

# Living Church News

Volume 11, No. 4 July–August 2009



**Inside:**

**Is the Bible REALLY Your Guide? .....3**

**The Place of Safety: A Conditional Promise .....6**

**Audit 2008: The Work Abounds .....10**

**Do You Like to Be Corrected? .....19**

**Do We Truly Honor God? .....22**

**Local Church News .....26**

**Commentary .....28**

## Do You Live by FAITH?

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Things certainly are *rapidly changing* in our modern world!

With the greatest financial crisis in 60 years still upon us, and with ominous world events now threatening war, disease epidemics and possibly even mass starvation in many nations, millions of people are worried and fearful. For our society has certainly “lost faith” in the God of the Bible—if, indeed, it ever had such faith in the first place.

More than ever, as frightening prophetic events seem to be speeding up, you and I *need faith* in the living God—the God of the Bible. For this generation of human beings is soon going to be **tested** in a way no other generation of humans has *ever been tested!* God tells those who are faithful to His ways at the time of the end, “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to **test** those who dwell on the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

Will you and I pass this coming “test”?

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write, “For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the *just shall live by faith*; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10:37–38). Having faith is *not* to be some isolated event. It is to be *continually ongoing*—a vital part of our everyday lives. Something we **live by**.

Later, Paul wrote, “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). Again, we must learn to *live by faith* in order to please our Creator and our Father in heaven. We must not only believe that He exists—even the *demons* believe that (James 2:19)—but we must *diligently “seek” God!*

Recent news reports have described the threat against America’s aging power distribution network; the risk that enemy nations could shut down the entire “electrical grid” here in the United States. Many think this would be awful. In certain ways, it would—certainly if the weather were too hot or too cold and people were without air conditioning or heating. But, apart from some of these disturbances, it might in one limited sense be *a very good thing!*

*How so?*

Because people would absolutely *have to take time* to **think**. They would no doubt sit down and **meditate** on their lives and the *meaning* of their lives

and why such events were occurring—perhaps more than ever before.

For, in our day-to-day lives, most people are simply caught up in the “hurly-burly” of human activities—constantly being “busy” rushing to and fro to business, to shopping, to social events, to taking children to school or sporting events, to “catching up” on television programs and the constant stream of information that is ever pouring out upon us through television, radio, newspapers and now through the Internet. Truly, we are victims of “information overload”! Indeed, we are often “too busy” to really **meditate** about the very purpose of life, about whether God really exists—and about what we ought to be doing to fulfill our purpose and to honor our Creator!

The world around us—all the *physical* events and things and activities—often seems to capture our complete attention. So, the invisible God seems less “real” to this generation than perhaps He has to any other generation in human history! For there has been *no other generation* so thoroughly engulfed in what is actually *Satan’s world*—surrounded by information, sights, sounds and “noise” from the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4)—who is Satan the devil.

As the Apostle Paul indicated in Ephesians 2:2, Satan is the invisible spirit being who “now works in the sons of disobedience.” He certainly is the “prince of the power of the air”—the one constantly *broadcasting* so many sounds, sights and impulses that he uses to keep human beings distracted from really, truly “seeking” the invisible God of the Bible, and from “*walking with*” that great God!

Have you been distracted by Satan, or by this world of which he is the invisible “prince”? Is God “real” to you, personally? Are you growing in the kind of faith you will need to *fully trust* God—*no matter what*—in the perilous years just ahead? Here are some “keys” to help you do so:

### I. Build the *habit* of regular, in-depth, Bible study.

We all need to overcome our intellectual and spiritual laziness and carelessness. We must consciously set aside *a lot* of our **time**, throughout each week, to genuinely **study** the inspired revelation from God to human beings—the Holy Bible. We must *meditate* on the fact that the Bible truly is “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16)—that it is a revelation coming directly from our Creator, revealing to us His *mind*, His *purpose*, the *way* He thinks and acts, and the absolute **promises** He has given to us.

If you learn to truly *study* the Bible in this way—with an open mind and heart, sincerely and urgently asking for understanding and faith—you will certainly **grow** in the attitude of faith and absolute **trust** in your Creator! As the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell us, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

*Continued on page 24*

# 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  
**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 0P6, 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.

©2009, 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.

# Is the Bible *REALLY* Your Guide?

## Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

**H**undreds of millions of people “profess Christ.” But in poll after poll, these professing Christians freely admit that they do not really study the Bible. In fact, scarcely more than one-third of Americans can even name the four Gospels—let alone understand what they say.

Most of you reading this article do “believe” in the Bible. You hear it preached regularly, and you know it contains the Truth about who you are and the incredible future God has planned for you.

But how many of us *really study* the Instruction Manual for all true Christians—the Holy Bible? And what is our real attitude toward the Bible? Do we view the Bible as the real authority in our lives? Or do we feel free to “reason around” it when we find it saying something “inconvenient” to our lives?

Coming to understand and to *live* the right answer to these questions is a major *key* to attaining eternal life.

Without the Bible as their authority, men and women everywhere feel “free” to make up their own rules and religions as they go along. In past generations, some Roman Catholic leaders felt “free” to torture and burn nonconformists. Many Protestant Puritans felt free to burn those they labeled “witches.” And without the guidance of God’s word, the Nazis felt free to torture and finally exterminate millions of Jews and others

they called “undesirables”—even during the lifetimes of many of you reading this article!

And, of course, in a society cut off from the understanding and authority of God’s word, men and women feel “free” to commit adultery and practice all sorts of perversions—doing virtually anything that “feels good.” If their sexual “freedom” brings unintended consequences, they do not hesitate to destroy the human life growing inside the mother’s womb. They offer clever reasonings and “catch phrases” to make these abominable practices seem correct. They say: “A woman has the right to control her own body.”

Sounds good?

Perhaps. But what about “controlling” her emotions and her body so that she does not become pregnant outside of marriage? And if she becomes pregnant in marriage, it should be done in a “controlled” manner, aware that she is *responsible* for the *other* human life within her body.

What about the countless millions of young people deprived of parents through the tragedy of divorce? Should people feel “free” to divorce for any reason, as so many do today? Jesus Christ clearly said: “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32).

In the world around us, many people will say, “I think that is too strong! I don’t agree with that!” Or they may say: “Jesus said that 2,000

years ago, so it doesn’t apply today.” But do we in God’s Church ever use human reasoning to “get around” dozens and scores of plain and clear biblical teachings? What is *our* attitude toward the Bible?

### Did Jesus **MEAN** What He Said?

Jesus Christ, the originator and founder of true Christianity, said: “If you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*”! (Matthew 19:17). Even after His death and resurrection—after everything that was “nailed to the cross” was nailed there—Christ commanded His disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.... teaching them to observe *all things* that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20).

Was the Son of God *misleading* His own disciples with these final instructions? Was He *confused* when He told them to “keep the commandments” and then went on to name several of the Ten Commandments? Did Jesus not realize that Protestant ministers would later say that His Apostle Paul had *done away* with the need to keep the Ten Commandments?

*What is going on here?*

The plain Truth is that—under the influence of Satan the Devil (Revelation 12:9)—carnal human beings *resent* the idea of a real and authoritative God. The carnal mind does not want a *real* God who has power and authority over our lives! As the Apostle Paul was inspired to write, “the carnal mind is *enmity* against God; for it is not subject to

the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).

Did you catch that? It is the spiritual law of God—the Ten Commandments—to which the carnal mind feels resentment or toward which it is “hostile”—as some translators render this passage of Scripture. The carnal mind resents the idea of a Creator God who has authority over their lives! Most human beings *resent* the idea of a Higher Power telling them what to do!

Very well known and respected in his day as a writer and philosopher, English author Aldous Huxley admitted this basic hostility against a Higher Power which he and his fellow writers and the “intelligentsia” generally held: “For myself, as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our *sexual freedom*... There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had *any meaning whatsoever*” (*Ends and Means*, p. 270; emphasis ours).

At least Huxley was honest. He admitted that—just like the intellectuals of our day—the “philosophers” of his day did not like the idea of a Higher Power telling them what to do. Acknowledging the God of the Bible would interfere with their philosophical reasonings about fornication, adultery and the various sexual perversions such “thinkers” like to promote.

Do you—in your heart of hearts—believe that the real God of creation has the *authority* to tell you what to do? Or do you have a sort of “hip pocket God” to whom you refer

when convenient? Eventually, we each must face this question honestly! For, again, a correct understanding of this topic is vital to our ever coming into a genuine relationship with the true God—the Creator God—who gives us life and breath and who will give us eternal life *if* we will surrender our lives to obey Him and serve Him in the way He tells us to do!

Perhaps the most basic teaching in *all* of Christianity is Jesus Christ’s instruction: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* of God” (Luke 4:4). Those who call themselves “Christian” but do not accept the authority of the inspired word of God even feel free to “make up their own religion” as they go along. Regrettably, this approach is precisely what *millions* of professing Christians are doing right now!

This attitude is why Jesus Himself warned us: “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). And again: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

God Himself tells us, through His servant Paul: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Notice that religious doctrine or teaching ought to come from inspired *scripture*—not from the confused and often contradictory reasonings of modern theologians or philosophers, who generally *refuse* to acknowledge the Bible as their sole and *supreme* authority.

### **REVERENCE for the Bible?**

In generations past, many men and women at least *professed* toward

the Bible a reverence seldom found today. The publishers of a well-known religious journal, *Banner of Truth*, felt compelled to republish a solemn warning from Bishop J.C. Ryle’s 1890 classic, *Light From Old Times*. Here is that warning:

“While we sleep, an onslaught is being mounted against us, an onslaught which the Protestant churches of our land were never less ready to sustain. Anglican and Non-conformist leaders alike have thrown away the only weapon that could defend us—‘the sword of the Spirit,’ the Infallible Word of God. The Word of God alone, the grace of God alone, the power of the Spirit alone, these were the watch cries which prevailed four hundred years ago. They are not the watch cries of our Protestant pulpits today.”

The world today basically *rejects* that approach to the Bible. That rejection is leading to a degree of religious *chaos* never experienced before. On this cynical, rebellious, God-rejecting generation will fall the Great Tribulation which Jesus Christ predicted: “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21).

So, what about *you*?

Have you genuinely proved to yourself, and truly accepted, the *authority* of the Bible? This is more than just “sitting” in Sabbath services. It requires your active cooperation with the Holy Spirit to reveal spiritual Truth to your converted mind (1 Corinthians 2:14). And it is certainly something you can do *if* you really want to. Two vital sources of information on this topic are our booklet *The Bible: Fact or Fiction?* and of course our *Tomorrow’s World Bible Study Course*. Both give very specific information regarding actual *proof* of a real God and of the Holy Bible as His inspired word.

Brethren, do we really, deeply understand the degree to which mainstream “Christianity” has *rejected* the Bible as its sole authority? Author Thomas Reeves reminds us that one mainline denomination has been described as “an institution in free fall... with nothing to hold on to... no shared belief, no common assumptions, no agreed bottom line, no accepted definition” of what it means to belong to that church (*The Empty Church*, p. 10). A chaplain in that denomination even declared that he “is not in the business of dispensing dogmatic answers about anything” (*ibid.*, p. 24). If we truly come to realize just how *wrong* this rejection of God’s word actually is, then perhaps we will be even more eager to honestly and conscientiously face the issue of *really* looking to God and the Bible as the supreme authority in our lives.

With tears in his eyes, the Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders about a great falling away that would occur after his death: “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:29–31).

Then, near the end of his life, Paul wrote the evangelist Timothy: “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will

heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:1–4).

All around us in the modern Israelite nations, ministers and religious leaders have ceased basing their teachings honestly and directly on the Bible. They have indeed turned aside to “fables”—as Paul warned. *If* our American, Canadian and British ministers had been faithfully and forcefully teaching the pure word of God, then a whole range of modern problems in the family and in society would *never* have become as serious as they now are. The stability of marriage and the family would be inestimably stronger if people had been taught the *binding* quality of marriage. The juvenile crime rate would not even begin to be what it is, if strong families were the rule throughout our nations. Teenage use of illicit drugs would not even approach its present level, nor would teenage suicide and a host of other problems.

### **The “Fruit” of REJECTING the Bible**

The vast majority of today’s priests and ministers scrupulously avoid the subject of homosexuality. Yet *if* they would do what the Apostle Paul commanded and “preach the word,” they would regularly and consistently teach that the *only* correct use of sex is between a man and woman within the bounds of holy matrimony. They would proclaim God’s judgment on this sin—that God made one man and one woman for each other and that His word labels sexual relations between two men an *abomination*. “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22).

