



# THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## The Official Newspaper of the Church of God International

Vol. 36, No. 4

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

Winter 2015

### ISLAM—A PROPHETIC CONSIDERATION?

*Some believe Islam portrays a growing and continued threat to the free world of the West. They think Western leaders, desiring to be perceived as tolerant and civilized, don't recognize they're dealing with a perfidious people who have no intent to return this courtesy. Is this possible? Is the Western free world being naive?*

by Bill Watson



Bill Watson

**S**trangely enough, no one is talking about how the most recent Middle Eastern refugee migration is similar to that of World War II and the horrific conditions Nazi Germany imposed on non-Nazis backs in those days—especially the Jews. Millions of Jewish people were massacred at the hands of the Nazi party leading up to, and during World War II. It was an appalling realization after discovering so many death camps and what they really were *doing* to so many millions of human beings. It was extraordinarily inordinate and shocking for the world to finally see the magnitude of such ruthless behavior!

Most of us don't realize there were some 20,000 concentrations camps that were used for a variety of reasons, but primarily for extermination or experimentation upon what the Nazis viewed as so-called "enemies of the state"—human beings, including women, children, and the elderly from all segments of society. Those considered "asocial," or believed to be deviant by government standards—Jehovah's Witnesses, gypsies, homosexuals, German Communists, anti-Socialists, a variety of ethnicities and of course the Jews, were exterminated by the millions.

However, from about 1933, when the Nazis came to power, until the end of the war in 1945, much of what was done in these concentration camps was unconfirmed and kept *secret* from the world. The detailed atrocities, human experimentation, sexual abuses and slavery, abortions, forced labor camps, and extermination centers were for the most part unknown. It really wasn't until the United States and its allies liberated thousands of POWs that these heinous facilities became plainly known for just what they actually were. Finally, as these camps became liberated, the enormous extent and detail of these "crimes against humanity," conducted within the walls of these camps, finally was revealed to the rest of the world, stunning even the German people with the grotesque images of such malicious treatment the Nazis imposed upon so many innocent people.

But as bewildering and horrifying as that was, by contrast, in our world today, *astoundingly*, Islamic religious groups, claiming to be following the Qur'an, especially those of the Sunni faction, under the guise of IS (Islamic State), or ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), *publicly*, in the open for *all the world* to see, are committing crimes against humanity, violating human rights on a genocidal scale, especially upon traditional Christians throughout the regions of Iraq, Syria, Libya, and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa, with Europe, the Netherlands, and Turkey being the next targets. It's shockingly unbelievable and unequivocally as brutal and savage as the Nazis!

These atrocities are committed systemically throughout the region *in open daylight*! Recently, the city of Mosul has been cleared of most, if not all, traditional Christians, along with many children and mothers being mercilessly beheaded. Some have had their heads impaled on sticks, displayed in public, like some kind of macabre horror film—their *only crime*: they claimed the name of *Jesus Christ*. There have been reports of crucifixions, and women and children being buried alive, or group drownings in cages, and of course homicidal bombers. Others have been kidnapped, raped, held as sex slaves, children included, sold as so much chattel. Others are held for ransom, and when they get the money, the person is killed regardless—their body parts sent back in a box to the family, as was recently done to a Catholic priest, *after* the family paid the ransom.

It's a *nightmare*—a grotesque situation being orchestrated *IN THE OPEN FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE*—yet no Western nation, China, Japan, or Russia has taken any serious steps to put an end to this *demonic madness* conducted by this Muslim group called ISIL. Why do you suppose that is? There certainly isn't any question or doubt about what's happening. There are all kinds of proof validating, confirming, and authenticating these "crimes against humanity."

So what is stopping the world from carrying out their *moral duty* to obliterate this faction of *deranged Muslims* that are on an Islamic religious mission? And don't kid yourself, it is a *religious* mission they are on. Remember, in their minds, it's all about dominating the world with their 7th-century ways of oppression.



#### What Are We Missing?

Strangely enough, many Western leaders *do not understand* Islam. They believe the *moderate* Muslims of the West define what Islam is—when in fact, that couldn't be further from the truth. Now I know many may find that statement uncomfortable and perhaps rather disturbing, because many "Western moderates" would like to consider

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## Open Church Policy

**T**he Church of God International is an open church. We have many people attending who are new in the faith. Some will not always keep each of God's laws as they should, and some will not believe everything we teach. We pray that they may be strengthened through the services we render and the examples we set as they come to a closer walk with their God. We request that you be neither judgmental nor base your standard for obedience on what you see your brother do. Christ is our standard, not weak and sinful men. Always remember that you will be judged for what *you* do, not what others do. Your job is to pray for them, set the right example, and please the Father in all that you do. □

## 2016 Holy Day Calendar

**New Testament Passover**

**April 21, 2016 (Observed at sundown)**

**Feast of Unleavened Bread**

**April 23–29, 2016**

**Pentecost**

**June 12, 2016**

**Feast of Trumpets**

**October 3, 2016**

**Day of Atonement**

**October 12, 2016**

**Feast of Tabernacles**

**October 17–23, 2016**

**Last Great Day**

**October 24, 2016**

Holydays are observed beginning sundown the previous evening and end at sundown on the days listed. Passover is observed at sundown on the day listed.

Download the *Holy Day Calendar 2015–2017*  
<http://cgi.org/holy-days/>

## Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if *you*, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800–1000 words in either .doc, docx, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to [vancestinson@cgi.org](mailto:vancestinson@cgi.org) or [lloydcary@gmail.com](mailto:lloydcary@gmail.com) or, preferably, to *both*.

DEADLINE for the *next* issue is

**February 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.**

We look forward to seeing you soon... *in print!*

*The Editor*



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these Muslim extremists an aberration, or oddity of sorts that are misappropriating and misapplying the beliefs of Islam and the Qur'an. But as much as those in the West would like to believe there is such a thing as a "moderate Muslim,"

make no mistake: moderate Islam *doesn't exist* to any significant degree—not even in Central Asia where Muslims co-exist peacefully with non-Muslims.

However, though some will make the case this is slightly being done sporadically, keep in mind that it's *not* because anything has changed in their teachings of Jihad—it's just simply due to certain Islamic laws presently being *ignored*. History has *proved*: nations allowing this kind of fraternization can expect the "true" Muslims among them to *change* and *influence* the *hosting culture* to adopt and embrace Islam—whether by force (jihad), or by infringing on and embedding in the hosting culture and conquering it from *within*—that's just what they do!

For example, the prominent American Muslim spokesman Siraj Wahaj, who by some is considered a moderate Muslim, addressed the U.S. Congress back in 1991, attempting 10 years later to ease America's nerves after 9/11 by saying he felt he should go on a jihad against this kind of extremism. However, this *same individual* recently warned the United States that if they didn't accept the Islamic agenda, it would fall! He has made additional comments indicating he would like to see the United States replace the constitutional government with a *caliphate*.

Sadly, there is a much bigger problem with Western leaders than we realize, when you understand that a man like this is allowed to give a prayer in the audience of the very men and women who are expected to uphold the U.S. Constitution. Obviously, this illustrates a symptom of a much more serious lack of judgment—a naivete that's hard to comprehend from Western leaders you'd expect would know better.

In a recent interview, the Iraqi Grand Ayatollah Ahmad Husseini al-Baghdadi said, "But if they [Christians] still refuse—then we fight them, and we abduct their women, and destroy their churches—this is Islam! ...Come on, learn what Islam is, are you even a Muslim?" (ref. *The Post and Before It's News*, 10-18-15). This statement is from a very prominent Islamic leader. Yet, we dismiss this rhetoric as just words without meaning since we consider this "extremism"—and then comfort ourselves by thinking, assuredly, this just can't represent what Islam really is. That is a very unfortunate view!

We must keep in mind the significance of this statement and remember al-Baghdadi is a Marja. What that means for the Shia Muslim is, he is considered a "source of emulation." In other words, he is viewed as a powerful voice of allegedly radical leadership for the Muslim faith. He is determined to make it very clear: Islam *cannot* co-exist with any other faith according to his interpretation of Islamic doctrine (based on the Qur'an and Hadith)—because he believes "this is Islam."

He proceeded to further explain all capable Muslims are *obligated* to fight for freedom of all occupied areas, including Israel! And furthermore, those areas not presently occupied?—Muslims are *mandated*, when they are prepared with enough strength, to go on the offensive and *conquer* all non-Muslims. The Ayatollah went on to expound that if they (those of the book, Christians and Jews) want to maintain their distinctive faith apart from Islam, they must concede to paying the *jizya* (Islamic poll tax) and live according to the *dhimmi* rules (guidelines for "protected persons" a.k.a. the conquered people). This is their only option besides out-rightly adopting the Islamic faith. Anything else will necessitate and *require* the Muslim to fight the infidel.

Throughout the interview, al-Baghdadi was emphatic that this is the word of Allah! As far as the Ayatollah is concerned, this is fundamental, and if you don't understand or agree with this, you don't understand what Islam really *is*. Unquestionably, the vast majority, virtually *all*

Muslim clerics, both Sunni and Shia, hold these views—clearly illustrating these are *not* "radical" views, but rather in the Middle East, they are the status quo. It is the norm—the *accepted definition* of what Islam actually is and its ultimate intent and objective.



Unfortunately, many in the West *just don't get it*. They continue to believe Islam is a religion of peace, and from a jihadist's point of view, he would agree. However, his framing of that idea is engrafted in the concept of dominance, as was theorized by one of the 20th century's foremost Muslim Brotherhood's promoters of jihad, Sayyid Qutb. Essentially, his idea of peace is when *everyone* becomes Muslim, or at least subject to Islamic law; and how that peace will be secured is through jihad! So, that's why a Muslim jihadist would agree Islam is a religion of peace. It is, as long as you concede to the dominance of Islamic law.

So many non-Muslims, especially here in the West, don't realize these Sunni and Shia Muslims *use the Qur'an* to justify terrorism. This is undeniable! Notice just a few verses from the Qur'an that Muslims use to justify jihad:

- *Then when the sacred months have passed slay the unbelievers (idolaters) wherever you find them, and take them captive, and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush... (Qur'an 9:5).*
- *Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers in fight, smite at their necks (behead them), at length, when you have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly on them (Qur'an 47:4).*
- *O you who believe! Take not the Jew and the Christian for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other and he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them (Qur'an 5:51).*
- *O Prophet, make war on (strive hard against) the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal rigorously with (be firm against) them. Their abode is hell, an evil refuge indeed (Qur'an 9:73).*
- *Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah (jihad) and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil: so fight you against the friends of Satan (Qur'an 4:76).*
- *O you who believe! Fight the unbeliever who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him (Qur'an 9:123).*

These are just a few of over 100 verses in the Qur'an encouraging believers to engage in jihad against non-Muslims. Yet, many will argue there isn't any difference with these directives from Allah when compared to that which the God of the Old Testament made against so many nations He mandated Israel to conquer. But is that a fair assessment of this comparison? Or is there an important distinction to be made?



Contextually, there is a *critical difference* to be made when comparing this alleged similarity. But that doesn't stop some Islamic apologists from attempting to make the case that Muslims are no more violent than those who followed the directives of the God of Israel. They will claim that selectively picking scriptures out of the Bible can be equally as easy to illustrate the moral equivalence between Islam and those following the Judeo-Christian Bible. These Islamic apologists insist you will find this kind of violence described in many religions throughout mankind's history and embedded in a variety of cultural traditions.

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They will even take scriptures out of the New Testament such as Luke 19:26–27 and attempt to spin them to say Christ was instructing His followers to slay His enemies in His presence. Unfortunately, they often fail to explain the context

is a parable to illustrate a spiritual *principle*, not a directive to His followers to kill His enemies. They will also use, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. I am sent to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother...” (Matthew 10:34–35).

Yet most apologists fail to admit, if this were true and Christ was advocating jihad behavior, it would be kept within the limitations of one’s family. But regardless, it is simply ridiculous and laughable to equate the Qur’an’s jihad directives with the peaceful message of Jesus Christ, which is clearly illustrated throughout the Bible. Contextually, taking that into consideration, it becomes evident Christ was speaking *allegorically*—a metaphor—for the spiritual effect His teachings would have within some families.

But perhaps *most* importantly, throughout the whole Bible, when God gives a directive for an invasion of a nation of people, He is very *specific* as to *who* they are, and *where* and *when* it should be done. Admittedly, the Bible is filled with descriptions of wars between His nation Israel and other nations He wanted them to fight, especially those living in the land He intended to give them (Deuteronomy 7:1–2). But clearly, a *major distinction* between these historical records of war and the Qur’an’s instructions to fight non-Muslims is that the latter are *present mandates* that apply at all times and in all places.

