

THE LIVING CHURCH NEWS

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Cry Out and Seek God!

Dear Brethren and Friends,

The Work continues growing and I want to thank you, *very much*, for the wonderful efforts so many of you have extended in helping us continue to grow and have an impact on this confused world. Obviously, with so many societal changes coming so rapidly, we certainly need to have a much greater impact on the confusion Satan is sowing in our entire society. Mindful of the Holy Day of Pentecost that we recently observed, it is obvious that we desperately **need** God's **power** more than ever in His Work!

Frankly, brethren, I deeply feel that the next two to three years of your life will see **big** changes—perhaps more than any we have seen in modern times. It looks like many massive changes are beginning to come together in our society—new leaders with drastically different ideas taking over the United States, *big* changes coming in Europe and a possible disintegration of the entire European Union, along with increasingly *dangerous threats* from China and the Far East. We need to realize that more and more reports are coming out almost every month about the threat of the Zika virus and a “new” virus against which there are apparently *no defenses*! So it is possible that the massive *disease epidemics* prophesied in the Bible are slowly beginning to develop. Also, *bigger* upsets and natural disasters than ever before will occur, including powerful storms, fires, earthquakes and other events of increasingly unprecedented magnitude.

All of this certainly indicates the need for us to “step up our game” and have a real *impact* on this terribly deceived world *while we have the opportunity*. It means each of us whom

God has called needs to realize that our lives are short and we need to **act** to *do God's Work* while we have the opportunity. As you know, *many* of our older ministers and brethren are dying. Each of us still living needs to truly go “all out” to seek God like never before, as the final years of this society close in upon us. Are *you*, personally, truly **seeking** God and His power? I know that most of us are sincere, and are attending Sabbath services and tithing regularly. But, in many of our personal habits and ways of life, are we just *drifting* rather than powerfully **growing** and “crying out” to God for all of us to have a *much bigger impact* on this sick world?

When the Apostle Paul realized that he was on a completely *wrong course*, what did he do? The Bible is clear about what **all** the great men of God did in such circumstances. For, after Paul was stricken with temporary blindness, his reaction was dramatic: “And he was three days without sight, and **neither ate nor drank**” (Acts 9:9). He began to *cry out* to God and involved himself in a *complete fast* as part of his response in that time of trial—and he was certainly “praying” (v. 11).

When the prophet Daniel began to ponder Israel's suffering during the seventy years of captivity Jeremiah had prophesied, *what did he do*? “Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, ‘O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed



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iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land” (Daniel 9:3–6).

So Daniel set himself to **seek** God in a powerful way over a period of many days or weeks! He confessed his sins and the sins of his people. He let God know that he wished with *all his being* for God to intervene and set things straight. He began to truly “seek God” as never before!

When Moses was confronted with the sin and *total worldliness* of his people just after he had been given the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, he truly sought God in a powerful way: “And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me at that time also” (Deuteronomy 9:18–19).

Daniel confessed his sins and the sins of his people. He let God know that he wished with all his being for God to intervene and set things straight. He began to truly “seek God” as never before!

So Moses *totally fasted* for a long period of time as part of this total action in seeking God. He said: “Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you. Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: ‘O Lord God, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand’ (vv. 25–26).

Brethren, I have now been *full time* in the Work of the ministry since my graduation from Ambassador College back on June 4, 1952. After all those decades of experience and “see-

ing” how God has worked and is working, I tell you urgently: we **now** are at a time when we need to *seek God* just as those servants of God did in the past. We are stricken with a kind of a “malaise” that makes us lukewarm and has no doubt kept God from *pouring out* His Spirit upon us with a **power** to heal the sick, discern spirits and cast out demons which we ought to have! We need to fully *realize this!*

Each of us needs to **beg God**—*on our knees*—to collectively clean us up and scrub us out, spiritually, so that we may be worthy of the gifts of His Spirit just as the early New Testament Church was. Brethren, we are *not asking* for something “unusual.” For it is *exactly* what God did do with the early Church to show His power and help the world understand *where* He was working, so they would respond and more people would be added to the Church. He worked with them *in a powerful way* so His Work could grow in power at that time.

Also, as many of us ought to carefully read and *meditate on*, even before the Spirit-led New Testament Church actually began, Jesus appointed “seventy others also” to go out across Israel and preach the Gospel, heal the sick and cast out demons. *Nothing* indicates these were converted men—since the Holy Spirit was not even given until the Day of Pentecost. Obviously, they were *not* the twelve apostles, as they were called “seventy others,” and no mention is given of the apostles. Jesus commanded these men to go out and preach the Truth, “And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’” (Luke 10:9). Later, we find, “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven’” (vv. 17–20). So they were *also* able to “cast out demons” in the name of Jesus Christ.

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Let Your Light Shine!

Enraged at the evangelists, the bloodthirsty mob brought them to the city officials crying, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too” (Acts 17:6).

With these words, the angry Jews at Thessalonica accused the Apostle Paul and his helpers of the same thing of which members of God’s Church are sometimes accused. Does true Christianity turn the world “upside down” or right side-up? Does the Holy Spirit inspire a spirit of a peculiar mixture of misguided religious zeal, unreasoning superstition and a rebellious attitude toward custom, society and other people in general? Is this the attitude of a good Christian?

We must face facts! We, as Christians, will ultimately change the whole world—but first we must change ourselves, with the help of our Savior and the Holy Spirit within us!

How should Christians live so as to gain the respect of unconverted neighbors and friends? How can we live the joyous, fruitful kind of lives that we should, without either “turning off” others with self-righteousness or “going along” and compromising our values in order to “get along” with the unconverted?

God’s Word contains the answers, which those who use sound-minded wisdom can understand.

Are You a “Light”?

Jesus told His disciples, “You are the light of the world.” Later, He said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father



in heaven” (Matthew 5:14, 16). Jesus taught that we are not to put our light under a bushel, but on a candlestick where all can see. But how do we let our light shine before men?

Notice that Jesus said men would see our good works and glorify God (v. 16). He did not say that they would hear our constant chattering about the Bible. Our “good works”—our kindness and thoughtfulness to others, our willingness to sacrifice, our Christian example in daily living—will cause even unconverted people to admire and respect us. Eventually, they will realize that it is God who is helping us live this way. Then they will glorify Him.

For arguing, disputing and trying to convince people they are wrong is nowhere referred to as “good works.” If your friends or relatives are not interested in God’s Church, they will in no way be helped if you constantly plague them with what they regard as “your religion.”

But what type of good works *should* we demonstrate in our daily lives?

Christian Works

In John 14:11, Jesus said, “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.” He was referring to the miracles that He performed, and said in verse 12 that one who truly believed on Him would perform even greater works.

