

The “Fruits” of the True Church

Dear Brethren and Friends,

As I look back on my nearly 63 years of full-time service in God’s Work, I am thankful. I am grateful that the Eternal God raised up Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Armstrong to restore and “energize” the Truth. For Mr. Armstrong had a truly dynamic personality—and was able to have a greater effect in preaching the Truth to the world than any human being we know of for hundreds of years. I am grateful that God guided my life to come during the third year of Ambassador College because, being weak and carnal, I might not have survived the first two years of trials and tests the college experienced as it was just becoming established. Back then, there were *no dormitories* at Ambassador College. In eating our meals, we had to basically “fend for ourselves” to survive. And, because of a financial crisis, Mr. Armstrong was almost **forced** to close the entire college. In fact, he did at one point put the faculty on half-time salary so they were only able to teach three days a week.

Yet, those who stayed were faithful enough that the Work grew and prospered because of a few key factors:

1. Most of us were loyal and unified because we were able to see the “Big Picture.” In dealing with Mr. Armstrong personally, we could see that he was the true servant of God and followed Christ in a remarkable way and was determined to preach the *full truth* in a way most of us had never experienced. I remember



a number of times when—under trial—Mr. Armstrong heartfully said: “Herbert Armstrong has made hundreds of mistakes. But I have always tried with all my heart to teach the *full Truth* and not compromise on that!” In my *thousands* of hours of personal contact with him, I saw that this was absolutely true.

2. We “hung in there” because Mr. Armstrong taught us the importance of preaching the Gospel, proclaiming Christ’s message to the entire world as Matthew 24:14 indicates we should.

3. We were inspired by Mr. Armstrong to see the vital importance of doing the “Work.” For Jesus Christ Himself stated: “My

food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34). Mr. Armstrong certainly exemplified that statement in the way he *drove himself* continually to preach the Truth, do the Work and also help the college to grow and help build a stable ministry even though, at times, we could see Mr. Armstrong was “dead tired” and yet intended to carry on as long as he could. This was *inspirational* to many of us in the early days of the Work.

We in the present Work of the Living Church of God have *dedicated ourselves* to carry on in that same tradition. And Christ has certainly blessed us with a great deal of unity and zeal because of having that same spirit. I hope that **all** of you dear brethren will “catch the vision” and realize how we *must* carry on even if something happens to me, to Mr.



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Ames or to *any one of us* as we grow older in this present physical life. For in carrying out that tradition, our **real** life is at stake—our coming *eternal life* in the Kingdom or Family of God and the kind of reward we will receive is definitely based on *how well* we serve God in our human lives *right now* (Luke 19:11–19).

In His inspired Word, the Eternal God commands us to be “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 4:3–6). Then, as Christ inspired Paul, the apostle tells us that Christ Himself “gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Ephesians 4:11–14).

It is important to *focus* on the fact that we in the Living Church of God have been following that *same pattern* of Church government God inspired the Apostle Paul to outline. Some try to pretend that the inspired form of Church government is “not important.” But it is *vitaly important* that we learn to teach and practice the *same form* of Church government we certainly will be teaching and administering in Christ’s soon-coming Kingdom!

So we have a great deal of **unity**. The vast majority of our ministers and members all “speak the same thing.” And we are overwhelmingly involved in “giving ourselves” to “do the Work”! Brethren, I am extremely grateful to report to you in the name of Christ that we do have a greater sense of unity

and harmony in this present Work than at *any* other time I can remember in the 63 years of my full-time service!

Most of you know that the man appointed to be my successor, Mr. Richard Ames, is extremely dedicated, balanced and loyal. I hope all of you will *support him* with all your heart unless he turns **totally** away from God as some men in recent years have done. However, those who turned aside a number of years ago had **not** been “tried and tested” in the way that Mr. Ames has. So I have every confidence

that—although Satan will attack us and try to divide us and upset us in other ways—it will undoubtedly **not** be because Mr. Ames turns aside. So I ask you to give him *every support* and heartfelt prayers to continue on faithfully as you have done with me. *Thank you!*

Also, if anything should happen to Mr. Ames, another of the most experienced and dedicated leaders in the Work at this time is Mr. Gerald Weston, who has already been acknowledged by the Council of Elders to carry on in Mr. Ames’ place, if necessary,

as Presiding Evangelist of the Living Church of God. Mr. Weston, also, has been tried and tested in many different ways. He has served faithfully throughout the United States, across Canada, and soon will be serving *full-time* in Britain, Europe and the Middle East. Do give him your support and your *fervent prayers!*

Dear brethren, please be sure to pray fervently for **all** of our faithful ministers—many of whom are doing a tremendous work. These men are worthy of your full support and loyalty. For Christ wants in His Church and Kingdom those who are absolutely **loyal**. Sometimes different ones come along with more technical knowledge or more of a “scintillating” personality. But God has been down that road before. For He had a magnificently beautiful cherub named “Lucifer” who had all kinds of ability and influence, but who “turned aside.” Lucifer

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

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Postmaster: Send address changes to

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

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THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT PENTECOST

After Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples “returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey” (Acts 1:12). The disciples met in an “upper room where they were staying” (v. 13). Today, tourists in Jerusalem may visit a location called the Coenaculum (Latin for “supper room”) or Cenacle—often described in English as the “Last Supper Room” or the “upper room.” This room is actually not the original “upper room”—it is a Crusader-built fourteenth century memorial, though many believe it was built near—perhaps even over—the location of the original room where Jesus instituted the New Testament Passover.

Why have people considered this “upper room” so important? Christ’s most intimate disciples met together and prayed there: “And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers” (Acts 1:13–14).

Yes, Christ’s eleven remaining Apostles, along with His mother and brothers, met there. Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem for God’s promise. “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4–5).

Pilgrims from sixteen different countries or regions had come to Jerusalem. They were there to observe the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22), also known as the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16) or “the day of the firstfruits” (Numbers 28:26). This was an exciting time for pilgrims—and even more so after sunrise on the Day of Pentecost in 31AD. We read: “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1–4).

Thousands of people gathered to find out what was happening. To their great surprise, they heard the Apostles’ preaching in their own languages! Notice:



“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language” (Acts 2:5–6).

These visitors were not listening to strange languages they could not understand—each heard the apostles “speak in his own language.” Further, what did they hear and understand? “[W]e hear them speaking in our own tongues *the wonderful works of God*” (v. 11). There is no question that this gift of languages communicated God’s truth in words each pilgrim could understand.

Still, this large audience was perplexed—they could not grasp the historical meaning of this great event: “So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine’” (Acts 2:12–13).

JOEL’S PROPHECY

The Apostle Peter gave them the scriptural perspective by quoting the prophet Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants

and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17–18).

God’s people—men and women who are converted and close to God—will often speak to one another, or to non-Christians, with comforting counsel or inspired answers to questions. I have observed my wife giving inspired counsel to others over the telephone, and in person. Today, we all need that close contact with God more than ever.

Peter continued with Joel’s prophecy: “I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD” (Acts 2:19–20).

Why would Peter emphasize these astronomical signs? We know that the ultimate fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy will be the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12), which introduces the Day of the Lord—the year of God’s judgments on the nations. Many in Peter’s audience on the Day of Pentecost would also have been in Jerusalem for the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread two months earlier. Remember that during the crucifixion, Jerusalem had experienced an awesome astronomical sign of darkness for three hours: “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land” (Matthew 27:45).

Joel’s prophecy also foretold that the moon would be **turned to blood!** Had Peter’s audience seen the moon turned to blood just a few weeks earlier? Even apart from the question of any unique supernatural phenomena, NASA and other astronomical sources document that a partial lunar eclipse would have been visible from Jerusalem on the night after the crucifixion—April 25, 31AD. This night, beginning at the sunset shortly after Jesus was placed in the tomb, is the night we today call the “Night to be Much Observed” (Exodus 12:42, *KJV*). Astronomical records suggest that indeed this eclipse, which lasted for more than two hours, could well have tinted the moon with a blood-like appearance, giving the exposed edges of the moon a pronounced reddish coloration.

Yes, the Apostle Peter was speaking of cosmic phenomena most of his audience had recently observed! Peter continued preaching about the Messiah and the resurrection of Christ! When he told his audience that they were responsible for Jesus’ crucifixion, “they were cut to the heart.” Peter boldly proclaimed: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission

of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:36–38). **More than 3,000** people heard Peter, since 3,000 were **baptized** on that day (Acts 2:41).

THE CHURCH MEETS TOGETHER

When pilgrims came to Jerusalem, they congregated at the city’s most holy site: the temple. So, too, did the Apostles and new disciples, every day: “So continuing daily with one accord **in the temple**, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46–47).

Around the temple plaza was a colonnade, the eastern part of which was commonly called Solomon’s Porch (though, strictly speaking, “portico” would be the correct term). Jesus often taught His audience at this location. The Apostle John records one such event. “Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch” (John 10:22–23).

