

THE

# LIVING

# CHURCH NEWS

www.lcg.org

March–April 2014

## Growing Together as a Christian Family

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Most of you who are reading this are aware that my beloved wife of 36 years, Sheryl Ann Meredith, died last November. The hurt and the emptiness in our home, and in my life, continues. I loved her dearly. But the loss certainly focuses my mind on the soon-coming resurrection from the dead. That is the hope of all Christians—as the Bible makes very clear.

God **never** promises to give us eternal life in this human flesh. And the vast majority of human beings nowadays—except for people who are killed in an accident or die at childbirth, etc.—die between age 65 and 85. So, it is not strange that some of our brethren may die just a few years before 70 years of age—as did my dear wife. Nevertheless, the deep love that we develop for a spouse or another family member results in a terrible *void* when they are taken from us. Yes, I am still hurting. But the wonderful help and encouragement that I am receiving from my family and the brethren around the world has certainly helped.

Brethren, the *outpouring* of love and encouragement from our *Church family* around the world has been of immense help and inspiration to me. I have received more than 200 emails and cards from all over the world—and they are still coming. I can feel the love and respect of the brethren—which I greatly appreciate. So many of the brethren have stated—as did this recent card from Auckland, New Zealand: “We believe your belief in the power and comfort of our Father will strengthen you.

Thank you for your labor of love for God, His Work and His people over the years.”

So many, *many* brethren have taken the occasion of my wife’s death to encourage me by thanking me for “reviving” the Work at a difficult time after the Worldwide Church of God abandoned the Truth. And, as I stated in my December 2013 co-worker letter, Sheryl was a *tremendous help* to me in reviving the Work, as she typed all my early articles and booklets, answered the phones, and helped bring along many hundreds of people as they were coming with us. I will *never* forget this, and will always appreciate the wonderful help that she was for 36 years.



So, dear brethren, thank you all *very much* for your cards and emails and for your prayers and encouragement. *Thank you* so much! I trust that you all realize that I simply *cannot answer* every one of the hundreds of messages or cards received during this difficult time. So many people sent cards, letters, flowers, books and various types of papers and “get well” information that it is simply impossible to answer every one. Please understand that during the days of trauma and sadness when Sheryl was dying, I simply did not—at age 83—keep up properly with all that was happening. So I did not keep exact records of such details as who sent which flowers or other things.

Even so, having our entire Church “family” respond so lovingly and thoughtfully was a wonderful encouragement. It helped me realize even more fully the depth of love and unity we have in the Living Church of God and it helped me focus

Volume 16, No. 2



### Inside This Issue...

**The Reason for Your Calling...page 3 • The Bread of Eternal Life...page 5 • Educating Godly Children Challenges and God-Given Responsibilities...page 8 • “Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me...” ...page 11 • Unleavened Bread Recipes...page 14 • Charlotte Family Weekend 2013...page 16 • Woman to Woman: Lady Aristocrats...page 18 • Local Church News...page 22 • Commentary...page 24**

on *how important* it is that we continue to build the “family spirit” in the Church. Even as I write this, we are sending relief to many of our dear brethren in the Philippines who recently experienced the wrath of Typhoon Haiyan, which struck a few weeks ago. Even now, we are finally getting fully organized a “disaster relief” team that can quickly respond to such tragedies around the world. Even now, we have just started an “Outreach” program in our Headquarters congregation as a first step toward more actively reaching out to the sick, the elderly and those in need in our communities—both people in God’s Church and *outside* of the Church. For we are instructed by our God: “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9–10).

Even though we cannot possibly feed and clothe and house every destitute person on earth, we can and should try to assist *our own* brethren all over the world—and also, *when possible*, others closer and known to us to show that we are true Christians who *do care* and who *do want* to “make a difference” as best we can with our limited resources. Yes, we know—and *know* that we know—that in Jesus Christ’s soon-coming Kingdom we will be able to **completely eradicate** the horrendous problems of poverty, starvation, sickness and lawlessness. But, meanwhile—as a “witness”—we should do our best to conform to the standard of a true “giver” as described by Christ: “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me’” (Matthew 25:34–36).

Dear brethren, let us all remember and *meditate on* the vivid example Jesus Christ gave of the “family” spirit He wants



©iStockphotos

us all to have toward one another. When He was teaching His disciples—who were *obviously interested* in learning—and one came telling Him that His mother and brothers were outside seeking to speak to Him, Jesus answered, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother’” (Matthew 12:48–50).

So, Jesus Christ *Himself* feels deeply that there must be a *genuine family spirit* that we all have toward one another in His true Church. He tells us that we are *His* mother and *His* “brothers.” *God Himself*—as He revealed Himself in the human flesh through Jesus—indicates that it is *this attitude* that we need to have toward one another in His true Church.

*So let us respond!* We all ought to do everything we can to welcome new people into the Church: invite them over for dinner if we can, or take them out, try to phone them, write them notes of encouragement, give them help in moving in and moving out of a different home, help them when they are sick, and do *everything we can* to help and encourage *all* the people in God’s Church as if they were our own family. For,

as Jesus indicated, they *are* our family through the Spirit of God dwelling within them and making us “one” in God!

The Apostle Paul was inspired to describe this feeling, “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Corinthians 12:26–27).

When the Apostle Paul was seeing the Ephesian elders for what he felt might be the *last time*, he told them, “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” And

**Continued on page 21**

**Editor in Chief:** Roderick C. Meredith

**Editorial Director:** Richard F. Ames

**Executive Editor:** William Bowmer

**Managing Editor:** John Robinson

**Regional Editors:** Rod King (Europe) • Bruce Tyler (Australasia)

• Gerald Weston (Canada)

**Layout Editor:** Donna Prejean

**Editorial Assistant:** William L. Williams

**Proofreaders:** Sandy Davis • Linda Ehman • Genie Ogwyn

**Business Manager:** Dexter B. Wakefield

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

©2014, Living Church of God™. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. Postage paid at Charlotte, NC.

**Postmaster: Send address changes to**

**The Living Church News • P.O. Box 3810 Charlotte, NC 28227**

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



## THE REASON FOR YOUR CALLING

Many of you who are reading this will remember that Mr. Herbert Armstrong stated a number of times that Almighty God did not personally “call” us in this present age just for our personal salvation. Rather, he stated, there are two primary reasons why God chooses to call us **now**—rather than allow us to come up later in the Great White Throne Judgment. The first is to do the Work. The second is to let us prepare ourselves to be kings and priests in Christ’s coming Kingdom. In this Editorial, I want to concentrate on the importance of each of us preparing to be kings and priests, governing in Christ’s soon-coming Kingdom.

I sincerely hope that all of you baptized members of God’s Church who are reading this believe in this goal. However, in our present materialistic, technological society, the goal may not seem as “real” to many of us as it should be. We are bombarded continually with images of this world and its God-rejecting

concepts—in advertising, on the Internet, on television, and in so many other ways. All of this does “take its toll” in weakening the reality of God and of His coming Kingdom.

Most of you know that the Bible clearly indicates that King David of ancient Israel will be resurrected and become the king over *all twelve tribes of Israel* in Christ’s Government (Hosea 3:5; Ezekiel 34:23–24; Ezekiel 37:24–25). In the months and years preceding his human kingship, David spent countless hours out under the stars, thinking and meditating on the greatness and reality of the Creator. He stated in Psalm 8:3–6, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”

Brethren, unless each one of us begins to “seek” God with all our hearts and minds it is difficult for us to quietly meditate and “consider” the works of our Creator, as David did over and over. Yet, we must *take time* and we must *make time* to do this and to “feed” on Christ through genuine *study* of the word of God (John 6:53). We must fervently pray, meditate and genuinely study God’s word so that increasingly the images going

through our minds are more concerned with the **reality** of God and His soon-coming government than this present evil world.

### THE NEED FOR GOD’S KINGDOM

Right now, we hear about and see television pictures of the death, destruction and absolute misery of multiple thousands of human beings in Syria, in Sudan, in the Republic of Congo and elsewhere. Also, we read of other countless thousands being imprisoned, tortured and living in anguish and terrible situations extant in China, Russia, North Korea and other oppressive societies. This should help us see the *absolute need* for a *genuine World Government* as described in Psalm 72:1–8: “Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king’s Son. He will judge Your people with



righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”

Yet, as most of you know, Christ **alone** is not going to run this entire enterprise. For He, under the Father’s direction, is *right now* preparing many of us to assist Him in bringing about this kind of loving peaceful government to take over this confused world. Most of us realize that we are **not**—as a whole—the wise or noble of this world. For God inspired Paul to tell us: “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Corinthians 1:26). The Word of God makes it clear that He will always give us the help we need through His Holy Spirit: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a *sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7). Also, God’s Word tells us: “For the LORD gives wisdom;

from His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6).

Since God is fashioning and molding us and *training* us to be kings and priests, it is obvious that He will give us the wisdom and guidance that we need in order to do the job He wants us to do in Tomorrow’s World. For He is more willing to give us of His Holy Spirit than we are to give our hungry children bread (Luke 11:13). Each of us needs to *think specifically* about how we should function as a righteous king or priest in Tomorrow’s World. God told the leaders in ancient Israel: “Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and *judge righteously* between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. You *shall not show partiality in judgment*; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it’” (Deuteronomy 1:16–17).

So, as we function in God’s Church today, each of us should try to be *absolutely fair*. Ask God continually for wisdom and judgment in making right decisions in any aspect of God’s Church or Work in which we are involved. We should try to see the “Big Picture” in every situation and *not* allow ourselves to get distracted by “fringe” situations and problems that would take away our ability to judge righteously the key things in which we are involved.