Therefore, taking the Qur’an for what it says, make no mistake, it is an *open-ended directive* to wage war on all unbelievers at any time, whenever and wherever you come up against those who resist the laws or tenets of Islam. This is something most do not recognize or refuse to accept in light of our present “politically correct” environment, and it may well exacerbate our own decline and seriously add to our ultimate collapse as a Western Judeo-Christian culture!

### What Is So Threatening to the West

The Islamic religion or movement is the fastest growing religion presently in the world, according to many sources. The *Pew Research Center’s* religious profile claims about 1.6 billion Muslims and 2.17 billion Christians are on the planet as of 2010. Its present growth rate is postured to exceed Christianity, some say as early as 2050, while others say not until the end of the 21st century. Many facts and figures are exaggerated regarding Islam’s growth from a variety of sources (e.g., *BBC*, 2003 *Guinness Book of World Records*, *Pew Forum*, *Carnegie Endowment for World Peace–2007*, *Wikipedia*), so it appears that Islam is presently the fastest growing religion *in the world*. However, much of that is actually due to the reproductive rate of Muslims compared to other religions—an average of 3.1 percent compared to Christians at 2.7 percent. Comparably, regardless of religion, the world’s total reproductive rate averages 2.5 percent.

It’s been estimated that as of 2009, the world’s population was 23 percent Muslim, with 80 percent of them living outside the Arab world since 2002. Muslims are expected to be at about 26.4 percent of the population by about 2030. (This is based on an approximate projected world population of 7.9 billion.) It’s been further estimated from about 1990 through 2010, the global Muslim population increased by about 2.2 percent annually.

A common misconception or stereotype in the West about Muslims is that most are Arabic. This isn’t true! Most Muslims actually live in Asia and Africa. Generally, they are considered “people of color,” with about 60 percent of all Muslims

living in Asia and about another 25 percent living in Africa, and many in Indonesia.

Admittedly, this has been very dynamic and fluid over the last few decades, with Western and Eastern

Europe and North America becoming destination spots for many Islamists, and especially most recently with so many migrating refugees moving westward. The primary means by which Muslims are growing in these areas is by two specific ways: immigration and the high Muslim birth rate, not necessarily by adding converts through their evangelistic methods. To illustrate this point, seven percent of all babies born in the European Union in 1998 were Muslim and as many as 57 percent in Brussels.

According to research scientist Carol Stone, it’s also very difficult to estimate how many Muslims are in North America today, due to a lack of reliable information. However, there are some signs that can give us some idea; but admittedly, inadequate religious census polling, inaccurate membership roles from mosques, and exaggerated figures from Muslims make it all rather difficult to arrive at a definite number.



Yet, Muslim and Christian sources all agree, Islam is the fastest growing religion in North America, also. According to *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 2000*, the claim is made that 3.9 million Muslims are in the United States. *Islamic Horizons* states there are approximately 8–10 million Muslims in all of North America. However, the most common number of Muslims used by the United States government is about six million, with the top five largest concentrations being in California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, and Indiana. Michigan, Virginia, Texas, Ohio, and Maryland round out the top 10. It’s been estimated there are about 400,000 Muslims in the general Chicago area alone.

Though some of these figures can be debated, what is certain is the enormous growth rate Islam is experiencing. According to the United Nation’s statistics, Islam has grown by 25 percent in the United States between 1989 and 1998. In 1990, there were only about 50 Muslim schools in the USA. Today, the number exceeds 200 nationwide. According to the *Islamic School League of America* (ISLA) an estimated 40,000 children are enrolled in Islamic schools throughout the USA. This represents a 25 percent increase since 2006. Mosques have tripled throughout the United States since about 1990. Presently, there are over 2,500 mosques and Islamic centers across the United States.

So, what was once a Judeo-Christian culture in North America, especially in the United States, is now becoming forcefully exposed to not only a Middle Eastern religion, but also a Middle Eastern culture not respectful of Western civilization, or lifestyle of the United States and Canada. Instead of assimilating, conversely, these foreign nationals are establishing their own neighborhoods to preserve their own cultural presence and laws (sharia in particular) within the host nation. They are segregated communities, because that’s what they *do*.

This brings up many questions that, based on some of the progressive conditions we see developing, causes one to ponder just where all this is leading, especially *prophetically*. Should it be considered more seriously? Looking at the present Muslim “migration invasion” of Europe, including the European Union, one can’t help but ask: Are we witnessing a major cultural shift of such gigantic proportions that it may lead to a significant rearrangement of the whole continent’s population and its ethos? Are these conditions becoming the proverbial “straw that breaks the camel’s back,” resulting in contributing to the collapse of the European Union as we know it today? And if so, what significance might it have? We will address this in the next edition of the *International News*. Ω





## What You Should Know About Christian Witnessing

*You, yes YOU, are commanded to witness for Jesus Christ. Personal witnessing is a Scriptural command. You are empowered to do so by God's Holy Spirit. Yet, how are we to witness? What steps should we take? Here, laid out before you, are the simple, easy-to-follow steps you should know about Christian witnessing.*

*by George Ramocan*



George Ramocan

**J**esus made it clear to His disciples that reaching others for Christ was the mission to which they were being called.

### 1. Christian Witnessing Is a Command To All Believers

In Matthew 4:19, He said to them, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He told them in John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. The consequences of not confessing Christ before men is severe." Matthew 10:32–33 states, "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

Acts 8 reveals that the Christians of the first century were active witnesses for Christ. When persecution came upon the church, Acts 8:4 says that those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Notice, the first members of the church were able to preach the Gospel wherever they went. This was only possible because they were already in the practice of witnessing for Christ. When persecution came upon them, rather than being silenced, they preached the Gospel wherever they went, causing the church to grow. This is quite the opposite of the recent WCG experience, where when the brethren were scattered, they were incapable of effectively spreading the Gospel.

Are you obeying God's command to be a witness for Him?

### 2. Christian Witnessing Is an Urgent Call

Jesus said in Luke 10:2–3, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves."

Christian witnessing is the means by which God reaches people. Speaking of how people are saved, Romans 10:14–15 says, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?"

Second Corinthians 5:20 says, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. Are you appealing to others on behalf of Christ?"

### 3. You Are Empowered to Witness for Christ

Acts 1:8 says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

We are given that power so that we can tell people about Jesus, enabling them to know Him, too. There is no point to having the power of the Holy Spirit if we aren't sharing the Gospel. And there is no point in sharing the Gospel if we don't have the Spirit's power. God's Spirit guides us in witnessing, as it says in the book of Acts:

- "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (Acts 14:26).
- "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about me. And you also must testify" (Acts 15:26,27).
- "When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (Acts 16:7).
- But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth" (Acts 16:13).

Do you have the Spirit of God? How have you used the power of God's Spirit to witness to others about Christ?

### 4. Your Witness Is Your Testimony to Others About Christ

A "witness" is one who attests to a fact, so in order to be an effective witness for Christ, one testifies to others the truth about Christ. In 1 John 1:1–3, the apostle speaks of this when he says, "That . . . which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life."

Today, we who have experienced new life in Christ give an account of His love and forgiveness, both verbally and in the way we live our lives. A true witness has the testimony of Jesus Christ. First John 5:10 says, "Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony of God in them." Your testimony is the story of how Christ made a difference in your life. First Peter 2:9 tells us that we were chosen by God "to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night and day difference he made for you." A witness is always ready to share God's word. In 1 Peter 3:15 is God's command to all believers, not just leaders and evangelists: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

Here are a few questions to help you put your testimony together:

- What has God taught me from failure?
- What has God taught me from a lack of money?
- What has God taught me from pain or sorrow or depression?
- What has God taught me through waiting?
- What has God taught me through illness?
- What has God taught me from disappointment?
- What have I learned from broken relationships and my critics?
- What have I learned from being lonely and without a spouse?
- What have I learned from the miraculous provisions and blessings God has poured out on me?
- What have I learned from God's blessing of wisdom and discernment?

### 5. You Must Witness to Whomever You Come in Contact With

Witness to your family and relatives. In Mark 5:19–20, Jesus told the formerly demon possessed man, "... 'Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."

Witness to your community. Luke 14:23 records: "Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'"

Witness wherever you are sent. Luke 10:1–2: "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" Witness no matter the circumstances or where you are. Acts 8:1, 4–5: "...On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria...Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there." How many persons have come into the church or visited the church because you witnessed to them or invited them?

### 6. Seven Steps to Witnessing

1. *Make a list.* By having a specific list of names, we are able to concentrate our attention and our prayers. By having that list in some prominent place, we are constantly reminded of our goal to reach them for Christ. It is like having a picture on the refrigerator to motivate us not to overeat. List the names of: a) Relatives b) Friends c) Neighbors d) Co-workers e) Classmates. Go through your personal emails and address book. Initially, just concentrate on developing the list. Add names to the list over a period of time as other prospects come to mind. Narrow down your list. These will be the people you want to approach first. Keep this list in some prominent place where you will see it daily. Begin praying. Ask God for *opportunity* to be of service to these people (1 Corinthians 3:5–7; Colossians 4:3). Ask God for *wisdom* to make the most of the opportunities you have (Colossians 4:4–6). Ask God for *boldness* to share the Gospel when the opportunity avails itself (Ephesians 6:18–20).

2. *Share your personal testimony.* Tell your story about the difference Christ has made in your life.

3. *Humbly and sincerely talk about the things you have learned* and how it has impacted your worship, and glorify God in keeping with His word.

4. *Listen empathetically* and be a source of encouragement, joy, and peace as you converse.

5. *Share church literature* of relevance to their circumstances. Email an article or send the link to a sermon you think will be of interest.

6. *Be sure to invite them to the outreach events* being put on by your congregation.

7. *ACT NOW!*

Remember:

- Personal witnessing is a Scriptural command.
- You are empowered to witness by God's Holy Spirit.
- You are equipped with a personal testimony to share with others.
- Begin by listing all the persons you know and come in contact with.
- Think about that list and pray for God's guidance in how to work with that list.
- Sift down your list to the persons with whom you can have the greatest impact.
- Decide on the specific steps you will take in bringing that person to Christ.
- Witness not only with your words, but with your deeds.
- Be gentle, be caring, be understanding, be a good listener, be a good example.
- Share literature/booklets of relevance to the person's situation.
- Invite them to church. What will you do? The Scriptures say, "he who wins souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).



# Casting Down Strongholds

*The word “strongholds” is seldom used today. It sounds strange to our modern ears. Yet, is vital to our Christian walk that we understand this concept as we continue in growing and overcoming in our Christian walk!*

by Lloyd W. Cary



Lloyd W. Cary

**This year’s round of God’s Feast days is over. We are now entering the dark season of the world, the days of Satan’s holidays.**

Contrary to what many believe and teach, Satan is real. In fact, he is *more* real than you and I are because he is a *spirit* being, while we are only flesh and blood. This evil fallen angel (Luke 10:18 KJV throughout) is likened to a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8) and will do his best to suck you back into this present evil world (Galatians 1:4). The apostle Peter warns, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for *we are not ignorant of his devices*” (2 Corinthians 2:11). Your Bible shows Satan is very real and that he *has* and *is* deceiving the whole world (Revelation 12:9). His goal is to deceive you and make you a captive of sin. He will attempt to oppose and discourage you by setting up what the Bible calls “stumbling blocks” and “strongholds” in your mind to cause you to sin, to separate you from God and from the fellowship of God’s people. He will try to make you feel low, down, blue, sometimes angry or offended, and discouraged. Discouraged soldiers do not win battles!

As Christians, we have three main enemies: 1.) the world and its near-magnetic influences (Matthew 4:19); 2.) our own human nature (Romans 8:7); and 3.) Satan and his minions, his false ministers (2 Corinthians 11:13–15) and worldly appeals (1 John 2:16). There are stumbling blocks and there are strongholds; we need to be aware of the differences. The evil one often uses stumbling blocks and strongholds to implement all three kinds of temptations. What is frightening is that many of these devices have already been planted in our minds and we are not even aware of it!

## What IS a Stumbling Block?

Have you ever stumbled, *missed the mark*, in your Christian walk?

A stumbling block is something that “trips us up”—a slip, an incident, a mistake. This is *not* a way of life! Moses forbade the putting of a stumbling block before the blind (Leviticus 19:14). Spiritually, it is anything that trips us up in our spiritual walk—something we do not see in advance and catches us by surprise, something that catches us “off guard.” We *all* stumble or trip up occasionally. The Bible calls these “sins of ignorance” (Leviticus 4:14). Stumbling blocks are more occasional. Hopefully we catch ourselves, repent, and pick ourselves up and continue.

## What IS a Stronghold?

One of the most successful tactics Satan uses against the Christian is to build strongholds in his life. No aspect of our spiritual warfare is more important than learning how to recognize and destroy them, for as long as they exist, they will cause frustration, hinder spiritual growth, and cause defeat in our spiritual lives. As a Christian, have you ever felt there is a *roadblock*—a *stronghold* over you—a habit, a sin, a mindset—that is almost “impossible” to overcome in your Christian walk? Strongholds usually are stronger and more permanent than stumbling blocks. They are like invisible walled “dug in” fortifications. And they are something we, with God’s help, must *cast down*!

