



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The official newspaper of The Church of God International

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"Put on the whole armor of God"

2003

Atlanta CGI hosts Armor of Truth Seminar

By Wanda Rogers

ATLANTA, Georgia—On February 1, 2003, Atlanta was the place to be. An Armor of Truth Seminar was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel of Powers Ferry Road, and it was phenomenal! Ministers and members of congregations scattered throughout the Southeast gathered with members of the Atlanta congregation for a day of worship and edification. Thanks to mail-outs, word-of-mouth and an announcement following an Armor of God broadcast, 118 people attended. While most attendees had connections to the Church of God International, for others it was their first encounter with the ideologies and tenets upon which the church was founded.

The Sabbath began with a sermon by Bill Watson on perhaps two of the most hotly debated topics throughout history—politics and religion. Differences of opinion on these two themes have led to injured feelings, family feuds, and wars and bloodshed since the beginning of time. Our

human nature has within it an inclination and a sense of obligation to "save" people. We sometimes carry this obligation to the extreme in an attempt to convince others we are "right" with regard to the variables of religious and political notions. Efforts to entice and even coerce those whose schools of thought differ from our own, as history and even personal experience shows, often times leads to aggressive actions. Ultimately, the decision to live a life reflective of Jesus Christ is a personal choice. When all is said and done, one will do what one feels and believes is "right" for him or her. How this takes place depends on the influences we allow into our everyday existence. Allowing God and His Word to be the leading authority in our lives will guide our steps along the narrow path we must travel to reach His Kingdom.

Immediately following the morning worship service, everyone trekked up the hill to the hall the Atlanta folks meet in each week and enjoyed a good meal and time of fellowship. The ladies of the

Atlanta church had put together a sandwich buffet with turkey and roast beef and all the fixin's. Rounding things off with mostly homemade goodies of cookies, brownies, and other sweets, we then reversed the trek and returned to the hotel for the afternoon sessions.

The first speaker of the afternoon, Ben Chapman, spoke on the calendar and the importance of it in our lives. While the Gregorian calendar is the most commonly used today, the Hebrew calendar is essential to determining the correct times for observing God's annual holy days.

Vance Stinson addressed the controversy over the proper way God is to be addressed. Once again we see how mankind places emphasis on issues that have no real bearing on our salvation. Within the pages of our Bibles we find various titles and forms of address that characterize God. While we may not know the proper pronunciation of His name as it is written in the ancient Hebrew text, what matters is that we know *who* God is.

The final segment of the seminar carried the title "Acts of Toleration," and was conducted by Bronson James. He began by saying that the hardest thing to achieve in life is balance. Knowing what the rules are and following them are two different things. Because there has only been One who has achieved perfection, we are all still a work in progress. Therefore, when we witness the shortcomings evident in each of us, it would pay to remember "...all have sinned and fallen short..."

The Armor of Truth Seminar concluded with a question and answer session that allowed participants to ask for additional details or seek clarification on any of the three topics discussed. It was a very enlightening seminar and definitely proved to be worthwhile for those who were in attendance. If the comments heard throughout the day regarding the topics and speakers are anything to go by, it was a positive experience that needs to be shared with others throughout God's Church.

Special service brings spirit of unity to Tyler churches

By Darren M. Cary

TYLER, Texas—In a spirit of joy, humility, and reconciliation, the local CGI church met with the Tyler Church of God for Sabbath services on February 15. By the time the song service concluded, the official count for attendance was at 121, including guests from other area "Churches of God."

The Tyler Church of God, pastored by John Reedy, was formed in 1995 over sharp differences in how to deal with the breaking scandal involving CGI founder Garner Ted Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong parted ways with CGI in December of 1997.

The meeting was held at a convenient location in town to accommodate the expected crowd. While some Tyler residents had only a 10-minute drive to church, others came from far greater distances, including Big Sandy, Longview, Dallas, Shreveport, Texarkana, and Houston.

Among the ministers in attendance were Wayne Cole, Richard Crow, Ronald Dart, Charles Groce, John Reedy, Vance Stinson, and Larry Watkins.

Russell DeBerry and Jack Wroten offered the opening and closing prayers before the assembly.

Brent Kern, an accomplished student of music, led the worship service with gusto. The purity of his voice encouraged everyone to sing their best—joyously and loudly. Too loudly, in fact. He had to interrupt the congregation and offer instruction after the first verse of "Open My Eyes, That I May See," because church members were singing the refrain ("Silently now I wait for Thee...") at the top of their voices.

After a few prayer requests by John Reedy during the announcement time, church members were treated to special music by Brent Kern. He sang a moving solo: "God Shall Wipe Away All Tears



STANDING ROOM ONLY—Harmoniously, members of the CGI and Tyler Church of God worshiped and fellowshiped together in a joint service on February 15. At least 121 attended.



RICHARD CROW, of Houston, spoke to the brethren of the Tyler churches.

From Their Eyes."

The meeting's guest speaker was Richard Crow, a minister from an independent Church of God in Houston. He admonished the assembly to avoid deadly hindrances to prayer, such as doubt, laziness, stubborn sin, and bad relationships with people.

After the service, church members gathered in the fellowship hall to meet new people and get reacquainted with old faces—faces seven or eight years older than when



Photos by Gerald Stephens

PASTOR JOHN REEDY, of the Tyler Church of God.

last seen, in many instances. The personal reunions were meaningful and long overdue. Put any group of converted but separated "Church of God" brethren in a room full of tables laden with food, and you're sure to witness mini-miracles of personal reconciliation.

"The gathering of brethren in such a spirit of community was an awakening," said Charles Groce. "Our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ must have been pleased."

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...and **MUCH MORE!**

Morehead's Winter Social measures up to advanced hype

By Bob Swimm

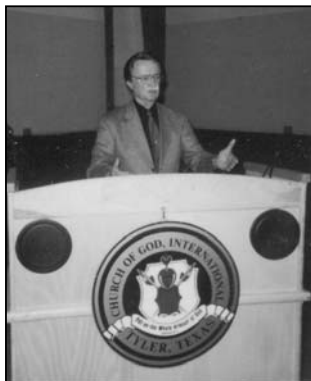
MOREHEAD, Kentucky—Rarely does an event measure up to the advanced hype, but the billing of the Morehead Winter Social was just that and more.

For the first time in five years, the weather cooperated with mild temperatures and clear skies.

God's Holy Spirit was in abundance as evidenced by the ambiance, mood, and camaraderie among the brethren and the meaty content of all five messages.

With 25 in attendance, Middletown pastor Tom Kauffung detailed 18 subjects addressed in the book of James. Rather than calling it a "book of straw," as did a noteworthy Protestant, Mr. Kauffung expounded James as a book of royal law, faith, healing, and restoration of the sinner to righteousness.

Morehead pastor James Pollitte warmly greeted 50 or so for the morning Sabbath service. Senior pastor and Council member Bob Tackett, who served as worship leader for both services, led the brethren in



Ferrell Vincent

"All Hail the Power" before introducing David Bumgardner for the sermonette.

Mr. Bumgardner, son of elder Orville Bumgardner, exhorted God's people to help the church grow by improving ourselves with commandment obedience and walking in faith, aided by heartfelt prayer.

Before the sermon, Sandra Corum of the Morehead church raised goose bumps with a beautiful a cappella rendition of

"Amazing Grace."

Tom and Barb Kauffung then raised their rich voices in singing "At Calvary."

Louisville elder Ferrell Vincent drew a cogent parallel between our calling to God's army and military inscription, and all that goes into turning a "recruit" into a worthy soldier of Jesus Christ. Just as a soldier must obey orders, work as a team player, exercise, and eat properly, the successful Christian must obey the commandments, communicate and share, pray, study, and eat the Bread of Life. Mr. Vincent was resolute and forceful in his delivery.

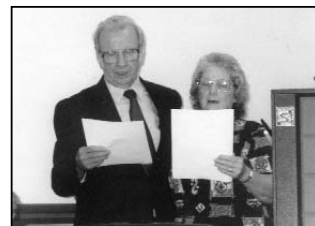
Between services, brethren fellowshiped before and after a sumptuous luncheon of vegetable soup, chili, and several kinds of sandwiches.

Huntington local contacts Morgan and Brenda Pinkerton were welcomed guests this year. Mr. Pinkerton spoke on "letting our lights shine" in this darkened world by our good works. He detailed those works by the examples of the Good Samaritan, Lazarus and the Rich Man, and James' description of "pure religion."

Mrs. Pinkerton then performed "The Twenty-Third Psalm" for the afternoon's

special music.

The final message of the weekend followed nicely in the theme set by Mr. Pinkerton. Fort Thomas pastor Bob Swimm related his own personal experience with physical blindness and the darkness of spiritual blindness that Satan has inflicted upon his world before we, as assistant eye surgeons to Jesus, restore light and sight and brightness in the world



DUET: Tom & Barb Kauffung

tomorrow.

The feasting continued with an awesome buffet of meats, vegetables, salads, and desserts.

After allowing dinner to settle, all that remained was the talent/fun show (the title depending upon whom is performing). Prior commitment and illness kept the Whitt and Stephenson families of Indianapolis from attending, thus depleting the "band," but Ferrell Vincent and John Brown from Knoxville did a yeoman job in their absence. Mr. Tackett emceed and Brenda Pinkerton and Bob Swimm added some vocals, and all went well as most everyone stayed until closing time.

These mini-feasts are indeed a welcomed oasis among the confusion of the world's holidays and the sting of "Old

Special Bible study in Waterloo

By Bob Alcorn

WATERLOO, Iowa—On Sabbath, November 23, 2002, the Waterloo church was treated to a Bible study conducted by Ben Chapman. He talked about the origin of pagan religion and how it started out early from Noah's sons. It was interesting to know when a lot of these people lived and where names like Semiramis, Tammuz, and Ishtar originated.

We had 18 in attendance, with two from Texas and two from Illinois. We also had two first-time visitors from Iowa. We hope they can attend regularly.

We're looking forward to Mr. Chapman's next visit.

God Loves Young People

By Loren M. Chamberlain

It was really great when you got that letter or e-mail from an older friend or relative who is really important to you, right? You didn't skip a line when you read it, did you? You probably read every word, and some of them more than once.

That is very likely how it was for young Timothy when he received the apostle Paul's letters. Timothy was like a son to Paul. You can tell from Paul's letters to Timothy that he loved him very much. Paul took him on trips and taught him important things. Paul invested a great deal in young Timothy's life.

One of the neat things about those letters Paul sent to Timothy was that Paul was writing to a young person. Paul was sure Timothy had a lot to offer and Timothy was willing to listen and learn. We are reminded by these letters that God uses people of all ages. No matter how young or old you are, if you are willing, have faith in God and love others, God can use you.

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

CGI Jamaica celebrates two anniversaries

KINGSTON, Jamaica—December 28, 2002, was a very special Sabbath for the brethren of the Kingston and Ocho Rios congregations. Over 210 brethren gathered at Life of Jamaica Auditorium to celebrate CGI-Jamaica's twentieth anniversary, and to pay special tribute to Pastor Ian Boyne for his thirtieth anniversary in the Church of God, and for his faithful service to the Jamaican church.

From small beginnings in the early 1980s, with only six people meeting in Mr. Boyne's living room, the church has grown to over 220 members and two congregations. The brethren have survived both schism and scandal, and are now poised for new growth. To them, the December 28 celebration was not merely a time to look back and celebrate past accomplishments, but was a reminder of the challenging work facing them in the days ahead, and a time for renewed commitment for fulfilling the mission Christ has set before His followers—preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, making disciples, baptizing repentant believers, and teaching them about God's awesome plan for humankind.

The church's disciple-making success is largely due to an aggressive evangelistic program, which includes public lectures, in-depth Bible studies, and open debates with representatives of other traditions—all carried out under the leadership of Pastor Ian Boyne.

Underscoring Mr. Boyne's contribution to the success

Reaffirms commitment to one mission

of the Jamaican church, Deacon Glenford Smith, in his keynote address, described the pastor as "one of the greatest, most visionary elders of the Church of God in these times."

The special anniversary Sabbath consisted of two services, both reflecting the theme of growth through a vibrant disciple-making program. The first service of the day included special music selections, a sermonette entitled "Celebrating a Firm Foundation—Becoming a Master Builder," and the main message by Mr. Boyne.

The second service was a special commemorative ceremony honoring Mr. Boyne's work in the church and faithfulness over his thirty years of involvement in the Faith. The service included reflections on specific phases of Mr. Boyne's life and the life of the Jamaican church, along with tributes in music and a special message from the leadership in Tyler, Texas. Forty-year veteran Herman Miller, who knew Mr. Boyne when "him was a bwoy," offered reflections from his unique perspective. And finally, Pastor Boyne himself reflected on his thirty years in the Church of God.

Now, after twenty successful years of diligent service, the Jamaican church—having not only survived scandal and schism, but *flourished* in spite of these stormy events—is primed for another twenty years of fruitful labor.

