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Trust in God and Live His Way!

Dear Brethren and Friends,

As I write this, many of us here in Charlotte are just now back from a truly inspiring Feast of Tabernacles! From all reports I have heard, the Feast was outstanding for Living Church of God brethren around the globe. We had a little over 9,000 people attending, in total, but the exact numbers are still coming in, and will be mentioned on page 18 of this issue in the article describing the activities at many of our Feast sites around the world.

From what I hear, however, the most inspiring growth has been in the spiritual maturity of the brethren and the spiritual depth of the sermons. As we surrender to our heavenly Father, He works with us—through His Spirit—to give us more and more of His mind, His character, His very *nature*. As the Apostle Peter wrote in his final letter, he described God's "divine power" and His precious promises that "through these you may be partakers of the **divine nature**" (2 Peter 1:3–4).

As we grow in God's very nature, we will automatically put more *total trust* in Jesus Christ as the real Head of the true Church of God. So we will have genuine *faith* that **Christ's form** of Church government is correct, and that **He**—as the **living Head** of the Church (Ephesians 1:22)—will truly guide His Church if we are willing to organize it *His way*. As most of us have just experienced at the Feast, the *biblical* approach to Church government does bring about a great degree of unity and harmony and *trust in Christ* beyond all the other humanly devised forms of Church government.



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For, as I am sure all of us learned through this Feast, we today are "called" to actually **be** those kings and priests whom Jesus Christ will use to assist Him in His soon-coming Kingdom! How can we possibly imagine that we should follow a "different" form of Church government *today* than the theocratic form of government we will be

specifically charged to administer in Christ's soon-coming Kingdom? How can we go *one way* now, expecting God to use us to go an entirely *different way* in His coming Kingdom?

Dear brethren, let us all "get real." Let us actually **obey** what the Bible clearly teaches on this vital subject, since the whole message of God is about the coming "**Kingdom**" or **government** of God to be set up on this earth! As I am sure most of us found during the Feast, the spirit of *service* and "brotherhood" is best experienced when we do *all things* God's way—the way the Bible clearly indicates.

In my 63 years in God's Work, I have seen repeatedly that God blesses and guides His people most of all *to the degree* that we really do things God's way and put our **trust** in Him. He certainly allows trials and tests to come along even then. But in the **end** He guides it for good—as many of us have experienced. To those who "water down" various aspects of Christ's teachings, He sometimes "works with them" over time, to help them, and does eventually guide those who are willing to have a *deeper* understanding of His full will. But they will never have the degree of God's guidance or the degree of God's **power** in doing His Work as those who are willing to put their **full trust** in the living Jesus Christ and

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do **everything** His way to the best of everyone's ability—helped, of course, by God's Holy Spirit. That is undoubtedly one reason why—even though we are humanly weak—the living Christ is doing more of His Work with fewer people in the Living Church of God than He is anywhere on earth today. We are grateful for this. And yet we realize we can all “do better.” And, dear brethren, we **must** do better and keep growing in every possible way “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

So, I hope and pray—now that you brethren have for some time been back from the Feast, where you received a concentrated menu of spiritual meat in just a few days—you will between now and the next Feast try to go even **deeper** into your Bible and ask God for a full understanding of His will. Ask Him to guide you, teach you, rebuke and chasten you, fashion and mold you and make you into the “full image” of Jesus Christ! Then, all of us can truly honor the God we serve. Then, all of us who do this will—in the perilous years just ahead—have developed the faith and courage to genuinely **trust** God even through horrible persecution, beatings, imprisonment or even death if need be. For we will have learned—in nearly *every* facet of our lives and conduct—to genuinely **trust** that God's way is right, and to put that trust into action in our lives and in His Church.

In all of this, we will be truly “Restoring Original Christianity”—as is the *new* title of my booklet along that line. Obviously, this must be a *basic theme* in all of our lives. It is something all of us should become very familiar with so we can *help others* in this confused world to “get the picture” as the terrible weather events and earthquakes and disease epidemics begin to strike—driving thousands more to ask themselves, “What's going on?” and perhaps be willing to listen to the Truth. We have to realize how important this concept is. For we are not just a “Sabbath-keeping Church.” We are, in fact, among the very few who are genuinely restoring the **original** Christianity of Christ and the apostles. We should be grateful for this opportunity. And we should be **zealous** in telling others about this in the right way and helping them understand so that they, too, may be in the *first* and “better” resurrection (Hebrews 11:35).

Brethren, I want to strongly encourage **all** of you to genuinely go “all out” in backing the very Work Christ is doing through us on this earth today! I know that most of

you are doing this. But many do “let down”—especially after the Feast when the income for God's Work often drops for a number of weeks. But above and beyond that, I not long ago received a letter from one of our fine ministers who has in recent times had the experience of *several* older people *dying* in his congregational areas.

This very sincere and serving minister—not a “money grubber”—wrote me: “Of them all, two were moderately wealthy. Neither looked or acted wealthy but they were farmers and left quite an inheritance. One left \$300,000 and a nice home, the other left 300 acres with quite a bit of nice river frontage. At \$1,500 per acre that would be \$450,000. At \$2,000 per acre that would be \$600,000. This is why I mention it. The one man said strongly the one thing he wanted to avoid was having his stepchildren, who seemed to hate him, inherit. He left no will, so of course the stepchildren got it all. Dr. Meredith, I feel we are missing a special opportunity by not bringing the possibility of leaving all or part of their inheritance to the attention of the Church.”

Brethren, following through on this suggestion from this fine minister, I would like to take the opportunity now to encourage many of you who are growing older to think about giving a good part or all of your estate to the Work of the living God. Many of you, no doubt, would like to do this but “simply have not gotten around to it.” Many *want* to do it, as this one man said—but simply put off *making out* a **will** so that your intentions will be carried out when you die. God's word encourages responsibility and wise estate planning. “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous” (Proverbs 13:11). Pray that God will give you wisdom in planning for how your assets may be helpful to your children—and to God's Church—after you die. And it is **important** that you think about this, because if you just “do nothing” your estate may go to people who will not appreciate what you are leaving behind, or it may even go to the state and be part of the budget of some government treasurer to use as *he* desires!

As the end of this age approaches, each one of us needs to focus on the profound statement Jesus Christ our Savior made in the Sermon on the Mount, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where

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EDITORIAL

Do Not Be a LAODICEAN! By Roderick C. Meredith

The vast majority of God's people are evidently "Laodicean" at the end of this age. When we truly understand Revelation 3, this is the clear indication. And those who are Laodicean will have to be **chastened** during the "fire" of the coming Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:18–19). How can *you*, personally, avoid this fate, and be among those whom God will protect from this approaching "hour of trial" (v. 10)?

Remember, the Laodiceans are **not** "Satan's people." They are *God's* people, living at the very end of an utterly materialistic and hedonistic age—an age in which the emphasis is on "self" and on "comfort" instead of **boldness** in true Christianity. It is extremely easy for many people in this age—yes, *many of God's own people*—to want to "get by" without the zeal and "fire in the belly" that characterized Peter, Paul, Moses, David and virtually *every* outstanding servant of God described in the Bible. Many in God's Church "want" to obey God, to keep His Sabbaths and observe the Ten Commandments, but are willing to "compromise" and "water down" when it becomes inconvenient or uncomfortable.

The "heart" seems to have gone out of the Laodiceans' religion, and out of their relationship with God. For, though many are certainly "nice people" and mean well, God says to them: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15–16). This "lukewarmness" affects their zeal to do *exactly* what God says in His word. Therefore, these people will tend to "water down" many of God's doctrines and teachings. They and their leaders will compromise a little here and there

in *how* they live their lives, *how* they observe God's Sabbath and Holy Days, *how* they pay God's commanded tithes, *how* they follow the clear examples of hierarchical government so clearly described in the Bible, *how zealously* they preach the true Gospel to the world and *how fervently* they proclaim the Ezekiel warning to the Israelite peoples—*before it is too late!*

Comparatively speaking, the Laodiceans tend to be rather well off, at least by external, physical measures. God tells them: "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see" (vv. 17–18). Having, perhaps, more material *things*—living comfortable lives and being more "socially acceptable" than many of God's other people—these Laodiceans can easily let down their guard and become smug and self-satisfied. They can feel that they are spiritually, intellectually or socially "superior." Yet the heartfelt *zeal* to serve, to *sacrifice* and to "do the Work" will **not** be there. The spirit of self-sacrifice and *passion* to proclaim the Ezekiel warning will be absent. And the "tone" of self-surrender and heartfelt obedience to live by **every** word of God will not exist as it once did in the Philadelphia era.

WHAT TO DO?

The Apostle Paul was inspired to exhort us in 2 Corinthians 13:5: "*Examine yourselves* as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you

not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified." So we are constantly to be alert as to whether Jesus Christ is **really** living His life within us. As the Apostle Paul wrote: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, KJV). This is a vital *key*. Is the true Christ of the Bible **really** living within you? Do you have the same **zeal** and spirit of service exemplified by Christ, the Apostle Paul and others?

Learn to meditate often on Jesus' teaching in John 4:34–36: "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.'" Is *your* "food" doing the Work of God? Is *your* "reason for being" primarily that of genuinely preparing for the coming of Christ's government soon to be set up on this earth, getting Christ's **message** out to the entire world as a "witness" (Matthew 24:14) and "laying down your life" for your brethren?

Jesus said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24–26). Many of God's people are in a "comfort zone." They

mean well. But the **passion** for Christ and His service has gone out of their lives—if, indeed, it was ever *in* their lives! These people are “comfortable” in their social lives. They usually associate with other “successful” people to the degree they are able. Perhaps without realizing it, their *real* desire is to live safe and comfortable lives—though remaining, outwardly, in the Church of God. *In reality*, the idea that they are in a “**crusade**” to get Christ’s message to the world—*regardless* of personal safety and comfort—does not appeal to them at all.

When they hear Jesus’ words that each of us should “**deny** himself, and take up his cross,” the eyes of the Laodiceans sort of “glaze over.” Perhaps even unconsciously, they think of these sayings of Jesus as *just idealistic*—probably intended for people like the Apostle Paul, but not for *them today*. Such people do not want anyone “messing up” *their* personal lives with an approach to Christianity that they feel might be too strict or too demanding!

But, again, Jesus Christ says: “So then, because you are **lukewarm**, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:16).

LEARN TO SEEK GOD

A key concept that can revolutionize our personal Christian lives is the concept of **zealously seeking** God. Most people in the various “Church of God” groups *assume* that they already know God and His ways. Without realizing it, they often *limit themselves* to halfheartedly observing the outward forms of Christian living. They go to church. They at least partially keep the Sabbaths. They generally live by the Ten Commandments. Soon, it all becomes *routine*. But the Apostle Paul wrote: “*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (Philippians 1:21). *Paul’s type* of **passionate** relationship with Jesus Christ is almost completely missing from the lives of the Laodiceans.

Often, they do not really realize this, or know what to do about it.

However, again and again in His inspired word, God reminds us to actively “**seek**” Him with all our hearts! After the modern Israelites are scattered and taken into **slavery**, they will finally learn to *do this*. “But from there you will **seek** the LORD your God, and you will find Him *if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul*. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the **latter days**, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice” (Deuteronomy 4:29–30).

Speaking of Judah’s first captivity, God describes this same “key” response—which *He obviously desires in all His people*: “Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will **seek** Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:12–13).

God inspired the prophet Isaiah to give us this basic instruction: “**Seek** the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:6–9). So each of us must build within our hearts and minds the awareness to constantly “**seek**” God and draw ever closer to Him. We must **not** take God or Jesus Christ for granted. We must **not** sink down into the “comfort zone” of the Laodiceans.

We should all know the primary avenues by which we must **seek** God. They are: *zealous Bible study*, *heartfelt prayer*, *thoughtful, purposeful meditation*, *fasting*, and *actively exercising* the Holy Spirit and “walking with God” in every phase of our lives. If we, as true Christians, let down or leave out *any one* of these, the power and effect of our Christian lives will be

greatly diminished. These five “tools” for Christian growth **must** be used continually, or we will lapse back into a “lukewarm” Christianity, if, indeed, we do not altogether fall away.

Yes! It is just that serious! We *must* use these five tools in order to become fully mature Christians. *There is no other way!*

And in *all* our Bible study, prayer, meditation and fasting, we must constantly have the approach of “seeking” God—seeking for a *deeper*, a more *profound* and a more *loving* relationship with Christ and our fellow man. We must **not** assume that we are somehow “superior”—that we “have it made.” Remember, Jesus said: “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** for one another” (John 13:35).

There are a few professing Church of God fellowships that exemplify the *exact opposite* attitude toward their fellow man. Although hanging on to some of the basic truths we have all learned, these people set themselves up as “hanging judges” not only of the carnal world, but of other sincere Church of God people! They are notable because of their obvious feelings of superiority and of the atmosphere of *harshness*, *fear* and *intimidation* that permeates their fellowship.

Genuine *love* and *outflowing concern* must permeate the minds and hearts of all “Philadelphian” Christians! Otherwise, they are no more “Philadelphians” than Mickey Mouse!

Yet, as they humbly **seek** God and the things of God, true Philadelphians will zealously avoid becoming bogged down in worldly pursuits and interests. They will be ever-mindful of Jesus Christ’s warning in Matthew 13:22: “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”

Focusing on the “cares of this world” can easily distract *any* of us if we are not

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“YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN”

By Gerald Weston

Jesus said that “unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). But what does that mean? Some believe that being “born again” is a highly emotional experience that suddenly comes upon a person, probably accompanied by tears of joy and a tremendous feeling of peace and well-being. It might occur in the privacy of one’s home after sobering up from a drinking spell. It might take place at an evangelistic meeting, “giving your heart to the Lord” after walking down the aisle and repeating the “sinner’s prayer.”

Others sincerely believe that none of those emotional feelings matter unless you also “speak in tongues”—by which they mean the utterance of mysterious syllables that are not part of any recognizable human language.

So, what is the truth? What does the Bible say about this subject?

The heart and core of this question is found in John 3, but the gospel author set the stage for his subject two chapters earlier. Speaking of Jesus, John wrote: “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:11–13).

John here expresses a theme common to many parts of the Bible—especially the New Testament—that we can become “children of God.” But what does it mean to become a child of God? And what does John mean when he describes those who are born “of God” and not “of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man”?

This much we do know: you and I were born because of our flesh-and-blood parents’ choice to come together in the act of procreation. Although we are born as beings separate from our parents, we share their genetic material and thus were made in their image and likeness. Begetting and birth is truly a marvelous and wonderful process!

A SECRET VISIT

One night, a man named Nicodemus—a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews—came to visit Jesus. This is how Scripture introduces us to Nicodemus, but this is not the last that we hear of him. We later discover that Nicodemus stood up before the chief priests and Pharisees in Jesus’ defense (John 7:50–52). After Jesus was crucified, Nicodemus helped Joseph bury Him (John 19:38–42).

These were both risky acts, which set Nicodemus apart from his peers who knew that Jesus came from God, but who were more interested in pleasing men than God. To Jesus, Nicodemus said: “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (John 3:2). Notice that he called Jesus “Rabbi”—meaning “teacher.” Nicodemus came to learn something from Jesus, but was startled by what he heard.



Anticipating the purpose of Nicodemus’ visit, Jesus replied to him with these famous words: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Many professing Christians mistakenly believe that Nicodemus’ response meant that he did not understand Jesus’ words. In fact, however, Nicodemus **did** understand **what** Jesus was saying; what he **did not** understand was **how** it could take place.

That is why he replied, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” (v. 4).

Why does this matter generate such confusion? In this passage of Scripture, the word translated as “born” is the Greek word *gennao*. Translators, knowing Greek but not understanding the doctrinal implications, variously render this unusual word into English as “born” or “beget” or “begot” or “conceive.” This seemingly small detail can lead to confusion and result in significant misunderstandings, especially about the concept of being “born again.”

