

Living

Church News

Volume 10, No. 5

September–October 2008



Inside:

Do We "Get It"?.....3

The First Feast of Tabernacles.....4

Be a Profitable Servant!.....7

Tips for a Successful Feast10

Kingship.....13

Rejoice in Moderation at The Feast.....15

Local Church News21

Commentary24

Plan for the *Real* Future!

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Truly significant and encouraging developments are under way! As we have reported before, the entire panorama of prophecy we have understood for decades *really* is finally coming together! Much of the news is *very sad*—growing *food shortages*, *hunger* in many nations, massive *earthquakes* and other natural disturbances, fast-growing malaise in the United States and Britain as our economic problems increase. Our American dollar will continue to drop even more in value, as other nations come to respect us less and less. And, as God prophesied: “The **alien** who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail” (Deuteronomy 28:43–44).

So, what lies ahead?

In the world as a whole—and *especially* among the descendants of Joseph and Israel (Genesis 48:14–16)—we will behold continued deterioration, growing **sin** and all kinds of things *going wrong* (Deuteronomy 28:15–68). Our peoples will truly be *humbled*. Thankfully, many then will be willing to listen to the Truth we are preaching and publishing.

Meanwhile, we in the Living Church of God *must* truly draw closer to God and “walk with God” ever more closely as the **end** approaches. And we must put our *whole hearts* into proclaiming the inspiring message of the *soon*-coming Kingdom or **Government** of God as a “witness to all the nations” (Matthew 24:14).

Also, we must preach the true “name” of Jesus Christ—the vital message about the *true* Jesus Christ of the Bible and what He actually taught, and the entire *Way of life* based on His teachings and His example (Acts 24:14, 22).

At this point, brethren, I would like to “brainstorm” with you and give you a *general overview* of my thinking as to how world conditions are going to go from here—and what we in God’s Church will be doing over the next several years. I hope this will give you more specific ideas of what to think about and what to **pray about**, and I hope it will help to draw us all closer together in having the “same mind” as we approach these final days.

First of all, it is obvious that *whoever* is elected as the next President of the United States of America will be *far more liberal* than the current President. Huge additional amounts of money will be spent on government programs—*redistribution* that will benefit certain individuals, but tend to take away from and *overtax* the broad lower middle-class and middle middle-class

peoples in the United States. The same will probably hold true in the other British-descended nations.

Then, gradually, we will face the specter of **real hunger** in America and Britain before it is all over. As the prophecies of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 make plain, God is going to **humble us** far beyond anything we have faced before! We are going to have increasing drought in certain areas, and in other areas awesome floods and storms and earthquakes. *Disease epidemics* will begin to take hold and finally become a **major factor** in humbling our peoples and bringing our nations down.

Meanwhile, a powerful ten-“kingdom” union—the “Beast”—will arise in Europe and begin to assert itself in many ways. Even now, European Union rules and regulations are beginning to be accepted in many parts of the world as the standard for conducting business in such areas as environmental protection and fighting global warming. And this is *just the beginning!* As the final nations of the “Beast” get themselves together, they will certainly be dominated by a great “whore”—the great false church—and will be tremendously inspired by a *miracle-working* great false prophet. This is **real**, brethren, and it will soon affect the lives of all of us.

We must *think things through—ahead of time—*and decide whether or not we are going to **trust** the God of the Bible, or whether we will simply “go along” with the millions around us who “follow the crowd” and take the easy way out. It will indeed be easier to go along, *at first*. But, in the end, the beast, the false prophet and their followers will suffer truly horrible judgments. As your Bible says: “Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20). Their followers will be put to the sword (v. 21).

However, those of us in God’s Church who are genuine *Philadelphians*—who have the “fire in our belly” to become fully involved in His Work, and prepare for Christ’s coming Kingdom with all our hearts—will be tremendously rewarded! Even now, brethren, the Work of the Living Church of God is taking on increased stature every month. As we have reported to you many times, the number of prospective members is going *way up*. The number of new donors and co-workers is also increasing a great deal. Our **impact** through the television programs is continually increasing and we are now averaging about 3,500 or more responses *every single week* to the telecast! This is **not** being done anywhere else.

Additionally, we are ordaining a number of new ministers, and some ministers from other Church of God groups are beginning to look our way and realize in their hearts *where the*

Continued on page 20

Living Church News

Editor in Chief Roderick C. Meredith
Editorial Director Richard F. Ames
Executive Editor William Bowmer
Regional Editors Rod King (Europe)
Bruce Tyler (Australasia)
Gerald Weston (Canada)
Layout Editor Donna Prejean
Proofreaders Sandy Davis
Linda Ehman
Genie Ogwyn
June Olsen
News Bureau Don Davis
Business Manager J. Davy Crockett, III

Regional Offices

UNITED STATES:

P.O. Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227
Phone: (704) 844-1970
<http://www.lcg.org>

AUSTRALASIA:

P.O. Box 300
Clarendon, SA 5157, Australia
Phone: (08) 8383 6288; Fax: (08) 8383 6388

CANADA:

P.O. Box 409
Mississauga, ON L5M 2B9, Canada
Phone: (905) 814-1094; Fax: (905) 814-7659

NEW ZEALAND:

P.O. Box 2767
Auckland, New Zealand
Phone/Fax: (09) 268 8985

PHILIPPINES:

MCPO Box 492 ■ Araneta Center Post Office
1135 Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines
Phone: 63-2-723-0499; Fax: 63-2-414-5349

SOUTH AFRICA:

Private Bag X7
Hatfield, Pretoria 0028
Republic of South Africa
Phone: (27) 58-622-1424; Fax: (27) 58-623-1303

UNITED KINGDOM:

BM Box 2345
London, WC1N 3XX, United Kingdom
Phone: 44 (0) 844-800-9322

The *Living Church News* is published bimonthly by the Living Church of God, 2301 Crown Centre Drive, Charlotte, NC 28227. Subscriptions are sent without charge to all members of the Living Church of God.

©2008, Living Church of God™. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. Postage paid at Charlotte, NC.

**Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Living Church News
P.O. Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227**

The *Living Church News* is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photographs. Scriptures are quoted from the *New King James Version* (©Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

Do We “Get It”?

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

For quite a number of years before his death, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong would look out over the Headquarters congregation and say, “Brethren, I think that many of us *just don’t get it!*”

Mr. Armstrong sensed that many of God’s people just “went along for the ride.” They believed in keeping “Saturday instead of Sunday.” They realized that the Ten Commandments were not done away. They realized that God was using Mr. Armstrong in a special way.

But most of these folks failed to understand that genuine Christianity—genuine *conversion*—really does involve a total **surrender** of one’s mind, heart and will to God. It involves really surrendering your life to Christ to let Him live His life in you through the Holy Spirit.

As Paul said, “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*).

I still remember how moved I was to receive the following letter from a former member of the Worldwide Church, who returned to the Truth and began attending the Living Church of God. Notice his renewed zeal for the Truth:

“Last July [my Living Church of God minister] directed me to the

32-lesson *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, and I’m just completing Lesson 25. That’s been a blessing as well. But, then, so is the *Tomorrow’s World* magazine, the TW telecast with you and Mr. Ames, the *Living Church News*, the *Bible Study Course* (my second test was just returned — I missed ‘I!’) and all the booklets I’m studying as well—along with the sermons posted to the Web and the 40+ ser-

Brethren, many of us have lost the zeal for the Truth. And some even in the Living Church of God are “dabblers.” They do not try to saturate their minds and hearts with the pure Truth coming directly from the Bible and from those God is using to really preach His message to the world.

mons I borrowed from the ‘host’ up this way that were recorded during the ‘Global’ days, as well as, of course, the many booklets published by Living, the 58-lesson Correspondence Course (which I’ll be starting soon) and older sermons given by Mr. Armstrong.

“When Mr. Armstrong used to look out over the congregation and say, ‘Many of you folks **just don’t get it!**’ I was definitely one of those folks! God is so merciful and loving—and His Way of life is the only way that produces good results. I can readily see why Mr.

Armstrong called the Bible ‘the foundation of knowledge!’

“But I particularly wanted to say ‘**Thank You!**’ for the series of Bible Study Commentaries which has just run on the Web site with you going through the book of Matthew! I hope and pray everyone, and I sincerely mean everyone, will read and study the Bible using that as a help. It is absolutely fantastic!

“Now I was in your freshman Bible class in 1965–1966, going through the *Harmony of the Gospels*, and I’ve gotten so much more out of this series there is no comparison! Of course now I’m trying with all my heart to surrender to God and Christ and His instructions to us, and live by His every Word. I just want you to know how deeply [I] appreciate your efforts, your commitment, your zeal and love in giving us—and the world—God’s

truth. I also appreciated your message regarding ‘Our Mission as a Church’ in the current *Living Church News*.”

Brethren, many of us have lost that zeal for the Truth. And some even in the Living Church of God are “dabblers.” They do not try to saturate their minds and hearts with the pure Truth coming directly from the Bible and from those God is using to really preach His message to the world. Rather, they “dabble” in this idea

Continued on page 19

The First Feast of Tabernacles

By John H. Ogwyn

We are all familiar with the story of the first Passover. Every year, as Passover approaches, we look back to the events surrounding God's sparing the Israelite firstborn and delivering His people from Egypt. We reflect on the lessons we can learn from the events connected with the first Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. We also appreciate how Jesus Christ's life fulfilled those Old Testament types, through the events of His final Passover meal with His disciples, and His subsequent crucifixion and resurrection.

