



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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"Put on the whole armor of God"

2005

Walking in Unity

*Why does Jesus Christ insist that His followers walk in unity? What is unity?
And how do we achieve it?*

By Lloyd W. Cary

The May 1987 edition of *National Geographic* featured an article about the arctic wolf. Author L. David Mech described how a seven-member wolf pack had targeted several musk-oxen calves, guarded by eleven adults. As the wolves approached their quarry, the musk-oxen gathered in a semicircle, their deadly rear hooves facing out, and the calves remained safe during a long stand-off with the enemy. After several days had passed, a single ox broke rank and the herd scattered into nervous little groups. A skirmish ensued, and the adults became confused finally fleeing in panic, leaving the calves to the mercy of the predators. Not a single calf survived.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29 that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock. Wolves have continued to attack God's church from that time until today and will continue to do so until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

But wolves cannot penetrate and destroy—as long as *unity* with God and with one another is maintained. When believers break ranks, however, they provide easy prey. Remember this: *Wolves hate unity!*

In the popular old hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers," we are told God's church is "ONE in hope and doctrine, ONE in charity." But is it? Admittedly, this is the ideal; but historically, it seems that the exact opposite is true. The record shows

God's church has continued to be scattered, persecuted, and maltreated through the ages.

The word "unity" stems from the word "unit," meaning one, something that is wholly united and complete within itself. Synonyms for unity are: oneness, togetherness, wholeness, unification, union, agreement, harmony, accord, concord, solidarity, and unanimity. Some antonyms are: separation, division, discord, disharmony, and rivalry.

Many of us live in the *United States* of America, "one nation, indivisible, under God." *We* say, "United we stand—divided we fall," "we must hang together or we will hang separately," and many other one-liners advocating unity. The enemy, however, says, "divide and cause dissension," "divide and conquer," "divide and destroy."

Division, or *disunity*, has been Satan the Devil's most common military tactic down through time. Why? Because *it works!* We must be constantly on the alert "lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

The apostle Peter likened Satan to still another wild animal: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

The prophet Amos asked a penetrating question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The evident answer is no.

King David mentioned unity in Psalm 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together *in unity*."

Unity was of the utmost importance to Jesus concerning His followers. In His agonizing prayer in the garden He prayed, "...that they may be *one*, even as We are one" (John 17:22).

Unity was equally important to the apostle Paul. "Endeavoring to keep the *unity* of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). "Till we all come in the *unity* of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13).

Paul went on to say, in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that ye all speak the same thing*, and that there be *no divisions* [Greek, *schisma* (*skhis'-mah*), meaning schisms, rents, or dissensions] among you; but that ye be perfectly *joined* together in the *same* mind and in the *same* judgment."

Why? "That there should be *no schism* in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another" (1 Corinthians 12:25).

There is "*one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), not many.

And finally, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark [Greek, *skopeo* (*skop-eh'-o*); to take notice of; take heed, look upon] them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). (You may also wish to refer to Acts 4:32;

Romans 12:16; 14:19; and 15:5–6 in your private Bible study on this same topic.)

Unity Is Not Always Easy

Unity is not always easy; that's why Paul said that we need to *strive*—work—for it. "Endeavoring to keep the *unity* of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

Jude put it even more strongly, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for [conscientiously and seriously fight for!] the faith which was *once delivered* unto the saints" (Jude 3). Note, this is not talking about a controversial evolving "progressive revelation," but getting back to the Bible *basics*—the faith *once* delivered to the saints! Why? He goes on, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness [license to sin], and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 4).

Christ said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of *wolves*: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). "Beware of false prophets," He said, "which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

Unity does *not* mean that we agree on everything or that we *never* argue. Nor

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Geopolitics: Where is it Leading Us... And Who is in Charge?

In today's world the stage of our global community of nations is changing. It appears that growing "negative dynamics" are accelerating international anxiety levels. Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 tell us, "Be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass." WHY? And WHERE are these commotions leading us? WHO is steering our current geopolitical trends?

By Bill Watson

We are told in the book of Genesis, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

It is interesting to realize that this scripture indicates God had remained actively involved in human affairs. Approximately ten generations—about 1,800 years—had passed. Yet, God remained intrinsically connected to this "human" experience. Additionally, we read in Genesis 6:6 that He was sorry He made man on the earth. It grieved Him at His heart.

Imagine that! God expressing regret! He had such high expectations for man's performance, but after some 1,800 years of observing mankind's proclivities He became so thoroughly disgusted and disappointed that He decided to "clear the earth" by destroying ALL of humankind. Notice Genesis 6:7: "And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the

earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; for it repents [grieves] me that I have made them."

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). We are fortunate that Noah found favor with God. Because of that, the rest is history and is recorded in the annals of many cultures throughout the world of how God preserved mankind by means of an ark while destroying all living creatures, including the whole human race by a worldwide flood.

This story has an intriguing sidelight: God was personally and actively involved in mankind's affairs. This is curious, to say the least. God was observing certain conditions, became disenchanted, and took the initiative to interrupt the human "drama" with a God-ordained event, forever changing the course of mankind's future. Unfortunately, most historians will dismiss this information of revealed knowledge from God.

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Believing that God is involved in human affairs is difficult enough for some of us to accept, but even more difficult is the belief that God would involve Himself in the genocide of the whole human race. How could God take such deplorable action? How could a loving, sensitive, and caring Creator decide to obliterate mankind, and consider this mass execution fair and justifiable? What could be at the heart of such a tragedy of this magnitude that would cause an all-knowing, supremely wise God to take such extreme action? How is it that He concluded total annihilation was the only reasonable solution to His disappointment? These are all legitimate questions deserving answers, when one considers acknowledging the fact that God is involved in world affairs.

To understand WHY God deems it necessary to occasionally react with severity is to understand His purpose for mankind. And when we begin to comprehend God’s hopes and dreams for the human race, only then will we begin to recognize and appreciate His sense of determination to secure its success.

Man’s Purpose

Hebrews 2:6–8 tells us of the incredible purpose God has for mankind: “But one in a certain place testified, saying, what is man, that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that you visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands; You have put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, He left NOTHING that is not put under him. But now we see NOT YET all things put under him.”

Did you notice what verse 8 said? That He (God) had put *all things* under his (mankind’s) feet. “He [God] left *nothing* that is not put under him [mankind].” These statements are talking about what God has predetermined to be mankind’s ultimate goal. God intends to eventually provide humanity with unimaginable power and authority. His ultimate objective for humankind is utterly amazing—especially when you begin to fathom the full meaning of “ALL THINGS”! Most would be astonished at the magnitude of splendor, grandeur, and pulchritude of God’s awesome plan for humankind.

However, we are told *not just yet!* ALL THINGS are not *yet* put under mankind’s feet. Instead, we see Jesus Christ as the means of accessing this predestined objective (Hebrews 2:9–18). But that doesn’t change our future destiny. Instead, it secures and assures us of a unique relationship with God that connects us to Him on the level of

a birthrighted son, sharing in all that the Father has given to Jesus Christ, His Firstborn Son.

Notice Romans 8:14–18: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they *are the sons of God*. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of *adoption* [sonship], whereby we cry Abba [Daddy] Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we *are* the children of God: And if children, then heirs; *Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ*; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Paul is disclosing an awesome truth concerning mankind’s purpose and reason for life. He claims we are destined to be *heirs of God* and *co-heirs with Christ*, and that once we achieve this it will be the most magnificent accomplishment of our lives. Paul assures us this reward, given to those submitting to Jesus Christ as their Lord, is well worth the price of any sacrifice we may have to experience. “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are *not worthy* to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

What is this “glory” that Paul claims will be revealed in us? Notice Romans 8:22–23: “For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the *adoption*, to wit, the *redemption* of our body.”

That’s right! This redemption of our body, reserved for some time in the future, is the “glory” to come. This means a *change* in our *material body* is expected to occur. The patriarch Job references this: “But man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost [breath] and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up: so man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep [death]. O that you would hide me in the grave, that you would keep me secret, until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! *If a man die, shall he live again?* All the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change come*” (Job 14:10–14).

Paul adds some additional information for us to consider about this glorious change: “But some will say, How are the dead raised up? And with *what body* do they come?” (1 Corinthians 15:35). This is a classic question. What kind of body will we be given at the time of this *new embodiment*, which will supersede our present natural (physical) body?

Paul continues to explain and draws on some analogies of the physical world to illustrate what he’s about to reveal

as a spiritual reality (verses 38–43). He concludes that the body “is sown [buried] a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body: there is a natural [physical, material] body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:44). Did you get that? Paul says that just as we presently have a material (natural, fleshly) body, we will—in the future—have a body made of spiritual material that is not subject to the limitations of the flesh! *This is astoundingly breathtaking!*

Jesus Christ said similar things to Nicodemus. Notice: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not [don’t be surprised] that I said unto you, you must be *born again*. The wind blows where it lists, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell where it comes, and where it goes: so is everyone that is *born* of the Spirit” (John 3:6–8).

Many will claim that Jesus and Nicodemus were discussing a religious experience involving a “change of heart” in the life of an individual convert. Though that is an important part of the conversion process, this *particular* discussion concerned something much more stupendous in scope. Jesus was speaking of a *metabolic change*—a change from mortal flesh and blood to something called “SPIRIT,” which is immortal and indestructible and is not limited to the physical realm. That’s why Nicodemus’ response seemed somewhat stunned and confused: “How can a man be born when he is old?” he asked. “Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (verse 4). He knew what Jesus meant when He said, “You must be born again.” *Nicodemus understood Jesus literally!*

Paul says, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood *cannot inherit* the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I *show you a mystery*; We shall not all sleep [in death], but we shall all be changed [remember Job 14:10–14], In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [this is when it happens, not at death]; for the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and *this mortal must put on immortality*, then shall be brought to pass the saying that it is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:50–53).

Jesus Christ and Paul are talking about the same thing. *It’s the ultimate conversion.* Yes, we have to convert our behavior now, in this life, after we repent and get baptized, accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior. This is precursory to accessing this magnanimous reward and potential that God has reserved for us. But unfortunately, most Christians today don’t realize what Jesus Christ and our

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does it even mean that we don’t make each other angry on occasion.

Unity *does* mean that we agree on the really important things such as love, sound doctrine, and obedience to Christ.

We can value *diversity*, yet be bonded together in love. Paul draws a keen analogy between our physical bodies and the body of the church in 1 Corinthians 12:4–27. Go back and *read* these verses! Then open your Bible and study the first seven verses of 1 Corinthians 13!

God’s people are not a box of yellow pencils. It is allowable to have different tastes in food, clothing, music, and even the kinds of sermons we prefer. There is room for these diversities and even differences in administrations.

Too often we get caught up in our own personal opinions and preferences and automatically judge (Matthew 7:1) those who may differ with us as spiritually immature at best and perhaps out and out sinners or heretics at worst! Brethren, this should never be!

“And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond [the glue or cement] of perfectness” (Colossians 3:14). Sometimes we must just agree to disagree and love one another despite our differences.

Beware! The Bible says we are at war against disunity. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts [carnality] that war in your members?” (James 4:1). Disunity, distrust, and disagreements over trivial matters are often signs of carnality.

Be aware that if we DO the work of Christ faithfully, some will not “like” us, but we should *never* break unity over personal opinions, preferences, hurt feelings, rumors, or gossip.

Why Unity? And how Do We Unite?

Christians are like coals of fire—together they glow; apart they grow cold.