Strongholds are erroneous thinking patterns. They can become bad habits, or ways of life. They are *patterns* or “strongholds” in our minds that cause us to think *contrary* to the truth. They can be strongholds of anger, alcohol, pornography, or any other.

Synonyms are: a fort, bastion, castle, citadel, fortification, battlement, or fortress. *Spiritually*, it means *something that has a STRONG HOLD on us*! It is something difficult to shake off.

On a psychological level, strongholds are an integral part of our *belief systems*. They are the driving force behind our thought patterns, attitudes, and actions. No matter what we say in everyday life or what we truly believe about the world around us—God, others, or ourselves—the strongholds in our minds come to surface when we are put in pressure situations.

Stumbling blocks can be temptations to give in to anger, fear, lust, drunkenness, fornication, viewing pornography, gossip, Sabbath breaking, and other sins. We can find whole lists of stumbling blocks and strongholds in Romans 1:28–32 and 2 Timothy 3:1–7. Look them up.

For example, a common stronghold that discourages Christians is when they feel dirty, guilty, unworthy, and ashamed of their past. They are so used to thinking about their past, that it’s driven them to think and feel like a

*failure*! They feel unworthy to have a close intimate relationship with God or with God’s people, which greatly affects their spiritual strength and faith. No wonder Satan tries to build such strongholds in our minds! They produce spiritual cripples!

Some of these strongholds can be set up in our minds by well-meaning friends, parents, enemies, work, schools, or by past experiences. Or by Satan himself.

Strongholds are built upon the foundations of deception and lies that we’ve accepted into our minds as something we believe to be true. They become part of our thinking. So how do you *counter* a lie? With the truth! Where do we *find* the truth? In the Word of God (John 17:17). Ephesians 6:17 explains, “...the *sword* of the Spirit, which is the *Word of God*.”

“For the Word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God can be likened to a bright light shining into the dark recesses of our minds, exposing these acquired strongholds. It is like a scalpel-sharp instrument surgically dividing the cancer of error from Truth.

If you want to tear down the strongholds or lies and error, you need to begin meditating on the exact *OPPOSITE* of false tradition and error—that of God’s Word. When we neglect our Bible reading and Bible study, our spiritual swords begin to tarnish and rust, our light begins to diminish, and we will not be good Christian soldiers.

## So How Does Satan Build These Strongholds?

The devil’s helpers begin building spiritual strongholds by reminding us of our *past* failures and sins. He brings up imaginations and things that we ought not to be dwelling upon, and tries to make us *agree with him* on how badly we failed. We then have the choice to listen and agree with him or listen to God’s Word, which is telling us that those sins have been washed away (Romans 8:1). If we take *the devil’s bait* and begin to meditate on our sins and failures, they will begin to *pull us down spiritually*, and strongholds will develop. We will begin to see ourselves as *failures* because we’ve taken the bait and chosen to meditate on a *lie* that the devil has fed us!

## Strongholds Can and Do Play a Big Part in How We Feel!

If we *think* we are failures, we will *feel* like failures. If you *think* you’re hopeless, you will *feel* hopeless. If you *think* you cannot overcome a fault or sin, you stop trying. Changing the way you *think* can make a big difference in the way you *feel*!

If you *know* you are forgiven, you’ll feel clean inside. If you constantly think of your past failures, you will see yourself as associated with them. But if you constantly think of how you have been separated from your past when the blood of Jesus has washed it away, you will feel bright and clean inside.

## A Personal Experience

At the Feast in St. Catherines this year, I was approached by a dear lady who asked if I was ready for my sermonette. I replied with what I felt was a humble reply, that I *hoped* so. She detected I had some kind of stronghold of *self doubt* in my mind, and pursued it. She pointed out that I had a spirit or “stronghold” in my mind that was *not* from God! She encouraged me, saying that I had a message for God’s people and should speak out *boldly* and with *confidence*. Then she said a prayer with me to cast out any stumbling blocks or strongholds in my mind. As a result, my presentation was favorably received by most. Thank you, my sister (you know who you are), for shining the light of God’s Word onto one of my strongholds!

## How Do We Tear Down Strongholds?

In 2 Corinthians 10:3–5, we are told that our spiritual weaponry is DESIGNED to *tear down* strongholds: “For though we *walk* in the flesh, we do not *war* after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but *mighty* through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down *imaginations*, and every high thing that exalteth itself *against* the knowledge of God, and *bringing into captivity every thought* to the obedience of Christ.”

## Them’s Fightin’ Words—A Call to Battle!

This is an excellent verse showing us how to tear down the strongholds in our minds. First, since the Sword of the Spirit is the only *offensive* piece of our weaponry, it is a critical tool for

*Strongholds, Continued on next page*



*Strongholds, Continued from previous page*

tearing down strongholds.

We need to go on the *offensive* to tear down a stronghold, and the Word of God is the *weapon* you can't afford *not* to use!

So when some inner voice tells us, *You really messed up this time! You won't make it!*—we need to counter it with, “1 John 3:5 tells me that the *reason* Jesus went to the cross was to *take away* my sin! Hebrews 8:12 tells me that God has chosen to *forget* my sin!” Romans 8:1 tells us, “There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” *I am not guilty!* And neither are *you* if you are in Christ Jesus!

What else are we told in this verse? We are to cast down *imaginings* and *every thought* that comes into our minds that *opposes* the knowledge of God. Since God associates Himself with His Word (John 1:1), if anything comes into our minds that is *contrary* to God's Word, throw it out! Do not waste your time thinking about it or trying to reason with it. If Satan is trying to tell you God is not wanting to forgive you, then don't listen to it! Why? Because God's Word says otherwise: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

### Many Disillusioned People Have Strongholds Against God Himself!

Nearly all agnostics and atheists have stumbling blocks and strongholds against God Himself! God's Word declares, “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are *CLEARLY SEEN*, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead; so that *they are without excuse*: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became *vain* in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was *darkened*. Professing *themselves* to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:20–22). The scholarly “higher critics” of God's Word raise objections to God's existence and His Word that have been answered over and over again for thousands of years, but they refuse to acknowledge the truth and go on parroting them to each new generation of would-be believers. They have *strongholds* in their minds that they refuse to cast down! God says they are “without excuse.” God will deal with them at a later time.

The plain truth is that not only does God *want* to forgive your sins so that your relationship with Him can be restored, He longs—He deeply *desires* to do so! God wants to forgive us even more than we want to be forgiven (1 Timothy 2:4). The penalty for our sins has *already been paid* through the blood of Jesus Christ. All we need to do is believe it and make the right choices (Acts 2:37–38). One of the *last* things Satan wants us to believe is God's forgiving and loving care for us—even after we have messed up!

Listening to and reasoning with the things the devil puts into your mind by whatever means is exactly what he *wants* you to do. It feeds his strongholds when you allow your mind to meditate on Satan's word, the *opposite* of God's Word. *Cut him off* at the source and say “NO” to the lies and deceptions he's been feeding you, and at the same time turn to God's Word. This process works for any lie of the enemy. Begin to feed, meditate upon, think about, and dwell upon the *truth*. It will stop the devil dead in his tracks! When He was tempted by the evil one, Jesus quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:1–10; Luke 4:1–12). You can, too!

### Smack! There's That “Brick Wall” Again!

Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, it seems we hit that proverbial “brick wall.”

Often we feel we are doing well, and then, *smack!* Some of those old strongholds we thought we had overcome are revived from some hidden deep crevices of our minds. Old lies of the enemy such as, “You are stupid”; “You are worthless”; “You are a bad mother/father”; etc. or any other stronghold (anger, jealousy, lust, greed, envy, etc.) that has built a giant invisible strong tower in your psyche. This, brethren, is how you pull it down, brick by brick. You are delivered as you repeat the process so many times that it becomes as natural to you as breathing. When you are successful, you put your foot on the neck of your enemy and he is forced to admit that Jesus is Lord! This is why we must put on the helmet of salvation—to guard our thought life, lest we allow the enemy to find a chink in our armor and exploit it, or lest we allow a sinful habit pattern to remain unchecked and develop into a stronghold. Hold forth the shield of faith, draw the sword of the spirit, and fight the good fight of faith!

Nonetheless, sometimes we still feel discouraged. We still sin and feel, “I couldn't help it. The *devil* made me do it!” Some think that they cannot be influenced by demons, but nothing could be further from the truth!

God's Word warns, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

When Christ's disciples could not cast out literal demons, Christ told them in Mark 9:29, “This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.”

### Home Again!

We came home from the Feast after hearing many inspiring sermons and sermonettes. Don't allow the devil to suck you back into the attitudes and “stinkin' thinkin'” and filth of this world! That's the warfare we face. Don't give in to P.F.L.—“Post-Feast Letdown”! Refuse to let go!

We cast down strongholds and imaginations by being transformed through the renewing of our minds: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2). As we meditate and wash our minds with God's Word, we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and we will come to know the will of God, and discern what is right, perfect, and good. Our strongholds, which are based upon error and deception, will not stand a chance as the light of God's Word (truth) is shed upon those areas of our minds.

Remember James 4:8: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”

But above all, remember that *God* gets all the glory, not our own puny “will power,” because our weapons are not of this world; they are “other-worldly!”

### Again, What Must We *Do* to Cast Down Strongholds in Our Lives and Continue in God's Feast Spirit?

You have heard these admonitions before. They are not new, but they are *vital* if we are to endure to the end (Matthew 10:22). God's Word gives us everything we need to cast down imaginations and strongholds.

OUR SPIRITUAL WEAPONS INCLUDE THESE, “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:17):

- PRAYER: Never forget the necessity of continuing prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:16).
- BIBLE STUDY AND BIBLE READING: Willfully allow God's Word to reprove, correct, and instruct you. You may need to increase or *double* your Bible study time until it becomes a well established *habit*. You can do it! Don't put it off as a “should do.” Get a grip. Just *do* it!
- OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD: “...the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that *obey* Him” (Acts 5:32).
- LIVE BY FAITH: The time is coming when you will either believe what you *see* and what you *hear*—or you will believe God's inspired Word. “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10:38).
- MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD: This is not some New Age mystical state of mind, but it means to deeply think about what you have read in God's Word. David said, “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my *meditation*” (Psalm 119:99).
- FASTING: Putting our personal comforts aside, occasional fasting helps humble us (Isaiah 66:2).
- WALK IN LOVE: “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour” (Ephesians 5:2).

May God be with you as you draw nigh to Him (James 4:8). And keep on casting down those strongholds! Ω





# Feast Reports

## Feast of Tabernacles 2015 - Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

**E**ach year we look forward to the Feast of Tabernacles in Myrtle Beach, with the beautiful beach, the gorgeous waves, sunny skies, and palm trees gently blowing in the ocean breeze. It is a truly awesome and amazing setting for God's people to come together in worship and fellowship. This year was just a little different. At the beginning of the Feast we had a couple of days to enjoy a little sun and some time on the beach, but the skies were mostly cloudy, the waves were large and furious, and the breeze was not always *gently* blowing the palm trees. As the days passed, each one became a little cloudier, with more rain coming down. In a different way, it was a truly awesome and amazing setting. There is beauty in the rain, peace in the storm.

As the Feast began in this different, still beautiful setting, the theme immediately became clear. It was a theme of loving fellowship and unity among the brethren. The weather conditions outside helped strengthen this theme as each day passed.

This year, as is our tradition, we kicked off the Feast of Tabernacles with our Hospitality Night. This is a night we all look forward to. It is our first opportunity for fellowship, to greet our Feast family at this wonderful reunion God provides for us. It is such a blessing to see faces not seen for a year or more, to see new faces; to share hugs and laughter with our brothers and sisters in Christ, looking forward to many more opportunities for fellowship in the days ahead.

We enjoy many activities at Myrtle Beach which have, over the years, become tradition for our Feast family. In addition to our Hospitality Night, we look forward to the Senior Luncheon, a very well attended and lively event. Our Women's Luncheon offers an opportunity for the ladies to step into a room together for very special fellowship: time to get to know one another just a little bit better, while enjoying a lovely meal. The luncheon also offers the ladies an opportunity to serve one another through interactive activities, music, and a short presentation. Our Family Dance was well attended this year, and remains a highlight of the Feast. With our talented Feast band, delicious hors d'oeuvres, and a dance floor ready and waiting, this event is always a wonderful opportunity to sit back and enjoy the music or spend the night dancing. Another highlight of the Feast is the Family Fun Show, and this year was no different. We were blessed with some very talented brethren who shared their gifts with us to make for a very special, very fun evening.