At Pentecost, in the same way, we look back to events of the first Pentecost after Israel left Egypt—when God gave the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. It marked the establishment of the Old Covenant, between God and Israel. We also focus on the first Pentecost of the New Testament era, when God miraculously poured out His Spirit from heaven upon Christ's disciples. It marked the beginning of God's establishment of a New Covenant with those who respond to His calling.

Clearly, the inaugural Passover and Pentecost seasons are recorded in Scripture. Looking back at "firsts" gives us much to reflect on as we strive to understand all the spiritual lessons God wants us to learn. What lessons do we find in the first Feast of Tabernacles? Are the events surrounding the first Feast of Tabernacles recorded in Scripture? If so, what can we learn from them? In this article, we will examine what the Bible reveals about this matter. By doing so, we can gain new insight into this final of the three festival seasons, through which God reveals His great plan of salvation.

A Look at Israel's First Year

Exodus 12 makes very clear the events of the first Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. While those dates are clearly named, and the events that transpired are described, it is not quite so simple when we come to Pentecost. However, by examining Scripture closely, we can verify the traditional Jewish understanding that God gave His law on the first Pentecost. Because we calculate Pentecost by counting 50 days, beginning with the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread (the day the wavesheaf was offered), it does not always fall on the same calendar date. Yet it can only vary by a few days, falling anywhere from Sivan 5 to Sivan 10. Jewish tradition has long held that the first Pentecost occurred on Sivan 6. During Jesus'

earthly lifetime, the temple priesthood properly counted from the Wavesheaf Sunday, and thus always celebrated Pentecost on a Sunday. The Pharisees sought always to celebrate Pentecost on Sivan 6, regardless of the day of the week on which it might fall (this is the practice most Jews follow today). All of the scriptural evidence points to the first Pentecost occurring on Sivan 6, because in the year of the Exodus that day fell on a Sunday.

Notice what Scripture reveals: "In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai" (Exodus 19:1). The Hebrew word for month is *chodesh*, which literally refers to the new moon. The expression "the same day" means the first of the month, the day of the new moon. This would be Sivan 1.

After arriving at Sinai, Moses went up the mount and communed with God, bringing back to the people God's covenant proposal (Exodus 19:3–6). This would have been on Sivan 2. After coming back down the mountain, Moses assembled the people and told them what God had said (vv. 7–8). This was on Sivan 3. The next day, Moses went back up the mountain to take the people's response to God (vv. 8–9). This was on Sivan 4. God told Moses that the people were to sanctify themselves "today and tomorrow" and be ready to meet with Him on the third day (vv. 10–11). The expression "today and tomorrow" would have referred to Sivan 4 and 5. The day on which they met with God was Sivan 6—the first Pentecost.

So, is it possible to know what happened on the first Feast of Tabernacles—the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the year Israel came out of Egypt? By comparing the accounts in Exodus and Deuteronomy, we will see that the answer is actually made plain.

To begin, we should note that there are 127 days between Sivan 6 and Tishri 15 (the Holy Day beginning the Feast of Tabernacles). Does the Bible show any significant event occurring 127 days after the first Pentecost? It certainly does!

Notice the timing. After the law was given on Pentecost, Moses and the elders of Israel went part-way up Mount Sinai. They partook of a great banquet in the presence of the God of Israel. "Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud" (Exodus 24:16). What happened next? "So Moses went into the

midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights” (v. 18). During the time that Moses was up on the mountain, Israel made a golden calf, and when he came down from Sinai he found the nation holding an idolatrous orgy.

God was angry, and He threatened to destroy the whole nation. Moses responded by spending time in prayer and fasting, beseeching God for mercy for the people. Did you ever wonder how long Moses spent, down from the mountain, interceding with God? Scripture reveals that he spent another 40 days (Deuteronomy 9:15–21). After that, Moses went back up the mountain, into God’s presence, where he received a second copy of the Ten Commandments. He was once again up on the mountain, for another 40 days (Exodus 34:1–4, 28). Add it up. There was a seven-day period following Pentecost before Moses went up into the presence of God, followed by three periods of 40 days each. This adds up to 127 days.

How do we know that there were 127 days between the first Pentecost and the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles? The Hebrew calendar is both lunar and solar. The months are based upon the cycles of the moon. The

the Ark of the Covenant. The purpose of the tabernacle was that God might dwell among the people of Israel (Exodus 25:8).

Consider the significance. Here we see a ruler coming in glory, bringing the law of God in his hands. We also see the God of Israel preparing to tabernacle among the nation. As we examine these three components, we will see that they connect very deeply with the ultimate fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Coming in Glory

As Moses approached the Israelite camp at the base of the mountain, those who first saw him did a double-take. Moses did not realize that his face was emitting a glowing light. He shone with a glory he had absorbed from being in the actual presence of God. The Israelites found that glory so frightening that Moses put a veil over his face to mask it when he spoke to them. He took the veil off when he went into the tent of meeting to commune with God, but he put it back on when he came out before the people (Exodus 34:29–35).

What lessons do we find in the first Feast of Tabernacles? Are the events surrounding the first Feast of Tabernacles recorded in Scripture? If so, what can we learn from them?

moon takes approximately 29.5 days to revolve around the earth. For this reason, Hebrew months alternate in length between 30 days and 29 days. The first, third, fifth and seventh months routinely have 30 days, while the second, fourth and sixth have 29 days. If Pentecost were on Sivan 6, there would be 24 more days in the third month. Adding to those 24 days the 29 days of the fourth month, the 30 of the fifth month, the 29 of the sixth month and the first 15 days of Tishri (the seventh month) brings us to 127.

It was exactly 127 days after the giving of the law on the first Pentecost that Moses came down Mount Sinai for the second time! Moses came down the mountain on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles! Notice how he came: “Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone.... and all the children of Israel... were afraid to come near him” (Exodus 34:29–30). Exodus 35 records that Moses summoned the Israelites, and in his instructions taught them how to build a tabernacle for holding

The Apostle Paul tells us that the glory Moses had absorbed from the presence of God gradually faded away (2 Corinthians 3:7). Paul compares the temporary glory of Moses with the permanent glory of Christ. He explains that just as Moses had to veil his face in speaking to the people, so also the real spiritual intent of his message is veiled from them as well. Scripture anticipates the time when “in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations” (Isaiah 25:6–7). These verses look forward to the time of the Millennium, and are often read and commented upon during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Jesus Christ told His disciples that some of them would see Him coming in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 16:28). About a week later, this was fulfilled for Peter, James and John in one of the most memorable events of their entire lives. Christ took them up on a high mountain, and was transfigured before them so that He shone

like the sun. Moses and Elijah also appeared with Him in radiant glory (Luke 9:28–31). This account's connection to the Feast of Tabernacles is strengthened when we examine Peter's suggestion. He wanted to build three tabernacles so that they might remain right there on the mountain to celebrate the upcoming festival (Matthew 17:4).

What was the meaning of this radiant glory? Jesus Christ will return to this earth in power and great glory to usher in the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles (Matthew 24:30). The saints will be raised in glory to rule with Him over the nations. Daniel records that the resurrected saints will shine like the brightness of the stars (Daniel 12:3). Our fleshly bodies will have been changed at the resurrection to

Ezekiel described the future gathering of Israel at the onset of the Millennium. "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel'" (Ezekiel 11:17). The Israelite nations will be brought back from the most horrible captivity imaginable—captivity brought on by national sins of ignoring God's law. When Israel is once more brought home, its peoples will be in a state of deep repentance. God inspired Ezekiel to describe that He will at that time give Israel a new heart and a new spirit. This will allow the nation to truly walk in God's statutes and judgments, to be His people and to worship Him truly as their God (Ezekiel 11:19–20).

Jeremiah, describing this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, makes it plain that under the New Covenant, God writes His law in our hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:33).

be like Christ's glorious body (Philippians 3:21). God is bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

When Moses came down the mountain from God on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, he radiated glory. This anticipates the time that Jesus Christ and the immortal saints will set foot on this earth, shining in glory, to usher in the time of the rulership of the Kingdom of God over the nations.

The Law of God

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, he not only came in glory, he came bringing God's law in his hands (Exodus 34:29). When Jesus Christ returns to this earth, He will rule the nations with God's law.

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2–3). The prophet Isaiah further described what tomorrow's world will be like, when the Messiah will judge the world in righteousness. It will be a time when they "shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). God's law will be known universally!

Jeremiah, describing this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, makes it plain that under the New Covenant, God writes His law in our hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:33). Peace and prosperity for the whole world will result as the nations of the world live in harmony with the law of God, and thereby reap blessings instead of curses.

The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of the thousand-year rule of the Kingdom of God. Because God's law will be proclaimed and kept all over the earth, it will be a wonderful time. When Moses, on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, came from God bringing the tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments, this anticipated the time when Jesus Christ will return to set up a worldwide government based upon that very law in its full spirit and intent.

