

Endnotes— *Faith that Moves Mountains*

1.

In a world of doubt; in a world trained to distrust absolutes, especially moral absolutes, faith is virtually non-existent. A person is more likely to catch a hair crab or to find ice worms than to find living faith [*pisteos*], belief of God leading to obedience, which in turn leads to righteousness based on belief, Abraham's righteousness. Yes, the Abrahamic standard of belief being counted as righteousness (Gen 15:6) is still the figurative *gold standard* for faith, which has been on life support for centuries, living on in an apparent vegetative state after it effectively died at the end of the 1st-Century.

But faith shall come out of its coma. Until then, however, faith will be sustained by its shadow—

Faith—again, belief of God that leads to obedience—ceased to be personified by a living person approximately seventy years after Calvary, when at the turn of the century the last person truly born of God, John the Elder, died physically. Actually, except for an old disciple here and one there, faith lost consciousness when Christ Jesus didn't return before Rome sacked Jerusalem (ca 70 CE); so faith didn't see what happened to the Jesus Movement in the 2nd-Century CE.

Faith didn't see itself as a shadow, a shade, of its former self, albeit a looming shadow growing larger with each passing decade but also growing farther and farther from God, drifting away as smoke pushed by wind, pushed by the prince of the power of the air, pushed into being a lie told to deceive the Christian who believes he or she has faith.

Plato, a name I seldom write, addressed shadows in his "Allegory of the Cave," found in *The Republic* (514a–520a). In this allegory, people have lived their lives chained to the blank wall of a cave. These prisoners watch shadows projected on the wall of things happening in front of a fire behind them. For these prisoners, the shadows are reality, and they name the shadows, treating the shadows as "real" things.

For Christians, chained to disobedience but believing themselves free, the shadow of faith that they perceive as *real faith* is weak, thin, a wisp of its former self, but Christians have no other perception of faith. They read about Jesus' faith in the Gospels, but they know they're not Jesus. They know they cannot walk on water. They know that their giving of thanks will not cause a loaf of *Wonder Bread* to feed five thousand, or even four thousand. They know that when they were baptized, nothing much happened to them other than they got wet. So they cannot relate to the pressure of the moment when Jesus, knowing He would be crucified on the Preparation Day (the First Unleavened), spoke to the fig tree, His faith causing the tree to wither and die. If the Christian wants to kill a tree, the Christian has to use means other than speaking to it.

Late in the 1st-Century, there was a move afoot to restore the intensity of the moment that produced Jesus speaking to the fig. There were persecutions—not as many as imagined, but enough to test the faithful—and from these persecutions came the souls [*tas psuchas*] that sleep under the altar (Rev 6:9), awaiting the arrival of their brothers

who are to be killed as they were. That is correct, *brothers* who will die in martyrdom, die unimaginable deaths, die in ways designed to scramble the Christian's will to resist.

Physical persecution for ideological reasons produces an intensity of the moment capable of focusing the thoughts of the persecuted to the extent that true faith comes into existence, the type of living faith that moves mountains or calms seas. But that isn't what the Adversary wants for the Christian: he wants to break the Christian, and if he can use his servants and mind-altering agents to scramble thoughts and create even more doubts, he will.

What usually happens in times of persecution is that the person wrestles with his or her doubts, either subduing them or surrendering to them, thus thinking only about escape. The Adversary knows this; so through constant reinforcement of doubts, he prevents the naïve but sincere Christian from truly coming to God. In this scenario, he wins. But in reality, all he has done is winnow the harvest of God, separating chaff from kernels.

The Adversary wins nothing: there is no *great controversy* afoot. The Adversary in winnowing Christians, serves as the puffs of air that remove stones and debris when grain is cleaned in modern elevators.

The kernels are those persons able to subdue doubts as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did:

Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

The story is familiar enough that its outcome is known: when faced with certain death, the Jewish administrators—all friends of Daniel—were, as Daniel himself was, willing to die rather than transgress the Commandments. These eunuchs who could not have entered the temple if it had stood, did not value preservation of physical life as much as they valued obedience to God. None of these men were born of spirit. They were not human supermen. But they all were placed in situations [Daniel in the lions' den] in which their faith was tested by trial—and their faith became personified in what they did during their times of testing.

Even to this day, the faith of Daniel, the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego lives on, personified by inscription of what these men did when their lives were at risk. Because they believed God, they were willing to physically die for God. And because they were willing to die, not bargaining with God (*If you will do this for me, God, I'll do that for you*), there was no need for them to die ... understand, the way out of certain death is to be willing to die. Yes, some will be killed to make the threat of certain death "real," but what is the point of killing the person truly willing to die. In this case, the Adversary

will lose: the person will have died in faith and will be with God. The only way for the Adversary to win is to let the person live so that the possibility remains of the person denying God.