A wide variety of groups, or synagogues, would often gather in Solomon’s Porch. The Greek *synagoge* can be translated “gathering” or “gathering place.” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* explains the term: “Synagogue. The meeting place and prayer hall of the Jewish people since antiquity. During Second Temple times the term ‘synagogue’ referred both to a group of people and/or a building or institution. Although these notions are not mutually exclusive, it is quite probable that at its inception the synagogue did not refer to an actual building but to a group or community of individuals who met together for worship and religious purposes” (Article: “Synagogue,” Vol. VI, p. 251). Many religious groups held gatherings in Solomon’s Porch rather than in a building of their own.

Even after Pentecost, we find that the disciples regularly met at the temple: “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch” (Acts 5:12).

Let us consider one more example of Peter speaking to a large audience. Shortly after Pentecost, Peter performed a great miracle that eventually led to his summons before the Sanhedrin. “Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1). Peter, in the name of Jesus Christ, healed the lame man who begged at the



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THE PROMISE OF ACTS 2:39

By Gary F. Ehman

TTrue Christians have embarked on an annual journey that starts with the Christian Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. This experience keeps them in remembrance of the great sacrifice that both God the Father and Jesus the Christ expended for all of mankind.

This journey leads to the day of Pentecost, the third in the series of seven annual Holy Days central to the fact of their special calling—a calling that sets Christians apart from all other human beings on planet Earth. For ancient Israel, Pentecost—also called the Feast of Weeks—was their date with the Law of God. It was their induction at Mount Sinai into a nation, the physical kingdom of God. God’s laws were going to set them apart as a new people—living examples of what righteous obedience to God could accomplish in a very evil world. They were to become a city on a hill exemplifying God’s commandments, demonstrating His righteousness to all the rest of the world.

The Christians’ journey today, beginning with the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, will take them to a singularly more important result. This third commemorative Holy Day service is in regard to their receiving, individually, the Spirit of God—becoming the literally begotten children of God. The Christian becomes the demonstration of God’s plan for mankind’s future redemption: “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

An examination of the history of Pentecost helps us understand more fully what was in God’s mind when He first began to develop the concept of presenting a special people to the world. Moses, preparatory to the Day of Pentecost, presenting himself before God on Mount Sinai, was told: “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel” (Exodus 19:5–6).

Let’s look at the words “special treasure” in v. 5, because it is an important concept. The Hebrew phrase is *s’gullâh* (seg-ool-law’) meaning “shut up,” referring to a valued possession or wealth one protects, that one shuts up in a special place of protection. God was telling them that if they would hear His

voice, and keep His covenant that He was going to establish with them, they should become a costly possession to Him out of all nations (Deuteronomy 7:6).

God was planning to create a nation of people who would represent Him on earth to a totally pagan world, as a nation wholly governed by righteousness through His law:

“Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?” (Deuteronomy 4:5–8).

But the Israelites failed to measure up to the task put to them. They repeatedly turned their backs on God, defying His commands and polluting His worship. Therefore their cities were destroyed, and the great temples they erected to God were plundered and leveled. The individual tribes, who had once stated in a covenant with God—“All that the LORD has spoken we will do” (Exodus 19:8)—became a conquered people disappearing into the mists of history, to wait in captivity of sin for a future deliverance.

With this brief history in mind, notice that in 31AD, before the Day of Pentecost, Jesus spent some concentrated time with the disciples, as shown in Acts 1:3. He explains why He did so in vv. 4–5: “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”

Jesus, raised from the dead after His crucifixion, walked with His disciples and taught them, “to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs,

being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). He was hearkening back to His last Passover with them when, facing death, He encouraged them in great concern to remember Him and what He taught that night: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be *in* you” (John 14:15–17, *NABRE*).

It must be made perfectly clear what it was Jesus was saying. The word “with” in the Greek is *para* (par-ah’) meaning near, from beside, or in the vicinity of. The word “in” is *en* (en) literally in, within, a position that is fixed. Why is this important to know? Jesus was revealing a complete change in God’s association with mankind, beginning with a new creation that we call a Christian. It would start on the Day of Pentecost, as the Jews and other Israelites gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks, commemorating the establishment of the Old Covenant, the giving of the laws of God.

Then, on that Day of Pentecost, 31AD, the incredible happened:

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1–4).

The scene was astounding to those nearby: “And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?’” (vv. 6–8).

Peter, taking charge of this chaotic scene, had to explain it to them, quoting from the Prophet Joel:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass

that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Acts 2:16–21).

As the Apostle Peter explained, Jesus connects His New Testament Church to the mission He originally gave to ancient Israel: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:9–10; cf. Deuteronomy 7:6).

This directly relates back to John 14:16–17, when Jesus said He would send the Comforter. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This would be the fulfillment of a promise given to them earlier: “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

The disciples tarried in Jerusalem, as commanded, awaiting that “Promise of my Father.” The Greek word “promise” is *epaggelia* (ep-ang-el-ee’-ah), a pledge of good or blessing; in this case, God’s Holy Spirit. It had been a prophesied promise, as was noted in Joel 2:28–32.

But Pentecost 31AD was not the complete fulfillment of this prophecy. On that particular Day of Pentecost, an event unique in all history took place—a one-time only, supernatural occurrence. What happened on that day was a partial fulfillment—not the entirety—of Joel’s prophecy. The Bible does show the complete fulfillment in Isaiah 32:14–15: “Because the palaces will be forsaken, the bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will become lairs forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks—until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest” (cf. Isaiah 44:3; John 7:37–39, Jesus’ reference to the Last Great Day following the Feast of Tabernacles). The term “pour out” in Hebrew is *shâphak* (shaw-fak’); spill forth, let fall like drops.

Back in Luke 24:49, Jesus used the word “endued” in regard to God’s power through His Holy Spirit. The Greek word is *enduō* (en-do’-o), literally to settle in, as a new garment, to be invested or, in this context, to be clothed with power. The Apostle Paul makes the concept clearer in his epistle to the Romans: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:12).

The word “put on,” again, is *enduō* (en-do’-o). But, notice that it is used as a counterpoint to the word “cast off” *apotithēmi* (ap-ot-eeth’-ay-mee), not only to put something off of oneself, but to separate yourself from it. Christians are given power to cast off the dark past of sin through the Spirit of God that is now in them. Light armors us when we reject darkness. But again what are we to put on? “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (v. 14). Jesus is

centered in that promise: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

Paul maintains this theme in his epistle to the Colossian Christians, who were struggling against the pulls of their former lifestyles: “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds” (Colossians 3:8–9). The phrase “put off” is *apotithēmi* (ap-ot-eeth’-ay-mee), putting off sin and stepping away from it.

The process of conversion—and its deepening, through the indwelling of the promised Spirit—creates something entirely new in those receiving it. Paul explained that Christians, who have the Holy Spirit, “have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all” (vv. 10–11).

What is the result of “Christ is all and in all”? “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (vv. 12–13). This is the practicing Christian walking in light. Paul understood what Jesus told the disciples the night of the Passover; “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18). The process cannot be facilitated without Jesus. We are Jesus-centered as Christians. We have put Him on, He lives in us (Galatians 2:20), just as He promised.

Jesus told the disciples to wait for the promise that would come on the Day of Pentecost: “you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). He was speaking directly to the disciples, those who had responded to His teachings. Peter explained: “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear” (Act 2:32–33). It was the advent of the other Comforter—the Holy Spirit—from heaven that Jesus promised them at Passover. This was the foundation of the Church.

The Spirit was *not* poured out over “all flesh”—it only touched those who had been in the upper room of the house (vv. 1–4). The rest, whom God had called to the disciples’ gathering place, asked Peter: “what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (vv. 37–38). These individuals, attending the Feast of Weeks in Jerusalem, were

attracted to this fledgling Church of God. They heard what Peter preached, and what the true Church of God has been preaching ever since: the Gospel, the Good News of the coming Kingdom of God.

Only those God calls and draws to Him may come to Christ during this Church age. To those of us who have responded—as to those who responded at the first New Testament Pentecost—a promise was made and fulfilled, “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (v. 39). As Paul sums it up: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13).

While the promise clearly is the Holy Spirit, the Day of Pentecost goes far beyond that for Christians. The Holy Spirit is the key that opens the door to a future that defies imagination. Paul opens that understanding to the Hebrew Church: “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15).

Two more definitions are needed to understand “eternal inheritance.” “Eternal” *aiōnios* (ahee-o’-nee-os) meaning everlasting, never ending, and it describes an “inheritance” *klēronomia* (klay-ron-om-ee’-ah), something given as a personal possession—a never-ending possession.

What is that all about—this inheritance in and through Jesus Christ? Paul shows that this inheritance comes after receiving the Holy Spirit, which Jesus promised back at Passover:

“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them;’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more’” (Hebrews 10:14–17).

This is not the same promise made to the nation of Israel (cf. Hebrews 8:8–12). Paul’s words are directed to the Church Jesus raised up on the Day of Pentecost.

The Apostle John, present the night the promise was made, makes it clear to Christians: “Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father” (1 John 2:24). John knew the promised result of such Christian obedience: “And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life” (v. 25). ■

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The Spirit of Peace

By Dexter B. Wakefield

PERSONAL PEACE

But how can we have personal peace these days when we are beset with so many personal trials? First, it is important to remember that we are still in Satan's world in an evil age, and Christ said that it would be difficult for God's people. This is because when God sets His children apart—makes them holy—He necessarily *puts a difference* between them and those in this world and age.

