

THE LIVING CHURCH NEWS

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LOYALTY, UNITY AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Dear Brethren and Friends,

At our weekly Executive Luncheon today, the discussion turned to the unusual *unity* and *warmth* displayed in nearly all of our Feast sites around the world. A number of our ministers commented on this; two or three of them mentioning how surprised some of our newer members were—especially those who have just come with us from other Church of God fellowships. These people mentioned that it was *remarkable* to them that we had such unity and warmth and such a degree of peace and affection for one another during the Feast.

This was very encouraging to all of us. Having been in the full-time ministry for more than 62 years, I have an unusual perspective on the degree of loyalty and unity of the ministry during that time, which I feel would be helpful to share with all of you.

Brethren, in the earliest days of Herbert W. Armstrong's ministry, he tried to work with other ministers in a loving way. However, as Mr. Armstrong relates in his autobiography (Vol. 1, p. 555–558), most of the ministers he tried to work with turned out to be a *disaster*. For they often attempted to undermine him and gain followers for themselves, and in other ways often caused *division* among the people they were supposedly helping Mr. Armstrong work with. So, after many years of this, Mr. Armstrong realized that it was best for him to *start a college* and train ministers in the proper way so that there would be a degree of unity in the ministry serving Christ's people. Overall, this worked out

pretty well, as I can surely affirm, as one who *worked with* the ministry directly for many years.

Nevertheless, I can honestly—before our God—tell you that the *degree* of unity and loyalty among our Living Church of God ministers today exceeds anything I have ever experienced since the very earliest days when *only* Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong were in charge of the Work and they were sort of “father and mother” figures to many of us young students.

I thank God regularly for the remarkable loyalty, kindness and responsiveness of such men in our ministry as Richard Ames, Douglas Winnail, Gerald Weston, Dexter Wakefield, Rod McNair, Bob League, Mario Hernandez, Wyatt Ciesielka and many, many, **many** others. Throughout this ministry, there has developed a great deal of love, warmth, loyalty and mutual cooperation. That is certainly something to *thank God* for—which we should all do.

As many of you know, I have already appointed Mr. Richard Ames as my successor to take over the post of Presiding Evangelist and President of this Church in case I should die or be forced to retire for health reasons or any other way. With more than 49 years as an ordained minister of Jesus Christ, and as perhaps the very last evangelist ordained by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Mr. Ames has proved himself in both the Worldwide Church of God and now the Living Church of God to be a constant example of faithfulness, stability and loyalty to the Word of God. He will give me suggestions and even criticisms when he feels that he should. Nevertheless, he



Volume 17, No. 1



Inside This Issue...

The Power of Your Personal Example...page 3 • Living the Beatitudes...page 6 • What Is Blessedness?...page 8 • Woman to Woman: Personality and Womanhood...page 10 • Festival 2014: Fulfilling the Mission of God's Church...page 12 • Local Church News...page 26 • Commentary...page 28

always tries to be loyal and support the government of God—looking to *Jesus Christ* to be “in charge” in the end.

The same is true of Dr. Douglas Winnail, Mr. Gerald Weston and the other men that I have mentioned. All of us try to “submit ourselves to one another” in the fear of God. We all realize that *no one* is perfect. And we all realize—in the end—*any job* or position we attain to in this life is absolutely **nothing** compared to the awesome responsibilities we will soon be given over the world—and perhaps the entire universe—later on in the very Kingdom or Family of God. Therefore, there is no “grasping for power” as is so common in so many other Church of God organizations.

One *reason* for this remarkable attitude is the fact that most of the leading ministers who have come with us in this Work have had a *great deal of experience*. They have been in the ministry for *decades*. No one is going to mislead them or make them “upset” at me with various stories, lies or deceptions about something that I perhaps did or did not do 40 or 50 years ago. They are willing to look at the “fruits” of my ministry since this present Work began about 22 years ago. And they are willing to “forgive” each other, forgive me, and *forgive the brethren* and serve them as bondslaves of Jesus Christ. For they have been around a long time.

Also, many of us are physically “older.” Our drives and passions of youth have long since dissipated, so we are able to concentrate on the really **important** things of God!

It has always been encouraging to me that *far more* “leading” ministers came with us as we started the Global and now Living Church of God than went with any other organization. For, almost from the beginning, we had men such as Dibar Apartian, Carl McNair, John Ogwyn, Karl Beyersdorfer, Sydney Hegvold, Lynn Torrance, Ben Whitfield and many, many others who had “been around” in the ministry or the Work for literally decades. These men *knew* me and knew what they were doing. So it is much harder to “shake” them away from what they know is the Truth and what they know about the Work of God and its leadership. **All of them** believe in the correct form of government described clearly

in the Bible. Not just “government from the top down.” But, as I have emphasized dozens of times over the years, the approach of **servant leadership** in how we administer that government. I am sure all of you older brethren can see that in our ministry.

In some other groups, sadly, we find that the leading minister or ministers become “little dictators.” They are very sensitive, easily upset and “demand” obedience and loyalty in unusual ways. Some are so fearful of losing their power that they will literally *disfellowship* their own members for even visiting or eating with members of *their own family* who happen to be with a different Church of God organization! Many of you know that, and most of you know that we—in *this Work*—are definitely **not** like that. So I hope all of us can appreciate how the Spirit of God is moving us toward “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Earlier in this same chapter, the Apostle Paul states, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which

you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:1–6). We certainly are instructed throughout the Bible to be *endeavoring* to keep the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And we are to understand *and practice* the correct government of God and recognize that Christ *did give* certain offices such as “apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (v. 11). Some Church of God organizations have gone so far in the other direction that they *do not even recognize* these offices. Yet, when we understand Christ’s command to live by every word of God, it is **absolutely vital** that we do

Continued on page 25



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THE POWER OF YOUR PERSONAL EXAMPLE

Jesus said: “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). He said that we should shine as lights in this world so that others “may see [our] good works and glorify [our] Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). God has called us to *live the way of life* of genuine Christianity. Our charity and our obedience to God’s commandments are a witness of our practicing Jesus Christ’s own original Christianity, the way that He and His apostles lived and taught.

Are you setting a genuinely *Christian example*? Whether we realize it or not, our conduct, actions, attitudes and beliefs communicate an example to others. There is an old axiom in the field of communications: “You cannot *not* communicate.” In other words, we communicate whether we want to or not. If we try to maintain a “poker face,” our body language tells others that we might be hiding something. However, if we are the light of the world, our countenance will radiate God’s love, joy and peace!

In 1962, I met a longtime faithful member of the Pasadena, California congregation. His wife had not been a member, but his faithful *example* as a husband influenced his wife—and after *eleven* years of his *Christian example*, his wife was converted. Even in the context of an unbelieving spouse, the Apostle Paul recognized the power of the believer’s example, for “the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will *save* your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will *save* your wife?” (1 Corinthians 7:14–16).

Yes, your faithful Christian character can be instrumental in the conversion of another person—even your own spouse! God does the calling (John 6:44), but the godly love, patience, kindness and service of a genuine Christian can make a big difference! Later on, in the 1970s, I met a woman who was a long-time faithful member in the Big Sandy, Texas area. Her long-time example of serving her husband, as a loving wife, led to his conversion. She had been baptized for about 12 years before her husband finally became converted.

OUR MISSION

Has your *example* been an influence on others? For good? Or for evil? Has God ever used you to “turn” anyone “to righteousness” (see Daniel 12:3)? Has God ever used you to “save” anyone? The power of *personal example* is one of

the greatest Christian tools for influencing others. In fact, we have a *mission* to *influence* others: by our *conduct*, our example of service, our words and our attitude!



