

Living Church News

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Dear Brethren and Friends,

The Passover will soon be here! We all should think and meditate on the deep meaning of this solemn occasion, for it pictures the fact that our Creator was willing to *die* for His creation! As we approach the Passover service, we really do need to *think through* the many lessons we should learn from this observance.

God's Word tells us that the One who became Jesus Christ actually *created* all that is: "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3). Then the Word emptied Himself and came into the world, "and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him" (v. 10).

God the Father and the Word (who became Christ) want to share ETERNITY with those of us who are willing to *totally surrender* and let God build within us His holy and righteous character. God and His Word have perfect love—which is OUT-flowing concern—and sincerely desire to share love, glory and immortality with untold *millions* of begotten children who will yield to God. God does NOT want spirit beings in His family who will be fighting and squabbling and MISERABLE for all eternity! Rather, God wants to give eternal life in His everlasting Kingdom to those who have PROVEN that they will *always* strive to express God's character in everything they think, say and do.

Yes, brethren, in spite of our present faults and sins, God was willing to reach out to us and "call" us to be *His full sons*, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Brethren, we always need to realize that true Christianity is NOT just a matter of "keeping the law." Some orthodox Jews and perhaps others keep at least the letter of the law as diligently as many of us do. Of course, we *must strive to obey God's law!* Make no mistake about that. But, above and beyond that we must have a profound appreciation of the fact that we have been FORGIVEN of our past sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. And, we must fully realize that ONLY through Christ living His life within us will we be able to keep God's law as we should—in the spirit as well as in the letter.

The Apostle Paul said, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin (Romans 7:14). But Paul also wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the

life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20 KJV).

Therefore, even in keeping the law, our focus is on CHRIST. It is only through Him LIVING HIS LIFE within us by the Holy Spirit that we are able to keep the law. As Jesus Himself said, “If anyone loves Me he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23). Through the Holy Spirit, God and Jesus Christ actually LIVE within us and guide our lives—giving us the spiritual strength, power, love and wisdom that we need. When He was here in the human flesh, Jesus said, “I can of Myself do NOTHING. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5:30).

If Jesus Christ could do NOTHING, how dare we think—apart from God—that we can do *anything*? Rather, we must develop a total dependence on Jesus Christ living within us to help us do what we need to do. We must profoundly recognize that it is NOT through our strength or our goodness, but ONLY through the power of our Father and our Savior Jesus that we are able to grow, to change and to overcome. We must walk with Christ, talk with Him, drink in of His Word *constantly* and realize that the true Jesus Christ is our living, *active* Savior and High Priest. Brethren, this will NOT “offend” God the Father—because that is *exactly what God wants us to do!*

That is why Stephen was inspired to cry out and to PRAY even as he was dying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59). This inspired prayer—coming almost *automatically* out of Stephen’s heart as he was traumatized in the very process of being put to death—shows the depth of the personal relationship between Christ and Stephen, and no doubt most of the early servants of God. So, although we should *primarily* address the Father in our prayers, it is not wrong occasionally to address Jesus Christ during our prayers—as Stephen did—knowing that He is *very* God and is sitting at the right hand of God the Father *even as we pray!*

Truly, we are to “honor” Jesus Christ *just as* we honor the Father. Does that sound blasphemous to some of you? Will someone try to “pick on” me for saying that? Then notice what GOD inspired Jesus Christ to say, “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son JUST AS they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:22-23).

Brethren, the depth of honor, worship, adoration and everlasting LOVE and LOYALTY we should feel toward Jesus Christ is something which should constantly increase in our hearts and minds year by year. Each Passover season should renew our profound APPRECIATION for what Jesus Christ actually did for us, is *now* doing as our High Priest and Living Head and what He *will* do as our Elder Brother and King throughout all eternity.

The early apostles obviously had a tremendous feeling about Christ’s death and resurrection. *They were there!* They heard Jesus cry out, “It is finished” and saw the blood come pouring out of His body. They *knew*

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We Grow Through Trials

Editorial

by Roderick C. Meredith

WHY are these trials and tests always coming along? Why does God allow such things to afflict even His begotten children?

From personal experience and from the testimony of many others, I have come to understand that tests and trials are for our good. They sharpen us and stir us to think more deeply about ourselves, about our problems and about the meaning of life. They often motivate us to review our values—to prove all over again what is *really* important and what is not. They usually help us realize how small we are and how *much we need* GOD.

Near the end of his first evangelistic tour, the Apostle Paul no doubt meditated on the fact that he had been thrown in jail, beaten, run out of town and even stoned and left for dead at one point. So as he wound up this tour he told the brethren in Antioch, “We must through *many tribulations* enter the Kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Certainly Paul and Barnabas must have been moved to cry out to God over and over as these trials and tests came upon them along the way. I personally remember that on the early baptizing tours in the 1950s, many of us had to pray over and over again for God’s protection and His deliverance as we were often threatened by bad weather, irate unconverted mates or difficult driving conditions. It did, without question, keep us “on our toes” and also *on our knees*.

The Apostle James was inspired to write, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2–4). Notice that God wants us to learn *patience*. Most of us usually want what we want, and we want it NOW! God is working with us, fashioning and molding us and helping us come to truly understand and surrender to HIS will. Then He can use us in His Family and in His Kingdom for all eternity. Then we will learn to think like He thinks and to act like He acts and be truly capable of ruling over cities and nations under the Living Jesus Christ.

Peter describes how we are “kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5). Then Peter states: “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (vv. 6–7).

When trials and tests come—as they always do—it is vital that each of us has the *right reaction* to these trials. We can allow ourselves to become upset, perhaps be angry at circumstances, at others, at ourselves or even at GOD. Or, on the other hand, we can so motivate ourselves and guide our minds so that these trials drive us closer to God, cause us to spend more time on our knees praying, meditating and beseeching God to help us truly understand *His* purpose and to be

more sensitive to *His* will in every possible way. We can be motivated to study the Bible more fervently. With a fresh perspective, we may be brought to the place where we really, truly, genuinely *seek* God’s CORRECTION as we study and pray. We may be softened so that our own SELF-will is far less prominent in our thoughts and actions.

If we can humble ourselves and truly grow spiritually through the trials and tests which God allows, we will find ourselves far more GOD-centered. We will learn to carefully, prayerfully seek *His* direction in every phase and facet of our lives. We will constantly ask ourselves, “How would Jesus Christ respond to this situation?” Then, instead of *imagining* how Jesus would respond—as so many professing Christians in the world do—we will honestly, open-mindedly *study* God’s Word to see how Jesus and His faithful servants *did* respond in circumstances similar to our own. Then we should ask God for the faith and the humility to “go and do likewise.”

Even King David, the man after God’s own heart, had to learn by suffering again and again. David wrote, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word. You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes. The proud have forged a lie against me, but I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart. Their heart is as fat as grease, but I delight in Your law. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes” (Psalm 119:67–71).

The afflictions God permitted to come on King David brought him to a depth of humility that was pleas-

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FEAST ON THE BREAD OF LIFE

By John Ogwyn

Jesus Christ declared to a great crowd of His listeners, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). These words were spoken at one of the early Passover seasons of Jesus’ ministry (v. 4). They puzzled His hearers then and they have puzzled many others since.

Christ went on to enjoin His followers, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world” (v. 51). As we approach the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, it is very important that we should deeply understand the message that Jesus Christ was conveying.

In Exodus 12 God commanded the Israelites to observe the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread forever. Prior to the Days of Unleavened Bread they were to remove leavening and leavened products from their homes (vv. 15, 19). Throughout this entire seven day festival they were to avoid eating leavened products (v. 15).

However, this was not the “Feast of No Bread at All.” It was the Feast of *Unleavened* Bread! There was a replacement provided for the leavened bread that was customarily eaten (v. 20). It was a bread made without yeast. Yeast is what causes the giving off of carbon dioxide during the bread making process that makes the bread dough puff up or expand. The ancient Israelites used sourdough to put yeast into their bread dough. Today we most commonly use packages of dried yeast in baking, or we produce the same result with the use of baking powder or baking soda.

Passover is the fourteenth day of the first month and therefore not one of the seven days of the Unleavened Bread festival (Leviticus 23:5–6, Numbers 28:16–17). Yet at the Passover service, both anciently and today, only unleavened bread is to be used (Exodus 12:8). There is an important reason. At His final Passover supper with His disciples, Jesus Christ explained that the unleavened bread which He blessed and broke was symbolic of His own body (Matthew 26:26). The Passover, centering on the lamb anciently and upon the bread and the wine today, points toward Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.

The Apostle Paul explained in I Corinthians 5:7–8 that since Jesus Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us, we are to keep the festival which follows in its true spiri-

tual significance. We are to understand that unleavened bread is illustrative of sincerity and truth. This, of course, points us once more right back to Jesus Christ. After all, He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

As we approach the Passover season, we should not only be focused on getting rid of the leavening in our lives, but also upon the necessity of feasting on the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ. At the Passover service and for the seven-day festival which follows, we are to be reminded of Jesus Christ by the unleavened bread that we put into our mouths.

We must feast on far more than mere physical bread products which are made without leavening agents. We must be spiritually feasting on what it symbolizes, Jesus Christ Himself. Seven is God’s number of completion and perfection. A festival of seven days reminds us that our partaking of Jesus Christ must be complete. This physical practice is to remind us of what must be part of our lives now and forever.

The metaphor of eating the Bread of Life points to the fact that we must become filled with Jesus Christ. How is this possible? A starting point would be to examine some of the purposes for which Jesus Christ said that He came.

Introducing His Ministry

In the fall of the year, about the time of His thirtieth birthday, Jesus Christ came to where John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing (Luke 3:23). This was in an area of the Jordan River about twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. A few weeks after being baptized, Jesus withdrew into the wilderness for forty days of fasting prior to beginning His ministry. At the end of that time Satan came and tempted Him. Christ resisted Satan’s blandishments.

In the aftermath of this, Jesus continued choosing His disciples. He introduced His public ministry in Jerusalem during the Passover season following His baptism. He taught in the temple, performed miracles, and, most dramatically, cleansed the temple. “And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple... And He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise’” (John 2:14–16).

The religious leaders were stunned. Yet Jesus proceeded to perform miracles that they couldn’t gainsay.

