

THE LIVING CHURCH NEWS

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IS OUR LORD DELAYING HIS COMING?

Dear Brethren and Friends,

At least a few thousand of you older brethren who are reading this letter have had to be patient through the trials and tests of life, of human issues in the Church, and with the realization that Christ has *not* come back as quickly as we had hoped. But please realize, Almighty God has *never* given us an *exact date* as to when Christ will return to this earth. Rather, His inspired Word tells us: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matthew 24:36).

Brethren, this same passage of scripture also tells us to “watch” for certain *events* to occur: “So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (vv. 33–34). Many of these prophesied events have *not yet happened*. Certainly, it appears that they may be coming *very close*. But the *reality* is that they have *not yet happened*. Mr. Herbert Armstrong, Ted, Herman Hoeh and I all “hoped” that Christ would come *very soon*. We prayed. We worked hard to *do the Work*. But our Father in heaven—in His infinite wisdom and mercy—has allowed human beings on this earth to have several more decades of time **than we expected** to do their own thing, and write the lessons of human suffering. But finally, He *will* intervene when humanity truly is on the verge of cosmocide and many thinking people finally realize that “all is lost” without God’s intervention in human affairs.

That time has *not yet come!*

However, we older members in God’s Church should not give up at the last minute. And we should encourage our young people to see the “Big Picture.” After all, we have been able to go ahead with our lives for these decades. We have had the opportunity to have families and perhaps



even grandchildren, to experience wonderful trips and opportunities in life and to *learn lessons* that we would not have learned if Christ had come 30 or 40 years ago. So we must always try to see and understand the “mind of God” as these things are worked out. In His inspired Scripture—which reveals God’s mind—He tells us: “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8).

Almighty God is not “late” in sending His Son back to this earth! Rather, He is letting things play out so the *full lessons* of human experience can be written—and *later learned*—by hundreds of millions of human beings.

So, I hope *all* of us in God’s Church will *learn the lessons* God intends from this situation: “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:7–8). In the following verses of James, we are told to remember the prophets of God who set “an example of suffering and **patience**” (v. 10). We are told to learn the “perseverance of Job” (v. 11) so that we can understand

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that the end intended by God is going to work out in a very compassionate and merciful way.

For the sake of our own eternal life, we *must heed* the lessons of the “ten virgins,” who begin to slumber and sleep before Christ came. For these professing Christians were **not** zealously involved in serving others, “in doing the Work” and in overcoming their sins. They were **not** earnestly studying, praying, meditating and fasting to draw close to their Creator and be *filled with His Spirit*. Therefore, when Christ came—pictured by this parable—they did **not** have God’s Spirit and were *shut out* of the wedding, picturing the very Kingdom of God! Jesus then concluded: “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you’” (Matthew 25:11–12).

And we must be extremely careful **not** to imitate the “wicked servant” described by Jesus in His parable in Luke 12, who said: “My master is delaying his coming’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk” (Luke 12:45). If we, dear brethren, “let down” and begin to have that attitude, Jesus made it very plain that He may come even more quickly than we imagine, and deal with one who is like that and “cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers” (v. 46).

We, therefore, need to go *all out* in seeking God and using the time and talents we have *right now* to assure our place in God’s coming Kingdom and the opportunity we have to truly serve millions as kings and priests during Christ’s reign. For Jesus said: “But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (v. 48).

Because I have been one of the pioneer students of Ambassador College and of the ministry of this Work under Herbert W. Armstrong, I have been able to know and converse for many hours with nearly all of the leading men who studied prophecy in detail in the early years. I have also read some articles and books on prophecy and biblical chronology

by outsiders. *Every one* of the leading men that I talked to in this Work—including Dr. Herman Hoeh, Dr. Ernest Martin, Dr. Charles Dorothy, Dr. Robert Kuhn and others—have acknowledged that they came to realize during their study of biblical chronology that we could “easily” be 20 or 30 years off in either direction! Therefore, it should be easy to realize that Christ may not come until about 2030AD!

Do I, personally, think it will be that long? *No!* But I have “hoped” that it would be sooner *for many decades*. So I want you to realize—as you plan your life, and as you *young people plan your lives*—that there may be enough time for you to have a career, and to marry, have children and accomplish a number of wonderful things *before* our Savior returns as King of kings.

Yet, even though we need to realize that we “must not set dates,” we must also *absolutely avoid* thinking that “my Lord delays His coming!” Rather, we must “watch” the major signs Jesus Christ gave to “watch”—the wars and rumors of wars, the false prophets rising up, the disease epidemics, famines and mighty earthquakes. For Jesus said, “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from

fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:25–28). As we all know, we are to “watch” for the coming Beast Power to rise in Europe. We must watch for the coming “King of the South” to appear. We must especially watch—near the end—for the “abomination of desolation” to be seen standing in the Holy Place (Matthew 24:15).

As *all* these events take place—including the “fourteen signs” I have listed in my booklet—then you may be “sure”

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PROPHECY MARCHES ON!

After describing the key events and prophecy preceding His Second Coming, Jesus instructed: “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).

In this article, I want to help you focus on the “Big Picture” of what is happening on the world scene. Many of our *Living Church News* and *Tomorrow’s World* writers try to keep you generally abreast of the prophetic events that are now occurring so rapidly. But perhaps I have a little longer overview, as I have been watching prophetic events unfold ever since I first came to Ambassador College nearly 65 years ago. Brethren, in all those years, I have never seen prophetic events unfold on such a broad scale as is the case today! I think it will be helpful to share this insight with all of you, so you can more fully grasp how far we have come and how close we must surely be to Christ’s return.

So many Protestant religious leaders and others have gone “off track” on prophecy in years past because they have focused on just one or two prophetic events that “seemed” to show that the end of this age was near. That is one reason I wrote the booklet *Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ’s Return*. For there are quite a number of key events that the Bible clearly indicates will precede the Second Coming of Christ.

In this relatively brief article, I want to list a number of prophetic events that have occurred—or are now happening—that clearly show we are very near the end of this present human society. I am not trying to be “encyclopedic” and collate all of the possible prophetic occurrences. I simply want to help you visualize how much has already occurred, or is occurring, to fulfill the biblical prophecies.

BLESSINGS AND CURSINGS

As a little background, remember the many biblical passages where God said He would bless the descendants of Joseph with tremendous wealth, power and the “gates” of their enemies as part of the “birthright” blessings (Genesis 12:1–3; 22:15–18; 28:1–4; 35:9–12; 48:14–20; 49:1–2, 22–26; 1 Chronicles 5:1–2). In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, God clearly shows that He will replace these blessings with comparable curses if His people forsake Him.

God plainly told our peoples: “But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it” (Leviticus 26:14–16). God then said: “And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit” (vv. 18–20). We are now in this stage of prophetic events. Many of our political, educational and religious leaders do, in fact, “despise” God’s laws and statutes, and constantly attack, deprecate and even vilify anyone who tries to uphold the sanctity of traditional marriage or who acknowledges that abortion is murder.

So the “terror” God said He would then appoint over us is now just beginning to occur. It may be difficult to imagine how many more terrorist attacks and other “terrors” will strike our people if we do not truly repent. And some of the “wasting disease” and “fever” is certainly beginning to be experienced by the millions who are coming down with AIDS and other “incurable” diseases. But, remember, this is only the beginning!

MAJOR EVENTS PROPHESED!

Let me now list just a handful of the major prophetic events affecting our peoples, which have happened or are beginning to happen. What is remarkable to me is how these events are occurring “all across the board”—affecting, for the first time, almost the entire spectrum of prophetic events.

- **The capacity to annihilate all life on this planet.** Jesus indicated that this would be possible at the end of this age (Matthew 24:21–22).
- **The loss of major “sea gates.”** Many of the great sea passages controlling the movement of wartime ships and peacetime commerce—such as the Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb, the Simonstown sea base (controlling shipping around the southern tip of Africa), the Strait

of Hormuz, Singapore, the Malacca Strait, the Panama Canal and others—have been taken away over the last few decades by the God who controls world events.

- **The rise of a united Europe.** Remember that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong predicted this—over and over—way back in the 1940s and 50s. He described in detail how the prophesied “ten nations” would finally come together to make up the prophesied “Beast.” Many thought that Germany would never rise again. But Germany has, in fact, risen to become the most powerful nation in Europe, both politically and economically. Events in Europe are now “setting the stage” for the final rise of this power. A great deal of preparation is already taking place for this to occur.
- **The fall of the Berlin Wall, and the liberation of the Eastern European nations formerly under Soviet domination.** Mr. Armstrong predicted this many years in advance. No other church, other than the Church of God led by Mr. Armstrong, could go “out on a limb” and predict these events, because of our understanding of the Beast’s two “legs” prophesied in Daniel 2.
- **The fall of the United States dollar, and the massive U.S. trade and budget deficits, which are greatly harming America’s financial prestige and putting the nation in a very precarious position.** As the dollar continues to drop—with both ups and downs along the way—this will be a continuing fulfillment of God’s promise. For God said to our forefathers: “The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them” (Deuteronomy 28:12–13). God said that if we disobeyed and turned away from Him, the “alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you” (vv. 43–45).
- **The massive borrowing that the U.S. has had to encourage via the enormous foreign purchases of our government bonds and other debt instruments.** We are now at the mercy of Germany, Japan, China and other Gentile nations because of this. Though a couple of decades ago we were the world’s greatest lender, we are now the world’s greatest debtor!
- **The continuing patterns of drought and famine, interspersed with terrible local floods, seen over much of the western U.S., vast portions of Australia and other**

modern-day Israelite lands. News reports describe these developments continually.