Our Savior gave us another metaphor for our identity: “You are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Salt is a preservative—it adds taste and spice to life. Jesus said in Mark 9:50: “Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” As we saw earlier, He told us to let our light shine as well! “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).

Christ has given us a mission to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world! Our character and personality should influence others toward righteousness—or at least be a witness to the world. As Proverbs 16:21 states: “The wise in heart will be called understanding, and sweetness of speech increases *persuasiveness*” (NASB). The *Moffatt* translation states it this way: “A wise man is esteemed for being pleasant: his friendly words add to his *influence*.”

The Christian life radiates light and positive influence. In his book, *The Message of the Sermon On The Mount*, John R. W. Stott writes: “A Christian’s character as described in the beatitudes and a Christian’s influence as defined in the salt and light metaphors are organically related to one another. Our influence depends on our character. But the beatitudes set an extremely high and exacting standard” (p. 68). Yes, God gave us high standards for genuine Christianity, but He also gave us the *power* to fulfill those standards (2 Timothy 1:7; Philippians 4:13)

How committed are we to fulfill the *whole way of life* taught by our Savior? How committed are we to our mission

as true Christians? Those of you who attended the Feast of Tabernacles with the Living Church of God in 2014 heard Dr. Meredith emphasize very powerfully what he calls the “sevenfold commission” of God’s Church. What was the fourth of the seven items? “Be **examples** to the Church at large and to the world of Christ’s way of life.”

Yes, Jesus Christ has commissioned us to *exemplify a way of life!* As most of us know very well, Christianity is a whole way of life, not just a one-day-a-week or surface religion! The disciples were first called “Christians” in Antioch (Acts 11:26). But notice what the true religion was called. Before Saul’s conversion, he persecuted the disciples. He “asked letters from him [the high priest] to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of *the Way*, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem” (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:22). Yes, we are to set an *example* to the world, of God’s total way of life! That means we strive to live by “every word of God” (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

God explained another major aspect of our mission through the prophet Daniel. In the first two verses of chapter 12, Daniel prophesied the “time of trouble” and the resurrection that follows. Who will be glorified in that resurrection? “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (v. 3). Our preaching the Gospel, *and our example*, have been turning many to righteousness, and will continue to turn many to righteousness. Later in this article, we will see more principles for witnessing to and positively influencing others.

FOLLOWING THE RIGHT EXAMPLES

Who is your hero? Whose example do you follow? Many look to sports figures such as Michael Jordan, Jackie Robinson, Lindsey Vonn, Wayne Gretzky or Serena and Venus Williams. Others look to high achievers among musicians, movie stars, businessmen, politicians and statesmen. While some of these may exemplify success principles in physical ways, whom should we follow in spiritual ways?

Jesus instructed us to follow *Him!* He told His disciples: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him” (Matthew 4:19–20). Our commitment to follow Him requires self-denial and dedication. “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it’” (Matthew 16:24–25). Our willingness to be a living sacrifice and to follow our Savior must be active *every day!* Are you following His example daily? Jesus said: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and

take up his cross *daily*, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). Our spiritual example to others must reflect that attitude every day!

As the great spiritual Shepherd, Jesus knows those who follow Him, and His sheep—His followers—know Him: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:27–28). Jesus promises eternal life to those who faithfully follow Him! He set the example of service and sacrifice in both life and death. He was willing to give His life for the sins of the world: “And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:27–28).

Are we willing to give our lives in service to the Master? Are we willing to help others with their most basic needs? In the classic movie *Ben Hur*, Roman captives passed through the village of Nazareth. One captive in chains, Ben Hur, was whipped—Jesus gave him water to drink. Near the end of the movie, the beaten and scarred Jesus carries the cross. On the way to Golgotha, Jesus falls. Ben Hur struggles through the crowd and gives Jesus water! This portrayal, although not historically accurate, was touching to me. We must be willing to sacrifice in service to others following Jesus’ example: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example*, that you should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

Those of us who have had the privilege of participating in the New Testament Passover have been taught the lesson of humility and service. Jesus again set the example. When He had washed His disciples’ feet, He said: “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have *given you an example*, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (John 13:13–17). Yes, Christian life is to be a “blessed” life. Read about that in this issue in Mr. Rod King’s article, “Living the Beatitudes” on page 6, and Mr. Peter Nathan’s article “What Is Blessedness?” on page 8.

God the Father sent His Son to be the greatest example of *love and life* the world has ever seen. And He has called us to follow that example with our whole heart! Jesus, the Head of the Body, has also trained and chosen leaders to guide us spiritually. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:1–2). We must be willing to follow the Christian leadership of God’s servants. The NIV states it this way: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”



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Hebrews 11—the “faith chapter”—gives us many more illustrations of God’s faithful servants. In our modern era, we know of many others who have died in the faith (Hebrews 11:13), including Mr. and Mrs. Herbert W. Armstrong, whose positive example of faith we follow. Notice this exhortation: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and *imitate their faith*” (Hebrews 13:7, NRSV).

We should also take warning from *negative examples* in the Bible. The Israelites lacked faith, and practiced “unbelief.” Listen to this exhortation: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12–13). We need to set a positive example: “Let us therefore *be diligent* to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same *example of disobedience*” (Hebrews 4:11).

The Apostle Jude (like Peter in 2 Peter 2:6) strongly warns us with the horrendous example of Sodom and Gomorrah: “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). May all of us, brethren, heed these warnings and strive to follow *positive examples*.

OUR PERSONAL EXAMPLE

What kind of an example do you and I set for others? Jesus tells us to let our light shine. *How* can we set the right example? Here is what Dr. Meredith wrote in this publication several years ago:

“In all of this we must try to help everyone we can—both within and without the true Church—to at least grasp the concept that true Christians are to “live by every word of God”—and that Christ is to literally live His life within us through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20). A vital part of this mission is that we are to be “examples” and “lights” to the world (Matthew 5:14–16). As the “Church of the living God, the pillar and ground [or “bulwark”] of the Truth” (1 Timothy 3:15), we, dear brethren, should set the **example** to the world—and to all professing Christians—of the way of life that Jesus taught!

“In our personal lives, in our zealous work and productivity, in being closely bonded to our wives and families—and in a constant spirit of **giving**, serving and helping others—we should set a sterling example of what Christ really stands for! This is an **awesome** responsibility for each one of us and is, in fact, part of our commission.

“By our own examples, we should set the standard of self-control, wisdom and judgment, of faith and courage and—most of all—of genuine love and outflowing concern. We

should show others by our conduct that we do love God and put Him and His commandments above all else in everything we think, say and do” (“The Purpose of God’s Church,” *Living Church News*, May-June 2009, p. 4).

We need to apply the principles outlined in Dr. Meredith’s comments above. Whether we realize it or not, others observe our conduct, words and way of life. Think of the ways you have helped others. Living the *whole* way of life exemplified by Christ is essential! What are other keys to setting the right example? Here are several additional practical steps:

Pray for brethren in need. Pray for their healing (James 5:16). Pray for national leaders and neighbors (1 Timothy 2:1–4). Pray for your enemies (Matthew 5:44). Trust God that while people may not “see” you pray, God rewards those who serve in secret (Matthew 6:4). Your “light” will shine through your outgoing attitude

Exhort and encourage one another. Hebrews 10:24–25 tells us: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting [or “encouraging” NASB] one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” The popular Bible bookstore pocket card: “Children Learn What They Live,” gives us this perspective: “If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.... If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.” Encouragement goes a long way in providing a positive influence to others.