God's Presence Among Us

Daniel explained, in the visions recorded in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, that a time will come when the governments of this world will be crushed and swept from the scene. In fact, "the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44). The King of that Kingdom will be the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:11–16). He is the One who was the Rock of Israel (1 Corinthians 10:4), and therefore He is the very One who dwelt among the Israelites by filling the tabernacle with His glory.

Many centuries later, that One who was the Rock of Israel—who was in the beginning with God and was the instrument of creation itself—became flesh and was born as

Continued on page 17

Be a Profitable Servant!

By Dibar Apartian

At the end of the day, can you look back and say you were really profitable, or did you only do what was required of you? Just how much does God expect of Christians?

Do you know what it means to be a worthy or profitable servant? Do you sometimes feel that, despite your efforts, you are not growing spiritually as you should?

More than once, I have heard a disheartened Church member exclaim: “I’m trying the best I can, but I just don’t see much spiritual growth in my life. What’s wrong with me? Am I really an unprofitable servant?”

These questions concern every one of us in God’s Church.

We are to overcome our carnal tendencies and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). But what causes our growth to be slow at times? Can we be “good Christians” yet still be unprofitable servants? What does God require of His begotten children?

Christ Gave the Answer

One of the best-known incidents in the Bible is the short conversation that took place between Christ and a rich young ruler. From all indications, this young man was conscious of his duties, faithful and respectful. He knelt before Christ, and asked Him what he should do in order to inherit eternal life (Mark 10:17).

Christ told him to keep the commandments. Then, to make His meaning even clearer, He quoted the commandments that define man’s re-

lationship with his neighbor. Unlike many people today, the rich young ruler did not argue with Christ’s answer. He recognized the validity of the order, and the importance of keeping God’s laws. In fact, in his own mind, he considered himself to be a profitable servant. “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth,” he told Christ (v. 20).

This was an unusual man, indeed! He loved God and was loved by Him. Not many, nowadays, could stand before Christ and tell Him boldly that they had observed from their youth His commandments. But, in his own righteousness, this rich young ruler thought he had passed the test. What else could there have been for him to do, in order to receive his reward?

Christ then told him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me” (v. 21).

What a harsh order—or so it seemed! Why should anyone be asked to give up so much, if he was already doing his best to “be good” and keep the commandments? It did not make sense to this rich young man. He was unwilling to go that far, to sacrifice to such an extent. So he went away “sorrowful,” because he had many possessions (v. 22).

Was he a profitable servant? Would you have done better had you

been in his place? Are you actually doing any better with what Christ is asking of you right now—however big or small? If your sense of values is no better than the rich young ruler’s, are you then an unworthy or unprofitable servant?

Does God Ask the Impossible?

You might be shocked and even irritated if you were told that God expects the impossible of you! That is how the apostles felt when they heard the answer Christ gave the young man.

Would God really ask the impossible? It depends what is meant by *impossible* and who is doing it. Christ told His disciples that all things are possible with God—even what seems impossible to us.

What is the greatest gift you can receive in this life? Surely it is God’s Spirit. If you are a member of His Church, God has given you something the rest of the world does not have. Much will be required of you, because much has been given to you (Luke 12:48).

For instance, you cannot by yourself conquer your human nature, however great your human efforts. But God can do it, and He does it in you through His Holy Spirit. You cannot win a fight against Satan and the lust of the world, but God can and will if you obey Him. Consequently,

though on your own you are unable to do much, with God's Spirit you can do the impossible!

Your part is to do God's will—to surrender to Him and let Him shape and use you as He wishes. Some in God's Church believe they are doing their share by merely living good lives. They may be members in good standing, willing to serve whenever called upon. Just like the young man with great possessions, they may consider themselves "good Christians," wondering what is left for them to do to inherit eternal life.

But that is not enough to please God. Even people in the world—people who do not have God's Spirit—can be "good Christians" that way. If your righteousness and deeds do not exceed theirs, you will not enter the Kingdom. They do not have God's Spirit, but you do. Christianity must have for you a different connotation.

Keeping God's commandments, paying His tithes, observing His Sabbath and His Feasts—all these things are required of you. But they will not make you a worthy servant. You must go over and above all these requirements—you must do what others in the world cannot do. God's Spirit in you will not only help you obey His commandments in the letter *and in the Spirit*, but will also help you fight against the things you are humanly unable to conquer.

You must go over and above the call of duty because you have received God's Spirit—the Spirit of love and power, which enables you to do what, with human nature, you are unwilling or unable to do. That is why Christ said, "when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'" (Luke 17:10).

God's Spirit Works Through Us

Jesus Christ revealed, in the Sermon on the Mount, the difference between what we humanly can do, and *humanly impossible* things God's Spirit can do through us.

He stated, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder'" (Matthew 5:21). This is a law any human can learn to keep if he has received proper education. He

Is your love, as a Christian, different from the love of someone who does not have God's Spirit? Christ said: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"

might even be able to go through life without ever being guilty of a crime. But that will not make him a profitable servant in God's sight.

Christ specified, "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire" (v. 22).

Think of it! This aspect of the law is impossible for any human being to keep without God's Spirit. But the Spirit of God gives you the help you need, not only to help you not insult your brother, but even to help you not grow angry with him.

Christ said, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery'" (v. 27). Many

people in the world have learned not to commit adultery. They are faithful to their mates. Are you in this respect a better Christian than they? Do you obey Christ, who said that "whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (v. 28)? If you are a faithful husband or wife, but you still lust after another person, you are far from being a worthy servant.

"Again," Christ said, "you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord'" (v. 33).

Any well-intentioned human being with the right education can refrain from taking God's name in vain, and can avoid cursing or using other foul language. But you, as a true Christian with God's Spirit, must do something others cannot do. You must "not swear at all: neither by heaven... nor by the earth... nor by Jerusalem... Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black" (vv. 34–36).

And how about love? Is your love, as a Christian, different from the love of someone who does not have God's Spirit? Christ said: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy'" (v. 43). Many people succeed in obeying that command. It is easy to love someone who loves you or is close to you—and it is just as easy to hate someone who is your enemy or wants to hurt you.

But Christ added something more, saying that true Christians must "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (v. 44).

You cannot possibly love your enemies the way you love your friends, unless you have God's Spirit. It can be hard to ask God to bless someone who hates you, and who will seize

every opportunity to hurt and persecute you. But as a Christian, you must help your enemies in need, do good to them—and even lay down your life for them!

Indeed, much is required of profitable servants.

Giving and Good Works

You do not work, give or serve to be seen of men, but of God. Ultimately, your reward is not of men, but of God. You can only strive toward perfection by allowing God's Spirit to do through you what you humanly cannot do, or do not want to do. If keeping the commandments has become a routine for you, or if you keep them just because it is required of you, then you are indeed an unworthy servant.

During the receivership crisis in the Worldwide Church of God, one Church member asked a minister whether tithes and offerings sent to Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong in Tucson, Arizona, were tax deductible. "If not," this man added, "I want to send them somewhere else so that I can be given credit."

The spirit of *getting* will not make anyone a profitable servant!

Of course, that man did not show much understanding or conversion. If you are paying God's tithes because you can get a tax deduction, then none of the money you pay—even if you give millions—will make you a worthy servant.

To serve or give because we expect something in return shows carnal-mindedness. Compare that man's attitude with that of the poor widow who gave two mites as an offering. Did she expect anything in return? Did men see it?

No, but God did, and Christ said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out

of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had" (Luke 21:3–4).

That poor widow was a worthy servant, not because of what she gave, but because of the spirit in which she gave—her godly attitude, her devotion and her love. That is what made her do more than was required of her.

Do you know the difference between a good work and good works? Whatever your task, you must endeavor to do a good work. That is required of us. But besides doing a good work, we must have *good works*—works that are not required of us, which we perform without expecting anything in return.

Consider what happened to Dorcas, a widow who did more than was required of her. She was full of good works. Notice the reward she received after she fell sick and died (Acts 9:37–41). Her friends who had seen her good works sent for Peter. They showed him the coats and garments Dorcas had made while she was alive.

Peter prayed for Dorcas, and God heard his prayer. Dorcas was brought back to physical life because of her good works! She had probably never dreamed, while she was alive, that one day her good works would be a testimony that would favor her to be brought back to life. Dorcas had done more than was required of her *without expecting anything in return*. She was a worthy and profitable servant.

How about you? Do you have good works? Just remember that keeping the commandments, praying every day and living a "good" Christian life are only part of the requirements of conversion; these works will not necessarily make you a worthy servant. You have to do what those without God's Spirit cannot do.

It Takes Effort

Mr. Armstrong set us a good example; he put forth intense effort doing good works. Ambassador Col-

lege in Pasadena, Calif., had the reputation of being one of the most beautiful campuses—if not the most beautiful—on the face of the earth. But it did not just happen to be built that way. It required much hard work, drive, determination and vision.

Mr. Armstrong often said that it was God, not him, who did everything. That was true! However, as Mr. Armstrong also explained, he had to work as hard as if he had done it! That is precisely what it takes to be a profitable servant. God is at work, but you have to strive as though you were doing the work. You must push harder and harder as time goes on. That is what Mr. Armstrong strove to do, and that is what Mr. Meredith strives to do—and it is what we all must do!