Rowing together—cooperation—gets the job done. At times we must aggressively create peaceful situations. Matthew 18:15 details how we should resolve personal disputes. “Let your speech be always with grace [graciousness and forgiveness], seasoned with salt [a preservative], that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6). We are saved by grace—but are we acting graciously? We are being called “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

We need to examine ourselves and *our* attitudes. We cannot change others, only ourselves. Like David, we should pray to God, “*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). Remember that Christians are in the process of personality modification—becoming less and less like our old selves and more and more like Jesus Christ. That is what conversion—change—is all about.

In all that we do, say, and think, we should be godly, positive, and goal-oriented. We need to get our minds off *ourselves* and onto the work Jesus Christ has commissioned us to do (Matthew 28:19–20).

Final Thoughts

Consider this carefully: ultimately, we will all be working *together* for a common cause, goal, and purpose for *all eternity!* There will be NO “independents” in the Kingdom of God! Either we will all be in harmony and *unity* with God’s Program—and with one another—or we just won’t be there.

Isn’t it time we begin...NOW? Remember, what is planted on this side of the Kingdom will blossom on the other!

Since love and the unity of God’s people is a primary focus of the Scriptures, let us work—strive—at being “ONE in hope and doctrine, ONE in charity.”

Let us beware of the wolves, brethren, and walk together in UNITY!

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Father are actually affording us. Immortal life as a son, a family member of God, is what *real conversion* is all about!

The apostle John says, “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons of God*; Therefore the world knows us not, because it knows Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does *not yet appear what we shall be*: but we know that, when he shall appear, *we shall be like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that has this hope in Him purifies [separates] himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:1–3).

Paul says, “As we have borne the image of the earthy [fleshy], *we shall* bear the image of the heavenly [spiritual]” (1 Corinthians 15:49).

We’re not sure just what it is, because it doesn’t appear to us yet, but we know we will bear the likeness of Jesus Christ as He is in His present form, for we will see Him as He is. So said the apostle John. The result of this will be eternal life and birthrighted access to our Savior’s inheritance, which God, our Father, has given Him (Colossians 1:16–22).

God’s Goal

This purpose underscores God’s reasons for involving Himself in the affairs of humankind. He is extremely protective and, consequently, goal-oriented in assuring this mission’s accomplishment. He has committed time and effort and conceded to the horrendous event of the crucifixion of the Word (Jesus Christ, 1 John 3:16) to see this endeavor completed. Therefore, throughout history *God has taken initiatives* to steer geopolitical events to accommodate His plan of salvation for mankind. He is determined to succeed in the reproduction of His kind.

However, what many people don’t understand is just what is going on and how this is being accomplished. Without knowing this overwhelming *God-ordained* purpose of humankind’s destiny, geopolitics appear to be just a variety of disjointed random events that have no specific “rhyme or reason” attached to them—a collection of “helter-skelter” global conditions spiraling out of control and seemingly taking us down the path to total destruction. As a result, for many of us, God is not even in the picture. At best, He’s “way off” somewhere attending to whatever God attends to.

Yet God’s Word is a documented outcry of His involvement and sovereignty in human affairs. Notice Daniel 4:17: “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the *most High rules in the kingdom of men*, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the basest of men.”

The whole purpose of this event in the life of King Nebuchadnezzar, described in Daniel 4, was to demonstrate that *God is supreme over the kingdoms of men*. Regardless of how great and mighty a king may think he is, God is infinitely superior. He is supreme, above all there is. Notice: “This is *the interpretation*, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times [years] shall pass over you, till you know that *the most High rules in the kingdom of men*, and gives it to whomsoever He will” (Daniel 4:24–25).

In this case, God intervenes in the life of the king of Babylon to prove a point—that He (God) is the principal Ruler above all human leaders and is actually the One responsible for putting, or allowing, certain leaders to be established at specific times during man’s history.

When we review major historical “benchmarks” and look back on the landscape of these worldwide events—the two world wars, for instance—and consider the leaders and consequential outcomes, is there any doubt that the unseen hand of God was involved?

Whether we like to admit it or not, if this is true—and *it is!*—we are left with no alternative but to admit God put George Bush into the presidency of the United States of America at this specific time for a reason. He also put Bill Clinton into the presidency. The same must be said of Roosevelt, Kennedy, Mr. Prodi of the European Union, Schroeder of Germany, Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Kim Jong-il of North Korea, and other leaders of nations around the world, including Iran, Jordan, Syria, Israel, Turkey, France, Japan, and China. The present stirring and “saber rattling” of our geopolitical circumstances are

exactly what Jesus Christ warned us would occur in the latter days. Notice: “But when you shall hear of wars and commotions, *be not terrified*: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by [will not come immediately]. Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in different places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven (Luke 21:9–11). In Mark’s account, He says, “These are the beginnings of sorrows” (Mark 13:8).

It is explicitly revealed that *God is steering world conditions* to suit His purpose, and is allowing certain circumstances, and world leaders, to play out according to His preordained plan. He has been doing this from the beginning of creation. What humanity doesn’t understand or recognize is, as Winston Churchill once said, “There is a great plan being worked out here below.” Mr. Churchill couldn’t have been more correct in this observation.

There is a GREAT PLAN being worked out here below! It concerns God *reproducing after His kind*. He is adding to His family, and Earth is presently the location where He’s conducting this project. It’s an amazing realization when one grasps the significance of this event, because then, and only then, can you begin to discern the “sense” in what appears to be so much senselessness and madness on this planet.

This is why Jesus Christ encouraged us when He said, “And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: *see that you be not troubled*: for all these things must come to pass, *but the end is not yet*” (Matthew 24:6).

It’s reassuring to know that God’s in charge. Nothing on the geopolitical level, presently happening today, is out of control. He reigns supreme, letting the heathen “rage” and imagine “vain things.” As a matter of fact, we are told in Psalms 2:4–5, “He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure.” Speaking of Christ’s inheritance, the Psalm continues, “I will declare the decree: the LORD has said unto me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten you. Ask of me and I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (verses 7–9).

This is exactly what is going to happen in the end. The conclusion of the matter is that ultimately God the Father will send Jesus, the Christ, back to this planet to set up and re-institute His world government. This planet will become His theocracy, as was originally intended. Notice: “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east...And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD and his name one” (Zechariah 14:3–4,9). He is returning to the Middle East, making Jerusalem the capital city of the world!

Daniel tells us the arrival of Jesus of Nazareth will

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SHARE THE VISION!

Come, *SHARE THE VISION with us!*

Who, what, is the “Church of God, International”? It is perhaps the best-kept secret within the culture of Sabbath-keeping churches today! Here’s an opportunity to actually see and hear for yourself, and come to your own conclusion.

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FEAST REPORTS 2004

Wagoner, Oklahoma

The Feast of Tabernacles, for those of us who celebrated it this year in Wagoner, Oklahoma, was a time of learning, communing, and renewal. A table for spiritual feasting was prepared and served up daily by such servants as Ron Elkins, Carl Fritz, Wayne Turnbull, Vance Stinson, Barnabus Grayson, Frank Marang, C.L. Osterlo, Max Davis, and Bronson James. Jim Ryan had the daunting task of offering up two sermonettes, which were both uplifting and informative. (Good job Jim!). Preceding the sermons each day was a wealth of fine performances of special music, which joined hearts together in praise of the Lord our God who is worthy to be praised.

All those who hunger and thirst after righteousness were indeed well fed! The sermons and song were reason enough to “Keep the Feast,” but we were also there to commune. Communing together, as a family, the family of God, strengthens in ways that sermons alone cannot! Expressing and receiving the love and joy that being together brings grants to each of us that assurance that God is on His throne and His plan is being fulfilled every day in us.

Singing together and receiving together each day’s spiritual food with men and women of like minds; dining together and playing together during feast activities; sharing with each other the events of our lives, some funny, some sad; comforting, supporting, and uplifting one another face to face on a daily basis is a true blessing! Experiencing the beauty of God’s green earth tucked away behind the pine trees of the Western Hills Resort, a picturesque site where nature blends so well with society, is truly awe-inspiring but is still a dimly lit view of that awesome Kingdom of God to come.

As a church we welcomed four new members into the family of God through water baptism. And we celebrated the union of Todd Bennett, the activities director at the Western Hills Resort, and our own Tammy Cottingame in holy matrimony, officiated by Ron Elkins on a spectacular Sabbath evening.

As a beautiful array of colors cascaded over Fort Gibson Lake with the setting sun, the bride, Ms. Cottingame, and her father arrived at “The Point” in a carriage pulled by a white horse as violin music played softly in the background. Mr. Elkins and the awaiting guests welcomed the bride and her father warmly. White globe lamps hung from tree limbs bathing the area in soft light as the ceremony commenced. The reception was held in the Bunkhouse there at the resort with wine and dancing. A most spectacular celebration.

There were numerous activities at this years feast, including two hay rides, horseback rides for the teens, pontoon boat rides, a canoeing trip down the Illinois River, family dance night, the fun show, two hymn-alongs, a pot-luck picnic, an “on the point” bar-b-que, with tournament games of basketball, volleyball and horseshoe toss. A rousing Bible study by Mr. Frank Marang, and food, food and more food.

Sabbath school for the teens this year was directed by Ted Standley, and Sabbath school for the little children was overseen by Suzanne Loomis.

On the seventh day of the feast, the youth took charge of the service, culminating in the blessing of the children by the attending ministers. All of these special events and activities afforded us the ability to commune with one another, with nature, and especially with our Heavenly Father.

Daily worship services, meals and activities, with brethren who worship the one true God, and appreciation for this good earth that God has provided for us has, for me, and hopefully for all who kept the feast this year, brought about a renewal of God’s precious Spirit which dwells in us. It gave to me that warm hug of acceptance and assuring love that we all so desperately need from our Father above.

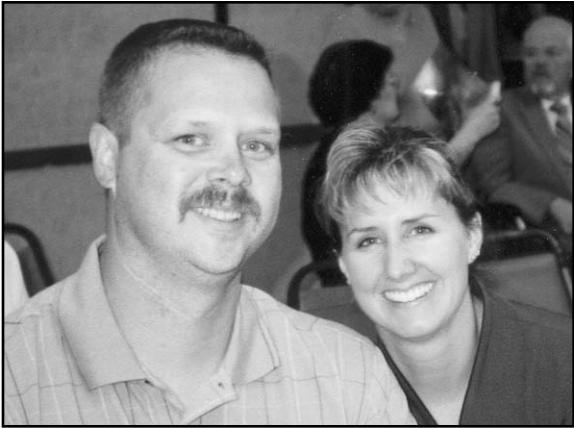
I am able now to appreciate more fully the words of the apostle Paul: “If God is for us, who can succeed against us?” And, “Greater is He that dwells [tabernacles] in me than he that is in the world.” This renewing is why we keep the feast. Sure, there are other reasons, obedience to God’s command being utmost, but it is also that revival of our hearts, that awakening of our minds to the functioning Spirit of our God and Father, both within us and around us, that strengthens us and assures us of our secure place in His soon-coming Kingdom. No matter what this world brings against me, I know that nothing, absolutely *nothing*, can separate God’s love from me or anyone who is His own!

It was an amazing Feast of Tabernacles.

David Beckerdite



Above: The Children's Choir provides special music at Western Hills Guest Ranch.



Right: Jim and Vicki Ryan (Jim was the horseshoe champion at the Sports and Picnic Day.)

Below: Brethren enjoy a hay ride at the Oklahoma festival site.



Tammy Cottingame and her father. Tammy and Todd Bennett were united in holy matrimony at the Oklahoma festival site.