Go the extra mile. We often accomplish only what is required. But Jesus said: “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two” (Matthew 5:41). Strive to go above and beyond in your work, in your service to the needy and in your obligations to your family and friends.

Strive to be a peacemaker. Jesus said: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). Tell someone you are sorry. Ask for forgiveness and extend forgiveness. When “setting the record straight” in a conflict, give a soft answer (Proverbs 15:1).

Speak the truth in love. The Apostle Paul wrote that, “... speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). Pray to communicate honestly, discreetly and kindly. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Proverbs 25:11).

Share your faith. Jesus warned those who would be ashamed of Him and His words (Mark 8:38). Paul said he was not ashamed of the Gospel (Romans 1:16). Be ready to give an answer for your faith (1 Peter 3:15). Be ready to let others know the time and station for viewing the *Tomorrow’s World* television program in your local area. Be ready to share the www.TomorrowsWorld.org Web site address with those who

Continued on page 24

LIVING THE BEATITUDES

By Rod King

We should all be familiar with what is often called Jesus Christ's "Sermon on the Mount." Chapters 5 to 7 of Matthew contain Christ's first recorded words of instruction to His disciples, and so provide us with an introduction to His way of thinking and what He considers to be important for our spiritual development.

These words of His were not addressed to the multitudes, but were spoken to His disciples on a mountain, far from the masses. Christ did not speak to them in mere parables, but rather in profound words of spiritual direction. His words are just as vital today as the day when He spoke them 2,000 years ago. They are found in the verses commonly known as the "Beatitudes" (Matthew 5:3–10).

But what does the word *beatitude* mean? And how can we instill into our minds and hearts the attitude Christ calls for in the Beatitudes?

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, "beatitude" means "supreme blessedness" and is from the Latin word *beatitudo*. The context of the word as used by Christ is that those who receive these blessings do so as *fruit* of their actions and attitudes as true Christians. In other words, the Beatitudes are the result or the fruits of what we do and how we think. It requires a change in the way that we *naturally* think. It is a precursor for all of Christ's future instructions as to *how* we *should* think.

Let us take each one in turn and use other scriptures to help us better grasp the meaning.

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

"...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Christ tells us that the reward for being poor in spirit is the Kingdom of God. As with all of the Beatitudes, the opposite tells us just as much. Those who are *not* poor in spirit will *not* be in the Kingdom of God.

Notice Isaiah 66:2 (last part): "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."

Understanding that we have no *innate* spiritual strength or power is the beginning of humility. Divesting ourselves of all of our pride in our self-perceived spirituality is not easy when we have always thought that God must have noticed how wonderful we are and how wise we are. Did God call us

because He really needed our spiritual riches? No, He does not need them.

Throughout this article we will see just how much Jesus Christ practiced what He preached in respect to the Beatitudes. Philippians 2:5–7 tells us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of **no reputation**..."

He emptied Himself of His power and strength and relied *totally* on His heavenly Father. He said in John 5:30, "I can of Myself **do nothing**. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."

Do you still rely on your own thinking and your own spirituality, or are you "poor in spirit"?

An absence of this quality is one of the faults of the Laodiceans, which Jesus Christ described in Revelation 3. "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy [i.e. spiritually], and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked" (v. 17). When we see our spiritual poverty we can turn to God for all of our spiritual strength.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

"...for they shall be comforted."

This of course applies to times of grief in our lives such as the death of a close family member or friend. But it also refers to a "mourning" for our country as we see its sins around us. Ezekiel 9:4 tells us about an angel who was directed by God to set a mark on those who mourned for their countrymen. "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who *sigh and cry* over all the abominations that are done within it." While the rest of the people were slain, the set-apart people were spared.

Jesus Christ mourned for Jerusalem because of its sinfulness. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37).

Scripture tells us this about mourning: "Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the



Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:9–10). Of course we understand that we cannot go about all day long mourning and being sorrowful, because there is “a time to weep, and a time to laugh” (Ecclesiastes 3:4).

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

“...for they shall inherit the earth”—not heaven!

Does the word “meek” mean weak? No, not at all. In fact, Jesus Christ said that He was meek (Matthew 11:29, KJV) and He was by no means weak. For years we have understood that the word means “teachable,” and so it does. But there is more to the meaning than just that. The real meaning is “to trust entirely on God and subsume the self to God’s will.” Meek individuals will display fruits of gentleness, humility and kindness. They are a pleasure to know and being with them uplifts and encourages. They do not boast or brag or tell you how great they are. These qualities were displayed by Jesus Christ when He was on earth.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

“... for they shall be filled.”

The person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is one who has discovered the need to “feed on Christ” as Dr. Meredith has told us to do so many times. Scripture says: “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?” (Isaiah 55:1–2).

This sustenance is not physical, but spiritual. When we develop the godly habit of daily prayer and Bible study we yearn for inner *satisfaction*. If we go beyond a certain time in the day without prayer and study, we develop an inner aching that can only be satisfied through contact with God. This is the hunger and thirst that Christ spoke of.

Jesus Christ shocked some of His disciples when He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever” (John 6:53–58).

How did some of His disciples react? “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall

we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (vv. 66–69).

What about you? Do you take it seriously when Dr. Meredith exhorts us to “feed on Christ”? If you have discovered the *real* meaning of “hungering and thirsting after righteousness” you will wholeheartedly agree with him.

Of course the physical tool of fasting—going without food and water for a set time—is the way we put our attention on our need for spiritual food, which in the ultimate sense we need more than the physical.

Jesus spoke to His disciples outside Samaria. They urged Him to eat some food but He said, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:32–34).

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

“...for they shall obtain mercy.”

Mercy and forgiveness go hand in hand. It is not easy to forgive others while we are busy nursing our own hurts and offenses. We take great care of our hurt feelings and grudges, yet Scripture tells us so many times that we cannot continue doing that. “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13). And in Psalm 103:8–12 we learn this about God: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

Developing the quality of mercy takes practice and perseverance. Do you need to forgive anyone? Can you let them go free in your mind? Can you accept that you have been guilty of so many offenses for which you would hope to receive mercy? So be merciful and forgive others. It is not a choice but a command.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

“... for they shall see God.”

We read: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Continued on page 24

What Is Blessedness?

By Peter Nathan

Some of the terms we use to describe parts of the Bible do not themselves appear in Scripture, yet they identify a part that we immediately recognize. One such example is the “Beatitudes.”

The term “Beatitudes” came into our English language from the French language, and has its roots before that in the Latin *beatus*, which means “blessed.” We commonly use it to identify that part of Matthew 5 in which Jesus Christ describes nine spiritual conditions that should be found in Christians’ lives.

The Beatitudes mark the beginning of Jesus Christ’s public ministry as recorded by Matthew. Jesus had been healing the sick and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom prior to this, as recorded briefly in Matthew 4, but it is with the Beatitudes—and the entire Sermon on the Mount of which they are part—that Matthew begins to give the detail of these teachings, which occupy such an important place in Jesus’ ministry.

When we read this section of Scripture, we typically focus on the personal states that are outlined in each of them, and on the rewards that are offered. Seldom do we stop to consider the first word of each of them: “blessed.” This word is used nine times at the start of the Sermon on the Mount. But what does it mean? Was it just a rhetorical device, or was the repetition intended so that we might learn a valuable lesson?

“Blessed” is the preferred translation of the term in almost all English-language Bibles. Yet a couple of translations use “happy,” and one (the *Amplified Bible*) uses “spiritually prosperous”—signs, perhaps, that the translators are seeking to indicate the depth and subtlety of meaning of this word.