You cannot be a profitable servant if you are selfish and lazy. You cannot please God if you only do what is required of you or do it in order to be seen by men. If you have God's Spirit, you must live to help and serve. You are a Christian soldier whose fighting is done by God!

Look at Christ's example. Look at how hard He worked, how much He sacrificed and what He gave up! More than anyone else, He lived to help, to serve and to sacrifice. He always did more than what was required of Him.

We should do our good works without ever expecting anything in return. If the people around us do not see our works—or if they do not seem to appreciate them—we should not worry about it. Perform every task as best you know how. God will always give you whatever help you need. Pray for His Work. Learn to love and to serve.

If God sees your good works, that is all that really matters. He will find you to be a profitable servant, and one day you will hear Christ tell you; "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). ■

Tips for a Successful Feast

By Don Davis

As the Feast of Tabernacles approaches, God's people look forward to an enjoyable stay in an area where their Creator has placed His name. For eight full days of spiritual refreshing and physical rejuvenation, we are to come out of the world and its cares and troubles as we observe a Feast in anticipation of Jesus Christ's millennial rule on Earth.

The Festival planners in Charlotte, and the many site coordinators and other support staff around the globe, all do their best to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of each site. But there is more to a successful Feast site than safe and comfortable housing and a pleasant meeting space. Each of us must also do our part individually, if we hope to make this upcoming Festival our "best Feast ever."

A Commanded Assembly

In order to receive the blessings from this great Feast, one basic point cannot be stressed enough: we must keep the Feast! Keeping the Feast is not an optional extra for God's begotten children; it is a commanded seven-day observance, followed by another Holy Day, the Last Great Day.

The Church makes arrangements for brethren who are suffering from extraordinary health problems, or who are experiencing major catastrophes in their lives, which prevent them from assembling with their brethren. If you cannot attend the Feast, it is important that you talk with your congregation's minister as soon as possible to see what arrangements can be made. Scores of brethren will receive Festival assistance this year, in the form of monetary grants or specially subsidized housing. Others who cannot travel will receive CD or DVD recordings of Feast sermons, so they can share in some of the same spiritual meat their brethren will enjoy in their larger gatherings.

For most of us, though, there is no question about it: we know we are to save our second tithe faithfully, and we rejoice that this saving allows us to keep a wonderful Feast to the Lord. What are we to do? Scripture makes it clear: "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days... And you shall

rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice" (Deuteronomy 16:13–15).

How important is the Feast of Tabernacles? God says it is so important that, during the Millennium, those peoples who refuse to come to the Feast will receive drought and plague, instead of His blessings (Zechariah 14:16–19). God wants to bless us, and we should be eager to receive those blessings if at all possible. We should hunger to keep His Feast of Tabernacles.

God tells us that we should be preparing all year long to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. One way we do this is by setting aside a tenth of our increase to cover our Festival expenses. "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..." (Deuteronomy 14:22–23).

Why does God want us to do this? So "that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always" (v. 23)!

In this modern, industrialized age, very few of us have a supply of grain, wine, oil or livestock to offer to our God. For most of us, our "increase" comes in the form of money. But even if we had several head of livestock to offer, how would we transport them to the Feast? God made a provision that applies to most of us today. "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. You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you” (Deuteronomy 14:24–27).

In ancient Israel, Feastgoers used part of their second tithe to help the Levites and the needy. Today, the Church applies this principle by asking brethren to offer 10 percent of their second tithe (a “tithe of the tithe”) to help cover the costs of administering Feast sites and related expenses—including Festival assistance to those in need, who are also helped by brethren’s third tithe donations made twice every seven years (Deuteronomy 26:12).

But while we must prepare our finances so we can attend the Feast, financial preparation is only the beginning. We should be praying for the success of the Feast, and should be asking God to bless His Feast sites around the world. God’s people need good weather not only during the Feast and Last Great Day, but also during the travel time before and after this eight-day festival period. Ask Him to provide it! Claim God’s promise that He will protect homes and property belonging to His children while they are away, keeping His festival (Exodus 34:24).

Plan Ahead for an Enjoyable Feast

God commands us to keep the Feast, but this does not give us an excuse to be unnecessarily inconsiderate of others who may be inconvenienced by our departure. If you are a student, or are the parent of a student, be sure to talk with teachers as far in advance as possible, so that suitable arrangements can be made to accommodate a Feast absence. If you work for someone else, give your employer as much advance notice as possible. Supervisors are usually much more cooperative about accommodating time off for religious reasons if you give them ample time to schedule around your absence.

Sometimes, a school or an employer may be intransigent, and may try to forbid you from taking the Feast off, under threat of a bad grade or even losing your job. The Living Church of God has a Legal Affairs Office that has prepared forms and procedures

you can use when dealing with schools or employers and, in the event of a serious legal problem, can help you find appropriate legal counsel. Your local minister has access to these forms online. Do not wait until the “last minute,” though, to act! Many big problems have started as small misunderstandings between student and teacher, or employer and employee, and could have been handled very easily if the right information (about legal precedents and about your religious rights) had reached the right people early enough. Whatever you do, be sure to pray humbly that God will give you favor in the eyes of those with whom you must interact, and that He will give you the wisdom to handle the situation successfully.

When you plan your expenses, do not forget to consider the cost of transportation to and from the Feast. Although your travel to and from a Feast site will be

occurring before and after the eight days of the festival, your second tithe can and should be spent to cover your journey. With the price of gasoline continuing to skyrocket, this may be a good year to look into carpooling with your brethren. You might even find it more economical to rent a fuel-efficient newer automobile, rather than to try to make an old family “gas hog” roadworthy for a long Feast journey. Remember, your second tithe is not meant to be an “automobile repair fund” which you use once a year to handle vehicle maintenance that will keep your car going until next year’s Feast!

Be sure to plan for appropriate rest during the Feast. Yes, the Feast is a wonderful opportunity to meet with friends we have not seen for at least a year, and it can be tempting to stay up all night enjoying their company. But we should not push ourselves to the point of exhaustion, where we find ourselves coming to services each day unable to concentrate or be attentive. If we are depleted, and overextend ourselves, we weaken our immune systems so that by the time the Feast is over, we may even return to our homes with a cold or flu because we failed to take care of ourselves during the Feast. What kind of message does it send to the world around us if we come back from the Feast in worse condition than when we left?

Getting proper rest is especially important for those who drive to and from the Feast. A little advance

God tells us that we should be preparing all year long to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. One way we do this is by setting aside a tenth of our increase to cover our Feast expenses.

planning can help you remain relaxed and well-rested for your trip. Do not leave everything until the last minute, then find yourself rushing to throw things into a suitcase while completing last minute pre-trip chores, worrying that you may have forgotten something. Your trip will be less stressful if you plan in advance by making a list of what you will need for your trip. Pack early, if you can, and make sure you had a good night's sleep the night before your drive. Navigating busy roads while you are tired can be a recipe for injury or even death! Be sure, too, that you are well-rested when you travel home after the Last Great Day.

When we are at the Feast, we are “ambassadors” of Christ in a special way. Of course, we are His representatives all year round, but at the Feast we are with a group of fellow Christians, and the service workers will form their impression of “the Church” based on how we conduct ourselves with each other and with those who are serving

us. Being ready to offer an extra smile, a generous tip and a patient attitude when problems arise can make the Feast more enjoyable for you, and for those around you.

Sadly, even at the Feast, we are still in a world where thieves and criminals look for people to exploit. Do not leave your valuables unguarded unless absolutely necessary. Some thieves will even steal a briefcase left visible in the back of a car, hoping it will contain a wallet or other valuable items. If you must keep valuables in your car, keep them in the trunk, away from thieves' prying eyes.

Loving and Serving One Another

As Christians, we are in training to serve as kings and priests in God's soon-coming Kingdom. As we love our brethren, we should want to help them as we are able. The Feast gives us an ideal opportunity to put into practice what we are being taught. No matter the size of the site you will be attending, you will find many opportunities to serve your brethren. Sometimes, there are so few volunteers for ushering or parking duty that those who do serve are unable to balance their service with their family time. The more of us who volunteer, the more we will be helping others balance service and family at the Feast. As the saying goes, “Many hands make light work.” By volunteering to serve, you not only serve God's people—you serve your fellow servants by allowing them to have a little more free time to enjoy the Feast!

Participating in a Festival Choir, or offering to perform special music, is another important way in which some of

us can serve. Even if you can only make a “joyful noise,” do not assume that the Festival Choir would not want your help—every year, choir directors lament that they do not have the full complement of soprano, alto, tenor or bass voices they would like to have to provide the best possible sound from the choir. If God has blessed you with any vocal or musical talents, you can add greatly to the overall

atmosphere of a Feast site, praising our heavenly Father and His Son in a way that many of us cannot! Remember: “Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all day long, and in Your righteousness they are exalted” (Psalm 89:15–16).

The Feast is a wonderful time to engage in “random acts of kindness.” Perhaps you could treat a widow or an elderly couple to a meal. Perhaps you could make a

special effort to engage a lonely brother or sister in conversation. Even if you are a little shy yourself, it does not take much to say, “Hi, I'm So-and-so, from Such-and-such congregation. Where are you from?” These little acts of lovingkindness can make a person's day, and help us all remember why we are at the Feast.

