurring, or rather *not* occurring. I should have gone to the man in a nice, low-key way with questions, and nothing more. If it had gone badly, I suppose then I could have called my brother-in-law. Otherwise, I should have left him out of it, and waited for God to solve such a problem.

“Understand. There were certainly a lot of things I had not figured out at age 22 and less than four months out of college.”

High Evaluation Reversed

Mr. Pack followed the advice, and spent several days carefully outlining a typed report.

But the day that he planned to submit it, his supervisor informed him it was time for his first evaluation. The pastor said the young assistant had been “performing well,” and “had delivered a good split-sermon (on the Feast of Trumpets).” He added that ordination would probably be in about six months, around the Feast of Unleavened Bread (1972).

Mr. Pack was dumbfounded. With the report in hand, he hesitantly said, “I have something I need to give you.”

The minister read the list of concerns, including a typed list of the 30 households who had been waiting for visits, and how long each had been waiting.

Now the minister was dumbfounded. He immediately telephoned the Director of Church Administration.

Instead of addressing the concerns in the report, the CAD Director completely—and blindly—backed the pastor. The minister brought the couple to his home and severely corrected them just before the Day of Atonement. The young couple was so in shock they could not eat before the annual fast began at sundown.

The hardest part was that the Director of CAD simply did not care about what was happening. It was of no concern to him. The facts of the situation did not matter.

“I must admit that the minister found it very difficult to correct me. He plainly said so and I believed it. But he was under instructions from above to ‘come down hard.’ While what happened was unjust, the problem lay above his head, and that man would soon be removed by Mr. Armstrong eight months later.”

It was natural to expect things to get worse between Mr. Pack and his supervisor. Yet the uncomfortable situation was short lived. Their working relationship soon recovered and things returned to somewhat normal. This attitude reversal largely stemmed from the pastor’s history with Mr. Pack and his personal fondness toward him. The feeling was mutual.

However, complicating matters was the fact that the Packs were only paid \$135 each week and were paying on a series of debts from prior to marriage. They simply had no discretionary funds left—at all!—on a salary of \$7,020 per year.

Finally Visiting Brethren

The Director of CAD had instituted a policy, in force for some years, that a certain number of visits (quite high) be

made each week by full-time ministers. To track this, paperwork was required to show time, length and topics covered for each visit.

As might be expected, there were certain ministers who redefined visits and cut corners to boost numbers. Some made phone calls that mysteriously became visits. Others made “popcorn visits,” including seeing widows for 10- or 15-minute periods. Through at least semi-falsified reports, certain field ministers appeared busy and productive. Pasadena could not know otherwise.

Mr. Pack’s pastor still rarely visited. However, to keep the Packs occupied, he let the young couple visit widows on their own. Finally, Mr. Pack was given a chance to support local brethren and gain experience in the field.

“This opportunity to visit widows with my wife, although at first just a few, turned out to become one of the very greatest blessings of my ministry. First, I was on fire to do the Work, and this gave me a tangible opportunity—a direct outlet—to do something. But that was only the beginning of the blessing.

“I almost immediately discovered that each visit with an older person (there were some older gentlemen on the list as well) was the entrance to a gold mine, almost literally. While these elderly brethren were always thrilled to break the monotony of their loneliness, and thanked us for coming, we always got more than we gave. Though visiting widows ‘*in their affliction*’ (Jms. 1:27) is ‘pure religion,’ visiting them (and widowers) who were eager to talk was *pure joy*.

“Sometimes every person on our schedule had baked a pie or cake for us. I can still remember days when I had to eat five pieces of one or the other—with coffee. When one is young you can do more of this than is possible later. I learned that youth hides a multitude of physical sins.

“Some ministers seemed burdened by this duty. Others did very little of such visiting, or ignored this responsibility altogether. Boy, did they miss out. This early exposure would set the tone of my visiting for decades to come. In fact, it is the biggest single reason I so miss pastoring today.

“I might add that this led me to look up all of my grandmother’s sisters, several of whom were living in and around Indianapolis, and who were in their 80s and 90s. I had met her one sister in Pasadena, Bess, but now wanted to meet more. My grandmother was one of 11 children, all of them successful, with seven girls. These ladies were such sterling people. I think my great Aunt Gertrude died at 102 (in the early 80s), and I got to visit her well into her 90s. Some of these women had cared for my father as a child because of his father’s absence. It was fun hearing stories from them about him that I could not hear from his father.

“Also, because of this experience, I remember that it hit me how I was long overdue in seeing my 79-year-old Grandmother Crowl near Green Bay, Wisconsin. My wife and I went up there after the Feast to see her (and my Uncle Dick). We were so glad that we did this because she died of cancer just four months later, in February 1972, after showing no symptoms during our visit.”

Travel Trial

In addition to making visits with his wife, Mr. Pack often did this with a local elder. However, while this was a great chance to learn from an ordained man, it also developed into a severe physical trial.

The local elder had a 1971 Plymouth Fury, a large car with an extremely sloped roofline of limited head room. Mr. Pack frequently had to cram his tall frame into the vehicle.

When asked if the bench seat could tilt back a little, the elder did so grudgingly.

But the next day, Mr. Pack would have to repeat his request: “Mr. [name], could you please move the seat again?”

It was an ongoing ordeal. It was as if he had to repeatedly convince the driver that he was *still 6’7”*.

Mr. Pack would sit for hours in the car, cramped in an awkward, uncomfortable position, his head cocked to one side. When he returned home from visits, his wife would have to massage his neck to relax the tense, cramped muscles. In part because of this experience, he would battle neck problems for the rest of his life.

Although Mr. Pack enjoyed meeting with brethren and prospective members in their homes, traveling to and from each visit grew even more physically agonizing whenever the lead minister accompanied them. Even though the pastor and particularly the local elder were much smaller than he, neither was willing to sit in the back seat. Incredibly, this meant that Mr. Pack had to literally lie down on his back in the rear seat of the car, his legs bent and feet propped up on the window. Neither of the men seemed to care that such a tall man was in a contorted position behind them as they traveled. It may have been a certain form of “hazing” the young graduate. The trial lasted throughout the year.

In an ironic twist, the CAD Director—unaware (by choice) that the Indianapolis pastor was neglecting his duties—was considering promoting him to be a district superintendent. This was, at least partly, because the man was so adept at playing political games—a problem that, at one point, became commonplace in the Church. Men were often awarded positions of leadership due to political savvy, rather than personal commitment to serving the brethren or their drive to teach the truth.

This would be a lesson learned repeatedly throughout Mr. Pack’s training in the ministry.

“Understand that the man I worked for was simply a person who did not want to be in the ministry. A few years later, he walked out of the ministry and out of the Church, not going with another group. He and his wife certainly never wanted to hurt anybody. But when he left the Church, it gave meaning—brought clarity—to all that we had experienced in his area.

“This said, unlike so many others, it would be easy to enjoy his company today if the occasion ever arose. I would love to see him again.”

Canoe Trip Turns Dangerous

It was April 1972. Almost a full year had passed since the Packs had arrived in Indianapolis. Mr. Pack and an elder in the area decided to take a canoe trip on a creek west of Indianapolis. Despite a cold, rainy day, both men enjoyed the experience.

A week later, Mr. Pack, two ministers, and four other men decided to take a longer, more adventurous trip down the Whitewater River—the swiftest in the state. While the Whitewater is often very calm in the summer, during times of heavy rain it is dangerous due to runoff from the steep hills of Southeastern Indiana. None understood this.

Despite another rainy, windy day, the group launched three canoes. They were off to a great start as they traveled the narrow part of the river, perhaps 20 to 25 miles upstream from the Ohio River.

Starting early, and after paddling all morning, the group stopped to eat lunch on an embankment. Forty minutes later, they went back, only to discover that the river had risen 12 inches! The men could now almost step laterally into their canoes.

The men continued their journey, not recognizing the danger. The water rose quickly, and the group realized too late how badly they had miscalculated.

The section of water they traveled joined the Great Miami River farther downstream in a floodplain. The men had no idea that the Great Miami had now swelled to two-and-a-half-miles wide—the result of some of the worst flooding in the Whitewater’s history.

As the men progressed, the river became swifter and began overflowing its banks. One man lost his hat to a gust of wind. As he reached to retrieve the hat, his canoe tipped. Moments later, the largest canoe, holding three men, rounded the corner and headed toward the capsized boat. Trying to help, their canoe also flipped!

The final canoe capsized soon afterward, and all seven men, being swept by the roaring torrent, gripped their overturned canoes in the cold water.

“We absolutely could not get out of the river. We could not get over to the bank. Although the sun had come out and we all had life jackets on, we started to get a little worried. But as we passed under a bridge where our wives were standing to watch us pass, we were all waving so they wouldn’t become alarmed. My wife was six months pregnant at the time, and we did not want to scare the ladies, so we continued to wave as we shot by. They waved back, smiling. We had no idea how close the Great Miami was ahead of us.”

The men drew near the bank several times, but the current was too swift to get out. For 45 minutes, they fought the current and freezing water, battling logs and debris around them as the river continued to swell.

Finally, the group rounded a bend and came across a gravel bar. Mr. Pack happened to be on the inside of the river as it took a sharp dogleg. Even though he was still fighting the powerful current, he finally felt the ground underneath. He anchored his feet firmly and yelled to the rest of the group, “Put your feet down!”

He and the other rider in his canoe dug their feet into the ground and held on. They managed to climb up the bank and even save their canoe.

Still helpless against the current, the other men were propelled down river. Two of the men sailed into several downed trees and were able to grab overhanging branches. They were forced to let go of their canoe, only to watch it smash into a bridge abutment just beyond them.

The other two men finally managed to get out with their canoe further down river. All the men were safe. They recognized that God had delivered them.

“The Bible speaks about the fact that we have angels who protect us. It is likely that at least some if not all of us were literally delivered from death on that day. I will never forget April 16, 1972. It was a moment ending with greatly increased faith when it could have been the story of seven tragic deaths.”

Fishing!—and Hunting?

It should be obvious that Mr. Pack’s experiences with water were not all bad (remember, he was a swimmer), and neither was the year in Indianapolis “all bad.” There was some fishing. No story of his life would be complete without explaining his love for fishing.

“I love fishing, and always have. It started when I was young, when my father surprised his three children with (bamboo) cane poles. I recall the excitement of my first trip to St. Mary’s lake in northwestern Ohio to fish off a dock at about age eight with my new ‘cane pole.’ I initially had a little trouble with the ‘put on the worm’ part, but I soon mastered this because I loved watching my bobber move—and disappear—when a bluegill stopped playing with it, and bit. I learned early

that they had ‘soft mouths’ and that I had to be a good ‘fisher of fish’ if I were going to enjoy the good taste of bluegills.

“I have fished in ponds, rivers, quarries, lakes, including several of the Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. And I have fished from banks, docks, bridges, rowboats and big vessels.

“I have fly fished and gone ice fishing in Wisconsin in duck ponds on the Mississippi River. The last time I was able to do this, in early 1974, I recall catching 75 crappies. They were biting so fast I sometimes pulled two from the water at the same time. I had to clean all of them that night.

“I have caught northern pike, walleye, lake trout, Chinook salmon, bluegills, perch, smallmouth, largemouth and sea bass, catfish (I am sorry to report)—and even an octopus (I am also sorry to report), the latter in the Gulf of Mexico when I was eight years old.

“Of course, later, I took my three children just as my dad took his three children with him. I recall that the last time we did this was at the Feast when we went shark fishing out in the Atlantic at night (I would not have eaten it if we had caught one—but we got skunked!).

“So much fishing was in fact very beneficial to my ministry. I might first add that one benefit was that it helped permit me to think during the difficult Indianapolis experience. But I have truly learned what Jesus meant telling His disciples, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ People *are* like fish. They are all different. It could be said that some have ‘mouths’ like great northern pike, and others are more like bluegills, meaning some are easier to hook and hold, and others can have the hook torn from their mouths very easily. Baits have to be changed according

to depth, temperature of water and time of year. There are so many lessons connected to fishing.

“I was not much of a hunter—that’s for sure. Not unless you count using a BB gun for a short while, shooting birds—until my dad took it away because he was a birdwatcher. He felt it was better watching them alive than dead. However, I have shot many rifles, shotguns and pistols, and did go skeet shooting once.

“I can only wonder how many times I have thrown a line into the water. I wish I still could.”

Second WCG Austerity Year

The summer of 1972 came. The U.S. economy had sunk into a recession. The Church’s income, which depended upon tithes, offerings and donations, was naturally directly affected, leading to a second year of austerity just two years after the last one. All departments were told that they must make cuts. This meant that a number of recently hired ministerial assistants also were to be laid off.

But rather than use a more practical guide to who was qualified and who was not, or who was necessary to keep and who was not, the Director of Church Administration made an arbitrary ruling to lay off one man from each of the 16 districts across the United States. His decision did not take into account that there might be more than one less-qualified man in one district, and none in this category in another.

The CAD Director made a special decision regarding Mr. and Mrs. Pack. He privately said to his successor that “Dave and Shirley Pack are family to me. I do not want to be accused of politics for keeping them when others are scheduled to be let go.”

Fearing charges of nepotism, the Director decided to lay off the Packs. In effect, he made a *political decision* to avoid the appearance of playing politics—incredible! In

fact, he was being removed after 11 years of harsh leadership over the United States and international ministry. At least it could be said that Mr. Pack losing his job unjustly was among his very last acts in office. His oppressive rule was over.

“It is important to know that my boss in Indianapolis gave me opportunities to learn and grow. While I did not have many opportunities to speak, I did participate in a variety of activities, including such things as finding a church hall for a new congregation that started in Muncie, Indiana the very week before I was let go. I recall giving the first sermonette to that congregation.

“But it is most important to recognize that most of my learning and development in this first assignment came by observation. I discovered that the ability—and necessity!—to *observe* what was going on around me was the single most vital element of my training. I learned to refer to this ‘coursework’ as ‘Observation 101.’ Everywhere I looked there was something to learn—the way assignments by deacons and elders were carried out, the way a Spokesman Club was handled, how counseling was offered in regard to different needs and problems, the smooth flow of Sabbath services, how Passover was prepared for, and simply the general way that so many things were done—or not done.

“Because there was little or no active teaching going on with my training, such observation was necessary. I also learned that there is a *second course* called ‘Observation 202.’ This consists of observing things that are NOT being done, areas where things should be taking place, but are either being neglected or ignored. I learned to think carefully about what I would do someday in my own pastorate, given the opportunity.

“Nothing from this first year in the field would be as important to the entire rest of my ministry as having learned to daily apply these two ‘courses.’ The book will certainly speak more about this.”

Mr. Pack’s salary was raised to \$145 per week, but this was just three weeks before he was let go. Now jobless, and bills mounting, the Pack household instantly faced a cold financial reality. Both Mr. Pack and his wife had college bills remaining, and their car loan still had a balance on it. There were other debts from before marriage that also still had payments to be made.

In addition, the Packs were expecting their first child in just one week...

More to the Story

More would be learned later about the outgoing CAD Director’s need to protect himself from any charges of nepotism. The picture is not pretty, but it completes a darker story.

“While the injustice to me was great, because I was married and had a child three weeks away, the injustice extended to my younger brother who had also been sent to the field in January of 1972. He went out as a junior student assigned for one year to the Washington, D.C./ Baltimore area. He was one of three students sent out that year, and it was something that was done with certain men to give them extra experience. It was routine.

“Incredibly, my brother was laid off at the same time I was. This was unprecedented. First, the other two junior students were *not* laid off, and yet I was. So this was its own terrible injustice. But my brother’s lay-off could be seen as its own separate travesty. He was laid off so the same Church Administration Director would not look like he had protected even an

extended family member of mine. What this caused for my brother is best understood in his own words. Here is his painful account:”

“Two to three junior students were sent out each year from the college as interns for a year of ministerial training in January of their junior year. They would then come back in January a year later and pick up as a second semester junior. The outgoing CAD director laid me off in the summer of 1972, after only six months in the field. The timing of this lay-off blew up my college career. When I came back to Pasadena, I was not in either class, junior or senior. So there was always the question of what class I was in, and what year I graduated.

“I went to the Registrar and asked for my expected credits for my internship. This would have given me enough credits to be in the senior class. For the first time in the history of the college, I was turned down and given no credit for my field internship. I could not advance to the next class. I could not even graduate and walk the line with my class of 1973 in the spring, alongside my wife-to-be.

“The summer of 1973 came and I still had another semester of college left. I attended that fall, worked in Mailing, then was sent to the field in spring of 1974, in May—a full *year* after all of my classmates had graduated and I still had not.

“I distinctly remember a lady coming up to me in Binghamton, New York, asking why she could not find my name in the Envoy. It was because I had not technically graduated from Ambassador College when I was sent to the field ministry. So I actually had to take some kind of college aptitude test and send the results into the Ambassador Registrar. I was finally put on the list to graduate and I did in the spring of 1975,

two years after I would have. My picture was never in an Envoy. They sent me a diploma in the mail.

“All through my adult life, I had to answer the questions, ‘When did you graduate?’ ‘Why didn’t you graduate with your class?’ ‘Where is your picture? I can never find you in the Envoy.’ Members wanted to look back and see their minister’s picture and see what he looked like as a graduating student. I could never explain this to people logically.

“The only consolation I received was that two months after I was laid off, in late August, upon flying into LAX from the Summer Education Program, in the summer of 1972, the man who had done this to my brother and me, incredibly, was the one awaiting me at the airport. I realized there was some justice, because this ‘senior evangelist’ who loved to describe himself as ‘third in the Work’ had been justly reduced to student airport runs. Sadly, this humiliation and subsequent ones always failed to produce the fruit of humility in this man.”

Mr. Pack had certain other feelings that would come later about this.

“Over time, I sought to forgive the man for what he did to me. It was only much later that I understood the truly awful way he had crushed my brother to protect himself. Proof that I forgave him is I followed him into the Global Church of God many years later, even willing to believe that Mr. Armstrong’s *very* strong warning to me—that he was not converted—in fact he was stronger than this—was incorrect. I was to learn bitterly that some leopards *never* change their spots. Given opportunity, some will crush people for no reason if it will buy them five minutes of favor with anyone. I will never stop praying for the thousands trapped under him.”

In Milwaukee

Facing stark financial circumstances, Mr. Pack did the only thing he could: humbly ask his parents for help. Ran and Jane Pack understood the situation and temporarily took in their son and new daughter-in-law while they awaited the birth of their first child.

Meanwhile, Mr. Pack, who was naturally deeply wounded over what had happened, swallowed his pride and tried to repay his parents' generosity in the only way he could—by painting their home.

This less than triumphant return to his hometown was humbling beyond what he could have imagined. As the young man painted portions of his parents' house, he could not help but wonder what had gone wrong.

Childbirth Trial

Three weeks later—at two full weeks late—Mrs. Pack awoke her husband at 2:30 in the morning. Her water had finally broken!

They hurried to get dressed, and Mr. Pack rushed his wife to the hospital in nearby Bluffton. As with any father

awaiting the birth of his firstborn, Mr. Pack was excited. He wanted to do everything he could to help the delivery process. From the hospital waiting room, the anxious father-to-be filled the time and tried to support his wife by scribbling down the minutes between her contractions on the back of an envelope. As the contractions (which lasted for hours) increased, staff took Mrs. Pack into the delivery room.

Soon after, on July 20, 1972, Randall David Pack was born.

The birth went well, except for the fact that it took so long. It did bring a 10 lbs. 2 1/2 oz. baby. However, the doctor was in such a hurry to wrap up the delivery that he tried to rush the process by pulling on the umbilical cord—but the placenta (which normally sloughs off soon after birth, via a few additional contractions) did not appear. Within minutes, the new mother began to hemorrhage!

Having never witnessed childbirth, Mr. Pack was not fully aware of the birthing procedure, neither did he at first realize the frailty and extreme danger of his wife's post-delivery condition.

Immediately, Mr. Pack excitedly held up their newborn son for his wife to see and then placed him on her chest. By then, Mrs. Pack's blood pressure was so dangerously low that she could not physically lift her hands to hold the baby. As she mustered a weak half-smile, the doctor pulled Mr. Pack outside the room. In minutes, the new parents went from the special joy of seeing their baby boy for the first time to the realization that Mrs. Pack's life was in real danger.

The doctor was visibly upset with himself for his miscalculated attempt to force the situation, and apologized profusely. He then said, "Mr. Pack, I need to give your wife an IV."

Mr. Pack was incredulous, but the doctor insisted.

"Look, I've got to give her an IV right now," the physician said, "or there is a '50-50' chance she will not make it!"

Mrs. Pack was losing a tremendous amount of blood—and fast!

Thinking the doctor was referring to an IV of saline solution, as is typically done in most hospitals, the new father agreed to the procedure. But Mrs. Pack, in retrospect, remembered the doctor giving her an IV of blood. Unaware of this at the time, the Packs realized they had accidentally permitted a blood transfusion, something they would never have knowingly done.

Mr. Pack understood his wife was precariously close to death. *Would God heal her?*

She came through the ordeal, and much faster than was thought possible. Although she had lost her ability to produce milk for the baby, Mrs. Pack had survived and begun recovery before being released two days later to return home to Lima.

“This was an unbelievable moment for a brand new 23-year-old father. I had a son! Yet it was mixed with my wife almost dying. I was stupefied. Looking back, I realize that I was also somewhat numb from lack of sleep. So was my wife. But God had brought us through.”

To Milwaukee

Still jobless, and now with a newborn baby to feed and clothe, Mr. Pack mulled his limited options. Again being forced to humble himself, he considered employment alternatives and where the family should live.

The couple agreed that Milwaukee was their best option. Being in close proximity to her parents would help Mrs. Pack and the newborn, allowing Mr. Pack to focus on finding employment. The next step was to call his still relatively new in-laws and awkwardly ask for physical assistance with the new baby if they moved to Milwaukee.

The Ochs understood their son-in-law's predicament came through no fault of their own, and said, "Of course you can come!"

The thought of being able to see their youngest daughter and her new husband, and the new grandchild, on a regular basis thrilled the grandparents.

Mrs. Pack's older sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Carl McNair, generously took the time to travel out of their way from Atlanta, Georgia, to pick up the mother and new son. Loading the back of their station wagon with just a handful of possessions, Mrs. Pack lay down in the back with her baby, surrounded by her five nieces and nephews, for the 340-mile trip to Milwaukee.

After seeing his wife and baby son safely settled, Mr. Pack departed for Indianapolis, where his brother-in-law was to meet him to retrieve the family's furniture and personal belongings, which they would store in the garage of Mrs. Pack's uncle, in Milwaukee.

For several weeks, the young family lived in an extra room in the Ochs' home while Mr. Pack searched for employment. Finding a job was no easy task in 1972's poor economy.

Jobless, no source of income to sustain his new family, and living with his in-laws, these conditions were far from what Mr. Pack had envisioned when starting a family. It seemed things could not get worse.

During this time, another harsh reality hit Mr. Pack: his own seeming lack of importance in God's Work.

It was a lesson he would never forget—and would later teach others. This applied to his current situation. Mr. Pack realized that when he was removed from the ministry, his absence left no discernible mark. It impressed upon him throughout the rest of his life that *no one* is irreplaceable in God's Work.

“When you pull your finger out of a bucket of water the rest of the water in the bucket immediately

fills in the space. Afterwards there is no sign that your finger was ever there, or even that the level of the water dropped. I learned that God's Work could function quite nicely without us."

Lessons from Milwaukee's "Lawrence Welk"

Mr. Pack appreciated and benefited greatly from the experience of living near the Ochs family. For someone who grew up in a relatively small family, it was quite a change to marry into the German-American culture of the Ochs. And, having come from Lima (population: perhaps 75,000) it was also quite a change to wed a "big city girl" who had grown up in a metropolitan area of a million and a half people.

Mr. Pack developed a strong bond with his in-laws, especially with his wife's father. Whether in public or at a Church function, Peter Ochs "worked the whole crowd" talking and laughing with people. Even before he entered the Church, when he performed at the Jefferson Hall in downtown Milwaukee, Peter always took time to make sure *everyone* enjoyed themselves.

"This wonderful man turned out to be the ultimate father-in-law. It is almost unfair to others that I got the extraordinary blessing that was this man's particular set of strengths from which to learn. I felt very blessed to be in a position to build a close relationship with him. I have never met anyone like him, and am quite certain I will not in the future."

Mr. Ochs often said the following about those singing in his festival choirs, whenever critics were judgmental and self-righteous toward those they perceived to have less than perfect voices: "If only the best birds sang, the woods would be a dull place."

Regarding his father-in-law's trips to Germany, Mr. Pack said,

“He played big, powerful music that electrified and elevated people. They would literally hang out of the windows as he marched down the street, excited to see an American German visiting their country and doing things that Germans no longer did, but used to do all the time.”

Even though he was a respected musician, Peter was neither a formally educated man nor an officially trained music educator. At times, formally trained music educators, or “small mouths” (as Mr. Ochs referred to them), looked down on him because he did not want to play their kind of music. Sadly, so did some (a relative few) in the Church.

Because of his reputation for playing music that appealed to large crowds, he and the Continentals were invited to be the official representatives of the United States at the Munich Olympics in 1972. However, due to an ill-advised decision by a district superintendent minister, he was not permitted to make the trip.

Mrs. Pack's father adhered to a strict code of ethics and morality, and sought to obey God and to teach the difference between right and wrong as he understood it.

Wise, practical, fun-loving and full of common sense, Peter Ochs became one of the most influential men in Mr. Pack's life. Peter's kindness, generosity and personal example left a lasting impression upon the young man, driving Mr. Pack throughout his ministry to always focus on making people feel included.

“During this time in Milwaukee, I was able to observe my father-in-law in regard to two big endeavors that he organized and led within the two

large Milwaukee congregations: all matters pertaining to special music, and large-scale fundraising through fruit and candy sales. By observing his extraordinary organizational skills, my pastorates would be able ever after to enjoy the same kind of positive results—results that led to \$10,000, \$20,000 and \$30,000 raised in fundraising in the 1980s every year through these very same projects, as well as beef sausage sales that we undertook in Buffalo.

“My father-in-law would also later come to each of my areas and put on a choir seminar with the local leaders. He would teach them how to create a more effective choir with broader participation. He also showed us how to incorporate brass and other instrumentation into the sound.”

Treated Well

There were other happy elements of the year in Milwaukee. The Packs were very involved in the young adult group. Because there were almost 800 people in the congregation by 1972, this was a large group with which to fellowship. Mr. Pack was naturally given opportunity to help organize certain activities. There were elements of organization which were learned. Mr. Pack also played on the men’s basketball team.

“But there was other training that was offered to me. It would turn out not to be a year where I was left out of opportunities to still grow toward a future role in the ministry. The pastor invited me over to his home to play cards on occasion. He and his wife were very encouraging in going out of their way to include us. He also instructed that I have the opportunity to visit on occasion with the associate pastor. And I did make a certain number of visits during that year.”

Draft Board Troubles

Once Mr. Pack was officially laid off, Church Headquarters by law had to notify the U.S. draft board that he was no longer employed as a minister and was no longer under “4-D” status—meaning he became eligible to be drafted to fight in the Vietnam War.

Mr. Pack soon received a letter notifying him that he had been moved up to “1-A” status, with instructions to soon report to the military base in Columbus, Ohio, for a physical examination.

Of course, Mr. Pack did not intend to violate the laws of God, and held firm to his conscientious objector position. His predicament was that, in the best case scenario, the mandatory alternative to combat training was entering a government-sponsored work program. This typically consisted of two years of laboring on a dairy farm, or something similar, with little pay.

First beseeching God, Mr. Pack did everything possible within the law to avoid military service. If it were determined that he had to report for duty, he was set to refuse, knowing this could result in his being sent to prison, as *had* happened with some.

The young father heard that if a draftee measured beyond a certain height at the physical, the board would refuse him. Hoping to be considered too tall, he devised a plan to “lengthen” himself before reporting for his physical in Columbus. He wanted to stall in every way possible to give God time to intervene.

The morning of his physical, Mr. Pack stayed in bed for as long as he could stand it to allow the discs in his back to expand so he could be measured at maximum height. Standing as straight as possible, he measured at, but not over, the exact limit of 6’8” —a full inch taller than he had ever been previously measured.

In the meantime, Mr. Pack prepared a paper defending his position as a conscientious objector. He drove back to Lima and, accompanied by his wife and father, appeared before the draft board.

It turned out that several of the men on the board were fellow members of the Shawnee Country Club and knew Ran was a dedicated World War II veteran who would not back his son if he were not sincere. Two of the men were also readers of *The Plain Truth*. The board members politely asked Mr. Pack about the magazine.

After he answered all the board's questions, they began to determine how they could give him conscientious objector status while not forcing him to report for mandatory work duty, since his wife had just given birth.

The board members, after a short deliberation, approved Mr. Pack's status, perhaps partly due to his borderline height at 6'8"—and because his father was their friend. The men casually said, "Forget it."

To Mr. Pack, it was evident God had intervened on his behalf. (The draft board had even, in sympathy, questioned the circumstances behind the young man's layoff.)

The national draft ended sometime shortly after the meeting, with the end of the Vietnam War. It was the last time that Mr. Pack ever had to be concerned about his status as a conscientious objector. But he could also more effectively counsel others facing problems with the military.

Finally—A Job!

Though ecstatic that God had delivered him, there was no time to celebrate. Instead, Mr. Pack immediately returned to job hunting in Milwaukee.

The young man was referred to a businessman attending the local congregation, who was co-owner and vice-president of a pipe company; his brother was also a co-owner and president.

Mr. Pack was hired as an “inside pipe salesman” (despite having never worked in sales and knowing nothing about pipes) because the vice-president was on the Ambassador College Board of Directors, and wanted to help the AC graduate. Mr. Pack recalled this man as having been very generous and helpful at a time of great need. He brought employment “salvation.”

The position enabled the Packs to move out of the Ochs’ tiny spare room and into a small apartment on the north side of the city.

It became evident that, although he clearly was not a pipe salesman, Mr. Pack possessed promising leadership capabilities. The vice-president informed him soon after he was hired that “It is our plan to make you the office manager in time.”

With high hopes about the potential promotion, the Packs attended the Feast at Wisconsin Dells. There they met a district superintendent in Western Canada. The man made it clear that he wanted to rehire Mr. Pack into God’s Work as soon as possible, only this time as his own ministerial assistant.

The Packs returned home full of optimism, having enjoyed a wonderful Feast. Though excited about the possibility of soon re-entering the ministry, Mr. Pack still prepared for the promised promotion back in Milwaukee.

However, a longtime employee of the company, who had been recently disfellowshipped from the Church, was upset that Mr. Pack was allowed to take time off to observe the Feast. He complained to the company president, a non-member. Though the disgruntled employee’s concerns had nothing to do with the young man’s work performance, the president did not want Church issues affecting his business. Since Mr. Pack was the newer of the two employees, he was let go to avoid any potential problems. It was probably for the best, because Mr. Pack has said he “was not very good at the job.”

Call to Pasadena

Next, Mr. Pack called the new Director of Church Administration to follow up on the possibility of being hired into the Canadian ministry.

“Dave, we do not think that you are a good fit for Canada,” he was told. “The openings there are mostly in the smaller, western prairie congregations. Being from the United States, we think you are more naturally suited for the United States ministry. Be patient. Your time will eventually come.”

He continued, “Just let a little time pass. Even though *I* know you were unjustly laid off, it will not look good to immediately hire you back and overrule the previous decision (made by the man whom he had replaced four months earlier). Just hang in there. We will get back to you in the spring. I give you my word.” (It was in this conversation that the man reported his predecessor’s rationale for letting the Packs go “because they were family.”)

Again, more politics, but at least a kindly, encouraging response had been given.

Finding a New Job

But spring was a long way off. The freezing Milwaukee winter was fast approaching and Mr. Pack was back where he started, with limited job opportunities in a depressed economy.

He returned to interviewing and applying for jobs, determined to find a way to support his family.

One day he walked into the office of the owner of Dunhill Personnel Services and interviewed for the position of an employment counselor. After the interview, the man said, “Well, thank you very much for coming. We’ll get back to you.”

He then opened the door to show the young man out.

Determined, Mr. Pack decided he was not going to let the chance slip away. He *had* to find a job to feed his young family.

He thought back to a story his father had told long ago: Once during a job interview, Ran Pack leaned across the desk, looked the owner of a company in the eye, and said, “If you hire me, all I’m going to do is make you money.”

Stunned by the applicant’s unbelievable confidence, the man hired him on the spot. Ran Pack went on to be the company’s best salesman for 16 of the 19 years he was in its employ.

Mr. Pack had nothing to lose. He summoned the boldness his father had shown, turned around in his chair, looked the interviewer in the eye, and said, “Well, I can do this job, and if you want someone who is going to make you money, you should hire *me!*”

The audaciousness of the statement caught the man off guard. He immediately shut the door, returned to his desk, and sat back down.

“Let’s talk some more when I have time,” he said. “You should return for a second visit. I want you to meet some people in the office.”

The time was left unclear.

Very Last Dime

Before this job prospect arose, the Packs were struggling to endure the hardest financial period of their lives. And adding to their difficulties, it was Mr. Pack’s third tithing year, beginning after the Feast. As instructed in the Bible, every third year in a seven-year-cycle, God requires His people to pay 10 percent of their gross income to assist widows and orphans in the Church.

The Packs would go on to diligently pay from what little they had—not discovering until later, when they were forced to ask the Church for one-time assistance, that they would

not have been required to pay third tithe due to their dire financial condition.

Sitting in their apartment that cold November night, Mr. and Mrs. Pack took inventory of their circumstances: The car's heater was broken—there was barely any gas in the tank—they had no food—and their four-month-old baby boy was crying from hunger pains, yet they had *nothing* to feed him.

With his hungry baby wailing in the background, and not a penny in the bank, Mr. Pack reached into his pocket and pulled out his very last dime. As he sat at the kitchen table, he held the 10 cent coin up to the light and prayed with his wife, "Father, I've got one dime and my baby is hungry! What do we do? Please provide something for our child."

It was a sobering moment. The Packs were at a crossroads that was testing their faith to the limit. They resolved to trust God to provide for their needs as He had done in the past—no matter what. They prayed that God would take care of them, and reaffirmed that they would never compromise His Law.

Turnaround!

Within minutes, Mrs. Pack's father called. A music student had requested a flute lesson and the regular teacher was unavailable. Peter Ochs wanted to know if his daughter was available to teach a lesson. (Rarely, if ever, did students make requests like this on such short notice.) To Mrs. Pack's delight, she taught *two* lessons that evening, earning seven dollars!—enough money to buy milk for the baby.

Their phone rang the next morning.

"Where are you?" asked the owner of Dunhill Personnel Services. Mr. Pack had not understood that the "suggestion" to return to their office was actually a firm appointment for the day following. He immediately rushed out and drove to

the second interview, and was offered a job—to begin the next day.

In just 24 hours, the Packs' financial circumstances changed drastically, no doubt through divine intervention. They were learning that God often *tests* a Christian's faith, hoping he will succeed, while the devil *tempts* one, hoping he will abandon it. In this case, their faith almost seemed tested beyond what they could bear—yet the situation affirmed that God *always* delivers, no matter how dark circumstances may appear to be.

But the story—and God's miracles—continued.

And More

Mr. Pack reported to his new job the next day, wearing only a light coat for protection from the bitter Milwaukee weather. During his four years in Southern California, he never had the need (or the money) for a winter coat. And he could not yet afford to buy one during his year in Indianapolis.

When the new manager saw this, he asked, "Don't you have a warmer coat? You're not in California anymore!"

The new employee explained he did not have the money to purchase anything else.

The manager replied, "This is Milwaukee, Wisconsin! It's November and it's snowing outside! I will advance you your first month's salary of \$1,000 so you can buy a decent coat."

Mr. Pack went home, picked up his wife and went shopping to purchase what would be an extra long, warm navy overcoat, lined in red, white and blue plaid. It hangs in his closet today as a reminder that God always provides during times of need. He still periodically wears it, over 36 years later, to remind himself of this 24-hour period of his life. He has remarked, "I will never throw it away."

The Packs' growing faith and patient endurance in waiting on God was starting to pay off.

“The Bible says four separate times that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ This became true for my wife and I at a level that few ever get to experience. When you have nothing, and a near blizzard of blessings suddenly rips you right out of a dark hole into the sunshine, because you kept your eye on God’s promises, it greatly adds to whatever faith you had.”

Nonetheless, their lives did not suddenly become easy. After paying *three* tithes on the gross income (\$300) and having about another \$200 in taxes deducted from his monthly salary, only about \$500 was left each month for rent, utilities, food, gas, clothing, haircuts, loan repayment—and everything else. But Mrs. Pack’s continued teaching of flute lessons helped make it work.

“By two months later of course the heater on our car was fixed. In January we went back to Indianapolis to show my former pastor our new baby boy. Just as we left to return home the heater broke again. There was no place open on Sunday night to fix the heater. We had to drive the rest of the five-hour-trip with a six-month-old baby in zero degree weather with no heat. It was absolutely bitter cold, and we were doing all in our power to prevent our child—and ourselves—from getting pneumonia. We would periodically open the dashboard vent just to try to get a little engine heat in. We told ourselves it was working. The next day it was fixed. What a trial!”

Promotion that “Never Came”

Mr. Pack’s new position involved teaching people how to properly search for jobs and conduct effective interviews. He was paid entirely based on how many people he could successfully “place.” Although confident, largely due to the price-

less leadership training he had received at Ambassador, his job depended on his ability to instill confidence *in others* so that they could interview well—and be hired! Mr. Pack’s on-the-job training provided him valuable experience in training and motivating others. He would be able to use it many times later to help brethren successfully find employment.

As the counselor for the consumer products division, he worked with several large companies, including Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson. He also worked with various insurance companies, which helped to further broaden his business experience.

“My wife and I had a routine. We had one car. We lived quite a ways from downtown, and she would have to take me to work and pick me up. Her parents’ music store was on the way. Her mother would be waiting at the curb to pick up our son every day as we passed on the way to work.”

Mr. Pack became effective enough in his position in such a short amount of time that corporate recruiters with whom he was trying to place employees several times attempted to recruit *him*. However, since all wanted him to move from Milwaukee, he turned down their job offers, as he still hoped to be rehired into the ministry that spring.

After six months with Dunhill, the man who had hired him called the young man to his office. He explained that Mr. Pack was doing such a fine job that he would shortly be promoted to the position of training manager over all new employees (in a relatively good-sized company)—quite a step up for a man still in his early twenties.

Back into the Ministry

The very next day another surprise came: a phone call inviting Mr. Pack to return to the full-time ministry! And the

following day, June 23, 1973, he was rehired into the Work of God—exactly one year to the day since he had been laid off.

Those months of trial, uncertainty and struggling to make ends meet were firmly etched into the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Pack. They learned firsthand lessons of faithful *endurance*, from which they could later teach brethren as they encountered their own tests and setbacks.

The Packs would later draw strength from the memory of their experiences whenever seemingly insurmountable obstacles arose.

“Our year in Milwaukee was far from a year of lost cause in growth toward the ministry, and this was about to become evident. In fact, I have often looked at the year in Milwaukee as the single most valuable year in my training—by far.

“Most ministers never got to do what I did—and I do mean *got* to do, not *had* to do. I have mentioned in my books to the splinters how ministers did not have to experience—meaning suffer—the same kinds of things as did others on a routine basis. If I may put it this way, I am very glad the Director of CAD was so concerned about himself that he would step on me. Otherwise, I could never have truly learned how brethren must live.

“This year put me in a position for the rest of my life to understand certain trials that God’s people would face in a way that other ministers would simply never be able to know in the same way—losing a job for keeping God’s Feast, paying third tithe, struggling to find a job, the office environment of a typical workplace in this world (I saw two), battling a draft board, persecution on the job, and in my case from an ex-member, the need to demonstrate faith during extreme financial difficulties, the near death of my

wife in childbirth, and so much more. It opened up the reality of life in the trenches where God's people all lived.

“By every account, Milwaukee was an extraordinary year in my life.”

Rockford— Back in the Ministry

The unbelievable year of trials, obstacles and learning experiences in Milwaukee was finally over, and Mr. Pack was hired back into the ministry. After being forced to learn many aspects of patience, the rehired ministerial assistant was eager to return to what he was called and trained to do.

Midwestern City

The field ministry was undergoing a restructuring in 1973, and, after careful consideration, the new Regional Director (RD) in Chicago requested Mr. Pack for an assignment in Rockford, Illinois. This was, in a sense, a significant promotion that sent the young ministerial assistant beyond where he would have been had he not been laid off.

Mr. Don Waterhouse, the previous pastor of the North Chicago/Rockford circuit, had not desired to live in the crowded metropolis of Chicago. Instead, he had chosen to reside 90 miles to the west in Rockford, a smaller city with a small congregation at the other end of his circuit. This was an unusual decision since most senior pastors who led

more than one congregation in their pastorate chose to live in the city with the largest number of brethren. But Rockford was a less expensive place to live. (Chicago was an enormous area divided into four congregations under separate pastors, with Rockford the fifth “satellite church” attached to the Chicago Northwest congregation. There were 150 brethren in Rockford, while North Chicago had about 350.)

The Packs moved in one week to an apartment in the east side of Rockford. This permitted Mr. Pack to immediately “jump in” and benefit from the outgoing minister before he was gone in 30 days. Don Waterhouse was very kind to Mr. Pack and showed him the ropes.

One month after Mr. Pack moved to Rockford, Mr. Waterhouse was transferred to a new assignment. The pastor replacing him, Mr. Pack’s new supervisor, chose to live in Chicago. There were also three additional men coming to Chicago, including the “RD,” his assistant and another associate pastor, all to the Northwest church.

There was already another full-time local elder in the Northwest congregation, a local man dating to the mid-1950s in the Church who had never been to Ambassador College. He quickly, but quietly, developed resentment regarding the fact that *four new men* were coming into Chicago, all to be over him, and a fifth was going to Rockford, with the obvious meaning being that his duties would be significantly diminished. But, when the Packs arrived, the Rockford area had only one deacon and one deaconess, the man’s wife.

“You will spend the majority of your time in Rockford,” the incoming minister told him, “and I or another man will come out to give most of the sermons. Headquarters is moving toward ‘one man, one church,’ so I will primarily work in Chicago, with you out here.”

The Rockford brethren received the ministerial assistant and his wife almost as they would a resident pastor, partly

because they had become accustomed to having the previous pastor reside among them, and partly because Mr. Pack rarely traveled to Chicago and the pastor rarely came to Rockford. Most of the visiting load, as well as conducting Bible Studies and helping to coordinate socials, and certain other duties fell on the young couple.

Within weeks, Mr. Pack had gone from teaching people how to interview for jobs to virtually pastoring a congregation.

Unexpected Help

Despite being an unordained young man at age 24, Mr. Pack was now largely—and suddenly—“on his own” in the ministry. Rockford was his first real opportunity to learn and grow with some independence as a speaker, leader and counselor. He occasionally gave sermons or split sermons—and welcomed the challenge.

After being catapulted into this new quasi-“pastorate,” the Packs were excited, but a little overwhelmed. Much opportunity was coming at them.

Shortly after relocating and getting familiar with the Rockford brethren, Mr. Pack was introduced to a 42-year-old deacon, who previously had been attending services in Peoria, Illinois. Mr. Don Morse lived in Rock Falls, on *Morris* Street, and had been in God’s Church for 17 years.

Because Mr. Pack was a ministerial assistant, he was technically “in charge.” Yet Mr. Morse had been a deacon for eight years, and was ordained before Mr. Pack read his first *Plain Truth*. Mr. Morse, a veteran of the Korean War, was also an accomplished carpenter. In the young man’s eyes, this seasoned veteran of the Church was a welcome sight—a practical, common sense man with a long history in the Church that would present much from which he could learn.

Since there were no local church elders serving in Rockford's small farming community, Mr. Pack took Mr. Morse on many ministerial visits. Because the older man was a self-employed builder, his flexible schedule allowed him to always be available to accompany Mr. Pack. They would pick locations to meet and then visit all the people in that area.

The arrangement also worked out wonderfully since Mrs. Pack was not always able to go visiting with her husband. She was home taking care of their son, with another baby soon on the way. Her second "due date" would be 11 months into the assignment.

The ministerial assistant and deacon drove many miles together, cutting across northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, counseling with members, and visiting and baptizing potential members.

On their trips, the men told stories to pass the time. Mr. Morse was a storyteller extraordinaire, and Mr. Pack eagerly listened to him relate his experiences. The two developed a unique bond that became a wonderful friendship that would last over 35 years. (In fact, Mr. Pack was still enjoying Mr. Morse's stories literally just hours before his death, on January 12, 2009.) The friends came through tremendous adversity and many trials, some sore. While the assistant could not have understood it at the time, the arrival of this older veteran of God's Church was a tremendous help to the young man's early ministry.

Spokesman Club Director

Mr. Pack was soon called on to actually *direct* the local Spokesman Club, the field version of Ambassador Club. Most congregations had at least one Club, in which members learned to "think on their feet" in giving impromptu answers during Table Topics sessions, to deliver speeches, give helpful evaluations, and develop as leaders while they

saw the government of God in action. Though Mr. Pack had never before directed, or even been an assistant director of one of these speech clubs, he was suddenly very grateful to have served in several offices within Ambassador Club. He also appreciated Mr. Morse being there to unofficially assist.

Before he came to Rockford, the Worldwide Church of God made a change that had slight implications on Mr. Pack's new assignment. Until 1973, new hires were called "ministerial assistants." However, the new Director of the Church Administration Department (CAD) changed the title to "ministerial *trainee*"—without Mr. Armstrong's knowledge. While this administrative change seemed inconsequential to almost everyone, it carried wide implications in Mr. Pack's (and others') ministry:

"At the time, I remember the new title 'trainee' solidified a demeaning stereotype in many ministers' minds that the assistants they were assigned existed solely for the personal benefit of the pastor, not for the needs of the local congregation.

"This change also suggested that adult young men with four marvelous years of Ambassador College experience were still 'in training-pants.' This simple name change was an example of so many other seemingly small administrative changes that had a cumulative negative effect. Being a 'trainee' sounded very different than did being an 'assistant,' and the brethren felt the difference.

"The change reminded me of the menial, non-Church-related tasks that I was asked to do in Indianapolis instead of serving the local brethren and learning vital skills that would lead toward ordination and future service of God's flock as a Church pastor. We are all trainees of a sort, so this means no one need be called one."

In the Background

Further complications arose when an older local elder in Chicago, as well as a deacon in Rockford (not Mr. Morse) and a couple of brethren close to the deacon, perceived Mr. Pack as acting like an associate pastor (a role always held by an ordained elder, and sometimes full ministers), or even more like an outright pastor in the Rockford congregation. Some setup is necessary.

Though only an unordained assistant, the time spent in Rockford was completely different from his assignment in Indianapolis. The good-sized Illinois farming community offered a wealth of experience he used to expand and develop tangible organizational skills, to employ a set weekly schedule, and to utilize his education. Most importantly, he regularly conducted long days visiting the brethren—every member of the congregation more than once, plus prospective members. Above everything, Mr. Pack found that he loved to visit and talk with people.

As a result, a phenomenal growth appeared: In just 18 months, the local congregation grew from an average attendance of 150 people each Sabbath, to an average of 225, and sometimes close to 240! Rockford became the fastest-growing congregation in the Worldwide Church of God, and this during the early liberal years, when most congregations were either not growing any longer or were already declining in size. The four ministers in Chicago Northwest were seeing no growth.

Mr. and Mrs. Pack's second son, Robert William (Robby), was born on May 18, 1974. This baby was only 9 lbs. 8 oz.!

“We now had our second son. If it could be said that the first looked more like me, our second baby was an obvious clone of his Grandfather Ochs—almost

from birth forward. We were tremendously excited to have another little boy so close in age to our first son. We had been preparing Randy for another arrival. I will never forget how this excited 22-month-old was a little confused—and frustrated—when we brought home a brother with whom he could not immediately play. But the boys would soon enough become the best of friends. Until they grew up, I could not envision my sons in my mind without seeing them together.”

1974 Rebellion

The size of the Rockford pastorate continued to grow, yet it was evident that a “wind of discontent” was slowly sweeping through the Church. To some degree, this coincided with the appointment of a new CAD Director. But there were other factors.

A growing number of ministers and leaders in the Church, in part led by the CAD Director and Garner Ted Armstrong, began changing certain long-held doctrines and Church traditions. They and other like-minded men opened up “all doctrine for examination” and, taking a more “open-minded” view, began to *overtly* liberalize the Church in *many* areas.

Mr. Pack, who gradually noticed this liberal trend, was more than surprised to learn that some in the ministry held different doctrinal views from Mr. Armstrong. Never before had this been seen on a scale greater than one minister here or one there who deviated from the Pastor General’s teachings. This was new.

Mr. Pack came to understand *why* certain ministers held a skewed outlook on doctrine—they had been *quietly* holding different doctrines for some time! Though they did not necessarily agree with each other on all the details, these men began to “find each other”—and their “watering down”

of certain truths gave a welcomed new “freedom” that even then many members seemed only too willing to accept and enjoy.

In addition, these self-deceived men naturally found themselves disgruntled with Mr. Herbert Armstrong. They began to question his authority, the role of Church government, and the way the Pastor General led the Church, Work and even the colleges. This was in direct violation of what the Church had understood for over two decades regarding God’s government.

To make matters worse, it was common knowledge that Garner Ted Armstrong had been engaging in various forms of grave and repeated personal misconduct. This hypocrisy at such a high level led to further criticism of Church leadership. Of course, many ministers found fault with how they perceived Ted’s behavior was being handled.

Whether they knew it or not, questioning authority on even small issues is a slippery slope. If a leader is willing to question Church government on a small decision, what would stop him from doing so on a larger scale?

Unbeknownst to the Pastor General, these murmuring ministers slowly added to their number through quiet recruiting—looking for more “loose bricks,” because misery—and insurrection—loves company. This behind-the-scenes movement was growing toward outright rebellion. The quiet uprising gained momentum and eventually erupted Church-wide in February 1974. A small group of senior leaders departed and formed a new organization. Initially led by the CAD Director, with most of the regional directors following, more than 3,000 members departed from the Worldwide Church of God in a matter of days. Some entire congregations, depending upon the position of the pastor, were almost wiped out because their ministers “puked” (the term commonly used to describe their actions) on them with supposed “inside facts of what’s happening” on top of liberal doctrine.

The plain goal was to make a case that “Mr. Armstrong is running this thing all wrong.”

The rebellious regional directors had quietly lumped ministers (and to a degree brethren) in their regions into two groups: “the Protestants”—those who wanted to reform (“grow”) and leave behind the Church and Mr. Armstrong—and “the Catholics”—those who were said to be “blindly following Mr. Armstrong.” These senior leaders derisively labeled anyone (these were the terms) who chose to loyally follow Church government under God’s apostle, claiming such brethren were non-progressive, closed-minded “Armstrong-worshippers.” (This term would return 20 years later, when even worse doctrinal changes occurred in the Worldwide Church of God, and in the organizations that later splintered from it.)

Though these men’s actions and claims were shocking, Mr. Pack was not privy to, or in any way included in, the secret craft and planning that was underway. Even his brothers-in-law told him little, and perhaps knew little themselves. Instead of approaching Mr. Armstrong directly, these men quietly publicized rumors and the conduct of Ted Armstrong in an attempt to embarrass the Church and its Pastor General.

Caught in Crossfire

The young ministerial assistant was caught in the crossfire of a power struggle right in the Chicago area—and his extended family fell on both sides of the division.

On one side, one of Mrs. Pack’s sisters was married to a man whose older brother was near the heart of the rebellion. On the other side, Mrs. Pack’s other sister was married to the brother-in-law of Roderick Meredith, the previous CAD Director. Effectively, Mr. Pack’s two brothers-in-law were directly connected to the two men who had just changed positions at the top, directly under Mr. Armstrong.

These were difficult times!

Another reason Mr. Pack found himself in the midst of the confusion is because the RD in Chicago was among those who were the first to leave the Church. The pastor, new associate pastor and the RD's assistant pastor only decided to remain in the WCG at the last moment.

After this schism, the Church went through another period of reorganization, and *all* the men whom Mr. Pack worked beside in the Chicago/Rockford area were either transferred or left the Church.

An older, soft-spoken and kindly minister replaced the defecting leader in Chicago. This man had been Mrs. Pack's childhood minister in Milwaukee as early as 1959, and had actually lived in the upstairs apartment above her parent's home. He was a welcome sight.

Upon taking over his new assignment, the new pastor informed Mr. Pack he could not yet ordain him a local elder, since all ordinations worldwide had been frozen—a period that would last from April to December 1974.

However, his new supervisor did expand the young man's authority, telling him, "You can conduct Bible studies, baptize people, even lay hands on, and anoint with cloths that I will send you in this interim period until Headquarters permits ordinations again."

Miracle Like None Other

Everyone has moments when they have wondered if God delivered him. On some occasions one can be certain.

"A lot of brethren in the Rockford congregation lived along the big, wide Rock River, which ran through Rockford, and then southwest for at least 100 miles until it emptied into the Mississippi River. It was a long, beautiful drive, and I looked forward to every time I could do it.

“Early one morning I took off to visit, heading down Highway 2. There were stretches of road where on the right side was a steep embankment, and on the left side was a long, sharp drop-off down to the river’s edge, and a guardrail. The traffic would often back up in this area because it was a two-lane highway—and there were really no shoulders in this stretch of the road.

“A young man’s negligence and impatience almost got him killed. I pulled out to pass from behind a truck that was blocking my view, and realized immediately that I could not clear the truck and return to my lane in time. I had not seen a pick-up truck barreling toward me. I tried to slow back into the spot just vacated, but a Cadillac had filled in behind me.

“There was absolutely nothing I could do—I could not go left or right. No time remaining, the truck would now hit me head on—except nothing happened. As it reached me, both of us going about 60 mph, it simply passed right through my vehicle. One moment it was in front of my hood, the next it was in my rearview mirror.

“My life had been spared by divine intervention! I have never doubted what happened that day in 1974. I only wonder if anyone else involved was aware as I was of what had occurred.

“Coupled with other interventions to spare my life, I am living proof that God *heals and delivers*, sometimes even when it is partly to protect us from ourselves.”

Greater Responsibility

When it came time to baptize prospective members, Mr. Pack learned he did not need to be ordained to perform this ceremony. As long as an unordained man submitted to God’s

government in the Church and carefully followed the instruction and guidance of the minister in charge, baptisms could be performed.

The inexperienced ministerial assistant had not thought through until then that Mr. Armstrong, in the 1950s, had authorized older Ambassador students who were unordained, but who were in training for the ministry, to perform baptisms on the summer “baptizing tours.”

The young man’s Rockford assignment soon led to delivering sermons. In one of these first longer messages, “Learning to Become People, People,” he taught the congregation how to be fellow helpers, heirs and laborers in God’s Work. He examined places in the Bible where the Greek word *phalage*, or “fellow” (meaning “companions of equal rank or service”), was used, and explained how this differed from ranks in the government of God.

It was also in Rockford that Mr. Pack first anointed someone, using one of several anointed cloths that would regularly be given to him by the pastor.

The ministerial assistant patiently waited for Headquarters to approve his ordination, using the time to learn under his new mentor. But this man was not happy to have been transferred to the large city of Chicago—for the second time—and only very little involved himself in offering any real training. He explained that he “was tired.”

When the ordination freeze was finally over, Mr. Pack was scheduled to be ordained when a visiting Headquarters minister would be in town.

Childish Resentment

Finding it difficult to submit to the authority of such a young man from the beginning, and resenting him for conducting visits with Don Morse, new to the area, the other deacon in Rockford followed the lead of the longtime elder in Chicago. He set out to help stop Mr. Pack’s ordination,

and the matter culminated the day it was to take place. These two leaders erroneously grouped Mr. Pack with the local liberals who had just left the Church. The deacon and elder's resentful attitude grew over a period of many months, particularly as they saw the ministerial assistant receive even more responsibility after the new pastor arrived in April.

The day before Mr. Pack's ordination, the group made their move—in effect, accusing him of “guilt by association”! How ironic. This is the only time Mr. Pack's name has ever been linked to the word “LIBERAL!” In fact, it was he who had called Headquarters warning that a rebellion was brewing in Chicago. At the same time, he had been in touch with his brothers-in-law regarding the matter. It made no sense that Mr. Pack would, after being rehired into God's ministry, somehow plan to almost immediately take himself right back out of it—and the Church!—to follow men he knew were off track in doctrine, tradition and conduct.

The accusation was ridiculous.

Mr. Pack was called to a Chicago hotel, where, alongside the minister from Headquarters, he was required to sit and listen to their charges, as a number of others sat as witnesses to the proceeding.

The deacon and elder falsely accused Mr. Pack of conspiring with the liberals in Chicago. This was despite the fact that he had nothing to do with what they had been planning. They had not one shred of evidence other than their “feelings,” and what they just “knew” had to have been going on. But when it was explained to them, they could not see that they had no evidence, and thus no case. The facts actually pointed directly the other way.

This would not be the last time charges were leveled against Mr. Pack in an almost tribunal atmosphere and setting. This event was a preview of things to come—twice more 20 years later. Looking back, it indicates that God al-

ready had His hand on him in a remarkable way. While the devil was desperately trying to attack Mr. Pack, like Satan's attempts to destroy Job, God never seemed to let these false accusers completely get rid of the object of their hatred. (Not long after, the deacon was reported to have left the Church and to have opened a restaurant on the Sabbath. The local elder died a little later.)

This was a difficult time in the Church as a whole. The Headquarters representative wisely chose to halt Mr. Pack's ordination until things quieted down. A reassignment to Cincinnati, Ohio, now even looked better, he told the couple.

"It is good that you are leaving the area for a variety of reasons," the leader assured him. "The biggest one is that it will be best for you to have a fresh start. We will soon ordain you in Cincinnati. However, we have to wait until you are there a few months so you can get settled in."

Cincinnati— Learning More

Mr. Pack valued the experience that he had gained in Rockford, but he looked forward to putting the controversy there behind him. It was difficult for the Packs to say goodbye to brethren to whom they had grown very close, especially to Mr. Morse. Thankfully, this would not be the last time these two men would see each other.

There were also certain other families that they would miss, families of similar age who also had small children.

Now the family was moving to its fourth city in three and a half years. It looked like this might be a little longer assignment—but perhaps the last one before becoming a pastor, and then going on to a longer assignment, usually seven to nine years, which is what pastors were told they could expect. Assistants usually had one, two or rarely three shorter assignments before such a promotion.

The Packs arrival in Cincinnati was inauspicious. They drove from Rockford in their used black Lincoln. Just as they entered the edge of the city, coming down an “on ramp,” they encountered something they had not experienced, right as they should be entering and merging into an expressway—a stop sign!

They ran into the back of a stopped vehicle. It would be some weeks before the hood of his car could be opened, because it was stuck shut, and the couple was not yet able to afford to get it fixed. However, they *were* able to quickly find a house to rent.

Stable Pastor

Mr. Pack was reassigned to the Cincinnati area because the associate pastor (and later the ministerial assistant) there had recently fallen away. The pastor, Mr. Jim Reyer, had remained faithful. His strength of leadership was the reason that only a few left the Church following either these men or other liberals during the rebellion of early 1974.

Mr. Pack credits much of his ministerial development to Mr. Reyer, whom he describes as the minister most influential—by far—in his training.

“Mr. Reyer was perhaps the wisest minister I directly worked for in all of my ministerial training. Probably no one else is even a close second. I still consider him one of the best teachers and examples of practical wisdom and common sense when it came to understanding human nature, dealing with brethren and understanding demon possession. Also, there was not a cowardly bone in his body. No one was in doubt of his character or courage. This man was a study in rugged individualism.

“Sadly, there was serious tension between the pastors in the area. One of them had been a regional director until the rebellion of just 10 months earlier. Mr. Reyer had stood his ground, loyal to the Church. It was evident from the moment I arrived, however, that there was an uneasy truce in the air. The third pastor was a quiet personality, who somewhat mitigated the atmosphere. We would go on to be good friends for many years, until circumstances would dramatically change.”

Multi-church City

Cincinnati's four-congregation area was an unusual opportunity to solidify one's ministerial and administrative foundations. Working with the Cincinnati North (325 brethren) and West (250) congregations provided a second opportunity to serve in a large metropolitan area, but this time one that had four different congregations, totaling between 1,200 and 1,300 people.