Do you really think that modern priests and ministers are somehow

“unable” to read, or that they somehow have not read or do not understand the Bible’s clear instruction that homosexuality is sinful and wrong?

Even for those who mistakenly believe that only the New Testament is the word of God, the Apostle Paul is very specific. Remember, the Bible was inspired of God to be the *authority* in all of our lives. Here is what Paul said about the homosexual practices of his day: “For this reason God gave them up to *vile* passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting” (Romans 1:26–28).

Then, Paul summarizes God’s judgment on the sin of homosexuality itself, and on the licentious attitude that tolerates it and ignores “the righteous judgment of God” (v. 32), which condemns not just those who practice such sin, but even those who merely approve of it. So we can see that, if people are in any way interested in doing what the Bible *actually* says, they will abhor homosexuality, since it is directly condemned in both the Old and New Testaments as an “abomination” and as “vile.” Paul states plainly in 1 Corinthians 6:9 that those who practice this sin **will not inherit God’s kingdom!**

Yet more and more “mainstream” churches are not only condoning this practice, but even allowing those individuals to be ordained as *ministers* in some cases! Can you imagine a belief or practice more *diametrically op-*

*Continued on page 24*

# THE PLACE OF SAFETY: A Conditional Promise

By Wyatt Ciesielka

**T**he Bible tells of terrible calamities that will occur at the end of this age. What will happen to God's faithful flock during the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord? Will God provide a *place of safety* for them? And, if there is a promised place of protection and nourishment, are there *specific qualifications* and *attitudes* that God expects to find in each of us if we are to be protected there?

While the place of safety is not the primary goal of a truly converted Christian, it is a *wonderful* and *important* biblical truth. It is also a promise that is accompanied by vitally important *spiritual lessons* that apply not only if we desire God's end-time protection, but also if we seek to enter into the Kingdom of God at Christ's return!

Regrettably, there is much confusion about this key promise. What does your Bible *really* teach? What has the faithful Church of God long *understood*? Can you be *confident* in your understanding?

Scripture is clear that war, famine and disease will come together and result in the most awful time the world has ever seen (Matthew 24:21). Scripture also reveals that a zealous, faithful flock will *flee* these terrors (Matthew 24:20) and will be protected in a *powerful* and *literal* way (Revelation 12:14). This is a promise that God makes to those of us living at the end of the age, but it is a *conditional promise*, and God has recorded very specific guidelines that are required to claim this promise.

## Does Scripture Teach a Real Place of Safety for God's Church?

Many prophecies such as Ezekiel 5, Jeremiah 30, and Jesus' teachings in Matthew 24 point to this very severe future judgment on modern-day Israel, which includes modern-day Manasseh and Ephraim (the United States and British-descended nations) as well as other nations primarily in northwestern Europe.

Notice what Christ reveals to the Apostle John in Revelation 12 about this coming time. Here, Christ specifically discusses *three* historic and future Satanic attacks, and *three* historic and future flights to a physical place of protection.

First, in Revelation 12:1–4, Christ looks *back* at events surrounding His physical birth. A woman clothed with the sun is ready to give birth to a Child—who is none other

than Christ born in the flesh (John 3:16, Romans 1:3)! Satan *the dragon* then attempts to “devour” that Child “as soon as it was born” (v. 4). This refers to Satan's attempt to slaughter Jesus through King Herod's decree that all male children under age two from the Bethlehem area were to be killed. But God sent a warning allowing Jesus and His family to be *physically removed* for their protection (Matthew 2:13).

Then, verse 6 transitions to a time hundreds of years *later*. Here, the Church flees “into the wilderness” and is nourished for 1,260 “days.” This refers to the 1,260 *years* when God's faithful flock fled *severe religious persecution* levied by the “Holy Roman Empire.” This period began with *Justinian's revival* (554AD) and concluded with the temporary collapse of that system at *Napoleon's defeat* in 1814. A second time we see a physical flight into a prepared *place* on this earth where God again provided protection and nourishment.

Why did Christ record these first two events in Revelation 12? In part, it was to help us understand the third, and yet future event. Just as the physically helpless newborn Jesus Christ and His family were given physical protection by God when they fled from Herod; and just as hundreds of years later God's “little flock” fled the persecutions of the powerful Holy Roman Empire, at the end of this age God's Church will likewise be *physically helpless* to protect itself from Satan's wrath. But, God will again provide physical escape to a physical location.

Revelation 12:7–12 describes a coming time when war will break out in heaven and Satan will be cast down to earth. Then, verse 13 describes “the dragon's” end-time *persecution* (but not “war”) on the *entire* Church. After this initial persecution, “the woman” flees into the wilderness “where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent” (v. 14). As with the preceding flights to protection, this third event also refers to a flight to a *literal place of safety*. Here, a faithful remnant will be protected for 3½ years.

The Greek word translated *wilderness* in Revelation 12:14 (*eremos*) may also be accurately translated as “*desert*,” or as “*desolate place*.” These passages clearly *do not* refer to being protected in individual homes during the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. Rather, as God's Church has long taught, a faithful remnant will be

gathered to a specific, physical desert (or wilderness) area.

At this point, it is helpful to review just a few examples of what the Church of God has long taught. Notice this from an article by Mr. Richard F. Ames:

“God will protect His true saints—genuine Christians—from the great tribulation. This is not a secret rapture. There is no such event in the Bible. Notice that the woman [symbolizing the Church] is taken to “her place” in the wilderness. Then the dragon pursues those lukewarm Christians who had not been intently growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ” (“When Will the Millennium Begin?,” January-February 2004 *Tomorrow’s World*, p. 10).

Notice also the following from Dr. Roderick C. Meredith’s *Tomorrow’s World* telecast T057, “Secret Rapture or Place of Safety?”:

“The Bible does clearly explain that there will be a place of safety during the Great Tribulation. The true saints of God, those who are part of the true Church of God, the little flock, that keeps God’s commandments, that has Christ living in them through the Holy Spirit the same kind of life He did live 1,900 years ago, an obedient life, they will be taken to a *place of safety*—and that place will be on this earth!”

This is not a new teaching. Note this excerpt from Lesson 32 of the *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course* (1965 edition):

“Jesus Christ promises that His own people, the OBE-DIENT MEMBERS of His one True Church performing His work on this earth, will be taken to a secret place of hiding—a place of protection and safety—to keep them from the Great Tribulation Satan will bring upon the earth!”

These are just three of the many examples where God’s true servants have long taught the biblical truth that at the end of this age, when the *entire world* is embroiled in the most intense upheaval, disease and warfare *ever known*, and when Satan again attacks the Church, God will dramatically intervene. However, not *all* of God’s Church flees to a place of safety. Revelation 3:10 shows that *Philadelphian Christians* will escape, while Revelation 12:17 shows that *Laodicean Christians* will be left behind, along with those of the other remaining eras. Why?

### **Why Are Some Protected and Some Not?**

Daniel 7:25, Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 12:14 all use the phrase “time and times and half a time” referring to the Great Tribulation. Briefly reviewing these passages provides some vital insight into the *type* of persecution Satan will unleash on God’s Church as well as *why* some are protected and some are not.

Daniel 7 refers to an end-time revival of the same Holy Roman Empire mentioned above. This empire will once

again persecute the Church of God. Notice in Daniel 7:24–25 that this “Beast” system will “persecute the saints” *before* the saints are “given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”

The “persecution” in Daniel 7:25 is the Aramaic *bēla’* which means “to harass constantly” or “to wear away.” This is almost identical in meaning to the Greek *diōkō* of Revelation 12:13, which means “to be mistreated” or “to be worn out.” These verses apply to the Church of God in general, *before* the Great Tribulation begins. However, this *bēla’* and *diōkō* “persecution” *prior* to the Great Tribulation is very different from what happens *during* the Great Tribulation.

Clearly, *all* of God’s faithful Church will again be *harassed* at the end of the age. But, prior to the onslaught of the Great Tribulation, God will *separate* His flock. The Philadelphian Christians will be protected from this coming war (Revelation 3:10; 12:14), but the Laodiceans will not. Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 12:17 show an all-out “war” against the saints during the Great Tribulation—those who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Here we see brutal, Satanic war waged against true Christians *who were not taken to a place of safety* (Revelation 12:17).

The “war” waged against those left behind is the Greek word *polemos*. It is violent, hateful, merciless and overwhelming. It is far more terrible than the “persecution” endured prior to the Great Tribulation.

*Polemos* is also used in Revelation 13:7 where it is “granted to him to make war with the saints *and to overcome them*.” In this terrifying time of *world war*, the Laodiceans will suffer and many will be martyred *because of their spiritual apathy* (Revelation 3:16; 12:17). God allows them to be overcome, taken captive and killed, by the authority of the “Beast,” in order to be spiritually refined and prove themselves worthy of entering God’s Kingdom!

While we understand that Philadelphian Christians are more *zealous* and that Laodicean Christians are more *lukewarm*, they are all part of God’s Church. The horror of this warning should drive us to our knees in prayer for ourselves, and for *all* of God’s people, including those estranged from our fellowship. Pray that God may still grant a repentant and humble heart to His sheep, and that *none* of us become infected with apathy, arrogance, or bitterness (Psalm 34:18)!

### **Refining Now, or During the Great Tribulation?**

Daniel 12:10 warns, “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined...” Isaiah 29:20 instructs that, “All *who*

watch for iniquity are cut off.” God expects us to be not merely Christians in name, but to be zealous *and refined*. Beyond just zealously supporting God’s Work, this includes not seeking and not tolerating any “iniquity.” *Iniquity* here is the Greek word *aven*—meaning any type of wickedness, idolatry or evil.

Isaiah 33:14–16 powerfully illustrates this point. The question is asked: “Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” The answer is given: “He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil.” Then verse 16 alludes to protection and nourishment in a particular location, which the Church has long understood could be Petra, in Jordan.

Rather than speculate about the *location*, however, consider the *admonition*. Recorded here are the characteristics God must see in us for us to be protected during the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. Remember, we must become spiritually *refined* to inherit eternal life; to survive the “devouring fire.” Yes, God makes a collective promise of protection in a place of safety, but for each of us individually it is a *conditional promise*. Regardless of whether or not we think we know the location, we will not be there if we do not personally meet God’s conditions!

Isaiah 33:15–16 shows us that God will grant protection to one who *walks and speaks righteously and who despises oppressive gain*. This admonition not only includes keeping *all* of the Ten Commandments; it also, as *Matthew Henry’s* commentary states, refers to a person who “is so far from coveting ill-gotten gain that he despises it. He thinks it a mean and sordid thing, and unbecoming a man of honor, to enrich himself by any hardship put upon his neighbor. He scorns to do a wrong thing, nay, to do a severe thing, though he might get by it. He does not over-value gain itself, and therefore easily abhors the gain that is not honestly come by.”

Paul beautifully summarized this attitude in 1 Corinthians 13:4–6. A true Christian has no room for vanity, evil, rudeness, self-aggrandizement, or oppression. A true Christian understands that, “He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who honors Him has mercy on the needy” (Proverbs 14:31).

*Individually and nationally*, is this our attitude? Or, are financial markets and the world financial system itself established on greed? Do excessive credit card debt, national debt and excessive borrowing drive consumerism? As nations around the world *reel* from the worst economic recession since the Great Depression, these are also timely questions we need to ask of ourselves, individually.

Individually and collectively, we find again and again that, “The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is

servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7). This world’s financial systems “trust in oppression and perversity,” and God says their iniquity will be like “a bulge in a high wall whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant” (Isaiah 30:12–13). Because of this approach, our nations are quickly nearing the days when, “Suddenly, your debtors will rise up in anger. They will turn on you and take all you have, while you stand trembling and helpless” (Habakkuk 2:7, *NLT*).

What about our *political* systems? Do our governments strive to do “*righteousness*” according to God’s law? Are our political systems even based on God’s form of government?

Speaking of national Israel, as well as how God’s true Church should be organized, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of The Ages* (page 246, 1985 hardcover edition): “Old Testament Israel, the Church of the Old Testament, was also a nation in the world—though not OF the world as God organized it. Its GOVERNMENT was HIERARCHICAL. It was theocratic government—government from the top down—the very opposite of ‘democracy.’ The CHURCH is organized under theocratic government, hierarchical in form. The members do not set officials in the Church. God sets EVEN THE LAY MEMBERS in the Church (1 Cor. 12:18).”