- **The growing threat of “incurable” diseases.** Remember, the appearance of AIDS and other diseases with terrible effects and no cure is only the beginning of God’s promise to bring disease upon our people if we turn away from Him.
- **A growing and pervasive animosity against America and Britain from most of the more than 1.5 billion Muslims, 1.4 billion Chinese and hundreds of millions of people in continental Europe, Africa, and Central and South America!** As primarily Muslim and Roman Catholic nations continue to turn against the U.S., this will indeed be ominous. For nearly 200 years, Britain and the U.S. (alone or combined) have been the “top dogs” in world affairs. Many other nations have been—and are now—jealous and resentful. In the course of human events, the dominant power is always brought down eventually. Our strong backing of the nation of Israel has been turning the entire Muslim world against us for decades. Now, our attack on and occupation of Iraq is infuriating most of these Muslims even more.
- **On the moral front, prophecy directly indicates that the depravity of the House of Israel would be disgraceful at the time of the end.** This is certainly occurring! The tremendous upsurge in support for the homosexual “lifestyle” even among professing Christian ministers is absolutely unprecedented in the U.S., Canada and Britain. Many professing Christian “leaders” are backing the idea of so-called “marriage” between these individuals, even though they must know that some homosexual leaders seek the total abolition of traditional marriage and the family as we have known it. In due time, as this trend is allowed to continue, “group marriages” and other “non-traditional” living arrangements will likely be approved by liberal activist judges, and then by many mainstream ministers as well.
- **The continuing slaughter of millions of unborn children by the “abortion industry.”** Someday, after Christ returns, the people involved in this savage practice of killing other human beings made in God’s image will be aghast when they fully comprehend the extent of this modern holocaust. No wonder God prophesies of our people soon after Christ returns: “Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations” (Ezekiel 36:31).
- **Continuing blows at the “pride” of our power.** From Abu Ghraib to Benghazi, the image of the U.S. is in decline. Once revered as a nation willing to make sacrifices to see democracy spread around the world, for the intended good of oppressed peoples, the U.S. is increasingly seen as a callous exporter of vile “culture” to nations and peoples that want to keep their children and families free of the pornographic images that many Americans now take for granted. American soldiers are now often seen as

“bullies” who are not much different from the oppressive armies they oppose. No longer is it taken for granted that America upholds a “higher” standard of behavior. However, in all honesty, what should we expect from these young soldiers who grew up watching hour after hour of violence and pornography on television and on the Internet? Think about it! Remember, brethren, that all of these actions involving homosexuality, abortion, prison abuse and other vile practices are simply a fulfillment of the Apostle Paul’s prediction for the end-time: “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

- **Earthquakes and wildfires are increasing.** Some of the most powerful earthquakes in modern history have occurred just within the last decade or two. Untold thousands of people have perished—and many more will perish—as God literally “shakes” the earth in an unprecedented manner! Also, concurrently with drought, some of the worst firestorms in modern history have been sweeping across the western U.S., parts of Canada, Australia and other areas of modern Israel. These will definitely grow much worse before Christ’s coming.
- **The city of Jerusalem is profoundly divided,** even though currently under Israeli control. For hundreds of years, Jerusalem was controlled by either one nation or another, and not contended over by warring peoples within the city. But the great God inspired His prophet Zechariah, thousands of years ago, to indicate clearly that this historic city would be a divided city at the time of the end. For God stated: “Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zechariah 14:1–2). How could the prophet Zechariah possibly know, way back then, that the city of Jerusalem would today be filled with both Jews and Palestinians, with each side claiming the right to control the city—precisely setting the stage for “half of the city” to go into captivity when the “Beast” power takes over? When you think about it, it is remarkable how detailed some of these biblical prophecies are!
- **The great False Prophet is “waiting in the wings.”** Whether people realize it or not, the current world stage is being carefully set by the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:3–4) for the great false religious leader to appear. Even in the “mainstream media” many Europeans have openly stated that they are waiting for a powerful religious-political leader to appear on the scene. One of the most remarkable statements came from former Belgian Prime Minister Paul-Henri Spaak, who said: “We do not want another committee. We have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people, and to lift us out of the economic morass in which we are sinking. Send us such a man and, be he god or the devil, we will receive him!” This statement could be applied either to the coming False Prophet or the political leader. Since these two figures will certainly work together as a team for a time, this is indeed a prophetic indication of what lies ahead. Among major international figures, many feel that only the Pope is standing firm against abortion, homosexuality, hedonism and the absolute trashing of the traditional “Christian” way of life by the British, Canadians, Australians and U.S. Do not think that European Catholics are unaware of this. For they are “watching” from an entirely different point of view! A few years from now, millions of Catholics in Europe, Mexico and Central and South America will turn toward the final False Prophet with a fervor that may astonish many Protestant ministers and leaders. As a result, many professing Christian ministers will simply “go along for the ride” and fully cooperate with this satanic system, for they will have already shown the peoples of Britain, Canada and the U.S. that they “stand firm” for nothing!
- **The final fulfillments of the prophecies about the coming King of the South are certainly yet to come.** But, even now, it is obvious that many events now indicate that the stage is being set for the powerful leader indicated in Daniel 11:40–43. The Muslim world has been infuriated by America’s ongoing export of values, whether “democratic” values of governance, or “secular” values of entertainment, which go strongly against long-standing Muslim sensibilities. The Arab world, despite overtures by the Obama administration, still sees the U.S. as a staunch supporter of Israel and as reflexively supporting a majority-Jewish state that many Arabs would prefer to “drive into the sea” if they could. America’s conduct in these areas, and its military incursions in the Middle East and Afghanistan, have caused extremists in the Arab world to unite in a manner unprecedented in recent years. This will no doubt factor into their backing a truly powerful pan-Arab leader, the prophesied King of the South, when God’s time comes.
- **The future direction of China is ominous!** Because the U.S. likes to trade with China and enjoy the cheap products it exports, we often forget that China is now coming together as a major threat—economically, politically and militarily—against the U.S. and the West. The Chinese have adopted a

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SUFFERING, ENDURANCE AND ETERNITY

By Mario Hernandez

Why does God allow trials and suffering in our lives? We know many of our brethren are sick, and still others are going through very difficult times because of other trials.

Certainly it can be very difficult to endure trials, suffering and pain. But what purpose does our suffering serve? Can God really use it for our benefit? And what does it matter to us that Christ Himself suffered?

WHY SUFFERING?

The first thing we need to remember when we are going through a trial is that there is Someone who knows what suffering is.

He has suffered more than any human being in history, and He is sitting up there in the third heaven. We can count on Him. No matter what, we will never experience a trial that goes beyond what we can handle. He will give us the strength and the way to bear it. He will never leave or forsake us.

In the book of Isaiah, Chapters 52 and 53, is an amazing description of what Christ went through. Isaiah 52:14 says, “So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.” Read the entire chapter of Isaiah 53. It shows how Christ suffered and died because we have sinned.

And often, there are trials that come upon us. But there is Someone up there who knows the reason why. Do you know what that reason is?

It is important to understand that although we sometimes have to suffer as a consequence of our own mistakes, even that is an act of love by the Almighty so we do not make those mistakes again.

But even if we have not made serious mistakes, we know we will still have to go through trials—just as Joseph did.

JOSEPH’S LOYALTY

We have the example of Joseph who honored his father in a way unlike all of his brothers. He was a faithful and loyal son to Jacob, and he feared God. Because of this, his brothers envied him. Maybe, of course, he also needed to be polished in his character—as we all do—and learn humility.

Joseph feared God, and he fled fornication and adultery. The result was he probably ended up ten years in jail, because he was 17 years old when he was sold to the Egyptians.

I remember telling my son that story when he was just a little boy, probably five or six years old. He said, “Papa, how come he obeys God, and that is the reward he gets? He is sent to prison.”

I had the joy of telling him, because I was the first one telling him this story in his life, “Wait, my son, this is not the end of the story.”

No matter what we are going through, this is not the end of the story. And, I had great pleasure in telling those true stories to him—like a tale our grandmothers used to tell before Mickey Mouse stole the attention of children through television, which is the babysitter now, telling our children all sorts of imagined stories that do not inspire us and change us like the true stories from God’s word!

WHY CHRIST SUFFERED

Scripture tells us: “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10). There you have the definition of the reason why suffering exists. The purpose is to achieve perfection of character.

I remember studying this with Dr. Meredith. How could Christ be made perfect through suffering if He was God become flesh? The wise explanation we receive from God’s Church is that *perfect* means *complete*. Christ had no defects of character, but there was something He had not experienced when He was the Word of God sitting from eternity with God.

They did not know what it is to suffer in the flesh as a human being. They had not experienced that, and they wanted to bring many sons to glory and perfect them through sufferings, so He offered to come not only to rescue us, but to become a human being like we are.

Christ was God become flesh, and after He suffered a new dimension was added to the godhead—the living experience of one having suffered as a human being in His own flesh, all the way to death. Christ knows what it is to suffer. He experienced it to the utmost that a human being could endure, and He overcame.

We must never forget that when we are going through a trial. There is no one who has escaped suffering or trials: “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted [tested], He is able to aid those who are tempted [tested]” (Hebrews 2:17–18).

“For in that He himself has suffered, being tempted [tested], He is able to aid those who are tempted [tested]” (v. 18). Those words are absolute. They will be true for eternity.