A visit from Mr. Armstrong would boost attendance to as many as 5,000 people, with brethren from congregations in Ohio (Columbus, Dayton and Portsmouth) Indiana (Indianapolis and Columbus) and Kentucky (Louisville and Lexington).

The people in Cincinnati were very different from those in Rockford and southern Wisconsin. Over 60 percent of people in the greater Cincinnati area had roots in eastern Kentucky. For those who know that area, this speaks for itself. Some of the brethren exhibited more "ornery" or "cantankerous" attitudes than usual. Of course many were very nice people. Obviously, the area reflected that a rebellion had recently taken place throughout the Church. But the pastor's strength had kept many feelings "under wraps."

"Jim Reyer understood human nature like few I have known. He also had extraordinary discernment of people's attitudes. He used to talk about 'hitting into human nature' through sermons and Church Bible studies. This man understood that certain kinds of more direct messages about vanity, jealousy, resentment, envy, pride, and so forth, would bring feelings to the surface in the congregation that might otherwise stay hidden. He felt it was his duty to speak fairly bluntly on a regular basis.

“This is perhaps where Mr. Reyer showed his greatest courage as a minister. He absolutely never feared in sermons to say what the people *needed* to hear in lieu of what they may have *wanted* to hear. In this regard, he had people who would die for him—and others who wanted him to die.

“Mr. Armstrong very much understood you have to speak to human nature—and when you do, plenty of it can surface in the congregation. It did periodically come out in Cincinnati, that’s for sure. The pastor on the other side of town could not have been more opposite in style—nothing but encouraging messages, ever—hence some of the tension I mentioned. I tried to learn what I could about how to avoid meddling in strife that belonged to others.

“Mr. Reyer was very similar to my father. I am convinced that God sent me to work under him so that I would receive what would almost be a ‘second witness’ to my father’s example. Just 26 when I arrived, with Mr. Reyer in his early 40s, he confirmed in my training and understanding how leadership is always willing to take a stand in difficult moments, no matter the personal price one might have to pay.”

Closer Supervision

The new assignment did come with less personal freedom, however. With the pastor only 15 minutes away—not 90 miles—there were naturally fewer opportunities to lead and organize for the ministerial assistant. In a way, Cincinnati would have been an ideal place for any young just-out-of-college assistant to start his ministerial learning process. Rockford would then have been a perfect assignment to *follow*, not precede, Cincinnati.

Nonetheless, Cincinnati and its four congregations were a beehive of activity, providing various unique training ex-

periences. It allowed for growth in several new ways, such as planning, organizing and helping to oversee larger family weekends, including sports tournaments and other large-scale events.

The teenage girls volleyball team was quite good. They won district and regional tournaments, which opened up the opportunity for them to go to the national tournament in Big Sandy, Texas. This led to the first bus trip—over 800 miles—that the Packs would take with a group of parents and teenagers. The girls won second in the tournament.

Cincinnati was also a great opportunity for Mrs. Pack to learn and grow as a potential minister's wife. Supporting her husband's responsibilities, she learned to balance assisting the brethren with managing a family of two small boys. The older Reyer children were wonderful to the boys, as were the senior Reyers. Mrs. Reyer was a terrific person—and a terrific example to Mrs. Pack and the other women.

Basketball with the Bengals

Cincinnati was the first of several times Mr. Pack engaged a professional football team to play the local Church basketball team as a fundraiser. Meeting costs for the trip to the Big Sandy tournament was the catalyst for the idea.

“We had to make a significant amount of money for the parents and teenagers to rent a bus for the trip to Big Sandy. It occurred to me that we could contact the Cincinnati Bengals, the local professional football team, to arrange a game with their traveling basketball team. We had to pay them \$600, plus cover the gym rental fee, and the rest of the profits were ours.

“After Mr. Reyer approved the idea—he loved basketball—I organized the evening. I had been playing some basketball at the local YMCA and

had met several players with a little professional experience. The Bengal team had a record of 49-1, and I was concerned that we would get crushed. One man I knew had played a year with the Boston Celtics, the other had played a year with the Houston Mavericks, a team in the old American Basketball Association. A third man was the younger brother of the former center of the Cincinnati Royals (now the Sacramento Kings). They all agreed to play.

“I rented a large gym and invited all of the local churches in the area, including Dayton, to come to the Saturday night game. We encouraged brethren to have their friends come to the event. The turnout was terrific and we made more than enough money. And it was a hit with the relatives of Church members. We won the game, the only other that the Bengals would lose that winter.

“I would later do this two more times in Buffalo, New York, each time with the Buffalo Bills traveling basketball team. On these later occasions we would have halftime entertainment, plus a drawing for an autographed football—one time my oldest son was the winner. I believe that we still have the ball.

“This activity was an interesting fundraising and business experience for me, and the Church really benefitted as well. To pull it off in a professional fashion was important, and we did.”

Unusual Response

Whenever the North and West congregations combined for Sabbath services, the speaker would address as many as 500 to 600 brethren. Attendance rose to more than 2,000 when the Dayton brethren were included during Holy Day services. At one service, Mr. Pack delivered his first sermon before an audience of thousands. The now 27-year-old min-

ister found preaching to so many brethren a very exciting and inspiring experience. In the end, he learned it was almost easier to speak to a larger crowd than a smaller one.

An unusual moment occurred when the sermon finished: As he walked away from the lectern, all two thousand people applauded. Clapping after a sermon was uncommon in the Worldwide Church of God; in fact, it was eventually banned by Mr. Armstrong because he felt it unseemly and wrong to clap for messages presented by God's ministers. Looking back, Mr. Pack acknowledged the decision made perfect sense. (In the latter years of his ministry, Mr. Armstrong's appearance on stage, not his message, would sometimes bring a spontaneous response that everyone understood was an exception to the rule.)

“This clapping was a product of the liberal years. It seemed strange to me when it happened, because it was still rare to that point. But I recall a curious mixed feeling of being honored by it, while at the same time wondering if it should have happened.”

As time passed, Mr. Reyer realized that, based on Mr. Pack's capabilities as a speaker and servant to the brethren, an injustice had been committed in his previous assignment. The pastor was very encouraging and worked toward correcting what had happened.

Mr. Pack was ordained a local elder on the Feast of Trumpets, September 6, 1975, eight months after relocating to Cincinnati. His brother was ordained the same day to local elder.

The Spirit World

Mr. Pack experienced in Cincinnati the first installment of what would be another unique training opportunity that most young ministers seldom faced: confronting the frightening reality of the spirit world and demonic possession.

One day while visiting with Mr. Reyer, the pastor was leading a counseling session with a married woman, whose four young daughters were playing quietly in a nearby room.

At a certain moment in the visit, Mr. Reyer saw something strange in the look on her face. His assistant, inexperienced in such matters, listened intently, not discerning anything out of the ordinary.

Suddenly, the pastor looked the woman in the eyes and declared, "You're a spirit, aren't you? You are a foul, unclean spirit!"

Her demeanor changed instantly—she snarled at the men like a wild dog bearing its fangs, her 10 fingernails literally raised and pointing toward Mr. Reyer.

He said, "We have to leave right now. We need to go home and fast about this."

Mr. Pack left the house in disbelief.

The pastor called Mr. Frank McCrady, the minister from Chicago who had trained him years earlier. This man was generally recognized among the ministry as the one with the most years of experience and most discernment with people troubled by demons. From these two trained and experienced men, Mr. Pack learned firsthand about dealing with the spirit world, lessons and experience that would be important training for his later ministry.

Several days after their encounter, Mr. Reyer and Mr. Pack met with the troubled husband and wife in the living room of the Packs' home on the north side of Cincinnati. Just before Mr. Reyer commanded the spirit to stop troubling the woman, she began a high-pitched shriek that Mr. Pack described as "a screaming hawk diving on prey."

Moments later, she shot up from her chair and seized her husband, locking her fingers around his throat in a death grip while taking him to the floor. Mr. Reyer grabbed one of her arms and Mr. Pack the other. At 6'3," the pastor was a powerful man. Both he and the younger minister were in

top physical condition—yet they struggled with the small woman.

While pulling the woman off her husband, Mr. Reyer had commanded, “In the name of Jesus Christ, come out!”

The evil spirit obeyed Christ’s authority immediately, and departed from the woman—and only then were these two strong men able to now easily lift her fingers from her husband’s throat.

She immediately dropped to the carpet as if dead. The men stared as she slowly started to move. As Mr. Reyer lifted her up, she said, “Oh, thank you so much.”

“How long has that spirit been in you?” he asked.

“Since I was seven years old.”

Mr. Pack stood amazed at the event he had just witnessed. This was a ministry-changing experience. The reality of the power and evil of the spirit world was forever seared into his mind. This training would be needed in the future.

Heart of a Shepherd

Mr. Pack was 27 at the time he would leave Cincinnati. Certain things had “jelled” in his mind by this time. Training under Mr. Reyer had been the catalyst.

“As I continued to visit in an environment where people could be somewhat more difficult to work with, I had to learn to ease in and out of subjects, to set the table, relax and draw out people in a soft manner, if I were to have any chance of helping them. I learned more not just to crash through the door of a subject, but rather to gently play on the edge of it, until a mind was more ready to receive help.

“Every effective minister must develop the ‘heart of a shepherd.’ Without it, all is lost. A man has no chance to effectively work with and lead people if he does not think like a loving shepherd working

with sheep, and being willing to lay down his life for them (John 10:1-15). This means he must be willing to battle wolves to the death because he loves God's people (John 21:15-17).

“He must understand that he is there to serve them and not be served, as so many men never seemed to learn. Mrs. Pack and I would actually be criticized on a few occasions because, as it was sometimes put, ‘You won’t let people do things for you.’ Of course, there were a certain *very few* exceptions to this, but overall it was true. We would not permit people to pick up our raw milk at the farm, or natural honey, or do our errands and shopping for us. God’s people are generally very giving, and it would have been easy to take advantage of them. They have been taught to give and to serve, and many ministers saw this and treated them as a resource for their own use.

“In the end, when you do this, you certainly get much more than you give. And believe me, I saw this happen time and again through the years. We never left an assignment where we did not feel we got more than we gave, and usually by far. In that sense, ministers reap what they sow. We surely did reap in this way.

“When it came to really understanding the heart of a shepherd, Cincinnati was truly the turning point. I learned much there of ‘being all things to all people to *gain* the more.’”

Colossal, Worldwide Organization

At this point, the biography requires an extensive inset, most of it in Mr. Pack’s words (from his book explaining the government of God). Describing the Church and its government as it existed under Mr. Armstrong’s final years, this section sets up all that would happen to Mr. Pack for the rest of his ministry prior to the beginning of The Restored Church of

God. It is presented here for the context it brings to many stories that follow in the biography.

“Despite the setback of the 1974 rebellion, the Church had grown colossal in size. By 1978, there were many hundreds of ministers and approximately 100,000 brethren on six continents, two beautiful college campuses (Bricketwood had closed in 1974), and an annual income in the many millions of dollars, with assets greatly exceeding this amount. More importantly, the gospel was being preached around the world, and Mr. Armstrong, who delivered it, was becoming well-known in all parts of the globe.

“Yet the Church’s international reputation and financial stability tempted certain men who soon became motivated to seize control of it. While not the last time rebellious leaders would attempt to take over the Church, it was the first time Mr. Pack experienced it directly.

“Before examining the power struggle that occurred, it is vital to understand how influential the Worldwide Church of God had become on the world stage.

“Everything about WCG and Ambassador College in Pasadena, California—the employees, campus, and even the buildings and activities—was a study in precision and effective performance on a massive scale.

“Perhaps the most important element leading to rapid growth, sheer size, and the preaching of the true gospel to all nations was the Church’s governmental structure. In contrast to professing Christian groups, the true Church of God was led by an apostle—Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

“In a true representation of God’s form of government from the top down, evangelists, pastors, preaching elders, local elders, local church elders,

deacons, deaconesses, and administrators at every level were appointed by (or by others under) Mr. Armstrong. The Church understood that for Jesus Christ to perform His Work on Earth, the proper structure of Church government must always be in place.

“Headquarters consisted of numerous departments, each having a well-defined purpose within the overall Church and Work. These sometimes had several sections within them, which orchestrated the day-to-day operations of the Church and colleges. Generally led by ministers or senior administrators, departments included landscaping, custodial and maintenance, carpentry, transportation and fleet, legal, business and accounting, insurance, festival, youth, editorial, a news bureau, Church administration, shipping and receiving, media production, data processing, mail processing, security, purchasing, food service (at the colleges), public relations, and even a travel agency.

“Pasadena directed and served as the example for similarly functioning regional offices and congregations around the world, and the two smaller colleges, in Big Sandy, Texas, and Bricketwood, England. In just the Los Angeles basin alone, more than 5,000 were in attendance (including students). In addition, the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF) operated from Pasadena’s Headquarters.

“Intrinsic to the regional offices was a field supervisory structure, led by Church Administration at Pasadena, which was used in the United States and every major country or group of countries. Church Administration, later called Ministerial Services, had authority over all international offices. Transfers of ministers—regional directors, pastors, associate and assistant pastors, and ministerial assistants—were directed from there. Everyone understood that this governed the smooth functioning of these offices.

“Headquarters and the international offices worked closely together to ensure that the ‘Second Commission’—feeding the flock—was always fulfilled in a way pleasing to Christ (John 21:15-17).

“Because there was one clear voice—Mr. Armstrong, through whom Christ was directly working, there was pastoral unity and precision in the congregations. ‘Maintaining decency and order’ (I Corinthians 14:40) was the norm during weekly Sabbath services, which were conducted in the same fashion throughout the world. From opening to closing prayer, the two-hour service was a picture of God’s government in action.

“This well-organized administrative hierarchy served congregations in ways that were clearly visible to every member. Each ordained man and lay member knew his place and service, including all specific duties for which he had been trained and appointed.

“Contributing directly to the unity of the Church were the annual Ministerial Conferences, held in Pasadena beginning in the mid-1950s and continuing through the decades. These updated, informed and inspired the entire ministry and ensured that everyone remained on the same page.

“In addition, highly structured speaking and leadership development programs were offered in every congregation, called Spokesman Clubs and Women’s Clubs.

“Every congregation held a broad range of periodic socials. There were picnics, formal dances, snow parties, and singles and seniors activities. There was also a wide variety of sports teams, tournaments and events sponsored by the Church, such as softball, basketball, volleyball, track meets—for adults, teens and young children. Each was designed to bring brethren closer together.

“Many of the local activities and programs described were paid for almost exclusively at the local level. This required extensive and highly organized fundraising activities, which sometimes allowed generous contributions to be sent to Headquarters so God’s Work could expand. Also, the most creative and fruitful fundraising ideas were often shared throughout the Church, and this helped to promote a feeling of harmony and unity.

“The annual Feast of Tabernacles was also directed from Headquarters, and was perhaps the greatest single event that demonstrated the efficiency, harmony, peace and strength toward which God’s government leads. This eight-day assembly took on the title of ‘largest multi-site convention of any kind in the world.’ At its zenith, the Church had more than 120 sites worldwide and was attended by anywhere from 100 people up to 15,000. The Feast became an event of legend. Local Chambers of Commerce were invariably left in wonderment at ‘those funny people from the Worldwide Church of God.’ They saw respectful, well-behaved children (another part of God’s government in action), minimal noise in hotels, cleanliness on site, happy faces in restaurants and sometimes even in massive traffic jams entering or leaving parking lots.

“The statement of one Chamber leader in Canada became an oft-mentioned quote in the Church for years: ‘How come such wonderful people have to believe such crazy doctrines?’ The Church could not make local communities appreciate its teachings, but the example of its members was observed—and extraordinary. This was attributable to God’s government at work in every Feast site.

“With the tithes and freely given offerings of supporters around the world, an immense

administrative superstructure produced an incredible number of quality media programs. *The World Tomorrow* television program increasingly grew in popularity on a worldwide scale until it was number one in the Arbitron ratings for all religious programs in America.

“In addition, the Church’s flagship magazine, *The Plain Truth*, had a monthly circulation of over eight million at its zenith.

“The size and scope of the Church and all its related activities were a wonderful representation of God’s way of life. Simultaneously, however, it was also seen as a tremendous prize of wealth and power to those motivated by such things.”

Special Assignment Outside New York

In June 1976, as Mr. Armstrong continued to take the gospel to dignitaries and heads of state around the world, Church Administration implemented a change that affected the newly ordained local elder.

Because of Mr. Armstrong’s hectic traveling schedule (he was away from Headquarters about 300 days of the year), he could not closely manage the Church and ministry. Therefore, CAD initiated another structure in the field that delegated some of the elements of oversight there to senior men who would be called Area Coordinators. Mr. Reyer was transferred to Iowa, and Mr. Pack was transferred east.

Mr. Reyer recommended Mr. Pack receive his own pastorate, and CAD began looking for the most appropriate place to assign him. The associate pastor had developed a reputation as a “good organizer.” Also, even though he had not officially pastored Rockford, Headquarters had taken note the congregation had grown considerably during a short period.

The new Area Coordinator in the northeastern United States requested that the young man handle a special assignment under him in the New York/New Jersey region that was to last for one year, after which the promotion to full pastor would likely occur. The Packs were once again going to be on their own. They were to relocate to Newburgh, New York, a small town on the Hudson River, about 70 miles north of New York City.

An assignment to the state of New York and to northern New Jersey felt as though the family was being assigned to another world, one of mystery.

But it was a clear promotion...

Next Stop, Newburgh, New York

While the new area coordinator remained in Pasadena, with plans to move to northern New Jersey at the end of the summer, he assigned Mr. Pack the challenging responsibility of restructuring the two congregations, one at the time in northern New Jersey, in Union, and the other in southern upstate New York, Newburgh.

Two other associate pastors were sent to serve in New Jersey at the same time, but with different responsibilities. Counting the area coordinator, four ministers entering an assignment from which three others were transferring out was something that never happened before, or since.

The Newburgh congregation was comprised of roughly 95 brethren; the congregation to the south, in Union, New Jersey, had about 550. In the reorganization, both congregations were to be moved farther south, reassigning about 150 people from Union to the newly named Nanuet, New York congregation, situated on the New Jersey-New York state line. Most of the members from Union would attend in Woodbridge, New Jersey.

Immediately came the task of renting halls and organizing local deacons and elders. It was an exciting, although

complicated, process, and Mr. Pack was determined to meet the challenge. He had already begun to realize that he loved organizing and developing congregations—as well as taking on difficult problems all the way through the process of solving them.

Arriving in Newburgh

In being transferred to their new assignment, the Packs did not have time to find a home before moving. They arrived in Newburgh after spending long, tiring hours of driving from Ohio, and decided to lodge in a hotel for the night.

With a U-Haul truck they had rented to transport their belongings from Cincinnati, the Pack family pulled into the parking lot of an older Howard Johnson hotel in Newburgh.

The next morning, to keep him company, Mr. Pack's oldest son, now almost four, sat beside his father in the front seat, while Mrs. Pack followed behind in their car. As Mr. Pack pulled the truck through the parking lot, it hooked the corner of the A-frame registration office, which was surrounded by glass—and pulled loose one of the two beams that held the façade of the hotel in place.

Shattered glass landed everywhere as the two beams, which were anchored to a massive cement support block behind the building, shook the entire structure! Naturally, the man behind the registration desk was astonished as the glass enclosing the hotel entrance was suddenly destroyed, leaving him talking on the phone—now outdoors! The chaos was like a scene from a movie.

Jumping from the truck with his screaming son, a most embarrassed driver was unsure of what to do. Thankfully, no one was injured and there was insurance on the truck; the young family certainly did not have the money to pay for the damages.

But this incident was minor compared to the monumental spiritual trial the Packs would soon face.

Secret Cult—Inside the Church

The Packs stayed with a local family for 10 days until they found a home. Almost immediately, since no other ministers had yet arrived in the area, Mr. Pack received a call from a local member, who told him that her husband was involved with a thing called “personality demons.” The young elder was at first hesitant, but it was soon obvious that what she described was not a hoax, and the problem had been widespread.

After some investigating, it became clear that one of the three previous ministers transferred from the area had taught and deceived a great many into accepting a ridiculous and bizarre belief: that every human being is born possessed by a demon!—and that conversion is in fact a lifelong process of *self-exorcism*!

This was happening in God’s Church!

A large, but secret, group of people in the two congregations were literally on a first name basis with demons. All members of this inside-the-Church-cult believed that they each had their own “personality demon,” referred to in code as their “PD.” Individuals were taught to daily “call forth” a “good spirit” that God was said to have assigned to them from birth. This “good angel” then supposedly “helped” the person get rid of his or her “bad angel,” or “evil spirit.” These terribly misled people were actually talking to *two* demon spirits, with one masquerading as an angel.

The apostle Paul warned the ancient Corinthians—and all Bible students today—that “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14). This was certainly true of the “good angel,” said to be working with each member.

Every day, the members involved would “call forth” their “bad angels” to talk and reason with them. These masquerading spirits would claim, for example, “I’m your good

angel. I'm here to help"—or "I'm your bad angel. You need to get rid of me."

The misguided people then wrote down the chilling messages and instructions from these spirits in endless notebooks as a futile attempt to "exorcise" themselves. Those thought to be members of God's Church were actually inviting demons into their lives, thinking they were "pushing them out"!

Because the previous associate pastor had been so influential and well-liked in the congregation, he was able to persuade many to accept these demonic beliefs—and possibly lead them to what could in fact become the very possession they thought they were escaping. This minister was actually trying to cast a spirit out of his own infant son!

"Somewhere in my basement I still have a pile of full notebooks of many who were involved in this terrible activity. That such a perverse practice could enter God's Church, and in a relatively large way, was hard to believe. For me, it was a sobering example of how determined the devil is in his desire to infiltrate the Church and cause confusion and destruction among God's people. And the pastor knew nothing of it.

"I later found myself counseling a young man in the group, while at my house, with my wife present, who began to speak to me in seven different voices, each spirit only too happy to give me its name. I cast all of the demons out, right there in my den, and found myself very thankful for training I had received just months earlier.

"This was more training of an extraordinary nature, something one could not imagine, never mind expect to be part of his field experience. It would take its place among the many unique elements of my training that I could only later understand for their collective value."

Finding a Home

The Packs were then forced to live in a motel room for two weeks. Though the area offered limited housing options, they finally found a home to rent. The building was owned by the Catholic Church and had been used as a residence for nuns. Before moving in, the couple spent the day moving large crucifixes and a statue strangely left behind of the “Virgin Mary” into a back room in the basement where they could be stored. No one ever came back to get these items until the family moved a year later and the nuns re-entered the home to live.

Meanwhile, the Packs discovered a “surprise” was awaiting them when unloading the U-Haul truck they had rented: some of their personal belongings had been damaged by water. When the truck had hit the Howard Johnson’s, the building had apparently opened the vehicle’s roof enough to allow rainwater to enter. For several weeks, the family’s belongings had been soaked, with many of the items ruined.

The family salvaged what they could, cleaned up the mess, and settled into their new residence.

Dressing and Keeping the Garden

Another inset belongs at this point. Recall that Ran and Jane Pack made their children work in the yard for half an hour every day. This time could be spent planting, cutting grass, edging, pruning, pulling weeds, raking leaves and generally keeping the yard neat and clean. Later, of course, Mr. Pack would have his own homes with yard(s), beginning with rented properties in every one of his assignments.

By the time the family had reached Newburgh, the Packs were in a position to work with the properties they would be renting. At this point, their two little boys were ages two and four, and were old enough to enjoy playing in

the yard, raking leaves while “Daddy” worked. So the family pruned and fixed the lawn. In the next assignment, Rochester, they did the same in two more houses—and in every future assignment.

“Everybody who knows anything about me knows that I love planting and working in the lawn. I love dirt under my fingernails, and my garage has every conceivable tool known to man, beast or machine. As a matter of fact, on most Father’s Days my children would give me a new tool to use in the lawn, knowing in advance it would be a ‘winner.’

“I loved working with things that were green and that grew. What I detested as a child, I came to thoroughly enjoy as an adult.

“Everywhere we were transferred, every home we entered, I saw as our responsibility to ‘dress and keep the garden.’ I saw our family as fulfilling God’s second instruction to Adam and Eve (after ‘be fruitful and multiply’). So we sought to do this. Of course every home was different, so each required a different landscaping plan.

“It made no difference to me and to my wife that the home was not ours. It was where we lived! And I wanted it to look presentable—to look like where real Christians lived. In each case, I would approach the entire property, foursquare, and usually completely reconceive the landscaping to whatever degree the landlord would permit. Invariably, he was thrilled that we would improve the value of his home. Of course, rentals were generally in pretty rough condition to start. So the landlord understood that when we moved it would have increased the value for rental, or, in some cases, the owner would be able to sell it for more—and this did happen on more than one occasion. I thoroughly enjoyed planning a creative, beautiful look.

“But there was also simply the fact that I found this activity relaxing. I discovered at a most rewarding level that a ‘desire accomplished *was* sweet to the soul,’ as Solomon recorded, and that, ‘In all labor there *is* profit.’

“Over the years, I found something wholesome about planting and pruning. I have literally planted hundreds of trees. Of course, I have also cut down hundreds of trees with chainsaws—and by ‘other’ means. Several years ago, my brother and I ‘felled’ a tree—here is his description of what happened.”

“My brother and I were unable to dig a medium-sized tree out of the ground. We had cut many of the roots, but the tree was being obstinate. He got the idea of using a rope to just pull it out of the ground. So we wrapped the rope around us and began pulling in a kind of tug of war against the tree. We pulled and jerked and cut, all the while worrying that it could fall on us. Moments later, it happened. Two husbands almost pulled *one* ‘widowmaker’ out of the ground. We felled the tree, which felled my brother, who felled me. Of course, neither one of us got hurt and there was not any real danger.”

“The above story is typical of so many accounts that could be included.

“Just in my current home, I have installed almost 100 trees—occasionally moving them, taking some down, pruning others. I have also removed many dead trees, and planted perhaps as many as 100 to 125 bushes all through the woods and around my home—with hundreds more planted in other homes. It is a wonderful feeling to accomplish and achieve, with the result being a precise, beautiful product—when the whole property has been completed as it should be.

“Space would not permit me to tell of all the lessons learned that collectively have made Jesus’ instructions in places like John 15 have so much more meaning.

“During and through the apostasy, I found working in the lawn was a necessary catharsis. It relaxed me and permitted clear thinking while away from the ‘maddening crowd.’”

Experimentation with Spirit World Downplayed

Once Mr. Pack had gathered sufficient information on the “PD” cult, he contacted his area coordinator, still living at Headquarters. The man planned to immediately come to investigate.

When he arrived, Mr. Pack had been on a scheduled vacation to Milwaukee. The offending minister came with him and downplayed Mr. Pack’s report. He carefully covered up the situation and his followers did the same. The investigating area coordinator believed that the matter had been terribly exaggerated. Mr. Pack was not there to challenge the investigation with the facts.

The men left almost as quickly as they had arrived. The area coordinator later phoned Mr. Pack and suggested that the matter had been overblown.

Mr. Pack could not believe his ears—a representative from Headquarters, his future boss, believed the discovery of a large secret cult operating within God’s Church was “overblown”?!

The young minister was unsure of how to handle a matter this serious. It was another trial on top of the original trial of discovering the cult.

First, Mr. Pack was determined to get more information in preparation for his supervisor’s arrival, so he asked more questions of the brethren involved who were willing to talk. Finally, one man’s wife turned over her husband’s “personality demon” notebook.

Relying on chain of command for the solution, he called his superior back.

“I told him, ‘You are about to inherit a serious problem when you settle in the area. This whole thing was swept under the rug. I have looked into this much more, and gathered many additional facts. A truly unbelievable situation is developing in this pastorate!’”

When the area supervisor arrived, he examined the writings—irrefutable evidence that a demon-influenced cult of about 110 people had been secretly thriving among Christ’s flock! The associate pastor was immediately removed from the ministry.

Incredibly, certain brethren involved pointed to *Mr. Pack* as the root of the problem, saying that he was “too judgmental and harsh”! Some actually believed the young minister should have been “more understanding” of the local brethren’s “difficulties”—in other words, they thought he should *tolerate* demons and a form of angel worship among God’s people!

Mr. Pack recalls that the situation revealed how many who attended the Church could not possibly have been part of the Body of Christ.

“I was aware that certain opposing views and rebellious attitudes had entered the Church during the 1974 rebellion. But now, over two years later, I saw that even though thousands of brethren and scores of ministers had left, there were *still* men in the ministry who privately held to a host of different kinds of ideas, many of them truly bizarre.

“Starting in the 1970s, the term ‘liberal’ was used in the Worldwide Church of God. The phrase really doesn’t refer to a specific behavior or attitude, but

rather encompasses a variety of different attitudes and unacceptable conduct that had entered the Church, which all had the same beginning.

“Before the liberal years, nobody ever questioned Mr. Armstrong’s authority and expected to remain in the Church. *Everyone* recognized that he alone was the leader of the Church. *Publicly* disagreeing meant openly acknowledging a decision to leave the Church. This changed in the 1970s as people began to feel more comfortable expressing their disagreement in a variety of areas.

“In the Church, the word ‘liberal’ has always been synonymous with permissive, overly tolerant, lax views toward accepted Church doctrine and members’ behavior. Unlike churches of the world that view conduct and beliefs in shades of gray, the Church of God understood that God’s Law is black and white.

“It was simply unbelievable that these kinds of things could happen in the Church of God. It was only years after that I could really understand I was seeing things that were preparing me for a role that would come much later. It was as though each new assignment was adding important training that would not normally be experienced in the ‘average pastorate’ or ‘average ministry.’”

How far had this liberal attitude infiltrated the highest levels of Church Administration? In the name of “tolerance,” it permitted the associate pastor at the heart of the “personality demon” cult to return to the ministry the following year!

Lunch with Mr. Armstrong

Several years had passed since the Packs had left Ambassador College. They had had little personal contact with Mr. Armstrong.

Living along the Hudson River, the family prepared for the annual fall Holy Days. In 1976, they and perhaps as many as 9,000 brethren attended the Feast of Tabernacles amidst the brilliant gold, orange and scarlet woodland scenery of Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania.

Here they attended a ministerial luncheon, where they had the opportunity to greet Mr. Armstrong. Mrs. Pack was excited with the possibility of once again speaking with her former “boss.”

On the day of the luncheon, the Packs walked into the hall, where almost 100 ministers and their wives were gathered to hear the Church’s senior-most leader speak. As Mr. and Mrs. Pack looked for an opening at a table, Mr. Armstrong saw them. The Pastor General was pleasantly surprised to see his former secretary; he immediately asked the young couple to sit with him so they could catch up. It had been over five years since he had seen them. His secretary was now a mother of two and the experienced wife of a minister.

At first, the invitation made the Packs slightly uncomfortable, because Mr. Armstrong asked a senior minister to move to make room for them. Mr. Pack could not help but think of Luke 14:11 and 20:46. The younger minister was not trying to exalt himself to the “best seat,” yet he had been beckoned by the Pastor General of God’s Church. The Packs considered this gesture a great honor.

“I am under no illusion that Mr. Armstrong probably spotted me merely because I was the tallest person in the crowd. It was nice that my height could be useful for something other than bumping my head more often than others.”

During the meal, Mr. Armstrong and the Packs “caught up” on the events they had experienced over the years they had not seen or spoken to each other.

50th Feast?!

Just minutes after the Pastor General had made some remarks to the ministry, Mr. Pack made an observation: “Congratulations, Mr. Armstrong. This is your 50th Feast.”

“No, it’s not, Dave,” Mr. Armstrong replied. “It’s my 49th Feast, because my first one was in 1927.”

“Sir, that’s 49 years ago,” Mr. Pack responded respectfully. “So, counting inclusively, this would be your 50th Feast.”

“I then took out a piece of paper and carefully showed Mr. Armstrong the math. It was not a hard sell. I was in the ‘unhappy’ position of having to ‘correct’ Mr. Armstrong about something I knew would inspire him—*if* he understood. He paused, looking inquisitively—and an excited look came across his face. ‘That’s right!’ he said. I was relieved.”

Mr. Armstrong stood up, tapped his glass to get everyone’s attention, and explained to the assembled ministry he had just come to realize that he was attending his 50th Feast, previously thinking it was his 49th.

The Packs conversed with the Pastor General for about two hours. Their chat revealed that Mr. Armstrong had been thinking about marriage, after his wife’s death in 1967. He discussed the implications of remarriage. His openness was surprising.

Mr. Pack was surprised at how lonely the older man seemed. He interacted with thousands of brethren and a host of leaders around the world—yet it was clear that, almost 10 years since the death of his wife, the elderly apostle was personally very lonely.

In a sense, this simple luncheon was the rekindling of a relationship that would become special, one that would go

beyond the normal greetings and pleasantries shared with the field ministry. From this point forward, a certain bond was forged between Mr. Pack and Mr. Armstrong.

“I was noticeably struck at how lonely Mr. Armstrong was. It was evident that either his travels or his high position in the Work had left him without many who could or would talk to him about certain kinds of personal things. I had not talked to him for more than a couple minutes (at a combined service years before) since college, and yet he really opened up in this luncheon. I am absolutely convinced that his loneliness, coupled with my willingness to talk freely to him, was the avenue to all that I would learn from him over the next nine years. This single luncheon was the start.”

A Grudge Springs from Basketball

Mr. Pack enjoyed staying in top physical shape. He often participated in and coached Church-sponsored sports teams, such as both coaching and playing with the Union congregation's basketball team.

The purposes of the Church-sponsored athletic teams, and the events surrounding them, were numerous. These weekends were a positive reason for hundreds, sometimes thousands, to gather for combined services and to socialize with brethren from surrounding congregations. The weekend events were also a chance for Christian fellowship for people of all ages.

These athletic programs generally promoted a spirit of friendly competition and sportsmanship. However, as the winds of liberalization were blowing into the areas of personal conduct in people's lives, certain ministers began slipping into a “win at all costs” attitude.

The Church had wrongly adopted an “open door” policy for weekly services, therefore, some ministers recruited play-

ers from *outside* the Church, sometimes relatives of those who attended, to supply their weekend sports teams with better players. To stack an athletic team with “ringers” was something to expect in the cutthroat world of pro sports or other non-Christian environments—but *not* in God’s Church.

One winter weekend in January 1977, the Washington, D.C. congregation sent their men’s team to play a basketball game against the Union congregation’s team. Hundreds of spectators packed the gym to see the two “powerhouse” teams play.

With seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, the Union team had the ball—down one point, 101 to 102. Mr. Pack received a pass tight in the corner, spun, shot—and the ball swished through the net as time expired. Union won the game, 103 to 102.

The opposing team was suddenly visibly angry. Its members had grown accustomed to the thrill of victory, having not lost a game in several years. Incredibly, and completely out of the blue, they claimed the Union team had tilted the game against them in some way. But how? This kind of thing simply never happened in the Church in the early years. It would have been unthinkable.

They returned home, waiting for a rematch—and, it would be learned, on *their* terms.

Interviewed to Become Pastor

Mr. Pack was by now developing a reputation of his own as an organizer who tried to involve as many people as possible, and in as many ways as possible. Partly as a result, the newest director of the field ministry summoned him to Washington, D.C., to interview for receiving his own full pastorate. (For a short period, ministers underwent a formal interview before such a decision.)

Naturally, Mr. Pack was excited. The Director opened the interview with a smile.

“There are three area coordinators ‘fighting’ over you,” he chuckled. “That’s a nice situation to be in.” It was certainly not one that Mr. Pack was used to.

One coordinator had written Pasadena, wanting Mr. Pack to work for him as the pastor in Erie, Pennsylvania. Another requested him to pastor two congregations, probably in Iowa, but possibly two others in Wisconsin. But his current area coordinator, his immediate pastor, had already informed Mr. Pack about his own plans: “I need you to go up to where your brother Bill used to be assistant pastor, in the Rochester and Syracuse, New York congregations.” (Recall that Mr. William Pack had also been sent into the ministry.)

Mr. Pack was glad to know that it was simply a matter of *which* area coordinator would “win the day,” not *whether* he would be promoted. Unlike so many other moments at crossroads in his life, this one was exhilarating.

His supervisor offered the young minister the opportunity to express where he would like to go. Without any reservations, Mr. Pack chose upstate New York.

Rematch

Weeks later, the losing team challenged Union to a rematch, this time in their area. The now Woodbridge team traveled to Washington, D.C., for another game. Though the attitudes of the opposing players were out of line in the previous game, Mr. Pack, who enjoyed a healthy rivalry, looked forward to the rematch.

Upon arriving, one of the first things the Union team noticed was that all of the referees were hand-selected members *from the local Church*. This signaled a problem, as it was common practice to hire experienced outside referees for Church games. This was done to ensure the level of quality that had long been stressed in the Church, and to promote a spirit of fair competition. Even Ambassador College *always* used outside referees for intramural games.

Worse, one of the referees was a woman, which was contrary to Church policy, in regard to men's games. Mr. Pack, an ordained elder and the Union team's coach, approached the woman prior to the game and politely asked, "Now, I understand you are a member of the local Church. Is that right? It is my understanding that you (also because she was a woman) cannot referee this game."

"Technical Foul!" the woman cried.

"Technical...? I'm a *minister*, not just the coach, and I'm stating a policy!"

This was not a basketball matter—it was a matter of Church authority, of which the very liberal local minister was apparently "confused"—or had decided that God's standards were not as important as winning the rematch—now also using "ringer" referees. It was obvious that the pastor had instructed her in what to do.

The woman was undeterred. *What should be done?* There were hundreds of people sitting in the stands, and two teams were moving to center court.

Mr. Pack gathered his team before the game started, and warned, "All right guys, look out! This could turn very ugly."

Little could anyone know...

Late in the closely contested game, one of the Washington players—who weighed almost 250 pounds—lifted another associate pastor from Woodbridge (a much smaller man) off the floor, literally turned him upside-down and smashed his head into the wooden floor!

Minister Assaulted!

The referees did nothing! Yet Mr. Pack as a minister had drawn a technical foul for trying to maintain Church policy from the same referees. And there was no response from the other players—or even from their ministers, including the senior pastor, the man who would later lead the entire ministry under Mr. Armstrong's successor.

Outraged, Mr. Pack complained to the “pastor”—who was playing in the game! He said the player’s actions—a physical assault!—were completely wrong and that there should be consequences—immediate and severe!—for such behavior. It was clearly in opposition to the most basic elements of Christianity! The man should have been *instantly* off the team, put out of the gym and out of the Church (and been arrested)—and he did not even receive a foul or technical foul. But Mr. Pack did for following Church policy.

“Make no mistake. I am a competitive person. As my sports background would indicate, I certainly play to win. But this was the single most outrageous thing I had ever seen, or ever would, with one possible later exception, in an athletic setting within God’s Church. Incredibly, the pastor turned away and did absolutely nothing. What I was witnessing simply could not have happened—it was literally ‘an impossible event’ in God’s Church. And yet the pastor, known the world over as a consummate politician, did nothing. Actually, he did do some things later—but they were worse...”

Mr. Pack’s brother, also a minister, happened to be in the stands, witnessing the event. He related this:

“I was also in Washington, D.C., being interviewed to be a pastor. Therefore, I was present at the basketball rematch. I distinctly remember the event. I remember the female referee and seeing my brother go over and talk to her...and the unbelievable poor sportsmanship of a partisan referee, as well as the general hostility of the home crowd.

“I just remember all that, and probably all I can say in addition to what my brother has said is that I confirm all the facts of the account. There is no exaggeration.”

After the game, which Union lost, some of its players were still dumbfounded that a high-ranking minister failed to address the incident. Neither did any of his elders or leaders speak up.

One New Jersey player pleaded with Mr. Pack: “This is unbelievable! We just witnessed an assault on a minister! What do we do?”

With Mr. Pack well aware that the opposing pastor stood within earshot, he reassured his players. “Don’t have any doubt about this,” he said. “What was tolerated was outrageous. *No minister of God should ever allow that!*”

Unbeknownst to Mr. Pack, instead of addressing the situation with him directly, the offending minister called the Director of CAD—for the purpose of spinning events against Mr. Pack. The pastor—for the sole purpose of protecting himself—chose to get out front of the incident and turned it into a politically driven false accusation against a man’s character because he had taken a stand the other man was too cowardly to address. Holding a grudge, thinking he could get away with it, he conveyed a skewed version of the incident, and then charged that Mr. Pack was not ready to be a pastor.

Now insult to injury!

Mr. Pack had enjoyed a wonderfully positive interview. The Director had formed a positive impression of the young minister. Yet he was taken aback.

The Director then called Mr. Pack’s area coordinator wondering more about what had happened, and reported that the senior pastor wanted to stop his promotion. The Director enjoyed a close relationship with the senior pastor.

Mr. Pack was called by his superior, who then called the minister who reconfirmed the assault, as did the other players. With the facts confirmed, the area coordinator told Mr. Pack that the senior pastor would be calling him to apologize and to settle the matter, and that of course his promotion would not be affected.

Mr. Pack waited for a phone call that never came—so he called his accuser.

“I understand you have something to say to me, but can’t bring yourself to say it. So I decided to call you.”

“Well,” the man mumbled, “I just thought things could have been a little different.”

With that, he refused to address the matter directly, leaving it unresolved.

Such is the way of political climbers, who do not take a stand or deal with problems, preferring to hold grudges and wait for a chance to “get even”—an attitude that should never be evidenced in men who have the Spirit of God, let alone ministers. This man’s actions, for years after, demonstrated how some who have wronged others find a way to remember themselves as the one having been wronged. But then “the heart is deceitful above all things.” (This senior pastor would return to persecute Mr. Pack for over 20 more years. But then this is the man whom Mr. Tkach handpicked as the one to inform and sell the entire Church that he was an apostle.)

Promotion

Shortly after the unresolved conversation, Mr. Pack’s next assignment was confirmed: pastor of the Rochester and Syracuse congregations.

“The part of my training under other men in the field was now over, other than when I was later demoted. I had worked to this point under seven different men (two more would come in the late 1980s)—and these men were very diverse in style, strengths and weaknesses, experience, age, and other things. They had all come to where they were through different paths. But some had experienced very little training to arrive at the point of becoming pastors.

“There was the case of one man I served under whose path to promotion could only be described as a ‘skyrocket in flight.’ He was ordained right after graduation at age 21 and was already Pastor-rank by 25, before being made a regional director at just 28 years old. None of this kind of thing was really the fault of such men. It was due to an entrenched system of politics, nepotism and rewards, unknown to Mr. Armstrong.

“Of course, I did not fully see this for what it was at the time. Coming to such conclusions was another of those things that was ‘unthinkable’ until later. The process toward promotion had once been *much faster* than the man I referenced here. Mr. Armstrong *was* learning to generally slow the ascent of men out of college. But he had no knowledge of a systematic method under each CAD Director of almost routinely putting certain of their favorite men on a ‘fast track’ to high office or *much higher* office.

“It is certainly obvious, and I am most glad, that I was never put on any such ‘fast track.’ It ruined so many men, and it might have ruined me as well.”

Transfer and promotion to being a full pastor meant also being raised in rank to Preaching Elder, meaning one becomes a full minister with all vested authority as such. This happened the Sabbath after Pentecost, on May 28, 1977.

On to Rochester and Syracuse

Mr. Pack looked forward to arriving in his new assignment—as a full pastor, and of two congregations in such a beautiful and scenic area of the country. He was convinced Upstate New York would be a wonderful environment for raising his family and creating lasting memories.

However, as with any congregation, his new pastorate had its share of problems. In fact, there were a number of serious problems that needed to be addressed right away. The Rochester and Syracuse congregations once held more than 200 members who had departed during the Church's liberal years, many at the time of the February 1974 rebellion. Certain leaders and ministers, including the former supervisor of Mr. Pack's brother, the pastor now being replaced, were the source of numerous problems.

On his first Sabbath in the area, Mr. Pack sat in the audience and listened to the outgoing pastor deliver his farewell sermon—which turned out to be the last day the man ever attended services.

“The previous pastor walked out and never looked back—and with his departure, I inherited an absolute

mess. What I would experience in the first year of what should have been an established pastorate we will just describe as ‘unexpected.’

“Through five consecutive areas, beginning with Rockford, my assignments involved interacting with ministers who had either been suspended, fired or had quit their positions. There were no exceptions. Rochester-Syracuse was number four.

“Each time, I inherited chaotic circumstances: Even before I could arrive at a new assignment, a sizeable portion of members would have already left the Church—the remaining brethren were invariably confused and divided—disorganization was prevalent—heresy was openly tolerated—corrupt conduct and vile practices were committed by both members *and* ministers, as well as teenagers—and a general lack of respect for authority existed.

“These conditions would be awaiting me in all of my new pastorates.”

This would be another assignment of many lessons—and much preparation for the future. But it would also be a place of wonderful happiness and production.

Liberal, Lax and Loose

The Pack family settled in the Rochester suburb of Penfield, where they enjoyed living in the western part of the state. They explored its vast scenic region, visiting the Finger Lakes, the Adirondack Mountains, the Great Lakes, southern Ontario, and hiking through perhaps 80 percent of New York’s state parks.

The Rochester-Syracuse area was a great environment for the Packs to rear growing boys, now ages three and five.

Mr. Pack promptly focused on his primary task: redirecting all aspects of both congregations. The previous pastor

had failed to administer almost *any* form of right government, and had exhibited little or no doctrinal understanding.

The first change: quietly ending the “open door” policy—a direct violation of Mr. Armstrong’s instructions! This deviation from protocol had liberalized Sabbath services and Church activities. Standards of decency, order, quality, excellence, Sabbath attendance and proper organization had been thrown out the window and replaced with chaos, confusion, division and a “come as you are” mentality.

In both the Rochester and Syracuse congregations, many members came to Sabbath services wearing inappropriate attire. Instead of coming before God wearing their best clothes, and according to established Church tradition (II Thes. 2:15; 3:6), most men wore open-necked shirts rather than ties; women wore slacks and pantsuits rather than appropriate-length dresses. In many cases, women wore their hair much too short, while a couple men had shoulder-length hair, or what Mr. Pack called “the Prince Valiant look.” Others simply wore it too long.

Many lay members had been on a first name basis with their previous pastor—again, contrary to what Mr. Armstrong taught—showing no respect for the office or authority of the ministry.

Only a small group bothered to attend the limited number of the congregation’s social events.

Nothing, including services, started on time.

Foul language and filthy jokes were commonplace among brethren.

Of course, many celebrated birthdays and skipped services to attend weddings and family anniversaries.

Parents let their teens date outside the Church, and adult singles were involved in romantic relationships with those outside the Church or with unbaptized attendees.

There were smokers in the congregation, as well as overdrinking.

And sex sins were rampant.

In short, the whole pastorate was grossly liberal—and some were overtly carnal, period. The Church in Corinth, which Paul had to address several times, had nothing on Rochester-Syracuse.

Eye-opening First Sabbath

Perhaps Mr. Pack's very first service leading Rochester best illustrates the condition of the local congregations.

Before the new pastor could even reach his seat, the local church elder pulled him aside and pointed out three pressing issues that needed to be dealt with immediately—meaning in one case even before services.

First, a deranged young man—whom the leadership had asked not to return to services, and against whom the previous minister had actually sought and received a restraining order—was in the audience. The man had recently been released from a psychiatric hospital, though he was “taking his medication,” the elder assured. Nevertheless, this did not completely dispel the elder's fears since the man had a history of “going off his medication.” With a new minister arriving to take over the pastorate, the deranged man used the occasion to slip back into the congregation.

Next, a highly troubled woman, also recently released from a psychiatric ward, had returned to services. The ministry had asked her to leave the Feast of Tabernacles the previous year when she became wildly “unhinged,” due to extreme instability.

Finally, the local elder explained that a Mormon elder—a tall, powerful, imposing man who had never been seen before—was at that moment lecturing a small group of brethren at the front of the hall.

These explosive “spiritual grenades” needed to be defused—one of them fast!

Mr. Pack put down his briefcase, asked for several deacons to be gathered, and moved toward the intruding “elder.”

The new pastor told the man his actions were not welcome and that he needed to leave Church services immediately.

The huge man belligerently responded that he had every right to be there and would not be going anywhere.

This time, with increased urgency in his voice, Mr. Pack said, “No, you’re confused. You’ll be leaving *right now*—and there is the door. Go!”

A few tense moments passed, but the man complied, leaving the premises, with deacons following him out to the parking lot.

As Mr. Pack went to find his seat and prepare for his sermon, he realized that once again he had inherited an assignment with significant problems.

One of them was that the meeting room was adjacent to a common wall beside a bowling alley, in a building that was right near the city’s major airport. Also, the men’s and women’s restrooms were at the *front* of the hall directly *behind* the speaker and the wall behind the lectern was thin.

“It was an unbelievable moment. I would be giving a sermon. Pins hit by a bowling ball could be heard through the wall to my left. Jets could occasionally be heard overhead—all in between flushes occurring directly behind me as sometimes sheepish-looking people were walking passed on my right going to and from the restroom. Their faces were sometimes no less flushed with embarrassment than the toilets.

“I laugh all over again just thinking about what I had inherited. I decided then and there my first order of business was to find a more suitable hall for when we came before God at services.”

The “Cat Lady”

Liberalized doctrine and allowing God’s standards to slide had invited strange and unbalanced people into the Church.

Over time, Mr. Pack learned that people with demon problems seek to enter God's Church when it is in a liberalized, weakened spiritual condition.

During these years, before the advent of the Internet and email, ministers primarily visited members or potential members in their homes. (Of course, this is still ideal.) The vast majority of the many thousands of visits Mr. and Mrs. Pack conducted were positive, even wonderful, experiences. Visiting either members or those desiring baptism and membership was one of the most rewarding aspects of being in the ministry. Few things can compare to seeing first-hand a person's joy and excitement in learning the truth of God's Word.

However, some visits could only be described as unique.

In one instance, Mr. and Mrs. Pack visited a woman who had been attending for some years. When they arrived at her house, for some reason she did not want them to come inside. The Packs stood in the driveway, in the hot July sun, speaking with the woman for quite some time.

Mr. Pack finally said, "Could we go inside and talk?"

After stalling, she reluctantly agreed, and they began to enter her home through the screened in front porch, with Mrs. Pack leading the way. But as they approached the front door, she suddenly stopped dead in her tracks.

"Come on, Shirley," her husband urged, "go inside."

He could not yet see what had caught her attention. Peering into a darkened room, she saw more than 60 cats—their excrement everywhere, emitting an unimaginable stench! Mr. Pack looked over her shoulder and stopped his gentle pushing from behind!

As the Packs conducted the short remainder of the visit outside, it became further evident that the "Cat Lady" exhibited bizarre behavior and was of a different spirit. Yet, the previous pastor had permitted her into the Church, and to remain there—another example of what happens when an "open door" policy is in effect.

Leaving, Mr. Pack thought about how one of the signs a person is possessed or influenced by a demon is that he lives in absolutely filthy conditions—and by choice. This was one of the first times he had seen this. Christ talked about *unclean* spirits for more than one reason. God’s Spirit is one of a “sound mind” (II Tim. 1:7).

The “cat lady” never returned to Church.

The 23-year-old “Prophet”

Shortly after moving to Rochester, the Packs discovered there had been a young man in the congregation who had claimed to be a prophet. The 23-year-old, who had just left the Church, was attempting to draw a following. He had successfully convinced his sister to follow him, with whom he had occasionally attended services, and had been influencing others when Mr. Pack arrived in the area.

Four or five members believed he was a prophet and that they should follow him. The new pastor was left to pick up the pieces and prevent others from being deceived. The ones who did follow him could not be convinced he was a false prophet—they left the Church! In fact, in the process, another young man decided he, too, was a prophet.

At just 28 years old, it was Mr. Pack’s first experience of anyone, especially men so young, arising to draw a personal following as a “prophet.” It stood as an example of how anyone, at any age, could say almost anything and someone would follow him.

From these lesson-filled examples, Mr. Pack learned that some had been permitted to drift into a Church where they *never* belonged. Others entered and later went astray; rarely could they be retrieved. Some people were “ruined” either before they got into the Church or became so after.

These were but a few of the early “Rochester” lessons, things learned that would be crucial preparation for later responsibility.

“This was the first time that I worked with large numbers of people as a full pastor, and I was able to see that many just did not ‘get it.’ It would be Rochester and Syracuse that more deeply ingrained in me that great numbers attending the Worldwide Church of God were simply not of God. I certainly was not ready yet to ‘put it all together’ in my mind, but I was experiencing things that would help me do this later toward very important ends.”

Car Chase

More information came to light about the heavily medicated, deranged man that Mr. Pack had been told about on his first Sabbath in Rochester.

The previous minister had filed harassment charges and a judge issued a restraining order against the unsound individual, which the young man soon violated. The police came to his house to arrest him.

He answered the door and said, “Just a moment; let me get my coat.”

The man shut the door, bolted from the back of the house and jumped into his car. While the police waited on the front porch, he roared past them in reverse! The authorities pursued him in what turned into a 100-mph police chase through city streets.

The pursuit ended when the young man crashed his vehicle, destroying six parked cars in the process, but leaving him unscratched. The police arrested him and placed him in a psychiatric hospital for intense observation. He was released shortly afterward, pending his guarantee to continue taking his medication.

Since he had just assumed pastoral duties in Rochester, Mr. Pack was not familiar with the severity of the man’s mental issues. So he had cautiously given him the benefit of the doubt, allowing the young man to continue attending.

The arrangement was that he promised to stay on his medications. This would last until the Feast of Tabernacles at Mount Pocono.

It was a decision that would be regretted. But Mr. Pack is the first to admit that his experience had not yet prepared him for such people. There would be many more on similar medications in years to come. Time would show that most of these would never recover.

Sermonette Seminar

It was very soon evident that the local leaders—deacons, elders and other sermonette men—had received little or no guidance in regard to effective speaking. An idea was born that would grow over the decades:

“Because the Church was entering the tail-end of the liberal years, I noticed the tone and spiritual information of the messages were weak. They were also poorly constructed and evidenced a lack of the most basic interest or zeal in preparing something meaningful and helpful to the brethren. I wanted to equip the local men to be strong speakers who could really edify the congregations.

“So in the fall of 1977, I decided to gather the best parts of the important information about preaching I had heard over the past 10 years, including Ambassador College, into an *extensive* sermonette seminar. This would be given to the deacons and elders on the speaking list in Rochester and Syracuse. Over the course of two Sundays, I passed along the best ‘nuggets’ and advice, principles and ideas I had heard.

“I also gave this seminar later in Buffalo in the early 1980s, and after that in Akron, Ohio in the early 1990s, as well as again early in The Restored Church of God in the spring of 2000.

“When our oldest son went to Ambassador College in 1990, in his second year he received a surprise. He called home and reported, ‘One of the instructors in my class asked us if we knew Dave Pack. I was surprised and raised my hand. I answered, ‘Yes...he’s my father.’

“Then my son explained how the teacher handed out to the class the carefully prepared notes of my sermonette seminar, exactly as my wife had typed them. I learned later that, beginning in 1979, Ambassador College was using my seminar as the central curriculum for giving sermonettes. I learned that a copy of my notes had fallen into Mr. Dean Blackwell’s hands, and he had decided to take them to Ambassador to make it part of the standard curriculum. It was my understanding that this continued until early 1993, meaning that for perhaps up to 15 years this material had been helping future speakers.

“It was most gratifying to find that ministers who left the college from the late 1970s until the early 1990s were still using the material I prepared.”

Things Go Wrong

The first Sabbath morning of the Feast in 1977, Mr. Pack was summoned to the Festival security office and told that the disturbed young man from his area had been involved in a bar fight the previous evening!

Imagine: A member of God’s Church was drunk...in a bar...on God’s Sabbath...at His Feast...in a fight!

Mr. Pack instructed security personnel to closely watch him, and then called the man’s parents, telling them their son was “off his medication” again. They agreed to immediately drive to Mount Pocono (a five-hour trip) and pick him up. (It will momentarily be evident why this story is included in some detail in this biography.)

Meanwhile, as the minister spoke on the telephone, the man eluded security guards, bolted out of the building into the woods—and into a driving rainstorm of 40-degree Fahrenheit weather without even a coat on.

Security called the local police, who combed the surrounding woods with dogs. Naturally, the hunt created quite a stir among the 9,000 brethren attending the site. Somehow God kept the story from the press.

The authorities finally found the young man squatting under a tree in the woods—naked and peering above his head.

“They want to take me away,” he said. “Don’t you see them—the UFOs? They’re 10 feet over my head!”

The police took him into custody and put him in a Pennsylvania psychiatric ward. A year later, shortly after being released again, he overdosed on drugs and died.

Nearly 30 years later, the facts of the account have long been drowned out by rumor, gossip, innuendo and plain misinformation. Many still cite the tragic account as an example of Mr. Pack’s “harsh” style, “lack of love” and “inability to help” people—driving them to suicide.

In truth, his mistake was not knowing enough about the man and permitting him to remain in the Church in the first place.

Yet, for so many, what has occurred on such terrible occasions does not matter. For them, it is easier to believe a sensational falsehood than to seek the facts and understand the truth of the matter, assuming they need to understand such things at all.

The still only 28-year-old pastor had to learn that sometimes ministers must live with circumstances akin to an ambush as early as their very first Sabbath in an area. Mr. Pack reminded himself to *never* forget that difficult day, and to *always* immediately deal with explosive problems that should not wait. Employing unwise “kindness” and unwise “patience” yield later accusations just the same.

Troubled Woman

Looking back, before his Rochester assignment, several ministers at the 1976 Feast of Tabernacles in Mount Pocono summoned Mr. Pack to the festival security office.

“We have a woman here who seems like she may be bothered by a spirit,” they told him. “What do you think?”

Not knowing what to do, they had sent for the young minister because of his training and experience in dealing with brethren troubled by demons. (Recall how in Newburgh, a month before the Feast, there occurred what became an instance in which Mr. Pack had cast seven demons from a man, right in his home.)

Mr. Pack looked at the woman in the security office, who was acting extremely strange. One of the pastors dismissed her bizarre behavior as “pure schizophrenia” and “a psychological problem.”

“No!” Mr. Pack said. “This woman has *at least* one spirit, and probably two.”

Though they disagreed on the exact nature of her problem, the ministers did agree she had no place at God’s Feast. They immediately sent her home.

Mr. Pack did not give the incident another thought, as the woman was not in the congregations he then served and the problem had been removed from the Feast.

However, on his first Sabbath in Rochester, Mr. Pack was surprised to see the same woman sitting in the congregation—the third of the three serious earlier-described problems about which the local church elder had warned him. Apparently, the previous minister had permitted her to attend services some time after the Feast. It was even more surprising when this same elder later conveyed more of the details of her history.

Mr. Pack attempted to gather all the facts and not rush to judgment, so he visited her at her home. He needed to de-

cide whether he should inform her that she could not attend Sabbath services.

The decision was almost immediately made for him. While he was conducting the local congregation's first Women's Club at a nearby Holiday Inn, the still-troubled woman was there, and, during the proceedings, leapt from her chair, threw her arms in the air, and shrieked as she fell backward on the women behind her.

Surrounded by several dozen terrified ladies, Mr. Pack sternly told the woman (actually, the spirit troubling her), "In the name of Jesus Christ, hold still and be quiet."

She immediately dropped to the floor, trembling.

"Don't say one word," Mr. Pack commanded. "I know who and what you are." Thirty shaken women observed.

An ambulance was called to take her away. When the paramedics arrived, they came to recognize that the woman only responded to Mr. Pack. After they loaded her into the ambulance, they asked him if he would be willing to ride with her to the hospital. It was an unusual request, but he complied, ordering the woman not to utter another word en route, and she did not.

The scene reflected badly upon the Worldwide Church of God in the eyes of the local public. This became another reason in Mr. Pack's thinking that people who do not belong in God's Church must not, if possible, be permitted to ever get there *in the first place*.

Mr. Pack could under no circumstances permit the woman to attend any longer. Since she was vexed by demons, it would have been imprudent to continue working with her while still in the Church. She had been bothered for many years, been divisive, and had shown no signs of progress. Therefore, in accordance with Church doctrine, Mr. Pack did not permit her to attend Sabbath services, and distanced the Church and himself from her.

A year passed with no contact—yet she somehow had the idea that Mr. Pack planned to let her attend services

again! That summer, after he returned from vacation, she unexpectedly telephoned him.