Also, throughout the entire book of Proverbs, God tells us over and over to seek *wise counsel* in any major situation: “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). The same basic instruction to **seek counsel** is found in Proverbs 12:15, Proverbs 15:22, Proverbs 19:20, Proverbs 20:18, Proverbs 24:6 and elsewhere. It should be obvious that the *book of Proverbs*, itself, is a tremendous source of **wisdom**. Every one of us should absolutely **study** this book on a regular basis—specifically thinking about its instruction in relationship to our future responsibilities as kings and priests in Christ’s Kingdom!

We should also read the *examples* of how King David, King Solomon and other great leaders in the Bible handled various situations—*especially* how Jesus Christ functioned as a leader and solved various situations. Note how Jesus handled the Pharisees when they plotted to “entangle” Him in His talk (Matthew 22:15). He showed them a coin with Caesar’s image stamped on it, showed that this was Caesar’s work and then put the onus back on them to realize that Caesar *did* have a part in the money that they used as a medium of exchange. But He **never** directly answered their question about taxation!

When asked about the man being forced to marry his dead brother’s wife, He did not get into the details of that. Rather He showed that “in the resurrection” there was to be **no marriage** in the first place. Again and again, Christ was able to *turn things around* when men tried to accuse Him, entangle Him in His talk or “trap Him” in any way like this. For Jesus had *supreme wisdom*—which we should all strive to emulate. Since God promises to give us glorified spirit bodies (Philippians 3:21), it should be obvious that He will also greatly enlarge our mental capacities to function in the role to which He has assigned us. However, the Bible clearly indicates that *even in this life* we should **grow** in “grace and **knowledge**” (2 Peter 3:18). So we are to try to exercise the “mind of God”

more and more in everything we think, say and do—all in preparation for the tremendous responsibilities and opportunities we will soon have to be an *absolute blessing* to thousands or perhaps even millions of people in a coming government based on love, joy and peace.

### THE NEED FOR HUMILITY

Over and over, God’s word tells us to *humble* ourselves and try in every way we can to honestly *serve*

our fellow man and our Creator. Jesus said, “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:11–12).

After describing the Gentile rulers’ tendency to exalt themselves and “exercise authority” over others, Jesus said, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28). Dear brethren, if we function like this in virtually every activity in the church in which we are involved, if we genuinely strive to use wisdom, to use kindness and mercy and humility in whatever function we have, we will be truly preparing to be those kings and priests in the coming Government of God. We will be able to assist Christ in bringing the genuine peace and joy upon all human beings for which they have longed for so many centuries. We will truly be “growing” in our capacity to assist Christ in the wonderful Government that we saw pictured in Psalm 72:7, “In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more.”

So let us set ourselves to *seek wisdom* and to cry out to God for the humility, the leadership and the spirit of service that we will surely need to assist Christ in bringing *that* kind of government to the entire world soon. *May God speed that day!* ■



©iStockphotos

# THE BREAD OF ETERNAL LIFE

By Dexter B. Wakefield

Each year, as we approach Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, we engage in a very important activity. Leaven pictures sin for us (1 Corinthians 5:6–8), so we put leaven out of our homes. As we do so, we examine our lives for spiritual leaven that needs to be repented of and removed. After Passover and during the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, we avoid eating leavened bread and keep our homes free of it. We make a point to eat *unleavened* bread each day, and in doing so, we remind ourselves of coming out of sin, staying out of sin and feeding on that perfect unleavened bread which is Christ Himself. He is *The Bread of Eternal Life!*

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always’” (John 6:32–34).

After sunset on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, we will begin eating leavened products again—perhaps a sandwich, donuts, biscuits or pizza. We probably missed those leavened products and, to a certain extent, will enjoy going back to our regular diets. *But the unleavened bread of eternal life is something we should eat every day of our lives.* It is “meat in due season” to learn about the nature of that Bread, so we will never fail to eat of it during the coming year.

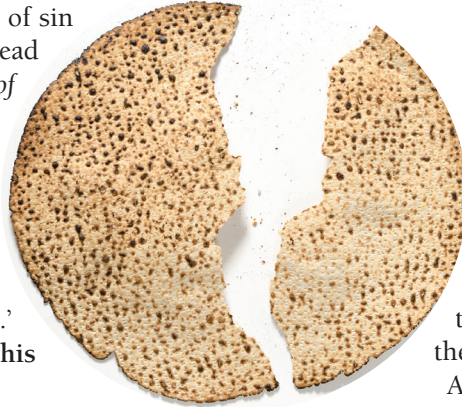
This Bread is so important that God prefigured it in ancient Israel. “Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness... Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily’” (Exodus 16:2–5).

In this manner, God reestablished the Day of Preparation and the weekly Sabbath for Israel—both of which they had lost in Egypt—just as most of us had done in our own spiritual Egypt. Notice that God said, “...*whether they will walk in My law or not.*” The Days of Unleavened Bread picture putting out sin—the transgression of God’s law—from our lives—which means to “*walk in My Law.*” The Eternal used the bread from heaven to *test* Israel—particularly in what they were to gather in preparation for the Sabbath.

Notice that Israel was to gather manna six days, but to eat it seven days. The Sabbath pictures the millennial rule of Christ, and we are in a season of preparation for the great millennial Sabbath to come. We are at the end of the sixth

millennial day—a millennial Friday, so to speak—and the sun is low on the horizon and ready to set. The millennial Sabbath is about to begin!

God could have said simply, “*Day after tomorrow is Sabbath*” but He gave Israel six days to gather and one to eat the double portion gathered on Preparation Day. Why? It is because we have a lesson to learn from the way that God instructed Israel. *Manna prefigured the Bread of Eternal Life that was to come.*



## VERY IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

In John 6, Christ described the importance of the “spiritual food” which was symbolized during the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread: “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him” (v. 27).

Although there were those who did not at first understand, Christ stressed this important concept: Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. *For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘**I am the bread of life.** He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst...’ (vv. 30–35).

These words were too much for some to accept: “The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven.’ And they said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (vv. 41–42).

Though it offended many, Christ instructed His disciples in regard to this concept, which was of the most vital importance to receiving eternal life: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. **I am the bread of life.** Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. **I am the living bread** which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.’ The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?’ Then

Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.’ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum” (vv. 47–59).

We are to feed on this bread that comes to us from the Father. Bread came down from heaven to feed ancient Israel, but having eaten it, they still died as all flesh does. But the Bread that comes down from heaven for spiritual Israel, the Church of God, gives eternal life. How much more important it is for us to feed on that True Bread!

Why do we eat unleavened bread for seven days? After gathering for six days—with twice as much on the sixth—Israel had sufficient manna for seven days. God commanded them to do this to test them and to establish them in Preparation Day and the Sabbath. During the Days of Unleavened Bread, we eat the *symbol* of the True Bread for seven days—picturing a complete millennial week. Keep in mind the biblical principle “...that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8). We are to eat the True Bread our whole lives. The Last Day of Unleavened Bread pictures in this sense, the millennial rule of Christ. Israel—a physical nation—ate the physical manna (which came from heaven) and they all died in the wilderness (except for faithful Joshua and Caleb). We eat the True Bread that came down from heaven, and even though we die in this age, *we will live forever!*

So, as we approach Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, it is important that we should learn about that Bread and the eternal life it brings.

### THE FATHER GIVES IT

In John 6:32–33 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but **My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.** For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Then in verse 45, “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ [fed the Bread

of Life] Therefore, everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me” (see also v. 65).

### THE FATHER WANTS TO GIVE IT

Jesus illustrated this for us, “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:26). Speaking of the Church, Jesus said: “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:8–11). This spiritual food is something that the Father very much wants us to feed on.

The idea that someone would offer a hungry person a stone to eat may seem unlikely, but it actually happened to Christ when Satan tempted him. “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread’” (Matthew 4:1–3).

Jesus knew that it is His Father who provides. “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”” (v. 4).

God’s word nourishes, but Satan’s word—often expressed in the popular culture of this world—is about as nourishing as a stone.

The scripture in Deuteronomy that Jesus quoted to Satan becomes even more interesting because God presented it in the context of the Days of Unleavened Bread. “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD SWORE to your fathers. And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, **to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.** So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, **that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD [who is the Bread of Life]”** (Deuteronomy 8:1–4).

We are to feed on this bread that comes to us from the Father. Bread came down from heaven to feed ancient Israel, but having eaten it, they still died as all flesh does. But the Bread that comes down from heaven for spiritual Israel, the Church of God, gives eternal life. How much more important it is for us to feed on that True Bread!

That word is the Bread of Life. This is one reason why Mr. Meredith so often exhorts us, “*Feed on Christ!*” This powerful theme is repeated over and over throughout the Bible.

### HOW DOES THE FATHER GIVE IT?

The Father gives it to us through Christ, the apostles and the ministry.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes **I will give some of the hidden manna to eat**” (Revelation 2:17). The “hidden manna” is doubtless a reference to the Bread of Life that we eat, but which the world does not see.

Jesus gave Peter an instruction which he relayed to the ministry of the Church: “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘**Feed My lambs.**’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘**Tend My sheep.**’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘**Feed My sheep**’” (John 21:15–17).

With what was he to feed them? The Bread of Life!

Peter later passed these instructions on to the ministry: “**Feed the flock** of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:2–4, KJV).

As our Passover, He is also the Bread of Life that we remember especially in this season—but that we **need** to remember *throughout the year*. We need to **feed** on that perfect Bread daily. The Father will feed us daily on the Bread of Life *if we will only eat*. In the Psalms we read, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; *open your mouth wide, and I will fill it*. But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me” (Psalm 81:10–11). Do we fail to allow God to feed us?

What happens when we fast for a day or two? We become physically weaker from lack of food and water. Think of prayer as spiritual water and Bible study as spiritual food. What happens if we fail to pray and study God’s word for a few days? We become *spiritually* weaker. Do not become a *spiritual anorexic!*

### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THIS ETERNAL LIFE THAT THE BREAD OF LIFE GIVES?

