



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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"Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13)

Fall 2012

The Church is God's Family

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named (Ephesians 3:14-15).

by Pastor George Ramocan



George Ramocan

The Sabbath of July 28 (in fact, the entire weekend) was very memorable, with fun-filled activities that enriched the fellowship of the brethren.

A heart-felt thanks to the organizers who laboured with love to make it all possible. It was a true example of what it means to be a spiritual family belonging to God.

The Human and the Church Family

The Bible teaches us to call God "our Father" (Matthew 6:9) and those who have the Spirit of Christ are called the children of God (1 John 3:1). These are just two of the many scriptural texts that liken the human family to the Church family. In referring to Christ and the Church, Hebrews 2:11 says, "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers" (NIV).

In Ephesians 5, God defines the rules for governing the conduct and relationship within the Church family. After describing the rules and governing relationship in the human family, the apostle Paul says in verses 32-33: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his own wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Authority in the Church?

The point could be made that since Christ is the Head of the Church and all believers are equal before Christ, there is no place for human authority in the Church. But this view ignores the human structure of authority instituted by Christ as reported in Ephesians 4. There the apostle Paul tells us, "And He [Christ] Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12, NKJV).

In clarifying the responsibilities of these leaders, the Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 5:1-7, "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (NKJV).

The First Church

In the Bible, the first Church was the home. The head of the home not only functioned as husband and father, but also as a priest to his family. In the book of Job, God gives the example of a family in the patriarchal age, to show us how the family functioned as a Church (Job 1:1-5). After God constituted Israel as a nation, the church transitioned from a home to a community assembly.

In Numbers 11:14, when Moses became overworked in his leadership responsibilities, he told the Lord, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." God instructed Moses to choose 70 of the elders of Israel to assist him, and God anointed these elders with the same Spirit he gave to Moses (Numbers 11:16-17). Just as "elders" were appointed to leadership in Old Testament Israel and anointed with the Spirit of God, even so in the New Testament, "elders" are appointed, based on distinct qualifications and anointed with the Holy Spirit. Paul said to Titus, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children

not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict (Titus 1:5-9 NKJV).

God's Family

God's family is a family of love, compassion, longsuffering, kindness, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and peace. Psalm 133:1-3 states, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forever" (NAS).

Truly, we are thankful and extraordinarily blessed to be part of the family of God, and that was abundantly demonstrated with our Spirit-filled weekend of extended fellowship. Ω

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Just What Do You Mean, “New Moons”?

by Evan J. Chase



Evan J. Chase

Every once in a while, the question comes up regarding the prophetic statement in **Isaiah 66:23**: “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” This is a powerful proof text that God’s Sabbath is valid now and kept during the Millennium.

The last two chapters of Isaiah describe the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth, as well as references to the new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65:17). It is also described in Revelation 21. Notice in Isaiah 66:23 the context noted above: “...shall all *flesh* come to worship...”. This is obviously in the Millenium before the new heaven and new earth, since fleshly human beings will still be dwelling on the earth (Revelation 21:4). The reference to “new moon” has significance. God’s sacred calendar is based on the moon, so each new month begins with a new moon. *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, 1884 edition, gives the following insight:

“The commencement of the month was generally decided by observation of the new moon. The usual number of months in a year was twelve, as implied in 1 Kings 4:7, 1 Chronicles 27:1–15. There was an extra, or intercalary month added once every three years to make up the shortfall of 12 days each year. The religious observance of the day of the new moon was considered a marking of a natural division of time.”

During the Levitical priesthood, on the new moon, trumpets were blown and special offerings made (Nehemiah 10:32–33).

Young’s Literal Translation renders this Isaiah 66:23, “And it hath been from month to month, And from sabbath to sabbath, shall all flesh come to bow themselves before Me, said Jehovah.” The *Faithful Version* more clearly renders this verse, “And it shall come to pass, that from one month to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, says the LORD.”

In Leviticus 23, God enumerates His holydays. The *only* implied mention that a new moon is a holyday is the Feast of Trumpets, which is the first day (new moon) of the seventh month (verse 24).

According to the book of Hebrews, Christians are no longer under the Levitical priesthood, but under the New Covenant royal priesthood of Jesus Christ, after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews chapters 5–9).

Turn to Colossians 2. Paul is addressing traditions of men, both Jewish and Gentile (verse 8). Verse 16 and 17 are very plain: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath *days*: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.” All students of the Bible know that in the King James Version, all italicized words were added by translators attempting to make the meaning clearer. In verse 17, note the word “is” was added. The correct rendering concludes that the “Body of Christ” judges these matters, referring to the church (see 1 Corinthians 12:12–13).

This indicates that some early Christians were still observing traditions involving meat (vegetarianism), drink (moderation versus abstinence), traditions related to holydays and the Sabbath, and traditions relating to new moons. Paul’s conclusion is the Body of Christ, the church, would clarify what is commanded and what is tradition or voluntary.

When we read Isaiah 66:23 in this light, we can now understand that the returning Lord Jesus Christ will not only be worshipped by all mankind from one Sabbath to another, but from one new moon or month to another—in perpetuity! His holydays will also be kept (Zechariah 14:16)!

But what about the significance and former celebrations ascribed to the new moon? When Jesus Christ establishes God’s government on the earth at His return, He will indeed institute detailed instructions to those in His ruling family and all mankind (Isaiah 2:2–3)!

Will the new moon be a special day then? Will the many ordinances and civil laws given to Israel be reinstituted? We don’t yet know all the details, for as the Apostle Paul said, “For *now*, we see through a glass darkly; but *then*: face to face” (1 Corinthians 13:12). We look forward to serving our God and mankind at that glorious time! Ω

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Our Great Commission

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19–20).

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Being in One Accord— Maintaining the *Spirit* of Pentecost

by George Ramocan

The early church, in the 1st century AD, experienced at first a tremendous growth in the spreading of the Gospel and in the number of persons called into the church. The church was characterized by a great vitality and genuine enthusiasm. It operated as one big family.

The believers enjoyed a tremendous unity. They made themselves available to each other and helped each other in every way possible. This harmonious state of affairs among the Christian church in the first century is expressed repeatedly in the book of Acts as being “of one accord” or being “of one mind.” It means that the brethren were of the same will, the same desire, etc. Describing the spirit of the people after Pentecost, Acts 2:44–45 says: “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” Continuing in Acts 4:32, Luke says: “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”

The believers met and continued daily with one accord for different occasions: in the temple or also breaking bread, i.e., eating meals together in someone’s home. An important matter in reference to “being of one accord” is also: *They praised God!* Acts 2:46–47 reads: “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people.”

The Power of One Accord

Acts 5:12: “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch...).” When the people of God are in one accord, God works mighty miracles among them. Acts 8:6: “And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” They gave heed with one accord unto the things which Philip spoke as they heard and saw the miracles which happened! The Lord added to the church such as should be saved. The believers in Christ Jesus were added to the church by the Lord. He added again and again to the church, and that way the church increased and grew.

The church in its early stages of growth gathered daily, and they were together daily. They obviously had a desire and the wish to be with each other; they had fixed their eyes on being able to praise God together, and to magnify Him. Their view was not directed toward themselves or on any other believer as independent of the others; rather, they saw the church in a magnificent position.

What Destroys “One Accord”?

It only takes one person to destroy the “one accord” of an entire congregation. We see this illustrated in the disastrous defeat of Israel at Ai. Israel had just miraculously won a battle in Jericho, because they were in “one accord.” Then one man, Achan, secretly stole certain items from Jericho. The power of God left Israel until that one man and his family were removed from the congregation (see Joshua 7). Similarly, one man and his wife secretly agreed to lie to the apostles in regards to the price of a land sale. In doing this, they failed to realize they were not lying to the apostles, but to the Holy Spirit. God also removed them from the congregation by sudden death. Following this, great fear came upon all the church. “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women)” (Acts 5:12–14).

The Church Fell Into Discord

Unfortunately, this situation was not a lasting one, and we learn from later writings of the apostle Paul in his epistles to Timothy, that already at that time, which is only a few decades after the beginning of the Christian church at Pentecost, many things had changed and turned out for the worse. Instead of the unity and like-mindedness seen displayed among the believers, now jealousy, hatred, envy, and disagreements were spreading and caused divisions within the church. Believers were judging one another, criticizing others, and fighting with each other; and the loving care from before, which they had had for one another, and the zeal for likemindedness, was replaced. The church developed more and more into “biting and

devouring one another,” which led to that which Paul already had spoken of in Galatians 5:15—they were “consumed one of another.” In Philippians, Paul writes from prison to a church disturbed by envy and rivalry. Philippians 1:15: “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of goodwill.” Philippians 4:2–3 (NKJV) : “I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.”

They Were Taking Each Other to Court

First Corinthians 6:1–8 (NKJV): “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ... Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!”

Our Ambition to Serve God Can Turn Into Selfish Ambition

Astonishingly, it is when people are really serious and zealous for their beliefs that they are apt to come in conflict with one another. The greater our enthusiasm for the church, the greater the danger of colliding with each other. Because of our human nature, it is tempting for our passion and zeal for the church to turn inward and become selfish ambition. When we are bright and passionate and gifted, we are often tempted to think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

The apostle Paul understood that because of his brilliance and gifts, this was a trap into which he could fall, and that it was the reason God allowed him to experience a thorn in the flesh. In 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (NKJV), the apostle Paul says, “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

How To Be of “One Accord”

Being in “one accord” does not mean that every person in a group will “agree” in every opinion or idea. It does mean that everyone is committed to conducting themselves in such a manner that works toward the good of all. This can be compared to an orchestra which plays under the direction of its conductor, where each instrument plays different tones and melodies, but they all together harmoniously play the same piece of music.