May God bless the brethren of Jamaica as they continue doing His work.

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Christ Is Building an *Organization*

Are You Preparing?

Christ is building an administration. He is calling us to be kings and priests, and we will reign on the earth with Him (Revelation 5:10). God is organized. We can look all around us and see symmetry, coordination, and interdependence. Throughout His creation, from the planets and the stars of the galaxies to the smallest of bacteria and amoeba, and all living structures in between, there is synergy. Is it then so odd and illogical to think of God building His “body” as a living organism made up of “parts” working together for a common objective?

By Bill Watson

For some, the problem with belonging is that it requires teamwork. Unfortunately, today there are fewer and fewer in God’s church who want to be part of a team. Many believe that it suits them better to be dissociated, detached, and unconnected from organizational associations. In other words, “independent.”

Now there are a variety of reasons for this, but two extremes are (1) to minimize, if not eliminate, commitments, obligations, and pressures, and (2) to be in the forefront, to be heard, to run the show, to get and receive all of the credit, accolades, and money.

Independence can be selfish

In addition, the problem with *not* belonging is that it can be somewhat of a selfish approach to Christ’s calling. The reason? Our calling includes and demands more than just *receiving* or *getting* personal salvation. There is a work to do! It’s a work that should be larger than us.

It’s larger than our families, our friends, and our lives. It has everything to do with personal sacrifice for a collective Christian purpose. Christ Himself said that we must *love less* our families and friends to be worthy to serve Him. “If any man come to me, and hate not [love less] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26–27).

Sure, we are expected to develop personally. Yes, we are absolutely expected to provide for our families and to personally grow in grace and knowledge. But in addition, there is a *collective* reason and purpose for our calling: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). “And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10).

Organizations are for team players

As melodramatic as it may sound, some of us may be required to lay down our lives in martyrdom (Luke 21:12–19). Dying for our faith is a great honor. Consider the historical records of Christians throughout the centuries, the apostles, and Christ Himself.

Unfortunately, today many of us have lost that connection in the quagmire of our “politically correct” society. Many are far more concerned with serving their own personal agendas than sacrificing for their country, political purpose, corporate goal, or team objective.

So it is in God’s church. We find Christians who are more concerned about what they can do “independently,” or how they can help *themselves* or improve on how they *personally* feel. So many today are concerned only about what *they* can do for *themselves*.

Meanwhile, our country is “going to hell in a hand basket,” unaware of the real causes of our demise as a nation.

Are we team players?

Not all of us are evangelists. Not all of us are preachers. We are not all writers or scholars. As in politics, not all of us can be president. But we can be part of a collective movement in our own way, but only if we are a team player.

Organizations are for team players. They require the spirit of cooperation for a common cause. They are not for the self-serving, the self-oriented, the self-interested, the

self-promoting. People like this are not well suited for an environment requiring sacrifice for a collective objective. That is too ambiguous for those who are self-serving; besides, it requires faith and trust.

The Bible says to trust no man (Psalm 146:3). That is true. But we are not talking about trusting an organization with our *personal* salvation. We’ve been through that. Don’t get confused.

We’re simply talking about trusting an organization enough to voluntarily participate in a *particular* work. In our case, that work centers on sounding a clear and concise warning to a dying nation and making disciples for Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19–20). This is not hard to understand, unless you are strapped with suspicion.

Building faith

Doing such a work requires faith. But faith (belief, trust) develops and matures only when we are committed to something *outside ourselves*, be it our business, our family, or our church.

The Christian faith should generate outreach. Unless obstructed, it generates selflessness and compels one to repent, to be baptized, to overcome, and to witness and share the good news (the gospel).

It’s not difficult to recognize the need to connect and network with others. By networking, you can enhance your personal impact on the world around you. There is strength in numbers, and your personal effectiveness is multiplied by the efforts of others.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised:) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:23–25).

Holding the profession of faith firmly and encouraging one another as we “see the day approaching” demands a team effort. We are required to get along, work with one another, interact with each other, and trust and depend on one another. It requires the ability to trust each other’s judgment, thoughts, advice, and leadership.

Mutual trust, with each of us trusting our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is a fundamental part of our preparation for positions in Christ’s governmental administration. Under those kinds of conditions, camaraderie occurs and the attributes of faith and trust become a real living experience.

Benefits of organizations

An organized effort that requires mutual trust and cooperation creates an ideal environment for developing faith and other attributes of godly character. At the same time,

it enables us to contribute to a larger impact for Christ throughout the world.

It’s much like the simple principle found in 1 John 4:20. If you can’t love those whom you see and work and talk with, how can you say you love God, whom you don’t see.

The same principle applies to organizations and organized efforts. How can you say you are with God’s team, yet not even have enough faith to commit to an organized brotherhood, sharing yourself, your talents and skills, with a work that is bigger than yourself—a work of witness and warning to our failing nation and violently agitated world? It’s something to think about.

Clarify your work and calling

When suspicion and distrust are abundant, Satan the devil can scatter the power of God’s holy people, and the love of many will wax cold (Matthew 24:12–13).

God’s church needs to have a very pointed, focused, and concise message. But with all of us being scattered, we have effectively allowed Satan to defuse our efforts to proclaim the true gospel and warn of the coming destruction to our own cultures within the United States, Canada, Australia, and other parts of the West.

Consequently, many today are focusing on more customary and traditional subjects of Christianity with minimal emphasis on the distinctions of God’s truth. This obviously is less likely to generate criticism from the public. Failure to emphasize these distinctions is unfortunate for God’s church and our nation. We are all aware Christ’s warning, found in Luke 6:26, about His true “called out” ones: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

In light of this world’s destructive trends and the continued demise of our Judeo-Christian values, God’s church cannot afford to take a “lukewarm” approach toward our responsibilities as an evangelistic “trumpet.”

I think all of us who know and understand the prophetic truth of our national identity and the scepter promise of Jesus Christ should reconsider why we were called and the direction we are pursuing in our Christian work ethic.

The nations of this world need God’s team to be committed, clear in message, and dedicated to the work of witnessing, warning, and making disciples for Jesus Christ. We are facing impending destruction. And Christ’s return to reinstitute our Father’s government on this planet is assured.

So what is our level of participation? Are we involved? Are we contributing? Are we part of a team that is actively witnessing and warning, and growing “Gideon’s army”? Are we properly preparing to be future kings and priests by working within an organized effort bigger than ourselves? The choice is ours.

God’s church needs to have a very pointed, focused, and concise message. But with all of us being scattered, we have effectively allowed Satan to defuse our efforts to proclaim the true gospel and warn of the coming destruction to our own cultures within the United States, Canada, Australia, and other parts of the West.

A positive sermon on a positive Sabbath

By Jo Morris

GREENSBORO, North Carolina—Members from the Summerville church headed toward Greensboro on November 22 to be there for the next day to hear Mr. Bill Watson speak.

The day was crisp and chilly, an exhilarating fall day. The fall leaves were finishing up their colorful display for the season. But the mountains, with their peaks of greenery, were in constant display.

We arrived at the Homewood Suites, which turned out to be a most enjoyable place. Even the conference room was close by.

The next morning, some went to the breakfast room, talked, had coffee, and just enjoyed each other. Later, we went on to the conference room, chatted with old friends, and readied ourselves for a wonderful Sabbath day.

Mr. Roger King got us up-and-going with the first opening song.

Mr. Bob Simmons gave the announcements and also mentioned how we should cling together and serve with the gifts we have and let our lights shine in this time of uncertainty and fright.

Mr. King pointed out a most positive point on healing. As we all know, many

Bill Watson conducts special North Carolina meeting, motivates brethren

are sick and in pain, as were many in biblical times, but when we examine Acts 4, we see that many people prayed together, and by such, a man was healed. When many stand together and pray, God listens. Expect a miracle!

Mr. Frank Ashfield read off a list of individuals who need the prayers of many. Those that were not on the list, too, should be prayed for, as God knows who they are.

Music is called the universal language: it can please people from all places and all ethnic backgrounds. God, too, is pleased with good music. What could be more pleasurable than to hear the sounds of music coming from children? Mr. Roger Bright and his three children—Jamie, Aaron, and Shayla—together sang, "I'll Be Somewhere, Working for My Lord." And we also heard a favorite: "How Great Thou Art," sung by another wonderful voice, that of Mr. William Morgan.

A very cheerful Mr. Bill Watson then got up and spoke on "What We Need to Do." We are shown throughout the Scriptures that, without a doubt, we have

enormous responsibility with what has been shown us. We are called-out ones and are to be a spiritual light by way of our actions and attitudes. And we can do this with the help of Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Obedying out of love means a lot to the Father and His Son. Attending church with a serving attitude and a positive outlook is also pleasing to God.

Romans 2:17–29 gives us more insight into ways to please and displease God. The United States and others are to be an

example for those that need to know that there is hope for all.

It was a positive sermon that Mr. Watson gave. It was a positive Sabbath.

Another great thing: there were 39 people attending services.

A little later on, Mr. Watson had a special talk. It was based on potential things that were to come in conjunction with the church, such as new articles, active mailing list numbers, and media and television.

When the day ended, we all said our good-byes and headed home with renewed thoughts and positive outlooks.



Our Future Harvest

By Noni McVey

Ministering to our children is one of the most important responsibilities we have as a church. There is, at times, a tendency to think it unimportant. This could not be further from the truth. While we all agree it is ultimately the responsibility of the parents to teach their children to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, and soul, it is the duty of the church to help our parents succeed. Ministering to children is a collaborative effort. If one doubts this, one only needs to look to Scripture.

In Matthew 18:1–4, the disciples asked Jesus who would be the greatest in the kingdom. Probably, the disciples were sure Jesus was going to call one of them to stand beside Him. Imagine their surprise when Jesus answered by calling a little child unto Him. Apparently the disciples had lost sight of what was important. Rather than seek a place of position, Jesus was teaching the humble attitude of service, and He did this with a child. Think about it: children have no power, influence, or status. They are the weakest among us. It is not only the new believers in the faith to whom these scriptures apply, but our children, as well. The spiritual guidance and education of our children is a job each of us needs to take seriously. It did not take the disciples long to forget the significance of this lesson.

In Matthew 19:13–15, we read that little children were brought to Jesus so He could put His hands on them and pray. Knowing how Jesus felt about children, how did the disciples respond? Did they clear a path for the children? Did they help bring the children to Jesus? No, they did not. Matthew 19:13 says "the disciples rebuked them." In other words, they said, "Do not bother the Lord." Jesus was not saying children are the only candidates for the kingdom; He was saying He loves them and that they exemplify the complete

trust in God we all need to have.

Jesus made it clear that He wanted children brought to Him. Jesus has not changed His mind about children today, and we are assured of this because of what we read in Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Ministering to children and its importance was forgotten by the disciples between chapters 18 and 19 of Matthew. As a church, we cannot afford to forget, because not only are children our future harvest, but Jesus loves and cares about them. This is why we, as a church, provide materials, guidance, and Sabbath school at the Feast of Tabernacles for our children.

At the feast, while the congregation is gathered in one large room worshipping the Lord, our children are also worshipping in smaller rooms. The theme for the children's program at the feast last year was the "Fruit of the Spirit." It was a huge success due to the dedication, generosity, and commitment of so many selfless people.

I would like to thank everyone who volunteered to teach at the Feast of Tabernacles last year. Words alone cannot express my sincere appreciation for each volunteer who sacrificed his or her time. Each of you is a vital part of our children's ministry. For those involved in teaching at the feast, it is a labor of love that is time consuming and exhausting in the weeks prior to the feast. Fortunately the reward is huge, individually and as a church. One small seed planted in a prepared heart can produce a major harvest.

The Feast of Tabernacles is a time ripe with opportunity to invest in the future harvest. It is a time to show obedience to God through the loving care of our children. The journey of the volunteers who give every year to our children's program is marked not by the sacrifices they make, but rather by the lives they transform. I am so very grateful.



Special feast report from friends in Kachinland

Greetings to you from Kachinland. On September 14, 2002, we baptized four persons into the Body of Christ. Among them were a former Baptist minister and one from a Buddhist family. In September, I came back home from Yangon, Burma.

From September 21 to September 28, we happily celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day at my home compound. We had 25 in attendance. We could not all gather at one place because of bad transportation and very great distances, but we celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day at seven places in Kachinland and Burma.

Here in Kachinland we are a small group, but we are continually doing the work of God day by day by the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. Very soon I will tour to China's border for the work of spreading the gospel. I have received many responses from various areas, so I am very busy all the time in the ministry here.

The *International News* and two cassette tapes (one by Vance Stinson, the

other by Wayne Hendrix) we recently received from Tyler, Texas, are very useful and effective in my ministry here.

Though the Church of God International is much smaller today than it once was, God is still using this church to finish His precious work around the world.