At Jesus' birth, the angels promised **peace on earth, goodwill toward men** (Luke 2:14). But, speaking of our trials, Jesus said: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth [now, in this age]. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:34–38). This is not a contradiction. In this age, the world does not like the difference Christ makes in His people. And Satan will attack at every opportunity.

When we came into God's Church, obeying God meant that we had to make some difficult choices. Christ and the apostles taught that we must repent of our sins when we come to Christ (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38), and we cannot repent of sin and break God's commandments at the same time (1 John 3:4). We remember that the Bible calls them "*The Ten Commandments*," not "*The Nine Suggestions*."

After we are baptized for the remission of sins, and we receive the Holy Spirit, we continue to make vital choices, throughout our lives, as to whether we will obey God and keep His divine law as our way of life. It is God who defines right and wrong for His people, and this puts a difference between God's people and the rest of the world. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

What we do changes us, and we must overcome throughout our lives, demonstrating *living faith* (James 2:14–17). Jesus told His disciples, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but *I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you*" (John 15:19). Being set apart by God means something! For one thing, it means enduring. Jesus said, "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

But even when our Lord warned us of coming trials and difficulties, He encouraged us with a **promise of peace**. "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have **peace**. *In the world you will have tribulation*; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

More slaughter in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Nigeria, Ukraine! Beheadings, mass killings, violence all over the world! Unimaginable human suffering goes *on and on and on*. Homegrown terrorism has sprouted across Europe and the United States. Everyone talks about peace, but—more and more—peace seems like a *mirage in the Middle Eastern desert*, moving farther and farther away as mankind staggers toward it.

Will peace ever come? What if, one day soon, someone *credibly* announced that *peace is coming* to the whole world? Would not that be *very, very good news*? **The good news of peace!** Did you realize that this announcement has *already* been made? And we are continuing to announce it today. Of course, God's people need to know what it means and must trust in it.

"GOSPEL" MEANS "GOOD NEWS"

The English word, "gospel" comes from the Old English, *gōd-spell*, which is a word-for-word translation of the Greek word used in the New Testament, *euangelion* (*eu*: "good" and *angelion*: "message"). We get our word, "angel" from the Greek word, *angelos*, for "messenger." Christ indeed brought a *good message* that is *good news* for the whole world!

God said through the prophet Isaiah, "The way of peace they have not known" (Isaiah 59:8). What a true statement! Generation after generation has seen centuries upon centuries of wars. But how will this promised peace come about? Paul wrote to the Church in Ephesus, "having shod your feet with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**" (Ephesians 6:15). What did he mean by that? How are we to travel through life, feet *shod*, and *prepared* with this **good news**—this **gospel of peace**? Can we know the way?

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), and He brings peace for *His set-apart people* in this evil age. He also has promised peace for *the whole world* in the age to come.

We can be very encouraged that the peace Christ has for His holy people in this age is *only a foretaste* of the peace that He will bring for His Holy Mountain [Government] and the whole world in the next age. And there can be no world peace apart from God's Kingdom. *The gospel of the Kingdom of God includes the good news of the gospel of peace!*

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

God's Holy Spirit brings peace! “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace**, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23). Love, joy, peace! *The order of those fruits is instructive.* On Passover, we remember that just before He died, Jesus told His disciples, “Greater **love** has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends” (John 15:13). At Passover, we remember that greatest love, and Passover is characterized by the spiritual fruit of **love**. John the Baptist declared, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Christ, our Passover, did that by dying for us.

We should also note that the scriptures often characterize the Days of Unleavened Bread with the spiritual fruit of **joy**. By the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we are washed of the guilt of our sins and are “clean every whit.” Like the Israelites coming out of Egypt—a type of sin—God's *spiritual* Israel has *great gladness* to be cleansed of the guilt of past sins and free from the bondage of it.

Similarly, after a period of idolatry, King Hezekiah returned the Kingdom of Judah to serving God. Then they kept the Spring Holy Days with **great joy**. “So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** seven days **with great gladness**... Then the whole assembly agreed to keep *the feast* another seven days, and they kept it *another* seven days with gladness... The whole assembly of Judah **rejoiced**, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. So there was **great joy** in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, *there had been* nothing like this in Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 30:21–26).

Similarly, when Judah returned from captivity to Jerusalem, they joyfully returned to keeping the Spring Holy Days in Jerusalem. “And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month... And they kept the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** seven days **with joy**; for the LORD made them **joyful**” (Ezra 6:19–22).

Love, joy—and then **peace!** The Holy Day of Pentecost pictures, among other things, the giving of the Holy Spirit—which brings great **peace** to God's people. God is the author of it. “For God is not the author of confusion but of **peace**, as in all the churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Our Father is “the **God of peace**” (Philippians 4:9) and Christ “**preached peace** to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access **by one Spirit** to the Father” (Ephesians 2:17–18). *God's peace is something we remember in a special way every year at Pentecost.*

Jesus said the Holy Spirit He would send would bring His people **peace**. “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, [that] the Father will send in My name... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. **Peace** I leave with you, **My peace** I give to you; not as the world gives

do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:25–27).

Paul wrote to the Church in Rome, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose” (Romans 8:28). We in God's Church understand that we have an infinitely powerful Father who will cause all things to work together for our benefit if we love, obey and trust Him.

When we know these things, we can be “confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). This confidence brings *great peace of mind* to God's begotten children.

Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18), and He is *zealous* for His Church. Paul exhorted the brethren in Corinth, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are *more than conquerors* through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35–39).

We do not need to take anxious thought about whether Christ will perform in us what He said He would. *He has both the will and the power to do all He promised!*

The apostles preached the peace that Christ brings through His indwelling Spirit. “The word which God sent to the children of Israel, **preaching peace** through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36). It is Christ who dwells in us through that Spirit, and we have **His peace**. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but *Christ lives in me*; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in [of] the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). That is why Christ said in John 14:27 quoted earlier, “**My peace** I give to you.”

Paul spoke of a **peace** that combines **trust** in God, a sure **hope** of eternal life in His Kingdom and a **quietness of mind** that is brought on by the indwelling of Christ in us. Jesus Christ's indwelling enables us to be spiritually minded and like-minded with Him. This results in an inner peace for God's people regardless of the trials we endure. “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded *is life and peace*” (Romans 8:6).

The peace of Christ is not just something we feel and experience emotionally, but it is something we *live and do*. Paul exhorts us to **live in peace**; and the God of love and peace will be with us (2 Corinthians 13:11). *Peace for God's people is not only a feeling; it is a fact!*

We not only have peace within ourselves and with our fellow man, but Christ has put away the barrier of our sins between us and the Father. God's people, made holy by His Spirit, are no longer profaned by the guilt of their sins. “Therefore, having

been justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

We seek to describe this peace of God, but can we fully comprehend it? The Apostle Paul told the brethren in Philippi, “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 4:6–7)—who lives in us. **It is good news indeed that God’s Holy Spirit can bring us such peace!**

WORLD PEACE IS COMING!

The Apostle Paul described the scene we see around the world today quite well. “Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:15–18). *Welcome to the modern world—things have not changed much!*

But this world cannot see that it is in bondage to an invisible ruler, “the *prince* of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). Christ called him “the *ruler* of this world” who “will be cast out” (John 12:31). The world is under *Satan’s government* which produces rebellion, destruction and violence. It is important to remember that this age is ruled for now by Satan’s kingdom, and Jesus referred to it. “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will **his kingdom** stand?” (Matthew 12:25–26).

Jesus Christ is not coming to reform Satan’s kingdom—his “*mountain*”—which currently fills the earth. He is coming to *destroy and replace* it! It will be replaced with the **Holy Mountain of God**—Christ’s righteous government. The prophet, Daniel, foretold how Satan’s government will be “blown away.” Describing the great Babylonish system that currently fills the whole earth, he wrote, “You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.... You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone [Christ, the chief cornerstone] that struck the image became a **great mountain** and *filled the whole earth*” (Daniel 2:31–35). Christ is the “firstborn among **many** brethren” (Romans 8:29), and that “great mountain” is the *Holy Mountain [Government] of God!*

The prophet Zechariah, described Satan’s profane kingdom and government as **a mountain that will be leveled**. “So he said

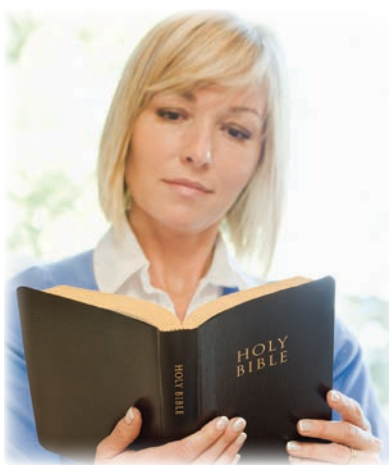
to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel [a type of the Messiah]: ‘Not by might [worldly armies or military] nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty. “What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become *level ground*. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’” (Zechariah 4:6–7, *NIV*). Satan’s government and kingdom will be “flattened”!