This spiritual Bread gives life like no other food can give. God said that “He has granted the Son to **have life in Himself**” (John 5:26) and we are to have bodies like His, *having inherent life*. What does that mean? It is hard to comprehend, but God’s word gives us an indication: we are to be transformed to be like Christ Himself!

The Apostle John explained, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.... Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He [Christ, our Passover] was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin [He is the Unleavened Bread of Life]. Whoever abides in Him does not sin [remains unleavened]” (1 John 3:1–6).

The Apostle Paul adds, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be **conformed to His**

**glorious body**, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:20–21).

The scriptures show that the bread of life that we eat today makes it possible for us to have eternal life—**inherent life**—at Jesus’ coming. He tells us that “we shall be like Him” in His glory. Jesus said in John 17:22 “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.” This great gift comes at the beginning of the millennium that the Last Day of Unleavened Bread promises in type.

So we can see why God is so concerned with us staying spiritually unleavened and constantly feeding on the Bread of life that He gives us in Jesus Christ.

Are we studying, meditating, praying and fasting? Do we lead repentant lives and continue to put spiritual leaven out of our lives throughout the year? Do we “feed on Christ” daily as Dr. Roderick C. Meredith consistently reminds us to do? What is *your daily bread*? Is it the world’s popular culture—spiritual rocks? Or do we eat the Bread of Life daily throughout the year?

Christ asks us today the same question that He asked Peter: “Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘**Do you also want to go away?**’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life**’” (John 6:67–68).

Let us always answer as the disciples did... “Then they said to Him, ‘**Lord, give us this bread always**’” (v. 34). ■



©iStockphoto

# Educating **Godly** Children: Challenges and God-Given Responsibilities

By Scott Winnail

Children are a blessing and reward from God (Psalm 127:3)! They are a joy, a challenge, and ultimately they are future God-beings—whom God Himself has blessed parents with the privilege of creating, raising and educating for a short period of time (Malachi 2:15). As Andreas Köstenberger notes in his excellent text *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, “Parents ought to consider themselves entrusted with the (temporary) responsibility and stewardship of nurturing and cultivating a child’s heart and mind in light of the Scriptures and on behalf of God” (2010, p. 114).

During pregnancy, a woman is very cautious with her body—the food she eats, what she exposes her body to, and how much rest she gets. Frequently she searches for the best labor and delivery option, the healthiest diet, and the safest and healthiest environment for her baby. Loving, supportive and godly fathers also help and encourage their wives in this most important of human endeavors—preparing for the birth of their child.

This parental research and education process usually continues for the first several years of a child’s life, with parents working to maximize their child’s growth and development. As children approach the age of mandatory education in most nations, parents often search for the best schools and teachers, or explore the barriers to and benefits of home schooling—taking very seriously God’s instruction in the book of Proverbs: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (22:6). But, as children age, parents routinely become less engaged in their education and less aware of the world their children live in (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Snow et al., 1991). A mistake parents often make is assuming that the society their children live in is “not that much different” than the world they grew up in themselves, decades earlier. Most parents also tend to believe that it is “the other kids” who are engaging in high risk behaviors or who are at risk, and not their own children (*The Guardian*, 2008). But, this naive assumption can have powerful and lasting negative effects on their children!

What do Christian parents need to know about educating their children in the 21st Century? What are the dangers, pitfalls, and challenges that most children face today? What are God’s expectations for parents regarding the education of their (and His) children? And what should parents do in order to protect their children’s minds, hearts and bodies from

this Satan-inspired society, every facet of which is designed to motivate them to forfeit their opportunity for eternal life?

## THE WORLD OUR CHILDREN LIVE IN

Parents cannot make truly godly educational choices for their children without understanding the world that their children live in and face every day. So, what perils do our children face today? Public education today is not like it was fifty, thirty, twenty or even ten years ago—regardless of one’s nation of residence. Western nations that once based many of their moral decisions on the Bible are now increasingly secular, as is witnessed by the growing number that have legalized same-sex marriage and abandoned belief in the Bible. *Once taboo* opinions and behaviors are now commonplace, and morals are declining. Across Europe in 2010, just 51 percent of EU citizens believe in God (“Religion in Europe, also in Crisis,” *Globalpost.com*, June 3, 2013). Although 70 percent of Spaniards still call themselves Catholic, only 12.5 percent attend weekly mass (*ibid.*). In the U.S., nearly a third of “millennials” (born between 1982 and 2000) report no religious affiliation (Barna Group, May 9, 2013). “In fact, between high school and turning 30, 43 percent of these once-active millennials drop out of regular church attendance...” One fifth of millennials with a “Christian” background say Christian beliefs no longer make sense to them (*ibid.*).

Out-of-wedlock birth rates and sexual promiscuity are skyrocketing in our children’s world. Between 1980 and 2009, babies born without legal fathers doubled and even quadrupled in many nations (*Family Life Culture Watch*, June 25, 2009). The percentage of out-of-wedlock births in 2009 was: 21 percent in Italy, 30 percent in Canada, 40 percent in the U.S., 44 percent in the UK, 50 percent in France and 66 percent in Iceland (*ibid.*)! In other regions of the world, the rates are even higher. For example, the 2007 out-of-wedlock birth rate in Jamaica was over 80 percent (Registrar General’s Department, 2013)!

In 2007, 61 percent of European school children reported drinking alcohol in the last month (more than just a “sip”), and 43 percent reported drinking to get drunk on more than five drinks at one time (*Drugnet Europe*, April-June, 2009). In 2011, U.S. teenagers were surveyed on a variety of health-related topics using the *Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, June 8, 2012). Thirty-two



©Thinkstock/Stock/Mika Heittola



percent were in at least one physical fight at school in the last year and 20 percent had been bullied (*ibid.*). Nearly one fourth used tobacco daily, 20 percent reported drinking alcohol (other than a few sips) before age 13, 40 percent had tried marijuana and 20 percent were current users, nearly 50 percent had had sexual intercourse, 46 percent were dieting to lose weight while only 15 percent were actually overweight, and 16 percent had seriously considered attempting suicide (*ibid.*). In terms of morality, a 2008 study of U.S. 18–23 year-olds discovered that most had *no concept of morals* and had not even thought about them. Others believed that morals were completely relative—based solely on personal perception (*The New York Times*, September 12, 2011).



©iStockphoto

### CURRICULAR AND SCHOOL TRENDS

Beyond ungodly behaviors, what ungodly trends are occurring in schools? Religious and gender *tolerance* is abuzz in public schools in nearly all Western nations. High stakes testing is paramount, and Darwinian evolution is core to science curricula. Secular humanism (a rejection of morals and God) and atheism are so much a part of modern education that they are no longer noticed. Even witchcraft is popularly read and discussed (think “Harry Potter”). Schools are changing in many ways, and those changes are happening in *schools near you*. In Sweden, a preschool movement is removing gender references to students (e.g., he, she, his, her), in order to avoid biasing children regarding their future gender identity (*BBC News*, July 7, 2011). California and Oregon schools are creating unisex restrooms for homosexual and transgender students, and some schools also allow boys and girls to use the same restrooms (*ABC News*, March 15, 2013; *World Magazine*, October 17, 2013). California also aims to require state history textbooks to “include prominent gay people and gay rights’ milestones in the curriculum” (*The Star*, May 11, 2011). Public high schools and secondary schools around the globe are creating *diversity clubs* that include diverse religious groups (e.g., Muslims, witches, atheists) and also lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teens. School administrators are under increasing pressure to allow such clubs to exist.

Morality on university campuses is certainly in rapid decline too. And sadly, the immoral and anti-God atmosphere at universities today shapes the public school teachers of tomorrow. Where public education was once commissioned to reinforce the common morals of the community or state, public “education today is seen largely as an economic activity, not as a moral activity...” (*Moral Intelligence*, 2010). Some have described today’s children as “more lacking in

decency, integrity, concern for others and morality” than all previous generations (*Moral Agendas for Children’s Welfare*, 2004). In a 2011 study, most young people did not believe in moral absolutes, were very tolerant, and felt uncomfortable identifying behaviors of others as wrong or right (*The New York Times*, September 12, 2011). Today, “waiting until marriage for a fulfilling sex life is considered not just quaint and outdated but quite possibly foolish... [while] the absence of relationship permanence” is valued. “The majority of young adults in America not only think they should explore different relationships, they believe it may be foolish and wrong not to” (*Premarital Sex in America*, pp. 170–171).

Another obvious casualty of our educational systems is the male student. “Like American boys, boys in Great Britain and Australia are markedly behind girls academically, notably in reading and writing. They, too, get most of the failing grades and are more likely to be alienated from school.” The British have now begun programs to assist boys in catching up with girls (*The War Against Boys*, 2000, p.15). A recent study on English state schools showed that nearly a million boys suffer from some form of learning disability—about twice the rate of girls. In addition, “almost a quarter of boys aged five to 19 had some form of difficulty that prevented them playing a full part in lessons”—again, nearly double the rate of girls (*The Telegraph*, October 23, 2013).

### WHAT ABOUT HOME SCHOOLING?

Because of the many factors just mentioned, homeschooling has grown rapidly in nations around the globe. In fact, a 2012 study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that 91 percent of homeschooling families reported making that choice because of the poor environments of public schools; 77 percent felt schools were morally lacking and 74 percent were dissatisfied with the academic instruction (NCES, 2013). In the U.S., about 3.5 percent of the school-aged population is now homeschooled (*ibid.*). Home-based education is also growing in popularity around the globe, including in: Australia, Canada, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, and the UK (National Home Education Research Institute, 2011). But, despite the many clear benefits of homeschooling, this educational option also has some limitations.