One of those very leaders, Nicodemus, came privately to Jesus and acknowledged, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher sent from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (John 3:2). After John the Baptist was put in prison in the late spring, Jesus and His disciples returned to Galilee. He began His Galilean ministry on Pentecost in His home synagogue in Nazareth.

Standing up to read, He opened the scroll of Isaiah to the section He wanted and proceeded to read the words, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18). He went on to tell His hearers that scripture was fulfilled that day (v. 21).

This section of scripture sets the tone for the rest of Christ’s ministry. It also sets the tone for today, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). To be filled with Jesus Christ means to be filled with the same message that He spent His time proclaiming. As we partake of the Bread of Life, we are being nourished by Jesus Christ and those things which He offered His hearers. Let’s briefly examine what Christ announced to the synagogue in Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry.

The Gospel to the Poor

Fundamentally, Jesus Christ came with a message. That message was the good news of God’s coming Kingdom (cf. Mark 1:14). It was a message of hope in a world where things looked very hopeless. Judea was a province of the mighty Roman Empire. In addition, the despotic Herod family exercised direct rule under the Romans. The people were ground down by oppressive taxes and harsh rulers. There was no relief in sight.

In the midst of poverty and hopelessness, Jesus of Nazareth came with a message of hope. There was coming a world government that would displace the Romans and the Herod family. It was the same Kingdom that was announced by the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures. The time was at hand for people to understand what that Kingdom was all about. Jesus explained to His hearers that they could actually **inherit the Kingdom** as children of God, **God’s very heirs**. His message went far beyond anything the religious leaders of the day understood.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained the kind of character that was required of those who wished to be the heirs of that kingdom. Throughout the rest of His ministry He expounded those same points over and over in different contexts.

To partake of Jesus Christ means to partake of the hope that He came to proclaim. His whole life was built around the reality of the Kingdom of God. It was the “pearl of great price” whose value far outshone everything else. In fact, He exhorted His listeners that they should be prepared to give up everything in order to achieve an inheritance in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 13:44–45). How real is that Kingdom to us? How brightly does it shine in our mind’s eye?

The Apostle Paul was one who truly feasted on Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. “But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:8–11).

An Offer of Healing

Healing was a big part of the ministry of Jesus Christ. It was tangible evidence, not only of God’s power, but also of His grace and compassion. In fact, Christ explained to His disciples at His final Passover meal with them that the bread which He blessed and broke symbolized His body, broken for us (I Corinthians 11:24). Many years later, the Apostle Peter explained that our healing was made possible by Christ’s sacrifice. His body was broken and beaten in our behalf, “...by whose stripes you were healed” (I Peter 2:23).

The miraculous healing of our physical infirmities and ailments is a wonderful blessing. It is, however, a temporary physical benefit, for this physical body is temporary.

In His statement in Nazareth, Christ emphasized a side of healing that we don’t always focus upon. He talked about healing “the brokenhearted.” This term, “brokenhearted,” means literally those who are crushed or bruised in mind or spirit. Jesus Christ came not only to heal the outward ailments that could be seen of others—as He demonstrated throughout His ministry—but also to heal the inward infirmities of the heart and mind. The word for healing in the Hebrew language comes from *shalom*. It carries the connotation of peace and wholeness.

To partake of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, includes partaking of the release that He offers from the inner hurt and turmoil that debilitates so many of us. We live in a world of fear, sorrow, and pain. Significantly, the first place those words are mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 3, where God explained to Adam and Eve the consequences of sin. Healing, whether physical or emotional

and mental, is evidence of God's power to forgive sin and to ameliorate its aftermath.

Many different things in our lives have contributed to the inner hurts and pains that we've all suffered. The good news is that we can have release. Christ announced that one of the reasons for His coming was to heal those who were crushed and bruised in their inner being. To feast on the Bread of Life leads to being filled with the inner peace that confidence in Jesus Christ and His love makes possible. The faith that flows from the deep realization of Christ's love and power is what makes healing of every sort possible.

While pain and sorrow won't be totally and permanently banished from this world until the time of the New Heavens and New Earth spoken of in Revelation 21:4, we can experience a foretaste now. An inner peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7) is available to us in this age. The Apostle Paul, though languishing in Roman imprisonment when he wrote Philippians, had come to be filled with that inner peace. He was filled with peace and wholeness because he was first filled with Jesus Christ. His life was one of feasting on the Bread of Life.

Gaining New Sight

John 9 records one of the most remarkable of Christ's many miracles, the healing of a man who had been blind from birth. This event, which took place on the Last Great Day (cf. John 7:37), symbolized the time when spiritual blindness is going to be removed from all mankind.

Physical sight is very important, but spiritual sight is far more so. It is what enables us to see the truth of God. We live in a world of spiritual darkness, but Jesus Christ came as the Light of the World. It is that light which makes spiritual sight possible.

To perceive ourselves accurately, as well as to perceive God and His purpose properly, we need the gift of sight. It enables us properly to perceive and make sense of everything around us. Without the gift of spiritual sight, we can't even begin on our spiritual journey which leads to the Kingdom of God. If we are feeding on Jesus Christ, we are being filled with the source of sight and perception. The perfect example of His life and the clarity provided by His teachings combine with His indwelling presence to give the believer guidance in a world that is deceived by the Prince of Darkness.

Recovery of sight is only possible for those who are feasting on the Bread of Life.

Deliverance and Liberty

Freedom has always had a special allure for human beings. Jesus Christ said that He came to proclaim deliverance to the captives and to set at liberty those

who are oppressed. What is the captivity from which we need deliverance? What is it that has oppressed us and robbed us of liberty? In one simple word, the answer is sin!

Deceived theologians often seek to picture God's law as an enslaving shackle. They claim that Christ came to free us from the law, which they picture as a yoke of bondage. Nothing could be further from the truth!

The Apostle Paul deeply understood the deliverance and liberty that Jesus Christ came to offer. Notice his explanation given in Romans 6:16–18: "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves to righteousness."

Clearly, sin is the enslaving factor that has made captives of us all. But Jesus Christ came to triumph over sin and pay the penalty in our stead. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

There is only one way out from under the death penalty exacted by sin. We are reminded of that one way every Passover when we partake of the symbols of our Savior's sacrifice. No amount of future good deeds on our part can ever atone for sin. Only the shed blood of Jesus Christ can do so.

The whole world is held captive by Satan the devil, that wicked spirit who works in the children of disobedience. However, Jesus Christ triumphed over Satan and overcame the world (John 16:33). Through Him, we may experience the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

To feast on the Bread of Life includes partaking of the forgiveness made possible by Christ's sacrifice. He has made it possible for us to be delivered from sin's hold on our lives.

If we are truly feasting on Jesus Christ, then we are being filled with hope, with inner healing, with clarity of vision, and with deliverance and liberty. We are being filled with that which will nourish and sustain us now and forever.

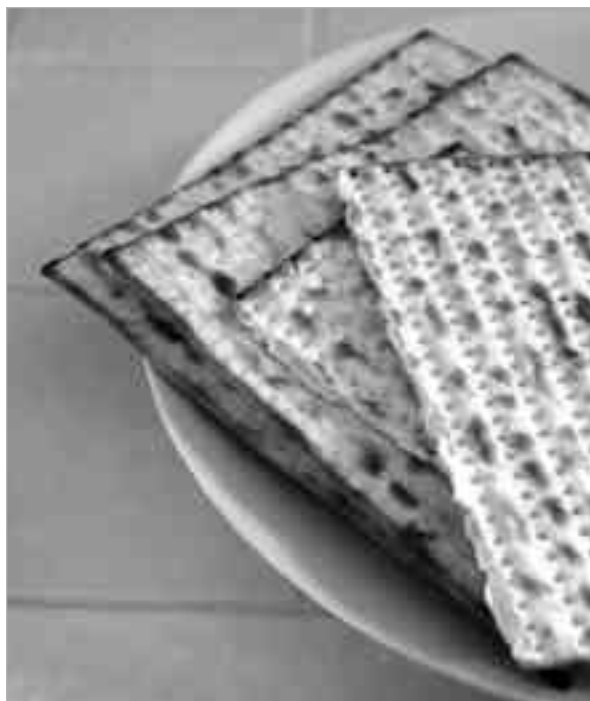
As we partake of the bread which will be offered to us at the Passover service and throughout the seven days of the unleavened bread festival which follows, let's be deeply conscious of what we're picturing. "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him," Jesus said. "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me... He who eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:56–58). □

WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS KEEP THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD?

By Robert J. Thiel

In Leviticus 23:5–6, the Bible states, “On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.” Similarly in Exodus 12:19–20 it states, “For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations you shall eat unleavened bread.” Are these Days of Unleavened Bread to be kept now? Why would Christians want to keep them? What happens if they don’t?

The Bible shows that the Days of Unleavened Bread are connected to Passover (Leviticus 23:5–6; Exodus 12:19–20; I Corinthians 5:7–8). While most professing Christians are aware that I Corinthians 5:7 teaches that “indeed Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us”, they do not seem to literally observe the verse that follows. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Corinthians 5:8). Actually, most pro-



fessing Christians do not seem to be aware that they are supposed to keep any biblical feast. There are many reasons, though, to do so.

Romans 3:25 states, “in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.” Does this mean we are to continue in sin? Of course not! A few verses later Paul wrote, “On the contrary, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). So while most understand that the Passover pictures a remembrance of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice (I Corinthians 11:24–26), many seem to not understand that we are not to continue in sin. Why? Maybe one of

the reasons is that they do not observe the Days of Unleavened Bread.

In the world, leaven is all around. Not only is it in baked goods, it is now in many other products. Leaven spreads and causes crumbling in most items it becomes part of. In the Bible, leaven normally pictures malice, wickedness, and hypocrisy (I Corinthians 5:8; Matthew 16:6,12; Luke 12:1), while unleavened bread pictures sincerity and truth (I Corinthians 5:8). Leaven pictures the teachings of the Pharisees (Matthew 16:6,12; Luke 12:1) whom Jesus called hypocrites (Matthew 23:23,25,27,29). According to *Strong’s*, the Greek word Jesus

used that was translated as hypocrite means, “an actor under an assumed role.” The Pharisees were false religious leaders who pretended to keep God’s law, but really did not (Matthew 15:3–9). Jesus further described the Pharisees by saying, “you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matthew 23:28). Jesus thus tied leaven (the Pharisees’ teachings, Matthew 16:12) to false religion (being hypocrites) and sin (since “sin is lawlessness”, I John 3:4). In Exodus it states that the Days of Unleavened Bread, “shall be a sign to

you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth" (13:9). Keeping seven days of unleavened bread pictures that we are to live in sincerity and truth by keeping God's law—that we are not to continue in false religion, not to continue in sin.