I am very glad to hear that the CGI has churches and fellowship groups in the U.S., Canada, Jamaica, Australia, the Philippines, and Ireland, and works closely with several independent affiliates.

We always need your special prayers and good suggestions for our ministries. Kachinland and China are adjacent countries, but we have some more works in Burma, Laos, Thailand, and India. The fields are ready, but workers are very few. Please remember the work in Kachinland—and please let us unite our hearts to finish the work of God around the world very rapidly.

May God bless all of you and your ministries around the world very abundantly.

—Pastor Lazum Brang

Questions & Answers

By Vance A. Stinson

Did Messiah come from Ephraim?

Q In 1 Samuel chapter 17 verse 12, it says David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah. Does being an Ephrathite mean Jesse was from the tribe of Ephraim? If so, then how can the Messiah come from the tribe of Judah if He is suppose to be a descendant of David but David's father is from Ephraim? References (Luke 3:23-33; Revelation 5:5; and Hebrews 7:14).

Can you give me any insight on this? This has me slightly puzzled.

W.B., Chatsworth, GA

A A member of the tribe of Ephraim is an Ephramite, not an Ephrathite. An Ephrathite is someone from Ephrath(ah), which is another name for Bethlehem in Judah (see Genesis 35:19; 48:7; Ruth 4:11; Micah 5:2). This term is used to distinguish between the Bethlehem in Judah and the Bethlehem in Zebulun (see Joshua 19:10, 15).

Will they marry in the Day of Judgment?

Q Could you please answer a question that has been perplexing me for a long time. It is found in Luke 20:27-40. If the people mentioned in these passages are all in the first resurrection, there is no problem. But what if they are all in the second resurrection? Whose wife indeed will the woman be? They were all separated by death which they had no control over. Will people marry at all in the second resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment period?...

I know the Sadducees asked an outlandish question but what if the woman had only been married twice instead of seven times? Whose wife will she be? The wife of her first or second husband?

I would appreciate your view on this....

K.M., Ashcamp, KY

A First, "the resurrection" in this passage is the one we call the *first resurrection*. Jesus said that "those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (verses 35-36). People in the second resurrection are not there because they are "counted worthy"; they are not immune to death; and they are not "equal to the angels." The resurrection Jesus had in mind was clearly not the second resurrection.

Second, granting the supposition that Luke 20:27-40 applies to the second resurrection, there is, nevertheless, no reason to believe that there will be any marrying or childbearing in the White Throne Judgment period, since this period is strictly a *time of judgment* for the "rest of the dead" (Revelation 20:11-15; cf., Matthew 10:14-15; 11:20-24; 12:41-42). Since death dissolves the marriage covenant (Romans 7:2-3), those who rise in the Day of Judgment will not be bound to a spouse.

What about instrumental music?

Q What is your concept on the Church of Christ? And do you have anything on instrumental music during the service?

B.C., Nacogdoches, TX

A The Church of Christ (or "churches of Christ," as many of them prefer) holds mostly mainstream doctrines: the Trinity, immortality of the soul, going to heaven at death, an ever-burning hell, and so on. The Church of God International differs with them on these issues. However, we agree on certain other issues: the necessity of baptism by immersion, the possibility of losing one's salvation through a life of sin, and perhaps a few other doctrines.

We don't have any material on the use of instrumental music in worship service, but we definitely disagree with the "churches of Christ" on this issue. There are biblical examples of the use of instrumental music in the worship of God, and there is no injunction against this practice. Therefore it would be wrong to teach that there is a law against it. However, it should be noted that many of the "churches of Christ" now use instrumental music.

The inspired Psalmist encourages God's people to "Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet...with the lute and harp...with the timbrel and dance...with stringed instruments and flutes...with loud cymbals...with clashing cymbals" (Psalm 150:3-5).

Does the timeless exhortation to praise God "for His mighty acts" and "His excellent greatness" (verse 2) apply only to people living under the Old Covenant? If not—and hard-

ly anyone would argue otherwise—why should we conclude that the rest of the Psalm is for Israel only, and not for the New Testament church?

Speaking of the collection of books we call the Old Testament, the apostle Paul said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Psalm 150 was "given by the inspiration of God," and reveals that the use of instrumental music in the worship of God is appropriate for God's people today.

Questions about Passover

Q I am a Ghanaian and a student. I would like to ask you some questions concerning the Christian Passover if you wouldn't mind. (1) John dates the Passover one day later than the other gospel writers. Why the difference? (2) Days of Unleavened Bread: when does it start, fifteenth or fourteenth of Nisan? If fifteenth, could you please explain Deuteronomy 16:5-8 and Mark 14:12? (3) Why should only the baptized members eat from the Lord's Table during the Lord's Supper? (4) How is the Lord's Supper organized? Should it follow the pattern that Jesus and His disciples had theirs?

K.P., Church of God (7th Day), Kumasi, Ghana

A My responses follow the order of your questions: (1) John's record of the Passover is in harmony with the practice of the Jews at the time. They killed the lamb in the latter part of the fourteenth and ate it that night. Jesus' death coincides with the killing of the lamb, as He is the true Lamb of God ("Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us"—1 Corinthians 5:7; cf. John 1:29; Revelation 5:6; Isaiah 53:7). We believe that the Jews' observance of the Passover was in agreement with the Law of Moses. The Passover meal Jesus and His disciples had (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-15) was probably not the sacrificial meal described in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23, but was simply a seasonal meal (a meal related to the Passover season). By that time, the Jews considered the fourteenth of Nisan the "first day" of the Passover feast, and the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread (including the fourteenth) was considered "Passover" (Luke 22:1).

(2) The "fourteenth day...in the evening" (Exodus 12:6) is the *end* of the fourteenth and start of the fifteenth. The Passover sacrifice occurred during the latter part of the fourteenth ("at the going down of the sun"—Deuteronomy 16:6). By the time of Jesus, the Jews referred to the fourteenth as the "first day of Unleavened Bread" and "Preparation Day of the Passover," since it was the day "they killed the Passover" and made final preparations for the festival (Mark 14:12; John 19:14,31), which commenced with the sacrificial offering and meal. The first high day (annual Sabbath) of the festival was the fifteenth, which commenced shortly after the sacrifice was offered and prepared for eating (Exodus 12:6,8,18).

(3) Only baptized members of the church should partake of the Lord's Supper (or "Christian Passover") because at that time we renew the commitment we made at baptism. Since a person cannot renew a commitment he has not yet made, those who have not made that commitment (and sealed it with baptism) should not partake of the Supper. They can make the required commitment by repenting of their sins and accepting God's provisions for salvation. Baptism (with the laying-on-of-hands) necessarily follows. Only then may they receive the benefits of Christ's sacrificial offering.

(4) We follow the same basic pattern Jesus followed in the evening He instituted the Supper. After an opening prayer and introductory comments, we move on to the foot-washing ceremony (John 13:1-17). Afterward, we have the bread and then the wine (Matthew 26:26-29), along with prayers and appropriate readings and comments. We close with a hymn (verse 30). The service usually takes about an hour. We have the service in the beginning of the fourteenth, just after sunset—the same time Jesus instituted it. It is rooted in the sacrificial rite called Passover, but is not identical with it. It commemorates Christ's self-sacrifice, which includes the suffering He endured that very evening.

Are there worms in hell?

Q What is the meaning of Mark 9:45-48? Verse 48 says, "...where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

A.C., Hastings, NC

A The passage in question reads as follows: "And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—where 'Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire—where 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

First, body parts do not cause us to sin. James tells us that when a person is tempted to commit evil, "he is drawn away by his own *desires* and enticed" (James 1:14). The cause of sinful behavior is an *internal* matter, not an external one, even though sinful *acts* are expressed externally. James goes on to say, "Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (verse 15).

Obviously, Jesus was using hyperbole when He spoke of cutting off body part to prevent sin. Rather than literally remove body parts, we should do all we can to completely remove the attitudes and motives that lead to sinful acts.

See **Worms in Hell?**, page 9

Over 200 at Jamaica site; eight baptized

Over 200 CGI Jamaican brethren celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in Ocho Rios last year, capping off what was a magnificent Feast with the baptism of eight persons on the Last Great Day, bringing to 16 the total number of persons baptized for the year so far.



Ian Boyne

Highlight of the Feast was the visit of Bill Watson and Vance Stinson, both speakers on the CGI's *Armor of God* telecast, who spoke during the first and second half of the Feast respectively. The CGI Jamaican feast site is the largest indigenous Feast site in both Jamaica and the wider Caribbean, with both the United Church of God, an International Association's and the Living Church of God's site in Jamaica consisting largely of American brethren. This year only the visiting CGI ministers came from overseas.

The Jamaican brethren savored the presence of the Eternal and His Son to make it a memorable Feast of Tabernacles. Meetings were held both at the Jamaica Grande Hotel, where the UCG-AIA met, and the Hibiscus Lodge Hotel nearby. The Feast began on the opening night with praise and worship and reflections from Deacons George Ramocan and Glenford Smith. (Incidentally, for the first time a Jamaican speaker, George Ramocan, addressed the CGI's Jekyll Island feast site in the latter half of the Feast, with great effect).

Opening day sermon was delivered by Jamaican pastor Ian Boyne, who talked about world conditions and the need for the return of Jesus Christ. He also made reference to the number of high-ranking theologians who were now speaking favourably about the Old Testament and the importance of using it to understand the New Testament. Mr. Boyne quoted from the highly respected *Word Biblical Commentary* to show the positive statements about the feast days, including the comment of the author that "Amazingly, the church has nothing like the Feast of Tabernacles today." Mr. Boyne also quoted from the *Journal of Biblical Studies*, which highlighted the relevance of the Feast of Tabernacles in the New Testament. "People did not want to listen to Mr. Herbert Armstrong because he was not a trained theologian, but the fact is that today there are many recognized scholars saying that traditional Christianity made a trag-

ic mistake when it uprooted its Jewish roots," Mr. Boyne told his audience. "Mr. Armstrong and the Church of God have been ahead of their time," he concluded. Mr. Boyne also spoke about building positive mental attitudes and dealing with crises. He delivered a message defending the view that man's destiny is to be born into the God Family, quoting a number of scholars in the process. And finally, He gave a message entitled "Christianity: the Best Option."

Bill Watson gave some inspiring messages on prophecy and the need for spiritual alertness, as well as the steps to spiritual growth. George Ramocan, a former Jamaican Senator and highly placed politician, gave an enlightening message on the Tabernacle in the Garden of Eden, and the fact that that Tabernacle preceded the Tabernacle in the wilderness. "What we are celebrating is something that goes back further than the wilderness tabernacle. We are celebrating something that is patterned off the Tabernacle in Heaven and which already existed in the Garden of Eden at creation," he told his appreciative audience. His sermon on "Living a Quality Christian Life" was also very well received.



Mr. Boyne and Mr. Hendricks baptize Miss Meghross.

When Vance Stinson touched the pulpit there was much anticipation, as his theological skills are well known. He did not disappoint. He gave an overview of the Feast as well as another sermon on the book of Malachi, which held the audience spellbound. His last Great Day sermon was a moving presentation on the importance of perseverance and living a quality Christian life. Other Feast speakers were Deacons Glenford Smith, Paul Oconnor, Carlton Sterling, and Gilbert Bell.

The Herbert W. Armstrong Memorial Speaking Contest, also a highlight of the Feast, lived up to its reputation. The moot this year surrounded church government and presenters were asked to research the strongest arguments against the view that government is from the top down. Again, Sandra-Mae Robinson won, largely interacting with the ideas of critics of hierarchical government.

The church also had a picnic, a family fun show, a couples and singles night, as

well as a leaders night and a youth day (organized by the very active Women's Ministries). On youth day, the youth took over the services, including the sermonette.

God stayed a Hurricane, which was threatening.

Everyone left the Feast stimulated to move in the strength of the Lord and to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God.



Sandra-Mae Robinson, winner of the HWA Memorial Speaking Contest



Beth Ramocan sings special music on the Last Great Day.

The Owner's Manual

By Tom H. Kauffung

The maker of anything complex at all produces an owner's manual, which tells how to properly use and care for the product. Our Maker produced an owner's manual for us. It is called the Holy Bible, and it tells us how to live our lives now in order to get the most out of it. "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly," says our Maker (John 10:10). That's the present goal; the ultimate goal is to have eternal life.

The Holy Bible also tells us the priorities we should have for various things in our lives. "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'...But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:31,33). Verses 25-30 dwell on details of being concerned about food, drink, and clothing. Then, in verses 31-33, Jesus summarizes what our attitude should be. Yes, we should give proper thought to these things, but we should not be anxious or fretful about them. Put them in appropriate perspective with proper priority.

In Ecclesiastes 12:13, Solomon adds a further comment on getting the most out of life: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Reverence God and obey His instructions (and commandments), for this is the completion of man" (para-

See **MANUAL**, page 8

Justin Hetrick baptized



HE'S GOING DOWN—Wayne Hendrix and Lloyd Cary, about to submerge Justin Hetrick into the baptismal waters, where his sins will be buried.