Notice how highly respected scholars explain the meaning of this word. *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* states that *gennao* means: “properly: of men begetting children... more rarely of women giving birth to children” (*Strong’s* no. 1,080). *The Interpreter’s Bible* says: “Birth can be considered either from the father’s side, in which the verb is to ‘beget,’ or from the mother’s side, in which the verb is to ‘bear’” (vol. 8, p. 505).

Several years ago, Evangelist John Ogwyn wrote the following explanation: “The English word ‘beget’ refers to the father’s causal action that generates offspring. Synonymous verbs would be ‘engender,’ ‘sire’ or ‘father.’ To ‘bear’ refers to the mother’s role in producing offspring—i.e., carrying to term and bringing forth into the world. In English, ‘begettal’ by the father is limited to conception. In Greek, however, *gennao* has a broader meaning and can be used to cover the entire range of the process of ‘bringing forth’ a child into

the world” (“What Do You Mean ‘Born Again’?,” *Tomorrow’s World*, January–February 2003, p. 12).

Consider two biblical examples that show how the one word *gennao* covers the full range from conception to birth. “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived [*gennao*] in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20). In this case, “conceived” is clearly the proper English translation of *gennao*. But notice just a few verses later: “Now after Jesus was born [*gennao*] in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem” (Matthew 2:1). Here, that same *gennao* is properly translated as “born.”

The context indicates how the word is to be understood in each instance. Hearing the word *gennao*, a Greek-speaker understands the word as inclusive of a whole process, unlike an English speaker whose vocabulary divides the process into various stages: conception, gestation and, finally, birth.

Nicodemus understood Jesus’ words in their Greek context. That is why he responded the way he did, but Jesus’ clarification did not solve the mystery for him: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Many people who report a “born again” experience totally ignore—or simply do not understand—what Jesus said. If we are to be born of water and the Spirit, why do some totally reject the need for baptism and misunderstand what it means to be born of the Spirit?

BORN OF WATER AND SPIRIT

Baptism is found throughout the Bible. The flood of Noah’s day is likened to baptism (1 Peter 3:20–21). The crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel was a type of baptism (1 Corinthians 10:1–2). Jesus was baptised as an example for us (Matthew 3:13–16), and He commanded His disciples to go into all the world, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and baptising those who believed (Matthew 28:19–20, Mark 16:15–16). Peter commanded those who heard him on the Day of Pentecost to repent and be baptised. The Apostle Paul explained that baptism symbolically pictures the death and burial of the old sinful self to come up a new man, resurrected as it were from a watery grave (Romans 6:1–7). Our booklet, *Christian Baptism: Its Real Meaning*, covers this in detail.

So, how is it that some who claim to be born again think baptism is unnecessary? And what does it mean to be born of the Spirit? As we saw above, Jesus told Nicodemus, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Scripture uses water as a symbol of God’s word (Ephesians 5:26). Water also pictures the Holy Spirit (John 7:38–39)—and we know that the Holy Spirit is given to those who *obey*

God (Acts 5:32). The Holy Spirit and God’s word function together, in that each is necessary to understand the other. The word of God explains to us what the Holy Spirit is, and it is only through the Holy Spirit that we can understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:11).

The Apostle John reveals Jesus Christ as “the Word” [Greek: *Logos* meaning “Spokesman”] in the God family, and it is the Word of God who must live in us by the power of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20). Paul clarifies the subject in his letter to Titus: “But... according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4–7).

To put it simply: we must put to death the old sinful self and learn to practice a new way of life—and we can only live that new way of life as Jesus Christ lives in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. And make no mistake about it. He will not live a sinful life in us, but will teach us through His word to live as He lived within the law of God. As Paul succinctly stated, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, KJV).

But is this all that “born again” means? Jesus went on to explain to Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:6–8).

Look carefully at these words. We were all born of the flesh and are made of flesh, but Jesus tells us “that which is born of the Spirit is **spirit**.” We may have God’s Spirit in us, but *are* we Spirit? A simple hat-pin test should clarify conclusively whether we are flesh or Spirit!

Nicodemus understood what Jesus was saying, but he could not understand **how** this can be accomplished; thus his startled reply: “How can these things be?” (v. 9). While it is evident that Nicodemus was a sincere man who recognized Jesus as coming from God, he lacked understanding and had not yet come to fully embrace His teachings: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness’” (John 3:10–11).

THE “END-GAME”

Scripture makes it clear that to be “born again” is something far greater than what most people imagine as a one-time emotional experience that confers a guarantee of “once saved, always saved.” But what, then, is the point and

purpose of being born again? The word of God tells us that until we are born again, we will not be able to inherit the Kingdom of God (John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 15:50).

In John 3:14–16, Christ talks of “eternal life” and “everlasting life.” That life to which He refers is our future life in the Kingdom of God. As we have already seen, being “born again” is a process that involves putting to death the old sinful self and having Christ live in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. But does the process end there? No!

Jesus told Nicodemus that he could not “see the kingdom of God” until he had been born again. Further, Christ explained, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). Paul confirms this as being true in this well-known passage: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption... for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50, 53).

Scripture reveals that God is a family, into which the faithful Christians of this present age will be born at the resurrection (Ephesians 3:14–15). The world’s counterfeit “Christianity” generally finds this truth to be shocking and unbelievable. But we must either believe the Bible or reject it. Consider how often Scripture describes us as sons of God. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [sonship] by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.... For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God... because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:14–17, 19, 21). Yes, we are children of God—but we are children still in the “embryo” stage, not yet born. This same truth is confirmed in Hebrew 2:6–18.

If you have not read Dr. Meredith’s inspiring booklet, *Your Ultimate Destiny*, I encourage you to order your own free copy or read it online at www.TomorrowsWorld.org. There, this subject is covered in far more detail than can be managed in a short magazine article.

CHRIST IS THE FIRSTBORN OF MANY

Scripture tells us: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Truly, God begot

Jesus in a special way at that time. No other human being has come into the world in that same way. But does this mean that He is the only one ever to be begotten of God? Hebrew 11:17 gives us a clue. The same Greek word found in John 3:16 is used here to describe Isaac as Abraham’s “only begotten son.” Yet we know that, after Sarah’s death, Abraham later had six other sons by his second wife Keturah (Genesis 25:1–2). So, is it possible for God to have other begotten sons besides Christ? Scripture says: Yes!

We read: “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born [gennao] of God” (1 John 5:1). The NKJV translators have rendered *gennao* as “born.” However, as we have seen, the word “begotten” is also a correct translation of the Greek. Consider, then, that in the context of this passage the believer is not yet born, but begotten or conceived. Note also, “Whoever has been born [gennao] of God does not sin, for [God’s] seed [Greek: *sperma*] remains in him; and he [does not practice] sin, because he has been born [gennao] of God” (1 John 3:9). Here again the use of *begotten* or *conceived* would better fit the context.

Note also that God’s seed (Greek: *sperma*) remains in the believer. Conception of a new creation takes place when God plants His Spirit in us, following baptism, by the laying on of hands by Christ’s ministry (Acts 8:14–18). This is why Peter could say, “that through these [great and precious promises] you may be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Yes, we are begotten, conceived of God’s very nature, “for His [God’s] seed [*sperma*] remains in him.”

Jesus Christ is “the firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:15, 18; Revelation 1:5). He is also “the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). We can be among those many brethren who will be “born again.” To be “born again” is far more than the one-time emotional experience that so many today misunderstand it to be. It describes the end result of a process that begins when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, repent of our sins, and receive water baptism—symbolically putting to death the old, sinful self—and receive the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9–11). With Christ’s Spirit living within us, our physical lives become a time of “gestation” as we grow in grace and knowledge, overcoming our carnal human nature and replacing it with the holy and righteous character of God, preparing for that time when the trumpet will sound and the faithful firstfruits will be born into the family of God at the resurrection. At that time, we who today are faithful Christians will find ourselves fully made in the image and likeness of God, just as He declared at the beginning: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). ■

LOOK CAREFULLY AT THESE
WORDS. WE WERE ALL BORN OF
THE FLESH AND ARE MADE OF
FLESH, BUT JESUS TELLS US “THAT
WHICH IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS
SPIRIT.” WE MAY HAVE GOD’S
SPIRIT IN US, BUT ARE WE SPIRIT?
A SIMPLE HAT-PIN TEST SHOULD
CLARIFY CONCLUSIVELY WHETHER
WE ARE FLESH OR SPIRIT!



Titus 2:3-5

Woman to Woman

DIAMONDS, TREASURES AND JEWELS

By Shirley Young

In 1971 the sixth installment of the popular “James Bond” films was made, in which Shirley Bassey so powerfully sang the theme song: “Diamonds Are Forever.” Many a woman recalls that movie and that song. But, is that true? Are diamonds really that enduring? Where should a woman look for beauty, value and permanence?

Consider some history. Late one afternoon, in the year 1905, the superintendent of the Premier Mine in South Africa was making a routine inspection 18 feet underground when his eye was caught by what he at first thought was a piece of glittering glass. But on closer inspection it turned out to be the largest rough gem-quality diamond the world had ever seen to that date! It weighed in at 3,106 carats or 1½ lb. It was named the Cullinan Diamond after the owner of the mine, but its more familiar title became the Star of Africa.

The diamond was purchased by the Transvaal government, and since South Africa was then a part of the British Empire it was decided to present the diamond to King Edward VII.

The problem was how to get such a precious and valuable diamond to England in safety. In 1905 transport from South Africa to England could be dangerous, and delivering the diamond posed a very real security problem. There were of course no flights, and sending it by ship might very well invite attack from pirates or robbers. So a cunning plan was devised.

An exact replica of The Star of Africa was made and security men

from London were dispatched to South Africa to accompany and ostentatiously guard the fake diamond on a steamboat back to England. This diversionary tactic was meant to attract the attention of anyone interested in stealing it. In reality the



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true Star of Africa was packed into a cardboard box and sent by parcel post to an address in London. Thankfully it arrived safely!

When King Edward saw the diamond he decided it should become part of the hereditary crown jewels, but since it was still in the rough it needed to be cut. At that time technology had not developed enough to guarantee the quality of the modern standard, so cutting diamonds was considered a difficult and risky business. Therefore, since it was such a magnificent and valuable gem only the best diamond cleavers in the world could be entrusted with the job. The Company of Abraham & Joseph Asscher from Amsterdam was chosen.

Joseph Asscher himself travelled to London, where he studied the

diamond for many months before making a decision. Finally he placed a steel cleaver's blade in a previously prepared V-shaped groove in readiness for the big day.

But Joseph Asscher was under such stress and tension from the huge responsibility that he asked for a doctor to be present when he made the vital stroke. When the day came, he did strike down with accuracy and precision, but then promptly fainted dead away!

JEWEL IN THE SCEPTRE

It became the world's largest polished gem at 530.4 carats, and was named Cullinan I or “The Great Star of Africa.” It is pear shaped and was placed in the head of the royal sceptre.

On June 2, 1953, when Queen Elizabeth II was crowned at Westminster Abbey, she sat over the Stone of Scone or Stone of Destiny, believed to be Jacob's pillar/pillow stone. Then during the ceremony the sceptre (a symbol of kingship and authority) was placed in her right hand.

Now 86 years of age and well into her long reign, Elizabeth II is a direct descendant of Tea Tephi, the young princess daughter of King Zedekiah whom Jeremiah and the scribe Baruch brought to Ireland. So God's promise that “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah” (Genesis 49:10) still holds true to this day.

The second polished gem, split from that great rough diamond, was named Cullinan II or “The Lesser Star of Africa.” That was mounted in the front band of the Imperial State

crown, which the Queen wears annually at the state opening of parliament.

These crown jewels, together with the anointing spoon and the eagle-shaped ampoule which holds the anointing oil, are all on display in the Tower of London together with many other crowns and jewels. Since they are so priceless they are undoubtedly guarded by the latest technology but also by the Yeoman Warders of the Tower (not to be confused with the Yeoman of the Guard). In their distinctive Tudor uniforms they also act as very interesting and entertaining guides to visitors at the Tower, explaining the history of the building and recounting stories and legends associated with individual jewels, like the Black Prince's Ruby.

Most women through the ages have loved jewels, and many even today choose a diamond for an engagement ring. Within our means, enjoying the beauty of a diamond is not wrong. But we need to keep our priorities in order. So, to ask again the original question: "Are diamonds forever?"

No! Even the most beautiful and durable physical diamonds, no matter how priceless, how historic, how shimmering with their many facets and no matter how deeply buried in the earth, will all be destroyed one day, when the earth is purified before the coming of the New Jerusalem to the earth (2 Peter 3:10–12).

So, *no*: diamonds are not "forever." But are there some "diamonds" that a woman can truly cherish—diamonds that will last?

A SPECIAL TREASURE

God said to the children of Israel through Moses: "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special *treasure* to Me above all people: for the earth is Mine" (Exodus 19:5).

And in Exodus 28 we read of the High Priest's attire. Over his garments he wore a two-pieced apron called an *ephod*. He also wore a breastplate of judgment on which were twelve *precious stones* of which topaz, emerald, turquoise, sapphire and diamond were mentioned, among others. These showed how precious the twelve tribes of Israel were to God.

Sadly, the women and men of ancient Israel did not live up to expectations—they failed the high honour of being God's *precious jewels*, and the history of their failure is recorded in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, in the future they will have God's laws written in their hearts and minds and eventually become part of the great God family.

However, if we look ahead in time to when Jesus Christ came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14). He likened that Kingdom to a great *treasure* hidden in a field (Matthew 13:44).

That Kingdom is of such unsurpassed value that we should treasure it above all else. That hidden knowledge and understanding which has been given to us is today hidden from the majority of the world's population.

However, this treasure, which is the Word of God, or the mind of God in print, is useless to us if it remains between leather covers. So with the help of God's Spirit, coupled with our diligence, it has to be dug out and transferred into our minds (Romans 12:2).

Jesus Christ counselled in Matthew 6:19–21: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The priceless but corruptible treasures in the Tower of London have been attained and stored up over a long period of time, but we as Christian women are urged not to store up *perishable treasures* but imperishable ones, which will last into eternity.

So, exactly how do we go about storing up *incorruptible treasure* in heaven? By obedience to God's commands, prayers for God's Work and other people, performing good works and acts of mercy (Matthew 25:35–40), and of course by supporting God's Work on this earth as we are able.

We should always be alert to do little kindnesses for other Church members or our neighbours. Sometimes if we do enact a kindness to someone, they may actually respond with "Thanks! You're a real *diamond*!"

In God's sight, there is no doubt that many of us women might well have been considered "rough diamonds" when He first called us. But with God's help, and our obedience to Him, our characters gradually change and we begin to bear "fruits of the spirit" (Galatians 5:22–26); fruits being the results of the Spirit working in our lives, or true Christianity in action.

Another point to consider is that, although we bear God's *treasure* "in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7), we are in a spiritual sense like the Wardens or Gardens of the Tower of London, who guard its treasure. We, as Christian women, are guardians of the treasure of Truth. The Tower officials share the Tower's history with visitors, and relate fascinating stories associated with individual gems. We as older Christian women have a responsibility to teach the younger women, sharing the stories of our lives and of how we have endured in the faith, and how we have played our roles in support of husband and children and other family members.

Ultimately, through the tests and trials of life, God cleaves and polishes every Christian woman, just like the Star of Africa, with the goal of our finally becoming "*true diamonds*" with facets gleaming and reflecting His very character.

As God says in Malachi 3:16–17: "Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. 'They shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'on the day that I make them My *jewels* and I will spare them.'"

Yes, **true** "diamonds" will survive. Spiritual diamonds are forever! ■

Dating: A Christian Approach

By Scott D. Winnail

God's calling is a special privilege, but it is also an incredible challenge. On the night before Christ was crucified, He prayed that the Father would help His disciples then and now, and protect them from the world around them (John 17:11). The Apostle Paul made it clear that God wants us to live in a way that is "different" from the world around us—walking in "newness of life" (Romans 6:4). And Christ's revelation through John admonishes us to also be separate from the sinful world we live in (Revelation 18:4). These basic, godly principles apply to every aspect of our lives, including the interesting, intriguing and challenging period of our lives when we are involved in **dating**.