This subject Jesus address when He said,

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt 10:24–28)

And,

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. (John 12:24–26)

Faith is not restricted to the Elect, nor to Christians. Don't ever make the mistake of believing that only those born of spirit have the faith necessary to pass through fire or to close the mouths of lions. If anything, the Elect have things relatively easy: they heard the voice of Jesus and believed the One who sent Jesus and thereby passed from death to life without coming under judgment, but then, they were foreknown by God and predestined to be called, justified, and glorified while their inner selves still dwelt in physical bodies. And once their inner selves were glorified, "death" is not an effective threat that can be used against them. They know that if they die physically, they have a heavenly house [body] awaiting them. So, from the Adversary's perspective, what is the point of killing them? He gains nothing by their deaths. Besides, being sons of God, they are under the protection of the Father; so the Adversary cannot really get at them. Again from the Adversary's perspective, the Elect are more likely to commit spiritual suicide if the Adversary simply leaves them alone

For the Elect, it is always a mistake to blame bad things that happen to them on the Adversary. Note what Jesus told Pilate:

So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "*You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.* Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin." (John 19:10–11 emphasis added)

It was popular in the former Worldwide Church of God to blame all things bad that happened to members on Satan or on demons, and to then attribute all things good that happened to members to God ... if a member sold his or her house for a profit, having purchased the home in 1953 but selling it in 1970 (in getting ready to go to the *place of safety*), the member gave credit to God for the increase, having bought the home for \$5,000., but selling it for \$24,000: *Look how God blessed me!* Of course, the neighboring place, also purchased for \$5,000 but in 1959, sold in 1976 for \$69,000—and the neighbor turned the money around and purchased a retirement cabin

on the shores of Lake Huron for \$25,000 that in 2005 was resold for \$331,000. So how was it that the member of the former Worldwide Church of God was blessed for his faithfulness in tithing those years between 1953 and 1970? The blessing wasn't financial; for financially his neighbor did better. However, the member came to believe that God blessed the member—and believing that God had blessed the member kept the member faithfully sending his or her full tithe to Pasadena, then holding back another full tithe for feast expenses, and on the third and sixth years of a seven year cycle, of sending a second full tithe to Pasadena as part of the Church's welfare program. A first tithe. A second tithe. And a third tithe. In addition, there were the regularly received Co-Worker letters that encourage members to give offerings, even if they had to borrow to do so.

Following are the first paragraphs of Armstrong's December 8, 1947 Co-Worker letter:

December 8, 1947

Dear Family of Co-Workers' in God's Service:

GREETINGS! in Jesus' name: TIME is running out! This world is moving swiftly to its destruction! Yet there is still time---and just barely enough time---to finish the work of God for this present age. THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE. But the work of God is progressing on schedule---amid handicaps, thru obstacles and trials that try our souls, our patience, and our faith to the limit---under the divine direction of God, and as a result of MIRACLES performed by him in our behalf.

The "Big Four" diplomats are locked in an uncompromisable duel between East and West---between Russia and the United States---between Communism and Democracy---between Atheism and professed Christianity. At the London conference, the nations merely lock horns and fight, and quarrel, and deadlock, in their efforts to restore the peace of Europe and the world.

The United States announces the invention and production of horrible, terrifying new atomic weapons---without giving the public any hint as to the nature of those weapons. The Russians give out hints that they, too, either HAVE the atomic bomb, or have its secret and are now preparing to actually produce it.

The United Nations recommend the partitioning of Palestine, and actual setting up, at last, of a new Jewish NATION in the holy land. This sets off the Palestine powder-keg. The Moslem nations, 300 million strong and solidly ORGANIZED these past three years, have announced they will never permit it---they spring to action---fighting and violence is intensified in the holy land, and terror reigns.

Europe faces its hardest winter, and the United States, with diminishing food supplies, sets out to try to feed the world to save it from chaos and communism and starvation.

Yes, this world is being hurled rapidly TOWARD UTTER DESTRUCTION---we approach the END OF THE WORLD!---which means the end of this AGE!

The WORLD TOMORROW will soon dawn, bringing peace, prosperity, happiness and joy at last;---and in the short time that remains our calling and sole important mission in life is to SHOUT THIS GOOD NEWS (the true Gospel of Jesus Christ) TO THE WORLD! It must go, not only to America and Canada, as it is now going, it must go to ALL NATIONS, in ALL LANGUAGES! To this end, AMBASSADOR COLLEGE is now

operating in sober earnest---instructing consecrated, eager young men and women in the true Message, training them in speaking foreign languages.

THE OUTLOOK, at the moment, is for six or seven more years of PROSPERITY here in America---(even tho it is an artificial, unsound and inflated "prosperity")---while meantime the world moves relentlessly toward WORLD WAR III and final DESTRUCTION!

YOU, dear Co-Worker, are not going to be permitted to enjoy your home, your freedom, your present privileges and pursuits, many more years. Just a few more years---perhaps six or seven---perhaps twelve or fifteen---and a re-united Fascist-Nazi Europe will STRIKE---America's great cities will be blown out of existence in one night without warning---we shall see such tremendous atomic destruction as the world has never even dreamed ---more than 40 MILLION Americans will perish in the horrifying blasts! At the same time drought and famine will strike dead another THIRD of our entire population--men, women, and children ---thru starvation and disease! And our second great commission ---our divine calling from Almighty God---is to WARN our beloved nation, and other Israelitish nations, before it is too late! Every individual who HEEDS this warning, turns to God, is WATCHING and PRAYING ALWAYS, being filled with God's Spirit, living by every Word of God, with a life consecrated to Him, will be given special divine protection---taken beforehand to a place of SAFETY--- preserved thru the final horrifying tribulation, time of plagues and human anguish soon to visit this earth!