Aside from the clear financial and time-commitments homeschooling parents must make, they also need to be very aware of curricular issues. Despite the excellent and thorough curricula commonly available, many are religiously based. Religiously based curricula pose doctrinal challenges that

godly parents and children must navigate through (e.g., the Trinity and the nature of God, pagan holidays, and issues with God's law), as well as issues with science and the Bible (many curricula, although they contain a strong anti-evolution component, make the mistake of following a “young earth” philosophy—attempting to support the false notion that the entire universe and earth were created at the time of Adam). Secular homeschool curricula can also pose challenges. These curricula are widely available and are even free in some locations, but they usually contain both the pro-evolution and secular humanistic ideas prevalent in most public school curricula.

Children in private schools are also not immune. Not only are private school curricula often religiously based (meaning that although they may place great emphasis on morals, they also focus on false-religious ideas like the Trinity, “cheap grace,” pagan holidays, and even “young earth theory”), but their pupils also engage in many of the same sinful behaviors that their public school counterparts do—just at a lower rate (AAP News, 1998).

Society is fleeing away from godly principles and is embracing increasingly Satan-inspired notions. And this is the world in which our children are growing up! So what are Christian parents to do with all of this information? Thankfully, God's Word gives us some solid principles to follow.

### GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

As the ancient Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, God directed Moses to make several very strong statements about educating children. “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up... You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6–9). God's point was two-fold: First, we are to look for opportunities to teach God's way to our children (His children) “throughout” the day and all day long—not just in the early morning and evening. Second, God's Way and His truth are to permeate our lives and our homes. Deuteronomy 4:9–10 makes this same basic point, but also includes grandparents in this spiritual education process.

“Young people are strongly influenced by the examples they see in the media and among their peers to form their moral frameworks and worldviews... As children become socialized and enter schools, more and more of their moral

character is open to the influence of peers and society” (*Moral Intelligence*, 2010). With this in mind, parents must keep in mind the sheer number of hours publically and privately educated children are in contact with worldly peers, socially acceptable curricula, and a worldly value system. When children spend 8–10 hours daily *away from* converted parents and family and around worldly teachers and peers, and when parents can only influence them for one or two hours a day at home, whose value system is most likely to win out—God's or Satan's? Godly parents must remember that children are “unconverted” and do not have God's Holy Spirit dwelling in them to direct and protect them, as a baptized adult does. Children lack the wisdom and maturity to fend off the constant powerful, immoral and anti-God arguments from influential peers and teachers. As we consider the education of our children we must ask the hard question, “Who do we want to be the *chief influence* forming their character, their peers and unconverted teachers, or their converted parents?” (see *Successful Parenting: God's Way*, p. 40).

Dr. Jeffrey Fall wisely advises the creation of a “God-centered family culture” in our homes (p. 37). “Every decision we make as parents should revolve around the question: ‘Will

this increase or decrease the likelihood that my child will grow up in God's image?’” (*ibid.*). And in this vein, parents must ask themselves “What type of *educational situation* and *educational environment* will maximize the teaching of God's way of life and minimize my child's exposure to Satan's powerful deceptions?” The myth that “a child will eventually live in Satan's world, so he or she might as well learn how to cope right now” is *spiritually dangerous* to follow, and can place God's children at unnecessary spiritual risk. Parents need to protect their children and control the *extent* to which children are exposed to Satan's world (pp. 42–43). And parents must cultivate in their children, the perspective that “we are different from the world” (p. 41). In fact, God commands us to be separate from the world around us (2 Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 18:4) and the way we live our lives should reflect this command.

This world's educational system is crumbling and is jettisoning Christian-based values and practices as quickly as it can: *right* is now wrong, and *evil* is now good, just as Isaiah prophesied (Isaiah 5:20). The ungodly are growing in influence and are creating a *system* in their image. Our children

This world's educational system is crumbling and is jettisoning Christian-based values and practices as quickly as it can: right is now wrong, and evil is now good, just as Isaiah prophesied (Isaiah 5:20). The ungodly are growing in influence and are creating a system in their image. Our children are being exposed to more false knowledge and immorality than ever before.

Continued on page 20

# “TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME..”

As we prepare for the annual Passover observance, true Christians find themselves meditating in a special way on some of the words of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Among His most meaningful and challenging exhortations is the following famous command that He gave to His disciples: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (Luke 9:23–24).

What did Christ mean by this? And how should we apply His words in our Christian calling?

Jesus’ first-century audience knew well what a *stauros* (Greek for “stake,” often rendered in English as “cross”) represented in their day. It was an instrument not only of agony, but of great suffering unto death. Those who had rebelled against Roman government, and others considered worthy of death for their criminal deeds, were nailed to the heavy timbers of a wooden beam, where they would spend hours or even days in extreme pain, gasping for air, bleeding from the wounds exposed by the heavy spikes or nails impaled through their flesh. This suffering was often preceded by another public humiliation—a condemned criminal might even be required to carry to his place of execution the very beam to which he would be nailed. The beam, in effect, was a symbol of the convicted individual’s sins, for which death would soon become the punishment.

When Christ, then, talked of taking up one’s cross, His statement had several meanings that are vital for us as Christians.

First, we must recognize that—without Christ’s sacrifice—we are all worthy of the death penalty. We carry with us our sins, and the consequences of those sins—sometimes as visible as a beam in our arms, sometimes as invisible as a sinful thought within our minds. In Jesus’ day, when a convicted criminal carried a beam to his place of execution, this served as a reminder to others of the results of sin. It is easy to look at others, and to see the consequences of sin in their lives. But do we have the Christian maturity to see not just the “speck” in another’s eye, but more importantly the plank—the veritable beam—in our own (Matthew 7:3–4)?

Yes, every one of us has some kind of cross to bear, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). But for those of us who have repented of our sins and been baptized, the consequence of our sins is even greater than for an ordinary criminal facing crucifixion. Unlike such a one—a criminal not yet called by the Father, and who will have his opportunity in the White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20)—what is the destiny of those who fail to “take up their cross” successfully as Christ instructed? “For if, after they have

escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire’” (2 Peter 2:19–22).

The Apostle Paul eloquently explained the fate of those who, after having once accepted the sacrifice of Christ for past law-breaking, knowingly and intentionally turn back to their old life of sin. “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies

without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who

said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the LORD. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:26–31).

Yes, we are responsible for our conduct as Christians. Jesus Christ, taking His own beam on His shoulders, literally and physically shouldered the responsibility given by His Father to die as the perfect sacrifice, that we could be forgiven of our sins. So, it is vital that we do not shirk our own responsibility and fall away. Despite those who mistakenly teach “once saved, always saved,” the Apostle Paul warns that it is possible for a once-converted Christian to become so callous about Christ’s sacrifice, and to forget the need for continual repentance, that eventually there remains no salvation available for such a one who falls away and, in effect, chooses to “crucify again” the Lord who died to save us (Hebrews 6:6).



©iStockphotos

## THE YOUNG NOBLEMAN

Consider one example, from Scripture, of a young man who was blind to his own sins and faults, and His need for a Savior. “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not bear false witness,”

“Honor your father and your mother.” And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.” So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich” (Luke 18:18–23).

Was the rich young ruler deceiving himself when he told Jesus that he had kept the commandments from his youth? Certainly none of us reading this article could honestly make such a claim. So, what was his problem? His wealth itself was not the problem; Christ had wealthy followers such as Joseph of Arimathea. It is not wrong for members of God’s Church to be wealthy. Rather, the problem was this young man’s attachment to wealth. Christ, the very Son of God in the flesh, knew the man’s heart, and sought to test him on one vital point: would he value his present riches more than his eternal destiny? Remember, Jesus had just offered this wealthy ruler a place among the 120 close disciples who followed Him. Yet, when given this opportunity, the young man chose his temporary physical riches.

As Christians, we recognize that the disciples were in fact rich beyond measure in the eternal spiritual things that matter most. “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:6–9).

Certainly, most members of God’s Church in the English-speaking nations are physically wealthy far beyond what billions of others around the world can imagine. But there is a vast difference between being wealthy and being materialistic. Jesus taught His followers: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’” But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:16–21).

The Word—who had been with God the Father forever, possessing the entire universe—was willing to give up His riches and come to the earth in the flesh, as a human being, in order to give human beings the opportunity to inherit the same riches with eternal life. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

A day will come, shortly before the return of Jesus Christ, when His followers will be forced to make a momentous decision.

Those who are called to the Place of Safety will have to be ready to leave their physical riches behind. As Christ taught, “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot’s wife [Genesis 19:12–26]. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.” (Luke 17:31–33).

Jesus Christ’s sacrifice was far, far greater than what He asked of the rich young ruler. But what about us? Are we willing to lose everything we own, if that is what it takes to enter into the family of God? Have our possessions become a kind of cross—a burden—keeping us apart from God’s will? The Apostle Paul expressed an attitude we all need to have, if we are to achieve eternal life. “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, [Here we find an explanation for the nobleman’s approach] but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:7–11).

### UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

If you have been in God’s Church for a while, you have no doubt heard many accounts of faithful brethren who had to give up a job, or even a career, in order to obey God’s command to keep the weekly and annual Sabbaths. You likely have heard about brethren who have become estranged from family members because of their commitment to God and His ways.

Christ explained the priority of true discipleship when He addressed a great multitude. “And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate [love less] his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish [enduring to the end].’... So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:25–33).

It is not enough to be “in the Church.” As Christians, we must shun worldly conduct, whether we find it in co-workers and neighbors and friends “in the world” or in those who are nominally “in the Church.” The rich young ruler would not part with his wealth in order to serve Christ. Are we holding on to relationships that keep us apart from the will of Christ? Yes, it may hurt to separate ourselves from friends and family whose

conduct drags us down. The Apostle Paul wrote powerfully about this. “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits. Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame’ (1 Corinthians 15:33–34).