The English word “blessed” is derived from the Greek word *makarios*. Some of you older readers may remember it as the surname of an Eastern Orthodox archbishop who sought to lead Cyprus to independence from Great Britain in the 1950s. But what does the Bible mean in speaking of us as being blessed? In what ways are we blessed—or, what is the cause of our spiritual prosperity?

“BLESSED” BEHAVIOR

We can gain understanding of this term by seeing how it is used elsewhere in Scripture. The Book of Psalms starts with these words: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1–2).

Hebrew writers used “triads”—groups of three phrases or concepts—to emphasize the totality of a subject as going beyond just the three specific items mentioned. For instance, the “stranger, fatherless and widows” (Deuteronomy 14:29) were intended to describe all the marginalized in society, rather than just people in those three categories. The command to “do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly” (Micah 6:8) was a call to develop every aspect of God’s holy and righteous character in our lives, not just those three qualities.

Similarly, the man described in Psalm 1:1 is a person who has totally and unequivocally rejected an evil way of life and has chosen instead the path outlined in verse 2. In that regard, Solomon, the son and successor to King David the Psalmist, explained that “happy is he who keeps the law” (Proverbs 29:18).

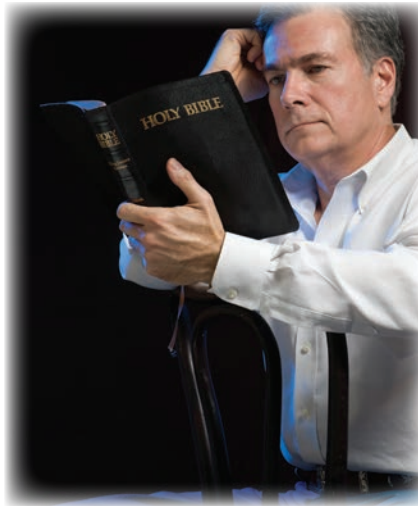
The words that are translated as “blessed” and “happy” in the two verses noted above are derived from the Hebrew word

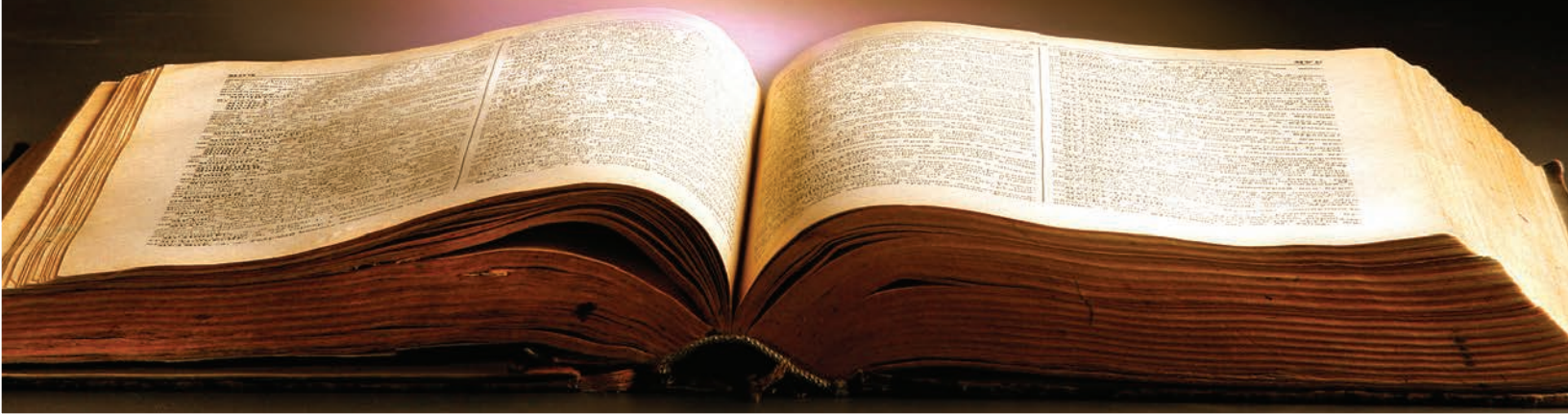
esher. But in order to understand the meaning and intent of Matthew’s use of “blessed” we should also examine another Hebrew word that is more frequently translated as blessed: “*barak*.” *Barak* is first used in Genesis 1:28 when humanity was created. Our Creator, having formed human beings, provided them with a blessing (*barak*) and gave them a charge (Genesis 1:26–28).

We find this term used again in terms of the blessing to Abram, actually four times in two verses, but especially that his seed would be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:2–3). When the firstborn received the birthright blessing from his father the term used for that blessing is the Hebrew *barak* (Genesis 27:4–29). With the term *barak*, the focus of the blessing is on the giver. It is an understanding of what the Eternal or another greater person does for the recipient.

Similarly we find *barak* in the final words the Eternal spoke through Moses to the children of Israel, where they were admonished: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, **blessing** [*barak*] and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The blessing referenced in Psalm 1:1 and in the Beatitudes is clearly different from these gracious actions by God. They





describe an appropriate response by the recipient to an initial blessing bestowed by God.

CONCEPTS OF BLESSEDNESS

When we come to the New Testament, we find that separate Greek words are used to translate the Hebrew terms *barak* and *esher*. The Hebrew *barak* is portrayed by *eulogeo* or *eulogia* from which we derive our ideas of a eulogy—speaking well of, or praising or blessing an individual. Luke, recounting the end of Jesus’ time with the disciples, describes: “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and **blessed** [*eulogeo*] them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven” (Luke 24:50–51).

The term *eulogeo* was also utilized when Gabriel came to advise Mary of her place in the Father’s plan for His Son to become flesh (Luke 1:28). It is also the type of blessing we are to give to those who mistreat us (Matthew 5:44) and, above all, the blessing we receive when we inherit the Kingdom of God (Matthew 25:34).

But *barak* is *not* the Hebrew equivalent of the term used in the Sermon on the Mount. There, it is not a simple blessing given by God or a superior. *Esher*—the Hebrew word for “blessed” and “happy” in Psalm 1:1–2 and Proverbs 29:11—is a word that requires something more of us. The Psalmist gives us an insight when he states: “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. **Blessed** [*esher*] are all those who put their trust in Him” (Psalm 2:12).

Here the concept of blessing involves something on our part. This form of blessing comes from putting trust in God. This same concept is reinforced in the Proverbs: “He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy [*esher*] is he” (Proverbs 16:20).

The blessing associated with *esher* requires something of us—trust in God. It entails placing ourselves under the authority of God’s Word. It involves the creation of a relationship with God that is pleasing to our Father. This concept is repeated frequently throughout the Psalms (See Psalm 34:8; 40; 84:5, 12). Notice also how the greatest exposition of God’s law begins: “**Blessed** [*esher*] are the

undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD! **Blessed** [*esher*] are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!” (Psalm 119:1–2).

Placing ourselves under the authority of God’s Word leads to another action—living in accord with God’s way. So the Psalmist can write: “The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide” (Psalm 37:31). Likewise Solomon recorded a small vignette of a life lived God’s way: “He who despises his neighbor sins; but he who has mercy on the poor, **happy** [*esher*] is he” (Proverbs 14:21). Job also understood the totality of this commitment and dedication to the law of God when he wrote: “If my step has turned from the way, or my heart walked after my eyes, or if any spot adheres to my hands” (Job 31:7).