“Mr. Pack, while you were gone I was told by one of my friends that I would be allowed to come back to services now that you’re back from vacation.”

Naturally, the minister was confused as to what could have led her to think this. He sought to diffuse the situation.

“I’m sorry,” Mr. Pack said. “You cannot attend. Just keep studying and working with the *Bible Correspondence Course* at home.”

About two hours later, he received a call from one of the woman’s daughters.

“I’m curious, Mr. Pack,” she said calmly. “What did you say to my mother when she called you?”

The young pastor explained he had not spoken to the woman in almost a year, but had quietly told her she could not return to services, and asked, “Why are you calling?”

The daughter said, “Well, after hanging up the phone with you, Mr. Pack, my mother walked straight out into the backyard and shot herself in the head.”

Staggered by the news, Mr. Pack saw underscored a valuable lesson, again, never to be forgotten: Problems must be diffused *immediately*. What might have occurred if he had allowed this terribly disturbed woman to fellowship with the local congregation?

Sadly, some today blame Mr. Pack for the troubled woman’s death. Their “reason”? Because he did not show enough “love.”

“I knew that a demon had been involved and had tried to set me up with such a call from her out of the blue. I also remember being very angry that the previous pastor had put me in this position.

“Over the years, my enemies have done much to promote this story and two other accounts, one of

which has already been described. Yet I had not the slightest involvement in any of these tragic occasions.

“The stories propagated about my involvement are pure fiction, and all who were involved in each case understood this. Had I been responsible in even a small way for such tragedies, one could have supposed that my ministry would not have continued, or there would have been some kind of consequences. These stories from the past are included here since they are a part of my life’s story, and occupy a place in the realm of ‘urban legend.’

“As I have learned so many times, those in God’s ministry must always be prepared to ‘play the hand that you are dealt’ by the previous pastor, men who were sometimes no more converted than a stump. I did the best I could at playing cards that no incoming minister should receive. But there would be one more *similar* occasion, and many additional times when ‘inherited’ problems would be laid at my feet. I had been trained from early on that when these things happen you just lean harder into the wind. And I did.”

Roots Discovered

Some weeks after arriving in Rochester and Syracuse, Mr. Pack was approached by a woman in the Syracuse congregation who knew some “Packs” who had lived there in the past. She referenced a turn-of-the-century book titled, “A Thousand and One Prominent Syracusans.” Mr. Pack explained that his family had no connection to Syracuse, but rather his grandfather was from Indianapolis, Indiana. However, he *was* interested in seeing the book. She brought it the next week.

“I was dumbfounded at a reference to a very successful man named Charles L. Pack. One of his five

children was named William Randall Pack, named in the book, who was born in 1885 in Syracuse, the year of my grandfather's birth.

“This single moment would lead me down a long, winding—and wide—road of genealogical research on the Pack family. The journey would last for years. It would take me to the early 1600s in England and to the birth of my seventh great grandfather (George Packe) there, who fled religious persecution by sailing from Plymouth to America in 1665 at age 30. In fact, I even found his oath of allegiance to King Charles II, as one of the first 80 settlers in New Jersey when the English kicked the Dutch out of New Amsterdam.

“My journey would also lead to a host of *living* relatives and knowledge of the family that I simply found fascinating. In fact, after I learned that my grandfather had moved to Buffalo—and this was learned shortly after I was transferred there four years later—I discovered that Charles L. Pack and my great grandmother were buried just outside my neighborhood.

“It is a small world.”

Congregations Turn Around

While promptly addressing the many problems in the Rochester and Syracuse congregations, Mr. Pack was also implementing simple organization and structure: instituting brief weekly meetings before Sabbath services with deacons and elders, distributing information, delegating responsibilities, and teaching everyone their proper roles within local Church government. These things were taken seriously.

“Underground” Greeting

In addition, Mr. Pack established a greeting team that operated “below radar” in the congregation. When new people were set to attend services, a specially trained team was alerted on Friday night and Mr. Pack gave the team leader a physical description of the expected new attendees.

The next day at services, everyone on the team would greet the new visitors before and after services, and always for at least three weeks in a row. Each of the 15 to 20 adults on the team was *personally* responsible for introducing the new people to at least one other local Church member, and were to offer them coffee or juice, before moving on.

This ensured that new brethren felt warmed and welcomed. Mr. Pack has long believed this was the biggest single reason his congregations grew so fast, and why there had been such high participation in all Church activities.

Next, the number of activities and socials were increased, and transformed into exciting “extravaganzas” in which there was something for everyone. One of the goals of Mr. Pack’s ministry was to make sure everyone was included, whether it was little children at a social or widows attending a senior dinner. The goal was to make everyone feel welcomed, involved and appreciated—at every occasion. The result was that most of the congregation would remain longer at Church functions, and bond more closely.

In addition, there were well-organized larger sports programs offering wholesome fun, and these were based on enjoying good (not perfect) attitudes.

These positive changes—which were designed to bring leadership, organization, efficiency and right authority—began to turn around the congregations.

Giant Picnics

In previous years, only about one third of the brethren, and sometimes only 15 or 20 percent, typically attended the annual summer picnic. Mr. Pack felt it his duty to make picnics so much fun, with so much going on, that there would be higher attendances there than at services. This was because he wanted members to be able to include their non-member relatives in one positive, happy Church function a year that cast the members in a good light in the eyes of their relatives.

But, to enhance the occasion, the decision was made to have one picnic for both congregations midway between the two cities, while recognizing that this extra driving could actually *reduce* attendance—if the picnics were not made to be very special. Also, new people were more likely to come

to functions. Big, exciting, fun announcements were prepared for weeks in advance, building up anticipation and letting out new details each week.

Even with the extra drive, higher attendance than services the day before *would* still occur because some brethren did still bring their non-member relatives. This level of participation was almost unheard of in other congregations. It became a reason that brethren from surrounding areas sometimes came, something that did not generally please their pastor—they were looking for a better picnic or social elsewhere.

The congregation enjoyed the fruits of these improvements. And some who had stopped attending returned to Church.

“After we transferred from an area it seemed that invariably the specialness of these occasions was quickly lost under the hand of succeeding pastors who did not seem to care. Sadly, I would hear that attendance was beginning to drop back as before. But never all the way.

“Looking back, I have to admit that subsequent pastors were sometimes in an awkward position trying to ‘match’ what had gone before. But my job was to bring an event that mirrored the joy of Acts 2:42-46.

“I think this is still the picture at The Restored Church of God Headquarters picnics today.”

Initiating the principle of “Organization equals production and peace,” something Mr. Pack heard from a minister years earlier, the Rochester and Syracuse congregations grew, becoming the fastest-growing in the country.

The transformations and the speed at which this pastorate increased in size were so drastic that Headquarters sent several ministers to see this firsthand.

Mr. Pack most attributed this growth to two things: (1) regularly visiting *all* brethren, and making sure he knew *everyone* by name, down to the little children; and (2) being sure that everyone always felt included, no matter the activity, with the greeting team quietly acting to build warmth every Sabbath, before and after services.

So Many Visits, So Many People!

Recall from his college days how Mr. Pack learned very early that the Work of God is people. Ministers must learn this fast if they are to succeed. They are called to work with living, breathing human beings made in the image of God, and these come in every conceivable shape, size, experience, age, sex, race, religious background and culture.

One of the most unique aspects of Mr. Pack's ministry was working with so many different kinds of people. This would be evident in future pastorates, but it was already the case by the time he was leaving Rochester and Syracuse. After he would no longer be serving as a field pastor, Mr. Pack would find himself saying that he had made perhaps 20,000 or more separate visits with brethren (and prospective members) in God's Church. This is the centerpiece of all successful ministers' service.

“I loved visiting and talking to people. There was simply nothing like it. What else could be more interesting than human beings? There are those who seem to want to work with *things* and others who wish to work with *ideas*, and so do I. But ultimately, I wanted to work with *people*. I still do. It has not changed since I asked my pastor about the ministry at age 18.

“While I was shy as a young person, because of so many years spent literally underwater, I overcame this and grew to love working with my fellow man. Frankly, I could not get enough of it.

“Of course, I enjoyed my free time—being able to think and be alone, to reflect. Being in the yard or taking long walks through the years as has been described was very important to me. But ultimately, a lot of my free time would be spent coming back to ask time and again, *How can I work more effectively with people? What am I seeing? What am I missing?*

“These thousands of visits taught me a host of different counseling techniques. It has been explained that most of these were neither taught very much at Ambassador College nor did my supervisors in the field teach them much. I had to teach myself about people, with the scriptures as my guide.

“If one will think about it, most of what is needed in order to understand people is right there in the Bible. But one must search for it. And I did.

“I learned and observed, and I found out what does and does not work. I must say that some of what I concluded was from trial and error. But other times it amounted to having faith that God would put words in my mouth to be able to answer questions I had never heard before.

“Often were the times that I left a visit and wrote down what I had heard myself say. I literally took notes on my own counseling. My wife often did this in the car on the way to the next visit. It was obvious God had inspired a point or points in a conversation, and I decided to be willing to record it for future use.

“Working with 10,000 people, either as a ministerial assistant, associate pastor or pastor, provided its own marvelous, rich experience. I still find working with people to be fascinating, and this biography would be incomplete if it did not talk about the many, many lessons born of visiting.

“Finally, of course, I felt it was my responsibility to teach these things to ministers I worked with. I did

not want to require that they have to figure everything out to the degree I did. It would be hypocritical to wish I could have learned more things by instruction, and then fail to do it myself when given the opportunity. This is why so much emphasis is given in The Restored Church of God to training our ministers—to fully equipping them in all facets of feeding the flock.”

The Raise that Wasn't

There were still certain financial struggles taking place in the Pack household.

“It was Church policy to give raises to ministers who were raised in rank. When I was raised to a Preaching Elder I was supposed to be given a raise, but did not receive one. I had just assumed my raise in rank had come at a time when the Work could not afford to give me a raise. I figured that I was just an exception to the policy and had to live with it.

“Approximately a year and some months later, my supervisor in New Jersey called and said, ‘It was noticed that you never received a raise when you were promoted and transferred, but you were supposed to get one. I did the math and you should have been paid \$2,300 more than you were last year.’ (This would have been \$7,000 in today’s dollars.) The area coordinator sincerely apologized, and added that all they could do was send \$300. So we did receive a check for \$300, leaving us out \$2,000. But at least it had been \$2,000 we had not known about.

“This period came right when my little—but growing—boys were beginning to eat more. Because of our financial situation, they had long been forced to wear hand-me-downs. Our boys were already wearing,

and did for years, the clothes of their three older cousins. My wife's older sister was very thoughtful to systematically give us these clothes, since we generally could not afford new clothes for our children. We were most grateful for that generosity, and it lasted for many years. We looked at it as though God was still taking care of us."

Jealousy Breeds Resentment

There was another reason the transformation of the Rochester and Syracuse congregations stood out: Many ministers in surrounding areas were not following correct doctrine and policy. This created a double standard with discerning brethren. Also, these areas were not being blessed in the same visible way.

While multiple, large activities regularly occurred in the Rochester area, the lack of such activities in the surrounding pastorates made a huge statement. Brethren from other pastorates often expressed how wonderful it was to see unity, organization and participation so evident. Since so many WCG ministers preferred to idly coast along and were slack in their ministerial responsibilities, resentment arose. Their comments would on occasion be reported back to Mr. Pack from Church Administration. (Remember, the apostasy demonstrated that two-thirds of all ministers readily gave up everything they had professed to believe, and did so easily and quickly, so a lack of zeal in such matters is not difficult to understand. And most of the rest of the ministry would later prove themselves to be lukewarm at best.)

Another critical element in transforming these congregations was the attention paid to the local youth programs. Previous programs had been overly tolerant of worldly influences when it came to appearance, music and conduct. Programs were purged of lowered standards that mirrored society in the late 1970s. Parents and teens were educated

about God's Way. Youth programs were built, which lessened the problems among young people.

But despite the positive results, a select few (locally and in neighboring pastorates) harbored the feeling that Mr. Pack was "the hard guy."

Looking back, Mr. Pack recalled:

"When you draw a line in the sand, and the ministers around you do not, you stick out like a sore thumb. Some saw me as harsh compared to others. Never mind that I was tall, and from a high-profile family in the Church because I had married Mr. Armstrong's secretary. I simply could not hide—nor did I seek to. Decisive leadership was necessary. Of course, I could never have imagined that merely administering standards the Bible taught and Mr. Armstrong adhered to could be so problematic and controversial.

"I was sent into these troubled areas time and again where many were 'lying in wait.' Tares were everywhere, waiting, ready to explode when true standards were re-introduced. And it seemed surrounding pastors always grew resentful. All of these factors made my ministry a tremendous challenge.

"Cleaning up programs and standards was interesting and rewarding as I saw the many positive effects on people's lives, but it was also extremely difficult, and wearying, dealing with the constant politics of what later were understood to be, for the most part, a carnal-minded ministry that had grown up throughout the Church. Of course, this was later evidenced as true in the same large percentages among the lay members.

"I just could not always put together the great overall meaning of what I was observing—and enduring—at the time. None of us could know until later how right was Mr. Armstrong when he said, '90 percent of you

do not get it.’ However, I was sure getting good training for all that would come.”

Inclusive, but Not Tolerant

Again, the defining characteristic of Mr. Pack’s ministry was his desire to include all brethren. Sadly, most ministers equated inclusiveness with allowing anyone into the Church who wanted to be there.

But God’s intention to ultimately include all people in His Plan was never to be a license for any to “come as you are” into the Church of God. People had to understand right and wrong as it pertained to truth, conduct and God’s Law. Within these guidelines and standards, Mr. Pack’s congregations were *extremely* inclusive, perhaps as much as any congregation throughout the Church. If brethren chose to act outside of acceptable conduct, however, it was made clear to them they would likely be more comfortable elsewhere, in another church. Only rarely did they actually have to be “sent away.”

Because he was careful to enforce God’s “rules and regulations,” those who chose to buck clearly-defined policy and guidelines viewed Mr. Pack as a “dictator.” So many failed to grasp the importance of holding to standards.

One example of this was during one of the first Sabbaths he attended in the Syracuse congregation. Mr. Pack noticed a baptized couple who had issues with hair length: The husband literally wore shoulder-length hair; his wife’s hair was much shorter than his, but marginally acceptable by God’s standards.

Mr. Pack politely explained to the couple that the Church had always understood that long hair on a woman is a clear sign of subjection in marriage, and that the Church—from the Bible!—*plainly* instructed men not to have long hair. (Interestingly, there *was* subjection in their marriage—the milquetoast husband bowed to his wife’s authority!) Al-

though the previous pastor had allowed it, it was made clear to the husband that his hair had to be cut right away.

The couple smiled, said they would not comply and immediately left the Church.

Understand that if someone will leave the entirety of God's truth—and the true happiness only experienced living God's Way—over issues such as hair, personal appearance or basic conduct, then it is an indication that the person's heart was never in the right place. Such minds could not have ever been converted.

Yet time and experience would go on to reveal that only a *relative few* in the Church probably ever had the Spirit of God.

18-Hour Sabbath Routine

While God set apart the Sabbath to be a weekly day of rest for all people, this was by far the hardest working day of the week for His ministers. In Rochester and Syracuse, 18-hour Sabbaths of preaching to and serving brethren were the norm.

For example, Mr. Pack woke up at 5:00 a.m. every Sabbath morning to finish preparing his sermon. His family arrived for services at 10:00 a.m. in Rochester, where he delivered a sermon, fellowshiped for an hour and a quarter, and then drove an hour and 40 minutes to Syracuse, where services started at 3:00 p.m. After giving another sermon, the Pack family usually stayed for several hours before heading home, arriving late in the evening.

Aware of the needs in the smaller of his two congregations, Mr. Pack planned his day accordingly, making sure he ended the Sabbath in Syracuse. This ensured that the brethren there (who did not see their pastor as frequently during the week as did those in Rochester where the family lived) had easy access for counsel and fellowship.

The Pack family practiced this 18-hour-day Sabbath routine for three and a half years. (When Mr. Pack had to

pastor three congregations for six months, Syracuse held Friday night services, with Sabbath services first in Rochester and then Buffalo the following day.)

These were the longest Sabbaths of Mr. Pack's ministry, with little sleep on Friday night after returning from Syracuse. The Packs made certain they were the last to leave services.

“With rare exception, we were the last to leave. When I walked out the door at the end of Sabbath, wherever it was, I figuratively—and often literally—flipped the light switch. It was a conscious decision to have people see their pastor remain until no one had anything else to ask. Looking back, I probably overdid this because I pushed my family too hard. But at the time, the benefits were clear. And my family was very, very patient with this routine.”

Mrs. Pack's Dedication and Support

Many ministers' wives did not take seriously Mr. Armstrong's statement that “A woman is 50 percent of her husband's ministry.”

But Mrs. Pack was different—she *believed* it. She was wholeheartedly involved in and behind her husband's ministry, even caring for one, two, then three little children.

“Never a complainer, she provided an extraordinary example of organization and child management to the women in the congregations. My first wife truly was 50 percent of my ministry—and everyone knew it.”

Mrs. Pack showed her dedication through her actions. She was often involved in certain aspects of the ministry that most women were not, and took an active role among the local women. When possible, and appropriate, she even took her children on visits with her husband.

“Most wives were not interested in visiting and participating to that degree. So many wanted to do as little as possible, believing the ministry was their ‘*husband’s* job’ rather than a calling to which both had been brought. Most wives would not even attend the other service in a two-church circuit, never mind all three, which my wife *never* missed.”

During the four years the pastor and his wife served in Rochester and Syracuse, Mrs. Pack and the children also “ran” the circuit and attended both Sabbath services every week, no exceptions. She would wake up early Sabbath morning and make lunches (tuna fish was her specialty and Mr. Pack’s favorite), which she then stored in an ice chest. While her husband finished working on the sermon, Mrs. Pack dressed the children and stored away coloring books and other items to occupy them on the long rides between congregations, as well as during the two services. She made sure the children were well behaved, all while managing to fellowship.

“Think of my wife as having been in charge of bags, babies, bottles, books, Bibles—and being sure there were no ‘bad attitudes’ among the children.”

During the entirety of her husband’s ministry, Mrs. Pack missed attending on only four Sabbaths: two in 1974, when Robby was born, and two in February 1980 after the birth of their third child, Jennifer, on February 14. (When Randy was born in 1972, Mr. Pack was no longer in the ministry. But Mrs. Pack even then only missed three Sabbaths despite her health ordeal.)

Mrs. Shirley Pack’s faithful attendance stands as an incredible testament to her dedication to her husband’s ministry and to the local brethren she served through the years.

Unlike many ministers' wives, she also never took a job to earn additional income during the liberal years. Rather, she entirely devoted herself to supporting her husband, serving the Church and rearing a family. Mrs. Pack often said, "I am a minister's wife and a mother. I already have two full-time jobs."

Importance of a Balanced Spiritual Diet

Many ministers gave sermons that tended to shy away from more difficult subjects, such as a truly thorough look at a particular doctrine and almost all *details* of prophecy. Mr. Pack came to realize this.

"Christian living topics were the subject of most ministers' sermons. While important, these were non-technical and known to be relatively easy messages to prepare and deliver. Much less careful and demanding research was required, than for prophecy. It was easier to leave this one-third of the Bible up to the Church's books and booklets, but these were only intended to be primers, and brought much less detail than had been taught at Ambassador."

Brethren sometimes complained that their minister's messages were boring. It was obvious that some gave messages compiled late Friday night or Sabbath morning that came straight from a concordance. They seemed to begin their sermons in a monotonous tone, saying, for example, "There are three tithes, brethren. One...two...three..." or "Today we are going to talk about faith. Faith is..." and then launch into a long list of scriptures on faith or whatever was the chosen subject.

"I came to understand that the reasons for this were simple: Most ministers did not really understand

doctrine, or its details, because they had never *deeply proven* subjects during conversion. Also, it was generally believed that strong sermons on Church doctrine, as well as ones on firm boundaries of conduct, would polarize the brethren. The vast majority of ministers de-emphasized prophecy and Church history partly because they wanted to avoid the hard work necessary to prepare these types of messages, but also because many of them did not know their Bibles and absolutely did not understand most of the details of prophecy.

“If concordances could talk, they could have done just as well as many ministers.”

This was never Mr. Pack’s approach to feeding Christ’s sheep. He chose to teach the Church’s doctrines and prophecy in all of his pastorates. He continually studied prophecy and doctrine, and labored at preparing and giving interesting, even compelling, messages, *always* refusing to prepare sermons at the last minute. In turn, members were more attentive and responsive to God’s Word.

Mr. Pack’s mother had taught him, from a young age, to be expressive. His father was naturally colorful and full of stories. Carefully combining these two traits in balance resulted in sermons that captivated brethren and held their interest. But it took real work. There were no shortcuts.

It must have been a family trait, because Mr. Pack described his brother in the same terms:

“Through the years, I worked very hard at making sermons interesting and inspiring. I have always felt a responsibility to not bore people with the Word of God. I know for a fact that my brother was the exact same way, and every week was doing just as I was. I often thought of us as the ministers who wanted to know the Bible more than others. I do not want to imply that my

sermons were designed to entertain or titillate. On the contrary, they taught on basic topics, while remaining appealing and interesting because I always wanted to bring a completely new way of looking at old understanding. Sadly, today, so many ministers think they have to bring new understanding to be interesting. This was not only wrong, but so *unnecessary*.”

In every pastorate to which he was transferred, the first messages Mr. Pack delivered covered the fundamentals. He would cover early how to keep the Sabbath, outlining how people should make decisions about what was permissible and what was not. To some, this instruction felt legalistic, but most very much appreciated the clear explanation of biblical *standards*.

Another important sermon sure to be delivered in each pastorate was titled “Odds and Ends of Doctrine.” It carefully expounded upon things such as hair length, voting, third tithing, dress codes (Sabbath and otherwise) and other practical, but often-misunderstood or overlooked doctrines.

Here is a list of 17 sermons, by exact title, that Mr. Pack would give within the first five to seven months of each new assignment, beginning in the mid 1970s:

- 1) Humble Yourself Because God Cannot!
- 2) How and Why Did God Call You?
- 3) Here is How to Keep the Sabbath
- 4) Love—God’s Motive for Creating Sons
- 5) Don’t Build a Credibility Gap with Yourself
- 6) Let Your Heart Bleed...
- 7) As a Roaring Lion—Satan!
- 8) Zeal and Singleness of Eye, Key to Seeking God’s Kingdom
- 9) Atonement Had to Be a Holy Day!
- 10) Be Careful with New People
- 11) Learn to Praise God
- 12) True Doctrine Versus Heresy

- 13) “To Thine Ownself Be True”???
- 14) We Must Fellowship with God
- 15) Knowledge Brings Responsibility
- 16) Childlike or Childish
- 17) Character Breakdown—Real Picture of the End-time

Mr. Pack also gave sermons to unify the congregation on tithing, proving the Law had to be kept, and that the Feast days were biblically *commanded*. These messages were always an in-depth look at many scriptures—never done superficially.

In addition, he considered the book of Proverbs a wonderful tool in teaching the Church basic things they needed to know about Christian living.

Based on Mr. Armstrong’s familiar statement—“The Bible is one-third prophecy”—Mr. Pack also gave extensive series on subjects within this category. In Rochester and Syracuse, he began for the first time to construct comprehensive, multi-part series on Daniel and Revelation during regular Church Bible studies. These took many months to complete, but local brethren found the messages extremely beneficial. And it really boosted attendance. Most wanted to understand more about prophecy because, again, they seldom heard anything on these subjects outside of what Mr. Armstrong wrote or preached. This focus on the importance of prophecy kept people’s minds on the big picture of end-time events and helped rejuvenate the brethren. (This lack of sufficient preaching on prophecy would later make people ripe for seduction by so many false prophets and other false leaders in the Laodicean age.)

Proving Doctrine—Then Preaching It

Throughout Mr. Pack’s ministry, he *never* knowingly compromised doctrinally. He did not waver! As he learned and developed as a young minister during the 1970s, he followed

the example set by Mr. Armstrong. He slowly learned what it meant to recognize and look for the voice of Jesus—the truth (John 10:4; 18:37).

The depth of Mr. Pack's conversion and process of proving the truth was sorely tested during the liberal years, when ministers preached new doctrines, or watered down old ones, with sermons often coming from psychology books.

When it came to truth, the young pastor believed in a version of the popular maxim "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Doctrinal discord crept into the Church, forcing brethren and ministers to again prove basic truths and understanding. Mr. Pack realized that trials and watered down doctrines would either take a person out of the Church or serve as a reproving process that made his or her faith stronger.

On the other hand, when Mr. Armstrong introduced truth to the Church (which, as an apostle, he had the authority to do), Mr. Pack did not become upset and leave, as did some senior ministers. Instead, he meticulously researched and studied the topic.

For instance, after Mr. Armstrong changed the observance of Pentecost from Monday to Sunday, Mr. Pack researched the topic and came to understand that Mr. Armstrong was right—and it could be easily proven from the Bible.

When the doctrine of divorce and remarriage was changed, Mr. Pack researched it, learned the change was biblically accurate, and *carefully* preached the new doctrine to his congregations. (Later, after the establishing of The Restored Church of God, this allowed him to be able to write the first full booklet on the truth of this subject. Mr. Armstrong had never been able to write a corrected booklet because of his schedule.)

Yet, most people then, just like today, simply did not prove things from the Bible. Their inaction served to continually remind Mr. Pack of one of his favorite quotes from

George Bernard Shaw: “The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.”

Those who followed the truths of God spoke with one unified doctrinal voice. From this basic principle, harmony and unity spread. This extended directly from Christ, through His apostle, Mr. Armstrong, to the faithful ministry, and finally to the brethren in local congregations.

“It should have always remained that simple. Except there is a devil—and there is human nature. Brethren in Rochester and Syracuse always spoke the same thing—as did all others in each of my pastorates.

“One of the things we never had were other doctrinal ideas that were permitted to circulate. Never. I would not allow other doctrines to creep into the congregation, no matter how small. I preached strong sermons and told people to prove and review what they heard.”

This exacting doctrinal precision is visible throughout God’s Church today.

Sins, Lies, Conspiracy— and Palace Intrigue

In May 1978, Garner Ted Armstrong was scheduled to visit Rochester on the Sabbath. The arrival of an evangelist who was also the Pastor General's son involved a large event that would bring together brethren from Syracuse, Buffalo, Binghamton, Corning, Erie, Pennsylvania and numerous congregations from southern Ontario, Canada. Mr. Pack and the local congregation were to host the weekend's activities, including Garner Ted's usual sing-along Saturday evening "concert."

Garner Ted's doctrinal views and increasingly outspoken opinions of his father's leadership became known to his father. Subsequently, Mr. Armstrong gave him a leave of absence, consigning him to Big Sandy, Texas, until further notice. He naturally also cancelled all of his son's activities, which would have included the Rochester trip, then just three days away.

Guidance

Unaware of the details surrounding Garner Ted's banishment to Texas, Mr. Pack felt a responsibility to make Mr.

Armstrong aware of the size and impact of the weekend event. Cancelling it on such short notice would have major implications for the brethren. It would have caused a logistical nightmare, as most had already made plans to travel the long distance to Rochester. In addition, the expensive Convention Center in downtown Rochester had been booked for the event, and many visiting brethren had made hotel reservations.

Mr. Armstrong had to be called for guidance on how to properly portray the cancellation of the event, as well as to see if there was a way to alter the decision. Mr. Pack understood this was a highly sensitive subject requiring the Pastor General's personal instruction. The cancellation would need to be put into proper perspective for the ministers and local brethren.

"The Church is off track," Mr. Armstrong said to Mr. Pack, "and I have got to get it back on track."

The Pastor General explained that Garner Ted's personal conduct and doctrinal differences were central to the Church heading in the wrong direction. Mr. Pack understood and agreed.

Mr. Armstrong added, "I've been discovering more and more going on with Ted's liberalizing the Church's doctrines behind my back, and I have sent him to Texas."

"Is Ted suspended," Mr. Pack asked, "or has he been put out of the Church?"

After the Pastor General clarified that neither was the case, Mr. Pack issued a follow-up question: "Then would it still be appropriate to permit him to come to Rochester since plans have already been made for the event? If he doesn't come, it will be a big black eye to the 1,500 who are to be here and to many others who will hear about what happened."

Concerned about his son's behavior, yet wanting to protect the Church above all else, Mr. Armstrong asked, "Do you think it could still work to have him come?"

“Well, if there are any problems,” Mr. Pack said, “I will let you know immediately.”

“All right, he has my permission to come. However, I want to know everything that is said and done over the course of the weekend. I want you to call me first, then give [name, the current Director of Church Administration] a full report of the weekend as well.”

With that, Garner Ted’s visit was back on schedule.

Terrible Attitude

Two days later, on the Friday afternoon of the big weekend, Garner Ted arrived at the Rochester airport aboard the Church’s jet, where Mr. Pack met him.

It would soon become plain why Mr. Armstrong might be concerned about his son mingling with ministers and brethren. The Rochester-Syracuse minister was not prepared for Garner Ted’s attitude—and the Pastor General’s son was being privately critical to the ministry.

After services, Mr. Pack, the area coordinator and Mr. Gary Antion (from Toronto), and their wives, conversed with Ted at a private dinner before the sing-a-long. Over the course of over four hours, the evangelist continually hurled criticisms at the Church, primarily centering on many against his father.

Later, brethren from the surrounding regions assembled at the Rochester convention center for one of Ted Armstrong’s famous (now infamous) “sing-a-long” performances. The show included his assistant and other men close to him.

It was apparent the younger Armstrong saw himself as a folk singer and sought to portray himself as an entertainer rather than a minister of God seeking to edify and uplift the brethren with exciting news of the Work. He and his entourage sat on stage, sporting open-necked shirts, gold chains and medallions, and exposed chests. They resembled world-

ly pop stars—not ministers and leaders in the Church of God!

The band members had also come to services dressed in the same worldly fashion. Mr. Pack asked Ted about the inappropriate dress of those traveling with him: “Why is your group dressed as it is?”

Garner Ted basically dismissed the question with, “Well, yes, that’s the way they dress.” He was completely unconcerned about it.

Before heading to the airport the next day, Mr. Pack called Garner Ted and asked to ride with him. He had decided to tell Ted that his father was expecting a report, and that he would have to mention certain things.

Reporting on Garner Ted’s Visit

As he prepared to call Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Pack was presented with one of the most difficult decisions he had ever faced: *What should I disclose about the weekend?*

Unsure of how to proceed in such a delicate situation, he asked the other two senior ministers for their thoughts. “How should I characterize Ted’s actions during the special weekend?”

Both men encouraged him to stick to public statements and avoid disclosing anything inflammatory. They suggested that any comments the Pastor General’s son had made privately to ministers should remain private. He had not been public in his comments.

But Mr. Pack was uncomfortable with “whitewashing” the weekend to Mr. Armstrong. He was torn, wondering, *Is it appropriate for me to get between a father and son? Is this a Church matter that transcends their relationship? I have been advised by good men to be cautious.*

He called Mr. Armstrong and presented his mixed report. Mr. Armstrong requested the sermon tape be sent to the CAD Director, along with the report to him.

Following instructions, Mr. Pack made the calls. Also, the sermon tape was finally located and sent—there had been an attempt to hide it—and the matter now rested with others.

Most Painful Decision

The next week, Garner Ted's penchant for inappropriate comments was exposed yet again, this time in Milwaukee, where Mr. Pack's other brother-in-law happened to host a special weekend event. Garner Ted repeated criticisms against his father and others around him to a large assembly of ministers. Another report was sent, with an accompanying tape. Mr. Armstrong came to realize the "handwriting was on the wall" for his son.

In June, just 10 days after the Rochester visit, Mr. Armstrong formally, and finally, disfellowshipped his son from the Worldwide Church of God. Only from that point on would it become fully evident to the senior-most Church leader just how doctrinally compromised many of the senior leaders of the Church and Ambassador College had become. Obviously, their ideas had trickled down through the Church and ministry.

From that moment forward, the almost 86-year-old apostle single-mindedly focused on redirecting the Church to bring it "back on track."

Relationship with Mr. Armstrong

It was during this trying time for the Church that Mr. Pack's relationship with the Pastor General grew much stronger. On many occasions in the summer of 1978, the men spoke on the phone, sometimes at length, and discussed an array of subjects.

These long, detailed discussions laid the groundwork for more extensive talks about liberal doctrine and other wrong

ideas permeating the thinking of certain senior men in Church Administration and many in the field ministry. The subject of these talks slowly rolled into reorganizing the Work “post-Garner Ted” and the Church’s overall condition from a field minister’s perspective.

That Mr. Pack was a field pastor was helpful to Mr. Armstrong. At the time, the Pastor General was surrounded by administrators at Headquarters who seemed to have their own agendas, while he was at the same time somewhat isolated living in Tucson. (A recent heart attack, plus a second marriage, had temporarily taken Mr. Armstrong to Tucson to live.)

It was through these phone conversations that Mr. Pack slowly began to realize his relationship with Mr. Armstrong had changed. He had become an advisor from the field perspective.

“Many will dispute this, and our enemies will call this characterization false, but this is what our relationship became. Only many years later did I understand why God engineered circumstances as He did. But this description is the truth of the relationship—and many knew it.”

Mr. Armstrong expressed that he appreciated frankness and honesty, even when it meant respectfully disagreeing. It stood in stark contrast to the usually sugarcoated, self-serving political anglings he often received from those at Pasadena. These were people who either shielded him or told him what they thought he wanted to hear (generally, because they had their own agendas).

Liberals Remain in the Church

With Garner Ted gone and Mr. Armstrong remaining in Tucson, political maneuvering in Pasadena revved up to new

levels, as people scrambled to “divide the spoils” and advance themselves.

Because Mr. Armstrong had been less involved in the day-to-day administration of the Church, liberal ministers had quietly infiltrated the top positions in the Work. Coming to understand this, Mr. Armstrong began to consider who held these key positions. Mr. Pack often found himself in phone conversations with him, discussing specific personalities in detail. Seven years of extended family connections, plus many transfers that brought him into contact with a host of ministers and thousands of brethren, had exposed Mr. Pack to much that was going on.

Mr. Armstrong freely discussed that the colleges were not fulfilling their original purpose. Over the years, he periodically stressed, “I am *not* in the college business. As soon as these colleges aren’t needed, we will shut them down”—a point he repeated after briefly closing Ambassador in 1978. The Pastor General believed that widespread misconduct had ruined the colleges.

“They are not God’s colleges anymore,” he said at the time. “They are rotten. They are putrid. And the fruit is terrible.”

In one phone call, Mr. Armstrong told Mr. Pack that Ambassador was not producing effective “laborers for the harvest.” In fact, he was so uncertain about the quality of men being trained for the ministry that, a year later, only one ministerial assistant was able to be hired and sent into the field.

“There was only one man who was sent to the field in 1979, and he came to my area. After this young graduate and his wife arrived in Rochester, he described how appalling the situation had become on campus. He painted with vivid colors. It was hard to believe that I had graduated from the same college just eight years before.”

Mr. Armstrong determined that a new administration, coupled with significant changes, could again produce quality—biblically sound ministers and Headquarters staff. He reopened the college that September.

But change would be slow.

Some Improvement

With the Pastor General more actively involved in the Second Commission (spiritually feeding Christ's sheep and directing the ministry), most brethren believed things would improve. And they did considerably.

Still, other problem leaders in the Church remained, men who were not enthusiastic about Mr. Armstrong's more active role. When Garner Ted was at the helm, things were *much* more free and loose, with an understood open-minded willingness to look at new doctrines and policies. By contrast, some had come to feel that Mr. Armstrong was "rigid," "dictatorial" and "old-fashioned" in expecting the Church and the ministry to live up to (what were deemed) "unrealistic standards."

Mr. Pack and others were well aware of the liberal thinking among some leaders, but few seemed prepared to address it. Over the course of just a few years in the 1970s, many once doctrinally sound ministers began to believe that, for instance, Mr. Armstrong was "too serious" about healing, and tithing was more of a "principle" than a *law* of God, along with other unscriptural ideas about makeup, Sabbath and Holy Day observance, standards of dress and hair length, and so much more. There was a strong, growing sense that the Church should be "more progressive."

Mr. Armstrong wanted to believe that he could trust the new Church Administration Director. Yet, virtually every one of those with whom this man associated left the aging Pastor General troubled. Of course, a man is known by the company he keeps.

Liberal Thinking at 1978 Feast

That fall, the Pack family attended the 1978 Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful Saratoga Springs, New York. Gathered with scores of other ministers, it was there that the doctrinal degeneration of many members in the Church became more obvious.

At a ministerial luncheon in the middle of the festival, a senior guest speaker from Headquarters addressed the ministers and wives about the tumultuous summer now just behind them.

“Things have been stabilized in the Church,” he said. “What’s going on now is simply that the Armstrongs have been fighting.” Those were his words.

This was a complete mischaracterization of conditions in the Church. Garner Ted was a disqualified, disfellowshipped enemy of the Church. This was *not* a family fight, but rather a rebellious son involved in false doctrine and personal sins, coupled with his refusal to obey his father, the leader of God’s Church. Rebellion, heresy and sin trump all “family fight” descriptions.

The visitor added, “I must admit, the Church is no longer stuck in the mud as it was for years”—implying that Mr. Armstrong was *perhaps* doing something right because conditions were better.

Mr. Pack was taken aback by these outrageous statements—and was even more surprised that no one else seemed irate about them.

Later, in a local mall, the visiting speaker warmly greeted Mr. Pack. “I’ve heard about your area,” he said, the two men meeting for the first time. “Month after month, your pastorate is the fastest-growing in the whole Church. At Church Administration, we wonder why almost every other pastorate is either not growing or declining in numbers.”

Outrageous Sermons Preached

From the beginning of the Rochester-Syracuse assignment, stories about the doctrinal ramblings of a neighboring senior pastor had trickled out. Brethren at combined activities in Syracuse would phone or pull Mr. Pack aside and tell him, “Our minister (in Albany) is preaching ridiculous ideas. What do we do?” And they offered specific examples.

Having only been in the area for 16 months, and dealing with problems in his own pastorate, Mr. Pack could not immediately fully address their concerns. (He had already approached the minister in question about the questions coming from his area, but did so not having understood the depth of the man’s false ideas.)

But at the 1978 Feast, the situation boiled over. This same senior minister stood before 5,000 brethren and preached that there will be 100 different resurrections—that Christ was returning on Pentecost—that the apostle Paul was currently in heaven getting special training—and many other related utterly unbiblical ideas.

This event taught the Rochester-Syracuse pastor one of the most integral lessons of his entire ministry: thousands could listen to plain heretical nonsense spewed from the pulpit *and not seem to hear ANY of it*. And those who perhaps did, tolerated what they heard.

The time for tact was over.

Mr. Pack’s brother was an associate pastor at the Brooklyn, Queens, New York congregation and was also assigned to the Saratoga Springs Feast site. He spoke to his brother about this outrageous sermon. He and his wife completely agreed with the above assessment. Here are his comments:

“I approached my brother with what my wife and I had noticed in the sermon. It was appalling, and it

became obvious that no one else in the arena seemed to agree.”

It was clear that immediate action needed to be taken!

Mr. Pack confronted the man in the choir room with the Syracuse local church elder at his side, and said, “That sermon was wrong! You just stood up and *vomited* on 5,000 people!”

“None of the other ministers are coming forward,” the minister replied.

“I don’t care what the *other* ministers do or don’t do! What you are teaching is false—and ludicrous!—and it cannot be left unaddressed.”

The minister slammed his fist on the piano.

“I’m the senior pastor here!” he yelled. “This conversation is over! We’re done talking!” The choir was waiting outside, and everyone heard the volume with which the man spoke.

Undaunted, Mr. Pack shot back with equal volume, “I won’t be intimidated. It is *you* who are in trouble—serious trouble—and *right now!*”

Yet, *not one* other pastor or additional elder—of the *scores* present in the audience—seemed to care or had the courage to say *anything*, assuming they were even listening. This tragic reality became a painful lesson for Mr. Pack, as most ministers’ lack of love for, or even understanding of, the truth would be a repeating disappointment for the next 15 years. That so many could tolerate so much from the pulpit without a word of objection left an impression on the 29-year-old pastor that would *never* be forgotten.

Following government and the Church’s organizational structure, he immediately called his area coordinator, who was attending the Feast in South Africa. Mr. Pack explained the details of what had happened—and that not one other minister spoke up (from a group of men primar-

ily under the area coordinator's northeastern administration).

His supervisor sought to smooth the situation. Though the minister was fired after the Feast, again, other than his brother and the elder with him, not one other minister was willing to say a single word of what was heard.

Only the sermon tape would tell the tale as the final witness of what had happened.

Years Later—Same Story

Three years later an almost identical situation would occur, but this time it would be from a guest speaker behind Mr. Pack's pulpit in his next assignment. The visiting minister was seeing his parents, and Mr. Pack asked him to speak.

“There is a popular prophecy speaker today among the slivers of the WCG who has a well-known tape ministry. In the late 1970s and early 1980s this man was apparently quite willing to publicly go against Mr. Armstrong doctrinally, as he was putting the Church back on track. The man's theories had to do with special rewards for those of the Philadelphian era, how the wedding supper would be in heaven and how Christ would return on Pentecost, among other things.

“I had not heard about these ideas, but I was about to be surprised that such a thing could still be happening, and allowed to happen, by late 1981. The visiting minister had fallen under this man's spell. He was excited and chose my pulpit to vomit what he was learning. I had no idea what he was about to utter.

“After the sermon I confronted the man. He pooh-poohed my concern, saying that others agreed with him. I called Headquarters—and they actually

supported me. The next Sabbath I stood up and corrected the man, and he understood in advance that I would. By that time he had been spoken to. He apologized.

“Realize that these things did periodically happen in the Church. Of course, more often when the Church was off track than on. It is just that on most occasions nothing was ever said later to counter or correct what had been wrongly spoken, and why.”

Headquarters Leader—Telling Visit

Returning to the timeline, earlier in 1978, the editorial manager in charge of *The Plain Truth* magazine came to Rochester as a guest speaker, bringing his assistant with him. That Friday evening, several ministers, including the area coordinator, gathered at a restaurant for dinner.

The conversation moved to the subject of childrearing, with the manager and the area coordinator declaring that some children do not ever need to be disciplined. This was unbelievable. The conversation became “vigorous.” Later, the manager from Headquarters proceeded to tell a crude joke that mocked God’s husband-wife relationship in marriage in the most uncouth and coarse language. When he announced plans to tell the story from the pulpit the next day, Mr. Pack said, “I ask you not to use that joke in the sermon. That’s not where this pastorate is going and many would find it offensive.”

The Plain Truth manager insisted that he should tell the joke, but after Mr. Pack stressed that it was disrespectful and mocked Scripture, the man promised not to tell it in his message. Mr. Pack also plainly told him not to include his other ideas or to mock Mr. Armstrong.

The matter rested.

The next day at services, the man told the joke anyway. And worse, he soon after mocked Mr. Armstrong’s voice

and speaking, through a “humorous” mimicking, and then still later suggested that parents should not discipline every child, among other liberal teachings. The sermon offended the congregation, as person after person came to Mr. Pack about it after services. He had literally violated all three promises.

Appalled beyond words by the message, especially from a leader charged with guiding the content of *The Plain Truth* magazine, Mr. Pack felt betrayed and quietly took the older minister aside.

“I asked you not to tell that joke,” he said. “You broke your promise. And worse, you mocked Mr. Armstrong and absolutely dishonored his office. I’m going to announce next Sabbath that you were out of line and broke your word. I cannot permit God’s people to believe I would countenance such wrong conduct. My silence would mean either agreement or that I was weak and fearful.”

“No, you won’t,” the man responded. “You will not do that.” And he was emphatic!

But Mr. Pack explained it was “too late.” Such degrading, disrespectful “family” humor and mocking could not be tolerated. He explained that neither was it acceptable to tell the congregation that some of their children need never be disciplined.

It was obvious the visitor had a carnal mind.

In such situations, the only recourse left to a true minister of God is to defend the congregation and maintain God’s standards, no matter the consequences. This is what Mr. Pack did, and in this case, often without his area coordinator’s support.

Relationship with Mr. Armstrong Grows

During these tumultuous times, Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Pack spoke more frequently. They touched on topics such as the progress that had been made in getting the Church back on

track, and what remained to be done. Mr. Armstrong was always encouraged about what he was seeing, yet always saw more to be done.

In a November 1978 conversation about the liberals around the Church Administration Director, the subject of the leader who had just visited Rochester arose. The young pastor knew he had an obligation to be truthful.

He recounted the incident of the coarse joke-telling and disrespect. Mr. Armstrong reacted, but he was not surprised. In fact, the Pastor General expressed that he had been thinking of replacing the man. Mr. Pack recommended installing his second-in-command into the position, who never knew of this input to Mr. Armstrong.

Shortly after the conversation, Mr. Armstrong did remove the manager of *The Plain Truth*, installing a faithful assistant in his place.

Mr. Armstrong conveyed that these regular phone conversations served him because they gave unfiltered information from the field. The talks between these two men covered a range of topics, allowing Mr. Armstrong to learn what was *really* happening “in the trenches.”

Many Questions

Sensing a chance to learn from the leader of God’s Church, Mr. Pack often queried Mr. Armstrong with questions such as, “Is your son the Joshua of Zechariah 3:1-7?”—“Do you think he is the man of sin?”—“If not, who is it?”—“Who are the 144,000?”—“It is possible that your son leads Laodicea?” At times, their conversations lasted for an hour or more just on prophecy.

The field pastor asked about the seventh era of the Church several times: “Who *exactly* is Laodicea and how do you see the arrival of the Laodicean Church?”

Mr. Armstrong’s response was always the same four things: “They will arrive suddenly. They will come from this

Church. They will do some kind of Work. They will be the dominant group.”

These and other thought-provoking topics gave Mr. Pack critical insight. Mr. Armstrong acknowledged that he rarely received such in-depth discussions about prophecy from those around him.

Mr. Armstrong would periodically solicit opinions on certain leadership decisions. In one instance, he asked who he thought should be appointed as the next British Regional Director. Mr. Pack offered an opinion, and Mr. Armstrong appointed the man. These conversations provided priceless learning experiences.

His relationship with the Pastor General did not go unnoticed. Mr. Pack was soon perceived as a problem to remaining high-ranking liberals. But others in the field or at Headquarters phoned him attempting to give input to Mr. Armstrong through their friend that they were afraid to deliver themselves.

As Mr. Armstrong put the Church back on track doctrinally, many who thought as did his son were still in positions of authority. The Pastor General had the difficult task before him of determining who was loyal—and who was not. Mr. Armstrong relayed stories to gain Mr. Pack’s feedback.

The pastor had been deeply concerned. “Mr. Armstrong, a number of the men around you are liberal—and known to be slippery,” he said. “They give non-answers when asked direct questions. They answer questions with questions. It is never clear where these men stand doctrinally and in regard to your authority. I have found some of them very difficult to pin down. Please be careful.”

Mr. Pack Again Opens Up

A chain of events unfolded in December 1978 that would drastically impact Mr. Pack’s ministry.

In a call with Mr. Armstrong, another long discussion ensued about Headquarters liberals. Mr. Pack opened up about how troubled he was over their actions. Mr. Armstrong probed for detail.

The field minister described the conduct of the very top ministers. Many examples painted a picture of leaders through whom Mr. Armstrong was trying to put the Work back together.

Mr. Pack also explained the prevailing attitudes and doctrinal discord that permeated the Church and field ministry. While most believed it was good that Garner Ted was gone, many others believed that some good ideas were introduced under his watch. Ted had just “gone too far.”

“I know there are certain liberals you have put out of the Church, Mr. Armstrong,” he said, “including your son, but all the ‘co-architects’ of the doctrinal nonsense in the Church are now the people that the CAD Director spends his time with. Look at who is around him. These are very liberal men. And this is happening while you are trying to get the Church back on track.”

Mr. Armstrong acknowledged that this also troubled him. However, he did not yet know how to distinguish who could be trusted from who could not.

Closeness to Mr. Armstrong

Through the years, some portrayed Mr. Pack as a “bothersome field minister,” a self-promoter whom Mr. Armstrong “placated by politely taking his calls.”

This was never the case. Mr. Armstrong had a standing rule that Mr. Pack’s calls were *always* to be put through. Sometimes Mr. Armstrong initiated the call. Mr. Pack does not recall one time when Mr. Armstrong did not take his call.

Mr. Pack would be relaxing Friday evening, preparing for the Sabbath, and the phone would ring. He would motion to his wife that it was Mr. Armstrong and quickly move to

his office. They would then talk for as short or long as necessary.

Years after his death, discussions as to who spent the most time with Mr. Armstrong or who knew him the best still disintegrate into petty disputes. Of course, the answer to that would always have to be his chief assistant. In the end, however, these disagreements fail to address the real issues. Who most clearly understood what Mr. Armstrong believed and taught? Who took the time to listen, learn from him and follow the example he set, whether at Headquarters or in the field?

Today, so many seem only interested in how to “grow past” Mr. Armstrong and a pattern that was so successful for over 50 years. They fail to glean lessons from his example and teaching.

Request for Sermonette

Mr. Armstrong had fully come to trust Mr. Pack’s doctrinal soundness. It was at about this time that he was asked to deliver a special sermonette at the Feast.

“I believe that it was before the Feast of 1978 that I was asked to give a sermonette that encouraged the brethren to read Mr. Armstrong’s new book *The Incredible Human Potential*. It was made plain to me that he had hand selected the men who would carry this out. I believe it was the first time that I ever spoke at the Feast.”

Betrayal Planned

Late one afternoon, Mr. Pack received a call from Headquarters. On the other end of his speaker-phone was the CAD Director. Nothing could have prepared him for what followed.

“Dave, this is [name] and I am a superior minister of Jesus Christ,” the call began ominously. “You had better speak the truth with me right now. We have heard reports that you have been talking to Mr. Armstrong about me. Do you have anything to say?”

Startled and initially uncertain as to what he meant by “We have heard reports,” Mr. Pack quickly realized by background noise there were others on the phone listening in. *But who were they?* Bracing himself, the field pastor sensed he was about to be ambushed.

Mr. Pack responded, “Yes, I have talked with Mr. Armstrong, but those are confidential discussions. I do find it strange that you have been openly negative about most of the senior ministers who are supportive of Mr. Armstrong, and those making efforts to stand firm on doctrine. I know some of the men around you are not speaking the same thing as Mr. Armstrong. And they do not respect his authority.”

“You better be careful,” the Director warned. “If you have anything to say, say it to me.”

Mr. Pack answered, “I am a loyal minister and I pray for you. My conversations with Mr. Armstrong are confidential. I hope you make the right decisions.”

“Well, you just wait there for now. We will be getting back to you soon.”

The call ended. The mouth-drying experience left Mr. Pack bewildered, in perhaps the deepest shock of his life. *How could this man possibly have known what was discussed with Mr. Armstrong?*

“You’ll Be Unfired, Dave”

Fairly certain what the final comment meant, Mr. Pack immediately called Mr. Armstrong.

“[Name] is aware that you and I have talked,” he said, “and he knew specific, intimate details of our conversa-

tions. I think I'm going to be fired." He added that he could only guess as to what other men were present during the call.

Mr. Armstrong said, "First of all, Dave, if you get fired, call me immediately and you will be *unfired*."

"Yes, sir," Mr. Pack replied. "You have my word I will!!!"

Mr. Armstrong wondered aloud. "How in the world could anyone else know the things that I only verbalized in private phone calls?" He stated, "I told no one else about our conversation. This is a mystery."

Determined to get to the bottom of the situation, Mr. Armstrong hung up the phone.

Calls from Politicians

Mr. Pack that evening received several unexpected calls. The first came from a senior minister. He had been in the Director's office. Mr. Pack never forgot his words. "Dave, we have been your patrons. Why are you going to Mr. Armstrong?"

"I know you have been supportive of me personally," Mr. Pack acknowledged, "and I appreciate that. But you have wrong doctrinal ideas, and don't fully support Mr. Armstrong."

Another call came, this time from his area coordinator. He confirmed that Mr. Armstrong's private phone calls with Mr. Pack had been secretly taped, and identified all the men who had been in the room during the Director's call—a full-length "who's who" of the Work!

Certain people who worked closely with the Pastor General sought confidential information about him, his activities, and the Church that could be used later. Many leaders did not want the status quo of the liberal years disrupted, so they actively (and some passively) resisted Mr. Armstrong's renewed involvement. Some wished the 86-year-old Church

leader would simply retire. Much to their vexation, he did not.

The secret recording of the phone call between Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Pack had been taken to Church Administration, where everyone whose name was discussed had gathered to listen.

A third call came a day later from an evangelist. “Dave, you’re family,” he said, “and you are going to Mr. Armstrong about me. Why would you do that?”

Mr. Pack said, “Wait a minute. I know we are family, but there are *major* doctrines you don’t agree with. For instance, do you believe tithing is a law?”

The evangelist evaded the question: “What do you mean ‘is it a law’? Is it a law in the mind of God? Do you mean, was it a law to Israel? Is it a law *today*?”

He continued to waffle, muse and debate over several doctrines of God.

These men were angling politically instead of standing—spiritually—for doctrinal precision. An interesting “dynamic” appeared: men who had painted themselves into a corner with their lack of support for Mr. Armstrong now tried to unpaint themselves through what they knew to do—politically maneuver and flatter.

They were now nervously, and very obviously, trying to smoothly plead their case. They now realized the CAD Director’s threat to “deal with” Mr. Pack would be less simple. From then on, certain Headquarters leaders understood the closeness of Mr. Pack’s relationship with the Pastor General.

High Stakes Battle

An all-encompassing all-out battle for control of God’s Church was slowly taking shape. “Another spirit”—also called “the spirit of error” and “the spirit of disobedience”—had infiltrated the Church.

Regardless of problems at Pasadena, Mr. Pack was confident that Jesus Christ would guide Mr. Armstrong. However, a disturbing phone call came from his brother-in-law, Gary Antion.

“Dave,” he warned, “I think you are going to be fired along with two other men. Carl McNair and it also looks as though Rod Meredith could be either fired or sent to a small congregation on the prairies of Western Canada.”

Mr. Pack thanked his brother-in-law. Undeterred, but cautiously aware, he trusted God to work things out. As 1978 ended, Mr. Pack continued to focus on his two congregations.

WCG Receivership— Under Media Spotlight

While Mr. Pack’s ministry saw many difficult situations, including troubled brethren and ministers, it was not one long negative tumble of events. It also contained many, many highpoints. In all, these experiences were vital to his Christian development.

“Even though a Christian’s walk is difficult at times, the overwhelming majority of the brethren, activities and situations I experienced in God’s Church were wonderfully helpful and inspiring in underscoring why I chose this way of life in 1966. After over a decade in God’s Church, I was more certain than ever that my choice to follow God’s Way was the correct one. I never doubted my decision.

“This same characterization applies to the entire Worldwide Church of God as a whole. Certainly I knew that God works through imperfect human beings and this included Mr. Armstrong. And of course I knew that I was far from perfect. Yet all those sincerely looking for the fruits of God’s government, and the doctrinal harmony and unity of purpose that flowed

from it, should have been able to easily recognize and identify what they were seeing.”

Four Groups—Four Agendas

The year 1978 was drawing to a close, and the size and international impact of the Church continued to increase as Mr. Armstrong thundered to all congregations that “Jesus Christ was putting the Church back on track.”

With the Pastor General absent from Pasadena, four separate groups, or camps, maneuvered ferociously for authority over the Church and control of its enormous assets. As Mr. Armstrong traveled around the world speaking to congregations and personally taking Christ’s gospel to world leaders for up to 300 days a year, it was difficult for him to fully discern what was occurring at Headquarters, especially as he recovered from a heart attack in 1977. There was also some loss of sight and hearing.

The *first* group, legally driven, covertly established a new corporation in another state, and advised Mr. Armstrong to stay in Tucson—effectively keeping him in the dark about their schemes. They planned to quietly remove him as the leader of the Church, and then shift the Church’s assets to their corporation.

The *second* group was the liberals described in the previous chapter. They wanted the Church to continue on the same path it had taken through much of the 1970s, and to go further. These men shared a similar goal as the previous group: Remove Mr. Armstrong and gain control of the Church.

Both groups publicly maintained friendly relations toward each other, presenting a façade of agreement. Yet each recognized the threat the other represented, and attempted to gain the upper hand.

The *third* group was led by a senior evangelist, a man who had long coveted power, and who would use any means necessary to get it. Today a leader of one of the big groups

that splintered from the WCG, this man had been pushed aside by Mr. Armstrong's son, as well as the second group, described above. (Mr. Armstrong would later himself dis-fellowship the man in 1979, reinstating him upon the man's feigned "repentance.") This "conservative" was the most senior evangelist in the picture, and a few other senior men stood with him in his publicly stated pursuit to "help Mr. Armstrong get things back on track."

"The first three factions all maneuvered as would mongooses and cobras—their eyes were fixed on each other, but in this case with each keeping a public smile on its face. To them, it was simply a matter of who could get Mr. Armstrong's ear, most influence his decision-making, and best create an environment in which they could gain control of the Church."

These men went back many years in the Church and understood the reality that the aging apostle would one day die. To them, careful positioning in the replacement process was *everything!*

Yet Another Betrayal

A *fourth* group also strove to overthrow Mr. Armstrong and gain financial control—but from *outside* God's Church.

This was a group of six disgruntled ex-members who despised certain aspects of doctrine, including God's form of government, and resented the influence of some around Mr. Armstrong.

"There is massive corruption and abuse at the top of the Worldwide Church of God," the six men charged. "Millions of dollars are being siphoned away."

Asserting that extraordinary legal intervention was needed, they planned to file a lawsuit claiming Mr. Arm-

strong was squandering the Church's tithes with "lavish spending and trips around the world." These dissidents petitioned the state of California to intervene as the only means of "saving the Church from Mr. Armstrong."

Never mind that their accusations were utterly baseless!

These ex-leaders of the Church were linked to Mr. Armstrong's son, all of whom were members of his new Church of God, International.

In this melee of confusion and coming betrayal, several thought-to-be "Mr. Armstrong loyalists" (those of the third group) felt they had the responsibility to open his eyes to the liberals. Unaware of the looming threat of lawsuit, four men flew to Tucson to warn Mr. Armstrong.

The intensity of this growing crisis was plain—*something* had to give.

Within weeks, something did.

The Receivership

By the end of 1978, speculation had arisen at Headquarters that "something big" was developing behind the scenes. The chief legal counsel for the Church received an anonymous call informing him that a pending legal case was about to be filed against the Church.

Because the nature of the charge was so sensational, this man and others naturally dismissed the call as an unfounded rumor. They soon found out how wrong they were!

On January 2, 1979, the Receivership by the State of California struck the Worldwide Church of God. That day a "closed-door" *ex parte* hearing (which means "from one party") was held in a judge's chambers in which the dissident six, in collaboration with the California Attorney General, sued the Church.

During *ex parte* hearings, the party against whom the action is brought (in this case Mr. Armstrong and the Church) is excluded from being in court—or from even being made

aware that legal action is being taken. It is an extreme legal proceeding.

Four Charges

The lawsuit, brought before a state judge, alleged (1) the Church had not accounted for the entirety of its third tithe distributions (estimated in the millions) to brethren who were in need; (2) the Church was in collusion with, and purchased services from, several profit-making companies that were owned or controlled by “certain influential members”; (3) Mr. Armstrong had appropriated the Church’s funds for his own personal gain with a variety of ventures that served only to build his personal international reputation as an ambassador; and (4) Mr. Armstrong had improperly used the Church’s financial resources for fruitless investments such as the Ambassador Auditorium.

Built in 1974, the auditorium was used for Church services, including the Feast of Tabernacles, and also showcased many of the world’s top entertainers, such as Beverly Sills, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby and the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF). AICF had been created to bring a high-level of culture to Pasadena as a community, as well as to perform certain other projects it was involved in or guiding in other parts of the world.

The state decided to scrutinize the Church with laws that had previously never applied to non-profits and charities. Until this point, there had been a clear delineation between the rules that applied to non-profit charities and those that applied to private or publicly held corporations.