But if we to whom God has revealed this terrible future thru His divine prophecies fail to heed it---if we fail to each play his or her full part in WARNING this nation and the world, now, while we may---then God says we shall not escape, but He will require the blood of this entire people at our hands!

God Almighty is causing a "prosperity"---if only a temporary, stimulated, prosperity---to shine brightly upon our LAND. Listen! Do you know WHY? TO ENABLE US WHO UNDERSTAND TO HAVE ENOUGH FINANCIAL MEANS TO CARRY OUT GOD'S PURPOSE---to WARN our nations of the soon-coming prophesied destruction---to WARN the entire world of the fast-approaching "TRIBULATION" and true Gospel of Jesus Christ---the Gospel Christ brought and preached, and commissioned every true minister of His to proclaim to the world throughout this age---THE GOOD NEWS OF THE COMING WORLD-RULING KINGDOM OF GOD! The denominations, preachers, and evangelists are not proclaiming THIS true Gospel! (All emphasis is that of HWA)

Now that is *fear-mongering*, using fear to empty wallets of believers ... the Co-Worker letter, quite lengthy, actually increases in intensity:

Listen, dear Co-Worker! To set your heart, your mind and interest now in the pursuits of THIS WORLD, or THIS LIFE,---to ignore this appeal, and this PRIVILEGE, to HELP TO YOUR VERY UTMOST in the closing work of God---to figure that you can't afford to spare anything now for God's cause because of OTHER worldly interests---is to enjoy a fool's paradise, and find yourself suddenly, when least expected, in just a few years, caught in the snare of this on-coming DESTRUCTION!

I tell you, ON THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST, IT IS COMING! Many of you NOW, are in financial condition to DO A LOT MORE than you are doing for GOD'S CAUSE---to help me get out this Message over the air, and in print---to help me train and prepare talented, able, consecrated young men and women for THEIR part in soon carrying this vital message to THE ENTIRE WORLD---into EVERY NATION!

One consecrated co-worker and his wife are mortgaging their home in order to place a few more thousand dollars in this mighty work that more millions may be warned! At first I shrank from accepting money under such conditions---but when we remember that in a few years NONE OF US will be living in our present homes---EVERYTHING material we possess now will be swept away from us, and we shall then be either in that haven of safety under God's divine protection, or else dead or in slavery worse than death--- and when we consider further that this brother and his wife are not deprived of their home, but merely PUTTING IT TO WORK FOR GOD'S GREAT CAUSE, while they enjoy it and live in it, too---then it appeared in a different light, and we could do nothing but accept it, to use it for God's honor and glory. WHO KNOWS? perhaps this one sacrifice on the part of this one man and wife may be the means to bringing MANY precious souls not only under God's divine protection in the TIME OF TROUBLE TO COME, but also into ETERNAL LIFE in God's Kingdom FOREVER!

TIME IS SHORT! It is fast running out! Soon we shall come to the time of the prophesied FAMINE OF HEARING THE WORD OF THE ETERNAL---the time when world forces will no longer PERMIT the preaching of God's Truth!

No man can know exactly how long. This much we DO KNOW ---it is now NEAR, even at the very doors, according to prophecy ---it will strike DURING THIS PRESENT GENERATION---it cannot now be more than A FEW YEARS;---yet, on the other hand, we may KNOW that God will not permit this time of national disaster and world destruction to fall UNTIL our nations HAVE BEEN WARNED (and no other voice is warning them), and UNTIL "this Gospel of the KINGDOM shall be preached in ALL THE WORLD for a witness UNTO ALL NATIONS, and then shall the END COME!" BE SURE THERE IS ENOUGH TIME, if we set ourselves full pressure to the task, and do our very utmost, at any sacrifice. But there is no more than enough---not one single day to waste.

I know that TIME IS SO SHORT, there was not enough time to delay the opening of AMBASSADOR COLLEGE even one more year. That is why God moved with MIRACLES to make the IMPOSSIBLE happen for us, so we could start, as we did, this fall!

By the way, the famine of the word comes when, first, every Christian is filled with spirit and has the Law [Torah] of God written on hearts and placed in minds: there will then be no need for the Word of God to be preached for sin will no longer be the transgression of the Law but will be unbelief (see Rom 14:23). The famine spreads when dominion over the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and his angels and given to the Son of Man halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation: the spirit of God will then be poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28), thereby baptizing all flesh in spirit, with this *baptism* causing all living persons to have the Law written on hearts and placed in minds so that all *know the Lord*.

Armstrong was marketing the famine of the word as a dreadful thing, but where there is no Law, there is no transgression of the Law (Rom 5:13). Sin in the form of unbelief was in the world before the Law came, but sin as the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4) was not. But Armstrong was a spiritual novice who didn't comprehend the *difference* between *sin* and "sin"; the difference between sin committed by the fleshly body (transgression of the Law) and sin committed by the inner self [*psuche*—soul] of the person (unbelief). So truly, Armstrong marketed fear as he had previously marketed laundry soap.

A ministry of fear is not a ministry of God, even though Armstrong taught his disciples to keep the Commandments and the high Sabbaths, to eat clean meats and to tithe.