So, blessing (*esher*) requires a response from us—a dedication to the ways of the Eternal.

IN GREEK AND HEBREW

Makarios, the word used for “blessed” in the Beatitudes, is the Greek equivalent of *esher*. It conveys the same ideas in the Greek language that *esher* does in the Hebrew. As such, *makarios* notes the aspect of ordering our lives according to the revealed will of God just as emphatically as Psalm 1:1–2 declare. This is brought out in the statements of Jesus Christ, where “blessed” is the English translation of *makarios*. We read: “But He said, ‘More than that, **blessed** [*makarios*] are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’” (Luke 11:28).

Also, speaking to the disciples as they were gathered around the table for that last Passover and having just washed their feet in an act of great humility, Jesus stated: “If you know these things, **blessed** [*makarios*] are you if you do them” (John 13:17).

John was also inspired to use this term at the very end of the Book of Revelation. Having described the New Jerusalem with the river and the trees of life, he was inspired to record this charge for us: “Behold, I am coming quickly! **Blessed** [*makarios*] is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:7).

Continued on page 11

Woman to Woman

By Faye League

PERSONALITY AND WOMANHOOD

One of the blessings which we have as women is the ability to express ourselves through each one's personality. This is a valuable tool of communication if used properly. How we as Christian women come across to others is of the utmost importance—if we wish to set a good example.

Personality (according to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*) is:

1. *The collection of emotional and behavioral traits that characterize a person.*

2. *The distinction of personal and social traits.*

Society has categorized personalities into two major types—with seemingly not much balance in between. Balance is the key:

Extrovert (*Merriam-Webster*): *a gregarious person with no reserve.*

Introvert (*Merriam-Webster*): *a reserved or shy person.*

To be gregarious (social) is fine up to a point, but to have no reserve is not. Reserve can also be carried to the extreme—to where a person can become anti-social—turning inward in one's thinking—and can become reclusive.

Communicating through personality can be conveyed through language, facial expressions, and body language.



child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

Childish behavior in adulthood can affect one's personality to the point of being immature and can hinder spiritual growth.

I think most of us ladies can look back on our lives to certain experiences which we had before we were called and realize that we learned some valuable lessons which have become very useful to us as Christian women. I have looked back on several experiences in my life and found this to be true. Since this article concerns personality, I will relate one such incident here: my husband and I were acquainted with a couple who owned a filling station and

mini-mart. We did business with them quite often and became friends. They were a very fine couple except the wife had a very quirky, off-beat, out-of-the-ordinary personality. One of the problems was that she would say or do certain things to create an uncomfortable atmosphere. I was around her more often than my husband because at times, as a favor, I would babysit her toddler daughter while she worked at the mini-mart—since I was a stay-at-home mom. Also at other times when her husband had to work late and my husband was out of town, she and I and our children would have dinner together and then we would take our kids to the drive-in movies.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Personality is developed from early childhood on into adulthood with possibly a few inherited traits. A lot depends on our upbringing and the examples that we see around us from day to day.

If certain types of childhood behavior are not corrected in childhood, they can be carried over into adulthood and become habitual. For example: Quite some years ago I knew a couple (young adults) who had two young children. One of the mates had grown up with the habit of constantly exhibiting foolish behavior. The children were being strongly influenced by this parent's constant foolish behavior to the point of mimicking this behavior. The other parent did not want the children to grow up to be foolish since they were a Christian family and God's word instructs, “The devising of foolishness is sin” (Proverbs 24:9). Also in Proverbs 22:15: “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.”

The Apostle Paul instructs in 1 Corinthians 13:11, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a

A COMMON SENSE SOLUTION

Needless to say, it was quite a challenge to handle the negative aspects of her personality. However, having been brought up with a common sense background, I decided to use common sense with her unacceptable behavior. I would respond to her in a way that would turn things around to a more positive situation. Then we were able to enjoy each other's company more fully. I came to realize that she evidently lacked understanding in certain areas—one of which was that one should not cross lines or overstep boundaries in personal relationships.

LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

Looking back on past experiences and learning from them, especially since receiving God's Holy Spirit, has helped me in many ways. While living in Pasadena, California in the early 1970s, my husband and I would invite other couples over for dinner occasionally, when we had time from our

busy schedules. He was attending Ambassador College in the daytime and also Pasadena City College at night. He was also pastoring the Santa Ana, California congregation. On one occasion the dinner guests arrived and after a few appetizers, we sat down at the dining room table for dinner. Everything proceeded along very well—with delicious food, fine ambiance, and very uplifting, enjoyable, and scintillating conversation. I was so pleased that everything was moving along so smoothly.

After dinner, we retired to the living room for after-dinner chocolates, a liqueur, and more enjoyable conversation (or so we thought). Shortly after we sat down, one of the guests proceeded to monopolize the conversation. No one could get a word in edgewise. Every time anyone would attempt to interject a comment or share in the conversation in any way, this person would start talking again, drawing the attention back to himself. Then all heads and eyes would have to turn back toward this person—again and again. I thought for sure

that my neck would get whiplash since this continued on for the rest of the evening. I made a mental note to myself that this type of social behavior is certainly not conducive to being invited for dinner again.

In essence, this person ruined what could have been a nice ending to a very pleasant evening.

OLD HABITS DIE HARD

Personality flaws are sometimes very difficult to recognize in oneself and, as we know, old habits do tend to die hard. However, as we truly seek to please our loving, kind and gracious Father in heaven, it would certainly be worth the effort in the long run to strive to eliminate the flaws and to enhance our individual personalities in any way that we can—as we continue to grow in holy, righteous and godly character—for we have a tremendous future ahead of us in God's Kingdom! ■

What Is Blessedness? Continued from page 9

Makarios, like *esher*, is the result of dedicating our lives to living in accord with God's way of life, which in turn comes from having a yielded relationship with God. That action on our part is central to this term. It relates to the Covenant that our Father invited us to enter into with Him—a supreme blessing (*eulogia*) from Him.

Not surprisingly, we find this aspect of the dedication of our lives being expressed as part of the Passover relationship. The Apostle Paul makes a statement to the Church at Rome, quoting King David from Psalm 32:1–2 in relation to the effects of the Passover. Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin” (Romans 4:7–8).

Why is *makarios* used three times in this section of Scripture to describe the type of blessing involved? Because, when we take the Passover properly, we show that we have accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as atonement for our sins. As a result of that acceptance, we are prepared to live a life that reflects an obedient

relationship with the Father and Jesus Christ. The end result is that we have a confidence that God will “do” according to His Word. It is a blessing that comes from giving ourselves to God's way of life.

THE BLESSED OUTCOME OF LIVING GOD'S WAY

The Beatitudes then reveal the outcome of that relationship—the blessed effect of living this way, the way so beautifully expressed in Psalm 1:1–2, that includes being poor in spirit, meek, mourning and hungering for righteousness. This is so different from the normal attitude of those who may have a relationship with someone influential, famous or in high authority. Those situations are often flaunted in a way that states: “I'm better than you!” Our relationship with our Heavenly Father and His Son produces humility within us, so we are able to serve others as Jesus Christ has served us. It is a representation of the way of give as opposed to the way of get.

Another interesting point is that the book of Genesis, the book of Psalms and the public ministry of Jesus Christ (in the Gospel of Matthew) all start with a statement about blessings. Genesis is the first of the five books of the Torah. Psalms is divided into five books that parallel the five books of the Torah.

Commentators note that the public teaching of Jesus Christ in Matthew's gospel is divided into five sections as a parallel to the books of the Torah. If this is so, then this arrangement is certainly important to our Father and His Son.