By Lloyd W. Cary

TOLEDO, Ohio—The Toledo congregation is happy to announce that on January 11, 2003, at 9:00 a.m., Mr. Justin Hetrick, 29, was baptized in the swimming pool of the Hilton Hotel by Mr. Wayne Hendrix (minister) and Mr. Lloyd Cary (deacon).

Welcome into the Family of God, Justin!

Among those present were several friends, his parents Larry and Jenney Hetrick, and his sister Laura, who just "happened" to be home from California for the weekend. Laura was baptized a couple years earlier. Afterward, all present went for a late breakfast at Bob Evans, and

Justin's beaming father picked up the tab for all!

After breakfast, Sabbath services were conducted. Mr. Wayne Hendrix gave an inspiring sermon entitled "A Great Day," in which he pointed out that it was a great day, not only because it was the Sabbath, but doubly so because we added another member to God's church.

Justin's father, Larry Hetrick, was told afterward that "you must have done something right!"

Aglow and smiling from ear to ear, Mr. Hetrick replied, "Well, we did our best!"

Surely, on That Day, Jesus Christ will pronounce, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"



CLEAN AS A WHISTLE—There are Jamaica's newly baptized. Front, from left: Madge Miller, Tanish Meghross, Karlene Dacosta, Annette McLaren Charmaine Scott. Middle: Michael Edwards, Chester Miller. Back: Christopher Hendricks, Ian Boyne, Antoinette McLaren.

Leave a Lot of Happy Tracks

By Bob Swimm

There was a Country and Western singer known as the Round Mound of Sound. His name was Kenny Price. He was best known for his role on the television show *Hee Haw* as a featured member of the Gospel Quartet.

Kenny was born and grew up in my hometown of Covington, Kentucky. He lived only a few blocks from me. He started performing in his teens, landed a job on the nationally syndicated *Midwestern Hayride*, which originated from Cincinnati's WLW-TV, and had quite a successful recording career. Two of his best-known hits were "Walkin' on New Grass" and "Sheriff of Boone County." But the one that I always think of when I remember him is a song entitled "Leave a Lot of Happy Tracks."

Some of the lyrics went like this: "Leave a lot of happy tracks as you go down life's road; leave a lot of happy tracks everywhere you go; and keep this in mind: others will have to follow in the paths you leave behind." Pretty solid advice, especially for those making tracks as God's people.

I used to work with a gentleman on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway that we called "Kelse." He was one of those rare individuals who literally lit up a room when he entered. He was a motor messenger, an in-house term for mailman. He went to all the area offices in the Cincinnati-Covington terminal picking up and delivering mail, saving the railroad time and postage. Everywhere Kelse went he spread laughter, levity, and joy. Everything about him—his attitude, infectious laugh, corny jokes, and songs he sang—cheered all with whom he had contact. You would have hardly thought he had a care in the world, but that was not the case at all. Deep in his heart, he carried the pain of having lost two adult daughters, one to cancer, and one to a sudden heart attack. He also had another daughter battling cancer, and his wife was chronically ill. But he never showed anything but the positive. He left a lot of happy tracks everywhere he went. Whether he was aware of it or not, he was

living Matthew 55:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"Leave a lot of happy tracks everywhere you go." All that we do in the way we conduct our lives should do just that.

When we think of Ebenezer Scrooge, we get negative vibes. We think of a scoundrel, miser, thief, liar, and cruel taskmaster. But really old Ebenezer deserves better. As you may recall, after the three spirits visit him, he totally repents and turns his life around. He went about erasing the evil tracks he had made and replaced them with happy tracks everywhere he went. He gave Bob Cratchett a pay increase, helped him support his family, paid for Tiny Tim's operation, and as the story ends it says, "Old Scrooge was the best friend the old city ever had." He performed all the good works that God requires of us Christians. We are expected to leave a lot of happy tracks as we go down life's road. If we haven't, we still have space to repent just as did Scrooge.

Jesus told us we have a responsibility to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick—perform the works of human kindness, even to the least of the brethren, as if each and every one of them was Jesus Himself (Matthew 25:36-46).

Another line of Kenny's record says, "Don't ever use a good friend for a personal gain; to gain wealth and lose one friend would only be in vain." Much earlier Jesus amplified this principle when He said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [eternal life]?" (Mark 9:36). Yet so many have used and abused friends for wealth, gain, and power. Consider the worth of a good friend. Please read Proverbs 17:17 and 18:24. Let's never use people, and especially not brethren and friends. Remember the rewarding words of the old hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Let's never foolishly try to use Him.

"Others will have to follow in the paths we leave behind..." Every one of us, no matter how insignificant we deem ourselves, is going to leave paths—a legacy if you will—for our families, our communities, and in our church. Once when singer/actor/racecar driver Marty Robbins was asked how he wanted to be remembered (the interviewer expected an answer involving his million-selling records, his introduction into the Country Music Hall of Fame, his driving, or his movies), Marty replied that he wanted to be remembered as a good human being, a good husband and father—a nice guy. He was concerned about the kind of tracks he would leave behind.

What kind of an impression are we making? When our name comes up, what pops into others' minds? Does it bring a smile like with the C&O's "Kelse," or a scowl like the pre-changed Scrooge?

Others will follow in the paths we've laid. I used to do shift work. I would continue the same duties my predecessor performed during the preceding eight hours. If my predecessor did his job well, my path was easier; if not, that was a different story. What we do, the path we leave behind, affects *all* who follow us. God warned that our sins, the paths that we leave behind, bring penalties on our children and grandchildren (Exodus 34:7). Not so strangely, we forever see generations repeating the sins of child or spousal abuse, smoking, alcohol abuse, drugs, and so on.

We cannot leave two sets of tracks. Jesus' brother James warned, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). We cannot be the kind of people who say one thing and do another. If we take a close look at the words of Paul in Galatians 5:19-23, and note the sharp contrast of the two paths, we'll see that two sets of tracks will clearly pinpoint the kind of tracks we're leaving behind.

If the tracks we're making and the paths we're leaving aren't what they ought to be, let's commit—or recommit—ourselves to repentance so "We'll leave a lot of HAPPY TRACKS as we go down life's road."

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Winnipeg church up and running

MANUAL

Continued from page 6

Winnipeg, Manitoba—On November 16, 2002, 29 people attended a special Sabbath service conducted by Frank Marang of Coffeeville, Kansas.

Three people provided special music. Megan Kennedy, granddaughter of Alex (host of the Winnipeg group) and Shirley Kennedy, played "Amazing Grace" on her recorder. Alex Kennedy sang "I Can Not Tell," and Frank Marang sang "Rise Again."

The highlight of the meeting was the ordination of Alex and Shirley Kennedy to the office of deacon and deaconess.

The church in Winnipeg, Manitoba officially became a CGI congregation on June 29, 2002.

—Frank and Margie Marang



Alex Kennedy, Jr., Jim Patterson, and Alex Kennedy, Sr., helped Frank Marang with the baptism of George Piche and Byron and Patricia Razella. Forty people were in attendance. Left to right: Alex Kennedy, Jr., Jim Patterson, George Piche, Charles Groce, Patricia Razella, Frank Marang, Alex Kennedy, Sr., Byron Razella.



CHARTERSHIP—Charles Groce presents church charter to Alex Kennedy. Frank and Margie Marang and Joanne Fowler look on.



NEW SERVANTS—Frank Marang ordained Alex and Shirley Kennedy to the office of deacon and deaconess.

phrased).

Those of us who have experienced it have found that, without God in our lives, we are incomplete, lacking something. It takes God in our lives to feel that we are a complete and whole person. The Jews call the first five books of the Bible the "Torah," which means divine instruction or revelation. These five books contain God's instructions and laws for man to live by, along with history and prophecy. In a sense, the rest of the Bible expands upon those first five books.

Deuteronomy 4:1,6 and 5:33 tell us to observe God's laws to gain wisdom and understanding and make the most of life. This is the same reason that we, as parents, instruct our children: that they will live long successful and happy lives.

Living according to God's ways will not only enable us to have a satisfying life now, but also promises us eternal life under Christ. "And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12). "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city [the New Jerusalem]" (verse 14).

May God bless you in your walk with Him.

Advice for Budding Writers...

First of all, do not think that you must be an English professor or a college grammarian to write an interesting article for our publications. The home office staff will correct your spelling, grammar, and punctuation if needed. What is really needed is the article itself—the thought, the news, the update, the item

In an effort to stir more interest in reporting and article writing, consider the following basic guidelines:

- A NEWS REPORT or update is relatively simple. One need only get the facts: names, dates, places, and happenings. Incorporate "the five W's and the H" who, what, where, why, when, and how throughout.

- ARTICLES, however, like complete letters, need a beginning, a middle, and an end.

- TITLES are your bait. A catchy or interesting title will grab your reader's attention. Your title, or headline, should be meaningful in as few words as possible (no more than seven words, if possible).

- THE LEAD or BEGINNING should draw your reader into the middle of your article. Keep it short. Don't ramble. The lead should establish the slant or muse of your article. KEEP IT SIMPLE. The article should be written conversationally. Relate your news or story in terms of people, or information relevant to people. Make your subject come alive! Narrow your focus: don't try to tell everything about a subject.

- USE SHORT, CRYSTAL-CLEAR SENTENCES. Use simple sentences with an average of twenty words or less. Show, don't just tell. Keep it plain and simple. Humor is always welcome. Do not try to show off your vocabulary. Your job is to inform, not impress.

- USE WORD PICTURES. Paint "word pictures" as vividly as you can. Use adjectives as colorfully as is necessary to convey your ideas, but don't overdo it.

- BE SPECIFIC AND CONCISE. Be clear and definite with your terms. Sum up your event, report, or article in 500 words or less. Avoid generalities. Consider: does your article impart valuable information, make them think, or inspire them to action?

- PROOFREAD UNTIL YOUR EYES WATER. When finished, read your article aloud. Streamline your sentences by rephrasing, revising, pruning, and cutting the flab. Good writing consists of rewriting. Set a time to write and then go to it. When all is said and done, the only way to write is to write!

While not every event, report, or article sent in can or will be printed, all will be considered. Needs, deadlines, timeliness, and space availability are also determining factors. It is hoped that these few suggestions will help spark your interest enough that we will have a deluge of articles to select from for our upcoming church publications. We look forward to seeing you in print.

More baptisms at Wichita

Wichita, KS—Forty-eight people attended CGI Sabbath services on October 26, 2002. Ben Chapman, Chairman of the Ministerial Council, gave a study on the history of the Bible.

Special music was a duet by Kathy Coleman of Manhattan, Kansas, and Suzanna Loomis of Newton, Kansas.

After services, Mr. Chapman and Frank Marang baptized Sylvia Criswell. After the baptism, everyone enjoyed a meal.

On January 25, 2003, Richard Segura traveled over 150 miles to Wichita to be baptized. Frank Marang and Max Davis did the honors, while 44 people rejoiced over the event.

—Frank & Margie Marang



Sylvia Criswell, baptized by Ben Chapman (not seen in photo) and Frank Marang baptize at Wichita, Kansas.



Frank Marang lays hands on Richard Segura following the baptism at Wichita, Kansas.

Covenants—Old and New

By Frank Marang

In the past several years we have heard a lot about covenants—old, new, and renewed. The church many of us were once affiliated with now says that Christians are not required to obey the laws that are a part of the Old Covenant, except for the laws specifically restated in the New Testament.

We have always believed that the Ten Commandments were in force before they were given to Israel at Mount Sinai, and that they remained in force after the Old Covenant was replaced by another, superior, covenant.

Unfortunately, some are confused because they do not know what the Old Covenant consisted of or what law was “added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come” (Galatians 3:19).

Let’s see what Scripture reveals about the Law and the Covenant.

A New Covenant For a New Nation

Exodus 34:28 says that Moses “was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the *Ten Commandments*” (emphasis added).

Remember, this was a brand-new nation and a brand-new covenant. With this in mind, notice Galatians 3:16–19:

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one. ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that is should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”

As stated earlier, the Ten Commandments were much older than the Sinaitic Covenant. They were *added* to the Covenant. But *why* were they added? Because those were the laws the Israelites were transgressing. Thus, the Ten Commandments were “added” to the Sinaitic Covenant “because of transgressions, till the Seed should come....”

In years past, many of us mistakenly thought that anything that was “added” had to be brand new. But that is not necessarily true. The Ten Commandments were not new, yet they were added (which means “made a part of”) the Covenant. Remember, this was a brand-new Covenant. Anything that was put in this brand-new Covenant was *added*. God “added” His Ten Commandments to the Covenant to keep the people from sinning.

We used to believe that the “added law” was only the law of sacrifices, and that it was added as a punishment and disciplinary measure for breaking God’s laws. This view was partly based on the way we interpreted Jeremiah 7:21–23, which reads as follows:

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’”

Does this scripture mean that God did not want or command sacrifices at the time He originally made His Covenant with Israel?