Opportunities for service come in many forms. Perhaps you cannot sing, or you cannot adjust to the Festival Choir practice schedule. Perhaps you cannot pay for a widow's meal, or run about on parking duty. You can still pray for the site's success, and for the inspiration of the speakers. You can pray for good weather and for God's Spirit to be powerfully present at the site. God's full attention will be focused where His people are, during the Feast, and you can be sure our combined prayers will have an impact. One year, as a deadly hurricane bore down in the direction of a Feast site at Jekyll Island, Georgia, hundreds of God's people prayed fervently that the hurricane be diverted—and God sent the storm back out to sea!

God has given each of us different backgrounds, resources, strengths and abilities, which we can use in service at the Feast. When we serve others by using what God has given us, we are doing our part to make the Feast better—not just for others, but also for ourselves. As we do this, we can know that God will be happy with us, and that His blessings will flow, engulfing our Feast site and all who are attending. This year, as we ready ourselves to go to the Feast, let us prepare to make it a Feast of love and service! ■

As we love our brethren, we should want to help them as we are able. The Feast gives us an ideal opportunity to put into practice what we are being taught.

Kingship

By J. Charles Ogwyn

Are you sometimes overwhelmed by the amazing truth that God has called you to be among those whom He has chosen to use as kings and priests (Revelation 1:6)? Certainly this is a very tall order, but it is indeed what each of us is being prepared for. Do you feel that you are better equipped for this future assignment now, than when your mind was first opened to understand God's plan for your life?

Just as Daniel was trained and tested before he was elevated from his status as a captive to a position of rulership, so too are we being trained and tested *right now* in preparation for our destiny. Since we are training to become kings, we should ask: "What qualities and characteristics does God look for in a king?"

David was the greatest king who ever reigned over Israel. Although he was certainly not perfect, his reign became a kind of yardstick against which the reigns of the other kings were measured. God admonished Solomon to walk "as your father David walked" (1 Kings 3:14). We read that King Josiah of Judah "did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (2 Kings 22:2). King David set an example that the other kings were measured against.

Scripture describes righteous kings as having followed in David's ways; those who acted wickedly are described as failing to walk in David's ways. King

Ahaz, for example, "did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David had done" (2 Kings 16:2). Not only was David the gold standard against whom the other kings were compared, but God reveals that David will serve as king over Israel in the Kingdom of God (Ezekiel 37:24–25).

David was not born of royalty, and did not inherit the throne of Israel. Rather, at God's direction, the prophet Samuel anointed David as king over Israel. What qualities did God recognize in David above all the other men of Israel, which made him suitable to be their next king?

God Selects a King

The book of Acts gives us a brief explanation of why God chose David for this important responsibility: "He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will'" (Acts 13:22). David's approach—his heart—is described as mirroring God's own. God had great confidence that David would carry out His instructions. Our Creator knew David's heart, so He knew that Jesse's son would fulfill all His will. This did not mean that God considered David perfect. Rather, it meant that God, knowing David's character, was certain that he would faithfully accomplish God's purpose for him.

What qualities was God seeking in someone to replace King

Saul? David's brothers were certainly more kingly in outward appearance, yet God found them lacking in the qualities He most valued (cf. 1 Samuel 16:6–12). God knew that He could trust David to watch over and care for His people faithfully, in the way He intended.

What specific character traits did God recognize in David, which allowed Him to appoint David as king with such confidence?

The Essential Quality of Faith

Scripture reminds us that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). One of the essential character traits that God recognized in David was real living faith. There are several early examples of David's faithful trust in and reliance on God. Perhaps one of the best known examples of David acting in faith was that of the confrontation with Goliath. David's father sent him to bring provisions to his older brothers who were serving in the army, and to check on their needs (cf. 1 Samuel 17:17–18). When David arrived, he observed Goliath, the giant of Gath, come forward from the camp of the Philistines and challenge the Israelites as he had, morning and evening, for 40 days. When the Israelites saw Goliath advance and proclaim, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together," they fled in fear (1 Samuel 17:10). While others were intimidated and fearful, David's response il-

illustrates the close relationship that he had with his Father in heaven, and the tremendous faith with which that relationship filled him. David's immediate response was to ask, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Samuel 17:26). When confronted with the spectacle of Goliath, David didn't have time to go and pray and "work up" faith. Rather, David was filled with faith and it showed in his response to the situation.

How did David come to possess such faith? Psalm 119 gives us insight into David's relationship with God: "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day" (v. 97). David loved God's law and he thought about it constantly. He did not view God's law as a burden. He did not consider thinking about God's law a dull chore that he had to squeeze into his daily routine. Rather, he *enjoyed* meditating on God's law and His way of life. "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (v. 103). David loved God's word, enjoyed thinking about it and was edified by it—and the result in his life was obvious. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (v. 105).

As we prepare for our future in the Kingdom of God, do we meditate on God's word as David did? Or is the time we might spend on Bible study, prayer and meditation squeezed out by time

we instead choose to spend on television, social distractions, and personal pursuits? Are we spending time with God and His word, to gain a sense of what is appropriate in our conduct, personal appearance and how we present ourselves to others, or do we let the world around dictate our behavior? Only if we are spending meaningful time absorbing the principles contained in God's word can we honestly say, as David did, that God's word "is a lamp to my feet."

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). If God's word is constantly and incessantly on our minds, it cannot help but be re-

By filling his mind with God's word, David not only grew to become a man who exhibited great faith, but his steps were obviously guided by the principles contained in God's word.

flected in our conversations with others. As we look forward to our future opportunity to help human beings understand God's way of life, and to help them learn how to put that way of life into practice, we should be building the prerequisite skills now. In the book of Deuteronomy, we find the great commandment, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). God told His people to internalize His words, and to "teach them diligently to your children, and [you] shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when

you rise up" (v. 7). When we fill our minds with God's law—meditate on it day and night, and let it guide us in all we do—we cannot help but talk about it with everyone around us, particularly to those closest to us, our own families (cf. Deuteronomy 4:9; Psalm 78).

By filling his mind with God's word, David not only grew to become a man who exhibited great faith, but his steps were obviously guided by the principles contained in God's word.

The Importance of Zeal

Scripture instructs us, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). We are to go about our activities with drive and determination. We should have goals, and pursue those goals with great diligence. We are told that, "the hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to

forced labor" (Proverbs 12:24). King David was certainly an example of this principle in action. Diligence and zeal were a part of David's character long before he was anointed king, and were part of the reason why God knew that he would do all of His will.

David's duties as a shepherd were very simple—to protect and provide for the flock that was entrusted into his care. David took his responsibilities as shepherd very seriously, and carried them out to the utmost of his ability. This dedication and zeal to fulfill his duties, even when it meant putting his own life at risk, is ob-

Continued on page 18

Rejoice in Moderation at the Feast

By Phil Sena

In a few weeks, thousands of Living Church of God brethren will be traveling far and wide to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Many of us look forward to the abundant social opportunities available at each Feast site. Certainly, the social opportunities the Feast affords are a wonderful aspect of this festival.

The name God gave this Holy Day—the *Feast of Tabernacles*—gives us a hint as to one key purpose He intended for it. The word *feast* implies a celebration that centers on food. It is not coincidental that God timed this festival to take place after the fall harvest in the Promised Land. The Feast of Tabernacles is a time to celebrate the blessings of abundance from the produce just gathered (Deuteronomy 16:15). Today, though only a very few of us are farmers, this festival still teaches us that there is a time to properly enjoy the blessings of this physical world.

One lesson we can learn from the Feast of Tabernacles is that our loving Father *wants* His people to eat—and drink—to celebrate the results of a year’s work. King Solomon brought out this principle when he wrote, “every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God” (Ecclesiastes 3:13). We also read that wine “makes glad the heart of man” (Psalm 104:15). However, even the good things God has given us to enjoy can be misused if we are not careful. Alcohol is no exception, and we should be careful not to let it spoil the Feast of Tabernacles—for us, or for those around us.

Alcohol and the Feast

Perhaps you have heard some Church members sum up their attitude toward using alcohol at the Feast of Tabernacles by using just one scripture: “And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household” (Deuteronomy 14:26, KJV).

God wants us to enjoy ourselves at the Feast of Tabernacles. Sadly, some at the Feast seem, by their actions, to take this scripture as if it were a God-ordained excuse to “party hearty.” You probably have known some brethren who, as one of their first projects after settling in to their temporary dwelling, proceed to stock up on varieties of beer, wine and “strong drink” as though they were setting up their own bar!

Of course, God certainly meant the Feast of Tabernacles to be a unique time of abundance and special celebration for God’s people. Scripture shows that alcohol is clearly an appropriate part of that celebration for many of us. But it is also important to note that the items listed in Deuteronomy 14:26 *are simply examples* of the types of things one can enjoy during the Feast. This is made plain by the verse’s use of the general catch-all phrase, “whatsoever thy soul desireth.” Obviously, this is talking about our godly desires—if we desire something unhealthy that will go against God’s law, or that will otherwise spoil the Feast for us or for others, God does *not* want us to fulfill that desire. What we buy at the Feast should *enhance* our observance, not become the *reason* for our observance. Right use of alcohol may enhance our enjoyment of the Feast, but we should remember that Scripture does not give Feastgoers a “blank check” to go wild and indulge in just anything that the world might consider “fun.”