Why seven days? In the Bible, God seems to use the number seven to show completeness. There are seven days in a week (Exodus 20:6), seven days of creation (Genesis 1), seven Churches in Revelation 2 and 3, seven candlesticks (Revelation 1:20), seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34), etc.

(Jude 4). In the next verse he ties this problem with deliverance (from Egypt) during the Days of Unleavened Bread (which should be kept as an annual reminder of sin and deliverance, Exodus 13:3–10, I Corinthians 5:8). "But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe" (Jude 5). In like manner, just because of the sacrifice of Jesus "God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25), he may afterward destroy "those who did not believe."

easier not to purge or remove all the leaven from our dwellings. But spiritually, by not keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread, many fail to understand that they have to live the way of life that Jesus taught—many accept a false outward religion! Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). By not keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread, many have fallen for a religion based upon traditions of men instead of God's commandments!

Believe it or not, Jesus ran into the same problem in His day. The religious rulers (the Pharisees) were condemned because "you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition" (Matthew 15:6). Although traditions of men say that Jesus condemned the Pharisees for keeping the law, the opposite is true. Remember that Jesus said to them that "inside you are filled with lawlessness and hypocrisy" (Matthew 23:28). Actually, they pretended that they believed the Bible, but taught that their understandings (hermeneutics in modern terms) were more important than the literal commands in the Bible (Mark 7:8–9). This problem exists even to our day. Many professing Christians believe God's laws and Holy Days are no longer in effect, even though one can find all ten commandments and the Holy Days observed by Christ's disciples after His crucifixion, and implicit in New Testament writings.

Now it is true that leaven is not always shown to be bad. Jesus even stated, "the kingdom of God... is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures till it was all leavened" (Luke 13:20–21). This parable seems to illustrate that, even though the leaven was at first hidden, in the future all will know the

"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8).

The seven Days of Unleavened Bread seem to picture that after our sins have been forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus (Romans 3:25, I Corinthians 5:7), that we are to no longer continue in the old ways but to walk in the true ways of the Bible (I Corinthians 5:8). The Days of Unleavened Bread help us to understand that sin is to be put out of our lives; throughout the year it reminds us that false religion is all around and needs to be avoided. People who do not keep the Days of Unleavened Bread are not reminded about false religion and sin through this symbol during the year; maybe they do not want to be.

Notice that Jude warned, "For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ"

How do you know if you truly have faith and believe? By doing what God says. James warned, "You believe there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead (James 2:19–20)? In a similar way Paul wrote, "for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Romans 2:13). Paul also warned, "For if we sin willfully after we have received knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation" (Hebrews 10:26–27).

Like the Old Testament (Exodus 12:19), the New Testament teaches us "Therefore purge out the old leaven" (I Corinthians 5:7). From a physical standpoint it is easy to not obey these teachings. Physically it is

Why Should Christians...

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Sin Of Disbelief

Could This Be Your Problem?

By Douglas S. Winnail

One of the most exciting concepts that many encountered as a result of their association with the Church of God was the *gospel* of the coming kingdom of God. Attending the annual Holy Days to learn more about the plan of God and the purpose of human life was important. The scriptural promise that the reward of true Christians is to rule with Jesus Christ when He returns was eye opening. The opportunity to restore this battered planet and re-orient human civilization to God's way of life was inspiring. Life, which for many had been empty, seemed to finally take on real meaning. Learning, growing and overcoming now had a purpose.

However, the turbulence in the Church during the last decade has affected the outlook of thousands of people. Many no longer attend the annual Holy Days—or even Sabbath services. They have returned to keeping holidays of pagan origin. Many now follow other gospels—of love, grace, or good works. Some have rediscovered the rituals of the Old Testament. For some the kingdom of God is here right now—for others it's only a metaphor. The preference today is to interpret the Bible for one's self. Confusion, disagreement and disbelief abound. Many have even become disillusioned with organized religion.

What about you? Have problems in the Church, division in the ministry and confusion in congregations weakened or shattered your basic beliefs? Do you still *believe* the gospel? Is God still working through His Church? Do you still want to be in the kingdom of God—or have you lost interest or changed your focus? Is it possible that you could be *disqualifying yourself* from the rewards God has promised to individuals specifically called to become the firstfruits of His family?

If you have grown skeptical and uncertain, there is a **fundamental truth** you need to remember: problems in the church do not change the gospel. Jesus Christ came “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” The *essence* of His message was “*repent, and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:14–15). The apostles conveyed the *same* message (Acts 2:38; 8:12–13). God's true Church will *still* be preaching that same gospel today. When a young lawyer asked Jesus what he had to *do* to inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God, Jesus said, “*keep the commandments*” (Matthew 19:16–22; Luke 10:25–37). Jesus' reference to the Ten Commandments would include the necessity to keep the weekly and the annual Sabbaths, as well as learning how to

love our neighbor. The Bible plainly reveals that God is only calling a *few* at this time to be the firstfruits in His kingdom (I Corinthians 1:26–29). To be called now to understand the gospel is a *unique and special* privilege (John 6:44, 65–66; I Peter 2:9–10). Peter urges us to “*make your calling and election sure*” (II Peter 1:10). The big question is *how* do we do this? How do we avoid becoming skeptical and cynical? Where do we look for the answers?

The Lesson of Israel

Many assume that the Old Testament is no longer relevant to New Testament Christianity—yet nothing could be further from the truth! Notice Paul's admonition to the early Church to *learn from* and *not follow* the unfortunate example of ancient Israel. You have to know the story to get the point of Paul's warning! The Israelites were chosen by God for a special purpose (Exodus 19:5–6). They saw God supernaturally deliver them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 4–14). They knew their promised reward was the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1; Exodus 3:8; Joshua 1:2). God had promised to be with them. Yet Paul recounts how these same Israelites provoked God to anger by departing from and rebelling against His instructions. As a result, “*they could not enter* in [into the promised land] **because of unbelief**” (Hebrews 3:7–19). The Israelites *lost their reward* because they sinned (v. 17). They *chose* not to believe God. An entire generation died in the wilderness because they lost their confidence in God and His promises. Paul's earnest plea is “let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest (attain the promised reward), *lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience*” (Hebrews 4:11).

The vital lesson for us is to understand what the *sin of unbelief* involved! *What* did the Israelites do that so angered God that they lost their promised reward? *What* did they do that was *so bad*? Paul does not elaborate on the details, but the Old Testament does—and the details are instructive and applicable to us today! We can learn important lessons from the costly mistakes of the Israelites—if we recognize that we, too, have the same tendencies. But just what are the *signs and symptoms* of disbelief?

A description of Israel's provocative actions is found in Numbers 13 and 14. It is worth reading. Moses sent men to search out the Promised Land. On their return they reported their findings. Most described a bountiful land, but said

it would be *impossible* and *futile* to proceed because the people there were too big and too powerful to conquer. These *gloomy* and *negative* reports stirred up the people. The entire nation of Israel was *angered* and *disturbed*. Joshua and Caleb tried to remind the people to remember and trust in God's promises, but their admonitions fell on deaf ears! The people became *cynical* and *sarcastic*, *grumbling* and *complaining* against Moses and his leadership. They *accused* him of leading them to disaster and death in the wilderness. They proposed selecting new leaders and returning to Egypt where they at least had food to eat. They even wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb for urging them to remember and follow God's instructions.

These were the *actions of disbelief* that angered God. Israel had *seen* God's power. They *knew* they were a chosen people. They *understood* what their promised reward was to be, yet they were *disinherited* and *denied entrance* to the Promised Land because they *chose* not to believe God. They lost confidence in God's ability to guide His chosen leaders and bring to pass what He had promised. In rejecting Moses' leadership, God said the Israelites had *rejected Him!* (Numbers 14:11). It was for this *cynical attitude* and *repeatedly doubting* and testing God that an entire generation wandered for forty years and died in the wilderness—*never having received* the promised reward.

A Lesson for Today

But was this cynical attitude of disbelief limited just to the Israelites of old? Hardly! This is a *human problem* we all have to wrestle with and overcome. Cynical people are critical of others, pessimistic, skeptical, complaining, fault-finding, distrustful, depressed, and disbelieving. They are lacking in faith and trust, not optimistic, not confident, not sure, not joyful or cheerful. Bible prophecy reveals this *same* attitude will be prevalent as we approach the end of the age. Peter writes, "*scoffers* will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts [following their own ideas]...they willfully forget" (II Peter 3:3–5). Peter states such individuals will promote "destructive heresies" and use "deceptive words" that will *lead many astray* and cause people to turn against the truth (II Peter 2:1–3). He describes these cynical individuals as "presumptuous, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries" (2:10). They will undermine the faith of anyone who listens to their ideas and opinions.

Paul writes similarly, "in the last days *perilous* times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves [their own ideas, etc]...proud, *blasphemers*...lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a *form* of godliness but *denying* its power...from such people *turn away!*" (II Timothy 3:1–5). He also states, "the time will come when

they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (II Timothy 4:1–5). Paul and Peter are essentially saying that the cynical attitudes of disbelief that plagued the ancient Israelites will also create problems at the end of the age. If we fail to recognize this we, too, could lose our reward!

Even Patriarchs and Apostles

It is tempting to assume that only the weak and those not really called will be caught up in such cynical attitudes. However, the Scriptures warn against making such an assumption. Most of the prominent biblical characters had bouts with cynicism. Abraham, in his old age, laughed out loud when God promised him a son. God named the son Isaac (meaning laughter) to remind Abraham of his skepticism and disbelief. Moses made so many excuses when God told him he would be used to deliver Israel from Egypt that God chose to use Aaron as the spokesman (Exodus 4). David wrestled with the temptation to become cynical (see Psalm 73).