No, it does not.

Sacrificial offerings are first mentioned in the book of Genesis, and Scripture reveals that sacrifices were offered from that time all the way to the time of Christ. When they were offered in the right attitude, God was well pleased.

In Exodus 3:18, God instructs Moses to say to Pharaoh, “The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God” (emphasis added).

Moses repeats this request to Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1–3. Also, the book of Exodus provides full details on the

Passover sacrifice, which first took place while Israel was still in the land of Egypt. So God plainly spoke of and commanded sacrifices before the Covenant was made at Mount Sinai.

But what about Jeremiah 7:21–23 (quoted above)? What does it mean?

Sacrifices Not Enough!

The New International Version clarifies the meaning of this passage. Notice:

“This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves! For when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not *JUST* give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you” (Jeremiah 7:21–23, emphasis added).

God *did* command sacrifices and offerings when He brought Israel out of Egypt, but sacrifices without *obedience* are useless! So God did not give commandments *only* concerning sacrifices and offerings; He gave many other commandments as well.

Israel offered sacrifices from the time they came out of Egypt, and, except for periods when the Temple and Priesthood were not in place, continued offering them until the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. The sacrifices, the Ten Commandments, the holy days—yes, the *whole law of God*—were “added” to the Covenant that God made with Israel.

A New Administration

Was anything new added at Mount Sinai? Yes, God put in place a *new administration*, and the Covenant and everything in it were under that administration. The purpose of the administration was to enforce God’s laws. Paul calls this administration the “administration of death” (2 Corinthians 3:7–8).

In Deuteronomy 5:29, God says, “Oh, that they [the people of Israel] had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and their children forever!”

But the people did not have the heart of obedience God wanted them to have. They did not have God’s Holy Spirit, which would not be given in a general way until after Christ ascended to His Father (John 7:39). So they were kept under the administration of death, which was to help keep them in line until Christ could accomplish His work of redemption and put a heart of obedience in them (Ezekiel 36:24–27).

Paul contrasts the administration of death with yet another administration. He called it the “administration of the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:7–8). The latter is the administration Christ introduced when the Holy Spirit was given to His followers.

The Two Administrations Contrasted

Who was under the administration of death? Only God’s people—His *physical* people. With this in mind, consider the following:

In 1 Corinthians 10:1–4, Paul tells us that God’s physical people—the Israelites—“were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea,” and that they “ate the same spiritual food,” and “drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ”

The Israelites’ “baptism” and partaking of “spiritual food” and “spiritual drink” are comparable to our baptism and partaking of the bread and wine of the Passover (or “Lord’s Supper”). Just as the food and drink the Israelites received extended their *physical* life, the food and drink we receive extend our *spiritual* life. Of course, the bread and wine we receive in the evening of Nisan 14 symbolize the body and blood of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23–27).

Now, who was under the administration of death? Only God’s people—His *physical* people—the nation of Israel. Anyone could become a part of national Israel by being

circumcised and keeping God’s laws. Such a person, upon becoming a part of this physical people, was under the administration of death.

Who, then, is under the administration of the Spirit? Again, only God’s people, but in this case, only His *spiritual* people. Only those who have received God’s Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14–17). Only those who have been begotten by God as His sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:14–18). And anyone can become one of God’s spiritual people—yes, His son or daughter—if he or she will become “circumcised” and keep God’s laws. The “circumcision” that is required is a circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:29; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11), which is done by *receiving God’s Holy Spirit*.

We read in Hebrews 8:6 that the New Covenant is a “better covenant.” How is it better? It has “better promises.” The things Israel was promised under the Old Covenant were all physical. They were promised a physical land, the Promised Land, which was only temporary. All the things we are promised are permanent. We are promised a spiritual “land,” the Kingdom of God, which will last for all eternity.

Obedience Still Required!

The laws and terms are the same in both covenants. As with the Old Covenant, so it is with the New: to enter covenant relationship with God, one must *obey God’s voice*.

But the laws are administered in a different way. Under the Old Covenant, God’s people were forced by the threat of punishment to keep God’s laws. Under the New Covenant, God’s people are led by the Spirit to keep God’s laws.

The only new thing added at Mount Sinai was the administration of death, which was taken away at Christ’s death and the inauguration of the administration of the Spirit. The administration of the Spirit is one feature that makes the New Covenant a “better covenant.”

When we receive the Holy Spirit, we become God’s children—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:14–17).

When a person becomes a child of God, God gives that person to Jesus Christ, and it is His will that every one of His children makes it into His Kingdom (John 6:37–39).

So to inherit all God has, we must receive His Holy Spirit, and then we have to “hang in there” and never give up. Then we will enter the Kingdom of God together at the First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4–5).

Worms in hell?

Continued from page 5

Second, the statement, “Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched,” is poetic morbidity, and is quoted from Isaiah 66:24, which speaks of the destruction of the wicked in the Day of the Lord. Notice the wording of the verse:

“And they [the righteous] shall go forth and look upon the *corpses* [dead bodies] of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

This is a description, not of eternal conscious suffering in an ethereal realm, but of the maggot-infested bodies of the wicked being burned up right here on planet Earth. The worms keep feeding and the fires keep burning until all the decaying flesh is consumed.

Third, the word translated “hell” is *Gehenna*, which was a valley located just outside the west-southwest border of Jerusalem. In the time of Jesus, the valley was used as a waste-disposal area. Garbage from the city were dumped there and burned. This was the place where some of the ancient Israelites offered human sacrifices to pagan gods. Because of the abominations that went on there, God promised that He would turn the valley into a “valley of slaughter” (Jeremiah 7:32). The valley became a fitting symbol of divine retribution, or the ultimate and complete destruction of the incorrigibly wicked.

Whitts renew wedding vows



Bobby & Ann Whitt

By Bob Swimm

The apostle Paul was inspired to write that "Love is patient and kind...not jealous or boastful...not arrogant or rude...does not insist on its own way...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things. Love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Most all marriages begin with those lofty principles and desires for the future, so it is rewarding when they are borne out after many years of marriage.

And such was the case when Bobby and

Ann Whitt of Plainfield, Indiana, asked elder Bob Tackett of Morehead, Kentucky, to "remarry" them as they renewed their vows of 17 years ago.

It was a private ceremony at the home of daughter Debbie Zimmerman in Pendleton. At 7:00 p.m. on November 16, Mr. Tackett again pronounced Bob and Ann "husband and wife" before a crowd of 25, mostly children and grandchildren. Rather than have a designated best man and maiden of honor, all of Bobby's and Ann's children filled the bill. At the informal ceremony, Bobby sang "Just You and I" and "Look at Us," and all were surprised when "Shy" Ann joined him for "We Could."

After a lavish buffet supper provided by the children, there was socializing, fellophipping, and some light banjo and guitar music by any who wanted to take part. Beside the children, 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild attended this joyous occasion.

The Whitts will formally observe their eighteenth anniversary in April of 2003.

Best wishes for many, many more days of love, Bobby and Ann!

The Whitts attend the Indianapolis church where Mr. Whitt serves as a deacon.

Ballina feast was 'one to remember'

By Dianne Tuskes

BALLINA, QUND, Australia—Last year, we once again enjoyed ourselves in the lovely coastal town of Ballina, Down Under. It was a truly special feast for my husband and I this year as we celebrated it with our baby son Danjard (pronounced *Dan-Yard*) who was all of 10 weeks of age on the first holy day. It was his first Feast of Tabernacles, and he was such a delight to us and the others. We took the advice of our American brother and sister, Richard and Ruth Williams, to let everyone spoil him with love; and that they did, as it wasn't very hard to do.

Partaking in God's feast saw our son each day developing in many ways—especially his personality. The climax of the feast for us was to have Danjard blessed on the Last Great Day (conducted by Herb Haupt and Frank Marang). How grateful my husband and I felt to have our son brought before God's church and ask for God's blessing upon our baby boy. How happy we are to know that God is watching over him, and that through us and the church he will be taught God's wonderful plan of life, leading him to his ultimate destiny in the Kingdom of God.

Last year's feast saw our brother and sister from Coffeyville, Kansas—Frank and Margie Marang—visit us and share in worship on God's special holy days. They are truly lovely people and we would all like to thank them deeply for sharing the

feast with us, and especially for the love and friendship they've shown us. A special thanks to Frank and his great effort in helping us all understand more of God's Word through the sermons and Bible studies he conducted for us. Frank's joy for singing really shone through when he sang for us his special music each day. It was very much a delight to us all. A thank-you to Margie must also be extended for her great poems she shared with us. Both Frank and Margie helped make our feast at Ballina one to remember, and we are all so very glad that they could join last year.

Although we are a small group here in Australia, everyone chipped in (with work and play) to make it a wonderful week. The children were good during services, and Paul had his prayer answered when he asked God to help him catch a fish. It very much feels like a family gathering each year when we get together. We all had fun during the activities held outside of services, and of course Frank and Margie especially enjoyed seeing some of our furry and feathered native friends, such as the kangaroos, wallabies, and emus.

We all were hoping to meet some new friends from Ghana, Africa, who were wanting to celebrate God's feast with us here in Australia. Unfortunately time was against them, but we hope and pray that God will see to their preparations to join us this year. And until then I would like to, on behalf of all the brethren here in Australia, send our love to all of God's people everywhere and hope everyone will have another wonderful feast in 2003.



Diane Tuskes brought her baby son, Danjard, to be blessed at the feast

A taste of the kingdom in Harrison Hot Springs



By Betty Register

HARRISON HOT SPGS, BC, Canada—What a great place to celebrate God's Feast of Tabernacles, with a beautiful lake just a few feet away. The surroundings make you step back and say "Wow!" The site, a darling village with shops and a choice of restaurants, is nestled between two mountains of beautiful green fir trees, and it is in walking distance from the housing facilities and the meeting hall. One can have a nice walk around the lake. The weather was beautiful all eight days of this feast. It's just a little taste of the kingdom to come.

Mr. Register, festival coordinator, spoke on the first day.

Mr. Bob Alcorn gave a Bible study on "God's Holy Spirit."

Mr. Bob Swimm spoke on the last day about what the resurrection will be like, and what happens to the rest of the dead. He had everyone's attention.

Mr. Mike James was with us for two days, giving us milk and meat from the Word of God. We appreciated him coming in from the east to speak to us. He was enjoying his visit to Western Canada. He also said "Wow!" when he saw those beautiful mountains surrounding the place

God had chosen for His people.

We quickly organized a fun show. Not a whole lot of talent, but a lot of fun skits that kept us laughing for an hour and a half.

One evening, we gathered in the hospitality room for pizza and fellowship. It was a happy evening for all.

We had a picnic at one of the cabin sites on the lake. It was wonderful, with good turn-out and a lot of good food.

One day we went as a group to visit the Mentor Gardens nearby. We had lunch together, then had a long walk around the gardens enjoying the beautiful grounds and flowers that grow in British Columbia. The small group there believed in togetherness, a great feeling.

We had four baptisms. Congratulations to these newly called ones: Lloyd and Inez Henderson, Rosemarie Pilon, and Robert Van Der Heide.

On the first day we had 54 in attendance; we had 55 on the last day. There were several there for the first time. Some came all the way from Edmonton, Alberta.

If you would like to see God's handiwork and share your joy with some of God's people, Harrison Hot Springs, BC, is a great place for His Feast of Tabernacles.

The Ever-Flowing Fountain of Inspiration

By Wayne Hendrix

John 3:16 is seldom understood in all of its implications: "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have ever lasting life."

Seems simple enough, but the vast majority of professing Christians, when reading or hearing these words of Jesus Christ (and it is important to note that these words are a direct first person quote from Jesus Christ), seem to glide right over the implied fact that the opposite of *eternal life is perishing*.

The clearly stated reason that Almighty God gave His only begotten Son is to provide a way for those who believe in Him to avoid perishing. The implication is that, without the Son of God, all will indeed perish.

Yet the vast majority of people who think of themselves as Christians are so completely indoctrinated with the false doctrine of the "immortality of the soul" that, somehow, the concept of perishing does not penetrate their mindset, even though the consistent teaching of the Word of God is that "sinning souls shall die." John 3:16 also speaks of God's great love. The words "for God so loved" are

amplified by the fact that He did indeed give His "only begotten Son" to make eternal life possible for all of us. Somehow though, those words don't always seem to affect everyone as they should. I can say that certainly was true in my case. The reason for this is that by the time the average person reaches adulthood, he or she has seen or heard John 3:16 literally hundreds of times, and, as a result, at least some of the personal impact has eroded.

However, the fountain of inspiration that pours from God's Word never runs dry. For me, it was another verse of Scripture from the apostle John that connected all the dots and made it personal. That scripture is John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

John the Baptist was baptizing in Bethabara beyond Jordan, and those were his words as he saw Jesus approaching. As I read them, however, I found myself inserting my own name: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of *Wayne Hendrix*." That got through to me and I was amazed by the revelation. The amazement has never gone away. The plan of salvation is so simple, so beautiful, and so personal. God be with you.