Rejecting God’s government is another manifestation of “Laodiceanism.” *Laodicea* is a conjunction of the Greek *laos*, meaning “the people” and *dike*, meaning “decide, judge,” and “take vengeance.” Instead of continuing in God’s hierarchical model, Laodiceans prefer an electoral approach, electing others (or themselves) into position or office. This approach puts preaching the Gospel (Mark 16:15) subordinate to politics.

Isaiah 33:15 also instructs that God will protect one who *abhors and shuns bloodshed, violence, lust, pornography and any kind of evil*. Do we *really* shun this type of content in television, movies, *all forms of media*, and even conversation? If we enjoy this type of entertainment, then we violate this passage and are not “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). How then can we claim that Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20)?

As *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown* observes, “The senses are avenues for the entrance of sin.” And as Psalm 119:37 records, each of us must *turn away* our eyes from looking at worthless things so that God may *revive* us in His way.

We should ask God to strengthen us in these areas, and we should prayerfully consider these admonitions along with the warning to the Laodiceans to buy “gold refined in the fire” (Revelation 3:18). Simply stated, God’s people have the opportunity to refine themselves now individually and collectively—and for those who do not take the



opportunity now, God will allow them to be refined in the *polemos* of the Great Tribulation.

### Location Less Important Than Attitude

Many have combined the prophecies in Matthew, Revelation and elsewhere with scriptures such as Isaiah 16:1–4, Isaiah 33:10–16, Isaiah 42:11–13, Jeremiah 48:28 and Jeremiah 48:40 to indicate that Petra is the likely place of safety. References in these Scriptures such as, “fortress of rocks,” and “Sela” (also translated “Petra”), and instructing the Moabites to “hide the outcasts; do not betray him who escapes” are just some of the reasons why the Church has long understood that these scriptures may indicate Petra as the promised place of safety. Others emphatically contend that Petra *cannot* be the location because the original Hebrew is *inconclusive* in these passages, and because Scripture reveals that intense warfare will consume the general area of Petra at the end of the age.

Petra may or may not be the place of safety. And while we hope to claim this promise, it is by no means a Christian’s primary focus. But, while we cannot say that Petra *will be* the place of safety, neither can we *reject* that possibility because the Hebrew text is not clear enough for our liking, and we must be careful not to *doubt* God’s power by assuming that He could not protect His people from physical violence prophesied for that area. As we read in the January-February 2009 *Living Church News*, “God rules supreme! Yes, God is *El Shaddai*, God Almighty. He has all power in the universe” (Trust in God’s Power in 2009,” Richard F. Ames, p. 6). God *can* protect us in Petra—or in another location—regardless of human or Satanic attack!

While there are clues that Petra *may* be the physical location of the place of safety, God’s Church has not insisted dogmatically on that location. Notice what Mr. Armstrong wrote in a letter to the Church on July 16, 1982: “Brethren, I HAVE NEVER said that Petra definitely is the place of protection where God will take us.” Similarly, Dr. Meredith stated in his sermon titled “Servant Leadership” (April 12, 2008) that “Petra *may* be the place of safety.” As Mr. John

Ogwyn nicely summarized: “While the details of how and where God will protect His people are fascinating, we must all keep in mind that in the ultimate sense our protection does not come from any *place*—it comes from *God*” (“Is There a Real Place of Safety?,” July-August 2001, *Living Church News*).

Just as the Israelites were not sure exactly *how* they would escape Egypt, or exactly *where* they would go, or even exactly *what path* they would take, but followed Moses as Moses followed Christ, we do know that God will make clear to His Church where the place of safety is, and will lead His Church to that place *when the time is right*.

More important than discussing “where,” is understanding the lessons we discussed *and practicing living righteously*.

We know that we will never be perfect in this lifetime (Romans 3:23). Even so, with heartfelt commitment, we are justified by the redemptive grace of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24). Keeping the commandments is required (1 John 5:2–3), but is not sufficient. We must also *love* God’s law, and we must love good and noble things.

These thoughts must be our meditation all the day (Psalm 119:97; Philippians 4:8).

Although we will occasionally stumble, this must not stop us from getting back up and continuing to be *living sacrifices* (Romans 12:1). Although imperfect, a *living sacrifice* will zealously support preaching the Gospel (Mark 16:15) and will earnestly *contend* for the “promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:8). Such living sacrifices will humbly and enthusiastically “labor and suffer reproach, because [they] trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe” (1 Timothy 4:8–10). A Christian who is truly a *living sacrifice* is one who takes seriously the scriptural *descriptions* of those whom God *will* protect during these cataclysmic events, and to whom He *will* grant eternal life!

God desires for each of us to “escape all these things” (Luke 21:36), and for each of us to make it into His Kingdom (John 6:37–40)! He has given us the warning. He has given us the instructions. It is up to us to respond. ■

Although we will occasionally stumble, this must not stop us from getting back up and continuing to be living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Although imperfect, a living sacrifice will zealously support preaching the Gospel (Mark 16:15) and will earnestly contend for the “promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

# Audit 2008: The Work Abounds...

By J. Davy Crockett, III

**A**s we go forward, it is good to take a look back to see where we have been, what we have accomplished and what has not yet been done. The year 2008 was in many ways a “banner year” for the Living Church of God, and one way in which this was reflected was the amazing growth in income—13.69 percent above 2007—for which we are grateful, as it allowed the Work to expand and more effectively carry out the mission of the Church.

Considering that by the end of 2008 the United States’ economy had already begun its downward spiral, this was a phenomenal rate of growth—and it certainly demonstrates

the deep dedication our members and co-workers have toward the Work that God has given us to do.

Another major factor in the substantial increase was the large number of special offerings—including one large estate donation—that were received throughout the year, above and beyond tithes and Holy Day offerings.

In 2008, the Living Church of God spent approximately \$6.2 million—47.8 percent of its total income—to preach the Gospel. Another \$5.9 million—45.3 percent—went toward feeding the

flock. Administrative expenses, \$900,000, accounted for 6.9 percent of spending.

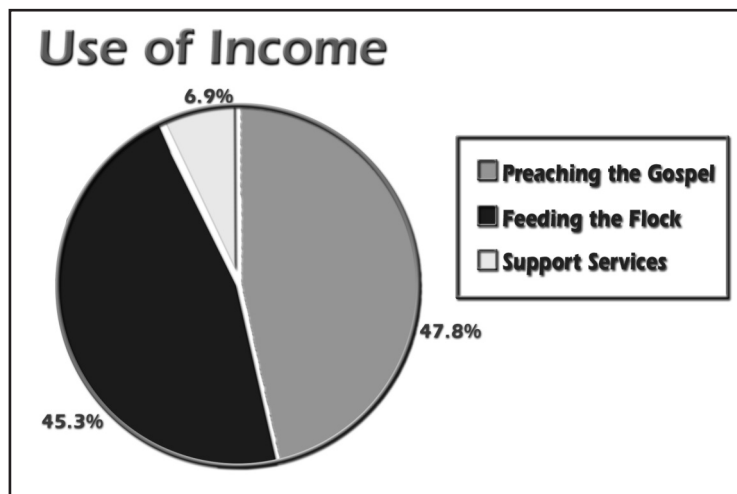
One significant development during 2008 was our airing the *Tomorrow’s World* telecast on the Black Entertainment Television network, through which we were able to reach a potential audience of 88 million households. Despite an early morning time-slot, the

sion production for the new digital format mandated by the Federal Communications Commission. To meet the requirements of the digital format, and to prepare for high-definition television programming, the Work had to outfit a new studio, build a new set, and upgrade tens of thousands of dollars in video and sound equipment as well as digital editing suites.

Here, as in so many other areas of the Work, God clearly opened a door that has provided major benefits to the Work. We had long realized the limitations of our old television studio—it was right above the warehouse from which our Mail Processing Department prepares, sends and receives large (and often noisy)

shipments daily, and its comparatively low ceiling restricted what could be done with overhead lighting.

While we were considering how best to remodel the studio, putting together figures to “count the cost” of our options, we learned that a 5,000-square-foot building, two doors west of the HQ building, had just come on the market. We were excited to find that this building had a spacious 40x60 room in the rear, with 16-foot ceilings—an excellent configuration for the kind of television studio space we needed!



program averaged more than 500 literature request responses per week over the 13 months it aired on BET. The network, however, was a very costly venue for the telecast, and by mid-2009 God had opened up other doors allowing the Work to proclaim the “Ezekiel warning” on television even more cost-effectively on other stations.

Another television milestone during 2008 was our securing time on stations in two huge Texas markets: Houston and Dallas.

An ongoing project throughout 2008 was readying our televi-

But could we afford the new building? Working with our bankers, we had the HQ building appraised, and we discovered that its value had appreciated considerably since we purchased it in 2003. This increase in equity allowed us to purchase and remodel the new building, and also to pay off the mortgage on the townhouse we purchased several years ago to house HQ visitors.

Of course, once the building was purchased, work had to be done to make it ready for our use. We engaged an architect to guide the remodeling process and assist us in working with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission to obtain the needed permits, some of which seemed arbitrary and even onerous at times. For example, one agency insisted that we would need to add bicycle racks in front of the building, though eventually it was

determined that we did not need to. Zoning changes required the addition of new parking spaces that we expect will rarely if ever be used. Once permits were received and our plans approved, we were able to begin the renovation process shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles. Construction continued into early 2009. What a joy it was, last February, when Dr. Meredith was able to gather together with the staff and say a prayer of dedication, committing the building to God's service, and asking for His blessing and inspiration on all the activities to be carried out within. By the time you read this article, many of you will have watched the first telecast taped and edited in the new building, which aired in mid-May.

The Church Administration Department also experienced significant growth in 2008. During this very busy year, seven full-time and

four part-time ministers were hired. Certainly we still have manpower needs that are not yet met, but the Work is pursuing long-term plans and goals in order to meet those needs.

Of course, the need to preach the Gospel and feed the flock does not diminish even in the face of severe economic downturn. As of May 12, the Work's 2009 daily income was just 1.1 percent above what it was on that date in 2008. With growth in the Work, and uncertainty in the economy, this poses serious challenges to those entrusted with the responsibility of managing Church funds. We continue to seek economies and reductions in expense wherever feasible, while continuing faithfully to carry out our mission, to preach the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as a witness, and then to feed

*Continued on page 18*

**LIVING CHURCH OF GOD  
(INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES**

**Consolidated Financial Statements  
Years Ended December 31, 2008 and 2007**

**LIVING CHURCH OF GOD  
(INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES**

Contents

|  | Page   |
|--|--------|
| Report of Independent Auditors.....                | 2      |
| Consolidated Statements of Financial Position..... | 3      |
| Consolidated Statements of Activities.....         | 4      |
| Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows.....         | 5      |
| Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.....    | 6 - 15 |



### Report of Independent Auditors

Board of Directors  
Living Church of God (International), Inc. and Affiliates  
Charlotte, North Carolina

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statements of financial position of the Living Church of God (International), Inc. and Affiliates (the "Church") as of December 31, 2008 and 2007, and the related consolidated statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These consolidated financial statements are the responsibility of the Church's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Living Church of God (International), Inc. and Affiliates as of December 31, 2008 and 2007, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

*Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, L.L.P.*

Charlotte, North Carolina  
April 16, 2009

**LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES**

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position

|  | December 31,        |                     |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
|  | 2008                | 2007                |
| <b>Assets</b>                              |                     |                     |
| <b>Current assets</b>                      |                     |                     |
| Cash and cash equivalents                  | \$ 1,624,274        | \$ 1,013,631        |
| Investments                                | 230,381             | 492,079             |
| Receivables, net                           | 444,263             | 449,697             |
| Inventory                                  | 294,918             | 293,452             |
| Prepaid expenses                           | 341,825             | 297,692             |
| Deposits                                   | 11,036              | 2,975               |
| <b>Total current assets</b>                | <b>2,946,697</b>    | <b>2,549,526</b>    |
| <b>Property and equipment, net</b>         | 3,456,202           | 2,795,418           |
| <b>Other investments</b>                   | 77,600              | -                   |
| <b>Other assets, net</b>                   | 3,655               | 8,778               |
| <b>Total assets</b>                        | <b>\$ 6,484,154</b> | <b>\$ 5,353,722</b> |
|  |                     |                     |
| <b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>          |                     |                     |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>                 |                     |                     |
| Accounts payable                           | \$ 296,657          | \$ 307,792          |
| Accrued wages and other liabilities        | 223,181             | 193,282             |
| Mortgage payable, current portion          | 63,026              | 42,925              |
| Capital lease obligations, current portion | 53,563              | 92,281              |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>           | <b>636,427</b>      | <b>636,280</b>      |
| <b>Long-term liabilities</b>               |                     |                     |
| Mortgage payable                           | 2,251,974           | 1,595,876           |
| Capital lease obligations                  | 22,843              | 74,301              |
| <b>Total long-term liabilities</b>         | <b>2,274,817</b>    | <b>1,670,177</b>    |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                   | <b>2,911,244</b>    | <b>2,306,457</b>    |
| <b>Net assets</b>                          |                     |                     |
| Unrestricted net assets                    | 3,498,797           | 2,970,391           |
| Temporarily restricted net assets          | 74,113              | 76,874              |
| <b>Total net assets</b>                    | <b>3,572,910</b>    | <b>3,047,265</b>    |
| <b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>    | <b>\$ 6,484,154</b> | <b>\$ 5,353,722</b> |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