As we consider this in relation to the church, each member of the church must work together as a big whole under the direction of God, cooperating with His Word and His Holy Spirit, all for the purpose of giving praise and honour to God. This, of course, is the exact opposite of divisions, jealous envying, fighting, and the like. As the church functions correctly, all contribute to the well being of the whole, and no one is just concerned with themselves; rather, every one watches out for the other members.

Yes, at times when we are spiritually strong and zealous for the faith, to prevent us from being overtaken by pride and selfish ambition, God allows problems and tribulations in our lives to produce humility in us so we can maintain unity in His church and make it into His Kingdom.

Let us maintain the spirit of Pentecost by imitating the example of Christ. Christ did not consider equality with His Father as something to be held on to. Instead “He emptied himself taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself becoming obedient unto death even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7–8). Christ voluntarily placed Himself in a position low enough to so he could offer up His life for us. Let us offer up our lives for the unity of God’s Church.

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Notice:

The deadline for articles, reports, and pictures for the winter issue of the International News is November 15.

Understanding the “Imprecatory Psalms”

We are told in Matthew 4:4 that we are to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” But what of the “hard” Psalms, such as “break their teeth in their mouth,” “let death seize upon them,” and “let them go down quick into hell.” How are we to understand these Psalms? What about these imprecatory prayers? Should we pray this way today?

by Lloyd W. Cary

A Mini-Bible Study



Lloyd W. Cary

Have you ever prayed for someone’s downfall? Have you ever asked God to break someone’s legs or knock out their teeth? *Horrors!* May it never be!

Yet David, a man we know and love—a man after God’s own heart—did!

Jesus said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

Second Timothy 3:16 tells us, “ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” This includes, of course, the book of Psalms. Do you ever use the book of Psalms as your prayer book? You should. And yet, the book of Psalms has some very “hard” sayings in it, even as Peter said of some of Paul’s writings: “However, some things are hard to be understood” (2 Peter 3:16).

Some of the hardest things to be understood in the book of Psalms are what is called “the imprecatory [im-prec-a-tory] prayers.”

The Imprecatory Prayers

What is an imprecatory prayer? *Imprecatory* is a scholar’s jaw-breaker word stemming from the word “imprecate” [im-pri-kayt]. To imprecate means “to invoke evil, or call down a curse” upon one’s enemies. Today, we might call this “HATE SPEECH”!

In short, imprecatory prayer is prayer asking God to kill, maim, curse, send someone into eternal damnation, or otherwise harm an enemy. In the United States, imprecatory prayer is most often invoked by both sides before an important football game—or, perish the thought—just before an election! Perhaps the most well-known imprecatory prayer in the Bible is found in Psalm 109.

On the Other Side of the Coin

On the other extreme, proponents of the “name it and claim it” theology teach that the words which come out of your mouth are some kind of a “creative force” in which you actually speak something into existence. Thus we are warned, watch what you say, because anything negative can work against you as an imprecatory prayer. According to this teaching, if you say “I don’t feel so well today,” you may have just literally prayed an imprecatory prayer over yourself making yourself sick. So, they teach, say only positive things that will speak health and wealth into your life, or don’t say anything at all. Why multiple proponents of this superstition do not consistently win the lottery remains a mystery! *God* is the Creator, not mumbo-jumbo coming out of our own mouths.

But what *about* these imprecatory prayers in the Bible? Should we pray for God to curse our enemies today? If not, why not?

King David, the psalmist most associated with imprecatory verses, often used phrases like, “Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord persecute them” (Psalm 35:6), and “Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth” (Psalm 58:6).

David asked God to bring judgment upon his enemies in most graphic—sometimes terrifying—terms!

See: Psalm 7:11–16; 35:1–8; 55:15; 58:6–9; 59:11–15; 69:23–28; 79:6–7; 109:8; 137:7–9; 139:19–24; and 140:8–11.

A few excerpts from among the imprecatory Psalms are:

- **Psalm 7:11–16:** God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.
- **Psalm 35:1–8:** Plead *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought

to confusion that devise my hurt. Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them. For without cause have they hid for me their net *in* a pit, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul. Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

- **Psalm 40:14–15:** Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.
- **Psalm 55:15:** Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness *is* in their dwellings, *and* among them.
- **Psalm 58:6–9:** Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. Let them melt away as waters *which* run continually: *when* he bendeth *his bow* to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail *which* melteth, let *every one of them* pass away: *like* the untimely birth of a woman, *that* they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in *his* wrath.
- **Psalm 59:11–14:** Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O LORD our shield. *For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying *which* they speak. Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may* not *be*: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. And at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.
- **Psalm 69:23–28:** Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; *and* let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute *him* whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.
- **Psalm 79:6–7:** Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.
- **Psalm 109:6–11:** Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour.
- **Psalm 137:79:** Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase *it*, rase *it*, *even* to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy *shall he be*, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy *shall he be*, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.
- **Psalm 139:19–24:** Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, *and* thine enemies take *thy name* in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. 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 140:8–11:** Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; *lest* they exalt themselves. Selah. *As for* the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.

Imprecatory Prayers continued on next page



A Few Other Biblical Curses

The Bible depicts God cursing the serpent, the earth, and Cain (Genesis 3:14; 3:17; 4:11). Similarly, Noah cursed Canaan (Genesis 9:25), and Joshua cursed the man who would build the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:26–27). In various books of the Old Testament, there are long lists of curses against transgressors of the law. The books of Hosea, Micah, and Jeremiah also speak of “curses” upon unrepentant people. And who can forger the “blessings and cursings chapters” of Leviticus 26:14–25 and Deuteronomy 27:15?

In Revelation 6:10, even the souls (Greek *psyche*) under the altar cried out in vision: “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

So, too, in the New Testament, Christ cursed the barren fig tree (Mark 11:14) to illustrate a valuable spiritual lesson to His disciples.

In Matthew 23:13, Christ warned, “But WOE unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” In verse 33, He called them a “generation of vipers”!

Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 16:22, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.” The word *Anathema* means “cursed.” The word *Maranatha* means “the Lord is coming.” The Word of God is saying that if anyone does not want to get right with the Lord (repent), then let him be cursed, because the Lord is coming. You can try to warn people, but they ultimately must make their *own* decision to accept or reject Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

In truth, those who transgress against God’s irrevocable law bring curses upon themselves.

The New Testament Gives the Balance

Some would have us believe it is justifiable today to use such imprecatory prayers against our enemies today, but this would require taking these prayers out of their proper context.

Many biblical scholars speculate that the intent of imprecatory prayer was to purposely alarm one’s enemies, and that invokers of imprecations in the Psalms did so for purposes of self-catharsis, or “emotional and spiritual cleansing.” Other commentators dismiss these prayers as remnants of “a less developed stage of religion, which we have now outgrown.” Yet, since Jesus and Paul quoted verses from these imprecatory Psalms, it proves God inspired those Psalms (2 Timothy 3:16), which removes any doubt that they were sinful or simply selfish prayers of revenge. There is an old adage that “The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed; the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.” Well spoken! *Both* testaments must be taken into consideration to give the proper context. Christ came to give the full spiritual intent of the law. God knows the thoughts and intents of our hearts and judges accordingly (Isaiah 66:18; Jeremiah 29:11; John 2:24).

When David prayed for God to shatter the teeth of his enemies, likening them to young lions that were pursuing him to his death, he was making the point that God is holy, righteous, and just; and HE, GOD, will ultimately judge the wicked for the evil they do. David always left the punishment upon the wicked in *God’s* hands—not his own!

These prayers were written not so much to exact “revenge” upon one’s enemies, but rather to emphasize God’s abhorrence of evil, His sovereignty over all mankind, and His divine protection of His chosen people. A kind of “Set ‘em straight, God!”

Romans 12:19,17 says, “...avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine; *I* will repay, saith the Lord’ Recompense to no man evil for evil.” “See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men” (1 Thessalonians 5:15). But notice, in each case, the prayer is for GOD’s judgment, GOD’s decision, GOD’s time and determination—not personal revenge!

Some who would apologize for David’s harsh imprecatory prayers hold that these are really the curses spoken by David’s enemies against him. Many of these prayers were PROPHETIC in nature, and can be seen taking place later in actual historical events. A case in point, what happened to Judas, “Let his days be few; and let another take his office” (Psalms 109:8), seemed to be a fulfillment in Acts 1:16–20. Many of these judgments may yet be future.

In the New Testament, Jesus exhorts us to pray *for* our enemies (Matthew 5:44–48; Luke 6:27–38). **Praying for their death or for bad things to happen to them isn’t what He meant.** Again, we must consider the context!

Even upon the stake, note how Jesus prayed: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Instead, we are to pray for their salvation first and foremost, and for *God’s* will to be done. A wise man explained the attitude we should have very well: “I pray for God to *bless* my enemies because I know that for God to bless them, He will first have to work with them and convert them!” Romans 14:11 says, “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

Why Pray That God Bless Our Enemies?

Praying in this manner allows God to work in our own lives to soften our hearts toward our enemies so that we’ll have compassion on them, and to remove bitterness and anger from our hearts.

If a personal wrong has truly been done to us, or if someone is determined to be our enemy, we should seek God’s will in prayer about it, and then leave room for God’s judgment and trust HIM to do what is best. That is the way to be at peace with God and all men (Romans 12:17–21).