Most of Jesus’ miraculous works were acts of kindness to others—healing the sick, feeding the multitudes and casting out unclean spirits. Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren, “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Corinthians 12:27). Today, Jesus is not here to perform good works in person, but God’s true Church comprises His body through which He can and does perform miraculous works. Many times, unconverted friends of our brethren have been moved to glorify God and His power when they have witnessed a genuine, miraculous healing according to God’s promise.

But aside from miraculous works of the ministry, there are many things that we should *all* be doing to glorify God in our lives. If we draw as close to God as we should, through constant study, prayer and fasting, He will grant His Church even more power to do the same

miraculous works as the early apostles, and many more will learn to glorify God.

Be a Good Neighbor

One of Jesus' most beautiful parables—which many of us learned as children but sometimes seem to forget as Christian adults—is the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37). Set upon by thieves, a wounded and suffering man lay by the roadside. A priest passed by, feeling too holy to be bothered. Yet a compassionate Samaritan was not too “good” to help a man he had never seen before.

Notice Jesus' instruction: “Go and do likewise.”

Just how good a neighbor are you? This is a vitally important factor in determining your ability to be a light to others—and, incidentally, in determining your own happiness.

You should realize from the outset that carnal-minded friends and neighbors are just naturally going to have a bad opinion of you—a true Christian trying to keep all of God's commandments, against which their carnal minds rebel. They are going to look upon you as peculiar or fanatical unless you take positive action to counteract this attitude.

Go out of your way to be a really wonderful neighbor. Remember that Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

The chief attributes of God's Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace and longsuffering (Galatians 5:22). Put the love of God to work in your life. Try to be understanding, patient and always ready to be of service to others. Cultivate the attitude of joy and peace at all times. Try to make others feel happy in your presence.

God is more willing to give you of His Spirit—His love, joy and peace—than you are to feed your own hungry children (Matthew 7:11). Ask God to help you show more love, to give you His love and to help you be a better neighbor in every way. Upon seeing your good works—your kindness, love and willingness to help in time of need—your neighbors can then come to like and respect you in a way that could never be accomplished by your words alone.

Be Positive

One of the most striking mistakes some new Christians make is their failure to show a positive attitude toward life. Because they have come to realize that much of this world is wrong, they assume a negative attitude toward life in general. They do not take a real interest in their family, their friends or their community. Is this the way to be a light—the kind of example others will admire?

No! Instead of being *against* everything, strive to be *for* something. Have a positive program of developing your personality, your capabilities and your ability to help and influence other people for good.

James asks us, “Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith” (James 2:5)? Many Christians are poor and humble people when God calls them. Some have not had many educational opportunities, and are limited in their speech, their writing, their knowledge of this world around them, and in many of the “social graces.”

But does God wish us to remain that way?

First of all, we have to confess that if we had all been highly successful in this world, we would have been too proud to accept God's truth and be converted. We would have had too much self-confidence to recognize our need for God. But now, that should all be changed. Now our confidence should rest in God, and in what He can do through us if we yield to His Spirit. Now that our confidence about any abilities rests in God—not self—can you see that He *wants* us to develop those abilities?

Jesus said that “you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). We are to strive to become like God in *every way*. Through God's help, we will finally achieve this goal when we are born of God in the resurrection.

Jesus was God in the flesh, setting a perfect example for us to follow. Did Jesus use sloppy speech or dress? Did He appear uneducated or uncouth to others?

In Luke 4:22 we find that when Jesus spoke in the synagogue, “all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.” People had to admire Jesus' ability in speech, even though they later condemned what He said and tried to throw Him off a cliff (v. 29).

In reading the gospels, it is easy to discern that Jesus was a natural leader. He was a person whom people would naturally admire, even though those same people felt so much hate for what He taught that they had Him crucified.

Are you developing qualities of personality and of leadership? Are you able to deal with and influence people of all social backgrounds? The Apostle Paul said, “I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Each of us should try to do our work the best way possible, keep our homes and yards looking as neat and clean as we can, and dress as well as our means allow. We should study to use language well. We should broaden our interests and our general knowledge, and develop our personalities and abilities in every way. God tells us to develop our talents, to be like Him in every way. As we do this, our neighbors will notice the change for good in our lives, and will be moved to respect us more.

Show Common Sense

Many fail to realize that “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

LIGHT continues on page 20

Blessed are the Peacemakers

By **Peter Nathan**

The Nobel Peace Prize is one of the most prestigious awards known. It is awarded annually “to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between the nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses” (nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/).

Recipients are chosen by a committee of five persons elected by the Norwegian *Storting* (parliament). The prize in 2016 amounts to SEK8,000,000 Swedish kronor (USD\$985,600), but the acclaim, stature and position that follow, together with the speaking fees and other engagements, increase that value enormously. To join that elite group is considered by many to be a very high honor.

As Christians, however, a far greater reward awaits each and every one of us—those whose names will never appear before the Norwegian committee for consideration. This leads us to the seventh beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9).

What greater calling is there for any human being than to become a son of God—literally a member of God’s own family?

This is a position and reward that cannot be purchased or gained by political manipulation. It can only be accomplished by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, submitting ourselves



to our Father’s purpose and leading the way of life that He instructs. The result of living that life of overcoming self, with the aid of God’s Holy Spirit, will be the creation of holy, righteous character—one quality of which is being a “peacemaker.” So now we will take a closer look at this subject and find out what it means to be a “peacemaker.”

Application for Today

It is easy to look to the Kingdom of God as a time of peace. Many scriptures convey this thought;

“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” (Isaiah 9:6–7).

The outcome of the Kingdom of God is going to be peace without end! Details of that government are provided for us in a section of Scripture that we look upon as being Millennial. It offers an insight into that peaceable kingdom:

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness *He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth...*” (Isaiah 11:1–4).

Today we use the term “equity” in a legal or financial sense, but in the original Hebrew, it conveys a sense of a path or road that is made flat and straightforward—something that is not convoluted, but easily accomplished. Continuing with Isaiah:

“He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist” (vv. 4–5).

He will be girded and attired with righteousness and faithfulness—godly qualities. As a consequence of that, the

Bible can give us this picture about what life will be like in God's Kingdom:

“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. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isaiah 32:15–18).

Isaiah 54:9–15 and other scriptures convey similar thoughts. Even the wild animals will be at peace with one another, and with humanity (Isaiah 11:6–9).

But for us, the concept provided in Matthew 5 is *not* one for *tomorrow*. Like all the other beatitudes, the **demand** is for the here and now, while the **reward** is in the future. It is instruction for *today*, in the world and society *we live in*. Jesus highlights this by showing that we are to be peacemakers in a world of persecution:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:10–12).