As God’s people, we should never forget that in all we do, we represent Him; we are to be His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). This is particularly true at the Feast of Tabernacles, where we spend a concentrated period of time with non-members whose main impression of God’s Church may be formed by how we conduct ourselves during those few days of the Feast. To help us all be the best “ambassadors” we can be, here are a few points to consider about the use of alcohol at the Feast.

Different from the World?

A few years ago, I was looking at a Church member’s online photo gallery. One group of photos was from a social gathering of young people at the previous year’s Feast of Tabernacles. I could tell from the pictures of Feastgoers talking and laughing that all the young people appeared to be enjoying themselves. But, as I paged through the photos, I began to notice something—almost all of the young people had some form of alcohol in their hands.

As I reflected on this, I realized that in the eyes of a non-member viewing those photos, there would be little apparent difference between this gathering of Living Church of God members at the Feast, and any number of similar gatherings of young people all around the world. The photos recorded the usual amount of silliness that is “normal” at these kinds of parties: a young man hamming

it up for the camera while stretched across the laps of four or five friends on the couch; two girls kissing one guy on the cheek; a group of friends singing at the top of their lungs. In almost every case, there was one element clearly visible—the ubiquitous bottle of beer or glass of wine.

Similarly, what would non-members think if they were vacationing near these young Feastgoers, and saw stacks of empty beer and wine bottles in the trash after the event? Was this what Jesus Christ envisioned when He told his people, “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)? Probably not.

Many of us have seen similar examples of “wild” conduct at the Feast. But sometimes, drunken conduct at the Feast is more than just “wild,” and more than just embarrassing afterward. Some drunken errors in judgment have led to personal mistakes that brought life-altering consequences—unplanned pregnancies, automobile accidents, serious injuries or even death. And we must remember al-

should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:17–24).

When I looked at that online Feast photo album, I found myself wondering: how would the party have turned out with no alcohol? Maybe there would have been less of the “wild” exhibitionism apparent from the photos, but I am certain the godly young people present would still have

We must avoid the kinds of alcohol-related tragedies that affect people in the world who do not have the same knowledge of God and His ways that we have—or that we are supposed to have. But God has called us to be different.

ways to *obey* the law of the land regarding alcohol! In the United States and in many other countries, it is *illegal* for businesses to sell alcohol to minors, and giving alcohol to minors may constitute the criminal offense known as “contributing to the delinquency of a minor.” In many jurisdictions within the United States, you could be held personally liable if someone to whom you serve alcohol becomes injured—or injures others—as a result of consuming that alcohol.

If you attend an official Church-sponsored function at the Feast, you will notice that the Church itself does not serve alcohol at events, other than once a year at the Passover. Sometimes a hotel with whom the Church contracts may make alcohol available to adults, but in no circumstance is alcohol ever made available to minors. But even at unofficial gatherings where Church members are hosts or guests, we should still be careful to practice moderation. Church members must *never* serve alcohol to minors at any Church gathering, nor should they *in any way* pressure minors—or *adults*—to drink alcoholic beverages (For more on Church policy regarding alcohol use, see Lesson 22 of the *Living Leadership Course*).

We must avoid the kinds of alcohol-related tragedies that affect people in the world who do not have the same knowledge of God and His ways that we have—or that we are supposed to have. But God has called us to be different. “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you

had an enjoyable time together. This brings up an important point we should consider when planning our Feast activities: is alcohol necessary? More often than not, the answer is “No.” Ask yourself: Will alcohol add to the enjoyment of a Feast gathering, or will it cause problems, distracting people from the true enjoyment God has ordained? Too often, we seem to think alcohol is necessary, even in excess—but the truth is, many gatherings are just as enjoyable without it—or with careful limits on it—and many potential headaches are avoided.

A Stumbling Block?

Perhaps *you* feel able to enjoy alcohol responsibly. During the Feast of Tabernacles, however, each of us *also* has a responsibility to those around us. Our conduct should never become a stumbling block to a brother or sister in Christ. We should always be aware that at any group celebration where alcohol is served, there may be some attending who have an alcohol problem. The hosts may not be aware of each guest’s history with alcohol, but the results can be serious for individuals who, feeling peer pressure, may “cave in” and drink even though they should not.

Some Church members may have grown up in households with a parent or relative who was an alcoholic. They may have lost a loved one to a drunk driver,

or seen a child born with disabilities caused by a parent's alcohol abuse. We should be careful never to place our brethren into situations where they may feel pressured to ignore their misgivings, or their conscience, and drink "to fit in."

What does the Bible advise in such situations? The Apostle Paul wrote, "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak" (Romans 14:21). Paul shows in this section of Scripture that what we eat and drink can be a cause of offense. His larger point is that we, as Christians, should be willing to adapt our behavior according to the sensitivities of others—for their edification, and not to please ourselves (Romans 14:19; 15:1).

Does this mean we should always avoid drinking alcohol at every Feast gathering? Of course not! Proper use of alcohol during this God-ordained time of celebration is appropriate (Deuteronomy 14:26). But we should not let our enjoyment become a cause of embarrassment for God's people, or a stumbling block to our brethren who have problems with alcohol. Again, we should never offer liquor to minors, nor encourage them to drink! For adults, alcohol is permitted, but it is *not* necessary. As Paul pointed out: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are

helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being" (1 Corinthians 10:23–24). When we drink at the Feast—or when we host events where alcohol may be served—we should consider how our choices may affect others. When we are hosts, we should be ready to offer non-alcoholic beverages to those who prefer them, and whether we are hosts or guests we should never pressure anyone into drinking along with us. By doing this, we will not deprive anybody of enjoyment, and we will be showing love to our brethren.

Glorify God at the Feast

The Feast of Tabernacles is a special time for God's people, in so many ways. God intended it to be both a spiritual and a physical celebration. As we gather for this year's Feast of Tabernacles, we should all endeavor to keep it a Feast to the Lord. Yes, He wants us to enjoy the abundance of the year's blessings, and alcohol can be a part of that enjoyment. But we must remember we are the people of God, who strive to glorify Him in *all* we do. Responsible use of alcohol will only enhance our enjoyment of the Feast, and help us avoid keeping a *worldly* type of celebration. ■

The First Feast of Tabernacles (Continued from page 6)

a human being (John 1:1–3, 14). In fact, John tells us that the Word was made flesh and *tabernacled* (as the Greek is literally translated) among us (v. 14). At the beginning of the first Feast of Tabernacles, Moses instructed Israel about the work of building a tabernacle so that God would dwell among them. This instruction anticipated the future time when the God of Israel would tabernacle among His people—first in human flesh, and ultimately as the returning, glorified, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Isaiah 32 describes a time when a King shall reign in righteousness (v. 1), and people will dwell in peaceable habitations, secure dwellings and quiet resting places (v. 18). Jerusalem, the city of the great King, is described as a tabernacle that will

not be taken down (Isaiah 33:20). During this millennial time, God will be recognized as Judge, Lawgiver, King and Savior (v. 22). This time when the Lord will dwell among His people, and they will see His glory, will be a time when the desert will blossom, the blind will see and the lame will leap (Isaiah 35:1–6).

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the millennial reign of the Messiah, a time of which we read: "Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young" (Isaiah 40:10–11). The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us that Jesus Christ will soon dwell upon this earth, among human beings, as King of kings.

At the festival season, we also look even beyond the Millennium. We anticipate the time beyond the thousand years when "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3).

As we approach this year's Feast of Tabernacles, we can reflect back on the lessons found in the first Feast of Tabernacles, which Israel observed in the wilderness. It was a time when Moses descended from the presence of God, radiating glory. He came bringing in his hands the law of God, and the plans for a tabernacle so that God might dwell in the midst of His people. These three components of the first Feast of Tabernacles anticipated the final fulfillment that is yet to come, the ushering in of the rule of the Kingdom of God on this earth! ■

Kingship

(Continued from page 14)

vious in his speech before King Saul. Reacting to Goliath's challenge, David came before King Saul. What did he tell him? "David told him, 'Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.' Moreover David said, 'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine'" (1 Samuel 17:34–37).

When confronted by a lion or a bear, a less zealous shepherd might have run away in fear, or might have thrown a rock or a stick in a half-hearted effort to save the lambs. But zeal was a part of David's character, and it was found in every area of his life—from meditating on God's word, to taking care of his father's sheep, to answering Goliath's challenge.

Humility in Action

James reminds us that "God resists the proud" (James 4:6). Humility, the opposite of pride, was evident in David's life. After Samuel anointed David as king, God allowed an evil spirit to trouble Saul. As a result, David was

brought before King Saul to soothe him with music when he was troubled (1 Samuel 16:14–23). David went from being a shepherd watching over sheep to standing before the king. How easy it would have been for a promotion like this to have gone to a young man's head. And yet, when King Saul and the armies of Israel gathered against the Philistines,

Only if we are humble can we truly take correction to heart. Saul was not filled with humility when Samuel corrected him, so the correction was not taken to heart.