But a person caught by fear; caught in a ministry of fear doesn't recognize the person's paranoia. For example, why should an American in 1947 fear a struggling German nation, weary of war, divided, and certainly not the Assyria of biblical prophecy ... the Assyria of prophecy is not a physical land, but Death, the fourth king of Daniel chapter seven and the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse. As Egypt represents Sin, the third horseman, with Moses and Aaron leading physically circumcised Israel out from the land of Sin, Assyria represents Death, with the two witnesses leading spiritual Israel [circumcised of heart Israel] out from death and to life, with this Second Passover exodus of Israel being so much greater than the exodus from Egypt that the exodus shall no longer be remembered.

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH], when it shall no longer be said, "As [YHWH] lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt," but "As [YHWH] lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where He had driven them." For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers. (Jer 16:14–15)

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Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH], when they shall no longer say, "As [YHWH] lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt," but "As [YHWH] lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where He had driven them.' Then they shall dwell in their own land." (Jer 23:7–8)

Apparently Armstrong believed his own messaging. ... If, however, Armstrong would have been less of a biblical novice, he would have recognized that the parallelism evident throughout the Bible has a visible, physical presentation of a spiritual thing or idea preceding the invisible thing or idea that is of God. Thus, the Passover exodus of physically circumcised Israel from Egypt will precede and reveal the Second Passover exodus of circumcised of heart Israel from Sin and Death.

Armstrong tried to keep everything physical; thus, for him, the second *Israel* was the endtime descendants of the ancient house of Israel that went into captivity in 721 BCE ... actually most of the ancient House of Israel was gone from the Levant before Assyria sacked Samaria. The regional drought in the days of King Ahab had caused a nation that could field an army twice as large as the American force that took Iraq in 2003 to be reduced in size until only 27,000 persons were taken captive by Assyria when Samaria fell. What happened to the remainder of a once great nation? Apparently many went west to Carthage [the Dido legacy], and even more went east, and were still remaining in the *'Stans* when modern Coalition forces initially entered the Afghanistan Conflict.

For an American to fear *Uncle Joe* and the Soviet Union had some logic in 1947, but not much. The Soviet bear was coming out of hibernation, having been awakened at Stalingrad—and as big boar brown bears defend their territories against all comers, the Soviet bear erected an iron curtain around itself to keep its citizens in, this iron curtain being like jail bars.

A big boar will kill sows and cubs, destroying its own to increase its offspring ... the truth is, big boars don't like competition, and perhaps don't even like themselves.

Sabbatarian Christians would have reason to fear their neighbors if they were living in an Islamic caliphate, but American Sabbatarians in 1947 had no reason to either fear neighbors or the Federal Government that would, in the 1990s, wage war against them at Ruby Ridge and at Waco. Of course, national news organizations didn't emphasize the Sabbatarian connection between Ruby Ridge and Waco. In both cases, the news media portrayed Randy Weaver and David Koresh as extremists, with Koresh feeding the flames of his own doom by how he lived his life.

Did the Federal Government penetrate the former Worldwide Church of God, whose Sabbath services were not open to the public but were private services for the invited? Certainly. But no subversive activities occurred in these apolitical services; so the only case brought by a governmental authority was that of the State of California for how moneys were spent, especially in giving gifts to foreign heads of nations as a way of greasing entrance into these nations.

So should Sabbatarian Christians fear their national government? Should Sabbatarians have a reasonable fear of a national bureaucracy runamuck? American history, going all the way back to the Snowhill Colony in pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania, would answer in the affirmative, but in a practical sense, no, they shouldn't. It is unreasonable for an American Sabbatarian to believe that neighbors are spying on them as was done in the former Soviet Union—neighbors already know that this Christian keeps the Sabbath. It is therefore unreasonable for this Christian to believe that the NSA has identified the person as someone of interest. This is not to say that the situation in America will not change, but this is to say that excessive concern is paranoia based on unjustifiable fear. A moderate awareness of the politics of the moment is reasonable. Preparation as done by Mormons (having on hand a year's worth of everything the person will need) is reasonable. Having the knowledge, skills, and tools to live without electricity for an extended period is reasonable. Beyond this, a Christian needs to closely monitor him or herself, understanding why the Christian believes what he or she believes about *Big Brother*.

Again, a ministry of fear is not of God. A ministry that holds out the *Rapture* or *going to the Place of Safety* as a trapper uses a feather flasher to draw in a bobcat is not of God ... Christians are not predators to be trapped for their souls, a string of souls able to buy for the mega-church pastor another luxury mansion if the Adversary approves the transaction.

The benefit Armstrong's disciples received for their decades of faithful tithing was in keeping the weekly Sabbath and the High Sabbaths, thus taking a step closer to God than neighbors.

2.