So it is the peacemakers, who learn their craft living in a world that is full of persecution and tribulation, who are blessed. That is a challenge! We are not called to be peacemakers in ideal circumstances! The problem is compounded for us because Jesus also said:

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. 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’” (Matthew 10:34–36).

His standards produce hostility in the powers that be, and those powers will persecute His followers.

Peace: Active, Not Passive

Psalm 37 forms the basis of much of Jesus' instruction in the Beatitudes.

“But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace... Mark the

blameless man, and observe the upright; for the future of that man is peace” (Psalm 37:11, 37).

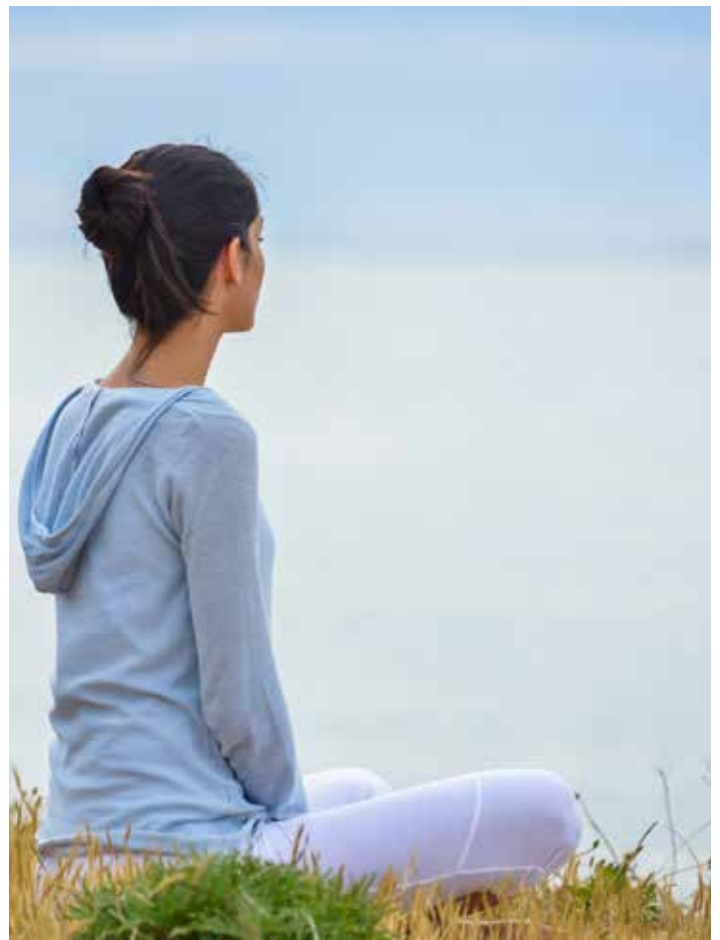
The *NET* Bible has an interesting way of putting verse 37:

“Take note of the one who has integrity! Observe the godly! For the one who promotes peace has a future.”

What is this peace that we are supposed to be promoting? How does it contrast with how humanity looks at peace? This world generally looks at peace as something passive—simply the absence of hostility or war. This outlook is found in typical dictionary listings of “peace.” Note how *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* sets out this term:

- 1: a state of tranquility or quiet: as (a) freedom from civil disturbance (b) a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom
- 2: freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions
- 3: harmony in personal relations

Similarly, “peacemaker” is defined as “one who makes peace especially by reconciling parties at variance.” Howev-



er, we know that peacemaking is a dynamic process that goes much deeper than that. The Hebrew *shalom* is the word translated as “peace” throughout the Old Testament. (In the New Testament, the Greek word most often translated as “peace,” *eirene*, is modified by the understanding of the meaning of *shalom*.) *Shalom* is a very wide-ranging word that ultimately speaks to well-being—or a sense of completeness. One commentator records that the primary meaning of the word can be characterized “as the healthiness, or the completeness, or the intactness of a community;” while another notes that it conveys the concepts of satisfaction and contentment (Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm. “Shalom.” *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000). *Shalom* conveys a very active, not passive, state because it requires something of the person seeking peace!

The world’s approach to peace is to erect walls between belligerents—to separate them—which is a poor compromise that does not solve the underlying issue. For instance, a parent may

Here is a concept very few people employ, but it is the role of a peacemaker! The tendency is to say that **if somebody has a problem with us, that is *their* problem, not ours.**

separate fighting siblings by sending them to separate rooms, but that simply creates quiet for the parent without getting to the cause of the problem. Those siblings will still fight again when placed in the same situation. We solve our problems of conflict by building walls, even at the national level. God’s way to peace, on the other hand, is to tear down walls between people and replace them with bridges—to build relationships. Peace, ultimately speaking, is the absence of evil! Notice how these concepts are juxtaposed in Zechariah 8:11–12, 16–19 (*ESV*, emphasis added):

“But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the LORD of hosts. For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things... These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for *peace*; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD. And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the



fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and *peace*.”

So, peace is living in harmony with the will of God, and not according to our own purposes. Or, to put it another way, *sin is the enemy of peace*.

The Peace Offering

To highlight the relationship-building aspect of peace, the Eternal instituted an offering known as a “peace offering.” The details are set out in Leviticus chapters 3 and 7. It is called a peace offering because the term derives from the Hebrew word *shalom*. The peace offering is also described as a fellowship offering in that the priest *and* the person making the offering shared it with the Eternal. Some people have tried to link the aspect of salvation to the meaning of the term as well. It is also described as being:

“A sacrifice for alliance or friendship; peace with God; fellowship between God and worshippers” (Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

So we have a sacrifice that portrays the quality of godly peace, whereby the parties sit down to a meal together—a sign of friendship and hospitality, and a sense of wholeness in the relationship of the parties. We are not talking about “fast food”! It could be an all-day affair, so the parties involved would want to be on very good terms—people who want to spend time with each other.

The relationship aspect of peace and peacemaking—restoring a person to fullness, etc.—is amplified for us in Matthew 5:21–48. Here, Jesus corrects six common misconceptions the populace had regarding relationships and teaches the only true way to be a peacemaker. First, He warns about the atti-

tudes—anger, insults and epithets—that constitute the spirit of murder (vv. 21–22). Then He instructs:

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (vv. 23–24).

Here is a concept very few people employ, but it is the role of a peacemaker! The tendency is to say that if somebody has a problem with us, that is *their* problem, not ours. Not so; Jesus says it is ours and that we must deal with it proactively. We must work to heal the breach. He also addresses the lustful thoughts of the heart that lead to adultery (vv. 27–30), a sin that is violently destructive to the marriage relationship and destructive to the peace that should prevail in a marriage.

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:27–30).