Christ had to learn obedience by overcoming the flesh. He had to learn to obey God’s law in the flesh, because He was

not tempted “as we are” (Hebrew 4:15), when He was a Spirit being. He was perfect from eternity, but for us He needed to go through a human experience and learn to overcome human flesh, and He did. He set that example for us.

TESTED IN THE WILDERNESS

Many of us have gone through several tests in the Church of God that can be compared to the trials that Israel went through in the wilderness. God tested the Israelites in the wilderness to humble them and to remind them that they were made of the dust of the earth. That is what we are, humanly.

The word humble comes from humility. Humility comes from *humus*, in Latin, which means “dirt.” So, a humble person is a person who is aware that he or she is but dirt of the earth. That is humility. It is a sound perception of reality. That is the only way we can be pleasing to God, because He will exalt the humble to His own glory. That is what He wants.

And, when we are going through a trial, acknowledge God’s hand in it. “Father, here I am. I will wait for You until You decide to take me out of this.” It will be His decision. So, this is one method that does not fail. When we are tested, and we experience that we are from the dust of the earth, then reality comes to us.

The trials we endure will teach us to cast all our care upon Christ. He wants to teach us to depend on Him. God also wants to teach us how to develop the faith of Jesus Christ, casting all our care upon Him, for He cares for us.

God allowed the ancient Israelites to learn through suffering, because He wanted to know what was in their hearts. He also wanted them to learn that man should not live by bread alone, but by “every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Their garments did not wear out in 40 years. That means God was watching even the slightest details. Although He allows people to suffer, His eyes are still watching, and He takes care of them. He let them get hungry sometimes, but He did not starve them.

God led Israel through “that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water, who brought water for you out of the flinty rock” (Deuteronomy 8:15).

It is amazing to realize that when God was testing them, He was taking care of them at the same time. He is doing the same with us today. He will never forsake us. He will never neglect us. And, God gives us the strength to keep going in the wilderness of this world.

“You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. Therefore you

shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him” (Deuteronomy 8:5–6).

CHARACTER MUST BE PERFECTED

Sometimes we must suffer the consequences of our own mistakes. But even this can be seen as an act of love by the Almighty, helping us learn a hard lesson so we do not make the same mistakes again. Yet, even if we have not made serious mistakes, we know we will have to go through trials.

Why? We know that there will be suffering because God wants us to perfect our character so our minds and hearts are in tune and in harmony with His law—law that expresses His character.

During the time David was tested, God was perfecting his character, because He knew He was going to make David king over Israel. It is not that by sinning David caused every trial he endured. God allowed David to suffer precisely because He wanted to see David perfected. He let David know what it was like to live one step from death, having to depend on God day and night. God wants us to have His holy and righteous character, and God Himself is love. So, we need to have the

perspective that God is love even when He loves us by letting us grow through suffering.

Think, too, of Joseph. His case was very similar. He was a well-behaved young man. He obeyed God, yet he ended up in prison for probably the same length of time—ten years—as David. Joseph was 30 years old when he became the Prime Minister of Egypt, but his character had been made ready by then, and he made it all the way to the end until he was 110 years old. And, in doing so, Joseph saw his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He had a tremendous, wonderful, beautiful life because God prepared him so he could take the blessings.

Consider also the case of Job. Even Job’s friends were there accusing him constantly, but despite their accusations they could not find anything he had actually done to break God’s law. God even told Job to pray for his friends, because they did not know how to speak of God and of Job (Job 42:7–8). They were wrong, but they thought Job had done something wrong. On the one hand, Job said, “I haven’t.” His friends said, “Yes you have.” Only God knew who was right!

Job was righteous in his own eyes. God needed to take that away, so He could dwell in Job’s heart. Job would become a temple of God’s Spirit. But, before his trials, he was self-righteous. God needed to perfect Job’s character, to humble him, so He could dwell in Job, to prepare him for the Kingdom of God.

God wants to make sure that we, too, as His firstfruits, make it into the Kingdom and fulfill our calling. So, we should be glad for our trials and tests. God wants to test us now to see if we are faithful in what is little. And, if He sees



that we are faithful in what is little, that will be enough for God to know that we will also be faithful forever in big things.

A WAY OF ESCAPE

We have an absolute promise from God that also helps us to have courage and never, never faint in our race toward the Kingdom of God. We read, “No temptation [trial or test] has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted [tested] beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

This is an absolute promise, and it will help us overcome any trial. Sometimes, when we finish a trial, we enjoy the fruit of peacefulness and joy. Of course, sometimes I say to myself, “Get ready for the next one!”

REFINED LIKE SILVER

Now, look at a tremendous analogy God uses. “The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the hearts” (Proverbs 17:3). We already know that God’s purpose is to perfect our hearts, to bring us to glory. He gives us the support of His own Son, and of He, Himself, who listens to Him. And He gives us the promise that He will never let the fire of test go beyond what we can take. “For you, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined” (Psalm 66:10).

Malachi 3:3 uses this same analogy. “He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver; that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.” Again, what is the end? To perfect us. The refining will produce a heart that will be acceptable to God, when the laws of God are written in our minds and hearts.

Many of you may know the story of three ladies who used to sit together and do Bible study. They read this verse from Malachi, and asked, “How does this happen?” So, one of the ladies said, “I know a man in town who is a silversmith. He is a refiner of silver. I will go and ask him how he refines silver.” So, she went to the silversmith and asked, “Sir, how do you refine silver?”

He told her, “I have to sit down.” And she was quite surprised, because it said here, “He will sit as a refiner.” “I have to sit down and keep my eyes constantly on the metal and have a control of intensity of the fire, because there are two things. If the fire is too intense or I leave it longer than it should be, it will spoil the metal. So my eyes have to be always fixed on this metal so it doesn’t spoil, so I don’t lose the precious metal.”

The lady was quite impressed. As she started walking away, she thought of something. She turned around and asked, “Sir, but how do you know when you have to stop the fire and that the fire has given the type of refinement you need?” And he said, “When I see my face reflected on the metal, I know it is ready.”

Yes, God is transferring His character to us through trials. That is an amazing concept: “When His character is reflected

in His child.” He will never let you go beyond what you can take, and He will do all He can to see His character become visible in each of us.

WHY FIERY TRIALS?

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you” (1 Peter 4:12). “But rejoice... that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy” (v. 13). We must always remember the end result of enduring a trial—a tremendous blessing.

After you were baptized, do you remember how you felt when you faced your first test? Many of us asked, “What did I do to deserve this?” Certainly, God will bring us into trials because of our sins (Psalm 38:1–3). “For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness” (vv. 4–5). What was this trial? From the description of his wounds, David likely had some kind of disease.

This is very different from what David described in Psalm 18, where he had kept himself from iniquity and been recompensed by God (vv. 20–24). God was preparing David to be the king over the Kingdom of Israel.

So, just like each of us, David underwent trials. Does it matter which trials came about because of his own sins, and which came because of time and chance, or because God was specifically preparing him for his future? No! And we must not fear. Since God is love, we know that there may be trials even if we do not sin. And if we do sin, there will be trials, so we will not sin again if we recognize our fault and repent. This is a very important perspective.

SEEK GOD’S HELP

What happens when we are in a trial? We are forced to seek God. We fast more often. We pray more often, maybe seven times a day instead of three, and day and night we will be begging God for His help. We will be looking for God, and looking to see what happens—how He will use our circumstances to transform our character.

When we pray, we know we have access to the third heaven. We have access to the presence of God. We can perceive His presence, though not with full clarity just yet. We cannot see His face, because no human being can see Him and live, but we can perceive Him through the Spirit. And our trials will force us to seek Him more often!

In Scripture we read, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image” (2 Corinthians 3:18). That is the ultimate reward, if we patiently endure our suffering and allow it to shape our character so that at the resurrection we can be born into the very Family of God for all eternity! ■

THE POWER OF MUSIC

By Karl Beyersdorfer

Why do we have song services in God's Church every Sabbath? That question may never have occurred to you, but over the years I have heard people wonder about this—and some have even said that the song service was the greatest waste of time they could imagine! Yet it is very interesting that, if you read the history of the Church of God going all the way back to the time of the early apostles, there was consistently an element of musical content to Sabbath services—and, if you go back further than that, you find there was even in Old Testament times a major emphasis on music among God's people.

I heard one man tell me, one time: "I don't come to Sabbath services to learn to be a Caruso." He was right. It is not that there is anything wrong with musical training, but there can be something about voices that are trained so precisely that something special disappears, and it is almost like you are listening to a machine or to a performance rather than to the heart of the person who is singing. So, I have always enjoyed the singing of God's people more than the more professionalized singing of so-called "musical experts" who are in the world.

THREE KINDS OF MUSIC

You will find as you go to the Scriptures that there are three kinds of music. The strongest emphasis in the Scriptures is on sacred, worshipful music. A second kind of music is mentioned from time to time—music that is entertaining in nature, to lift your mood, perhaps to work by. And there is a third kind of music mentioned from time to time—degenerate music. Certainly, if you notice what is around you in the world, there seems today to be more degenerate music in our culture by far than there ever has been. Then again, there have always been "bar songs" and other entertainments that were sarcastic and derogatory toward other people, values and ideas.

Why is this important? Whether we know it or not, the music we listen to affects the way we think. It affects our attitude. It affects our view of life. It affects how we relate to other people. Music has a power that goes far beyond noise. It is not just noise with a tune—it is a lot more than that.