Our Father wishes to bless us by making us part of His Family. That was the initial intent of the God Family in creating human beings, and why they were blessed as recorded in Genesis 1:28. Psalm 1:1–2 and Matthew 5:1–9 set out the proper response for each of us to that invitation to the ultimate blessing.

Most people seek blessings so they can be enriched or bettered. The blessings discussed here come from a relationship based on our commitment to live a way of life—a way that benefits others rather than the self. It is this form of blessing that the Father desires all to have.

So the term “blessed” is not just a rhetorical device that helps us remember the Beatitudes. It rather speaks to the yielded attitude through which we can display the character described in those verses. We cannot ever be that type of person without being totally submitted and committed to the way of life of our Father and His Son. Without that form of blessing, we cannot accomplish our Father's goal for us. ■

FESTIVAL 2014:

FULFILLING THE MISSION OF GOD'S CHURCH

More than 10,250 of God's people gathered at 53 sites in 32 nations around the world in October 2014 to celebrate God's Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

From the evening of Wednesday, October 8 through sunset on Thursday, October 17, brethren came together to observe the final two festivals in God's annual Plan, depicting the coming Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment.

In so many ways, from Dr. Meredith's stirring messages on the opening night and Last Great Day, to the uplifting comments God's ministers shared in the annual Behind the Work video, brethren were reminded of the mission of God's

Church, and of their individual and collective parts in that mission.

For the next few pages, we have prepared a photo-essay documenting some of the highlights and special moments shared at a number of Feast sites around the globe. We know there are some gaps in our coverage below. Nevertheless, we have tried to include photos from as many sites as possible, and we apologize if you do not see a photo from the site you attended.

For a further retrospective of Festival 2014 (including brief write-ups from most sites), and a look forward to Festival 2015, watch your mailbox for the upcoming *Festival Tabloid*.

—LCG Editorial Staff













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GATINEAU, CANADA



COSTA RICA



VANUATU

COLOMBIA



BARBADOS



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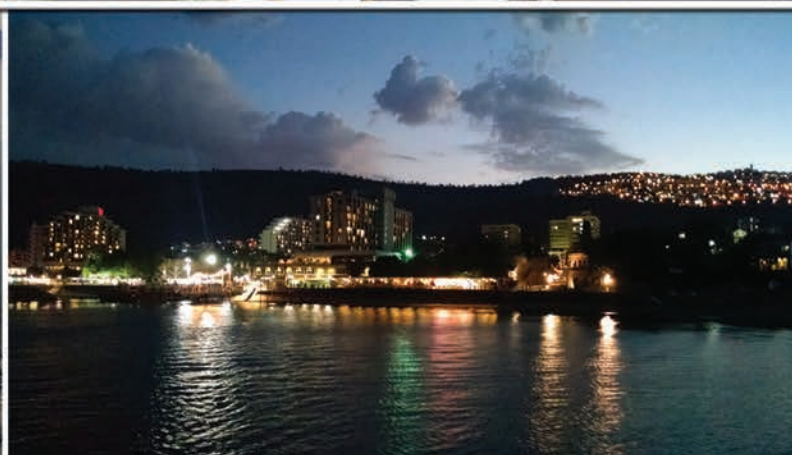
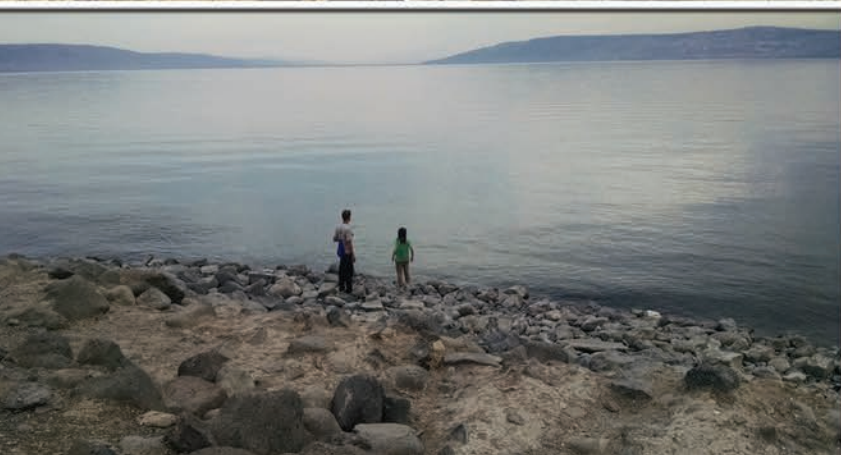
BAGUIO, PHILIPPINES



MEXICO

**IGLESIA DEL DIOS VIVIENTE.
FIESTA DE LOS TABERNACULOS**

OAXTEPEC MEXICO DEL 8 AL 16 DE OCTUBRE DEL 2014





Your Personal Example
Continued from page 5

ask about your Church and your faith. Whenever you can, sow seeds to the Kingdom (Galatians 6:7–10).

Radiate the fruits of the Spirit. When others meet you, do you project love, joy, peace and patience? The very first characteristics of charity are patience and kindness: “Love suffers long and is kind” (1 Corinthians 13:4). Maintain a positive and joyful outlook. “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4).

As we have seen, the *power of personal example* is one of the greatest Christian tools for influencing others. Each of us influences others, whether we want to or not! Christ commissioned us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. He wants us to

turn many to righteousness, to help others reach their human potential and use their God-given gifts, and to help others into God’s Kingdom. Your example may turn others to



righteousness. Your example may lead another person to salvation! “For how do you know, O wife, whether you will *save* your husband? Or how do you

know, O husband, whether you will *save* your wife?” (1 Corinthians 7:16).

Never underestimate your effect on others. *Our example* is an influence that is always active. Our words, habits and deeds, in secret and in public—perhaps a hug, a thank-you note or a word of encouragement—may turn someone to the truth and to righteousness. We should strive to fulfill the mission Dr. Meredith stated: “Be **examples** to the Church at large and to the world of Christ’s way of life.”

We are commissioned to exemplify a way of life. We are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Pray that *you* can turn many to righteousness. Let Jesus Christ use *you*, your influence, your personality, your Christian example. Let God’s Spirit flow out from you in love—and let God use you and the power of your personal example! ■

Living the Beatitudes
Continued from page 7

Purity of thoughts and motives comes from God. It replaces and roots out malice and bitterness. It refreshes and cleanses us, leaving us pure as snow. Purity leaves us with a clear mind and spirit. Purity purges us of anger and hatred and leaves us with the ability to speak the words of Christ, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34, KJV).

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

“... *for they shall be called sons of God.*”

In the “Wild West” the Colt 45 gun was called the “Peacemaker.” God’s peacemakers, however, make real and lasting peace. Unlike the United Nations *peacekeepers* who try to maintain peace, peacemakers are proactive and go out of their way to establish paths of peace for others. They open dialogue with their enemies and speak words of peace, and not of war. Doing this makes us vulnerable, as we run the risk of being rejected. Nevertheless, true Christians are ready and willing to act boldly to make peace. Scripture reminds us: “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual,

demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by **those who make peace**” (James 3:13–18).

**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR
RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE**

“... *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*”

With this, we have come full circle. The fruit of the first Beatitude, for those who are poor in spirit, is the same as for those who are persecuted for righteousness. Being a *real* Christian will bring on persecution—but, like our elder Brother who has gone before us, we will stand and be strong in the Lord.