We were thankful once again to have our *Infuse* team working with us at Myrtle Beach. *Infuse* offers a morning service for young adults, but also welcomes all ages to their services. Our *Infuse* team has set some traditions of their own at Myrtle Beach, traditions which complement the many activities already offered. Each year *Infuse* hosts a children's activity partly geared toward offering parents a night out together, which is always appreciated. This year, as in past years, a Children's Carnival and Pizza Party was offered for the kids. *Infuse* also hosts the annual Volleyball Cookout. This year the rain hampered this activity a little. We had a few who were happy to play in the rain, and they did, but when the lightning began, an alternative plan was in place to move things indoors. Volleyball became a fun afternoon of card games, board games, and other activities. Another very well attended *Infuse* hosted event is the Ice Cream Social. This event takes place just before the Family Fun Show and gives everyone an opportunity to enjoy a sing-a-long as well as enjoying some individual karaoke performances. Our *Infuse* team at Myrtle Beach is focused on service to the brethren as well as developing leadership skills in our young adults, and we are blessed to enjoy the fruits of their efforts.

With the many and varied opportunities to fellowship, the best opportunity of all is our daily worship services. As the room begins to fill, you hear the sounds of many conversations going on at once, the sounds of laughter right beside you or reaching out to you from across the room. As services begin and the music starts, you feel the warmth of all of the voices joining together in love and joy. The tone is set. We are family worshipping together as one. As a family, we were blessed daily with beautiful special music from truly gifted brethren. Another blessing was the wonderful variety of inspired messages delivered throughout the Feast by true servant leaders in God's church. As services ended each day, many brethren lingered a little longer for more conversation, more laughter.

We were very excited to offer a new program for our teens this year, *Ignite*! Our goal is to ignite our teens with a passion for God's word and with a love for God's church. With daily sessions designed just for them, the teens were able to actively interact with the topics presented. This was just for them, and we got off to a great start this Feast. We are looking forward to building on it in Feasts to come.

Our Feast is not complete without our children's classes and the very dedicated ladies who are there every year making it a fun learning time for our kids. With daily lessons and several crafts in the works, the children love their classes. A great joy and highlight for everyone is seeing the children's choir take the stage on Youth Day to sing. There is nothing more precious than our children. This year the children were joined on stage by *Ignite* and *Infuse* for the final song. Truly a special moment!

Another very special part of our services on Youth Day is the Blessing of the Children. There is so much joy in the innocence of our children, seeing them with their parents, coming together with servants in God's church in front of all the brethren for the moment of laying on of hands, while asking for God's blessing for each precious child. It's something that brings tears to our eyes every year.

One other very special and meaningful event is welcoming new brothers and sisters to the body of Christ. We welcomed five new members to our family this Feast. Such a blessing!

We were also very happy to witness the ordination of Mr. Morgan Pinkerman as a minister in God's church, another servant leader among God's people!

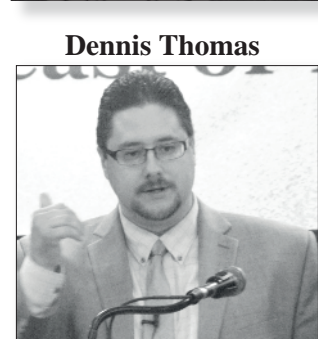
Our numbers were down a little this year. With 185 registered, we were missing several of our Feast family. Unfortunately, many were unable to attend due to issues of health. They were with us though, in our thoughts and in our prayers each day! They remain in our prayers! We look forward to seeing them again.

We were blessed abundantly this Feast and, yes, it was a little different. This will be remembered as the year God pushed Hurricane Joaquin off our coast and protected us from the possible devastation of a Category 4 storm. It will also be remembered as the year of the "historic" flooding in South Carolina, which was brought on by a separate weather system, but aided by the side effects of Joaquin. More importantly, and most of all, it will be remembered as a year of loving fellowship and unity among the brethren. God was with us. The hurricane did not alarm us. The rain did not stop us. What the weather systems did was give us more time focused on being together, adding to our joy, our closeness, and our unity as a family, God's family. This was indeed, *the best Feast ever!* Ω

Submitted by Pam Nolen



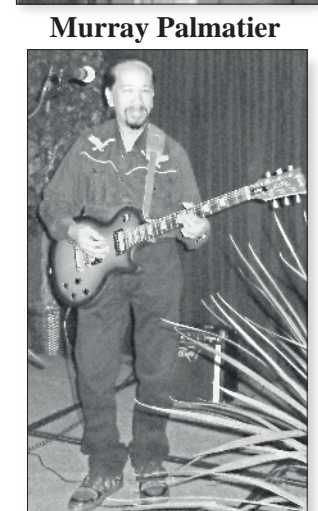
Adrian Davis, Worship Leader



Dennis Thomas



Women's Luncheon



Murray Palmatier



Paul McIntyre

A FEW FEAST SNAPSHOTS

Freddy Herald



# Feast Reports

## Fairy Hill, Portland, JAMAICA

**S**cores of Feast keepers converged on the 20-acre property called the Crest Retreat and Conference Centre, secretly tucked away on Fairy Hill in the parish of Portland, Jamaica's first tourism parish. One thought that Morant Bay (2014 Feast site) was the ideal place for the Feast, but this view was quickly transferred to the Fairy Hill location. The vast area of lush grass and other vegetation, coupled with the presence and constant chirping of birds of several species and the cool breeze from the nearby Caribbean Sea, brought Feast keepers at one with nature and fostered a family type setting that issued a taste of the Kingdom of God.

The theme of the Feast, *The Living Hope*, was duly expounded on by Pastors Bill Watson and Pedro Hall and Brothers Stephen Allen, Henry Small, Chevoy Martin, and Eliud Ramocan. There was a nice mix of speakers being drawn from Ohio (USA), Spanish Town, Ocho Rios, and Kingston congregations. Pastor Watson kicked off the speaking schedule on Day One. He encouraged Feast keepers to stay the course or to endure to the end, after vividly showing the downward spiraling of earth's conditions brought on by world leaders. He passionately entreated his audience to focus on the hope, and gave 2 Peter 1:5-8 in which Peter encouraged his readers to take on a set of positive characteristics (faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity). He said that there was a reason why Peter listed the characteristics in the order given, and challenged the congregation to ascertain the reason as their homework.

On Day Two, Pastor Pedro Hall, who received the *Church of God International* official ministerial credentials by the laying on of hands by Pastor Bill Watson on Day One, picked up from where Bill Watson left off, with the topic, *Jesus Christ: The Lively Hope*. Commenting on the passion with which Pastor Watson spoke, Pastor Hall presented to the jury a volley of biblical evidences to make his case that Jesus Christ is He whom we patiently await to bring to fruition the lively hope that is pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles. Brother Stephen Allen's sermon on Day Three of the Feast was entitled *Mankind's Only Hope*. He clearly showed that it is not at all within man to direct his steps by carefully outlining how over the centuries, mankind's greatest efforts to make things right resulted in mankind being worse off. The death toll in World Wars I and II were tabled. The top 10 weapons of mass destruction were displayed, and Feast keepers were reassured that Jesus Christ is indeed the only hope for a better and brighter tomorrow. It only got better when Brother Chevoy Martin took to the podium on Day Four with the topic *The Lively Hope: A Reason to Continue Fighting*. He drew and based his presentation on the Bible stalwart Caleb, who after several decades received that which was promised him by God. Caleb fought, endured, and received the hope, and for that reason we were encouraged to stay the course for the better hope.

Brother Eliud Ramocan took up the reins on Day Five with the topic *My Personal Sukkah Project*. He was fully supported by a large contingent from the Ocho Rios Feast site. After receiving a crash course in the Hebrew language, Feast keepers were carefully enlightened about the significance of the sukkah and other Feast of Tabernacles emblems/traditions such as the lulav, the water drawing ceremony, and the 70 bulls that were sacrificed over the seven day period. He beautifully brought out the meaning of the emblems/traditions using eye catching PowerPoint presentations, and left the congregation salivating for more. Like Brother Eliud, Brother Henry Small was supported by a contingent from his Ocho Rios congregation as he spoke on Day Six. Though not giving a particular topic, there was clear evidence that he was on track with the theme of the Feast. He expounded on the *Hope*, drawing from a barrage of Scripture texts encouraging his audience to abound more in the hope they so earnestly seek.

Brother Stephen Allen got a second chance at the pitch on Day Seven, the last day of the Feast. His topic was *Your Calling: The Hope of Glory*. He set out to, and aptly accomplished, the task of giving Feast keepers a deeper understanding of God's purpose and plan for their lives as they celebrate the Feast. He reminded his audience that the Feast was not a vacation, and that it was more than just feasting on delicious foods and wines. Feast keepers were reminded of the reasons they were called into God's church at a time as this: *train now, rule and teach tomorrow*. On the Eighth Day, Pastor Hall spoke on the topic *All Sinned: Hope for All*. He followed up from his Day of Atonement presentation by showing clearly the debilitating result of sin on the entire creation, mankind in particular. He statistically showed the billions of persons who have died during the ten deadliest natural disasters and genocides (including the Amalekites of

Bible days) not hearing about Jesus Christ the lively hope, and reminded the congregants that there is hope for all, not only some.

Each day's activities started fittingly with a very fulfilling prayer meeting at the poolside. Conducted by Pastor Hall, every morning at 6 AM sharp, Feast keepers streamed expectantly from their rooms and villas to the pool area from where full view of the Crest property could be had. Beautiful hymns enveloped the morning air, which was always cold and refreshing. Feast keepers made themselves comfortable under the large, lush breadfruit tree that forms a beautiful shade for the pool chairs lining the poolside. Prayers were sent up for the day's activities, individuals who gave prayer requests, and all the Feast sites around the world.

Fellowship at the Feast this year was *turned up!* The Sukkot Building Competition, Feast-O-Lympics, Pool Party, Gala Ball, Men, Women, Youth, Children, Singles and Couples Nights Out and Beach Trip brought everybody together. Food was in abundance. Nobody had more than the other, and no one was without. Feast keepers had breakfast, dinner, and supper together in a very comfortable, family setting. The Gala Ball was exceptional. Men, women, and children were dressed in their best, escorted to their seats and feted a three-course meal in a well decorated hall, followed by the dance. The Sukkot Building Competition was a learning activity for the two teams (Jephthah and Gideon). Both teams did an in-depth search on the sukkah, and took three days to complete their sukkah project. Team members worked hard and long, and after the judging, Team Gideon won by only two points. The Feast-O-Lympics started out with a bang, but ended prematurely due to rain. Team Jephthah was in the lead when the activity came to an end. The visiting Feast keepers from the Ocho Rios site were fully welcomed, entertained, and given a taste of the Gala Ball, as they would have missed it based on the day they visited.

Special thanks must be extended to the Feast committee, a group of dedicated, selfless, and hardworking individuals who went all out to make the Feast what it was. Heartfelt gratitude is being sent out to the head office (Tyler) and the Canadian and Ohio congregations who supported the Feast in one way or another. The owner of the site and the workers went all the way out on a limb to make the Feast keepers fully comfortable. Words are not sufficient to tell them thanks. To the over 90 individuals who attended the Feast, whether they spent a day or all eight, thanks. Those who served, whether by preaching, singing, preparing the hall for worship, encouraging, or entertaining, thanks a million. You all made it happen with the help of the Almighty God. Ω

Submitted by Pedro Hall

### What in the World is God Doing? God's Seasonal Plan Reveals All!

Isn't it strange that man's fascination with the spiritual realm seems to deliberately overlook the rich typology seen in God's annual Sabbaths given to ancient Israel? Ironically, the mind of God is revealed in them. Now you can know!

Be sure to send for our free offer, *God's Seasonal Plan*, and *The Fall Festivals*. If you are new to God's holydays, you'll be enlightened and amazed! If you are familiar with them, you will be given even deeper understanding. Send for them now, *today*, before you forget.

**Church of God International**  
3900 Timms Street  
Tyler, TX. 75701  
Or call,  
903 939-2929  
[www.cgi.org](http://www.cgi.org)





## Help Us ‘Ignite’ Our Youth

**A**s we expand our use of evangelism to preach the Gospel and show our communities that Christianity is not some old-fashioned, outdated religion, but rather *a way of life* that works, we cannot forget a most important segment of our church—our teens.

The beginnings of a new youth program for CGI were seeded this year at the Myrtle Beach Feast site. Over the years, teen programs were operated locally on an as-needed basis. Through the development of the *Infuse* program, which serves the “young adult” population of our church, a need to serve our high school aged youth group has become evident.

As we build out this program, among the goals we want to accomplish include: providing Bible-based, age-appropriate studies; topical resource material for relevant issues to guide our youth into a lifetime of service to Christ; social interaction with youths of a similar belief structure. The main focus, as we begin, will be to assist local CGI Feast of Tabernacles coordinators in designing programs for this age group at all of our Feast sites.