The King of kings will then establish His righteous government on earth. Isaiah tells us what that kingdom will be like. After Satan’s violent, profane mountain is destroyed, it will be replaced with God’s Holy Mountain—which will be characterized by **peace**. “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the **government** will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**. Of the increase of His **government and peace** there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain**, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 9:6–7, 11:9).

Why will they “not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain”? For one thing, the King of kings will not allow war and destruction in His Kingdom. He is “Melchizedek... first being translated ‘king of righteousness,’ and then also king of Salem, meaning ‘**king of peace**’” (Hebrews 7:1–3). And there is another reason. It is because “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea”! It will be the job of the sons of God to teach the world the way to peace, because this world certainly does not know it now. *That is why we must learn to live in peace today*. Jesus was looking forward to that great day when He said, “Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called **sons of God**” (Matthew 5:9).

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Church in Ephesus, regarding peace, “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**” (Ephesians 4:1–3).

Paul’s benediction at the end of the Book of Hebrews is an apt blessing for all of God’s people as we approach the Holy Day of Pentecost. “Now the **God of peace**, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20–21, *KJV*). **Christ’s gospel of peace is good news indeed!** ■



Revealing the Father Through the Annual Festivals

By Peter Nathan

Jesus Christ told His disciples that He alone knew the Father and that the revealing of the Father would be to those to whom Christ Himself would reveal Him (Matthew 11:25–27). One of the ways in which Jesus did this is through the annual Festivals. If we examine the teachings and instructions given throughout the New Testament, we find facets of the Father's character associated with each of the Festivals. The result is that through observing the annual Festivals we can come to have an appreciation of our Heavenly Father and start to understand how these days represent His Plan for humanity. The Plan of God truly is His Holy Day Plan. And the whole Plan of God reveals the giving nature of our Heavenly Father.

The people of Christ's day had only a very limited understanding of the being we know as God the Father. Interestingly, when Jesus spoke of His Father, the disciples did not reveal an attitude of bewilderment—"Who are you talking about?" or "What are you talking about?" They clearly showed some appreciation of the Father. Even the religious leaders were not without some comprehension of the Father, although they, as Christ said, did not "know" Him. We read: "Then they said to Him, 'Where is Your Father?' Jesus answered, 'You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also'" (John 8:19).

But, then, how was Jesus to reveal the Father to the disciples and to the Church?

To appreciate how the annual Festivals picture our Father's plan, we must remember that any such appreciation must start by our being called into a relationship with Him. Jesus Christ explained this in an oft-quoted passage, in which he told His followers, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). The Father's role in calling Christians into a relationship with Him, and with His Son, is reiterated several times in John 6. In verse 37 and again in verse 39, Jesus explains that the Father "gives" the disciples to Him.

To be disciples means that the Father has become intimately involved in our lives so we can have a relationship with both Him and His Son.

It is significant that, throughout the New Testament, the Greek word translated into English as "God" is the term *theos*—a term used almost exclusively in relation to the Father (except for a very few times where the meaning of the Word or Christ is clear from the context). By contrast, Jesus Christ in His glorified state is normally referenced by the Greek term *kyrios*, translated as "Lord" (1 Corinthians 8:6, 12:3). As a result, throughout the apostolic writings, we can be certain which member of the God Family is being addressed—even if they are not referenced as the Father or His Son, Jesus Christ. When we understand this, we can better appreciate just how much the New Testament speaks of the Father.

PASSOVER

The annual Festivals commence with the Passover, representing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). That description makes Jesus the Lamb of the Father. John reinforces this idea as he records Jesus' frequent teaching about His relationship with His Father. A frequently quoted scripture about Jesus—ironically one of the least understood of scriptures—is found in the Gospel of

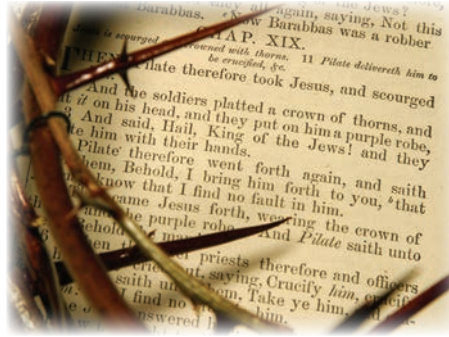
John: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16–17). If you have not already done so, I urge you to read Mr. Gerald Weston's comprehensive series of *Living Church News* articles about the "golden verse," beginning with his May-June 2012 article, "God, Who Loved the World."

Jesus as the Passover lamb was a gift from the Father—an expression of His concern for us so that we can be reconciled to Him, and through that salvation have access to eternal life. Jesus states more about the Father and His qualities at the last Passover He conducted with His disciples than in any other section of Scripture. We read of this in detail as part of our Passover service each year. The Son was revealing the Father to the disciples and to us.

PENTECOST

The Israelites were given the instructions about Pentecost in the context of a gift: the land they were about to inherit. They had come into the land, crossing the Jordan just before the Passover. Following the Passover, the miracle of manna ceased, and they were able to reap the ripening barley and subsequently wheat as they moved through the land conquering the territory. The inhabitants retreated into their walled cities out of fear of Israel, and there would have been little resistance to them taking the first harvest of the land. So we find the introduction to Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks stated in terms of the harvest of the land:

"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave



offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 23:15–22).

The land was a gift that Israel was never to forget. Leaving the corners of the field for the poor was a way of reinforcing the memory that the land was a gift from God. To this end, Moses also recorded: “For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which **He has given you**” (Deuteronomy 8:7–10).

Pentecost for us is still about a gift, not of land but something infinitely greater. At the Passover, Jesus had told His disciples about that gift. “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).

The gift of the Holy Spirit becomes the defining symbol of Pentecost, making us the first fruits of the harvest. It was and still is to this day, a gift from our Father. So the ability to have a real relationship with the Father and His Son comes as a gift. So gifts are as relevant today as they were to Israel entering the Promised Land.

After promising the gift of the Holy Spirit from the Father, Jesus described the outcome of that gift. He described it in terms of the intimate relationship we would have with the Father; a loving, caring, sharing, instructive relationship that would prepare us for service in His Kingdom. “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make

Our home with him.... These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:23–26).

Passover was not the time for the giving of that gift. The promise was made and then fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, 31AD. But consider this in a larger scale. The promise was clearly not just for those disciples eating a Passover meal with Jesus. As Luke records, it is a promise to all those whom the Father would call. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13).

That power and role come as a gift from the Father: the most priceless gift we could receive—the Holy Spirit of God. That allows us to appreciate spiritual issues and, above all, see this physical world through the mind of our Father and His Son. It is not just to be a remembrance at Pentecost but to be an active ingredient in our daily lives!

On the day of Pentecost, the Father fulfilled those promises. In giving His Holy Spirit to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem, it provided so that they and we who follow could be firstfruits—the “church of the firstborn”—of our Father (Hebrews 12:23).

TRUMPETS

How should we view the Feast of Trumpets in this regard? We pray daily, eagerly looking forward to the return of Jesus Christ. We appreciate the incredible earth-shaking events that are to take place. But who is it that has the power to allow any of these events? Humanity cannot do so! Jesus Christ does not appear to have the power to do so! It is in the Father’s hand to ultimately determine the timing and occurrence of those events. Matthew records Jesus teaching that it was **the Father only** who knew the day and hour of His return (Matthew 24:36). Luke reinforces that with a subsequent teaching of Jesus, just before He ascended to His Father.

“And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority’” (Acts 1:7).

Trumpets pictures the announcement of Christ’s return to establish the Kingdom of God on planet Earth. Yet even here we can see that the event we all anticipate in celebrating the Feast of Trumpets requires the action and intervention of our Father.

ATONEMENT

When we consider the Day of Atonement, we understand Jesus Christ as the real High Priest, of whom the Aaronic High Priest acted as a type. The High Priest performed all of the



actions in the tabernacle or temple on that day. Leviticus 16 sets out the detailed events that had to be performed by the High Priest on that day. It was the only day of the year in which the High Priest was able to enter the Holy of Holies—during which time he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifices on the Mercy Seat over the Ark of the Covenant.

So, Jesus Christ, as the true High Priest, was then responsible for performing all those actions. We must then ask ourselves to whom was He performing those actions and presenting the blood that had to be sprinkled on the Mercy Seat? The answer to that question helps us understand who was providing the atonement for sin as a result of that blood. The High Priest was presented with two goats before the altar for divine selection. One was for the Lord, and its blood had to be sprinkled in the Holy of Holies. The other was the goat that was to be taken away. The goat representing Christ reminds us again of the Father's gift. And who was it that determined the result of the casting of lots for the two goats? Was it time and chance? Surely not. It is the Father who orchestrates and controls the events that Atonement pictures.

The Father, then, is the ultimate being who is responsible for us being brought together as one—**at-one-ment!** He does this through the actions of His Son, our true High Priest. Our Father desires the reconciliation of humanity to Himself.

TABERNACLES

The Feast of Tabernacles is the high point of the year for us in terms of the Holy Days. The concept of the Kingdom of God with the dramatic changes being made for the benefit of all humanity and the creation is awesome to consider. Our part in that Kingdom is something that the Father is eagerly awaiting. He desires us to have our part. Jesus taught us: “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Do you realize how long it has been that the Father has looked forward to that event?