His antidote is not to literally mutilate our bodies, but He uses such graphic terms to impress on us how imperative it is that we stop at nothing to root out those harmful thoughts and to live at peace as a result.

He also said that divorce is not, with very limited exceptions, an acceptable solution to marital problems (vv. 31–32). We are to be faithful to our marriage covenant and work out any difficulties to the extent it is within our power to do so. With regard to swearing (vv. 33–37), His instruction is simple: just keep your word. How frequently is a sense of peace disrupted by ignoring this simple action?

Another wrong practice that Jesus addressed was that of seeking revenge. His well-known admonition is to “turn the other cheek” instead (vv. 38–42).

Consider the example of David and Saul in terms of this last instruction. David did not resist Saul or seek to become equal to him. Rather, he built up the borders of Israel so that Saul had a more peaceable time as king. Finally, rather than hate our enemies, Jesus says to:

“...love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spite-

fully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven...” (vv. 44–45, emphasis added).

This is the same reward promised in the beatitude on peacemaking (v. 9). In each of these areas or examples, there is a way that leads to peace and to the maintenance of peace with others. Each is ultimately based on the the Spirit of the Law of God, and each requires that we consider the other as much as we do ourselves. We can take stock of our own progress by reviewing 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 as another example of making peace.

So, following the Spirit of God’s Law can help us be peacemakers. So can another aspect of our lives. Why do you pray for the Gospel to be preached with more power to the nations? For what reason do you contribute your tithes and offerings? Is it for our own salvation or so that others can be made whole by having a relationship with our Father and His Son? If the latter is your motivation, then you are seeking to be a peacemaker.



Christian Peacemakers

True peacemakers, therefore, are those who see others from a godly perspective and seek to reach out and help them become whole. In doing so, they are preparing themselves for the kingdom, when they will be able to help those who cannot be helped today.

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful” (Colossians 3:15).

We have been called to be peacemakers in the family of God—here, now and forever! (LM)



Deuteronomy 4:13:

The Broken Contract

By **Dexter Wakefield**

Let us say that a man bought a small house as an investment. He fixed it up for use as a rental and located a prospective tenant. He and the tenant signed a lease (also called a contract or covenant), and it provided that **if** the tenant paid his rent on time and kept the place up, **then** he could live there for a year. Such conditions are typical for rental agreements.

However, soon after moving in, the tenant stopped paying his rent and began to damage the house. The owner was forced to declare the lease in default, terminate it and require the tenant to leave. When there was no more contract between them, *did the house disappear?* Of course not! The house existed *before* the contract, *during* the contract and *after* the contract. They made a *conditional agreement about* the house—the agreement was not the house itself. When the contract terminated, the existence of the house was not affected. That simple outcome may seem obvious, but sometimes people lose sight of it when thinking about God’s commandments.

Anyone who has taken a basic course in contract law knows that contracts (sometimes called “covenants”) must have something called “consideration,” which means that there must be something in the agreement for both parties. Each party must *consent* and receive *consideration* in the agreement. You will find that word in almost all valid contracts, and without mutual *consideration*, a contract may be declared invalid. Contracts often provide that, **IF** one party will do something, **THEN** the other party will do something in return.

God and ancient Israel made a covenant or agreement at Mt. Sinai: “Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient’” (Exodus 24:7). *God stated the terms of the covenant and Israel consented.*

If... Then

God detailed this covenant to Israel—and *there were conditions*: “And it shall be that **if** you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, **then** I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled” (Deuteronomy 11:13–15).

However, there was a penalty for non-performance by the people of Israel. “Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD’S anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you ... For **if** you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—**then** the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves” (vv. 16–17; 22–23).

The Bible contains many other examples of this “If... Then” conditional nature in various aspects of the Old Covenant with the ancient nation of Israel. Sometimes the “If... Then” condition is stated, sometimes it is implied (for instance, Deuteronomy 7:9–13; 11:8–9, 27–28; 29:15–20; Leviticus 26:3–4, 14–16).

Before, During and After

The covenant made at Mt. Sinai, referred to as the Old Covenant, was a covenant *about* the Ten Commandments, *not* the Commandments themselves—just like a lease covenant is made *about* a residential property. A lease is *not* the property

itself. And, just as a house exists *before, during and after* a contract on it terminates, the Ten Commandments exist *before, during and after* any covenant based on them.

In fact, the Bible clearly shows that the Ten Commandments existed before, during and after the Old Covenant and will exist in the Kingdom of God!

For example, when God made His covenant with Abraham and continued it through Isaac—*long before Mt. Sinai*—notice the role that the commandments played: “Dwell in this land, and [then] I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, **My commandments**, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:3–5). God’s holy, righteous character and His definition of right and wrong that comes from that character existed before this world was created—and His Commandments existed long **before** God’s covenant with Abraham and Isaac’s descendants at Mt. Sinai.

We know that the Ten Commandments of God existed **before** the Old Covenant. God asserted that fact to Abraham, as He did throughout the Old Testament—and that covenant was *based on the Commandments*.

After Christ died, the apostles instructed their churches to keep the commandments. For instance, the Apostle John wrote, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we *keep His commandments*. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3–4). The Apostle Paul even mentions the Sabbath in Hebrews: “*So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God*. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, *as God did from His*” (Hebrews 4:9–10 *NASB*).

Paul actually listed some of the Ten Commandments in his letter to the Romans. “For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:9–10). Clearly, the Ten Commandments existed after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What about in the **last days** of this age? When the third angel sounds during the Great Tribulation, he declares, “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who **keep the commandments of God** and the **faith of Jesus**” (Revelation 14:12). God’s people will be keeping His commandments continuously until Christ’s coming. Jesus told His disciples

that the Sabbath commandment would still be valid and the Sabbath would still be holy in the final days of this age when He said, “And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath” (Matthew 24:20).

What about in the **Kingdom of God**? Isaiah prophesied about Christ’s rule from Jerusalem: “Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth **the law**, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people” (Isaiah 2:3–4). I would not want to be the poor fellow who tries to tell the all-powerful King of kings and Lord of lords that His commandments and laws have been done away! Even so, there are many who teach that falsehood today!

Commandments Equal Covenant?

Some still make the mistake of claiming that the Old Covenant was the Ten Commandments. Then they reason that when the covenant with Israel ended, the Ten Commandments ended also. However, is it no longer a sin to commit murder? Or to steal?

Israel consented to their covenant with God when they said, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:7). The Ten Commandments have their origin in the very character of God, and *divine law does not need human consent*. For instance, idolatry, theft, murder, adultery and other transgressions of God’s commandments are sin whether humanity agrees for them to be sin or not. Those things are wrong because God says they are, and God said, “...I am the LORD, I do not change” (Malachi 3:6). Can you imagine someone telling God that His commandments are not valid because that person did not agree to them in the first place?