Tapping into the resources of youth programs already in place in the southern US and Canada, ideas to kick off the newly-minted *Ignite* program include:

- Dedicating a portion of the quarterly *Infuse* magazine for *Ignite*.
- *Ignite* will work with the coordinators of each Feast site to offer a program of studies and activities for the teens.
- Inclusion in the monthly *Infuse* newsletter.

The program will initially be headed up by Pam Nolen and Murray Palmatier. Additionally, there will be some assistance from volunteers from the *Infuse* program. But here is where WE NEED YOUR HELP—parents, teens, and other volunteers. If you are interested in receiving the monthly newsletter, the quarterly magazine, or even helping us develop the program, please drop us a note. Pam can be reached at [tmnolen@homesc.com](mailto:tmnolen@homesc.com) and Murray can be reached at [murraypalmatier@yahoo.ca](mailto:murraypalmatier@yahoo.ca).

While we open our doors wide to offer rivers of Living Water to those who are thirsty, we cannot forget to evangelize a group of prospective members of the Body of Christ already within our congregations—our teens. Let’s IGNITE a fire in our youth to develop a love for God, His Word, and His people. Your help will go a long way in making a difference in their lives. Ω

## Rick Dubler Ordination



**Rick Dubler**

Rick and his wife Grace have been dedicated members of the Church of God for over 40 years. As former members of the Worldwide Church of God and foundational members of the United Church of God in Toronto in 1995, Rick and Grace started attending the *Church of God International* in the fall of 2004. Rick has served as a deacon and on several charitable foundation boards, including the CGI Canada board.

Born in Switzerland and raised in a small farming community in southwestern Ontario, Rick, a chiropractor, and Grace have been married for 43 years. They live and have a family practice in Elora, Ontario along with their son Adam and his wife Alyson, and their two grandchildren, Jackson and Audrey. When you visit their home you do not leave without opening your Bible and discussing the Word. We thank God that this loving, gracious, servant of God who has been a humble leader for over 40 years, now pastors the Kitchener, Ontario congregation. May the Holy Spirit of God continue to guide and direct their leadership. Ω

**I**t was Sunday, September 14, at the Feast of Trumpets, 2015, that Richard Dubler was ordained as an elder in the *Church of God International*. With the assistance of elder Horane Smith, Murray Palmatier conducted the ordination in the presence and witness of a combined congregation of approximately 200 members from the Burlington, London, Kitchener and Toronto congregations.

## 2016 Canadian Feast Site



**COLLINGWOOD, ONTARIO – Georgian Bay Hotel**  
**10 Vacation Inn Drive, Collingwood, ON L9Y 5G4**  
**705-445-9422 or 1-800-482-7894**



**I**n 2016 there will be one CGI Feast site in Canada. This Feast site will be coordinated by the Kitchener, Ontario congregation.

Come and join us in the beautiful community of Collingwood, Ontario, on the shores of Georgian Bay. The sermons, seminars, and activities will leave you spiritually and physically rejuvenated.

We have negotiated the following rates at the Georgian Bay Hotel:

- Hotel Rooms with 1 King or 2 Queen beds: \$79  
(This price *includes* a continental breakfast.)
- 1 Bedroom condo: \$119
- 2 Bedroom condo: \$169
- 3 Bedroom condo: \$219

(All condos have fully equipped kitchens but do *not* include continental breakfasts.)

Find more information about the Georgian Manor Resort Hotel at the hotel website at: <http://georgianbayhotel.com/> or call now to reserve your room (mentioning the Church of God conference) at: 705-445-9422 or 1-800-482-7894.

Any questions can be directed to Murray Palmatier at: [murraypalmatier@yahoo.ca](mailto:murraypalmatier@yahoo.ca).

Be sure to visit our Canadian Feast site at: <http://www.cgicanada.org/feast/> as well as our PowerPoint presentation at: <http://www.feastsofthelord.ca/#welcome1>

For Festival locations in the United States, please visit the [www.cgi.org](http://www.cgi.org) site. Ω





# Feast Reports

## Report for St. Petersburg, Florida (Pinellas Park)

**B**eautiful warm weather and great fellowship were abundant during the Feast of Tabernacles this year in the St. Petersburg, Florida area for the Feast of Tabernacles, 2015. Services were held at the Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center, where for eight days we heard inspired and instructional sermons and sermonettes.

During the Feast, an average of 140 like minded brethren attended services, with 162 being the highest attendance. All services and Bible studies were also webcast, live, for the benefit of those who could not physically attend. An average of 100 persons viewed the webcast daily with 150 persons being the highest viewership on a single day.

Inspiring presentations were given by Ben Faulkner, Ian Faulkner, Eliezer Flores, Alex Fontao, Dwight Harrison, Mike James, Tony Morelli, Jeff Reed, Michael Roy, Dave Rusinko, Jr., Larry Sharp, Bill Watson, and Ray Wendle.

Special music was performed by Sunny Faulkner, Jean Harkins, Mike McCarthy, Miriam Moreno, Albert Smalley, Marge Watson, and Angie Wendle. The talented Peggy Hunter performed some of her original poetry throughout the Feast.

This year we were able to video conference with the Australian group for the two separate Bible studies given by Jeff Reed and Bill Watson. It was morning service for the Australian group, while we had our evening Bible studies in Florida. Everyone was able to see each other, ask questions and listen to the answers as if both groups were together. It was really a unique and awesome experience to be able to see, hear, and speak with brethren, live, halfway around the world.

Ben Faulkner presented two well attended seminars on separate days.

Over 28 children attended Bible Sabbath School during the Feast. They performed a beautiful and lively song program during Youth Day services. As a special treat, Josiah Moreno recited the Lord's Prayer, with Noah Gonzalez and Preston Collins doing the opening and closing prayer, respectively. The blessing of the children was performed during the service. A special thank you to all the Sabbath School teachers: Patty Fontao, Eileen Gonzalez, Stacy Grant, Tanya Jones, Jennifer Moreno, and Lisa Sims.

Activities included a family bowling night, an afternoon of games and rides at Celebration Station, a BBQ cookout at the park with a very competitive softball game afterwards, and a luncheon/BBQ and pool party at the Holiday Inn. The main highlight of the social activities was the dinner/dance with lots of music, fellowship, good food, and of course, lots of dancing.

It was a great spiritual Feast filled with love, fellowship, and the opportunity to worship and celebrate together with brethren from different Church of God organizations in unity, as one body.

Thanks to all who contributed and volunteered their services in many capacities, especially to Alex Fontao and Larry and Richard Sharp for their technical expertise. And to all in attendance at the St. Pete Feast, a big thank you for making this Feast of Tabernacles a great one. We look forward to seeing you next year again.  $\Omega$

*Submitted by Eliezer Flores*



**T**he last thing Christ promised was that He would return to this earth. But what will happen when He does come? What will the world to come be like? What are God's plans for man? *You* can know!

The NEXT MAJOR EVENT in God's unfolding plan for humankind is the glorious SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST! The Millennial reign—the "thousand years" of Revelation 20—will begin soon after Christ returns to this earth. But just what *IS* the Millennium? *Where* will it take place? And what will it be like? Let's turn to the SURE PROPHECIES of God's Word for answers!

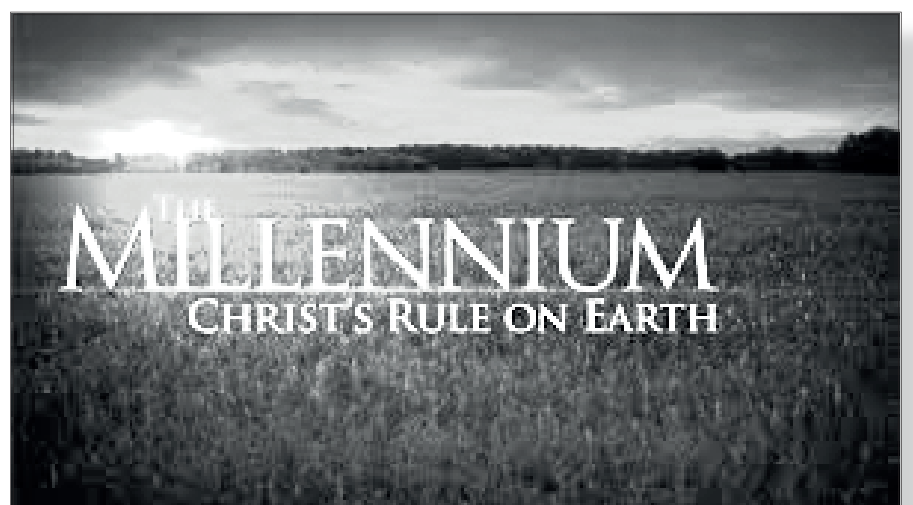
Request our booklet and see for yourself from God's own inspired Word!

CHURCH OF GOD INTERNATIONAL  
3900 TIMMS ST., TYLER, TX 75701

CGI Website: [www.cgi.org](http://www.cgi.org)

CGI E-mail: [info@cgi.org](mailto:info@cgi.org)

Phone: 903-939-2929



**The Real Meaning of the Millennium**



# Feast Reports

## Harrison, Arkansas

**T**he Feast of Tabernacles was held once again in the beautiful city of Harrison, Arkansas. The theme of the Feast this year was “Hang in there!”

On the first day of the Feast, Ron Elkins gave a thought-provoking sermon about how important it is that Christ be at the forefront of our lives. He also explained how corrupt a person’s character can be without Him, and that Christ is Who holds us together and saves us from ourselves. Later on that day, Lawrence Gregory gave a sermon about why we were there at the Feast. He explained through three main points: His plan for our purpose; because God has commanded us to keep his holydays; and that God guides in the selection of our Feast sites.

On the second day of the Feast, Bob Hutchinson gave a sermonette on how most people in the world claim to be Christians, yet their actions speak otherwise. He continued speaking about how denying Christ is more than just saying that we don’t know who He is. Not living the life that Christ told us to do is denial.

The main message of the second day was given by David Campbell. He spoke of the *Intent of the Heart*. He asked if the intent of your heart matters to God. He went on to say that Satan wants us to think that we aren’t good enough. Nothing can separate us from Christ but our own falling away. We should stir up the Spirit within us, so that we have the correct attitude and intent when He returns.

On the third day of the Feast, Denny Ledford gave a sermonette titled *My Cup Runneth Over*. He spoke of the many blessings we are given when we follow Christ. He also had all of the Veterans in the room stand and be recognized for their service, in which we all applauded in gratefulness for their sacrifice in keeping this country safe and preserving our freedom. The sermon of the day was given by Dean Roberts. He preached about the Kingdom to come and how we await the assignments that God will give us when we are priests and kings. He theorized on what types of jobs we would have. He gave a wonderful overall picture of the world to come.

On the fourth day of the Feast, Pete Hornbuckle gave a sermonette about God’s creation of the human being, and that God gave us a good mind—a mind that can be very righteous, but can also be very wicked. Satan understands the workings of the mind and knows that he can persuade man to be evil. The sermon that day was given by Steve Andrews. His sermon was titled *The Glorious and Joyful Message of the Kingdom of God With Warnings*. In his message, he explained that we are in the greatest battle ever fought—with one side, lies, and the other side, truth. God has been working on a plan with us, and we should be a “fruit checker,” meaning we should find out what a person is like by their fruits. He encouraged us to always look towards the Kingdom, and never look back. He concluded by emphasizing that we’ve been baptized and had hands laid upon us, that His Spirit dwells within us, and to never think that it doesn’t.

On the fifth day of the Feast, Jean LePont and Wayne Turnbull gave a split sermon. Jean’s sermon expressed the joys of living. In the book of Ecclesiastes, it asks relevant questions about the meaning of life and the futility of life without God. Wayne’s sermon concentrated on the fact that there are parts of us we will never see without God’s help. The Lord judges our hearts, and without the Spirit of God dwelling within us, it is impossible to see our true selves. Later that evening, Skip Martin gave an excellent Bible Study about Paul’s travels. He used a Power Point presentation to describe, in detail, the lands that Paul traveled; and he also included an illustration of ancient Ephesus, and showed us what Ephesus looks like today.

On the sixth day of the Feast, it was all about the youth! The Sabbath School class made a video about being the “Salt of the Earth.” Afterwards, the youth held up three signs that thanked their parents for bringing them to the Feast. A split sermon was performed by Max Packard and his father, Cliff Packard. Max gave a great sermon explaining that God is our Rock, and we are the salt. All of us should look at ourselves as the salt that is sprinkled by God throughout the world. He concluded that we should be the flavor in a bland world, meaning that we should be an example to all in our Christian walk. Cliff’s sermon was about it never being too late to change our lives. Time is irrelevant to God, and He doesn’t see time like we do. It doesn’t matter if we’d been in the church for years or just converted. When conversion takes place, it is always important to God. It’s not the timing, but the event that is important. The blessing of the children was also performed.