Consider that there are always people who resent being told what to do. Perhaps in today's society they would rather not work, and they might not have been taught to do their share at home and to be responsible toward their families and communities. When such people are told what to do, they may often give a sassy, sarcastic answer and refuse to do what they are told. And, sure enough, there is music that supports, encourages and bolsters this attitude!



Some of you reading this may think of today's music and its coarse lyrics, disrespectful to all sorts of values that our society used to take for granted. But I can remember even 40 years ago there was one very popular song in which the singer made light of a woman's infidelities. People loved that song. It was a top hit on the radio. But

what does that attitude, that lyric, tell you about that singer's view of sexuality? And, since then, it has only grown worse—today, it is almost commonplace to hear songs that advocate rape and violence toward women. You cannot escape the fact that this kind of attitude in music shapes people, and changes them.

It is interesting that the U.S. Army blames the conduct of its soldiers, including the increasing incidents of rape and sexual assault, on the music the recruits are growing up with. And right in the middle of Genesis 4, the chapter showing the condition of the earth before the great flood, there is a verse or two about music. You see, when people want to reject God's values and embrace sin, one of the tools that is very handy to promote that way of thinking, that way of living, is music. We can infer from the account in Genesis that, before the flood, music had become so perverted that it helped to lull the sense of alarm in most people's minds as they saw the world around them separating itself from God and His way. Yes, this is not something new—throughout the history of mankind, people have used music to encourage and support evil.

Ezekiel 28 reminds us of just how musical Satan the devil is. God created Lucifer with tremendous musical skill, but it became perverted. And, interestingly, many of the top rock music performers have acknowledged that they are influenced by spiritual powers as they compose

their lyrics and their music. Yes, evil spirits know the power of music, and we should, too. Music can have a wonderful power, but however it is used it is a tool of power.

MAKE MELODY IN YOUR HEART

We read the Apostle Paul's words to the Ephesian brethren: "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18–19). Yes, sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord! Make music in your hearts!

At times, the sacred music that comes from the Scriptures—such worshipful music—can stick with us so that it goes through our mind and heart over and over and over again. When it does so, it has the maximum power to change us. We read in Colossians 3:15–16: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Today, so many people fill their minds with all sorts of wrong attitudes through music. But we can use this principle to improve ourselves, and to become more thankful instead of more sarcastic and resentful! Paul mentioned this idea a number of times in his writing. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (v. 17). Yes, singing is a way to give thanks!

Our music comes before the throne of God. The New Testament should not be ignored in a person's study of music. Even in heaven God is surrounded by music. We see this in chapter 5 of the book of Revelation. Revelation is a rich source of understanding of music. We read: "And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.' Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (vv. 9–11).

If you multiply that out, that is a choir of a hundred million angels. Amazing! In the human realm, we have four-part harmony or eight-part harmony, but when you

consider the male side of the chorus and the female side with 100,000,000 angels, how many parts are there to be sung? It is easy to imagine that it will be far, far more complex and wonderful than what we see from human singers. We have as human four-part harmony the soprano, alto, tenor and bass parts. But how many parts will the angels sing? What a special treat that will be!

WILL YOU SING?

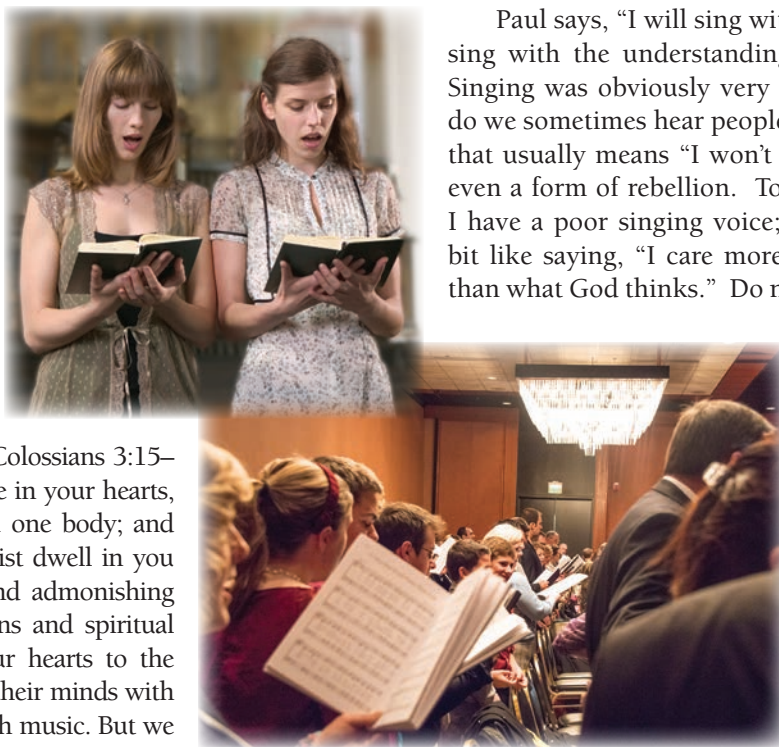
Paul says, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding" (1 Corinthians 14:15). Singing was obviously very important to him. So why do we sometimes hear people say, "I can't sing"? Really, that usually means "I won't sing." It can be vanity, or even a form of rebellion. To say, "I won't sing because I have a poor singing voice; I can't carry a tune," is a bit like saying, "I care more about what people think than what God thinks." Do not be embarrassed. Sing! If

you make an effort, you will improve—but even if you do not improve, God appreciates the effort.

There was a time, before radio, television and the Internet, when singing was an element of almost every family's entertainment. Singing, not just listening. Many family gatherings routinely included

singing. For much of mankind's history, it was that way. Music is important. Even at Sabbath services, music in its own way is just as important as what is spoken. Just as a sermonette man will pray about his sermonette, pray about your singing. Make sure God is involved, so it does not become a matter of vanity and self. And encourage whatever talent you have, or that you see in others. Remember that musical contributions come in various forms. Song leading is a major one at Sabbath services. Playing the piano to accompany the hymns is another. Pray for those who serve in these important ways. Encourage them when you can, and let them know you appreciate their efforts.

And remember the words of Colossians 3:16. Paul told us, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns." Teaching? Is music like a sermon? We may not normally think of it that way, but God tells us here that music has a power that goes beyond the spoken word. It is not that music may impart a point or teach a lesson the way you can in a sermon, but music does have a special impact. It should inspire us. It should stir us to action. Music has power. Find the music that stirs you in a godly way.



There are many songs in the Bible. A very quick review finds quite a range. Look in Exodus 15 and Numbers 21. Also Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, 1 Samuel 2 and 2 Samuel 22. The book of Revelation includes several. And, besides these, the whole book of Psalms consists of songs, as does the entirety of Song of Solomon. When I counted the number of songs in the Scriptures, I listed 171 songs filling 166 chapters.

Did you know that 4,000 out of the 38,000 adult male Levites mentioned in 1 Chronicles 23 actually devoted their lives to making music? Some sang solo, some sang in a choir. Some performed on instruments, and some taught music. Some composed music, and some led singing. Each served according to his gift and according to the need. We find that there was music in the temple every day (1 Chronicles 23:30).

Israel's sacred music became world-renowned, and even the heathen asked to hear the nation's beautiful music (Psalm 137). Music creates a mood or atmosphere that opens a way for people to commune with God (2 Kings 3:15). Interestingly, music was also taught at the college of the prophets (1 Samuel 10:5).

People sometimes say, "I don't have any part at Sabbath services. I don't have anything to do. You know, there are some who open and close with prayer.

all things unto God and the father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Maybe it is not natural for some of us to be musical, but God has designed all of us so that music has a potential to touch our minds and hearts. One of the interesting discoveries researchers have made about music in recent years is that when babies in the womb have a mother who sings, the newborn infants recognize those tunes and even the words they heard before they were born. And when those babies are colicky or cranky, they calm right down when they hear again a familiar song they had been hearing for their first nine months of life. They are comforted. The music they heard in the womb

changes their view of life. There is even research suggesting a similar effect when a father sings in the presence of his child in the womb. Certainly it would be a big mistake to underestimate



LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM, TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD (COLOSSIANS 3:16).

Others give sermons and sermonettes. Others lead songs. So what is there for me to do?" I think we miss something when we view it that way. Consider Psalm 138, "I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to You" (v. 1). That phrase is repeated a number of times in the Psalms. And it is an important part of the way that we approach God in music—to sing with no reservation, no compromise. That is no small part of what God values in each Sabbath service when we all come before Him!

A PRICELESS TREASURE!

Certainly, music that comes from the Scriptures has a great value. It is a treasure—something priceless. We need to appreciate the benefit of the spiritual tool of meditation, and music is a form of meditation, as we speak to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for

the power of music, and its part in the wonderful way God made us.

We read: "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away" (Psalm 148:1–6). This is a very interesting Psalm. It tells us that God made all His creation to praise Him—the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the birds of the air, the grass of the field, the trees that grow, the flowers, the vegetables. And, our potential fits in there, too. We were created to make music, and not just during our brief human lives. We are going to make music throughout eternity. So, sing out with your whole heart! ■

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE 2014

“...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12).

From May 5–7, 2014, 287 ministers, wives and ministerial widows from 20 countries around the globe gathered in Charlotte, North Carolina, for three days of fellowship and intensive instruction in the history, doctrine, practice and mission of the Living Church of God.