Christ’s final prayer for those who were tormenting Him was, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). This is the true *spirit* of the law. We are to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

Christ said, “But I say unto you, *Love* your enemies, *bless* them that curse you, *do good* to them that hate you, and *pray for them* which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:17–18).

Remember, our Lord and Savior created those who have made themselves our enemies, as well as us. Christ bled and died for them as well as for us.

We are advised, “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Romans 12:20). Do not withhold from any man the bowels of mercy and kindness. Your kindness may be the means of stirring a sense

of his guilt within him, and instead of being your enemy, he may become your real friend! Consider that *you* have been God’s enemy in the past, and yet God fed, clothed, and preserved you alive. Do to your enemy as God has done to you—love him!

First Timothy 2:4 tells us God desires ALL men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Our time is now. Their time will be whenever God determines.

Praying for God’s will to be done (Matthew 6:10) means we *agree* with God and are *submitting* ourselves to His divine sovereignty, despite our not always understanding perfectly what He’s doing in a particular situation. Plus, praying in this manner shows we have given up the idea that we want our way above all, or that we think *we* know best, and instead are now relying on and trusting in God to work His will.

In Summary, What is the Value of the Imprecatory Psalms?

- They show that David, a man after God’s own heart, was just as human as you and me. Sometimes we *all* wish God would step in and avenge us.
- They show God’s authority over the wicked (Psalm 59:13). They give comfort that the will of God shall prevail.
- They demonstrate God’s ultimate fair and righteous judgment toward the wicked (Psalm 58:11).
- Reading them may lead the wicked to repentance (Psalm 83:16).
- They will ultimately cause the righteous to praise God when justice is done (Psalm 7:17).
- Finally, there is always a “turn-around” somewhere in the imprecatory Psalms that give God the glory and acknowledge Him as all-knowing and ultimately in charge. Look for it.

Always remember God IS *love* (1 John 4:8; John 3:16), and that we are to put on the very mind and attitude of Jesus Christ and of our Heavenly Father. Jesus’ final prayer was for His tormentors: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

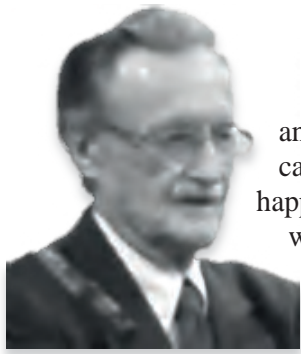
All in all, let us pray as Jesus directed, “*THY* will be done” (Matthew 6:10). You know that it will be. Ω

*Do unto your enemy as
God has done unto you...
Love him!*

Check us out on the Web
www.cgi.org

Sticking to Your Guns

by Ferrell Vincent



Ferrell Vincent

There is an old saying that if you really believe something, don't deviate from it. Stick it out to the end. My theory is, and I teach in the congregations where I speak, you can't *let* things happen; you have to *make* things happen. You can't always make things happen the way you want it to be, but you have to tactfully try.

There is a beautiful story in the Bible perhaps we are all familiar with, and I get inspired every time I read it. I would like to become inspired a little more by relaying it to you. Perhaps you, too, can become lifted up a little by renewing it in your mind.

The story is about the prophet Daniel and his friends. They found themselves in a very difficult situation that was no fault of their own. Jehoiakim began his rule of Judah in 609 BC. This verse dates itself as 606 BC, the third year of his reign. The Hebrew name *Jehoiakim* means "Jehovah will set up." We know from other scriptures that Jehoiakim became king when he was 25 years of age, and that he collected heavy taxes for the Pharaoh of Egypt. "So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Necho. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah" (2 Kings 23:35–36, NKJV used throughout).

Jeremiah, a prophet of God who lived during Daniel's time, warned Jehoiakim of divine judgment unless retribution was made. God gave this king three years to repent, but Jehoiakim treated the matter with contempt. "Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 'Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin' (Jeremiah 36:1–3). Therefore, in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, God judged Jehoiakim by allowing Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem. Sometimes we associate the word "besiege" with a swift, violent overthrow. In this situation, though, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem to conquer the city and to make its inhabitants loyal to him. Up to this point, the confrontation had been relatively nonviolent, though later there would be much bloodshed.

Solomon's temple, which Nebuchadnezzar looted, was magnificent, as were all of its furnishings. Riches like these had not been seen since Solomon's actual reign. The stolen vessels were ornaments that the king had made specifically for the temple, so they were all exceptionally beautiful. Second Kings 24:13 states, "And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said."

Also, in 2 Kings 25:15, Nebuchadnezzar carried these goods into the land of Shinar in which the city of Babylon was located. "Nebuchadnezzar also carried off *some* of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon" (2 Chronicles 36:7). Ashpenaz was the master of the eunuchs, loyal servants of the king. As a requirement, eunuchs were castrated so they would not desire women, least of all the king's wives and his daughters. The fact that Ashpenaz was asked to bring royal Israelites meant that they were descendants of King David, the second king of Israel, who received God's promise that his family would always rule. David was from the tribe of Judah, so also was Daniel and his friends.

The king further directed Ashpenaz to choose young men who were without physical blemish. They were to be physically attractive and "knowledgeable in all subjects," which indicated that they were to display discernment and sensibility in words and in actions. In addition, they were to possess the intellectual aptitude to learn the Chaldean language, customs, and culture. In the Babylonian Empire, the Chaldeans were the dominant race, and were considered extremely intelligent. These captives, with their ability to learn and to understand the Chaldean language and

culture, ranked among the elite of the Jewish captives. They were to be young people competent to stand in the king's court as physically, morally, and mentally exceptional individuals, those of whom the king could be proud. These men were chosen because they possessed these qualities as judged by their fellow man, yet they were given these characteristics by Almighty God. They were God's chosen people, singled out and set apart by Him. Because of their Jewish heritage and their special relationship with Jehovah, they could trust His leading in every aspect of their lives, even as they experienced the cruel circumstances of captivity.

Once these young people were chosen, they were brought into the king's palace in Babylon and served the choicest meats and the finest wines. Their meals were selected by and suitable for the king himself. By worldly standards, this was the best food and drink available, since they were the same provisions consumed by the king.

This was not just a special favor that happened every so often. It was a daily regimen. For three years, the captives were to partake of this food. At the end of that time, they were to stand before King Nebuchadnezzar as beautiful, seemingly perfect human beings.

Among the young men who were taken captive, four were singled out: Daniel, whose Hebrew name means "my judge is God"; Hananiah, whose Hebrew name means "the grace of Jehovah"; Mishael, whose Hebrew name means "who is what God is?"; and Azariah, whose Hebrew name means "helped of Jehovah." These Hebrew children were from the tribe of Judah. Judah means "He shall be praised," and these four men certainly would praise God throughout their lifetimes in Babylon.

These four—and presumably all of the captives—received new Babylonian names. This was probably an attempt to dissociate the captives from their Jewish culture and identity. Daniel's new name, *Belteshazzar*, means "lord of the straitened's treasure." Hananiah's name, *Shadrach*, means "the breast was tender." Mishael's new name, *Meshach*, means "waters of quiet." Azariah's name, *Abednego*, means "servant of brightness." The king delegated the mundane task of renaming the Jewish captives to the head eunuch.

Daniel's decision surely seemed reckless, because it was culturally inexcusable to disobey the king's orders. However, Daniel did not want to defile ("harm") his body with substances that God specified in the Law not to eat. The Hebrew word translated as *harm* means "to pollute; to stain" and carries with it a spiritual emphasis more than a physical one. Although the request that Daniel made of the eunuch was in direct opposition to what the king had ordered the eunuch to do, Daniel stood firm, or "stuck to his guns" in his convictions.

Because of God's work in his mind, the chief-of-staff granted Daniel special privilege. He did this even though Daniel was a captive stranger that the chief had only known for a short time. In this way, God used Daniel and his friends to influence the Babylonian authorities. God is all-powerful and can use anyone, even someone without faith, to accomplish His will. Any benevolence granted to Daniel by the chief was, as this verse confirms, a direct result of God's intervention—because he "stuck to his guns."

The chief of the eunuchs feared disobeying the king's command and the consequences that could result. One of the consequences that the chief dreaded most, as indicated by his response, was execution by beheading. Ashpenaz feared that the king might be able to look upon the faces of Daniel and his friends and see that they had been disobedient. He was afraid that their faces would look whiter, more drawn, or in some other way less healthy than the other young men.

Daniel appealed to the proper authorities through the proper channels. He was not able to convince Ashpenaz, the chief of the eunuchs, but he did not lose heart. Instead, Daniel petitioned the steward who was placed directly in charge of his group.

Daniel "stuck to his guns," pleading with the steward to consider his petition, at least for a reasonable trial period. Daniel was willing to put his conviction—consuming only vegetables and water—to the test if the steward would permit this 10-day trial.

Daniel invited the steward to compare his and his friends' appearances with those who had eaten the king's food after 10 days. He did not suggest that their faces would appear healthier than those who had eaten the king's provisions; he merely encouraged the steward to see for himself. At that time then, the steward could determine what the king's men would serve the Israelites from then on.

Continued on next page



Daniel's trust in God's faithfulness was so steadfast that he agreed with whatever action the steward deemed appropriate at the end of the 10-day trial, whether that meant submissive compliance with the king's diet, or even punishment for their conduct. This is the first of many examples in which Daniel boldly placed his life in God's hands, regardless of the outcome, with uncompromising obedience. The steward eventually permitted the request. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah ate only vegetables and water for 10 days in an effort to "stick to their guns" and be true to their faith convictions, even in a foreign world.