Scripture does not promise that it will always be easy to abstain from sin. We may suffer ridicule, loss of position, persecution—and worse—from those who had once been our friends. “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead [spiritually], that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:1–6).

### THE CROSSES OF ADDICTION

Sometimes, what we need to separate ourselves from is a behavior or a situation, not just a person. Look around you, and you will see a world in which so many human indulgences are promoted despite leading to abuse, addiction and great suffering. People may think they can indulge in “just a little” of some vice, yet soon they become addicted to a habit that brings suffering—emotional, physical and spiritual. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines addiction as: 1: the quality or state of being addicted. 2: compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance (as heroin, nicotine, or alcohol) characterized by tolerance and by well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal; *broadly*: persistent compulsive use of a substance known by the user to be harmful.”

If a professing Christian is addicted to practices that harm his or her physical body, two spiritually dangerous paths are simultaneously being trod. First: we are placing the addiction ahead of our Creator, in direct conflict with the first commandment. “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). Second: it is our duty to God to maintain our bodies as a clean dwelling place for His Holy Spirit. Jesus said: “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23). Some people are addicted to the Internet, wasting an inordinate amount of time in front of a computer monitor. The misuse of this valuable tool—one that when rightly used can educate us and help us communicate—may rob us of our Bible study and prayer.

Is a habit helping to build God’s holy and righteous character in you? Or is it dragging you toward the Lake of Fire? Consider

Paul’s words: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19–21).

As Christians, we all face temptations, but in order to overcome them we must first recognize them and then commit to overcoming, with Christ’s help. A tobacco addiction is easy to recognize. Alcohol addiction may be easier to “hide” in a society that promotes the use of alcohol. Other addictions can involve food, pornography or even overwork. How many married men and women let their marriages suffer because they are “too busy” for their spouse or their children? “Workaholics” are bearing an unnecessary burden—a burden that Christ’s sacrifice will relieve upon repentance!

### OUR COMMON PROBLEM

The Apostle Paul bore the same cross we all bear—that of being human. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Romans 7:18–23).

By revealing our common weakness, Paul has given us the answer: confess our sins to our Creator and Christ will help carry our cross by living in us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin” (vv. 24–25).

Christ carried His cross, not as a sinner, but as our Savior, accepting His responsibility to endure to the end and die for sinful humanity. We, too, for as long as we remain in the flesh, have a Christian responsibility to endure. We must actively turn away from sin, just as a recovering alcoholic will turn away from an offered drink, lest we slip back into the conduct that would rob us of salvation. As we do so, we can have confidence, knowing that our Savior Himself took up His cross, for us, so that through Him we can take up our own cross and overcome, as we prepare to inherit the Kingdom that is being prepared for us. Let us take seriously His promise: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

—LCG Editorial Staff

# UNLEAVENED Bread Recipes



©iStockphotos

**M**any in God's Church, when preparing for the Days of Unleavened Bread, rely on store-bought matzos or other unleavened crackers to serve as the unleavened bread they will eat on each day of the seven-day festival.

Especially in our modern age, when so many grow up without learning basic cooking skills, the prospect of making unleavened bread from scratch may be intimidating to some. Others may think of unleavened bread as simply something unpalatable that must be endured for the duration of the festival.

In fact, however, it is probably easier than you think to make your own unleavened bread, and even to follow simple recipes for other unleavened treats that can be enjoyed during the Days of Unleavened Bread. What follows are a number of recipes that some ladies at Headquarters have enjoyed over the years.

## UNLEAVENED BREAD

2½ cups unbleached flour  
2½ cups whole wheat flour  
(or 5 cups whole wheat flour)  
1 cup cornmeal  
1 teaspoon salt  
4 egg yolks  
5 tablespoons butter  
½ cup oil  
1 cup water  
1 cup milk

Mix flours, corn meal and salt. Cut in butter. Add egg yolks and remaining ingredients. Mix well. Roll out and cut in squares and bake on a lightly greased cookie sheet at 350 degrees, for approximately 15 minutes. The length of time to bake depends on how thick you prefer to roll out the dough.

## FLATBREAD

2 cups whole wheat flour  
½ cup yellow cornmeal  
½ teaspoon salt  
4 tablespoons butter  
⅔ cup warm water

Sift flour, measure, then sift again with cornmeal and salt. Cut in the butter and mix until crumbly. Stir in the warm water. Roll dough into balls the size of marbles. (If difficult to work with, chill first.) Roll out into paper-thin rounds about 4 inches in diameter. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet at 375 degrees for 5 minutes or until very lightly browned. Cool and store in tightly covered can. Best when eaten hot!

## ALMOND BREAD

4 eggs  
1 cup sugar  
¾ cup butter or oil  
3 cups flour  
½ teaspoon vanilla  
1 teaspoon almond extract  
1 small bag of slivered almonds

Mix sugar, eggs and 1 cup of flour. Mix well and add oil or butter. Add remaining ingredients. Pour into 2 greased bread pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove from pans to cool. Apples, cinnamon and walnuts may be substituted for the almonds and almond extract.

## CHEESE NAPOLEONS

2 cups flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ cup of oil  
4 tablespoons milk  
2 cups grated cheddar cheese

Mix flour and salt. Slowly add oil, tossing mixture with a fork. Add milk and cheese. Stir until dough clings together. If too dry, add a little more milk. With hands, press into a large cookie sheet with edges. Using a pizza cutter, cut into squares. Bake for 15 minutes at 425 degrees or until lightly browned.

## CHOCOLATE GRANOLA

15 cups oats  
2 cups wheat germ  
scant 1 teaspoon salt  
2 cups chopped walnuts  
¾ cup cocoa  
½ cup ground flax seeds  
2 cups honey  
⅔ cup oil  
⅓ cup water  
1 tablespoon vanilla  
Chocolate chips (as many as you want!) added later when cooled.

Mix dry ingredients. Mix liquid ingredients in a saucepan and heat until warm. Add to dry ingredients and mix well. Spread on a cookie sheet about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep. Bake at 250 degrees for about 2 hours, or until it is the desired dryness. Check during baking time and with a spatula lightly stir once or twice so it bakes more evenly. When totally cooled keep sealed in a glass gallon jar in a dry place. Serve to all children and adults who like chocolate!



Giant size (9 $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce) Hershey milk chocolate bar Mix butter, sugar, flour and vanilla well, and press (may use your fingers!) into a 9" x 13" baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Melt chocolate bar and spread on dough while it is still warm. Sprinkle chopped pecans or walnuts on top.

#### NO BAKE CHOCOLATE COOKIES

2 cups sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk  
 1 stick butter  
 3 to 4 tablespoons cocoa

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup peanut butter  
 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 cups oatmeal (uncooked)  
 2 teaspoons vanilla  
 1 cup chopped nuts  
 1 cup coconut

Boil sugar, milk, butter and cocoa for 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  minutes (time after it starts to boil.) Remove from heat and quickly add other ingredients. Beat until blended, and immediately drop by teaspoonful on wax paper. Allow to set and cool.

#### PECAN PIE SQUARES

Crust: 2 cups flour

1 cup butter  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup brown sugar

Filling:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups corn syrup (light or dark)

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup brown sugar

6 tablespoons flour

1 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons vanilla

4 eggs

Blend crust ingredients and put in 9" x 13" pan and bake for 20 minutes at 350 degrees. Blend filling ingredients together and put on top of baked crust. Then cover top with chopped pecans (the more the better). Bake an additional 30 to 40 minutes or until done.

#### FAVORITE CHEESE CAKE

Crust: Follow directions for the Nut Pie Crust.

Filling:

3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar

2 eggs

1 tablespoon vanilla

Beat cream cheese, sugar, eggs and vanilla together until mixed well. Pour into 10" pie pan lined with Nut Crust. Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Take out of oven and cool about 10 minutes. Then top with the following mixture and bake in 350 degree oven for an additional 10 minutes.

Topping: 1 pint of sour cream

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla

#### NUT PIE CRUST

1 stick melted butter  
 1 cup flour  
 3 tablespoons sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped nuts

Mix well and press in pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes—if recipe does not call for baking the pie. If recipe calls for baking the pie, pour the pie ingredients into the unbaked nut crust and bake the recommended time for the pie.

#### CINNAMON HONEY GRANOLA

14 cups oats  
 3 cups any variety chopped nuts  
 1 cup wheat bran  
 1 cup wheat germ  
 1 cup sunflower seeds  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 2 tablespoons cinnamon  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup oil  
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 cups honey  
 1 cup water  
 4 teaspoons vanilla

Optional: Add dried fruit when done.

Combine dry ingredients. Mix liquid ingredients in a saucepan and heat until warm. Add to dry ingredients and mix well. Spread on a cookie sheet about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep. Bake at 250 degrees for about 2 hours, or until it is the desired dryness. Check during baking time and with a spatula lightly stir once or twice so it bakes more evenly. When totally cooled keep sealed in a glass gallon jar in a dry place.

#### TOFFEE SQUARES

1 cup butter  
 1 cup brown sugar  
 2 cups flour  
 1 teaspoon vanilla  
 1 cup of pecans or walnuts

# CHARLOTTE FAMILY WEEKEND 2013

By Jim Meredith

This year the Charlotte Family Weekend was the biggest and best ever! Over 550 people enjoyed a weekend that many described as a “Mini Feast of Tabernacles.” The activities began on Friday and some, who arrived early, had the opportunity to tour the Church offices and the TV Studio. They were able to see the staff hard at work as well as the set where the *Tomorrow’s World* program is filmed. The host hotel for most of the activities was once again the Renaissance Charlotte Suites. This all-suite hotel is the perfect venue for families and others as it sleeps up to six people in each suite. On Friday evening Mr. Ames got the weekend off to a great start as he gave a Bible Study to 293 brethren on understanding prophetic milestones. The Feast-like atmosphere of excitement carried on late into the evening with much fellowship at the hotel.