The blessedness that comes from this way of thinking—and this entire way of life—is an inner contentment that cannot come from the ways of this world. Look around, and you will see that so many people in the world are empty, without the blessed contentment that you as a Christian can know and experience.

Yes, as Christians we are called out of this world and its ways of jealousy, envy and pride—attitudes that produce only strife and discord. Do you want to have inner peace and contentment? Then practice the way of life that Jesus Christ gave us in the Beatitudes! ■

Loyalty, Unity and Servant Leadership
Continued from page 2

have these offices in Christ's ministry, respect them and yet understand that they are offices of **service**—not to be used by “little dictators” just trying to show off their power by putting down others.

Following the correct approach, we in the Living Church of God have experienced a degree of unity and loyalty that is remarkable—as I have stated—for which I thank God almost daily. I *pray fervently* that—if anything happens to me—this unity and loyalty will continue to the very end. So I call on all of you brethren to *pray fervently* that God will continue to bless us with that kind of unity in the Church and the Work of the Living Church of God. We have an absolutely *wonderful*

opportunity to reach out to this whole world—at this time with increasing **power** and the Spirit of God. We all need to constantly ask God to inspire and empower us as never before that we can have a **genuine impact** on this very mixed up and sick world while there is still the opportunity. As Jesus said, “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work”

(John 9:4). As all of you dear brethren who watch world news can attest, it is obvious that the “night is coming” when all of us who are truly doing God's Work and teaching His Truth will be persecuted and perhaps made *unable* to do the Work at that time. So we want to do all that we can while we are here. Every one of us wants to be part of the “team” Jesus Christ is using today to do His Work.

We need to realize that—as Almighty God looks down from heaven—He is carefully watching how each one of us responds. Are we trying to exalt ourselves? Are we just looking for personal power and prestige? Are we “taking it easy” and laying up too much wealth on earth instead of *serving others* with our time, our treasure and our strength? Each of us needs to *think through* and meditate on these questions and be sure that we are truly **humbling ourselves** and seeking God and serving God in the *right attitude*. For, if anyone of us is too “quick on the trigger” to leave God's Church, to cause **division** or in any other way to upset and hinder the Work of God, we must ponder the fact that “Christ is watching.” Dear brethren, each one of us must be sure that we **never** “play games” with ourselves or with God. For God's inspired Word tells us, “The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth” (Psalm 33:13–14).



God does indeed “look down from heaven” and sees all that we are doing. He is preparing a group of dedicated men and women who truly “fear” Him in the sense that they have a profound *awe* and **respect** for God, for Jesus Christ as the living Head of the Church, and for the **Government** which He has already put in place. For *how* we respect God's Government today indicates clearly to God how we **will** respond to His Government throughout all eternity! He can see by our actions now whether we would quickly turn aside later on—when we have tremendous power and eternal life as full sons of God. He will **not** give that kind of power to those who have not fully surrendered to Him and to His way—having the right attitude of *love* and **genuine service** toward God and toward fellow man.

Again, “Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, just as we hope in You” (Psalm 33:18–22).

If we truly **trust** in God's Holy Name, we will trust in Jesus Christ—as the **living Head** of the Church—to guide the Church, overall, and be sure that

nothing untoward happens within His Church or within His Government of which He is the **active Head**. So let us all *thank God fervently* for the wonderful growth we have experienced in the Work of the Living Church of God these last few years. Let us thank God for the unusual degree of *love* and *unity* He has given us. And let us *beseech God* to keep us in that unity—and to move us forward to an even greater Work so that more and more people in this world may at least have a powerful “witness” that there is a real God working out a purpose here below and an understanding of what that purpose is.

Brethren, may God guide and bless all of you as you continue to walk with Him. *Thank you*, very much, for *your part* in the unity of the Church and the *growth* that has taken place in this Work in the last few years. Let us all strive to do *our part* to keep it up and **grow** in this as each year passes.

With Christian love,

Roderick Meredith

Ordinations

Mr. Alan Collins was ordained a deacon on August 24 by Australasian Regional Pastor Bruce Tyler, Pastor Rod King, and Area Pastor Michael Gill. Mr. Collins serves in the Melbourne, Australia, congregation.

Mr. Angus Bauman was ordained a deacon on the Feast of Trumpets by Area Pastor James Ginn. Mr. Bauman serves in the Guelph, Canada, congregation.

Mr. Hugh Stewart was ordained an elder on the Feast of Trumpets by Southeast Regional Pastor Dan Hall and elder James English. Mr. Stewart serves in the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation.

Mr. Mickey Mayeaux was ordained an elder on the Feast of Trumpets by Area Pastor Glen Harrison and elders Curtis Lambright, Chip Wheelahan and Ray Joffrion. Mr. Mayeaux serves in the Lafayette, Louisiana, congregation.

Mr. Nathan Brecheen was ordained a deacon and *Mrs. Carol Thibodeaux* was ordained a deaconess on the Feast of Trumpets by Area Pastor Glen Harrison and elders Curtis Lambright, Chip Wheelahan, Ray Joffrion and Mickey Mayeaux. Mr. Brecheen and Mrs. Thibodeaux serve in the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, congregation.

Mr. Gary Jones II was ordained an elder and *Mr. David Ostrom* was ordained a deacon on the Feast of Trumpets by Midwest Regional Pastor Rand Millich and elder James Wells. Mr. Jones and Mr. Ostrom serve in the Kansas City area congregations.

Mr. Wade Brown was ordained an elder and *Mr. Richard Soule* was ordained a deacon on the Feast of Trumpets by

Area Pastor Phil Sena. Mr. Brown serves in the Temple, Texas, congregation and Mr. Soule in the Austin, Texas, congregation.

Mr. Gary Flowers was ordained a deacon on the Feast of Trumpets by Area Pastor David Stiffler. Mr. Flowers serves in the Russellville, Arkansas, congregation.

Mr. Timothy Markopoulos was ordained an elder on the Feast of Trumpets by Area Pastor Phil West. Mr. Markopoulos serves in the Chicago, Illinois, congregation.

Mr. Michael Heykoop was ordained a deacon on the Day of Atonement by Canadian Regional Director Gerald Weston and Regional Pastor Winston Gosse. Mr. Heykoop serves in the Mississauga, Canada, congregation and works in the Canadian Church office.

Mr. Glendon Driver was ordained an elder and *Mr. Steven Whitson* was ordained a deacon on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, in Navarre, Florida, by Area Pastors Anthony Stroud and Ed Breaux. Mr. Driver and Mr. Whitson serve in the Columbus, Mississippi, congregation.

Mr. Luis Arellano was ordained a deacon during the Feast of Tabernacles by Mexico pastor Mr. Antonio Mora. Mr. Arellano serves in the Queretaro, Mexico congregation.

Mr. Michael Johnson was ordained a deacon on the Sabbath of November 8 by Southwest Regional Pastor Rodger Bardo, Area Pastor Gary Stein and elder Larry Crooks. Mr. Johnson serves in the Midland, Texas, congregation.