How does the world today view dating? And are worldly dating practices different from what God expects of Christians? Do God's people ever inadvertently adopt and practice ways of dating that are contrary to godly principles? In this article, I will draw on my professional training in public health, my two decades of working with teens and young adults, my perspective as a parent, my experience as a pastor—and, most importantly, on God's instructions in Scripture that form a clear guideline for a Christian approach to dating.

I will explore the godly principles of giving, serving and putting the needs of others first. This article will examine some of the fallacies and pitfalls of worldly dating, and contrast them with godly practices built on godly principles. As Christians, we must recognize that if we are not careful, worldly practices can make their way into our lives—even unbeknownst to us. The social practice of dating is one area that, if we are not careful and consciously working to keep it on a godly plane, can quickly fall into a worldly cycle, complete with all the pitfalls.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WORLDLY DATING

So, how does the world around us measure up to our responsibility to date God's way? In this article, I define *worldly dating* as a one-on-one, emotionally and physically serious relationship between a man and a woman. Godly dating is different, as we will see. Up until the 1960s, dating in much of the Western world was more structured than it is today, and behaviors of men and women were respectful and sexually conservative (Turner, *Dating and Sexuality in America*, "Background and History"). Following the "sexual revolution" of the 1960's, dating devolved into a more relaxed pastime with increasing tolerance about right and wrong. Modern dating behavior typically begins in the early teenage years of 13 and 14, and results in most teenagers becoming sexually active. Sexuality in the media has powerfully influenced teenage social norms and perspectives about dating. Today's young people are raised in a world that is morally lacking and sexually tolerant (*ibid.*)—a perspective that can impact singles of all ages in the Church. Thanks to media, technology and music, no region of

the world is safe from the declining morals that dramatically affect modern dating behavior.

In Satan's modern world, sexual attraction and loneliness are two common motivators behind dating—not that attraction is wrong. Godly attraction is *one* tool to find an eventual mate. The problem lies in the motivation. The concept that "it is more blessed to give than receive" (Acts 20:35) is a foreign concept in Satan's end-time world, and far too many are motivated by the selfish notion of "get." Today, many individuals feel an emotional void and go looking for a relationship to fill it (get). Dating is seldom about building a friendship, or serving another person. Often, the end-goal in dating today is not to "give" to another person or even find a mate, but instead to fill one's personal needs of loneliness and greed. And what happens once personal needs are met and a person realizes this "special someone" is **not** "the one" to spend "forever" with? Breakup, heartache, loneliness and a return to selfishly "hunting" for another person to fill the *new* void. Our "throw-away-society" even results in "discarding" a dating partner when there is no more use for him or her. Heartache and dejection are so commonplace in the worldly dating scene that they are basically expected to be a "natural" part of the average person's dating experience. Ultimately, worldly dating today consists of "undefined and directionless romance" (romance for the sake of romance, without a godly purpose) that frequently ends in heartache (Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 188).

In today's Satan-orchestrated world, tremendous confusion surrounds the topic of dating. Sadly, that confusion frequently works its way into God's Church, leaving many Christians with the same emotional scars that are inflicted on people in Satan's world. How many people do you know in God's Church who have emotional scars from dating? Why is this? And what can be done to make dating among God's people different?

THE WORLDLY DATING CYCLE

The sad but true outcome of worldly dating is that it usually results in a cycle of failure and heartache. In Joshua Harris' bestseller, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* (2003), he deftly describes many of the following mistakes made by dating couples today. When we date to "get" and fill personal needs first, we are motivated by selfish and worldly reasons. Frequently, loneliness and searching to fulfill personal need results in identifying a dating partner based solely on sexual attraction. This attraction—and *often lust*—brings two people together. *Some* communication usually begins. Exclusive dating quickly follows and as comfort levels and trust develop and individuals fail to guard their hearts, deep emotional and physical intimacy commence. Because attraction and intimacy are the engines driving the relationship, it rapidly intensifies. And with no plan or purpose behind it, the relationship takes on a life of its own.

Then, while the relationship rapidly intensifies, more meaningful communication and deeper awareness *finally* occur. This more thoughtful analysis reveals incompatibility factors, character flaws, and a lack of common vision and purpose between the two individuals. But because the relationship is grounded on attraction and physical intimacy, there is little to hold it together and a “break-up” often results, followed by heartache and emotional pain. In today’s high-tech, shallow society, many even lack the courage to speak face-to-face with the person they break up with. Instead they frequently use the phone, email, a social media tool, or even a simple text message, to inform the other dating partner “it’s over.” This heart-rending breakup leads back to loneliness and searching, and a need to fill emotional and physical voids left by selfish and ungodly dating actions. The destructive *worldly dating cycle* starts all over again! And because of the extensive physical and emotional intimacy, any hope of a future friendship between the two individuals who have broken up is dashed.

Does anything about this *worldly dating cycle* sound familiar? Is there anything godly and truly Christian about this painful cycle? Can this Satan-inspired cycle of selfishness, impatience and hurt be prevented? And, is dating in a *godly* or *Christian* way even possible or realistic? The exciting answer is **yes!** Dating can be done in a Christian and godly way. But it takes looking at dating through the lens of God’s word and **not** through the eyes of Satan’s society.

WARNING: Some will consider the perspective I am about to offer odd, unrealistic, old-fashioned and perhaps even a bit “revolutionary.” Indeed, the following guidelines *will be* considered foolish and confining by Satan’s worldly standards. However, true Christians should find the following tactics purposeful, respectful—and even fun! And, if followed carefully, they will prevent much heartache.

A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO DATING

Godly values are a “mystery” that is typically directly in conflict with worldly values (1 Corinthians 2:6–8). They are based on the way of “give” and not the way of “get.” They require putting others first, practicing restraint and patience, and ultimately *seeking God’s will over our own*. Our hedonistic society teaches us: “Obey your thirst!” and “If it feels good do it!” God’s way is not “cool.” In fact, the world often views God’s way as antiquated and unrealistic. So, will we follow the crowd and *predictably* experience the worldly cycle of dating despair, or will we follow *God’s* way? Will we swim against the stream and experience the freedom and blessings that come

with rightly applying God’s principles? A converted Christian mind knows the answer, but do we have the courage and character to direct our *hearts* down the straight and narrow path that ultimately leads to a life of joy (Matthew 7:13–14)? Do we have the faith and determination to override the elements of our heart that often guide us—elements that are “deceitful... and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9)?

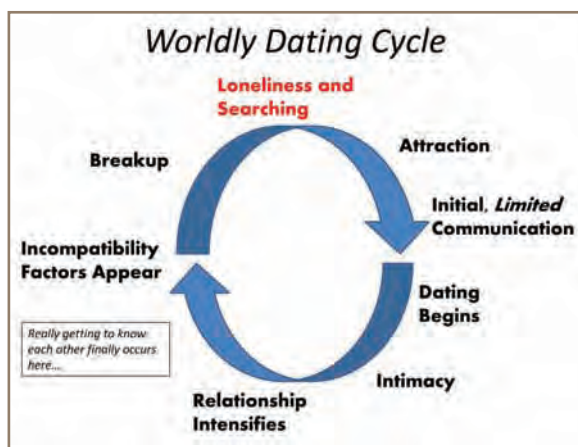
We must first remember **who** the members of the opposite sex really are—*God’s* potential **full** children (1 John 3:1–2). Baptized fellow Church members are our begotten brothers or sisters in Christ (Luke 8:21). The worldly fallacy of viewing them as a “conquest” or “prize” is wrong and Satan-inspired! Each of us is made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26), with the potential of becoming Spirit members of His family one day (1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 John 3:2).

“The premise of [worldly] dating is ‘I’m attracted to you; therefore, let’s get to know each other.’ The premise of friendship, on the other hand, is ‘We’re interested in the same things; let’s enjoy these common interests together.’ If romantic attraction forms after developing a friendship, it’s an added bonus” (Harris, p. 39). In getting to know the opposite sex, our motivation should be to find out more about them, learn about their likes and dislikes, learn about their spiritual motivations and aspirations,

learn about their life-goals, learn how to help them become even more successful Christians, and ultimately develop lasting friendships! During this time, we can also make mental notes regarding our future with this person—but that motivation *must be* secondary.

Although worldly dating allows **only** for “getting” a serious, one-on-one relationship, *godly dating* should initially be about serving another person and “giving” them a fun, enjoyable, and interesting time as both individuals get to know each other better. Godly dating does not begin with intimacy and an *expectation* of romance, based primarily on physical attraction. These wrong expectations are worldly, selfish and misleading. Godly dating should be about giving, serving and getting to know. The concept of “giving a date” should be central—not “pairing off” or seriously committed one-on-one relationships involving emotional and physical intimacy. Passionate and repeated kissing *has no part* in such relationships.

Let me be clear; *I am* talking about a “cultural shift” away from the norms of the world around us! “People who sincerely want to find out if someone is potential marriage material need to understand that typical [worldly] dating actually hinders that process... Their priority shouldn’t be to get away from real life [through pairing off]... They need to see each other in real-life settings of family and friends...



How does he interact with the people who know him best? How does she react when things don't go perfectly? When considering a potential mate, we need to find the answers to these kinds of questions—questions that dating [pairing off] won't answer" (Harris, p. 45).

Initial steps to physical intimacy (such as passionate, romantic kissing) should *only* come after a couple is in a committed *courtship*—or, more appropriately, an engagement. Even then, such intimacy should be engaged in with great caution. As can be demonstrated from simple facts of biology and human physiology, physical intimacy such as kissing, combined with attraction, is designed *by God* to trigger a cascade of hormones in the male and female brains and bodies, that ultimately prepare the body for sexual intercourse. Additionally, physical intimacy can often send powerful messages to both the person one is dating and to those who are watching. Passionate and intimate contact tells the person you are dating that he or she is *yours* and that you are *seriously committed* to and very likely *in love* with them.

Women, especially, are likely to interpret passionate kissing in this way and quickly develop an *expectation of marriage*. Joshua Harris makes a very important observation about physical intimacy: "You might say that intimacy between a man and a woman is the icing on the cake of a relationship *headed toward marriage* [emphasis added]. And if we look at intimacy that way, then it becomes obvious that most of our dating relationships are all icing" (p. 29). By the way, this book, although not perfect, is a *must read* for anyone who is dating or who is *planning* on dating. It is also an excellent tool for parents to review, maybe even with their children—who will be dating in the future, and may already be dating and learning the lessons of the world's wrong ways!

In its earlier stages, godly dating can and should often be done in groups—even among older singles. Note that older singles should take special care when dating, as they may *feel particular pressure* to find a mate and marry quickly. Because of such perceived pressure, people can easily make the mistake of skipping the more *time-consuming* stage of friendship development, and move rapidly into courtship. Failure to build a relationship on the foundation of friendship can have long-term implications that are damaging and even ultimately destructive to a relationship.

Group dating eliminates the pressures of a one-on-one situation (Remember: godly *dating* should not involve intimacy early on, so dating in a group is *not* "weird" or "strange" as the world may imply). Couples or groups of young people can share meals, hikes, an evening of board games, a good Christian movie (occasionally), a picnic, sitting together during Sabbath services, or the like. These dating activities should always involve a lot of talking (In the case of a "Sabbath date," obviously the conversations should occur prior to and following services). Activities that "prevent" or "limit" communication, and that are not productive and prevent friendships from forming and

deepening (activities like watching movies), should be limited!

A Christian date can be as simple and inexpensive as inviting a woman to sit with you during services, or as complicated and costly as taking her out for dinner and a show. And, yes, the guys **should** take the lead in planning and asking a woman out on a date! A man should learn to **plan** a date and make it interesting and enjoyable, but also pressure-free. He should plan topics of conversation, as well as activities. Women should also learn how to make a date interesting for a man, including engaging in fun and interesting conversation. She should learn how to say yes to a date on occasion, even to a man she is not initially attracted to.

Remember, dating should be first and foremost about getting to know your brothers or sisters in Christ! Frequent one-on-one, or exclusive, dating (as opposed to dating in groups or as couples—e.g., a "double date") should also be fun, interesting, and relatively pressure-free, but this is an activity to be avoided until a person is of the age and maturity level (emotionally, spiritually, and financially) where he or she can pursue matrimony if the relationship goes in that direction. This is because exclusive dating is more intimate and creates pressure that has the potential to *force* or *speed up* the relationship.

Society today "pushes" young people to date. If a teenager does not have a "girlfriend" or "boyfriend," he or she is often viewed as strange. Often the same conclusion is made regarding older singles, too. Nevertheless, true Christians should be careful not to create—or even allow—situations where a **serious** dating relationship can develop *until* they are in a place in life where such a relationship is appropriate. Men especially should take a proper, godly lead in this area. Parents, grandparents and friends should all send this same, godly and consistent message. *Serious, intimate dating* before baptism and before both the man and woman are emotionally, spiritually and financially prepared for marriage, is not only unwise but also selfish!

Note the following strong and wisdom-filled admonition by Mr. Herbert Armstrong: "Enough, also, has been said about 'going steady' [serious one-on-one dating]. This should not be done by teenagers. After one is mentally, emotionally and spiritually mature and qualified to assume the *responsibilities* of marriage, steady dating with **the most likely choice for an engagement to be married** becomes a different matter" (*The Missing Dimension in Sex*, p. 218).

Was Mr. Armstrong just "spouting" his own ideas, or is there truth to his recommendation? Brain research demonstrates that, for many people growing into adulthood, the portion of the brain (the prefrontal cortex) responsible for long-term planning, managing intense emotions, directing appropriate behavior, delaying gratification, setting long-term goals, clearly considering the future and making overall wise decisions, is not mature until about age 25 ("Maturation of the Prefrontal Cortex," *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*).

If a Christian man is not yet ready to lead a wife and family spiritually (meaning that he is baptized, and converted-enough to do so), provide financially for a wife and family, and have the character to love and lead in a godly way (requiring God's Holy Spirit dwelling in him), he is not in a position to ask *God's daughter* to consider him seriously. The command for husbands to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25) translates the Greek word *agapao* into the English word "love." This type of love flows directly from God's Holy Spirit, and is a "fruit" of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Without God's Spirit in him, a man cannot fully fulfill God's command to "love" his wife in the Christian way He intended. One cannot "work up" godly love; it comes only through God's in-dwelling Spirit.

At the same time, if a woman is not prepared to properly love, teach and spiritually lead her children, she is not ready to rear a Christian family. And, if she is not ready to emotionally support a husband, appropriately submit to him and follow him, she is not ready to ask *God's son* to support and take care of her in marriage. Doing so will virtually always result in relationship difficulties and heartache. In a few cases, it may result in a *premature marriage* and a host of difficult trials that come from moving ahead of God's timeline. Scripture makes plain that a godly wife "makes herself ready" for her future responsibilities (Revelation 19:7) and does not "rush" into them prematurely.

Although this Christian approach to dating may seem unusual from a worldly standpoint, the results of proper Christian dating are godly—and are worth the effort! Christian dating results in maintained friendships, and never ends in a hurt-filled, emotional breakup. Even after two Christians stop dating each other, they should be comfortable remaining friends. If a couple can no longer be friends after they stop dating, they have **not** dated in a godly way. How different this is from the worldly dating cycle! We can see that dating God's way goes contrary to what the world teaches about dating and intimacy.

NEED FOR A GODLY DATING CULTURE

In a world that is rapidly heading for disaster, members of God's Church must conduct themselves so as to develop and encourage a godly "dating culture." That culture should be governed by godly expectations and actions, and must be based on biblical principles. Christian men and women who "dare to be different" from Satan's world—who desire the blessings and fulfillment of living a truly Christian life—must help create and continue this *godly dating culture*. However, in order to do this, *worldly* dating habits must be *identified clearly* and *discarded*. The Satan-inspired lie that "it's not really feasible" must be cast aside. God calls Christians to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4), to "be separate" from the world and to avoid its sins (2 Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 18:4). He directs us **not** to be "conformed to this world," but rather to be "transformed by the renewing of" our

minds (Romans 12:1–2). God's way of living separate from the world involves how we conduct all aspects of our lives—including the way we date *His* sons or daughters.