Sabbath morning began with a wonderful buffet breakfast complete with omelet bar. Later that morning, there was a hymn sing followed by a Bible Study given by Drs. Douglas and Scott Winnail on tools for preparing for our future as kings and priests.

Sabbath services were a highlight for all 563 in attendance. After a rousing sermonette by Jason Fritts—Assistant Director of the Living Youth program—and a really special musical performance by a combined choir of about 50 singers, Dr. Roderick Meredith gave the main message. His sermon titled “Make Your Life Count” encouraged all of us to focus our lives on accomplishing things that have an eternal meaning. He reminded us that we have been called now to finish the work of preparing the way for Jesus Christ to return. His message capped off a wonderful Sabbath, and set the tone for the remainder of the weekend.

Saturday evening over 400 people enjoyed a delicious dinner in an elegant setting. After the dinner was over, we were treated to a number of musical pieces, sung and played by some very talented members. The young children’s song was especially enjoyable, and a group of men sang the final song *a cappella* with great gusto and harmony that resonated



with everyone. After these talented musicians finished, the dance began. There was music for both young and old and the dance floor was packed with brethren on every song. Next year we hope to have a larger dance floor!

Sunday morning we began our day of activities with a sportsmanship talk from Mr. Sheldon Monson

to get everyone in the right mindset for the day’s games. The very well organized basketball and volleyball tournaments began at 9:00 a.m. and ran continuously throughout the day. Five basketball teams played their hearts out to gain the top spot, but when the smoke had cleared, this year’s winner was Josh Lyon’s team of “Southern Gentlemen.” They narrowly defeated Mark Sandor’s “Royals” team in the final game to take home their trophies—custom designed sweatshirts. In volleyball, Jim Meredith’s defending champion team “The Good, the Bad and the Old Guys” faced off against John Robinson’s “LYC Adventure Team” for the finals. After losing the first two sets, the “Old Guys” came back and won the next two, forcing a deciding fifth set. The “Old Guys” gave it their all to get the miracle comeback win, but fell short to the younger

“LYC Adventure Team.” Mr. Meredith’s and Mr. Monson’s children showed no mercy to their dads and took home the sweatshirts this year. For those who did not play in the tournaments, there were also free play courts as well as basketball and volleyball clinics for some of the younger children. A hot lunch of freshly grilled hotdogs and hamburgers was served to everyone who came to play or just watch and cheer on the teams. The young children were also able to play some kids’ games on one of the courts in the afternoon. All told, over 300 people

showed up for this day of activities and, by the end of the day, everyone was very tired but happy.

Sunday night after dinner, over 220 people still had enough energy left to play board games at the hotel. Next year we will have to get a bigger room for the games night!

On Monday morning about 350 people attended seminars for teens, singles, mature singles and married couples. These



©iStockphotos



seminars are always popular and give the brethren spiritual guidance in areas that directly relate to them and their situation. As these Family Weekends grow in popularity, we may even add new seminars in future years. After the seminars ended at noon, we added a senior citizens luncheon this year that was much appreciated by all who attended. After everyone had eaten from the sumptuous buffet, Dr. Meredith gave a talk to the seniors encouraging them to set a high standard and to “adopt” a younger family that they could mentor and help live a godly way of life.

Monday night close to 150 people showed back up at the hotel for an ice cream social. Many of the younger crowd stayed up late playing games and talking, hating to have to say goodbye to their friends and go home.

The Charlotte Family Weekend was a huge success this year. We would like to extend a big thank you to all who attended and, especially, to all who served behind the scenes. We are looking for ways to improve and attract even more people to this event in the future. The next one is less than ten months away, so start planning now to be here next year! ■



# Woman to Woman

By Shirley Young

## Lady Aristocrats

The United Kingdom for many centuries has maintained a divided and rather inflexible class structure. Broadly speaking, the divisions are: The Aristocracy (Elite) or Upper Class, the Middle Class and the Working Class. Each person's social position is mainly determined by heritage, education, power, influence, wealth, manners, accent and which schools they attended.

The Elite or Upper Class is said to number around 7,000 in the U.K. The Queen and Royalty are at the top. Then there are a number of fixed titles in the following descending order: Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts and Barons. Those in the five ranks of peerage or nobility are generally recognised by their heritage and aristocratic exclusiveness, their ownership of large estates and mansions, which particular clubs they attend, and often by a rather leisurely lifestyle, supported by servants. Their wives too hold such titles as Duchess, Marchioness, Countess, Viscountess and Baroness.

All these people who hold such important-sounding titles are considered to be *aristocrats* or "The Quality." But what does "aristocrat" really mean?

The Greek word *aristocracy* means "rule of the best" and originally denoted leadership by a privileged minority who were thought to be superior, and morally and intellectually fit to govern in the best interests of the people. This came to be a rather small, stratified group of individuals who often did not display these qualities, but rather preferred the pursuit of pleasures and status, leading to pride and self-importance.

Men and women might well call themselves by grandiose titles and think that they are Nobility or "The Quality" or even "Our Betters" as they were sometimes referred to, but what qualities and characteristics does God require of a woman, to make her a *true aristocrat*? Thankfully, God in His foresight has given us some wonderful Biblical examples of women who were *true aristocrats*.

In the early days of the Judges, God raised up a truly remarkable woman. Her name was Deborah. She was a wife, prophetess of God and a Judge in Israel (Judges 4-5). Since Deborah was a Judge, she regularly sat beneath a large palm tree, as was the custom, and settled disputes, handing down wise judgments. Deborah discharged all the duties and responsibilities of a judge and civil leader except that of a military leader.

Since God chooses leaders by His standards and not ours (1 Samuel 16:7), Deborah must have had some excellent qualities of character, which God knew He could well use in His service.

Israel in Deborah's time was under harsh and cruel oppression from Jabin, a Canaanite king with nine hundred iron chariots. This punishment of servitude to a Gentile king was due to Israel's disobedience to God's commands. They had not driven out the Canaanites

as they had been instructed and consequently had begun to follow after false gods. This inevitably led to moral decadence and disorder, no longer regarding God's moral absolutes. But Deborah was a faithful, and loyal servant of the true God. She staunchly "stood in the gap," becoming known as "a mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7).

During this time of national crisis and high-handed tyranny, the people felt abused, browbeaten and downtrodden. As a result they began to cry out to the true God for mercy and rescue. So God in His compassion decided to liberate them. Although God disciplines His people, He never abandons them. He therefore spoke to Deborah, and gave her His instructions on what to do.

Being an obedient and decisive woman, Deborah, by virtue of her official authority, immediately sent for Barak, a commander of armies. Barak's name actually means "thunderbolt." It is as though he were summoned to be the Lord's flashing sword!

But when Deborah faithfully repeated God's instructions on how to fight Sisera, the commander of



©iStockphoto

Jabin's army, Barak immediately demonstrated some timidity, because of his lack of faith.

From Barak's point of view, the whole project probably seemed suicidal since he understood the tactical problems. Mount Tabor was exposed and could easily have been surrounded by Sisera's chariots, cutting off any possible escape. But of course, Barak was leaving God out of the picture! So since his faith was not quite equal to the danger he said to Deborah: "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go" (Judges 4:8). Perhaps he also thought that Deborah's presence would officially sanction the uprising of Israel against so formidable an enemy and thus give the people the courage to fight.

Deborah willingly agreed to go with him, risking her own life for the sake of the people. In asking Deborah to go, Barak was actually asking a woman to partially do what he had been assigned to do. So Deborah told Barak that the glory of the victory would go to a woman, as indeed it did when God allowed Sisera to be killed by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite.

When some of the Israelites were finally assembled at Mount Tabor, it was Deborah who gave the signal for the attack (4:14). She believed God, and had every confidence that He would go before them like a Mighty Warrior. As it turned out Deborah's faith in God was completely justified.

In her song of praise in chapter 5 Deborah gives all the credit and glory to God for the outstanding victory. In verses 20–21 she describes how God fought with storm and flood against Sisera, probably bogging down his iron chariots. Deborah then picturesquely describes the pounding of horses' hooves as the enemy galloped away.

Yes, man might place foolish faith in his own pitiful weaponry, but forgets that God is able to fight like a great and Mighty Warrior with His own superior power over rain, hail, lightning, thunder and storm, and that *no force* can withstand Him! Consequently, after the battle for deliverance, the land had rest and peace for forty years (5:31).

So against the background of disobedient, degenerate Israel, Deborah's character shines out. She was a humble woman whom God was able to use. She did not deny or resist her position in their society but neither did she flaunt it. She understood the position was one of service. Whenever praise came her way, she gave the credit and glory to God. She was a wise woman who was able to delegate responsibilities to other capable people when necessary. She was also a woman of great faith and was even willing to lay down her life in the service of her people. Deborah was indeed an excellent leader—a *true aristocrat!*

There is also another lady of similar character and distinction who was willing to lay down her life for her people. We know her name as Esther. Esther is one of the only two books in the Bible named after women. But actually her Hebrew name was Hadassah, meaning Myrtle (Esther

2:7). Myrtle was a tree or branch that was supposed to signify peace and thanksgiving. And Esther, with God's backing, certainly did bring these attributes to her Jewish brethren throughout the Persian Empire.

The Book of Esther is somewhat unique in that God's name is never directly mentioned, but His hand can frequently be seen in the many so-called "coincidental" happenings throughout the story, as we will see.