Do You Have Questions?

By Dianna Bowman

Do you know or care where your loved ones are? Do you think they are in hell or maybe heaven? Have you ever asked yourself what is hell or heaven? Do you choose to believe what all these ministers have told you? (They can't all be wrong can they?) Or would you prefer to know what God really says in His Word, the Bible.

I was a young girl when I began asking these questions. At 13, I was attending a Protestant church with my little brother. (We always went alone.) Oh how I loved "Sunday School." I wanted to know more about this Jesus who loved me so. My teacher talked me into "getting saved." Of course I had no idea what I was being saved from or for. But upon being baptized, I felt God must have given me some of His Holy Spirit, because I had never known such peace and tranquility up to that time.

Our minister (whom I adored) was always preaching hellfire and brimstone for those who were not saved. When my father died, it was just assumed by all that he must have gone to hell. Something in my mind kept saying, "This can't be right!"

By the time I was 24 and had three small children, I was still considering this place of burning torture for eternity. My husband had just died. He was only 27, a good husband, father, and provider who knew nothing of Christ or any religion.

With three little ones to care for, I had no time to cry or mourn. One day I decided to slip back to my old church and talk to my minister. (I was considered a backslider.) I asked him where my husband was. He asked if my husband had been saved and I told him, "No, he had not." He then told me he was in hell, where he would stay forever.

I even lied to my in-laws, telling them that our Jimmy was saved before he died, just to give them peace of mind. But I was not satisfied. I needed to know more. I wasn't too keen on the idea of being saved just so I could float on a cloud or walk streets of gold for all eternity!

Over the years, I lost many loved ones and good friends,

yet I could never convince myself they all went to hell. Something had to be wrong with that picture.

I began studying with many different churches and denominations. I had actually begun this before my husband died, so at that time I was convinced his soul (being his blood) was washed down the sewers of Cleveland, Ohio. (He bled to death because of the hospital's experimental testing.) These ideas came from a church I was studying with.

There was always this thought in my mind that I was overlooking something. I vaguely remembered a radio broadcast when I was a very little girl. I hated that program so much! This "preacher man" would always come on and there would be no more country music. But for some strange reason, my daddy always listened to him. I recalled hearing that man say, "Don't believe me; believe what God says!" Why was this coming back to me at this time in my life? I had no idea. So I had to keep searching.

From then on I didn't care what man said to me or preached at me. I wanted to know exactly what God had to say, and I was quite surprised to learn that most ministers had no idea what the Bible really says.

Now I happen to be a person who enjoys reading. I am finding that many people hate reading in this day and age. I was over 30 years finding answers to my questions. I thought maybe I could save people many years of searching by telling how I found my answers.

Of course, I must admit that it all began with the "old preacher man" on radio who told people NOT to believe him. After a while I bought a huge book called a *Strong's Concordance*. It contains every word in the Bible in Greek and Hebrew with the meanings of the words. I began looking up words. I had so many questions.

Now, if you are still reading this far in my little story, I will give you *some* of the results of my search for the truth. Before I do, I would like you to picture this in your mind. See the news on TV. See the vile things going on in the world and right in your own school, town, or state. See

all the babies killed by abortion. See the murder and rape.

Now, picture your beloved (Christian) mother or grandmother up in heaven looking down on all this as she floats on a cloud. Would you say she is in heaven? What torment she must be going through! And what about the resurrection? The Bible tells us that when Christ returns, *all eyes* will see Him. I haven't seen Him. Have you? So, how did your loved one get "up there"?

You don't have to read a whole book. Listed here are just eight scriptures from the Bible, and you may check them out for yourself. I'll begin with this one:

Second Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death." (Or is it eternal *life* in hell?)

Malachi 4:3: "The wicked will be ashes under the soles of your feet." (Oops, it didn't say we would burn forever did it?)

Ecclesiastes 9:5: "The living *know* they will die, but the dead know *nothing*."

Ecclesiastes 3:18-19: "What happens to men also happens to beasts; all go to one place, all come from dust and will return to dust."

Ezekiel 37:11-14: "I will open your graves, and put my Spirit in you and you shall live."

Revelation 20:4-5: "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the *first* resurrection."

And so, this is the end of my story. I hope it doesn't take you as long to find your answers. I now have the assurance that I will see all my loved ones again. This assurance came from God, not from man. If you would like a more in-depth understanding of what God really says, may I suggest writing to the Church of God International at P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas, or call 1-903-939-2929. Ask them for more proof from God's Word on heaven and hell.

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Mild weather and joyful spirits make for great feast in Oklahoma



By Clara Elkins

WAGONER, Oklahoma—It was a hot 97 degrees at the Western Hills Guest Ranch for a few days before the Feast of Tabernacles started. It rained the day before and turned cooler that night. From then on, we enjoyed mild days and refreshingly cool nights. This made our outdoor activities very pleasant.

We gathered at our meeting hall on opening night to meet new people and catch up with "old friends." Refreshments were served to add to the evening's festivities. About 8:30 that evening, we began to make our way to our "tabernacles" to prepare for the first day of the feast.

Mr. Stinson delivered our first message: "Why the Feast of Tabernacles?" He showed us it is a time to give thanks for the harvest. The feast is also a memorial and a shadow of things to come when people will truly dwell in safety.

The afternoon message was delivered by Mr. Wayne Turnbull, who shared some of the human-personal-emotional characteristics of Christ.

Our late afternoon and evening was open, most using the time to register and sign up for activities and fellowship.

Our youth started classes on Sunday morning at 9:15. Their subject matter this year focused on the Fruit of the Spirit. The youth joined the rest of us for the morning services.

Our rejoicing was apparent in every congregational hymn. This was inspiring for our song leaders and those of us who have small congregations at home.

Mr. Art Hulet delivered our spiritual food. That afternoon our youngsters were treated to a sack-lunch picnic, games, and a tram tour through the park.

Monday morning, Ron Elkins delivered the message.

The afternoon was spent by many in tournaments, pool, chess, a basketball shoot-out, horseshoes, tennis, and other activities.

That evening approximately 70 brethren loaded into wagons for our annual hayride. The ride started out okay, but shortly into our ride the tractor pulling our wagons began to pop, spit, and backfire. We all thought this was rather amusing, but the Canadian Geese feeding on the golf course must have thought goose season had started; they all began to run for a quieter and safer part of the golf course. Our tractor quit on us at the top of a hill

next to the clubhouse. Not to fear—the staff borrowed the ol' John Deere used by the staff who maintain the golf course.

We arrived at our wagon camp where a fire was burning. We roasted marshmallows, made s'mores, and washed it all down with hot chocolate. The Guest Ranch recreational staff told stories and organized games for the children, and then we all participated in a campfire sing-along. As usual, the ride to and from our camp was blessed with many deer sightings.

Tuesday morning's message, "The Day of Small Things," was delivered by Mr. Stinson, and it was the buzz at our afternoon meal. Mr. Stinson reminded us that God's work is only accomplished through God's Holy Spirit.

That afternoon, many brethren loaded into pontoon boats for a tour of Lake Fort Gibson.

On Wednesday, Mr. Carl Fritts explained that God is all-powerful and knows us, and even though we will have troubles in this life, we should be at peace knowing God cares for us and nothing can separate us from His love.

That afternoon, several brave souls took the opportunity to take a float trip down a local river. The evening was filled with music and fun at our country-western dance. Refreshments and "raffle" gifts for all ages added to the occasion.

We were blessed Thursday with two messages. Mr. Alex Kennedy offered our first course of spiritual food, followed by Mr. Don Mitchell's message.

Afterward, many gathered at the

Seminole Campground for our annual potluck picnic for good food and fellowship. The weather was perfect and many children took part in "Goofy Olympic Games." During the evening we had our annual fun show.

On Friday, our youth led songs, offered prayers, and gave announcements. The sermonette was given by 16-year-old R.G. Saul. His message was on how the Twelve Laws of the Boy Scouts correlate with biblical principles. We had three children brought forward for the Blessing of

Children ceremony. Mr. Wayne Turnbull provided our main message.

Afternoon activities include an Indian Museum tour, and at 3:00 many brethren gathered at the poolside to witness the baptism of Joe Bolig. We all sang "I Surrender All" and welcomed Joe into the Family of God with congratulations and hugs. Evening activities started with a hymn-along and concluded with a Bible study by Mr. Art Hulet.

On the Last Great Day, Mr. Hulet suggested everyone give their pocket change to the children to give for the offering. We counted \$84.22 in change. Thanks, children.

As usual we were blessed with special music, and the message illustrated that God's greatest day is yet to come: a day when billions will rise from their graves and receive their chance for salvation.

We closed the feast with a song; we hugged; we said our good-byes until we meet again. Thanks to all those who helped make this feast a joy for all, and special thanks to our Bible-class teachers and to Ms. Kathy Coleman, who played piano for us all eight days.

Lord bless you all.



Ron Elkins

Ben Chapman lectures on Second Coming, 'mystery religions'



By David P. Beckerdite

SPRINGFIELD, Missouri—On August 31 of last year, the Springfield and Willow Springs churches gathered together to share a special service and potluck meal with Mr. Ben Chapman.

Mr. Chapman gave an informal Bible study during which he addressed the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the "mystery religion" of Babylon, among other topics.

Because the Bible study was so involved and covered so many subjects, Mr. Chapman suggested that those of us who needed refreshment should feel free to get a drink, snack, or a cup of coffee.

There were a total of 38 brethren who attended the service, two of whom were first-timers.

One of the new attendees said that he felt as if the circulated letter he received from the Tyler home office announcing Mr. Chapman's visit was for him a personal invitation from the Lord to keep the Sabbath with the people of God!

Mr. Chapman announced his plans to visit our churches at least once—if not twice—next year. The potluck meal that followed was abuzz with discussions on the different topics Mr. Chapman raised.

We look forward with eager anticipation to his next visit!

'God's Longest Sabbath' at Ontario feast site

By Noel Scoburgh

TORONTO, Ontario, Canada—"God's Longest Sabbath" was a sermonette that some of us within the CGI had the privilege of hearing in September 2002. The grand occasion was the Feast of Tabernacles in Niagara Falls, Ontario, where 170 individuals came to worship together. It was indeed a blessing being present and participating at the feast for several reasons.

In some way, nearly all of the daily sermons and sermonettes had the common theme of the coming Kingdom of God. Messages such as "One-on-One With God," "Teamwork," "The End of History," and, as already mentioned, "God's Longest Sabbath," were inspiringly delivered. We heard from speakers such as Roger King, John Coish, Bronson James, Horane Smith, Mike James, and Stager Haughton.

An additional tidbit of the deep prophetic meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles was brought to light each day by the daily messages. What was especially edifying was that, more than once, the same passages of

Scripture were expounded upon from a different perspective. Additionally, the presentation of each daily message by various speakers seemed to harmonize, flow, and fit with each other. This feast afforded the digestion of lots of spiritual food.

The activities were another aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles. What was visible here was teamwork. Observing individuals working together to present the special music, to coordinate the various trips, and to host the different events was a very small indication of the massive team effort that will get underway after the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

The different activities also allowed for a joyful fellowship and hearty conversation. To be with others of like minds and doctrinal beliefs for over eight days was a blessing indeed.

The Ontario feast site had three baptisms. Two individuals were from the United States and one from Canada. It was wonderful to experience the growth of the Family of God, especially during the feast. May God be praised for giving us His "Longest Sabbath."

Games ‘Christians’ Play

People in society often play “head games” in order to gain control or advantage of others. Unfortunately, many of these “games” have crept into the churches. Often, well-meaning Christians play “head games” with each other—and even with God—without even being aware of it. Could you be one of them? Here’s what to look out for and what you need to do.

By Lloyd W. Cary

Several years ago Dr. Eric Berne wrote a best-seller entitled *Games People Play*. In it he exposed the subtle ways people manipulate others—either consciously or subconsciously—without those people even being aware of what’s happening. These so-called “games” are implemented to gain an advantage or control over others in society, business, and personal relationships. We are still human. We are products of the society we are called out from. Sometimes even Christians play “head games.” The games Christians play, however, can be very serious—*deadly* serious.

The thought of this article first came to mind one morning while channel-flipping across the Sunday-morning comedy hour of “Christian” channels. It was observed, “Why, surely these people—these ministers—*know* better! They’re playing head games. They’re deceiving the people, and in the process they are even deceiving *themselves*. Do they really think *God* is well pleased with their personal hybrid theology, or are they trying to bamboozle God as well?”

This led to the question, Do *we*, in God’s true church, sometimes play “head games” as well? Do we at times even play “head games” with God? Or are we “immune” to such goings on just because we are “in the church”? By the time this article is finished, it is hoped that we will be able to see through some of the “games” people play, and come to realize we have *all*—to one degree or another—been guilty of playing various “Christian” head games ourselves, and what to do about it.