In this passage, Daniel "made up his mind" not to eat the food of the king's table. Other versions, such as the KJV, say that Daniel decided "in his heart" not to eat the king's food. The heart is often considered the very core of a person, and in this verse, the description *in his heart* refers to Daniel's total commitment to God's Law rather than to an emotional decision he made based upon his own preferences. Like Daniel, our decisions must be made in the heart if we are to remain committed to those decisions. We must wholeheartedly *stick to our guns!* Ω

Truth or Tradition: Would You Recognize Him?

by Evan Chase

Those who attend CGI Sabbath services and are regular viewers of the *Armor of God* often hear about how the Jews of the first century A.D. failed to recognize and accept the Lord Jesus Christ when He was born and lived His earthly life. There are similarities to today's world just as there was rejection of the true Savior of mankind then.

Turn back to Genesis 32. Here Jacob wrestles with God and is renamed "Israel." By virtue of this "in-person" relationship with God, Jacob is given wisdom, blessings, and insight into God's plan for mankind! Notice Jacob's prophecy in chapter 49: "And Jacob called his sons and said 'Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days....and the Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people'" (Genesis 49:1,10). This is the only instance in the Bible that the term "Shiloh" is used. Shiloh's literal meaning is "peace," later expanded upon in Isaiah 9:6 as "Prince of Peace." So Israel, including Judah, knew from early times there would be not only "last days," but a Prince of Peace—from God—to appear on the earth.

Moses, another who had a face-to-face relationship with God Almighty (Deuteronomy 34:10), knew there would eventually appear a Shiloh, or Savior (Deuteronomy 18:15–19). The prophet Baalam knew the same thing (Numbers 24:17).

King David knew in great detail the first appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The book of Psalms has the most detail in the Old Testament of any book describing the Lord.

Here are just a few: In Psalms 2:7, God declares Him as Son. In Psalms 16:10, He will be resurrected from the dead. Psalms 22 shows that He will be forsaken, scorned, mocked, pierced, and His garments gambled for. Psalms 34:20 shows that not one of His bones will be broken. In Psalms 41:9, He will be betrayed by a friend. In Psalms 68:18, He will ascend to God's right hand. Psalm 118:22 shows that He is the Chief Cornerstone.

The prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Daniel, and Zechariah concentrate on the great hope for mankind in Jesus Christ's return and establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

For some reason, the Jews who reconstructed the Temple and reestablished their religion after their captivity lost track of the earlier prophecies of Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb of God (John 1:29) and only looked in their tradition for the coming conquering King.

Over and over again, Jesus Christ spoke of these earlier prophecies being fulfilled before the peoples' eyes as He walked the earth (Matthew 8:17, 12:17–21, Luke 4:21, John 13:18, and many others)—but tradition dies hard, and the Jews didn't notice. This same traditional thinking has blinded both the Jews and the majority of professing Christians today. Today we have traditions and holidays that obscure rather than explain God's wonderful plan.

This is why it is so important to study to show yourself approved of God, as we are admonished in 2 Timothy 2:15. WE DON'T GAIN ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH TRADITION! We look to the Author and Finisher of our salvation, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:2).

These truths and references are vital to a Christian today to not only give an answer to questions from others, but to know solidly the true plan of Almighty God, like your life depends on it—it does! Ω

Is Christ Divided?

by Vivian Hall



Vivian Hall

Jesus stated that a kingdom divided will be ruined and a house divided will fall (Luke 11:17).

It is amazing how honest, intelligent people can deceive themselves into claiming credit for something they had no input on and absolutely no control over. God did not seek our services when determining 1) how we would look, 2) to what parents we would be born, or 3) what ethnic group we would be part of.

There is no place where differences should be aired in cutting words or hurtful actions when saints gather. Assemblies and services are a place to edify and unify. Too many incidents pop up and become fodder for "He said, she said." If I experience it, others are aware also. We must not label each other or look upon our differences in distaste. It is wrong to decide worth or conversion based upon how some person looks. We cannot buy into fallacies and notions handed down to us.

Here are some real "bummers" of false ideas:

- Whites are all alike and think in racist terms (blatantly false).
- Blacks are, for the most part, hostile and negative, steeped in illegal pursuit (untrue).

Words and categorizing labels add unfounded stigma to culture. In America, as in many places on the globe, wholesome and useful contributions have been made across color lines.

We are faced with an opportunity to become a repentant, godly people. We cannot afford to buy into bias and negative concepts that hinder unity and growth. The apostle Paul warned, 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 among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Christ is not divided! His people cannot and will not be! We will break the habit of assuming. We will listen more openly to messages. We will come together in unity of spirit.

We are on the other side of life's mountain, and we will have to get past our differences and focus on the goal before us. Pass this on. Ω

Words

by Vivian Hall

Often people say something, but the meaning and intent is unclear. What is said is not always what is heard.

The English language is full words with more than one meaning. Often it is even the *tone* used that causes a word's meaning or interpretation. One example is the word "go." "Go" can be a simple command, a direct order, or a harsh dismissal.

When we are communicating, we must be aware of that fact.

Seasoned speakers are usually aware of the possible effect of words. Some audiences are receptive and do not look for hidden agendas to what is said. Others find conflict in the simplest things. These listeners are not always the hostile nitpickers we depict them to be.

Another example is "pitcher." This can be one who throws a ball, a water container, or even an image, depending on spelling and usage.

Recently, I was informed word conflict is common in other languages as well as English. Two people from other nations informed me word meanings in their cultures can depend largely on accent, tribe, even area of origin and birth lineage.

What does this have to do with me?

If you are asking, perhaps you can benefit by awareness of this. We must strive to be uplifting, comforting, and edifying in our quest for right living. Our love for others and their feelings should be a high priority for us. Our conclusions are not necessarily acceptable to others. We can be mindful of our words and their possible effect on others.

A while back, I heard a speaker attempting to expound the distinction between physical and spiritual issues. The speaker's intent was to clarify the subject, but his choice of words—or perhaps *my interpretation* of the words he used—left me with more questions than answers. I was more confused than ever. Fortunately, I came to realize that the subject is not so confusing after all. All *external* acts are physical; the *internal* aspects (motive, intent) are spiritual. And the "letter of the law" is the law as it is actually stated, while the "spirit of the law" is the *intent* of the law. Funny how such a simple concept can become so muddled by the way we use and/or interpret words.

Words are a wonderful tool for communicating with each other and expressing ourselves with precision. But—user beware!—they can also lead to conflict and confusion. Let's be careful how we use them. Ω

Occultism—In God’s Church?

*New Age practice abounds in society today.
Could occult practices find footholds in God’s church today?*

by Lloyd W. Cary

In 1931, during the rise of fascism in Europe, semi-satirical novelist Sinclair Lewis wrote, *It Can’t Happen Here*, in which a populist United States senator is elected to the presidency after promising drastic economic and social reforms. In the end, he turned the U.S. into a dictatorship. The populist said, “It can’t happen here!” But it did.

Likewise, the apostle Paul marveled that newly converted Christians could return to their pagan ways, occultic ways (Galatians 1:9). The second and third chapters of Revelation reveal that, through creeping incrementalism, false doctrines and heresies entered the early New Testament church. Many undoubtedly thought, “That can’t happen here in *God’s* church!”—but it did.

Today an old heresy that has once again gained strength in nearly all the societies and cultures of the world—occultism—is raising its ugly heads once more. Can it happen again, in God’s church? Read on.

Satan’s Masterpiece: Sorceries

Occultism is the term used to describe the study of occult practices including (but not limited to) magic, alchemy, extra-sensory perception, astrology, spiritualism, and divination. Interpretation of occultism and its concepts can be found in the belief structures of religions such as Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Theosophy, Wicca, Thelema, Satanism, and Neopaganism. These are *all* practices forbidden by your Bible. “Thus saith the LORD, Learn *not* the way of the heathen, and be *not* dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them” (Jeremiah 10:2).

The word “occult” means secret, hidden, unknown, invisible, undiscovered, undetected, and usually hidden from the eye or understanding, such as the occult qualities of matter. It is usually claimed to be understood by, or disclosed only to, the initiated. It often pertains to magic, astrology, or any system claiming use or knowledge of “secret,” mysterious, or supernatural powers or agencies. The lure of the occult is nearly always based upon the acquiring of knowledge, power, or some other esoteric benefit. Satan’s ways promise benefits while ignoring their penalties.

There is a strong appeal—a temptation—to “dabble” in the unknown if we are overly curious or intrigued by it. It is human nature to want an “edge” over others—the power and recognition that comes from unusual insight and a knowledge of the unfamiliar. To the occultist, occultism is thought of as a study of the inner nature of things, as opposed to the outer characteristics that are studied by science.

Looking around with a critical eye, we see evidence of the occult everywhere around us in song, cinema, and symbol. The *Harry Potter* books lure children to witchcraft and the occult, and many preachers condone them.

The Bible tells us that in the last days, “...by thy *sorceries* were all nations deceived” (Revelation 18:23). The Greek word for “sorceries” here is *φαρμακεία pharmakeia far-mak-i’-ah*, from which we get our English word “pharmacy,” i.e., medication; by extension, magic, literally or figuratively: sorcery, witchcraft; (by extension) a magician or sorcerer. History has shown that the ways of the world tend to bleed into the church because most of us are called out of the world (1 Corinthians 1:26). The occult can be like leaven, growing, often without notice, even within God’s called-out ones if we curiously dabble in it. Many of God’s people—scattered throughout the churches of God at large—though well meaning, have been infected with occultic activities without knowing it.