What happens when shadows become the only known reality? What happens when a Christian, having confirmed through many prayers being answered for parking places and the getting of "things," knows with absolute certainty that he or she can walk on water *if the need to do so were to arise*? Does not the Christian say to him or herself, *I can walk on water, I know I can; I believe!* Then does the Christian leave the shore of

Lake Huron and looking up to God, enter the water, walking on the lake bottom until the water is knee deep, waist deep? Does the Christian turn around or continue forward, maintaining his or her faith, believing that he or she can truly walk on water when the water is deep enough the Christian would drown if God didn't cause the person to walk on water? Will the Christian continue forward until he or she drowns? No, the Christian will turn around when the water covers his or her foot; for that alone is proof enough that no crisis exists that is sufficiently great to cause God to have the person walk on the waters of Lake Huron. After all, a Christian isn't to tempt God—

What the former Worldwide Church of God member perceived as “faith” was merely the lifeless shadow of faith; for through this Christian's lifetime, the Christian knew that he or she could not walk on water; knew that he or she could not move mountains by speaking to the mountain as if the stone were a person. The Christian lied to him or herself, telling the self that he or she had faith but knowing the faith the Christian claimed wasn't sufficient to move mountains. The Christian wanted to believe a lie, but the truth came out: Herbert Armstrong died in January 1986. He didn't live to see the return of Christ Jesus as was taught at least unofficially. And the theological empire Armstrong build had crumbled by 1994. The member who sold his home for a profit in 1970 had bought another as this member reinvested assets in the world's transactional economy; so when Armstrong died, although the member thought about selling, the member didn't for time had been short for Armstrong, not for the world, or so the member told him or herself for the member's faith had dissipated as fog burning off with the rising sun.

Every Christian “knows” that he or she cannot walk on water, that the Christian's faith isn't even equal to Peter's:

But when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the [strong] wind [*anemon*], he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out His hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt 14:26–31)

If Peter would have had no doubts, he could have continued to walk on water—and Peter was not yet born of spirit. So again, having faith sufficient to walk on water isn't a matter of spiritual birth, but strictly a matter of faith, with spiritual birth perhaps hindering having faith great enough to move mountains. For with spiritual birth, the Adversary really cannot get at the person. The Adversary cannot do to the person what he did to Job, who withstood the Adversary's assault and did not sin with his mouth. For the Elect, the hedge placed around the disciple is not removed until death is eminent; hence, the testing of the Elect comes with the sort of death the Elect will die, dying as their brethren sleeping under the altar died in martyrdom—dying as Jesus died.

Christians, however, will only reluctantly admit that they lack faith sufficient to have their prayers answered. It was not until a Korean mother brought her dead baby to a young Mormon missionary and asked him to bring her baby back to life that this

missionary realized how inadequate his faith really was. The Korean mother's faith was greater than his. He knew he could do nothing for her, and he had to rethink why he was a proselytizing Christian ... the young missionary could have been a Methodist or a Southern Baptist, but wasn't. The result would have been the same if he had been.

Unless put on the spot as the missionary was by the Korean mother, a Christian is usually unwilling to admit to anyone how inadequate the Christian's faith really is. The Christian attempts to fool him or herself, praying for rain on an overcast day—and then when it rains, saying, *See, God answers my prayers*. The Christian prays to get things, a car, a house, a spouse, then gives God thanks for answering the Christian's prayers when the Christian gets a new car, or buys a house, or marries. It certainly appeared that God answered the Christian's prayer. Of course, having a credit rating in the high 700s; having a 20% cash down payment, and dropping twenty pounds did much to ensure that the Christian's prayers were positively answered. Even having a credit rating in the low 600s would have gotten the Christian financing from Ford Credit in 2008, and before the housing bubble burst, no down payment was needed to buy a house.

But the Christian who prayed for rain on a rainy day, and who is certain the Christian's prayers were answered when it rained, feels as if he or she can tackle moving a mountain, but doesn't tell a mountain to move because all mountains are fine where they presently reside. In this way, the Christian can maintain the illusion that his or her prayers are answered, with only an exception here and there, like every time the Christian prays for a brother or sister in the faith to be healed from terminal cancer. The brother or sister always dies, but often not as soon as the doctor said; *so God did intervene, giving the person a little more time to get right with God*.

A Christian's imagination is as active as a non-believer's imagination. Thus, within the Christian community, the shadow of faith passes as faith. Even within the Sabbatarian Churches of God, the faith of disciples is but a shade of the faith of Christ.

Shadows are always in one less dimension than the reality that casts the shadow. Therefore, the shadow of faith is dead faith, not living faith. The shadow of faith is physical—belief conjured up by the imagination of the Christian—not spiritual, or of the heavenly realm. And in the physical realm, the Christian's faith cannot cause the surface of the water to become solid as if it were dry land. To give surface solidity to water requires the Christian to bring imagination out of the realm of thought and into physical existence. This the Christian knows he or she cannot do.

But if the Christian were placed under tremendous pressure, the spiritual justification for the seven endtime years of tribulation, then things begin to change, as was the case when Daniel was placed in the lions' den:

Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God." Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign

the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction. When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed." Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before Him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm." (Dan 6:5-22)

Daniel spent the night in immediate danger—and an angel accompanied him, the angel having closed the mouths of the lions. The angel in Daniel's case, in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, did for these Jewish administrators what the indwelling Christ Jesus does and will do for the Christian truly born of spirit. No angel has to come to the rescue of the Elect; for the person numbered among the Elect is "one" with the glorified Christ. The person has within the inner self access to the power of God, access to power that can move mountains or harden the surface of water if the person will only believe without doubt.