Did Mr. Armstrong travel the world meeting with world leaders? Yes. Did he use these trips to also visit WCG regional offices and brethren around the world? Yes. Did he spend millions of dollars building quality college campuses and Ambassador Auditorium? Yes. Was the gospel preached, as never before, around the world in every nation? Yes. Was

spending money for all of these a misuse of tithes and offerings of loyal members? No.

Viewed under a microscope, any detractor looking for “loose bricks” would always be able to find areas and decisions with which he would disagree or that seemed like misappropriations of funds. This comes as no surprise to anyone who understands human nature.

However, *collectively*, all of the Pastor General’s decisions had the following result: Mr. Armstrong’s voice, *The Plain Truth* magazine, the Ambassador Auditorium and the work of the Worldwide Church of God under his leadership are still known and respected the world over even *today* by countless millions.

High Drama—High Stakes!

With the dissidents having taken legal action, it was impossible to avoid the ensuing conflict.

The judge, after hearing “evidence” against Mr. Armstrong and the Church, ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and issued a court order. Local sheriffs arrived at Church Headquarters within hours to seize control and lock the doors of the Hall of Administration.

The court-approved receivership temporarily froze all of the Church’s bank accounts, money and assets, including all Headquarters buildings—over which the state of California now maintained control.

This was unacceptable to every thinking person in the Church, member and minister alike—so they responded.

As national and local media cameras rolled, a small group of local brethren, including families with small children, refused to vacate the Hall of Administration. They exercised “passive resistance” by participating in round-the-clock hymn singing and fellowship. This put the authorities in a bind: Obey the court order and handcuff smiling, clean-cut families, with babies, in front of news cameras—or leave the worshippers alone.

Deciding it was better not to arrest families before live television, police officials chose to let the situation resolve itself, and vacated the premises.

Unexpected Phone Call

Meanwhile, Mr. Pack received a phone call from a local newspaper reporter. Introducing himself as a representative of the *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, he said the state of California had imposed a court-ordered receivership against the Worldwide Church of God. The journalist wanted a response from the Church's local minister.

Incredulous, Mr. Pack asked, "What?" This was the first time he heard about the receivership.

Since it was Thursday, the reporter needed a story, and more importantly a quote for Friday morning's edition. He asked Mr. Pack, "What is your response to what has happened in the Church?"

Thoughts raced through the minister's mind: *They are going to raid the Headquarters of God's Church? They cannot do that. They will fail. God will defeat them. Don't be worried.*

"I choose to laugh at that," he answered.

Not having public relations in mind, his immediate reaction was one of faith. The field pastor firmly believed God would lead Mr. Armstrong and the Church through this trial. Yet Mr. Pack readily admits that he did not yet fully understand the magnitude of the problem, therefore his response reflected more zeal than wisdom.

The *Democrat & Chronicle* was part of the Gannett News Service, which owned 78 daily newspapers in 33 states and Guam, as well as a national news service, seven television and 14 radio stations, outdoor advertising plants in the United States and Canada, 21 weekly newspapers, and Louis Harris & Associates, a research firm. Gannett's world headquarters was in Rochester. No minister could have

known how important his response would be to a local reporter representing such an entity. He could not understand that he was talking to a representative of the largest communication conglomerate in the world. (The Supreme Court later broke it up as being an illegal monopoly.)

The Morning Paper!

The next morning, Mr. Pack's comment became the headline in dozens of Gannett-owned newspapers across the United States! He discovered (too late) that he had been ambushed by a journalist seeking a sensational headline. Of course, the rest of the article was biased and quoted local enemies of the Church happy to offer "insight" that the paper sought. An accompanying editorial, which took Mr. Pack's quote out of context, stated it was a "sad day" when a minister of a church chooses to "laugh" at such a calamity. In the pre-Internet age when news took longer to traverse the nation—many of God's people first learned about the crisis through Mr. Pack's comment in their newspaper.

Adding to the confusion, Gannett owned the Tucson newspaper that Mr. Armstrong received each morning! Naturally, Mr. Pack was concerned about how the Pastor General would react to his inexperienced mistake.

He later learned, to his relief, that Mr. Armstrong understood the context of the quote as Mr. Pack had intended it.

Important Newspaper Interview

Due to the Church's influence worldwide and the magnitude of the receivership story, the Rochester reporter called the next day to arrange a follow-up interview. Mr. Pack agreed to meet the following Friday at a downtown restaurant for lunch. However, realizing he needed to be more careful in dealing with reporters, he called the Church's chief legal counsel for some coaching.

When Friday came, Mr. Pack met the journalist for lunch and found him to be friendly, respectful—and full of questions. However, this experience became one of many in which Mr. Pack learned that friendliness does not mean one has your best interests in mind.

As the interview continued, a news crew unexpectedly arrived and set up lights, cameras and equipment. The reporter quickly explained he was planning a special in-depth look at the Worldwide Church of God, with a photo spread to appear in the Sunday paper, two days away. He also wanted to attend services the following day to complete his research.

Mr. Pack gave the reporter his approval to attend.

Now a reporter was coming to Church, and the congregation had not been informed. To prepare the brethren, Mr. Pack immediately called the greeting crew and local leaders, who then called dozens of brethren to ensure everyone was ready for a reporter among them. There was no need to instruct the brethren to be warm and friendly. That would be automatic. No one needed to “put on a show.”

Knowing the reporter’s visit would reflect either positively or negatively on the Church, Mr. Pack was determined that the journalist receive an accurate picture of God’s Church and what its membership believed.

This was all-important.

Reporter at Services

The next morning, the reporter arrived well before services, and brought with him, unannounced—a cameraman.

Mr. Pack nicely, but firmly, said, “We are glad you are here, but cameras cannot enter the room. This is a Church service. We cannot invite a circus atmosphere.”

The reporter complied and the camera remained outside. He went on to engage the brethren at length, and then exited the hall midway through services. A special sermon had

been prepared on the positive aspects of Christianity and God's way of life.

Mr. Pack wondered why the reporter departed so abruptly. The waiting now began in earnest. The minister was anxious for Sunday morning to arrive since it was expected that the follow-up article would appear all across the nation throughout Gannett's newspaper chain. An in-depth look at the Worldwide Church of God by the world's largest communications conglomerate would be a major public relations event. *How accurate would it be? How biased would the reporter be? What would be the reception by members and non-members around the world? Would the Church be further injured?*

High Anxiety

Mr. Pack prayed at length and awaited the morning paper. Though he set his alarm for 6:00 a.m., knowing the paperboy arrived at that hour every Sunday, anxiety woke up the field pastor well before the alarm rang.

When the paper finally arrived, he tore it open, prepared for the worst. Mr. Pack paged through the newspaper several times, literally cover to cover, but could not locate the story, not even a passing reference to the Church. Yet the reporter had clearly stated his plan to run a full spread—*where was it?*

Still having the reporter's home phone number, Mr. Pack waited a while and then called him to find out what had happened.

The journalist said he had changed his mind and had decided not to run the story—any story! Mr. Pack pressed for his reasons. After all, the man had gone through so much effort to get a news story.

"I realized when I walked into your congregation that I could not write the article," he said. "I saw all of those happy, friendly people and changed my mind."

“Why?” the minister asked.

The answer came. “I went into this assignment with a preconceived notion about your organization—that it was a cult. Because of that, I thought I had a great story and was planning to write a very strong article against the Church—an entire one-page spread. I was caught off guard. The people were so sincere and friendly. I just did not have the heart to do it.”

The news reporter had not expected to see such unity of purpose and happiness in the brethren—especially in a Church reputed to burden its members with unnecessary rules and financial demands.

Like Nothing Else

The minister hung up the phone, left baffled by the reporter’s candidness. He then realized the number of lessons he had gleaned from that weekend.

In retrospect, Mr. Pack vividly recounted the man’s words many years later:

“He said he was in effect ‘going to rip the Church to pieces.’ First, we had witnessed divine protection firsthand. I knew that. God had moved in a miraculous way to prevent His Church from being attacked on a grand scale. Second, I had learned valuable lessons about how *not* to handle the news media in the future. I would never forget what had happened.

“Finally, of course, the greeting teams had truly paid off, with the *whole congregation* having demonstrated outgoing concern. The brethren had taken to heart the oft-repeated Church saying, ‘Your example may be the only Bible most people will ever read.’

“I was just thrilled. God’s people had wonderfully acquitted themselves. Their warmth and friendliness had *shown*, and their lights had *shone*! They could not

know how much damage to the Church that just a little of the right example had averted.

“I could not wait to tell them what they had done the next week at services.”

Conversations— Mr. Armstrong Redirects the Church

As brethren in Pasadena continued to resist the court-appointed receivership, Mr. Armstrong was forced to confront the unwarranted crisis from hundreds of miles away in Arizona.

But his absence turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

Fighting from Tucson

In the face of the California judicial system, Mr. Armstrong had to declare himself a legal corporate entity—a “corporate sole.” He wrote the Church membership more than once, urging the brethren to stand firmly against the court-appointed receiver.

“Don’t give him God’s tithes. Dry him up. He’s a thief. Send your tithes to me personally and the receiver will have to go away. He’s paying himself \$150 an hour and his assistant \$100 an hour directly out of *God’s tithes*. This cigar-chomping, court appointed *DEceiver*, not *REceiver*, thinks he can control the Work of the living God? He will learn that he cannot.”

By residing outside of the state, Mr. Armstrong could “dissolve” the corporation, dismiss all employees and reorganize as a one-man corporation. This permitted him to operate independently from the Worldwide Church of God Corporation and temporarily manage God’s Work from Arizona—effectively circumventing the receiver. Tithes went to Arizona.

Mr. Armstrong had instructed the leaders in Pasadena to keep the Hall of Administration locked and to hold services around the clock if necessary. “Make them break in and arrest women and little children if they must!”, he instructed.

The faculty and staff followed his instruction, and continued to reside in the lobby of the Administration building with their families, singing hymns before the national media.

From the Inside

As events unfolded, Mr. Armstrong talked at length with Mr. Pack—there were conversations that included poignant moments.

The Pastor General was animated, “If they want to arrest an 86-year-old man and throw him in prison then they can come get me! If they want to throw little bit ‘a [*sic*] children into prison they can do it. *But I will not send them God’s tithes!* Maybe God will not really consider me an apostle until I spend time in prison like the other apostles. *I fear God more than the Attorney General of California!*” Such was his resolve.

Mr. Armstrong’s powerful personal example helped illustrate how much one must be willing to sacrifice for the truth of God.

Mr. Pack asked himself, in light of Mr. Armstrong’s example, *How far does God require us to go for His truth?* The answer became clear: True Christians and ministers must be

willing to lose *everything*. This would be a powerful, and recurring, theme throughout his ministry.

While the Church struggled battling with the receiver-ship, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Pasadena Star News* repeatedly attacked both it and Mr. Armstrong in scathing editorials.

Meanwhile, right out of the gate, the Director of Church Administration in effect encouraged support of the receiver's actions. He offered little resistance, tacitly implying there might be truth to the accusations against Mr. Armstrong. The other liberal administrators agreed, all while insisting to the ministry and faculty that they supported the Pastor General and were not involved with the court action.

Quietly, the CAD Director and the evangelist who had led the '74 rebellion (the Church's business manager) conference-called Mr. Armstrong, urging him to cooperate with the receiver.

Mr. Armstrong was furious, and responded on the spot. Stunned that they would even suggest such passive inaction, the Pastor General fired and disfellowshipped both men, plus two others in their circle.

Soon after, Mr. Pack called Mr. Armstrong and received a recap of the intense conversation that had occurred. The warnings about these men and others had crystallized in Mr. Armstrong's mind. Through this act of now overt betrayal, he realized which men were only loyal to *personal* interests.

He thought aloud to Mr. Pack. "Cooperating with the receiver is unthinkable if it means handing over God's tithes and control of His Church." The senior-most leader understood tithes belonged to God—and that His servants are duty bound to protect them at all costs.

"Dave, we had a man in charge of the treasury who doesn't even believe tithing is a law!" he thundered into the phone. "I fired him, that's what I did! What would you do if you found the Director of the Business Office doesn't be-

lieve in tithing? You would fire him! And that's what I did. They were yelling at me on the phone, and in rebellion—so I fired them.”

“Now that they are gone,” he continued, “you do not have to worry about being fired anymore.”

Obviously, this was a conversation, with its details, that Mr. Pack would never forget.

Refusal to Respond to Accusers

Over time, Mr. Pack learned how personally difficult these traumatic events had been for Mr. Armstrong. But the stress of this great trial had been only a small portion of such challenges for him, when coupled with personal tragedy in his life.

In the late 1950s, Mr. Armstrong lost his eldest son, Dick, in a tragic car accident. And now, forced to disfellowship his grandson's step-father, the man who had married his son's widow, Mr. Armstrong was cut off from his grandson—the only child of his deceased son—and his beloved former daughter-in-law.

Loma D. Armstrong, his wife of nearly 50 years, died in 1967. He had also buried his mother (in the faith) in 1961, and seen both daughters leave the Church in the 1950s.

Then of course Mr. Armstrong had disfellowshipped his only surviving son, Garner Ted, which meant the end of his relationship with Garner Ted's three sons, whom the aging apostle had watched grow up.

“I taught Ted's three children to swim when I was on the Physical Education faculty and they were students at Imperial schools. To some degree, I also watched these boys grow up. It was difficult knowing that Mr. Armstrong could not finish enjoying their growing up period, and beyond.”

Mr. Pack observed the Church's leader suffer some of this, in addition to enduring unending personal attacks from every quarter, yet the Pastor General remained unwavering for the truth. The lesson of this example of solitary endurance was etched into Mr. Pack's mind.

Leadership can be terribly lonely!

Mr. Armstrong also expressed in their phone conversations how incredulous he was at some of the outrageous rumors about himself personally, once saying, "Can you believe it? There are people who think I have fathered illegitimate children all over South America and that I quietly support them from secret bank accounts." There were a number of other things said about him that he related, making this only the tip of the iceberg of such sordid rumors.

At the time, Mr. Pack did not fully understand why Mr. Armstrong related some of these things to him. He remembered feeling anger and wanting Mr. Armstrong to "set the record straight" about malicious lies.

But Mr. Armstrong decided early in his ministry never to answer accusers, and reiterated the importance of this principle.

"You just have to stay away from those stories," the Pastor General told him. "Denying them will only serve to resurrect things that were never true."

Years Later

Many years of similar painful experience with outrageous false accusations by "inventors of evil things" (Rom. 1:30) would require Mr. Pack to write the following in his book *Should Accusers Be Answered?*, about one year after the beginning of The Restored Church of God:

"Christ described our time as the age of hatred, betrayal, offense and lawlessness (Matt. 24:10-12).

Many today use and promote innuendo, rumors, outright lies and other forms of deception to confuse and divide God's people, and defeat their confidence in Christ's ability to govern His Church. Christ said, 'If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you!'

"This means attacks, sometimes vicious, are a fact of life for God's people, especially its leaders. Should accusers be answered? What spirit motivates them? Did Jesus answer His accusers? Mr. Armstrong was attacked throughout his ministry. Did he answer accusers? What does God's Word say?

"When one is accused, only two options exist: either respond to the charges—usually triggering an ongoing, and sometimes endless, back-and-forth exchange, accomplishing nothing, or sit silent and passive—which will inevitably be considered either arrogance and proof of guilt, or cavalier and uncaring. So the issue becomes a kind of catch-22, with both options, humanly speaking, carrying big liabilities for the accused. The victim usually cannot win.

"Anyone who has ever been falsely accused can understand the tremendous temptation to 'set the record straight'—to jump in and bat down falsehoods with the real facts. No one likes to be attacked or accused. I confess that, humanly, there have been times when I was sorely tempted to write a long answer refuting a false accusation. There have also been times when I yielded to this temptation and answered my accusers. It rarely did any good.

"The apostle Paul did not answer his accusers. He recognized that nothing in God's Word justifies explanations being given to counter persecution and accusations. A Christian's 'answer' to attacks is to continue steadfastly holding to—'continuing in'—God's truth.

“I have been forced to accept that many false and outrageous rumors have circulated about me since the beginning of The Restored Church of God, and really long before. Partly as a result, a variety of people have repeatedly ‘prophesied’—and some actively sought—our destruction virtually since our inception. These rumors are ridiculous and some are actually the very opposite of the truth.

“If one were to try to address every accusation, the process would be endless. After each answer had been given, in the end, it would have done no real good. After all, would you not expect that people who invent outrageous charges would also invent clever denials of their victim’s explanations?

“If I took the time to answer every charge against me, from now until Jesus Christ returns, Satan will have effectively rendered me useless as God’s tool, no longer able to serve His people—tied up in an endless process accomplishing very little. But I have learned that if I were able to satisfy such people, who may leave or reject Restored if not given an ‘adequate explanation,’ then if they *did* receive such an explanation, it would probably only last until the next attack against me or Restored, requiring yet another ‘adequate explanation.’ Besides, doing this is physically and emotionally exhausting, and consumes great amounts of time.

“How do I feel when falsely accused—or when others of our ministers experience this? Jesus taught that ‘blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets...’ (Matt. 5:11-12).

“I have had to learn over the years to feel ‘blessed’ and to ‘rejoice,’ and to be ‘exceeding glad’ in the face

of slander and accusation. Why? Because I have had to make many unpopular decisions throughout my ministry. As a result, ‘all manner of evil’ charges have been said against me falsely, effectively forcing me to focus on my reward! I have taught others to do the same. Courageous leaders must always do what is right, not what is popular!

“What might happen if I answered every charge or accusation leveled at me or Restored? The answer is what has happened when people attempt to do this—it generates an even more vicious response from the accuser. I have watched people, whom I knew and loved dearly, literally explode with venom, in ways that were stunning!

“Anyone who answers silly accusations is unwise, because this will usually incite the accuser to invent worse charges. I have learned that to even gently explain the innocence of simple events occurring in this age that were distorted to create an accusation, can cause even more poison to pour from those who brought their false version of what probably never happened at all, or happened very differently from the way they related it. What was the point after this wasted exchange? What would be learned other than nothing good can come of this?”

This biography reveals only the tiniest few of the many false accusations that Mr. Pack would have to endure.

Misunderstood Passion

Mr. Armstrong was a man who openly expressed his emotions, all the time and in all flavors. People who did not know him often mistook his fervor for the Work as wrath, just as, in certain ways, the same charge is brought against Mr. Pack, who said this:

“People think I have a temper because I become animated about subjects I care deeply about. This is described as anger. But compared to Mr. Armstrong, I am a pussycat. He could at times be volcanic, not toward people, but situations. That’s just the way he was.

“Mr. Armstrong was in battle mode for the truth nonstop, while being as soft as cotton personally in the sense that he was kind, fatherly and polite. He could sit and talk to children in a very gentle way. I saw him do this with my children on two occasions, and it made him memorable in their young minds. On the other hand, regarding the truth, you just never crossed him. He was a man absolutely ‘set for the defense of the gospel.’”

There were many times when both men discussed difficult situations, subjects which could involve righteous indignation. But examples of “righteous indignation” are found throughout the Bible. Leaders through whom God works are not “wallflowers” or “shrinking violets.”

New CAD Director

With Mr. Armstrong in full control, he began to reorganize Headquarters. But there were still some close to him who were clearly not converted minds.

During that time—as in every age—God permits tares to remain among the wheat to provide a constant winnowing process to test the Church (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43; I Cor. 11:18-19). The difficulty of the task of getting God’s people back on track in doctrine, tradition and conduct—and zeal for the Work—should have served as its own warning and reminder that liberals and enemies could enter the Church at any time. These years became a forecast that dangerous times would come again. Of course, most paid little attention and, forgetting the past, they doomed themselves to repeat it.

Mr. Armstrong called for a ministerial conference in Tucson in early 1979. It was the largest of its kind ever held, with the entire ministry present. The Pastor General informed those present that he would continue to lead the Church and Work from Tucson. In addition, he planned to deliver powerful sermons with the purpose of re-establishing structure, doctrinal unity and, above all, the proper functioning of God's government in the Church.

But first he had needed a new Church Administration Director.

About two weeks prior to the conference, Mr. Armstrong called Mr. Pack to discuss the state of the ministry and who should lead it. Mr. Armstrong bluntly asked for his opinion: "I have to find a new leader of the ministry. Who do you think it should be?"

Mr. Pack offered a suggestion, one he would *terribly* regret. In what he later considered as one of his greatest errors in judgment, he answered, "Mr. Armstrong, I think you ought to pick Roderick Meredith."

"Really?" Mr. Armstrong said, surprised. "We have had a great deal of trouble with him in the past. He has been self-righteous and difficult to work with. Do you really think the men respect him?"

"I think they could, Mr. Armstrong. I think he could be the type of man you want at a time like this. He will be loyal to you."

Mr. Armstrong said, "Since you have mentioned him before, I was already thinking this way, but I just wanted to see whether you still felt the same. I am going to go ahead and select him."

"Never Compromise"

As the conference drew near, Mr. Armstrong expressed his disappointment that it had been some time since he had seen the Packs.

Mr. Pack was equally disappointed: “It’s too bad I won’t be able to see you before the conference.”

To his surprise, Mr. Armstrong said, “Couldn’t you just come for a short visit? Why don’t you just call Church Administration and change your flight so you can come to Tucson early and meet with me privately?”

Pleased that he would get to see Mr. Armstrong again, he called Church Administration to arrange the flight.

Mr. Meredith, the newly appointed CAD Director, was thrilled. He sought to carefully prep Mr. Pack, telling him, “Now, Dave, be careful when talking to Mr. Armstrong. Be sure to tell him I am loyal.”

Mr. and Mrs. Pack arrived in Arizona several days before the conference. The meeting between the Pastor General and the field minister covered numerous subjects, including the planning of the Church, the newspaper interviews in Rochester, new ministers and Church leaders, events surrounding Garner Ted, and the men who had recently been disfellowshipped.

Mr. Armstrong particularly enjoyed showing the Packs his pet ferrets in the backyard.

The most important thought on Mr. Armstrong’s mind was the possibility that there were still liberal ministers in the Church. He knew they offered the most dangerous threat to God’s people.

The afternoon ended with a moment that Mr. Pack could never forget. As the elderly apostle rose shakily from his chair, he pointed his finger to Mr. Pack’s chest, and said, “Dave, you will *never* teach anything but the truth, will you? You will *never* teach these false doctrines, will you?”

“No, sir,” Mr. Pack promised. “I will not.” He later said this of this conversation:

“I had not the faintest idea that I would some day have to keep, and demonstrate, this promise in the most profound way. I knew Mr. Armstrong was speaking

from the crisis of the moment. I am sure that he also thought I would never have to keep my word in the way that I ultimately had to.”

Mr. Pack to Be “Superintendent of Something”

The next evening, Mr. Pack was called to a planning meeting with Mr. Meredith and another man, and was asked for a report of his meeting with Mr. Armstrong.

The subject of the United States ministry arose. “You have to realize, men, for years there has been nothing but raw sewage flowing from Pasadena,” Mr. Pack said. “This has left half the field ministry in rotten condition.”

Most were not accustomed to hearing powerful and direct indictments of those who had clearly been deceivers.

After Mr. Pack’s blunt assessment, Mr. Meredith said, “Dave, because of your loyal support, in a year or two, you will become a district superintendent, certainly ‘of something.’ But right now you are a junior preaching elder.”

Of course, the latter statement was true; the Rochester-Syracuse pastor had only been a full minister for about 19 months. Mr. Pack recounted:

“I wasn’t ready to be superintendent of anything. I simply wanted to give sound counsel and honest advice. I was not looking for political reward. My only aim was to help in the middle of a crisis. Yet here I was being offered a reward—which almost felt like a bribe when all I was doing was making known that there were terribly liberal ministers out there who had deeply bought into the Systematic Theology Project (STP). This was the giant folder of doctrine that Ted Armstrong and his team, and sadly my best friend, had crafted behind Mr. Armstrong’s back. Of course, Mr. Armstrong required every man in the ministry to bring his copy to the conference to

be turned in so they could all be disposed of at the same time.”

The 60 Minutes Fiasco

Three months later, in mid-April 1979, Mr. Armstrong’s chief legal counsel was interviewed on the popular *CBS* television news program *60 Minutes*.

At a point, after a heated argument with reporter Mike Wallace, the man stormed off the set, warning before the camera, “You’re on my list!”

Mr. Pack was far from the only minister who was terribly disturbed by what had happened on national television. A month later, at a regional youth track meet in Hershey, Pennsylvania, three field pastors vented their frustrations to him.

“If Mr. Armstrong doesn’t do something about this man, the Church will be destroyed,” they said with one voice. “You’ve got to say something.” Of course, many other ministers felt the same, but these three actually urged Mr. Pack to speak up to Mr. Armstrong. Their request was formal.

Convinced he had a duty to apprise Mr. Armstrong of the damage being done by the Church’s attorney, Mr. Pack called the Pastor General the next day.

“Mr. Armstrong, we have a major problem brewing with [name],” he warned.

Mr. Armstrong became angry. (He had been satisfied with the interview, not knowing he had been given an *edited version* of the program! He had no idea that all of America had witnessed a representative of the Church engage in an emotional outburst and seem to threaten a prominent journalist.)

“Dave, you just have to understand that he has a temper,” Mr. Armstrong said, “and when he shows it to me or raises his voice to me, he always regrets it and apologizes. You need to extend him the milk of human kindness.”

Unsure of how to get his point across, and very much now on the “hot seat,” Mr. Pack simply stated, “Mr. Armstrong, I just don’t understand how he is allowed to scream at you. People know that he does this. I would never dream of even talking back, let alone raising my voice at Christ’s apostle.”

His words stopped Mr. Armstrong in his tracks.

“You’re right!” the Pastor General said with some volume as he made an instant 180-degree turn in thinking. “If he ever screams at me again, it will be the last time!”

Mr. Armstrong’s perspective was the same as most others. He had grown accustomed to things a certain way. However, when someone presented him with the reality of the situation, he realized, “That’s right...That can’t happen. What is being tolerated here?”

“This was another time when Mr. Armstrong became upset with me, when I asked him about his attorney. I think the first time was when I asked him about an evangelist whom he had to disfellowship in August of 1979. (The story follows after the next subhead.) Mr. Armstrong got very upset at me because I even just suggested that this top minister had God’s Spirit. He thundered at me that I was the only person who had defended this man and expressed this, and that no one else had anything good to say about the man.

“The third time would be an incident in Buffalo regarding the questions about Mr. Tkach being in charge. This is described later in the book.”

“Courage,” Then Cowardice

After Mr. Pack had carefully explained the concerns of the three ministers at the track meet, Mr. Armstrong did agree to speak with the men.

“You get those men to call me,” he said. “I will talk with them. I want to hear personally what is going on in the field.”

Mr. Pack asked, “May I give them your phone number?”

“Yes, I will take their calls.”

Immediately Mr. Pack called each of the men, one after another. Despite claiming just one day earlier to want action taken, all three refused to call Mr. Armstrong, too afraid of what could happen to themselves if it backfired.

Mr. Pack was forced to phone Mr. Armstrong, with egg on his face.

“I’m sorry to report to you that they were all too afraid to call,” he said. “They fear retaliation from [name].”

Mr. Pack learned another of what he would call one of the greatest lessons of his life: *how cowardly ministers would not stand on principle and righteousness*. Many would fuss and complain about matters, as long as someone else took action—“You do it!” Almost all are concerned with preserving *paychecks* than preserving *truth* and *what is right*.

“Few incidents affected me as did this one. To watch three such hypocritical and cowardly reactions from men who were full of opinion just 24 hours earlier was shocking to witness. Professing concern for the flock, and how it was being injured by the man on *60 Minutes*, not one of them had the guts to call Mr. Armstrong even when I told them he was eager to speak with them, and that I had paved the way for them. All they had to do was dial the number and report what I had already told Mr. Armstrong they were going to say. I don’t have to tell you where my respect for these ‘men’ now stood.

“What would later make this more difficult is that one of these men was one of my best friends, yet he would go on to betray me to Mr. Tkach six years later.

Another of these would become my boss in 1986 in New York City for three and a half years. The third was another close friend who almost never spoke to me again.”

Mr. Meredith Replaced

In August, Mr. Armstrong removed and disfellowshipped the CAD Director for several reasons—the chief of which was disloyalty and sowing discord almost exactly as the man he had replaced seven months earlier.

“Virtually every evangelist—I know of not one exception—who was promoted to the office of Director of Church Administration ‘flew away with himself,’ eventually abusing the authority that came with directing the ministry. Over time, each of these men forgot that it was Mr. Armstrong, the leader whom Jesus Christ had appointed to be His apostle—remember, his title was *Pastor* General—who was the true Director of Church Administration, under Christ.

“I learned that all the men in the second highest office, but a few others also did this, fell into what I called the ‘Absalom syndrome.’ The man that Mr. Armstrong disfellowshipped in 1979 was far and away the worst in this sense, having the ultimate ‘Oh, that I were judge in Israel’ mindset and approach.”

After years of having to replace director after director after director, Mr. Armstrong decided in August 1979 not to permit another evangelist to hold this position. Instead, he appointed Joseph Tkach, a preaching elder who had never pastored a congregation, to work with the ministry. The Pastor General also changed the position of “Director” to “Coordinator” and the name of “Church Administration” became “Ministerial Services” (MS).

Ordination as a Reward

Along with other mistakes in the liberal years, Church leaders had instituted an unwise practice: raising certain men in rank merely because of their long years of service. Often, a man was promoted to offer him encouragement rather than because he had proven, by his fruit, that he had qualified to hold a higher office in Christ's ministry. Mr. Armstrong never wanted such promotions to occur in God's Church, yet it happened anyway.

When the receivership struck, the misuse of promotion occurred again, when some men who were considered "loyal" were given "battlefield promotions" in the heat of the crisis. This was regardless of their qualifications—which were sometimes almost no qualification at all.

Thus was the case with Joseph Tkach. His physical service of organizing and leading hymns in defiance of California's court order had strangely lionized him as a "powerful defender of the faith." Yet the facts are that he had done almost nothing else in a career that was in fact noted for its lack of illustrious behavior.

It was the Church's attorney who had recommended Mr. Tkach to coordinate the newly named Ministerial Services, believing he had a better chance of controlling a poorly educated low-level minister than he would an evangelist who would likely have at least some experience and ability. Although the attorney would soon depart from the Church, most of the unconverted leaders that he had pushed before Mr. Armstrong would remain.

The new appointee to coordinate Ministerial Services would prove to be a turning point in both Church history and prophecy. Of course, others with this man did go on to exercise power over the Church and its teachings after the elderly apostle's death. But even before Mr. Armstrong's death, it can be seen looking back that God's will was being

carried out on the way to a great trial he wanted every one of His people to undergo.

With the reorganization of the ministry, and the Church once again powerfully preaching the gospel around the world, it appeared that the WCG was entering an unprecedented time of growth.

But, all through 1979 and 1980, unbeknownst to Mr. Armstrong, there were still many ministers who did not have their hearts in the Work. It would soon be evident that many *never* had a real understanding of the truth.

Health Problems— Assuming Buffalo

During the Church's reorganization in mid-1979, Mr. Pack began to experience a trial that few people knew of at the time: he suddenly developed degenerative rheumatoid arthritis in his shoulders, one of the most severe forms of this disease.

Almost 10 years after his rigorous swimming and training schedule had ended, Mr. Pack's body began to show the stress it had endured for years.

He had long valued the importance of exercise and stayed physically active, along with his family. To stay in shape, reduce stress and promote cardiovascular health, Mr. Pack played competitive racquetball, as well as basketball and softball, and on occasion golfed. He also diligently weight trained.

One day while weight-lifting at the local YMCA, the minister felt pain shoot through the joint in his shoulder. Within days, the throbbing spread to the other shoulder. He could no longer lift weights without debilitating pain. Soon the pain was also noticeable even without activity.

Unsure of how to proceed, Mr. Pack prayed, and counseled with others. Thinking he had somehow injured both

joints in the same way, he spent months resting his shoulders, without results.

By October, after Mr. Pack had exhausted other options, a renowned orthopedic surgeon diagnosed the problem: Though just 30 years old, Mr. Pack had “old” shoulder joints, or “swimmer’s shoulder,” similar to what football quarterbacks develop from long careers of throwing a ball. The very repetitive motion of swimming compressed the Acromial Clavicular (AC) joint, causing its degeneration. The surgeon further explained that the damage often does not manifest itself for years. Strangely, it can even lead to the systemic condition that is rheumatoid arthritis.

Mr. Pack thought, *Wow! I don’t even want to think about how many hundreds of thousands, probable millions of individual strokes I took over the years, crunching (during the reaching motion of a swimmer) the AC joint every time!*

The physician offered three options. First, surgery to resection the ends of the clavicle bone in each shoulder.

The second was to start taking eight to 12 aspirin a day, and slowly increase this number for the rest of his life. Mr. Pack was told this probably would eventually seriously affect or even destroy his stomach.

The last option was endure the pain.

Mr. Pack said, “No, thank you. None of the above,” and left the hospital.

While placing his faith in God’s ability to heal, Mr. Pack felt a duty to learn what health laws might apply. He turned to his parents for advice, hoping they could help him understand the cause or causes of arthritis.

Life-changing Impact

In December 1972, Ran and Jane Pack had made a decision that changed their lives: they decided to move to North Carolina and open a natural food store with the inheritance Jane received upon her mother’s death earlier that year.

Some 25 years earlier, in the late 1940s, Mr. Pack's maternal grandfather, Ralph Crowl, had earned a considerable amount of money selling calves during the four years of his company's operation. It was more than enough to settle all his tax debts, as well as invest in a sizeable piece of property in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. There he meticulously planned his next business project: a massive development/vacation destination that would include five hotels, a shopping center with 40 to 50 shops, a botanical garden, the world's largest outdoor amusement park, and an enormous outdoor amphitheater. This while he was in his late 60s.

But before he could fully realize his vision, Ralph suffered a stroke and later died. Nevertheless, the land investment had been very profitable. Upon his wife's death eight years later, their three children received sizeable inheritances.

Ran and Jane Pack, who wanted their life to take a new direction, and looking toward their future retirement, climbed in the car and went on a several-week "vacation," searching for a small natural food store to buy somewhere in the Southeastern United States. Jane Pack had recently taken an interest in reading about natural healing through diet and the supplementation of vitamins and herbs. This was becoming a new fledgling industry in America. Now that she and Ran were in the Church, they determined this was a worthy venture.

The couple explored various cities in the south, until settling on Greensboro, in central North Carolina. There they walked into a "hole in the wall" retail natural food store, owned by an elderly man seeking to retire. Ran and Jane struck a deal on the spot. Two months later, they left Ohio and went into business.

Not as health conscious as he should have been, Mr. Pack called his parents and started on a lifelong journey of learning about vitamins, herbs and natural foods. He realized he had permitted certain dietary habits to change in his years after college.

Seeking to understand the nature of debilitating arthritis and alleviate his pain, Mr. Pack talked with his parents. He read several books on arthritis, and then incorporated wholesale changes into his diet.

“I could not believe that I had arthritis at age 30. Like all men this age—particularly those who had had a successful athletic career—I thought I was impervious to such a debilitating disease so early. But I decided to attack the problem like I was entering World War III. I could not read and study enough about a disease that was threatening to change my life—and to some degree had already done this.

“Of course, I would go on to believe that I had actually been wonderfully blessed by this disease. This is because it paved the way toward an entirely new approach to health that has me enjoying just as much energy today, at age 60, as I had at half this age. There were also other wonderful benefits to the lifestyle changes that I made at that time.”

Mr. Pack began by starting each day with a large bowl of freshly cut fruit. He almost completely eliminated sugar from his diet, and also almost completely avoided refined foods by replacing them with whole grains, fruits and vegetables—plus other changes.

This daily routine, along with a short juice fast, caused his arthritis problem to miraculously disappear totally within five weeks, with most of the pain gone within about 10 days. This made Mr. Pack a “believer.” To this day, he follows the same strict dietary practices to ensure that arthritis never returns.

“I learned that a person must do everything within his power to follow the proper biblical principles of healthful living—after all, why would God intervene

if someone is not willing to put forth diligent effort to address the *cause* of the problem, not just the effect?”

Writing for *The Good News Magazine*

In the meantime, an exciting opportunity had arisen: Mr. Pack decided to write an article for *The Good News* magazine! This would be a wonderful way of contributing to the Work and, at the same time, grow in the ability to help people by communicating effectively in print.

In May 1980, his article “We Are Ambassadors for a Foreign Power!” was published. It exhorted God’s people to examine their conduct and stand out as examples in their community. Here is an excerpt:

“Our lives are to exemplify God’s way to this world. We are to represent the order, peace and abundant joy inherent in the spiritual government to which we truly owe our allegiance.”

A Daughter!

Mr. Pack’s sons were now almost five and seven years old. For some years, the Packs could not agree on whether or not to try to have one more child who might be a daughter. For a time, neither felt that a third child was in the picture. Next, for two years, Mrs. Pack did, but Mr. Pack did not. And then, for two more years, Mr. Pack did, while Mrs. Pack had changed her mind. Finally, they agreed to have one more child—but laughingly decided “only if it would be a girl...”

On February 14, 1980, a third child arrived in the Pack household. Finally, a smaller baby, one only 7 lbs. 7 oz. arrived. And it *was* a girl!—Jennifer Lynn Pack.

“We took her home that day and showed her to the boys as we walked into the house. They were sledding

in the yard—but because it was a girl, the five- and seven-year-olds had no interest.

“This did change over the years.”

However, in coming home on a bitter February day in Upstate New York, the baby immediately caught a cold. The congestion quickly got much worse—and then still worse. Mrs. Pack virtually never left the room the child was in for a period of 10 days. The tiny baby would stop breathing over and over again, only to have the mucus suctioned from her nose each time.

“At the moment of our daughter’s birth, we were thrilled, both shouting almost simultaneously ‘It’s a girl!’ This was before the days when people wanted to know the child’s sex before the birth.

“What immediately followed was one of the most exhausting trials that my wife and I had ever been through. Very little sleep for days on top of extreme concern that we were going to lose this little girl that we had waited so long to receive.

“There came a moment when I decided that I had to pray about her health in a different way than before. Thinking of Abraham with Isaac, I decided I had to be willing to tell God that I would lose her—I would give her up. This was one of the toughest moments of my life. It could have happened five minutes ago in my memory. My wife was absolutely exhausted, so I did not tell her my feelings going into this prayer.

“I went upstairs to see her after the prayer and she reported that our daughter had *immediately* begun to improve ‘out of the blue’ during the moments I had been praying. Very quickly she was just fine. We had another normal baby. This was yet another of the many faith-building incidents in our lives. But it would not be long until yet another came over the horizon.”

New—Serious—Problem

Less than two weeks later, on March 9, 1980, and after the pain and physical trial of his arthritic shoulders was gone, another severe and prolonged health trial would arrive to test Mr. Pack's faith—and endurance—and threaten his ability to remain in the full-time ministry.

By now he had resumed an active lifestyle, returned to full energy and was enjoying being in good physical shape.

However, during a basketball tournament in Cleveland, Ohio, Mr. Pack felt a twinge of pain in his heel when it hit the floor upon landing after a rebound. Thinking nothing of it, he continued playing. The pain was gone by the next day.

Over a period of weeks, this pattern would repeat itself after racquetball or basketball. Mr. Pack finally discovered he had what is called a “stone bruise” on the bottom of his left heel. But by the time he learned this, he could no longer put much weight on the heel. For seven months, he limped not putting his left heel on the ground. But this was only the beginning. The 31-year-old field minister next graduated to needing a cane, using one for the next 13 months. Despite icing and wearing padded inserts and heel pads, the pain would not leave.

A determination grew not to let what had become a mysterious ailment put a damper on his ministry. During sermons, he had to improvise by preaching while sitting on a stool.

To limit the pain and reduce inflammation, Mr. Pack got in the daily routine of plunging his left heel into ice-cold water for 30 minutes at a time, until it went completely numb. While this was effective in the short term, it was learned that this prolonged, repetitive icing permanently injured the nerves in the heel, leading to a condition called *tarsal tunnel* syndrome, in which the nerves in the heel area

are damaged in a way that sends fiery pain into the affected area. His pain intensified over the months, seriously affecting his mobility.

Misconduct in Buffalo

In the fall of 1980, at the Feast of Tabernacles in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, a local church elder from a nearby pastorate recounted a story to Mr. Pack. As the details unfolded, the account sounded like a twisted rumor. It could not be true.

The elder described conduct that was completely inappropriate for a minister—or for anyone! The pastor of the Buffalo, New York congregation had been abusing his position of authority beyond what this biography is permitted to divulge. The matter involved a party living in Mr. Pack’s pastorate.

Understanding the appalling misconduct involved, and recognizing the potential legal ramifications, Mr. Pack called the Coordinator of Ministerial Services and gave a full report, informing the leader that he was calling on behalf of two ordained leaders who had sought him out.

When Mr. Pack asked what his next course of action should be, he was told that, due to the gravity of the situation, he should “keep the details to himself and leave it to Headquarters”—and to “stay out of it.”

Mr. Pack repeated the instructions: “I want to be absolutely clear. I am being instructed to leave this completely to you...correct?”

The Coordinator confirmed this, assuring that the matter would be addressed.

In early February 1981, Mr. Pack received a call from the coordinator of Ministerial Services: “[Name, evangelist] is also on the line. We have an anonymous letter explaining more of what is happening since our call last October.”

He read the letter and asked, “Is this true? What is going on?”

“Sir,” Mr. Pack said, “when we spoke several months ago, you told me to stay out of the situation, entirely.”

“Oh, no,” the man replied. “I told you to stay very much involved.”

Wanting to make the matter clear, especially with a witness listening, Mr. Pack said, “Excuse me, but I must correct you. You absolutely directed me, and in no uncertain terms, to ‘stay out of it.’”

The man persisted in his dishonest version of what was said. (This was the first of many such instances, but the worst was yet to come. Such deceit was becoming so repeated and blatant that, by the end of 1981, Mr. Pack had compiled a list of them as a record of this man’s pattern!)

“Let’s just put that behind us,” the Coordinator said. “We have a problem, and you now need to pastor the area.”

Carnal Minds at Headquarters

Shortly after the offending minister was suspended from the Church, the Coordinator phoned Mr. Pack again.

“Mr. Armstrong said the man does not need to tell his wife what happened,” he told the field pastor.

Mr. Pack was surprised, but followed the instructions. However, this created an uncomfortable situation locally.

A month later, Mr. Pack was engaged in a two-hour phone conversation with Mr. Armstrong, who wanted a full report on the progress of the Buffalo pastorate. Mr. Pack gave details of the problems encountered and how they were being addressed.

“Mr. Armstrong took a very keen interest in these kinds of reports from the field. In this particular conversation it tumbled out that the leader of Ministerial Services had lied about Mr. Armstrong’s decision and clear instructions regarding what should happen to the pastor. I recall vividly how, at a point when it became

evident that Mr. Armstrong had not said what the Coordinator had attributed to his lips, he thundered, ‘I NEVER said that!’

“This was perhaps the loudest in volume that I had ever heard Mr. Armstrong. I realized that I had inadvertently stumbled into proving that this leader had been baldly untruthful, in a way that left me caught directly in the middle. I knew that this would get back to the Coordinator—who was acting like our boss. This conversation might have been a contributing reason that I would later be targeted for demotion by this man as soon as Mr. Armstrong would no longer be present to stop it.

“I also knew that if the man in question ever became the Pastor General, the whole Church would be in a crisis unlike anything we could imagine, or had ever experienced before. I began to recognize even in those early days that, without God’s intervention, the Church could in the future actually be led by a man who did not have God’s Spirit. Of course, I hoped that there would simply be another ‘routine change’ in the ‘musical chairs’ game that had developed at the number two position in the Work.”

Buffalo Pastor

The next day, on February 11, 1981, a Wednesday, Mr. Pack assumed the pastoral responsibilities of the Buffalo congregation, while still pastoring his two congregations in Rochester and Syracuse. For the next six months, he handled the responsibilities for three congregations, two of them large, making it at the time the biggest pastorate (in attendance) in the Worldwide Church of God. (Mr. Pack recalled that he averaged exactly 1,584 miles per week in his car for a three-month period soon after.)

Source of Controversy?

Some today assert that Church Administration, and later Ministerial Services, perceived Mr. Pack as a source of controversy in his pastorates, and that there was a necessity to frequently transfer him through the years to alleviate problems he had supposedly created. Had this been the case, and this should be obvious, he would not have been systematically *promoted* in 1976, 1977 and 1981 (and other times later).

On the contrary, he was viewed as a pastor who could reorganize and stabilize injured congregations.

The expanded Rochester/Syracuse/Buffalo pastorate spanned five and a half hours east to west, and three hours north to south, from Dunkirk to beyond Utica, and from the St. Lawrence River (Canadian border) down to Cortland, New York, below Syracuse.

Now pastoring almost 1,100 brethren, the Packs drove almost nonstop to attend three Sabbath services each week, on top of giving Bible studies and directing Spokesman Clubs and youth programs, as well as also making many visits each week. He did have two unordained, but full-time, ministerial assistants to help.

Meanwhile, Mr. Pack continued his battle with tarsal tunnel syndrome, still walking with a cane and preaching from a stool.

All this occurred as the Packs cared for their now one-, six- and eight-year-old children.

Every Sabbath, Mr. Pack would preach to each of his three congregations, beginning Friday night at 7:00 p.m. in Syracuse. While not ideal to hold services on Friday evenings, this had been done before, and it did provide a temporary solution. The alternative was to neglect the smaller Syracuse congregation.

The Packs would then return home on Friday evening as late as midnight. The next day, they would have services in Rochester at 10:00 a.m. and in Buffalo at 2:30 p.m.

Mrs. Pack and the children still never missed a service during those months. In retrospect, Mr. Pack summed up the workload:

“This schedule seems hard or even impossible to many, but ministers had to work much harder back then. Today, most would no longer even consider doing this, nor are they asked to. All one has to do is look at the tiny numbers of people and the geography that pastors today administer in the splinters. But I had no choice—it had to be done.”

Mr. Pack continued struggling with his heel. The pain eventually required the use of special foam pads in his shoes, which ensured that the bottom of the bone on his left heel would never contact the sole of the shoe. But the imbalance created by wearing these pads gradually caused additional stress and problems in different areas of his body, which would only later be understood. The need for crutches came in late 1981, with this need to last for another over four months.

Another Good News Article?

Several documents paint a picture of Mr. Pack's thinking doctrinally, his relationship with Mr. Armstrong, the condition of his pastorate, and what the Church was looking like well into the "back on track" years.

First, about 10 months had passed since Mr. Pack had written his first article in *The Good News*. On March 9, 1981, a letter arrived from the Editorial Services Managing Editor Dexter Faulkner thanking him and requesting that he write again. Mr. Armstrong had apparently mentioned that he liked Mr. Pack's style and wanted him writing more:

Mr. Pack,

Again, I feel compelled to write a note of thanks to you for your continued support of the Work's publications. I know personally that Mr. Herbert Armstrong appreciates the contributions you have made toward making the magazines come alive with valuable and timely articles. As managing editor it is a pleasure to work with such a dedicated team member.

Attached is an article published by the Royal Bank of Canada that I plan to make required reading for my magazine production class. I feel it may be worthy of a few moments of your time.

Please continue to keep up the good work.

Warm Regards, Dexter

Mr. Faulkner's letter speaks of "contributions" and "magazines," plural, because Mr. Pack was occasionally involved in suggesting articles that would be written by others. For instance, he never wrote for *The Plain Truth*.

It would be over two and a half more years before Mr. Pack wrote another article, this time titled "Make This Your Best Feast Ever!" He addressed 12 points of spiritual preparation for the fall Festival, including three things to do at the Feast of Tabernacles, three things not to do, three attitudes to have, and three attitudes not to have.

"The only other article in my memory that I went on to write was basic. I encouraged brethren attending the Feast to fellowship widely, to remember to visit the elderly and infirm, to rejoice, and to understand their purpose for being there. I advised them to devise a specific plan for how they would spend their second tithe, as well as reminded them to be aware of their health. I repeated the importance of always maintaining a good attitude at the Feast, even in the face of trials, and the need to look to God through prayer and study."

The article would be important more for what *did not* follow it than any other: the fall of 1983 was the last time Mr. Pack wrote for the WCG.

"This is one of the greatest mistakes that I made in my ministry. I regret not having responded for so long a time to Mr. Armstrong's personal encouragement and request in this regard. It would be a mistake that would come home to roost when circumstances required me to rewrite the entirety of God's truth in books and booklets, beginning in 2000. I would find that getting into the groove of writing would be *unnecessarily* much harder than it needed to be. Yes, I had written one more article long after Mr. Faulkner's

note. And I was also very busy with the size of my area and other things. But I really had no excuse for not having forced myself to find at least some time to have done more.”

Rochester-Syracuse on Track

While Mr. Pack battled personal health problems, the Church as a whole continued to grow and positively transform. This leads to another document from Headquarters.

Pasadena had long required every minister to send a monthly report for each church pastored. As the Church was being put back on track, it became a custom in the *Pastor General's Report* to periodically include certain of the “comments section” of various reports. As an illustration of the spiritual condition of how Mr. Pack saw the Rochester and Syracuse congregations, the following report is included from the March 20, 1981 *Pastor General's Report* (PGR). Ministerial Services made the decision to publish this brief comment as you see it:

SYRACUSE, NY – DAVE PACK: The Syracuse church is absolutely solid as bedrock. There are no major problems at all at this time! A number of young people are eager about attending Ambassador College.

Just two weeks later, Mr. Pack would again be quoted in the PGR.

1981 Refresher

For many years, an annual Ministerial Conference had been held to keep the entire ministry “on the same page” in terms of doctrine, policy, tradition and principles employed. However, it soon became evident that not all ministers were able to attend every Conference. The Church was simply too big.

At the end of 1979, Headquarters instituted a comprehensive “Refresher Program” to replace annual conferences. This ensured that every pastor and wife could visit Pasadena for an intensive two- or three-week coursework about every 12 to 18 months. These provided a kind of miniature Sabbatical that left couples revitalized and inspired. Refreshers also created an opportunity for ministers to socialize with fellow ministers, many of whom they had not seen for years.

In late March 1981, Mr. and Mrs. Pack prepared to travel to Headquarters for their second Ministerial Refresher Course. They were excited to meet with old friends.

However, in light of the Buffalo “phone” incident, Mr. Pack dreaded bumping into the Coordinator of the ministry.

In a strange turn of events, one of the first people Mr. Pack met on campus was Mr. Dean Blackwell, a senior evangelist who had been Mrs. Pack’s pastor in Milwaukee in 1959.

Mr. Pack greeted the minister as the two men walked near the college’s egret sculpture outside Ambassador Auditorium.

“Dave, how are you doing?” Mr. Blackwell began. “I just want you to know I was in the room there when you were talking to Mr. Armstrong last week.”

The young pastor apologized for the longtime minister having had to sit there for *two hours* while he conversed with Mr. Armstrong.

Since Mr. Blackwell had been a close friend of the Coordinator for years, Mr. Pack braced for the worst.

“No, that’s all right. I did not mind,” he responded. “Mr. Armstrong respects and enjoys talking to you. He made that clear. You don’t need to apologize.”

Mr. Blackwell seemed very friendly, however, it was almost certain that the details of the long conversation Mr. Pack shared with Mr. Armstrong had traveled through this man to his boss.

Mr. Pack now realized that his private conversations with Mr. Armstrong could still be monitored by others. This

meant he faced the choice of either sugarcoating future communications or continuing to speak openly to Mr. Armstrong. He chose the latter.

But also, Mr. Pack did appreciate that at least some did not view him as a “bothersome field minister” draining Mr. Armstrong’s time. Here was a longtime evangelist mentioning that he knew Mr. Armstrong valued the young leader’s opinion, and that he also knew Mr. Pack presented unvarnished—and sometimes unpopular—opinions.

Refresher Letter

Mr. Pack wrote to Mr. Armstrong after the March 1981 Refresher. This letter was included in the very next (April 3, 1981) *Pastor General’s Report* to the ministry after the one just quoted above. It is shown here because it reveals what was most important to Mr. Pack in that early period. It also demonstrates that Headquarters knew exactly where Mr. Pack stood and did not mind reporting it to the entire field ministry as had just happened in the previous PGR. This letter speaks volumes:

Dear Mr. Armstrong,

Thank you very much for conceiving the Refresher Program! Shirley and I enjoyed it tremendously. We found it informative, interesting, fun and ‘refreshing’. But it was not a vacation in any sense!

I don’t ever recall a time when I have felt so sure of all of our doctrine and policy. It is reassuring to know that we can speak with confidence the same truths that all the others around us will be speaking as well.

Our only regret would naturally be that you couldn’t be there personally for one lecture with each session (though we understand why it’s impossible). However, please know that the staff that represented you did certainly speak for you.

We feel especially privileged to have attended with ministers in nine different countries from all over the world. After three weeks we all felt like friends of many years and members of one family. We are already looking forward to our next session a year from now!

Thank you again.

Dave and Shirley Pack

The Refresher was music to Mr. Pack's ears as he was trying to put yet another pastorate that was a mess back on track, and doing so now almost three full years after Mr. Armstrong had begun the same process with the whole Church. It was good to see at the Refresher a unity of teaching that could easily be brought to Buffalo.

God Intervenes—Receivership Ends

Eventually, by about January 1981, God provided a final solution to the Receivership through a strange twist of events: Virtually every major denomination of professing Christianity in America jumped to the defense of the Worldwide Church of God, filing *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") briefs. This was not because they agreed with the Church's teachings, but rather they believed such unprecedented state intervention was a violation of the rights and freedom of *all* religious groups.

Prominent religious leaders publicly proclaimed that civil government had no authority to intervene in the private business and decision-making of *any* religious organization. The thought was that if the state of California could intervene in the affairs of the WCG, other states—or even the federal government—could later do the same to other churches. A group of Catholic bishops lobbied against the attorney general—even the Catholic Church backed the WCG as "a friend of the court," in the name of religious "freedom to operate."

Finally, after sustained outrage, the state of California quietly dismissed the lawsuit.

This meant that Mr. Armstrong was back in full legal control of the Worldwide Church of God (of course, he had never given up his spiritual control and authority). The ordeal was finally over.

Treasurer/Attorney Gone

During the Refresher, Mr. Pack received an 11:30 p.m. visit from a breathless minister who had sought him all over campus after attending an open house for the visiting ministry at the treasurer's home.

"I have to talk to you," he said. "While at the open house, I was standing over a coffee table and saw a document on it. The host was standing right beside me and the document was lying in the open. It had to do with Mr. Armstrong and a plan against him. It was a very calculated thing," he continued. "Two or three of us saw it and he *knew* we did. In fact, it appeared that he actually planned that someone would see it. I couldn't discern all the details, but some kind of action will soon be taken against Mr. Armstrong."

Mr. Pack immediately called Mr. Blackwell. The result was that Mr. Pack was called to Mr. Tkach's home at midnight to meet Mr. Blackwell to discuss the matter. Mr. Armstrong was informed that night. Soon after, the treasurer was no longer in the Church.

"Some of these stories are helpful to include in the biography because it reveals the kind of difficult and often politically and spiritually dangerous situations that could suddenly arise. Palace intrigue was a fact of life in Pasadena from the liberal years all the way through Mr. Armstrong's death—and obviously long after. To tell too many of these stories is counterproductive, but to leave all of them out is to exclude key events, some

major, in my learning and growth process, and indeed for all who loved God's truth and Work. It is a balance, however, of how much of this to pass on."

Transferred to Buffalo

Two months later, Mr. Pack was notified that he would be transferred that summer to Buffalo to become its full-time pastor. The interim designation was lifted. Another minister would assume the Rochester-Syracuse pastorate in July.

The move to Buffalo was bittersweet. For four years the Packs had enjoyed living in the same community, in two houses just blocks apart. The family loved the area. Buffalo was only 70 miles west of Rochester, but Mr. Pack knew that his two sons would now experience the trauma of changing schools for the first time and leaving behind friendships in the congregation. At least they would be close by to visit, they thought. (It would be another three years before Mr. Pack was invited back to speak to his old pastorate just *one hour* to the east.)

Living in Rochester had been a rewarding time in Mr. Pack's ministry, and had also been a time to focus on rearing a young family. Though not eager to move, he looked forward to assisting another pastorate that needed "repair"—to take on a new challenge. There was an opportunity to learn more lessons in organizing and structuring, and this time in a very large congregation in a big metropolitan area.

The Packs spent the summer searching for homes, eventually selecting the suburb of Williamsville to buy a house.

"It was during this time that my wife and I for the first time were no longer 'in debt' due to college bills and furniture purchases from the period before we were married. Exactly 10 years after our marriage, in June of 1981, we were completely out of debt. This was a special moment for us. And we were excited

about our new assignment, as well as the options that some new financial freedom would open to us. There would only be two more times this would happen, and the next one would be before going to New York City about four years and three months later.”

As the family prepared to move, it was comforting to know that Mr. Armstrong had returned to reside in Pasadena. With rebellious leaders gone, a single voice of leadership could once again be heard. Many had waited patiently for this.

Buying First Home

The Packs’ frequent transfers had prevented them from buying a home. Having been forced to rent, sometimes several houses in the same assignment, it had long been their dream to purchase. They considered their options, and, rearing three small children, decided there was no time like the present.

With little money down and even less home-buying experience, they purchased a “fixer-upper.” Given that Mr. Pack borrowed much of the down payment from his parents and that mortgage rates were above 15 percent, this “investment” was a disaster waiting to happen.

“We decided to make the worst financial mistake of our lives. Nothing more need be said.”

To make the most of the investment, he started an extensive remodeling project just before winter. Plans included converting the existing garage into an office, siding the home, and constructing a new garage and driveway.

Days turned into weeks, and then months, as the project went well over budget. An interesting element of what happened was that the builder suggested a gigantic crater be dug in the backyard to dump a lot of old concrete. This sounded

like a good idea—until winter became spring, turning the area into a sloppy mess.

The Packs came to realize they would have a hard time making ends meet if God did not deliver them.

Wrong Question!

During this time, Mr. Pack made the decision to ask Mr. Armstrong about Mr. Tkach's specific role. Mr. Tkach had moved to take a higher profile in his office. Having been raised to evangelist, he was in some ways conducting himself no differently than his predecessors. Yet he was not technically in charge of the field ministry.

Against advice, Mr. Pack called Mr. Armstrong to ask what became an infamous question, 'Is Joseph Tkach our boss?'

"This was one of three times that Mr. Armstrong became upset with me—and I must add for good reason. I knew that Joe Tkach was not in charge of the ministry, but it was clear he was acting as if he were. I knew that nobody else would speak up to Mr. Armstrong so, I must admit, against good advice, I decided to ask Mr. Armstrong about this.

"His answer was something like, 'No, he is not your boss, but I would imagine you ought to generally do as he says.' I said, 'Okay, Mr. Armstrong.' He was irritated by the question.

"The next *Pastor General's Report* carried a letter from Mr. Armstrong describing 'one local pastor' who had 'called me at my home to ask whether Mr. Tkach is really "boss" over the field ministry.' Of course, Mr. Tkach found out about this question and now had another reason to resent my relationship with Mr. Armstrong. He may have seen the event as an indication that the relationship was vulnerable."

Congregation Catches Fire

Mr. Pack settled into his new home and began working with the local congregation. Before moving to the area, attendance for services had already skyrocketed. Average attendance in January 1981, the month before Mr. Pack arrived, was 397; by February, attendance averaged 439, followed by 469 in March, 507 in April, and 526 in May. This growth electrified the area and set the pace for the next four and a half years of exciting participation by almost all in virtually everything.

However, some pastors serving in surrounding areas were resentful.

Some ministers worked hard. But most did little or nothing beyond the barest essentials—preaching and appearing at a smattering of activities. The Packs continued the pattern of a *very* busy, active approach.

With the Church almost completely back on track, with Buffalo an exception, Prospective Member (PM) requests were once again pouring in all over the world.

In November 1981, Mr. Armstrong put perhaps the final capstone to the back-on-track process when he reversed the decision by the liberals to permit women to wear cosmetics.

“Mr. Armstrong’s adage that ‘When our ways please God, He blesses us’ had become true throughout the Church. Everything was going wonderfully. The form of government and the doctrines it administered in the Church were thundering to all with ears to hear that *God was behind it!*”

Surveys Reveal Temperature

Although the Church was enjoying an unprecedented wonderful time of growth, Mr. Pack had been noticing since the mid-1970s a disturbing trend: Brethren were beginning to

reflect a lackadaisical attitude toward spiritual growth and development! The same was evident in the ministers. He also saw that weak conditions in the Church could affect his own spiritual life.