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Here at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, things couldn’t have been any better. What a great Feast of Tabernacles! Arrivals were met with tables of good food and beverages in the conference room. Without a doubt, the hurricanes didn’t dampen the cheerful spirit of the crowd.

The first day of services started out with a bang. Everyone was asked to introduce themselves to their neighbors seated near them. A lot of chattering and smiling faces were the beginnings of a moving eight days.

The first morning, Bill Watson presented an update of the church’s work and happenings. Then festival coordinator, Mike Nolen, expressed loving pride in the teenagers for their tireless service to others while there.

Vance Stinson declared the importance of the Feast of Tabernacles, which hints at “a

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Festival coordinator Mike Nolen baptizes repentant believers at the Myrtle Beach festival site.



Above: Brethren enjoy good food and fellowship at the senior citizens luncheon at Myrtle Beach.

Below: A scene from the 2004 Talent Show at the Myrtle Beach site.



Above: John Coish and Ewa Kowalczyk

Above Right: Raymond and Olivia Doyle (married September 16, Feast of Trumpets)

Right: John Coish and Mindy Martin

Below: Noel Scoburgh, Erica Delacruz, Carlos Delacruz, Benjamin Coish, Zachary Coish racing across the course on the five-man skis



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shadow of things to come,” and how it represents the Kingdom of God. The afternoon brought a sermonette by Tony Buchert. He said to stay focused, committed, and know there is hope in the resurrection of Christ.

Mike Nolen asked, “Why are we here? What motivates us to do what we do?” The answer, he explained, is simple—obedience! True love is obedience toward God. He didn’t come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. If you love God, you want to obey Him.

The days that followed brought more instruction and inspiration...

Robert Balsamo urged us to be involved in God’s activities. This is a time to be together—to enjoy and relax, learn and grow.

Wayne Hendrix reminded us that we are different because of our way of life. But we all have our problems and need God’s Holy Spirit to help our minds against human nature, Satan, and other problems. God knows humans are weak—that we don’t always measure up, but He’s still there for us. We’ve been given all we need. We’re going to be rewarded for our faith.

Clint Mahoney, clarifying salvation, covered the holy days from Passover to the Last Great Day.

We are not here by accident, explained Bill Watson. God is reproducing Himself by adding to His family. An important part of the gospel of Jesus Christ is our relationship with our fellowman and our love toward God and His Son.

Gene Morris expounded upon the physical family helping us prepare for the spiritual family. He emphasized God’s promises, His assurance that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability, and the importance of working together for God.

Ferrell Vincent said the world needs changes. The hope for mankind is Christ’s return to this earth. Promises are there and we will become kings and priests. As it is now, we’re in a global war.

The reason for joy, said Morgan Pinkerman, is God, family, and other blessings. The positive things bring lasting joy.

Duane Nicol spoke on producing fruit and overcoming, as God receives the glory when we do. We are to take care of ourselves in order to accomplish this.

Who loves music more than Frank Denman? He explained the difference between man’s music and God’s. Our emotions, when intoned to God, are felt differently—with more joy.

Loren Chamberlain touched a bit on science, explaining about space and the universe and how remarkable it is that it has been created for a great purpose. As participants in that grand purpose, we are to trust in God and act out our faith in obedience.

Jeff Reed showed us how temporary life is and how time is short—but God’s Kingdom is eternal.

Bill Watson focused on prophecy. He brought out more from the book of Daniel and the signs of the times. We are living in biblical times, exciting times, he explained. He said that everything we’re learning and have done would be used in the thousand-year period and the Kingdom.

On the Last Great Day, Roger King explained that God would accomplish what he was started. He wants to save all people.

The sermons, special music, and blessing of the children were wonderful. The senior luncheon, children’s party, teen pizza party, and family dance worked out well. One hundred and ninety-six people showed up at the fun show and three hundred and twenty-five people attended the Myrtle Beach Feast of Tabernacles 2004. God, without a doubt, smiled down on us and was pleased.

Jo Morris

Niagara Falls, Ontario

There is something *very* special going on “*up there*”—north of the border, that is. If you have never been to a Canadian feast site, you are *most* definitely missing out on a very special festival blessing. A whole new level of spiritual commitment, devotion, love, and friendliness awaits visitors, who will find the unique and most pleasant blending of cultures, nationalities, and God’s Spirit filling their hearts *full*, and enhancing their *entire* feast experience.

As awe-inspiring as the twin behemoth waterfalls are *physically*, there is a quiet, but sure, “magic” floating in the refreshing, Canadian air and sunshine that will both charm and warm your soul. Sure, there is plenty to do and see here for all ages and lifestyles. But when the beauty *inside* rivals the natural beauty that God has blessed this country with *outside*, then one cannot go wrong. Among the children, teens, and adults, the sheer amount of talent and gifts *alone* is quite staggering and inspirational.

In all my 26 years in God’s church, no other festival site location (other than Jamaica in 1982) has tugged at my heartstrings more, and—most interesting—may be the maybe-not-so- coincidental sheer number of Jamaican brethren here at Niagara. (I personally feel that their unique gift of enthusiasm, love of God, energy, and openness is one of the secret spices that peppers the heightened level of worship that fills the church hall and inspires the level of excellence found in the fellowship, sermons, and sermonettes here at God’s feast.)

And yet, another large part of this positive and magical ambience owes much to the consistent and benevolent leadership of Mr. John Coish, who heads the CGI Canadian work. Mr. Coish’s *obvious* love for God and for the brethren—coupled with his often-expressed concern for their growth in service to God—set a higher bar for his fellow Canadians to serve one another and the church as a whole.

Where else can you find church leadership so *totally* involved with the brethren—racing and rolling in the grass with the children during Family Day; tossing water balloons; strapping on multi-person, wooden block skis; and leading the charge in three-legged races!? If there is a church event, he is not only *there*; he is *personally* involved. His humility, good nature, and *love* of humor combined together on Talent Show night, when his “Children of Light” musical, dance group ensemble provided the evening’s

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most creative, enthusiastic, and humorous hit.

Fun, Love, Spirit—just a *few* of the jewels you’ll have experienced *daily* while in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada.

But I do feel that I must first caution you should you plan to attend this awesome festival location: 1) You *will* go back to your home a different person—a *better* person. 2) Please, do *not* consider coming to Niagara if you never want to have to face the personal dilemma of considering the possibility of moving up here *permanently*.

The warmth, the love, and the spirit of family and belonging will surely do to you what they did to my family and me. It’s kind of like finding, “a whole *nother half*” to your own family!

On a scale of 1–10, Niagara Falls, the wonderful brethren, and the feast organization and leadership rate this site a rock-solid 10!

See you at the feast—in Canada—next year!

Howard Nitzberg

Harrison Hot Springs, BC

God’s children gathered in the millennial setting of Harrison Hot Springs for the fifth year in a row. Canadians traveled from cities, towns, and villages in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. Their United States brethren drove and flew in representing Missouri, Utah, Texas, Iowa, Colorado, and Kentucky—quite a family reunion for Feast of Tabernacles 2004. And, as always, it was the BEST FEAST EVER!

The tone was set on opening night at the Hospitality get together. God’s Holy Spirit was in abundance as familiar friends and brethren shook hands and hugged, melting away the past twelve months as though they were mere minutes. New acquaintances quickly turned into family bonds that will last into eternity.

“All Things are Ready, Come to the Feast” was the first hymn as sixty brethren lifted their voices in praise to our Father and Brother. Bob Swimm, Paul Messier, and Alex Kennedy served as worship leaders during this year’s feast. Special music enhanced the services as Frank Bean and Messrs. Messier, Kennedy, and Swimm each provided beautiful solos. On the Last Great Day, moving and emotional versions of “The Holy City” by Vivian Rust and “How Great Thou Art” by Sharon See were heard via audiotape. We were blessed to have Pansy Alcorn play the keyboard for services, as well as accompany some of the special music.

Bob Swimm had the honor of giving the first day and Last Great Day sermons. His “The Train’s Done Gone” opening message stressed the urgency to be ready and prepared to board the train to the Kingdom. The Last Great Day presentation compared the fallacies of the world’s “great” religions and the simple truth of God’s Word as to life after death, moving nearly everyone to tears as he made Ezekiel 37 come alive, describing the various scenarios at the graves of our loved ones—wee infants, little children, fifty-year mates, and beloved grandparents—as they again receive the breath of life *and*, now, God’s Holy Spirit.

Charles Groce, as is his style, abandoned the lectern, connecting personally with the brethren, as he spoke on why it so vital we keep the feast, not only as an act of obedience and worship, but because it lights the way for all those whose lives we touch on a daily basis. His second message warned of the iniquity all around us. Ken Kerr preceded Mr. Groce’s first message with a sermonette comparing us with salt (once a valuable commodity), and suggesting that each of us is an offering to God.

Ben Chapman interrupted his feast at Salt Lake City to bring us a sermon confirming that the Feast of Tabernacles is about government. Then, two days later, he spoke of a “silent” gift in the church that needs to be greatly increased and “shouted”—the gift of HEALING. Again, Mr. Kerr gave a sermonette preceding Mr. Chapman’s second sermon, warning of Satan’s attacks on our time—the diversions of television, music, and the computer from our need for prayer, study, and meditation.

Alex Kennedy spoke of another of the gifts we need to avail ourselves of as he emotionally delivered his message, “The Gift of Forgiveness and Love.” Robert Alcorn asked, “Are You Willing to Follow Jesus Christ,” citing the many examples from those original disciples. Festival Coordinator Ken Register preached a straightforward sermon examining our calling, noting that “not many wise men now are called, not many noble.” Bob Swimm’s Bible study went through the lessons from “The Preacher” in Ecclesiastes, and how our lives are at best the “vanity of vanities,” as we plod our way to the permanency of the Kingdom, from our temporary “tabernacles”—our very bodies.

Rain (and it occurred only once, as we enjoyed sunny skies and temperatures in the mid 60s to lower 70s) forced the cancellation of our “outdoors” picnic, so we just moved it indoors to the Chilliwack Room. There was the third annual talent/fun show, with the brethren showcasing their talents at singing, guitar, keyboard, skits, and readings. Again the highlights were the recitation by Ken Lofts of the sad tale of “Sam McGee” and the Frank Sinatra wannabe Eddie Rolecki, who brought down the house. Our other planned activity was the pizza dinner after which we viewed the video of the 2002 fun show, and again it was Eddie who drew the most applause and gave the most pleasure. Another activity some of the brethren engaged in was a boat tour up Lake Harrison toward the Frazier River, viewing all the natural beauty of the area from the “other” side. Most days the brethren gathered for a community lunch in the Chilliwack Room or over at “The Pub.”

One other note on the spiritual side was in two presentations by Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Swimm on the “new” part of some of our worship services—the Intercessory Prayer. This was prompted by Mrs. Gertrude Moore having to leave after the first service because of illness. It wasn’t the same without Gert. Mr. Chapman’s sermon had a major impact as over twenty brethren asked to be anointed.

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Niagara Falls U.S. or Canadian Feast Site?

If you are like I was, then you either a) have *not* read the accompanying article (though you absolutely *should*!), or you’ve used the following short-sighted excuses as to *why* you’ve never seriously considered Niagara Falls, Canada as your next feast site: “*It’s almost twelve hours away.*” “*It’ll be freezing cold.*” “*It’s not worth the trip.*” “*Borders, and customs—I don’t need to deal with those hassles.*”

My response: *Wrong, wrong, wrong, and wrong.* If you are driving from a mid-southern state such as Tennessee, Niagara Falls is just an hour longer away than Pensacola—but with highway all the way. The weather is perfect—in 2004, it ranged from 55F-82F. Not worth the trip? You couldn’t me *more* wrong. Read the accompanying article to learn about one of the church’s best-kept secrets! (And those “customs and borders” are a breeze.)