Jesus had to deal with skepticism—even among men He chose to become Apostles. In Jesus' hometown *disbelief* limited what He could do. People could only see him as the kid down the street, the carpenter's son. They *couldn't believe* He was the Messiah spoken of in the Scriptures (Matthew 13:53–58). Jesus told His disciples their inability to heal a child was due to *their unbelief* (Matthew 17:14–21). When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection these same disciples *refused to believe* her eyewitness account (Mark 16:9–14). The *doubts* of Thomas, another disciple, are legendary (John 20:24–29). However, God used these same individuals—as they were able to overcome their doubt and cynicism.

Banishing Doubts

How do we effectively battle cynical attitudes? How do we overcome doubt and pessimism? The solution involves getting our perspectives straightened out. David learned this vital lesson. He writes, "I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked...when I thought how to understand this it was too painful for me—*until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end*" (Psalms 73:3,16–17). David gained a valuable perspective when He looked to God and His word for understanding. David came to realize "the entirety of Your word is true" (Psalms 119:160). He described God's word as "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (119:105). David's cynicism evaporated as he learned to trust in God and His instructions. Jesus told

His disciples that God's word "is truth" and that a knowledge of the word of God will set us free—from doubt and fear (John 17:17; 8:32). We, too, can share that experience if we study and *believe* what God has inspired in the Bible.

Many have become discouraged and disillusioned over problems in the Church, yet Jesus promised "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). God's Church *will* continue to exist, although it is prophesied to be small (Luke 12:32), scattered (John 16:32), and persecuted (Matthew 24:9). True Christians must endure and persevere to receive their reward (Matthew 24:13; Revelation 3:10–11). They must hold on faithfully to what they have been taught (Titus 1:9) to avoid losing their crown. Christians must *resist* becoming critical, skeptical and cynical. We cannot give in to this type of temptation. We must *believe* God and *act* on that belief.

Personal trials can also be difficult. It is easy to become pessimistic, yet here again the challenge for us is to *believe* what God has promised. Paul writes "we *know* that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Can we *trust* God on this? Have you seen this work in your life? Paul told the church in Corinth, "God is *faithful*, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13). Will we choose to *believe* God, or will we blame God for trials—as Satan tried to get Job to do (Job 2:9)? Job did not give in to this temptation. Trials can help us grow and build character—and faith—if we understand this is part of God's purpose and we respond accordingly (James 1:2–4).

The cure for cynicism is developing faith and trust in God and His word. We are told "*without faith* it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must *believe* that He is, and that He is a *rewarder* of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). It takes courage and determination to seek and trust in God—especially in an age of skepticism and disbelief. Jesus told His disciples if they would ask, seek and knock that God *would* hear and respond (Matthew 7:7–8). Scripture states, "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (II Chronicles 16:9). God wants us to develop faith in Him. Chapter 11 of Hebrews provides a list of individuals who developed that kind of faith. It merits study.

Christian Leaders

Christians are called to become leaders in the kingdom of God and to rule on this earth with Jesus Christ

(Daniel 7:27; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 5:10). Part of the challenge of becoming a Christian involves coming out of this world and leaving negative ways of thinking behind (II Corinthians 6:11–18). Our goal is to develop the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5–6). Real Christians are learning to exercise the fruits of God's Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, *faithfulness*, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). They are determined to *add* to their faith such qualities as virtue (courage, confidence, resoluteness), knowledge and discernment so they can function effectively as members of God's governing family (II Peter 1:5–11). Christ-like individuals are positive, objective and optimistic. They are inspiring to be around. They are principled, focused, caring and solution-oriented. They are not negative, skeptical, critical and cynical.

Effective leaders must *develop the courage to reject cynicism*. One authority on leadership has observed, "you can't indulge in the luxury of cynicism and still expect to build the trust and optimism needed to inspire effective teams of people who make a difference" (Bethel, *Making a Difference: Twelve Qualities That Make You a Leader*, 1990). This same author notes that "cynicism... requires no courage... doesn't solve problems, expand relationships, or provide positive energy for the tasks we face." Anyone who aspires to real and effective servant leadership must develop a positive, confident, constructive, cooperative outlook on life.

The American poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once wrote, "people don't seem to realize that their opinion of the world reflects their character." Godly character is not critical, skeptical and cynical. It is positive, confident and optimistic. This was the "*different spirit*" that God saw in Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 13:30; 14:6–9, 24). Paul emphasizes this same theme in his advice to the Philippians, "finally, brethren, whatever things are true... noble... just... pure... lovely... of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—*meditate on these things*" (Philippians 4:8).

God is looking for individuals who are developing the mind and character of Jesus Christ to be leaders in His coming Kingdom. If we allow ourselves to doubt God, become skeptical of His promises, critical of His Church and leaders, distrustful of brethren and pessimistic about the future—we are on our way to losing out on our promised reward. Let's not disqualify ourselves. Let's learn from the Israelites. Let's not make the same mistake they made of becoming cynical and committing the sin of unbelief. Let's ask God to help us recognize our shortcomings, see how to change and grow to become positive and powerful leaders He can use to re-educate this world. Let's *believe* God and *trust* in his word! □

Deleavening The Corners of Our Minds

By John H. Ogwyn

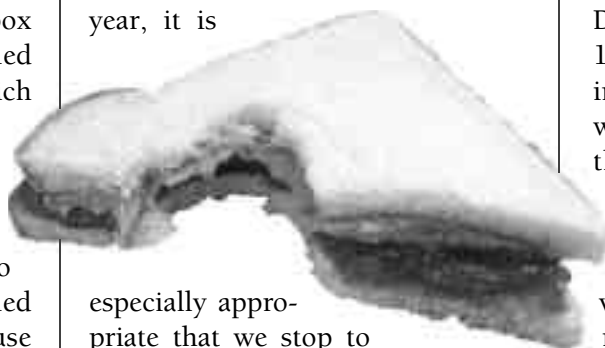
In the days when our two sons were young, preparing for the Days of Unleavened Bread was often quite an adventure. My wife would find bits of leavening in places you wouldn't normally expect. There were remains of cookies in the bottom of the boys' toy box and even the occasional petrified remnant of a peanut butter sandwich under a bottom shelf in a corner of their closet.

Most of us who have raised children in the Church have our own unusual unleavening tales to tell. As the Days of Unleavened Bread approach, general house cleaning is on our priority list. We clean our homes and, in the process, search into various corners and cubbyholes looking for bits and pieces of leavening. The scripture enjoins us that for seven days no leavening is to be found in our dwellings (Exodus 12:19).

Leavening, an agent such as yeast or baking soda which causes bread to rise, is used in the Bible to symbolize sin during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Paul made this analogy plain in I Corinthians 5:8 when he compared leaven to malice and wickedness. He emphasized to the Corinthian Church that just as they were unleavened in their homes, so were they to be unleavened in their lives. He went on to enjoin them to keep the Feast, not only physically, but also spiritually.

As the spring festivals approach, God's people give a lot of thought to

the subject of sin. We focus on the Passover and how Jesus Christ died to pay for our sins. We prepare for the Days of Unleavened Bread in which we picture getting rid of sin and replacing it with righteousness. At this time of year, it is



especially appropriate that we stop to meditate on the question of sin and where it is hidden in our lives.

We all know what sin is, right? After all, I John 3:4 makes plain that sin is the transgression of God's law. While this is the most simple and succinct definition of sin found in the Bible, there is much more to be said on the subject. Just as we examine the hidden corners in our homes to find leavening, so we must examine the hidden corners of our lives to find sin that is still lurking. There is a lot more to the matter of sin than a mere superficial glance may reveal. Let's look more closely at what the Bible reveals about sin.

Sins of Indifference

One of the best known stories in the Bible is that of the Good Samaritan. The account is given in Luke 10. A lawyer was attempting

to trip up Jesus Christ by asking certain questions.

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" he queried. "Well, you're a lawyer," Christ responded, "what does the Torah say?"

The lawyer replied by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. The verse in Deuteronomy instructs us that we are to love God with our whole heart and soul while the verse quoted from Leviticus exhorts us to love our neighbor as ourself.

After the lawyer quoted the verses, Christ responded in the affirmative and told him that if he truly did that, he would live. That wasn't the end of the exchange, however. The lawyer, we're told, wanted to justify himself. In other words, he had no desire to make real changes in his life, he simply wanted an excuse to remain the way that he was. "And just who is my neighbor?" he then inquired of Jesus.

Christ proceeded to tell him a story about a man who was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho and was robbed, beaten, and left for dead by the roadside. Three different travellers happened by. The first was a priest, the second was a Levite, and the third a Samaritan. The priest and the Levite looked but declined to become involved. The Samaritan, moved with compassion, stopped and rendered aid. "Who was a neighbor to the man who had been beaten and robbed?" Jesus demanded of the lawyer. The obvious answer, which the lawyer was forced to admit, was

that the Samaritan who stopped and helped was the only one who showed himself a neighbor. Christ then enjoined the lawyer to go and do likewise.

What was the sin of the priest and the Levite? Neither of them participated in the beating or the robbery. They didn't harm the injured man. Yet clearly, according to Jesus Christ, their actions hadn't met the requirements of a holy, righteous God. Simply put, the priest and the Levite were guilty of the sin of indifference. They didn't care!

In another well-known account, this one found in Matthew 25, Christ told of His future coming in power and glory when He would begin the process of judging the nations. This time of judgment will last throughout the Millennium and the White Throne Judgment period. Christ likened His role to that of a shepherd dividing the sheep from the goats.

In this account, Christ placed the righteous on His right hand and invited them to enter into life. He told them that this was because when He was hungry they had fed Him, when He was thirsty they had given Him something to drink, and when He had been sick and in prison they had visited Him. He then turned to those on His left hand and told them to go into the lake of fire because they hadn't fed Him when He had been hungry or given Him a drink when He had been thirsty, neither had they visited Him. Both groups had a common response to Christ's statements. "When did we respond to you that way," they asked. "Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me," Christ replied.

As does the parable of the Good Samaritan, this account illustrates the seriousness of the sin of indifference. It's not enough for us to mere-

ly refrain from robbing or killing our neighbor, we must actively show love and kindness to others. The spirit of God's law requires far more than merely the avoidance of actively harming someone else.

As we examine the closet corners of our lives, we must examine for sins of indifference. They violate, in principle, all of the commands that hang on the simple statement that we are to love our neighbor as ourself.