Note the beginning of that pleasure and desire on the Father's part as described by Jesus. “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’” (Matthew 25:34).

Our Father has been anticipating rewarding His children with the Kingdom since the beginning of everything. It is the ultimate blessing He wishes to bestow on His family; the blessing He has been waiting to give to us from the beginning (Genesis 1:26).



THE LAST GREAT DAY

The Last Great Day pictures the period when those not called in this day and age will have the opportunity to have a relationship with our Father and His Son. They will have the privilege to appreciate the gifts of our Father's calling, the giving of His Son, the gift of the Holy Spirit and many of the other benefits He has given to us. Our role will be to serve them and help them understand the greatness of the gifts they are then receiving. We will teach them that the change in environment into which they are resurrected came about because of obedience to our Father.

In summary, the annual Festivals provide a way for us to have a relationship with our Father. Many Protestants like to talk about being “Christ-centered,” but in doing so fail to understand what this really means. We cannot be properly “Christ-centric” unless we **also** understand the Father's role, and Christ's role in our establishing a relationship with the Father. Certainly we deeply value the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But why do we value it so highly? Because it allows us to enter into a relationship with God the Father. The very ability for a Christian to have the “mind of Christ” is made possible by the gifts of our Father. And this is only possible because of the Father, whom we thank for the resurrected and living Christ who is our High Priest, by whose life we are saved (Romans 5:10)



So we find Paul making comments to the Churches such as, “for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13) and “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, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18–20).

The annual Festivals therefore put the statement of James into an interesting context. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:17–18).

James talks of the Father's gifts and we being firstfruits, which brings us back to where we started. What was the purpose of the gifts offered by our Father in the first place? “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Indeed, the Holy Days enable us to appreciate the great generosity of our Heavenly Father. What an awesome plan He and His Son Jesus Christ have in place for their creation! ■

Higher Education: A Christian Perspective

By Scott D. Winnail

Scripture is replete with God's admonitions for His people to prepare wisely for their future. God, the author and creator of the universe and the loving Father of us all, gave us clear guidelines to follow as we prepare to be used by Him in our future physical and even spiritual lives. Solomon observed that a wise person prepares a means of steady income *before* building a home and family (Proverbs 24:27). Christ directed Christians to build solid physical and spiritual foundations (Matthew 7:24–27).

He also directed Christians to develop the talents and skills that God gave them, and in that way present themselves to God in a pleasing way (Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27). Many of God's leaders obtained education and training *prior* to being placed in their leadership positions by God. Examples of this would include Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elisha, many of the prophets, the twelve Apostles, and the Apostle Paul.

In addition, God expects men and women to prepare for their future roles of service to and taking care of their family. The Apostle Paul told Timothy "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). That scripture directs families to prepare to take care of aging parents when this becomes necessary. And the principle can be applied more broadly. It directs men, as future husbands and fathers, to obtain the training and education needed to appropriately support self and family, and to contribute tithes and offerings to God's Work. It implies that women, too, need to prepare adequately, obtaining the training

and education necessary to be the best wives, mothers and grandmothers possible.

Young people must plan and prepare for their future, and parents and grandparents need to guide, direct, and encourage them to build a solid spiritual and physical foundation. For decades, it has been common knowledge that training and education

lead to greater career opportunities. Typically, the higher one's level of education or training, the greater one's earning potential (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002; AOL Jobs.com, September 14, 2011). The better one prepares for the future (through university, technical school, or other training), the brighter the future will be. In today's economy, formal education credentials are more important than ever for future success (*The Atlantic*,



July/August 2010).

Years ago, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote a powerful booklet titled *The Seven Laws of Success*. Within its pages, he discussed the following seven laws, which—when fully implemented—guarantee success in life. The laws are: 1) Set the right goal, 2) **Education and preparation**, 3) Good health, 4) Drive, 5) Resourcefulness, 6) Perseverance, and 7) Involving God in the process. These simple but profound laws of success are *not* followed by most in the world today, and are even neglected by some in God's Church. These important laws need to be recaptured and the booklet needs to be reviewed by young people in God's Church, and parents and grandparents alike.

Today, many young people desire a good job that makes them "lots of money," and many young

women desire to fulfill their godly roles as wives and mothers, but few plan for and subsequently work toward these goals with perseverance. From a Christian perspective, lusting after or coveting a high salary for its own sake is wrong (Exodus 20:17)! But preparing for a well-paying job that one enjoys, so one can better support family and God's Work, is entirely fine (Proverbs 24:27).



Today, “many boys seem to think they will be successful—career-wise and financially—without having any idea about how they’ll achieve that success” (DiPrete & Buchmann, June 11, 2013). We see an alarming trend

in higher education today, with young men likely to prioritize work over college—choosing to make money quickly and soon, as opposed to planning for and *working toward* a career that will benefit them and their future families far more over the long run (*ibid.*). Young men are also more likely than their female counterparts, to earn poorer grades in middle and high (secondary) school, and drop out of university. While women have made great strides in higher education, men have gone in the opposite direction (*ibid.*). However, although more women than ever are graduating with college and post-graduate degrees and are now holding more jobs in the public workforce and are forecasted to continue this trend (Rosin, July/August 2010), fewer women than ever are becoming full-time homemakers. *Home Economics* degree programs, originally designed to prepare wives and mothers, have gone the way of the cassette recorder and disappeared from many universities a few decades ago.

Education and preparation are critical and godly steps for future success. As we further develop our minds and skills, we provide God with additional tools He can use. Christ powerfully urged all believers **not** to neglect their God-given talents and in fact, to grow and build them (Matthew 25:14–29)! But, seeking the right type of education and training that is *in harmony with God's way of life* now and in His Kingdom, takes a great deal of thought and planning (Proverbs 4:27). When pondering and planning for the future, it is important to ask the following questions: 1. How will a chosen career path mesh with God's way of life today? For example, a medical professional who needs to be “on call” 24 hours a day, even for just one or two weekends a month, can be guaranteed to “break the Sabbath” on a regular basis—twice a month. A police officer or security

guard who is required to carry a gun, even if he or she intends never to use it, can be guaranteed the opportunity to use it and is trained in doing so. Remember, our adversary will constantly tempt us to sin just as he did Christ (Matthew 4:1–3), and thus will predictably provide the opportunity to use a gun. 2. Will a chosen career path in society today help you build skills that will be useful for ruling in God's Kingdom, or will it direct you to develop skills and perspectives that God will not want in His Kingdom? These are important questions to personally consider, discuss with family, and even share with a minister. And remember, choosing to focus one's efforts on being a wife and mother *is* a “career choice,” worthy of the same education and preparation as any career. Once an idea of a career path is decided upon, what should be considered when choosing an educational setting or institution?

CAUTIONS REGARDING WORLDLY EDUCATION

Just as the tree Adam and Eve ate of was a “mixed bag” of good and evil, so too is education in the institutions of the world. Much of the information learned in the colleges,

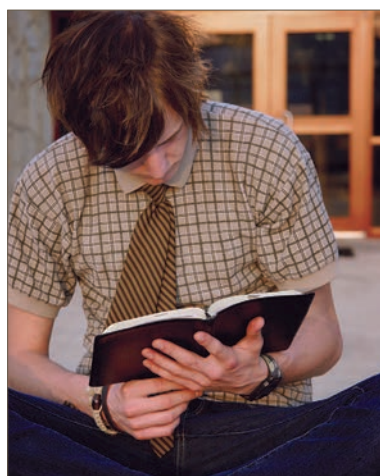
***Education and preparation* are critical and godly steps for future success. As we further develop our minds and skills, we provide God with additional tools He can use. Christ powerfully urged all believers **not** to neglect their God-given talents and in fact, to grow and build them (Matthew 25:14–29)!**

universities, and technical schools is correct and helpful. Many of the educators and students are sincere and desire to do good for society. However, Satan's deceptive nature also permeates these institutions and learning environments and Christians need to be “on their guard” if they choose this educational path. University and even technical program students who are true Christians need to know what ideas and opportunities to avoid, and which to pursue.

For a glimpse into public education today, it is helpful to start by viewing the changes in university education over the last several decades. After all, university is where most teachers are made! In most large universities, faculty scholarship, research and publication are professorial duties that take precedence over teaching. Much of the teaching is actually done by minimally experienced graduate assistants and not faculty members (Cuban, 1990). In many elite schools, the balanced general education approach has been discarded in favor of technical training. Sadly, critics observe that this action forces students to memorize facts but leaves them devoid of the ability to *think* (Deresiewicz, 2014).