But the person has been trained to doubt: the Christian has undergone classical conditioning (Pavlovian conditioning), learning that occurs when a conditioned stimulus is paired with an unconditioned stimulus. The Christian prays, and the doubts begin. The Christian prays more intensely, and the doubts become stronger ... the doubts can be likened to the salivation of Pavlov's dogs. The doubts are involuntary. The prayer is said; the bell is rung. The Christian doubts the prayer will be answered; Pavlov's dogs salivated. The Adversary has trained the Christian to doubt whether God will answer the prayer. The Christian has attempted cross training, believing that a prayer for a parking spot is a prayer God answered.

3.

Jesus the Nazarene was under pressure throughout His earthly ministry, but the pressure He was under intensified during the last year of His ministry—and intensified even more after He entered Jerusalem on the 10th day of the first month; entered as the Passover Lamb of God, sure to be slain on the Preparation Day, the First Unleavened (from Matt 26:17 in the Greek).

What sort of pressure is a person under if the person sweats blood?

Note what Jesus told His disciples:

In the morning, as He was returning to the city, He became hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, He went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And He said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once. When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" And *Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.* And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith." (Matt 21:18–22 emphasis added)

Jesus was under pressure that probably no other person has ever experienced; for He would take the sins of Israel onto Himself, dying for these sins. If He failed, all of Israel would fail. There would be no acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the people other than their own deaths in the lake of fire. He had to succeed, not so much for His sake for He already had heavenly life returned to His inner self, but for the sake of those who mocked Him as well as for the sake of the righteous men of old. Enoch. Noah. Job. Abraham. Isaac. Jacob. Moses. David. Daniel. Others.

If a Christian has faith—the type of faith Jesus had, faith without doubt—whatever the Christian asks in prayer, the Christian will receive for the Christian will have the indwelling of Christ Jesus. But Christians do not have this sort of faith. They have merely the shadow of faith, if they even have that; for the Christian seeks to avoid pressure, asks God to keep bad things from happening to the Christian, asks God to eliminate those things that place a Christian between that proverbial rock and hard place. Christians ask God not to let them develop the sort of faith Jesus had from being long under pressure. And that/this makes no sense: why would a Christian seek to avoid pressure when it is pressure that produces faith without doubt?

Herbert Armstrong used a resurrected Fascist Germany as well as the Russian Bear as boogey men to incite fear in potential disciples ...

In 1960, I was thirteen when general deer season opened. I wanted to hunt opening day; I intended to hunt deer on opening day, always a Saturday in Oregon. But my stepfather wouldn't hunt on the Sabbath. Mom didn't want me to go unless he went, but he wasn't going. Reluctantly she said I could go, but only to where I could walk.

I knew how far I could walk, could pack home a deer. I had brought a large otter back from Trout Creek the previous February; so I knew that I could bring a buck back from upper Slick Rock Creek—my intension was to hunt a particular abandoned orchard up Slick Rock, actually up Trout Creek—

In 1959, my stepfather bought the old Seventh Day Adventist Church building along Slick Rock Creek, remodeled the building, taking down its steeple, which functions spiritually as giving the finger does in the physical realm. With interior partitions, the building made a reasonable house. And we lived there until I graduated from high school and went to Reno for the summer.

Since we moved away from Slick Rock in 1963, there has been considerable development along the stream. The homestead where I intended to hunt, abandoned when families left the hills to take jobs in town during the War years, has been reclaimed and rebuilt, along with a great many other places. The long pasture on the south side of upper Slick Rock has apparently become a subdivision, but there were only a couple of families living up the creek in 1960.

Excited about the opening of deer season, anxious to kill a deer on the Sabbath to *show* my stepfather he was wrong about not hunting on the Sabbath—too excited to sleep—I left home at 3:00 a.m. to hike the three plus miles to the orchard. I had no flashlight, no light of any kind; so I hiked in the dark, my military surplus .303 Enfield in hand, a round in its chamber as was always done outside a vehicle (a rifle with an empty chamber makes a poor club when its use is needed in a hurry).

The nearly full moon was partially obscured by clouds. There was just enough light to produce shadows—and shadows cast by tree boughs and berry bushes leaned over the road and seemed to reach out to grab me. These shadows swayed as I approached, swayed as a rattlesnake wags its tail, the rustling leaves *rattling* against each other, making them seem alive, threatening, dangerous. I knew they were nothing, but I wasn't certain. I had doubts, sometimes more doubts than logical sense. And I hurried up North Slick Rock Road where the road runs close to the stream. I covered distance faster than I expected: I was anxious to be in the orchard where I would await sunrise. And I arrived in much less than an hour.

The old bridge across Slick Rock was rotten, and the road up Trout Creek was overgrown. No vehicle had passed this way for years. If someone were to drive to the orchard, they would have to go up the road on the other side of the hill. I would hear a vehicle coming long before it reached the orchard, if it could even reach the orchard, which was not regularly spotlighted by the many residents that sold their beef and lived off venison. Even my stepfather didn't see anything wrong with living off venison, a practice I acquired while living alone as a sixteen year old emancipated minor (seventeen by the time Marion County Circuit Court actually issued the declaration) ... I was still living off venison when I went to Alaska in 1974, but after 1969 when State Troopers finally got four-wheel-drive pickups, I didn't spotlight.