David returned home and resumed his former duties as a shepherd (1 Samuel 17:15). He had not, as the old expression goes, "grown too big for his britches." Instead of having outgrown his old job, he returned to it. He did not come back home and try to impress his family and friends with how important he was and how much the king depended on him.

Only if we are humble can we truly take correction to heart. Saul was not filled with humility when Samuel corrected him, so the correction was not taken to heart. Instead of accepting the correction and moving forward with repentance, King Saul rejected the correction and sought to justify his actions (1 Samuel 15:13–21). Even after he finally admitted his mistake, he was preoccupied with what others would think of him (1 Samuel 15:30). Saul's pride prevented him from receiving the benefit of correction.

Saul's pride-steeped response to correction stands in stark contrast to David's reaction at being corrected in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 12). David did not try to excuse his own actions by shifting some of the blame to Bathsheba or others. He reacted with humility to the correction Nathan delivered. David acknowledged his sin, and he asked for forgiveness (Psalm 51).

God knew that David was not perfect, and that he would indeed make mistakes. God recognized that David—based on the zeal and humility he had made a part of his character—would strive to carry out his duties to the utmost of his ability. He also knew that when David would make mistakes, he would respond to correction with humility, and take it to heart.

When God looked for a king for His people, He looked for someone after His own heart. He looked for someone He knew would be faithful to follow instructions. He looked for someone who could be guided back on track when he stumbled or went astray. God recognized in David the faith, zeal and humility that would allow him to be a king after God's own heart.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the soon-coming time when the Kingdom of God will be established on the earth, when those whom God has called and prepared for kingship will teach human beings how to live in harmony with His word, to experience the fullness of joy He intends for all His children. Are you doing all you can do—as David did—to prepare to be a king? ■

Do We “Get It”?*(Continued from page 3)*

and that—creating their own spiritual “smorgasbord” of often-conflicting religious ideas and concepts.

Again and again in His Word, God warns us about being “wishy-washy” and uncertain about Him and His ways. The writer of Hebrews tells us, “But 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). So you cannot please God without real faith. Somewhere along the line, you and I *must* commit. We cannot just “dabble” with various ideas and with various teachers who often “water down” much of the Truth and usually contradict each other in the process. You must *prove* where Christ is primarily doing His Work today and “put your heart” into that Church.

As the man quoted above related what he was now doing, you also should *zealously* study the Bible and the literature from God’s *true* Church. You should make your religion a *genuine way of life*. You should not foolishly “get sidetracked” by following the ideas of false prophets and worldly ministers and teachers who often *do not even claim* to teach the Ten Commandments as a way of life.

Yet some will extol what they feel are “good ideas” in the teachings of these Commandment-rejecting ministers and teachers, and allow themselves to get “sidetracked” into studying their material or hearing their messages on tape—often spending *several hours* a week listening to those who *reject* God’s Commandments! Subtly, slowly but surely, these weak and misguided individuals in God’s Church have their thinking skewed into the direction of Protestantism,

sentimentalism, New Age thinking or whatever.

As Mr. Armstrong would say, “*They just don’t get it!*”

From one end of the Bible to the other, God tells us **not** to follow those who *refuse to obey God’s Law*. Isaiah was inspired to write, “And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? *To the law and to the testimony!* If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is **no light** in them” (Isaiah 8:19–20).

Notice that God says there is “no light” in these lawless teachers! Do you **disagree** with God and want to follow these Commandment-rejecting teachers anyway? Remember how the Apostle Jesus “loved” clearly warned us, “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a **liar**, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4).

What is God telling us in the above scriptures? Do Commandment-rejecting ministers and teachers know **anything**? Yes, of course they do. But note carefully: these people do **not** have the true spiritual “light” because—as John says—they do not “know” Jesus Christ. They may know *about* Christ. But to truly “know” Christ—to be *truly acquainted* with Him—one must actually **surrender** one’s life to **keep** all ten of the Ten Commandments as 1 John 2:4 indicates. Then, and **only** then, does one have the “mind of Christ” to understand and explain the full **truth** about any spiritual matter.

Experiencing what it is like to fully keep God’s Commandments, to have Christ **live** within oneself and to “walk with Christ” over a period of years, is the **only** way to prepare to fully and properly explain God’s word and its principles. Lacking this, lawless ministers and teachers will tend to “skew” people’s minds away from a

full understanding of the biblical principles about marriage, child rearing, personal relationships, being fully honest on the job—about **everything**. They may be totally sincere. But without Christ living in them through His Spirit, they can only give **part** of the answer to these problems. They will therefore give **wrong** advice, or very incomplete advice at most. As Mr. Armstrong said, “Putting just a ‘little’ cyanide in an otherwise good glass of water or juice is enough to kill.” Think about it!

God’s Word tells us, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is **light** and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). In God is complete “light”—*no darkness, no compromise* and *no “watering down”* of the Truth whatsoever. But Adam and Eve ate of the tree of “mixed” fruit—*partial* good and **much** bad—which caused the entire human race to be **cut off** from God!

Think! Any “good ideas” on marriage relations, child rearing, personal success—or whatever you might learn from Commandment-rejecting ministers—is information you could *also* learn from articles in the *Reader’s Digest* and other non-religious publications. But from those non-religious sources, you would *not* be getting the information mixed with a false Christ and a “watered down” approach to God—an entire approach to religion that is *distorted* and is certainly **displeasing** to God.

To learn *real* spiritual Truth—the **full Truth**—you must go to those faithful teachers who are preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God based on God’s **law**. The Apostle Paul told the Ephesian elders, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the **whole counsel** of God” (Acts 20:27).

Brethren, with all my heart I am also trying to declare to you the “whole counsel of God!” Please do

not allow Satan to cleverly “side-track” you into following any “watered-down” version of religion—whether from a weak, misguided minister in some Church of God fellowship, or from some lawless, yet well-meaning, religious teachers of this world.

The living Christ tells us in Scripture, “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the

commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). Also, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

That is why Christ tells us **not** to merely “believe” in Him, but to *believe* and *practice* His teaching, His **doctrine** (Luke 6:46). Again, His beloved apostle warns us, “Whoever

transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2 John 9–11).

And again, brethren, “Do we really get it?” ■

Plan for the Real Future!

(Continued from page 2)

Work is being done. A number are already in contact with us. We have just graduated our first six students from Living University! The impact of this new on-line university may well be *awesome* before it is all over with. For the world’s colleges are increasingly degenerating into cesspools of immorality and bastions of political correctness and other kinds of crazy and impractical thinking—and they are often *very poor places* for most young people to attend.

So, we are *grateful* for what Christ is already beginning to do. We need to be genuinely humble and realize it is “not about us”—for, as the Bible states, *we* humanly have “little strength” (Revelation 3:8). As I have stated repeatedly, **none** of us is “great” in human capacity, and we all certainly need *much more* of God’s Holy Spirit. I am extremely aware of this! Yet, as Mr. Herbert Armstrong stated repeatedly, “God’s Church goes forward *on its knees!*”

Therefore, brethren if every one of us can “catch the vision” and realize the tremendous **impact** we should be having in the years to come, each of us can genuinely *give* our lives as a living sacrifice to the great God, preparing the way for Christ’s return! For a truly **powerful** Work must and *will* be done through the true servants of the living God! As Jesus said about these very end times: “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and *you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake*” (Matthew 24:9).

As I have said repeatedly, we **cannot** be *hated* by “all nations” unless they know that we exist! So this Work of the living Christ **must** become far more powerful for us to be known and “hated” by **all** nations. *Nothing could be plainer!*

If we “drop the ball,” so to speak, then God will give this opportunity to **others**. But *we* have been given the understanding, the zeal and the vision for doing this very end-

time Work beyond any others at this time. Most of you brethren realize this. It does not make us “better.” For *many* other Church of God brethren may be “better” than some of us in their personal lives. But, somehow, so many others are so concerned about having a “nice” church to attend, and being close to their friends, that they fail to catch the vision that God has given us—of the *absolute necessity* to lay down our lives in Christ’s service and perform His **end-time** Work. If we can retain this vision and **drive** ourselves *forward*—on our knees, and in every other way—then we will certainly be among those “people who **know** their God [and] shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*” (Daniel 11:32).

If we will learn to *cry out* to God to clean us up, fashion and mold us more and more and genuinely *use us* in His service, then we will definitely be among those people described in the book of Malachi: “Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him’” (Malachi 3:16–17).

Brethren, may God grant that *each one of us* may be wholeheartedly involved in what Jesus Christ is *beginning to do* to prepare for His Second Coming, and the setting up of a genuine **world government**, and surrendering to the calling to urgently *warn* our unconverted brethren and our peoples and nations of what truly lies just ahead! May God grant each one of us this *understanding*, and the **faith** and **courage** to act on the awesome understanding and calling which God has given us at this critical time in human history.



Local Church News

Anniversaries

Maurice and Juliette Brisson, of Canada's Chatham, Ontario congregation, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on July 19, with more than 200 in attendance—a majority of whom were their 15 children, sons- and daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Gaither and Rose Drum, of the Headquarters congregation, observed their 50th wedding anniversary on June 24. Baptized into God's Church in 1970, they have two sons, a grandson, a granddaughter and a great-granddaughter. Mr. Drum is retired from the U.S. Postal Service.