3

**LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES**

Consolidated Statements of Activities

|   | Year Ended December 31, 2008 |                        |                     | Year Ended December 31, 2007 |                        |                     |        |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------|
|   | Unrestricted                 | Temporarily Restricted |                     | Unrestricted                 | Temporarily Restricted |                     | Totals |
|   |                              | Totals                 |                     |                              |                        |                     |        |
| <b>Revenue and support</b>  |                              |                        |                     |                              |                        |                     |        |
| Tithes and contributions  | \$ 10,344,403                | \$ -                   | \$ 10,344,403       | \$ 9,633,829                 | \$ -                   | \$ 9,633,829        |        |
| Holy Day offerings  | 2,358,079                    | -                      | 2,358,079           | 2,081,516                    | -                      | 2,081,516           |        |
| Investment income and other revenue   | 703,674                      | -                      | 703,674             | 125,136                      | -                      | 125,136             |        |
| Special project donations   | 271                          | 68,532                 | 68,803              | 550                          | 13,619                 | 14,169              |        |
| Tuition and fees  | 38,884                       | -                      | 38,884              | 32,370                       | -                      | 32,370              |        |
|   | <u>13,445,311</u>            | <u>68,532</u>          | <u>13,513,843</u>   | <u>11,873,401</u>            | <u>13,619</u>          | <u>11,887,020</u>   |        |
| Net assets released from restrictions due to satisfaction of restricted purpose | 71,293                       | (71,293)               | -                   | 15,101                       | (15,101)               | -                   |        |
| <b>Total revenue and support</b>  | <u>13,516,604</u>            | <u>(2,761)</u>         | <u>13,513,843</u>   | <u>11,888,502</u>            | <u>(1,482)</u>         | <u>11,887,020</u>   |        |
| <b>Expenses</b>   |                              |                        |                     |                              |                        |                     |        |
| Feeding the Flock:  |                              |                        |                     |                              |                        |                     |        |
| Support of local congregations  | 4,718,116                    | -                      | 4,718,116           | 4,454,289                    | -                      | 4,454,289           |        |
| Assistance to the needy   | 990,525                      | -                      | 990,525             | 886,975                      | -                      | 886,975             |        |
| Living University   | 174,487                      | -                      | 174,487             | 111,674                      | -                      | 111,674             |        |
| Preaching the Gospel:   |                              |                        |                     |                              |                        |                     |        |
| Television and radio  | 3,705,272                    | -                      | 3,705,272           | 3,174,978                    | -                      | 3,174,978           |        |
| Publishing and editorial  | 1,114,364                    | -                      | 1,114,364           | 887,585                      | -                      | 887,585             |        |
| Mail processing and distribution  | 1,385,217                    | -                      | 1,385,217           | 1,383,706                    | -                      | 1,383,706           |        |
| General and administrative:   |                              |                        |                     |                              |                        |                     |        |
| Support services and other  | 900,217                      | -                      | 900,217             | 823,910                      | -                      | 823,910             |        |
| <b>Total expenses</b>   | <u>12,988,198</u>            | <u>-</u>               | <u>12,988,198</u>   | <u>11,723,117</u>            | <u>-</u>               | <u>11,723,117</u>   |        |
| <b>Change in net assets</b>   | 528,406                      | (2,761)                | 525,645             | 165,385                      | (1,482)                | 163,903             |        |
| <b>Net assets</b>   |                              |                        |                     |                              |                        |                     |        |
| <b>Beginning of year</b>  | 2,970,391                    | 76,874                 | 3,047,265           | 2,805,006                    | 78,356                 | 2,883,362           |        |
| <b>End of year</b>  | <u>\$ 3,498,797</u>          | <u>\$ 74,113</u>       | <u>\$ 3,572,910</u> | <u>\$ 2,970,391</u>          | <u>\$ 76,874</u>       | <u>\$ 3,047,265</u> |        |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

**LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES**

Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows

|  | <b>Years Ended December 31,</b> |                     |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------|
|  | <b>2008</b>                     | <b>2007</b>         |
| <b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>  |                                 |                     |
| Change in net assets   | \$ 525,645                      | \$ 163,903          |
| Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities |                                 |                     |
| Depreciation and amortization  | 302,728                         | 295,325             |
| Net unrealized/realized gains on investments   | 53,814                          | (440)               |
| Loss on disposal of property and equipment   | -                               | 270                 |
| Provision for uncollectible receivables  | 7,344                           | 7,524               |
| Change in operating assets and liabilities:  |                                 |                     |
| Receivables  | (1,910)                         | 15,501              |
| Prepaid expenses   | (44,133)                        | 6,981               |
| Inventory  | (1,466)                         | (28,035)            |
| Deposits and other assets  | (3,685)                         | (6,914)             |
| Accounts payable   | (11,135)                        | (42,658)            |
| Accrued expenses   | 29,899                          | 4,261               |
| <b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>   | <b>857,101</b>                  | <b>415,718</b>      |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>  |                                 |                     |
| Purchases of property and equipment  | (962,765)                       | (268,730)           |
| Proceeds from sale of investments  | 408,454                         | 147,291             |
| Purchase of investments  | (278,170)                       | (395,739)           |
| <b>Net cash used by investing activities</b>   | <b>(832,481)</b>                | <b>(517,178)</b>    |
| <b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>   |                                 |                     |
| Principal payments on mortgage   | (1,638,801)                     | (28,509)            |
| Proceeds from issuance of long-term debt   | 2,315,000                       | -                   |
| Principal payments on capital lease obligations  | (90,176)                        | (107,537)           |
| <b>Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities</b>                                 | <b>586,023</b>                  | <b>(136,046)</b>    |
| <b>Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>                                    | <b>610,643</b>                  | <b>(237,506)</b>    |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents</b>   |                                 |                     |
| Beginning of year  | 1,013,631                       | 1,251,137           |
| End of year  | <b>\$ 1,624,274</b>             | <b>\$ 1,013,631</b> |
| <b>Supplemental disclosure of cash flow information</b>                                    |                                 |                     |
| Cash paid during the year for interest expense   | \$ 102,357                      | \$ 126,082          |
| Equipment acquired through issuance of capital lease                                       | \$ -                            | \$ 21,583           |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

5

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 1 – Organization and summary of significant accounting policies**

*Organization and nature of activities* – The Living Church of God (International), Inc. and Affiliates (the “Church”), a North Carolina nonprofit religious corporation, is involved in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and providing for the spiritual and material needs of its members. The Church is primarily funded by unrestricted tithes and offerings. It maintains its worldwide headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina.

*Consideration of reporting entity* – The Church is comprised of various legal entities in the United States. Entities controlled by the Church have been included in the accompanying financial statements. These entities include Living Church of God, Inc., Tomorrow’s World, Inc., Tomorrow’s World, LLC, and Living University. The operations of foreign affiliates are not included in the accompanying financial statements as they are independent entities in which the Church does not hold a controlling interest.

*Living University* – The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of the Church, including affiliates, and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Living University (the “University”). The University was established in 2007 to initially offer online course work for the development of the whole person by educating men and women in the skills, concepts, and values that lead to success in life, while helping them prepare for leadership and worthwhile service to God and humanity. The University began offering online study in the fall semester of 2007.

All significant intercompany balances and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation.

*Basis of presentation* – The accompanying financial statements are prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Net assets and revenues, expenses, gains, and losses are classified based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Accordingly, net assets and changes therein are classified and reported as follows:

*Unrestricted net assets* - Net assets that are both undesignated and designated in nature. Undesignated unrestricted net assets are those currently available for use in the day-to-day operations of the Church and those resources invested in property and equipment. The Church may designate certain amounts to be utilized/invested to meet specific objectives of the Church.

*Temporarily restricted net assets* - Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions that may or will be met by specific actions of the Church and/or passage of time. When a restriction expires, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the Statement of Activities as net assets released from restriction.

*Permanently restricted net assets* - Net assets that are subject to donor-imposed stipulations that they be maintained permanently by the Church. Generally, the donors of these assets permit the Church to use all or part of the income earned on any related investments for general or specific purposes. As of December 31, 2008, the Church had no permanently restricted net assets.

6

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 1 – Organization and summary of significant accounting policies (continued)**

*Contribution revenue* – Tithes and offerings are recorded as revenue in the year the contribution is pledged. Members of the Church practice tithing, the donation of ten percent of one’s income for the Church’s unrestricted use. These tithes (known as first tithe), plus unrestricted offerings given at each of seven annual Holy Days, comprise the majority of Church support and revenue.

In addition to first tithe and offerings, members save a second tithe for personal use to be able to attend the annual Holy Days. Those who are able give ten percent of this personal second tithe and/or excess second tithe to the Church. The Church uses these funds to help pay for expenses incurred by the Church to conduct the Holy Days and assist the needy members to be able to attend the Church festivals. These contributions are known as second tithe.

Members, who are financially able, also contribute a third tithe in the third and sixth years of every seven year cycle. These contributions are used first, to assist widows, orphans and the poor; and secondly, for retirees and missionary support.

Restricted donations are received for the purchase of media time, the operation of the Church’s summer youth camps, buildings and facilities maintenance, disaster relief and assistance to foreign affiliates in need.

*Cash and cash equivalents* – The Church considers all highly liquid debt instruments purchased with an original maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents. For the purpose of the Statements of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents included in investments are considered cash and cash equivalents.

*Inventories* – Inventories consist of various books and publications and are stated at the lower of cost (first-in, first-out method) or market. A physical inventory of the publications is taken semi-annually (mid-year and year-end).

*Investments* – Investments consist of certificates of deposit, equities, preferred stock and mutual funds stated at fair value. Unrealized gains and losses are included in the Statements of Activities.

*Receivables* – Receivables consist of contributions receivable, amounts due from foreign affiliates, employees, the state of North Carolina for sales tax paid and vendor receivables. Management’s determination of the allowance for doubtful accounts is based on an evaluation of the receivable, past experience, current economic conditions, and other risks. Accounts receivable are written off when, in the opinion of management, such receivables are deemed to be uncollectible. At December 31, 2008 and 2007, management determined that an allowance for doubtful accounts of \$13,000 was reasonable.

Contributions receivable consist of current year tithes and offerings received in January of the subsequent year.

7

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 1 – Organization and summary of significant accounting policies (continued)**

*Prepaid expenses and deposits* – Prepaid expenses consist of television time, publications, vehicle leases, Church meeting hall rentals, insurance and other including postage paid in advance. Deposits include funds to secure hall rentals, youth camp and festival sites.

Programming costs of television time are paid in advance of the scheduled air date. The expense is recognized in the month that the program is aired.

Prepaid church meeting hall rentals are expensed in the month the meeting is held. Virtually all of the church hall rentals are on a month to month basis.

Prepaid vehicle lease costs are paid at the inception of the lease and amortized over the term of the original lease, usually 12 to 48 months.

*Property and equipment* – Property and equipment is stated at cost. Depreciation of property is computed on the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of 30 years for buildings and improvements and 3 to 5 years for office furniture and equipment. The costs of major improvements are capitalized, while the costs of maintenance and repairs, which do not improve or extend the life of the respective properties, are expensed when incurred. The cost and accumulated depreciation of property are eliminated from the accounts upon disposal, and any resulting gain or loss is included in the Statements of Activities.