Sins of Pride

King Uzziah of Judah came to the throne when he was only sixteen years old. He went on to become one of the most outwardly successful rulers of the southern kingdom.

From early in his reign he pursued an aggressive policy that secured his own borders and brought traditional enemies to bay. He put together a sizeable, well equipped army. He fortified Jerusalem, placed fortified garrison cities among the Philistines, and forced the Ammonites to pay annual tribute.

He expanded the economic prosperity of the nation by digging a series of wells that opened new opportunities of cattle raising and agriculture. The entire nation had peace at home and respect abroad.

II Chronicles 26 tells the story of King Uzziah. In verse 15 we're told, "So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong." Setting the stage for this prosperity and success was the fact that, from the beginning of his kingship, Uzziah had sought to serve the God of Israel.

That doesn't represent the end of the story, however. In II Chronicles 26:16, we read of the turning point in Uzziah's life. "But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed

against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense." One of the greatest dangers of success is pride.

At the pinnacle of blessings and success we are all quite vulnerable to this insidious destroyer, pride. Pride is what turned Lucifer into Satan. It has spiritually destroyed many who seemed on the road to great success.

In Uzziah's case, he took to himself the prerogatives of the priests. Israel's priesthood consisted only of those men who were direct descendants of Aaron. The priests were the only ones permitted by God to enter the Holy Place of the Temple and to perform the rituals outlined in the Law. One of those rituals consisted of burning incense on the altar that stood in front of the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

Uzziah became focused on his greatness as Judah's most successful king. He lost sight of the fact that he was subject to God's law just like everyone else. No one is so important as to be above the law!

The High Priest Azariah and eighty other faithful priests confronted the king in the temple. "You must leave immediately," the high priest demanded, "you're not a priest and it isn't lawful for you to be here!" The king's response was to become enraged at the priest for addressing him that way. When his anger flared at the correction he had received, a remarkable thing suddenly happened. As the priests watched in horror, Uzziah's face became leprous. As the now-frightened king recognized what was occurring, he quickly withdrew from the temple. For the remainder of his life he was a leper and had to live apart from others. His son Jotham became regent in his stead. Uzziah's life ended in loneliness and obscurity because this great con-

quering king was himself conquered by pride.

Pride leads to presumptuous sins. It also serves as a roadblock to accepting correction. When any of us presume to set ourselves in a position that God hasn't chosen to give us, we are on very dangerous ground. We must all search the drawers and closet corners of our lives for hidden pride that could be the key to our undoing.

Compromise and Faithlessness

When fear rather than faith rules our life, it leads us to compromise

the astounded Jeroboam. The prophet went on to explain that God was going to make Jeroboam king over ten of the tribes of Israel after Solomon's death. Because of His previous promise of an everlasting dynasty to King David, God was going to preserve Solomon's dynasty over Judah. However, Jeroboam was told that if he would be faithful and obedient to God, God would also establish his dynasty forever.

Evidently Solomon must have heard about some of this, for he became suspicious of Jeroboam. As a result, Jeroboam had to flee to Egypt to preserve his life. Only after

ple travelling to Jerusalem year after year to attend God's festivals, he was troubled. "In time, they'll become nostalgic for 'the good old days,'" he mused. "They'll think back longingly to the time when everyone was together as one nation. Some day they will simply get rid of me so that they can reunite with Judah." The more he thought about this possible scenario the more persuaded of it he was and the more he worried.

After talking it over with his advisors, Jeroboam came up with a plan to prevent this from happening. I Kings 12 explains that he called the people together and proposed some changes. "It's too hard for you folks to have to go all the way to Jerusalem to worship God," he told the Israelites. Jeroboam then told them that there would now be two centers of worship for the ten tribes. One would be in the northern part of his kingdom at Dan and the other in the southern part at Bethel. Additionally, he told them, there would be a golden calf set up at each location. New priests were appointed by him who were not from the sons of Aaron. I Kings 12:31 tells us that they were the lowest of the people. They were men willing to preach whatever Jeroboam paid them to preach. In addition, he changed the date of the Feast of Tabernacles from the seventh month to the eighth month, undoubtedly under the guise of offering greater convenience.

Jeroboam's compromises with the truth of God were motivated by fear. They were self-protective strategies based upon his apprehension about what the future might hold. While his concerns were certainly understandable from a human standpoint, they left God entirely out of the picture. The same God who had

When fear rather than faith rules our life, it leads us to compromise with what we know is right. "For whatsoever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

with what we know is right. "For whatsoever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Perhaps one of the most vivid illustrations of faithlessness and compromise is the account of Jeroboam, the first king of the House of Israel. From I Kings 11 we learn that Solomon displeased God in his later years. As a result, God allowed adversaries to rise up and trouble him.

In this context we're introduced to Jeroboam, a very industrious young Ephraimite who was the son of a widow. Solomon became so impressed with Jeroboam's ability that he made him governor of the tribe of Ephraim. One day, on his way out of Jerusalem, one of God's prophets accosted him. Ahijah the Prophet came up to Jeroboam, asked to see his new coat and then proceeded to rip it into twelve pieces! "Take ten of these," he told

Solomon's death was he free to return to Israel.

Upon King Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam succeeded to the throne. A delegation from all of the tribes came to him and demanded a reduction in the high taxes that Solomon had levied. Rehoboam, ignoring the counsel of the older, wiser men, refused to heed the people's request and decided to show that he was "in charge." The result was that the ten northern tribes refused to acknowledge him as king and chose the newly returned Jeroboam as their king. This event produced a split between Israel and Judah that has endured to this day.

So far, half of what God had promised Jeroboam through the prophet had come to pass. Now he was king over the ten tribes. However, as he thought of the peo-

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Prepare Now

For The FEAST OF TABERNACLES

By Don Davis

Even before the ink was dry on the incorporation papers of the Living Church of God, members were asking, “Where will the Feast sites be for 1999?” Indeed, attending the Feast of Tabernacles is the highlight of the year for God’s people. If we are growing in grace and knowledge, the reality of the Kingdom of God becomes ever clearer to us as we gather together each fall to celebrate our part in God’s plan and to look forward to the establishment of God’s government here on earth.

But why does God give such emphasis to this year-end milestone on the Holy Day calendar? How should we be preparing for this important time, and how should we observe it when it arrives?

We read in Leviticus: “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it’” (Leviticus 23:34–35).

We then notice that although only the first and last days are “holy time”, God says we should be at the Feast for all eight days: “For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it” (Leviticus 23:36).

For how long should we keep the Feast? “You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month” (Leviticus 23:41). Yes, God commands us to keep the feast for seven days each year, year after year, generation after generation — forever!

“You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 23:42–43). Notice that we are to leave our homes and live in temporary accommodations for the entire Feast. This reminds us that we are merely sojourners here on Earth.

But why does God so emphasize the importance of

our keeping the Feast of Tabernacles? What lessons are we to learn from it, and how should we prepare ourselves to celebrate it? “You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, *that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always*” (Deuteronomy 14:22–23). Yes, God has commanded our attendance at the fall Feast so we may learn to fear the LORD our God *always*.

Notice that part of God’s instruction to us is to prepare a tithe of our annual increase to pay our expenses traveling to and staying at the place where God places His Name: “But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household” (Deuteronomy 14:24–26).

God did not say that we do not have to attend if the site is too far away. In the Millenium, people will come to Jerusalem for the Feast from every nation; they will not be able to complain that the site is too far distant. Yes, except for severe health reasons, all God’s people should attend, and He expects us to set aside a tithe for our expenses. In past years, some have excused themselves to return to work during the Feast, or have left early to get back to school. A few have attended only the morning service on the Last Great Day, so they could get an early start rushing back into the world. Yet the Last Great Day is holy to God and should be *entirely* and *reverently* observed until sunset.

Properly saving our second tithe is one of the ways we show our Father that we do fear to violate His statutes and that we desire to fully honor Him at His fall festivals.

Arrangements for 1999

This year the Festival Office has had to start all over again arranging sites. All our previous records and files were unavailable to us. It is a lot of work even in normal times, and in our exceptional circumstances some major changes are being made to accommodate the shorter-than-normal deadlines we now face. We only have enough people and ministers to run ten North American sites; four in Canada, five in the United States, and one in Mexico.

A number of international sites will also be available; information about these will be published in the near future.

Details about housing arrangements should be available before Pentecost, and will be announced in local congregations and through the Church web site. Please be aware that we must handle housing arrangements differently than in the past. We will only be able to publicize sites that offer us their meeting halls free, or for a reduced cost in exchange for our filling a block of rooms. To meet the needs of members who have special housing needs or transportation requirements, each area pastor will appoint someone in each congregation to act as Festival Coordinator to provide assistance. Additionally, the Church web site will provide links to Chamber of Commerce, Visitors' Bureau, and other such information for the Feast locations.

Since no commission arrangements or contracts with hotels, motels or realtors will be made, the Church will lose an important source of income that previously helped pay some Feast expenses. It thus becomes more important than ever that members send in their tithe of the tithe and excess second tithe donations, which can help cover these and other expenses in addition to helping needy brethren attend the Feast, as soon as is possible. Please, however, do NOT make your housing arrangements until we have been able to announce the preferred hotels, since our ability to obtain

free use of meeting halls may still depend on having enough brethren staying in the meeting hotel.

It is our privilege and our responsibility to fulfill God's admonition that all should: "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

God is preparing a great future and a place for each of us in His family. He has called us to learn how to rule and teach this world in the ways of peace and happiness. The Feast of Tabernacles is the best place to train for the awesome events to occur in the days and years just ahead.

The Feast gives us a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

Even after the Kingdom is here, the Feast of Tabernacles will still be observed and all nations will be required to attend. As we read in Zechariah:

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the

Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16-19).

Once the nations learn what God will teach them at the great fall festival, they will come to love and enjoy the Feast of Tabernacles as much as His people do today.

See you at the Feast! ☐

North American Feast sites and their respective Coordinators are currently as follows:

Tucson, Arizona:

Don Davis

Jackson Hole, Wyoming:

Ben Whitfield

Gatlinburg, Tennessee:

Bob League

Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri:

Gerald Weston

Panama City, Florida:

Randy Kobernat

Prince Edward Island:

Frank Best

Cranbrook, British Columbia:

Laurie Nyhus

Niagara Falls, Ontario:

Ken Frank

Montreal, Quebec (French):

Jacques Secours

Mexico:

Mario Hernandez

A Challenge To The Youth

By Rod McNair

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman... we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value." (Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*, December 23, 1776).