On the last day of the Feast, a split sermon was given by Max Davis and Rick Eckert. Max gave a sermon entitled *Peace*. He explained that we had to do our very best at being peacemakers, and that we will be responsible for bringing peace to the earth sometime in the future. How do we achieve peace spiritually? We know that we are in peace when we are in safety, to be spiritually minded is life and peace, and that we will have the peace of

God if we believe and trust in Him. Rick’s sermon was titled *The Gardner, the Branch, the Vine, and the Seed*. He went on to say that God was the Gardener; the Branch is what will rule the family of God; the Vine is Christ; the Seed is the Word, which goes out to draw men to Christ. He encouraged us to keep loving each other, and not just on the Sabbath day. We are the light of the world. It starts at home, and should also start with the church. In the evening, the second and final Bible Study was given by David Campbell. It was a question and answer open forum, which allowed the brethren to ask questions and have them explained, as well as comment on others’ statements.

On the Last Great Day, the offertory was given by Charles Groce. Before Wynn Skelton began the last sermon, he said that this Feast had to be the “most peaceful, loving, and joyous Feast that I’ve ever experienced.” His sermon was about the Kingdom to come, and that the people who never knew God in their previous lives will have the opportunity that we had when we were converted. He quoted Luke 19:11, and explained that this scripture referred to our attitude and how we take care of what He has given us.

Special music was given by many talented performers, and made the Feast all the more fulfilling, to see that God’s people were so very blessed in this way. The activities involved Game Night, Family Fun Show, the always exciting Raffle with a Pizza Party, and a Dinner Outing for the seniors.

It was a wonderful Feast! Hope to see you all next year!

Ω

Submitted by Carol Buser





# Feast Reports

## 210 Gather for Feast in Canada

**A**ll things are ready, come to the Feast! This year, the Feast of Tabernacles 2015 was held at the Holiday Inn located in St. Catharines, Ontario, and hosted by the CGI Toronto congregation. Many travelled far and wide in order to keep the Feast with fellow brethren. We had brethren who travelled from as far as Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, California, Arizona, Missouri, Atlanta, the Bahamas, and Jamaica.

After the opening services on Sunday night, brethren gathered outside the hotel lobby to observe the final of the blood moon tetrad for this year. Some recorded and took photos of this spectacular and rare lunar event. Even some of the hotel staff were curious about what we were looking at and came outside to watch with us. The rest of the night was spent fellowshiping and reminiscing as we all got caught up with one another over the past years. We were also very blessed to have a number of brethren who were recovering from illnesses attend this year as well.

Some of the spiritual food that was digested this year included sermons and sermonettes from a very special and wide array of pastors and deacons. This list included four pastors from America who blessed us with both their message and presence at the Feast this year. They were Clifton Buchanan, Wayne Hendrix, Ed Szalankiewicz, and John Reedy. Much thanks to them and their families for making it up to St. Catharines, Ontario this year, and blessing us with such profound and inspiring sermons.

Sermons given by Horane Smith and George Ramocan reminded us about the nature of giving and not hiding our light. Further contributions were made by Shey Smith, Zion Hezekiah, Louis Anane, Courtney Scarlett, Bernard Wilson, Ken Allen, George Tanakis, Noel Scoburgh, Tony Brathwaite, Godfrey London, and Lloyd Cary.

Some of the other aspects of the Feast were the Meet 'N Greet social, where brethren were able to get to meet others they had not come in contact with as yet. We were asked to sit next to someone we did not know, and then as the microphone was passed around, we had to state a few things we learned about that person. There was also the church social, which consisted of some of the brethren displaying their talent on stage in front of an audience. There was much fun and laughter.

The musical contributions included Erica de la Cruz and Margaret Tourand-Townson, who were both impeccable on the piano. Aside from their piano duties, the de la Cruz family blessed us with various songs and performances. Other contributors included Marie Allen, Margaret Tourand-Townson, Demetria and Machala Buchanan, Mandela Dunamis, Tru Licorish, Rene Shelly, and Kenneth Brown. An inspirational dance, *Breathe On Me*, was also performed by Samar Smith, Kerine Thomas, Noel Scoburgh, Amelia Bain, Shenieka Scarlett, and Jesse Bennett.

The marriage seminar was conducted by George Ramocan, who gave valuable advice to both married and unmarried people from a biblical perspective. Afterwards, three couples were invited on stage to share their insight on their personal marriages with the audience.

Next to the hotel was a bowling alley, where the brethren made use of the facilities, as outside activities had to be cancelled because of the weather.

One of the highlights of this year's Feast was a community outreach campaign, called *Are They Lost?* which was held on Sunday evening, October 4. The presentation was given by George Ramocan, addressing the subject of: What is the fate of those who have died and never heard of Jesus Christ? This presentation was opened to all. The Toronto Evangelism Team, headed by Zion Hezekiah and Bernard Wilson, along with some of those in attendance, took to the streets of St. Catharines to distribute flyers three days before the event.

Anticipation was high leading up to this year's Feast of Tabernacles, and none was let down. The Holiday Inn did a wonderful job of accommodating CGI for this year's Feast. In total, there were 210 brethren attending the Feast of Tabernacles at St. Catharines. As this year's Feast has closed, we wonder what joy awaits us at next year's Feast, which will be held in Collingwood, Ontario, two hours north of Toronto. Ω

*Submitted by David Jagmohan*



**Congregation in St. Catherines, Canada**



**St. Catharines Feast Site - Speakers**



**St. Catharines Feast Site - Ministry and Wives**

**S**t. Catharines, Ontario, known as "The Garden City," was the temporary dwelling place for over 200 of God's people in observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, hosted by the CGI Toronto congregation.

Other than regular daily church services, this Feast site featured a Sabbath School class, Infuse (for the young adults), a daily Prayer Meeting, several social functions, an evangelism outreach, and much more!

We were blessed to have a small handful of persons who were observing the Feast for the very first time, and a few persons who were observing the Feast for over 50 years!

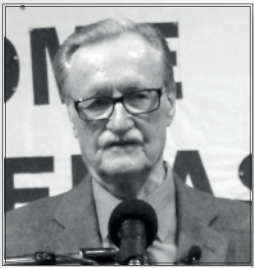
The Spirit of God was very much felt throughout the Feast, and we sincerely thank the Almighty for all of the many blessings that were bestowed on us. Thank you also to all who were present and contributed to the success of this Feast site. God be with you...till we meet again! Ω

*Submitted by Bro. Zion Hezekiah*



# Feast Reports

## Kentucky Dam Village



Ferrell Vincent



Marvin Wyke



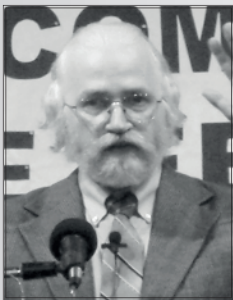
Archie Reynolds



John Reedy



Nathan Kelley



Mark Skiba



Bill Russ



Wes White

**W**hy keep the Feast of Tabernacles? In a time of turmoil and lawlessness, any relief is much appreciated. “Relief and Hope” might have been an appropriate title for this Feast of Tabernacles. There were many inspiring messages given by our speakers. Mark Skiba’s sermonette went straight to the point, *Focus on God*. Charles Groce, our keynote speaker, urged us to rejoice and have fun at the Feast.

Mark Schwarzkopf asked us to surrender all and examine ourselves. Wes White identified some of the problems in Satan’s world: military, medical, education, and industrial complexes. He reminded us that understanding was given to help us, but first we must rid ourselves of our own baggage.

Archie Reynolds outlined the spiritual tool needed for survival, the Word of God. Jeff Reed compared the desire for a better life to the Feast of Tabernacles as it relates to the nation of God.

Alan Graham described the *Tired Old Christian*.

Marvin Wyke told us we must be courageous in our faith, and God would not forsake us.

Ferrell Vincent taught us about our responsibilities in refurbishing the planet.

Bill Russ asked, *What Category Are You In?* Are you preparing to choose life?

Tom Kaufung reminded us that although we are saved by grace, what we do will be judged. Roger King’s Bible Study reflected on the human desire to be the best, just as in the animal kingdom.

Eugene Lucka painted a picture of world conditions at the first resurrection. John Reedy used Nicodemus’s visit with Christ to explain our transformation from a three dimensional world to a new dimension of the unseen eternal spiritual world.

Nathan Kelley explained how *Looking In The Mirror* to examine ourselves would help us obey.

John Reedy’s Bible Study subject was the *Kingdom of God*. Steven Wyke presented *Life’s Academy* courses. The subjects: to be Called, the Chosen, Change, Connect, Challenged, Correction, and Completion/graduation. Roger King presented the last sermon, *Mankind’s Long Journey Home* for the willing.

In between the inspiring messages there were plenty of activities for attendees of all ages. This was a Feast, so naturally there was lots of eating. There were a number of meals we shared as a congregation: the luncheon between First Day double services, a Senior Luncheon, a Picnic, a Youth Picnic, a Ministerial Luncheon, and a Fun Night. We had some excellent talent performing for us, in addition to a Movie Night and Ladies Only get-together. The youth did an excellent job on Youth Day.

Although our numbers were down, it was an opportunity to be blessed not only by the messages, but the fellowship. It doesn’t get any better than a warm smile, a friendly “Hello,” and a sincere “How are you?” The great part about it is, everyone participated in the success of the Feast at Land Between the Lakes. When the congregation sang, we took to heart Charles Groce’s encouragement to rejoice, and we did. So much so, that we sounded like a 100+ voice choir. Many thanks to everyone who participated in numerous ways. The contributors and their contributions are too numerous to list. Also, our thanks to James Pollitte, our Feast organizer, for another successful Feast.

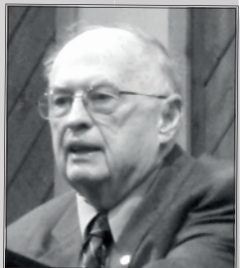
However, Charles Groce must be recognized for his special contribution. He brought his Texas “posse” with him. When you put Texas hospitality and Land Between the Lakes hospitality together, you can’t help but enjoy yourself.

It would seem the answer to the opening question would be all the messages of hope and instruction, as well as the added activities. It really makes you want to be a part of all that the Feast of Tabernacles represents for our future.

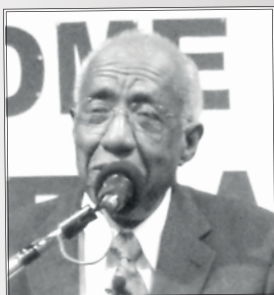
Our Feast was a blessing, and we can only hope that was true for all participants, wherever everyone traveled. May each one be blessed this coming year. Just a reminder, don’t delay your Feast plans for 2016. Let’s all rejoice, make a joyful noise, and have fun!



Charles Groce



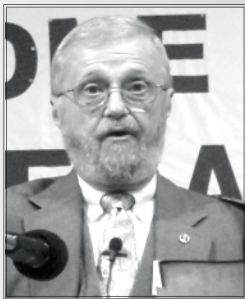
James Pollitte



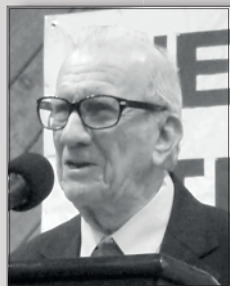
Roger King



Jeff Reed



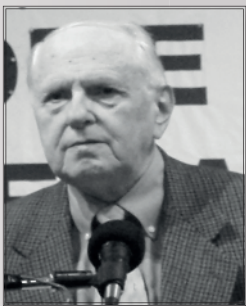
Steven Wyke



Tom Kauffung



Alan Graham



Eugene Lucka



# Feast Reports

## The Feast Down Under



**W**e are a blessed people in a blessed nation, and we had a blessed Feast. We could not be more grateful to our Father throughout the time we spent together, enjoying each other's company and being in such a lovely part of the country. The weather was brilliant, with blue skies, slight breezes, and even blood moons appearing at night. Diane Tuskes photographed the blood moon as a sequence event, so we could all enjoy the grandeur of it.

Our group stayed at the Ramada Hotel in Ballina, and we hired a conference room for the eight days in the hotel, so no one had to get in a car to go anywhere. The room was set up for us, so each day we could just arrive and settle in to enjoying the service.

On the first day of the Feast, we enjoyed taped special music by a young girl called Rhema Marvanne, who sang *The Lord's Prayer*. For a young girl, around eight years old at the time, to express such heartfelt passion and sing so beautifully, was a great opening to the Feast for all of us.