Attendees commented that the meetings were “informative” and “well-presented” and noted the “atmosphere of brotherly love” as one conference attendee described it.

The conference was well-appreciated by newly ordained men and by long-time pastors who noted and appreciated the differences between Dr. Meredith’s approach and that of some other Church of God leaders. Dr. Douglas S. Winnail, Director of Church Administration, expressed one of these key differences: “One who came from [another] group said what they heard there at a conference [stated by the group’s leader] was the ‘last word’ on any issue. By contrast, our message was to encourage our ministers to learn and grow in our understanding of various issues.”

Evangelist Richard Ames summed up his feelings as follows: “We are so thankful for our faithful brothers and sisters, ministers and wives, from around the world who are working tirelessly to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God blessed the conference with His presence and with a family atmosphere and with a spirit of love, purpose, unity, and mission. We will all go forward from this Conference with renewed zeal facing daily challenges with faith. And we are solidly dedicated to preparing the world, the church, and ourselves individually for the coming Kingdom of God.”

Dr. Roderick C. Meredith launched the conference by recounting key milestones in the modern history of the Church of God. His comments and directions throughout the conference were widely appreciated. As one pastor noted, “It appears that Christ is indeed preparing the Church through the HQ leadership. This will filter to the brethren as we pastors and elders are faithful in conveying the emphasis and the admonitions.”

Significantly, Dr. Meredith’s opening presentation was followed by a graduation ceremony for Living University. Seven of this year’s 14 graduates were present at the ceremony,

at which three students received the Associate of Theology Degree, three received the Diploma in Biblical Studies and one received the Certificate in Biblical Archaeology. Their presence reminded the gathered ministry that the Church has not only a past to be remembered, but a future for which we must prepare.

Living University Dean of Faculty Dr. Scott Winnail, an elder attending the conference, observed, “Conducting the Commencement Ceremony at the Ministerial Conference this year gave ministers and wives a true feel for the diversity of our students and programs, the exciting growth in our faculty, and

the future potential of ‘God’s College.’ The excitement and formality of the Ceremony also accentuated the fact that Living University is an important part of the Work.”

Monday afternoon’s session featured reports from Regional Pastors around the world. Evangelist Gerald Weston began the session by describing the encouraging growth of the Work in Canada, and that nation’s role in supporting the Work being done in countries as far away as China and India. Evangelist Bruce Tyler gave stirring news about the progress of the Work in Australasia, where he and other ministers travel to remote parts of Myanmar and Papua New Guinea to visit widely scattered brethren, as well as parts of the Philippines where the local brethren must contend with religious violence between Catholic and Muslim partisans.

Mr. Rod King reported on the Work’s progress in the United Kingdom and Europe. Mr. Mario Hernandez stirred the gathering with his news of breakthroughs in the Spanish-speaking areas, and of new projects taking root throughout his areas. Finally, Mr. Rod





McNair briefed the ministry on developments in the Caribbean.

Evangelist Richard Ames then gave an overview of developments in preaching the Gospel through the Internet,

television and print media. After years of fervent prayer by Dr. Meredith that the Work would be able to get a better time on WGN, one of the Church's most successful television airings, an opening at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays became available—and, we are now on major station BET at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesdays!

Dr. Meredith has recorded a number of new *Tomorrow's World* telecasts in the last few months, and has continued to preach the true Gospel powerfully despite the effects of his stroke. His programs continue to draw large audiences to receive a witness and hear the Truth proclaimed. New initiatives are underway to add fresh graphics and updated literature-offer promotions,

and the television staff is hard at work maintaining a standard of excellence that stands out among programs of its kind.

Mr. Ames also noted the growth of our Internet efforts, both in reach and in power, with the updated *TomorrowsWorld.org* Web site better suited than ever before to take advantage of modern Web technologies and mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets.

Additionally, a year after the redesign of the *Tomorrow's World* magazine, its May-June print run of 480,000 copies set a record and—despite needed renewals in several regions—Dr. Meredith is looking forward to seeing the subscriber list exceed half a million before too long.

After Mr. Ames' presentation, Messrs. Wyatt Ciesielka and Sheldon Monson gave stirring reports on Internet activity and Living Youth Programs developments. Then, Evangelist Douglas S. Winnail joined Dr. Meredith on the podium to talk about the high calling for which the assembled ministry has been chosen. Attendees heard powerful, motivating and helpful exhortations about the role played by elders, deacons and deaconesses in the Church.

Following a dinner buffet, Monday's activities closed with a presentation by Dr. Douglas Winnail on the “missing



years” of Jesus Christ, and on the spread of the Gospel after His resurrection.

On Tuesday morning, after a hearty breakfast buffet provided by the Renaissance Hotel, the ministry received valuable tips on speaking and further exhortations about the vital role of the ministry and the importance of living up to one’s calling.

Mr. Ames followed with an overview of “Fundamentals of Prophecy,” reminding attendees to stick to the “trunk of the tree” even as God grants the Church greater understanding of various prophetic details as we come closer to the end of this age.

Next came another informative presentation by Dr. Douglas Winnail, briefing the ministry about the current state of research and scholarship about the “lost” ten tribes of Israel and their migrations to northwest Europe and around the world.

Mr. Gene Hilgenberg, Area Pastor in Oklahoma, joined Dr. Scott Winnail after lunch for a presentation on “Becoming Better Teachers,” in which the two speakers—both university-trained lecturers—shared their professional insights into effective techniques and best practices for imparting information to listeners.

The material was widely appreciated by long-time and newer elders alike. As one participant noted, “The sessions covered very basic principles, which was very good; a reminder to the long-time ministry as well as to those recently ordained, thus the material was very solid.”

Essential and helpful information was then shared in a talk by Mr. Weston and Western U.S. Regional Pastor Dr. Jeffrey Fall, who offered insights on the vital role of a minister’s wife in her husband’s ministry.

Bringing the Tuesday afternoon sessions to a close, Dr. Fall and Dr. Douglas Winnail, recognizing the severity of problems that can affect even Church members in our troubled modern age, gave attendees important principles and techniques for dealing with addictions (ranging from pornography and sexual addictions, to gambling, to substance abuse issues such as tobacco use and alcohol abuse). During this presentation, wives and ministerial widows were offered a simultaneous break-out session, facilitated by Mrs. Carol Weston on topics relevant to their lives.

After another outstanding dinner buffet provided by the very helpful Renaissance Hotel staff, a presentation on “Technology and Ministry” drew a large audience. Area Pastors Jonathan McNair, Phil Sena and Adam West spoke from personal experience about webcasting services in their areas, and using computer technology both for managing their workflow and for connecting with the brethren and prospective members.

Dr. Meredith, Mr. Ames and Dr. Douglas Winnail began the Wednesday morning sessions by offering an overview of

various doctrinal issues about which pastors are commonly asked. The day continued with a session on “Lessons from Pastoring,” shared by Area Pastors Lambert Greer and Rand Millich. Assistant CAD Director Mr. Rod McNair noted, “I appreciated the sessions for their practical advice and fresh perspectives. The lessons passed on from these men’s decades of pastoral experience are very helpful to the ministry.”

Dr. Douglas Winnail continued with important information on professional development—physical, mental and spiritual—for the ministry.

As one participant observed, “It was spiritually inspiring, receiving what we need in these trying times—so educational biblically, and with information on many everyday happenings in our lives.”

Wednesday afternoon meetings ended with a stirring presentation by Dr. Meredith, reminding everyone present that the Living Church of God is carrying out a vital commission

given by Jesus Christ, and that the Living Church of God is poised more than ever to do a powerful end-time Work according to God’s will.

Throughout the conference, the atmosphere was of learning and of unity. As Mr. Dexter Wakefield, Director

of Finance and Operations for LCG, noted: “I was most impressed by the unity of the ministry behind Dr. Meredith’s leadership, and it will be a solid platform for growth in the future.”

Three days of information-packed meetings were capped by the Wednesday evening dinner-dance, where ministers from six continents had a final opportunity to socialize together before beginning to return home Wednesday night and Thursday morning.

The Church only holds these “General Conferences” for the entire ministry every two or three years, so they play a role of vital importance in maintaining the brotherly contacts between ministers, as well as providing special opportunity to refresh knowledge and learn key lessons for their ministry directly from Dr. Meredith and other leaders. As Mr. Ames observed, “Dr. Meredith consistently points us all to the Living Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. And it was obvious during the conference that Christ was leading Dr. Meredith to inform, instruct, and inspire us all. His 61½ years of experience as an evangelist of Jesus Christ is continually giving the ministry—and the Church at-large—the powerful kind of inspired leadership we read about in the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul. Our prayers are with him daily!”

The Church Administration Department is hearing many positive comments about the 2014 Ministerial Conference, and it is clear that many who attended are already looking forward to the next!

—LCG Editorial Staff





Is ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE ETERNAL?



By Donald Roach

Is God limited? God says, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it” (Psalm 81:10). How wide do you open your mouth to God? Of course, we must often do our part. But even in doing our part, God can show us what our part is and how to do it. Just how real is God to you and me? Let us consider the question, “Is anything too hard for the Eternal?” The Bible says that “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). So, we will look in the Word of God at a few examples.