One way to recognize Christian dating is by its emphasis on character development and service to one another. As young Christians mature, they should plan to really get to know *many* others of the opposite sex—appreciating them for who they are and who they hope to become. In our modern environment, where Church members are widely scattered, this requires patience, restraint and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). And it requires a heartfelt desire to please God in all our interactions with His potential family members. It requires speaking and acting in a way that *protects* the feelings and the emotions of the people we date. Dating should be fun, interesting and engaging, and should help us *grow in character* and the skills and character traits of leadership, communication, service and submission. The Christian approach to dating should not lose sight of our focus on serving our brothers and sisters in Christ—with the ultimate expectation that, *after* we have adequately prepared ourselves spiritually, emotionally, socially and financially, God will bless us with the hand of an individual whom He has prepared especially for us! Yes, we ultimately want *God* to arrange our marriage, and the way we date should prepare us to serve that future mate for the remainder of our physical life.

NOTE TO PARENTS: Christian parents need to understand the principles of Christian dating, and help their children *grow up with* these concepts as part of their way of thinking. When they do so, teenagers will clearly understand what is and what is **not** appropriate for them at each stage of life. Young adults will understand the importance of reaching appropriate stages in their emotional, spiritual, educational and financial development *before* seriously looking for a future mate—guarding their hearts and emotions until the time is truly right. These principles, when taught from childhood, will pave the way for a successful process of Christian dating that God will be pleased with. They will ultimately help lead to a godly courtship—and to a godly marriage, where *God* guides the selection of the future mate as well as the right time for marriage.

For parents who may not have previously taught these concepts to their teens, do not be afraid to introduce them now! This is a topic your teens *want* to talk about and in which they *want* instruction. As you make the rationale behind Christian dating more clear to your children, and you demonstrate the pitfalls of the worldly alternative by identifying real-life examples, expect them to "catch the vision" of dating in a Christian way. Your teens will need encouragement to fight the pulls of Satan's society, wait for God's time, and—in the meantime—properly prepare themselves for the opportunities to come. And with your instruction they will come to see for themselves that Christian dating not only works—it makes sense! ■

Why Do We Have Summer Camp?

By Sheldon Monson

The Living Church of God conducts several camps in a number of countries around the world. This article will focus on the Teen Summer Camp program held in the United States at Camp Lazarus, located in Delaware, Ohio.

Unless we know our purpose for being, we cannot expect to successfully meet our goals and fulfill our objectives. The following short story entitled “Straight and Steady” helps to illustrate this point:

“When I was a teenager, a local farmer hired me to help him complete fall plowing. My first day on the tractor was disastrous. As I watched the plow turn the soil behind me little did I realize that by the time I reached the end of the field, the row was noticeably crooked. Toward the end of the day the farmer arrived to survey my work. The crooked rows

prompted him to give this advice. ‘You can’t plow a straight row if you continually look back. You must keep your eyes focused straight ahead.’



“So it is with life. Plowing our way into the future is powered by meaningful and specific goals. Focusing on the past, what lies behind, will prevent us from effectively pursuing

our future. Goals provide the direction for us to focus our energies on what lies ahead” (*Speaker’s Sourcebook II*, Glenn Can Ekeren, p. 177).

Why do we have summer camp? What are our goals and objectives? Take a look at what you can expect if you sign up for summer camp in 2013—and how you can plan to get there.

SEVEN REASONS TO HAVE SUMMER CAMP

REASON 1: Camp provides an opportunity for young people in God’s Church to get together with their friends. Camp is also a great place to make new friendships with others of like mind. It is good for young people in the Church of God to build strong friendships with each other. Camp provides a unique



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place to meet people, and a place where many lasting friendships begin. We do have marriages that trace their beginnings to summer camp!

REASON 2: To provide physical activity! God created young people to be active! Unfortunately, many young people grow up in

opportunity for this to occur. Many lasting friendships have traced their beginnings to summer camp. One of the main reasons that young people come back to camp, year after year, is to get together with friends. This social aspect is a major reason to have camp.

The majority of our young people are scattered. Many attend congregations where there are few, if any, others their age. Camp provides the youth in God's Church an opportunity "to get to know one another."

Many parents see the value of getting their children involved in Church activities, including (and even especially) summer camp. They will drive hundreds of miles and spend a considerable amount of money and time to provide their children the opportunity to attend these Church activities.

Parents are concerned with the kinds of friends their children spend time with. It is not wrong for our young people to have friends outside of the church; however, generally speaking our best friends tend to be those of like mind (Amos 3:3).

In the long run, it is our hope that our children will build friendships with those in the Church, date within the Church, and marry within the Church (2 Corinthians 6:14–18). God is pleased when this happens. Camp is not a place to "date" (*whether you are a staff member or a camper*) but it is a great



a sedentary setting. Camp provides an opportunity for physical activity. Sports like canoeing, orienteering, volleyball, flag football, softball, swimming and water polo allow campers to be physically active. One of our goals is to promote a "healthy and physically active lifestyle."

The faculty and staff are dedicated to running the highest quality programs possible. Each activity

work, drills, and game situations are employed to accomplish maximum results in a minimum amount of time. In addition, adequately staffed activity areas provide an unparalleled camper-to-staff-member ratio for individualized training to occur. Needless to say, there is not much down-time, and campers are kept continually active.

REASON 3: To help campers learn new skills, and to challenge them! Many campers have never been in a canoe before. Many have never camped outdoors overnight. Many have never been in a dance class. We hope to provide opportunities for campers to do new things and learn new skills through a program of well-organized and varied activities. For those who have been a part of the camp program for some time, camp provides an opportunity for them to perfect or fine-tune their skills. For those who have not, camp provides a number of new and exciting opportunities.

The overnight canoe trips on the lake at Alum Creek State Park, located just four miles from Camp Lazarus, Ohio, provide campers and counselors with the opportunity to practice the strokes learned in class over a six-mile stretch of lake. They get to camp overnight in tents, to cook and eat outdoors, and to participate in a number of challenges such as starting a fire without matches, a canoe slalom course, a slingshot contest and a canoeing IQ test. Before returning to the main camp, they enjoy breakfast by the fire, an outdoor Bible Study and a



director carefully constructs a course outline and lesson plans for each activity. A qualified, trained and experienced staff provides hands-on training during each class period. Station-





People have all sorts of fears. At camp we encounter campers who have a fear of water, fear of heights, fear of animals, fear of the dark, or fear of speaking in public—just to name a few. The activities offered are designed to help campers conquer their

came that we might have life, and that we may have it more abundantly (John 10:10). In *Tomorrow's World* we read of boys and girls playing in the streets of Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:5).

One of our mottos is: "Work hard, play hard, and live life to the full!" Young people are instructed that they can do anything they want to as long as it fits within the confines of God's

mile-long paddle to the beach at their put-out point.

Other activities include riflery and archery on state-of-the-art covered shooting ranges, with new technology and equipment. Certified and qualified activity directors and members of their staff help to ensure that these activities are fun and safe. Camp also offers public speaking and dance classes. Additionally, baking and jewelry-making classes are offered for girl campers. This last summer, the baking class was taught by two "professional bakers."

Camp should be challenging! The faculty and staff set high, yet attainable standards. We all strive to get a balance while setting expectations that will stretch campers' minds and abilities.

Summer camp also provides opportunities for those who are musically talented. Special music is featured each morning and evening during camp. A choir performs each Sabbath, and the entire camp attends the annual "Talent Show" one evening near the end of camp. This year, 22 acts were featured on "An Evening with the Stars"—and what a spectacular evening it was!

REASON 4: To help campers overcome their fears. We all have perceptions regarding what we can or cannot do. How often in life do we pass over opportunities due to fear? At camp (*and on the Adventure Trips*) we hope to provide campers with the opportunities to face and overcome their fears.



fears. An enormous amount of patience, perseverance and resourcefulness must be exercised by the faculty and staff in accomplishing this goal. We strive to be positive and encouraging while chipping away at these phobias. We understand that conquering fears may have a powerful and far-reaching impact on their lives (2 Timothy 1:7).

law (Ecclesiastes 11:9). On the other hand, they are warned that anything that involves breaking God's law is not real and lasting fun. These are more of the values we strive to promote.

REASON 6: To provide daily, biblical instruction via Bible Studies or Sabbath Services on a variety of topics of particular interest to teenagers in God's Church. At summer camp we begin each activity day with

Bible Study. What better way to start the day's activities! These Bible Studies provide opportunities for instruction and also for the campers and staff to ask questions and give input. Because we are dealing with the young people at camp, these Bible Studies are designed to cover topics of particular interest to young people in God's Church. We are,

after all, a Christian camp! And we are not uncomfortable talking about the things of God. The instruction we give applies in real life. The better job we do in relating to young people—and speaking to them in a manner to which they can relate—the more effective we will be.



REASON 5: To have fun! Camp is a place where young people can have good clean fun in a safe and organized environment. If camp is not fun, it is not worth having! The Scriptures show that Christ





Of course we also encourage campers and the members of the faculty and staff to find time for personal prayer throughout the day.

REASON 7: To train leaders. To prepare a people to rule with Christ. Camp provides a “hands-on” opportunity to serve the youth and to learn to work with others in a unique training environment. Although summer camp is for young people, older members of the faculty and staff can benefit greatly from the experience as well! The benefits afforded those serving at camp cannot be overlooked! Camp provides an opportunity for members of the staff to teach, to encourage, and to lead by example.

We are preparing to rule with Christ. Camp provides hands-on experience in leadership training. What a wonderful opportunity to teach and to serve! We are always on the lookout for talented adult staff who love kids, enjoy hard work and are dedicated to upholding Godly principles and values in word and action.

Although our youth programs will never take the place of the parents, we can support parents in their efforts to teach and uphold God’s way of life. Camp can be one more positive experience in the life of a young person. It is our hope that they will look back on their camp experience with fond appreciation, with camp having positively affected their lives.

WHAT ABOUT OUR MINI CAMP PROGRAM?

A Mini Camp has been designed to help those parents with small children who come to serve at camp. This year, 20 children ages 12 and under came to camp with parents, brothers and sisters who were either campers or were serving as workers at the camp. The Mini Campers had a full schedule of activities, accompanied by a rest period each afternoon. The younger ones were separated from the older Mini Campers during portions of the day, and were given additional rest as well

as activities more suitable for them. From 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily, the older Mini Campers participated in a variety of activities before returning to their parents.

Families are encouraged to come to camp, and the Mini Camp program is designed to help make this possible. At the same time, the Mini Campers are able to experience many of the same activities they will enjoy later as campers—just on a smaller scale. For example, the Mini Campers shoot BB guns at riflery class while the teens shoot 22-caliber rifles.



The Mini Campers shoot smaller bows with shorter draw length and easier draw-strengths while at the archery range, and at the pool they learn how to float and swim and hold their breath while under water, while the campers learn and perfect their strokes. These are just some ways in which activities are adapted to suit the Mini Campers. Parents,

just because you have small children, do not let that keep you from applying to serve at camp.

HOW YOU CAN ATTEND SUMMER CAMP

If you are a young person and would like to attend camp, or an adult who would enjoy serving at camp, now is the time to begin planning. Some scholarship money is available for campers, many congregations help to pay the tuition costs for Church youth in their local area, and others send money to help whoever is in need. However, we encourage campers to work hard and save at least a portion of their own money so they can afford to attend. In general people tend to appreciate the things they have had to work hard to attain. There are a number of things that you can do to raise your

own money for camp. Some include: fundraising projects, cleaning houses, washing windows, shoveling snow (in some parts of the country), raking leaves, or caring for animals while people are on vacation. Members of the local congregation, or even neighbors, are willing to pay for these services, especially if you are willing to do a good



job for less than the going rate. At the same time, you will be learning the value of hard work and how to “close the deal” while pushing yourself to accomplish tasks—the value of which cannot be overestimated. ■

Festival 2012: Meat in Due Season!

More than 9,100 brethren kept God's Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day at 50 Living Church of God Festival sites in 32 countries around the world. We hope you will enjoy reading the following overview of activities at many of those sites.

Living Church of God Festival sites in the United States included San Luis Obispo, California where, with an attendance high of 414, Feast-goers joyfully celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in a beautiful area of the central California coast, nestled in serene rolling hills and surrounded by lovely vineyards and spectacular mountains. The days were warm and evenings cool, with the gorgeous Pacific Ocean just minutes from the Embassy Suites meeting hall!

God blessed us with exceptional choral singing and special music, great activities, family "Bible Baseball" and a thought-provoking evening Bible Study. The messages were inspired, on-point and spiritually focused. In attendance were a number of local guests, who expressed appreciation for the site.

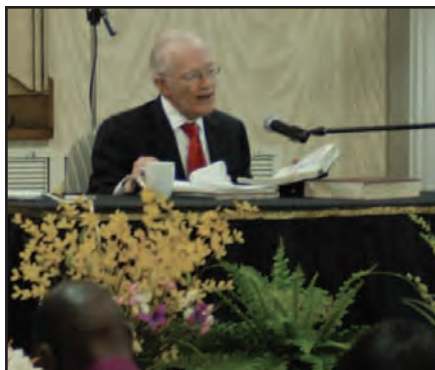
Many enjoyed a special evening tour of Hearst Castle with its



gold floors and incredible opulence, a tiny foretaste of the splendor of Tomorrow's World. Family Day at Morro Bay included a number of ocean excursions and two memorable harbor dinner cruises. Our exciting family "fiesta" dinner dance, teen pizza bowling party, seniors' luncheon, local tours and singles' mixer were also memorable highlights.

The brethren set good examples and let their lights shine, with hotel staff commenting on the great attitudes seen. Many thanks to all who served so diligently in this truly millennial setting!

Colorado: More than 300 brethren and visitors attended Vail, where beautiful fall weather and colors greeted Feast-goers from all over the country. Tradition and new technology helped serve many brethren who were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond their control. Each day, we had



more than 80 "live streaming" and direct telephone hookups.

Messrs. Phil Sena, Glen Gilchrist, Wyatt Ciesielka and Ben Whitfield gave messages on such topics as holiness, healing waters, superheroes of tomorrow and the meaning of the Feast. The special music and sermonettes balanced the Feast with spiritually uplifting messages befitting the Rocky Mountains. We truly went "up to the mountains of the Lord" to learn His ways.

Shared meals promoted fellowship, while Family Day activities included a trip to the Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park. Teens and their families went to the Dobson Ice Arena for an afternoon of ice skating while the singles tried their hand at bowling and various other activities that kept them mingling all throughout the Feast. We had two wonderful Bible Studies by Mr. Sena on guarding against worldliness. Mr. Ciesielka updated us on the Work with behind-the-scenes video presentations about Internet and social media efforts, and with a Bible Study on equipping our children for spiritual battle.

Truly it was a spectacular Feast with unparalleled mountain beauty and lovely accommodations. We all look forward to returning next year, wherever God places His name.

Missouri: After a long absence, God placed His name on the beautiful Lake of the Ozarks, where 647 brethren gathered to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles!

Messrs. Karl Beyersdorfer, Dan Friz and Wallace Smith provided sermons and were later joined by Regional Pastor Mr. Rand Millich. The inspiring messages and Bible Studies helped us to paint a mental picture of Jesus Christ's coming reign, including discussions about the Millennial Temple of Ezekiel's vision, the power of God's way to solve mankind's persistent problems, and what physical families—and the Family of God itself—will be like in the Kingdom!

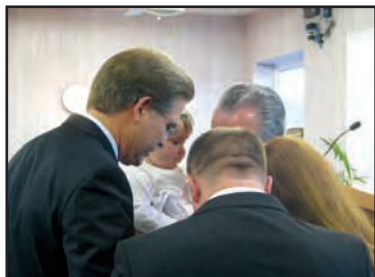




The rich spiritual content was complemented by truly fun and uplifting activities. While the teens enjoyed a Bible Study on questions they submitted and tested their ping-pong mettle against the Site Coordinator, the singles enjoyed a narrated tour cruise, highlighting the rich history of the area. Seniors enjoyed a tasty luncheon and an uplifting address from Mr. Beyersdorfer, and Mr. Millich similarly thanked and inspired ordained members at a luncheon of their own. Family Day featured games for all ages, an arts and crafts exhibit, a delightful dinner and a dance with an eclectic variety of music!