The writings of Thomas Paine so strengthened the hearts of the American colonies that General George Washington had *The American Crisis* read to the Continental troops during the Revolution. It was a time of testing, a time of sacrifice, and indeed a "time that tried men's souls." The Church of God goes through times of trial as well. And we know it's not just the parents and adults who are tried, but the youth in the Church, too. No matter what age we are, trials can compel us to prove what we may have taken for granted in the past. As the essayist said, "what we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly." I'd like to challenge you to use this recent crisis in the Church to pore more deeply into personal Bible study to determine what God's will is for you. It's never too early to start "proving all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) for yourself, as a youth, including the issues the Church has faced recently.

GOD'S WORK and GOD'S GOVERNMENT

Is your heart in the Work? Should you be concerned about "The Work?" One of the central issues of the recent crisis is, "Just what priority should the Work have in the Church?" If you haven't read Dr. Meredith's recent letters on this crisis, take the time to read them. Study the Scriptures he refers to. Read the articles that will come out explaining this issue. You need to know what priority the Work should have in your life! It's not too early to begin to get involved in the Work. Pray fervently for the growth of the telecast and the magazine. Pray for our leaders' health and boldness in preaching the gospel (Ephesians 6:18-19). Pour out your heart to God in prayer, as you watch world events and become aware of the problems facing our world today (Ezekiel 9:4). Contribute financially from a part-time job in tithes and offerings. As you do these things, you will be growing and developing yourself, and getting behind a global effort to warn the world of calamity and tell them of the Good News of a better one to come! What effort could be more exhilarating and personally expanding?

What about government in the Church? That's another big issue in the recent crisis. Our attitude towards government is very critical—no matter what our age. Again, Dr. Meredith has explained that God has always used one main leader, who has the primary influence, to whom we look and follow (as he follows Christ—I Corinthians 11:1). We have a wonderful opportuni-

ty to learn government the right way. In the world around us, all too often government is NOT wielded the right way. Whoever is "chief" should have the attitude of really caring for, listening to, and helping and serving others (Matthew 20:25-28). He has to make himself a servant—a "servant leader." Take the challenge to learn what servant leadership is for yourself. And then, in whatever situation you find yourself, baby-sitting a younger sibling, heading a project at school, or whatever, you can practice those principles Christ outlined for us.

Each generation, it seems, has had its unique challenges. In the Bible, Mordecai challenged Queen Esther to stand up for right, even in the face of personal danger, when he said, "Who knows whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14) God challenged Israel—and it stills rings true today—saying, "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap..." (Ezekiel 22:30) Dr. Meredith recently challenged us to "stand up and be counted!" in his emergency letter, dated November 21.

This challenge is not just for your parents. It's for YOU! Take the challenge. How deeply do you cherish what you have been given by God? It's never too early to start proving what you've been taught all these years, in your own Bible study. And then, stand up, in your own personal way, and "live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," (Matthew 4:4) not as a "summer soldier" or "sunshine patriot," but as a strong, steady, and committed youth in the Church of God! □

Report From The Treasurer

By Fred Dattolo

As you certainly know, the last few months have been quite a challenge! At Headquarters, with roughly half the staff we had before, we are not only keeping up with regular duties, but we are also rebuilding the office infrastructure. We have had to reinvent “from scratch” the programs, systems, procedures and policies to support preaching the Gospel and feeding the flock. During this time, we have had at least four generous individuals volunteering all day, almost every workday, to help us get started. Others have volunteered for days or weeks at a time — some coming from out of the area to do so! We are deeply grateful to all of them and to all of you for your part in helping revive God’s Work. It has been wonderful to behold.

Our “start-up” costs, especially after these first few months of heavy buying, are finally diminishing.

...with 77 percent of last year’s income, we can sustain the same level of output as before in preaching the Gospel and feeding the flock!

As you can imagine, it was quite a task (and quite an expense) purchasing video, audio, mailing and other production equipment, while also needing to acquire computers, printers, copiers, desks, chairs, filing cabinets and other furniture for 22 full-time staff. Fortunately, we were able to buy much of it (especially much of the furniture) used. As a “new” organization, we were also required to put down some hefty deposits with a few vendors in order to do business with them.

Our current income level is approximately 77 percent of what it was a year ago. Accordingly, we have limited payroll to roughly 65 percent of what it was

before. Yet when we count outside attorney fees and outside television production fees (which were formerly in-house), the equivalent payroll costs are near 72 percent of what they were a year ago.

Equivalent payroll needs to remain proportionately 5 percent below last year’s figure because many other costs have not decreased at all. These include such expenses as WGN, television tapes and duplicating, telephone and toll-free 800-number service, Sabbath hall rentals, third-tithe assistance and some insurance policies. Our office rent, however, is only half of what it used to be.

Thus, with 77 percent of last year’s income, we can sustain the same level of output as before in preaching the Gospel and feeding the flock! As long as we maintain at least our present level of income, our cash flow projections show that we should be able to live within our means.

We are at the time of the year when we normally begin to receive the tithe of second tithe. Traditionally, as originated by Mr. Armstrong, tithe of second tithe has been used to help pay the common expenses of conducting all the annual Holy Days. For the *spring* Holy Days, for example, we use tithe of second tithe to rent halls in which to meet, send ministers from Headquarters, purchase needed Passover supplies, and similar such expenses. If you are able to send in a tithe of your second tithe to help defray these festival costs that benefit all of us, it would be most appreciated!

Finally, we already hear of brand-new people being called to the Living Church of God! We look forward to the growth and hope to be able to preach the Gospel even more effectively than at present. We will try to keep the Headquarters staff as lean as possible, taking advantage of technology wherever possible to remain as efficient as we are able.

We appreciate your prayers in that regard and we are very thankful for what God has done so far. Thank you very much for your allegiance to His Work! □

Corners of Our Minds

(Continued From page 14)

made him king could certainly have preserved his dynasty.

When we follow our fears and try to protect ourselves rather than rely upon God, we inevitably embark upon the path of compromise. The truth is that we can't protect and preserve ourselves, but God is faithful and His promises stand sure! Jeroboam thought that his actions would enable his dynasty to hang onto power. In reality they were its death knell! His dynasty proved to be extremely short-lived, only surviving his death by a mere two years (I Kings 15:25–27). He had left God out of the picture and had acted from fear rather than from faith.

When we search the hidden crevices of the inner man for the crumbs of leavening, we must be on the lookout for our human fears and the compromises they produce. "The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

Sins of Unforgiveness

Ahithophel was one of King David's very closest friends. Most commentaries agree that the reference in Psalm 55:13 to the man David called "...my comrade, my own dear friend..." (NEB) was to Ahithophel. David further describes this friendship by saying in Psalm

55:14, "We were together in sweet fellowship, and went to God's house with the festal throng" (DeWitt).

Yet both Psalm 55:13–15 and Psalm 41:9 tell of David's betrayal by this man whom he trusted. As the

David's closest advisor, Ahithophel!

Simply put, Ahithophel never forgave David for what he had done to his granddaughter and her husband, Uriah. He must have felt deeply hurt by David's actions. That

When we follow our fears and try to protect ourselves rather than rely upon God, we inevitably embark upon the path of compromise.

Jerusalem Bible renders Psalm 41:9, "Even my closest and most trusted friend, who shared my table, rebels against me." John 13:18 quotes Jesus Christ at His final Passover applying this verse to the actions of Judas Iscariot.

Ahithophel, David's friend and most trusted advisor, joined with Absalom in his revolt. He was part of the conspiracy to overthrow David as king (II Samuel 15:12, 31). Why, after years of trusted friendship, would he do such a thing?

The answer is found in a careful comparison of two verses. II Samuel 11:3 tells us that Bathsheba, the woman with whom David committed adultery, was the daughter of Eliam. From II Samuel 23:34 we learn that Eliam was one of David's "mighty men" and that he was the son of Ahithophel. In other words, Bathsheba was the granddaughter of

hurt, however, turned to bitter resentment and festered on the inside for years. He could never seem to turn it loose!

It is easy to understand the depth of Ahithophel's hurt, but what did his lack of forgiveness do for him? It fed a resentment which turned him into a traitor to God's anointed king! He died as a hopeless suicide (II Samuel 17:23).

How many unforgiven hurts do we have lurking deep within us? If we don't get rid of them, they'll destroy us!

This year let's make sure that we don't only unleaven the corners of our closets. Most importantly, let's search out and remove the crumbs of leavening in the corners of our hearts and minds.

We can't do this spiritual unleavening on our own strength. But then we don't have to! God's power is available to us if we will only reach out to Him and truly seek His help. □

Why Should Christians...

(Continued From page 8)

true religion, which is consistent with Habakkuk 2:14, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." Thus, leaven may be a symbol of false religion now, but true religion in the future.

Although the Days of Unleavened Bread are first mentioned in the Old Testament, it is in the New Testament that we learn more fully that today's leaven

pictures false religion and sin. The New Testament shows the connection between Jesus' Passover sacrifice and the removal of sin from our lives. By keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread, Christians picture that they have heard the word of God, accepted the sacrifice of Jesus, tried to put the word of God into practice, and have symbolically put false religion and sin out of their lives. By keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread, Christians show that they are willing to obey God over the traditions of men. In conclusion, as it says in I Corinthians 5:8, "Therefore let us keep the feast." □

Editorial*(Continued From page 3)*

ing to God. These trials literally forced David to SEEK God even more in his daily life. For, being a man of God, David *knew* that his trials and afflictions were either directly caused or at the very least permitted by God for David's own good. Again, David wrote, "I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are

right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. (v. 75).

Are you and I as sensitive to God's will as was King David? Are we constantly and *sincerely* asking God to "purge" us from our sins and our own vain, selfish ways? Are we regularly meditating on the lessons we can learn from each and every trial and test that God allows in our lives? Are we constantly focusing on how much closer we can become to the true Jesus Christ

who now sits at God's right hand? How we can reflect *Him* more perfectly in every thing we think, say or do?