Call it pride, vanity, or curiosity—we naturally want to experience a power that is semi-spiritual or supernatural in origin. Even avowed atheists seek such power if only to counter the claims of Christians. Such desires are, in a sense, godly desires, but they are intended to be fulfilled by the knowledge and power which comes from God and His Word, not the occult.

Satan the devil, the great deceiver (Revelation 12:9), is busy trying to pass off his *counterfeit* occultic knowledge for *God’s* knowledge and power, as the real thing. His delusional power is so deceptive that he is called “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Christian, beware! If he can get you to accept his versions of knowledge and power, HE HAS A FOOTHOLD IN YOUR LIFE! We need to examine our lives and root out any and all possible occultic practices and beliefs we may harbor, lest they grow like leaven and affect our Christian walk. When in doubt, throw them out!

The lure of satanic knowledge and power is nothing new. God’s people have been warned against it from the earliest times. We live in a culture where it is socially permissible, even desirable, to dabble in horoscopes, palm reading, mediums, and psychic counselors. In this respect, we are not far removed from ancient Canaan, just as morally we are not far from Sodom and Gomorrah. The command in Deuteronomy 18:9–12 is as viable for us as it was for the Israelites under Moses’ leadership.

“When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt NOT learn to do after the *abominations* of those nations. There

shall NOT be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an *abomination* unto the LORD: and because of these *abominations* the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath NOT suffered thee so to do” (Deuteronomy 18:9–14, *emphasis added*).

Today, our culture does not sacrifice their children in the fire to their pagan gods, but the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a leading proponent of abortion on demand, claims that there have been *more than 50 million abortions* in the U.S. since Roe vs. Wade. By comparison, Adolf Hitler killed a “mere” 6 million Jews. Today we sanitize murder by relabeling, while sacrificing our children upon the altars of science, preference, and convenience.

There are many professing Christians who see nothing wrong with books about fantasy, mythology, or witchcraft, and see nothing wrong with mixing the occult with God’s Word. It looks so innocent, so intriguing, so fun. It is a *trap*!

First Timothy 4:1–2 predicts, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

A closer look at seven practices that come under the term “divination”:

- *Observer of times*: One predicting good or bad things by observation of the heavens or other means. By extension, this can also refer to those who set dates for the return of Jesus Christ even though Christ repeatedly stated that, “But of that day and hour knoweth *no* man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32).
- *Enchanter*: One who enchants, murmurs, or casts a spell upon; a sorcerer or magician; one who has spirits or demons at his command; one who practices enchantment, or pretends to perform surprising things by the agency of demons. The Hebrew word for enchanter is *nachash*, meaning “serpent.”
- *Witchcraft*: A person, usually female, who practices or professes to practice magic or sorcery, especially black magic, or is believed to have dealings with the devil. Often one who has relations with the devil. Some claim to use only “white” or “good” magic. God’s Word does not differentiate between black and white magic. All magic is condemned (Exodus 22:18; 1 Samuel 28:3; Revelation 22:15).
- *Charmer*: A person who pleases or attracts so as to win one over to enchantment through personality or beauty; one who uses or has the power of enchantment. A hypnotist. Also a trinket or charm to be worn on a bracelet, necklace, or placed on the body, alleged to bring good luck or healing properties.
- *Consulter with familiar spirits*: One who seeks information or facts in a matter from demon spirits; those claiming to communicate with spirits or ghosts.
- *Wizard*: From “wise.” A male witch or a man who practices or professes to practice magic or sorcery. A conjurer; an enchanter; a sorcerer (Leviticus 20:27). One who has access to an unlawful wisdom.
- *Necromancer*: One who pretends to foretell future events by holding converse with departed spirits; a conjurer. Magic in general, especially in the black arts.

These abominations existed then, and they exist today, although we disguise them with modern sounding names such as *clairvoyance*, *palmistry*, *astrology*, *soothsaying*, *fortune-telling*, *spiritualistic séances*, *theosophy*, and *Christian Science*.

Indeed, we live in a contemporary Canaan where it is socially acceptable to consult spiritists, mediums, palm-readers, phrenologists, psychic counselors, and horoscopes for supernatural insights and abilities. Moves and video games often center on the occult. Barnum and Bailey, of Ringling Brothers circus fame, said it best: “There’s a sucker born every minute.” This applies especially to those who are suffering from guilt, grief, or ill health.

Many New Age proponents claim we are on the threshold of new frontiers of the mind: astral projection, telepathic images, levitation, and communication with departed spirits. “New Age” is of or pertaining to a movement espousing a broad range of philosophies and practices traditionally viewed as occult, metaphysical, or paranormal.

While the Bible is literally banned from public schools, some of these same schools are promoting New Ageism and the occult along with alternate lifestyles. And students desiring power and “secret knowledge” are eating it up!

Occultism Is Idolatry

Anything between you and God becomes idolatry. Could occultism gain a foothold in God’s churches? Yes, if we dabble in the forbidden arts, even out of

Continued on next page

“fun” or idle curiosity. “If there come *any* unto you, and bring not *this doctrine* [that is, doctrine or teaching approved of in the Bible] receive him not into your house [into your mind], neither bid him God speed” (2 John 1:10).

If you were to ask these New Agers if they believe whether it is right for people to get involved with such practices, most would tell you, “Oh, I’m not interested in whether it’s right or not. I don’t even know *how* it works. I just know **IT WORKS!**” Remember, magicians, charlatans, and Satan himself can perform great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).

There is no question that the occult, spells, blessings, and curses sometimes “work.” Look who is empowering it! The question we need to answer is not whether or not it “works,” but whether or not it is right *in the eyes of God*. Ask yourself, “Does God’s Word approve?” And “Would *Jesus* do it?” The promises the forbidden arts make are as old as the devil himself.

Christian, beware! *It can happen here!* God does not use the lures and tools of the evil one to bless His people. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen” (1 John 5:21). Ω

December 21, 2012 is approaching... Another year is ending... Are these the final days of human civilization? Is the answer in the Mayan calendar?

**The Church of God International
(Toronto congregation)**
presents

PROPHECY 2012 Conference

Beginning at 10 AM

Saturday, November 11 to Sunday, November 12

Toronto Plaza Airport Hotel

1677 Wilson Avenue, Toronto (Highway 400/401)

Hear the biblical truth about the end time unveiled by *Armor of God* presenters *Bill Watson* and *Vance Stinson*, as well Evangelist *George Ramocan*.

***A Tale of Two Beasts
Unsealing the Mystery of the Seven Seals
Where Are We In Prophecy?
2012—Is This the End?***

Free parking! Refreshments provided!

God’s Fall Holy Days:

Feast of Trumpets: September 17, 2012

Day of Atonement: September 26, 2012

Feast of Tabernacles: October 1-7, 2012

Last Great Day: October 8, 2012

Details of the times, locations, and housing accommodations are posted on our website at **www.cgi.org**.

In loving memory...



THERESA HALES (nee Eisele), age 91. Beloved wife of the late John. Loving mother of Dennis (Shirley) Hales, Margaret (Bill) Watson, and Barbara (Steve) Frenchik. Dear grandmother of 8; great grandmother of 9. Dear sister of the late Matthew Eisele. The family suggests contributions to the *Church of God International*, PO Box 629, Brunswick, OH, 44212. Funeral services were held on Friday, August 24, 2012 at A. Ripepi and Sons Funeral Home in Middleburg Hts., with interment at West Park Cemetery. Ω

The Word

The WORD is GOD! That is the word we must always accept and follow. My conclusion: Sometimes when you speak to me, I do not understand. What I hear may not be, using words at my command. How can I respond to you if I know not what you say? I am not sure what to do or even the proper way! The harder I try, the more frustrated I become. Without understanding, why I look and sound quite dumb! Could it be the words you use or perhaps the tone? The way you sound does confuse. My understanding is very wrong! I will not try to control what you say and do. I’ll make more effort to understand you. I’ll blame ME! Then I’ll let it be.

Submitted by Vivian Hall Ω

***Wishing you a
memorable, profitable,
and great Feast of
Tabernacles,
one and all!***

Thou Cans’t Understand the King’s English!

Lloyd W. Cary

Many people in the United States today claim they are confused by the “thee’s,” “thou’s,” and “thine’s” used in the King James Bible. This confusion is entirely unnecessary.

In nearly every language but modern English, people understood whether the speaker was addressing *one* person or *many*. In classical English, this is preserved. Fortunately, the King James Bible also preserves this distinction. One can *instantly* tell if the speaker is addressing one person or a group of people. The generic “you” used in most modern translations obscures this important distinction.

If the speaker is talking to *one* person, he uses “thou,” “thee,” “thy,” or “thine.” If he or she is talking to a *plurality* of persons, he says “you,” “your,” or “ye.” An easy way to remember the feature is to memorize that “thou, thee, and thine” all have *one* downstroke (the letter “T”). “You, your, and ye” all have *two* upstrokes (the letter “Y”).