SARAH GIVES BIRTH AT AGE 90

We read in Genesis 18:1–2, “Then the LORD appeared to him [Abraham] by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground.” “Then they [Christ and two angels] said to him, ‘Where is Sarah your wife?’ So he said, ‘Here, in the tent.’ And He said, ‘I will *certainly* return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.’ (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing” (vv. 9–11). Remember that Sarah was now 89 years old. “Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, ‘After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?’ And the LORD said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh, saying, “Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?” *Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will*

return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah *shall* have a son” (vv. 12–14). “*Is anything too hard for the LORD?*” Only you can answer that question for your life. Christ says that He will deal with you according to *your* faith, not the faith of your parents, children, or siblings, but “according to *your* faith let it be to you” (Matthew 9:29). What is another Bible definition of sin? “*Whatever* is not from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). Well, at age 90, Sarah *did* have a son! “*Is anything too hard for the LORD?*”

PETER WALKS ON WATER

Now look at another event that is just *not supposed to happen!* Matthew 14:22–24 states, “Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.”

How often in life has our boat been tossed about? What do we do then? Do we lose our cool? Do we panic? Do we jump overboard? Do we say, “I am out of here”? “Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear” (vv. 25–26). Just imagine, twelve grown men, including Peter, crying out for fear like little children! What fearful cowards we humans are! Truly, God has called the weak of the world (1 Corinthians 1:26–29). We must always give God

the credit for our strengths, talents, and accomplishments. We read in Matthew 14:27, “But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘*Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.*’” What kind of advice is that to give in a life threatening situation? The Apostle Paul was not the only one to tell us to rejoice *always* (1 Thessalonians 5:16). Here we see Jesus telling His disciples the same thing, *even in a life-threatening situation*, “Be of good cheer.” Are you of good cheer? The world is filled with miserable people. They find life a boring drag. But, Jesus does not want His children living that way. He came to bring abundant living (John 10:10). The joy of the Eternal is our *strength* (Nehemiah 8:10). That is how God wants us to be. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Neither does God want us to be fearful, even when in His holy, perfect, righteous presence. Above all else, God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). The fearful we are told will not be in God’s Kingdom (Revelation 21:8). We must replace our fearfulness with the fear of God, which is deep reverence, awe and respect for God.

“And Peter answered Him and said, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’ So He said, ‘Come.’ And when Peter had come down out of the boat, *he walked on the water* to go to Jesus” (Matthew 14:28–29). That is just not supposed to happen. Is anything too hard for the Eternal? “But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me’” (v. 30)! Peter had taken his mind off of God. He started to dwell on the around, instead of on God. That is what also takes us under, when we take our minds off of the great God and His almighty power. But Peter knew where to go for help. He cried out for Jesus to help him. Do you ever *cry out* for help like Peter? Or, do you just grin and bear it? Are you macho? Even Jesus had to *cry out* for help (Hebrews 5:7). We are living at the end of a very evil age. *Not a one of us* is going to just stroll into the Kingdom of God; it is through much tribulation that we enter God’s Kingdom (Acts 14:21–22)! We *must* lean on God.

Now, can Jesus really help us, even in life-threatening situations? “And *immediately* Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt’” (Matthew 14:31)? When we take our eyes off of God, doubt creeps in. We look at ourselves, others, the around, but help comes from God, not from here below. God certainly at times uses others. But even then, He is the Source. All good things come from God (James 1:17). And yes, sometimes the deliverance is instantaneous. “And when

they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God’” (Matthew 14:32–33). What a tremendous miracle! The wind ceased at that very instant! Is anything at all too hard for the Eternal? *Anything at all?*

JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE

We will conclude with one more miracle. Mark 11:12 states, “Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.” Jesus was very human, with actual hunger. No wonder He can relate to us so very, very well! He is a terrific High Priest! Always run into the loving arms of Jesus with everything. Always remember, help is available. And we are not talking about just any kind of cheap help! We are talking about God-help, help from the God Who made the universe. He can provide that help directly or through human instruments. But, *God* always gets the credit. “And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, ‘Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.’ And His disciples heard it” (vv. 13–14). Some feel that all anger is sin. The Bible has no such teaching. It is very possible, as we see here, to be angry and yet not sin (Ephesians 4:26). Christ even looked at His audience of Pharisees in the synagogue with anger. He was grieved by the hardness of their hearts (Mark 3:5).

“Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.’ So Jesus answered and said to them, ‘*Have faith in God.* For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, “Be removed and be cast into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have *whatever* he says” (Mark 11:20–23). Jesus gave the key—we must not doubt! We too often are riddled with doubt. Like Peter walking on water, we take our eyes off of God and look at the around. But, it has always been and always will be *according to our faith!* No area is off limits with God. Mark 11:24 provides the assurance, “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, *believe* that you receive them, and you *will* have them.” As long as we do not “ask amiss” (James 4:3), we *will* receive! We should never doubt or underestimate God’s will in our lives! ■

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Woman to Woman

By Elizabeth Stafford

WAITING ON GOD

I hate waiting. Whether I am stuck in traffic, in a long checkout line, or at a doctor or dentist's office, it is totally frustrating. I am fairly sure I am not alone in this. In fact, I have never met another woman who enjoys long commutes, grocery lines or traffic jams. However, most women I have known in the Church have come up with various ways to redeem the time, whether by listening to a sermon CD or educational radio in the car, engaging in good conversation, or reading helpful books (paper or on an iPad) while seated and waiting. Even so, at the end of the day, we still hate to wait.

An expression we have all probably heard often is that something is actually “worth waiting for.” For me, that would be especially true of my children. After more than 20 hours of *hard* labor, and nine long months of either nausea or back pain and heartburn, along with other *not-to-be-named* trials of pregnancy, both of my children were **definitely** worth waiting for. And our Father in heaven is patiently waiting on each and every one of us, too. As the Apostle Peter wrote, God is, “longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). It is hard to imagine that our Father has been waiting patiently to see us in His Family since the foundations of the earth, when He determined to give up His only Son for all of us. He has confidence that we are worth waiting for!

As women of God, we are all trying to develop the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, which includes being longsuffering or patient in our daily lives—not always an easy task. Every day we are tested in this area, whether by our husbands, our children, our families or our work, or simply by our own imperfect human nature. It is a constant battle. If you are like me, you have proven to yourself, over and over again, that no women (or men) can do this on their own strength. Rather, we can only make any lasting change in becoming more patient or longsuffering by seeking daily the help of Christ, who

strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). I have come to see that the one thing **most** worth waiting for can sometimes be the **hardest** of all—that is, to wait on God.

What does it mean for a woman to wait on God? Basically it means that she is prayerfully trusting His timing, whether it be regarding when He chooses to intervene and save us out of our trials, or how quickly He chooses to bless us with certain blessings that are desires of our heart. Most of the time, I find that my timing

would be much faster than God's. I think we probably all want to be saved from trials and given the

desires of our heart much more quickly than God knows is best for our spiritual growth.

BIBLICAL WOMEN WHO WAITED

Looking into a couple of the biblical examples of godly women, I am encouraged to know that we are not alone. Abraham's wife Sarah set us a wonderful example as a submissive wife (whose daughters we are spiritually, according to 1 Peter 3:6). However, Sarah had a very difficult time waiting on God to provide her with a son, in His perfect timing. Becoming impatient, as we often do, she thought she would go ahead and do things her own way, and she even talked her husband into her idea.

The book of Genesis describes how Sarai decided that she thought God was restraining her from having children, and in her impatience and human reasoning, she decided to talk her husband into having a child through her Egyptian maid (Genesis 16:1-3). When we look at the results of that decision, we know why God gives us these examples to learn from, because



the resulting family discord and eventually violence and wars between Sarah's descendants and Hagar's can still be viewed in the Middle East to this very day. I am sure we can all look at our own lives and see so many times when we “got ahead” of God when it came to something we thought was good and that we wanted very much to have or to do for either ourselves or our family. We can also undoubtedly see the wonderful results that came during those times *when we did wait on God* to bless us, or our family members, in a particular way. One of my favorite scriptures in this context, is in Proverbs 10:22: “The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.” One way we can know that something we want comes from God and is according to His will, is when there is no sorrow as a result of having it, either then or later.

Sometimes, it is not just for ourselves that we need to patiently wait on God to provide. We also need to wait on Him to intervene for, or bless in special ways, either family members or close friends. In reading over the account of Sarah's daughter-in-law Rebekah, in Genesis 27, we see that she had the same tendency as Sarah, in that she chose to make things happen herself. Often, we will want to fix things we feel are unfair, and be “large and in charge.” One lesson I took here was that Rebekah did not ask her

of seeing her son married and later spending time with her little grandchildren during their formative years! What a valuable lesson for all of us who are mothers of mature children, to be willing to fully trust that God will bless and intervene for our grown children, and that we can safely wait for His perfect timing in their lives.

WAITING FOR GOD'S INTERVENTION

I know from hundreds of conversations that so very many of us are waiting for God to intervene in serious trials in our lives or our families' lives. Some of us have to live alone, or with a hostile husband or family members. Others are in dire financial or health trials. Many of our lovely and dedicated ladies are waiting on God to provide them with a godly husband, a less stressful job, or to bless them with children. What are the blessings of waiting on God? Enormous and beautiful promises are given to us in the Word of God concerning those who are willing to trust in God's timing and His will instead of their own. One of the most encouraging of these promises to us is found in Isaiah 40:31: “But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they

WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF WAITING ON GOD? ENORMOUS AND BEAUTIFUL PROMISES ARE GIVEN TO US IN THE WORD OF GOD CONCERNING THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO TRUST IN GOD'S TIMING AND HIS WILL INSTEAD OF THEIR OWN.

husband Isaac before acting. She probably knew he would not go along with her plan. Our husbands can give us perspective and help keep us from making foolish decisions in most cases, and they are a safety net that God has put into place for our protection. Rebekah, however—instead of waiting for God to give the birthright blessings to her son Jacob—intervened in the process because she thought she was right about her son's character and that he should have the firstborn blessings. However, Jacob was not at all ready *at that time* for what his mother tried to “get” for him by disguising him and fooling her husband into giving him the blessing. In Genesis 27:12, when Jacob himself was hesitant to disguise himself lest he receive a curse, Rebekah would not listen to him either, but instead told him, “Let your curse be on me, my son.” How easy it is, once we have decided something for ourselves, not to listen to others—and how very sadly this turned out for Rebekah in the end. She basically lost her son as a result of her deception, because Jacob had to flee for his very life and live far away from family and friends for many, many years.