Some assert that the comma in the following scripture (emphasized) equates the Old Covenant with the Ten Commandments. Moses said to Israel, “Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you **to perform, the Ten Commandments**; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess” (Deuteronomy 4:11–14). They reason that if the Old Covenant and the Commandments were the same and if later the Old Covenant ended, then our obligation to keep the Ten Commandments ended with the Old Covenant.

However, the punctuation in the highlighted portion above was *inserted by the translators*—it is not in the Hebrew

text. If you read the verse without the translators' inserted punctuation, the meaning is clear. What God declared in His covenant that Israel was to do was **"...to perform the Ten Commandments..."** and this admonition is repeated in many other scriptures. *If* they did, *then* they would receive the benefits of obedience. The covenant was *about* the commandments. As such, the commandments were not the covenant itself. The verse does not *equate* the Old Covenant with the Ten Commandments, although some translators may prefer that interpretation theologically, and it certainly does not do away with or diminish any of God's Ten Commandments.

It should also be noted that the word "which," appearing in Deuteronomy 4:13 as "...His covenant **which** He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments," is translated from the Hebrew, *'asher* (*Strong's* 834). The same Hebrew word is

Official Catholic writings acknowledge that there is no change in the Bible of the Sabbath commandment. **They simply say that the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity of the seventh day, Saturday, to the first day of the week—Sunday—and that it did so with papal authority.**

often translated **"in which"** in the *NKJV* and is translated that way multiple times in Deuteronomy (see Deuteronomy 12:7; 17:11; 28:20; 28:53–55). It is translated as "in which" in a number of other places in the Pentateuch as well. So Deuteronomy 4:13 could be translated, "So He declared to you His covenant **in which** He commanded you **to perform the Ten Commandments**; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone." That makes a lot more sense.

The Sinaitic covenant was something that God *made* with Israel. However, the Ten Commandments are as eternal as the character of God and were not *made* at Mt. Sinai. And, He said in Deuteronomy 10:12–14 that He commanded them "for our good." The Apostle Paul affirmed that after the death of Christ when he wrote, "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12).

The Real Issue

The real issue for some who try to do away with the commandments is often the Fourth Commandment about the Sabbath. They do not deny that it is wrong to murder or steal, but the commandment that says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8) makes them uncomfortable. They simply do not want to obey it. So they try to find ways to justify profaning the holy time that God has set apart in the seventh day.

In multiple authoritative works of official Catholic teaching and doctrine, the writers claim not to do away with the Ten Commandments, and they acknowledge that in the Bible no change in the Sabbath commandment was made. They simply claim that the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity of the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week—Sunday—and that it did so with papal authority. As the *Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* states, "The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed on her!" (Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., (1946), p.50). However, since Catholic authority was rejected in the Reformation, Protestants have had to come up with a variety of different explanations for abandoning the fourth commandment. None work very well.

They may assert, in effect, that "we no longer have the Ten Commandments, we only have *The Nine Suggestions*." Or they may suggest that when Christ died for our sins, the Ten Commandments were, in effect, tossed into the air, and *only nine came down*. Or that they were "nailed to the cross." Or they also say that all Ten Commandments somehow "ended" with the Old Covenant. But God does not change, so His definition of right and wrong does not change. It is still sin to profane what God has made holy, whether it is His holy name or His holy time. Nowhere does the Bible remove the sanctity of the Sabbath. Doing so is a tradition of men (Mark 7:9)!

Any such assertions are wrong if they attempt to do away with, or to invalidate or even to *diminish* one or all of God's Ten Commandments.

Jesus taught us that His commandments would not change in the slightest when He admonished us, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17–19). With such a powerful statement coming from our Savior, should we not teach that *all* of God's commandments should be kept, instead of making erroneous assertions that they are done away?

Even though God's Church is living under the terms of the New Covenant and not the Old, the Ten Commandments—upon which the Old Covenant was based—existed *before*, *during*, and *after* that covenant, and they will be *just* as valid in the Kingdom of God. *God gave all ten of them "for our good"!* (LN)

AUDIT 2015: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By **Jerry Ruddlesden, Financial Controller**

Every year, when we publish the Church's audited financial statements in the *Living Church News*, we hear one of two comments most commonly. "Thank you for being so transparent with your finances; I know there are many churches that don't share as openly as you do," is one encouraging comment we often receive. Another, however, is, "Why do you take up page after page in a spiritual publication with these details that don't really make a difference to me as a Christian?"

This year, I hope we will please both of those perspectives. For the first time since Living Church of God began, we are putting the audited financial statements *online*. You can find those statements at www.LCG.org/about-us.shtml. Having done this, we will no longer be publishing the full audit in the *Living Church News*; instead, each year we will share with you a report like this one.

As has been the case for more than a decade, our audit was performed by Cherry Bekaert, LLP, one of the larger accounting firms in the southeast region of the United States. Once again, we received an "unqualified" opinion. I know this confuses some people, but what this means is that we received a report with no "qualifications" (objections or hesitations). Here is what the Report of Independent Auditor stated, "In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Living Church of God (International), Inc. and Affiliates as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

An International Work

This audit directly covered the Work in the United States, including Living University and Living Youth Programs. It did not directly cover the many offices of varying size around the

world, which report financial information to International Headquarters in Charlotte. For the year ended December 31, 2015 the Church's total worldwide income was approximately \$24.6 million dollars. Of that, a little more than \$18 million was U.S. income; Canada accounted for another \$3 million.

The Work is truly interconnected around the globe. The Work in the United States produces the majority of telecasts, booklets, sermons and other materials, but we also rely on the regional offices and the dedicated staff and countless volunteers for help in areas where they have particular resources and strengths. The Canadian Office, for instance, has purchased duplication equipment that allows short-run printing of booklets and magazines, which is particularly helpful for supporting the Spanish and French regions. Additionally, the Canadian Office produces a version of the *Tomorrow's World* telecast for use in Taiwan, along with the support materials for that effort.

Although most regions broadcast the *Tomorrow's World* telecast produced in the United States, the regional offices are often the ones that not only sponsor the cost of airing the telecast, but also take care of literature fulfillment—staffing a toll-free number, stuffing envelopes for mailing and tending to subscriber needs. On the surface these tasks may seem



straightforward and easy to accomplish. However, when you examine them more closely, these tasks often are quite complicated due to broadcasting formatting requirements, mailing issues such as postage, delivery and even moving material through the customs process at the border for each country. We are especially grateful for the teamwork and resourcefulness of our staff and brethren in the Spanish-speaking areas, which have been particularly affected by problems involving the mail. Headquarters has been working with various national offices in the Spanish-speaking areas to find the most effective way to deliver literature to brethren and subscribers. We have experimented with local printing (to avoid customs-related delays) as well as with various mail couriers that specialize in these regions. While the situation is improving, we know there is room for *more* improvement, and we greatly appreciate the hard work and creativity of the Spanish Work in helping to resolve these issues and improve our “customer service.”