The facility where we met, the Country Club Hotel and Spa, proved a fantastic location. The hotel's general manager remarked on multiple occasions how our members' positive and uplifting attitude had a visibly encouraging effect on his staff and their morale, and how our attitude of service and abundant generosity was an inspiration to them all.

How fitting that God's people gained a taste of the Millennium, and those around us were able to share part of it through their experience with us. Our thanks to those who came to Missouri, to the outstanding volunteers who served, and to our great and loving God for blessing our Feast tremendously!



from our faithful shepherds, including Site Coordinator Mr. Harold Way, Dr. Jeffrey Fall and Messrs. Davy Crockett, Gary Ullerick and Ron McGowan.

Messages focused on topics such as liberating the world, spiritual vision, keeping our minds and hearts on God, the responsibilities of kings and priests and getting a glimpse of our awesome spiritual destiny.

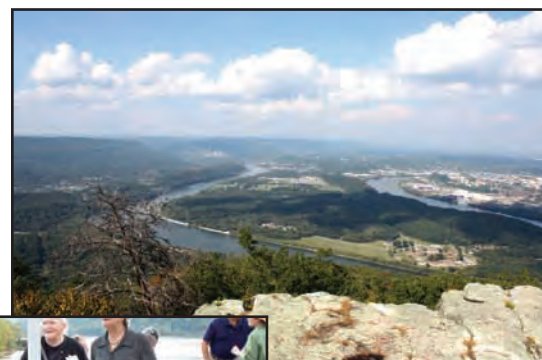


There was a loving spirit of family warmth and cooperation among all of God's people. Family Day and activities for teens and singles gave plenty of opportunity to make new friends and renew old friendships. Mr. Crockett was guest speaker for the seniors' luncheon, and talked about the importance of the seniors' experience in God's Church. Then there was a variety show consisting of music, talent skits and singing from young and old alike.

At the luncheon for deacons and elders, Mr. Way thanked all in attendance for their service to God's people, and expressed the importance of our examples within the Church and in the world. Mr. Crockett gave a Bible Study, and Mr. Way held a breakfast brunch in appreciation of all those who served at the Feast.

Along with all of the many blessings we shared together at this year's Feast, we also were able to experience the majestic Pacific Ocean and the pristine beaches of Newport. We had lovely sunsets each evening, as we watched for whales. All of God's people truly had a taste of what it will soon be like in God's Kingdom.

Tennessee: Surrounded by mountains and valleys, and bisected by a vibrant river waterfront, Chattanooga hosted the Feast of Tabernacles for a second year—but irrefutably *not* second best as 371 rejoicing Feast-goers from all over the United States came together in a wonderful spirit of



unity and brotherly love. One couple attending the Feast for more than fifty years declared it was their "best ever!"

A banquet befitting kings was served through positive spiritual messages looking forward to the return of the King of kings and the restoration of the Government of God to the earth. Our traveling speakers, Messrs. Lambert Greer and Martin Fannin, brought inspiring sermons reflecting Jesus Christ's resolution to establish His Kingdom on earth, the importance of obedience, and having the courage to endure so we can faithfully serve mankind on the Last Great Day. Additional sermons and Bible Studies by Messrs. James Sweat, Ron Poole and Jason Fritts focused on our family inheritance, being

properly equipped Christian soldiers, our admonition to rejoice before God, and how the Feast is also for our children.



The fellowship was enlarged by various activities in a genuine family atmosphere! Children made Feast-themed arts and crafts during Kid's Corner. Family Day featured a riverboat cruise followed

by an amazing 3D arctic movie at the IMAX. Singles enjoyed a thrilling ride on the Incline Railway to the top of Lookout Mountain, with spectacular panoramic views of the scenic city from the clouds! Teens and families cheered each other during an afternoon of bowling and pizza. An enthusiastic group of all ages dined and danced the evening away during the Family Dinner Dance. Seniors enjoyed a stylish dinner together amid entertainment and a special address, as well as a question and answer session with Mr. Greer. Deacons, elders and wives also enjoyed an elegant dinner with live background music plus words of wit and appreciation from Mr. Fannin.

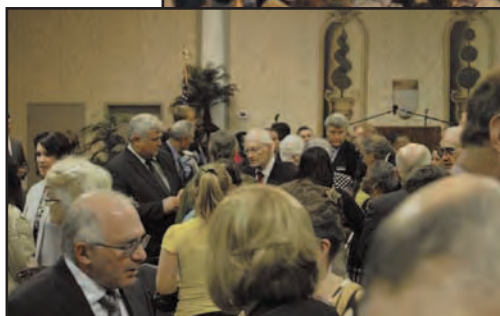
This Feast in Chattanooga will certainly be remembered for the selfless service displayed. God's people let their lights shine! It was particularly moving to see children and teens representing godly parental teaching through their service. At the beginning of every service, Feast-goers were affectionately welcomed by cheerful smiles and hearty handshakes from our youthful greeters. God's faithfulness and generous character was reflected by the brethren. It was difficult to say our goodbyes, but we look forward to the Feast next year, and even more to its fulfillment, when we will never say goodbye again!

Virginia: Virginia Beach is known for the thunder of jets as they periodically streak across the sky from nearby Naval Airstation Oceana. Locals call that familiar roar "the sound of freedom," and yet there was a different "sound of freedom" there for eight days. It was the sound of 617 brethren rejoicing before God! The message of God's Kingdom coming to earth came through loud and clear. Dr. Meredith and his wife attended in Virginia Beach the entire Feast, providing a unique opportunity for brethren to hear powerful messages and get better acquainted with the Presiding Evangelist and his wife. Dr. Meredith gave three sermons during the Feast, exhorting brethren to prepare to rule in the coming Kingdom of God and to strive for the hope of mankind, the resurrection from the dead. He reminded us that we are called to be winners!

Visiting speaker and Canadian Regional Director Mr. Gerald Weston challenged brethren to make the most of their opportunities as firstfruits, to fear God and choose His way of life. Site Coordinator Mr. Rod McNair encouraged Feast-goers to be filled with the joy of the Lord and to prepare for their

future roles by being true, godly examples. Mr. James Wells exhorted brethren to really come to know the Lord in a close and personal way. Mr. Dennis Chornomaz inspired brethren to prepare for their "metamorphosis" to spirit life, and Mr. Scott Lyons challenged Feast-goers to be living sacrifices in their personal relationships at home.

The pounding surf and expansive views of the Atlantic Ocean were daily reminders of Isaiah's millennial prophecy, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the



waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). Balmy weather lured many Feast-goers out to enjoy God's creation—the soft sand, the rolling waves and the passing dolphins.

On day three, more than 200 brethren ventured out by boat, exhilarated by the refreshing ocean air during a two-hour tour of the Atlantic coast. A day later, many Feast-goers fellowshipped as they and their families explored the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center. The Saturday night banquet was followed by a family dance, featuring *Tomorrow's World* announcer Kevin Lee as DJ. Uplifting music was provided by the Festival Choir, music coordinator Marcus McCullough and other performers. The Feast in Virginia Beach 2012 was an inspiring foretaste of God's Kingdom, and a vision of the future hope of mankind.





Wisconsin: The beautiful orange, yellow and auburn colored trees of Wisconsin Dells greeted 275 enthusiastic Feast-goers from all over the United States and parts of Canada. From day one, everyone knew a very special and uplifting Feast was beginning!

Messages focused on the great changes we can expect once the Kingdom of God is established on the earth. We heard early on what God thinks about fun and what “real fun” involves. We were also reminded to add to our understanding of the Kingdom of God as God reveals more to us at the Feast every year. We heard a very fascinating message revealing that the “Model Prayer” outlines God’s Holy Day Plan. Other messages included information on family in the Kingdom, what we will be doing in the next age, opening the Ark of the Covenant, David’s view of God and a Last Great Day message on the “complete” healing—Christ’s Second Coming.

On Tuesday afternoon 22 gathered for a luncheon honoring deacons, elders, deaconesses and their spouses. After a wonderful meal prepared by the Chula Vista Resort, we were honored to hear an encouraging message from Regional Pastor Mr. Rand Millich.

Wednesday evening included a special family event at Knuckleheads Bowling and Indoor Amusement Park, where more than 120 excited members gathered for pizza, bowling, small amusement rides for kids, indoor go-karts and other games. The children were thoroughly entertained and worn out by the end of the night.

Thursday night was the Family Dinner Dance in the Grand Ballroom of the Chula Vista Resort. As the adults enjoyed a succulent buffet complete with chef-carved prime rib, the children enjoyed their own buffet in the “Kids’ Fun Zone.” After the meal, the children were entertained by a professional balloon-twister. The rest of the evening included dancing and

a talent show—with vocalists, piano solos, a saxophone solo and a balloon twister, who performed a highly entertaining act in which he was “swallowed” by a seven-foot balloon! Many of the almost 200 brethren who attended commented on how much they enjoyed the evening.

More than 70 enjoyed a ride on the Wisconsin Dells popular Original Duck Boat Tour on Sunday. Teens also enjoyed a Digital Treasure Hunt on the expansive grounds of the resort.

God truly blessed The Feast in Wisconsin Dells in many noticeable ways: the weather was perfect, the messages



were inspired and the fellowship was plentiful! So many helped to make this a very special Feast for everyone—a big thank you to you all!

Texas: Nestled in the hill country of Texas, God placed His name on the quaint town of Boerne. The glorious scenery and beautiful weather provided a peaceful setting for the Feast. Approximately 255 people attended each day at the Boerne Convention and Civic Center, where brethren rejoiced in harmony with inspiring sermons, sermonettes, and special music.

Family Day at an authentic Western ranch outside of town brought almost everyone together for a delicious Texas-style meal, complete with brisket, potato salad, pinto beans and “all the fixins.” Seniors enjoyed the banquet at Ye Kendall Inn and Historic Hotel, where they dined on a succulent dinner with entertainment. The teens had a delicious feast of pizza and fun for the whole family at the Turn Verein Bowling Alley. The singles also enjoyed several well-planned occasions together—including an afternoon at one of the scenic parks nearby.

Mr. Lambert Greer arrived for the second half of the Feast, and challenged us to witness change in our lives by obedience to the laws of God. Indeed, it was a look into the future, as all of God’s people experienced the true meaning of a deep spiritual Feast. The joyous group left Boerne with

lifted spirits, and most commented that they definitely had the “best Feast ever,” with plans to return again next year.



Hawaii: The beautiful “Garden Isle” of Kauai was the near-millennial setting for more than 200 enthusiastic Feast-goers from across the United States, Canada and Australia. Services were held in the lovely Performing Arts Center of the Kauai Community College. Sermons during the Feast from Site Coordinator Jim Meredith and Messrs. Sheldon Monson, Darrell Lovelady and Barry Walker focused on various aspects of preparing for rulership in the Millennium and beyond. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ames made the long journey from Victor Harbor, Australia for the second half of the Feast. Due to crossing the international dateline, Mr. and Mrs. Ames were able to extend their Feast of Tabernacles for an extra day! Mr. Ames gave two very inspiring sermons and also spoke at the Seniors’ Luncheon and the Deacons and Elders Luncheon.



Kauai is a truly beautiful, tropical island with inspiring ocean and mountain vistas. We were blessed with wonderful weather during the Feast with daytime highs in the low 80’s and nighttime lows of about 70. “Aloha” in the Hawaiian language means peace, affection, compassion and mercy, and this certainly was the spirit in God’s people that prevailed at the Feast, especially in the many who volunteered to serve. Some of the teens served on the parking crew while others participated in special music and hymn accompaniment. There were many other highlights, including a catamaran cruise, along the spectacular Na Pali coast. During this five-hour cruise, passengers were able to see spectacular sea cliffs, cascading waterfalls and timeless lava tubes, as well as spinner dolphins, flying fish and sea turtles. We also anchored at a tropical reef to snorkel and explore an underwater ecosystem. Other activities were teen and singles mixers, luaus, a family dance, and Family Day at

the beach. Family Day began with a delicious catered lunch of freshly barbequed hotdogs and hamburgers. Then young and young-at-heart participated in sand castle sculpting, volleyball, football, various children’s games and swimming and snorkeling in a protected area with beautiful, multi-colored fish. Many Feast-goers also enjoyed horseback riding, helicopter tours, hiking, snorkeling, surfing and scuba diving. In addition to the inspiring messages, wonderful fellowship and enjoyable activities, we were also blessed to have a baptism in

the warm Pacific Ocean on the Last Great Day. The Kauai 2012 Feast of Tabernacles will long be remembered as one of the best ever!

Florida: The beautiful Wyndham Bay Point Resort was again selected to host the Feast of Tabernacles in Panama City Beach. Warm temperatures, sunny skies and blue waters welcomed the more than 866 brethren in attendance. Dr. Douglas Winnail was our guest speaker for the first half of the Feast. He gave sermons on going from darkness to light, and keys to the mysteries of God. Mr. and

Mrs. Gerald Weston joined us at the middle of the Feast. Mr. Weston gave sermons on choosing the right road and learning



to fear God. Mr. Jack Lowe, the Site Coordinator, presented sermons entitled “Are We Preparing for the Kingdom of God” and “Marriage and Family.” Other sermons included “The Joy of the Lord” and “The Way of Abundance,” given by Mr. Ray Clore and Mr. Charles Ogwyn respectively. Many brethren commented that the spiritual food was the best part of this Feast of Tabernacles.

God commands us to rejoice before Him at the Feast, and rejoice we did! Panama City Beach offers many amenities; it has fine restaurants, hotels and condominiums in abundance, and the best beaches with the prettiest sunsets in the world. In addition to the inspiring messages, the brethren enjoyed many activities. There was a singles’ mixer and Sabbath

brunch with a Bible Study. The teens enjoyed a great afternoon on the Wyndham's private beach with food, games and tons of fun. The Shell Island and dolphin watch cruise was a big family favorite. Approximately 225 brethren enjoyed the food



and dancing at the Family Dinner Dance. Our Family Day was held at Rock-It Lanes again this year. About 400 brethren joined in the fun of bowling, skating, billiards, games, fellowship, and eating as much pizza as they wanted.

There was a true spirit of service and cooperation as many brethren worked hard behind the scenes to support the activities and help everyone have the best Feast ever. When asked what the overall impression of her first Feast of Tabernacles was, one first-timer simply said, "WOW!" God truly put His blessings on us this year.

Pennsylvania: Nestled among the scenic Pocono Mountains, Tannersville was the temporary dwelling of 235 enthusiastic brethren. This new Feast site welcomed us with beautiful fall foliage common to the Northeast, yet unseasonably warm temperatures. The Festival Choir opened services each day followed by inspiring sermons from Messrs. Martin Fannin, Jonathan McNair, Tex Malone, Wayne Tlumak, Anthony Stroud, Larry Alverio and John Hunter.

Daily activities created a rich environment for fellowshipping, learning, and meeting new people. On Family Day, we gathered at the top of Camelback Mountain where we ate a Cajun-style meal prepared and served by brethren

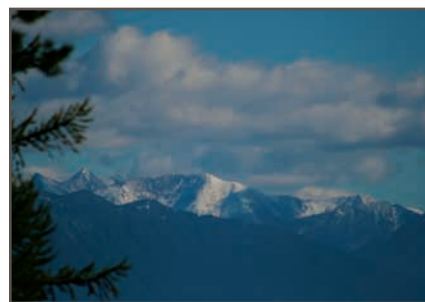


from Louisiana. The brethren also hiked together and enjoyed the beautiful panoramic view of God's creation. The day ended with a Bible Study on the topic of family. Another special event was the annual Family Dinner Dance with music and singing by member Steve Coady, while Don Wood ran the music equipment. Mr. McNair led a men's seminar on

the topic of courage in the man's role of leadership. There was a teen Bible Study, an interactive singles' Bible Study—and two more members were baptized into God's family.

One special highlight of the Feast was the Progressive Fellowship Afternoon.