Another consequence of Rebekah's unwillingness to wait on God included her missing out on the great blessing

shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” In Lamentations 3:25 we are also given the assurance that, “The LORD is good to those who wait for Him.” When we are worn out by the daily stresses we all face from work, family or friends, it is reassuring to know that we can find, “Rest in the LORD” while we, “wait patiently for Him” (Psalm 37:7). During the low times, we as women, created to be sensitive and empathetic, can so easily become saddened or depressed by the large and small stresses of life.

Yet, we can also take heart from the words of David, who himself suffered many trials and loss of children, yet still encouraged us in Psalm 27:14: “Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!” We all want to be mature Christian women, and to accomplish this we have to follow the instruction in James 1:4: “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete [mature, of full age], lacking nothing.”

Let us continue to help each other to look forward to the day when all the patient waiting will be over. We have been promised: “To those who eagerly *wait for Him* He will appear a second time.... for salvation” (Hebrews 9:28). ■

Prophecy Marches On!

Continued from page 5

certain “tolerance” for the economic growth which a kind of capitalistic system allows, but the nation’s leaders have not abandoned their hardline communist approach. They have not decided to “love” America! Rather, China is preparing one of the most powerful military forces in modern history. And they are holding American debt totaling hundreds of billions of dollars, which they can decide to “cash in” at a time most catastrophic for America. Meanwhile, China also regularly threatens to cross the Taiwan straits and forcibly reclaim sovereignty over that island nation. Yes, as I have written to our *Tomorrow’s World* readers, China will not be the ultimate economic superpower of the 21st century. But it will play a vital role in end-time events, surely involved, for example, in the prophesied 200-million-man army coming from the east. China will be a powerful enemy of the United States right up to the latter’s final decline.

THE END OF THE AGE

Obviously, there are dozens of other circumstances clearly showing us—directly or indirectly—that the very end of this age is truly at hand. Brethren, this ought to inspire us

all, as our constant prayer should be: “Thy Kingdom come.” Jesus Himself told us what to do as we watch these end-time events: “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. Then He spoke to them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away’” (Luke 21:28–33).

End-time prophecy is certainly a “work in progress.” I hope this brief review of many of the “key” happenings affecting prophecy can help all of us realize the tremendous breadth of prophetic happenings across the entire spectrum of world events. May this help all of us to pray more fervently: “Thy Kingdom come.” And may it help all of us to “watch” more intelligently, to be more perceptive of how God is working out His great plan on this earth, and to realize how very close we are to the final realization of our hopes and dreams for *Tomorrow’s World*. As the Apostle John wrote: “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly’” (Revelation 22:20). ■

Is Our Lord Delaying His Coming?

Continued from page 2

that Christ’s coming is “even at the doors”! Until then, each of us must fervently concentrate on *reflecting Jesus Christ* in everything we think, say and do. For Almighty God is *not nearly* as concerned with our “figuring out” the exact date of Christ’s coming as He is in whether our **whole beings** are involved in giving our lives to Him, *surrendering* completely to Him so that Christ may live His life within us through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20). *That* is God’s primary concern. Frankly, nearly *every single one* of the men I have known who have gotten *too involved* with dates and chronology have had severe problems in their Christian lives—and many of them have *completely fallen away* from the Truth!

So let us truly “walk with God” with all our hearts, minds and souls. Let us be grateful for each day we have to serve God and our fellow man. As the Apostle Paul, I would urge all of you in this fashion: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing” (Philippians 2:12–14).

We must never be involved in “murmuring” and “disputing” and complaining about the fact that Almighty

God is giving human beings *more time* to write the lessons of human suffering and for His *own children* to “work out” our own salvation before Christ returns. Rather, we must be glad that God has called us now: “*Rejoice* in the Lord always. Again I will say, *rejoice!* Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4–7). As we “walk” with God and experience the **joy** of His salvation in knowing Him, knowing our purpose, and deeply knowing and *experiencing* the life of Jesus Christ within us, we will know that we have much need to be grateful, to be *joyful*, and to **worship** our Creator.

Those of us who have been in God’s Church for a long time need to be *very grateful* for **all the time** we have been given to learn the lessons of life and to *serve more* during these years God has granted. And we need to zealously *use the talents* our Father has given us to serve our Creator, to serve our fellow man and to *do His Work* over the next several years—*however long* it is until Christ’s feet are again upon this earth!



SOUTH CAROLINA SPRING HOLY DAY WEEKEND

Over 160 brethren and guests came together in Greenville, South Carolina for the seventh Upstate South Carolina Spring Holy Day Weekend. Visitors came from as far as Saskatchewan, Canada.

Attendees were inspired by two sermons from the Presiding Evangelist of the Living Church of God, Dr. Roderick C. Meredith. One sermon, during the Sabbath, was on the book of 1 John and the other for the Last Day of Unleavened Bread was on “Put Out the Evil Heart of Unbelief.” Area Pastor Ron Poole spoke on “A 24/7 Way of Life” on the Holy Day. Dr. Richard Franz of the Atlanta, Georgia congregation gave a Friday evening Bible Study on “The Holy Land and the Ministry of Christ,” and Anderson elder Manuel Burdette conducted a Bible Question and Answer Session on Sabbath morning.

Early arrivals enjoyed a 14-mile round trip bike ride from downtown Greenville to Furman University on the Swamp Rabbit Trail. A highlight of the weekend is always the Saturday evening dance, with local member Robert Pitts serving as deejay. This year’s theme was The Black Hat Ball, and many were adorned with black hats for the occasion.

On Sunday, runners gathered early to compete in the 5K road race. This year’s winners were Tyler Wayne and Michelle Meredith. Softball has always been an enjoyable activity at the weekend. This year we had four teams competing and the team captained by Scott Lyons won the playoff game. A number of brethren enjoyed the stroll to Falls Park and the Liberty Bridge on Sunday afternoon. Seeing God’s handiwork in the beauty

of spring blossoms and the Reedy River Falls has been an inspiring part of this Holy Day weekend each year.

We were blessed with God’s intervention in giving us sunshine for Sunday’s recreational activities and helping multiply the food for the picnic. We are thankful for how God has blessed this weekend for the past seven years, and especially for His providing the meeting space at the premier convention hotel in Greenville, the Hyatt Regency, for free. The setting and the beauty of downtown Greenville have inspired guests for years—and we hope will continue to do so for years to come. Most of all, we have felt God’s inspiration in the messages presented and in the fellowship of the brethren.

—Manuel Burdette

Births

Kirk and Emily Prince of the Kansas City, Missouri, congregation are happy to announce the birth of their first child, *Eden Grace Prince*. She was born February 10, weighed 8 pounds 5 ounces, and measured 19¾ inches long. Her grandparents are Randy and Carol Shippy of Joplin, Missouri and Phil and Marlys Sandilands of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Adam and Tiffany Walker of the Des Moines, Iowa, congregation are very happy to announce the birth of their first child, *Declan Asher Walker*. He was born Thursday, March 20, weighed 8 pounds, 9.6 ounces and was 22 inches long. Declan’s grandparents are Jeff and Terri Walker of Clive, Iowa, and Rand and Gloria Millich of Grain Valley, Missouri.

Upcoming TOMORROW'S WORLD Telecasts

JULY 3-9	WILL THE BEAST RISE IN EUROPE?
JULY 10-16	THE SOON-COMING UTOPIA
JULY 17-23	THE SABBATH CONTROVERSY
JULY 24-30	THE WORLD OF ANGELS AND DEMONS
JULY 31-AUGUST 6	HOW TO WATCH WORLD EVENTS
AUGUST 7-13	SEVEN KEYS TO ANSWERED PRAYER
AUGUST 14-20	ANYTHING GOES
AUGUST 21-27	GOD'S MASTER PLAN

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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

In **LOVING** Memory

Mr. Alldon Graham, 79, of Savannah, Georgia, died May 26, 2013 at his home, surrounded by his loving family. He was a faithful member of God's Church for many years. Mr. Graham is survived by his wife of nearly 57 years, Sarah Graham; two daughters, Benilda Harden and Phyllis Harper; and a son, Ronny Graham. Funeral services were conducted May 29 in Savannah.

Mrs. Lila Johanna Stein died peacefully in her favorite chair on December 23, 2013. Mrs. Stein had a full and meaningful life, five years short of a century. At 95 years old, and a member of God's Church for 47 years, she never lost sight of the "hope that lies within," looking forward to God's Kingdom. She was a deaconess and the widow of her late husband, Howard Stein, who was an elder in God's Church. Mrs. Stein is the mother of sons Howard, Gary and Terry and daughter Sherry Stein Winnail. She also had ten grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren, all of whom loved her dearly. She will be greatly missed.