Randy and Christine Kleindienst of the Columbia, Missouri congregation, marked their 25th wedding anniversary June 12. The Kleindiensts' three chil-

dren, Kirt, Krystal, and Kevin arranged a surprise party to celebrate the occasion.

Lish and Dorothy Lambright, of the Lufkin, Texas congregation, were honored with a special surprise Sabbath luncheon on May 31, in recognition of their 60th wedding anniversary. Married in Oakdale, Louisiana on May 29, 1948, the Lambrights have been members of God's Church since 1966, and have been blessed with five children, ten grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

James and Judy Vaux, of the Fort Lauderdale, Florida congregation, parents of Brittany, Heather and Julia, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on July 2.

Wedding

Summer Rachele Burdette and *Benjamin Martin McCarty* were joined in marriage on May 25, in a ceremony at the Clemson University Outdoor Lab in Clemson, South Carolina. The ceremony was performed by Mr. Ronald Poole, assistant pastor of the Anderson, South Carolina congregation. Summer's sisters, Heather Lentz and Desiree Burdette, were matron and maid of honor. Groom's attendants were best man Joshua Penman, and David Ogwyn. The bride's parents are Manuel H. Burdette, of the Anderson congregation, and the late Annette Burdette. The groom's parents are Gordon and Cindy McCarty of east Texas. The couple resides in Port Allen, Louisiana, where they attend the Baton Rouge congregation.

Births

Suraj and Roschaine Nanayakkara of Melbourne, Australia are pleased to announce the birth of their son *Johnathan Mishan Nanayakkara* on June 20. He weighed 8 pounds. He is the first grandchild of Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Pereira of the Colombo, Sri Lanka congregation, and nephew to Roshelle Pereira of the London, England congregation.

Theo and Lanita Peiris, of the Headquarters congregation, are happy to announce the birth of their daughter, *Kaitlin Hannah Peiris*, on June 18. Kaitlin Hannah weighed 5 pounds, 5 ounces at birth, and was 19 inches long. Mother, father and baby are happy and doing well.

Tim and Jessica Wilson, of the Indianapolis, Indiana congregation, are happy to announce the birth of their second son, *Jonathan David Wilson*, on April 6. He weighed 8 pounds, 6 ounces. His brother Alan, age 2, helped welcome him home.

In Loving Memory

Kenneth Cargill, a deacon serving the Living Church of God congregation in Belfast, Northern Ireland, died on June 1 after a short illness. He was 73 years old. A caring father with six children and ten grandchildren, he first heard Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong on the *World Tomorrow* broadcast over Radio Luxembourg in 1956, and was baptized in 1963. He will be remembered as a man of principle, integrity, dignity and faith; a man of great conviction, who was passionate about his calling, the identity of modern Israel and the preaching of the gospel to Northern Ireland.

Jean Hayka of Canada's Winnipeg, Manitoba congregation died on May 5. She is survived by her husband John, by daughters Maryann and Rose Anne, by grandson David (Sarah) and great-grandchildren Emily and Reese. Mr. Frank Best conducted the funeral on May 18.

Anne Sophie, age 84, a long-time member of God's Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, died on April 7. She was predeceased by her husband, Stephen.

Upcoming *Tomorrow's World* Telecasts

BET: Monday, 3:00 AM ET & PT

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 AM ET

VISION (Canada): Sunday, 5:30 PM ET; Monday–Friday, 3:00 AM ET

WORD: Friday, 1:30 AM ET

AIR DATE

BROADCAST TITLE

September 7	Overcoming Satan
September 14	Why Must Christ Come Again?
September 21	Principles for Effective Bible Study
September 28	Make Your Marriage Happier
October 5	Armageddon and Beyond
October 12	The Power of Prophecy
October 19	End-Time Powers of the Middle East
October 26	Beware of the Antichrist

For additional stations and times, check the Television Log on page 31 of your *Tomorrow's World* magazine.

Ordinations

Mrs. Carolyn Graham was ordained as a deaconess on September 13, 2007 by Area Pastor Mr. Wallace Smith and elders Mr. Glenn Travis and Mr. William Oswald. She serves in the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation, where her husband, Mr. Doug Graham, is a deacon.

Mr. Lawrence Hartshorne was ordained as a deacon on the Sabbath of May 3, by Canadian Regional Director Mr. Gerald Weston and Area Pastor Mr. Stuart Wachowicz. He serves in the Edmonton, Alberta, congregation.

Mr. Mike Shymansky was ordained as a deacon on the Sabbath of May 3, by Canadian Regional Director Mr. Gerald Weston and Area Pastor Mr. Stuart Wachowicz. He serves in the Edmonton, Alberta, congregation.

Mr. Barry Walker was ordained as an elder on Pentecost by Canadian Regional Director Mr. Gerald Weston and elder Mr. Eldon Davis. He serves in the Kelowna, British Columbia, congregation.

Mr. & Mrs. Jake Warkentine were ordained as deacon and deaconess on the Sabbath of February 2, by Canadian Regional Director Mr. Gerald Weston and Area Pastor Mr. Frank Best. Jake and Evelyn serve in the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan congregation.

Mr. Philip West was ordained as an elder on Pentecost by Evangelist Mr. Richard Ames and Regional Pastor Mr. Rand Millich. He is serving in the Kansas City, Missouri area

Literature Tracking: Get Involved!

The Mail Processing Department at Headquarters is constantly looking for ways to improve the speed with which mail is delivered to brethren and others requesting Church materials. Since much of our mail is sent at “bulk rate” to receive the lowest-possible mailing charges, it is vital that we monitor the speed of delivery, so we can work with our U.S. Postal Service contacts to help local post offices do a better job of meeting their published delivery times. One *Living Church News* mailed in 2007 took nine weeks to reach some brethren in the Charlotte area, while many other brethren not far away received it in less than two weeks!

In the MyLCG area of the Member Resources Web site at www.cogl.org, there is a Literature Tracking feature. When you receive a co-worker letter, *Living Church News* or *Tomorrow's World* magazine, you can provide important assistance to the Mail

Processing Department by going to the Literature Tracking area and recording the date on which you received the item. No matter whether you received the item quickly, or whether it took longer than usual, your data is very helpful to the Mail Processing Department, as it helps staff gain a more accurate picture of where our mail delivery is going smoothly, and where there may be problems to overcome.

The same username and password that you used to register for the Feast of Tabernacles will also grant you access to the Literature Tracking area. You are holding the September-October 2008 *Living Church News* in your hands. If you have not already done so, when you put this issue down, why not go to www.cogl.org and let us know the date on which you received it? Thank you in advance for your help!

We want to hear more about the happy milestones in the lives of our brethren. If your family has had a birth, marriage or major anniversary, please ask your local pastor to send word to the *Living Church News*, PO Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010 (or to send e-mail to lcg@lcn.org).

Commentary

The Ultimate Battlefield

By J. Davy Crockett, III

Recently, I watched a documentary, *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West*, which showed Muslim extremists and their religious leaders using classic propaganda techniques to inflame their followers to hate Westerners—particularly Israelis, Americans and the British.

It was a gripping, gut-wrenching glimpse into the mindset of one troubling segment of modern-day Islam. “Death to America!” is their cry. Hate slogans, reminiscent of the Nazi movement of the 1930s and 1940s in Europe, are being shouted in mass rallies at Muslim schools and colleges. These hatemongers are using modern methods to instill in young Muslims across the Middle East—and in parts of Europe—an irrational hatred and unfounded fear of non-Muslims.

Radical political parties have gained power in Iran, Lebanon and other predominantly Muslim nations, openly using terrorism, intimidation and torture to achieve their ends. Children, adolescents and young adults are being taught that it is their religious duty to hate and kill the enemy—defined as anyone who does not embrace their brand of radical Islamic dogma—even if it costs them their own lives. In one chilling scene, the documentary showed a respected religious teacher telling a large class of children that there is no higher calling than to be killed while fighting “infidels” in *jihad*, or holy war.

Though well-trained and well-equipped U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan are using the latest military techniques to fight insurgents and terrorists, they have been unable to fully subdue their opponents and claim lasting victory. Why? Because the battle is really for the hearts and minds of the foe. Until true freedom and brotherhood are taught and embraced by all the warring peoples, no victory can be had unless one faction completely subjugates the others, killing all those opponents who are willing not only to kill but to die for their cause.

The ultimate battlefield is found in the hearts and minds of men, women and children, for it is there that ideas, attitudes and resolve are formed. For meaningful change to occur, it must begin with a change of heart and mind. Without such change, no real progress can be made—and no victory can be won, whatever the cause.

God has revealed how He will bring lasting peace and prosperity, first to Israel and then to all humanity. He promises: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26–27).

The verses that follow describe many benefits that result from this change of heart. God has promised to bring about the change, and He alone can make it happen. He will do it on His timetable, according to the plan He is working out here below. Until then, our world's bloodshed and carnage will continue, for the real battlefield has been ignored.

Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray, “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). This is the message we bring on the *Tomorrow's World* television program and in all our publications. In these troubled times, the world *needs* this information.

The above is adapted from one of the many commentaries, discussing vital topics facing our world, available at the www.lcg.org and www.tomorrowworld.org Web sites.