Esther, who was actually an orphan, was brought up in exile in Persia by her older cousin Mordecai, whom she regarded as a father figure.

When Queen Vashti disobeyed her husband King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) who ruled the Persian Empire, and refused to come and have her beauty flaunted before his banqueting guests, she was deposed and Esther, a beautiful young Jewess was chosen to be the new Queen consort. However, the King was unaware of her heritage (actually of the tribe of Benjamin).

Some time after Esther had become Queen, Mordecai uncovered a plot to assassinate the King. He quickly informed Esther, and she reported the conspiracy to Xerxes, giving Mordecai the credit. The plot was thwarted and Mordecai's deed was recorded in the chronicles of the King.

Later, the King promoted Haman the Agagite to be above all the other officials. The fact that Haman is identified as an Agagite suggests a connection with Agag, the king of the Amalekites, ancient enemies of Israel. So Haman hated the Jews and especially Mordecai, who had refused to bow down to him. Consequently Haman devised a plan to have every Jew in the Persian Empire exterminated on a certain date, and the king agreed.

When Mordecai learned of this he immediately fasted and cried out to God. He then informed Esther of the situation. Since he believed that God had deliberately placed Esther in her current position for such a time as this, he implored Esther to approach the King and entreat him for mercy for the Jews and so bring deliverance and prevent genocide.

However, Esther well knew that *anyone* who approached the King in the inner court unsummoned was put to death. The only exception was if the King extended the gold sceptre to spare them (4:11). So Esther, knowing that she must act wisely and proceed with great caution, didn't rush into the King in haste, but first prepared by asking for the rest of the Jews to fast with her for three days, seeking God's help. Only then did she dare to go to Xerxes, because she knew that she could do nothing on her own and needed God's backing.

Then, even when the sceptre was extended towards her and her life spared, Esther did not blurt out the true reason for her coming, but wisely invited the King and Haman to attend a banquet which she had prepared for them, and also for the following night.

Meanwhile, Haman's hatred of Mordecai had grown to such an extent that he had a 75ft gallows prepared on which to hang Mordecai. But in a seemingly coincidental twist to

the story, the King, who could not sleep, had the chronicles brought to him and read of Mordecai's faithfulness in saving his life from assassins. He therefore decided to elevate Mordecai, much to Haman's chagrin!

When, after two nights of banqueting Esther finally revealed that she was a Jewess and that Haman was the one who had plotted to have her people destroyed, the King was angry, finally having Haman hanged on his own gallows! And so all the Jews in the Empire were saved and Haman's children killed.

Like Deborah, Esther was a humble woman, and although Queen consort, she still respected Mordecai and listened to his advice. She was careful in planning and looked to God for a favourable outcome. She too, risked her life for her people.

There are, of course, other ladies of great character in the Bible such as Mary the mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth

the mother of John the Baptist, and they all exhibited a similarity of characteristics. They were humble women, respectful of authority, obedient to God and full of faith as they each performed their designated role in God's service.

These women were definitely "The Quality," or *true aristocrats*, who did not flaunt some man-made title, but rather humbled themselves to become the true *servants* of God.

So we ladies too, who have been privileged to be called at this time, must take on the same high qualities of character and distinction in order to fulfill our roles as servants of the Most High God. Then, and only then, can we be born again into the most noble and regal of all Royal Families—the Family of God—becoming true daughters of God and *lady aristocrats!* ■

## Educating Godly Children

Continued from page 10

are being exposed to more *false knowledge* and immorality than ever before. And they are also being pressured to develop worldly perspectives as never before.

Not everyone has the luxury of homeschooling due to: single-parent families needing to earn a living, extreme health situations, and even government bans on the practice. For this reason parents whose children are being educated in the world's system (public or private) must put *tremendous effort* into knowing what their children are learning and being exposed to at school. They must also spend *significant time* teaching and educating their children not only in biblical truth, but also provide them with the answers to "why" we believe what we do and "why" we reject the ways of the world. In this way, parents can more effectively attempt to counteract the deceptions and *social programming* that Satan has *built into* his educational system, in order to destroy our children and their faith.

But homeschooled children are not completely safe either. For homeschooling to work well, there must be at least one parent (typically "mom") dedicated to making sure children are truly learning their lessons. Although homeschooling children typically have significantly less influence from the world (ungodly teachers and peers), homeschooling parents must still be diligent to guide their children regarding choosing worldly friends, activities, media and music. Dr. Jeffery Fall recommends that parents allow their children to "mix with other children in regulated, supervised activities—not in unregulated and unsupervised 'free time,'" for obvious reasons (p. 43). In addition, homeschooling parents cannot "relax" with their children's educations either. They must be very aware of and look for biblical and factual errors in homeschool curricula that are *also* developed by carnal people, and must also be sure to include proper training in the Bible. Homeschooling parents

must be sure to operate within local laws—rendering to Caesar what is his and to God what is His (Mark 12:17). Ultimately, for *all* "Christian parents, the goal is to lay a foundation in their children's young impressionable years, so they will always desire to fully seek God as their father... The goal of godly parenting is to help our children want to walk in the footsteps of parents who are living God's way of life... to have children in God's image" (Fall, pp. 2, 7).

Raising "godly offspring" is a wonderful opportunity and also an incredible responsibility that parents must never take lightly. Christian parents must be *fully* aware of the real and Satan-inspired influences, pressures and lies that permeate not only society, but also the worldly educational system. And they must seriously "count the cost" of the educational decisions they make. Training up a child God's way has never been more difficult or more important. Parenting and grandparenting is serious business! God directs parents to educate their children in His ways "throughout" the day. And godly parents must work to meet this directive to the fullest extent possible—which may require changing how things are typically done in and outside of the home. Christian parents must develop a God-centered family culture and must constantly work to assure that the environment children are exposed to throughout the day is as godly as possible.

For more information on and encouragement about godly parenting, be sure to read our free booklet *Successful Parenting: God's Way*. All parents (and grandparents) should review this booklet annually as long as children are at home! In addition, Living University offers several helpful courses that address this topic, including: *Christian Marriage and Family*, *Principles of Christian Living*, *Working with Christian Youth*, *Teaching in the Christian Home*, and *Early Childhood Education in the Church*. Ultimately, the Bible is the foundation of knowledge, and Christian parents must do all they can to make sure that God's *living word* is living in the lives of their children. ■

**Growing Together as a Christian Family**

Continued from page 2

when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship" (Acts 20:35–38). Both Jesus and Paul constantly told us, in effect, to be "givers"—to be those kind of people who are constantly helping, serving and *giving* to others of their substance, and of their love, concern and encouragement.

Notice also that when Paul was leaving the Ephesians, they knelt down and prayed together and "wept freely" and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him. This certainly indicates the depth of *personal closeness* and outflowing love that Paul and the brethren had for one another.

In the months and years to come, brethren, I want us all to realize more fully that the time of **terrible persecution** is growing closer and closer. We will really *need* to help and encourage one another. We will really *need* to deeply appreciate one another in the midst of a dark and perverse world. For this world **hates** the way of God, and you will begin to realize this more and more as this Work grows in power and the world turns on us because we preach the Truth.

At such a time, if we have *already built* a deep feeling of family within God's Church—if we have *already built* a network of friends and brethren who are like "family"—then the hard times just ahead will be made much easier. We *will* need to visit one another in prison. We *will* need to help and

encourage one another in sickness, in trials and persecution. With God's help, we *will* be faithful to the end and make it into God's Kingdom.

But, before that, we will learn the *truth* of this inspired warning: "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified" (1 Peter 4:12–14).

Knowing that such trials are sure to come, we really *must* develop a great closeness to God and Christ through constant prayer, meditation and study, and we *must* try to build a genuine "family spirit" within God's Church. This will give us the additional help and encouragement that comes through God working *in* each of us to provide that extra encouragement and

help and fellowship which is so encouraging. We are all human, and *need* that kind of help so often in trials and tests that will surely be coming upon us at the end of this age. Let us *pray fervently* that God will give us that kind of love, that kind of spirit and that kind of *practice* within the Living Church of God.

In the months and years to come, brethren, I want us all to realize more fully that the time of **terrible persecution** is growing closer and closer. We will really *need* to help and encourage one another. We will really *need* to deeply appreciate one another in the midst of a dark and perverse world.

With Christian love,



## Upcoming **TOMORROW'S** WORLD Telecasts

<b>MARCH 6–12</b>	<b>THE MIDDLE EAST IN PROPHECY</b>
<b>MARCH 13–19</b>	<b>SEVEN SECRETS OF REVELATION</b>
<b>MARCH 20–26</b>	<b>CHRISTIANITY VS. CHRIST</b>
<b>MARCH 27–APRIL 2</b>	<b>HOW TO WATCH WORLD EVENTS</b>
<b>APRIL 3–9</b>	<b>SEX AND SIN</b>
<b>APRIL 10–16</b>	<b>COMING SOON: GOD'S NEW WORLD!</b>
<b>APRIL 17–23</b>	<b>GOD CONTROLS THE WEATHER</b>
<b>APRIL 24–30</b>	<b>DOOMSDAY AND ARMAGEDDON</b>

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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

# LOCAL

## CHURCH NEWS

### WEDDINGS

*David Mwanzia and Whynant Prince* were married on Tuesday, September 24, during the Feast of Tabernacles in Kenya. The couple will live in Kenya, where Mr. Mwanzia is an elder in the Nairobi congregation. The ceremony was conducted by Mr. Jock Bennie from South Africa.

*Verlon Riddle and Brenda Scott* were united in marriage on November 9 in Fultondale, Alabama. It was the first wedding for the Birmingham LCG congregation and the brethren did all they could to make it an enjoyable evening for the bride and groom. All enjoyed a very fine meal together, after the ceremony conducted by Mr. Anthony Stroud. The new couple will reside in Albertville, Alabama.