For this, several members volunteered to serve as hosts preparing three courses—appetizers, dinner and dessert. The rest of the Feast-goers were assigned separate locations for each course. By the end of the afternoon, everyone had the opportunity to mix and fellowship with three completely different sets of brethren.



One of the most frequently heard comments this Feast was regarding the warm family atmosphere that was present from beginning to end. God speed the day when we will serve together in the Kingdom!

In Canada, 187 attendees gathered in a beautiful millennial setting in **Kimberley, British Columbia**, where they enjoyed crisp mornings and sunny days surrounded by the spectacular Rocky Mountains, with a profusion of fall colours. Several deer greeted us regularly as we went to and from services. The messages were truly filled with spiritual food. Messrs. Eldon Davis, Stuart Wachowicz, Michael Elertson, Norman Aitchison, Lawrence Hartshorne and Sheldon Monson gave excellent sermons and sermonettes. The overall theme of the Feast centred on our roles now and in the Millennium.

The brethren enjoyed an informative afternoon at Fort Steele, established in the late 1800s. After a delicious buffet, the brethren went on a tour of the fort, which included various artisans at work in their shops, using the tools of that era.

One-hundred and twenty brethren went on an informative underground train trip into the Sullivan Mine, which was the largest lead zinc mine in Canada until it closed in 2001. Former Sullivan miners demonstrated how the power-house and the mining equipment were used.

The Feast activities were rounded out with a family dinner and dance preceded by Mrs. Elertson taking excellent photos of the brethren as keepsakes of the best Feast ever!

Liverpool, Nova Scotia: Seventy-five joyful brethren attended the Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful Nova Scotia. Sunny warm days with an awesome nighttime display of stars over the Atlantic Ocean, along with the beautiful Autumn foliage, added an extra measure of inspiration to the Feast. Sermons and sermonettes were oriented on the Millennium, with



messages about having the mind of a shepherd, and being ready to rule.

Activities included a whale-watching excursion, a dinner theater production of “Acting Rich,” and a fun night of music and song provided by the Feast of Tabernacles



“scrap band.” Feast-goers took advantage of the scenery and tourism sites along the beautiful south shore of Nova Scotia, including Lunenburg, where the refurbished Bluenose II, launched on September 30, was tied to the wharf for refitting. Two new members were added to the family of God during the Feast.

Many people commented on the feeling of love that prevailed, with one woman commenting that she had never received so many hugs before.

Shawinigan, Quebec: Shawinigan was host for the first time to the Feast of Tabernacles and it was a wonderful success. The scenery was beautiful, especially the St. Maurice River flowing just across the street from the hotel with a nice promenade along its bank. The fall colors were on time once again to provide the backdrop. The majority of the brethren stayed and attended services under the same roof at the Auberge des Gouverneurs. This was the first time in many years that the brethren did not have to travel out for meals and services. The fellowship was rich and meaningful. The scriptures are absolutely right: “How good and how pleasant” for brethren to be dwelling safely together in harmony and peace.

The 110 brethren enjoyed spiritual food that was rich and diverse; some of the subjects covered talked about how the Kingdom will bring permanent justice, righteousness and peace. We were summoned to become as wise as our King, to be the salt of the earth in a world that is getting darker and sadder. We had a marvellous vision of what Jerusalem will become, so different from what it is today.

As far as the activities are concerned, the youth were challenged to a game of Mini Putt-Putt golf in which the older members were also invited. The seniors enjoyed a magnificent cruise on the St. Maurice River; the activity was so popular that some members wanted to pass for seniors in order to be there. The Talent Show, Dance Night and Game Night were very successful and provided a wonderful occasion for the

brethren to enjoy themselves as a family. Two guided tours in the area completed the activities.

It was a privilege to see the family of God in action and to see the growth and warmth of the sons and daughters of God.

Niagara Region, Ontario: Surrounded by rushing water, 311 brethren from three countries, eleven Canadian provinces, and 14 U.S. states gathered among the beautiful fall colors to celebrate God’s Feast of Tabernacles. Live speakers included Site Coordinator Mr. James Ginn, local elder Mr. Winston Gosse, and Messrs. Gary Ehman and Ken Frank from the United States. Messages given during the first several days talked about God’s people being lights to the world, darkness passing away, and His people as holy ground and ambassadors through God’s presence with them.

Activities began immediately after sundown the first day. These included a Meet and Greet social with hors d’oeuvres and a special presentation to help familiarize attendees with local attractions. A flurry of activities continued the next day to get people together right from the start of the Feast. The singles enjoyed an afternoon

t o u r i n g
Niagara Falls
and a dinner
at the Skylon
T o w e r ’ s
r o t a t i n g
dining room,
overlooking
the falls.
Teens were
challenged on

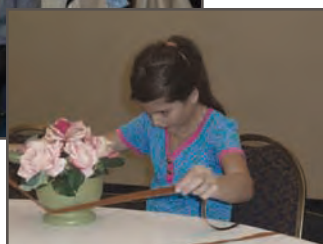
a geocaching
hike followed by pizza. The seniors attended a luncheon with

delightful piano music and Mr. Gary Ehman as a guest speaker. Other outdoor activities included a family outing to Marineland and an afternoon family picnic at the historical Queenston Heights Park. God provided a beautiful setting for all activities despite daily forecasts calling for rain. Many of the brethren enjoyed dance lessons provided the evening before the Family Dance. Those that attended found themselves laughing together as they learned or brushed up on the polka and waltz. A lively evening of dancing to live music followed. A Bible study was held by Mr. Winston Gosse on the Sabbath, and the Feast activities ended with what many thought was the highlight: a Talent/Fun Show.

God’s people jubilantly rejoiced during His Feast and left with final lessons on the Last Great Day from Mr. Frank on coronations and having the dedication required to rule.

Mandurah, Australia: Eighty-nine brethren gathered together in Mandurah, about an hour south of the city of Perth.

Meadow Springs Golf and Country Club was the beautiful millennial setting for the Feast, where brethren could see





beautiful sprawling fairways and hills from the room where services were held. We were also richly blessed with near perfect weather, while the rain the week before no doubt helped in 'greening' everything up just in time. The beautiful spring flowers and foliage were also a lovely addition to the surroundings.

Evangelist Bruce Tyler, our Regional Pastor, opened the Feast here before traveling to our site at Victor Harbor. Mr. Tyler spoke on what the Kingdom will be like, and about God dwelling with us. We also received messages from Perth elder Mr. Mal Jennings, who spoke on picturing the soon-coming Kingdom.

For the second half of the Feast, we had the pleasure of welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gill, who serve the Work in Australia. Mr. Gill preached on how we need to adjust our lives every day to God's will, and the importance of bringing every thought into the captivity of Christ. All the messages energized the brethren, which was evidenced by the warm fellowship and atmosphere in the air after each service.

Activities included a relaxing singles' evening by the water, with delicious Italian cuisine. The Family Day was set amongst beautiful English gardens and a scale model miniature village and the Talent Night was warmly received.

Near the end of the Feast, the seniors enjoyed a riverboat trip along the waterways and canals in Mandurah. The highlight of the activity program was the Supper Dance, which featured a live Jazz band. A great deal of planning had obviously gone into the wonderful decorations that complemented the evening mood perfectly.

As the Feast came to a close, the brethren were thankful to God, and many were heard to comment that this truly was the best Feast ever!

Victor Harbor, Australia: This was the third Feast to be held at

the beautiful McCracken Resort, set amid a lovely quiet golf course in Victor Harbor. This venue provides excellent facilities, including a private auditorium, a fine dining restaurant and a casual bistro. Those who stayed in the resort's serviced units enjoyed quality rooms, many with beautiful views over the golf course. Mr. and Mrs. Ames expressed appreciation for the millennial atmosphere of the site.

The majority of the brethren rented rooms looking out over the Great Southern Ocean, looking south towards Antarctica, (not actually visible from Australia). There can be no doubt that Victor Harbor offers a truly millennial atmosphere. The weather was very pleasant, with cool nights and warm days. On most days we had clear blue skies after a morning rain shower that provided a beautiful rainbow to remind us of God's promises.

This year brethren enjoyed a wonderful array of activities. On the afternoon of the second day a number of seniors had a very pleasing cruise to the mouth of the Murray River, and a short distance beyond into the Coorong River. What made this trip so pleasurable was the running commentary by the Captain of the boat. He gave us a history lesson that kept us entertained and interested all the way.



That evening, almost everyone attended an "Evening with the Ames." Mr. Michael Gill interviewed them and asked questions submitted by brethren beforehand. The questions were about how and when Mr. and Mrs. Ames were called, and their ongoing involvement in God's Church. We appreciated their gracious responses.

There were a number of other enjoyable events, including the Talent Show, where giving people were willing to bring us an evening filled with beautiful music, poetry and other forms of entertainment. Other memorable activities were the Family Dinner Dance, and Family Day at Horseshoe Bay. Family Day brought many families together for a barbecue lunch and a variety of team games, and there were soap bubble toys for the kids.

This year was genuinely inspiring. The sermons we received from Dr. Meredith, Mr.



Ames, Messrs. Bruce and Rob Tyler, Mr. Gill and Mr. Hemphill clearly pointed us toward the Kingdom of God.

This year's Feast of Tabernacles at Victor Harbor helped us picture the Kingdom, and pointed us more clearly to God's Way of life.

England: Two-hundred and sixty brethren from around the world gathered to keep the Feast in the Victorian town of Buxton in the English Peak District. We met at the regal Palace Hotel with its beautifully decorated High Peaks Meeting Hall—an ideal place to celebrate God's soon-coming Kingdom. The Hotel's fine Restaurant and Lounge Bars were ideal for meals and fellowship, contributing to the convivial family atmosphere that was prevalent throughout the Feast.



A broad range of planned activities included a coach (bus) tour of the Peak District National Park, an afternoon walk around the Goyt Valley, a performance

by the Buxton Choral Society and an Afternoon Tea Dance, to name a few. One highlight was a private visit to Haddon Hall, a fortified medieval manor house, parts of which date back to the 12th century.

Inspiring Feast messages explored different facets of God's future Kingdom here on Earth: Regional Director Rod King invited us to "Tabernacle with God" and discussed Africa in Prophecy. Site Coordinator John Meakin highlighted "Jesus Christ—Lord of All" and "The Meaning of Judgment." London Pastor Rick Stafford examined "Post Traumatic Stress and the Millennium." Visiting from the U.S., elder Adam West clarified "Our Crowning Achievement" and elucidated "Power in the Kingdom." All of these messages were supported by well-chosen, relevant sermonettes, and were augmented by beautiful special music, which included a delightful Children's Choir.

The spiritual meat, fine food and varied activities at this site combined to provide a most successful, memorable and rewarding Feast that was enthusiastically appreciated by members, some of whom commented that they had never before celebrated the Feast in such grand and uplifting surroundings!

Indonesia: This has been another spiritually uplifting and inspiring Feast of Tabernacles for everyone! Twenty-five of God's faithful brethren gathered in the beautiful villa resort of Toeti in Batu City, East Java to keep God's wonderful Feast.

We were once again grateful to have international visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Ian West from Australia, and also the Simanjuntaks, a family from the island of Batam. Together their

presence helped make the Feast even more joyful.

The messages gave us a stronger picture of the commission God has given us, and a deeper

appreciation of the dedicated men and women who serve in the Charlotte office—we can pray for each of them daily.

Activities of Bible games, outdoor sports and a featured Bible drama have left all of us with fond memories we will keep forever.

Jamaica: For the fourth year consecutively, we celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in the north coast resort town of Montego Bay, the island's main tourist destination. Brethren from Barbados, Canada, Trinidad, Tobago and the United States joined the Jamaican brethren to celebrate the Feast at the Holiday Inn Sun Spree Resort. The pervading atmosphere was akin to a family reunion. The messages were awesome and inspiring, outlining the opportunity we have been given, what we will be doing when Christ returns, understanding the application of the commandments, statutes and judgments, and painting a picture of the Way to the Kingdom.

The Feast was truly a time to rejoice, and this was evident in how enthusiastically the brethren sang. The fellowship was



great and a sense of camaraderie prevailed throughout. We had encouraging attendance at our premier activity on day four, the family

cookout and Fun Day where the brethren enjoyed mouth-watering local foods, some played games and a few went rafting at the grounds of the picturesque Martha Brae Rafting Facility. Our worship service started earlier to allow for maximum fun and fellowship. Other activities at the Feast included the Pre-teens, Teens and Singles Mingle, an evening of games, an off-site get-together with our visiting brethren and the Jamaican brethren not staying at the Feast site, a Spokesman Club meeting, a family Bible Study and a seniors' luncheon.

Day three was designated a tour day and like the Fun Day, worship service started earlier to allow the brethren more time to visit local attractions.

On the weekly Sabbath, Evangelist and Director of Church Administration Dr. Doug Winnail gave the main message. Brethren commented on the theme that ran through the



messages, the fellowship, the warmth and friendliness of the Jamaican brethren and the excitement of life in Tomorrow's World. Some commented that this was their best Feast ever.

Malaysia: Services were held at the Avillion Legacy Hotel in the historical city of Malacca. Seventy-eight locals and nine visitors from abroad assembled together to observe God's festivals. This year, we were privileged to meet six members from Australia, a couple from New Zealand, and one member from Singapore who chose to celebrate the occasion with us in Malaysia.

During the Opening Night service, Site Coordinator and Pastor, Mr. Rajan Moses warmly welcomed the attendees, noting the smiles on their faces. Throughout the whole Feast we had sunny weather and great activities.

Many commented on the spiritual meat provided to the brethren via the various sermons and sermonettes presented during the Feast. The attendance at each service spoke volumes of the excitement prevalent among the brethren. A special treat this year was the marriage seminar, where many openly spoke about their married life. We watched a DVD titled "Make Time" by Dr. Scott Winnail, touching on the many aspects of marriage.

This year Mr. Michael Tyler conducted special music. This was a wholesome treat in addition to the power-packed performances of the choir. A children's choir was also assembled at the Feast site to perform a piece on the day specially assigned to them.

Three combined luncheons were organized, providing a wonderful opportunity for everyone to fellowship. At other times, members were seen at numerous eating outlets around the hotel and town, rejoicing.



Two baptisms were conducted at the hotel swimming pool. After the ceremony the ministry laid hands on Cynthia and Shamariyah and warmly welcomed the sisters into the family of God. Church membership here is surely growing.

Numerous activities were held for the various age groups in the congregation. The outing at Wonderland and Zoo and the traditional Fun Show, which saw the children and youth showcasing their talents, were highlights.

The hallmark of the Feast was clearly the intense and heartfelt fellowship. There was not a day when groups of brethren were not seen together engrossed in a casual or in-depth discussion of some sort. Many seemed to sense the seriousness of the times we live in and all are looking forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth. May our Father in heaven hasten that day.

New Zealand: Paihia, a small seaside town in the Bay of Islands, hosted 120 Feast-goers from several countries. This is a renowned scenic area named after the 144 beautiful islands which dot its sparkling waters. The Bay has a rich history as it was the first large centre of European colonial settlement.

The venue for services was the Scenic Hotel, whose staff exhibited a wonderful attitude of service which enhanced our stay in their beautiful facilities. Many attendees stayed on-site.

Delightful aspects of feasting in a small town were the many opportunities to fellowship and dine together as members "bumped into" each other downtown. The village atmosphere was greatly appreciated.

God blessed us with special weather. Day after day we noted bad forecasts for other parts of New Zealand while we enjoyed activities unimpeded by adverse weather.

A good range of leisure activities are available in the Bay of Islands area. Many Feast-goers availed themselves of the Bay's water and land attractions. Many completed an Adventure Ropes Course and tested their nerves as they climbed, swung and zip-lined through the trees. For many this was a "must-repeat" experience.

Early in the Feast, brethren in their teens and twenties enjoyed an ice cream social where they were able to make new friends and renew old friendships. Seniors visited the historic village of Russell with a bus and ferry tour. Also in Russell, many participants toured the village seeking answers to questions designed to stimulate interest in its lively history. They visited a





Victorian era church building that had been riddled by musket fire during an early Maori uprising, and they saw the rammed-earth building which housed the printing press of the early Catholic mission in New Zealand.