Above: Lunch at “The Pub” (Harrison Hot Springs)

Right: Bob Swimm and Ken Lofts after the “Train’s Done Gone” sermon



Below: Bob Swimm conducts a Bible study on the book of Ecclesiastes



Left: Ben Chapman and Ken Register. Mr. Chapman came up from the feast site in Salt Lake City, UT, to spend a couple of days with the brethren at the BC site.

Below, left to right: Eddie Rolecki, Betty and Ken Register, Bob Swimm, and Bonnie and Frank Bean at the pizza party



Kachinland work forges ahead

GREETINGS to you from Kachinland! In September, I was in the China border town Kutkai for the Feast of Trumpets. I stayed there for one week, and I taught Bible truths there every day and night. Many people of hills tribes and from various areas came to me for Bible studies every day. Some people came to sleep at my bamboo house, and they studied the Bible lessons until midnight.

In the China border areas, the Sabbath message is spreading quickly. It is wonderful that many new believers absolutely accept God’s holy days and other biblical truths. Now they are gathering at a bamboo house every Sabbath for worship services. They need a community hall, but they have no budget to build because they are all poor families.

We celebrated the Day of Atonement our hometown, and we kept the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day at my home. This year, brethren in Kachinland and Burma celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in seven places.

I recently received your September 2004 letter, and we want to learn more from you about the feasts of God. We thank you so much for your literature and your teachings about God’s annual holy days.

Thank you for the sermon tapes we have received from you, and for your informative letters. We very much appreciate you for your generous hearts. At present, I am serving as spiritual leader both in Kachinland and Burma. So I always need to tour various areas to see the scattered church members. Every month my travel expenditure is around \$50 (U.S.).

For the next year, I will accept more Bible students from far distant areas. Now I have three projects I have to complete as quickly as possible:

- 1) One community hall to be built in the China border area of Kutkai.
- 2) One community hall to be built in Central Burma for Karen Tribes. Many church members are there, but they are poor families.
- 3)Property to be purchased in the Karen State and Central Burma border area. It is a fruit farm, about five acres.

We need your special prayers for these projects. We believe that God will provide us the needed funds.

We have had heavy rainfall for about a week, and our community hall is not finished yet because of the heavy rain.

Please let us unite our hearts to accomplish the work of God in the vast new mission fields. May God bless your ministry there in America very abundantly.

Your fellow servant in the service of Jesus Christ,

Pastor Lazum Brang
Kachinland



Brethren get together for a group picture at the Ballina feast site.



Above: Lisa deGraff receives the laying-on-of-hands following her baptism. CGI minister Herb Haupt (third from right) officiated.

Right: Lisa’s baptism at Shaw’s Bay in Ballina



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Several of the ladies met with Mrs. Register to discuss women’s role in the church and to make preparations for Feast 2005. Another wonderful accomplishment was the formation of a new fellowship that was to begin immediately over in Penticton. Last year’s feast bore the fruit of a new church being established at Calgary, Alberta.

Many people made this feast the BEST EVER, but a special tip of the cap to Mrs. Alcorn and Ken Kerr, who brought all of his recording equipment and was responsible for the wonderful sound system, and taped everything. He had hoped to broadcast *live* to those unable to attend but the hotel’s facilities did not have the required setup. All of the sermons Ken taped are available to be viewed by logging on to the Canadian or Alberta web site, and audios are available on cassette from Tyler.

We were saddened not to have Wilf Seal, who passed away earlier this year, but were heartened to have Joan, whose service and grace to the brethren was not abated despite the hurt of her loss.

Mr. Groce set the tone for the feast when he opened with “Grace and Peace, Brethren.” Mr. Swimm closed with the same words, and added “God be with you all, ‘til we meet again,” as his voiced cracked with emotion.

Feast 2004 at Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia)—THE BEST EVER!!!

Bob Swimm

Ocho Rios, Jamaica

With high attendances of 271 on the weekly Sabbath and 266 on the Last Great Day, the Church of God International celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. “Ivan the Terrible” left the area along the north coast from Montego Bay eastwards of the largest English-speaking Caribbean island mostly unscathed. So this feast site blessedly escaped the ill effects of this year’s busy hurricane season. Since the local church has rapidly grown in attendance in recent years, it met for the first time in a large meeting room above a restaurant called “The Ruins.” This location supplied the gathered feast-goers with a striking millennial backdrop. A nearby waterfall flowed through lush tropical greenery, which could be seen from a bank of windows that opened the meeting room to the world outside.

The general theme of the speakers consisted of warnings against materialism and making this life our priority, for Tabernacles reminds us that we are aliens and sojourners in a temporary world. The local speakers employed a particularly powerful metaphor by comparing this world to “Babylon,” which represents not merely sin, confusion, or a false religious system, but economic power and wealth (see Revelation 18:9–23). Resident pastor Ian Boyne, in his Last Great Day message, “Confronting the Twins,” pointed out it’s much easier for people in the Church of God to condemn Roman Catholicism, Babylon’s religious side, than to escape the pressures exerted against festival and Sabbath observance and the temptations presented by the desires to pursue wealth, Babylon’s economic side. We need, he observed, more sermons condemning materialism, not just those attacking Babylon and her daughters since people in the Church of God movement will find economic Babylon’s offers of pleasure, money, and (illicit) sex much more alluring than the doctrines of Catholicism. Other messages Pastor Boyne gave argued the case that people cannot be true Christians without observing the holy days and that Jonathan’s self-sacrificing relationship with David has not been sufficiently extolled or appreciated by Christians. Deacon Glenford Smith gave a powerful message against passion, pride, and pleasure that perhaps for many was the outstanding message delivered at this feast site. The traveling speaker was Duane Nichol, who gave strong messages about the “Cortez Principle,” of burning our connections/bridges with the world, and the “Poignancy of the Fig Tree,” about the need to produce fruit. George Ramocan, the local deacon, spoke about how not to be distracted by Babylon’s allurements and financial traps while pursuing the Christian life, and about how God gives us help in fighting evil spiritual forces. Ray Curtis, a speaker from an American independent group, also gave one sermon.

Social activities at this feast site included a spectacularly successful Jamaican Juice Night featuring karaoke versions of popular American songs unusually well sung in most cases by local talent (mainly choir members and/or special music performers). The next night’s Family Fun Show, with the stated theme of “The Pride of Africa,” was full of inventive musical acts and a play with a spiritual theme. Other social activities included a quiz competition between both junior and senior teams, a sports day, a youth Bible study, a couples rap session, and a singles mingle. A spiritual workshop, led by Deacon Ramocan, allowed the congregation to share its solutions to three theoretical dilemmas of Christians torn between spiritual and physical goals. As for the annual Herbert W. Armstrong Memorial Presentation, Sandra-Mae Robinson once again emerged triumphant. She faced down a strong second-place challenge by Erlett Findlay while speaking against the Sacred Names doctrine. In this contest, which had four entrants this year, each speaker is given up to 20 minutes to defend as effectively as possible the same distinctive doctrine of the Church of God movement. Robinson retained the trophy and claimed a first-place prize of J\$10,000, or about US\$167.

On the Last Great Day, in the morning before services, Pastor Boyne and Deacon Paul O’Connor baptized 11 people in the ocean off the main beach in Ocho Rios. For a local church of around 230 in attendance in two congregations, this is a remarkable level of growth.

Eric V. Snow

Ballina, NSW, Australia

What a shock to the system going back to work was after a two-week break. My husband and I, along with our son Danjard (who is now two), took extra time off to enjoy some fulltime family attention and interaction during this year’s

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Feast of Tabernacles. And it certainly beats going to work everyday. Ballina is such a beautiful spot, and we are so glad Herb and Tui chose it some years ago to be the site to worship and enjoy God’s feast days. This year we had a change of venue for our services due to the property sale of our previous feast site, “Tropical Gardens.” We were all so used to our little slice of private paradise that it was somewhat sad not being there this year. Fortunately, the alternative venue we found at “The Comfort Inn All Seasons” was very pleasant and the owners, Ralph and Joanna Matthews, were fantastic and willing to help us in every way possible. They put on two deliciously catered BBQ meals for the high days. The first we had outdoors and the last was in the motel’s comfortable air-conditioned restaurant.

This was our son Danjard’s third feast, and he is only two years old. His first feast was when he was only ten weeks old. My husband and I were very proud of his behavior during services. He always enjoys the hymns and trying to copy daddy (Zoltan) waving his arms when he does the song leading (he must be training for when he grows up). Most days by the third hymn he would want to lie down for a nap. I think this was because he knew what was coming up. Each day we were all treated to some very special music played by Dennis Freeman on his classical guitar. Most days Danjard would be lulled to sleep when Dennis played, but on the last two days he laid there quietly, and when the music ended he said out loud “Fine!” and then went off to sleep. I guess this was his way of saying how much he enjoyed Dennis’ recitals, as we all did. On behalf of everyone who attended the feast, I would like to thank Dennis for his effort in sharing with us his special talent which God has blessed him with.

This feast was a little different to the previous feasts not only due to the change in venue but because our scheduled visiting minister was not able to attend. Bronson James was all ready to join us here in Australia but had some passport complications. This was very disappointing as we all were looking forward to meeting Bronson and sharing this year’s feast with him. But he assures us he will get over here as soon as it becomes possible for him, as his tickets are valid for twelve months.

With the news of Bronson not able to attend the feast coming only about a week before it was to commence, our minister Herb Haupt needed to get working on preparing sermons for each of the feast days. This was not going to be easy, but with much prayer and God’s will on his side it became possible for Herb to produce some excellent sermons, which we all enjoyed and took in. Each sermon has been videotaped so audio and visual copies will become available to anyone requesting a copy. We are also hoping to have a DVD copy available soon. On behalf of the brethren here in Australia, Zoltan and I would like to thank Herb for the superb effort he made in feeding us God’s Word the whole eight days and making this year’s feast a memorable one for us all.

This feast will be especially memorable for one of our brethren, Lisa deGraaf, who on day seven of the feast, at Shaw’s Bay in Ballina, was blessed by God through her baptism. We all welcome Lisa as our new sister in Christ.

All up, twenty-two brethren attended the feast at Ballina this year. Brethren from Ghana in Africa were hoping to attend but had to cancel their accommodation due to visa difficulties. They have been trying for three years to get out to Australia but it is quite difficult to obtain visas in their country. Hopefully next year will produce a more positive outcome for them.

With our new venue a success, we have re-booked for next year’s feast. All in all, it was an excellent feast with everyone enjoying themselves in and out of services. I hope everyone in God’s church around the world enjoyed their time at the feast as much as we did, and we hope everyone has a great year ahead. Until the next feast, God bless and keep you safe.

Dianne Prather-Tuskes

Scenes From the Feast in Land Between the Lakes



Left: Dana Marr and David Baldwin at the pool party.

Above: Megan Keith



Above: Singer Kateena LeForge with her daughters Roni Jo (left) and Caitlyn (right). Brethren enjoy the musical performances Kateena has provided during the past two feasts.



Right: Charles Groce and Nancy Miles on the Last Great Day



Left: Servers Amanda Andrzejak, Candace Andrzejak, Destinee Nitzberg, and David Hopper at the ice cream social.