Morality on university campuses is certainly in rapid decline too. Sadly, the immoral and anti-God, anti-Christian atmosphere at universities today shapes the public school teachers and

university professors of tomorrow. Where public education was once commissioned to reinforce the common morals of the community or state, public “education today is seen largely as an economic activity, not as a moral activity...” even on university campuses (*Moral Intelligence*, 2010). Some have described today’s children as “more lacking in decency, integrity, concern for others and morality” than all previous generations (*Moral Agendas for Children’s Welfare*, 2004). In a 2011 study, most young people surveyed did not believe in moral absolutes, were very tolerant, and felt uncomfortable identifying the behaviors of others as wrong or right (*The New York Times*, September 12, 2011), and they bring this *lack of values* to university campuses. Today, “waiting until marriage for a fulfilling sex life is considered not just quaint and outdated but quite possibly foolish... [while] the absence of relationship permanence” is valued. “The majority of young adults in America not only think they should explore different relationships, they believe it may be foolish and wrong not to” (*Premarital Sex in America*, pp. 170–171). And university campuses are where much of this exploration takes place. Parents who are considering “sending their children away”



to live in an on-campus environment in a worldly college or university should think twice before placing their not-yet-converted children—God’s children—in such an environment. In addition, over the last few decades, universities have become increasingly hostile to traditional Christian values and orientations. Evolution is typically taught as fact and influences students’ study in subjects from biology to chemistry, to anthropology, to sociology, to nursing and medicine. Homosexual conduct is taught as “normal” and even praised, instead of being rightly labeled as a sin. As Robert Bork noted, quoting sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, university intellectuals have “... a predominant sympathy for the antiestablishment, liberal-left positions.... They have lent disproportionate support to atheistic, antiwar, civil rights, civil liberties for deviants, liberal Democratic, and third party

causes” (Bork, 93). In essence, many university campuses have become vehicles for advancing social, intellectual, and political agendas—they are no longer what we would properly consider *institutions of higher learning*. Students and faculty are now expected to “tolerate” and “accept” a wide range of behaviors that were once viewed as sinful. Universities have normalized behaviors that many parents and even therapists consider “depraved” (Grossman, 149). Those who “hold on” to traditional values are labeled as bigoted and intolerant, or even ignorant and stupid. In general, the university experience (including the on-campus living experience) is designed to *deconstruct* traditional values and rebuild them in the image of the elite of the academy. It is no wonder that many young people lose their faith along with their “virtue” while at university.

Even with the inherent problems of the world’s educational system, there are still many benefits to education and preparation within this system. Individuals choosing to pursue training and education in universities or technical schools *can* learn a tremendous amount of useful information. The degrees or certifications they earn will open many doors of opportunity and earning. They can also build valuable skills and glean knowledge that can better prepare them for the workforce and even the home. But, caution is urged! One should not go into the world’s educational system naïvely assuming that everything taught is correct or even moral. Navigating the world’s system takes wisdom, guidance (from parents and other converted adults), and God’s help. Having God’s Holy Spirit *within*—through baptism—is also a tremendous tool and defense against Satan’s lies and deceptions. Seeking an education while living at home can provide constant access to converted parents and the opportunity to discuss the thoughts and ideas being taught—not to mention it is far less expensive than living on campus. This is especially important for younger students who are not yet baptized.

THE MISSING DIMENSION IN EDUCATION

Although the world’s educational system does its best to train and educate people for the *workforce*, it is lacking in educating students *for life*. The world’s system does not teach students keys to live a happy and abundant life. It does not teach them how to budget, including setting aside tithes and offerings, so that God can bless them. It does not teach them from the “foundation of knowledge”—God’s Word. It does not teach students how to avoid Satan’s deceptions and how to develop a deeper relationship with God. However, God has blessed members of His Church with the establishment of an institution of higher education where this missing dimension in knowledge

is central. Yes, that institution is Living University, where I have taught since 2008, and where I serve as Dean of Faculty. Living University's programs are based on the



Bible and include significant training in the Word of God. Additionally, Living University aims to *recapture the true values* of Bible understanding, in marriage and family preparation, in health and wellness, and even in finance. Our **on-site program** goes further in fostering this outlook in dating and social life, in leisure activities and in service to the Church and the community. It really is different—and I have experienced this firsthand, having also taught in the world's universities for more than a decade before coming to Living University.

Unlike the world's universities, Living University offers programs aimed at teaching its students how to live a truly godly life. The majority of its classes focus on deepening the students' Bible knowledge and understanding. However, the curriculum has expanded to include courses in marriage and family, education, business, speech communication, health and nutrition, counseling and more. The aim is to provide a balanced curriculum—much of which should eventually be transferable to other universities, for those who need that option. Living University is a powerful tool for building a stronger spiritual foundation necessary for any Christian, male or female, and with this purpose in mind has developed courses that will help “round out” Christians for service to their families and the Church. Whether one wants to become a better father, mother, husband, or wife (current or future), Living University offers helpful instruction. Living University also offers courses that can help prepare students for education elsewhere. The on-site program provides additional social interaction, guidance and training in many other areas, and also the opportunity to personally grow and develop as an independent adult, in a much safer and more godly environment than is offered by the world's educational institutions.

For those who choose an education in the world's system, Living University's **online curriculum** can still be an important tool for building spiritual depth and countering powerful worldly influences. And Living University's online curriculum is a tool and blessing that God's people of almost any age can use to continue developing their God-given *talents*. Living University is not intended to train individuals for careers in the workplace, but it is intended to provide God's people with

a powerful spiritual undergirding that can help prevent deception and help insure that godly values and His way of life are instilled in future generations. Even a year or two of Living University study can help create an unshakable spiritual foundation that will benefit self, family, and church.

Education and preparation are important to God. Before entering the Promised Land, God charged parents and grandparents to pass on His way of life to their children and their grandchildren (Deuteronomy 4:9–10). God wants us to plan for the future, building our lives on a firm biblical foundation (Matthew 7:24–27). He wants us to plan for the future and obtain the proper training to excel in our



future roles (Proverbs 24:27). God wants us to be successful in this life as well as in the life to come. But, success does not just happen. It takes thought, planning, and hard work. To succeed in the world today and to find a vocation that is enjoyable, godly, and suitable for supporting a family takes forethought

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and will take training and education. Young people should view education as a necessary step to success, whether inside or outside the home. The better prepared we are for our future roles, the more successful we will be and the better served the people around us will be—even including our spouse and our children!

The world's educational system can be an important tool to success, but it must be treated as a two-edged sword. There are many benefits that can be sought out, yet there are drawbacks that must be avoided. Many in God's Church will naturally gravitate toward the strengths Living University can offer, that cannot be found in the world's educational system, as an important part of a person's preparation for godly success, even if the on-site program is not an option. As godly goals are set, effort and work is put into proper education and preparation, and the remaining laws of success are put into play, true godly success will be achieved in this life, and beyond!

For more information on Living University be sure to visit www.livinguniv.com or call 704-708-2292 with questions. ■

Woman to Woman

By Faye League

OVERCOMING THE DREAD OF IT ALL

Ladies, no matter what your station in life is at the present time—whether it be a domestic engineer (a full-time homemaker), clerk, paralegal, secretary, teacher, student, lawyer, waitress, to name a few—there are certain mundane, but necessary tasks of everyday living which the very thought of doing can bring dread.

I have found over time that the worst part of doing any mundane but necessary task is the dread of putting forth the effort. So when the thought of dreading to do something enters my mind, I have learned to give myself a little “pep talk” and say “Don’t dread it; just do it!” Then I forget about the dread and the task gets done.



BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING

It all begins in childhood, where a child is taught good grooming and proper hygiene. I can recall when I was in elementary school (way back when) my first-grade teacher taught the class a little ditty to sing while acting out the motions. It went like this, “This is the way we wash our face, wash our face, wash our face. This is the way we wash our face, so early in the morning.” Then she would continue on with brushing the teeth and combing the hair. She was endeavoring to teach the class life-long habits of good grooming and proper hygiene—thus reinforcing the parents’ efforts at home.

Also assigning children certain chores in the home or yard can be a valuable starter tool to help them build a strong work ethic for the future and also will give them a sense of accomplishment instead of dread if explained properly.

This reminds me of the first year my eldest son attended summer camp in Orr, Minnesota. I believe he was thirteen years old at the time. The week before he was to leave for camp, in our family Bible study we had been discussing Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.” We discussed the many ways in which this instruction could be applied, and the consequences of doing so. It was a very interesting

Bible study and the children seemed to enjoy it very much. So, as my son prepared to leave for camp, I reminded him of this scripture. In the first letter we received from him, he wrote, “Mother, I am putting your advice into practice—to do everything with all my might. I am determined to do my part to make camp a success.” His positive response brought tears of joy to my eyes—to know that he was paying heed to my advice.

Many years later, after he had grown children of his own and also grandchildren, some of our family members were sitting around talking, and “out of the blue,” he said, “Mom’s a rock!” He could not have given me a greater compliment. The only reason I mention this is that children do notice our examples—whether we are solid in God’s truth year after year or whether we are as weak as the sand, which can be blown or washed away.

The Apostle Peter uses this imagery to describe our firmness in Christian example. “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:1-5). Yes, we as Christian women are called to be as living stones, with Christ as the chief cornerstone.

DUE DILIGENCE

We as Christian women can indeed be bastions of spiritual strength to our families and to others—if we in our quiet and steady way hold fast to the truth and stay solid in the faith.

In order to do this, we must be diligent to maintain spiritual growth and to not dread doing the things that this requires—prayer, Bible study, meditation, and fasting. Why are these spiritual tools so important to our spiritual growth? Because they keep our minds focused on God, His Kingdom and His righteousness. I am so thankful that Dr. Meredith

reminds us to do these things from time to time—especially to feed on Christ, who is our salvation. If we do not pray and study on a regular basis, how can we truly know the Father or Christ?