One great highlight was a barbeque/sports afternoon organised by our Pacific Island brethren, who comprise a sizable minority of New Zealand's membership. Carlo and Colleen Rhode organised a games evening and a family talent show. Visitor Lyn Hayhurst prepared activities for children before services each day.

During the Feast we were delighted by the news that two ladies, Shannon Payne and Juanita Gibson, had been baptised by local pastor Kinnear Penman and visiting elder Mr. Bill Whitaker. These two men provided live sermons to supplement DVD messages from Headquarters.

Our first Feast in northern New Zealand was an experience that we look forward to repeating next year.

Philippines: In Baguio City, known as the City of Pines, the air was cool and clean and 253 brethren came together to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Feast-goers stepped out each misty morning looking forward to uplifting sermons and engaging activities, and retired with the echoes of shared celebrations each night. The Philippine brethren were joined by returning and first-time visitors from the United States, China, Japan and Australia, in an atmosphere of welcoming friendship.

The sermons provided a "rocket-fuel boost" to everyone with a loving reminder of the wonderful changes that will be brought about by the coming Kingdom of God and the part God's people will have in creating the true utopia the world is yearning for. We were also reminded of God's requirements to overcome and be part of His team. These and other instructive reminders were given by DVD sermons from Headquarters, with live sermons from Messrs. Basilio Osillos and Jes Puzon, and Regional Pastor Mr. Dayrell Tanner.

The Baguio Feast site had many activities for the brethren to get to know each other, have fun and share God's gifts and blessings. There was great fellowship and feasting among and between generations, a sharing of talents and teamwork, and of course, invites from brethren as they shared their blessings with one another.



Every day we experienced more of what it is like to live in a community that follows God's Way of life.

The familiar feeling of sadness and longing prevailed as the sun set on the Last Great Day, and brethren prepared to go home. Everyone took not only a part of Baguio home with them, but also lessons, inspiration and joy to keep them charged until the next step in God's master plan.

In Mindanao, 372 brethren coming from Western, Central and South Eastern Mindanao, as well as some brethren from Luzon and the Visayas, kept the Feast of Tabernacles together in Kaamulan, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon. It was the first time in the history of the Living Church of God that the three Mindanao Pastorate areas dwelled together in unity at one Feast site.

The Kaamulan Arts Theatre was the venue for services and other activities. It can hold over 1,000 people, so there was a feeling of spaciousness. We had exclusive use of the Theatre and surrounds for the entire Feast, and the setting was private and millennial.

The spiritual meat from the ministers was the greatest highlight of the Feast. The brethren also rejoiced during activities such as our youth, leaders, seniors and family evenings, Bible quizzes, and the Farewell Party.

It was a wonderful and priceless treat for all the brethren from all over Mindanao to be together for the first time for many years. It was with some sadness that we all returned to our homes, but in God's Kingdom we will dwell together permanently, serving people as teachers and priests. What an awesome plan God has prepared for us.



Glentana, South Africa: This year God again placed His name in the small seaside village of Glentana on the southern coast of Africa. Approximately 104 brethren from all over Southern Africa, including Lesotho and Botswana, as well as from the United States and the United Kingdom, gathered here. This Feast site was close to the Indian

Ocean with its dolphins and whales, and the hall, surrounded by lush natural vegetation and songs of indigenous birds, contributed to the extraordinary millennial setting.

The various messages delivered by Messrs. Irvin Woelfle, Pieter van der Byl, Christo Botha and Louis Bouwer provided food for lively discussions during fellowship and points to ponder during personal reflection. Messages included topics such as God's power to deliver on His promises, how God desires to bless an obedient people, our migration to the Kingdom of God and encouragement to learn more about the saints of the early Church so that we can know them when we meet them in God's Kingdom.

The Seniors' Luncheon was enjoyed at the hall, and the singles and youth went chocolate tasting and tenpin bowling on the second day. Mild, sunny weather made Family Day very memorable, with the customary barbeque, lots of fellowship under the trees and games for the children. The day was finished with a sing-along in the hall, led by two guitarists from the Cape Town congregation. Everyone, including the 32 first-time attendees, agreed that the Feast provided the necessary vision to press towards the Kingdom of God.

Port Shepstone, South Africa: This year South Africa had a Feast site on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal in the Banana Beach Holiday Resort. The resort housed almost all the 119 brethren who attended the Feast in chalets and rondavels (round huts) nestled in lush tropical greenery with a sea view and daily sightings of humpback whales and dolphins. Brethren from Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom joined those from South Africa in a friendly environment with mostly sunny warm weather.



God blessed us with a family atmosphere and He kept our overall focus on the positive news of His soon-coming Kingdom, our journey and future roles in His family. The messages included topics on God's purpose for woman, anchoring our hope on the Kingdom, preparing to be servant leaders, and God's solutions to the world's problems.

On the second day of the Feast the senior citizens enjoyed their luncheon in the resort while the youth, singles and children had other activities. A group of 20 singles had a fun-filled day at Lake Eland Game Reserve where they enjoyed lunch with spectacular views of the Oribi Gorge and abundant wildlife. Afterwards they went for a thrilling walk across an 80-meter suspension bridge. The youth enjoyed an adventure-filled afternoon in the Uvongo Lagoon.

As most brethren were accommodated in the resort, we made good use of the family atmosphere and enjoyed Saturday evening fellowship with another barbeque at the swimming pool.



After the last service on the Last Great Day we welcomed a young man from Swaziland into the body of Christ when he was baptised by Mr. Lawdi Ferreira.

How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! We thank Christ as the Host of a memorable Feast in Port Shepstone.

Thailand: This year the Thai brethren celebrated the Feast at the same location as last year, at a small resort in Tha Song Yang district, on the western border. We enjoyed a wonderful foretaste of the Kingdom of God in a beautiful environment. We are only a small group, with a high attendance of 21, but we were blessed with a spirit of unity and very good weather.

Participants enjoyed sharing delicious meals during the Feast. We also "fed" on daily spiritual food. Messages in the members' native language were supplemented by DVD sermons in English on the Sabbath and Holy Days.

One highlight during the Feast was the Family Day. On that day, the older boys led songs and gave the prayers and the girls presented special music. In the afternoon everyone enjoyed a variety of novelty games and a treat of ice cream!

We all look forward to next year, and even more to the fulfillment of these days in the Kingdom of God!

Barbados: The Barbados Feast site was on the Maxwell coast, Christ Church, at the all-inclusive, peaceful Barbados Beach Club, which allowed an unrestricted scenic view of the ocean.

One-hundred and thirteen brethren gathered to learn God's Way and hear sermons from the visiting elders. Mr. Bob League delivered "A Special Day for Special People," Mr. Joseph Brown gave "Tasting the World Tomorrow Today," and Mr. Stephen



Climer delivered “Set Your Minds on Things Above.” Mr. Clyde Skeete delivered “God’s Family Will Rejoice in Safety.”

The seniors’ luncheon was a very memorable tribute to our elders. Thirty-four attended the presentation in the refurbished Reefview Restaurant. They enjoyed a buffet lunch in a beautiful ocean setting after being presented with gifts, and serenaded with melodic songs from the young children and a poem composed for the occasion by Mrs. Kay Layne. After the presentations the young ones sat at the feet of their elders and also enjoyed lunch. Mr. Bob League concluded with some very encouraging words.

Our special arrangement with the Beach Club allowed many visiting brethren to interact and fellowship in a way that is not possible at other all-inclusive sites, since this site made special provisions that local brethren were able to fellowship with the brethren staying there. At Family Day all the local brethren brought lunches to King George V Memorial Park and shared a meal with our visiting brethren. Ice cream and plenty of drinks were available.

Memorably, during our scheduled catamaran cruise, a large and beautiful turtle came out and swam among the brethren and put on the most magnificent display of harmony with nature one can witness. He enjoyed his meal of flying fish and showed that he knew the difference between human limbs and his food. The crew of the ship was jovial and the buffet excellent. The brethren were extremely bubbly.

Costa Rica: In the heart of a tropical rain forest with colorful flowering plants all around and Scarlet Macaws screaming overhead, 270 of God’s people celebrated the Feast in a true



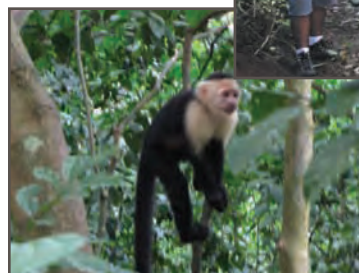
tropical paradise. With high attendance of 245, services were held in an air-conditioned hall that was greatly appreciated for relief from the humidity and rain. Because of the rainy season it often rained in the afternoon, so services were held

at 3:00 PM each day, allowing for activities to be held in the morning when it was not raining and less humid. Many of those attending took advantage of the housing that included a meal plan with a complete buffet-style breakfast and dinner with Costa Rican cuisine. There was plenty of fellowship, and wild animals such as monkeys visiting every day. Most of the brethren were housed within walking distance, while those who were not were provided a shuttle service.

Feast-goers toured national parks and a dairy farm/cheese and yogurt processor, and enjoyed a white water rafting trip. One highlight was the exceptional service that the resort provided for us. All resort staff personnel went out of their way to please and take care of us. Activities available at the resort included three swimming pools, two ocean beaches, two restaurants, athletic

courts, ocean kayaking, horseback riding, deep sea fishing, crocodile tour, butterfly house, bird watching tour and a night hike in the rain forest. It is a great place to stay active or just take life easy.

Surveys indicated that the highlight of the Feast was the messages given by our many sermonette men and the sermons given by Site Coordinator Mr. Gene Hilgenberg along with Messrs. David Chornomaz and Shannon Christal. The combined dinner for deacons, elders and seniors was a hit as well, as were the Family Dinner Dance, Talent Show and Children’s Party. It was a memorable



Feast highlighted by acts of service, generous offerings, attentive audiences and loving fellowship.

France: There were 178 enthusiastic brethren from more than 30 countries or ethnic backgrounds registered at the Belambra Club at Le Pradet, Toulon, France. They enjoyed the balmy autumn temperatures, brilliant sunshine, savory southern French cuisine on the ‘Cote d’Azur’ and spiritual delicacies served by the local French ministry and visiting ministers. We appreciated messages on rejoicing and on the value of music. Other messages emphasized close family ties highlighted by the marriage relationship, the restored family in the Kingdom, the importance of God’s glory, laws, statutes and judgments and being precious stones in the Temple today and in Tomorrow’s World. Being able to walk to services after eating breakfast together added to the atmosphere for close family fellowship in this relaxed resort.

Activities included a brain-teaser family activity around the Feast site, a bus trip to discover the quaint seaside town of Cassis and panoramic views of the Toulon Bay. Some of the brethren were able to marvel at the submarine beauty in a glass-bottomed boat in the renowned creeks that typify this area of the coast. There was a discovery of a local vineyard where we were initiated in oenology methods so famous in the French wine-growing areas; and, we also visited an olive oil press set in an ancient olive tree grove where the oldest trees are up to 700 years old. We were reminded daily of the awesome meaning of God’s soon-coming Kingdom, our amazing role and the honor that we all have to participate in our eternal destiny.

Argentina: Springtime in Argentina! That is when the whole country begins to show the fresh green colors of spring foliage—just in time for the *Fiesta de los Tabernaculos*. This

beautiful country hosted 37 enthusiastic brethren coming from as far south as Tierra de la Fuego on the southern tip of South America's Patagonian Peninsula, and from Charlotte, North Carolina to the north.

The Feast site was in Sierra de la Ventana, a small resort town about 90 minutes north of Bahia Blanca in rocky mountains near the Argentine *pampas*, or plains. The Argentines are very affectionate, and the brethren are all greeted with a hug and a kiss each day. Services were held at 10:30 AM and 4:00 PM

to allow time for the traditional *siesta* in the afternoon. In addition to the spiritual food of meaty s e r m o n s , sermonettes and Bible S t u d i e s



provided by visiting Pastor Dexter Wakefield and local elder Aaron Bravo, the *Fiesta* featured a special type of Argentine barbecue called an *asadero*, an important part of the Argentine culture, and the *Fiesta* usually features one or two. The usual *asadero* features beef or lamb cooked over coals similar to an American barbecue. In the *asadero* prepared by Mr. Bravo, a lamb and a kid goat were flayed out on vertical grills and slow-cooked by the radiant heat of an open fire. The result was most delicious! If you go to the Feast in Argentina, be prepared to eat a lot of *carne* (meat) and to enjoy Argentina's good Mendoza wines if you so desire. When bought domestically, the better Argentine wines are a bargain compared to their U.S. prices.

Argentines are also very fond of horses, so naturally there was an afternoon ride led out into the countryside by a *gaucho*. There were gentle gallops on the unpaved roads and climbs up the rocky hills to take in the beautiful springtime views of the area. The happy riders were watched by quiet cattle and an occasional small herd of horses. Truly a millennial setting... a *Felice Fiesta* indeed!

Brazil: Forty-two brethren came from Guyana and Bomfim, while four brethren came from Manaus, Amazon to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in Moscau, Brazil. Through the faithful contributions of God's people around the world, many here were able to make it to the Feast site to keep God's Holy Days.

The opening ceremony was highlighted with prayers led by Mr. Laurus Alfred, followed by a welcome address



by Mr. Elmo Benedito da Silva Souza. Afterwards, there was introduction of all brethren and participants present at intervals, and special music sang either in Portuguese, English or Wapishana languages. These languages were used throughout the Feast.

Meals were prepared by the women of the congregation most days, although the men stepped in on one occasion and gave them a break.

Mr. Alfred performed a wedding ceremony on the second day of the Feast. He also dedicated eight children and anointed six ailing brethren. Activities included a Bible Study, DVD shows, football matches, men and women's talent show where 25 items were programmed. The Talent Show featured music, drama and storytelling. There was also a short meeting where the major issue discussed was transportation.

Finally, towards the end of the Feast, photographs were taken of the brethren. There were also farewell speeches and an ending ceremony where we shared sweets, cakes and soft drinks. The next day, the visiting brethren were sent off with cheers and applause, and the chanting of *tchau*, goodbye, and *atu Ba'uran dun!* From the departing brethren came the words "We will come back again!"

Haiti: This year's Feast of Tabernacles was one of the most exciting experiences for the brethren in Haiti since the beginning of the Living Church of God.

In the northern and southern parts of the country a total of 335 people came to keep the Feast. The brethren from the congregation in Petion-Ville kept the Feast in the city of Enery, while 300 people kept the Feast in the city of Boidine. This large group was a mixed combination of people who attended the *Tomorrow's World* Special Presentation last year along with a group who recently attended the *Tomorrow's World* Special Presentation this year. They were already keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days by themselves after hearing the broadcast in French years ago.

The weather was pleasant with very little rain. Activities during the Feast included a family picnic, a musical recital, a dance and various excursions to the beach and other tourist attractions. The brethren also enjoyed visiting several art and history museums.

Twenty-four brethren from this group were baptized right before the Feast of Tabernacles. Nineteen are still studying and preparing for Dr. Pierre's next visit to Haiti.

Martinique: At the beautiful coastal community of St. Luce, 47 brethren from Martinique and Guadeloupe gathered to rejoice and observe the 2012 Feast of Tabernacles. Martinique is known as the "Island of Flowers" because of the large variety of tropical flowers that continue to bloom



throughout the year. St. Luce is surrounded by historical landmarks, fresh fish restaurants and quaint shops. Beautiful rainbows could be seen right over the ocean several times throughout the Feast.

Services were held at the Amyris Hotel Resort. The brethren enjoyed a light buffet style meal with refreshments following the opening night service. There was an afternoon catered meal on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and also on the Last Great Day.

Tropical heat during the day with cool ocean trade winds made all of the outside family activities enjoyable. The warm, crystal clear water provided family fun on the beach during the Feast. The brethren experienced a foretaste of God's Kingdom in a millennial setting.