When I arrived at the orchard, it was still very dark, much too dark to see to shoot; so I sat on the ground under an apple tree, my back against the trunk. And I waited. And waited.

In the orchard I saw a black shadow, and I smelled a bear—and I didn't move. I couldn't determine distance in the dark so it was daylight before I could see how close the bear was

After a while the dark shadow was gone—and the night became even darker.

A deer approach. I couldn't see much of the deer except for the white band around its nose. I couldn't tell if the deer was a buck or a doe as it crunched an apple that lay between my feet—

Yes, at the length of my legs I couldn't tell if the deer was male or female, but I could have touched it with the rifle's barrel.

Eventually it moved five, six feet away, and ate more windfalls. It was still within fifteen feet of me as the sky began to lighten ... I could see that the deer was a doe without a fawn, and I heard the bear leave the orchard, but I still couldn't see it.

Shadows seemed real as the sky lightened a little more. They seemed terrifying. They produced fear that had to be rationally addressed; for they really couldn't be what they seemed to be.

The bear wasn't out there to get me for hunting on the Sabbath, a thought I had to subdue. The bear was just there, eating, getting fat. I just happened to be in the orchard with it—and this after three miles of hiking through shadows that looked like bears.

There in the orchard, no deer entering after sunrise, I had to rein in my imagination ... I smelled the bear, which was about thirty feet from me when I briefly saw it as a black spot in the darkness. I'm sure the bear smelled me, and I suspect the bear wondered what I was doing up there without a light. The bear was probably more afraid of me than I was of it: my thumb was on the safety of that Lee-Enfield, and my finger was inside the trigger guard all the while I sat leaning against that apple tree. And I already knew that I tended not to panic in difficult situations so I expected that I would kill the bear if I could get a reasonable look at it.

What I learned about myself when twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old [my freshman, sophomore, and junior years of high school] is that intellect has to trump emotions, regardless of how strong the emotions are. There couldn't be as many bears in Lincoln County as there were threatening shadows as I hiked up North Slick Rock Creek Road in the darkness of that opening day of deer season [bears were then varmints and could be hunted anytime]. Besides, why would a bear be interested in me? It wasn't likely that I would get between a sow and her cubs, and even if I did, the sow would most likely watch her cubs to see if I intended them harm. The cubs could easily avoid me, especially when I couldn't see them in the dark.

I would go on to spend years living on Kodiak Island, where the bears are bigger and more aggressive ... I had no problems with them. The bears could and would avoid me. If one didn't, I didn't question myself as to whether I should shoot; I was quick with aimed shots. I didn't hesitate; for by not avoiding me, the bear signaled that it was looking for trouble. And if it was looking for trouble, an encounter was unavoidable.

As an adult, I don't eat bear; I haven't eaten bear although I have killed a couple of black bears and traded their meat pound for pound for beef. So I didn't hunt bear on Kodiak. I wouldn't kill an animal I didn't intend to eat. However, I had the outboard of one assistant guide mauled by a bear in my living room for a winter. I cut timber with another fellow mauled by an inland grizzly. I sold a saw to Dr. Milo Fritz, a legend in

Alaska and mentioned in *Alaska Bear Tales*. So it wasn't that I didn't respect Kodiak brown bears. It wasn't that I didn't feel fear when near one. Rather, I didn't let the presence of bears alter what I intended to do. Plus, when I knew there was a possibility of encountering a bear, I carried a Ruger #1 in .458 Mag, which had the same weight and balance that the heavy barrel #1 in .25-06 I carried whenever I was out of town had. Both rifles had become extensions of me: where I looked, my shot went. On the mainland, I took a moose at over 300 yards with the .25-06, so it wasn't that I was unarmed when I carried the long range varmint rifle as a deer rifle on Kodiak. I just wasn't going to stop a charge with the little Nosler partition bullets so I would have to place my shots differently than trying to take out a front shoulder, what the .458 would do.

When on Kodiak, I didn't want to have to kill a bear; I wasn't hunting bear. I hunted deer. So I carried the .458 to stop a charge if that became necessary—and if the first shot were a miss, regardless of rifle, there would not be time for a second shot. The first shot had to be lethal. Then there would be time for follow up shots, if necessary.

Because I carried single shot rifles, I also wore a cartridge belt so I didn't fumble chambering another round. I could shoot the singleshoots faster than most could shoot a bolt action rifle, and the Ruger is a concealed hammer design so cold weather didn't cause a slow firing pin strike as sometimes occurred on the tubular receiver bolt actions.

Enough digression. Well almost enough. I included some information on what I carried in bear country on Kodiak for a reason. A person can easily permit fear to cause the person to go into the field overgunned, carrying a rifle the person cannot shoot effectively.

Legendary Kodiak cattle rancher Joe Zentner once chased a wounded brownie through the alders with an engraved .308 Winchester, a gift from a client. He had the bear running, and he didn't intend to let the bear double back and ambush him. So he ran through the alders, firing whenever he saw the bear. Seven shots or so later, the bear was dead—and Joe was on his way to town where, at Kraft's Commercial, he traded the fancy Winchester for a stock .375 H&H, a plain Jane Model 70. So there is a reason for carrying a large caliber rifle on Kodiak ... Zentner wasn't overgunned. He could shoot the rifle. Not everyone can without shooting sticks and a guide to talk the hunter through the shot.