ANNIVERSARIES

On September 6, 2014, brethren from Canada's Living Church of God congregation in Kelowna, British Columbia, celebrated the anniversaries of *Mr. and Mrs. Steve (Verna) Ewanowich* (61 years) and *Mr. and Mrs. Richard (Sharlene) Gibbs* (50 years). It was a very special and happy day. After services a cake and fruit salad were enjoyed by all as they reminisced about their many years of marriage and dedication to God's way. Mr. and Mrs. Gibbs have been faithful members of God's Church in the Kelowna area since early in their married life. Mr. and Mrs. Ewanowich were baptized in 1963 and ordained deacon and deaconess in 1978; they have served in the Kelowna area since that time, though Mr. Ewanowich is currently confined to a retirement home as a result of Parkinson's Disease.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Christopher (Amber) Leonard, of the Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation are delighted to announce the birth of their second daughter, *Hannah Ruth Leonard*. Hannah was born Sabbath morning, June 7. She was a very healthy nine pounds and measured 20½ inches long.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilsy (Nafftcherlie) Noel, of the Toronto, Canada, congregation are most pleased to announce the birth of their fourth child, *Nayelie Noel*. She was born August 26, weighing in at 7 pounds, 11 ounces. She was also welcomed by big brothers Wadley and Nathan, and big sister Nakeasha.

In Loving Memory...

Mr. Robert E. Sliger, age 83, of Warren, Michigan, died on June 28, 2014. Mr. Sliger was baptized into God's Church in 2004 and attended the Detroit, Michigan, congregation. He was born in Tennessee in 1930 and drove a truck for a moving company for many years. Mr. Sliger is survived by his wife, Mildred, and his son William, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was always a calm, welcoming presence within the local congregation and he will be greatly missed by his family and his Church brethren.

Mr. Dean McPherson, age 81, of Ottawa Lake, Michigan, died on July 9, 2014. He was born in Michigan in 1933 and served in the U.S. Air Force from 1952 to 1956, earning the Crew Chief of the Month award. He is survived by his wife, Susan, as well as children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, a brother, and a sister. Mr. McPherson was a long-time, dedicated member of the Church and was always the first to arrive at services each week. His family and Church brethren, including his good friend, Mr. Bill Tessman, will dearly miss him.

Mrs. Aileen Wells, age 83, of the Rolla, Missouri, congregation, died July 16, 2014 at her daughter's home. Mrs. Wells was a member of God's Church for 50 years. She had one son, one daughter and two grandchildren. Mrs. Wells was a wonderful homemaker, loved and respected in the congregation, and she often entertained the brethren in her home. She was a true lady who will be missed by the community, her family, and Church friends. Mr. Bill Oswald conducted the graveside service on July 18.

Mrs. Shirley Young, age 76, died peacefully at her home in Watlington, UK, on September 11. She grew up in the county of Kent, nicknamed "bomb alley" during WWII, and vividly remembered taking shelter in the family's cellar during frequent air raids. She was one of the pioneer students at the Bricket Wood campus of Ambassador College in 1960. During her time at college, Shirley served on the Student Council and as the resident girls' monitor. After graduating in June 1964, she married James Young, also one of the original Bricket Wood students, and they set off to serve in the ministry in the U.S. They served in Ohio, Kentucky and California before returning to their homeland of England. Mrs. Young's insightful and inspiring contributions to the

"Woman to Woman" section of *The Living Church News*, her unwavering sense of humour, and her solid faith will be sorely missed.

Isaac Stephen Hall died September 15, 2014, having touched the lives of so many people in his short six months of life. His, parents, Stephen and Elizabeth Hall of the Birmingham, Alabama, congregation are truly thankful that they had a chance to know and love him and so thankful to know he will be completely healed in the resurrection. He is also survived by his grandfather, Mr. Daniel Hall, LCG Southwest Regional Pastor, and other family members.

Mrs. Dorothy Lambright, age 82, of Silsbee, Texas, died September 19, 2014. She was a long-time member of God's Church, having been baptized in 1965. She was preceded in death by her husband Lish Lambright, son Fred Lambright, and daughter Jo Ann Vercher. Survivors include son Curtis Lambright of Monterey, Louisiana; daughters Joyce Starnes of Lumberton, Texas; and Brenda Dill of Webster, Texas; ten grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. Mr. Ron McGowen conducted the funeral service.

Mrs. Jeanine Hodebar of Martinique died October 22. She was a deaconess and a pillar in God's Church in Martinique. As a child, Mrs. Hodebar and her parents began attending the original congregation of the Worldwide Church of God, which started in 1963, two years after Mr. Apartian began broadcasting in French on the island. She was a dedicated and faithful member to the end, noted for her meek and quiet spirit, precious in God's sight. Her husband, Simbert Hodebar, is a deacon and she is also survived by five adult children, also Church members. Dr. Wilner Pierre and Mr. Etienne Duval conducted her funeral on October 27.

Mr. Abraham Vice, of the Lafayette, Louisiana, congregation died on October 28, 2014 at the age of 77 years. He had been a member of God's Church for more than 46 years. Mr. Vice is survived by his wife Velma Hargrave Vice, three sons, ten grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and one sister. He was preceded in death by three sons, one brother, and his parents. Mr. Glen Harrison conducted the funeral service on October 30.

United States: P.O. Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010, www.TomorrowsWorld.org, Phone: (704) 844-1970 • **Australasia:** PO Box 300, Clarendon, SA 5157, Australia, Phone: (61) 8-8383-6288, Fax: (61) 8-8127-9667 • **Canada:** P.O. Box 409, Mississauga, ON L5M 0P6, Phone: (905) 814-1094, Fax: (905) 814-7659 • **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 2767, Auckland 1140, New Zealand, Phone/Fax: (09) 268 8985 • **Philippines:** PO Box 492, Araneta Center Post Office, 1135 Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, Phone: (632) 455-3699 • **South Africa:** Private Bag X7, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0028, Phone: (27) 58-622-1424, Fax: (27) 58-623-1303 • **United Kingdom:** Box 111, 88-90 Hatton Garden, London, EC1N 8PG, Phone/Fax: 44 (0) 844-800-9322.

COMMENTARY

Patience... Mercy... Longsuffering... Forgiveness

These are hard words. They are easy to say, and easy to ask for, but much harder to give—at least sometimes. I am convinced that, much of the time, I am just about the most easy-going person in the world. At least, I feel like the most easy-going person I know. But other times, in different circumstances, I feel like I have neither an ounce of patience nor a glimmer of mercy. It is as if I have run out that day, and I just do not feel like having any more of those wonderful emotions for anyone—no matter how unsuspecting and how undeserving my next victim may be.

If our patience, mercy, longsuffering and forgiveness are only human emotions, coming from our human spiritual resources, we will surely run out. Human patience falls short. Godly patience does not. Human mercy fails. God's does not. It is not as if we never have mercy, patience, or other admirable traits. It is just that ours tend to run thin at times.

Interestingly, every one of the fruits of God's spirit would also be considered an admirable personality trait in a man—a “good fruit” of the spirit in man. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23).

Sometimes we feel like being good, kind and gentle. But sometimes we do not. And therein lies the difference between us and God, between the human spirit and God's Spirit.

Earlier in Paul's letter to the Galatians, he wrote, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of

the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (Galatians 5:16–17). The word “lust” here is not limited to sexual craving. It embodies the range of human wants, feelings, and priorities... human desire.

Paul had to deal with our human proclivity to take on godly characteristics “part-time.” Paul acknowledged that he fell prey to that same human problem and had to battle to overcome his flesh (Romans 7:14–25). Christ warned us that we face the same battle, saying, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

Is the goodness of our human spirit “good enough”? Are our “good days” good enough for God? Is our “occasional joy” okay with God? Does God “understand” that we sometimes just don't feel very kind or gentle? Are we content with occasional lapses of self-control, as long as we are usually pretty good—better than the average guy anyway. Or are we only as godly as our least merciful moment?

It need not be that way. Paul told the brethren at Philippi, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). So, let this mind—this whole, complete, constant way of thinking as God thinks—be in you. Then we will never have a “least merciful moment.”

—Jonathan McNair