We also had taped special music by Robin Mark, who sang *Days of Elijah*. We then had the marines from Camp Pendleton Marine Base in California, who sang another rendition of *Days of Elijah* and put actions to the words. To see the comradeship of these young men singing *Elijah* and doing the movements throughout the song with such great joy and expectation was such a moving thing to see. If we could all emulate the joy and friendship as the Marines showed us, knowing that their lives were in each other's hands, just as our lives depend on the love and companionship we have toward one another as we go forth in uncharted waters. It was so inspiring for all of us. The Marines were going to the desert to fight a war; we are in a desert, fighting the evil that surrounds us—so we are both Christian soldiers going off to war. Let us keep the bond between each other, and we will win our battle. At the end of the Feast, we did their call, "Hoorah," but it was not quite the same as a group of Marines.

We were blessed by being connected to the Florida Feast site to sit in on two Bible Studies, and we were able to interact with both Jeff Reed and Bill Watson. Jeff Reed made the Bible Study entertaining by including the audience throughout. He separated people into small groups to give each group a different scenario, so they could give their points of view or show Scriptures to back up what they had decided on the subject given to them. Bill's Bible Study was on Sunday night (Florida time) but for us, it was the next day, which was the Last Great Day. We are grateful for modern technology, even though it can take up a lot of our time, as we are all aware. To interact with others anywhere around the world makes the world a small place indeed.

Throughout the Feast, we enjoyed sermons by Bob Schofield and sermonettes given by Zoltan Tuskes, plus taped sermons relevant to the Feast. Offertories were given by David Nicholson and Zoltan Tuskes. During the Feast, our youngest member, Danjard Tuskes, gave a reading from the Bible. So we had a lot of pleasant and inspiring teachings to help us to continue in our walk with God.

We enjoyed the company of our brethren throughout our time in Ballina, with games and fun nights at Irene and Michael Curro's apartment and film nights at the Schofield's. We had spare time to visit the surrounding countryside, and a small group of us played barefoot lawn bowling one afternoon. We realise it is easier to play than ten-pin bowling, as age is wearing out our weary backs, and the ten-pin ball is heavier than a lawn-bowl ball.

On the Last Great Day, after our service had finished, we adjourned to the Surf Lifesaving Club to have our lunch. And then we were blessed again; whales appeared just off shore in a perfectly calm ocean and gave us a wonderful performance by breaching out of the water, and continued to entertain us for a while. We had not seen such a magnificent show as this before in Ballina by the whales.

So as I started this message, to finish it is to say how blessed we are and, hopefully, soon the whole world will be blessed by the coming of our Lord. Ω

Submitted by Sonja Schofield

## When Jesus Comes... Again

by Pastor Horane Smith



Horane Smith

**T**he vast majority of humanity is oblivious about exactly what will happen when Jesus, the Messiah, returns to establish His everlasting Kingdom. Where will Christ be when He comes, and what's the purpose of His coming? Let's understand that it's not about taking Christians back to heaven; it's about the Christ coming from His throne in heaven to set up His government on earth, in the New Jerusalem. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17). That's exactly what He promises us in John 14:3: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Where will He be?

It's rather unfortunate that many sincere people get confused about the Second Coming. Of course, the false teaching about the rapture doesn't add clarity to the web of misconception regarding the whereabouts of Jesus when He descends to earth from the throne in heaven. The entire New Testament speaks of His Second Coming at least 320 times. Furthermore, it's not only the New Testament that speaks of His Second Coming. Genesis 49:10 prophesies the Shiloh to come; Job 19:25 speaks of the Redeemer standing on the earth on the last day; and Zechariah 14:4, speaking of the day of the Lord, says His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. The Holy Bible is clear on the whereabouts of the Saviour when He returns, but many continue to ignore the Word of God to their peril. If we are alive at the Second Coming, it's crucial we are aware of how the events will play out, not from man's own theories and half-truths, but the inspired Word of God. If we're not aware, we could confuse the real Christ with the false one. If you are expecting to be raptured, you won't be.

When the Great Tribulation begins, followed by the Heavenly Signs and then the Day of the Lord, you won't have a clue what will be happening because you'll still be waiting to be raptured to heaven. Jesus Christ is coming; there are no if's and but's about that. He says, "Behold, I come quickly..."; and in Matthew 24:31, He tells us He will command His angels to collect the elect from the four corners of the earth – east, west, north, and south. Of course, adherents of the rapture claim the elect here refers to the Jews or the "tribulation saints." The Jews have rejected Christ, so how can they be gathered to meet Him? And if we use the argument that these are the saints that came out of the Great Tribulation, nowhere in the Scriptures is a distinction made between the saints. In other words, there are no "tribulation saints," categorized separately from the other saints. Daniel 7:27 says, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High..."

### Why Is He Coming?

The Christ is coming to establish a Kingdom with no end. That's why He has to return to this earth, because it will become His dwelling place. This is where He is going to rule the nations during His millennial reign, so Christians going to heaven doesn't fit in His glorious plan here. All prophecies point to an earthly Kingdom. Listen to this proclamation by the angel in Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."

The purpose of His Second Coming then, having fulfilled His Messiahship by dying to save the world from its sins, is to establish His world-ruling government here on earth. Establishing it in heaven is not logical, because not only do the Scriptures point to this planet, but this is where the nations are today. What we need to comprehend is that Jesus Christ will have a literal kingdom.

The firstfruits of the church, resurrected during the first resurrection, will be ruling with Him as kings and priests (Revelation 5:10), and the nations that survive the Great Tribulation will become His subjects. Isaiah 2:3 says the law shall go forth "out of Zion." Yes, the law is not done away with. Christ will use it to teach the nations His ways so that eventually "the knowledge of God will be as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:19). We just completed the fall holyday season. Our celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles pictures His coming glorious kingdom. What better time to reflect on His return, a time when there will be divine rule on earth, a time when the kingdoms of men will become one kingdom under Christ.

Brothers and sisters, the Word of God is forceful on where Jesus Christ will be, and what He will do, when He returns a second time. It is revealed through these fall festivals, and it's incumbent on every Christian to learn about them in order to lift the lid of confusion that reigns in modern day Christianity. (You can download our free booklet, *God's Seasonal Plan*, from [www.cgi.org](http://www.cgi.org)). May He continue to be your guide in these troubled times in human history. Ω



# Feast Reports

## CGI Philippines, 2015 Feast of Tabernacles

**T**he CGI Philippines brethren celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in Tagaytay City. Feast services were held at the Summit Ridge Hotel, the first time it has done so. Brethren from Malolos, Baguio City, Alabang, Manila, Naga, Masbate, and Sagay converged here to celebrate and rejoice before our God. This year's Feast celebration has got to be "the best Feast ever!" And it is an understatement.

The "best Feast ever" for us can be characterized as a Feast experience worthy of its tag both physically and spiritually. Two nights of the Feast days were devoted to our traditional "Bayanihan Nights." *Bayanihan* is a local custom highlighting communal cooperation and unity to achieve a particular goal. The goal: to prepare food for everyone who meets the following criteria (the three T's, as our pastor fondly refers to them): Quality, Quantity, and Variety. The first Bayanihan Night (with a Filipiniana theme) was sponsored by the combined Naga and Masbate congregations. It was a smashing success! The brethren were treated to a smorgasbord (read: so many) of local favorites, from the main courses down to the desserts. The brethren were amazed at the quantity, quality, and variety of food that the Naga and Masbate brethren prepared for us. The evening was made lively and fun for both the youth, women, and couples of the church, as the sponsors organized local traditional games.

But this was just the tip of the iceberg. The second Bayanihan Night sponsored by the combined Malolos, Manila, and Alabang congregations, assisted by the Sagay brethren, topped everything else we have known about a feast. Somebody counted, and 21 dishes (main courses and desserts) in great abundance, varieties, and definitely mouth watering food were enjoyed by everyone. And we're not including the traditional roasted calf here. The rainy night failed to dampen the spirits of everyone as the brethren enjoyed fellowshiping with one another. All told, the "Bayanihan Nights" were certified smashing successes!

If that was not enough, the brethren were also treated to three communal meals (lunch together). Two of these were held at the Summit Ridge Hotel during the first day of the Feast and on the Last Great Day. The third communal meal was held at the Balay Dako restaurant. These lunches together were sponsored by generous brethren who shared their bounteous blessings with us.

The Feast experience was made more uplifting and edifying with the various wonderful messages delivered during the daily services and on the Sabbath in between. A total of 22 messages were delivered by the following speakers, and each one of them nourished us spiritually:

### Sermonettes:

- Ferdie Padilla – Welcome and Offertory, *We Can Make a Difference*
- Alex Sanchez – *Essence of the Feast*
- Ben Agaton – *Becoming Teachers*
- Milo Divinagracia – *Edification Through Fellowship*
- Winston Co – *Keeping the Feast Faithfully*
- Rolly Garcia – *Joy of Keeping the Feast*
- Gerry Espenida – *How to Get the Best Out of the Feast*
- Gonzalo Uy – *Ruling With Christ*
- Jose Pioquinto – *Growing Into the Image of Christ*
- Carlos Sarmiento – *Chance for Salvation*

### Main Messages:

- Rene Corpuz – *Reminders on Keeping the Feast*
- Winston Co – *Child of the King, End Time Israel, It Is Done*
- William Co – *The Birth of Moses, Words Are Powerful*
- Carlos Sarmiento – *Reeducation in the Millenium*
- Mel Arcinas – *The Prince Who Became a Pauper*
- Romy Guintu – *Are You Ready for the Millenium?*
- Eli Mellomida – *Firstfruits, Endure Unto the End*

The services were enriched by beautiful and great special music offered by the Alabang, Bulacan, Manila, and Naga local church choirs. Wonderful special music was also offered by the Luntok, Bacolod, and Field families, as well as by Van Mata and the former and current de la Cruz sisters. The children also gave special music entitled *In The Beginning*.

The Feast was also made more memorable and joyful as we welcomed nine new members into the body of Christ. They are: Danilo Perez, Mark Mellomida, Abe Dubouzet, Tessie Dubouzet, Charene Jimenez, Domingo Robis, Edwin Ubanan, Goldie An Solon, and Glenda Catingan.

We also had the traditional blessing of the children on the Sabbath, and after the afternoon Sabbath service was over, those who have illnesses were anointed by the ministers. An afternoon was also devoted for the elderly of the church. The event was hosted by the Naga brethren. And on the afternoon of the seventh day of the Feast, a pool party was held for the children.

All in all, it was a Feast to top previous "best Feasts." Credit goes to the ministry who provided guidance and direction, to Mrs. Menchu Co who took care of hall decorations, to the various individuals who coordinated the special music, and to the final audio visual presentation at the Last Great Day; and yes, to those who took pictures of the brethren during various events. Special thanks also go to our Feast coordinators, Mr. and Mrs. Alex and Malou Sanchez. But most of all, the Feast was made the "best Feast ever" by the individual members themselves, who rejoiced and celebrated with much joyful fervor as commanded in Leviticus 23:39-43.

Other Feast sites in the Philippines include Maranding in the Mindanao Islands and Iloilo City in the Visayas region. This year's Feast attendance saw the largest contingent we have had so far, 360 participants spread across these sites. We are truly thankful for the bountiful blessings God lovingly showered upon us at the Feast and for the beautiful Feast experience. Even now, we are looking forward to the next year's Feast. Ω

-CGI Philippines



The Luntok Family, from left: Leng, Pia, Paola, Pearl, Bebot, and Bong



Manila-Alabang-Malolos-Naga-Sagay-Masbate Churches Along With Guests at end of Afternoon Service



Attendees on the First Day



The Alabang Church Choir



# Feast Reports

## OCHO RIOS, JAMAICA

**T**here was much anticipation for this, the 40th anniversary of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jamaica, and expectations were exceeded as 333 brethren met at the Ocho Rios, Jamaica site of the *Church of God, International* (CGI). To cap off this spectacular Feast, 13 persons were baptized on the Last Great Day.

Two others slated for baptism had emergencies and had to leave the Feast site, but were baptized the following week, bringing the grand total to 15 baptisms.

From opening night when there was a rousing praise and worship session led by Deacon Christopher Hendricks, to the Last Great Day when our Maroon Town congregation led praise and worship in the morning service, the exuberant band of worshippers sang their hearts out and clapped enthusiastically in praises to their God. CGI Kingston, Jamaica, where the Church of God has been experiencing significant growth, hosted the largest Feast site of all the Churches of God in the Caribbean.

The schedule was chock full of activities. Starting from early morning prayer on the beach to morning and sometimes afternoon services, all activities were focused on deepening our vision of the coming world tomorrow. On the second day of the Feast, we had a thrilling bonfire party. This was followed by a dinner, concert, and party the following night, *Jamaica Night*, coordinated by Meleisa Haynes, which had full attendance. The church invited one of the country's leading secular artists, Lloyd Lovindeer, to perform, to the delight of members.

There was also a well attended sports day and an unforgettable picnic to Wata Land Waterpark, where families had immense fun. In addition, there was another picnic at Jewels Hotel's Water Park in Runaway Bay—the site of the Worldwide Church of God's first Feast site in Jamaica 40 years ago, which I attended. There was the staple Family Fun show, ably coordinated by Kadeen Bell Wright, which featured some of our finest talents.