Let each of us really take *this* approach to the trials, tests and afflictions that come upon us. Let us understand more fully the Apostle Paul's inspired words, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). □

Dear Brethren *(Continued From page 2)*

He was dead. Yet, a few days later, they personally saw Him and talked with Him as He came and stood in their midst (John 20:19). So the then-converted and thus completely fearless Apostle Peter could say to the Jews, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:13-15).

Over and over we read in the book of Acts about the profound feeling the original apostles had for the death and resurrection of Jesus. Only by constant study, by heartfelt prayer and by deep MEDITATION on these things can we modern day Christians approach the feeling of *adoration* and WORSHIP toward Jesus Christ which those apostles felt. But, again, to be as close to Jesus as they were, we need to strive for this by zealously walking with Christ so that we can *fully* honor Him and the Father who sent Him to be our Savior and Living Head.

One of the most powerful "pre-Passover" scriptures is found in Philippians 2:5-11. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Truly we *are* to have Christ's mind of service and sacrifice. With God's help through His Holy Spirit, we *are* to develop the "footwashing attitude" of Christ in being willing to humble ourselves in order to serve. Remember that in verse 7 the expression "made Himself of no reputation" *should be* translated "emptied Himself." For in order to *serve* us, in order to DIE for us, Christ "emptied Himself" of the glory, the power and the majesty that He had shared with the Father from eternity. He did this in order that He could genuinely *understand* the human experience and the temptations and trials we go through in a personal sense and so become our "merciful and faithful High Priest" (Hebrews 2:17) so that He—now made human—could *suffer* and DIE for us as the ultimate Passover Lamb.

As we each file into the meeting hall this coming Passover evening and prepare to take the symbols of the bread and the wine, let us think and MEDITATE on these things. Let us THANK GOD that He was willing to sacrifice His beloved Son—His companion from eternity—in this way. And let us *thank Christ* that He willingly gave of Himself that we might someday join Him and the Father in the Kingdom of God. Let us also have absolute FAITH that our sins will be totally forgiven *if* we repent of our sins and accept the magnificent gift of total forgiveness, mercy and love that comes from God and from God alone.



Philippine Brethren Enjoy Year-End Escape!

Seventy brethren from the Metro-Manila and Cavite congregations enjoyed a very special Church outing from December 30 to January 1. The beautiful Villa Rosanna Beach Resort in Balayan, Batangas was the setting for the first year-end church activity of the Living Church of God in the Philippines. While children enjoyed swimming, older participants took advantage of the fresh air and clear skies, fellowshiping and strolling along the beach. On the second night, dinner was served around a bonfire under the moonlit sky. Games and a sing-along followed, as snacks of boiled peanuts and bananas were passed around while the children roasted corn on the cob over the bonfire embers. Activity planners and cooks Mr. and Mrs. Osillos were responsible for feeding the whole group almost non-stop! Everyone seemed to have a great time fellowshiping, serving, playing and simply being together. What a way to end the year!

—from a report by Cielo Buena

Baptisms

On Friday, March 5, 1999, two baptisms were held in Guelph, Ontario. Mr. Ken Frank baptized Mr. Douglas Rafus from Waterloo and Mr. Ron McAfee from Burlington. Welcome to them both!

Feast of Tabernacles 1999 in Penang, Malaysia

Penang, known as the Pearl of the Orient, is located on the northwestern coast of peninsular Malaysia. It is blessed with such a great variety of food that it is said that Penangites don't eat to live; they live to eat. Everywhere you go, hawker stalls are in abundance offering a diverse selection of local fare. This year the Feast of Tabernacles will be held in the Copthorne Orchid Penang hotel, located on a private seafront, 20 minutes from the city of Georgetown and 30 minutes from the international airport. Room rates begin at RM 75 per night. For further information, please contact the Feast Coordinator, Rajan Moses, M263 Perkuburan Cheras Batu 4, Jalan Cheras, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (email rajend@pc.jaring.my, phone/fax 603-930 1187)

Feast of Tabernacles 1999 in Ayr, Scotland

Brethren in the United Kingdom will be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in Ayr, Scotland. Meetings will be held in the Jarvis Caledonian Hotel. The site is easily reached from Prestwick Airport just five miles away, and Glasgow Airport 35 miles distant. Ayr Railway Station is approximately a half mile away. The double occupancy rate is £35 per person, which includes bed, breakfast and evening meal, full use of all hotel facilities free of charge (including indoor heated pool, whirlpool spa bath, sauna, solarium,

gymnasiums and steam room). Single rooms are charged at £45 per night. Children under 16 are free (except for meals) when two adults book, subject to availability.

There are many historical sites nearby, such as 18th century Culzean Castle, Loch Doon Castle, Georgian Rozelle House, Burns Cottage in Alloway, and Burns National Heritage Centre where you can experience "Tam O' Shanter", Robert Burns' famous poem.

There are 22 golf courses within a 20-mile radius, and many beaches.

Anyone who has not made book-

ings directly through Mr. Robert Storrier is asked to contact him immediately to confirm your reservations. He may be reached by email at Rstor55457@aol.com, or by phone/fax at 44-1698-263977, or by post at P.O. Box 9092. Motherwell, Scotland, ML12BA. Before you book your flight and/or accommodations you must register with the UK Office, otherwise you will not have the booking code entitling you to discounts at the hotel, and you will be unable to attend services. Please register quickly, as only 200 places are available.

Local Church Listings

UNITED STATES

Anchorage	AK	Video Group	
Homer	AK	Video Group	
Wasilla	AK	Video Group	
Birmingham	AL	Rand Millich	706-227-6895
		Carl Ponder	334-285-3265
Florence	AL	Bob League	615-641-3778
Huntsville	AL	Bob League	615-641-3778
Montgomery	AL	Rand Millich	706-227-6895
		Carl Ponder	334-285-3265
Fayetteville	AR	Karl Beyersdorfer	417-623-8888
Little Rock	AR	John Ogwyn	903-986-8117
		Davy Crockett	501-868-8760
		John Ogwyn	903-986-8117
Russellville	AR	Video Group	
Mena	AR		
Phoenix	AZ	Doug Winnail	602-572-8747
		Jim Nork	602-222-9400
		Gerald Shoquist	602-546-3773
		Gary Stein	602-975-0897
		Howard Stein	602-546-3773
Tucson	AZ	Doug Winnail	602-572-8747
		Phil Steagall	520-744-6453
Camp Verde	AZ	Bob McCann	520-567-0230
Arroyo Grande	CA	Video Group	
Eureka	CA	Don Haney	541-855-9872
		Michael Norris	707-445-1335
Fresno	CA	Gaylyn Bonjour	209-674-0229
Garden Grove	CA	Dibar Apartian	619-676-0886
		Rodger Bardo	714-270-4663
Los Angeles	CA	Jeff Fall	626-914-1474
		Hadden Pace	626-447-4476
		Ron Wheeler	415-892-3862
Novato	CA	Don Turk	619-325-3356
Palm Springs	CA	Don Haney	541-855-9872
Redding	CA	Jeff Fall	626-914-1474
Sacramento	CA	Roderick Meredith	619-673-7470
San Diego	CA	Video Group	
San Jose	CA	Video Group	
Sonora	CA	Video Group	
Denver	CO	Video Group	
Franktown	CO	Video Group	
Hartford	CT	Jim Arnaldo	508-393-6209
Washington	DC	Ken Frank	As Of July, 1999
		Ray Clore, II	703-591-4787
Boca Raton	FL	Ben Faulkner	813-684-1423
		Dexter Wakefield	407-627-2471
Jacksonville	FL	Randy Kobernat	850-894-9909
Live Oak	FL	Randy Kobernat	850-894-9909
Miami	FL	Ben Faulkner	813-684-1423
Ocala	FL	Ben Faulkner	813-684-1423
Pensacola	FL	Daniel Hall	334-626-0585
		Tony Smith	850-438-0785
		John Burquist	334-661-9086
Tallahassee	FL	Randy Kobernat	850-894-9909
Tampa	FL	Ben Faulkner	813-684-1423
		Ron Peterson	941-858-4090
Atlanta	GA	Rand Millich	706-227-6895
		Jack Lowe	770-474-8101
Blairsville	GA	Martin Fannin	423-675-2304
Macon	GA	Randy Kobernat	850-894-9909

Pearl City	HI	Harold Way	808-455-2761
Des Moines	IA	Gerald Weston	816-228-2035
Boise	ID	Byron Hartman	541-372-2210
Pocatello	ID	Mark Mendiola	208-238-0403
Chicago	IL	Paul Shumway	651-407-3636
		Gary Ehman	715-524-2218
		Irv Woelfle	309-266-3638
Peoria	IL	Dave Burson	517-699-4971
Fort Wayne	IN	Lambert Greer	502-228-5917
Indianapolis	IN	Dave Burson	517-699-4971
Plymouth	IN	Virgil Thompson	812-442-1303
Terre Haute	IN	Video Group	
Coffeyville	KS	Video Group	
Utica	KS	Video Group	
Wichita	KS	Video Group	
Berea	KY	Video Group	
Louisville	KY	Lambert Greer	502-228-5917
Alexandria	LA	Jon McNair	504-654-6797
Baton Rouge	LA	Jon McNair	504-654-6797
Lafayette	LA	Jon McNair	504-654-6797
Monroe	LA	Jon McNair	504-654-6797
		Don Wood	870-863-8512
New Orleans	LA	Jon McNair	504-654-6797
Shreveport	LA	John Harbison	903-796-0790
Boston	MA	Jim Arnaldo	508-393-6209
Salisbury	MD	Video Group	
Bangor	ME	Jim Arnaldo	508-393-6209
Detroit	MI	Dave Burson	517-699-4971
Kalamazoo	MI	Dave Burson	517-699-4971
Lansing	MI	Dave Burson	517-699-4971
Marquette	MI	John Blanchard	906-586-6834
Saulte St. Marie	MI	John Blanchard	906-586-6834
Minneapolis	MN	Paul Shumway	651-407-3636
Columbia	MO	William Oswald	573-657-4637
		Rod Reynolds	816-827-1320
Joplin	MO	Karl Beyersdorfer	417-623-8888
		Gene Hilgenberg	417-455-2057
Kansas City	MO	Gerald Weston	816-228-2035
		James Wells	816-358-9606
Rolla	MO	Rod Reynolds	816-827-1320
St. Joseph	MO	John Turner	816-387-9213
St. Louis	MO	William Oswald	573-657-4637
Amory	MS	Evo Walker	601-773-6137
Greenwood	MS	Daniel Hall	334-626-0585
		Jim Burson	601-262-7233
Jackson	MS	Video Group	
Laurel	MS	Daniel Hall	334-626-0585
Ocean Springs	MS	Daniel Hall	
Great Falls	MT	Arnold Lalum	406-265-4072
Helena	MT	Dana Glatz	406-442-0136
Kalispell	MT	Video Group	
Bozeman	MT	Video Group	
Asheboro	NC	Ken Frank	As Of July, 1999
		George Webb	336-993-5714
Asheville	NC	Martin Fannin	423-675-2304
Charlotte	NC	John DuBry	828-874-5164
Raleigh	NC	William Dobbin	919-832-7296
Bismarck	ND	Arlan Weight	701-255-2897
Omaha	NE	Gerald Weston	816-228-2035
Hammonton	NJ	Don Contardi	973-379-7184
		Dennis Chornomaz	609-653-0425