In all assignments prior to Buffalo, Mr. Pack employed an unusual tactic to take the spiritual temperature of his areas. The pastor asked each Church member to anonymously answer five questions on a 3 x 5 card and turn it in. He described these in his book *Anoint Your Eyes*:

- “How many days a week do you study the Bible?
- “How many minutes on average do you study?
- “How many days a week do you pray?
- “How many minutes on average do you pray?
- “How often do you fast?

“The answers were revealing—and APPALLING! Invariably, about 20 percent would not even turn in the card, presumably because their answers were not good. (Some in this category were openly offended at being asked to engage in this exercise.) Another 20 percent admitted they spent zero time in all categories! Yet another 20 percent prayed and studied only five to 10 minutes a day—and that was on the days that were not zeros! A fourth 20 percent generally prayed enough, but did not put in enough Bible study, and rarely fasted (other than on the Day of Atonement, a *commanded* fast). The last 20 percent (interestingly, roughly the same number that survived the apostasy after Mr. Armstrong’s death) generally prayed and studied close to 30 minutes most days. However, only about two or three percent of the total group reached or exceeded these numbers *every* day in *both* prayer and study, *and* fasted on a regular basis throughout the year.

“These surveys revealed that most in the Church were headed for big trouble! While no one could envision just how big it would be, I saw a disturbing

lack in the use of the most basic Christian tools—prayer, Bible study, fasting, meditation, and actively exercising God’s Spirit—instruments necessary for producing spiritual growth.”

Buffalo took the survey test. Mr. Pack also monitored what he came to call “The Disappearance of Self-Examination.” He discovered that many people had essentially stopped trying to build godly character now, in preparation for rulership later—the primary reason for being a Christian.

“Performing this survey with many thousands gave me enormous and regular insight into the declining spiritual state of God’s people. On the one hand, the Church was steadily growing. But on the other, these surveys were very dismaying. They were telling quite a different story of what was going on privately in people’s lives. After the survey in each area I would announce the results the next week to get their attention regarding my part in the plan to correct it.”

Learning More from the Inside

During the first months of reorganization in Buffalo, Mr. Pack talked frequently with Mr. Armstrong. They often discussed problems he was wrestling with in Buffalo.

Watching Mr. Armstrong during the “back on track” process helped teach how the same could be done in a local congregation. In turn, Mr. Armstrong received extra insight into attitudes that had grown into the Church during the 70s.

Mr. Armstrong was surprised by the relaxed standards that had permeated the Church. Brethren smoked, dressed badly before God on the Sabbath, rarely came to Bible study, attended Feast sites to which they were not assigned, were less respectful of authority, and so much more. The pervasive politics in Pasadena had also become common in local

congregations. A well-established worldwide grapevine had also done its damage.

“I recall notifying Mr. Armstrong that ministers were now often addressed on a first-name basis. In response, the Pastor General immediately wrote an article for the October 1981 *Good News*. It instructed brethren to show proper respect to the ministry by always addressing them as ‘mister.’ As soon as he finished the article, Mr. Armstrong called and read much of it to me before it was published. He wanted a last-minute opinion.”

The elderly apostle also said he was going to re-establish standards of Sabbath dress following the Feast of Tabernacles. On Friday, October 23, 1981, the Pastor General gave a Bible study in Pasadena about Sabbath dress, based partly on his recent conversations with the new Buffalo pastor.

“Working with Mr. Armstrong during those years cemented certain standards in my mind and provided insight into his thought process. Overall, my role was very minor, but I felt grateful and privileged to participate at all.”

Unable to Continue

In early 1982, Mr. Pack called Mr. Armstrong for advice regarding the persistent pain in his heel, which had also worsened. His physician had suggested a simple surgical procedure that might solve the problem. Mr. Pack was hesitant about surgery, and explained his struggle between faith and surgical intervention.

Knowing that Mr. Armstrong had also undergone certain medical procedures in the past, he asked for an opinion.

The Pastor General saw no problem with a simple repair surgery, stating, “Athletes are getting their knees and feet

operated on all the time to repair injuries. There is no lack of faith involved here.”

Eventually, Mr. Pack had been forced to rent a wheelchair because he could no longer put any weight on his foot without experiencing burning pain. To maneuver through his home, he had to literally crawl everywhere he went—this lasted for exactly 99 days!

Mr. Pack was at his wit’s end. His property was a muddy mess. Financial hardships were escalating. Even a severe case of the flu hit. Physically immobile, he could do nothing but spend time on his knees, praying for deliverance.

By early March, it was impossible to continue as a minister. God would have to intervene.

“As with the arthritis in my shoulders, I feel strongly that each of my physical health problems through the years were part of a humbling process that God was forcing me to undergo. The trials I endured were preparing me for what would be infinitely more difficult times ahead.”

Healed!

One Friday evening, when Mr. Pack was at what he called his “lowest point,” he learned that leaders in the congregation had led all the brethren to collectively pray and fast for God’s intervention. Touched and inspired, Mr. Pack determined that he had to at least stand up and attempt to walk.

The next morning, March 31, 1982, two years and 22 days since the initial injury, he arose from his wheelchair. His left leg no more than half the thickness of the right, Mr. Pack was immediately able to walk with no pain for the first time in over two years.

“As I walked around the house pain-free I simply could not believe it—and all I could do was thank

God. I will also never forget the feeling of how close the ceiling seemed to me. I had been crawling on all fours, using basketball/volleyball pads for my knees, for so long that the ceiling actually looked as though it had dropped by the time I could stand up again.”

With Mr. Pack having been unable to attend services for the last number of weeks, visiting ministers had been standing in for him each week. Now that he had been healed, the pastor was not about to stay home even one more minute.

“I went upstairs, showered, dressed and rushed to services with my family, walking in as the congregation was singing the opening hymn. It was one of the most wonderful moments of my life, and a joy to see so many astonished brethren who could not believe their pastor was back on the very day that they had begun fasting. I liken it to the Acts 12 account, when the brethren were gathered praying for Peter’s release from jail, but then could not believe he was at the door—that what they were fervently praying for could actually happen.

“The next day, Sunday, I walked and worked in my yard for eight full hours. My left leg was very tired, but there was no pain in my left heel.”

The next Sabbath, Mr. Pack delivered a sermon, this time *standing* behind the lectern for the first time in almost two years. His pain never returned. But he did decide to wear from that point on special orthotics he had ordered. They are still worn today because they are so comfortable.

There was still the matter of finishing his home. The Packs were able to do this and then sell it a year later. They soon found a newer, larger one to rent in nearby Lancaster. This blessing meant their children could enjoy a lovely neighborhood with friends—and another school change.

Congregation on Track

Eager to reactivate his ministry, Mr. Pack continued with the principles that had worked in other pastorates: re-establishing proper governmental structure and active guidance, organizing leaders, visiting *everyone*, delivering sound doctrinal messages, and planning a variety of big, inclusive activities to promote unity. As a result, the Buffalo congregation flourished.

“It happened every time, in every pastorate. It was a biblical formula that came directly from the last five verses of Acts 2, when the Church had first come into existence on Pentecost. The brethren were together at every turn, and unified in every way.”

In fact, growth had been so steady that Mr. Pack decided the Buffalo pastorate should split into two congregations. Regular attendance had grown to almost 600 by the spring of 1982. Buffalo South would meet at 10:00 every Sabbath morning, while the North congregation would meet in the same hall at 2:00 p.m. It was the first time Mr. Pack pastored two congregations in the same city (and hall,

with just a 12-minute trip to services). No more long Sabbaths in the car.

Both congregations thrived. Mr. Pack made certain that everything, other than services, was done together—socials, sporting activities, clubs and Bible studies.

“From this point forward, and for the next three years and three months, my life and that of my family was the happiest and most contented it had ever been or would ever be again. The congregation was wonderfully unified and participative, the whole Church worldwide was on track and growing, and the Work was being done by Mr. Armstrong at a level never experienced before. The endless hours of driving between churches were over, our children had bonded with large numbers of little children within the pastorate (there eventually came to be 99 singing just in the children’s choir), there were 150 seniors in our ‘Silver Ambassadors’ group, and it was active. We were just 20 minutes from Niagara Falls. The city and beautiful region in which we lived was simply too good to be true.”

***Plain Truth* “Blitz” Program**

By the early 1980s, *The Plain Truth* magazine and *The World Tomorrow* television program were well established in preaching the gospel around the world.

Headquarters devised a program that enabled brethren to assist in distributing *The Plain Truth*. Pasadena administrators developed a way to quickly dispense some few thousands of overprinted magazines through newsstand displays in cities around the U.S. This soon led to the Newsstand Distribution Program (NDP), which enlisted local brethren to distribute them.

Mr. Pack was determined to get his congregation involved in a big way with the fledgling program. It was deter-

mined that it could—and should—be done with *much* more efficiency if it were to reach its full potential. Gathering local leaders who wanted to help, he asked, “What can we do to better organize the program and impact the greater Buffalo area with the truth?”

Working together, a highly specialized program was developed that delegated duties to individuals based on their strengths.

First, certain qualified brethren were designated as “sales representatives,” with the job of opening outlets in new locations and setting up display stands or PT subscription request cardholder stands. (Some of these ideas came from Headquarters.) Sales reps had to “sell” store managers and business owners on the idea of having their place of business as a distribution point. Certain personalities could do this best.

Others acted as “service representatives,” replenishing and cleaning stands every week. This allowed a great many additional people to be involved.

Then there were those assigned to place subscription cardholders in medical and professional offices, as well as libraries.

“Each Sabbath between services, I gathered the leaders to brainstorm about new ways to be more efficient. There would *always* be more brethren who now wanted to participate. Certain men were assigned to give rousing sermonettes to inspire people to help God’s Work by getting involved.

“And it worked. Because of the brethren’s diligent labor and sacrifice, the program bore astonishing fruit. The Buffalo *Plain Truth* ‘Blitz’ program, at its pinnacle, distributed about 35,000 magazines each month. Reports were regularly given to keep the whole pastorate ‘in the loop’ of what was being accomplished. Eventually, a great many members understood that

helping with the program was the proper way to assist in spreading Christ's gospel, so unlike 'personal evangelism' taught later by the apostates, in which each individual preaches what is in fact a different 'work' and 'gospel' as he or she sees fit."

Buffalo's *Plain Truth* subscription list mushroomed. The Blitz program became so successful that Headquarters used it as a guide for other regions. This local blueprint, including maps of the Buffalo area broken out, was implemented in small, medium and major metropolitan areas around the world. This area became the model for how to efficiently manage an area's local program. (A display of the manual and some notes is shown in this volume.)

Public Bible Lectures

Another way in which ministers could serve was by Headquarters inviting local *Plain Truth* subscribers to public Bible lectures. Ministers who desired to participate were encouraged to tell Pasadena that they wanted to hold a lecture. A letter was then sent to every subscriber in the area, informing them of the event and offering free literature to attendees.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, Mr. Pack conducted a number of these lectures. To prepare, he contacted the mailing department and requested one copy of every piece of literature, along with 10 of each key piece, be sent. At first officials objected because of cost, but they later saw that the approach was effective and never hesitated again to send what was requested.

Depending on the size of city, anywhere from 20 to 150 people would attend.

Mr. Pack often opened the lecture with the same question: "Where on Earth is God?" He would then explain there was a Church that Jesus Christ promised He would build.

The next evening he would introduce the WCG and answer questions.

These events gave subscribers an inside look at the Church. Many were enthusiastic when they learned that a local congregation existed, reminding Mr. Pack of the thrill he felt in 1966 upon learning there was a congregation relatively close to Lima.

Later, Mr. Pack took the idea further: Headquarters could send a senior minister, or a recognizable name from *The Plain Truth*, to his area. If Bible lectures were successful with only a local minister present, how much more fruitful might they be if a recognized representative visited?

Pasadena was intrigued. (This idea later spawned a program in which the presenters of *The World Tomorrow* were sent to large American cities to give lectures.)

“It was surprising to me that more ministers did not use this tool often to expose local residents to God’s truth. Of course, a few did. I made sure the public Bible lectures occurred in all of my pastorates, and made sure that as many brethren as possible locally were involved in their success. They loved playing a part.”

Visit Requests and Baptisms

The Public Bible Lectures (PBLs) and the Newsstand Distribution Program generated much increased interest in the Church. This was a high priority in the Church. Interested lecture attendees would sign up so they could be visited.

Numerous prospective members went on to attend services for the first time. In time, a lecture could yield 10 to 20 new attendees. They saw doctrinal unity, positive attitudes and inclusive activities. Seeing the benefits of God’s way of life, many were eventually baptized. PBLs were held in every medium- and larger-sized city in Mr. Pack’s pastorates about every 12 to 18 months.

Most ministers held “private” baptisms, in which only those being baptized were included.

“This ceremony was a unique, one-time opportunity for these people. I decided early in my ministry to turn these events into large, joyous occasions. The entire congregation would be invited to our home for the baptism, making it memorable for new members—it was forever associated in their minds with food, fellowship and the feeling of being welcome. Pictures were always taken of the new wet-haired group. Some of our fondest memories were of hundreds of brethren jamming our home and spilling into the yard so they could witness these special events. Of course, their cars spilled all over the neighborhood.

“Not one time beyond about 1978 or ’79 did I *ever* baptize people privately. Yet I was accused of making a gala out of it by ministers who would not put in the effort to make the occasion special. What about the 3,000 baptized *together* (Acts 2:41), and the effect it had because of this?

“This is still the policy today, and will always remain so in The Restored Church of God.”

“In the Same Judgment”

First Corinthians 1:10 describes, in five separate ways, how the people of God’s Church are to be united—to be *one*. They were to “speak the same thing,” have “no divisions,” be “perfectly joined together,” and be “in the same mind” and “in the same judgment.”

“At a certain point in all my pastorates I saw unity emerge exactly as Ephesians 4 said that it should. But I also always saw people who did not agree with Headquarters, ‘with Pasadena’ as so many put it. Their

criticism may have been of ‘how the money was spent’ or ‘Mr. Armstrong travels too much’ or ‘why did they buy that plane (or some other item)’ or ‘they should have a Feast site near my city’ or...or...or...

“These people always left the Church in the end. No exceptions. They simply did not believe *God’s* government was in place. Some lacked faith. Others had never proven God’s Church and government. Still others never thought about it, but just responded naturally—which is carnally. Did they consider what God thought? Probably not. Did they even remember they should do this? Again, probably not. But the result was the same. They were not in agreement and ultimately left the Church as a result, according to I John 2:19-21. I also noticed that once they had made their mind up that a matter was wrong they usually could not be moved. I saw this countless times.

“As these people filtered out early in my new assignment, each congregation went on to be extraordinarily unified. There was always one more here or there who might leave, but the process was usually over pretty quickly at the beginning. However, those who left were few because even carnal minds could recognize ‘everything was now different,’ with many wishing to remain. Some few were rebaptized.”

Working with Youth

Mr. Armstrong understood the crucial importance of working with young children. He performed this duty, in part, through the Youth Opportunities United (Y.O.U.) program for those age 13 and above in the Church, and the worldwide Summer Education Program (S.E.P.) summer camps. The Pastor General recognized the Church needed to emphasize teaching God’s Way to young minds, before the pulls of the world drew them away.

Though long stressed by Mr. Armstrong, some older ministers largely overlooked or just ignored the need to work with young people, doing as little as possible. Also, one of the primary goals of Ambassador College was to provide a training ground for God's youth.

As was the case with brethren in the Church during the 1970s, the youth programs in Buffalo and surrounding areas had become liberal, and mirrored the permissive leanings of the Church and a deteriorating society. Larger youth activities in the Church degenerated into breeding grounds for bad attitudes and unacceptable behavior before Mr. Armstrong directed radical changes be made. Sports programs had become overly competitive, with spectators sometimes hurling insults at opposing players and stomping wildly on the bleachers, as would happen at a worldly high school game.

As doctrines were watered-down, youth constantly pushed the limits of tolerable behavior. Without guidance and clear standards, their behavior, as well as their appearance, soon became almost indistinguishable from teenagers in the world.

In many congregations, teens and preteens ran wild, giving themselves over to inappropriate music, underage drinking—even drug abuse and fornication. The situation became so appalling that Mr. Armstrong temporarily shut down the Church's regional youth activities and national tournaments, as he prepared to doctrinally straighten out the Church.

From 1978 forward, the Pastor General worked to re-insert God's Way back into youth programs, starting with new leadership at Ambassador College, and reorganization at the S.E.P. summer camps. Next was the introduction of a groundbreaking youth magazine (called *Youth 81, 82, 83, etc.*), which taught teens how to strive against the pulls of the world and attain their full potential. It also provided instructions to the ministry on how and what to teach young people.

Along with removing teens who clearly did not belong in the Church, the introduction of new activities with the

right focus caused young people to once again bear the fruit of living God's Way.

"I came to understand that the spiritual health of the youth was directly connected to the focus of the local minister. Congregations in which the minister looked to God—and Mr. Armstrong's direction and example—for guidance brought huge rewards. Conversely, ministers who allowed permissive attitudes to permeate their local youth programs reaped what they had sown—and previously (before Mr. Armstrong's course correction) so had the entire Church.

"The Church as a whole was not performing its God-given duty to its young people during these years. Teenagers are incredibly perceptive. They immediately notice hypocrisy when leaders allow certain behaviors in one congregation, but not another."

The field pastor stressed holding to God's standards and insisted that parents train their children properly. This was a big reason some viewed him as too strict.

Much to the chagrin of some youth, Bible studies were also held for parents on the trends of the day regarding rock music, dress, alcohol and drugs. These candid discussions gave parents the assistance they needed to teach their children properly.

Mr. Pack remembered countless times when he nicely, but firmly, told teenagers, "I do not care what's going on with your friends outside the Church or who is allowed to attend, and what is permitted, in other congregations. You are here. If you want to hold to right standards of conduct, wonderful. If not, you will be happier elsewhere, meaning outside the Church."

While some may think this harsh, obeying God is always a choice—for adults *and teens*.

Along with explaining to teenagers what they were *not* to do, it was always a priority to show them the *right* way to live. Campouts, canoe trips, talent shows, sports programs, special group trips and other activities were held—all with the correct focus. A tremendous amount of effort was exerted in reviving the youth programs to God’s standards.

Development of Young Children’s Programs

Mr. Pack’s two little boys, ages eight and 10, soon brought a matter to their father’s attention: There were hardly any activities for children their age!

“Why don’t we have sports?” they asked. “Why don’t we have campouts, too?”

Unable to adequately answer, Mr. Pack set out to plan programs for younger children. While youth programs for teens were wonderful, one thing was noticed: By age 13, some had already been irreparably influenced by the world—it was simply too late for some.

Mr. Pack was convinced that more could be accomplished locally if younger children were included. Efforts in the Buffalo pastorate yielded positive responses, as grade-school-aged children and their parents were introduced to an increased number of activities. The goal was for young children to feel like this was *their* Church—not just one for “mom and dad, or older brothers and sisters.” The plan was to incorporate as many “peewee” activities as possible, including sports teams. Scores of young children participated. The parents loved it and volunteered to help at every turn.

First, Buffalo developed a basketball league for boys ages five to 12. They played during the halftime of team games. Soon, little girls asked about “peewee cheerleaders.” Peewee track meets were also started.

The program took on a life of its own. Mr. Pack encouraged other ministers from surrounding areas to do the same,

and invited neighboring congregations to bring little children to youth weekends for games and activities. Some ministers acquiesced under pressure from onlookers in their areas. He often traveled hundreds of miles with parents and young children so they could participate in Y.O.U. tournaments.

Buffalo also started a children's choir, which as mentioned eventually grew to 99 children, all singing together on stage during services.

But social activities were not enough. In the 1960s and 70s, the Worldwide Church of God began producing *Bible Story* books. To augment these, Mr. Pack told his sons endless Bible stories, starting at ages two and four. To this day, some of his (and their) fondest memories involved recounting the stories of Samson, King David and his mighty men, Noah, and many other Bible figures, to his two small boys, dressed in pajamas, sitting in little rocking chairs at his feet.

Mr. Pack frequently stressed the importance of teaching children from an early age, starting with his own.

God's Word states in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Deuteronomy 11:19 adds, "And you shall teach [God's laws to] your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Pasadena Notices

Given the growth and fruit of the program in Buffalo, eventually Headquarters heard of it and inquired about its success.

"I got a call one day from Ministerial Services asking for details of the 'wonderful program' for younger children that we had in Buffalo. They had heard about it. I carefully explained what we did, and why, and then described the overwhelming success and fruit being borne.

“So a group was gathered and we wrote up the program and sent it to Pasadena. Almost immediately, Pasadena planned a parallel curriculum for the entire Church, this time with a new name: Youth Educational Services (Y.E.S.).

“Today, for obvious reasons, I draw great satisfaction [in] the program we devised in Buffalo... This experience put us way ahead in fully rekindling all of these programs in Restored.”

Soon after, Headquarters began to produce Y.E.S. Bible Lessons for levels Kindergarten through sixth grade. (These were forerunners of the *Children’s Bible Lessons* in The Restored Church of God, probably far and away the most comprehensive tools in existence anywhere for training young children).

Overview of the Buffalo Years

Brethren are to dwell together in unity, regularly fellowship, and speak the truth in love. This brings real, tangible results that all can taste.

“Church activities in Buffalo experienced marvelous participation. Large sporting tournaments brought families and others together as often as possible. For instance, an already-existing annual golf tournament, titled the ‘Buffalo Wide Open,’ became the largest in the Church. There were volleyball tournaments for women and luncheons for seniors, as well as potlucks, costume parties, game nights, dances, boat rides and more. Every activity was near full capacity, and reflected the zeal of brethren in the spirit of Acts 2:44-46. (Take time to read these verses.)

“But the activities were not focused solely on entertainment. There were well-attended Spokesman

and Graduate Clubs. Members were urged to attend twice-monthly Bible Studies. Within *three months* of arrival, attendance had skyrocketed from 50 or less to an average of 385 on Wednesday night!

“To afford our activities, so that people did not have to pay to attend everything, it was necessary to generate significant monies for the local activity fund. Programs did not simply pay for themselves. I determined to use fundraisers as more than an avenue for earning money. We tried to turn selling fruit, making beef and turkey sausage, selling candy bars, etc., into fun activities for *everyone*. Fundraising became its own ‘activity’ to pay for *other* activities. It provided wonderful opportunities for building strong families and friendships.

“It also permitted us to send large offerings to Headquarters on a regular basis.

“Also, our five-year-old daughter saw opportunity in combining fruit and candy sales. ‘Daddy, first we can sell candy to people. And when they get sick we can sell them fruit to get better.’ By the way, she was one of the top sellers in the entire Church at this age.”

Once, after Mr. Blackwell had stayed with the Packs when he visited the local pastorate, he said to Mr. Pack, “If I’m ever sent back to the field, I want to come to Buffalo. It is such a vigorous and happy area.”

He expressed that, after having extensively traveled the United States, Buffalo was the “best local church congregation he had ever seen.” (Yet it would be only 8 months later that Mr. Pack would be falsely accused of destroying the two congregations!)

The evangelist quizzed Mr. Pack about his success, and it became obvious that the congregation’s transformation had not happened overnight. But the activities that were implemented, along with the brethren’s hard work, had resulted

in growth and unity. The pastorate grew to over 700 attending by 1984.

Sad Occasion

At the beginning of 1984, Mr. and Mrs. Ochs visited the Packs. The busyness of the ministry only permitted one or rarely two trips to Milwaukee each year.

Four years earlier, in late 1979, at age 64, Mr. Ochs had suffered a stroke. Partially paralyzed on his left side, the once gregarious man was confined to a wheelchair, and often used a walker because of his restricted mobility.

It had been hard for Mrs. Pack to see her father, who had been such a strong force in her life, so long wheelchair bound.

Following his stroke, Shirley Pack's father had been unable to operate the Ochs House of Music or play in his music bands. The store began to struggle because its vibrant owner, the charismatic "Lawrence Welk of Milwaukee", was no longer a daily presence with customers. The business folded in 1982, after 50 years of operation.

It was extremely difficult for the Ochs to watch helplessly as the place where the family had lived and worked for so long slowly faded away in the face of a changing society.

Despite these setbacks, Peter Ochs was honored in 1982 at the Feast of Tabernacles in Wisconsin Dells for his musical contributions to the Church through the years. Although the Packs could not attend, Mr. Pack has pictures of his father-in-law smiling in front of a huge choir with a very large orchestra sitting below him.

Father-in-law Gone

Returning to the Packs' home after a special dinner at an Italian restaurant, Mr. Ochs mentioned he was experiencing chest pain, and went upstairs to lie down. Mr. Pack was soon summoned to the guest room and told that his father-in-law

was having trouble breathing. Mr. Pack anointed him and massaged his chest.

Several minutes later, Mr. Ochs returned to normal breathing. As a precautionary measure, the Packs called for paramedics, who loaded Mr. Ochs into their emergency vehicle and headed for the hospital.

The family followed, unaware that Mr. Ochs suffered a massive heart attack en route. Physicians at the hospital tried to save him, but with no success. Just before dawn on January 3, 1984, Peter Ochs died, with his wife, youngest daughter and son-in-law near his side.

The entire family was shocked. Mr. Pack had lost a mentor and Mrs. Pack her beloved father. It was the first time they understood what it was like to lose a parent.

Returning home, Mr. Pack called Mr. Tkach to tell him about Peter Ochs' death. Mr. Tkach had known the Ochs well from his years in the Chicago congregation. He also knew Mr. Ochs for his renown in conducting Church choirs, including the marvelous Wisconsin Dells Festival Choir, which even Mr. Armstrong commented was the highest quality festival choir he had heard.

When Mr. Tkach answered, Mr. Pack paused.

"We had a sad occurrence here last night, Mr. Tkach," he said. "My father-in-law, Mr. Peter Ochs, died."

Surprisingly, Mr. Tkach's response was detached.

"Yeah, I heard about it."

Mr. Pack continued, "I just wanted to call and tell you that he had died, because as you know he was a very special man who was loved by many. Of course, you knew him well."

Mr. Tkach was unaffected. "Like I said...I heard about it."

Appalled, there was nothing left to say. Mr. Tkach had often spoken well of Peter Ochs, yet he was unmoved, even disinterested, with news of his death.

Several days later, the Packs accompanied Mr. Ochs' body to Milwaukee, where his family experienced a most

unusual funeral. Because he had touched so many lives, and many wanted to pay their respects, there was no funeral home in the city that could host the funeral. A special building had to be used for the occasion.

“Over 1,500 people came and lined up in the snow in *below-zero* temperatures at night just to pass by my father-in-law’s coffin. I have never seen anything like it at a funeral, and I never will again. His former students, and their children, and *their* children, paid their respects to a part of his life I still only then truly understood for the first time.”

Father-in-law’s Lasting Impact

Returning from Milwaukee, Mr. Pack reflected on the time he spent with Peter Ochs and the lessons he learned from him.

Starting in 1971, Mr. Ochs taught his son-in-law by personal example, grit, determination, drive and a “never-give-up” attitude. Unusually outgoing, he taught the young man to overcome insecurity, and to walk into crowds and engage people comfortably. Mr. Pack credited his learning to enjoy social situations largely to his father-in-law.

Pulling from his experiences as a member of the Mantel Club, Mr. Ochs talked often, and at great length, with his son-in-law. He showed by example how to serve while sticking to principles.

Mrs. Pack’s father also taught how to promote large activities and events, think expansively and motivate and organize people. By just observing Peter Ochs, Mr. Pack absorbed qualities that would serve him for decades. He recalled:

“Peter Ochs was very easy to talk to. He loved people, was a phenomenal promoter, and more than anyone I’ve ever met in my life, he always wanted to include everyone. And I mean everyone. Such people

are so rare that if you can appreciate the uniqueness of just this, then you'll understand that the impact he had on my ministry would have been colossal. I don't know if anything ever affected me all the way through my thinking today like that one quality in that lone human being. He couldn't bear to see anyone left out.

“Because of this man's effect on me, decades ago, I can scarcely stand to see someone left alone. He, literally, caused my congregations to be the fastest growing in the world year after year. I attribute that gift directly to my father-in-law who had more of the love of God than anybody I ever met. Was he perfect? Far from it. Did he have flaws? Yes, but they were not very evident, very many or very big.”

Though Mr. Ochs often met resistance from people from whom he should have had the greatest support, he overcame it. Mr. Pack respected his mentor's ability to overcome whatever circumstances he encountered and make peace. As he recalled, Peter could always find a way to quiet frictions.

After all these years, Mr. Pack imagines his father-in-law's voice guiding him in certain situations. For instance, on the subject of leadership, Peter often reminded him, “You can't get kicked from behind, unless you are out front.”

Often the son-in-law watched people manipulate his father-in-law and take advantage of him. But Peter never allowed it to discourage him. The message stuck.

“He was the man who taught me that love leads with its chin. Sometimes you get ‘popped,’ but you have to be willing to pay that price. People will burn you and you must still love them, including enemies.

“He was generous to a fault. He died with virtually nothing because he gave away almost everything

he had. I still have his toolbox with all his tools. I treasure it.”

Changing View of Death

Mr. Ochs’ passing was so painful that Mr. Pack could not listen to his music for over 15 years. The feeling of loss was almost too much to bear.

“Although I felt real loss for losing my father-in-law so early, I recognized that most people never have such a father-in-law for even one day. I felt guilty permitting myself to continue feeling bad.”

Mr. Pack was also comforted by the Bible, which shows that God has lost to death every human being He has ever called “friend”—Abraham, Job, Enoch, David, even Jesus Christ Himself for three days. *Each of these men walked after God’s own heart and thought like God*, Mr. Pack mused, *but still—they all died! Even Noah, whom God had been with for scores of generations, eventually died!*

It was a lesson that Mr. Pack began to learn early in his ministry.

In retrospect, he said Peter Ochs was one of six people, including his mother, father, and Mr. Armstrong, who most influenced him.

“There are five men who in a sense truly shaped me, plus of course my mother. Three of these were my ‘fathers’: (1) my father in the gospel, Mr. Herbert Armstrong, (2) my human father and (3) my father-in-law. My two brothers-in-law were also very influential in my training, although they probably never realized or understood this. I scrutinized them through the years in a way that they could not know. I learned

much from them. But the three ‘fathers’ in my life taught me the most, and probably by far, over all the other men I was exposed to put together. The accounts in this biography make clear all the reasons.”

Encouraging Sons to Play Sports

Mr. Pack found encouragement in how well his sons and maturing family thrived, especially in sports. A highlight of Buffalo was watching the boys, Randy and Robby, grow up surrounded by friends and immersed in activities.

Mr. Pack enjoyed teaching his sons to play almost every sport, and tried to expose the boys to a wide variety of athletics. He taught them to play racquetball at the local fitness centers, and provided opportunities for them to practice basketball, baseball and run track through the Y.E.S. programs. He also took them to see professional sports teams, such as the Buffalo Bills (NFL football) and the Sabres (NHL hockey), just as his father used to take him and his brother to see the Cleveland Browns.

His children excelled at athletics, but Mr. Pack never pushed them to swim. To the contrary, he *discouraged* competitive swimming. However, he did teach them to enjoy *recreational* swimming.

When Randy and Robby were 12 and 10, respectively, their father decided they were old enough to appreciate a visit to Lima, including the Shawnee Country Club. Mr. Pack arranged to meet with old high school friends and their nine-year-old daughter. The adults reminisced as the children enjoyed swimming together at the club.

The parents of the little girl recounted her swimming accomplishments, knowing Mr. Pack would be interested. His friend convinced the boys to try to beat his daughter in a race. The girl beat them—badly. The two fathers shared a laugh about the incident, and Mr. Pack advised his sons to stick to basketball.

Building a Close Family Bond

The Packs seemed to have been in a state of perpetual motion, never having been in a pastorate for more than four years. Worse, they often had to move *within* pastorates, never remaining in the same home for longer than two years. Since 1971, the Packs had lived in 13 homes and apartments, having entered the 14th after less than 12 years of marriage.

Randy and Robby had reached middle school age, and their sister Jennifer was getting ready to begin kindergarten. After several years in Buffalo, Mr. Pack began to feel for the first time that he did not want to move for a long time (unless, of course, Church Administration *needed* him elsewhere). The whole family dearly loved the Buffalo assignment. It was the first time since 1967 the Pack family was putting down roots.

For years while battling adversity in the ministry, Mr. and Mrs. Pack tried to ensure their family was not neglected. There were always new trips, experiences and activities they could enjoy together. In the late 1970s and 80s, the family went on dozens of excursions.

They visited state parks in upstate New York's Finger Lakes region and more frequently visited their favorite, Letchworth State Park, southwest of Rochester, hiking and enjoying the beauty of God's creation. The Packs sought out beautiful points of interest, including Taconic Falls and Buttermilk Falls, and found places that were off the beaten track. On more than one occasion, the Packs rented a cabin on Oneida Lake and spent time fishing and enjoying the woods above Syracuse.

“Beginning in Rochester, we adopted the family habit of long hikes in the woods with our boys, later pushing or carrying our daughter with us, and I mean miles. We wanted to be in the woods. I also cut and

burned wood—with three chainsaws—during most of the upstate New York years. We would take the children out of school for a day and cut and split logs wherever we could get permission. I have images of arriving at home at the end of the day dead tired and having to empty the wood into a crib with two small boys helping as they could. But it was wonderful family bonding.

“Our family photo albums are brimming with pictures of these occasions through the years.”

Perhaps the most magnificent instance of God’s creation that the Packs saw on a regular basis was one of the Seven Wonders of the World, Niagara Falls. They enjoyed Southern Ontario and the beautiful country around Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.

The Packs also took family trips to Florida, and journeyed to Glacier National Park (later), along the Canadian border in Montana, and Yellowstone National Park.

There were trips to South Dakota and the Black Hills, Bar Harbor in Maine, and the beautiful Canadian cities of Montreal and Quebec, after two different Feasts. On one trip to Boston they saw 37 historic sites in 48 hours—a family record!

“I was a ‘hard-charger’ when it came to seeing points of interest, history and opportunities to learn. On endless occasions, my children groaned from the backseat as Dad hit the brakes, pulled over and read historical plaques at points of interest. Later, they loved it, and would often remind me if I missed one, but not so at first. This must have happened hundreds of times.

“I never wanted my family to stop learning. I considered it our responsibility to expose our children to as much as possible. My mother had ingrained this into me, and I wanted to do the same. We worked hard

and played hard. Days off from one or the other were few and far between.”

But there was also going to different zoos, enjoying picnics, walking botanical gardens, touring old homes, forts and historic sites, visiting museums, boat rides, canoe trips, bicycling, all kinds of fishing, trips to amusement parks, trying new affordable restaurants, playing board games at home, all of these many times—and so much more.

The family excursions created an appreciation for the importance of staying in one assignment for the normal duration of eight years, something that would not happen until 19 years into their ministry. But the family was settled for the first time and their children were comfortable in school. Yet the boys did not have the opportunity to stay in the same system for more than two years, except once.

Trouble in Buffalo

During his years in Buffalo, it was clear to Mr. Pack that there were ministers throughout the country who *appeared* to agree with God's Way, but were not living His Word. It was that simple. This ranged from men at the highest levels to surrounding pastors.

A subtle divide in his thinking and theirs slowly grew. Not evident at the time, God had a grand purpose in permitting carnal men to direct the ministry. Now that Mr. Tkach had been directing the ministry for several years, Mr. Pack had more serious concern about what effect his prolonged leadership was having on the Church.

Tragedy

A chain of events quietly unfolded that forever changed the Packs' lives. Some of the most intense learning experiences occurred when one is forcibly *pulled* into people's lives.

One Friday evening, Mr. Pack was battling a case of severe laryngitis and wondering if he would be able to preach the next day, when the phone rang. Mrs. Pack answered. It was a former member—the previous pastor had

disfellowshipped the woman long before Mr. Pack took over Buffalo.

Mrs. Pack apologized and told her, “My husband has laryngitis and cannot take the phone.”

The woman said she understood, and calmly hung up. She then proceeded to kill her five-year-old with a butcher knife!

The girl’s devastated father, a local member, and no longer married, called Mr. Pack the next morning from the police station and detailed the grim circumstances.

Mr. Pack was stunned, explaining she had called the night before.

The Packs then received a call from a local detective who wanted to know what happened the night of the murder. Because of the nature of the crime, there was an inquest—a grand jury was convened. After finding Church literature in her home, the prosecution concluded that the Church had maybe somehow influenced the heinous act.

Prosecutors charged the mother with murder and summoned Mr. Pack to court as a witness. The Buffalo pastor called Headquarters for counsel and explained the circumstances to the legal office.

In response, the Church hired a constitutional attorney to protect its rights and Mr. Pack’s rights as a minister. Though he had not the slightest involvement in the crime, “clergy penitent privilege” might come into play. By law, the field pastor did not have to answer certain questions. In fact, he could not.

Taking the Stand

On the day of the inquest, Mr. Pack entered the courtroom alone. (Because it was a grand jury proceeding, the attorney could not be present. However, the witness could ask for an adjournment to consult.) Before him sat the District Attorney and about 30 people on the grand jury.

Facing intense scrutiny, the Church's non-involvement and innocence needed to be protected. Mr. Pack took the stand and the assistant district attorney (DA) began questioning. This is what happened:

"Mr. Pack, tell us about your contact with the defendant," the DA said.

"Well, I can't get into that. But I did have certain correspondence with her."

The DA said, "When did you first meet?"

"I met her in about 1979."

"Where was that?"

Mr. Pack said, "In Rochester. She came once to talk to me some years ago. I had never met her before."

The DA then asked about the substance of their conversation, which was protected under "clergy penitent privilege."

"I'm sorry, but I can't say," the minister responded.

The attorney was undeterred.

"Okay, when was the next time you saw her?"

"In 1981. She came once to my home with her husband."

"Did you meet her at any other time?" the prosecution asked.

"Never."

"Okay, let's come to the present," the assistant DA said. "I understand she called you on Friday night."

"Yes, she did."

"What was the gist of that conversation?" he asked, trying once again to push Mr. Pack to open up.

"I had laryngitis and could not take the call. I did not talk to her. I said nothing to her, because I could not talk."

"I see," the prosecution attorney said, nodding his head. "Could you tell me about the correspondence you had with her? How many letters did she write you?"

"About three or four, counting notes."

"What was the substance of those letters?" the DA pressed.

“I don’t have to tell you that.”

The assistant district attorney grew agitated.

“Yes, you do have to tell me.”

“No, I don’t,” Mr. Pack said. “I know the law.”

The courtroom grew tense. Irritated, the DA pressed hard. A child had been brutally murdered and *someone* was to blame! The grand jury’s eyes widened—the exchange had their full attention!

The assistant DA said, “I am ordering you to answer the question.”

“I will not answer.”

At this point, the attorney was infuriated.

“You must answer the question.”

Looking at him squarely, Mr. Pack said, “You will not get me to break the law in this courtroom. I want to talk to my attorney.”

Knowing he had “clergy penitent privilege,” Mr. Pack privately convened with his lawyer, the DA and the judge.

The assistant DA said, “I have instructed you, Mr. Pack, to answer my question.”

“You know I do not have to answer that question. You are trying to intimidate me into breaking clergy penitent privilege.”

Finally, the prosecution backed down.

“Well, I didn’t mean the *exact* contents of the letter. I see your point.”

Mr. Pack calmly said, “I will tell you when they arrived, but not the substance. I will tell you how often, how long they were and the dates of the letters.”

With that, they re-entered the courtroom.

The prosecution clarified to the jury, “Mr. Pack was within his rights. He does not have to divulge the contents of the letters—I apologize.”

The tension was over, as was a most difficult test in Mr. Pack’s life. “The exchange helped to temper me for tough times that would come,” he said, looking back.

It later became known that the reason the mother committed her terrible act was that she thought she had to “cut the devil from her daughter.”

In another instance of members exhibiting strange behavior, Mr. Pack also recalls one man approaching him in Buffalo and saying, “Mr. Pack, I can’t pray anymore. Every time I pray bad things happen to the Work. I decided that I am the Joshua of Zechariah 3, and that my prayers are an abomination before God.”

Though dumbfounded by this man’s strange conclusions, the 34-year-old pastor simply told him he was wrong—his prayers did not hinder God’s Work, and he was not a type of Joshua. Mr. Pack recalls that this man first also thought that he was one of the Two Witnesses. As in previous pastorates, strange people were sometimes permitted into the Church.

Forbidden to See Mr. Armstrong?!

There were occasional moments of high drama in the first half of the 1980s. Here was one not to be lost.

“At a certain point, perhaps around 1983, Mr. Tkach basically warned me to ‘stop contact with Mr. Armstrong.’ He was not subtle.

“Taken aback, I repeated, ‘You are telling me to stay away from him? I want to get this clear—and to remember your exact words. You’re telling me to cease contact with Mr. Armstrong! May I quote you on that?’

“Mr. Tkach was unnerved. ‘I’m not *exactly* saying that. You just need to realize that talking to Mr. Armstrong could backfire on you.’

“It was painfully obvious that a different spirit was seeking control of the Church. I was unsure of what to expect for myself personally, but recognized that Mr.

Armstrong’s continuing to live and breathe was linked to me in a way I did not misunderstand.”

Another Visit to Mr. Armstrong

The Packs prepared to attend the 1984 ministerial refresher, this time taking their children along. They enjoyed the special time together traveling across the country by train, and admiring America’s various landscapes.

In Pasadena, the Packs wanted to visit Mr. Armstrong. Mrs. Pack wanted her children—ages 12, 10 and five—to see God’s leader. No matter Mr. Tkach’s warning, the Packs went to Mr. Armstrong’s residence, though uncertain whether this was a good idea.

There they were greeted by Mr. Armstrong’s maid. Mr. Pack stayed only briefly. While his wife and children socialized with Mr. Armstrong, the Buffalo minister first stood on the sidewalk. He left the home, concerned about the repercussions of his mere presence, but quickly returned.

“I was upset that I had momentarily let myself be intimidated by a man I knew was evil. Those were such difficult times, sometimes involving very difficult decisions that could almost come minute to minute.”

Made Y.O.U. District Coordinator

Buffalo’s north and south congregations had grown to 750 people by 1984. Ministerial Services used this to justify splitting the pastorate. Mr. Pack would now pastor Buffalo North. A former college classmate of his would pastor the south congregation.

A special assignment came at a strange time.

“The Buffalo congregation set a positive example that was known across a wide area. Whether it was

a singles' dance with hundreds of guests, a softball tournament with 20 teams, or something as small as a costume party for young children, these activities built a positive reputation.

“Since Buffalo was a hub city for Upstate New York, ministers and brethren from other areas often visited. The surrounding area had professional sports teams, very diverse ethnic culture, and a large congregation meeting in a beautiful hall. There were family dances, Y.O.U. weekends, including sock-hops, sports and activities. The young children, ages five to 12, were always included. Brethren from surrounding pastorates loved that Buffalo attempted to include everyone. Quality was brought to everything the congregation did. Brethren were united.

“By the summer of 1984, very strangely, I was named the Y.O.U. District Coordinator in Buffalo. Quite surprised, I presumed this was because ministers at Headquarters other than Mr. Tkach suggested it.”

At the refresher of early 1984, Mr. Tkach gave a lecture about declining Y.O.U. standards. The ministry was armed with new guidelines for improving youth music standards.

Mr. Pack moved ahead with his new responsibility. On the surface, surrounding ministers supported Buffalo's well-organized and positive youth activities. They had no choice. Better standards brought happy harmony. Buffalo activities were a breath of fresh air. Everyone knew that the Buffalo pastorate was simply unique, and in a host of ways.

Underneath, however, surrounding pastors were harboring a growing, deep resentment.

Knee Surgery

After God had healed Mr. Pack's foot, the pastor began to rehabilitate his left leg, severely atrophied from long disuse.

He devised a vigorous routine involving “110 percent effort,” including an intense workout regimen.

However, he had done too much, too fast. Cartilage remains hard and strong only through constant activity—but the cartilage in Mr. Pack’s left knee had softened from disuse. By the summer of 1983, he felt sharp pain when kneeling or bending the knee. Even prayer could be difficult.

Mr. Pack decided to get another medical diagnosis. He went to a hospital outside Buffalo where an orthopedist, the team doctor of the Buffalo Bills professional football team, examined his knee. The diagnosis confirmed a large area of softening and loosening had occurred under the left kneecap through overuse of weakened tissue. The surface had to be scraped and smoothed.

Mr. Pack decided to undergo the relatively simple surgery. Coincidentally, the other Buffalo pastor had a similar problem. The two men underwent arthroscopic knee surgery on the same day, in the same hospital, one hour apart. They awoke together in the recovery room, laughing at how “old and broken down” they had become. And another Church member *also* happened to be there.

In the 20 years since the operation, Mr. Pack’s knee has bothered him only rarely.

“I was yet again left with a constant reminder that the body is temporary and that the clay vessel God gives us will eventually break down. I was also left with the reminder that I had brought this upon myself through impatience and a lack of wisdom, beginning in 1982, and really earlier, with my heel bruise.”

Offenders Get Offended

Mr. Pack recuperated, and then refocused on his duties as Y.O.U. District Coordinator. Brethren responded enthusiastically to activities, but, again, neighboring ministers

were critical, in part feeling that *their* efforts were made to look inferior.

So many ministers did not display the motivation and zeal learned at Ambassador College. For example, Mr. Pack found it strange that when all freshmen male students were instructed to keep sermonette idea notebooks at all times to be better prepared later to deliver messages, almost no one he knew took this seriously. In the end, most students took instructions as *suggestions*—yet these were to be taken literally.

“What we were taught in class were not matters of minimal importance. In my childhood, instruction was followed—else there would be consequences! I saw that the most basic principle of God’s government was lost on most: *When instructions are given, they are to be followed.* Many of the ministers proved to be the worst examples of this. In addition, most did not care about details—or of going above and beyond.

“Many were unmotivated in nearly every aspect of their ministry, whether organizing socials, visiting members or preparing sermons. The fruit borne in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and elsewhere was because of hard work and attention to detail. Those of another mind were left—were in fact ‘forced’—to be critical of those who would do what they were too selfish and lazy to do.”

As resentment festered, a seemingly simple youth activity triggered an unfolding of events that snowballed behind the scenes.

Beginning of the End!

During district family weekends, congregations would combine for Sabbath services, Saturday night activities and Sunday sporting events.

One activity was watching and judging the performance of each congregation's cheerleaders' dance team. The goal was teamwork and unity, and to provide a positive opportunity for teenage girls. Sabbath observance kept most girls from participating in school-sponsored cheerleading.

For many brethren, these performances were a highlight. Sometimes a thousand people gathered to watch the teams perform specially choreographed routines. Each had chosen their own music selection and prepared their routine.

It became evident certain teams had little or no adult supervision. Some mirrored worldly trends, with inappropriate music and overtly suggestive dancing. Yet most ministers took little notice. But Mr. Pack was the responsible host.

After watching a sexually suggestive routine by one squad from Pennsylvania, Mr. Pack was furious. Hundreds of brethren, including families and little children, were exposed to appalling, inappropriate dancing. Some of the squad's cheerleaders were daughters of the pastor—and they were the very worst offenders. The dancing would have been better suited for a nightclub than a Church youth activity.

But their father was pleased with the performance!

Mr. Pack was left with a choice: *overlook the situation or make plain that God's Church has standards.*

“I pulled the pastor aside, and said, ‘That routine was lewd and out of line. It gave other teams the wrong idea about what is appropriate, and it exposed hormone-laden teenage boys to the wrong things. It plants wrong thoughts in minds.’ I was unyielding.

“Instead of listening, the Pennsylvania minister was offended, deciding that his daughters were under attack. He raced home, called Mr. Tkach and complained about my ‘lack of love, understanding and tolerance,’ and how ‘I was missing the big picture.’ Mr. Tkach agreed with the minister, who called and reported this to me. But Headquarters never called me.

“This was not a case where a pastor was unnecessarily ‘gunslinging.’ Actually, host or not, I had a duty to speak up. But I did know the man would be angry and would play politics to protect his daughters. After all, he did think their conduct was fine. A few years later, this man was brought to Pasadena and placed in charge of all youth activities worldwide under the new Pastor General.”

Ironically, the “offending incident” had occurred just weeks after Mr. Tkach’s lecture outlining guidelines on how to hold the youth to higher standards! Music was the centerpiece of the lecture.

In the spring of 1985, Mr. Pack was summarily removed as District Coordinator, being told it was just “time for a change.” Such a move had never previously happened after only one year. The assignment was always for two years. Mr. Tkach was methodically building a case.

Enforcing Standards

The new minister in south Buffalo immediately fostered a liberal environment, and quietly invited people to believe that Mr. Pack, their previous minister, had been too harsh. They formed a tiny vocal minority of “Mr. Pack doesn’t have love. He’s too harsh. He’s a dictator.”

But standards are standards, and the majority loved the administration of right standards.

Some brethren will receive correction; others are of a different spirit. Hebrews 12:8 carries God’s special term to describe them. A pastor led of God realizes his first duty is to protect the flock. This inevitably means he will be perceived as “harsh” by some, or even many. Most ministers prefer to be seen as “nice people.” But enforcing God’s laws and principles *defines* leaders in the Church. A true leader will always refuse to compromise as opposed to appeasing

the masses, even if the price is being accused of “not having enough love.” God’s Way is more than a vacant commitment to the truth—it is something that must be *actively* maintained.

Having an “open door/come as you are” policy in the Church invariably leads to an “open doctrine” policy—and vice-versa.

Extreme Test

One example of following this principle of addressing issues immediately led to Mr. Pack having to actually call the police on intruders. Although this was a last resort, it can be necessary to deal with hostile people trying to attend.

A young couple wanted to attend Church. They told Mr. Pack they were not married—but were living together. He explained they would have to separate or marry. They responded, “We won’t separate and we have a right to come to your church. We demand you let us.” Mr. Pack said, “No, you do not. In fact, this visit is over. You are not welcome in our Church.” They answered defiantly, “We are going to be there this Sabbath.” Mr. Pack nicely, but firmly, stated, “No, you are confused. If you come, you will be removed.”

The next Sabbath, the couple came. Before entering the hall, which was filled with about 425 brethren, they waited until services had started and no one was at the door. During announcements, they slowly walked in, crossed the entire room to the far wall and sat down. Mr. Pack saw them and realized a battle of wills was on.

Mr. Pack told the brethren to relax and that services would be halted. He instructed the deacon to call the police, to tell them people had disrupted services and needed to be removed. A member at Headquarters recalled that there was a tape in the archives of the service. Here are Mr. Pack’s exact words from September 8, 1984. The voice was calm:

“Brethren, the police might be here shortly, so just sit quietly when they come. There are some people who are going to have to leave, so if you see people moving around, please understand that sometimes that happens in God’s Church. We are asking them to do it quietly, and if they do not, then the police will help them. Let’s just let them quietly go. [Long pause.] As soon as everybody is finished looking over there, we’ll get back to the announcements.

“Once in a while people threaten the Church and say that they are going to come no matter what. We have to tell them, ‘No you’re not, no matter what!’ We asked them nicely to leave and so, I believe, the police are probably waiting outside.”

Hearing this, the couple did not believe the police would be called and refused to leave. When the officers entered the hall, they walked to the still seated couple, with one bending over and saying, “Get up!” They argued. The officer was emphatic. The couple rose and were escorted out, continuing to argue. The officers returned, and were apologetic.

Here is the point. Covering the eyes or sweeping things under the rug on matters of clear *right and wrong* never works in the end. God has laws and standards. His leaders must maintain—and sometimes publicly *defend* them.

God’s Math—“Subtract Problems, Add Growth”

Normal math is subtract from the whole and you have less. God’s math is different.

“I learned early God’s ‘*addition by subtraction*’ principle: *subtract problems from the congregation, and attendance goes up, not down*. This vital principle largely defined my ministry over the years. I implemented it in every pastorate, all of which were troubled when

we arrived. Eliminate noisy, disruptive tares (not quiet ones, Matt. 13:29) and attendance goes up.

“I found that most ministers simply took the easy, political road and refused to address trouble. Of course, certain other ministers *were* the problem. These often transferred their liberal, incompetent leadership to others by punishing those who were complaining about lax conditions. Their response could be brutal.

“Most would not follow Mr. Armstrong’s simple principle: ‘One rotten apple spoils the whole bushel.’ He practiced what he preached many times in regard to senior leadership in the Church. Which man who led Church Administration did not go on to prove himself to be a ‘rotten apple’?

“Each time Mr. Armstrong eliminated a rotten apple, things at least temporarily improved—until the replacement showed his colors.

“I learned early on that division in my congregations could not be tolerated—under any circumstance. Discord is the most destructive thing to God’s Church and simply cannot be permitted to exist. I saw that people can be divided over many things: doctrinal ideas, not following Church traditions, matters of wrong behavior openly permitted in the congregation, criticizing ‘how the money was spent,’ decisions made by Headquarters—and false accusations between brethren.”

“In this regard, I came to understand the value in sometimes (rarely) disfellowshipping according to God’s instruction, people who did not belong. Although stories exist that I disfellowshipped large numbers of brethren, and was a harsh dictator, I only very infrequently had to do this.

“Sadly, I have become a subject of legend in regard to something *I almost never had to do!* I rarely had to

disfellowship anyone. People who did not agree with the Church usually left on their own. I did not have to put them out of the Church. During the 1970's, I perhaps put as few as half a dozen people out of the Church. In the early 1980's, after arriving in Buffalo, I disfellowshipped the same or an even smaller number over a four year, seven month duration.

“In the latter half of the 1980's, since I was not a pastor, I was not in a position to put anyone out of the church. From 1990 to 1993, only two people had to be disfellowshipped in Akron, two ladies who had gone with PCG. They left me no choice.

“Between 1993 and 1999, I believe there were only one to three that I disfellowshipped. Today, in The Restored Church of God, we are now 10 years old and I have not had to disfellowship even *one* lay member anywhere in the world.

“My detractors will state that this report is false. I assert that it is true!

“My wife always marveled that I disfellowshipped so few—even when I was serving in terribly divided pastorates where almost anything had been permitted—but that others could disfellowship many more and never be questioned about it because of who they knew. She said this many times.

“I recognized there was a legend growing up around me that was pure fiction. Throughout my ministry, I had to live with the reality of being accused by ministers I knew to be of a different spirit. My wife was right. These men actually got away with terrible wrongs themselves, in regard to their unwarranted claims about my supposed harshness. These accusers often brutalized their flocks, then got away with it due to connections in Pasadena.

“In the end, the tragedy is not my bruised ego or reputation, but the fact that God's people are fed

lies and my ministry and the Work today have been clouded by rumors.”

Final Visit with Mr. Armstrong

During these years, Mr. Armstrong struggled with his eyesight and overall health, making it difficult to oversee details of Church operations.

Leaders in Pasadena quietly maneuvered to become the aging Pastor General’s successor. Perhaps the one most guilty of this, Mr. Tkach, was presumed by most to be on the inside track. Certain men gave him a hypocritical public deference, even though, in private, almost any thinking person could not stand him, and said so. The words used were not unclear.

“Mr. Tkach’s hatred for me was coming to full bloom, as Mr. Armstrong’s deteriorating health continued his slow receding from the picture, starting in the late summer of 1985. He still kept it quiet outside certain circles, but this would soon change.”

It became obvious at the 1985 ministerial refresher that the Coordinator of Ministerial Services was no more than a *completely* carnal politician. Mr. Pack had a local administrative matter that he needed to discuss with this man, so he pulled him aside after one of the lectures and asked for an appointment.

“Sure,” Mr. Tkach responded. “Come on up to my office tonight at seven. We can talk then.”

That evening, Mr. Pack arrived a few minutes early—only to discover that Mr. Tkach’s office, along with all of Ministerial Services, was dark, empty and locked. Mr. Tkach was nowhere to be seen.

The Packs waited 30 minutes and, giving the benefit of the doubt, concluded that the man must have become busy or had forgotten.

Now with a free evening, and a standing invitation to visit Mr. Armstrong, he and Mrs. Pack decided to visit the Pastor General. It had been a year since the last time. Mr. Armstrong still enjoyed company. While he was always lonely, most made no effort to visit him, probably just assuming he was too busy.

When the Packs arrived at the Pastor General's home, he was watching a movie by himself.

"I entered Mr. Armstrong's den. He was glad we came. Because of failing eyesight, he had to watch the TV screen from about 18 inches away. He asked me to join him this close to the television to watch a movie. It was strange, but I pulled up a chair. It was the first time I truly understood how far his eyesight had deteriorated. I recall that the only others present were his personal nurse and his housemaid. We enjoyed a nice evening together. This was the final time I would see or talk to Mr. Armstrong. I bid him farewell."

Blatant Lie

Mr. Pack approached Mr. Tkach the next day: "Mr. Tkach, I came to your office last night and you were not there. Did I misunderstand our meeting time or place?"

The head of Ministerial Services hesitated, and then said, "Oh, Mr. Armstrong suddenly called me to his house last night and I spent the whole evening with him talking about important Church business."

Commenting on the encounter, Mr. Pack said:

"I could hardly believe what I heard. Of course, I knew Mr. Tkach was untruthful, but this time simply stunned me. No one could be ready for such a thing. I was tempted to ask what chair he was in because I had not noticed him the entire evening. (I am being

facetious.) But I knew this particular moment was dangerous since he would soon learn that I was there, and his falsehood would be exposed. All he had needed to do was truthfully explain that he was busy, or even forgot, and the matter would have been closed.

“Stupefied, I said, ‘Well, maybe we’ll get to talk again another time.’

“I learned later that the attending nurse acted as Mr. Tkach’s ‘eyes and ears,’ reporting to him about everyone who visited the Pastor General’s home. Informed of my visit, Mr. Tkach almost immediately realized he had been caught lying.”

Demoted!

Uncertain of the future, the Packs returned to Buffalo. Weeks later, on a Friday afternoon in August 1985, they received a telephone call that would dramatically alter their lives.

It was from Mr. Tkach. Mr. Pack knew instantly that he was not calling with good news. Mr. Harold Jackson, an elderly evangelist and Mr. Pack's friend, was also on the phone.

"Dave, are you seated?", Mr. Tkach began.

The field minister said, "No, but I can sit down."

Mr. Tkach wasted no time: "We've heard some complaints. We think there are some lessons you need to learn, so we are sending you to New York City as an associate pastor."

Mr. Pack could not believe the news. Yet another gross injustice, this time a plain demotion, and it had been stated in such a matter-of-fact manner—a terse notice that they would need to leave Buffalo as soon as possible—within a month. Mr. Tkach offered few explanations as to what were the problems, what lessons needed to be learned, or which brethren were upset.

“I was more shocked at this moment than at any other in my life to that point. I suppose in a way I feared it was coming, but the actual arrival of such an unbelievable injustice was the single most difficult experience in my life—or that of my wife. I had experienced injustice before, but NOTHING of this order. I knew that I had been the victim of a conspiracy of evil thinking, but would only learn later just how great that evil would be.

“What was worse, and what drove the moment indelibly into my mind, was that, while on the call, my 11-year-old son, Robby, ran into the house crying. Both sons had been playing a football game with neighborhood friends in the backyard—and Robby had snapped his collarbone—for the second time! He was simultaneously pleading for my help, while holding his shoulder as the bad news was being received. I did not realize the seriousness of his injury, and told him to go upstairs and I would be with him later.”

Mr. Pack hung up and walked upstairs in a daze to check on his son. Seeing his condition, the parents took him to the hospital. It was in the emergency room waiting area that the reality of the life-altering phone call sank in.

“I understood that New York City had been selected for my assignment because the goal of this maneuver was an all-out attempt to destroy my life. I would have no understanding of the true *level* of evil I was dealing with until years later. It was only in the apostasy that I fully understood the devil’s role acting through one of his chief agents in trying to destroy my ministry, in trying to get me to give up. Strangely, I was better able at that later point to more completely forgive the man for simply following the alien spirit that was probably always leading him.”

Reconsidering the Demotion

The next morning, without her husband's knowledge, Mrs. Pack called the Ministerial Services Coordinator. Again, her family had known him since 1959 in Milwaukee, back when the Ochs family first came into the Church.