A “game,” as used here, simply refers to a set of actions and interactions that allows one to structure his goals so that he can achieve some desired aim or objective. That’s why we play games. We want to “win” at something, prove a point, express our skills, show off, or relate to someone in a certain way. Sometimes, with the best of intents, we just want to “get along” with others and resort to various manipulative devices to do so.

If we are alert, we see such daily interplay between nations, between various strata of society, between employer and employee, between the sexes and, yes, even between professing Christians.

It is a proclivity of human nature that we are sometimes willing to convince ourselves into believing that doing things *our* way must also be *God’s* way, even though God informs us, “For *My* thoughts are not *your* thoughts, neither are your ways *My* ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are *My* ways higher than your ways, and *My* thoughts than your thoughts.”

Jeremiah 17:9 warns against relying upon our own thoughts and feelings instead of God’s inspired Word, the Bible: “The heart,” man’s natural thoughts and feelings, “is deceitful above all things,” we are told, “and desperately wicked.” Then the rhetorical question is added, “who can know it?” The answer? *God* knows!

We are further instructed in Isaiah 64:6, “But we,” in our natural state, “are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” illustrating the innate repulsiveness of sin. Not a very encouraging indictment on human nature from the Word of God!

Just because we are called out of the world and into God’s church does not mean our human nature no longer resides in or influences us. Nor does it mean we are not influenced by the pulls of the world, or the manipulative devices of Satan and his minions. We often bring our “game-playing baggage” into the church with us and exercise it unknowingly. It’s time to check up on ourselves.

Let us examine some of the games Christians play.

Game #1. “Holy” Follow-the-Leader: Those who play this game absolve themselves from all guilt by pleading, “I was only following orders—I was obeying the chain of command!” Many in the trials of Nuremberg, after the Second World War, took this stance. Blame-shifting is a

poor excuse. Exodus 23:2 commands, “Thou shalt *not* follow a multitude to do evil.” Just because someone “in authority” tells us to do something that is criminally or ethically wrong does not mean we have to do it. We are to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). If there is a conflict between what man says and what God says, we are to obey God first and, if necessary, suffer the consequences man may lay upon us. The Apostle Paul admonished, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1). In other words, if someone, whether he is a minister, lay member, or casual acquaintance, is not following Christ—living and teaching and setting the right example—we are *not* to follow him! “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14). Have we forgotten what it is like to be unchurched? Beware of those who say, “Follow me—right or wrong”—those who take it upon themselves to “correct” the Word of God in order to turn us away from what it plainly SAYS! Are we to return to our old ways because those who lead us set a wrong example or *tell* us to do wrong? Do we have a license to SIN (Jude 4)? Assuredly not! Proverbs 26:11 warns, “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.” Let us not follow any man, organization or multitude to do evil (Exodus 23:2)!

Game #2. “Holy” Daredevil: These brave players seem to want to see how close they can come to the edge of the cliff without toppling over. Sometimes we want to live LIKE THE DEVIL and *still* be a saint! The rules of this game seem to be, how far can I walk the tightrope...without falling off? The challenge of living on the ragged edge somehow seems exciting and gives some folks a perverse thrill. How much can you flirt with sin...and remain sinless? Can you hang out in a bar...as long as you only drink soft drinks? Can you associate with thieves and criminals...as long as you don’t participate? Can you go to a Christmas dinner...as long as you don’t eat the ham? Is it OK to read *Playboy* magazine...as long as you don’t look at the pictures? Is it OK to smoke dope...as long as you don’t inhale? Consider! What APPEARANCE do these things—and others like them—give to others? Does our behavior sometimes make us appear *hypocritical*? Do we sometimes undermine our own testimony by where we go, what we say, and what we *do*?

We are *not* to let our good be evil spoken of (Romans 14:16). When possible, we are to even avoid all APPEARANCE of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). How can two walk together unless they are agreed (Amos 3:3)? We need to back *away* from the edge of the cliff. *Way* away.

Be prepared. There is a time to draw the line, a time to say “no!” Sometimes we want to be “so nice”—so “politically correct”—we wouldn’t even want to offend the devil! We are told in Ephesians 4:27, “Neither give place to the devil.” Don’t put yourself in harm’s way. We are to pray, “and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil” (Luke 11:4). Don’t tempt God—or yourself. We need to stop being participants in our own destruction. When we “dance with the devil,” he always leads. We need to stop playing church by playing “Christian Daredevil”!

Game #3. “Holy” Hide & Seek: There are those who

attempt to *hide* their own sins while *seeking* out the sins and faults of others. This comes under the auspices of compartmentalizing things in our minds, playing mental gymnastics and semantics, absolving ourselves of the faults we see in others. However, God’s Word assures us that “your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). In attempting to cover their own shortcomings and sins, these players often play word games, avoiding the spirit of the law by getting “technical” when the truth gets a little too close for comfort. They often ask advice from those they think will agree with them or tell them what they *want* to hear.

This religious game is most often rooted in vanity and hypocrisy.

In Matthew 23:13-15, 34, Christ warned, “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites*! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites*! For ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites*! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.... Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise

men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.”

Very few Christians, it seems, ever apply these Scriptures to *themselves* because they prefer to think that because they are *called* by Christ’s name, they are exempted from such harsh reproof. For such, let them read and heed 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction* in righteousness.” Second Timothy 4:2 admonishes God’s ministers to “Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; *reprove*, *rebuke*, *exhort* with all long-suffering and doctrine.”

Game #4. “Holy” King of the Hill: We have all seen these kinds of “Christian” game players. These are the Theological Intimidators. You could probably name dozens of them. They thrive on clerical bombast—of putting others down in light of their own “spiritual ascendancy,” just like the Pharisees. For example, have you ever encountered the “When you have been a Christian as long as I have...” type of person? The impression is that these players were either born in a baptismal font or saved at age four! These “superior” players often substitute charisma for sound doctrine, giving their followers a false sense of security. Like those in Isaiah’s day, the people often seem enamored with their leader and say, in effect, “Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits” (Isaiah 30:10). Such spiritual dictators often reside in churches with strong hierarchal governments. In their religious pomposity, they seem to challenge, “Who do you think you are?” or, “Don’t you know who I am? I am God’s anointed, His chosen vessel. Why, I have many theological degrees after my name! I am eminent in my community! I have done many great works! The Lord and I are ‘in tight’ and you can be too...if you’ll just follow me!” These Holy Joe’s delight in making their subordinates believe that what they do not know is not worth knowing; they are “in con-

Many believers today are merely 'playing church'

Continued from page 13

trol"; and their *authority* is not to be questioned. Nearly all of us have seen or known of some "spiritually mature" cleric who attempts to force others into their mode, and if the people do not properly submit, they are "cut off" or "shunned." It's almost like playing God. Finally, their attitude seems to say, "I thank my God that I am not as other men are." Beware of those who play "Holy" King of the Mountain! They will pat your head, take your money, chew you up, and spit you out.

Game #5. "Holy" Ring Around the Rosy: These are the excuse-makers. These elusive game players are always on the move; you can't pin them down. They often play "Stump the minister" games to show they are "smart," or "Let's compare answers" games in an attempt to expose what they perceive as disharmony. When things are going smoothly, they seem to have the attitude, "There *must* be something wrong here...and I'm going to *find* it!" While they put on a happy Sabbath face, they often have their own hidden agendas and commonly cause schisms and dissension amongst God's people—like wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15).

While salving their conscience and appearing to support the ministry, too many so-called Christians are merely marching time and "playing church." When our actions do not match the guidelines set forth for Christians in the Bible, we are reduced to simply feigning our religion or "playing church."

Jesus gave clear instruction about *actions*: Matthew 7:16: "Ye shall know them by their *fruits*"—by what they *say*, *do*, and *teach*—how they *live*. And in verse 21, Christ adds, "Not every one that *saith* unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of My Father which is in heaven." In other words: Don't tell me; *SHOW* me!

If that isn't plain enough, then another passage certainly is: "But be ye *DOERS* of the word, and *not hearers only*, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). The answer to those who might accuse us of being "legalists" because we seek to *obey* God, is "Yes, I *want* to be legal with God—not *illegal*!" We cannot be breaking God's Commandments and pray, "Lord, bless me!"

Many in the professing Christian world feel obliged to make their ritualistic semiannual pilgrimage to services on Christmas and Easter. We must ask the question, how far can we delve into paganism before we are breaking the First Commandment (Exodus 20:3-6)? In like manner, others deceive themselves into believing that they only need to keep God's holy days "on the *high* days" when God says, "ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord *seven* days" (Leviticus 23:39). Again, we must ask, who do we think we are fooling? Are we serious with the Word of God—or are we only playing church?

Game #6. "Holy" Hop Scotch: These games could also be labeled "Holy" Checkers, or "Holy" Skip To My Lou, just as well. These players are the never-satisfied "dabblers" who jump from one church organization to another, ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the Truth (2 Timothy 3:7). Similar to the "King of the Hill" game, these folks become the ultimate "independents," setting *their* personal theology above all the rest. They pick a doctrine from this organization or that, putting together their own peculiar theology. In effect, they become "judge and jury," placing *their* opinion above *all* the organizations they come into contact with. Quite often much emphasis is placed upon some favorite twist of doctrine. These gamblers are usually on a perpetual search to find someone who believes "just the same as they do." We need to realize one of the important qualities Christ is trying to build into His Church is *LOYALTY* (Matthew 24:13), not discontent. These mobile players owe no allegiance to any church or organization. Ultimately, their only loyalty is to *themselves*. In their self-righteousness, they play little attention to Ephesians 5:21—"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God"—but instead would have others look to them and subscribe to their pet theories or doctrines. We are cautioned in Ephesians 4:14 to "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness." Those playing "Holy" Hop Scotch often hop from one ditch to the other—going from one extreme to the other—causing much harm to others and to themselves in

the process.

Game #7. Playing God: This, perhaps, is the deadliest game of all. Some people appear to treat God as though He were a butler or a genie in a bottle, as though we are the potter and *He* is the clay (Isaiah 64:8)! Some go to God with the "gimmies": "Lord, gimme this, and Lord, gimme that. Give me good weather, and while You are at it, find me a parking place!" God is not pleased with such presumptuousness.

Another way of playing God is in trying to do God's job *for* Him. Do we sometimes try to dictate to God who He will call, how, and when? (John 6:44). Do we sometimes try to wrest the Scriptures, looking for "legal loopholes," so that we may continue in some private sin?

Do we sometimes go on to condemn, belittle, and gossip about our *brethren*, forgetting that judgment is one of God's prerogatives, not ours? James 4:11-12 says, "Speak not evil one of another, *brethren*. He that speaketh evil of his *brother* [not speaking here of pagans, false churches, or gainsayers, whose mouths we are to stop (Titus 1:11)], and judgeth [condemns] his *brother*, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."

Why is it that we condemn, belittle, carp, and gossip about our *brethren*? Isn't it sometimes to hide or excuse our *own* faults? Doesn't it somehow tickle our sense of vanity and pride to pass on some juicy tidbit about a brother in Christ? Isn't it sometimes a way of masking our *own* behavior? "So-and-so said or did such-and-such." "Why, I would never do that," we reason, "so I must be better. I am thankful I am not like him."

A Warning

Make no mistake! We *ARE* to make analytical assessments, appraisals, and evaluations of right and wrong behavior and doctrine in the light of God's Word, but it is *not* our job to condemn or determine—either in thought or in deed—whether someone will be in God's Kingdom or end up in the lake of fire. That is *God's* call. He is sovereign. We must let God *BE* God!

Be assured, counterfeit Christians—make-believe Christians—*will* be rooted out. "As therefore the tares"—that is, those unprofitable spiritual "weeds" sown among the churches of God which are at times indistinguishable from the true Christians until the harvest—are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world" (Matthew 13:40). God does not play games. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Remember! There's a *vast* difference between being "religious"...and being a Christian! Are we to be closet, "pretend" Christians—or the real thing? Know this: Not a single "make believe" Christian will slip into the Kingdom of God! We need to ask ourselves, "Am I a *REAL* Christian? Or am I just playing "Christian" games? (Send for our free booklet, "What Is a *REAL* Christian?")

Though they would deny it, many believers today are merely "playing church." Mere profession and belief are not enough. James 2:19 asks, "Thou believest that there is one God? Thou doest well: *the devils also believe*, and tremble." But they will not *OBEY*! Christ warned, "For *many* shall come in *My name*, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive *many*" (Matthew 24:5). The vast majority of professing Christians today are bound so strongly by tradition and peer pressure they cannot break out. They have a "just in case" God, and are simply using God... instead of

allowing God to use them.