Quite a few years ago, my husband and I were attending a ministerial conference in Pasadena, California, in which the keys to spiritual growth—prayer, Bible study, meditation and fasting—were emphasized quite often. One of the ladies who was there with her husband had apparently become bored and tired of hearing these instructions. I would hear her laughing and talking to others about the “Big Four” as she called them. She would pass us in the hall and say, “Now don’t forget about the ‘Big Four’” and laugh as she went by. Apparently she did not realize the importance or significance of these spiritual tools.

The dread of doing anything can lead to procrastination. Procrastination can hinder spiritual growth and can cause loss of spiritual ground. The Apostle Paul instructs us: “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus... Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind” (Philippians 3:13–14, 16).

AVOID PROCRASTINATION AND LAZINESS

Dread can lead not only to procrastination but also to laziness. “I went by the field of the lazy man, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; and

there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; so shall your poverty come like a prowler, and your need like an armed man” (Proverbs 24:30–34). Procrastination and laziness go hand-in-hand and neither one is beneficial in any way. The following incident is a classic example.

My husband was telling me one time about a Spokesman Club member who was assigned a speech for the next club meeting. The man told him that all week long he had been struggling to think of a subject to speak about. Each day of the week he would struggle to come up with a subject, but could not think of anything, so he would say to himself, “I will wait until tomorrow and try again.” Finally, at the end of the week, he had decided on his subject. Then on the night of his speech, he addressed the club and said, “Tonight my subject is—procrastination.” My husband said that the way he described his struggles with procrastination during the previous week was very effective and helpful to the club.

There was a song written many years ago titled *Mañana* (*Tomorrow*): “Mañana, mañana, mañana is good enough for me”—meaning that to put things off until tomorrow is cool and acceptable, as it is in some quarters of society. But of course, as we know, tomorrow never comes.

So as we continue on in our quest for perfection (maturity), let us heed the words of Christ, “Therefore you shall be perfect [mature], just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). And let us remember to “Do not dread it; just do it!” ■

FEAST OF TABERNACLES 2015

If you have not already done so, please do not delay in registering to attend the 2015 Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. Go online to FOT2015.LCG.org and (with your MyLCG username and password) sign up for your preferred site and activities. United States and Canadian sites this year include:

USA	Seaside, OR	CANADA
Indian Wells, CA	Tannersville, PA	Kimberley, BC
Navarre, FL	Myrtle Beach, SC	Liverpool, NS
Palm Harbor, FL	Gatlinburg, TN	Niagara Falls, ON
Lihue, HI	Boerne, TX	Shawinigan, QC (bilingual French/English)
Traverse City, MI	St. George, UT	
Lake of the Ozarks, MO		

Dozens of other sites around the world are available for adventurous Feastgoers. Find out more at FOT2015.LCG.org or contact your congregation’s Festival Advisor.

**The First New Testament Pentecost
Continued from page 4**

Temple gate called Beautiful. “So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God” (Acts 3:8–9).

As a result of the miracle, a large crowd gathered to hear Peter speak. Where did that take place? “Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them *in the porch which is called Solomon’s*, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: ‘Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know’” (Acts 3:11–16).

Peter then spoke a message similar to his Pentecost exhortation: “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19–21).

The Apostles and disciples were “with one accord” at the same temple location where thousands of pilgrims and worshipers met for Pentecost. The various language groups or synagogues met in Solomon’s Porch.

The colonnade comprising Solomon’s Porch or Portico was very impressive. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* gives this description: “A colonnade which made up part of the temple complex built by Herod in Jerusalem. This colonnade like the others that surrounded the temple precinct, provided a meeting place for individuals to discuss Scripture preceding and following the observation of religious rituals. Jesus’ disciples gathered at this location and the early Jerusalem church also met there (John 10:23; Acts 3:11; 5:12). It was located on the E side of the temple complex overlooking the Kidron Valley (Josephus *Ant* 20.9.7). According to the tradition reported by Josephus, Solomon’s temple utilized a covered area supported by a platform (*JW* 5.5.1; *Ant* 8.3.9). The location described as Solomon’s portico in the NT was certainly designed by Herod’s architects. This colonnade was reportedly double columned and spanned 49 feet. The columns were 38 feet tall monoliths of white marble and

supported cedar-paneled ceilings” (Article: “Solomon’s Portico,” Vol. VI, p. 113).

PENTECOST TODAY

The New Testament Church began on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus declared the enduring quality of the Church when He said, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). God’s people can take great encouragement from that truth! As we look forward to the Second Coming, we have a responsibility to carry on the mission Christ gave His Church. Remember, before His ascension to heaven from Jerusalem, Jesus assured His disciples that they would receive “the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4–5).

God’s Spirit is not “a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). It is by this awesome power that God has given us the means to fulfill the mission

God’s Spirit is not “a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). It is by this awesome power that God has given us the means to fulfill the mission He has entrusted to the Church.

He has entrusted to the Church. Jesus’ last instruction to His servants before His ascension was: “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:7–8).

Brethren, we must all be committed to fulfill that mission. We are grateful for Dr. Roderick C. Meredith’s 63 years of dedicated service to the Work of God as an evangelist of Jesus Christ—he was, as most of you know, ordained in the very first group of evangelists ordained by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. To put that in perspective, when I was ordained as an evangelist by Mr. Armstrong—during the Days of Unleavened Bread in 1984—Dr. Meredith had already been serving as an evangelist for more than 32 years! I know you will join me in praying that God will bless him with the health, energy and continuing zeal to serve God’s people for many more years!

As we observe Pentecost this year, we must remind ourselves of the power God has given us through His Spirit. Mr. Armstrong summarized the characteristics of God’s Spirit in his article, “A Voice Cries Out Amid Religious Confusion (Part 4).” He wrote: “What, then, is the Holy Spirit? It is the very divine life-begetting Power of God, that imparts divine and immortal life to a repentant and believing Christian, begetting such a person as a child of God. And it is MUCH MORE!” (*Plain Truth*, May 1980, p. 42).

Mr. Armstrong continues his description of the Holy Spirit: “It is the POWER emanating from God by which God creates. It is the LOVE of God which the converted Christian receives from God. It is the FAITH of Christ. It is the Spirit that imparts to the human mind spiritual comprehension. It is the power of God by which the child of God may overcome sin. It is the Spirit by which, on human surrender, repentance, faith and decision, God imparts HIS CHARACTER to a human” (*ibid.*).

Brethren, at this Pentecost and beyond, we must remember who we are and the responsibility our calling requires of us. Always remember that we are God’s begotten children and the servants of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! And thank God for the awesome spiritual power and gifts He gives us. As we saw earlier, the Apostles and disciples of the first century spent much of their time at the temple.



Today, God has called His people to be the “temple.” The Apostle Paul gave the Corinthians a warning that we, too, must apply to ourselves: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, **which temple you are**” (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

Brethren, God blessed His people at His house, the temple (John 2:16–17). Now, **we** are His temple, and we must honor Him by all that we do and think and say. Christ is the living Head of His body, the Church (Colossians 1:18). Let us go forward with Christ’s loving and powerful leadership, to fulfill the Work

He has given us to accomplish, because we do so, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). ■

The “Fruits” of the True Church Continued from page 2

was **not** loyal to His Creator. We must **not** be like that. Rather, we must do what we can to continue the wonderful spirit of unity, brotherly love and service which is already extant in the Living Church of God. This will require a spirit of deep humility from all of us, and the willingness to humble ourselves to work together as a team. Christ Himself warned: “And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

So we should always let the **living** Head of this Church, Jesus Christ, do the exalting. We must look to Him to direct the Work, overall, and focus on doing with faithfulness that which is our *own part*—sincerely trying to support those who may have, at this time, a higher “rank” in the Work of God. As we do this, Christ will see that we are willing to humble ourselves to be faithful in *whatever* position we are given, and He will be able to know that we will be His **loyal** servants throughout all eternity.

Our adversary, Satan the Devil, will not like this. He will “come after” *anyone* he thinks he can upset. But we must “resist the devil” as Almighty God commands (James 4:7). The Apostle Paul warned the brethren in Corinth: “For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.” (1 Corinthians 11:18–19). God Himself is telling us that *He allows* these “tests” to come along in order to see if we will truly follow Him and His leadership under Christ in the right way. As He sees us withstand these tests, He can be sure where we stand in our deep commitment and humility to *do exactly what God says*.

The inspired Word of God describes the true Church as the body of Christ. “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Corinthians 12:27). This passage states: “For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body?... But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased” (vv. 14–15, 18).

Dear brethren, if we will continue to work together as a team under the overall leadership of Jesus Christ, He will continue to *bless us* more and more as each year goes by. This world is certainly coming apart. Somewhere on this earth, Almighty God will have a group of His people to really proclaim the “Ezekiel warning” with increasing power and fervency. He will have a Church that truly teaches and practices His form of government. He will bless that Church. That Church will be the one that He primarily uses to proclaim His message around the world. Let us all thank God for opening our minds to where He is working and ask Him to give us humility and the zeal to increase the impact that Christ will have on this earth *through us* as we yield to Him. For He is **alive**. He is our active Leader and will bless us and guide us if we follow **His** form of government and **His** true Gospel with all our heart and with all our mind. May God bless and guide you as you walk with Him in this way.