Below: Brethren enjoying delicious banana splits at the ice cream social.

Youth Day at KY Site

Youth Day at Land Between the Lakes, KY, was held on Wednesday, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The young people were all excited about going on stage. David Baldwin led the singing and gave the opening prayer. Then, Virginia Andrzejak, Kirsten Baldwin, and Eleslie Clifton teamed up as a trio to sing “God Will Take Care of You.”

Each of the Sabbath School young people took turns reading a part that, when put together, told the story of the life of Joseph. The young people who participated in telling the story of Joseph’s life were Dalton Tilley, Tara Clifton, and Meagan Keith. Michael Corum and Trey and Taylor Garner studied with the Sabbath School but had to leave before the Youth Day program.

Other participants were Devarious and Deniasha Garrison, and sisters carol Ann, Katie, and Kori Fink, who

were assisted by Brianna Harelson. The teens who participated were David and Kirsten Baldwin, Virginia and Candance Andrzejak, David Hopper, Destiny Nitzberg, Eleslie Clifton, and Jeremiah and Brianna Harelson.

It was exciting to realize that the sermon that day would tie-in to the theme of the Youth Day program. Bobby Whitt joked that the young people had stolen his material.

I had the honor and privilege of singing the first song I wrote for children (in 1995), “The Sunflower Song,” with Dalton Tilley as my assistant on stage. All in all, it was a wonderful day for our youth.

Let’s always keep the young people in our prayers and help them as much as we can. They are a precious treasure to our God and to the Church of God International.

Nancy Miles



Matt Giesler and Devarious Garrison face-off in the egg relay race at the picnic.

Scenes From the Feast in the Philippines



More than 180 people from different parts of the Philippines attended the feast in Tagaytay City.



Mr. Ed Rodrigo, minister from Iloilo, talks about the wonderful mechanics of the human body and the awesome destiny of man.



The Manila Church Choir singing an original composition of Elsa Ortega, “Love the Children of the Lord,” on the first day of the feast.



Mr. Eleno Mellomida, who was ordained a minister during the feast, delivers a message about coping in today’s world.



Festival services were held at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP), Tagaytay City.



The Billiards competition in Tagaytay Highlands. Janjan prepares to take a shot while Julius waits for his turn.



Above: Mr. Joel Barrios, minister from Naga City, implores the brethren to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.



Above, right: Lunch at Josephine’s Restaurant in Tagaytay.



Right: Brethren enjoying the sumptuous lunch at Josephine’s.

A True History According to Holy Scripture

By Benjamin R. Chapman

CHAPTER 3

THE POST-FLOOD WORLD

The Tower of Babel

The Flood was a devastating blow to all mankind. Only righteous Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives lived through this catastrophe. Satan had been able to deceive all this earth's human inhabitants with his wiles and false teachings. The world had gotten so ugly and sinful that God was grieved in His heart to see His children so miserably unhappy. He would start over with Noah's family! But God gives man free moral agency to obey Him or not, and it was not too many years before Satan and his henchmen would be busy again with their cunning arts.

God gave us the beautiful rainbow set in the heavens to assure us that never again would God use floodwaters to destroy mankind. I'm sure that all those who came through the Flood would warmly welcome this great sign. Today, we look upon this glorious sign as a beautiful sight in the sky without thinking too much what it meant to those who have experienced a great flood! After the Flood, which lasted about one year, Noah's Ark came to rest on some of the high hills in the mountains of Ararat. Several archaeologists claim they have found the fossilized remains of this enormous boat. Several interesting photographs and articles are available on the world-wide-web: <http://www.wyattmuseum.com>, <http://noahsark-naxuan.com>, and <http://www.anchorstone.com> to mention three. Perhaps God is going to give man one last witness and chance to repent before the terrible day His Son returns to this earth! By the way, the name of the city where Noah first settled after the Flood is called Naxuan (which means Noah's capitol) according to some archaeologists. It is located high in the mountains of Ararat.

Of course, what would any intelligent man do after the Flood? Build a shelter for his family and begin to farm for food! That is exactly what Noah and his three sons did. Many years passed as the three sons and their wives produced sons and daughters to replenish the earth's population (see Genesis 10 for the complete list of several generations). All listed, the three sons had sixteen sons among them. No girls are mentioned. So one has to speculate: how many daughters would you guess they also had? Generally speaking, around the world there are approximately as many females as males. War takes more males than females, though, but of the billions of human beings today, the division between boys and girls is about 50/50. So I speculate that Noah had sixteen grandsons and sixteen granddaughters. They intermarried to produce more children from their sixteen families. If they, in turn, had sixteen children each, we would have two hundred fifty six children in the next generation. These people were living long lives, but nowhere as long as their forefathers before the Flood. I think you can see that before too many more generations, the population of the earth would be quite large.

Let's take a close look at Noah's progeny as recorded in Genesis 9:18–21:

"And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent."

Yes, Noah made a mistake. Perhaps anxious after many years of building the ark, suffering through a yearlong flood, then resettling his wife and family in a brand-new unfamiliar territory, he began to grow foodstuffs, including grapes for wine. Grape growers will tell you that it takes many years to get a good crop, with careful pruning every year, because grapes only grow on one-year old growth. How long this took after the Flood? We are not told. But Ham did have four sons, one of whom was named Canaan who by the time of Noah's drunkenness may have been a teenager or in his young adulthood.

Editor's note: This is the third installment of a series by Benjamin R. Chapman on the history of the world according to biblical data. Mr. Chapman has completed several chapters and plans to eventually publish the entire series in a single volume. Until the volume is completed and made available, we plan to run segments of the work serially in the *International News*.

Whatever he did to Noah was so terrible that it is not even mentioned in scripture, but he was cursed by Noah to be a servant of servants to his brethren (verse 25). This man had a large family and much progeny who were to become a thorn in Israel's side when they entered the Promised Land!

Much of Ham's line was very wicked, particularly two of his sons Cush and Canaan. Probably the worse of all humans born after the Flood was Noah's great-grandson Nimrod. See Genesis 10:8–10:

"And Cush began Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD And the beginning of the his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

Nimrod

Bible scholars have thought that the name "Cush" means black, or burnt, implying that this son of Ham was of the black, or dark, race. His brother Phut has been considered the father of the central African races, while his brother Mizraim supposedly settled in the Goshen area of Egypt. Cush himself is the father of the Ethiopians who settled in southern Egypt. His brother Canaan was probably of swarthy appearance. Why is this important? Because, according to the great writer Alexander Hislop, author of *The Two Babylons*, Nimrod was considered of the black race too.

What the Bible does not reveal is that Cush married a white woman named Ashtoreth or Ishtar, a very important woman in early Egyptian history, who is more commonly known as Semiramis. This was indeed a wicked woman. Not only did she marry Cush and have a son Nimrod, but with these people began a great false religion! We read its story in Revelation 17:1–6:

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whole that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

Satan is very clever. He knows that it is in human nature to want to worship someone or something. He reasoned that if he could fulfill that need in a false way, he would be able once again to deceive all mankind. His goal? If he can cause every man, woman, and child to fall into sin and not ever be converted to the truth, then there would be nobody to judge him! But he does not realize even today that many have overcome him, repented of their sins, and turned to the Righteous One Jesus Christ for salvation. And lest we forget, remember that Jesus Himself was able

to overcome all the devils' temptations and is today fully qualified to judge Satan! Just how deceived can somebody be?

Revelation 17 is talking about a worldwide great false church! Nimrod, a wicked great-grandson of Noah, married his own mother, but fortunately had no children. Finally, in the twenty-seventh year of Nimrod's reign, Shem, the righteous son of Noah, tracked Nimrod down in Italy (the current name of this territory) and killed him. Shem also drove his wife Semiramis into hiding in the land of Goshen for some thirty years. This is covered in greater detail in Dr. Herman L. Hoeh's *Compendium of World History*. While in hiding, Semiramis had relations with Asshur, a son of Shem, which produced a fair-skinned son whom she named Horus (Egyptian name) or Gilgamesh (Babylonian name). She then proclaimed him as Nimrod reborn!

Many unbelievable details are found in Alexander Hislop's book mentioned above. I would encourage all readers to obtain a copy of this book from your library or bookstore. It is well worth reading, even though somewhat pedantic and tedious in style. I've included a few quotes from this book to whet your appetite:

"In Egypt, the Mother and the Child were worshipped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India, even to this day, as Isi and Iswara; in Asia, as Cybele and Deoious; in Pagan Rome, as the Great Mother, and the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, and the boy Plutus in her arms; and even in Thibet, in China, and Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child as devoutly worshipped as in Papal Rome itself; Shing Moo, the Holy Mother in China, being represented with a child in her arms, and a *glory* around her, exactly as if a Roman Catholic artist had been employed to set her up" (pages 20–21).

"The original of that mother, so widely worshipped, there is reason to believe, was Semiramis, already referred to, who, it is well known, was worshipped by the Babylonians, and other eastern nations, and that under the name of Rhea, the great Goddess 'Mother.'

"It was from the son, however, that she derived all her glory and her claims to deification. That son, though represented as a child in his mother's arms, was a person of great stature and immense bodily powers, as well as most fascination manners. In Scripture he is referred to (Ezek. viii. 14) under the name of Tammuz, but he is commonly known among classical writers under the name of Bacchus, that is, 'The Lamented one.' To the ordinary reader the name of Bacchus suggests nothing more than revelry and drunkenness, but it is now well known, that amid all the abominations that attended his orgies, their grand design was professedly 'the purification of souls,' and that from the guilt and defilement of sin. This lamented one, exhibited and adored as a little child in his mother's arms, seems, in point of fact, to have been the husband of Semiramis, whose name Ninus, by which he is commonly known in classical history, literally signifies 'The Son'" (pages 21–22).

"Now, this Ninus, or 'Son,' borne in the arms of the Babylonian Madonna, is so described as very clearly to identify him with Nimrod... 'Ninus, the most ancient of the Assyrians kings mentioned in history, performed great actions'" (page 23).

"...and Cush [father of Nimrod] is generally represented as having been a ringleader in the great apostacy [with his wife Semiramis]...Cush, 'the son of Ham,' was the 'DIVIDER of the speeches of man' [because, as we shall see, it was during his rule that the languages were divided after construction of the Tower of Babel]" (pages 25–26).

"If the founder of Babylon's glory was 'The mighty Hunter,' whose name, even in the days of Moses, was a

Continued next page

proverb—(Gen. x. 9, ‘Wherefore, it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord’)—when we find the ‘Archer’ with his bow and arrow, in the symbol of the supreme Babylonian divinity, and the ‘Archer,’ among the signs of the Zodiac that originated in Babylon, I think we may safely conclude that this Man-horse or Horse-man Archer primarily referred to *him*, and was intended to perpetuate the memory at once of his fame as a huntsman and his skill as a horse-breaker” (page 42).

“I have already noticed the fact that Nimrod, as the son of Cush, was a negro. Now, there was a tradition in Egypt, recorded by Plutarch, that ‘Osiris was black,’ which, in a land where the general complexion was dusky, must have implied something more than ordinary in its darkness. Plutarch also state that Horus, the son of Osiris [son of Semiramis, after Nimrod’s death, by Asshur], ‘was of a fair complexion,’ and it was in this way, for the most part, that Osiris was represented” (page 43).