*Other assets* – Other assets include “The World Ahead” trademark and “Global Church of God” copyrights, other trademarks, trade names and all intellectual property rights. The intellectual property rights are amortized over 7 years. Amortization expense for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007 amounted to \$747 and \$1,326, respectively. Accumulated amortization of these assets was approximately \$30,946 and \$30,199 at December 31, 2008 and 2007, respectively.

*Accrued wages and other liabilities* – Accrued liabilities primarily pertain to amounts accrued for compensated absences, salaries and wages.

*Income taxes* – The Church and the University are exempt from income tax under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Church’s controlled entities are non-profit organizations with no taxable activity.

*Tuition and fees* – The University charges tuition and fees for online study courses. Revenue is recognized pro-rata over the time that the online course is offered. Payments received for future study courses are reported as other liabilities in the accompanying Statements of Financial Position.

8

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 1 – Organization and summary of significant accounting policies (continued)**

*Programs and support services* – The Church sponsors a number of programs and support services. Those programs and services consist of the following:

*Support of local congregations* - Represents the cost incurred and paid by the Church at the local congregation level to provide for the spiritual needs of its members. Included are pastoral expenses such as salaries, health care, vehicles and other travel related costs; as well as weekly meeting hall rentals, mailing of DVD sermons, expenses to conduct the annual Holy Days, youth programs, the direct support of foreign affiliates and other support.

*Assistance to the needy* - Provides for the material needs of Church members primarily as assistance for widows, orphans and the poor; including assistance to enable some members to attend the annual Holy Days. Assistance to foreign affiliates in need is also included.

*Television and radio* - Primarily represents the cost of purchasing air time for the Church’s weekly television program, *Tomorrow’s World*. Also included are the production costs associated with creating the program and costs for video tape and answering service.

*Publishing and editorial* - Includes editorial and publishing costs of the Church’s bi-monthly magazine, *Tomorrow’s World*, and an array of booklets, primarily intended for non-members. Also included are costs of printing all other Church materials.

*Mail processing and distribution* - Represents the costs of fulfilling literature, audiotape and compact disk requests generated by preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God through television, radio and publishing. Computer support of mailing lists is also included.

*Support services and other* - Includes administrative expenses not directly attributable to specific programs. This includes the full cost of all finance, accounting, purchasing, human resources and legal support. It also includes general insurance and other miscellaneous expenses.

*Functional expenses* - The costs of providing programs and other activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the statement of activities. Accordingly, certain costs have been allocated among the programs and supporting services benefited.

*Donated services* - No amounts have been reflected in the financial statements for donated services. The Church pays for most services requiring specific expertise. However, many individuals volunteer their time and perform a variety of tasks that include assisting the Church with specific programs and service on various committees. Such donated services have not been quantified and do not meet the criteria for recognition in financial statements.

*Advertising expense* – Advertising costs are expensed as incurred. Total advertising expense for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007, was \$193,092 and \$104,343, respectively.

9



LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 1 – Organization and summary of significant accounting policies (continued)**

*Use of estimates* – The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

*Recent accounting pronouncements* - In July 2006, Financial Accounting Standards Board Interpretation (FIN) No. 48, *Accounting for Uncertainty in Income Taxes*, was issued and interprets SFAS No. 109, *Accounting for Income Taxes*. This Interpretation clarifies the accounting for uncertainty in income taxes recognized in an entity's financial statements in accordance with SFAS 109 by prescribing a recognition threshold and measurement attribute for the financial statement recognition and measurement of a tax position taken or expected to be taken in a tax return. FIN 48 also provides guidance on derecognition, classification, interest and penalties, accounting in interim periods, disclosure, and transition.

FASB Staff Position (FSP) 48-3 defers the effective date of FIN 48 for certain non-public enterprises for fiscal year beginning after December 15, 2008. The Church has elected to defer the application of FIN 48 in accordance with FSP 48-3. During the deferral period of the application of FIN 48 the Church will continue to evaluate uncertain tax positions utilizing the underlying principals of FAS 109, *Accounting for Income Taxes*, and FAS 5, *Accounting for Contingencies*.

**Note 2 – Investments**

The fair market value of investments at December 31, 2008 and 2007 is summarized below:

|                          | 2008      | 2007       |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Certificates of deposit  | \$ 98,000 | \$ 300,000 |
| Equities                 | 42,050    | 149,192    |
| Mutual funds             | 956       | 1,657      |
| Preferred stock          | 77,600    | -          |
| Gold shares              | 89,375    | 41,230     |
| Total investments        | 307,981   | 492,079    |
| Less current investments | 230,381   | 492,079    |
| Other investments        | \$ 77,600 | \$ -       |

Investment return is included in investment income and other revenue on the accompanying Statement of Activities and consists of the following at December 31, 2008 and 2007:

|                               | 2008        | 2007      |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Interest and dividends        | \$ 27,705   | \$ 37,221 |
| Unrealized and realized gains | (53,814)    | 440       |
| Total                         | \$ (26,109) | \$ 37,661 |

10

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 3 – Receivables**

Receivables at December 31, 2008 and 2007 are as follows:

|  | 2008       | 2007       |
|--|------------|------------|
| Contributions receivable                     | \$ 301,177 | \$ 256,527 |
| Other receivables                            | 156,086    | 206,170    |
|  | 457,263    | 462,697    |
| Less allowance for uncollectible receivables | 13,000     | 13,000     |
| Total receivables                            | \$ 444,263 | \$ 449,697 |

**Note 4 – Prepaid expenses**

Prepaid expenses at December 31, 2008 and 2007, consist of the following:

|                            | 2008       | 2007       |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Prepaid insurance          | \$ 14,193  | \$ 16,075  |
| Prepaid vehicle lease      | 11,713     | 4,222      |
| Prepaid building rent      | 8,500      | 12,500     |
| Prepaid church hall rental | 48,755     | 32,737     |
| Prepaid television         | 227,621    | 203,165    |
| Prepaid postage            | 12,842     | 16,659     |
| Prepaid other              | 18,201     | 12,334     |
| Total prepaid expenses     | \$ 341,825 | \$ 297,692 |

**Note 5 – Property and equipment**

The following is a summary of property and equipment at December 31, 2008 and 2007:

|                                   | 2008         | 2007         |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Land                              | \$ 415,000   | \$ 415,000   |
| Land improvements                 | 10,670       | 10,670       |
| Building and improvements         | 2,215,424    | 2,201,437    |
| Equipment, furniture and software | 1,109,177    | 1,040,949    |
| Automobiles                       | 296,779      | 324,822      |
| Construction in progress          | 881,942      | 2,174        |
|                                   | 4,928,992    | 3,995,052    |
| Less accumulated depreciation     | 1,472,790    | 1,199,634    |
| Property and equipment, net       | \$ 3,456,202 | \$ 2,795,418 |

Depreciation expense, including amortization on equipment and vehicles under capital lease, was \$301,981 and \$293,999 for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007, respectively.

11

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 6 – Mortgages payable**

The Church has two mortgages outstanding which are summarized below:

|  | December 31, |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|  | 2008         | 2007         |
| Mortgage payable – bank; variable interest rate based on 7/8% below the bank's prime rate to a maximum fixed rate of 6.375% and a minimum fixed rate of 3.375%. First year is an interest only loan with a payment of \$6,521. Starting June 2009, principal and interest is payable in monthly installments of \$15,439 through April 2015 with the final payment of the balance plus accrued interest, if any due May 2015. The mortgage is collateralized by the Church's headquarters and studio located in Charlotte, North Carolina. | \$ 2,315,000 | \$ -         |
| Mortgage payable – bank; variable interest rate based on 1% below the bank's prime rate (6.6% at December 31, 2007). Principal and interest is payable in monthly installments of \$9,839 through October 2032 with the final payment of the balance plus accrued interest, if any due November 2032. This mortgage was refinanced in 2008.  | -            | 1,537,166    |
| Mortgage payable – bank; fixed interest rate of 7.625%. Principal and interest is payable in monthly installments of \$1,031 through January 2011 with the final payment of the balance plus accrued interest, if any due January 2011.  | -            | 101,635      |
|  | 2,315,000    | 1,638,801    |
| Less current portion   | 63,026       | 42,925       |
|  | \$ 2,251,974 | \$ 1,595,876 |

Future maturities of the notes payable are as follows:

|            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| 2009       | \$ 63,026    |
| 2010       | 110,856      |
| 2011       | 114,661      |
| 2012       | 118,598      |
| 2013       | 122,669      |
| Thereafter | 1,785,190    |
|            | \$ 2,315,000 |

12

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 6 – Mortgages payable (continued)**

Total interest expense for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007, was \$102,357 and \$126,082, respectively.

**Note 7 – Capital lease obligations**

The Church leases certain equipment and vehicles under agreements that are classified as capital leases. These obligations require monthly payments varying from \$598 to \$2,046 and extend through May 2011. The cost of equipment and vehicles under capital leases is included as property and equipment and is summarized at December 31, 2008 and 2007, as follows:

|                               | 2008      | 2007       |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Equipment                     | \$ 98,000 | \$ 98,000  |
| Vehicles                      | 296,779   | 324,822    |
|                               | 394,779   | 422,822    |
| Less accumulated amortization | 316,426   | 251,762    |
|                               | \$ 78,353 | \$ 171,060 |

Required minimum lease payments as of December 31, 2008 are as follows:

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 2009                              | \$ 58,769 |
| 2010                              | 27,792    |
| 2011                              | 8,988     |
| 2012                              | 3,925     |
|                                   | 99,474    |
| Less amount representing interest | 23,068    |
|                                   | 76,406    |
| Less current maturity             | 53,563    |
|                                   | \$ 22,843 |

**Note 8 – Temporarily restricted net assets**

Temporarily restricted net assets are restricted for the following purposes at December 31, 2008 and 2007:

|                               | 2008      | 2007      |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Disaster relief               | \$ 69,974 | \$ 72,735 |
| International Brethren Guyana | 4,000     | 4,000     |
| Other projects                | 139       | 139       |
|                               | \$ 74,113 | \$ 76,874 |

13

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 9 – Commitments**

The Church leases fleet vehicles and equipment under various non-cancelable operating leases. These leases require monthly payments varying from \$116 to \$1,452 and extend through October 2011. Lease expense for vehicles under various operating leases amount to \$122,240 and \$166,348 at December 31, 2008 and 2007, respectively.

Required minimum lease payments on items under operating leases as of December 31, 2008 and 2007 are as follows:

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 2009 | \$ 184,802        |
| 2010 | 127,478           |
| 2011 | 57,753            |
|      | <u>\$ 370,033</u> |

**Note 10 – Benefit plan**

The Church has a 403(b) Tax Deferred Annuity Plan for all eligible employees. Eligible employees may elect to exclude up to the maximum contribution permitted by the Internal Revenue Code. The Church does not contribute to this plan.

The Church has a Simplified Employee Pension Plan (SEP) covering all eligible employees. The Church's contribution is based on 2.5% of eligible participants' compensation. The contributions made by the Church for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007 amounted to \$62,837 and \$61,262, respectively.

**Note 11 – Contingencies**

The Church provides discretionary post-employment retirement payments and healthcare benefits to select ministers' widows and retired employees that meet certain objective and subjective criteria. Although one of the criteria includes an employee's years of service (with the Church and its predecessors), an accrual for these future benefits has not been recorded due to the Church's ability to deny payments at its sole discretion. For the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007, the Church expensed payments for this purpose totaling approximately \$250,000.

**Note 12 – Concentration of credit risk**

The Church places its cash and cash equivalents on deposit with financial institutions in the United States. In October and November 2008 the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) temporarily increased coverage to \$250,000 for substantially all depository accounts and temporarily provides unlimited coverage for certain qualifying and participating non-interest bearing transaction accounts. The increased coverage is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2009, at which time it is anticipated the amounts insured by the FDIC will return to \$100,000. The Church may from time to time have amounts on deposit in excess of the insured limits.

14

LIVING CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL), INC.  
AND AFFILIATES

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
December 31, 2008 and 2007

**Note 13 – Related party**

The Church has affiliated entities throughout the world that are related by some common board members. For the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007, the Church expended \$298,078 and \$310,564, respectively, related to these affiliates. In addition, the Church had accounts receivables of \$86,634 and \$132,801 due from affiliated entities at December 31, 2008 and 2007 (included in other receivables as described in Note 3).

During 2006, the Church granted a note to one affiliate to finance the purchase of their building. Advances to the affiliate were made over a series of payments in 2006 totaling \$61,062. The note is to be repaid over a seven year term with payments scheduled to begin November 1, 2008. Interest on the note accrues annually at 5%. The total amount of the loan was outstanding at December 31, 2008 and is included in other receivables as described in Note 3.