The main focus for this year's Feast in Martinique was placed on leadership training and building a strong Church family. The Feast began with a variety of Spokesman Club members giving their first sermonettes and leading songs. Also, the congregation was deeply moved by the ordination of Mr. Etienne Duval, who is a long-time member and deacon serving in Martinique.

The brethren in Martinique left feeling greatly blessed with an abundance of physical and spiritual food. All the brethren are looking forward to an even better Feast next year.

Sri Lanka: The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated here by 30 brethren at the Insight Resort, located on the southern coast at Ahangama.

Members attended from four different countries, which included Canada, USA and Australia. It was a privilege to have Mr. Zig Svalbe as the elder at the site.

The beachside setting provided a wonderfully relaxed and refreshing open air setting. Most brethren commenced their day at 7:00 AM with a brisk walk along the crisp coral sands which were graced by warm tropical sea breezes and gentle rolling waves.

The messages were inspiring and relevant, with the constant reminder that the coming Kingdom of God is very real and necessary, and that knowledge of it is a true "pearl of great price." The physical food and tropical fruit was delicious and varied.

Throughout the Feast the brethren were treated to a variety of fun and interesting activities organized by our Colombo brethren. They were enthralled on Talent Night by the young ladies' choreographed costume dances under the illuminated palm trees. They were also entertained with speeches on the Spokesman Club Ladies Night, excited by a family cricket match along the seashore, and challenged by

the many balloon popping games during the outdoor Family Day. Bathing in the shallow waters along the sea shore and games of water polo in the outdoor swimming pool were a great hit for everyone.

On the Last Great Day the ladies brightened up the meeting hall by dressing up in colourful saris. Finally, tears were shed as the brethren said their farewells. Many, including the overseas guests, indicated they would love to return again to where God would place His name on this island in the sea.

Chile: Small in size but great in majestic beauty and tranquillity. That is how we can describe the Feast in Lycan Ray, Chile. Imagine yourself at a window, facing the sun brightly shining on a peaceful lake surrounded by green mountains and a volcano covered with perfect white snow. A thin mist begins to lift from the surface of the water as the sun rises and as it warms the day, it also seems like lifting and warming you as well. It was a truly an enjoyable and remarkable Feast for the 34 attendees who gathered in Chile to hear of God's promises and plans for humankind. The

low temperatures did not seem to bother anyone or to divert us from our God-given objective: to rejoice before Him for eight days. We really enjoyed the cheerfulness of the Chilean and Argentinean people, perfectly suited for celebration. May our Father and Son allow us all to see the Kingdom soon.

Colombia: The Feast was celebrated in the central Colombian region of coffee production, near the city of Armenia. We enjoyed springtime weather and seeing nature and wild animal life. The food was excellent; we tasted regional fruits and enjoyed coffee of great quality. God inspired for us to receive food in due season with sermons, sermonettes and Bible studies encouraging us with urgent spiritual nourishment. There was an ambience of friendliness, fellowship and unity in the faith, giving us a feeling as if the 86 attendees had forever known each other. We lived the meaning of the Feast, and we all returned home motivated to keep on going in the way of God. We look forward to the time when the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day will come to pass on the Earth and we will all be a Spiritual Family reigning under the leadership of Jesus Christ.

Mexico: In Tequisquiapan, Querétaro the Eternal placed His name to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. We had the company of visiting brethren from the U.S. (Phoenix, Arizona; Charlotte, North Carolina and Puerto Rico) and Colombia (Medellín).

Fellowship was strengthened by bonds of brotherly love and friendship in the tranquility of this fine city. We practiced the commandment to rejoice and celebrate the Feast with inspiring messages; therefore, we can say it was our best Feast ever.



The activities we enjoyed were a childrens' afternoon, youth afternoon, ladies' night, Spokesman Club and visits to the different nearby towns in Tequisquiapan. We were able to appreciate the cultural richness of the zone. We especially enjoyed a visit to the vineyards. It was a great opportunity to learn appreciation for the agricultural cycle.

Huachulo, Perú: Some 10,170 feet above sea level, under a blue sky in the Mantaro Valley and with sunny days and warm fellowship, 70 brethren gathered to celebrate the Feast in Concepción.

Since the beginning of the first day, the unity in the spirit to carry out an excellent Feast was reflected among all the brethren. The messages given by Messrs. Mario Hernández and Ismael Hernandez moved us to greater hope and faith. Each morning the children received educational material and enjoyed handicrafts classes led by Maria Nieves. Among the many excellent messages, the sermon "The Most Famous Carpenter" helped us to see a side of the Work the Savior of the world performed. Other sermons reflected solid maturity in the doctrines and teachings of the Church and God's ministers.

Thirteen children and young adults hiked Mt. Huaytapallana (17,060 feet above sea level). It was unforgettable to be able to contemplate the heavens and to see the majesty of the perpetually snowy landscape. There were three guides, but above all God helped them.

There was an excursion to the mysterious and enigmatic archeological site Huariwilc. Afterwards we had an excursion to Lake Ñahuinpuquio. Brethren took a boat ride and we appreciated the variety of birds there. On Sunday afternoon, we were able to appreciate the Weekly Fair. Some brethren bought handcrafted mementos from this region of the country.

For everybody it was a time for peace because we were away from the bustling of the traffic. Huaychulo and its peaceful countryside welcomed God's people and we lived in harmony with the brethren.

Guatemala: We give thanks to God because we were able to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in Antigua, Guatemala.

This year we had visitors from El Salvador, the U.S. and Mexico, giving us an attendance of 65 people.

God intervened, keeping the volcano stable and giving us pleasant weather which contributed to the activities and the fellowship in a much more effective manner. We participated in activities for all ages and we welcomed the Sabbath with a Church dinner. We were able to develop more brotherly bonds with one another as we were fed and exhorted by God's word.

Myanmar: The Feast here was a great success. The Opening Night message from Dr. Roderick C. Meredith was very encouraging. We had about 90 brethren attend here. As the Presiding Evangelist has taught all of us, we admonished our members not only to have a happy Feast but also to help others do the same.

As we had meals together for eight days, the harmony and cooperation were truly inspiring and lovely. We appreciated the sermons on DVD that we watched at night since we do not have electricity at daytime. The fellowship was full with love and joy. Although brethren here often lack physical things, they never lost their focus on spiritual things.

As most of us are relatives in flesh and blood there was a good spirit of friendship and fellowship that bound everyone together as a true family. The atmosphere throughout the Feast was warm and brotherly.

—Compiled by William Williams from reports by Jose Arendain, Rodger Bardo, Frank Best, Christo Botha, Connie Casing, Raul Colón, Job de la Cruz, Michael Elertson, Rees Ellis, J. Burnetta English, Pamela Ernest, Lawdi Ferreira, Ryan Foster, Lascelles Fraser, James and Kristine Ginn, Fitzroy Greeman, Gene Hilgenberg, Thomas Tial Hoe, John Hunter, Charles João Mateus, Kate McKenzie, Rod McNair, John Meakin, Jim Meredith, Rajan Moses, Arius Nusantara, Armando Orrego, Gabriel and Nohemí Ortega, Kinnear Penman, Wilner Pierre, Kuma de Silva, Clyde Skeete, Wallace Smith, James Sweat, Issachar Tenorio, Robert Tyler, Eden Hurtado Villa, Dexter Wakefield, Phil West and Ben Whitfield ■



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FESTIVAL OFFICE PLAN FOR FESTIVAL 2013!

THANK YOU!

Do Not Be a Laodicean!

Continued from page 4

careful. That is one reason why Philadelphian Christians should spend much of their time, energy and resources in the **crusade** to proclaim Christ's message to the entire world. Jesus said: "And this *gospel of the kingdom* will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). And to the Philadelphia era of the Church, Jesus proclaimed: "I know your works. See, I have set before you an **open door**, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name" (Revelation 3:8).

In 2 Corinthians 2:12, 1 Corinthians 16:9 and Colossians 4:3, the term "door" clearly indicates an opening or opportunity to preach the true Gospel. The Philadelphians *zealously desire* to have a very active part in proclaiming Christ's message. They personally work, pray and sacrifice so the magnificent message of Christ's soon-coming Kingdom may be powerfully proclaimed to *all the nations*.

Truly having our hearts in **doing** God's Work, zealously using the "tools" for Christian growth and scrupulously avoiding the pitfalls of *lukewarmness*, will help us avoid being Laodiceans—especially if we humbly and passionately "seek" God in *every* facet of our lives. ■

Trust in God and Live His Way!

Continued from page 2

thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:19–21).

If we truly have our "hearts" in God's Work, we will obviously want to give *generously*! This should not be a mystery to any of us. So we should each think about *how* we can best do this. A wonderful example as a "hero of the faith" was Raymond Jorgensen, the Iowa farmer who **willed** his entire farm with the buildings and equipment and *everything* to God's Work enabling us to move to our new Headquarters in North Carolina! Some of you remember his wonderful example. By giving that entire property—which was valued at nearly a million dollars—he certainly indicated to our Father in heaven *exactly where he stood*! His wonderful gift will **never**

be forgotten by me, nor by many of us who are profoundly thankful that God put this action into his mind and heart.

Obviously, those of us who can help the Work in this way will certainly be honoring God and a genuine **reward** will be given us from the God who gives all of us life and breath. He will *never forget* what you are trying to do in leaving **Him**—through His Work—much or all of what you have accumulated during this short human life time. You know your own personal family situation, and you know your own heart. So, you know what is appropriate in your circumstances. Please think about it and pray about it—and, if you wish to do this—*take action* before it is too late. Even now, I hear from time to time about brethren who left the Worldwide Church of God many years ago, but failed to update their wills, and when they died their families were shocked to see bequests go to an apostate group from which they had departed years ago. So, if necessary, be sure to update your

will. If you need help in this, or in other aspects of planning your bequest to the Church, I urge you to contact our Legal Affairs Department at Headquarters. For contact information, please note the box at the end of this article.

Again, *thank you* for all that you do and for all of your love and encouragement for my wife and me—and for others like us in older age and facing severe health trials—and for your service in God's Church. We really had a **wonderful** Feast of Tabernacles, and are looking forward to a spiritually uplifting year ahead. We need to *thank God* by the way we live, the way we speak and in every facet of our lives. For I am sure all of us truly want the "*living Christ*" to live His life within us so that we may hear these words in the resurrection, "**Well done**, good and faithful servant."

With Christian love,


Legacies and Other Gifts

From time to time, the Church receives requests for information about how to make a current gift to the Living Church of God, or a future gift by way of a will or trust or other charitable means. Those desiring to receive such information should send their request to the Legal Affairs office at Headquarters. Please write to:

Living Church of God
Attn: Legal Affairs
PO Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227-8010

You may also write via email to legal@lcg.org. As the laws of different countries vary, most of the information available through Legal Affairs will only apply to the United States. However, Legal Affairs will furnish as much information as possible. You may also wish to consult with your own financial and legal advisors.

LOCAL

CHURCH NEWS

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Scott (Brittany) Bashus, of the Omaha, Nebraska congregation, are delighted to announce the birth of their first child, **Ethan James Bashus**, born June 25, 2012. Ethan weighed six pounds, 12 ounces and was 19 ½ inches long. This is the first grandchild for happy grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. James (Judy) Vaux, of the Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, congregation, and Mr. and Mrs. Mark (Laura) Bashus of the Omaha, Nebraska congregation.

Mr. and Mrs. Justin (Angie) Wilsbach, of the Nashville, Tennessee congregation, are happy to announce the arrival of their third daughter, **Justina Kyle Wilsbach**, on July 11, 2012. Justina weighed six pounds, 12 ounces and was 19 ½ inches long. She is the fourth grandchild of Mr. and Mrs. Larry (Judy) Wilsbach, also of Nashville.

Anniversary

Raymond (Blackie) and Joan Waller of Dubuque, Iowa, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 22, 2012, with a dinner party. They were married on August 4, 1962 and both were baptized in May of 1970. Mr. and Mrs. Waller have four children, Wanda (Joe) Ross, Dale (Shelly) Waller, Sarah (Dale) Jecklin, and George, and twelve grandchildren. Both of their sons and one of their grandsons is deceased.

Wedding

Brian Poerschke and Tanya Jones, both of the Clarksville, Tennessee congregation, were united in marriage on Sunday, August 26, 2012. The ceremony was conducted by Area Pastor James Sweat, witnessed by family and friends, and followed by a reception. The happy couple will reside in Pembroke, Kentucky.

In Loving Memory

Mr. Lish Curtis Lambricht died July 16, 2012 at his home in Silsbee, Texas, at the age of 85. Mr. Lambricht was baptized in 1966 and was a loyal and faithful member of the Church of God. During his 46 years of attending Sabbath services and Holy Days, he enjoyed meeting and talking to everyone about God's great plan. He was preceded in death by his parents, seven siblings, one daughter, and one son. Mr. Lambricht is survived by his wife of 64 years, Dorothy Lambricht, also a long-time Church member; one son; two daughters; ten grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by family, friends,

and brethren. The funeral service was conducted by Mr. Phil Sena and Mr. Ron McGowen, and Mr. Dan Dever gave the eulogy.

Louis Wayne Pyle II died at age 65 on August 25, 2012, after a valiant two-year battle with cancer. He is survived by Suzanne Kloster Pyle, his beloved wife of 40 years, son Michael (Mayuko) Pyle, twin daughters Kathleen Pyle and Angela (Dwight) Mullis, and grandsons Aiden and Easton Mullis. A 1972 graduate of Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, he was employed by the Worldwide Church of God until 1995 in the

Transportation, Mail Processing and Media/Circulation Departments. In the Living Church of God, he served at Headquarters as Media Coordinator. A long-time deacon, his devotion to his duties was legendary. Despite the pain of advancing illness, he continued on the job until just days before his death. His life-long love of mountaineering brought him national recognition as an expert on the mountains of North America, but none of his interests were more important to him than his family and his Church brethren. A funeral and memorial service were conducted on August 29, 2012 by Mr. Davy Crockett.

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COMMENTARY

To Give or Not to Give?

While traveling in the Philippines, my wife and I made our way to the roadside after eating at a restaurant. Two young boys—no older than 9 or 10—saw that we needed a taxi. Seeing that we were “Westerners,” they proceeded to hail a taxi for us.

After a few minutes, they managed to get the attention of a taxi driver and then walked over to us in the hope that we would give them a tip. I looked inside my wallet and pulled out a \$20 bill and a \$10 bill, which I gave as a tip to the two boys.

Just as I was about to get into the taxi, several of their friends came over. They looked just as needy as the two other boys. I had to make a quick decision: should I give more or not? I initially resisted and quickly got into the taxi in order to avoid the uncomfortable situation. Yet, as I took my seat and looked straight ahead, I could not pretend that one of the boys was not knocking on the taxi window saying, “Please sir, can I have some money?” Still torn about what I should do, the desperate knocks on the taxi window were finally drowned out by the bustling traffic of Manila as we drove away.

Upon reflection, I have asked myself, “Should I have given money to that boy?” Giving him a couple of dollars would have been of no consequence to me, but would have made a difference to him, at least temporarily. I know that God encourages us to be generous (Isaiah 32:8; Proverbs 22:9) and, in hindsight, I think it is better to give “too much” rather than too little.

Nevertheless, another lingering thought emerges: if I did give to that boy, what about the several other boys with him? Would I not be obligated to give to them also? What about the millions of poor people in the Philippines—and indeed the whole world—who are living in poverty and have to resort to begging to survive? I may ask myself, “What can I do to help these people?”

Although giving money would temporarily help the poor, I know that money alone will not change this world. Lack of money is not the sole reason people are poor. A more weighty matter is that this world—as a whole—is disobeying God (Romans 3:23; 1 John 5:19).

The solution to worldwide poverty will only come when the world begins to obey God, which will occur after Jesus Christ returns to this earth and establishes His righteous ways and laws (Isaiah 2:2–4). So, the most effective way that I can help the poor—long term—is to be involved in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to this dying world. This Kingdom will be fair and equitable and will ensure that poverty becomes a faded memory (Isaiah 41:17–20).

Although we should always strive to be “givers,” we also—if God is calling us—ought to be a part of His Work and actively support the Church that God is using to preach His warning message.

—Paul Kearns