She pleaded with Mr. Tkach. Here are her words describing her call in a summary:

“You've known me for a long time, Mr. Tkach. I'm telling you, the reports you're hearing are false. Why are you allowing these lies to be treated as truth without hearing our side? It is unfair and I don't understand why you would do this to us.”

“I questioned him as to why my husband was being transferred when there was so much growth in Buffalo. I told him of senior ministers who had visited and praised him for all that was accomplished and explained that the decision made no sense.”

Assuring her he understood her concerns, Mr. Tkach said he would reinvestigate the decision.

Mrs. Pack hung up under the impression he was going to honestly reconsider the transfer. She could not have known that something much darker was unfolding.

A “Promotion”

The following Monday morning, Mr. Pack received another call from Mr. Tkach, only this time he was cheerful.

“I have good news!” he said. “We've been thinking about the situation over the weekend and I've received some additional counsel. We have decided to promote you.”

He continued, “But in order to transition you to your new and greater responsibilities, we need you to move to

New York City, and *temporarily* assist Bob Fahey. By next summer, we're going to put you over the office in the New York metropolitan area. This will be a big responsibility. About 3,000 brethren live in the New York metro area, including several congregations in New Jersey, southern New York state, New York City and Long Island. You will be the office manager and will coordinate the other pastors there. We believe you are up to the task."

He assured Mr. Pack, "This is not a demotion—it will be a promotion! In the meantime, go there, get settled in, and in nine months we will complete the reorganization.

"Mr. Jackson is here on the phone as my witness that this will happen—and I *give you my word*."

Hanging up, Mr. Pack thought, "Here we go again... another challenge."

Still, he was determined to put aside past experiences with the man and remain optimistic.

He knew that Mr. Armstrong, if he knew about the situation, would most likely intervene. But Mr. Pack made a conscious decision not to contact the Pastor General for three reasons:

First, he knew that Mr. Armstrong was now in extremely poor health. Just three weeks later, in September, he would give what became his final sermon, after which his condition declined dramatically. Mr. Pack did not want to trouble the ailing apostle.

Second, Mr. Pack chose to follow the examples of King David and other Bible figures, who, when treated unjustly, simply remained quiet and awaited God's deliverance.

Third, he had been assured that this setback would lead to promotion. *What was there to "appeal"?* Mr. Tkach had created an impossible scenario in this regard. It was a brilliant stroke in response. He could say that his intention was to *elevate* Mr. Pack, not *reduce* him.

With no choice but to accept what Mr. Tkach had said, the Packs did their best to accept the transfer with a cheerful

attitude. According to Mr. Tkach, there were positive aspects to the move. He would have an opportunity to work with thousands of brethren and multiple ministers, fill an immediate need, and perhaps learn from Mr. Fahey, a former evangelist who had been Mr. Armstrong's personal assistant during the 1970s. The transfer was also an opportunity to work in America's largest city and be exposed to a wide variety of new situations.

However, the move would affect the family. Just one month earlier, their oldest son, Randy, had started eighth grade, and Robby, sixth grade. This was only weeks after their daughter Jennifer started kindergarten. Leaving during the school year is traumatic for any child.

Still, the family resolved to make the most of the situation. They put their faith in God and prepared to move to the "Big Apple."

Moving to NYC

As the 1985 Feast of Tabernacles approached, and the family packed their belongings, they looked for a home to rent in the New York metropolitan area.

But details of the transfer became clear. Mr. Pack was not just being transferred to New York City—he was involved in a flip-flop of assignments, replacing the associate pastor there, who was being promoted to Buffalo North to take over Mr. Pack's pastorate.

Upon realizing this, and with limited time in which to transfer, the Packs decided it would be necessary to take the man's apartment in Thornwood, New York. This was in Westchester County, about 45 minutes north of Manhattan. The apartment was both tiny and extremely expensive—\$1,500 a month in rent. (It was so small, five-year-old Jennifer had to sleep in a hallway above the open family room!)

The Packs arrived at the new assignment only two days before the Feast, with just enough time to unload their things

into their new apartment. They hurriedly packed their suitcases and left for Trinidad and Tobago, a small festival site of 400 attendees.

Though discouraged, there was a positive aspect about the circumstances. For the first time in years, Ran and Jane Pack could spend the Feast with their eldest son and his family—and in a tropical island paradise of the Caribbean. They generously offered to help with the costs at this difficult time.

Next, before Mr. Pack arrived, he was told he would *not* be speaking, but only songleading. After pastoring numerous congregations—including a three-congregation pastorate in which he had to deliver three sermons every weekend—and speaking to thousands at the Feast every previous year for many years, this was a humbling experience. Worse, there were only two other traveling American ministers at the site, and each spoke three times—while Mr. Pack was not given the opportunity to even deliver a *sermonette*!

It was becoming clearer that the “nine months to promotion” scenario was a deception designed to “keep Mr. Pack quiet” for a time. Mr. Tkach and his assistant had decided to make their move now that Mr. Armstrong had grown so ill. Time was now on their side.

Still resolved to wait on God, Mr. Pack focused on his assigned duties. There was really no other choice.

The Big “Grapple”

The Packs returned from the Feast and settled into their new apartment. Often referred to as “the big apple,” Mr. Pack would come to call it “the big *grapple*.”

The former upstate New York pastor would now be serving under Mr. Fahey, whose pastorate was comprised of four congregations: Manhattan/Bronx, Westchester County, Nassau and Suffolk, and Long Island.

Mr. Fahey lived on Long Island and was two hours from Westchester. Two other associate pastors assisted him in

Long Island. In some ways, Mr. Pack served as the quasi-pastor of the small Westchester congregation. He was free to give regular sermons and serve the brethren somewhat independently. It was as though he had come full circle to a situation similar to Rockford and Newburgh. It still appeared his transfer might be preparation for larger responsibility in the New York area.

He and Mr. Fahey enjoyed a good personal relationship. Both were experienced ministers and had long conversations in the first months of Mr. Pack's transfer. The men were also skilled racquetball players. Since neither had lost a match to anyone for a long time, they enjoyed finding a worthy opponent. This also gave them the opportunity to socialize and talk about issues the Church faced.

The pastor also helped the Packs become familiar with New York, and to keep certain things in mind while living there. For example, there was the importance of moving confidently in crowds in certain areas of the city, while also avoiding prolonged eye contact with people.

"Always keep your suit coat open," he was told regarding visiting members and prospective members. "Never button it. People will think you are the law, and carrying a gun. Almost always, residents of rough neighborhoods assume anyone in a suit is a police detective or FBI agent. Therefore, they will leave you alone."

But the inevitable could not be avoided in New York. Mr. Pack was robbed almost immediately upon arrival and his car was broken into on several occasions later, often due to loose change or subway tokens left in plain view.

But nothing could prepare one for the shocking and deteriorating environment of Harlem and of the South Bronx.

Working in an Office

Because many of the neighborhoods in which brethren and prospective members lived were unsafe, ministerial visits

were conducted differently than almost anywhere else. Instead of ministers visiting in houses and apartments, the Church maintained a centrally located office in a high-rise Manhattan building at One Penn Plaza.

This was a drastic change for Mr. Pack. One of the most rewarding parts of his ministry had been traveling, often with his wife and small children, visiting brethren. But here the brethren usually had to come to him—in a tiny, cramped office.

As a bigger man, the idea of riding a crowded train to and from work each day would be claustrophobic. Not yet ready to give up independence by riding the train to work, Mr. Pack drove into Manhattan on the first day at the office. He navigated through the congested city and (finally) found a parking spot deep underground. As he walked to the office, Mr. Pack rounded a corner and almost tripped over a homeless woman, who was bent down, scraping gum from the sidewalk—before putting it in her mouth!

Welcome to New York.

After work that same day, Mr. Pack was scheduled to give a Bible study about 20 blocks away in the B'nai B'rith building, opposite the United Nations complex. To become more familiar with the city, he walked north to 42nd Street to cover the remaining distance east on foot.

Five minutes into the walk, Mr. Pack heard a barrage of gunshots several hundred feet behind him—he kept walking. He arrived at the Bible study, and found that a member had been caught in the middle of the gunfire. In broad daylight, a man had jumped from a car, and shot one man to death and wounded several others.

Mr. Pack would later ask the brethren, “How many of you have heard gunshots at any time in your neighborhood or elsewhere?”

About 80 percent raised their hands. Another 80 percent acknowledged they had been mugged at least once while living in New York City—it was *multiple* times for many.

This was nothing like the suburban bliss of Buffalo. God now had a much different training in mind.

Riding the Commuter Train

Mr. Pack accepted the reality of riding the Metro North train to the office once each week, a routine to which he slowly became accustomed.

Each Tuesday morning, Mrs. Pack dropped off her husband at a train station in Westchester County. En route, Mr. Pack would enter a tunnel, which was often the last time he would be outside for the next 12 hours. Boarding the south-bound commuter, he eventually arrived at Grand Central Station. From here, a “cross-town shuttle” took him one mile, where he took a third train to Penn Station (midtown Manhattan), another modern engineering marvel.

These multi-level “cities beneath the city” were uncomfortable for anyone unfamiliar with them. Every store, restaurant and service imaginable is in these enormous underground transportation hubs through which millions of commuters travel each day.

Think of Manhattan this way: The population of the island doubled during the day because of commuters by train, ferry, bus, auto, on foot and even by helicopter. Up to one million arrived and left each day via these means.

Finally, Mr. Pack went up to the 35th floor of the 57-story One Penn Plaza office building, from which he could see Madison Square Garden, the Statue of Liberty, the World Trade Center, downtown Manhattan, and New Jersey. At day’s end, he retraced his steps, emerging to see his wife awaiting him, 10-12 hours later.

Fateful News

By the end of 1985, Mr. Armstrong had become virtually incapacitated.

Just one year earlier, he had started a book that he believed was his most important—*Mystery of the Ages*. Virtually blind, the apostle finished some of the manuscript on a typewriter specially formatted with oversized keys. (Aaron Dean’s help was most crucial to the process.) This was while struggling to see words on the pages of his Bible. (The Restored Church of God has this very typewriter today, still with its extra large keys.)

That fall, the Pastor General was thrilled to present *Mystery of the Ages* to all Ambassador College students. The book was also given at the Feast to Church members. Outside of the Bible, he believed no other book so thoroughly explained God’s truth and Master Plan.

A new year began, and Mr. Armstrong’s health grew much worse. His dynamic 52-year ministry was nearing its end. On Thursday, January 16, 1986, Mr. Pack was visiting a member with Mr. Fahey in New Rochelle, New York. The phone rang—it was Mrs. Pack. She explained that she needed to speak with her husband right away. Wondering what it could be, he took the call. She told him she had just received the news: Mr. Armstrong was dead. The apostle had died peacefully at home in Pasadena in his favorite rocking chair.

Mr. Pack was in disbelief to the point where it was difficult to speak. He told Mr. Fahey, who was also deeply affected by the news because he had, for a short time, been Mr. Armstrong’s personal assistant.

After calling Headquarters to confirm Mr. Armstrong’s death, he turned to Mr. Pack. “It’s true,” he said. “He died around 6 o’clock this morning.”

They immediately ended the visit and drove home, largely in silence, trying to comprehend the implications of Mr. Armstrong’s death and the Church’s future.

“I recall that the next morning I was terribly sick, and learned by Saturday night that I had the only

sinus infection I had ever experienced. But it was my responsibility to explain Mr. Armstrong's death to the Westchester congregation, since each of the four ministers of the pastorate were assigned to attend one of its four churches that day. There was no way I was going to miss that Sabbath, or even not preach. But the whole day of January 18, 1986, for several reasons was one of the most difficult in my life."

It became official: Mr. Tkach was the new Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God.

Unbelievable Revelation!!!

Two months later, on a Friday evening, Mr. Pack received a call from a pastor of a western New York congregation. He was emotionally distressed and did not sound like himself. He "had to talk."

"I have a confession to make," he said. After a long pause, he continued slowly and painfully, "I wrote you up to Mr. Tkach."

Mr. Pack said, "What do you mean you 'wrote me up'?"

"Last summer Mr. Tkach called and asked me to write you up. He wanted me to type up a report of as many different examples of misconduct and mishandling of brethren or situations that I could think of. I was to leave nothing out. I wanted you to know I did it and that I am sorry. I could not keep it to myself any longer. Several other pastors were also involved, and were asked to do the same. We were specifically instructed to make our reports as damaging as possible. I'm sorry, Dave, but as your friend I had to tell you what happened—and that I am not the only one who did this."

Surprised, Mr. Pack probed. "Who else was involved?"

"All the pastors surrounding Buffalo were asked to participate, and they did," the man answered.

This was hard to believe. Such careful, outright betrayal by men (thought to be ministers) who had so often smiled to his face—such cowardly, back-stabbing conduct from supposed men of God.

Hanging up the phone, Mr. Pack realized the uncertainty of his future.

He was truly “stuck” in New York.

Mr. Armstrong had died.

Mr. Tkach was in control of the Church.

I am absolutely in the hands of God, the demoted pastor thought.

Another Confession

Days later, he received a second call, this time from perhaps his closest friend, who was pastoring in Pennsylvania.

“Dave,” he said, “[Name] called me and told me he confessed what happened. I figured I better do the same.”

Mr. Pack asked, “Can I ask you the details of what happened?”

The man described his involvement. “I was sitting at my kitchen table on a Friday afternoon while Gerald Waterhouse [a visiting evangelist] was in town, and the phone rang. It was Mr. Tkach, who bluntly told me, ‘I want you to write up Dave Pack.’”

The man paused, struggling to continue.

“His exact words were ‘Make it good!...because Mr. Armstrong likes him.’ I was shocked by the request. I sat down and told the story to Mr. Waterhouse. I asked him what I should do. He replied, ‘Mr. Tkach is your boss. It sounds like you better do what he requested.’”

The advice reflected more cowardice.

Most painful was the man’s disclosure of what Mr. Tkach had also said: “We need one of Dave’s close friends to say some strong things about him or Mr. Armstrong won’t believe the report if Dave appeals. We must have a friend speak

up. If we can show that a friend is in agreement with the other reports it makes the whole story more credible.”

The man acknowledged that, racked with guilt (he said), he then wrote a short, false report. He explained that a few days after sending it to Pasadena, he received another call from Mr. Tkach—this time he was upset and demanding.

“Your report is not strong enough! Do it over! Throw everything but the kitchen sink into this report. It has got to be strong! I told you, Mr. Armstrong likes him.”

The caller went on to admit to Mr. Pack that he wrote still another false report—this time “much stronger.”

“Here was one of my dearest friends, a man I had known intimately for 18 years, who had done this to me. And he was only now telling me because he had been told that I knew. Most brethren have absolutely no idea the convolution of continuing evil that existed in the very highest reaches of the Church. Truly ‘all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution’—with the worst of it by far coming from those we would have thought to be in the Body of Christ. But I realized this must just be more training toward some end I could not yet see.”

Events of the past few months now began to clarify. Mr. Pack had wondered why, after his transfer, he had not heard a word from even one of his closest friends. *Now* he knew. He could never have remotely dreamed his friends could betray him as they did—and invent such outright lies in self protection.

The mentality of men so carnal, so weak, so cowardly—motivated out of fear and self-preservation—was difficult to comprehend when the price for the innocent victim was so great. Some would not give a second thought to sacrificing others to save themselves. Even worse, the duplicitous behavior came from those thought to be “God’s ministers.”

Where were men's consciences? What happened to basic right and wrong? What about bearing false witness?

Summing up this painful time in his life, Mr. Pack said,

“I learned to truly walk by faith and not by sight. I cannot even begin to describe how dumbstruck I was at that time. It was a moment like nothing I had ever been through before or since. It should not be surprising that these two men later gave up the truth wholesale to return to the world. So did two of the other three who participated with them.”

Mr. Pack was now 100 percent certain that the promised “promotion” was pure fiction—a lie of monstrous proportion by the man who now led all that Mr. Armstrong had been used by God to build.

Unsure of whether the situation was from Satan and allowed by God or a test sent directly *from* God, Mr. Pack asked, *What am I supposed to learn from this?* He resolved to learn the painful lessons it provided, and to endure until a miracle ended it.

A New Supervisor—*Further* Demotion

Soon, more details about the duration of Mr. Pack's long trial would become known.

It should be noted that within 24 hours of Mr. Armstrong's death, a team of younger men was immediately assembled to assist Mr. Tkach in reorganizing Headquarters and Church Administration. This team would become the architects of destruction that would guide all the events of the organization going forward. This scrambling to build a new order will take on greater meaning.

In the late spring, one of the first decisions the new Church Administration team made directly affected Mr. Pack. It was decided that Mr. Fahey's pastorate was too large for one man.

A foreign-born minister then serving in Appalachia became the new pastor of the Manhattan and Westchester County congregations, while Mr. Pack remained the associate pastor now directly under him. The two less-experienced associate pastors on Long Island, however, were promoted to full pastors, thus splitting one pastorate into three.

The incoming Westchester pastor was named the office manager for New York—the responsibility promised to Mr. Pack nine months earlier! The duties included congregations in Brooklyn and Queens, and Union, New Jersey. Mr. Pack was not even notified of the changes.

Many years earlier, Mr. Carlos Perkins, a minister, had become somewhat close to Mr. Pack—when they had both served in the Chicago area in the early 1970s. Mr. Pack fondly remembered him, having stayed at the man’s house and having spoken in his pastorate.

“Carlos Perkins was not only a very nice man, but a ‘salvation’ in a way. When Mr. Fahey transferred and Mr. Perkins moved at the same time into Brooklyn, he gave me the one office with a window, and it was also bigger. This may seem like a small thing, but he knew that it was a huge change for me to be cooped up in a tiny office in the city instead of out visiting brethren. Although he was the older man, and a pastor, he offered me the nicer office. I could not talk him out of his offer. This meant a lot at the time.”

But Mr. Pack was left to wonder what his future would hold.

Depths of Deception

Several months later, at the 1986 Feast of Tabernacles in Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania, the full picture of Mr. Tkach’s plan became clearer. He had been the Pastor General of the

Church for about nine months, when the minister involved in the basketball incident of nine years earlier was promoted to Director of Ministerial Services.

“By now, I had come to doubt even more that this past antagonist could be of God. Later, he would almost seem to set out to prove it.

“In November of 1986, some months after this man took office, he made the point at Refresher, speaking openly, saying ‘You know, Dave, we thought you were going to appeal your demotion to Mr. Armstrong and get it overturned, but you didn’t,’ he said. ‘You took it quietly and that surprised all of us.’

“Overall, the meeting went well since the Director was open and cordial, even indicating that Headquarters planned to make me a pastor again the following spring.

“Of course, it would soon prove to be an offer of false hope.”

Exhaustive Personal Project

That summer, stripped of his once busy schedule of responsibilities, Mr. Pack found himself with time on his hands.

But instead of feeling sorry for himself, he started the most profitable activity he could think of: an exhaustive personal Bible study project. Mr. Pack organized and printed (by hand) all the key scriptures on every major subject in God’s Word—a massive undertaking that lasted three and a half years. He spent literally hundreds of hours printing thousands of scriptures, always by hand.

Here is how Mr. Pack described this project in one of his books to the splinters:

“In late 1985, just before Mr. Armstrong died, I was demoted by his successor, after he had already

systematically stripped away most of my pastorate. This man had deeply resented my relationship with Mr. Armstrong and openly told me so. With Mr. Armstrong dying, he pounced.

“I was sent to New York City and placed under two successive men who were told to give me very little to do—‘teach me a lesson’—‘break me.’ This intensely difficult trial lasted for 4 1/3 years. I went from pastoring almost 1,100 people (some time before my transfer) in a beautiful part of western New York state to a level of responsibility equivalent, in some ways, to little more than what a deacon would do. (This is not intended to denigrate the important service of faithful deacons, but merely to explain my severe reduction in responsibility after having had such special and extensive previous training for pastoral service.) All of this occurred while having to serve in some of the most dangerous neighborhoods on Earth!

“I suddenly found that I had much time on my hands—and not by choice. Like a prisoner in a cell, I had to fill that time, and I decided there was one activity that was the most profitable way to do this! I determined to start organizing and printing ALL of the key scriptures on every major subject in God’s Word pertaining to Christian growth and overcoming. I knew this would be a daunting task, but decided that the benefits would be well worth the time spent—time I had in abundance. I saw value in a refresher about basics.

Extensive Research

“After selecting a topic (such as peace, happiness, wisdom, patience, faith, etc.), I would then look up *every single scripture* throughout the *entire* Bible that was in any way related to the subject. This often involved

many hundreds of passages. Next, I would selectively print out, laboriously by hand, a large number—50 to 100, and sometimes twice this number—of the clearest scriptures on each subject until I had exhausted it. For instance, there are 121 passages recorded under ‘Faith and Confidence’ and 90 under the heading ‘Persecution, Trials and Tribulation.’

“The project slowly took on a life of its own. I got to where I looked forward to each new topic. Ultimately, I wrote out thousands of passages. This task took years and I was transferred back to pastoring just before completing it.

“I now look back treasuring the many hours and years that I spent doing this. I still have the original notebook, and periodically review its contents, as does my wife. Among other benefits, this project helps me remember an extremely humbling period in my ministry—and life!—when circumstances *forced* me to bury myself in the project, in part to defeat discouragement and boredom.

“I have often reflected on this very long and most difficult trial—and on the *many* benefits gained from this exercise that are still serving me today. For instance, this exercise permanently changed my view of how God assembled His Word for our benefit. Space does not permit me to tell of all the other wonderful lessons that flowed from this scriptural research. (You could probably cite similar lessons from writing out the old *College Correspondence Course*.) Looking back, I have never doubted that God inspired this project. An assignment that was born of an injustice and seemed at first to be a curse turned into a great *blessing* partly because of God’s role, later seen so clearly!

“The thought did not then occur to me how this exercise would serve me for many years to come.

This is because, again, I still periodically read these scriptures aloud, sometimes in prayer, from the old, battered notebook. Pages are tattered and tabs are falling apart from age and use, and I have repaired them several times, much like rebinding an old favorite Bible, as I have had to do.

“For personal reasons, I will never stop reviewing these passages—or recalling the period they represent!”

Here is a small sampling of verses in the notebook that guided Mr. Pack through that trial and many to follow:

- “For among My people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that sets snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich” (Jer. 5:26-27).

- “He that by usury and unjust gain increases his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor” (Prov. 28:8).

- “An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked” (Prov. 29:27).

- “The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted” (Ps. 12:8).

- “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked bears rule, the people mourn” (Prov. 29:2).

- “You therefore, my son, *be strong* in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard...the same commit you to faithful men...You therefore *endure hardness*, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; *that he may please Him* who has chosen him to be a soldier” (II Tim. 2:1-4).

- “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

Reduced Responsibilities

Mr. Pack settled into the reality of working for a man who shared the same rank, yet had no more, and in some ways much less, experience. At least under Mr. Fahey, Mr. Pack was able to deliver sermons on a regular basis and more actively serve the local brethren. Assigning duties that basically reduced a man to perhaps a senior deacon was hardly the best use of one who had considerable years of experience pastoring large congregations.

Upon the new pastor’s arrival, it appeared Headquarters had instructed him to humble Mr. Pack. He was a well-connected minister within the new Church Administration Department.

The New Pastor

The new pastor was intelligent, and very capable, but full of himself. He and his wife openly scoffed at the notion of sending their child to Ambassador College. With their daughter heading to an Ivy League school, they discouraged the Packs from permitting their oldest son to apply to AC. It made for an awkward situation. (This man was also one of the three ministers who, years earlier, had pleaded with Mr. Pack to relay concerns to Mr. Armstrong, but then lacked the courage to call himself.)

The incoming pastor was also an effective organizer of events, and was charismatic. He was also an effective storyteller as a speaker. But he was also a classic example of a minister who avoided prophecy. Mr. Pack often preached on prophecy, and people loved it. This created a problem with the new minister. Mr. Pack quickly learned he had to stay away from certain topics so as not to overshadow his supervisor.

He meditated at length, struggling to understand the purpose behind the circumstances. The Bible records many prayers, and Mr. Pack recalled the thrust of his prayers: *Father, this is where I am and clearly where You want me to be. I read in the scriptures that you have put the members in the Body as it pleases You. I am here because this is where You want me to be. You can call the stars by name, know if a sparrow falls, and count the number of hairs on our head. I wouldn't be here unless You wanted me here.*

Though at times deeply discouraged, Mr. Pack determined to not waste time feeling sorry for himself. He routinely reminded himself of I Peter 2:19-20: “For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.”

Before his transfer, Mr. Pack had the opportunity to serve God's people in a big way. But here in New York City, he was essentially sidelined, and often working in blighted, difficult and dangerous areas. Yet brethren could still be visited; he could stay involved and make the most of the situation. The demoted minister encouraged as many brethren and prospective members as possible, sometimes meeting up to 10 or 11 people in a single day.

While he was permitted to freely visit existing members, even this was a challenge: The pastor instructed Mr. Pack to keep a written report of *every visit*—no matter how short—with a brief description. This was, of course, to “keep tabs” on him—to micromanage the 38-year-old, who was never asked to do this even when he was a 22-year-old ministerial assistant.

Mr. Pack learned later that this was part of a broader decision by the new CAD Director to “crush him”—these were the exact words reported to him by a friend who knew.

“I learned patience and faith in New York at a level I had never dreamed of, never mind practiced. It took *real* patience and *real* faith to simply survive—day, by day, by day, by day. I will never stop being grateful for having been *forced* to learn this. I was absolutely trapped, and God alone got me through it. I simply waited for God year after year to show His will, and what would happen next.”

Rock Bottom in New York

As the months passed, Mr. Pack came to appreciate in a greater way Luke 21:19: “In your patience possess you your [lives].” He was forced to learn that trials and difficult periods can seem insurmountable physically, as well as mentally and spiritually—yet when examined in a true spiritual light, the hardships of the Christian path can always be endured, can always be overcome, and with vital lessons learned.

“The biggest application of this need for patience was in reminding myself daily, weekly and for years to bite my lip. There is no language that comes to mind that could fully convey how difficult it was, at least early on, to continually ‘take’ things that occurred in the New York City assignment.

“I had to repeatedly ask God to help me endure both general conditions and specific moments that were regularly happening to me. It is just very difficult to imagine what it is like to work for supervisors with whom you know every word is being weighed—every action examined—in the light of negative instruction

they had been given from their superiors. You may recall from earlier the nature of what they were to carry out.

“Strangely, however, over time, I learned that one does not need to express many of the things that he thinks he does. Biting the lip can be a very good exercise, done at the right time. In fact, I learned that withholding most of my feelings was making me stronger. This is probably also akin in some ways to the adage, ‘Whatever does not kill me makes me stronger.’

“I took a certain real satisfaction in learning to accept whatever was dished out to me. In the end, I found that I could handle a lot more than I thought I could. God knew how this *learned* patience might yet be useful to Him in the future.”

***Plain Truth* Blitz—Again**

It was decided at Headquarters that Manhattan and the Bronx would be a special “target area” for the *Plain Truth* “Blitz” program.

Mr. Pack would relate to his supervisor about how *The Plain Truth* Newsstand program had been organized in the Buffalo metropolitan area and about the fruit it had borne. Attempting to find a way to serve, he offered to help organize the brethren who volunteered to participate.

But the pastor had a different idea, preferring to bring his own ideas from experiences in the small towns of more rural Appalachia. In addition to leading all aspects of the effort, he wanted Mr. Pack to work on the streets, personally filling newsstands alongside the brethren.

There was no choice but to roll up his sleeves and embrace the opportunity to help do the Work at the grassroots level.

Just as in Buffalo, Mr. Pack asked for as many extra magazines as possible. Within weeks, local men set up large numbers of outlets.

It was easy to enjoy the zeal of so many desiring to serve. On Sunday mornings, teams gathered to deliver magazines throughout Manhattan. Only six men in the congregation had cars, of which two or three were cabs. Thousands of copies were carried by hand onto trains and into subways for distribution.

The program experienced serious vandalism, as people dumped magazines out of boredom, simple spite or just wanting to stop the message *The Plain Truth* delivered. Many displays were damaged or destroyed, or sometimes magazines had been removed in place of other pamphlets or newspapers. And the pigeons loved them—there was cleaning to do.

New York is a chaotic place, completely unlike almost any other place on Earth.

“In many ways, the usual ‘rules’ do not apply in New York City. Traffic laws are followed as though they were mere guidelines, street preachers abound, sidewalks are jammed, hawkers are everywhere, as is crime in every form. In this environment people felt that they could freely use somebody else’s expensive distribution stands as though they were their own. It was not unusual to find that we had become ‘distributors’ of religious tracts, pornography, Broadway plays being advertised, community bulletin boards, even other kinds of newspapers, and other things.”

Undeterred, the “Blitz team” systematically repaired newsstands and replaced (or replenished) magazines time and again. Over the course of 13 months, the excited group distributed more than *three million magazines* on Manhattan Island and in the South Bronx. This brought tremendous satisfaction, and Mr. Pack thought, *At least I am now DOING something!*

Financial Rock Bottom

The winter of 1986-87 passed. And time continued slowly moving forward until soon it was 1988. Mr. Pack strove to set his “affection on things above” (Col. 3:2) as he wrestled with his inability to serve in a spiritual capacity. But he did find great reward in working with the brethren (some of whom were also in dire personal circumstances). And there were aspects of his new urban environment he found interesting. The fast-paced, high-energy atmosphere of “the city that never sleeps” had its benefits—but only for a short time.

Mr. Armstrong was gone, and the direction the new leadership was taking grew more uncertain.

The Packs also began to really struggle financially. Living near giant New York City was different from previous pastorates. The Westchester county area was very affluent and one of the most expensive places in the world to live. (The retired Clintons, after leaving the White House, later moved to a town about a mile from where the Packs had settled.)

At the beginning, the Pack family had moved into the small apartment in Thornwood, New York, for six months at \$1,500 a month (1985 dollars). The Packs soon searched for a home to rent in the same school district, but there was nothing available. The family was forced to change school districts again, and rent a house in the neighboring town of Pleasantville.

Eventually they located a modest, older home of over 1,600 square feet, yet it rented for \$1,550 a month—in 1986 dollars! The amount climbed to \$1,700 a month by 1989—over \$3,200 in 2009 dollars—as the family was forced to move two more times, each time into smaller homes before leaving New York. Mr. Pack did receive a modest “area wage adjustment” from Pasadena to help offset the addition-

al rent, but it only barely began to compensate for the overall additional financial burden. It was not designed to take into account the many *other* expenses of the metropolitan area.

For illustration, just before transferring to Ohio, the Packs received their final home heating bill: \$468! New York is often described as “the city where your hand is always in your pocket (paying tolls, tips and fees).”

Adding to the household expenses, Mr. Pack’s two growing boys were now teenagers and unusually big sons. Clothes were more expensive, the family was eating more, and food also cost more in New York.

Just keeping up with monthly expenses was a challenge. To make ends meet, Mr. Pack first exhausted his savings, then slowly ran up credit cards, hoping a transfer would come soon. But the goal in Pasadena was to systematically underpay him. And they did.

Some might ask: Why didn’t Mr. Pack take a second job, or why did his wife not go to work to help make ends meet? Ministers were not permitted to work a second job, or did so surreptitiously. The new administration did permit *wives* to do this, but this was *never* something Mr. Armstrong permitted—under any circumstances, except those working at Headquarters, and only then when the woman’s children were fully grown. Mr. Armstrong was emphatic that “the wife is 50 percent of her husband’s ministry,” and she needs to work alongside him. The Packs had three children at home who needed their mother, and they would suffer if she took a job.

But those children also needed to eat.

At some point, things became so dire in the fall of 1988 that, in order to pay the rent, something had to be done. And there was the need to avoid approaching Headquarters for what would seem like *further* assistance (above the area wage adjustment). This would have been a strike against Mr. Pack, with the probable accusation that he was “not managing his money properly.”

This is just the way it was.

Hat in Hand

Mr. Pack decided to visit his landlord “hat in hand,” asking for a free month’s rent *if* they would tidy up the yard (remove large bushes and trees, prune, plant grass, etc.—in what was now their fourth home). The landlord agreed, and all five family members spent two weeks working together outside. The family still has moving pictures of how bad the property looked, and how wonderful it looked when the process was complete.

The following summer, the landlord had to again be approached, as the family hoped for another creative way to “work off” a second month of rent. This time, the owner permitted the whole family to paint the exterior of the house. On each occasion they saved \$1,700.

Try to imagine. Here was an experienced minister and wife—almost 20 years out of college, and rearing children who were approaching adulthood—wanting to serve in their calling. Yet they found themselves forced to perform the same kind of work Mr. Pack had done after his junior year at college—trying to pay the bills with a paintbrush in hand. There was nothing wrong with physical labor, and there were lessons of value for the family in it, including *working together* against an urgent need. But to have been used in the ministry to such a limited degree, all while struggling to keep the household financially above water was *deeply* humbling and *deeply* faith-building. Of course, this was on top of having been betrayed by friends and unjustly demoted.

Mr. Pack concluded that one reason for the trial was that it became a test of whether he would become bitter or angry, and quit. This “bad attitude” would certainly have vindicated Pasadena.

“I realized that God would not permit wolves to remove me from my calling. They do not have such

power. No false leader carries the power or authority of thwarting God's plan for any of His true servants. This much I absolutely knew, and also because I was innocent of the charges they brought. In a sense, Mr. Tkach was given the same boundaries with my life that God gave Satan with Job. But why the trial went so long and was so very, very difficult was the part that was often uncertain in my mind at the time. Of course, I could not possibly have known what God had in mind for my future—but, looking back, I see that He would need to know the strength of my resolve.

“When Jesus said (twice, in Matthew 10:22 and 24:13) that those who endure to the end shall be saved, He meant it. I knew this is what Christians do, and that includes ministers. You do not give up because things do not go your way. *Nothing* could make me quit.”

Happy Moment

On February 20, Mr. Pack's Uncle Frank finally got married—at age 65.

“My mother's two brothers, her only siblings, did not marry until late in life. But they did finally marry. Her older brother, Dick, had dated a woman in Green Bay, Wisconsin, for almost *30 years*. Circumstances required her to take care of her elderly father, and my uncle had to take care of his mother, my grandmother.

“There was no way to merge the two homes, so a couple years after my grandmother died, they decided that they could no longer wait for her father to die. My uncle felt that he might die before his future father-in-law would. Finally, at age 58, in 1974, he decided to

‘pull the trigger.’ Obviously, this was too late for me to expect any cousins to result. Sadly, my uncle only lived another seven and a half years, until early 1982, when he died very suddenly of a heart attack in his sleep. I had not seen him for over 10 years. His wife, my aunt, is still alive.

“My Uncle Frank finally decided to marry at age 65—after my mother almost threatened to disown him as her brother (I speak facetiously) if he did not marry a person we all knew to be a wonderful lady. She had lost her husband due to cancer. He had been a good friend of my uncle.

“My aunt is one of the most unusual women I have ever met. She lived two years in Germany when she was younger, and after marrying she lived five years in Australia and 10 more in France, while her husband was the president of French Encyclopaedia Britannica. She has been the President of the Historical Society in Dana Point, California.

“A writer and historian, among other things, she did a tremendous amount of research on the history of the Crowl family as a gift to my uncle. But her efforts became a gift to the whole family. Much of the Introduction about Penelope Van Princes can be attributed to her. I sometimes wonder how many books my aunt has read. I am sure she has no idea.

“Now almost 80, and in good health, my aunt still travels the world by herself. One moment she is on a safari in Botswana, the next she is on a train from Moscow to St. Petersburg.

“I tell my uncle that I am upset that he met her so late that I could not have any cousins. He reminds me that she was married—and I have no response.

“My uncle almost became like a special third parent after mine died, and he would refer to me as the son that he never had. He and his wife have lived on the

California coast for the last 13 years. I still regularly visit them.

“I do have two cousins by my father’s older brother. Both (daughters) married naval officers, following in their father’s footsteps. The oldest daughter married a full Commander (a Lt. Colonel if he were in the army) who was also a Navy test pilot. Her sister also married a Navy officer.”

Sad Note

Not three weeks later, on March 10, Mr. Pack lost his paternal grandmother—“Grammary”—who died at the full age of 92. He had seen her weeks earlier in Jacksonville, Florida.

“This was the last of my grandparents to die. My grandmother was a small lady, with a kind of ‘banty rooster’ personality who was no end of fun for me as a grandchild. I had only met my Grandfather Pack (her first husband) once. I did know my grandmother well because she lived in Lima all through my childhood, and well past the point of college, my marriage and birth of our children, all of whom she knew. She was on my paper route as a child. For many years, I also cut my grandmother’s small lawn for \$1 per time, after which she would feed me breakfast and play cards with me. She was one of the best Gin Rummy players I have ever seen.

“After I went away to college, my brother Bill took care of her lawn, and he also inherited her house when he later took my paper route, which meant he inherited breakfast at her house. For all these reasons, I knew this grandmother much better than I did my other three grandparents. My wonderful, kind, adopted grandfather had already died in 1980. This man was also beloved of her grandchildren.

“In many ways, I learned more about honoring my own parents from watching my father and his brother honor the woman who had taken them through the Great Depression largely by herself, usually holding two jobs.”

Examples of Cheerful Endurance

One of the things that carried the Packs through these trying times was witnessing the congregation’s example. Week after week, the brethren displayed wonderful attitudes despite enduring the dreary, dingy and often inhuman conditions of living in New York City. They always attended services, Bible studies and other Church functions with smiles on their faces.

When these brethren arrived at services, they came to a spiritual oasis—then returned home to a dark, blighted urban landscape, not much dissimilar from a war zone. They overcame the day-to-day adversity, filth and squalor of their surroundings. Not owning cars, most brethren walked or relied on subways and buses—all the time—while also being constantly aware of the need for personal safety.

These harsh realities did not leave the brethren bitter. Despite difficulties, the Manhattan congregation was an example of friendliness and outgoing concern that was almost famous throughout the Church. Theirs was the warmest congregation the Packs had served.

Working with people who exhibited such appreciative attitudes gave the Packs solace, as well as a deeper perspective and resolve to endure.

“My wife and I determined something very early on: Never, under any circumstances, would *any* of the brethren in New York City be permitted to know our feelings about what had happened to us. While I literally hated such a big, dirty, crowded city, I decided

that I would never give even a hint to anyone of what I thought about serving there. Also, of course, there was the danger that one of them could report our feelings to our supervisor.

“Perhaps the greatest compliment we received from the brethren in the area, and this happened with many, is that they came and, literally, *consoled me* when it was announced that I was being transferred. They were under the impression that I so loved New York City that it was *leaving* the assignment, not *coming* to it, that was hard. In fact, because we were perceived to love the area, many opened up to us about how different this was from so many previous ministers assigned to New York who had disparaged the city at every turn.

“I still draw consolation at how not one person was, to our knowledge, ever able to discern our true feelings.

“What makes me saddest when thinking of New York is how few in the area even made it out of the apostasy into the splinters. It seems that much of their warmth in those days must have just been a natural *human* energy at work.

“When we left, the Church gave us a Steuben crystal apple as a going away present so we would never forget ‘the big apple.’”

Melting Pot

Those assembling for Sabbath services or activities were not all from a bleak, inner-city environment. The diversity of New Yorkers was unusual, and in many ways extreme. Brethren came together from neighborhoods across the Bronx and Manhattan. Of course, there were also the very different Westchester people—doctors and many other professionals.

There was another unique quality to the Manhattan congregation, different from previous pastorates: their ethnicity, which was approximately 65 percent black, 20 percent Hispanic and 15 percent Italian. Some of this was no different from the Buffalo congregation, which had a lot of Italians and fully 35 percent who were of Polish background.

“Why does a person’s ethnic background matter? What difference does it make?” one might ask. First, New Yorkers were an extremely *responsive* group. Experiences with the Manhattan brethren taught that, generally speaking, those not descended from ancient Israel were easier to work with than stubborn, “stiff-necked” Israelites. Mr. Pack has often stated that, through the years, no more than one-fourth of people receiving counsel truly act on it, even of those who seek it out.

One-third of all the inhabitants of New York were not even born in the United States, let alone New York City. Whether they came from the Caribbean, the Philippines, across Africa or Europe, the inner-city “projects” of New York were generally paradise compared to what they left behind.

Immigrants appreciated the blessings of living in the West. Of those God called into His truth, they were easier to work with. Though these people often had more “sins of the flesh,” because of the nature of their surroundings, they were much more friendly and outgoing. Also, Mr. Pack observed very little of an “entitlement” attitude so typical today of many in the West.

Experiences Like No Others

Many things seen in New York reminded Mr. Pack that he was not in Lima anymore. He was robbed twice and witnessed several arrests—including some in which police violently wrestled suspects to the pavement. On one occasion,

he saw two sets of policemen simultaneously arrest two thieves within 20 feet of each other—for *separate* robberies. Plainclothes police were said to match officers in uniform one-to-one on the street.

A member relayed that, one day while watching television, he heard gunshots. Although common, this time was different. The man peeked outside and watched someone bleed to death right below his window.

On another occasion, a young woman in the Church called on a Friday evening. She was nearly hysterical, and explained how she had just awakened to the sound of gunshots. Upon examining the wall directly above her, she saw a bullet hole, just inches above where her head had been resting asleep on a pillow.

There was also the experience of a member whom Mr. Pack had baptized. The day before the Feast of Trumpets of 1990 (eight months after the Packs had left the area), the man heard a knock at his door. Opening it, the neighbor across the hall asked for help. As soon as the member entered the neighbor's apartment, the man attacked him with a frying pan, delivering a crushing blow to his head and stabbing him in the chest and shoulder area with a six-inch blade—42 times!

The attacker fled his own home as the victim's wife rushed across the hall, finding her husband in a pool of blood. She called 911. The ambulance took *45 minutes* to arrive, because such events are considered almost par with New York. Authorities often believe violence is related to drug deals gone wrong, and take their time in responding, not wanting to get caught in crossfire. There is the saying among the police: "We let God sort them out, and come get the bodies."

While they waited for the ambulance, a clean-cut man arrived "out of nowhere," meticulously cleaned and bandaged the victim, waited for the ambulance, before suddenly—and permanently—disappearing. Miraculously, not *one* vital organ or major blood vessel had been struck—yet some

wounds were so deep the knife was said to have exited the skin on his back.

Ten days later, on the Day of Atonement, the member was back at services.

On another very sad occasion, soon after arriving in New York, a distraught mother came to Mr. Pack for counsel concerning the tragic death of her son: "My son worked for the city of New York and was collecting trash," she told him. "While he was working, a car knocked him into the back of the truck just before the compactor engaged. He was crushed and the city has offered me a \$72,000 settlement. Should I take it?"

On another occasion, Mr. Pack received a call from a member, who asked, "Is it all right for Christians to be hypnotized?"

Puzzled, Mr. Pack said, "Hypnotism? No, it's not good to be hypnotized. Why do you ask?"

"I just witnessed a murder and I'm at the police station," the member said.

Mr. Pack asked for more details. The man recounted that earlier that day he was entering his car with his wife when a man leaped from a car behind him and put five bullets into the face of a man standing in front of the hood of his vehicle. The gunman then laid his weapon on the sidewalk and drove away. Out of instinct, the member followed.

Mr. Pack asked, "What were you thinking?"

"Well, I did quit chasing the car after it went up a dark street and I realized what I was doing. I reported it to the police, and the officers think I may be able to remember the license plate if they hypnotize me. What do you think?"

"Excuse" Like No Other

Another time, a group of brethren were gathered at a woman's house one Friday evening for dinner. The dinner was to

start at 6:00, but one of the guests had not yet arrived. At 6:30, the hostess called the man to see if he was on his way. There was no answer. At 7:00, she called again, still no answer. At 7:30, she called again with no success, and called one final time at 8:00. He did not pick up. Wondering where he could be, but not able to wait all night, they began eating at 8:30.

Almost immediately after starting the meal, there was a knock on the door. It was the missing guest. She let him in and asked what happened. "I got tied up," he replied, seeming to enjoy saying it.

"What do you mean you got tied up?"

"Just before leaving my house, someone broke in, robbed me and *tied me up*! I heard the phone the whole time, but could not answer it. I finally untied myself and raced over."

Such could be New York!

The assignment was not all robberies, shootings and stabbings. There was a visit with a prospective member who had full-blown AIDS. As the man was explaining his condition, his full-grown, black pit bull charged into the room and excitedly jumped on Mr. Pack.

The owner yelled at his dog: "Midnight, stay down!"

He then reassured the minister, "Don't worry. He's friendly and harmless. He's only bitten me badly once." This was not the most comfortable visit.

In one of the saddest visits he ever conducted, Mr. Pack was called to a hospital room to see a mother (a member) of two sons who were friends of his boys. Just as he joined the woman at her bedside, her doctor arrived to inform her that she had a form of pneumonia associated with AIDS. She died soon after, and she suffered all the things one would expect with this terrible disease.

Counseling sessions were held with former prostitutes, pimps, drug addicts and all manner of criminals. Some were still battling these problems. Mr. Pack would describe that he counseled those who were dealing with virtually every

conceivable problem and offense—sin and crime—that human beings could have or commit.

Unique People

New York's unique diversity was also a study of extremes. The contrast between the living conditions of the "haves" and "have nots" was stark. Mr. Pack worked with some of the wealthiest and most influential people with whom he had come in contact. He visited people worth many millions of dollars, including well-known actors and musicians.

Once while visiting in a very affluent area of Westchester, Mr. Pack came to the end of a road where the house he was looking for should have been found. He saw nothing but woods. But as he got closer, he saw two giant columns, with huge, stone lions on top. After winding down the quarter-mile driveway, he arrived at a palatial home. Outside and smiling, the owner introduced himself. As they entered the man's office, the walls were filled with rows of gold and platinum records.

Mr. Pack wondered, *Who is this man?*

The prospective member turned out to be a very well-known songwriter and singer in a world famous band. Most readers here would know the band and his name. Affable and soft-spoken, the man and his family began attending, and within weeks he was playing third base on the softball team.

Again, such could be New York.

Most Unusual Wedding

On another visit, Mr. Pack was preparing to invite a prospective member to services when, over the course of the conversation, the subject of the man's occupation arose. He was in the "heating and air conditioning business." Thinking the

man was referring to *homes*, it was revealed that his company installed systems in *skyscrapers*.

Years later, this man would ask Mr. Pack to perform his wedding. Unable to secure a yacht big enough for the ceremony, the couple had been forced to rent a medium-sized *cruise ship* for the evening event. (President Franklin D. Roosevelt's private yacht had first been selected, but had proven to be too small.) The ceremony and reception, and dancing, were held on the ship as it circled Manhattan Island, passed the Statue of Liberty and went under the Brooklyn Bridge with the sun going down.

Noah's Ark

When visiting a prospective member in Connecticut, a chiropractor, in early 1986, Mr. Pack was introduced to a visitor or patient who was just leaving the doctor's home. The person departing was a naval pilot (a captain). Standing at the front door talking, Mr. Pack began telling him that his uncle had also been a Navy pilot who was a captain. The doctor then asked the pilot to explain how he had been commissioned by the U.S. government to fly into Turkey and specifically take photographs of the area where Noah's Ark was located.

Fascinated, Mr. Pack asked, "You actually saw the Ark?"

"Yes, many times," he answered. "Any photos you see of the Ark today, I am probably the one who took them, or who supervised the others who did. I had to avoid the Russian military and Armenian artillery because gun emplacements were located where the countries meet. This meant difficult maneuvering to avoid Armenian airspace."

The pilot said the pictures he took were infrared, which meant they could photograph through the ice and reveal some of what type of design was used to construct Noah's Ark, among other details.

There were also numerous times when Mr. Pack sat on trains or entered elevators with well-known people. These included actors, actresses, business types and professional sports figures.

So many people, so many personal stories, so many experiences. The lessons learned gave critical insight and perspective into the human condition. No matter one's social standing, race, age or gender, all people struggle with personal problems. Working with so many diverse people cemented into Mr. Pack's mind the need for God and His plan for mankind.

Mr. Pack remarked, "New York made it so easy to pray daily 'Thy kingdom come.'"

Marvelous Gift!

During this time in the Packs' life, Ran and Jane Pack surprised their sons by offering them and their wives an all-expense-paid, three-week tour of Israel in July 1988.

The parents wanted their sons to share rich, new experiences. They also recognized their oldest son had been stripped of responsibility, and the trip would take him from New York City for over three weeks. Knowing their sons' appetite to learn, there was no better gift they could give than to send them to where Bible history unfolded.

Mr. Pack's parents offered to watch their seven grandchildren during the trip. Overwhelmed, the four Packs gladly accepted. Mr. Pack could not have dreamt of a better gift—and it could not have come at a better time.

Planning for the Trip

When the hundred-page itinerary for the trip arrived in the mail, it only fueled enthusiasm. Dr. Richard Paige, one of Mr. Pack's classmates and a faculty member in Pasadena, would lead the tour. More than 40 members, including some senior ministers, would be going.

Mr. Pack began to realize just how comprehensive the trip would be: they would fly into Tel-Aviv and stay in the area for two days; next, depart for Jerusalem to explore the city and the surrounding region for six days; later, head to the northern regions of Israel and explore the shores around the Sea of Galilee; next, journey to Israel's southern tip and stay in the city of Elat on the Red Sea for four days; and finally return to Jerusalem for several days.

The group mostly traveled by bus, permitting riders to see the ancient landscape, interact with the people and gain a better understanding of the region. On top of the chance to broaden his mind spiritually, the journey would provide the opportunity to enjoy a change of pace away from the grind of New York City.

It is easy to forget that scriptural accounts actually represent events involving living, breathing human beings who lived in places that still exist. One of the most important challenges a minister faces is painting vivid pictures of events described in Scripture—to make the Bible “come alive” in the minds of brethren. Mr. Pack hoped it would provide a better frame of reference regarding biblical events.

Thumbing through the itinerary packet, the anticipation grew. The Packs realized they would see where Jesus began his ministry, *firsthand*, at the Sea of Galilee, the city of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the City of David, the creek where David killed Goliath, the Jordan River, the city of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Golgotha, the Mount of Olives, the Valley of Hinnom, Megiddo, the Valley of Jezreel, the Pool of Siloam, the Garden of Gethsemane, Nazareth, the Wailing Wall, Ceasarea Philippi, and other sites of biblical interest.

Maps and Books

To fully prepare for the trip, Mr. Pack made a list of all the things he wanted to see, experience and accomplish in Israel. He read books such as *Your Historical Guide to Jerusa-*

lem Throughout the Ages, The Popular Jewish Bible Atlas, Jerusalem Holy, The Jewish Book of Why, Petra, Facts About Israel, Biblical Holy Places: An Illustrated Guide, Bible Places, Our Visit to Israel and Oxford Bible Atlas. He then marked the entire trip on a detailed map to gain perspective of exactly where the group would be geographically.

“I love maps. I don’t know why, but I love to buy maps, study maps and make mental pictures of maps. I always have. I am sure it has partly to do with just enjoying the world’s geography. As a child, I studied them. I have collected them all my life. I can look at just the outline of highways of any city in America of any size and identify the city—and usually name the interstate highways and spurs that serve it. I cannot explain the love. So what better than studying maps and locations of areas all over Israel?”

Mr. Pack decided that to retain as much as possible for future use, he would keep a daily journal of his impressions. His goal was to maximize the experience by becoming a “sponge.” Mrs. Pack would take as many pictures as possible to capture this once-in-a-lifetime event!

Across the Atlantic

The time arrived to depart from New York’s JFK Airport. The first time to cross the Atlantic Ocean for Mr. Pack, the couple first landed in Frankfurt, Germany, where Mr. Pack recalled that “The trip became very interesting, very quickly.”

The passengers emerged from customs to find heavily armed soldiers throughout the airport, especially concentrated at the terminal from where Lufthansa flights left for Israel. Passengers with flights to Israel were isolated. Accompanied by soldiers with assault rifles, they were then driven by special armored buses, also accompanied by ar-

mored personnel, from the terminal to the plane. As each bus approached a plane awaiting departure, troops poured from the carriers. With backs to the Lufthansa jumbo jet, and Uzi submachine guns leveled, the soldiers stood guard around the plane.

It was an eerie experience no one was prepared for. They were no longer in the U.S.!

Once on the plane, the troops retreated into their vehicles, and the jet prepared for take-off. The group soon found out that part of the reason for heightened security was the hostilities in the Holy Land.

After an eight-hour flight, they arrived in Tel Aviv, where they were again carefully examined in customs. The group spent the next two days recovering from jet lag and preparing for the visit to the picturesque coastal city of Tel Aviv and the beautiful surrounding areas south of Lebanon.

Israel: A Military Country

Always sitting in the front seat of the bus since it was the only place a man of his size could comfortably fit, Mr. Pack could converse with the bus driver, a member of the Israeli military, whose son was an Israeli paratrooper. With regional violence intensifying due to the first Intifada, riding with this man set a certain tone to the beginning of the trip—and provided a look into the sobering reality of the region.

Talking for hours with the driver, Mr. Pack asked endless questions and listened to fascinating stories about Israel. He learned that because most Israelis are impassioned about their country, they in turn love Americans for their support. Contrarily, they hate the American press because of their unsympathetic stance toward Israel and seemingly open support for the militants who oppose the tiny nation.

One of the driver's comments caught Mr. Pack's attention. "Israel is due for another war in about three to four

years,” he calmly stated, “because there is one war in the Middle East about every eight years.”

Everyone—men and women—serves in the Israeli army at one point in their lives. Mr. Pack recalled vividly:

“When you are in Israel you had a sense that you were dealing with a people forged of steel—who will take no prisoners—they are a people who will never strike first, but they will always take an ‘eye for an eye’ and a ‘tooth for a tooth.’ And it was the entire citizenry.”

The bus frequently passed abandoned tanks, armored personnel carriers and other military vehicles destroyed in battle, and memorialized as national monuments. The Israelis often leave ruined buildings after violent acts to remind future generations of the danger they faced.

As a testament to this, the group went swimming in the Mediterranean Sea. As they bathed in the turquoise waters, attack helicopters zoomed back and forth, patrolling the beach. There were also periodic sonic booms by fighter jets on patrol.

The tour traveled from Tel Aviv north to the Lebanon border, where the Israeli army held a 10-mile “no man’s land” that was regularly patrolled to keep foreign commandos from penetrating the country.

Part of their visit included an area where a lone commando had crossed the barbed wire fenced border in the city of Dan. He had entered an Israeli settlement, and a soldier on guard panicked and fled, failing to warn anyone. The commando killed seven Israeli soldiers before he was killed. The soldier’s court martial was taking place during the trip.

Evidence of War Everywhere

Bullet holes were everywhere. “You could see them right into the cement and stone where they had chipped it away,”

Mr. Pack remembers. “I saw them in a number of places.” The guides often stopped to point them out, saying, “Those are 1948 bullet holes,” or “those are 1956 bullet holes,” or “those are 1967 bullet holes in the Joppa gate.”

As a part of everyday life, the army was continually on patrol and more visible than the police. Soldiers patrolled old places of historical significance. Barbed wire and concrete barriers were everywhere. Barricades bordered villages, particularly along the edge of Israel.

Throughout the country there were people with missing arms, legs, parts of hands and wearing eye patches—unreported casualties of never-ending violence.

It was painfully obvious that Jesus’ millennial rule was in the future not the present.

Mr. Pack learned firsthand that Israel was in constant fear of terrorism, and few families had not been touched in some way by it. Mr. Pack asked how the Israeli military views God.

“They know that the Bible talks about Israel,” he responded.

Mr. Pack pressed, “Do you believe there was any kind of divine intervention in these battles...for the Israeli cause?”

The guide became uncomfortable at the mention of God. “Israel has strong enough reason and motivation to succeed ourselves.”

It was clear where this man stood. And his belief seemed to represent the majority of Israelis. They reasoned that it was their zeal and purpose that carried them through, not God’s intervention! And, interestingly, only 56 percent even believed God existed—with less today.

Account of Samson Comes Alive

North of Tel-Aviv, the group stopped in Tel-Keitel, an ancient Philistine town, and descended into a fascinating archaeological dig.

The story of Samson recounts how he was captured by the Philistines, blinded and kept as a slave. In his last heroic act, he was given his strength back, and used it to knock down the two major pillars that supported the pagan Philistine Temple—destroying it (Judges 16:29-30). For a long time, skeptics thought it was impossible to have a building designed in a way that a single man could push two pillars and collapse the entire structure, killing hundreds, even thousands. Archaeologists questioned why anyone would construct such a building. The result was that most viewed the story as fiction.

The excavation at Tel-Keitel revealed the ancient part of a city, about 3,500 years ago, where archaeologists discovered a Philistine Temple—its roof held up by *two middle pillars!* It was interesting to look down and see these pillars, stationed about four feet apart, with enough room for a man to stand and push them down—provided he had strength from God.

To see such a powerful biblical story come alive was inspiring.

A Desolate Conflict-riddled Country

After two days on the Mediterranean coast in and around Tel-Aviv, the tour headed southeast for the two-hour journey to Jerusalem. Mr. Pack recalled, “I could scarcely wait.”

On the ride south, the tour noticed a lack of trees across the Israeli countryside. Several times, the Bible describes the lush forests that once flourished throughout ancient Israel. The guide explained the primary reason for so few trees, even on the western side of the mountains, was that the Romans routinely destroyed forests when conquering new lands. This was to subjugate the native peoples, establish authority and rebuild cities and towns after the Roman pattern. Israel was no exception.

Many of Israel’s climate problems can be attributed to the lack of large forests, a condition that has existed for more

than 2,000 years. Small forests now grow all across the country. Since it does not rain during the summer, a unique irrigation system is employed. The nation takes tremendous pride in planting forests.

The Palestinians launch attacks and burn trees to damage Israel. The government does not take this lightly. It was explained that when a person is convicted of burning a forest, long prison terms result.

To limit the expense of imprisoning an arsonist, the government sometimes seals off his home so he cannot enter, locking him out for a predetermined time. With more serious crimes, sentences can include bulldozing an offender's home. In the worst case, the house is bulldozed *and* the person goes to prison.

“Hearing stories of such crime and punishment told in a matter-of-fact manner was something to which I was not accustomed. I realized the amazing differences between my home culture and that part of the world. In much of the Middle East, arsonists run the risk of extremely harsh penalties. Punishment (swift and severe) actually is a deterrent, unlike in America and other Western nations.”

Arriving in Jerusalem

The Bible talks of “going up to Jerusalem.” Approaching the city by bus brought an appreciation of the term. Jerusalem sits on a huge ridge 2,600 feet above sea level, despite being only 30-35 miles from the Mediterranean coast.

The road to the city from the coastal plain to the west winds through the mountains. East of Jerusalem lies the desolate Wilderness of Judea. Seeing this area of the country was eye-opening, since it is where Jesus was tempted by Satan. Less rainfall makes the area even more desolate than the West Bank.

By contrast, the Mount of Olives, which sits on a ridge running north-south, separates the area from the fertile coastal plains. Mr. Pack has described seeing this area as a profound moment in the trip, because of picturing the mountain splitting at the Return of Jesus Christ (Zech. 14:4).

On one of the first nights in Jerusalem, a tour member offered to rent taxis so the group could tour the city privately for the first time apart from the guided tour. The Packs and a few others gratefully accepted.

One of the first things noticed about the city was its beauty. Throughout the streets and neighborhoods was “Jerusalem stone,” a unique white stone used everywhere that is easy to cut and polish. A law in Jerusalem largely forbids anyone from building with anything else. Almost all government buildings and others downtown use it. Walking the streets, the group came to a blocked area where Arabs were throwing rocks, bringing reality to the current conflict.

In 1987, the first real uprising (or intifada) in many years in the nation of Israel occurred. After relative peace between Arabs and Jews in the Holy Land, the situation had again reached a boiling point, with violence spilling to the streets.

Stumbling upon the disturbance, the driver calmly yet forcefully informed Mr. Pack and his brother, “We should not go farther. It could be dangerous.” They turned and continued their tour in a safe part of the city.

Next the group went into an area called the Mea Shearim, meaning “100 gates.” It was a closed, segregated neighborhood, a kind of slum where the extremely conservative Hasidim, or Hasidic Jews, lived.

The women walked on one side of the street, with the men on the other. This practice is based on a strict interpretation of Old Testament law in which men are forbidden to come in contact with a woman during her “fountain” (menstruation). The verse, meant to prohibit *sexual* contact, was mistaken to mean no contact of any kind. Even husbands and wives did not walk together.