Problems...and Solutions

At times, people become discouraged or confused, saying that there are problems in the church. God's church has *always* had problems! Without problems, most of the New Testament would never have been written! We see back in the Book of Revelation, chapters two and three, that there were many problems in the early church; and many, it seems, were playing the *same* "Christian" games people play today. To name a few: there were false apostles who had infiltrated the church Jesus built (Revelation 2:2); there were those who said they were followers of Christ, and were not, but were of the synagogue of Satan (Revelation 2:9); there were those who embraced false doctrine (Revelation 2:14). Some were giving attention to false teachers and were given over to licentiousness (Revelation 2:20). Others were physically in attendance but had no works, no zeal (Revelation 3:1). Some were in danger of losing their crowns if they did not hold fast that which they had (Revelation 3:11). And some thought they "had it made," and did not realize they were spiritually wretched, poor, blind and naked in the eyes God (Revelation 3:17). They thought they were "normal" and did not realize they were playing the games Christians play.

The solution for the problems in the churches in Revelation 2-3 was the same each time. It is the same solution for us today: *Repent! Change! Grow! Overcome!* We do this by recognizing our faults and shortcomings and turning from them! If we, as a body, draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh unto us (James 4:8). Of ourselves, we can do nothing (John 15:5). Together, united under God, we can move mountains. Draw nigh to one another! Pray for one another (James 5:16)! Fellowship! Come to services early and stay late! Remember, to have friends, we must be friendly (Proverbs 18:24). And most of all, *love* one another. That's why we are here. That's why we are collectively called.

Assuming that we may see a "game" here and there we can identify with, how do we *stop* playing these games? First, by recognizing that we—yes, even *we*!—may, in fact, have *been* playing "games" from time to time...and then *repenting* of it! How? By reconnecting with the God of the Bible. How? Through earnest prayer and diligent Bible study. Through fellowship with God's people (Acts 2:42). And by recognizing where God is working today and getting behind that work. God is never more pleased than when we are behind what *He* is behind. Don't merely *wish* for these things to happen—*make* them happen! We need to be of *one* mind, one body, one spirit. We need to stir up the Spirit of God within us (2 Timothy 1:6). We need to candidly ask ourselves: are we a *praying* church...or are we only *playing* church? Are we truly *on fire* for God? If not, *why* not? What will it take to motivate *me*? Problems? Trials? The Great Tribulation? If God is indeed calling you and working with you—if you are His begotten son or daughter—be assured Christ will see to it that every spot, blemish, and wrinkle will be ironed out of your character before you will inherit a position in the Kingdom of God! How much better to see our own mistakes—and to correct them now, while there is still time.

Like King David, we need to sincerely pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: *try me*, and *know* my thoughts, and *see* if there be any wicked way in me, and *lead me* in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).



Photo by Gerald Stephens

LONG-LOST TWINS?—No, but they are brothers in

Christ. The uncanny resemblance of Matthew Steel and

John Woodard was noticed when their respective churches held joint services in Tyler, Texas, on Sabbath, February

15. See page 1 for details of the church reunion.

Don Evans 1916—2002

WHEATON, Illinois—Mr. Donald Irwin Evans of Wheaton, born April 13, 1916, in Chicago, passed away at 10:04 p.m. on Wednesday, December 4, 2002, in Evanston, Illinois. The cause of death was a stroke suffered on Monday, December 2, followed by a heart attack on December 4, 2002.

Don was an avid golfer, fisherman, gardener, and photographer. In his early professional years he was a photographer for the *Chicago Sun Times* newspaper. Later, he formed Ambassador Services, Inc., a manufacturer and supplier of commercial cleaning supplies. Don was an accomplished speaker with Toastmaster's International.

Mr. Evans was a beloved father and husband. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Mildred Ryther Evans; his son, Robert (Bob) Evans; his daughter, Mrs. Donna Evans Carl; and her husband, Dick Carl. Don's wife of 57 years, Estelle, preceded him in death in 2001.

Don worshiped and fellowshiped with the brethren of the Churches of God in Elmhurst, Illinois.

One of Don's greatest joys was his love for and participation in the Work of God and Jesus Christ. He was inspired and led by his deep belief in God's calling. He loved and served his fellow church members. One of Don's greatest strengths was his willingness to encourage and help others who had spiritual and physical needs.

During his 47-plus years in the Church of God, he served in many leadership capacities: most church council officer positions, church treasurer, financial advisor to the pastor and council, sermonette-giver, prayer-giver, song leader, and usher. He was a graduate of the Church of God Spokesman's Club, Advanced Spokesman's Club, and Management Club. He gave uncompromising and stalwart support to each of the many pastors with whom he served. Don's friendliness and love for others was exuberantly shown in his role as "official church greeter." Every Sabbath and holy day, Don was at the front door welcoming everyone to services with a cheerful, happy smile and a warm handshake.

Many years ago, Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong gave Don the honorary title of "Jerusalem Elder." People who knew Mr. Evans did not question Mr. Armstrong's logic.

Mr. Evans' absence will be greatly felt by the many people whose lives he touched. He has been a light, a shepherd, a mentor for many of God's "little ones" over his numerous years of exemplary service. His most frequent advice for those facing spiritual- and other life-challenges was to "keep on following the middle of the road" and to avoid straying down the many dead-end side trails. His encouragement was to "stay close to the trunk of the (doctrinal) tree" and avoid

getting lost among the "twigs."

Those who knew him well are thankful that he passed their way, and praise God and Jesus Christ that Mr. Evans has now advanced to the next step toward his long-awaited spiritual salvation and eternal service to the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.



On December 7, we conducted a memorial service for Don Evans. The theme of the service was taken from Psalm 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The dictionary definition of *precious* is as follows: "highly esteemed, beloved, of great price or value, of great value or worth in an immaterial way, as morally or spiritually."

The long, faithful service of Don Evans echoes the Psalmist and Webster's definition of precious.

When applied to a "beloved saint" of Jesus Christ, some Bible passages take on new meaning, such as "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10), "charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8), and our works "shall be revealed by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:13).

Don was known throughout the Church of God as a staunch supporter of the ministry, the church, and our mission as called-ones of God.

Every week after services, Don would remark to me how my message struck him right in the heart. We would laugh and hug each other and he would encourage me to stay on track and keep up the good work that I was doing.

That was how he was with everyone. We all know only too well that not all of our sermons are affecting everyone. Don gave the impression, however, that every message was crucial to him. He was encouraging when perhaps it was not always deserved.

That is why he was a pillar. He was always supportive! Always encouraging! Always friendly and outgoing to everyone that came to service!

Jesus Christ will reward this saint according to the work he has done.

He will be sorely missed, but we know from the Bible that he was highly esteemed by God.

As sad as his death was to all of us, we know how much God loved this man. That knowledge takes away the "sting of death"!

In Memory of Our Son

By Ferrell and Barb Vincent

On August 5, 1964, in a home in Indianapolis, Indiana, our precious baby boy fought his way into this world with a broken umbilical cord. He was dark blue from lack of oxygen, but Angie Groce (Geddes) quickly spanked the breath of life into him at the sharp command of his father, who was holding him. It would be an understatement to say we gave a sigh of relief as we watched him turn pink and begin to cry.

Immediately the cord was tied and he was handed to Dot Denman, who gave him his first bath. The doctor arrived a few minutes later and checked on mother and baby; he had been stuck in work traffic, causing him to be late. We named the baby Bryan David, the David being after King David.

Bryan was never a very strong baby, and at six months we almost lost him to meningitis, which left him with many health problems for years.

Bryan attended the Worldwide Church of God with us till late in his teen years. Not having found a good steady job at age 22, he entered the army. A few months later he married the love of his life, our sweet Kim. A year later, a son Tony was born in California. Three years and three months later, twins Aaron and Amber were born here in Louisville. Bryan had completed his service duty and moved back home.

Five months later, in November of 1990, Bryan went to work for CSX R.R. where his father and brother worked. He was still employed with the R.R. at the time of the accident.

Despite serious weakness, he was a loving compassionate person, with a beautiful smile and outgoing personality, always quick to say "I'm sorry" and tell you he loved you, the last words he said to his dad and mom. He was killed on impact in an automobile accident on Sabbath, October 12, 2002. He was 38 years old, our baby.

He has a sister Gwen, 46, and a brother

Greg, 44. His son Tony is 15, and the twins are 12. He and Kim had been married for 16 years.

We loved him so much. We miss him so much. We'll never completely get over it, but we are trying to adjust to the reality. Please keep Kim and the children in your prayers, as they are having a hard time.

We would like to express our appreciation, if we can find the words, for the outpouring of pure godly love and sympathy shown to us by the churches of God due to the loss of our son.

Apart from knowing the truth of God's plan for the future, the response from the people was the greatest help of all. The many phone calls; so many cards and letters expressing sympathy, love, and compassion; the many beautiful flowers and plants—these all told a story words can never say.

And to all of you brethren of the CGI, and all of the brethren from other churches of God who were there with us in person: we want all of you to know we appreciate, from the depth of our being, you being there with us and comforting us in so many ways. We thank you. *We thank you.*

Bryan left a wonderful family that is a part of him, and that part we will share as his children grow up and take their place in this life. We feel honored having his wife Kim for our daughter-in-law. She was a wonderful wife to Bryan and is an excellent mother to their children.

Bryan and the family belonged to a small independent Sunday-keeping group. They were very active in church activities which were many. They reached out to the needy in many ways. The support for the family and any who need them is still going on. What a good example they are.

We look forward to seeing Bryan again when he answers the call to come forth in the order that God chooses (Job 14:14-15; John 5:25,28). Until then, we pray "God speed that Day."

You Can Live

By Sarah McIntyre

You can live your life with ongoing sorrow and pain, always feeling surrounded by darkness and rain.
Or you can live each day being joyful, having fun, unable to escape the rays of the sun.

If you get intimidated, worried, or scared, just remember that God's always there.
You can come to Him to heal your sadness, or give Him thanks for your day-to-day gladness.

You'll experience both ends at different times unexpected, but if you turn to God you'll never be rejected.
He forgives all sins, but only when you ask, so prioritize your life, let God be your first task.

Be thankful for your blessings throughout each and every day, obey God's commandments and remember to pray.
Have patience with Him, for some prayers He knows aren't right, all things happen through His will, so don't put up a fight.

Resist the temptation of Satan the devil, he'll try and pull you down to his low, evil level.
Though Satan deceives the world, he won't get to you at all, because God will protect you, He'll be the dividing wall.

Trust and be faithful, always believe God's words are true.
Honor and respect Him, and He'll forever remain with you.

Norma Gobble dies at 68

FAYETTEVILLE, Arkansas—Norma June Gobble, 68, of Fayetteville, died August 16, 2002.

A memorial service was held at the Fayetteville church, officiated by the pastor, Wayne Turnbull.

In attendance were her family and all her church family. Norma attended the feast in Wagoner, Oklahoma, and might be best remembered by her comedy acts on family night.

Norma was also a faithful contributing writer to *The International News*.

She will be greatly missed by her church family for her sense of humor and her gift of meeting new people and making them feel welcome.

—Sheila Ledford

‘Our Father Who Art in Heaven’

By Roger Bright

In Matthew chapters 5 through 7, we can read the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in His “Sermon on the Mount.” In chapter 6, we see Jesus giving us an example of how to pray, ending with the famous “Lord’s Prayer.” Although we do not believe that we should recite this prayer repetitiously as some do, there is a lot to be learned from this model prayer.

The prayer has several components, but all I want to deal with here is the beginning of the prayer, which is the title of my subject. When we read the words “Our Father Who art in heaven,” what comes to our minds, or what *should* come to mind?

Let’s examine the first part of the address: “Our Father...”

Most of the professing Christian world believes that God is the Creator and Father of us all, but do we realize what kind of Father He really is? In Hosea 11, we read of God’s divine and enduring love for Israel: “When Israel was a child, then I

loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” This holds so true to us when God called us out of sin. We know and understand that we are spiritual Israel and that Egypt represents sin. So now, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are His begotten children whom He loves, having brought us out of our sins by the death of Jesus Christ.

God continues: “I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them” (verse 3). We must recognize that God is leading and healing us in our everyday lives. Sometimes He chooses to heal us spiritually and not physically. But I can bet that He does not desire us to be in sickness either. I wonder if our minds can really grasp how long the love of God can endure.

For centuries, God pled with Israel to turn from idol worship, but they did not listen. He sent prophets over a span of 3,000 years pleading with them. This is so

crucial to our lives. It teaches us that we can know that when we encounter various trials we can call on our Father to help us—and He is always there for us.

John 3:16 is one of the most quoted verses in Bible. It reads, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” God had to watch His Son be tortured and killed so we can know Him personally. With Jesus there at His right hand making intercession for us, how can we fail? We can have the greatest two examples of love right there in our every awakening need.

There are many other scriptures that deal with the love of our Father, but I don’t want to tie up too much space. My point is very simple: We can look at this prayer and study each of its components, and see what the Bible says about each. I think this was Jesus’ intention when He first spoke these words. He knew the Father one-on-one—and so can we.



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