Our offices in Australia and the United Kingdom play very important roles in serving our brethren across wide swaths of the earth. From 1993 until his death earlier this year, Evangelist Bruce Tyler oversaw the Australasian office, which—with an annual income approaching \$900,000—was the third-largest region in 2015. I had the opportunity to visit Mr. Tyler at his home/office several times in the early years of the Australasian work and will miss him greatly. Also very active in serving all of Europe, Middle East and Russia was the United Kingdom, our fourth-largest office—with an income of about \$650,000—where Mr. Adam West leads a team of experienced and loyal ministers in supporting our brethren now that Evangelist Gerald Weston has moved to Charlotte. We could easily continue around the globe naming the significant contributions of each office, but space does not permit. We are a work that spans the globe and is intricately linked together as one body in our mission to preach the Gospel and feed the flock.

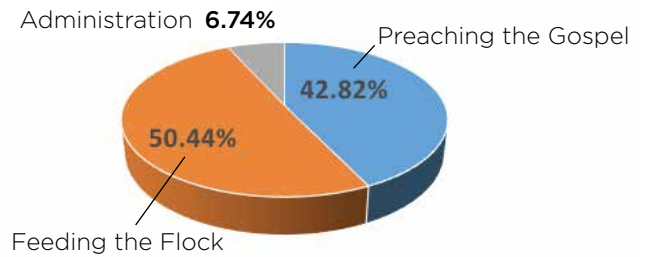
U.S. Financial Information at a Glance

The total income in the U.S. for 2015 was \$18,389,457, which was **7.93 percent above 2014**. The breakdown of our 2015 expenses into our three main programs include \$8,028,013 or 42.82 percent Preaching the Gospel, \$9,452,353 or 50.44 percent Feeding the Flock and the remainder \$1,263,931 or 6.74 percent Administrative.

One of the factors for future growth is the number of our donors and co-workers. These important contributors are those who respond to the Church’s efforts on all our various media but do not yet identify as members or prospective members. 2015 saw good growth in donors and coworkers. Donors increased 9.39 percent and coworkers increased 9.71 percent. Not only are we seeing growth in the number of donors and coworkers, but these contributors make up a full 17.2 percent of our total mail income.

Please note in the chart of U.S. income on the next page that there has been a steady trend of increases over the years. The trend line is occasionally interrupted in a positive way by the blessing of generous estate donations that may increase total income well above the trend line in a particular year, as was the case in 2013. Income returned to the trend line in 2014-2015.

Percentage breakdown of U.S. expenses



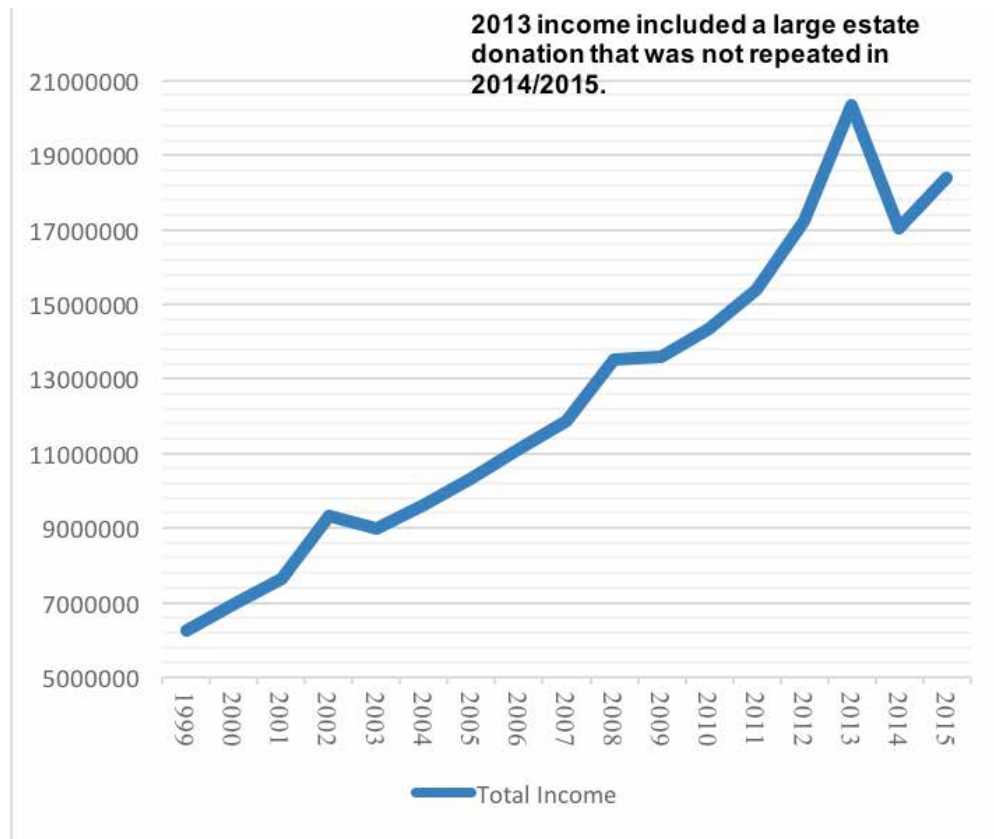
New Media

In 2015, we continued to develop new avenues for reaching a quickly changing world with the message of the true Gospel. Many of the Work’s most loyal supporters grew up in a world where a daily newspaper came to their doorstep every morning, and where “television” meant a big box with vacuum tubes, perhaps receiving as many as a dozen channels if you lived in a big city. Local news often came via a news radio station.