Mr. Johan Kisina, of the Sultan Hamud congregation in Kenya, died January 17 after a short battle with typhoid. He was 47. Mr. Kisina is survived by his wife, Catherine Wavinya Kisina, and three children, Morris Mutava, Lillian Nduku and Olive Musau. Mr. David Mwanzia conducted a memorial service on January 22 at his home village of Sultan Hamud.

Mr. Joe Wilks, age 75, of the Calgary, Alberta, congregation died on March 5 after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Mr. Wilks was born in August 1938, baptized in 2010 and lived a full and active life. He is survived by his wife Mary; son Dwayne and daughter-in-law Sarah; daughter Donna and son-in-law Steve; and granddaughters Brayley and Kaelyn. A memorial service was conducted on March 13. Mr. Wilks will be greatly missed by family, friends and brethren.

Norma Abood, age 92, passed away peacefully at home with family in Garland, Texas, on March 10. Born in Crowell, Texas in 1921, she was the oldest of four children. Mrs. Abood became acquainted with the Truth in 1972 when her son heard a broadcast by one of the Armstrongs and said, "This is what we have been looking for." While she was a bit skeptical at first, she and her son's family began attending the Church of God and studied the teachings diligently. She was baptized in the mid-1970s and she always said that the Bible was opened up to her understanding in a way she had never had before. Mrs. Abood was preceded in death by her parents, her brother and her son. She is survived by daughter Patti Forsness of the Dallas congregation, a daughter-in-law, four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, four great-great grandchildren, two sisters and numerous nieces, nephews,

cousins and loving friends. In addition to her family, Norma's faith and Church family meant everything to her. She was known and described as generous, kind and classy. She had a great sense of humor, and loved helping people.

Mr. Bernhard Leuker, age 53, of the Calgary Alberta, congregation died on March 19 after a long and courageous battle with various health issues. Mr. Leuker was born in Germany in 1960, made Canada his home in 1979, and was baptized in 1997. He is survived by his wife Mechtild, son Stephan and daughter-in-law Kelsey, son Markus, brother Frank (Birgit) and sister Elisabeth (Wilfried). A memorial service was conducted on March 30. Mr. Leuker will be greatly missed by family, friends and brethren.

Irma Graciela Jimenez Bernal, 69, of the Charlotte, Tijuana and San Diego congregations, died at her home in Charlotte on March 31, surrounded by family. A graveside service was conducted on April 2 by Dr. Roderick Meredith. She is survived by her two daughters: Madeleine Lincoln-Strange and Deborah Lincoln-Strange, both of Charlotte. Born in Tijuana, Mexico, Mrs. Jimenez began listening to Mr. Armstrong's radio program, *The World Tomorrow*, when she was only 15. Her mother, who owned a hotel in downtown Tijuana, forbade her to listen to the program, but she continued to do it and even ordered the literature—but under the names of hotel guests! After hearing a program on healing, she requested an anointed cloth for a painful health problem she had been experiencing. After using the cloth, she was instantly healed, which proved to her that Mr. Armstrong taught the Truth. A few years later, she moved with her family to Mexico City, where she eventually began attending Sabbath services and she was baptized at age 21. She later worked for a few years at the Church's regional office in Mexico. Mrs. Jimenez' personality was full of life, enthusiasm and love for others. She was concerned for those in need—the poor, the sick, the orphans and the strangers. She was generous and hospitable. Her greatest love in life was God, the Work, His Truth and His Kingdom.

Mr. Glen Gilchrist died on April 27, in Spanaway, Washington, of a heart attack. He was 59 years old. Born in Los Alamos, New Mexico, his family later moved to Montana. He worked at the Ambassador College archaeological excavations in Jerusalem in 1975. After graduating from Ambassador College in 1976, he married the former Diane Grede in 1978. They moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he held several positions in sales and technical recruiting. In 1997, he was ordained as an elder, and in 2004 he was ordained as a pastor. He served congregations in Wisconsin, Illinois, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska. He loved to travel, and had visited all 50 states

of the United States, as well as traveling throughout Europe and Canada, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand. Preceded in death by his beloved son and best friend, Kyle, he is survived by Diane, his wife of 35 years; by his beloved daughters Laurel, Allison and Eva; his sons Marc and Ryan. Siblings who survive him are Bruce (Evelyn) Gilchrist of Texas, Chris (Larry) Madge (of Alberta, Canada), Alan (Jan)

Gilchrist (of Texas), Mike Gilchrist (of Washington) and Katherine Gilchrist (of Montana). A deeply loved pastor, father, grandfather, friend, teacher and husband, he will also be missed by his many nieces and nephews, friends and those to whom he was like a second father. He will be remembered as a passionate man of uncompromising conviction, inspiring teaching, serving shepherd and avid reader.

ORDINATIONS

Mr. Douglas Lindsay and Mrs. Brenda Stow were ordained deacon and deaconess on May 27, 2012 by Regional pastor Daniel Hall, and elders Dwain Crisman and Gary Stein. Mr. Lindsay serves in the Lufkin, Texas, congregation and Mrs. Stow in the Hawkins, Texas congregation.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward (Brenda) Fulford were ordained deacon and deaconess on September 17, 2012, by Area Pastor James Ginn. Mr. and Mrs. Fulford serve in the Ottawa and Kingston, Ontario, Canada congregations.

Mr. Amancio Cuares, Jr. and Mrs. Julieta Gonzales were ordained as deacon and deaconess on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, April 1, 2013, by Australasian Regional Director Bruce Tyler and Pastor Dayrell Tanner. Both have been faithful members over many years. With a large congregation of over 100 in Manila, plus many outlying congregations and video groups, there was a need for additional help in this area. Mr. Cuares and Mrs. Gonzales serve under Pastor Kinnear Penman and Elders Basilio Osillos and Jes Puzon, and alongside Mr. Tito dela Cruz, also a deacon. Congratulations to both in their new roles of servant leadership in God's Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Heykoop (Leona) were ordained deacon and deaconess on September 5, 2013 by Canadian Regional Director Gerald Weston and Elder Marc Arseneault. Mr. and Mrs. Heykoop serve in the St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, congregation.

Messrs. Gerald Kennedy and Thomas Wirfs were ordained deacons on September 5, 2013 by Area Pastors Gaylyn Bonjour and Carl Derstine. Mr. Kennedy serves in the Jacksonville, North Carolina, congregation and Mr. Wirfs in the Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation.

Messrs. Alex Celan and Marshall Moluf were ordained elders on Sabbath, April 5, by Director of Church Administration Douglas Winnail, Regional Pastor Daniel Hall and elders Gary Stein and Dwain Crisman. Mr. Celan and Mr. Moluf serve in the Dallas, Texas, congregation.

Mrs. LaDonna Thomas was ordained a deaconess on Sabbath, April 5, by Director of Church Administration Douglas Winnail, Regional Pastor Dan Hall and elders Gary Stein and Dwain Crisman. She serves in the Dallas, Texas, congregation.

Mr. H. L. Brown was ordained an elder on April 15 by Area Pastor Daniel Friz. Mr. Brown serves in the Monroe, Louisiana, congregation.

Mr. Shawn McMillin was ordained an elder on April 15 by Pastor Ben Whitfield. Mr. McMillin serves in the Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado, congregations.

Mr. Edward Sheret was ordained an elder on April 15 by Pastor Darrell Lovelady and elders Bill Pace, Don Roach and Stephen Elliott.

Mr. Larry Fletcher was ordained a deacon on April 15 by Pastor Ben Whitfield. Mr. Fletcher serves the brethren in the Denver, Colorado, congregation.

Mrs. Joyce Yetka was ordained a deaconess on April 15 by Pastor Darrell Lovelady and elders Bill Pace, Don Roach, Stephen Elliott and Ed Sheret.

Mr. David Jones was ordained an elder on April 21 by Area Pastor James Sweat and elders William Malone and Stephen Elliott. Mr. Jones serves in the Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregation.

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COMMENTARY

WALK IN THE TRUTH

When it comes to politics, philosophy and religion, truth is usually a commodity in short supply. “Truth” in our modern world often seems to depend on the viewpoint of the speaker and the hearer. A premise you accept as obviously true may seem terribly wrong to your neighbor. *The Cambridge Dictionary Online* defines truth as, “the real facts about a situation, event or person.” But who is to say what the real facts are?

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Pontius Pilate asked Jesus Christ whether He was a king. Christ answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (John 18:37). How did Pilate respond? “Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’” (v. 38).

Judea’s Roman governor lacked the foundation to discern spiritual truth from error. But are you and I any better off? Upon what foundation do we base our decisions about what is right and what is wrong?

God has given us a book that makes a bold statement—that we can rely on it for truth. “Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness. The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever” (Psalm 119:159–160).

The Apostle John wrote, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:6–9).

Do you understand the significance of John’s words? If someone claims to represent Christ, but makes a statement that is only half-true, that statement is half a lie. But a statement that is half a lie is not God’s truth! Any statement that goes against Scripture must be rejected as untrue—as evil fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16–17). Remember, God told Adam that the mixture of truth and error would ultimately kill him! Just as one drop of poison can turn a glass of pure water deadly, so too can a small untruth poison those who accept it.

This statement applies not only to politicians, journalists and teachers, but also to those who call themselves religious. The Bible is the gold standard for determining truth and distinguishing it from error. Compare what you hear to the words of your Bible. “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20).

—Glen Gilchrist (1954–2014)