*Victor Humphrey* of Springfield, Missouri, and *Sandy Morrison* of Kimberling City, Missouri, were married on June 23. Brethren from the Springfield, Missouri, and Harrison, Arkansas congregations, celebrated the occasion with them. Mr. Karl Beyersdorfer conducted the ceremony. The couple plan to reside in Kimberling City, Missouri.

*Djibril Diaw and Blandine Deshommès*, both from Paris, France, were married on October 6, at a chateau just outside Paris. The ceremony was conducted by Pastor Vincent Lardé. Many family members and friends who joined them to celebrate the happy occasion enjoyed hors d'oeuvres on the lawn, followed by dinner and a dance.

### Births

Gabriel and Tera Roldan of the Bluefield, West Virginia congregation are excited to announce the birth of their first and long-awaited baby, *Alyssa Grace Roldan*. She was born on October 4, measured 19½ inches and weighed 6 pounds 12 ounces. She truly was a little miracle and a much-prayed-for blessing.

Joshua and Jenny Penman of the Charlotte, North Carolina congregation are delighted to announce the birth of their second daughter, *Anna Rose Penman*, on October 22. She weighed 6 pounds 5 ounces and looks just like big brother Jack. Big sister Kady is very glad to have a baby sister. Their grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Kinnear (Caroline) Penman of Manila, Philippines and Mr. and Mrs. Laurence (Diana) Marshall of Helena, Montana.

### ANNIVERSARIES

*Mr. and Mrs. Barnie (Ann) Henderson* celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on December 15 at a celebration in Austin, Texas, hosted by their son and grandson. Mr. and Mrs. Henderson attend the Temple, Texas, congregation and brethren from that and other congregations attended the celebration to rejoice with them on this wonderful milestone in their lives.

*Mr. and Mrs. Arch (Joyce) Miller* of the St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, congregation celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on November 28. Fifty friends and relatives rejoiced with them at a party and presented them with the gift of a new television set. Mr. and Mrs. Miller were baptized in 1968.

The Edmonton, Alberta, brethren gathered after Sabbath on October 26 to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversaries of long-time members, *Mr. and Mrs. Robert (Gervaise) Toutant* and *Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence (Katie) Hartshorne*. Visitors from other congregations joined in the festivities. The two couples were presented with cakes and gifts from the local brethren. Mr. and Mrs. Toutant were married October 26, 1963 and Mr. and Mrs. Hartshorne were married November 2, 1963.

*Mr. and Mrs. Anthony (Gayle) Stroud* celebrated their 35th anniversary with a weekend trip to Florida on the last weekend of December. They were married December 30, 1978. Mr. Stroud is an elder pastoring congregations in Alabama and Mississippi.

## In Loving Memory

*Mr. Daniel Featherston*, age 53, of the Jacksonville, Florida, congregation died December 2, at his home with family by his side. He was born in Ohio in 1960 and had lived in Baker County, FL, for 13 years. He had retired as a mechanic at the Winn-Dixie Distribution Center. He enjoyed traveling to the mountains, camping, hunting, fishing, tending to his plants and yard work. Most of all he enjoyed spending time with his family, especially his grandsons. Mr. Featherston is survived by his loving wife of 19 years, Donna Perry Featherston; his mother, Patricia Morris of Montgomery, Alabama; two sons; one daughter; two grandsons; five brothers and one sister. Mr. Joseph Brown conducted the funeral service on December 6.

*Mrs. Carolyn Kemp*, of the Ferriday/Jonesville, Louisiana, congregation died on November 11 at the age of 90 years. She and her husband, Roy Kemp, who died in 2007, had been members since 1975. She is survived by four children, 13 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren. She will be well remembered for her musical talent and quilting skills, and very much missed.

*Mr. Carl Klink*, dedicated Living Church of God elder, died Friday, November 1 after spending about a week in hospice care after suffering a number of mini-strokes. He was surrounded by family when he peacefully fell asleep. Mr. Klink served as an elder in New Jersey for a number of years and then in the Chicago, Illinois, congregation since 2011. He will be greatly missed and remembered for his peaceful demeanor and for his love of God's Truth and for God's people.

*Mr. Ronald Hull*, age 71, of the Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation died October 4. He was a long-time dedicated member of the Church of God. Mr. Hull is survived by his wife, Faye, children and grandchildren. He is greatly missed by family, brethren and many friends. Funeral services were conducted by Area Pastor Martin Fannin.

*Mr. George Wyatt*, age 77, of the Crossville, Tennessee congregation, died September 9. He is survived by his wife, June, children and grandchildren. George was greatly loved and admired and will be missed by all who knew him.

*Mrs. Glenda Canonigo Mendoza*, age 68, of Polomolok, Philippines, died peacefully after a heart attack on October 29. She was baptized in 1997 into God's Church and remained

faithful to the end. Funeral services were conducted on November 3 by Messrs. Felipe Casing, Benito Parbo and Johnny Bolences. Mrs. Mendoza is survived by her husband, Antonio, and six children. She will be greatly missed by her family, brethren and friends.

*Mr. Ronald Francisco*, age 36, of the Mauswagon congregation in the Philippines, died on October 24 after a battle with cancer. Mr. Freddie Benitez conducted the funeral on October 29. Mr. Francisco is survived by his wife, Armelyn, and by their three children. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

*Mr. Ralph Martin* died on December 19, after a short illness. He is survived by his wife Corynne, four children and nine grandchildren. Ralph was born in Somerset, Bermuda in 1935, and moved to Canada in 1990. Funeral services took place in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia on December 30, 2013, officiated by Mr. Frank Best.

*Mrs. Sheryl Ann Meredith*, 67, died at her home in Charlotte, North Carolina on November 29. She had spent the past ten years valiantly battling cancer. Baptized into God's Church in 1971, she was a strong supporter of the Work through many trials, a loyal support to her husband, and a dedicated mother to her children. She is survived by her husband of 36 years, Dr. Roderick C. Meredith, as well as her sons, David, 34 and Jonathan 32, and her two grandchildren Brenna and Keeley. More than 240 brethren attended her funeral service on December 4, 2013, conducted jointly by her husband and by Evangelist Richard Ames. Sheryl helped and supported her husband and children through the years, spanning from their time with Mr. Herbert Armstrong in the Worldwide Church of God, through the Global Church of God and finally the Living Church of God. She will be remembered for her deep kindness and loving attitude towards God's people and all mankind throughout the years of her life, and the many challenges she and her husband faced and overcame as faithful servants and soldiers of Jesus Christ. She will be greatly missed, as her physical and spiritual families look forward to God's great, soon-coming Kingdom—the goal that she and so many others have “gone to sleep” anticipating, and encouraging others to “never give up” while so doing.

**United States:** P.O. Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010, [www.TomorrowsWorld.org](http://www.TomorrowsWorld.org), Phone: (704) 844-1970 • **Australasia:** PO Box 300, Clarendon, SA 5157, Australia, Phone: (61) 8-8383-6288, Fax: (61) 8-8127-9667 • **Canada:** P.O. Box 409, Mississauga, ON L5M 0P6, Phone: (905) 814-1094, Fax: (905) 814-7659 • **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 2767, Auckland 1140, New Zealand, Phone/Fax: (09) 268 8985 • **Philippines:** PO Box 492, Araneta Center Post Office, 1135 Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, Phone: (632) 455-3699 • **South Africa:** Private Bag X7, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0028, Phone: (27) 58-622-1424, Fax: (27) 58-623-1303 • **United Kingdom:** BM Box 2345, London, WC1N 3XX, Phone/Fax: 44 (0) 844-800-9322.

# COMMENTARY

## BECAUSE HE IS RISEN, I DO NOT KEEP EASTER

I believe in the risen Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior of mankind. I believe that after His crucifixion on Passover, He was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth—as He said He would be. I believe He was then resurrected by His Father, restored to the glory He had with His Father before the world was.

He was the perfect Passover Lamb. He also became the perfect wave sheaf offering, accepted by His Father as the first of the firstfruits. In His resurrection, I see confirmation of the promise made to all those who truly follow Him that they, too, will one day be resurrected to live forever as He now does.

Consequently, I do not keep Easter.

Any unbiased look at the history of the Easter holiday, and at the customs now surrounding it, will reveal plainly that the Easter observance is of pagan origin, introduced long ago into “Christian” worship as new converts sought to hang on to their old practices, and as established Christians more and more began failing to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered (Jude 3).

Most who call themselves “Christians” today are unaware of how “Christianity” has “evolved” over the years—even in the very first centuries of its existence. For instance, we could speak of ancient Polycarp and Anicetus, of Polycrates and

Victor, and of how the churches of the East strove to maintain the apostles’ practice of observing Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Polycrates wrote of the Apostles Philip and John and others who “always observed the day when the people put away the leaven,” as opposed to the corruption of Rome and others who wished to blend Christian doctrine with heathen practice. The history of it all is fascinating reading, to be sure.

But history is not Scripture. And it is the Bible—and the word of Jesus Christ—that compels me not to keep Easter. My human mind can come up with lots of reasons to ignore the Bible and to discount the scriptures (Jeremiah 17:9 has a lot to say about that), but every argument I have ever heard, whether from others or from my own imagination, is always rooted fundamentally in faulty human reasoning that ultimately contradicts God’s word. I cannot honor Christ by disobeying Him.

From the Bible’s perspective, the choice is simple. Jesus Christ told us never to violate God’s laws and commandments in favor of human traditions, regardless of how sincere or “religious” those traditions might be (Mark 7:6–9). God clearly does not want us to adopt pagan customs to worship Him (Deuteronomy 12:29–31; Jeremiah 10:1–2).

—Wallace G. Smith