Fast-forward to 2016. Now, there are literally hundreds of channels available to anyone who subscribes to a cable or satellite television service. Add to this Roku, Amazon Fire, YouTube, Kindle and smartphones that can receive the telecast—and other Church media—in places and ways that would have been unimaginable even 30 years ago. Print is still very important; many of the Work’s most ardent supporters still like to receive a paper magazine, and appreciate booklets that can be read without electronic equipment. Yet we know the Work has a responsibility not only to reach the people who rely on “traditional” media, but also to reach the billions who increasingly use “new media” (which itself is becoming “traditional media”). Of course, while we have a commission to preach the true Gospel to every nation, we do not have unlimited finances. God gives us what He knows we need, and He expects us to be good stewards of what He provides. As a



Living Church of God Trend of US Total Income



Data from audited financial statements.

result, our staff is constantly testing and evaluating old media and new media alike. Which media help us do the Work best? Should we be on more television stations? Should we expand on the Internet? And what about advertising—which kinds? Should we use “spot ads” on the radio or television? What about focused Internet advertising? What type of programs should we emphasize—the 28.5-minute telecast, or the five- or six-minute webcasts? What about simplified and targeted approaches, such as we are trying with *TheBibleSaysThat.org*, paired with radio spot ads? This last year we also have had some of our greatest successes yet with the very “old media” approach of targeted mailings, yet we have at the same time found substantial new success with the “new media” Roku channel that brings the *Tomorrow’s World* telecast to a fresh new audience. We pray regularly that God will guide the Church’s leadership to choose the best paths for the media effort and will bless the Church with the resources to take the Work forward powerfully.

Thankfully, we see again and again that our collective efforts do bear fruit. We hear of new people being called and baptized around the world, and lost sheep are returning to

us on a regular basis. Yes, we are a small Work, but we are also an effective Work that moves forward on its knees. As the world continues on down its dark path, it desperately needs the message we preach—a message both of warning and of hope, revealing what will happen to modern Israel and to the whole world before the glorious return of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God to carry out His plan for all of mankind.

As we consider our international and domestic work for 2015, God’s people can take comfort that we are an integrated work that spans the earth. Please remember to pray for one another, and pray that God continually shows us how He wants us to use the media opportunities we are given until Christ returns. And pray and rejoice that we are all striving to fulfill the words of the Apostle Paul, who expressed his hope that, “speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:15–16). (L)

Join Living University for our Tenth Year of Learning!

By **Scott D. Winnail**

On August 15, 2007, Living University opened its virtual doors to 150 students from 18 nations. At that time, we offered only three classes and few had any idea of what to expect. As the years have passed, LU has added numerous classes and credential programs, and has graduated dozens of people from around the globe. As we work to “*Recapture True Values*,” we also continue to improve our curriculum and our classes by putting Ecclesiastes 9:10 into practice: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might...”

This academic year is an exciting time for Living University, and August marks the start of its tenth year of operation! Over the last nine years, more than a thousand brethren in dozens of nations around the globe have taken LU classes. More high school-aged young people are taking online classes and are taking advantage of our Early College program with its sizeable tuition discount. Many senior citizens also take advantage of our tuition waiver available to those over age 65. In fact, our oldest student to date was age 92. A few dozen additional young people have also studied in-residence in both Charlotte, North Carolina and Adelaide, South Australia.

As we prepare to start another semester, we are pleased to offer several of the core classes in our theology curriculum. Many of the lectures for these classes were developed and re-

corded by Dr. Roderick Meredith, Mr. Richard Ames and Dr. Douglas Winnail. These classes include THL 135—*Life, Ministry and Teachings of Jesus*, THL 211—*Old Testament Survey I*, and THL 200—*Principles of Christian Living*. The Bible courses delve into the Gospels and the Old Testament on a level that few have studied, and most of our students in these courses are surprised by how much they learn and how applicable this knowledge is to their everyday Christian lives. Here are some comments from a few past students:

- “I already have encouraged others to take this class because it is so helpful in improving our understanding of the circumstances and conditions during the time of the ministry of Christ.”
- “I personally feel that LU gives understanding that Christians cannot gain on their own or even from regularly attending services and watching sermons on their own time.”
- “As Dr. Meredith pointed out in a number of his lectures, Christ’s teachings represent one of the most important parts of the Bible. So by taking time to delve into Christ’s life, ministry and teachings you are able to feed on Christ and put on His mind.”
- “This course gave me a deeper understanding of the Old Testament and opened up Scripture to me in ways I would have never otherwise learned. It has brought the Old Testament to life for me, deeply increased my knowledge of God and has connected the entire Old Testament together.”

In addition to the three *core* theology courses just mentioned, Living University will offer some more advanced Bible classes this Fall, including an end-time prophecy class on *Daniel and Revelation*. We also plan to offer new and unique classes on Christian-living topics and general education classes in English and business that can benefit everyone. See the complete list of Fall 2016 classes in the box to the left.

The biggest difficulty reported by many students in taking Living University classes is insufficient time. Although this is a very real challenge, most successful students find that good time management can often make LU classes not only doable, but also exciting. In reality, we tend to make time for those things that matter most in our lives—and LU is certainly an important opportunity to consider *making time* for, if you have not already done so.


Why not take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen your own spiritual foundation or build some additional writing or budgeting skills? Plan to take a Living University class that

Fall 2016 Course Offerings

- THL 110A — *Tomorrow’s World Bible Study Course* (this course goes into far more detail than the Church’s online and print versions)
- THL 135 — *Life, Ministry and Teachings of Jesus*
- THL 200 — *Principles of Christian Living*
- THL 211 — *Old Testament Survey I*
- THL 320 — *Introduction to Church History*
- THL 326 — **(New)** *Christian Service and Leadership*
- THL 332 — *The Biblical Text*
- THL 344 — *Christian Women*
- THL 412 — *Epistles of Paul I*
- THL 439 — **(New)** *Biblical Prophecy III: Daniel and Revelation*
- BUS 223 — *Personal and Family Finance*
- EDUC 346 — *Teaching in the Christian Home*
- ENGL 111 — *Written Expression*
- HPRO 114 — *Health and Wellness*
- NUTR 207 — *Introductory Nutrition*

For detailed course descriptions be sure to visit our Web site, www.LivingUniv.com.

LU continues on page 23



Titus 2:3-5

Woman to Woman

OUR LOT IN LIFE

By **Faye League**

King Solomon wrote many fine proverbs, full of true knowledge and wisdom, that are very helpful to all who read and heed them. I study them quite often myself. There is one proverb that I have been deeply reflecting on lately. This proverb has great promise for those of us who find ourselves in certain situations. “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD” (Proverbs 16:33).

Even though some of us ladies for one reason or another may not be pleased with our current lot in life—perhaps due to past mistakes, unexpected occurrences or circumstances beyond our control—there is great promise and much hope in the scripture just mentioned: “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.” If we look to Christ as our guide and our stay, He will help us to find a way to make the best and the most of our lot in life.

Making the Best of It

For instance, I knew a lady years ago, a Church member and a stay-at-home mom, who found herself in a very unusual situation. Her husband agreed with most of the Church’s teachings, but chose to start a small “work” of his own—using a good portion of his salary to fund his efforts. This in turn put a financial burden on the family’s budget. The wife, wanting no part in her husband’s endeavors, soon realized that since there was no change in sight, she would have to do something to alleviate this lot, which had been “cast into her lap.” Before marriage and children, she had been employed as an educator in the public school system. Now that her children were older and attending school, she came to the conclusion that her best alternative was to seek employment in her former line of work. Apparently, she had kept her credentials up-to-date. So, after much prayer and counsel, she went for an interview with the Superintendent of Schools in her area, and she was hired on the spot—thus opening up a way for her to make the best and the most of this lot in her life, which she did through her determination and ingenuity.