This is just a hint of the beginnings of a great false church or religion started first by Cush and Semiramis, then “perfected” by Nimrod. It was of a pure rebellion motive that drove this family into apostasy. They provided all the rites, initiations, drink and sex that mankind loves to satisfy his carnal nature. But when man is called by God to repent, and turn to Him, he can and will abhor this sinful way of life and turn to obedience to the Almighty God. As Revelation 17 goes on to show what is going to happen to this great false religion. It is not a pretty sight. Read the end of the chapter!

Many other titles have been given to Cush, Nimrod, Horus, and Semiramis. We will cover more of this in chapter 8.

Tower of Babel

What many people do not realize is that the wild animal population after the Flood greatly increased while mankind slowly grew. Animals have the ability to mature in just a few years, then reproduce, while mankind requires some twenty years or so to be mature enough to have progeny. Nimrod was a great savior to the inhabitants, a great hunter of all these wild animals threatening man. He, along with his mother-wife, built walls around all the cities for protection. Most pictures and statutes of Semiramis show her with a turret-shaped crown to honor her idea of walled cities. This great show of defiance by Cush, Nimrod and Semiramis led to the construction of a great tower from which they could rule the earth! We read about this in chapter 11 of Genesis, and what God did to slow this rebellion of man and limit his imagination:

“And the whole earth was of once language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime he they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from

them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:1–9).

In Genesis 10:8-10 we confirm that it was Nimrod, son of Cush, who authored, with his father’s help, this city of Babel. We will learn more about Cush and Nimrod in chapter 8. According to Dr. Hoeh, in his thesis *Compendium of World History*, this city and tower were abandoned after only two years of construction. With so many different languages thrust upon the builders, they were forced to find their own language group, then regroup and migrate to a different land. Dr. Hoeh starts his world history with this event which he dates as 2256 B.C.E. to 2254 B.C.E. In terms of A.M. dating, we will discuss this event and the beginning of the First Dynasty at Thinis with Ham’s son Cush as the first Pharaoh of Egypt!

But let us return to the story of the righteous line of Shem, Noah’s youngest son.

The Righteous Line of Shem

1658 A.M., Arphaxad

Genesis 11:10-11: “These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the Flood [two years after the beginning of the Flood, as previously proved]: And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.” According to Dr. Heoh in his *Compendium of World History*, Shem continued as an Administrator and Priest of Shinar for over three hundred years, as well as being one of the Egyptian pharaohs for a short period of time!

1693 A.M., Salah

Genesis 11:12-13: “And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah: And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.”

1723 A.M., Eber

Genesis 11:14-15: “And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber: And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.”

1757 A.M., Peleg

Genesis 11:16-17: “And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg: And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.” Genesis 10:25 has this interesting comment on Peleg: “And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; *for in his days was the earth divided*; and his brother’s name was Joktan.” This is referring to the great division of languages after the Tower of Babel fiasco. We can date this *division* between 1757 A.M (Peleg’s birth) and 1996 A.M. (Peleg’s death).

1787 A.M., Rue

Genesis 11:18-19: “And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.”

1819 A.M., Serug

Genesis 11:20-21: “And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: 21. And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.”

1849 A.M., Nahor

Genesis 11:22-23: “And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor: And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.”

1878 A.M., Terah

Genesis 11:24-25: “And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and began sons and daughters.”

Terah, the Father of Abram

How do we understand Abram’s year of birth? In Genesis 11:26-27 we read of the children of Terah:

“And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran: and Haran begat Lot.”

These sons of Terah were not triplets, since the authors of the Bible use the term “twins” when they mean multiple births of two children. Unfortunately, the term “triplets” does not appear in the Bible. See Genesis 25:24 for the story of the birth of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob: “And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.”

But let’s not get ahead of the story. Isaac was, of course, Abraham’s son in his old age of 100. So, when was Abram born? Though he is listed first, this does not mean he was born first. So it is with the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Japheth was actually the elder, while Shem was the youngest. Shem is listed first because he was the righteous son of Noah. Terah’s first born was when he was 70 years old, as the Scripture plainly states. As a matter of fact, we can determine when Abram was actually born. We shall see from the next Chapter that Terah was 130 year old when his youngest son Abram was born! He, too, is listed first because Abram was the righteous son!

2008 A.M., Abram

In the last verse of Genesis 11 we read: “And the days of Terah were two hundred an five years: and Terah died in Haran.” Chapter 12:1-4 clearly show us that Abram was 75 when his father Terah died.

We have moved through the tumultuous post-Flood years, which saw large population expansions in Mesopotamia and Egypt. More will be written about this in chapter 8. But now we have come to the birth of a truly remarkable man, Abram, who was eventually to receive unconditional promises, which include the coming of one of his future progeny, Jesus Christ!

He Is Risen?

By William R. Harkins

The nominal Christian world will experience a strange anomaly this spring. Most of those who call themselves “Christians” will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, March 27, 2005, a full four weeks before the celebration of His Passover sacrifice and death, commemorated on April 22–23. Members of God’s church will look at these dates and wonder how this obviously impossible reckoning ever become established in the ecclesiastical calendar? It is in the best interest of every believer who keeps God’s appointed holy days, to understand exactly how such an obvious inconsistency came to be. The following quote from the desktop *Catholic Encyclopedia* article “Easter

Controversy” helps place things into historical perspective: “Irenaeus states that St. Polycarp, who like the other Asiatics, kept Easter [ed. Passover] on the fourteenth day of the moon, whatever day of the week that might be, following therein the tradition which he claimed to have derived from St. John the Apostle, came to Rome c. 150 about this very question, but could not be persuaded by Pope Anicetus to relinquish his Quartodeciman observance.” The church in the East held steadfastly to the fourteenth Passover, as they had been taught. But how could such a wide disparity of dates occur? From the *Britannica* online article “The Gregorian Calendar,” we note the following: “On the Jewish cal-

endar, Passover was celebrated at the full moon of the first month [Nissan] of spring. In developing their own calendar [fourth century CE], Christians [read Roman church] put Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.” So now we have an insight into why mainstream Christians can celebrate the resurrection four weeks before the annual Passover sacrifice. We can also see how human traditions began to affect Christians living within a godless society. A careful reading of the historical data will show that this *first major split* within the Christian church developed over the timing of the holy days. This split began with the attempted change of the ecclesias-

tical calendar by an apostate Christian community. The Roman church established through its own authority that the resurrection was to be celebrated on the Sunday after the full moon falling on or after the spring equinox. Under the Jewish reckoning, they kept the Passover on the fifteenth of the new moon nearest to the spring equinox. This meant that the new month could start on either side of the equinox depending on its proximity to the equinox. This reasoning allowed the new month to begin in the winter, prior to the equinox, rather than in the spring. Armed with this information, we should be better prepared to discuss this inconsistency with any one who asks.

Church News

Dean and Helen Roberts visit Springfield, Willow Springs brethren on holy day

Springfield and Willow Springs churches met together on this wonderful feast day. We had special guests from the St. Louis area. Mr. Dean Roberts and his wife Helen came to spend the holy day with us.

Mr. Roberts gave the sermon, going into depth on what the day means to our future.

We were blessed with thirty-two in attendance, with fellowship meal afterwards.

Mr. and Mrs. Roberts come to the Ozark country from California. They are getting used to the change and seem to love it. We hope to be seeing more of them in the future.

The Roberts and Register families have been long-time friends, both living in California back in the early '70s.

Welcome to the neighborhood, Dean and Helen, and thank you for visiting us. Come back again soon.

Betty Register



Above: Dean Roberts speaks to Springfield and Willow Springs brethren on Feast of Trumpets. **Below:** Dean and Helen enjoying fellowship meal with brethren after services.



BAPTISM—Springfield, MO, brethren had the pleasure of welcoming Ms. Dolores (Lori) Seiver to the family of God on June 6, 2004. Lori was baptized after having repenting and giving her life to Christ. She came up from the watery grave to receive the Holy Spirit and become a new member of God's family. **Left:** Lori's mother, Jan Seiver-Martinez, a member of the Springfield church, shares her daughter's joy. Congratulations Lori and welcome to God's family.

Brethren enjoy “refreshing oasis in the desert of winter” at annual social in Morehead, KY

The weekend of December 17-18 gathered many of the regional feast goers for a mini-instant replay. Brethren from many of the congregations of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee, and West Virginia came to Morehead for the annual event. As is his custom, Bob Tackett tried to involve as many as possible.

Middletown pastor Tom Kauffung conducted a Friday evening Bible study. Sandwiched around the split sermons of Knoxville pastor Orville Bumgardner and Louisville elder Farrell Vincent were four pieces of special music: Barbourville's Brenda Pinkerman, Toledo's Israel Evans, Middletown's Vivian Rust, and Morehead's own Sandra Corum. Morgan

Pinkerman, Barbourville local contact, served as worship leader after Morehead pastor James Pollitte greeted everyone. Opening prayer was given by Knoxville deacon John Brown, and Indianapolis deacon Bobby Whitt closed services with prayer.

A typical banquet of homemade and catered food satisfied everyone's hunger.

Bobby and Ann Whitt coordinated the social, which utilized the talents and abilities of the brethren and entertained all in attendance.

As always, this event was a refreshing oasis in the desert of winter between the feast and the spring holy days.

Bob Swimm

ORDINATION—On Pentecost day, 2004, Charles Groce and Frank Marang laid hands on Alex Kennedy of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, ordaining him an elder in God's church. The ordination ceremony took place in Winnipeg, where Alex will serve as minister. **Below, left to right:** Frank Marang, Alex Kennedy, and Charles Groce.



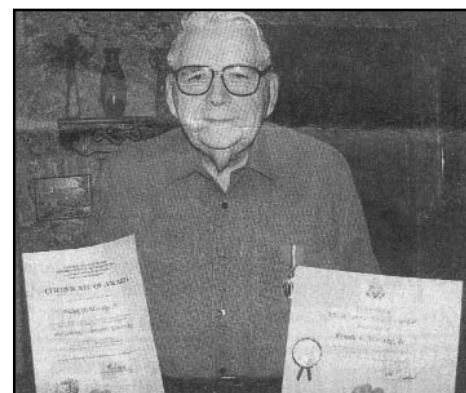
CGI elder receives belated award for service in the Philippines

Frank Marang, CGI elder and resident of Coffeyville, Kansas, had to wait almost sixty years to receive a medal he earned in World War II.

Frank had heard that others who had been stationed in the Philippines at the same time he was there had received medals for their service, so he decided to check into it.

Frank was in the Philippines with the 78th Combat Engineers during the early months of 1945 and was later discharged as a sergeant. He wrote to Congress and received his medal and two certificates: One is a “Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for Services in WW II During the Philippine Liberation Campaign,” and is signed by U.S. Rep.

Todd Tiaht. The other, from the Philippine government, reads, “Certificate of Award, Philippine Liberation Medal, Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines,” and is signed by Major General Delfin N. Lorenzana.



Obituaries

Amy McNabb

Mrs. Amy McNabb, born November 28, 1918, died August 9, 2004. She lived at Marshfield, Missouri, and has attended the Church of God International for the past ten years.

This past year she was not able to attend services on a regular basis, as she took care of her ailing son. He passed away about one month before her death. She was looking forward to attending church on a regular basis again.

Amy had an exciting and full life. She was a realtor for a number of years. She started her career years ago near San Berideno, California. She was involved with Webster Co. Opera. Her love for people kept her going and serving.

We will miss Amy’s warm and outgoing personality. But we look forward to seeing her in God’s Kingdom.

Betty Register

Desmond Burke

On September 17, 2004, a large number of family and friends gathered for a memorial service at the Pentiction Lakeside Resort to pay tribute to Eugene Desmond Burke, who passed away peacefully at home in the company of his family on September 12, 2004. The service was conducted by Rainer Salomaa, pastor of the Prince George, Kelowna, and Pentiction churches.