Morristown	NJ	Don Contardi 973-379-7184 Carl Klink 793-379-2640
Albuquerque	NM	Video Group
Des Moines	NM	Video Group
Reno	NV	Don Haney 541-855-9872
Brooklyn	NY	Don Contardi 973-379-7184 Roger Allgeyer 516-271-8785
Buffalo	NY	Don Contardi 716-638-7508
Corning	NY	Don Contardi 716-638-7508 Shawn McMillin 717-547-1501
Long Island	NY	Don Contardi 973-379-7184 Roger Allgeyer 516-271-8785
Rochester	NY	Don Contardi 973-379-7184 Ron Lilie 716-473-4722
Akron	OH	Lambert Greer 502-228-5917 Walter Warrington 330-325-7700
Cambridge	OH	Video Group
Cincinnati	OH	Lambert Greer 502-228-5917
Columbus	OH	Lambert Greer 502-228-5917 Charles Knowlton 614-964-0437
Dayton	OH	Video Group
Oklahoma City	OK	John Ogwyn 903-986-8117 Ray Reynolds 405-672-6965
Tulsa	OK	Karl Beyersdorfer 417-623-8888
Eugene	OR	Don Haney 541-855-9872
Medford	OR	Don Haney 541-855-9872 Fred Wittlake 541-855-6950
Portland	OR	Don Haney 541-855-9872
Mt. Pocono	PA	Don Contardi 973-379-7184
Philadelphia	PA	Don Contardi 973-379-7184 Dennis Chornomaz 609-653-0425
Anderson	SC	Rand Millich 706-227-6895 Ronnie Poole 864-968-9112 Buddy Wrenn 864-576-9460
Asheboro	SC	Video Group
Walterboro	SC	Lehman Lyons, Sr. 843-549-2985 Frank Frye 803-245-4752
Rapid City	SD	Video Group
Chattanooga	TN	Bob League 615-641-3778 Ron Laughland 615-851-7329
Crossville	TN	Bob League 615-641-3778
Knoxville	TN	Martin Fannin 423-675-2304 John Shelton 423-523-9332
Memphis	TN	John Ogwyn 903-986-8117 Davy Crockett 501-868-9860
Nashville	TN	Bob League 615-641-3778 Ron Laughland 615-851-7329
Abilene	TX	Video Group
Amarillo	TX	Video Group
Austin	TX	Keith Walden 512-244-5478 Randy Gregory 512-244-1863
Corpus Christi	TX	Keith Walden 512-244-5478 Bob Parker 512-387-9192 C.B. Short 512-853-2460
Dallas	TX	John Ogwyn 903-986-8117 Charles Haughee 903-887-8994
El Paso	TX	Video Group
Gladewater	TX	John Ogwyn 903-986-8117 Lynn Torrance 903-636-5218
Houston	TX	Keith Walden 512-244-5478 Ron McGowen 281-331-8930
Lufkin	TX	Larry Solomon 409-559-1145
Midland	TX	Video Group
Pampa	TX	Video Group
San Antonio	TX	Keith Walden 512-244-5478 Conway Slaughter, Jr. 830-560-1928
Temple	TX	Video Group

Salt Lake City	UT	Video Group
Gladespring	VA	Charles Lauderback 423-283-0394
Winchester	VA	Don Contardi 973-379-7184 Gerald Dulaney 540-662-3696
Williamsburg	VA	Don Contardi 973-379-7184 Ray Clore, II 703-591-4787 Michael McDaniel 804-526-5948
Everett	WA	Gary Ullrick 253-922-6917
Lake Stevens	WA	Video Group
Pasco	WA	Video Group
Quincy	WA	Video Group
Richland	WA	Video Group
Seattle/Tacoma	WA	Terry Graves 253-474-5807
Spokane	WA	Video Group
Tonasket	WA	Eldon Davis 509-486-4240
Green Bay	WI	Paul Shumway 651-407-3636 Gary Ehman 715-524-2218
Merrill	WI	Paul Shumway 651-407-3636 Gary Ehman 715-524-2218
Milwaukee	WI	Paul Shumway 651-407-3636 Gary Ehman 715-524-2218
Wisconsin Dells	WI	Paul Shumway 651-407-3636 Gary Ehman 715-524-2218
Bluefield	WV	Val Burgett 540-726-8020 Clyde Wolford 540-326-3051
Logan	WV	Val Burgett 540-726-8020
Ripley	WV	Edward Lee 304-372-3047
Craigsville	WV	Val Burgett 540-726-8020
Buffalo	WY	Video Group
Casper	WY	Video Group
Cheyenne	WY	Video Group
Hulett	WY	Video Group
Rawlins	WY	Ben Whitfield 307-324-7931
Wheatland	WY	Video Group

INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

Canberra	ACT	Bruce Tyler 011-61-6231-8166
Brisbane	QLD	Church with Host
Perth	WA	Ken MacLeod 011-61-08-9457-7624

BARBADOS

Christ Church		Video Group
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BELIZE

Belmopan		Video Group
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CANADA

Calgary	AB	Laurie Nyhus 780-484-7633
Edmonton	AB	Laurie Nyhus 780-484-7633 Stuart Wachowicz 780-466-1815
Kelowna	BC	Video Group 250-491-0024
Vancouver	BC	Video Group
Vancouver Is.	BC	Video Group
Fredericton	NB	Video Group
Sussex	NB	Jim Arnaldo 508-393-6209
St. John's	NF	Frank Best 709-782-3733
Woodstock/ Springdale	NF	Video Group
Winnipeg	MB	Laurie Nyhus 780-484-7633
Halifax/ St. John/Sussex	NB	Video Group
Dartmouth	NS	Video Group
Barrie	ON	Video Group
Bracebridge	ON	Garry Lucas 705-726-0628
Guelph	ON	Charles Bryce 905-276-9729
Kingston	ON	Charles Bryce 905-276-9729
Ottawa	ON	Charles Bryce 905-276-9729
Peterborough	ON	Jon Pippy 705-696-3566

Toronto ON **Charles Bryce** 905-276-9729
 Montreal QC Jacques Secours 450-623-5002
 Quebec City QC Video Group
 Prince Albert SK Bruce Bird 306-873-4864
 Prince Edward SK Video Group
 Regina SK Eng Monson 306-545-5250
 Saskatoon SK Eng Monson 306-545-5250
 Yorkton SK Eng Monson 306-545-5250

CHILE

Santiago Video Group

COLOMBIA

Santa fe de Bogota **Eduardo Hernandez**

COSTA RICA

Santa Ana Video Group

FRANCE

Paris Video Group

GERMANY

Karlsruhe Video Group

GUATEMALA

Coatepeque Video Group

GUYANA

Aishalton Video Group

Awarewaunau Church with Host

Georgetown Fitzroy Greeman

Lethem Video Group

IRELAND

Dublin Brian Bedlow 011-353-55-25170

KENYA

Nairobi Ernest Owino

Ndhiwa Video Group

Sultan Hamud Video Group

MALAYSIA

Bahau Church with Host

Kuala Lumpur Church with Host

Singapore Video Group

MARTINIQUE

Fort de France Church with Host

MEXICO

Guadalajara Video Group

Mexico City Video Group

San Luis Potosi Video Group

MYANMAR

Ka Lay Myo **Thomas Tial Hoe**

Sa Khan Gyi **Saw Lay Beh**

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland Kinnear Penman 011-64-09-435-3592

Palmerston North Video Group

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Maprik Video Group

Wewak Video Group

PHILIPPINES

Baguio City Video Group

Bogabongan Video Group
 Cavite **Rod McNair** 011-63-2-813-6538

Cumbio Video Group
 Compostela Video Group
 Davao City Eleno Cabahit

Don Carlos Felipe Casing 011-63-082-297-0200
 Iligan City Video Group

Koronadal Proper Eustiquio Benitez
 Leyte Video Group

Maranding Video Group
 Mauswagon Video Group
 Napunturon Video Group

Quezon City **Rod McNair** 011-63-2-813-6538
 Gorgonio De Guia

PUERTO RICO

San Juan **Ben Faulkner** 813-684-1423
 Raul Colon 787-739-5708

SOUTH AFRICA

Bloemfontein Video Group
 Cape Town **Syd Hull** 011-27-11-664-6036

Johannesburg Pieter Van der Byl 011-27-21-785-1418
 Klerksdorp **Syd Hull** 011-27-11-664-6036

Kroonstad Video Group
 Nelspruit Video Group

Pietermaritzburg Video Group
 Van Wyksdorp Video Group

SPAIN

Canaria Video Group

SRI LANKA

Colombo Video Group

THAILAND

Tha Song Yang Video Group

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

San Fernando Video Group
 St. Augustine Video Group

UNITED KINGDOM

Derby CI Tom Mahon 011-44-121-525-8636
 London ENG Bob Farrell 011-44-181-995-4131

Belfast NI Video Group
 Dublin Video Group

Glasgow SCO Robert Storrer 011-44-1698-263-977
 Bristol Video Group

VANUATU

Efate Video Group

Malekula Video Group

Tanna Video Group

VENEZUELA

Caracas Video Group