For example, when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, He said, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again” (John 3:7). What He said in effect was, “Marvel not that I said unto *thee* [Nicodemus], ye [all who hear these words] must be born again.” Jesus did not mean this only for Nicodemus. Christ’s inspired words were intended for all people of all times. This understanding helps bring out a much deeper meaning. Ω

Church News

The 2012 Infuse Retreat at Auburndale, Florida



Mike Nolen

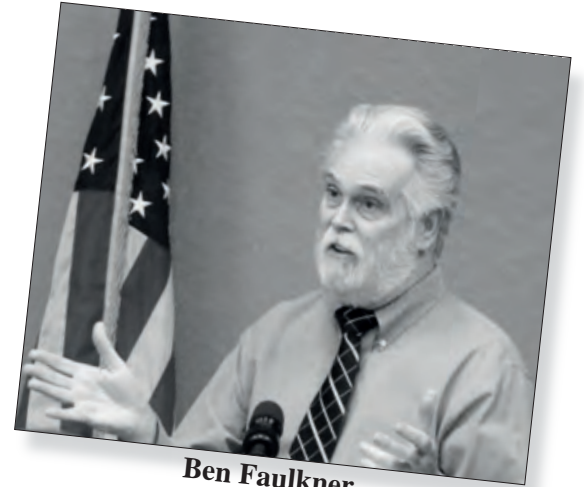
The Infuse Retreat was held July 11 through July 14. The theme for this year's retreat was "Let Your Light Shine"—and the light *did* shine in Auburn-dale! Attendees from all along the eastern U.S. convened at the Auburndale CGI building on Wednesday afternoon for a BBQ dinner and to kick off the Infuse Summer Retreat. The next three days were jam-packed with activities, lively music, and down-to-earth captivating seminars, plus an inspirational Sabbath service with over 50 in attendance. We enjoyed original music written and performed by Infuse member Jesse Goff and our own local musical artist, Vivian Rust, who sang *All God's People*, plus a lot more upbeat, contemporary worship music.

Presentations and seminars were enjoyed (by order given): *Worship Music*: Vivian Rust and Jesse Goff; *Seminars*: Mike James, Larry Sharp, Pat Williams, Ben Faulkner, Dr. Sunny Faulkner, Bill and Jean Harkins, Morgan Pinkerman, Dr. Brenda Pinkerman, Ray and Angie Wendle; *Sermon* by Mike Nolen; and a stimulating *Conclusion* by Herb Hanson. All of the seminar presentations were energy-charged and interactive, with a refreshing interlacing of inspirational and very original music.

During the first two days, the team even managed to fit in some bowling at Cypress Lanes and an evening of pizza and trivia (we were all well fed, so there were no hunger games).

It was all over so quickly, with Sunday morning trips back to the airport. We all enjoyed the youthful and energetic Infuse Team, and wish them well at their next activity during the Feast of Tabernacles. Ω

Submitted by Larry Sharp



Ben Faulkner



Pat Williams makes an Infuse Point



Vivian Rust



Infuse 2012, Church of God International, Auburndale, Florida



Ray Wendle



Morgan Pinkerman

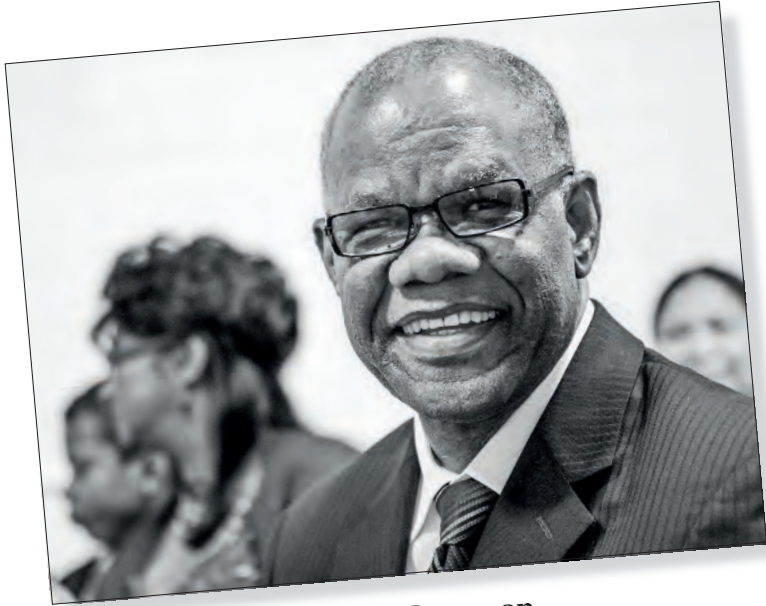


Mike James

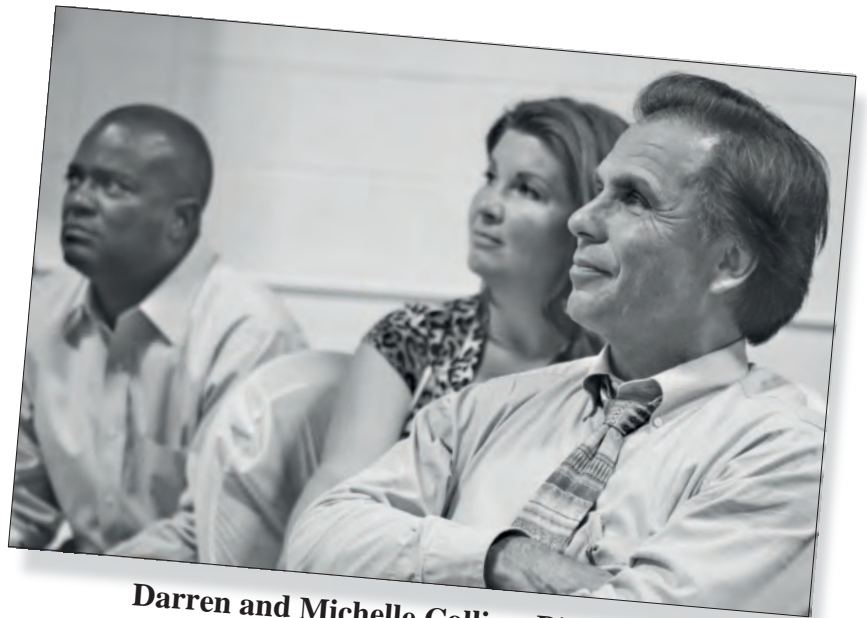
Church News

Pastors' Appreciation Dinner in Toronto

by Zion Hezekiah



George Ramocan



Darren and Michelle Collins, Bill Watson

On Saturday, July 28, we held our first ever Pastors' Appreciation Event. Organized by our Women's Fellowship Program, the event was a great success. Praise be to the Most High God!

In one of the Apostle Paul's very first letters, he instructs the Thessalonians: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

The main objective of the event was to give thanks to the Eternal who has blessed us with these two admirable, God-fearing men, and to encourage our pastors to continue to serve God and His people with love and compassion. Our regional pastor, Bill Watson, has been "shepherding the flock" here in Toronto for over 12 years, while George Ramocan has been with us, serving as our local pastor since November, 2009.

The event featured tribute speeches in honour of both of our pastors. Brother Horane delivered the tribute speech to Pastor Watson, and Brother Adrian delivered the tribute speech to Pastor Ramocan. Both speeches were well delivered and heartfelt, expressing on behalf of the congregation how very much we appreciate their servant leadership and their commitment to the Body of Christ. Both speeches followed a presentation of gifts to our pastors.

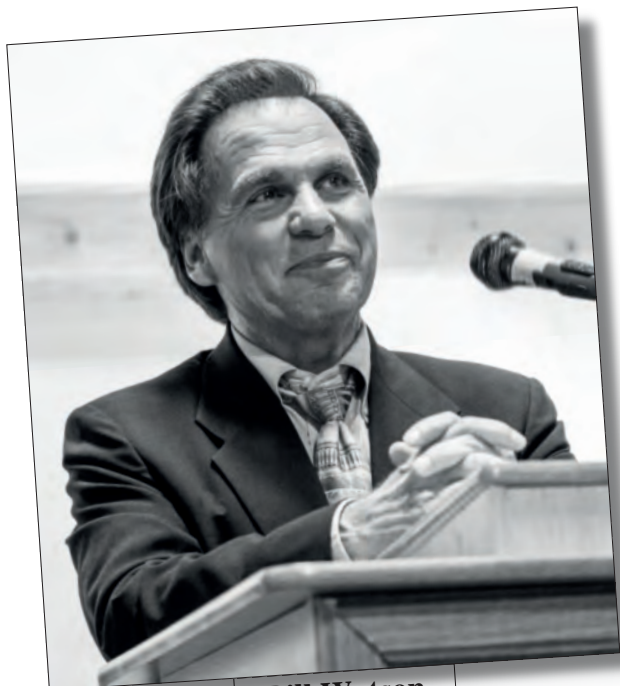
A special musical presentation was delivered by Sisters Jasmin, Stephanie, and Jessie, and Brothers Shey and Craig as they harmoniously blessed us with *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms* and *Everybody Clap Your Hands*. The evening ended with Pastor Watson and Pastor Ramocan expressing their sincere gratitude for all of the kind words that were spoken of them and all of the work that went into making the event such a great success. They also encouraged us to continue to walk in the way of the Lord (Deuteronomy 5) and to do His will.

Let us, as children of the Most High God, continue to show love, appreciation, and support for our pastors, and ask the Lord to continue to guide them and lead them by His Holy Spirit.