A person's imagination, if unchecked, can cause a person to believe almost anything, including that a person needs an elephant rifle to hunt deer on Kodiak Island. I carried an elephant gun because Tom at Mack's Sport Shop gave me a deal I couldn't decline, not on the cartridge, but on the model, to which I became partial after acquiring my first one in 1968. I purchased several new Number Ones from Mack's that had been in a flooded basement and covered by insurance: whatever the shop sold the gun for went to the insurance company that by this time "owned" them. The prices were fair. The calibers were what had been in inventory at the time of the flooding.

At what point does reasonable caution become fear driven paranoia? At what point does cowardice become evident? Where is the imaginary line crossed between applied common sense and cowardice? And does not doubt begin in the person's imagination?

When living along Idaho's Clearwater River in 1998, I wrote the following:

IMAGINATION—

I shot a deer
A little deer
Carried him
On my shoulders

Hung him in the shop
Hung him from a beam
Hung him so I could skin him
After I sharpened a knife

But I didn't find the knife
Didn't find the whetstone
Didn't get back to him
Till after he cooled

Then there were those ticks
I never saw so many
Never saw them drop off his hide
Never saw them crawl across the floor
While feeling them down my neck

My imagination produced ticks as real as the shadow bears looming over North Slick Rock Creek Road nearly forty years earlier ... how is a Christian to deal with imagined fears that cannot be easily distinguished from real fears, justifiable fears? And for a Christian, what can possibly be a justifiable fear? Who can stand against the Christian whose faith can move a mountain?

The problem is, who's the Christian with faith that can move mountains?

Every Christian desires to have faith that moves mountains, but the Christian doesn't understand what he or she desires. And that is the problem that will be addressed in future Endnotes.

When a Christian is placed under enough pressure—placed between the figurative rock and hard spot—the Christian will either break, renounce his or her professed faith, or the Christian will grow in faith, believing God, believing Christ, having no doubts about whether the Christian can literally walk on water. It is at this point, when the doubts no longer exist, that the Christian will either die physically for what he or she believes but live spiritually, or the Christian will bring mountains down on those who threaten.

The Christian will respond to threats and perceived threats. He or she has no choice about responding; for to do nothing is a response, perhaps a response based on being paralyzed by fear, or perhaps a response intended not to attract attention, or perhaps a response based on love for the other person, a refusal to acknowledge a threat.

For a couple of decades, Americans were afraid of the Russian bear; but the former Soviet Union was more afraid of America than most Americans realized. But not Ronald Reagan, who used Russian paranoia against this *evil empire* to cause the former Soviet Union to keep up with American military technology, in particular the so-called *Star Wars* missile defense shield—and how could the Soviet Union produce counter measures to a technology that didn't work. And how could the Soviet Union know that the technology didn't work? It couldn't. Its paranoia couldn't chance *Star Wars* not working. Its paranoia required the Soviet Union to believe that whatever America set out to do, America could do. Therefore, the Soviet Union had to develop both a missile shield that worked as well as a way to penetrate America's shadow shield.

Extreme paranoia is a mental illness that is not easily addressed. Mild paranoia is nevertheless paranoia; for at the root of all forms of paranoia is fear, cowardice, the inability to rationally address the imagination.

Note the following:

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But *as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.*" (Rev 21:6–8 emphasis added)

The coward simply will not inherit the kingdom. The person who is sexually immoral, who is a witch, who is an idolater will suffer the same fate as the coward. The person who does evil will not inherit the kingdom. Thus, cowardice equates to evil. The Christian who is basically a good person, feeding the hungry and giving shelter to the homeless, but who is a coward will not inherit the kingdom when otherwise the Christian would ...

The person who is a rebel against God will not receive eternal life. The person concerned about the surface of things—gender, skin color, wealth, cleanliness—will not be glorified. And the Christian who is fearful, who is paranoid, afraid of things that go bump in the night will not escape the lake of fire; for paranoia is a mental problem that is, for the spirit of the person, analogous to a physical disease such as anthrax for the fleshly body of the person. Paranoia originates in unfounded fear ... if the person truly has something to fear, then this fear can be addressed. God can eliminate the cause of the fear. But paranoia lacks a justifiable cause for the fear being felt; hence, it cannot be treated by eliminating the threat. Paranoia produces its own threatening situation that cannot be rationally addressed. Hence, paranoia is a mental illness that needs treated by a competent professional, not by a rank amateur who thinks—because he or she is a

Christian—that prayer and fasting is the answer to mental problems. This is not to say medical professionals have answers to all problems, or that the advice given by professionals is of equal value. This is to say that before treatment, the cause of the paranoia needs to be identified.

If the cause is a treatable biological condition, treatment needs to be undertaken. If the cause is one or many past experiences, then discussion of these experiences needs to be undertaken by a professional who will not gossip. For in each case of paranoia, the Christian's imagination works against the Christian: the Christian's imagination produces doubts that prevent belief, real faith.

*

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