Shocking News

While in Jerusalem, the tour received very surprising news—shocking to Mr. Pack. While the group was standing in line to visit the Western Wall, one of the editorial employees returned from making a phone call to Pasadena. No one was ready for the report he brought.

“The messenger had just been told that Mr. Tkach had decided to cancel the book *Mystery of the Ages*. There were supposedly ‘problems’ with it, and it would ‘soon be reprinted.’ I had no idea what this meant, but I remember being shocked that all copies were to be destroyed. It was only later that we would learn there was no intention to ever reprint it, that the decision was part of a grander plan to destroy all of Mr. Armstrong’s literature, and that the decision was so firm that 800,000 copies were destroyed worldwide. The man bringing the report seemed to have been expecting something. But I was shocked.

“Of course, looking back, once we knew these things, this moment became much like the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was a date that would live in infamy.”

Irony of the Dome of the Rock

The approach to Jerusalem brought the first clear view of the ancient “city of peace” (the literal meaning of Jerusalem). Dominating the skyline was the Dome of the Rock, the third-holiest shrine in Islam, and an impressive sight.

As the group toured the Dome, they saw the exact spot where Muslims believe the prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven. According to Islamic tradition, as “Gabriel” pulled him toward heaven, Mohammed’s feet became stuck and the

whole rock began to move, creating a cave underneath. Removing his shoes and entering the cave, Mr. Pack noted no evidence of where “Mohammed’s footprints” were supposedly located. There were Muslims praying. No photographs were permitted on this “holy ground.”

This is also the site where the Jews believe the Temple was built in ancient Israel. The present Temple Mount is under Muslim control and covers 35 acres. It was constructed by Herod the Great, beginning in 20 B.C., and its large rectangular platform required filling in a large part of the Central Valley.

During the visit, Mr. Pack also learned that the Western Wall is holy to the Jews because, as the only part of the Temple structure remaining, the Jews believe that God’s Spirit entered the wall, having no other place to go. Visitors insert prayers on folded paper between its stones. There are hundreds visible.

“The most amazing thing to me was the massive cut stone used for the Temple, each weighing anywhere up to 40,000 pounds. This was in the area of the archaeological dig where Ambassador students had participated in the AICF-sponsored event years before.

“Perhaps the most poignant moment was seeing the ‘pinnacle of the Temple’—over 100 feet tall—just below the al-Aqsa mosque on the corner of the Mount, dropping to the base of a very steep slope. To see the very place where Jesus battled Satan was a moving and memorable moment.”

Walking the Streets as a Tour Guide

Mrs. Pack often referred to her husband as the “consummate tour guide” because of both his natural curiosity and desire to share knowledge with others.

“I found it surprising that many of the others on the trip were content to view it as just another vacation. It was as though they were touring Florida or a Caribbean island. I saw few note-takers. Also, few seemed to even know enough to ask questions.”

On another free day, Mr. Pack decided to lead a tour through Jerusalem and walk the wall around the four quarters of the city. It was another eye-opening experience that revealed the stark contrast between the Jewish quarter, immaculately clean and recently rebuilt, and the Arab quarter, which was dirty and drastically different.

“Everything about the culture of this ancient land—dress, food, gestures—was different from what Westerners are accustomed to. You cannot really appreciate in a brief description how different the Middle East really is. America is learning the bitter, hard lesson that the Middle East is a place where you cannot win. They do not think like Westerners. They do not believe what we believe. They do not dress as we do. Their religion is different. Most of this is, of course, because Jew and Arab history and religion have taken such different paths through the centuries.”

Walking into “Hell”

Mr. Pack and his brother decided to take an excursion to Hinnom and visit the valley of Jehoshaphat. They wanted to be able to say they had walked through the area the Bible describes as “hell”—where dead bodies were burned, where “worms die not.” A taxi took them to the area.

Starting near the city of David, the two men walked toward and into the Valley. Mr. Pack recalled the account of Joab becoming “chief” (I Chron. 11:4-7) after he had captured this area.

A unique natural formation in the city's limestone, called the "gutter" or "water shaft" (II Sam. 5:6-8), forms an underground passage, a long, thin labyrinth that enters the valley from the bottom of the hill outside the city. Joab's troops had crawled one at a time in pitch blackness, unable to even hold a torch. Eventually, traveling 55 feet up, to where water runs out of the ground.

"This was one of those special moments when the Bible comes alive—really alive. It took athletic ability, extreme strength, courage and endurance to accomplish this feat. Joab and his men could not show fear or weakness. I gained a new appreciation for their actions, and will never forget looking down from the top of the 'gutter' into a narrow cave that dropped into the darkness. I was 'riding in the saddle' with Joab and those with him."

The brothers continued down the valley, on essentially the edge of Jerusalem, where the city's garbage was held. They soon realized they *really were* in a type of hell. It was a seedy area littered with shacks. They learned later this was a dangerous place for Westerners to wander alone: a British student had ventured into the valley and been killed by Arabs who had mistaken him for a Jew.

Finally, realizing there might be danger, they turned around and called a cab. Since the driver spoke little English, he wandered around until figuring out where his American passengers wanted to go.

Runaway Camel!

Another interesting experience occurred on the east side of Jerusalem, at the base of the Mount of Olives. Encountering a man offering camel rides, Mr. Pack and his brother were talked into the adventure. Assured it was safe, and only cost-

ing seven shekels (a few American dollars) for both men to ride the same camel, the brothers “hopped on.”

It would at its least make a great picture!

Bill settled in front on the more comfortable hump. Next, Mr. Pack climbed atop the animal, realizing the only seat available was astride its protruding backbone—*very* uncomfortable.

The owner tossed Bill the reins, which fell short as the camel took off down the street. The owner screamed, “Oh no, the camel is out of control!” He chased, but could not catch them.

With his brother holding the hump, Mr. Pack yelled, “Bill, Bill, get hold of that rope!”

The rope flew around as Bill struggled to grab it. “I can’t!” he replied. “I can’t reach it!”

As adrenaline shot through his body, Mr. Pack did not realize they were unwilling participants in a set-up: the camel was *trained* to run for a while and stop! To this day, Mr. Pack and his brother laugh at the story.

Soon after, the group visited the ruins of one of Herod the Great’s temples. Although Herod had six temples across Israel, one location was of particular interest near Jericho, at the edge of the Dead Sea.

On the way, the group was captured by the sight of throngs of Bedouin children.

“These were some of the saddest looking people I had ever seen. Their lives were monochromatic, their living conditions dismal and their entire existence revolved around groupings of little dirt shacks they called homes. The area was desolate, without a single tree for miles. Being close to the Dead Sea, below sea level, made it excruciatingly hot.

“I was curious and wanted to see how I would be treated as a tourist. I briefly left the group and approached some playing children. Ranging from

age three to 10, some were naked. They surrounded and tried to pickpocket me—unsuccessfully. For the rest of the trip, I was on guard for swarms of children, with my hand always on my wallet when they approached.”

Arab Marketplace

The group next visited a typical Arab “shopping center,” where tourists could bid on items and negotiate with merchants.

“I decided to purchase something for our children. With the vague notion that the price listed is nowhere near what one should pay, I started bidding on a few things. Most items were very obviously overpriced trinkets. It took awhile to find something I wanted, but I eventually saw two decorative daggers and sheaths encrusted with ‘jewels’ that I thought our sons would enjoy. The merchant was selling them for \$30 apiece. I launched into bidding, offering a certain price. The man resisted, trying to “work” me higher.

“Confident I would not lose the bidding, I got the merchant to lower the price. Finally, both of us arrived at a price where neither would budge. Unhappy with the price, I started to leave. The real game of ‘cat and mouse’ now began. The merchant went a little lower to keep me ‘on the hook,’ repeating this several times.

“Unaware of this tactic, I felt extreme pressure and almost guilt as the seller made me feel as if I was cheating the ‘poor, honest shopkeeper’ into an unfair price.

“I had had enough of the game and left the store. The man chased me, saying I was ‘really ripping him off’—and yet again offered another lower price. Frustrated, I finally said, ‘That’s it. No more.’

“But the merchant would not lose the sale. Running down the street, he offered a final price of six dollars per dagger. I agreed, partially feeling sorry for him, only to learn later that the merchant had paid about 80 cents each!

“My brother also wanted to buy something a bit nicer as a token of the trip. Searching for a quality Bedouin blanket, he found one in the same market. It was hand-woven and magnificent—yet the merchant wanted \$1,000 for it. Wanting the blanket, but determined to not pay anything close to this amount, he began a bidding war. The price fell to a more reasonable \$200.

“Shopping in the Arab markets and seeing the indigent people was eye-opening. Although it was an entertaining novelty to shop there, it was a sad revelation about the lengths to which people in these conditions must stoop to survive—a career of deceiving customers into buying terribly overpriced items.”

Bethesda Pools, Walls of Jericho and Hazan Caves

Another significant landmark were the Bethesda pools (described in John 5:1-8), near Jerusalem, where Jesus healed a man who suffered an infirmity for 38 years. The word *Bethesda* implies healing, from which the world-renowned Bethesda Naval Hospital in Annapolis, Maryland derives its name. Patients still go to these pools today to talk to priests or medical doctors for counseling, or to get medicinal drugs, because of this scriptural reference.

Another interesting sight were the walls built in and around Jerusalem and other cities. One example was Jericho and its famous fallen walls. Considered by most to be a Bible myth, in 1967 archaeologists discovered that many of the city's walls did seem to have collapsed instantaneously, rather than slowly over time. According to ex-

perts, only one wall remained intact (obviously of Rahab the harlot).

Then there were the Caves of Hazan. Difficult to locate and long hidden, these were unearthed in a remote part of southwestern Israel. They reached deep into the earth. The last time they were apparently occupied was during the final Jewish revolt, called the Bar Kokhba Revolt, from A.D. 132-135. During the uprising, a Jewish rebel leader gathered 200 of his people and carved out the limestone caves, which they used to ambush and destroy five Roman legions (typically consisting of 4,200 to 5,000 troops). The rebels would then vanish into the cave system.

Inside the caves were grinding devices used to make olive oil that were still visible. The rebels created a secret system in which the oil was sold to finance their efforts. They also sold and marketed wine. Their operations remained a secret until betrayal by one of their own. Armed with the knowledge of the hideout, the Romans placed wet, green brush over the mouth of the cave and lit it on fire. The smoke forced the rebels out so the Romans could slaughter them. All 200 were killed.

More details were learned about the Romans' destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Mr. Pack observed the effects as the tour walked certain areas of the city.

In June 1967, archeologists slowly excavated affluent neighborhoods of ancient Jerusalem. Evidence revealed that the Romans had systematically destroyed and then buried homes. Christ's words were recalled of when no stones of the Temple would remain (Matt. 24:1-2). But the Romans had also completely destroyed the entire *city*.

“We ventured deep *beneath* the city of Jerusalem. The area felt much like I had always envisioned the catacombs of Rome. As we passed by and through ancient homes, the support system that engineers had designed amazed all of us.

“Our exploration brought us to an area called “the burnt house.” It had been excavated and left intact as it would have been after the A.D. 70 destruction. It was covered with a layer of ash 1,897 years old. The guide related that some of the homes of that time were 10,000 square feet and many originally contained their own saunas and whirlpools.

“We also saw mummified bodies. Some still wore jewelry, and other valuables were in place in their dwelling. The Romans burned Jerusalem without even taking time to pillage.”

Visiting Bethlehem

One of the more disappointing sites was the Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem, southwest of Jerusalem.

“It was a sad experience—not because I expected to be moved by where we knew Jesus Christ was *not* born—but because the site had been reduced to a gaudy ‘shrine.’

“Six competing religious groups operated the church for monetary gain. They were divided to the point of being unwilling to let anyone in these six groups hold the church’s key.

“The guide related that an Arab/Muslim family had the keys. They are passed on through generations, with no Christian permitted access to them. About 1,600 years old, the building was ornate, filled with icons and stained glass windows, and dominated by Byzantine design and architecture.”

One of the more interesting parts of the design was a short, bricked-up doorway. The floor was raised from a previously bigger door. The guide told the group that during the Crusades, knights showed such disrespect for the

churches that they did not want to get off their horses before entering them—so the knights had big doorways constructed. In response to this, the monks raised the floors of the churches so the crusaders would be forced to get off their horses to enter.

Although intriguing, the church certainly had no religious significance. Of course, the Bible does not mention it. Tradition holds the site as Jesus' place of birth merely because the Emperor Hadrian built a shrine to Tammuz on the site in A.D. 135. As the years passed, folklore sprang up and many were led to believe that the shrine linked it to Jesus' birth. To perpetuate the myth, the Emperor Constantine consecrated it.

“There was a certain pathos to the fact that so many were confused. At no previous time in my life was the reality of the false Jesus so evident, with idols and crosses everywhere.”

Pinched Nerve in Hezekiah's Water Tunnel

One of the trip's most unforgettable kinds of experiences was walking the same steps as well-known people in the Old Testament had done.

“For example, there was Hezekiah's water tunnel on the north side of Jerusalem. Modern archaeology and the detailed biblical account of II Chronicles describe the amazing events and circumstances surrounding the construction and use of the 1,750-foot-long (one-third mile), hand-cut tunnel. During King Hezekiah's reign, about 700 B.C., Israel was attacked from the north by the Assyrians. The invaders systematically conquered cities and strongholds across Israel, sometimes using massive earthen ramps and battering rams. Lachish had fallen. Jerusalem alone held out. Hezekiah watched as

the Assyrians conquered and took tens of thousands of his people into captivity.”

The king devised a plan: when the Assyrians arrived to lay siege to Jerusalem, there would be no water! A little spring in the valley of Jehoshaphat flowed into Jerusalem. Hezekiah capped the spring so the Assyrians would not find it, and rerouted the water inside the city walls to what is known today as the pool of Siloam.

The events are recorded in II Chronicles 32:3: “He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him.” It is also found in II Kings 20:20: “And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?”

II Chronicles 32:30 adds, “This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.”

The king’s engineers started at opposite ends, chiseling to the middle through solid rock. Workers toiled around the clock. Eventually, after some engineering course corrections, the two tunnels connected and the extraordinary project was completed, effectively thwarting the Assyrians. Even by modern standards, this is considered to be an engineering marvel.

“With this account in mind, I prepared to tour the tunnel. The group navigated the underground passage, flashlights in hand, which still runs into the Pool of Siloam. The tunnel was only five feet high in most places, and at times the water grew deeper, sometimes reaching waist level. It was also flowing swiftly. My height provided a challenge the other sightseers did not have. Slouching, leaning and bending through the circuitous tunnel, I was so focused on the journey I did not realize until a day later that I had severely pinched a

nerve in my neck—and I could barely lift my left arm for six weeks. But the experience was very memorable—it placed us in the same location as Hezekiah’s men.”

Caesarea Philippi

After many days in the Jerusalem region, the group traveled into the northernmost areas of Israel. Included was Caesarea Philippi, 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

Caesarea Philippi is best known as where Jesus stated, “I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). It is also the biggest source of water for the Jordan River.

“Approaching the landmark, where a Catholic monastery now sits, I visualized Jesus on the same spot talking about building ‘upon this rock.’ A monolithic cliff towered above us. I immediately recognized the only thing Jesus could possibly have meant was building on Himself as the God of I Corinthians 10:4, not on Peter, a little pebble. The Catholics are without defense in their position. Geography alone tells the tale.”

The Sea of Galilee

From Caesarea Philippi, the group ventured south for several days to the area around the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberius), Israel’s largest freshwater lake. Although little springs of salt water enter it, most have been isolated and capped to reduce salt levels in this vital source of drinking water. Interestingly, it is the lowest freshwater lake on Earth, at more than 200 meters below sea level.

The region is most known as where Jesus began His ministry. He lived most of His adult life on its shores before journeying south to Jerusalem for the final phase of His ministry. Capernaum lies on the northernmost tip of the Sea, and is where Jesus did much of His preaching.

“We took a boat trip to Capernaum for Sabbath services, where Jesus gave His Sermon on the Mount. In what would become perhaps the most memorable moment of my ministry, I had the honor of delivering the sermon while overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The experience of standing where Jesus had preached nearly 2,000 years ago was indescribable.”

It was obvious why the lives of those living in the vicinity revolved around fishing. This explained why Jesus would have used so many analogies comparing His disciples’ fishing skills to preaching the gospel.

The guide explained that during a recent drought, the sea dropped to its lowest recorded levels. Subsequently, archaeologists found what looked like the “ribbing” of a boat protruding from the mud. Although most of the vessel was buried, experts removed and refurbished it for display. The boat was determined to be approximately 2,000 years old.

On the eastern shores of the sea is an area that has been a contentious piece of real estate for centuries: the Golan Heights, a high plateau that rises sharply on the northeast side of the sea. Its desolate rolling hills have provided critical defensive positions dating to ancient Israel and, more recently, the Six-Day War.

“I toured several battlefields and memorials from the 1967 conflict, visiting trenches, foxholes, gun emplacements, twisted artillery and destroyed jeeps and army carriers. It became apparent how proud Israel is of its military accomplishments.

“At one memorial the guide described an inspiring battle cry that Israeli officers would use. The translation means ‘After me,’ or ‘Follow me.’ Leading by example, officers yelled this to their troops before a charge. This mentality epitomized the Israeli military.”

Next on the tour was an area opposite the Golan Heights—Mount Carmel. This is where Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18). The mountain overlooks the Valley of Megiddo, the broad flat valley stretching out below where Elijah called fire from heaven. Of course, the Catholic Church had built a church on Carmel because of its custom of building on an area's highest spot—the coveted traditional “high place” position.

Next was the Via Maris, a narrow gorge on the way up to Megiddo, where some of the most famous ambushes and battles throughout Israel's history occurred. Numerous armies traveled through this gorge. The Via Maris happened to be the fastest way to get to Megiddo, also known as the Jezreel Valley. Huge armies—some with 500,000 men—had passed through this spot.

“Nearby, we visited the very spring from which Gideon's small army of 300 men drank (Judges 7:1-7). In a lighter moment, I lay down and everyone took pictures of me lapping the water as Gideon's men had done so many centuries before.

“King Saul was killed in this area. When a guide reminded us of this, it generated interesting comments on how the Jews viewed Saul. We learned that most Jewish people do not think of him as a rebel who disobeyed God, but rather as a generally good man who was just weak. The prevalent opinion is that the Bible is too harsh on him and that Saul should generally be remembered as a patriot.”

Swimming in the Dead Sea

The Great Salt Lake in Utah is four times saltier than the oceans. The Dead Sea, however, is 13 times saltier than the Great Salt Lake—making it *52 times* saltier than the oceans. This means swimmers are extremely buoyant.

“Swimming in the Dead Sea is not comparable to any other experience, or even other swimming, and for several reasons. First, I was able to read a newspaper while sitting with my head well above the water. It was strange. But it was also extremely hot, and thus perspiration immediately gushed from the exposed parts of swimmers. Warned not to wipe our eyes, most could not help it, and thus wiped more salt *into* their eyes than they were wiping *away*. It *really* burned.

“Next, the swimmer would have to leave the water and race across the hottest sand—*terribly* burning the bottom of the feet—to get to a shower to rinse off. In conclusion, an experience I would not want to miss was agony throughout.”

The Masada

Perhaps one of the most fascinating sites on the tour was the Masada, where several hundred Jews for so long held off Roman forces. (Some believe this was David’s stronghold.) The massive mesa-like plateau hosting the fortification towers over the valley below and overlooks the Dead Sea at its base. The only way to access the ruins is by a ski-lift type cable car. Several hundred feet to the top, the elevation is still below sea level.

“Evidence of the Roman legions is still visible in the form of defensive walls. I walked around the Masada and noticed piles of huge round stones resembling cannonballs. These were reminders of the ancient Roman ‘mortars’ that catapulted boulders hundreds of feet into the stronghold.

“The persistence of the Romans eventually overcame the resistors. However, as I toured the ruins where Jews once hid so long ago, I began to understand the importance of the Masada to *modern*

Jews. It had become a symbol of strength in the face of overwhelming adversity.

“At the top our guide said, ‘Let’s all sit down. I’ve got something I want to read.’ He held a copy of what the ancient Jewish commander at Masada told his besieged people. It was a moving account about how they would never let the Romans diminish their spirit or the revolt they had begun. They believed this spirit would be kept alive by mass suicide before surrender. Of course, this is how it ended.”

Scuba Diving in Elat

The group then headed to Israel’s southernmost region. However, the Intifada at the last minute prohibited visiting several sites that many people had been looking forward to seeing. These included Mounts Gerazim and Gebal, where God pronounced Israel’s blessings and cursings. Perhaps most disappointing was the tour would not be able to visit the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah were buried.

This setback allowed extra time to relax, which was used to visit the city of Elat. This place is so hot it could be described as the “death valley” of Israel, despite being on the water’s edge. Even at midnight, when outside, one is literally blasted by the heat of still over 100 degrees temperature driven by powerful desert winds.

Mr. Pack and his brother used this part of the trip to snorkel in the Gulf of Aqaba, geographically unique because of its location on the northernmost tip of the Red Sea. Here, four nations (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Egypt) come together and can all be seen from one spot. This is one of the best places on Earth to dive because of its vast coral reefs teeming with exotic fish.

“Just putting my head underwater attracted hundreds of spectacularly colored fish. Red, green,

blue, striped, and every size, shape and color combination of fish imaginable were present. The colors were absolutely brilliant as my brother and I dove under exotic coral bridges and formations.

“Following some distance behind my brother, I was observing the colors of the fish and coral designs, when a fairly large octopus surprised me. My face came within six inches of the frightened creature! As I swam over it, the octopus attempted to disguise itself by blending with the coral on top of a rock. Only when it quivered did I realize what I had seen. Startled, I jerked backward and motioned for my brother to join me.

“‘There’s an octopus here!’ I yelled, yanking my head from the water. I wanted my brother to see it—but he was an unbeliever.

“‘I’m not kidding! That rock there just moved.’

“Sand had kicked up a little bit so I returned to see it again.

“‘It’s still there,’ I said. ‘Come on over.’ Swimming by again kicked up more sand. By the time I convinced my brother, the octopus had disappeared at apparently great speed.

“Looking back, I consider this coral diving one of the most unique experiences of my life.”

Later, the two brothers did additional diving near a sunken ship not far from the Egyptian coast.

Holocaust Memorial

The tour returned to Jerusalem as the trip drew to a close. But there would still be the life-changing visit to Yad Vashim—the World War II Holocaust Memorial.

Throughout the memorial the horrific realities of the Holocaust are told in a graphic way. However, the moment most

poignant to Mr. Pack were pictures of the mountains of victims' personal belongings—massive piles of shoes, coats and personal effects.

All Jewish children are required to visit this memorial from a young age so the whole country could never forget.

“As guides maneuvered groups of children through the building, I listened in to get a sense of how events were portrayed. One guide, describing the six years of the Holocaust, said that although United States intelligence was aware of what was happening, ‘The Americans did nothing.’ In fact, the whole world did nothing—and I thought of how this will happen again, but this time with all 12 tribes of Israel involved.

“I visited a large darkened room called ‘the children of lights,’ or the ‘room of two million lights.’ It actually contained two million tiny lights, each representing one of the children killed by the Nazis. Each light briefly flashed on as a child’s name appeared. The magnitude of what it portrayed was overwhelming.”

Informal Opinion Poll

One of Mr. Pack’s personal goals was to gain a sense, unfiltered by the media, of the thoughts and feelings of both Arabs and Jews in Israel. To do this, he conducted “opinion polls.” Through casual conversation, he wanted to understand people’s feelings on a variety of issues, including the average citizens’ opinions on the cause of the conflict between them, how foreigners viewed America and the American press, among other questions. He engaged strangers from all walks of life.

“In one instance, I initiated a discussion with an Arab man sitting in front of a linen shop in a marketplace. Business was slow and, as most people

are inclined to do, he was more than willing to offer his opinions.

“I asked, ‘What do you think is the root of the problems and conflict here in Israel?’

“The man answered, ‘The Jews.’

“‘What do you mean, “the Jews”?’

“‘Haven’t you heard the media?’ the man asked.

“‘Yes, I have seen the media.’

“‘Well, what do you think of what you’ve seen?’

“I answered, ‘You tell me what you think of it.’

“The man answered, ‘The Jews beat little children.’

“‘How do you get along with Arab Christians?’ I asked.

“‘They are not a problem,’ the man said. ‘It’s the Jews.’

“Then I asked another Arab shop owner the same set of questions. This man was ‘Christian.’

“‘How do you see the problem with the other Arabs?’

“The man answered, ‘We do not get along well. We have problems.’

“A deeper understanding of the problems in the region became clear after actually seeing the land and closely interacting with the people living there. It seemed strange that so many peoples and civilizations would covet this small chunk of scarred land on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. However, for millennia the region has been a crossroads for the greatest trade routes in the world. During the trip, the group took some time to go over these routes—the coastal route, the ridge route, along the mountains, and another running along the Jordan River going north into Mesopotamia. It causes one to see geography in a different light. I did from then on.

“The tour guide explained that the land has always been at the center of many cultures because of its

strategic positioning. Nations controlling this land control the world's economy.

"I had understood this academically, but *seeing* it opened my eyes to the prophetic implications for Israel and the entire Mid-East.

"Consider how much worse are conditions over 20 years later!"

Leaving Israel

At trip's end, the group was again struck by the difficulty of Israeli customs as they prepared to depart for Germany. While checking their bags, each person was interviewed prior to boarding the plane. After being isolated, Mr. Pack was peppered with questions. "Have you talked to anyone who you did not know in the past five minutes?", guards asked. "Did anyone hand you anything and ask you to get it on the plane for them?" Officials were obviously looking for terrorists with bombs.

Questions such as these may seem like the norm now, but in 1986, this made an impact. In a pre-9/11 world, security such as this was unheard of in Western nations. That these people had long lived with the threat of terrorism was obvious.

Germany!

The Packs next traveled to Germany to spend several days. Although the nation holds obvious prophetic significance to those who understand God's truth, there were personal reasons for seeing Germany. All of Mrs. Pack's extended family migrated from Germany and neighboring Austria.

Also, Mr. Pack's father had flown in WWII's Battle of the Bulge. He wanted to see specific sites his father had described from childhood. It was a moving moment to finally see the very spot where his father had been almost shot down

beside the Remagen Bridge, which connected to a small town on the Rhine River where the battle of epic proportions occurred between the Allied forces and Nazi Germany.

As Mr. Pack toured the area, he remembered his father's stories and the "adventures" he had with his Piper Cub, as another officer with him redirected Allied artillery. This was the sky where his father had recounted so many times how he had to avoid enemy antiaircraft guns on the ground and enemy fighters in the air.

Today there is only a single towering brick abutment of the bridge remaining on each side of the river. Each tower has a tiny plaque commemorating where so many died.

"Germany is an absolutely beautiful country. After only 43 years recovery at that time, there were almost no signs that the country and its cities had been bombed beyond recognition in both World Wars. The landscape was immaculate.

"We saw the Cologne Cathedral, which allied bombers deliberately missed. Virtually every roof of all other buildings was new because of saturation bombings during the War. There was little evidence there had ever been a war. I remembered the predictions that after the war it would take 1,000 years for Germany to rebuild.

"One was left with several impressions of the country and its people: the beauty of their cities and the superior design of their products. The efficiency and organization of their society was also evident. And the people seemed to carry themselves with a certain dignity, perhaps due to their long history, traditions and national pride.

"A more entertaining experience was the best example of German ingenuity, efficiency and quality—driving on the world famous autobahn. There were no speed limits. Driving above 100 mph in a rented Audi

sedan on the high banks of the perfectly engineered roads, cars still shot past us like we were standing still. The Germans built these superhighways to last many times longer than our roads.

“We briefly visited and toured the regional Worldwide Church of God office in Bohn. My wife had known the man who became the German office manager from her years in Bricketwood, England.

“For many reasons, Germany was a special experience.”

Lasting Impressions

Every great adventure comes to an end. Such occasions invite reflection.

“Finally, on the trip home I reflected over all that I had seen: the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Garden Tomb and Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified and buried. I had preached in the same place where He gave His ‘Sermon on the Mount.’

“But there were other memories: floating in the Dead Sea, seeing 1,500-year-old olive trees. I remembered the Valley of Elah where Goliath was killed, and where I had selected some round stones to give our children from the very brook David used to pick his five for battle. Because of my height, my brother wanted to film me on the ground with a stone on my forehead. ‘Wait a minute,’ I said. ‘My name’s David—why can’t I play the David part?’ Jokingly, he had said, ‘Oh no. You are too big. You must play Goliath. There are plenty of other Davids. You are the Goliath named David.’

“Against countless inspiring memories from the trip was a painful reality: The pushers of religious artifacts and trinkets had reduced the city where the glorified

Christ will one day rule the world to a souvenir stand. Tourists and visitors in Israel want crosses made out of olive wood, or carved camels and goats. Natives peddle the same junk everywhere. It was evident how Satan has trivialized the places and things of God.”

Mr. Pack also reflected on the “opinion polls” he had taken. Since 1967, many American Jews have moved to Israel. But most Israeli citizens are not religious people who feel a connection to the Holy Land. Instead, they come to, as they put it, “Be part of the Jewish thing, the Israeli state.”

Sadly, these people were now working, raising families and building lives in this barren land, full of barbed wire, bullet holes, bunkers, bombed buildings and destroyed military equipment.

“My eyes were opened to the conflict in the Middle East and how strongly Israelis felt about it. Never again would I view images on television as a world away.”

In the immediate days after the trip, Mr. Pack organized his experiences into dozens of pages of notes to ensure he could accurately pass his observations to brethren in his ministry for years to come. Upon his return, he began a series of biblical “travelogues” for the brethren.

“The perspective gained on the Israel trip of 1988 had an unexpected effect. It permitted me to return to the circumstances of New York with the big picture of God’s Plan in mind. I could better endure what still lay ahead, because the New York years were far from over...”

Leaving New York

Mr. Pack determined to return to New York with renewed vigor for God's Work, and to make the most of whatever would be his remaining time there. Although still facing financial obstacles, he again settled into a routine of trying to serve as he could. His focus remained almost entirely, *What am I supposed to learn from this? What experiences am I supposed to be acquiring before the trial is over? What will I wish that I had learned more thoroughly when it comes time to look back?*

The continuous realization that he was in God's hands brought peace. But he would soon *again* be knocked down physically and have to learn more powerful lessons in regard to his health. These *physical* trials would force additional *spiritual* lessons to be learned.

Yet Another Physical Trial

God had *always* previously intervened at times in the past when healing was needed. But the fall of 1988 was different. God *did* intervene, but not directly or as hoped or expected.

The day-to-day intensity of Mr. Pack's physical afflictions (infections, arthritis, nerve-damaged heel and worn-out knee) was now a memory. They no longer affected his daily routine. Nevertheless, after years of following dietary regimens because of previous health problems, it was soon learned that even though God does heal, sometimes He leaves a "thorn in the flesh" as a reminder of how temporary is human existence.

Mr. Pack's next major health issue was not the result of a specific injury, but was due to many factors. It would be perhaps his most intense physical trial yet.

The months of walking with a cane, then crutches, had caused a certain imbalance in his spine, and had placed additional strain on his lower back. Adding to this was almost one million miles traveling in a car between congregations and visiting brethren. The years spent cramped in cars too small finally caught up with the big man.

After relocating to New York, Mr. Pack pursued medical counsel about the back pain. For almost two years, starting in 1986, he sought answers from chiropractors, but with no success.

After returning from Israel, he again sought the advice of a physician. He was informed that the pain was being caused by two nearly completely destroyed disks that had caused the two lowest lumbar vertebrae to slide backwards partly off the sacrum, slightly "kinking" the spinal cord.

The solution offered: back fusion—three bones must become one.

Mr. Pack began researching as much as he could learn about the spine, including going to numerous medical libraries and reading anatomy books, such as *Gray's Anatomy*. He hoped that, by proper education, he could rid himself of, or sufficiently reduce, the problem without surgery. It became evident that stretching and strengthening the back would not be enough.

Surgical intervention *was* needed.

Back Surgery

Just before the scheduled operation, the surgeon became ill. The hospital selected a new surgeon, one who had operated on many professional athletes in New York. It was soon learned that the man was considered perhaps the top orthopedic surgeon in the world.

Other physicians told Mr. Pack that he was most privileged to have this renowned, highly respected surgeon. One doctor reported, “If the King of Saudi Arabia fell off his horse and needed a back operation, this man would probably do it.” (Interestingly, in regard to nationalities that are usually at odds, this famous *Irish* surgeon told Mr. Pack he is the cousin of former *British* Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.)

Mr. Pack later learned that he had the same surgery on the same day (October 21) in the same hospital 34 years to the day that the then Senator John F. Kennedy did. (Recall, the famous PT-109 accident in World War II that earned the future president a Purple Heart Medal.)

In the third week in October, 1988, Mr. Pack checked into the Hospital for Special Surgery in Manhattan. The complex surgery involved four screws being inserted into his back. These screws would stabilize the bones during the healing process, but also after.

The surgery was a success and Mr. Pack was home in eight days. The pain gradually subsided, and his strength began to return. Determined to accelerate the recovery, Mr. Pack began taking long walks, starting immediately—meaning *too soon!* On the very first walk, his back muscles began to suddenly “lock up,” forcing him to return home, his arms around each of his sons for support.

Mr. Pack realized more patience would be required during the recuperation. A special brace had to be worn at all times for six full months. Six weeks into the recovery, Mr. Pack *could* take long walks at very high speed—one mile

every 11 1/2 minutes. The long recovery required hours of daily rehabilitation, as well as a constant awareness of posture while riding in a car or sitting.

“I have never been able to walk an 11-1/2-minute mile since—and I was wearing a cumbersome back brace during that time. But rehabbing was something at which I was experienced, so I went at it ‘hammer and tong.’ Being chair bound, and in the winter, also gave me a chance to read a great many books.”

After one year, a fusion is considered to be at full hardness. But to this day Mr. Pack maintains a necessary regimen of stretching and strengthening his lower back.

Promotion Promised Again

Soon after the surgery, Mr. Blackwell was sent from Headquarters to visit Mr. Pack. By this time Mr. Pack had just begun again to attend services. The visiting minister came to his home. To Mr. Pack’s surprise, Mr. Blackwell informed him that some in Pasadena had considered having him pastor once again. Providence, Rhode Island, had been discussed, but Mr. Blackwell urged waiting one more year, “until your back is 100 percent.”

This news was bittersweet. The wait was unnecessary. On the one hand, Mr. Pack had *almost* been moved and restored to pastoring. On the other, it had *not happened*. He was told that he would *only* have to wait another year and one-third.

Two Conversations

Spring turned into summer and summer into fall. It was now the Feast of Tabernacles 1989, which the Packs observed in Daytona Beach, Florida. Strangely, Pasadena assigned the entire New York pastorate to this far away site in Florida,

1,000 miles south. It would be the site of the first of two important conversations.

“I had heard that Mr. Tkach used his chief assistant to prepare many of his sermons and to write for him much of what appeared in the Church’s publications under his name. We were invited to dinner with this assistant, which was in itself surprising. It gave me further hope that there might in fact be a plan to permit me to pastor again.

“I decided to ask about the truth of something unrelated that I had heard. I asked this assistant, ‘Is it true that you write much of what Mr. Tkach writes to the Church and to the ministry?’ The man’s calculated answer was, ‘No, it is not true. I write *all* of it. And I prepare *every one* of his sermons.’ I simply responded, ‘Really?’ And he responded, ‘Yes,’ quietly enjoying his answer.”

“It was long rumored and even by some generally understood that the new Pastor General was a kind of captive to a group of young men under him who were orchestrating the speed, size and number of the changes hitting the Church. But his assistant’s answer was more than even I expected.”

The second conversation was just days after the Feast, and it offered an additional glimmer of hope for Mr. Pack’s future. It had been arranged to meet a longtime minister friend and classmate at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. This was an opportunity for the wives and children to enjoy time together while the two men caught up on each other’s lives.

The man had recently become a “top evangelist” in the Church. His words carried much weight in the new administration. He was one of a few close confidants of Mr. Tkach.

At breakfast, the friend voiced admiration for how Mr. Pack had handled the New York transfer. “We noticed how

you received the demotion,” he said. “Some thought you would call Mr. Armstrong, but you did not. I am also surprised that you did not call *me!*”

“I explained that I did not appeal to Mr. Armstrong for the same reason that I did not complain to my friend. This was not the first time I had accepted a decision when I did not understand why it had been made. Church government is not just something you submit to when it works in your favor. Even if you do not agree, it is still God’s government. I knew in 1985 that God’s government was certainly still in place. And that government exists today, where the same doctrines are found.”

Even more surprised at the response, the man stated, “Either way, I am still going to ‘go to bat’ for you because you never tried to call me and play politics when you were demoted.”

Mr. Pack did not yet understand the full extent to which his friend had entered the new inner circle at Headquarters. But as the two walked around Disney World, it became a little more clear.

The conversation shifted to the Church’s current state. Allusions were made that the new administration would be examining more of Mr. Armstrong’s doctrinal views. Mr. Pack listened carefully as the man implied that more changes were on the way, but he would not yet be willing to name them.

But, because the Church had clearly understood what were and what were not true doctrines for so long, Mr. Pack found it hard to believe that there could be *major* changes in the works. The truth seemed largely still in place.

Mr. Pack decided to focus on the positive elements of what his friend had confided—that a promotion might soon be coming! By patiently enduring the setback and allowing God to work things out, apparently a transfer *might be* ahead!

One More Conversation

Still, these promises from Church Administration had been made before under Mr. Tkach. Though hopeful and intrigued, Mr. Pack did not hold his breath.

Just six weeks after the Feast, the Pastor General's son came to New York City for the congregation's 25th anniversary celebration, over the Thanksgiving weekend. Surprisingly, he wanted to talk with Mr. Pack privately.

He said, "I'm here to let you know that a decision has been made. I'm going to make you a pastor again next summer. Where would you like to go?"

In disbelief, Mr. Pack replied, "If I had to choose, I'd love to return to the Midwest...and specifically Akron, Ohio."

"It encourages me to know that God used me to select Akron rather than the men in Pasadena doing this. Just consider all that this area would come to mean."

His friend had kept his word, apparently having talked with officials right away about promotion. After all the lies, Mr. Pack was incredulous.

But the summer of 1990 was still seven months away. So Mr. Pack determined to focus on serving local brethren, and "finishing strong." He would wait to see if the new Headquarters administration would follow through with its plans.

He would not have to wait seven months.

Soon would come the news about a minister who had to be fired and disfellowshipped. This would be the catalyst that sped up events.

A Pastor Again

Less than three weeks later, on Friday, December 15, 1989, an unexpected call came from his supervisor. Mr. Pack was

to become the new pastor of Akron, Ohio. He could hardly believe it! He was going to serve as a pastor again.

Even better, the need was an *immediate* one! Gerald Flurry, the pastor in Oklahoma City, had been fired for *real* heresy, however he might have tried to quickly cloak it as “standing up for the truth.” (Some were confused by what happened here, thinking a faithful minister was being fired by the apostates, but the facts were plainly otherwise. Life is full of ironies. Think of it this way—*false* leaders were able to discern *true* heresy.)

The Salt Lake City, Utah pastor was immediately transferred to Oklahoma to replace him. The pastor of the Akron, Ohio congregation was to be transferred to Salt Lake City as soon as possible, as a replacement. This would leave a void in, of all places—Akron, Ohio!

The situation provided a sudden, unexpected opportunity to offer Mr. Pack a pastorate right away. Patience had paid off!

“I was reminded of the parable of the unjust judge. Though God bore long with my prayers, yet did He ‘answer speedily’ when the time came. The irony was that after all the waiting, just before I was told that the wait would be only seven more months, the phone rang in just 20 more days.”

However, even though the move would be welcomed, Mr. Pack realized that leaving behind brethren in Manhattan and Westchester would be difficult. The negative feelings he had about the assignment were toward the city—not the local brethren!

The move became somewhat bittersweet for his children. Although living in the Midwest would be a much more positive environment, they would have to change schools again during the middle of the school year. Classes would have to be started again, and new friendships would have to be formed.

One day after hearing the news from his supervisor, another call came, this time from the Pastor General's son again to remind Mr. Pack of "how to pastor." Being lectured by a man who had never pastored—who had not a clue what he was talking about, and who had been permanently removed from the ministry in the mid-1970s—was laughable. Yet his father now had him directing all of the United States ministry!

"He was in authority, so I listened patiently and accepted the instructions. It was nothing different from what I had heard for well over four years. He was careful to include their new misdirected slogan, 'Now remember, be a *shepherd*, not a *sheriff*,' as though everybody who did not practice the permissive standard they desired was a 'sheriff.' Frankly, it was kind of humorous listening to a man of so little experience and so little knowledge of pastoring utter such words.

"But such were those days.

"I suppose some might wonder how God could—or why he would—use such deceived, false leaders to promote me. Remember, God could harden Pharaoh's heart for His own purpose; He 'stirred' Cyrus's spirit toward good in rebuilding Solomon's Temple; He sent a lying spirit to cause Ahab to go into battle and death; and then there was His greatest purpose of all achieved through Judas.

"I certainly did not politick to get promoted. And, in my case, that would have brought disaster, first from God, but also from men who had developed a certain grudging respect for me. In fact, what was perhaps the greatest cause for carnal minds being willing to return me to pastoring was that even they could respect that I had not appealed to Mr. Armstrong, nor politicked or pleaded my cause in the years that followed the

demotion. Believe me, I did not handle the assignment perfectly, but in this I was blameless.

“Finally, I learned that my local supervisor in New York had given me a strong recommendation. In fact, this was the single greatest catalyst to my transfer. I am appreciative that he finally did this. Of course, this man later gave up all of God’s truth, but, for reasons just explained, could also be used to make the recommendation.

“So I was headed back to pastoring, and doing so with Psalm 75:6-7 in mind. True promotion comes from God, not men. I firmly believe that *God* both reduced my duties and responsibilities *for His reasons*, and that He promoted me right on time within His *overall* timing toward a great purpose that He was working out in His Church.”

Impression of Akron Congregation

Two weeks later, the Pack family made the necessary and usual advance trip to the new assignment, and with two purposes. Mr. Pack wanted to introduce himself and his family, and meet the brethren. And the family needed to get a feel for the area and look for housing.

On the last Thursday in December, the Packs drove to Ohio for the weekend. The new pastor gave his first sermon, titled “Days of Noah” on December 30, 1989.

A potluck was held after services, organized by the congregation. At a certain point, a greeting line formed, with handshakes and introductions being exchanged.

At first, Mr. Pack was surprised that the congregation seemed unified and trouble-free. Each of his previous pastorates had been a hornet’s nest of problems.

Everyone was warm and friendly, giving the impression that there might not be as many “fires to put out.” It appeared to be a stable congregation.

However, one element of the day was strange. Although most lay members had lined up to introduce themselves, many of the *leaders* had not. As the Packs left town several days later, Mr. Pack and his wife discussed the new names and faces. They recalled few deacons' and elders' names, yet the congregation had eight deacons (plus deaconesses) and three elders.

This would be an indicator of the congregation's spiritual temperature.

A Blessing

There was still the matter of finding the right home. A small window of possibility existed to buy one in this less expensive area. Recognizing that homes could be purchased for as little as five percent down, Mr. Pack was able to convince the landlord to cut the final rent in half through last minute home improvements made before they left. In addition, the Packs would be receiving a larger than normal security deposit returned to them. Also, they determined to "pinch" for six weeks to spend no extra money. But it still did not appear that there would be quite enough for the down payment of even five percent. (Recall the huge final January home heating bill of \$468.)

Before the trip, Mr. Pack called the CAD Office manager to discuss details of the transfer, and whether he would be taking the current pastor's home to rent. The idea of buying arose in the course of the conversation. Almost before Mr. Pack could say another word, he was offered \$3,000 to help with the purchase.

"I assumed that this would mean a loan, and I was thrilled at the offer. But before I could really even think about this, the man explained that it was a bonus. Of course a loan would not have been acceptable toward a down payment with a bank, anyway.

“So we were absolutely ecstatic, having not remotely dreamed of such a thing being possible.

“This was the first and only bonus I ever received from the Worldwide Church of God. Others got them routinely, but I never did. However just the *timing* of this one made it worth more than any others that might have been put together. In fact, I should add that I was actually offered more if I needed it.

“Ironically, had we not left New York, we were probably headed for bankruptcy at some point. So, in the end, the transfer came just in time—and with it ownership of a lovely home.

“Also, this time, we decided that we would not buy a fixer-upper as we had in Buffalo. It could be said that we would finally become *real* homeowners.”

There still remained the consideration of which community they should select for their home. Although the previous minister was vacating a rental home into which the Packs could have moved on short notice, the house was too small for a family of five. It was not well located, and the school district was also less than ideal.

The decision was made to look for a community that resembled the tranquility of the one the family had so enjoyed in Lancaster, New York (outside Buffalo). At the last minute, almost as an afterthought, the Packs discovered and explored a wonderful little community just 12 miles west of Akron—Wadsworth. They eventually settled on a small home on a quiet cul-de-sac on the north side. They learned that the school system was one of the top 100 in the nation. This was important to both their now sophomore son and their 10-year-old daughter.

Wadsworth seemed the ideal place to settle!

“One regret—and it was big—was that this transfer was occurring during our oldest son’s senior year of

high school. At 6'6", he was an accomplished basketball player and the star of the team, and it was the middle of the season. It was arranged for him to stay with someone until the season had ended. This was difficult because it was the first time our family had been separated.

"Then it became impossible for us to go back and see more than just one of his games before he would join us in Ohio in mid March. We missed all of his tournament games in his last year. My wife and I would regret that for years—but circumstances left us no choice."

Time Running Out!

It would not be easy getting a bank loan for the home. The first lender that was approached decided the Packs did not make quite enough money to qualify for the loan. The small down payment was now in place, and everything else was in order, but—and with only one day to go before the home would be lost—word came they had been "turned down."

Immediately after the Packs' offer on the home had been accepted, two other families followed them bidding higher on it—and in rapid succession. Because those other bids had been expected, only one week was given to secure a loan. Six days were gone, and only 23 hours remained to save the house.

"The loan officer quietly and almost immediately filed another application with a different bank, and did so before even telling us that he did. Saying he had *never* failed to get a loan for a qualified applicant, and that he was not going to accept a 'no,' he found a bank with a lower rate and told its representative that he had to hear back by 3:00 the next afternoon, or our offer would expire and the house would go to someone else.

"My wife and I sat anxiously in his office waiting for a call from the new bank in Detroit. We had arrived

at 2:00 and all three of us watched the clock together as the minutes ticked down. The phone finally rang at *11 minutes* until 3:00 with an *approval!* While we rejoiced that God had intervened, the loan officer quickly called the seller's realtor—and the home was ours."

One Thing More

With this dramatic turnaround, something else had happened—but it would not be known for almost a decade. And it would be *further* proof God had intervened at the last minute on the Packs' behalf. What merely seemed like a sudden idea to buy a home in Wadsworth had really been a decision probably made long earlier, then carefully guided, by God.

Little could the Church Administration Director, who would go on to become the Church's leader in 1995, have known that he was giving final (and even joyous) human endorsement of where God would restart the very Work that he and others intended to destroy. In fact, he had even approved a special gift of \$3,000 toward reconstruction.

An assignment was finally over that could have signaled disaster. One misstep could have been fatal. Instead, the Ohio transfer merely heralded the end of the beginning. Mr. Pack had so obviously been preserved as part of the same long ago decision by God. A story of special training and preparation would now begin to give way to what could never have been anticipated.

The next two decades would bring so much more...

A Time to Think

Everything had changed in Mr. Pack's life. Now came a time for reflection—both on pastoring again, and a large congregation at that. But it also meant considering the state of the Worldwide Church of God “congregation” as a whole. The latter would have much to do with how one would approach the former.

After all, four and a third years had passed. There were many thoughts about being a pastor again. Too many to recount.

Observation 101 and 202

Mr. Pack had now worked for *nine* different pastors. Since leaving college, these men had ranged from completely carnal to at best lukewarm to the truth.

Recall from Chapter Twelve Mr. Pack learned to apply what he called Observation 101 beginning with his first assignment in Indianapolis.

Daily observing for years under so many pastors had been worth its weight in gold. Their range of personalities, experiences and manner of administration, as well as

strengths, normal human weaknesses and inadequacies, had brought its own marvelous degree in “higher learning.” They had all contributed toward what Mr. Pack would now describe as *doctorates* in both Observation 101 and the more advanced 202.

At college, there were no formal classes offered on how to baptize, perform a wedding, perform a funeral, conduct Spokesman Club, anoint the sick, organize a social or lead a Passover service, for instance. Mr. Pack had attended some of these prior to field assignment, but over time administrators seemed to fall into the assumption that students would generally at some point observe how these events were properly carried out. A few did.

But leaders were not completely naïve. They knew that some skills had to be taught. Special training was needed to be a full-time minister, and this could not happen overnight. Over time, graduates were to be first sent to the field as assistants or associate pastors. Each student was to receive training from a full-time pastor to whom he was assigned.

Yet, as an assistant, Mr. Pack did not receive much direct training. Almost everything he incorporated into his ministry *would* be “picked up” along the way.

“By observing, I learned how to do things—in fact, how to do almost everything. Not one minister ever sat me down and actively taught me the details of how to conduct socials, clubs and events of all varieties and sizes. The sad reality is that most of these men had never been taught themselves, and had also never figured out how to do these things very well. Almost *every element* of what I practiced in my ministry I learned through observation. I had to be my own best teacher. It was as though someone taught me, ‘You should be able to figure these things out yourself.’

“It’s true. With God’s help, *you can.*”

Importance of Observing

Through the years, as mentioned earlier in the biography, Mr. Pack has also *taught* the principle of observing to literally scores of deacons, ministerial assistants, elders and preaching elders. Here is the evolution of his growth by observation:

“In my first assignment in Indianapolis, I had to learn by primarily observing how *not* to do things—and this became a theme that to a greater or lesser degree continued throughout my ministry. Most assignments, I did not get to enjoy the luxury of learning by seeing things done the right way—either under pastors or in areas I inherited as a pastor. This is not said to bash my supervisors or exalt myself, because the sad fact is that most Worldwide Church of God ministers would later fall away, proving they understood almost nothing of what a true minister of Jesus Christ is. Of course, not everything I saw was wrong. This would be unfair to say. But most men demonstrated that they did not worry or care about what Mr. Armstrong—and God!—expected them to administer.

“When I came to the field I asked no end of questions, and about almost everything. At a point, my first supervisor told me, ‘You ask too many questions. You need to be cooler in front of brethren and act like you know more. Don’t ask so many questions.’ He had a certain point.

“But I realized at that moment that he was not going to actively teach me much, and that I had better be able to figure things out on my own. In a way, he did me a great favor and started me down the road to this approach. Nevertheless, I was still surprised that

he was not going to teach me and did not want me to ask very much. Yet, I had already been practicing Observation 101 in college, so doing more would just be continuing the same.

“In Milwaukee, I gained invaluable experience just from observing my father-in-law, and the extraordinary organization that the very efficient German people of that city brought to everything they did.

“In my third assignment (counting Milwaukee), Rockford, Illinois, I was thrown into situations for which I had no training, such as baptisms, anointings, taking Spokesman Clubs, organizing socials, and other things. I had to quickly figure out how to do a lot of different kinds of things, for instance, how to counsel someone who is discouraged. But I must admit I loved the learning process—and the challenge.

“In my fourth assignment, as an associate pastor in Cincinnati, I also got to observe, but it was primarily by seeing human nature at work—lots of sins in the flesh, in a big, wide-open city. I also was blessed to learn about how to handle demons.

“In my fifth assignment, as an ‘almost pastor’ in Newburgh, New York, I was forced to deal with serious spiritual problems because the regional pastor who was my supervisor was usually absent. I also learned more about organization.

“In my sixth assignment, the Rochester and Syracuse pastorate, I learned about the devastation that can be caused by a minister who was neither living the Word of God nor administrating very well even the most basic rudiments of God’s government in the congregation.

“In my seventh assignment, as pastor of a very large, fast-growing congregation in Buffalo, I got to employ more large-scale organizing and building

of programs than anywhere else. This included establishing two congregations where there had been one. Through this assignment, with my age now in the early 30s, I had really learned to observe more about strengths and weaknesses in people, and how to both utilize the former and avoid the latter. Working with almost 1,100 people for a six-month interim greatly aided my ability to learn by what I was seeing.

“My eighth and final assignment (prior to Akron) in New York City was simply unique. The first man I worked for there was sometimes helpful, but most of his teaching was correcting me, sometimes on a daily basis, and usually on things regarding pastoring that I knew much more about than he. He did not in fact consider himself a very effective pastor. His natural talents sped him to be a regional supervisor very early, but long before he was ready.

“The second New York pastor did not teach me anything nor was he interested in teaching me anything. He may not have thought there was anything he could teach me. Yet, he was a gifted man, so there were many things I could learn from him by observation. However, I was also incredibly grateful for the opportunity to observe and be exposed to the experiences and circumstances of the wonderfully diverse congregation in New York City. While working with these people, I paid close attention and tried to learn as much as possible from them, in fact much more than my position permitted them to learn from me.

“Much of what I learned about all manner of field administration was also somewhat connected to experience through trial and error. It has been said that ‘good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment.’ Serving in so many different pastorates made the opportunity for bad judgments obvious. But I learned from them.”

18 Truths

Looking back always permits a certain “20/20” hindsight. Reflecting on all the events that transpired after Mr. Armstrong’s death began to be much more important as the decade turned into 1990.

For a year or so, the new administration upheld the status quo. Just seven months after Mr. Armstrong’s death, Mr. Tkach confirmed in a *Worldwide News* article the major truths that the Church had long understood. It was titled “God restored these 18 truths: How thankful are you for them?”

The article was a clear affirmation of truths re-established in the Church through Mr. Armstrong over his 52-year ministry. These “18 essential truths” were:

- 1) Jesus’ Return will restore God’s government to Earth.
- 2) The true gospel is about the kingdom of God—not Christ’s Person.
- 3) God is a Family and His purpose is to reproduce Himself through human beings.
- 4) God is not a trinity, the Holy Spirit is not a person and Christ is the God of both the Old and New Testaments.
- 5) Man does not have an immortal soul.
- 6) The human mind is very different from the animal brain.
- 7) God is working with a very few right now, and is not trying to save the whole world yet.
- 8) The Church is not yet the kingdom of God.
- 9) Only those whom the Father calls and draws to Jesus Christ can be converted now.
- 10) The Great White Throne Judgment is when all humanity will have an opportunity for salvation.

- 11) The kingdom of God will rule all nations on earth for 1,000 years after Christ's Return.
- 12) God's Spirit opens our minds to His truth.
- 13) We are only begotten now—not yet born again.
- 14) The lost tribes of Israel can be identified with modern nations.
- 15) Identifying the modern nations of Israel is the key to understanding end-time prophecies.
- 16) God commands observance of His seven annual festivals.
- 17) The authority of the sacred calendar is of utmost importance.
- 18) Paying second and third tithe is a direct command.

Based on this article, the Church could assume in August 1986 that the new Pastor General would keep the Church on the right track. At the end of 1989, most or all of these truths were still in place, and were either still taught or were at worst only ignored.

There was one other ominous sign, however, that things would likely change. Joseph Tkach had seized for himself what the Head of the Church had never given. And Mr. Pack knew it!

New Apostle?

In the weeks before Mr. Armstrong died, Mr. Tkach pleaded with the ailing man to ordain him an apostle. Mr. Armstrong refused, relating that it was not his place to confer this office. Only Jesus Christ chooses apostles, and this would be known by fruits and fruits alone.

Insecure, Mr. Tkach was unrelenting—convinced that the ministry and Church would only take him seriously if he held this office. After Mr. Armstrong was gone, he began

pressuring high-ranking ministers to announce that he was an apostle.

The new Pastor General first called Mr. Armstrong's assistant, Aaron Dean, knowing his opinion would carry weight with the Church. Asking whether it was time to announce the change, he heard a resounding, "No." Mr. Dean reportedly plainly reminded him that only Christ gives this office, and that this happens by fruits. And he suggested calling Dr. Hoeh, the man first to suggest that Mr. Armstrong held this office. Dr. Hoeh agreed with Mr. Dean.

Undeterred, Mr. Tkach waited a short time and called the new Director of the ministry. Without hesitation, this political climber agreed to write the entire Church in the *Worldwide News*, designating Mr. Tkach as an apostle and explaining why. In effect, this man stepped in front of Jesus Christ and without His consent raised Mr. Tkach to apostle.

WCG "In a Mess"

Shortly after the 1986 Feast, the Packs again traveled to Pasadena for a Refresher Course. It was hard to comprehend not hearing from Mr. Armstrong after 20 years under his leadership.

"It was one of the strangest feelings that I have ever had. I did not realize how I would be affected by entering a Pasadena without Herbert W. Armstrong. I held no illusions about the spirit that would be in the top leadership that awaited us there. But it was as though I only then understood that Mr. Armstrong was now *completely* gone.

"Soon after we arrived, we found ourselves walking down the hill toward the Dining Hall after a morning lecture by Mr. Tkach. We were suddenly beside him, heading in the same direction.

“He was feeling a certain ‘magnanimity’ I had never seen before. I guess he no longer viewed me as a threat. He greeted my wife and me, and immediately started volunteering ‘information,’ beginning with, ‘You know...I really inherited a mess.’

“I was unsure about what he was suggesting. But expecting something negative about Mr. Armstrong, I sought clarification.

“He said, ‘The Church was almost bankrupt when I took over. Mr. Armstrong had almost bankrupted us. But don’t worry. I have been able to pull the Church’s finances back from the brink of disaster. We were over a million dollars in debt, but now we have money in the bank.’

“His words were something almost exactly to that order.

“I knew that I was dealing with a man who would be untruthful even when the truth would serve him better, so to speak—but would he so blatantly lie on a matter like this? Had the Church been almost bankrupt? Mr. Armstrong had been very plain that the corporation was in very good financial order just before he died. I assumed that Mr. Tkach’s insecurity was causing him to brag. Years later, I asked people who would know the truth of the Church’s financial position, those high in the business office when Mr. Armstrong died, and they laughed, declaring it a bald lie, and stating that the Church’s reserves were strong in January 1986. There was no debt.

“The short conversation with Mr. Tkach ended when we reached the Hall of Administration.”

Commissions Flipped

Before Mr. Armstrong’s death, the Church’s First Commission had been clear: preach the gospel of the kingdom of

God to the world, in conjunction with warning the modern nations of Israel. The Second Commission involved those who are God's people—"feeding the flock." The order of priority of these commissions had never been in question.

After Mr. Armstrong's death, the emphasis gradually changed. There was a new focus on looking *inward* rather than *outward* in spreading the gospel. A new "take care of our own" approach was reflected in what became a popular slogan, "We are family."

Soon the new Pastor General was traveling the world, visiting and speaking to brethren in scattered places. This was not wrong in and of itself, but the tone of these visits was very different from the past. Mr. Armstrong presented himself as a voice crying out, urgently compelling brethren to take action—and was meeting with world leaders. Mr. Tkach was more casual. His tone began to immediately bring a shallowness into the Church, and he did not continue Mr. Armstrong's role of meeting with heads of state.

"Mr. Tkach began openly pandering to audiences, in fact actually beckoning for them to clap—and to continue clapping—for him, and to then do so for longer than they intended. His messages were obviously prepared for him. I even recall him slipping one time when he began a message in Big Sandy with, 'Let's see what they have for me today.'

"He would use trite, shallow phrases like 'Happy Sabbath,' and do so in the local language wherever he traveled. This was his 'thing,' and people made a big deal of it. Every time I hear people utter this little phrase I wonder, 'Do they not know that *Joseph Tkach* taught them this?' I wish everyone would get this saying out of their system so we never have to be unnecessarily reminded of the man who taught it, a man who soon would not even believe either in the weekly Sabbath or in God's annual Sabbaths."

It was in about 1988 or 1989 that the *Plain Truth* Newsstand Program was shut down, with the Church being told that it was *ineffective* and *expensive*.

“Of course, when I heard these things I knew better. So did many others. Now I was going back to a pastorate where I could no longer carry out this wonderful program.