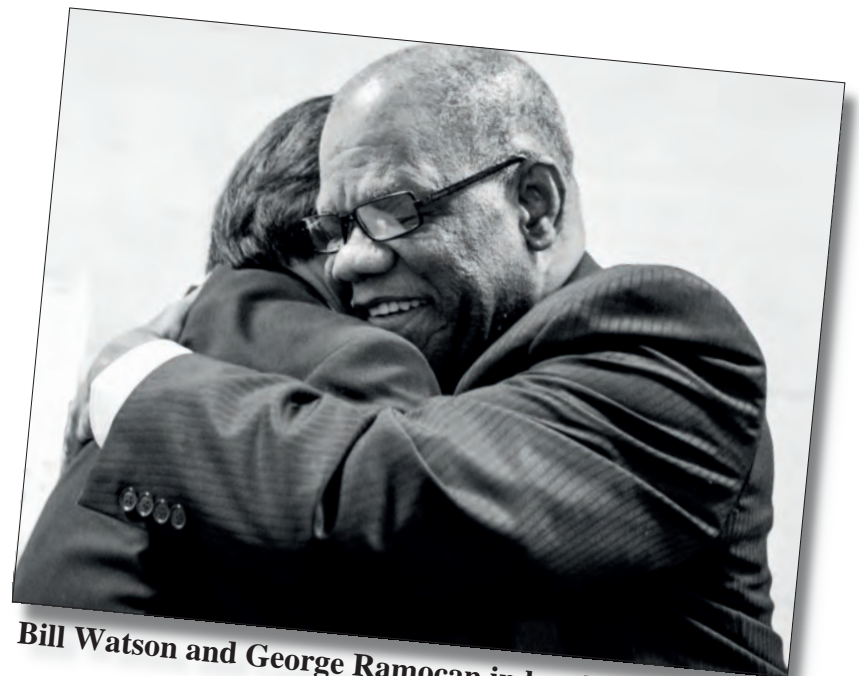
"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" (Hebrews 13: 17-18).

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the event, and a very special thanks to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ for making it all possible.

Ω



Bill Watson



Bill Watson and George Ramocan in brotherly embrace

Toronto's Annual Church Picnic

A special thanks to Brother Noel Scoburgh, who organized our annual church picnic. We had a great turnout and wonderful weather. Continuing in the spirit of the Pastors' Appreciation Weekend, both Bill Watson and George Ramocan and their families were able to join in the fun.

We had lots of activities and lots of time for relaxed, as well as spirited, fellowship.

God is well pleased when we can take advantage of opportunities like this to dwell together in unity.

Church News

London Garden Service

The Sabbath of July 7, 2012 had arrived! The morning was bright and sunny, but a bit warm. This was the day of the London Fellowship's second garden service, and we were honoured to have Mr. George Ramocan as our guest speaker. His wife, Lola, and two grandsons accompanied him.

Mr. Ramocan presented a most appropriate sermon discussing the best way to make the Christian way of life successful, comparing our lives to the lives and discipline endured by a soldier, but with Christ as our "Commander in Chief"; also as an athlete and a farmer, showing how persistence and patience will bring results. We must love and pray for our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and wait with patience, endurance, and discipline in order to overcome.

Our worship leader was Mr. Doug Coish, and the music for the song service was provided by Erica, Lorrie, and Carlos DelaCruz. They also entertained us as we barbequed our chicken and fellowshiped. There were about 20 to 25 in attendance.

Everyone was grateful for the "artificial breezes" created by a few electric fans, as the wind had totally died down. In due time, the meat was cooked and a wonderful assortment of food, including salads, fruits, and desserts, was enjoyed by all.

Shortly thereafter, the Ramocans had to leave, and slowly we said our goodbyes. All in all, a happy and successful Sabbath. Ω

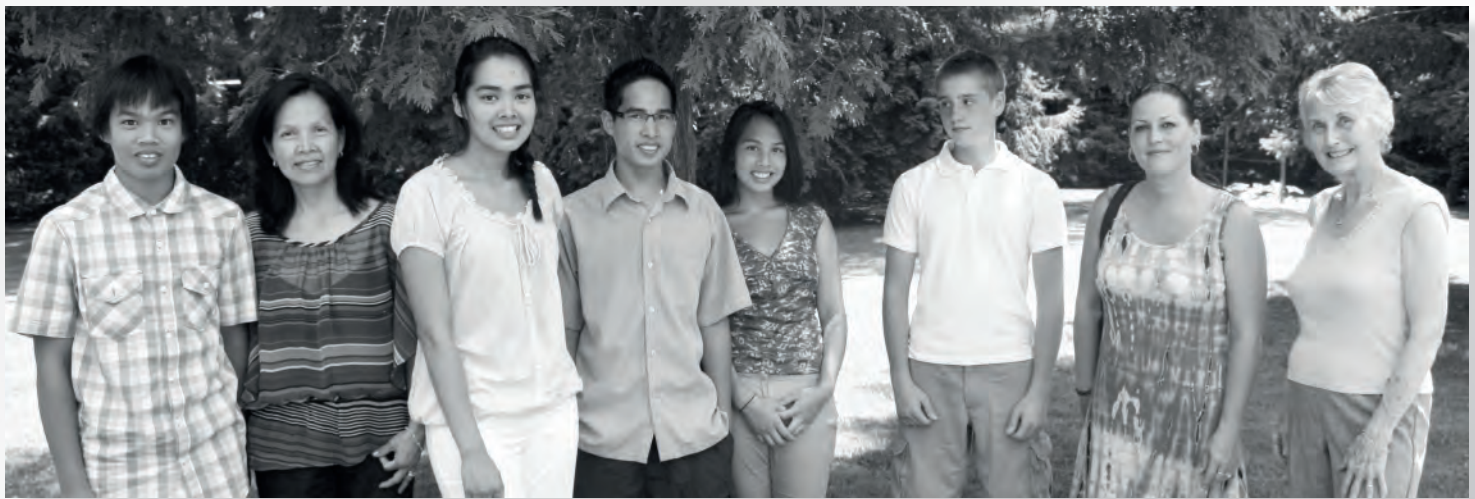
Submitted by Loretta Jasper



Doug Coish addresses the congregation



Mr. and Mrs. Ramocan and grandsons



Bruce, Virginia, Erica, Carlos, and Lorrie Delacruz, Logan and Lisa Thatcher, Loretta Jasper



Mr. Ramocan with Marilyn Jamison and her daughter Michele



Leland Jasper cooking

Church News

In loving memory...



Fred P. Brown
May 5, 1925 – May 18, 2012



Longtime member of God's church, Fred P. Brown, 87, of St. Matthews, South Carolina, died peacefully Friday, May 18, 2012, at his residence, surrounded by his loving family.

A funeral service was held on Tuesday, May 22, 2012, in the Chapel of Dukes-Harley Funeral Home. Interment, with full military honors, was held at the Ft. Jackson National Cemetery. The United States Air Force served as active pallbearers.

Born on May 5, 1925, in South Carolina, he was a son of A. H. Brown and Lillian Fort Brown. Following high school, Fred joined the United States Army, United States Air Corp, and retired from the United States Air Force in August, 1964, as a Technical Sergeant, with over 20 years of faithful and dedicated service to his country. He was of the "greatest generation," serving during World War II and the Korean War. Following his retirement, he worked for civil service in Nashville, Tennessee and later moved back home, where he worked for the Citadel Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

Fred was talented with his hands, building his own home and airplane. He had a zest for life and loved spending time with his beloved "Bet" and family.

Fred is survived by his wife of 62 years, Bettie Jean Brown of the home; two daughters, Nancy Haynes (Jerrell) of St. Matthews, and Sherrie Parker (Richard) of Summerville; a son, James Brown of Mountain City, Tennessee; five grandchildren, Laura, Anthony, Steven, James, and Michael; and seven great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by a grandson, Christopher Tavalacci, a sister, Nancy Pegram, and a brother, Jim Pegram.

Fred will be remembered by his little church family as someone of singular character and devotion who loved God and God's people. Fred was a wealth of knowledge and a joy in conversation. Despite the physical pain and handicaps he endured in his latter years, Fred would endeavor to assemble with the brethren at Sabbath services until eventually his health would no longer allow him to attend as often as he once did. His last Sabbath service was conducted at his home surrounded by the people he loved and who loved him. We will miss you, Fred Brown, until we see you in the eternal Kingdom. Ω

Kitchener-Toronto Choir Performs for Pentecost

The combined Kitchener-Toronto Choir, under the direction of Frank Klett of the Toledo, Ohio congregation, performed two selections during the Pentecost service on May 27, 2012. The choir, consisting of 34 members of the Kitchener and Toronto congregations, performed *Let There Be Peace On Earth* and *Can God Spread A Table In the Wilderness?* to an audience of nearly 200, as brethren gathered for joint Pentecost services in Kitchener, Ontario.

Those in attendance included Charles Groce, who gave the main message, and his wife Betsy, as well as resident pastors George Ramocan and his wife Lola from the Toronto congregation, as well as John Coish and his wife Myrna from Kitchener.



This joint choir initiative was born from a desire to utilize the gifts God has placed in His people to glorify His great name and to edify the brethren in songs of praise and thanksgiving. Frank Klett and his wife, Pam, selflessly make the trip up to southern Ontario, often leaving their home at 5:00 AM on Sabbath mornings to serve the brethren first in Kitchener before services, then driving east to conduct choir rehearsals after services in Toronto. The choir rehearses on a consistent basis, and we are currently preparing selections for the upcoming fall holydays. Submitted by Stephanie Chin

Church News

Bill Watson and Mike James Conduct Historic CGI Leadership Conference in Jamaica

The Courtleigh Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica, was the venue for the very first International Leadership Conference organized and conducted by Bill Watson and Mike James on behalf of the Ministerial Council of the *Church of God International*, May 17 through 20, 2012.