Our usual speaking competition had addressed the controversial matter of divorce and remarriage. This year was unusual, as it became a real debate with one of the participants who disagrees with the church's position allowing for remarriage being given the opportunity to make a full presentation to show why the church is wrong. However, her arguments could not match those of Stephen Scale, the 2014 champion of the competition, who regained his title in a sensational presentation where he debunked the view that there were no grounds for remarriage. Scale looked at the best arguments for the no-remarriage view, drawing on scholarly sources, and refuted all of them. Then there was a roundtable discussion between the three participants moderated by me, where questions were taken from the audience.

This year we had the pleasure again of having our Regional Director Bill Watson address us at the Feast. He spoke about enduring to the end. I delivered three sermons, two of which looked at God's temple through the ages, coming down to the church. The other one drew lessons from the life of the Apostle Paul. Other sermons were given by Deacon Christopher Hendricks, Derrick Allworrd, Fentony Tracey, Stephen Scale, and Ray Williams. Sermonettes were given by Jordan and Dwayne McKenzie and Sean Golbburn, who spoke on Youth Day. It was a rich diet of spiritual food.

Since coming back from the Feast, I have received an invitation from a group of Church of God 7th day churches to make a presentation on the Feast days in December. Their senior pastor has become convicted about the necessity of keeping the holydays and now wants the CGI to expound on this truth so that the entire membership can start keeping these days. Another Church of God 7th Day group, led by Bishop Samuel Chambers, began keeping the Feast days for the first time this year, and met in Kingston to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. They began observing the Feast as a result of a presentation I made to them in February.

God has been doing a major work through CGI Kingston in leading independent Sabbatarian groups to God's full truth. The CGI in Jamaica now has congregations in Kingston, Spanish Town, May Pen, Ocho Rios, and Maroon Town. In 2016 there will be an even more accelerated thrust toward evangelism as the Jamaican church fulfills its part of the Great Commission. Ω



Submitted by Ian Boyne

## Feast of Tabernacles Report from Mananasi, Kenya, AFRICA 2015



Leader Mr. Isaac Gwaro Motanya with Members of the Church During the First Day of the Feast on September 28

**W**e started the Feast on Monday 28, where 18 members attended. Mr Isaac Gwaro Motanya opened the Feast with prayers. We proceeded with songs, the main song number 103 in Ekegusii, *Jesus Is My Cross*. The sermon was conducted by Isaac Gwaro Motanya about the importance of keeping the Feast.

On the second day we conducted our programmes as usual. Mr Onderi led us in songs, followed by church announcements by Mr. Motanya. Mr. Kennedy took us in the sermon, entitled *Christ Our Savior*. We closed the day by prayers from Mr. Motanya.

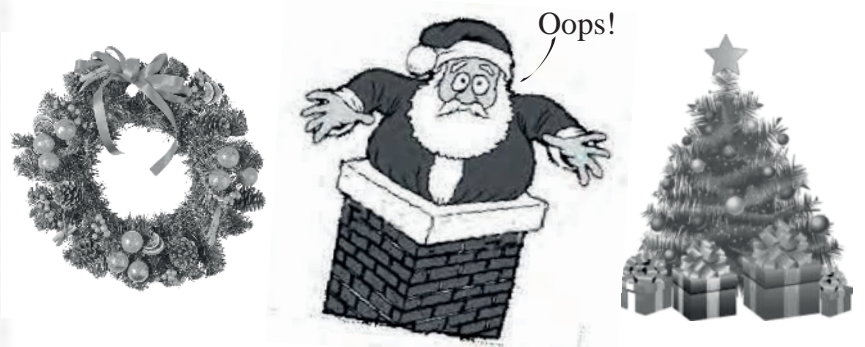
We did the Feast with a lot of blessings from the Lord in the seven days. In the Last Great Day on October 5th, members turned up in saying, "Bye-bye" to one another in Christ's name.

Mr. Isaac Gwaro thanked members for availing their time and resources at this year's Feast. He also emphasized the importance of giving and dedicating oneself to the Lord. At the end he thanked everyone for attending. "Till we meet again at the Feast of 2016." We can't forget this Feast ever. Ω

Submitted by Isaac Gwaro Motanya

### Christmas come and gone? Not to worry: it will be back!

How much do you really *know* about Christmas?  
Did you know Christmas is surrounded with PAGAN origins?  
It's time to PROVE what you THINK you know!  
The following web sites will teach you the REST of the story.



#### Exposing Christmas –

<http://cgi.org/bill-watson-exposing-christmas/?rq=Christmas>

#### Is Christmas Christian? –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bqpiistenqo>

#### Facts You Should Know bout Christmas –

<http://www.cgiphils.org/literature/christmas.htm>

#### Are You a Tolerant Christian? –

<http://cgi.org/are-you-a-tolerant-christian/?rq=Christmas>

#### How To Be A Real Christian –

<http://cgi.org/how-to-be-a-real-christian/?rq=Christmas>

#### God's Seasonal Plan –

<http://cgi.org/gods-seasonal-plan/?rq=Christmas>



Church News

Prayers Answered at Myrtle Beach Feast  
Amidst South Carolina Flooding



Over 180 brethren gathered together to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Mid-way through the Feast, the Festival was threatened by Hurricane Joaquin. We, with brethren from other Feast sites, reached out to our heavenly Father and He heard us!

The hurricane did not make landfall, and despite heavy rain, flooding, and devastation all around us, our Festival observance was not disrupted as we enjoyed a pocket of calm in the midst of the storm.

In fact, not being able to go to the beach for a few days resulted in more time spent in fellowship with one another. Not a single service nor activity was cancelled.

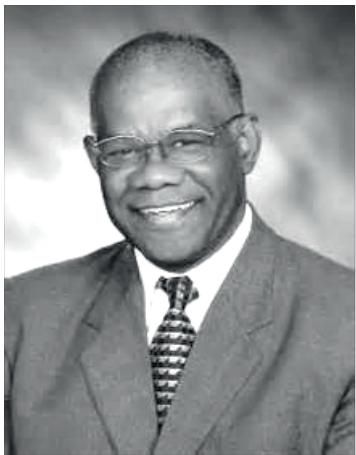
We thank God for His intervention and for another spiritually enriching Feast!

Ω Submitted by Sister Jennifer Davis

It is with great pleasure that we announce our full-time employment of Pastor George Ramocan. Effective January 1st, 2015, Pastor Ramocan has been hired by our Board of Directors to serve as our full-time Evangelism Coordinator. We are blessed to have a man with such ability with God’s word, love for God’s people, and passion for God’s work now focusing his full-time effort on evangelism.

As Evangelism Coordinator, Brother George will oversee all of our evangelical efforts. He will work with the rest of the ministerial team and the local congregations to leverage our strengths and effectively preach the Gospel. Ω

Submitted by Pastor Adrian Davis



George Ramocan



Pam Barnes Appointed Deaconess  
for Auburndale CGI

Auburndale, Florida—I am sure that, like me, you have said to yourself, “How can I serve my brothers and sisters in a way that would be pleasing to God?” Doing so surely means continuously and faithfully thinking of others rather than oneself. If someone were sick, then one would make sure that person was comforted, whether by means of a card of encouragement or a care package of some sort.



Pam Barnes, Deaconess

The servant would think not only of the needs of the local brethren, but also of the needs of the community, with outreach projects that impact a variety of folks.

The person striving to be such a model Christian would likely see others doing things that would cause him or her to ask, “Why didn’t I think of that?” or exclaim, “That’s a great idea!” While many of us desire to be a model Christian, we admit that actually reaching that goal is a challenging endeavor.

But, you know, that’s what we do. We spend time looking and searching for what God wants us to do. How many times have you asked, “Lord, what about me? What do you want me to do?” And, of course, once we realize our talent or gift, the next phase is to carry it out—to make the most of it through service to others.

We have such a person among us in our local congregation in Auburndale, someone who has faithfully demonstrated Christian charity, a person who has been with our congregation from the start, setting up Sabbath School materials for our children, as well as initiating food and school supplies collections for needy children in the community.

Well, I am sure by now that anyone who has visited the Auburndale church has figured out that I’m speaking about Pam Barnes. She has faithfully and continuously been doing the works that are best described as the servant leadership of a deaconess. And the Auburndale congregation has recognized Pam in this capacity to continue to develop our local Sabbath School and Community Charity Outreach activities, as well as all she does for those who are sick and in need of prayers. On September 26, following Morgan Pinkerman’s sermon, which was titled *Deacons, Servants to the Body of Christ*, the Auburndale congregation designated and anointed Pam Barnes to serve as our local Deaconess. Ω

Pastor Murray Palmatier has been appointed to the Council of Elders for CGI! He will bring his years of experience in the field in Canada to the Council, as well as his tireless work ethic. Congratulations, Brother Murray! Ω



What’s going on in *your* local church area? Combined services? Public Bible studies? Pot-lucks? Church activities? Celebrations? Memorials? Visiting ministers? Birth or death announcements? Plans for getting *The Armor of God* on a free public access television station in your area? Let us know, and perhaps we can publish it under “Church News.” We’d love to hear from you!

The editor



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Church News

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Six Baptisms in Toronto



*Front row:* Simran Randhawa, Shanieka Scarlett, Carla Jaghroo-James, Leesa Janelle

*Back row:* Deacon Ken Allen, Pastor Horane Smith, David Jagmohan, Alphanso James, Deacon George Tanakis, Pastor George Ramocan

“...they were pricked in their heart, and said... ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost’”  
(Acts 2:38)



**We welcomed Ben Miller into God’s church on June 20, 2015.** The baptism took place on beautiful Lake Ariana with Larry Sharp and James Barnes escorting Ben into the water for baptism. Waiting on the shore was the congregation of the Auburndale, Florida CGI where the laying on of hands took place. Afterwards, we had a lovely celebration in the home of Ben’s parents. We are so happy to have Ben join with his family and church family in becoming a baptized member of God’s church. Ω

Baptisms in Burlington

**T**wo of our members recently committed their lives to Jesus Christ. During the Feast in Myrtle Beach, **Rebekah Cox** was baptized by Pastor Murray and Pastor Adrian. Most of the Burlington congregation witnessed her public confession, including her parents. Rebecca is a wonderful example of youthful commitment to Christ.

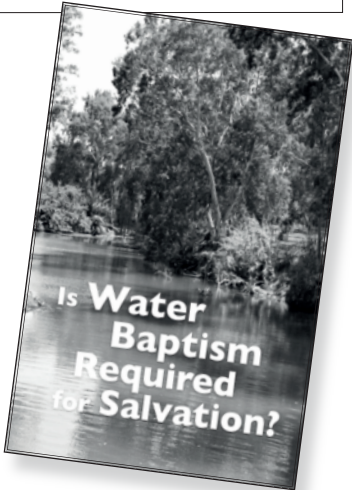
After the Feast, on October 17th, **Linda Hessel**, faithful wife of long-time member Gordon Hessel, made her public confession and commitment to Jesus Christ. Linda has been attending Church of God congregations for many years. She said she “finally feels at home in the Burlington congregation.” Her baptism was conducted by Pastor Murray and Pastor Adrian and was witnessed by the entire Burlington congregation.

We are blessed to have had three baptisms in the last year (including **Dylan Swan** at last year's Feast). We thank God for the growth of committed members. Ω

Free  
Booklet!  
Request your copy  
today!

Is Water Baptism Required For Salvation?

Is baptism necessary for salvation? When should it be done? Should infants be baptized? Should one be re-baptized in later years if one feels his first baptism was invalid? Should the living be baptized for the dead? What is the form for baptism? Sprinkling, pouring, or immersion? Can you be saved if you are not baptized? Who should do the baptizing? What if you were baptized by a man in whom you have since lost faith? Should you be baptized again? Here, from the pages of your own Bible, is the plain truth about water baptism. Ω







Howard E. Conley

**H**oward E. Conley of Loveland, Ohio and his wife Jean attended the *Church of God International* at Middletown, Ohio for over 27 years.

Howard, beloved husband of 64 years of Wilma Jean Passmore Conley. Loving father of Sherry Stagge, Pam Mullins, Scott (Donna) Conley, Tim (Gena) Conley, Barbara (Gary) Hylton, and Matt (Terri) Conley. Proud grandfather of 12 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren. Dear brother of Mary Hartley, Kay Goodman, Bill Conley, Wayne Conley, David Conley, and the late Barbara Lindley, Gail Witmer, Elmer Conley, and Edgar Conley. Howard passed away Tuesday, November 3, 2015 at the age of 86. Howard’s work career included 17 years with the A & P Grocery chain, and 25 years with the City of Forest Park, Ohio Public Works Department, retiring from that job as one of the supervisors.

Ω

*Submitted by Tom Kauffung*



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