**Note 14 – Fair value measurements of assets and liabilities**

On January 1, 2008, the Church adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards ("SFAS") No. 157, "Fair Value Measurements," which defines fair value, establishes a framework for measuring fair value under accounting principles generally accepted in the United States, and enhances disclosures about fair value measurements. The Church elected to delay the application of SFAS No. 157 to nonfinancial assets and nonfinancial liabilities, as allowed by Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") Staff Position SFAS 157-2. This statement requires fair value measurements be classified and disclosed in one of the following three categories ("Fair Value Hierarchy"):

Level 1: Financial instruments with unadjusted, quoted prices listed on active market exchanges. The Church has Level 1 assets of \$209,981 at December 31, 2008. These are all investments excluding certificates of deposit.

Level 2: Financial instruments valued using inputs that include quoted prices for similar assets and liabilities in active markets, and inputs that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly, for substantially the full term of the financial instrument. The Church has no Level 2 assets or liabilities at December 31, 2008.

Level 3: Financial instruments that are not actively traded on a market exchange and require using significant unobservable inputs in determining fair value. The Church's has no assets or liabilities subject to Level 3 valuations at December 31, 2008.

15

**2008 Audit**

*(Continued from page 11)*

the flock whom God calls in response to that message.

As one tool of responsible fiscal stewardship, the Church each year undergoes an independent audit. On pages 11–18 of this issue, you will see the auditors' report for calendar year 2008. The auditors issued an "unqualified" opinion, which simply means that their opinion is not "qualified" by any uncertainties or reservations. As part of their report, they recommended some routine items on which we can improve, and we will be implementing those recommendations in due course.

You will notice in the audit report that some of the Church's investments fared worse than others during the economic downturn at the end of 2008. Our cash reserves were not ad-

versely affected, but the small portion invested in equities—predominantly in natural resources such as oil, silver and gold—did go down. Thankfully, those equities have to a large extent rebounded as of mid-2009.

In his May-June 2009 *Living Church News* editorial, "The Purpose for God's Church," Dr. Meredith reminded us of the Church's mission, which he described as follows:

- Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and the true *name* of Jesus Christ.
- Preach the *end-time* prophecies and the Ezekiel warning to the Israelitish peoples.
- Feed the flock and build all our members to the stature of Jesus Christ as best we can.
- Be *examples* to the Church of God, and to the world, of Christ's way of life.

- Learn and practice Servant Leadership in all our dealings with others.
- Restore Apostolic Christianity and all that this implies.
- Build an atmosphere of radiant *faith* within God's Church.

As we go forward, Dr. Meredith and the Headquarters staff are carefully reviewing all expenses in every area of the Work, to ensure that they are reasonable and necessary for carrying out our mission.

We hope that this brief recap of our 2008 activities, and the accompanying 2008 audit report, will encourage you that we are striving to live by the words of the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). ■

# Do You Like to Be Corrected?

By Dibar K. Apartian

**B**e honest with yourself! Do you actually *like* to be corrected?

Hardly anyone does. Receiving correction in the right attitude is one of life's most difficult responsibilities.

But a truly converted Christian should like—and even welcome—correction. It helps him or her grow. It is easy, of course, to see someone else's faults, but it is not easy to recognize our own mistakes. We often resent being told our shortcomings, especially if we see that the person who corrects us has his own problems to overcome.

The purpose of life is spiritual growth and change. But such growth is impossible without reproof and correction. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

What is reproof? What is correction? Do these words have clear, specific meanings to you? Check your dictionary and learn their definitions, because both are necessary for our "training in righteousness."

Every one of us must study the Bible with an honest desire to be taught and corrected by it. Sadly, some in the Church have

a self-righteous attitude when they read the Bible or hear a sermon. They are convinced that the admonishment applies to someone else and not them. So Bible study loses its effectiveness as far as they are concerned.

God says, "He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray" (Proverbs 10:17).

Some of us think we receive too much correction, but the truth is that God gives us exactly what we need. However, we all have a tendency to give more correction than we should! It is a matter of attitude—we need a converted, Christian attitude, based on love.

Are you on the "path to life," or are you going astray because you reject reproof? I often heard Christ's Apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, say that he asked God regularly for correction. Today, I often hear our Presiding Evangelist, Dr. Roderick C. Meredith, say the same thing. We should all be making that same request of God. The more we are converted, the more we

will welcome correction. Why do some of us hesitate to pray that prayer?

## Wash Me Thoroughly

Some of us think we receive too much correction, but the truth is that God gives us exactly what we need. However, we all have a tendency to give more correction than we should! It is a matter of attitude—we need a converted, Christian attitude, based on love.

To receive correction in the right spirit, we must be willing to admit we are wrong—and that is hard for the carnal mind to do. Get down on your knees, and ask God to help you see your faults. Ask Him to change you, and then be willing to change.

Look how David pleaded his case in Psalm 51. He first acknowledged his guilt. "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," he asked God (v. 2). But how did he expect to be washed and cleansed by God? By correction and reproof—and by chastisement if necessary.

"Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your

presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (vv. 6, 10–11).

David wanted to be corrected, even though it meant making a serious effort and undergoing suffering. He was ready and willing to accept God’s correction, no matter how it came and however unpleasant. He was indeed a man after God’s own heart.

How often do you ask God for correction and reproof? Do you expect it to come only from Him and never from a human being? I have heard people say, “If correction came from God, I would accept it, but I wouldn’t listen if it came from some man.”

Such reasoning is totally wrong. When you ask God for correction, you must be willing to accept it, *no matter how it comes to you!*

### **Paul’s Conversion**

Before his conversion, the Apostle Paul did not realize that he was on the wrong track. He believed he was doing God a service by persecuting the Christians. Proud of his background and learning as a Pharisee, he followed the way that “seems right to a man.” When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned, “Saul [whose name was later changed to Paul] was consenting to his death” (Acts 8:1).

Here we see a powerful, influential man witnessing a murder—and approving of it! Shortly thereafter, he was “still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” when he went to the high priest to ask for “letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way [Christianity], whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1–2).

Filled with this hatred, and convinced he was doing the right thing, Saul was on his way to Damascus

when God struck him down. What happened then? What was Saul’s attitude when corrected? What were the first questions he asked of God? “Who are You, Lord?... what do You want me to do?” (vv. 5–6).

Those beautiful questions will guide anyone God is calling to true conversion—if they are asked honestly and their answers applied. Saul wanted to do what was right in God’s sight. Until then, in his ignorance, he was on the wrong course. But upon God’s calling, he sought correction. From that time on, Saul never again persecuted Christians. In fact, he himself became one of the most persecuted Christians.

Was it easy for Paul to be corrected that way? He had to start again from the beginning, and learn how to serve God, how to turn the other cheek, how to be a Christian. He was probably ridiculed and scoffed at by his former friends. But nothing stopped him from wanting to do God’s will.

### **Change What Needs To Be Changed**

When you are corrected, do not look for excuses to reject admonishment. For instance, even if the person who corrects you needs to change, *your* task as a Christian is still to admit where you are wrong—and to change. The other person’s need for correction does not solve your particular problem, nor does it justify your attitude. “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

Consciously or not, most people are too lazy to make the effort to change. Life has become routine for them, and they fall into a rut. They vegetate. But vegetating is not growing in your Christian life. If you do not grow, you go backwards.

Regrettably, some of God’s people cannot see their own problems. In

their self-righteousness, pride or sometimes blindness to their own faults, they do not allow God to show them how to change. They are not willing to pay the price to change!

The patriarch Job paid dearly to learn this lesson. But he learned it well, and in the end he was more blessed than before (Job 42:10). Just like Job, we must learn to tell God: “I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me’” (vv. 2–4).

Can you pray like that? Have you learned to accept correction in order to say to God: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (vv. 5–6)?

That is the attitude we must have to enter God’s Kingdom!

### **How to Give Correction**

It is said that no one is able to command unless he first is willing to submit to orders. In like manner, before you can correct anyone properly, you must be willing to receive correction. Whether you are giving or receiving correction, you must have understanding, humility and love—without compromise.

If the task of correcting someone falls on your shoulders, be sure you yourself are not guilty of the same faults. Set the right example. As God says, “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5).

Do you know what a proud person is? One who does not seek cor-

rection. He thinks of himself as better than others. He suffers from self-righteousness. God opposes such a person. When correcting someone, always apply the golden rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Whether at home or at work, with friends or among strangers, be honest and true, “in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works” (Titus 2:7). Be genuine, not a hypocrite. You can neither give nor receive correction properly if you are a hypocrite.

Paul wrote, “If you are sure that you are a guide to the blind [and every member of God’s Church is in some way a guide to the spiritually blind]... a corrector of the foolish [the foolish are those who do not believe in God or His word], a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you then who teach others, will you not teach yourself?” (Romans 2:19–21, RSV).

These strong words are meant to change and correct every one of us, to train us in righteousness. Giving correction to others is an important responsibility.

### **Conversion Is Change**

Obedience to God is synonymous with wanting to be changed and corrected by Him. Growth spells conversion, and it results from applying the teachings you learn.

Beseech God, “O LORD, correct me, but with justice; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing” (Jeremiah 10:24). It takes courage to pray this way, but a begotten child of God must have courage.

Christ said that unless we become like little children, we will not

enter God’s Kingdom. But why? What childlike qualities does Christ desire in adults? Children are more teachable, and adapt better to change. They put their trust in those who are watching over them, and they usually do what they are told—even though they may not always agree with it. Christians must be like this. The degree of your conversion is determined by how well you respond to correc-

**It is said that no one is able to command unless he first is willing to submit to orders. In like manner, before you can correct anyone properly, you must be willing to receive correction. Whether you are giving or receiving correction, you must have understanding, humility and love—without compromise.**

tion. The ancient Israelites did not like correction. They wanted change, it is true, but only in their own way—not God’s. They did not care for His authority and laws. They wanted to be like other nations who were cut off from God, free to do as they pleased even though it meant suffering and death!

Imagine! God was their Ruler, their King and their Protector. He was their Counselor and Teacher. But they rejected Him, preferring to be slaves to sin. Even when the prophet Samuel warned them what would happen to them, they refused to listen. “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they

said, ‘No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles’” (1 Samuel 8:19–20).

Do you wish you were free like other people—free to do what you want? In that “freedom,” you would only be a slave to sin! We are called to be God’s people—not like “other people.” We have to be malleable in His hands. How sad it is that some of God’s people leave the Church because they want to be like “other people,” rejecting correction because of pride, stubbornness and vanity.

Be grateful when you are corrected. Accept reproof with humility and make the necessary changes. Afterwards, forget the mistakes God has forgiven. Do not burden yourself with a guilt complex, which can only hinder your growth. God is always willing to forgive you if you accept correction and change.

“He who hates correction will die,” says God. That is an awesome warning. But He adds, “The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise” (Proverbs 15:10, 31).

Notice: If you heed admonition you will live with the wise. The wise are those who listen to God’s counsel, submit themselves to His authority, accept correction and live by His every word.

What will be their reward? “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). They will be members of God’s immortal spiritual Family!

These are God’s words, and they cannot be broken. If you hate correction, you will die. But if you love correction, you will live forever!

What is your choice? ■

# Do We Truly Honor God?

By Terrence Kennell

Some time ago, I received a chain e-mail involving prayer. It was the usual type of such e-mail, in which the reader was encouraged to pray an enclosed prayer—a few simple lines only—and pass it on. In return, according to the e-mail, the reader would receive a “blessing” from God. Feeling a bit bothered by what appeared as a terribly callous approach toward prayer to God, I contemplated the message and considered whether or not I should respond; if not to the whole list (as the e-mail requested), then at least to the person who forwarded it to me. I decided to respond, and quickly jotted down a few scriptures that show the futility of repetitious and meaningless prayer. I had prepared to reply to the sender only, but I could not help but notice the “reply to all button”—and that is what I chose!

“Oh, boy,” I suddenly thought after sending the message, “trouble now! Surely a barrage of hot e-mails will follow!” Yet, none did. Only one e-mail came back, and the sender did not include a message. Surprisingly, no one took me to task for objecting.