“It was evident that urgency to finish the Work was giving way to an inward focus on self—on ‘getting’ not ‘giving’—that we should bask in being ‘family.’ But none of us could yet know just how far this would go. That the Church would, or even could, be transformed into a *completely* Protestant denomination was also *completely unthinkable*.”

In the interest of looking like a wise manager, and to save money, the ministry and Church began hearing its new leader say things like, “Work smarter, not harder” and, “Failing to plan is planning to fail.” No one could argue with these maxims, but they had the effect of diminishing the zeal and urgency God’s people were to have to finish a Work that had consumed Mr. Armstrong.

Consolidation of Ambassador Colleges

A decision was made almost immediately after Mr. Armstrong’s death to consolidate the two Ambassador College campuses into one at Big Sandy, Texas.

Most were puzzled by the decision to close the Pasadena campus. So many had worked for so long to establish such a splendid environment that so honored God. God’s college had been reduced to little more than “added expenses.”

The new administration also began seeking accreditation of the college, the same course that the liberals of the 70s once pursued.

Mr. Armstrong had resisted this path for a variety of reasons. He knew God's college did not need approval from secular minds. And intercollegiate athletics would invite problems.

These changes revealed the nature of the new administration. They saw the Church as a business entity to be managed. Yet these seemingly minor administrative shifts were a manifestation of deeper changes.

“We saw some of these things happening, but it was not until my sons went to the campus in Texas that their mother and I came to understand that God's college was already dead by the early 1990s. Stories we heard of conduct on campus—students and faculty—were beyond appalling. But it took time to sink in.”

Early Change—Christ's Broken Body

The decision with the most profound impact on the WCG was the formation of a “doctrinal team” composed of roughly five “players”—“leaders”—who barely had an idea even what the Bible was. It only became known much later that these same men first secretly approached Mr. Tkach with their ideas very early on.

The result was that they wasted no time. The first noticeable doctrinal change was one with significant implications. In March 1987, the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice began to blur. So did the symbols of bread and wine. The Church had long understood that Jesus had endured a terrible scourging and beating of His body to make possible the healing of sickness. This was distinct from the shedding of blood—giving His life—as an atoning payment for our spiritual sins. (This is why *two* symbols were instituted in the Passover service—bread, representing Jesus' broken body, and wine, symbolizing His shed blood.)

The new administration changed the meaning and importance of the Passover symbols. The new explanation improperly merged the two elements. Yet Headquarters' new teaching seemed almost deliberately unclear, leaving ministers and brethren confused as to what the new "interpretation" really meant.

"I would certainly not go on to teach this change in Akron. Strangely, I was not turned in to Pasadena. This was its own statement about how many brethren either did not notice, or did not care—its own greater problem. I do realize, however, that God may have been using the congregation's blindness (or even causing it) to buy me important time until His overall purpose had advanced."

More Changes

Another wave of changes followed, including the announcement that birthday celebrations were now acceptable, as well as relaxed standards of personal appearance (including men's and women's dress and hair length). Further, women were once again permitted to wear makeup. Mr. Armstrong had never been confused about this subject, but the new administration claimed that he had "gone back and forth" on it (a misrepresentation that lives on today in the splinters) and used this to reverse the teaching.

Although Mr. Pack began to notice these changes in New York, he did not know how far God would allow them to progress. During this early period of subtle "adjustments," those who voiced concerns were usually admonished to not "major in the minors"—which was nothing more than an insult to anyone who was resistant to a given change.

Members were told that the Church was simply "growing in grace and knowledge." While II Peter 3:18 contains no mention of doctrine, this misinterpretation became the

standard argument in pushing doctrinal changes. It was a mask the new doctrinal team could hide behind for a time as they planned a much more extensive overhaul. Any who questioned new teachings were “unwilling to grow.”

Mr. Pack observed that these first departures from long-held understanding were not presented as changes, but rather as doctrines that the Church had *always* believed—including Mr. Armstrong!

The realization that something serious was amiss began to clarify. The implications of all that happened since Mr. Tkach took over were beginning to sink in. *Perhaps there was something much more significant at play*, Mr. Pack thought.

In retrospect, Mr. Pack considers it a blessing that he was insulated for a short period from the requirement to voice his disagreement with these changes—or to teach them. In New York, he was an *associate* pastor and therefore not required to stand up and explain the false doctrines. Although he disagreed with the changes from the start, he understood his role. There was not yet reason—and he was in no position—to sound an alarm. It was too early.

Later would be a different story.

What Next?

Transferring often and working with many ministers—some not converted—had been challenging. Yet Mr. Pack had learned to truly ask, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

Now moving to Akron, he determined to apply the same form of looking for God’s will. He wondered what lessons God had in store upon his arrival.

“I had lived through the 1970s and saw that the liberal years were reversed. The Church was brought back on track. Of course, this was when Mr. Armstrong

was alive. But I was certainly not ready to believe or understand that the Church as we knew it was going to completely explode. Neither was anyone else in my circle. The true God was still in place—the trinity had not been accepted. There was no place to go. No senior ministers had left. I was under no illusion that God wanted me to do anything on my own at that very early point. But I was hearing things that were disturbing.

“I realize that for some (certainly only a few) I will not have left soon enough to suit them. One pastor *had* just been fired, but only one. Yet I recognized that his termination was absolutely correct and valid—that it was ‘for cause.’ Sadly, thousands would seem uninterested in investigating this false prophet.

“I also saw that Mr. Armstrong continued to associate with Sardis for some years, and the fifth era of the Church had much less truth than did the WCG at this point. Neither did the apostle John just completely forsake the Jerusalem congregation *immediately* when faced with Diotrophes. It was not time.

“Finally, assuming I *was* thinking of leaving, doing so at this juncture would preclude any opportunity—any *platform*—to be able to help anyone. While the apostates would certainly have wished me, and all others, to be hirelings—to flee at their mere presence—this was never an option for a true shepherd.”

So, Mr. Pack had seen a few changes coming from Headquarters, and heard about others possibly on the way, but large-scale doctrinal changes had not yet actually occurred.

One of Life’s Greatest Lessons

No chapter titled “A Time to Think,” one including what lay ahead, could be complete without addressing the lesson of

dealing with—handling and enduring!—suffering and injustice. New York had been in so many ways the most difficult period in Mr. Pack’s life.

Mrs. Pack often stated how much she personally enjoyed living in Pleasantville, New York, and watching the children grow up in what was a wonderful school district by any account. The area was also scenic and upscale. But she always commented that this enjoyment was tempered by what her husband was having to endure.

“I do not know if any lesson I have EVER learned compares to that of recognizing how one can endure much more than he or she might think. The only way that I, or anyone, could ever learn that injustice can be empowering is to have to undergo it. There is no other way. And the depth of learning is directly tied to the degree of injustice and length of suffering.

“After New York, I developed little tolerance for people thought to be Christians who believed that they did not have to endure what by most accounts is nothing or almost nothing. So many will so quickly declare, ‘I can’t take this,’ or ‘You can’t talk to me like that!’ or ‘I’m offended,’ or ‘This is unfair—I quit!’ meaning leave the Church, or, or, or... Such people have no idea what suffering and enduring is all about. Such people can be thankful that Jesus thought differently from themselves.

“The tremendous empowerment that came from the New York City experience is worth all the gold in Fort Knox and Solomon’s Temple combined. Whatever awaited me in Akron, Ohio, would be nothing—a piece of cake—compared to what I had endured.

“When Paul said, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,’ he only *truly* knew this because he had to experience so much more than the

average Christian would ever *begin* to experience. Of course, I did not have to endure in New York—or in any of the many long periods of trial that proceeded or followed New York—anything close to what Paul suffered. I know that.

“A byproduct of the last over four-years time was that weak, frightened, crybaby people would ever after be difficult for me to ‘suffer gladly.’”

Why Akron, Ohio?

In August of 1989, the Packs had gone to Montana with their family to see Mr. and Mrs. Carl McNair, and to take in many sights on the way to and from their destination. This included visiting Akron, Ohio on their way home. This volume previously explained that Mr. Pack knew the Akron pastorate was going to become available the next summer. This was a chance to see the area firsthand and to talk with the local pastor about it.

“The one thing I did not want to enter, in my first assignment after New York City, was another troubled pastorate. I understood the extraordinary scrutiny that Headquarters would bring to my every decision and program. I really wanted to avoid this if at all possible. The hope was that some quiet years might pass while I flew under radar.

“Also, Akron, close to Cleveland, was much like Buffalo in demographic make-up. The European ethnic diversity of northeastern Ohio very much appealed to me, as it had in western New York. And what others thought of as the ‘rustbelt,’ I saw as the wholesome eastern Midwest from which I had come.

“I had overlapped at Ambassador College for two years with the man who had been the pastor of the Akron congregation for six years by the summer of

1989. We had become better friends after college than during our years there because freshmen typically were not close to juniors and seniors. But he had worked for a number of years in the Midwest under my brother-in-law—and I had previously visited him more than once—so I thought I had a good idea of what kind of pastor he might have been. This man also seemed quite agreeable to the idea of me following him into the area. I was looking forward to being able to really support this pastor—but really *any* pastor—who preceded me in my next assignment.

“Akron, Ohio, seemed to be the solution in so many ways.”

Settling into Akron

On the morning of February 1, 1990, the Packs left their home in Westchester County and headed west to Ohio. Driving through the Bronx on the way to the George Washington Bridge and out of town, the family watched with horror as police zipped a dead body on the side of the road into a body bag. New York's last image. Mr. Pack was relieved to be relocating to the more peaceful Midwest, and excited to return to his home state to raise his family in this more healthy environment.

What a difference Wadsworth would be!

Stopping in central Pennsylvania for the night, Mr. Pack was unable to sleep. He recalled walking the motel room at two in the morning, his mind racing with thoughts, eager to move forward on the course change his life had now taken.

“Months Inn”

Arriving in Wadsworth, it would have been ideal for the Packs to immediately move into their new home. But the transfer was to be so sudden that the previous homeowners

had not been able to vacate to their new home in time. So four members of the Pack family stayed in a hotel until the previous owners moved out. The Days Inn where they stayed soon became known to the family as the “Months Inn,” with four people having to live in one room for 32 days.

Living in a hotel was uncomfortable for the Packs, as it would be for any family. The children had to start a new school in the middle of the year while sleeping on cots in a hotel room. Along with not having his own room, Robby had to meet the school bus each morning in the parking lot of a Bob Evans restaurant next to the hotel. It was nice that the school did this, but for a teenage boy, this was embarrassing. But that was life.

Rusty at Pastoring?

Years had passed since Mr. Pack had been in charge of a congregation, or a pastorate of any size and number of churches.

“Some might wonder if I came back to pastoring and found that I was rusty. This is a natural question. The answer is no, there was no rust. It did not take months, or a month. It did not take even one week or one day to be comfortably ‘back in the saddle’ of pastoring. Perhaps the process is best likened to riding a bike or going swimming again. These are things that, once you know how to do, you just do not forget. A person can get on a bike when they have not ridden for 25 years and ride perfectly comfortably. The same is true with diving in a pool. People are not rusty when it comes to swimming, although one might be out of shape. Of course, a pastor should always be growing in knowledge and effectiveness. This process should never stop.

“I immediately set out to learn the spiritual state of the brethren. I wanted to listen and observe as much as I could about where the Church had been. I did understand that four and one third years had passed and that the overall Church was different in many important regards. While this did not mean I was rusty, or would not remember how to pastor, structure, organize, preach and teach, it did mean that I was now working with a flock that was in a different condition than would have been the case at Mr. Armstrong’s death in 1986. For me to effectively work with a congregation of early 1990, as opposed to the fall of 1985, would require some period of observation and analysis. This was on my mind at the beginning of my Akron years, now nearly 20 years ago.”

Malachi’s Message

Mr. Pack wanted to fully understand the reasons for the firing of the Oklahoma pastor. He decided to read the book this man wrote (*Malachi’s Message*) right away while he was in the hotel room. First, because this man had started his own organization, the “Philadelphia” Church of God. Second, this man had written his new book almost immediately after his firing. It was beginning to circulate among some members. Third, Mr. Pack knew there *were* some doctrinal changes and was naturally curious. He wanted to understand this man’s response to these changes.

It became clear that the short, poorly written book was nothing more than a butchering of plain Bible prophecy. To anyone who had even a basic understanding of God’s Word, its message was ludicrous, especially the author’s claim of special divine inspiration. (It was learned later that the book was apparently plagiarized almost in its entirety from another man’s work.)

The author claimed that the book of Malachi was in fact the “little book” of Revelation 10. This threw out the Church’s understanding that the prophet Ezekiel recorded what was the little book described in Revelation—that the great nations of the West are modern Israel and will soon go into captivity.

Something New Underway

The new organization heralded a change from anything the Church had previously experienced.

“It was very obvious to anyone who knows the Bible that the book *Malachi’s Message* could only be described as silly. It was difficult in those early days to believe that many brethren would fall for the ideas it presented. However, immediately a few in the author’s congregation and his associate pastor *did* fall for it, and left with their pastor.

“What made him effective was the way he marketed Mr. Armstrong—carefully packaging, wrapping, himself in Mr. Armstrong’s image and memory—while bringing a ‘prophecy message.’ People were hungry for prophecy. That the Worldwide Church of God ministry had been so largely derelict—negligent—in carefully teaching more than, or even just, the basics of prophecy was a chicken coming home to roost. This man took advantage of a void that he could easily fill with prophetic gobbledygook.

“But clearly, the man had set in motion something *not seen before*—people leaving the organization believing that they were *holding to* the truth, not *moving from* it. This was a ‘sea change’ from the past. In all previous instances, those leaving the Worldwide Church of God wanted to follow *other* doctrines than those taught and understood by the Church to be truth.

“So, while the ministry understood this new ‘leader’ was not remotely an option to be followed, the brethren did not. Two local ladies, longtime members, from the Akron congregation would soon join him.”

What Else Coming?

Still, Mr. Pack’s conversation with his friend after the Feast in Florida echoed in his mind. *What if the Church’s leadership is planning to alter some of its long-held doctrinal understanding? What if the few changes from Headquarters are really laying the groundwork for more and bigger changes?*

If a pattern of doctrinal change continued, Mr. Pack knew that many brethren would become confused. And, mirroring the 1970s, division would soon follow. He soon suspected that something bigger *was* happening. He remembered having a similar feeling when liberals began to water down doctrines in the 1970s. He sensed that the same confusion would upset the unity and harmony for which Mr. Armstrong had worked so diligently for 52 years. *If this happened, he thought, Mr. Armstrong is no longer here to put the Church back on track!*

When the family finally moved into their new home on March 6, Mr. Pack began to more fully investigate the small doctrinal changes that had started to come from Headquarters. He also looked more closely for new ways that articles and doctrines were being “flavored.” Over time, a working mental list of new doctrines began to be built.

Working as an associate pastor in New York City had somewhat shielded Mr. Pack from the doctrinal changes that began after the death of Mr. Armstrong. Not serving as a pastor, he had not had to address the fuller implications of the changes. But now that he was pastoring again, things

were different. Since he was now expected to resume *teaching* the Church's doctrines, he needed to understand them. He would need to more closely examine every doctrinal alteration, no matter how small or subtle. This would happen slowly, as the changes arrived.

A Look at Akron

It was the beginning of 1990 and Mr. Pack was settling into his new pastorate. One of the first things he recognized about the local congregation was that it was well established. Started in July 1959, it was one of the oldest congregations in the world—number 28, meaning only 27 other congregations preceded it in the Radio Church of God from 1933 to 1959. (For comparison, by the early 1990s there were almost 900 congregations in the World-wide Church of God.)

This had advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, there were many experienced leaders and older members. On the other, many were set in their ways. Many wanted to stick with the same course set by the previous pastor. Any administrative change Mr. Pack brought—regardless of how small or how positive—was viewed with suspicion by some.

By 1990, congregations were much different from those of the back-on-track years. Thinking had grown shallow. Temperatures had cooled. But this would be only gradually more evident.

Full Speed Ahead

As Mr. Pack examined the changes, determined not to compromise God's truth, he also attended to the needs of the congregation. Following Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might," he put forth his full effort in serving members in Akron. It was

quickly evident that much work lay ahead. Within months, it became clear that the Akron congregation was anything but trouble-free.

In contrast to the explosive issues he had encountered in previous pastorates, the problems here were much more subtle. These included judgmental leaders, a divisive minority, cliques at all levels, but also doctrinally unsound brethren. And it became apparent just how disgruntled many had become with the Church's local leadership during the last several years.

Few evidenced spiritual minds. And there was little respect for the ministry because of the example they had just seen for seven years.

Undermined by Previous Pastor

One of the first major obstacles to be faced began before moving to Akron. Unbeknownst to Mr. Pack, prior to his arrival, the previous pastor met for the final time with all of the local deacons and elders, and wives, and as much as warned them about the incoming pastor.

"Now look, fellows," he said. "Dave Pack has been allowed to be a pastor again, but he has a history of being difficult to work under and extremely strict. But, if you have problems with him, don't call me. I do not want to be involved. He is your problem."

It was an act that terribly undermined Mr. Pack from the start, and showed that the man had no understanding of the correct form of God's government—or what such damaging words planted on his listeners' ears would yield—let alone on the ears of those who needed to be the most supportive of an incoming pastor.

Mr. Pack was in a sense "doomed" before he even arrived! He had no idea that he had been discredited in the minds of local leaders. This meeting created distrust from the beginning.

“The old pattern of ministerial backstabbing had returned, and even before I had arrived. I only learned later how a man I thought was another ‘friend’ had poisoned the well before I had even gotten to town. It was always an astonishing thing to me that people were willing to believe the stories about me—including all of my dearest friends who had neither seen these things themselves, nor uttered a hint of them to me over the years we knew each other.

“Imagine how difficult it was functioning with a group of leaders who had been warned about me. Ungodliness takes different forms, and such an advance ‘caution’ is certainly one of them. Anything I would ever have to tell the leaders that was unpopular they could now frame as ‘strict’ or because I was ‘difficult to work with.’ They were put ‘on the lookout.’ What made this worse was that the leaders let this be known to their friends who were not deacons and elders.

“Thankfully, I did not know what I was up against for sometime until one elder and a deacon finally took me aside, almost by accident, and told me what had been said.”

Snobbery

Another problem with the Akron group was cliquishness, and in the extreme. Two tiers of people had developed, with this partly attributable to the influence of several wealthy members with large extended families.

This superior feeling of the few would soon need to be dealt with. As the brethren assembled for a potluck after services on the Packs’ first Sabbath, the most well-to-do family gathered separately in the corner, and chose not to use the same plates—or even the same silverware—as the rest of the brethren. Instead, they brought their own *fine*

china so that others were aware that they were not among the “commoners” in the congregation. This elitist attitude even trickled down to the teenagers.

It was by far the most cliquish congregation the Packs had ever served, with other groups also broken into older, large extended families.

In response, about five months later, Mr. Pack delivered his usual sermon given in every pastorate during which at the end he instructed that everyone gather their belongings and move next to someone they did not already know. Most got the hint that everyone needed to be more inclusive, and the response was good overall, as it always was in other areas. A few were visibly annoyed that he would imply that they were not friendly.

Politicking was also commonplace. Some would even commandeer other brethren’s responsibilities—no matter how small—to elevate *themselves* and make it look like others were shirking their duties. Some members served purely for reward—and made sure everyone saw their serving. Such petty issues made the Akron congregation more like a typical worldly church in which people often maneuver to gain “spiritual” acclaim. Mr. Pack remarked, “Only the trumpets blown before the Pharisees were missing.”

The Kitchen

Mrs. Pack found strong resistance among the most senior women in the congregation. She learned that the previous pastor’s wife had been largely uninvolved, and, instead of serving, was being served.

“The previous pastor’s wife was a sweet person, but she always or almost always had the local ladies take her shopping. My wife’s independence could not have been more opposite than this. She could

hardly believe what she was hearing about a woman she thought she knew, going all the way back to Ambassador College. The result was that the pastor's wife was almost totally irrelevant as a leader among the women. My wife was far from overbearing, but neither was she irrelevant.

“Many pastors did not want their wives involved much in their ministry. It was easy for a wife to agree to this if she had no interest in serving others, or genuinely believed that she was in the area to be served. Many had the idea that ‘I am the minister and my wife is to be at home.’ This was incomprehensible to my wife.”

Mrs. Pack understood that she should take a leading role as the pastor's wife and offered to help the ladies organize and prepare food. As she had done many times before in previous pastorates, she headed for the kitchen. Approaching the most senior deaconess, the one in charge, she said, “I'd like to serve and be involved helping to organize the kitchen. I would like to see how things are being done.”

Incredibly, the woman replied, “You're not needed in the kitchen.”

Mrs. Pack politely responded, “I believe that I am.”

“You don't understand,” the woman replied again. “You are not needed. Everything is under control.”

Mrs. Pack declared, “I am needed, but it remains to be seen if *you* are needed.” The resistance ended *immediately*.

The Packs were then invited for dinner by the couple, and the woman had done a complete about-face. She had simply gotten accustomed to a pastor's wife who had little interest in serving. She was apologetic—and turned out to be a very nice, even particularly helpful, person.

In another incident, a deacon pulled Mr. Pack aside almost one year after his arrival, and stated, “You never men-

tion our name from the pulpit. Why is that? The previous pastor mentioned our family and all the things we do for the people regularly and you never mention it.”

Incredulous that the man would openly express concern that he was not receiving enough public credit, Mr. Pack responded, “The previous pastor did you a disservice. I will not do the same. He was unfair to you, and in effect taught you that public acclamation was your reward. You do not want that, do you? You certainly do not want me to put you on a pedestal above the brethren.”

Of course, that is exactly what the man and his family wanted.

Paperwork

Every pastor is involved with a lot of paperwork. Headquarters has to know what is happening in the field, and this means either telling it over the phone, visits (to or from Headquarters)—and paperwork of all kinds.

“For the story of my ministry to be complete, the element of paperwork has to be included. Nobody really liked to do it, and for the most part neither did I. But it was necessary.

“There were some ministers who simply ‘blew off’ instruction to send monthly church reports, and other items to be sent by stated policy, and depending upon who they were, they could get away with it—at least for a time. It actually got so bad at a point after Mr. Armstrong died that Headquarters was forced to withhold paychecks until some men caught up. I know this is shocking to hear, but this policy worked wonders.

“Monthly church reports were vital to keep Headquarters informed of the condition of every local congregation. Of course, most men through the

decades, good and bad, described their congregations as *solid, supportive of Headquarters* or similar positive descriptions.

“There were also hall rental vouchers, divorce and remarriage write-ups, church assistance back-up paperwork, Feast of Tabernacles assistance forms, *Plain Truth* Newsstand reports, baptism cards, prospective member forms, semi-annual church listing updates, basic letters and later emails, among a variety of others, to be filled out.

“Paperwork was just part of being a minister. I fell right back into these things, but I must admit that I did find myself suddenly realizing how nice had been the ‘paperwork furlough’ in New York City in this regard.”

Congregation Slowly Revitalized

Regardless of the congregation’s problems, Mr. Pack was determined to employ the same principles of rebuilding pastorates that had been so productive elsewhere.

He could see the congregation was stratified, non-participative and had been declining in attendance for several years. With much of the old guard “playing church,” new people were not being welcomed. A number of people desired to serve for the right reasons, but were lacking proper direction.

To reinvigorate the congregation—spiritually and physically—Mr. Pack started as he had done in the past by preaching the same basics that had always worked. One member present during that time commented about the immediate difference in the messages given by Mr. Pack in contrast to the previous minister:

“Coming as a guest speaker, on the first weekend that Mr. Pack visited looking for a home, he gave an

incredibly interesting sermon explaining that the last days were going to be like it was just before the Flood and in Sodom and Gomorrah. He took the passage in Matthew 24 where Christ describes the end-time being ‘as were the days of Noah,’ and built an entire sermon around that one passage.

“This message truly stood in contrast to messages that had been previously given. It had been some time since I had heard such a good sermon. After Mr. Pack moved to Akron, messages such as this became the norm, and many brethren were disappointed when someone else would give the sermon.”

Also, as in the past, large, inclusive activities were incorporated to get everyone involved and to help brethren warm up to each other. The Packs made sure to spend an equal amount of time talking to everyone in the congregation, not just the “important people” who had for so long been catered to.

An example of the fruits of these efforts to revitalize the congregation and to break apart its cliques was the response to the first local picnic. In the summer of 1989, the brethren, not the pastor, organized the picnic for the congregation. His response had been, “If you want a picnic, organize it.” With about 400 in the congregation at the time, only 47 came to the picnic—a pathetic response by *any* standard of the past—and it was on a beautiful, sunny summer day!

The next year, when the Packs got everyone involved well in advance of the activity, with special announcements, attendance skyrocketed. After implementing the same standards that had worked so successfully at other pastorates, 353 people attended the picnic in 1990—even though the temperature was the coldest in history on that day, with a high of only *57 degrees*, and raining with strong wind besides for the entirety of the day.

“This lone activity—a summer picnic!—just a little over five months after we had arrived, was the turning point for everything that would happen in the congregation. No one ever wanted to miss anything after this.”

Observing Temperature

One of the groups that is easy to overlook in importance within the Church are its single people, whether divorced or never previously married. It is a pastor's duty to look out for these people. God's Word prohibits them from marrying outside the faith—from being “unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

Akron became one of the central, designated locations of perhaps the largest annual singles dance weekend event in the eastern United States and Canada. More than 400 people visited Akron for these weekends—in the spring of 1991 and 1992—and the local brethren loved it.

People arrived from 38 states, all over the East Coast and beyond—as far west as Kansas City and as far north as Ontario—to participate.

“I loved working with single people. One year during my Akron assignment I was asked to serve and guide the single people at the Feast in Dayton, Ohio. This younger group had more than average energy, and so did I. They also were willing to ‘forage’ far and wide in order to ‘graze’ for a possible mate.

Large, central, well-organized, well-announced—and quality—activities offered them a chance to meet many different personalities of the opposite sex. It was astonishing how the underground word would spread regarding such activities.

“I took the approach that this was also an opportunity for single people to build and demonstrate leadership. It was also clear that if a guest speaker from Headquarters came, and a helpful seminar from that man were incorporated on Sunday morning after a Saturday night, post-Sabbath dance, the ‘draw’ to attend was strong. I invited my brother-in-law Gary Antion the first year because he and my (first) wife’s sister are very good at, and enjoy, these affairs.

“But as much as anything else, the activity had to represent *quality*—because this is God’s standard. Everyone appreciates quality. We rented a beautiful, local country clubhouse for the Saturday night affair.

“Attendance the second year doubled over the first year. I was not present to continue a third year.”

The Word Spreads

Just as had happened in Buffalo, the word spread that Akron was the place to be for activities—and of the right kind! There were softball, basketball and volleyball tournaments, family weekends, and more. Even Church fundraisers were designed to unite the congregation. Many of Mr. Pack’s friends in the ministry and pastors in adjacent congregations were amazed at the scope of Akron’s activities. Brethren from Cleveland East and West, Canton, Youngstown and even Mansfield began taking the extra drive to visit the old congregation that had spawned their congregations.

The implementation of correct government—in fact, just basic guidance in some cases—also reinvigorated the

direction and orderliness of activities, and it was evident that Sabbath messages were bearing fruit.

However, the efforts did not stop there. Extensive child-rearing seminars were organized, as were specialized Bible Studies for teens. Mr. Pack made the effort to visit everyone in their homes and to establish his usual greeting teams.

Participation

As a result, participation increased in all areas: Y.O.U. sports, singles activities, Spokesman Club, socials and Sabbath service attendance. Prospective members more consistently remained in the Church and baptisms increased. Akron began a progression from an “old and cold” congregation toward a warmer, friendlier environment, as well as a hotbed of activity.

“Whether it was Spokesman and Graduate Clubs, dances, picnics, snow parties, singles activities, senior activities, sports, fundraising or youth activities, the sense became that these things were just not to be missed.

“Spokesman Club jumped to the limit of 30 members, and then, as I recall, we eventually had to create a separate Graduate Club.

“Of course, all who were involved worked very hard at being sure that everyone was included in whatever was being planned. An emphasis on quality was reinstated as the only way to do something if we were to plan it. The people absolutely loved the fact that things were being done in a way they had never seen.

“All but the few quickly seemed to forget that I was supposedly harsh and strict. They reported that the area had *never* had so much fun.”

Serving Brethren

Mr. Pack also viewed his role as a pastor as an opportunity to occasionally directly serve members. In each pastorate, he had become acquainted with every man, woman or child, committing each name to memory. Akron was no exception.

During his ministry, a problem had sometimes arisen that is worth being repeated: some pastors treated the congregation as a resource to be used for personal reasons. Mr. Pack knew it was important to lead by serving, sometimes on the most personal level. He was determined to help members any way he could.

Sometimes a love of planting and caring for trees provided a natural opportunity to do this. One member of the Akron congregation recalled the following account:

“It was on the Night To Be Much Observed in the spring of 1990. During the evening’s conversation I mentioned I was going to transplant some tulip trees from my father’s woods to my property. I wanted to line my driveway with them. Mr. Pack told me that he had dug trees out of the woods many times and transplanted them to other locations. He explained how much he enjoyed doing this, and asked me when I was planning to move the trees and told me that he wanted to help.

“We spent most of one day finding and digging up tulip trees, half a dozen or so, between five and six feet high, and then replanting them in my yard along the driveway. We even found a dogwood tree that he helped plant at my father’s house, and he was not even in the Church.

“I had enjoyed spending much of the day with him. To repay Mr. Pack for his help, I wanted to give him

some rich, black, fertile soil I had left over. It was about a small pickup truck's load. But I could only talk him into taking a five gallon bucket of it. He did not want anything in return."

And another member, an elderly widow, recounted this story:

"One of the times Mr. Pack came to visit me I asked him about a tree in my front yard. We all knew that he understood trees. It was not doing well and I thought it was dying. But he said, 'Don't worry about it. I'll come out and work on it. It will be fine.' So he made a special trip out to my house to prune and trim the tree. He was always so kind and helpful."

Members could see that they now had a minister who cared about them.

Mother's Health

During this time, Jane Pack was suffering from an ailment that she had not revealed to anyone. The first time her son became aware of her true condition was just before Thanksgiving of 1990. Mr. Pack's father and mother called to announce that, for the first time in almost 20 years, the family could not keep Thanksgiving together, because both of them needed to fly to a clinic in Mexico. For several weeks, Jane Pack was scheduled to undergo special treatment for what the couple had come to understand was advanced breast cancer. It was a somber announcement, followed by positive encouragement that she was taking a good path, one she was comfortable with because of her natural food background. But the discovery had come late.

After over five years of struggling with what she thought was a bruise, the senior Packs finally discovered the wound

was something much worse. As Mr. Pack learned, his mother thought she first sustained an injury to her breast in August 1985—the week before Mr. Pack was told he was demoted. While driving bumper cars with her grandchildren, “Grandma” got hit from behind by one of them, creating an impact that sent her flying forward. Her chest hit the steering wheel of the car. (Note that this was a grandmother who rode bumper cars and other rides at the county fair into her 60s, and who challenged her grandsons to “duels” in the arena.)

Over the next year, there were two more occasions, one a fall and the other being jabbed by an umbrella, where Jane Pack injured the exact same area.

She had slowly developed a weeping wound, but chose to only privately tell one person—and not even her husband. With iron-willed determination, she kept it a secret until forced to tell him because she finally needed to have it checked out.

Ran Pack was alarmed, but there was nothing they could do other than wait for the prognosis. After Mr. Pack’s parents flew back from Mexico, they felt that progress had been made. They both were filled with faith, and were encouraged about the course of the disease.

Mr. Pack was deeply affected, but his mother largely refused to talk about the severity of her problem, believing the situation was under control. She told him she wanted to handle the illness in her own way. He maintained close contact with her, visiting a month later in December.

“My mother was absolutely one of the strongest-willed people I have ever known. I could write an entire chapter about how this woman never, never complained about anything. Long after I entered adulthood she told me of the difficulty she had experienced following my birth because the doctor had left something inside her for over three weeks.

My father explained that she never complained, then or ever.

“One of my mother’s best friends in high school was former Vice President Dan Quayle’s mother—who was from a very wealthy family, and lived nearby. This introduces my mother’s Indiana neighborhood. Many wealthy young girls were pampered and spoiled and acted as though pain and suffering were only to be experienced by others.

“Never my mother.”

“Bible Study Test”

As Mr. Pack neared the completion of his first full year in Akron, the congregation continued to be transformed. However, one issue troubled him. For the first time in his ministry, he could not motivate brethren to attend Bible Study!

No matter how much he exhorted and encouraged, prodded and pushed, there was only a slightly improved response to the bi-weekly event. He simply could not get people to attend—including several veteran deacons and most of the longtime brethren. They had “heard it all before.”

Mr. Pack realized, *Everyone is responding wonderfully to the physical activities, but they have little interest in spiritual matters.* This mentality had implications for the entire Worldwide Church of God. It was evident that members did not have the same zeal for spiritual growth as they once did.

Bible Study attendance was the “great test”—at least on a local level—to see who cared about God’s Way and desired to grow in understanding. Obviously, people are willing to attend socials because they are enjoyable—the “good times.” However, in Akron, it was noticed that in addition to Bible studies, there was also a lack of attendance

for any activities that required both a desire for growth and a personal sacrifice of time.

Leaders of Little Help

There is one factor that greatly affects how much, or even whether, a congregation can fully turn around: the quality and dedication of local leaders.

“In every pastorate, it was crucial to have solid elders, deacons and deaconesses involved and supporting all that occurred. Perhaps nothing is more important. Most of the Akron contingent of these could only be summarized as ‘old and tired.’ I really had my work cut out for me in trying to ‘turn them around.’

“Like everyone else, these people need guidance and direction. First, they are human beings and only second are they office-holders. I immediately set out to nurture and infuse enthusiasm in them because their support was particularly important in such a large congregation. Besides, there were more leaders than the congregation needed. This made their long, tired faces more obvious for what they were not doing.

“Communication with the leaders is much more important than most pastors understand. Jesus told the disciples that they were called His friends, and were not merely servants who ‘knew not what their Lord does.’

“Every single Sabbath, I met just before services at the front of the hall with these men (I had done this in every previous assignment) and made sure I gave each one a little job to carry out. They all enjoyed knowing what the others were doing. Deacons and elders always seemed to love the extra effort of coming to these meetings, because they saw their value.

“Still, I had to almost physically drag several to Bible Study. Two simply would not come, even when the wife of one of them never missed.

“Sadly, some of the men who were deacons had absolutely no idea that they were to serve, even though they had been ordained to the office of ‘servant,’ the meaning of the Greek word for *deacon*.

“One elder was very helpful, another was somewhat helpful, and the third one fought me at *every* turn. So did his wife. Sometimes one has to work with people who NEVER should have been ordained, but who were because a particular pastor ‘liked’ them.”

Christian Growth Tool Survey

Mr. Pack once again conducted the five-question prayer and Bible study survey/questionnaire. The response was stunning! Large numbers returned cards full of zeros. Twenty percent did not even bother to turn in their cards! This would certainly not have been because their answers were good, meaning their numbers were high. The answers confirmed that many in the congregation simply did not care about spiritual growth. Incredibly, this was just not on their mind.

“I recall as though it were yesterday seeing very different looks on people’s faces when I administered this particular ‘3x5 card survey.’ In the past, people enjoyed taking it, and it was obvious at the pulpit, from where I was asking the questions. People would look up and smile, some obviously thinking of what was a right and fair answer to how much and how often they prayed, studied and fasted.

“Akron was different—very different. While I had only been there a short time, I still thought it not too early to present the survey. The faces revealed that I

was intruding where I did not belong. Some faces were outright angry that I would dare ask about things that were none of my business. Of course, no names were ever used. Through the years, any who put their names on I would throw away.

“I was not interested in specific names or their scores, but rather in the overall spiritual condition of the flock I was to feed.”

Despite repeated efforts to revive enthusiasm, Bible Study attendance never did reach even close to the levels Mr. Pack wished to see. Although attendance did double—going from 50 to 100, then very temporarily to 125—it never reached the 65 percent to 75 percent of the total congregation that was common in Mr. Armstrong’s time in Mr. Pack’s pastorates. Local attendance later fell back to a number that was closer to 50 percent above past attendance partly because of what was happening in the Church worldwide.

“I tried very hard to make Bible Study interesting, in fact, harder than ever. We looked deep into prophecy, and those present enjoyed it. But most of the increase was due to the congregation jumping in attendance by almost 100 over time. In effect, this meant that even fewer of the original regulars continued coming to Bible Study by late in my third year. When people would come to ‘give it a try,’ it was as though they saw the numbers present and concluded, ‘This isn’t the place to be.’”

A realization slowly came over Mr. Pack. He had been demoted at nearly the same time Mr. Armstrong’s ministry virtually ended. Over four years had passed, and he had now been reassigned to a new pastorate—and it had been a completely new and different experience from the years in Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, and earlier.

Members' flagging zeal was not limited to Bible Study. Many did not care about the Work or about fellowship. For the first time, a new "spirit" was beginning to manifest itself. It was also evident that large numbers in the congregation did not seem to be led by the Holy Spirit—at all. Mr. Pack began to believe it was impossible in the present circumstances to bring most brethren back to the same level of enthusiasm for the truth and the Work seen in previous decades.

Greater Problem Evident

At first, Mr. Pack attributed some of the congregation's problems to a lack of teaching from the previous pastor. However, as the months progressed, Mr. Pack was forced to ask himself, *Is this lukewarm attitude now prevalent in the entire Worldwide Church of God? Is my congregation a microcosm of the state of affairs in the Work as a whole?*

Mr. Pack found little reason to be optimistic regarding the future of the Worldwide Church of God.

"The previous pastor was not much the problem in regard to Bible Study attendance. The pattern was becoming universal in the WCG. There *were* some in the congregation who caught fire. Of course, this was gratifying.

"But what made things really difficult was that more and more brethren began to open up to me about previous conditions in the pastorate. Frankly, there was a flood of this that occurred almost right out of the gate. It made for a very awkward—and dangerous—set of circumstances for me personally. A tiny number were informing the previous pastor that I was 'doing everything differently,' and that 'I was not supporting his style.'

"I was certainly not undermining him as he had done to me, but I intended to pastor the congregation

as I knew God was guiding according to what it needed, not what the previous pastor or anyone else wanted. The automatic byproduct was that previous leadership did not look much like leadership. In the end, *this* is what undermined his record. This would certainly not stop him later, however, from ‘retaliating’ with a vengeance.

“This said, many ministers simply did not know how to be ministers. The problem was not just uninvolved wives. Some men did not care about ministering correctly, others did but their fruits reflected incompetence—they were square pegs in round holes. I do not believe the man intended to be as he was. He just did not have any idea how to be a minister.

“But the result was the same. I sought to be—and had to be—very, very careful with every step taken and move made.

“Another factor came into play, and it was crucial. I spent a great deal of time in my first Akron year regularly calling a man I knew at Headquarters, now in Ministerial Services, with whom I had attended college. The purpose was to make sure that all the decisions made and things done were known by someone in Pasadena so that I was ‘covered.’ This friend was helpful and supportive, to a point, and for a time this bought me a certain amount of time to bear fruit in the area so that I could not be as easily attacked as had happened in 1985.

“The ‘warning’ given the leaders before I arrived always hung ‘heavy’ in the air—for over three years.”

Confronting the Church's Doctrinal Direction

It was now approaching 25 years since Mr. Pack was first exposed to the truth through Mr. Armstrong's voice. Over the years, there had been doctrinal issues that arose within the Church, most notably during the 1970s. But these were always brought by certain rogue ministers and rebellious factions—*never* the Pastor General!

For the first time, there was growing uncertainty about whether the *leader* of the Church was off track.

Mr. Pack was determined to trust God's government—as long as what remained in Pasadena *was* God's government as the Bible and Mr. Armstrong revealed it—and as the Church long understood it. However, he was also determined to listen for Christ's voice—the voice of truth (John 18:37), which always rings with clarity. He was grateful that he had been forced early on to *deeply* prove basic doctrines in his youth. This conviction had guided the toughest decision of his life: turning from a successful swimming career and comfortable lifestyle and future to God's Way and truth. It was the extra depth of study and research, and resulting commitment, that prevented Mr. Pack's faith from wavering, and that kept him from being fooled by the

world's shallow theology being disseminated from Headquarters.

Now that he was a pastor again, his role had taken on new meaning. While an associate pastor in New York, he waited patiently for things to improve. But he could do this no longer. He had a responsibility to the brethren and the leaders.

“Born Again in this Life” Announced

Mr. Pack could no longer remain silent. He began to gently approach surrounding ministers at district activities, and certain friends elsewhere, about their reaction to whatever was the latest change—and then he would continue on to discuss other changes if a man were receptive.

Almost all were.

This process began shortly after the January 28, 1991 *Worldwide News* arrived in which Joseph Tkach addressed the question of whether Christians are “born again” in this life or at the Resurrection upon Christ’s Return.

Since early in Mr. Armstrong’s ministry, a fundamental belief of the Church—and Bible!—had been that Christians are not born again now, but rather are *begotten* by God’s Spirit at baptism and conversion. This was bedrock. The Church held to the belief that I Corinthians 15:52 indicates the moment when Christians are born again. It is the future event when, “We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.” *This* is the moment when Christians are born as Spirit beings. *This* is when Christians’ “corruptible” bodies take on the “incorruption” of Spirit bodies, as they are given the gift of eternal life and enter into the kingdom of God. *This* is when “that which is born of the spirit *is* spirit.”

The belief that Christians are born again at the Resurrection was confirmed by Joseph Tkach seven months after Mr. Armstrong’s death, in the benchmark August 1986 “18

Truths” *Worldwide News* article. However, Pasadena now had another angle, far from new theology, on what born again meant. Ironically, this change was announced in the same publication in which the long-held understanding was confirmed just over four years earlier.

In the 1991 article, Joseph Tkach’s ghostwriter stated this: “Mr. Armstrong’s analogy of human gestation (begettal) is a good analogy. But we must not confuse it with the biblical analogy of being ‘born again,’ which is referring to Christian conversion. The Church must now redefine its explanation of the verb *gennao*.” *Gennao* is the Greek word that Mr. Armstrong explained was a reference to begettal, not birth.

The Bell Tolls

It is important to note that this latest change radically altered the Church’s understanding of the plan that God has for each of His children in—and on the way to—His kingdom. It was an assault on one of the most basic doctrinal underpinnings of the Church.

As Mr. Pack remembers, from this moment forward his “antennae” were now fully up and acutely attuned to what was occurring.

“With the January 1991 *Pastor General’s Report* and the accompanying *Reviews You Can Use* report—the latter was distributed as a regular bi-monthly resource for ministers—a loud bell rang in my mind. To quote Ernest Hemingway’s famous book title, it was as though I was the one ‘for whom the bell tolled.’ This was the moment when I understood that likely nothing would ever again be the same.

“Four changes were simultaneously announced or hinted to be coming: (1) No one has to *qualify* for salvation, meaning there are no biblically prescribed

‘qualifiers’ and the Church was wrong to ever suggest that salvation was anything other than a gift to any who ‘believe on Jesus’—works play no part. (2) The Christian is born again at conversion, not the first Resurrection. *Many* truths collapse under the weight of this single horrific error. (3) Men in the Church may now wear earrings, and the apostles probably wore them. Of course, ‘scriptures’ were cited, and butchered, to prove this. (4) The pagan idea of God as a three-in-one being (trinity) was ever so softly (and cleverly) suggested as something at least for consideration.

“Many men were upset at these developments, but others seemed not to even notice—literally. It was then that I learned some ministers were not, for various reasons, reading, or more accurately *studying*, what was coming from Pasadena.”

Visitor from Pasadena

Word of Mr. Pack’s disagreement almost immediately traveled to Headquarters, as did a couple complaints from a few in his local congregation that Mr. Pack was acting as “a sheriff not a shepherd” (a new phrase that Pasadena had been using with field ministers). Church Administration decided to respond.

“I had periodically been asking my friend in Ministerial Services if they had received any complaints about me. He always said no—none. Naturally, this was encouraging—and emboldening—because I knew that I could begin to turn up the heat from the pulpit a little more and a little more as time passed. And I did.”

Roughly one year after arriving in Akron, however, Mr. Pack was visited by his best friend. His opening line shortly

after arriving was, "I have a message for Garcia." That message was clear.

"Dave, we've received complaints that you are once again not being understanding and tolerant with brethren," he said. "I'm told you are taking a pretty hard line, and you need to soften up in the way that you approach brethren in your congregation."

Mr. Pack acknowledged that there were indeed some who did not agree with certain of his administrative judgments—and he defended these decisions. But he absolutely knew that the number writing in was very small—and also knew likely who they were.

"I explained that I had not disfellowshipped anyone, except two ladies who had gone with Gerald Flurry the month before. I am not even sure if I had *suspended* anyone from services. I learned that *one family* had flown to Headquarters to complain about me in person—the same one that wanted to hear their name spoken from the pulpit. Their prominence made their report 'easier to hear' in Pasadena. It did not take long to convince my friend they were not to be taken seriously, and why. He then assured me that some, including himself, found their attempt disgusting.

"Of course, I was learning yet again that 'no good deed goes unpunished.'"

Mr. Pack also acknowledged that he held people to dress standards at services. In keeping with longstanding tradition, he would not permit men to come before God on His Sabbath without ties and coats, or women without wearing a dress instead of pants. Also, if prospective members were attending intermittently, or attending for long periods without demonstrating any intention of counseling about or moving toward baptism, Mr. Pack nicely reminded them that they either needed to commit in a more serious way or

find a church where they could come and go as they pleased. But even this was rare.

In addition, Mr. Pack had exhorted people to attend and participate in local activities and Spokesman Club, and questioned from the pulpit why some would have no interest in such things. Not surprisingly, some were not appreciative that their zeal was questioned. Their religion was to be Sabbath services and nothing more.

He had also addressed misconduct in the youth program and made it clear to teens and parents alike that they must meet God's standards in order to participate. When the foul-mouthed son of one deacon and deaconess used four-letter words at Y.O.U. activities, the 12-year-old was told about it. And his parents were not happy that he was.

Mr. Pack had seen the results of pastors who allowed "bad apples" to remain in otherwise thriving youth programs in upstate New York and earlier—and he was not about to permit it in Akron. Teens were rightly singled out for behavior beyond foul language, including dating outside the Church, smoking and fornication. Some parents did not appreciate characterization of their children as bad influences on others. The messenger was the problem. Others were grateful for assistance against the world's pulls on their children.

In these instances, people's actions—if sometimes not their words—clearly revealed that they had no interest in meeting clear biblical standards. Instead of either addressing their own behavior or acknowledging that they were of a different mindset, they chose to complain to Pasadena. This conveniently shifted the focus away from the need to change their own unacceptable behavior.

Regrettably, certain people at Headquarters were more than willing to listen to such complaints. Some reasoned that a few comments meant one thing: that the "old Mr. Pack" had returned. In a sense, they were right! Now that he had been reinstated as a pastor, he could again ensure that

right standards were maintained, and wrong behavior and attitudes were addressed.

“A true minister is not some kind of cowboy who rides in and shoots up the town. That’s for sure. He is thoughtful and careful in everything, gently working toward the right outcome on every occasion.

“But the tail was now being openly permitted to wag the dog. Pastors were now judged almost solely on their ability to soothe and keep quiet the tares in their congregation. Imagine! Tares literally *ruling local congregations*, but only because they were already *ruling Headquarters*.

“Anyone who wants to understand this dark period in true Church history should reread the entire last subhead.”

A Redirect!

Unwilling to allow the meeting to focus on the minutia of several complaints in the Akron congregations, Mr. Pack turned the tables and challenged the visiting “evangelist” on some of the other smaller changes trickling from Pasadena.

Revisiting their conversation of 16 months earlier at the Feast, Mr. Pack questioned many issues, including the trinity, makeup, physical sin and healing, and other points of doctrine. But there was a larger issue on his mind.

“I wanted to know what was coming regarding the utterly false idea that one is born again at conversion. I asked why so few seemed to be taking issue with this. He tried, naturally, to defend an old idea with the same old shallow nonsense.

“We were sitting at a restaurant. At a point, I cut right to Colossians 1:18 and it stopped him cold. It states that Jesus Christ is ‘the firstborn *from the dead*.’

His response was genuine surprise: ‘You have a good point. I never thought about that. I’ll have to ask [name] about that.’

“Incredible. He had never thought about such an open-and-shut verse. Some time after, a pitiful attempt to explain away this passage came from Pasadena.”

After receiving mostly “non-answers” from his college friend, the visit ended. As the man left, one thing was clear. Regardless of how inaccurate the generalization was, Mr. Pack was once again characterized as harsh by a tiny number of brethren who did not want to address their own conduct, and by certain liberal-leaning administrators at Headquarters who preferred an approach to Christianity that was more “inclusive.”

Yet, curiously, his friend was going to, and did, give Pasadena a good report of the visit. This would soon be obvious.

“There is no doubt in my mind that God was granting me a special favor with Pasadena for His own later purpose. This man was unwittingly carrying out that purpose. I did recognize it.

“Things were pretty clear in my mind. As I often put it now, everything that God is doing is summarized by 20 words: ‘Jesus built a Church that does a Work under a Government that explains and declares the Truth through Two Commissions.’ So easy to understand—and remember—yet almost everyone lost sight of it.

“I knew the true Church had always existed and that the same Jesus Christ would keep His Matthew 16:18 promise, right on time, to preserve it. While I certainly had my moments, I must say that I was quite calm going forward from that February 1991 meeting.”

An Expanded Pastorate

In June of 1991, Mr. Pack was once again asked to “stand in the gap” for Headquarters with an adjacent pastorate because of a health crisis in the ministry. A neighboring pastor, Vince Panella, over the Canton, Ohio, congregation (25 miles south of Akron) was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and had to take a medical leave of absence. Since Mr. Panella would be unable to serve the brethren in his congregation for several months during the summer, Ministerial Services contacted Mr. Pack and requested that he temporarily pastor two congregations.

Mr. Pack was honored and happy to be able to assist and to have the opportunity to do something similar to 10 years earlier with Buffalo. Only this time, he would not be using a cane and raising small children, and the pastorate would not stretch over hundreds of miles.

Saddened by the man's personal trial, but pleased with another chance to serve, Mr. Pack accepted the assignment and again began running a two-church circuit.

Something else was at work in the addition of this second congregation. Mr. Pack now had almost 900 brethren to look after. No pastorate in the entire WCG was larger at the time. The decision to expand his pastorate in fact signaled that Headquarters had a growing confidence in his ability to pastor effectively. The timing is important to the story. It was now four months *after* the February visit from his friend.

“Taking the Canton congregation was not a difficult adjustment. I moved Akron to morning services so that I could spend extra time in Canton after the PM service. The people were clearly hurting over their pastor's condition. They could see he was not recovering.

“This man had been my brother’s pastor in 1972. He was an example of a man who had made dramatic changes in his approach to the ministry, and I respected him. So many older men were unable or unwilling to change long-held habits and patterns. I certainly had to outgrow a variety of things from my early years. So had this man. Sadly, he died.

“The ‘Canton summer’ was helpful in that I got to work directly with another 375 people right in the middle of the Church’s descent into apostasy. It broadened and deepened my grasp of what was happening in people’s lives on the personal level. Almost everyone sees the apostasy as merely a doctrinal problem, of course a *big* doctrinal problem. Very few saw the cooling *spiritual temperature* in scores of thousands of lives at the individual grassroots level in the Church. I did. I knew that far more than Pasadena, or Mr. Tkach, was off track.”

Ministers and Senior Men Refuse to Take a Stand

As 1991 continued, Mr. Pack was forced to confront doctrinal changes in “real time,” because brethren were now aware of certain “new understandings”—and a few were asking questions.

Never one to merely “wait and see” what would happen in a matter of such importance, he further consulted other friends in the ministry. During many years of pastoring, Mr. Pack had come to know a great many ministers around the world.

At District Family Weekends, visits to Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, where his oldest son was now a student, and combined events in the Church, Mr. Pack began to take opportunities to speak with these men and understand their views of the changes. Sadly, many of the other pastors to whom he talked during this time either did not

understand the *scope* and *great depth* of the doctrinal changes—or did not seem to care!

The ministry's complacency was maddening. Although many could see the changes, these men downplayed them or viewed them as "no big deal."

Thankfully, there were more than a few who *did* have problems with the alterations. Yet, even though some were very upset by the new doctrinal path, they were only troubled *off the record*. Publicly, it was "business as usual."

In some regards, Mr. Pack was "out in front" of other ministers in their understanding of the depth of the doctrinal changes. First, he took an active approach in *identifying* them. Second, he had a preview of the new Headquarters team's intentions through his interactions with an inner-circle "architect."

"I spent a lot of time with ministers on gymnasium bleachers watching basketball games that we were not really seeing. There were many covert conversations taking place, and this was probably happening around the world. I engaged in an untold number of such conversations. Gradually, over time, there was only rarely a minister who liked what was happening. But most did not see the depth. Of course, the question became, 'How could so many ultimately go along with disaster?'..."

Eventually, many ministers, including some in Mr. Pack's extended family, began leveling the charge that he was "crying wolf." They did not believe Pasadena would much further alter the Church's doctrines and traditions.

To complicate matters, Mr. Pack was surrounded by a mixture of "liberal" and "conservative" ministers. As he resisted these new changes and refused to expose the congregation to them, pastors of both stripes around him were largely remaining quiet.

“Born Again” Becomes Official Doctrine

Unbeknownst to Mr. Pack, there was a calculated, covert process being implemented by the doctrinal committee at Headquarters.

Before the committee could progress to more sweeping changes, brethren had to be pre-conditioned to accept the idea that they were growing spiritually by accepting new teachings. Therefore, they were at first lulled to sleep with *popular* changes that Headquarters knew would appeal to many members. And they would make the Church look more “normal” to friends and family.

Whether aware of it or not, brethren were being slowly conditioned, and even *trained*, to routinely accept changes—and again so many seemed to have no idea that they were in grave danger! Of course, the greater ministry was not sounding the alarm. By this time members were programmed to justify any change with the defense that they were “growing in grace and knowledge.”

“It was evident that much time and thought was given in Pasadena to the subtlety with which the changes needed to be delivered to the membership. Very artful language was used to bring maximum seductive impact. It was as though every word was carefully chosen to both bring about a change, and at the same time not seem to be doing this. The cunning with which nuances were used was in fact gouging giant holes in the truth.

“The goal was to make sure that the brethren did not understand that a doctrinal shell game was underway. The ‘sleight of [hand]’ used, to quote Paul, was simply magnificent to behold. I knew that what was being brought to the Church was not coming from men, but from Satan working through his most skilled word manipulators.

“It was frustrating in the extreme to watch God’s people trade away truth in nickels and dimes, never realizing that they were quickly adding up to 10 and 20 dollar bills. So many would exclaim later how they did not see it happening. But my master-poker-playing father had explained from my youth that one takes the other player’s money only a little at a time or he will leave the table too soon, meaning before you have cleaned him out.”

Another reason that this mindset appealed to so many was that it appeared to counteract what many now were ready to see as “oppressive legalism.” As one member stated, “People traded what they *had* to do for what they *wanted* to do.” Many were eventually overjoyed to finally “throw off the shackles of little elements within God’s overall Law” and replace it with more permissive—and palatable—beliefs. But at the time, grace was only ever so slowly turned into license.

Once people accepted these more popular beliefs, *then* the doctrinal architects could move on to further fundamental shifts. Vast thousands were in all-out “growth mode,” meaning, “Let’s throw off all restraint.” In fact, some actually left the WCG because they saw the “end-game” before others, and believed Pasadena should move even faster. One family famously said, “We see where you are going. So we are going to go on over there and wait for you.” They joined a Protestant church.

It had been almost a year since Mr. Tkach first planted the seed that Christians are born again in this life. Starting in early December 1991 through January 1992, a new barrage of articles, sermons, tapes and announcements on the same subject began to emerge from Pasadena—this time from a number of other men.

To anyone paying attention—and most were not, because even today this doctrine is somewhat widely accept-

ed in the most liberal big splinter—the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God had decided its members were “born again Christians”!

Setting up the Trinity “god”

Mr. Pack was sickened by this false and confusing interpretation of what was previously clear—and basic—biblical understanding. This change was more damaging than most could realize because it acted as another domino in a line to fall, setting the stage for many other beliefs to be toppled.

The new Headquarters administration understood that if a person accepted the “born again” change, there would be little *resistance* to others, such as the details of the Plan of God, the need to obey the Law, or even the very nature of God—Who and What He is.

What should have been a nuclear explosion in early 1991 in the Worldwide Church of God, when *Reviews You Can Use* arrived, never happened. Very cleverly, Headquarters had successfully laid the groundwork to introduce the trinity doctrine—the traditional, three-beings-in-one teaching held by Catholics and Protestants! At the time, it was hard to believe that the men in charge would embrace this false god—one that over 150,000 people had left behind for such good reason.

It was at this point that the struggle with what was being introduced intensified, because there was always the implied message that local ministers would be required to teach it—but not yet!

Unwilling to teach error, Mr. Pack had continued giving the same doctrinally sound sermons he had given his entire ministry. However, this still left him conflicted. Even though he was not buying the new changes, and had shielded the congregation from them, he began to feel that not *refuting* them was tacitly *approving* them.

The Worst Dilemma

This began to weigh heavily on his mind, partially due to local brethren being left with a feeling of uncertainty as friends and family members in other Church areas brought the changes to their attention. Upon hearing rumors of new doctrine, many Akron brethren were puzzled. Only a small number approached him—and this was a blessing because it bought him time to think through a grander course—and these related that when others outside Akron mentioned these teachings, they could only respond, “I don’t remember Mr. Pack saying anything about that.”

Through the early part of 1992, Mr. Pack developed a deeper crisis of conscience. Beyond personal anger, he knew his greater responsibility was to guard the spiritual well-being of the brethren in his congregation.

The local dynamic involved a clear-cut division. Some few were upset about the changes and wanted proof they were biblical. In contrast, another small number seemed almost giddy that the Church was “relaxing” its expectations—they wholeheartedly embraced every new doctrine. The large “middle” seemed to sense very little. These opposing attitudes created a strange dichotomy. As demands for explanations mounted, Mr. Pack found it increasingly difficult to provide satisfactory answers. He would try to work with people one-on-one, knowing that he could be betrayed at any moment. It is a difficult dilemma for any true minister.

It's About the Money

Another ugly factor at work has to be understood to comprehend the success of the apostates.

“Almost no one talks about the real reason the apostates were such successful seducers. It was about

the money—the salaries—that local pastors would no longer receive if they did not go along as long as possible, meaning until they had secured *for themselves* an alternative where they could hold a job. Salaries were at stake, and when salaries run head-on into cowardice where there should be character, the lack of action I was seeing was easily explained. This cowardice bought the apostates time to slaughter great numbers.

“Most of God’s ministers turned out to be very weak people. But you could never tell them this. They saw themselves as professionals, men in suits and ties, men with skills, men filled with Bible knowledge and training, etc.—so it never occurred to most of them that they could be weak, never mind *profoundly so*. Besides, many who held onto a few true doctrines would go on to leave at the last minute with enough sheep to support them that they could tell themselves they had been *leaders*.”

But there were positive developments underway in Mr. Pack’s family...

(To be continued in Volume Two.)

Books by David C. Pack

- The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out
- The Awesome Potential of Man
- Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!
- Saturday or Sunday – Which Is the Sabbath?
- America and Britain in Prophecy
- Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!
- The Trinity – Is God Three-In-One?
- Sex – Its Unknown Dimension
- Dating and Courtship – God's Way
- Train Your Children God's Way
- Herbert W. Armstrong – His Life in Proper Perspective
- The Bible's Difficult Scriptures Explained!
- The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross”
or Required for Salvation?

All books listed, in addition to scores of booklets, articles and sermons, can be found at The Restored Church of God website (rcg.org). Mr. Pack's *World to Come* broadcasts are available at *The World to Come* website (rcg.org/worldtocome/home).

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BIO - 112018

The Restored Church of God

1000 Ambassador Drive
Wadsworth, OH 44281
USA

P.O. Box 4064
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3
CANADA

Phone: (330) 334-2266

Fax: (330) 334-6513

E-mail: info@rcg.org

Web: rcg.org