Desmond Burke was born in Walpole, Saskatchewan, on November 2, 1929, and was the eldest son in a family of thirteen children. He was preceded in death by his parents and one sister.



Desmond Burke
1929-2004

After growing up on the prairies, he left the farm and moved to Vancouver in 1950 and continued his education to become a teacher. He taught in the Kelowna, Williams Lake and Summerland High Schools before going into the machine shops business with his brother Ed Burke in Pentiction.

While he was growing up, his parents determined to educate their family in regular Bible reading, a practice that Desmond continued all his life. Although they did not have a religious heritage, and almost no church affiliation, Bible instruction was a faithful practice. Desmond often said he was thankful for that teaching because it spared him many wrong choices in life.

In 1965, he began to listen to the World Tomorrow program and realized that the Bible revealed more knowledge than his family had been able to understand reading at home on their own. This led to both his parents as well as nine members of his family eventually getting involved with the Worldwide Church of God.

Desmond was ordained into the ministry by Richard Pinelli in 1978 and was later employed by the Church of God International for seventeen years. He was privileged to serve on the Ministerial Council during this time. He looked after the Canadian office and traveled across Canada to assist in setting up fellowship groups. Lasting friendships were made and many joyous experiences occurred.

He enjoyed life to the full with his children and grandchildren. His travels took him to many enjoyable and interesting places. Desmond was also blessed with a wonderful natural talent for music and, in his retirement years, volunteered many hours of musical entertainment at senior centers.

Love of his home workshop provided him with a great deal of happiness and enjoyment even to the last few weeks of his life, but the most important and valuable part of life for Desmond was his love for God, His Word, and the glorious hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

Desmond and his wife Jean were married almost forty-seven years. They had three children and seven grandchildren. Surviving family members include his devoted wife Jean; daughter Glennis Park (husband Mike) of Calgary, Alberta; sons Graham (wife Kim) of Kaleden and Brian (wife Trish) of Summerland, BC; and grandchildren Amy, Stacey, Matthew, Allison, Laura, Teagan, and Natasha. Family and children were always a very valuable and important part of Desmond’s life, and they all look forward to the time they will see each other again.

Diary of a Bible

DECEMBER 21 – I had a great day today! Somebody bought me off the store shelf and brought me home!

DECEMBER 26 – My new owner opened me today and browsed through me. I am optimistic that this is the beginning of good things to come.

JANUARY 20 – I’ve been resting quietly for a week. The first few days of the new year, my owner read me regularly. But now I feel as though I’ve been forgotten.

FEBRUARY 28 – I got used for a coffee cup coaster today. At least I was used for something!

MARCH 1 – We had company today. I was dusted and put on the center table in the living room for a while, but now I’m back on the shelf again.

APRIL 11 – Got lost among a pile of books and newspapers. I feel deserted.

MAY 15– Packed in a suitcase with clothes. Off on a vacation, I guess.

JUNE 4 – Still in the suitcase. I can hear a lot of television through the walls.

JUNE 7 – Home again and on the shelf. Not sure why he took me along.

JUNE 30 – The minister visited today, so I was dusted off and put on the center table in the living room. He seems proud to show me off.

JULY 5 – I had a different kind of day today. My owner found me and took me to church today, but I was never opened. Many of my pages are still stuck together.

AUGUST 9 – Busy day today! Grandma was here on a visit. I’m in grandma’s lap now. She let a tear fall on Acts 20:29–31 where Paul said farewell to the Ephesians, but I didn’t mind.

AUGUST 10 – In grandma’s lap again. I’ve been here every day. It is so wonderful to be loved and appreciated.

AUGUST 16 – Grandma is gone and I’m back in the same old place. She kissed me goodbye before she left.

SEPTEMBER 3 – Somebody must have died. Had a couple of newspaper clippings stuck in me today. I think it was grandma.

OCTOBER 1 – Back on the shelf. I feel I received more attention on the store shelf. At least passersby looked at me and a few even caressed me. I am so lonely.

NOVEMBER 15 – Still on the shelf. Dusted off today, but not opened. Wish grandma were here.

DECEMBER 31 – Today I was taken off the shelf as the family played a game. Each member of the family closed their eyes and put a finger on a “good luck” verse. Everyone was quiet when my owner’s finger landed on Hosea 4:6.

Submitted by Lloyd W. Cary

Thank You God
For Everything

By Kathy Coleman

Thank you God for all things new—
For cheery birds that greet new days,
For quiet dawns aglow with light,
And new resolve to live life right.
New days, fresh hope to choose Your ways
In all we think and say and do.

Thank you God for all you made—
The mighty river, cascading stream;
Oceans that gently lick the sand,
And lakes that softly adorn the land;
Rain whispering lightly as I dream,
Leaving me at peace and unafraid.

Thank you God for all that grows—
The fragile ferns, the stately pines,
Green blades tickling children’s feet,
Lilacs making the breeze smell sweet,
Springtime’s iris, and fragrant vines
Predicting the arrival of Summer’s rose.

Thank you God for life and love—
Life made new through saving grace,
Christ’s love bearing the sins of man,
Your love disclosing through Your perfect plan;
Children wet kisses and friends’ embrace,
Love of brethren and from You above.

Thank you God for all you give—
Promises kept, and blessings flowing,
Forgiveness, faith, and angels’ protection,
Mercy and hope of the resurrection,
Daily comfort and joy o’erflowing,
And guidance to teach men how to live.

Thank you God for beauty of spring,
For robins’ first chorus, and music sung low.
Thank you for the blazing autumnal trees,
Deep blue skies, balmy days, and fresh breeze,
And the silent beauty of winter’s first snow.
...Thank you God for everything!

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Questions
& Replies

By Vance A. Stinson

Emotions or Demons?

Question: I was wondering what you believe or where it is in the Bible about being slain in the Spirit. See, I just was informed recently that my experiences have been most likely emotional ones. In the past, I have had hands laid on me and I have fallen down and laid there weeping. One time a breeze hit me in the face instead of someone laying hands on me and again I fell down. Later the preacher had said that he asked or told the Lord to let him just blow on someone and they fall down...apparently it was me.

Is that scriptural or was I just being moved by my feelings (emotions)? At this same church, at a women’s meeting, we had prayer and such. Then the pastor’s wife laid hands on me and I fell out, and while I was down, she was speaking in my ear and it sounded evil, as I recall it. It scared me, apparently because I heard myself screaming; yet I couldn’t move. No one spoke to me about it that evening. I was so confused as to what had happened except that I felt that maybe it was some kind of demon in me. The next day another woman called me from the meeting (the pastor’s wife’s right-hand lady). She asked me if I was all right and said that the pastor’s wife will call me later. Weeks went by and she never did. I tried to call her but she never returned my calls. What was all of that? Any insight to this stuff would be greatly appreciated.

M.A.

Reply: There are no scriptural examples of the modern phenomenon of being “slain in the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is not a Spirit of confusion or drunkenness and does not cause people to pass out, fall over backward, make strange noises, or laugh uncontrollably. All these modern phenomena come from some source—whether internal or external, I’m not sure—other than the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of a *sound mind*. The Spirit produces *self-control*, not loss of control; peace of mind and joy, not fear or fright; faith, not uncertainty. Read Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 5:22–23; and 1 John 4:17–19.

I firmly believe that what you experienced was not of the Holy Spirit. While I cannot rule out demonic activity, I tend to doubt that was the case. I suspect that your experience arose from your own manipulated emotions. Make no mistake, emotions are powerful, and when they are manipulated they can affect one’s perception in powerful ways. My advice is to stay away from meetings where people are being “slain in the Spirit” or doing other strange things and attributing those things to the work of the Spirit.

In the meantime, don’t be worrying about demons. Just confidently ask God to protect your mind from demonic influences and trust Him to do so. You should be fine if you read your Bible and pray daily and stay away from excessive emotionalism and meetings that encourage the things you mentioned.

Legitimate Expressions

Question: Thank you so much for the additional insight. I was also wondering about crying when I am in the Lord’s presence and when I talk to Him. I have always been a cry-baby when I think about Him or pray (sometimes) and pretty much all the time when I praise Him. Is that emotional and unscriptural?

M.A.

Reply: There is nothing wrong with emotional expression in our worship of God. The emotionalism I was referring to is an extreme and is very different from normal emotional expressions such as crying during earnest prayer. Different people express themselves differently in prayer and praise. Some are more emotional than others, and that’s perfectly fine—one is not superior to the other. Remember, however, that reaching a certain emotional state is *not* the object of worship. We should neither try to work up emotions nor attempt to suppress them. Rather, we should simply be ourselves and express ourselves in whatever way is natural for us. This, of course, does not include anything that would disrupt church services or interfere with edification.

Was the Decalogue “Cast Out”?

Question: Could you please give me your option on Galatians 4:21–31? The way I see it is as follows: Abraham had two women, and these two women had two sons (4:22). The one woman was Hagar and her son was Ishmael (16:15). The other woman was Sarah and her son was Isaac (21:3). These women and their sons represent two covenants (4:24). Hagar and her son represent the covenant given at Mt Sinai (4:24). The other woman and her son represent the covenant mentioned in Jeremiah 31; Luke 24:47; and Galatians 4:26. Hagar and her son are not heir to the promises (Galatians 4:30). Sarah and her son are heir to the promises (4:30). Conclusion: cast out Hagar and her son (4:30). When you cast out Hagar and her son you are casting out the covenant given at Mt Sinai (4:24). The covenant at Sinai are called the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:27–28; Deut.4:12–13; 9:9; 1 Kings 8:9)—nothing in there except two tables of stone. Verse 21 says in it was the covenant—same thing only using different names.

Frank

Reply: Hagar and her son represent the Jews who were under bondage, but their bondage was *not* due to faithfulness to the Sinaitic Covenant. On the contrary, their *unfaithfulness* led them to reject Messiah when He came. Rather than accept Him, they relied on their own righteousness as if that could save them. The truth is, the Law is not, and *never was*, a salvation device. To treat it as such is to misuse it. That was Paul’s complaint. He most definitely was not anti-Law; he was opposed to the *misuse* of the Law.

Even in the time of Moses, the Law could not save. That *never was* its purpose. It has an educative function (it reveals godly standards of living) and a judicial function (it identifies and condemns sin—and sinners), but providing salvation was never one of its functions.

The scriptures you cite do not mean that the Ten Commandments and the Sinaitic Covenant are categorically identical. They simply show that the Ten Commandments are *central* to the Covenant, but the Covenant is the agreement, or contract, which includes *all* the commandments, statutes, judgments, and promises—the entire package (including the commandments to love God with all one’s being and to love one’s neighbor as oneself—Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). The Decalogue is at the heart of the Covenant law. Without the Decalogue, there is no Sinaitic Covenant, but the Decalogue’s existence does not depend on the Sinaitic Covenant. The abolition of the Covenant does not mean that every law (or unit of law) found among the terms of the Covenant is also abolished. The Decalogue is a unit of law—ten parts of one whole. To break one is to break the unit (James 2:10–11). All ten stand or fall together.

If the indivisible unit known as the Decalogue (or Ten Commandments) is not still in force for New Covenant believers, then Romans 7:12–14; 13:8–10; Ephesians 6:1–3; and James 2:8–12 (among many other passages) make no sense.