## Real With God?

Sadly, the aforementioned chain prayer is typical of most people’s approach to God: they want God to bless and prosper them, but it seems they are not willing to truly honor and glorify Him, even with a few heartfelt words in prayer. In other words, they want God to be “real” with them, but they are not willing to be real in their response to Him. Rather, they take Him for granted. They readily assume that God, who is kind and loving and freely gives all things, will simply accept whatever offering of their lives they present to Him, no matter how insignificant. This is what Christ said of those of His day, as He quoted the prophet Isaiah to describe how the people drew near and honored Him with their lips, though their hearts were far from Him (Matthew 15:8). They had no real desire to honor and reverence Him.

But what about those of us in God’s Church? What is our attitude and approach when we present to God our spiritual gifts, such as prayer, study and meditation (Matthew 5:23–24)? Do we honor and reverence Him with our offerings (Malachi 1:6–8; Isaiah 43:23–24)? Do we offer Him our very best, without blemish, as befitting the Great God (Leviticus 22:20)? Are we careful, when coming before Him, to avoid careless and meaningless sacrifices

(Ecclesiastes 5:1)? Do we faithfully present our sacrifices as He appoints and commands (Numbers 28:2; Acts 3:1)? Or are we careless, typically neglecting our daily service to God (Psalm 61:8)? Do we try to convince ourselves that a lax attitude is okay—that God understands and will accept, even if we do not do as He commands and give Him the very best of all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30)?

## Will Just Any Offering Do?

Will God accept just any offering? In the first such example in the Bible, God made it clear that He *would not*, when He rejected the sacrifice of Cain but accepted that of his brother Abel, who was careful to honor Him with the first of his flock (Genesis 4:3–5). God afterward admonished Cain, and warned him that if he was not careful, his angry attitude and approach to God’s correction would result in sin (v. 7). God refused Cain’s offering, deeming it unacceptable because it did not honor Him (Proverbs 3:9). Abel’s attitude and approach was different, however, in that he glorified God with a “more excellent” sacrifice, which God says is instructive for us today (Hebrews 11:4; 12:24).

Later, when He dramatically struck dead the sons of Aaron before all the congregation for profaning His holy sacrifice, God made it even more clear that we are to be circumspect in our offerings to Him (Leviticus 10:1–2). He then commanded Moses to say unto Aaron, “By those who come near Me [to serve God] I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified” (v. 3). Nadab and Abihu were among those who failed to carefully consider and reverence God’s holiness—a failure that proved deadly for them, as it has for others (cf. 1 Samuel 6:19–20; Acts 5:3–5). Disasters have occurred when people have not faithfully served the Lord with fear and trembling (Psalm 2:11). Clearly, this matters to God!

## Spiritual Sacrifices Acceptable to God

Still, what about our “spiritual” offerings? Do they really matter? The Apostle Peter obviously thought so when he wrote in his first epistle that we, “as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). In the same manner, Paul encouraged the brethren at Rome to consider it reasonable

that they present themselves as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1). Paul also said that he labored in the gospel that the “offering of the Gentiles” might be acceptable to God (Romans 15:16). The Hebrews were likewise reminded to continually offer the “sacrifice of praise... the fruit of our lips” to God, and were told that He is well pleased with sacrifices of doing good (Hebrews 13:15–16). The prophet Hosea admonished ancient Israel to take words of repentance with them, and return to God to offer the “sacrifices of our lips” (Hosea 14:2).

King David no doubt understood that it mattered when he prayed that the “words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart” would be acceptable in God’s sight (Psalm 19:14). He also declared that we should, “Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him [to] worship... the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:29). Further, we read that God accepts the sacrifice of the humble and repentant (Psalm 51:17), and that He delights in the prayer and words of the upright and pure (Proverbs 15:8, 26). Micah says that God requires the sacrifices of justice, mercy and humility (Micah 6:6–8). Looking forward, God inspired Malachi to prophesy of a time when all people everywhere will glorify His great name and offer to Him incense [prayers] of a “pure offering” (Malachi 1:11)—prayers that David says will be made “continually” as God is praised “daily” (Psalm 72:15). Isaiah also foretells of this time, writing that the offerings and sacrifices of all nations will one day be accepted in God’s “house of prayer” (Isaiah 56:7). Truly, Christ’s expectations are the “same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

### Reaping What We Sow

How, then, do we assure that our spiritual sacrifices and offerings are always acceptable and well-pleasing to God (Philippians 4:18)? Paul gave us a principle to follow when he told the Corinthians that if they sowed bountifully, they would also reap bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6). The same principle applies in our relationship to God: we

must in our service to Him give Him a real, earnest effort in order to be accepted (Deuteronomy 11:13–15). If we faithfully take the time to “draw near to God” (through prayer, study, meditation and fasting), He will accept us and respond in the same way (James 4:8). God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Hence, it is effective, fervent prayer that accomplishes much with God (James 5:16)—not empty, meaningless words (Matthew 6:7).

Keeping this in mind, we must be diligent to present ourselves approved—acceptable—to God (2 Timothy 2:15). We do so by giving God the best of all we have to offer (Ezekiel 20:40; 44:30). This especially includes the best of our heart, soul and strength—our time and effort (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12–13). This is why David said he

would not sacrifice to God that which “cost [him] nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). This is why the psalmist cried out with his “whole” heart (Psalm 119:145), and praised and glorified God with “all” his heart (Psalm 86:12). For the same reason, Jeremiah was inspired to tell the Israelites that God would hear their prayers, and that they would find Him when they searched for Him with “all [their] heart” (Jeremiah 29:12–13). This is also why the prayers and alms of the Roman centurion Cornelius were declared a “memorial before God” (Acts 10:1–4), and why the young evangelist Timothy was told to “meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them that your progress may be

evident to all” (1 Timothy 4:15). This is why the Apostle Peter wrote that it is through our earnest, and diligent effort that we truly make sure our calling and election (2 Peter 1:10).

In the end, it was Christ who said that we must be careful to honor and exalt God in our prayers, as in the “model prayer” He gave His disciples (Matthew 6:9–13). Christ also reminded us that we should meditate on God’s word day and night (Psalm 1:2), just as the kings of Israel kept it with them and read it diligently all the days of their lives (Deuteronomy 17:19). If we do this—if we are faithful to observe all He commands—then God truly will, as He told His servant Joshua, “make your way prosperous and have good success” (Joshua 1:8). ■

**Still, what about our “spiritual” offerings? Do they really matter? The Apostle Peter obviously thought so when he wrote in his first epistle that we, “as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).**

**Bible REALLY Your Guide?***(Continued from page 5)*

posite everything proclaimed in the word of God?

So how *dare* these ministers and churches say they are preaching or teaching “the word of God”? Yes, they say that! And somehow, because the professing Christians of the Western world are mainly biblical illiterates, these false ministers get away with it, for most people do *not* really study the Bible or in any way understand it. They read little bits and pieces of “inspirational” passages in the Bible—and very little else. They do *not* get down on their knees and beseech God for genuine *understanding*,

and they do not ask God for the faith and *courage* to do what He says *no matter* what the result may be. They have not learned to put their total faith and trust in the God of Creation. He is the *invisible* God and they do not really know Him or understand Him—even though they call themselves “Christian.”

But we in God’s Church are different—at least we *should* be! Those of us whom God has called should be opening our minds and hearts every day to *seek* the true God and to be willing to *do* what He says. We should be *studying* the Bible in a focused and consistent manner, so that we will not be deceived by false teachings. We must live by “every

word” of God as found in the Bible—God’s Instruction Manual for each of our lives.

God’s prophecies are surely moving ahead, but He is giving each of us the opportunity to act now to genuinely prove these things to ourselves and implement them in our own lives, so that we may qualify to become “firstfruits” and, as part of His Family, help others in the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment. As our English-speaking nations continue to be brought down through the prophetic events specifically described by God in His word, may He help each of us to stay close to Him, through the tools of diligent Bible study, prayer, meditation and fasting. ■

**Do You Live by FAITH?***(Continued from page 2)***II. Meditate on the Bible’s many examples of healings and blessings, and on those that are happening today!**

We all need to think more about Jesus’ constant statement—repeated in various ways—“According to your *faith* let it be to you” (Matthew 9:29). With a humble attitude, we need to “drink in” God’s revelation in His inspired word of all the times He *has* intervened to heal, bless and deliver people. In addition, we need to take time to *meditate* on the examples of His present-day interventions and healings. Otherwise, we will not be developing the same degree of faith or appreciation for what God is, in fact, doing even now—even in this present faithless generation.

We see that even the apostles often “forgot” to think about what Christ had done right in front of their eyes. In Mark 6:41–44, we read the account of how Jesus blessed five loaves and two small fish and ended up feeding 5,000 men—plus women and children. Then, Mark tells us, Jesus “*departed to the mountain to pray*” (v. 46). After praying for hours, He came to the disciples. As they were out on the boat, and Jesus was “walking on the sea,” they were absolutely afraid and astonished, even though they had seen Jesus perform miracle after miracle—including the recent feeding of the 5,000.

Why were His disciples so astonished?

God’s word tells us, “For they had **not understood** about the loaves, because their heart was hardened” (v. 52).

Because they were still carnal—totally filled with their own ideas and the things of this world, since the Holy Spirit was not yet given—they did **not** fully grasp or understand the real meaning of the tremendous number of miracles and “signs” which Christ had already given, showing that He was indeed Immanuel—“God in the flesh”! If they had fully grasped the *meaning* of the other miracles, they would have thought, “*Of course* Jesus can walk on the water!” For He had *already* healed many people in front of their very eyes, fed the 5,000, and performed *many other* absolutely wonderful and supernatural signs.

However, still being carnal, they did not “connect the dots.” So we, brethren, must be sure that we—through God’s Spirit—“connect the dots” and understand the *meaning* of the wonderful accounts we hear, even today, showing that God **still heals** and **still blesses** His people supernaturally, although to a lesser extent than in apostolic times.

Do you and I seem to “forget” the accounts that I have given you many times in sermons about the divine **healing** of Howard Clark back in 1958 through the prayers of Richard David Armstrong? For Howard had been in hospital after hospital—attended to by the best naval doctors because of his injury as a Marine in the Korean War. I, personally, baptized him, knew him well and *for years* saw him sitting in a wheelchair in the Pasadena congregation, back in the 1950s. His healing was **awesome!** Yet it is so easy for us to forget.

What about Dennis Brady’s daughter? She had been diagnosed with the *fatal variety* of spinal meningitis. A med-



ical doctor, after clinical tests, had plainly diagnosed that this little girl—the daughter of married Ambassador College student Dennis Brady—had contracted the *fatal* variety of *spinal meningitis*. Yet after my fervent prayers—and of course the fervent prayers of her parents—God answered and she was supernaturally **healed**. I have told the story—with its details—many times in sermons. Are we *still thankful*?

What about the lady with a withered arm, who came to Raymond McNair and me on our baptizing tour back in 1951—who brought along her Baptist friend as a “witness” of her baptism and as a companion while she counseled with these “two young men from Pasadena.” This unconverted lady, who had known her since childhood, confirmed that her friend had *always* had a withered arm—an arm that simply hung limp and was only about one-fourth the size of a normal arm. Yet—as she told us—after receiving an anointed cloth from Herbert W. Armstrong, her arm began to grow and grow. By the time she met us, her arm’s size and function were virtually normal!

As I wrote to you several months ago, we were very encouraged to hear about the divine healing of a Church member in Joplin, Missouri. His wife sent a touching handwritten note, saying: “We would like to thank everyone for all the prayers and wonderful cards for Jim. Jim was diagnosed with **pancreatic cancer**. The doctors gave Jim two to three months to live. Jim was anointed by the local ministers and Mr. Meredith. Jim’s cancer is gone into remission! He was diagnosed last Feast. Thanks, Jim & Marla Tallman & Family.”

Does God really answer prayer today? *Of course He does!* But it is up to us to let our minds “feed” on the word of God (John 6:57), to *meditate on* His wonderful promises and the Bible’s many examples of His *keeping those promises*. We should not tire of reviewing the wonderful blessings and healings we have experienced in recent months and years, *even now!*

### III. Pray fervently and fast regularly.

In addition to the above, we obviously need to use the spiritual tools of *prayer* and *fasting*—constantly crying out to God to give us *more faith!* As Christ tells us, “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:7–8).

Remember, God tells us that His own elect would “cry out to Him *day and night!*” Do you and I do this? Or do we just *occasionally* cry out to God—seldom putting our “heart” in our prayers as God indicates we should? Remember, “the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16)!