With Christian love,

Roderick C. Meredith

Ordinations

Mike Dickson of the Charlotte, North Carolina congregation was ordained a deacon on December 6, 2014 by Presiding Evangelist Roderick C. Meredith and other Headquarters ministers.

Mr. Robert Coates was ordained an elder on the Sabbath of February 14 by Southeast Regional Pastor Dan Hall, Pastor Ed Breaux, and elder Steve Climer. Mr. Coates serves in the Pensacola, Florida, congregation.

Mr. R. Shane Kruse was ordained an elder on the Sabbath of February 14 by Evangelist Gerald Weston and Pastor Winston Gosse. Mr. Kruse serves in the Mississauga congregation.



(Left to right, front row): Mr. and Mrs. Simon Muthama, Mr. and Mrs. Ephraim Abok, Mr. and Mrs. Elizaphan Mijondo. (Second row): Dr. Douglas Winnail, Mr. Peter Nathan



Mr. Nathan and Dr. Winnail (back row) with deacons and elders and family members from across Kenya

In Loving Memory...

Mrs. Diana Wood, beloved wife of Eric Wood, a deacon serving the South Wales, UK, congregation, died on November 24, 2014 after a long illness. She was 71. Mrs. Wood suffered from a neurological disease, as did four of her sisters, all of whom she outlived. Mrs. Wood was born of Cornish stock in South Wales, the youngest of seven children. She met and married Eric in 1964 and together they reared two children, Tina and Tony. Mr. and Mrs. Wood became members of God's Church in the early 1970s. She will be remembered as she was before her incapacitating illness: a likeable, vivacious lady with a ready smile, always willing to help, efficient and highly dependable, a genuine and honest person. She had a strong fighting spirit and a deep Christian faith right to the end. Though all who knew and loved her are saddened by her death, it is comforting to know that she is now released from the imprisonment of her disease and all look forward to seeing her again with a new spirit body. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor John Meakin on December 5.

Mrs. Susan Marion Hodges died on December 17, 2014, at the age of 81, only a month after moving to Edmonton, Alberta. She first attended services with the Living Church of God in Grande Prairie, Alberta, and was baptized in 2011. Mrs. Hodges often mentioned that these last years as a member of the Church were the happiest years of her life. The brethren appreciated her passion for the Work and her love of fellowshiping, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles. She loved knitting, sharing her labors with others. Mrs. Hodges is mourned by two sons, one daughter, six grandchildren, and her beloved Church family. Mr. Laurie

Nyhus conducted a memorial service on January 3 in Grande Prairie.

Mr. Gerard Sajous, 78, a long-time member of God's Church, beloved brother and deacon in the Living Church of God in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, died peacefully at his home on January 14. Mr. Sajous was born on October 29, 1936. His funeral service was conducted by elder Jove Jean-Pierre on January 22. Mr. Sajous will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Mrs. Bertha A. Hall, 97, died peacefully while taking a mid-morning nap on February 5, 2015. She and her late husband, Mr. Don C. Hall were longtime and faithful members of God's Church, since 1965. As an active deaconess years ago, she would organize local church banquets, assist midwives in delivering babies, and help serve those in need in the Glendale, California congregation. Mrs. Hall was admired and loved by all who knew her. She is survived by five sons—including Southeast Regional Pastor Mr. Dan Hall, 16 grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren.

Mr. Wayne Carvin, 66, of the Pensacola, Florida congregation, died Sunday, February 15 of a heart attack. He had been a member of the Living Church of God since 2001. Mr. Carvin was so full of life and enjoyed being a part of God's Work. He was loved by everyone in the congregation and will be greatly missed. Mr. Carvin is survived by his wife Myra, also of the Pensacola congregation, four children and many grandchildren.

Conscientious Objector Status for Young Adults

United States law currently requires all males to register with the Selective Service Administration within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Keeping in mind the biblical guidelines of Romans 13:1–2, the Church advises its young men to comply with this requirement, and to do so retroactively if they have previously failed to do so.

At present, there is no draft. However, if a draft is reinstated, current regulations will give conscientious objectors as little as nine days to document their status if they have not already done so. As a result, it would be wise to begin documenting your conscientious objection now, so that if the military reviews your claim it will already be established, and not be seen as the hasty action of someone simply afraid to fight.

Current Selective Service regulations apply only to men; however, it may also be wise for young women to document their

conscientious objector status as soon as possible, so that they will be ready in the event that the draft is extended to women.

Our Official Statement of Fundamental Beliefs teaches that a true Christian will be a conscientious objector to military service. If you are a young adult in the Living Church of God, and would like more information about establishing conscientious objector status, please write to the following address for an information packet:

Living Church of God
PO Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227
Attn: Conscientious Objector Packet

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Richard (Gretchen) Jacques, of the Charlotte, North Carolina congregation, are delighted to announce the birth of their first daughter, *Sophie Evangeline Jacques*, born Tuesday, January 20, weighing eight pounds and measuring 21½ inches long. Sophie's big brothers, Jonny and Aaron, are delighted to fulfill their big brother duties.

Mr. and Mrs. Jared Colcord, of the Garden Grove, California congregation, are delighted to announce the birth of *Trent Noah Colcord*, born January 22, a month early but healthy. Trent weighed 6 pounds 5 ounces and was 18½ inches long.

ANNIVERSARY

On December 8, 2014, *Mr. and Mrs. John (Lynn) Meakin* celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. The Birmingham (UK) congregation honored Mr. and Mrs. Meakin on the previous Sabbath with a cake and a card. The Taunton congregation rejoiced with them after combined services on the following Sabbath, celebrating with a champagne toast, chocolate cake and gifts. A few in the congregation remembered when Mr. and Mrs. Meakin's engagement was announced at the Wimbledon congregation in 1974! They have faithfully served the Church and a number of congregations over the last 40 years.

Upcoming TOMORROW'S WORLD Telecasts

MAY 7–13 **THE MYSTERY OF LIFE AFTER DEATH**

MAY 14–20 **DIVE INTO PROPHECY**

MAY 21–27 **THE SOON-COMING UTOPIA**

MAY 28–JUNE 3 **SURVIVING TOUGH TIMES**

JUNE 4–10 **666?**

JUNE 11–17 **GOD'S MASTER PLAN**

JUNE 18–24 **FIVE BIBLE MYSTERIES**

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COMMENTARY

Churchill: Man of Destiny

Seventy years ago, in July 1945, on the heels of great triumph, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill resigned as Prime Minister when his Conservative Party went down to defeat in Britain's first general election since the close of World War II.

Churchill today is revered as the leader who galvanized British resistance to Nazi Germany, and is remembered for his indomitable spirit and commitment to fight to eventual victory—no matter how slim the chances may have seemed. He is also remembered for possessing a profound sense of personal destiny, something that colored his entire life.

Biographers record that when Churchill was a teenager at school, he and some friends were discussing what they would become as adults. Churchill's answer was simply extraordinary: he would one day save London, the nation and the world! At such an age, amongst the banter and bravado of youth, such a vision could be lightly dismissed as just so much hot air. However, later in his life this is precisely what transpired! After a successful run in high office during the 1920s, Churchill was out of office during most of the 30s, and was a lone "voice in the wilderness" warning against Nazi intentions.

But on the eve of World War II, he was brought back into the War Cabinet and appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, responsible for the navy. Eight months later, on Friday May 10, 1940—coincidentally the moment the Nazis invaded France—Churchill was made Prime Minister. He wrote: "I was conscious of a profound sense of relief. At last I had authority to give directions over the whole scene. I felt as if I was walking with destiny, and that my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial" (Paul Johnson, *Churchill*, p. 106).



In the dark days of May and June 1940, when all seemed completely lost, it was Churchill, now at last at the very apex of power, who insisted that, whatever the outcome of the seemingly relentless and unstoppable Nazi onslaught, Britain would continue to fight on and never, ever surrender! Eventually a courageous and unbending Britain would prove victorious. This was a message that, like some vast lightning bolt, electrified Parliament and sent shock waves across the airwaves, resonating with the mood of the nation, stiffening resistance, galvanizing the war effort—and instilling hope! And the rest is history.

God was the one who ultimately enabled freedom and liberty to prevail over evil and tyranny (in accordance with His covenant promises to Abraham). But, after the war was won by the grand alliance of the Allied forces and the facts soberly assessed, the conclusion must be that, humanly, it was Winston Churchill who saved Britain. No one else could have done it. By the grace of God, his lifelong sense of destiny had been fulfilled.

But what about you and me? You may not be a Winston Churchill, but you can possess his strong sense of destiny. How? Because a strong sense of destiny comes as part of "the package" for all those God is calling now. God's calling is simply God's invitation! To "an inheritance incorruptible"—to "salvation"—eternal life in God's growing spiritual family (1 Peter 1:3–9); to be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:2–4); to reign with Jesus Christ when He returns to establish His thousand-year world-ruling kingdom on earth—and beyond (Revelation 5:10; 20:4). Are you preparing as you should for that destiny?

—John Meakin