Keeping the Sabbath Holy

Question: I am a Seventh-Day Adventist. I am writing my thesis now regarding Exodus 35:3. I am collecting a data or survey about some doctrines or positions of “You shall not kindle fire” on the Sabbath day among Christian denominations who observe Sabbath as the seventh day (Exodus 20:8–11). Could you help me to give as a summary of your church’s position concerning it (it is better if you have an official source)? Does your church keep this prohibition until now or not anymore? For instance, do your members either cook or heat their food on the Sabbath day? Thank you for your help. I am looking forward to your reply.

M.P.

Reply: We look on this law as a part of the stipulations needed to instill the Sabbath principle into a hard-hearted, stiff-necked people (Israel). Heating food and light cooking, in themselves, are not violations of the Fourth Commandment. Some of the restrictions given to Israel were necessary for them, given the circumstances and their rebellious inclinations, but should not be seen as universal laws. The man who was put to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath is a case in point (Numbers 15:32–36). (For further study, send for a free copy of “Keeping the Sabbath Holy.” It’s available on tape or CD.)

What About Jewelry?

Question: I have been attending an SDA church for several years and occasionally the issue of wearing jewelry is raised. Although I believe the Bible allows for the moderate wearing of jewelry, I am in the minority in this belief. What is the teaching of the CGI on this subject?

Mark

Reply: There is no biblical injunction against wearing jewelry. We do believe in the biblical principle of moderation in all things, but do not regulate individual expressions unless they are vulgar or profane.

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Marriage Enhancement

Four Ways of Improving Your Marriage

By Loren Chamberlain

Marriage is a challenge! Whether we approach the challenge of marriage with God’s blessing or without it, we can expect problems, but at least, with God’s help and blessing our chances of a successful union is multiplied many times over.

The Scriptures teach that the man is to be the head of the wife even as Christ is the Head of the church. This puts the man in the leadership role of the marriage and the family.

Unfortunately, many decisions that husbands make are less than successful, including those of this writer. Without God’s help, and the help of his spouse, no husband can be a successful leader of his family, and no wife can be a successful helper, especially when their performance is measured by the standards of God’s Word, the Bible.

God, in His Word, does give us some clear principles, and if followed we can be sure of building a marriage that is much more than mediocre. With a little work, care, and love, we can have an enhanced marriage.

It is vital for the husband to realize how important his leadership in the union of marriage really is. It is putting God’s truth to work in our lives, and having the resolve to act on His truth, that will produce the kind of husband that is pleasing to God.

On the other hand, respect for the husband’s position by the wife is of equal importance. Spouses must be aware that they each have a role to play. Both roles are of equal value, and one role cannot be successful without the other.

First: Growth in Communication

A major failure in marriages is lack of communication. Building a vigorous communication system between a husband and wife is not a luxury, but a necessity. It can’t be looked at as an option or a creative alternative—it’s an essential for a good

relationship! Without communication, a good relationship cannot exist. It will end in frustration by either one or both marriage partners.

We cannot expect our spouse to be a mind reader. Marriage partners must be in constant contact and discussion, confiding and debating everything from work to the daily chores around the house, including such mundane things as diapers.

Listening to your spouse may sound easy, but it is not. “It is not a natural thing to do; it is a learned achievement.” If you want to know what is in the heart of your spouse, you must engage in small talk. No matter how frivolous some small talk may seem it leads to an understanding of the thoughts of each individual heart. It is even important to repeat what we think we heard our spouse communicate so he/she will know feelings are important.

Feelings are often the most important concept in communication because we can know in our head that we are loved, but if we can’t feel it in our heart, it doesn’t mean much. Our spouse may hear our words, but if he or she didn’t capture the feelings, the words ring hollow. “What shame, what folly, to give advice before listening to the fact” (Proverbs 18:13 NLT).

Second: The Tolerant Spouse

Most people over time develop an image of the “ideal spouse,” unfortunately all too soon we find that we married an imperfect person. How could this happen? In general it is because we forget that we are people to, and because we are imperfect we naturally will make imperfect choices. First of all, there are no perfect people, therefore, we can choose to cherish the image we developed and destroy the person we married, or we can cherish the person we married, and destroy the image. The choice is for each one to make.

“Let’s face it realistically, we are all a little bit crazy at times.” We all suffer from

disagreeability, irritability, awkwardness errors, the blues, and even just plain tiredness. In most cases it would be better for spouses to tolerate each other with a bit of humor. Tolerance doesn’t mean you pretend to enjoy or be pleased by the less than-acceptable behavior of your spouse. It simply means not to make a mountain out of a molehill. In other words, it means to express the displeasure felt in a kind and gentle manner in an appropriate time and place. Obviously, we are not talking here about out and out sinful behavior. The toleration of sin hurts everyone and we are to be intolerant of sin and remove it from our lives.

I like to tell my wife that she is perfect, and that I made the perfect choice for my life. How can you argue with that?

What we must do is make every effort to concentrate on all the things we love and enjoy about our spouses. After all, husbands and wives once married are one flesh. If we dwell on the faults of one another we only end up criticizing ourselves, which is unprofitable.

“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance” (1 Corinthians 13:4–7 NLT).

Third: Build an Interactive Relationship

The marriage relationship should be built on a strong and healthy foundation. This foundation should be made up of a concentrated concern for the other person’s well being.

Isn’t it amazing how quick we are to forgive a friend for some oversight, but ready to condemn our own spouse immediately! Shouldn’t our spouse be our best friend? If we are to develop an active friendship with our spouse we must have respect for differences, dreams, and dignity. There should be great pleasure and value in the simple sharing of time together, time that demonstrates acceptance and trusting commitment to each other.

Nothing can bring more security to a relationship than a verbalization of expressed love and devotion. “I love you and I always will speaks volumes, especially when it is eye to eye, face to face, and heart to heart.

Without a dedicated effort by spouses to keep their marriage alive, their marriage will die a slow death. Without regular deposits of shared experiences, such as love, fun, and laughter, the marriage will collapse into bankruptcy.

All married couples know the seriousness of providing a home and all the necessities that come with it when children are involved, but families must also take a little time out now and then to enjoy some simple pleasurable experiences together and recharge their batteries, so to speak. Pleasurable experiences are a hundred times more fun when shared with those we

love.

Conflict seems to come to every marital union, however, great marriages are not built on avoiding conflict but rather in facing the conflicts as they come and handling them in a creative manner. There are certain rules to follow that when put into use will bring calm to the worst of storms. Think before speaking. Focus on one issue at a time. Deal only with the current problem. Don’t intimidate by name calling or belittling by using verbal jabs. Practice honesty but not brutality. Defuse explosive negative feelings before they get out of control. Don’t attack the character or personhood of one another. Discuss things so right decisions can be made, not to just win the argument. Be willing to accept half of the responsibility for any misunderstanding. Practice compromise and celebrate peaceful settlements. Remember, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

Fourth: Pray Together

It has been said that the family that prays together stays together. When problems come, and they will, the husband and wife who can pour out their hearts together before God will surely be drawn closer together.

The truth is, we become like the people with whom we spend time. By spending time with God, His character rubs off on us. When we are in His presence, and we are when we pray, married couples can share together the healing, wholeness, and peace that only God can bring. In His presence, our lives can be changed for the better, conflicts overcome, and couples will experience the great blessing of sharing a spiritual life together in the presence of God.

The ability of mature married couples to share the pleasant and the unpleasant is a mark of a healthy relationship, especially when they share their lives together with God. While it is true that biblical women are to submit to their husband’s authority, the husband must be careful not to abuse his authority. He must not be a tyrant, faithless, unloving or impatient.

Likewise, the wife should not be rebellious, subversive or contradicting. “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).

While the wife may be weaker, physically speaking, than her husband, she is his equal partner, morally, spiritually, and intellectually. They are partners in a side-by-side relationship, working together and praying together, which includes receiving God’s gift of eternal life. It is vital for both partners to respect and honor each other in the roles they play in their marriage, and harmony of this kind is best accomplished in sharing prayer time together.

If husbands and wives diligently put into practice these Four Ways, mentioned here, they can’t help but experience an *enhanced marriage*.

GOD’S GOAL, continued from page 3

finally produce world peace. He mentions how the evil fourth kingdom will devour the whole earth, treading it down and breaking it into pieces. Daniel describes how this “beastly” empire will change times and laws, even resorting to persecuting Christians (Daniel 7:19–25). But the prophet also tells of the overthrow of this kingdom: “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions [rulers] shall serve and obey him” (Daniel 7:26–27).

This will occur, commencing the dawn of a NEW AGE! In Revelation 20:4, we are told it will last for 1000 years. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and *they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*”

This is the day we all pray for, the time when Planet Earth will finally enjoy world peace under the benevolent kingship of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. The world will be groomed into a utopian social order with Jesus, the Anointed, reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Our Father is steering world events to that ultimate conclusion. So let’s all pray, “Thy kingdom come,” because when this happens, we are *just beginning* to embark on all that God has prepared for us.

PUSH

By Lloyd W. Cary

Gather 'round, children. I have a story to tell. Once upon a time, long, long ago, a young man was sleeping in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light and the Lord appeared. The Lord told the man He had a *work* for him to do and placed a boulder as large as a mountain in front of his cabin.

The Lord explained that the man was to *push* against the rock with all his might. So, this the man did, day after day.

For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all of his might.

Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

After awhile the man became discouraged and *the Adversary* (Satan) entered into the picture by placing thoughts into the weary mind:

“You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn’t moved.”

Thus, he gave the man the impression that God had given him an impossible task and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man still further.

Satan continued, “Why kill yourself over this? Just put in your time, giving just the minimum effort, and that will be good enough.”

That’s what the weary man decided to do.

Then, out of desperation, one night he decided to make it a matter of *prayer* and to take his troubled thoughts to the Lord.

“Lord,” he said, “I have labored long and hard in Your

service, putting all my strength to do what You have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter.

“What is wrong? Why am I failing?”

The Lord responded compassionately, “My friend, when I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that *your task* was to push against the rock with all of your strength. That you have done.

“Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to *move* it. Your task was to *push*. And now you come to Me with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed.

“But is that really so? Look at yourself.

“Your *arms* are strong and muscled, your *back* sinewy and brown; your *hands* are callused from constant pressure, your *legs* have become massive and hard. Your *will* and *resolve* have been set.

“*Through opposition* you have grown much, and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have.

“It is true, you haven’t moved the rock. But *your calling* was to be *obedient* and to *push* and to *exercise your faith* and *trust* in My wisdom. This you have done. Well done, good and faithful servant.

“Now my faithful servant, *I* will move the rock.”

* * * * *

At times, when we hear a word from God or have a sore trial, we tend to worry and use our *own* reasoning to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just a *simple obedience and faith* in Him.

By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still *God* who moves mountains.

Our task—our work—is to endure to the end (Mathew 10:22) and overcome (Revelation 2:7,11,17,26).

First Corinthians 10:13 assures us: “There hath *no* temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make *a way to escape*, that ye may be able to bear it.”

So, when everything seems to go wrong...just PUSH!

When the job gets you down...just PUSH!

When people don’t react the way you think they should...just PUSH!

When your money is “gone” and the bills are due...just PUSH!

When your health is failing and your friends are few...just PUSH!

When people just don’t understand you...just PUSH!

When *trials* and *pain* and *suffering* and *tribulation* make you want to quit, *don’t* quit; keep on keeping on...just PUSH! Trust and obey.

You see, PUSH is an acronym for...

P = Pray
U = Until
S = Something
H = Happens

May God help you move your mountainous obstacles as you trust and obey...and PUSH.



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