In addition, we must truly *learn to use* the vital tool of “fasting” in order to draw close to God. Do you, personally, set aside time for **fasting**? Again, remember Jesus’ statement about the fact that certain answers to prayer *do not* come without the use of this tool! *Meditate* on this very revealing comment Jesus made to His disciples as to *why* they could not cast out a demon, “This kind can come out by **nothing** but *prayer* and *fasting*” (Mark 9:29).

### IV. Exercise faith!

One of the greatest examples of faith that I have ever seen in my nearly 60 years in God’s Church was that of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Although he was a “big” personality and sometimes made mistakes because of that, he genuinely, continually determined to *trust God* and to **do** God’s will in carrying out his ministry and leading the Work of God. I experienced that in situations with him again and again!

He himself told us, in his booklet on faith, how he was inspired by the example of George Mueller. He also used George Mueller’s *definition* of faith as absolutely true and reliable. Here it is: “**Faith** is the *assurance* that the things which God said in His word are *true*: and that God *will act* according to what He has said *in His word*. This assurance, this *reliance* on God’s word, *this confidence*, is **faith!**” That’s George Mueller’s definition. And it is a true Bible definition” (*What Is Faith?*, 1952, p. 8).

So, we must all learn to study, pray and meditate about **faith**. Then, we must *exercise* faith continually, and in this way learn to *walk by faith* every day. This will enable us to have **far more** blessings in God’s Church. It will result in all of us drawing closer to God. And it will result in greatly increased **power** in the very Work of God, enabling us to have a much greater **impact** on this confused world. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “Now *the just shall live by faith*; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10:38).

May God help you to **grow continually in faith!** As we each do so, our lives will truly be enriched. We will have a *much closer* walk with God. He will begin to seem far more **real** to us in every facet of our lives. And we will be far better able to go through the trials and tests that are coming upon this entire world within the next several years of our lives.



# Local Church News

## Ordinations

*Mr. Bryan Burkinshaw* and *Mr. Jere Rohe* were ordained deacons on February 2 by Regional Pastor Dr. Jeff Fall and Area Pastor Mr. Rodger Bardo. They serve in the Albuquerque, New Mexico congregation.

*Miss Yvette Aguirre* was ordained a deaconess on February 28 by Regional Pastor Dr. Jeff Fall and Area Pastor Mr. Rodger Bardo. She serves in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, congregation.

*Mr. and Mrs. Danny Baisley (Eva)* were ordained as deacon and deaconess on February 28 by Area Pastor Mr. Bob League and Mr. James Sweat. They serve in the Crossville, Tennessee, congregation.

*Mr. Gary Davis* was ordained a deacon on April 4 by Area Pastor Mr. Wallace Smith and Mr. Glenn Travis. He serves in the Rolla, Missouri congregation.

*Mr. John Murphy* was ordained an elder on April 4 by Regional Pastor Mr. Rod King. He serves the Belfast, Ireland, congregation in the United Kingdom.

*Dr. Wilner Pierre* was ordained an elder on April 4 by Dr. Rodrick Meredith, Mr. Dibar Apartian, Mr. Richard Ames and Dr. Douglas Winnail. He has been serving the brethren in Haiti as well as his home congregation of Charlotte, North Carolina.

*Mr. George Little* was ordained a deacon by Mr. Davy Crockett, Mr. Gaylyn Bonjour and Mr. Carl Derstine on April 15. He serves in the Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation.

*Mr. Myron Short* was ordained a deacon on April 15 by Area Pastor Mr. Rick Stafford. He serves in the Little Rock, Arkansas, congregation.

*Mrs. Maureen Smith* was ordained a deaconess on April 15 by Area Pastor Mr. Bill Whitaker and Mr. Lehman Lyons Sr. and Mr. Frank Frye. She serves in the Walterboro, South Carolina, congregation.

*Mr. David Stiffler* was ordained an elder on April 15 by Area Pastor Mr. Rick Stafford. He serves the Little Rock, Arkansas, congregation.

*Mrs. Ann Stroud* was ordained a deaconess on April 15 by Mr. Davy Crockett, Mr. Gaylyn Bonjour and Mr. Carl Derstine. She serves in the Raleigh, North Carolina congregation.

*Mrs. Susan Winnail* was ordained a deaconess on April 18 by Area Pastor Mr. Dexter Wakefield and Mr. Randall Kobernat and Mr. Ron Peterson. She serves in the Tampa, Florida, congregation.

*Mr. Richard Bourne* was ordained a deacon on April 25 by Regional Pastor Dr. Jeff Fall. He serves in the Oakland, California congregation.

*Mr. Jurie Schoeman* was ordained a deacon on April 25 by Regional Pastor Mr. Rod King and Messrs. Pieter van der Byl, Christo Botha, Louis Bouwer and Mansie Bouwer. He serves in the Johannesburg congregation in South Africa.

*Mrs. Emmerenthea Wallace* was ordained a deaconess on April 25 by Regional Pastor Mr. Rod King and Messrs. Pieter Van Der Byl, Christo Botha, Louis Bouwer and Mansie Bouwer. Mrs. Wallace serves in the Pretoria congregation in South Africa.

---

## Births

Mr. and Mrs. Enrique Cattaneo (Gabriela) from Rio Grande, Tierra del Fuego in Argentina, are thrilled to share the happy news of the birth of their daughter *Leonor Liz Cattaneo* on March 10. She weighed 9.8 pounds and both baby and mother are doing well. Four older siblings are also delighted with the addition to the family.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Sam (Collette), of Orap Village, Vanuatu, are delighted to announce the arrival of their son, *Jerry Sam, Jr.* He was born March 20. Twin big sisters Lynette and Lolette are excited about their baby brother.

Mr. and Mrs. Randy Wayne (Lyndee), of the Cincinnati congregation, are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter *Leah Mae Wayne*, born February 9. She joins six brothers and three sisters. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Steve Woolley (Barbie), Mr. J. T. McCreary and Mr. Emmett Wayne.

## Anniversaries

*Mr. and Mrs. Dibar Apartian (Shirley)* celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 16. Mr. Apartian was born in Istanbul, Turkey and grew up in the French-speaking area of Switzerland. Mrs. Apartian was born and reared near El Dorado, Arkansas. They met at Ambassador College and were married by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Their son Daniel, his wife Renee and their grandson Andrew (as Proverbs says, truly a “crown” to them) particularly shared in the joyous occasion, and friends in the Headquarters area and around the world also rejoice and are thankful for this milestone in the lives of two fine examples of faithfulness and dedicated service to the Work of God.

*Mr. and Mrs. Honore Belanger (Agnes)* celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on February 20. Mr. and Mrs. Belanger attend the Calgary, Alberta, Canada congregation.

*Mr. and Mrs. Ed Breaux* and *Mr. and Mrs. Jim Baugh* were honored for their 30th wedding anniversaries at a special reception and with gifts after Sabbath services in Lafayette,

Louisiana. Ed and Connie Breaux were married on March 17, 1979 and Jim and Beth Baugh were married on March 24, 1979.

*Mr. and Mrs. Bill Oswald (Barbara)* of the Columbia, Missouri, congregation celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 21. The following week they were honored at a celebration planned by their six children, Connie, Clay, Christine, Carlene, Camilla and Carmen, their spouses and their fifteen grandchildren. The gathering brought together a great number of friends from years of service in the Church of God and the festivities included a slide show of pictures of their life together, a dance and all the dessert you could eat. It was a beautiful celebration of a marriage that continues to inspire others.

*Mr. and Mrs. Jack Routledge (Yvonne)* celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on December 29, 2008. Mr. and Mrs. Routledge attend the Calgary, Alberta, Canada congregation.

## In Loving Memory

*Mr. Joseph Bachmeier*, a long-time Church member in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, died on April 29. He was 85 years old. Mr. Bachmeier is survived by his wife, Dolly, three sons and three daughters and their spouses, fifteen grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren as well as a brother and numerous nieces and nephews. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

*Mr. Gene Gustin*, 82, died February 13 after a short illness. He and his wife, Gigi, moved to Charlotte about a year and a half ago from Holland. Mr. Gustin was one of our Board members in the UK. For years his work and other opportunities took him and his wife to many parts of the world and his big smile, warm heart and cheerful enthusiasm quickly endeared him to all who knew them. Church services were a delight to him. Dr. Roderick C. Meredith conducted his funeral on February 18.

*Mr. Joseph Stephen (Steve) Mikulec*, 88, of the Dubuque, Iowa congregation died peacefully in his sleep on October 18, 2008 while attending his thirty-sixth Feast of Tabernacles. Mr. Mikulec was born in Czechoslovakia, the oldest of four children. His parents and two sisters immigrated to the United States when Steve was six years old and he and his brother lived with his grandparents until he was sixteen, when they made their way out of Czechoslovakia. During WWII he served with the U.S. Army in England. He is survived by his brother and two nephews. Mr. Mikulec was a very dedicated member of the Church and loved God and the Truth of the Bible. He will be dearly missed by the brethren in his Church area.

*Mrs. Ada C. Whaley*, 89, of the Terre Haute, Indiana, congregation died March 4. She was reared in and became

a member of the Seventh Day Church of God and was baptized in the Worldwide Church of God in 1984. Mrs. Whaley was an outstanding example of servant leadership in her local congregation and in the community. She served the senior citizens of Monroe County by providing transportation service for the seniors' center, collecting old prescriptions for proper disposal, serving Meals-on-Wheels, fundraising for the Area Agency on Aging and volunteering at area nursing homes. She was a member of the Modern Homemakers Home Extension Club and worked with the Home Extension Service at the Monroe County Fair. She is survived by two brothers, one son, three daughters, fifteen grandchildren, sixteen great-grandchildren, and eleven great-great grandchildren. All who knew her will greatly miss her. Mr. Lambert Greer conducted her funeral on March 6.

# Commentary

## A Not-So-Special Relationship

By Rod King

Not since the days of the 1956 Suez Crisis have the ties that bind the “special relationship” between the United States and Great Britain been so strained. Why? The reason is simple. There is a new man in the White House.

President Barack Obama wasted no time in making his intentions clear about the future for the U.S. and Europe. He plans to make friends with the players who will really count in the years ahead. Some of his counselors are wondering whether he should try to play favorites with just one of the the European Union’s members—Great Britain—when he can woo the whole shebang.

At the first meeting between Prime Minister Brown and President Obama, the PM gave the new president a penholder crafted from the timbers of the HMS President, sister ship to the HMS Resolute. The Resolute’s timbers were used to make the Oval Office desk symbolizing the bond between the two countries.

Reporter Nile Gardiner wrote, “Barack Obama heads to Britain and Europe in two weeks’ time as the leader of the first U.S. Administration to wholeheartedly back the creation of a federal Europe.... the Obama administration is avowedly Euro-federalist in outlook and is keen to help build... a European superstate in Brussels. This dangerous shift in U.S. policy is a betrayal of both U.S. and British interests that will threaten the long-term future of the Anglo-American Relationship, weaken the NATO alliance and undermine the defence of British sovereignty in Europe” (*The Telegraph*, March 18, 2009).

David Cameron, British opposition leader and head of his nation’s Conservative Party, faces a tough time. Either he stands firm with the Eurosceptics in his party, or he caves in to Brussels’ pressure to continue supporting the juggernaut spawned by the Treaty of Rome in 1956. The dream of a fully functional European Federal state—complete with a president and foreign and defence policies—is now enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

That treaty will not be ratified, however, until all EU member states approve, and Irish voters upset the process last year by voting “No” in their nation’s referendum on its implementation. But Ireland’s “No” barely ruffled a feather in the halls of the European Commission—the real powerhouse of Europe. Business has carried on as normal, and the Irish Prime Minister has essentially been told to keep asking his people until they say “Yes” to the treaty.

Strong support from across the Atlantic will strengthen the hand of European federalists. It may be too early to tell, but the indications are that Obama and his team are keen to duplicate the EU experience in North America. Some have talked of a North American Union made up of Canada, the United States, Mexico and other Caribbean and Central American countries. In such a union there could be a common currency and closer ties to Europe.

The “New World Order” so often spoken of by former U.S. President George H.W. Bush is gradually becoming a reality. There is an inexorable move to establish global spheres that enthusiasts hope will ultimately morph into a one-world state. Idealists hope this will bring world peace, but the Bible identifies this as the last stage of the Babylonian system revealed in Daniel 2.

---

The above is adapted from one of the many commentaries, discussing vital topics facing our world, available at the [www.lcg.org](http://www.lcg.org) and [www.tomorrowworld.org](http://www.tomorrowworld.org) Web sites.