Up to 60 attendees, representing the core of the leadership teams of the Jamaican CGI congregations, were there. The participants consisted of resident elders Ian Boyne and Glenford Smith, in combination with members of the diaconate, youth leaders, ministry heads, and sermon/sermonette speakers. All assembled for the much-anticipated leadership confab. The Jamaican CGI congregations represented, traveled from as far as Ocho Rios, Maroon Town, and Spanish Town to join their Kingston brethren.

A Vision Fulfilled

According to CGI Regional Director of the Caribbean and Ministerial Council member, Pastor Bill Watson, “The CGI Ministerial Council has wanted to do this leadership conference for a while now, so it is great it has happened.” He acknowledged and remarked that a tremendous work was being done in Jamaica, and many people were benefited by that work. The conference was a good opportunity to explore different avenues for improving and expanding the Jamaican effort, along with sharing ideas for growing the work throughout the Caribbean.

Toward that end, Pastor Watson and his colleague, Ministerial Council member Pastor Mike James, conducted a series of seminars on the general themes of *Ministerial Culture* and *Servant Leadership*.

Sessions included:

- *Ministerial Culture and Biblical Leadership* by Bill Watson
- *Qualified Leadership* by Mike James
- *Servant Leadership* by Bill Watson
- *Leading Like Jesus* by Mike James
- *A Culture of Teamwork* by Mike James
- *The Seven Practices of Servant Leaders* by Bill Watson

Sabbath Sermon by Mike James

Pastor James also delivered a dynamic, engaging, and challenging sermon on *The Six Elements of Effective Change* during the abbreviated Sabbath service held at the Sagcor Auditorium.

Conference Highlights

Mr. Watson started the conference by giving a brief overview of the circumstances that led to the birth of the CGI. He explained that from as far back as 1996, the Ministerial Council recognized there were fundamental shortcomings in the “eldership culture” of the Church of God movement; consequently, it has been on a mission to explore how to improve it.

The CGI Ministerial Council adopted the concept of servant leadership as espoused by Alexander Strauch in his book, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*. That book formed the central “study-hub” of servant leadership throughout the conference.

Mr. Watson explained that Strauch’s book was the foundation on which the Ministerial Apprentice Program (MAP) was developed. Although the Jamaican conference was not particularly a ministerial training event, the principles of leadership were essential and relevant to all who served in leadership roles within the church.

- **Biblical Leadership:** Biblical leadership is characterized by humility, sacrifice, plurality, hospitality, and character which is above reproach.

- **Qualified Leadership:** Several biblical passages describe the qualities that servant leaders must embody, including the following: 1 Timothy 3:1–7, 10; 5:24–25; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Peter 5:2–6; and Ephesians 5:3.

- **Servant Leadership:** The essence of servant leadership is about having a heart to serve, help, and care for others above and beyond caring for yourself. It requires building trusting relationships with those whom leaders serve.

- **Church Leadership:** It provides many opportunities to exploit and take advantage of members, but, as it was emphasized, this should never be done! Instead, servant leadership is the very opposite of using people and position to advance a leader’s self-determined and/or own personal interests or agenda.

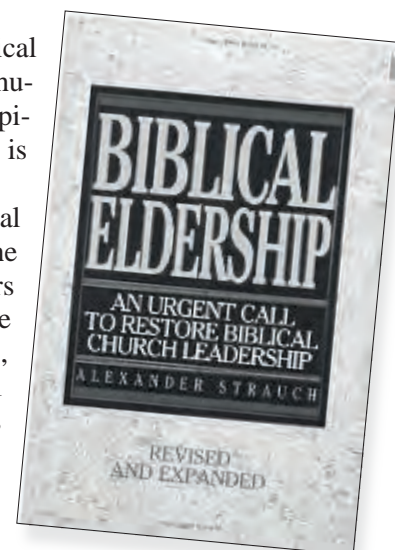
- **Lead Like Jesus:** Jesus was the ultimate servant leader; therefore, He is the consummate model. The book, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons From the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time*, by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, helps to study Jesus’ approach toward the kind of leadership He expects. Jesus modeled leadership in four important domains, namely, the heart, the head, the hands, and habits.

- **Teamwork:** In sports, teams with the best individual talents often don’t end up winning. That’s because it is the synergy among players that often create the winning dynamic, rather than the brilliance of individual players. The acronym for T-E-A-M, namely, *Together Everyone Achieves More*, is an apt one. It is only by working together as a team in ministry that the best results will be achieved.

- **The Seven Practices of Servant Leaders:** Ultimately, it is the choices that are made individually to apply the ideas discussed during the conference, which will make the difference. Servant leaders practice the following seven habits: empathy, commiseration, compassion, selflessness, availability, commitment, and action.

Regarding the last practice, Mr. Watson shared an important principle he learned from Herbert Armstrong when first coming into the church, which guided him throughout his career. That principle is encapsulated in the acronym KOVIKA: Knowledge Of Value Is Knowledge Applied—anything less is wasted knowledge.

Continued on next page



Church News



Mentorship Graduation

The evangelism ministry, in collaboration with the education and training ministry of the CGI Toronto congregation, is in the final stages of a mentorship training program. A graduation exercise is scheduled for July 21, 2012.

The training program, designed by the education and training ministry led by Dr. Lola Ramocan, was a rich mixture of group interaction, skits, and interesting presentations.

Some topics covered were: *Understanding Mentoring and Intensive Mentoring*, presented by Dr. Ramocan; *Occasional Mentoring and Passive Mentoring*, presented by Bernard Wilson; *Peer Co-Mentoring and The Constellation Model*, presented by Beatrix Tanakis; and *The Ten Commandments of Mentoring*, presented by Adrian Davis.

With the information provided, participants are equipped with the necessary information on how to establish and maintain meaningful mentoring relationships. This allows individuals to play a part in fulfilling the great commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, NKJV)

Ω

Submitted by Brother Bernard Wilson



Canada Day Camp-Out

Once again, the annual CGI Camp-Out was a huge success! Over the Canada Day long weekend, members of the church gathered for fun, food, and fellowship. Some brethren even came from as far as the southern United States for this event! We unified and became closer to God and each other as we participated in Sabbath services, health and wellness sessions, games, sports, campfires, and swimming in Lake Erie. There was something for everyone! Young children, teens, and adults alike engaged in night-time sing-alongs, hiking, and getting to know each other better.

Together we cooked, shared food, and had meaningful conversations, which led to a feeling of cooperation and fellowship. Sabbath services under the shade of the surrounding trees included a sermon by Pastor John Coish, special music by a blended team of Kitchener and Toronto brethren, and a lovely hymn-singing session!

A pleasant surprise for me personally, occurred when members of the *Romanian Pentecostal Church of God* heard CGI members singing hymns, and joined us, even singing a chorus for us in their own tongue.

Overall, the camp-out was enjoyable, relaxing, and entertaining!

Ω

Submitted by Brother Noel Scoburgh

Audience Participation

Throughout the conference, many opportunities were afforded for audience participation, including an entire session during which leaders and spouses gave feedback on the presentations, as well as raising issues of relevance for discussion. Needless to say, it became quite lively and enthusiastic at times, going way beyond the scheduled time limit of the meeting; but everyone seemed to sincerely enjoy themselves.

As was already mentioned, the success of the material presented will be determined by how the information is applied in the leadership roles of each individual’s service to the congregation. This will be revealed in the months and years ahead. Based on the enthusiasm and comments of those who attended, and the willingness to learn together; it appears the work of the *Church of God International* will forge ahead and continue to make a big difference in the lives of those who are touched by this ministerial work that God has raised up by His Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Ω



Notable Sayings About the Bible

Abraham Lincoln: “I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book.”

W. E. Gladstone: “I have known ninety-five of the world’s great men in my time, and of these, eighty-seven were followers of the Bible. The Bible is stamped with a Specialty of Origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors.”

George Washington: “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

Napoleon: “The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it.”

Queen Victoria: “That book accounts for the supremacy of England.”

Daniel Webster: “If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”

John Ruskin: “Whatever merit there is in anything that I have written is simply due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read me a part of the Bible and daily made me learn a part of it by heart.”

Sir Isaac Newton: “There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.”

Charles A. Dana: “The grand old Book still stands; and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the pages of the Sacred Word.”

Lord Tennyson: “Bible reading is an education in itself.”

Ronald Reagan: “Of the many influences that have shaped the United States into a distinctive nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible.”

W. H. Seward: “The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever growing influence of the Bible.”

Patrick Henry: “The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed.”

Malcolm Muggeridg: “People say that the Bible is a boring book...but they don’t say that about Shakespeare, because the people who teach Shakespeare are zealous for Shakespeare.”

U. S. Grant: “The Bible is the sheet-anchor of our liberties.”

Horace Greeley: “It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.”

Andrew Jackson: “That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests.”

Robert E. Lee: “In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength.”

John Quincy Adams: “So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year.”

Immanuel Kant: “The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity.”

Charles Dickens: “The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world.”

Theodore Roosevelt: “A thorough understanding of the Bible is better than a college education.”

Zachary Taylor: “It was for the love of the truths of this great and good Book that our fathers abandoned their native shores for the wilderness.”

Douglas MacArthur: “Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed.”



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Fall Issue

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