While serving in one of the Church’s Regional Offices for a time, my husband and I became acquainted with a widow there who was an excellent baker. This lady had a unique natural talent for working with flour and dough—almost as if wielding these products like an artist’s tools into her desired results—producing delicious, delectable and wholesome baked goods. She had even mastered the art of working with whole wheat

flour, which can sometimes be a difficult challenge with unpredictable results.

This widow enjoyed sharing the fruits of her labor with others. She was immensely helpful to the ministers’ wives there (three of us), when visiting ministers and wives from Headquarters in Pasadena, California, at that time, would come for regional visits and stay with the ministers and families, or even when others would come for regional activities. She felt that this was one way she could do her part—by serving the ministers.

As any woman knows when planning a menu, it is immensely helpful if a large portion of the menu is prepared ahead of time. As soon as this widow heard that one (or all) of us was expecting company, she would whip out her rolling pin and go to work turning out large batches of delicious breakfast biscuits, muffins, dinner rolls, cookies and desserts. The ministers and families were very appreciative of her exceptional talents and thoroughly enjoyed the fruits of her labor. One of the minister’s wives even exclaimed, “This lady was born to bake!”

There came a time, however, when the widow could no longer partake of her delicious fare herself due to dietary restrictions, which can sometimes happen as one ages. While this was not a huge lot that was cast into her lap, it did put her into a kind of quandary. Should she just stop baking, thus eliminating the possibility of the temptation to partake of her own work, which could certainly arise if she continued to bake? Or should she continue to bake, ignoring the temptations, and use her talents in the service of others? She chose to continue to use her talents as a baker, giving others the pleasure of enjoying the fruits of her labor—remembering the words of the Lord Jesus Christ found in Acts 20:35, that “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” By making this unselfish decision, she chose to make the best and the most of this lot in her life.

Coping with Loss as a Widow

Since becoming a widow myself, this scripture, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD,” has taken on new meaning for me. When a woman becomes a widow, she not only loses the love of a mate and a companion, but she also loses the security of his masculine leadership.

As Dr. Roderick Meredith mentioned in one of his sermons, men have always been used as leaders down through the ages—especially in major roles, with very few women fulfilling these roles.

And of course, in the Church God has given men, as leaders of the home, the ability to lead, which—as they yield to **His**

leadership—enables them to be more adept at making the major (and sometimes tough) decisions that are required in families from time to time. This type of leadership, when carried out with love and kindness (which is priceless), tends to give the wife and children a sense of security, comfort and peace of mind. When this leadership is gone, it can be very difficult for a widow to bear and to carry on alone. I now know this to be true from my own personal experience. It leaves a huge void in one's life. This is why it is so important for a widow to seek God's will in her life daily and to look to Christ for guidance and direction—as the scripture says, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.” However, as we widows continue to seek God's kingdom and His righteousness, we can learn valuable lessons along the way that can help us to make the best and the most of this difficult lot in our lives.

The area of caregiving can sometimes be a heavy lot to bear, especially if most of one's time is consumed with the daily care of a loved one who may be disabled somewhat—due perhaps to an injury, a serious illness or simply old age—and is therefore unable to properly care for himself or herself anymore. This can be very stressful at times for everyone concerned—both the cared-for and the caregiver.

However, positive examples abound in this area as well. For example, while attending the Feast of Tabernacles, Myrtle Beach (2015), I was pleasantly surprised to be able to renew acquaintances with two women, sisters, whom I had not seen in many years. Their health had been declining for some time, so that it had come to the point where it was necessary for both

of them to use wheelchairs at the Feast. I sat a few rows behind them at Church services, with a clear view of them and their caregiver (who I believe was another one of their sisters) and I could not help but notice and admire how well the two sisters were being cared for by their kind and compassionate caregiver. They were at every service, well groomed, faces beaming and silver hair shining—rejoicing to be at God's Feast. Another lady sat nearby to lend a hand when extra help was needed, especially when one of the sisters had to leave the room temporarily for necessary reasons. It was very heartwarming to observe how each one cooperated with the others—the caregiver, the two sisters and the gentle lady nearby—thus avoiding any frustrations that could possibly arise. Looking back on this example at the Feast, I realized that I had witnessed the love of God in action through their fine example.

To Give or Receive?

In order to keep the subject of caregiving in the proper perspective, there is a helpful question a woman may ask herself: “If given a choice, which one would I rather be—the one being cared for or the caregiver?” I think most of us, if not all, would choose to be the caregiver for obvious reasons.

So whether our lot in life is light or heavy, the important thing is to let Christ guide our decisions, as we strive to make the best and the most of our lot in life, remembering the exhortation of the Apostle Paul: “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9). ^(LN)



TEN YEARS OF TOMORROW'S WORLD PRESENTATIONS!

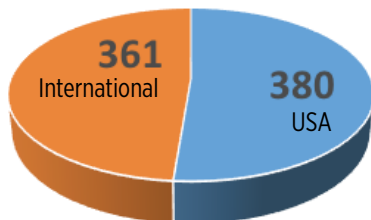
By **Rod McNair**

Christ commanded the disciples to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the world. He said in Mark 16:15, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” In an age of darkness and wickedness, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is the hope that the world needs!

Tomorrow's World Presents is a vital program the Living Church of God is using to preach the Gospel. These events—also called “TWP”s—have proven to be an effective link in the process of introducing *Tomorrow's World* subscribers to the Church of God. These local, live events give them real, live exposure to the Church of God—in many cases for the first time.

Tomorrow's World Presents

Total presentations from January 2006 to May 2016



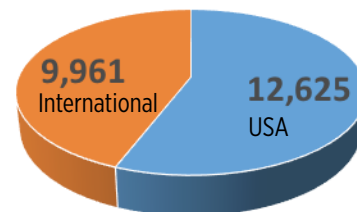
The Church of God has been doing “live campaigns” for decades. Mr. Herbert Armstrong conducted personal appearance campaigns in the early days of the modern era of the Work of God. Dr. Meredith has described some of the personal campaigns he was part of in years gone by.

In recent years, public Bible lectures were occasionally conducted in the Global Church of God, and in Living Church of God as well. But it was not until about 2006 that LCG began to put together a concerted effort to develop a program of personal appearance campaigns. Today they are called *Tomorrow's World Presents*, and these live events have become an important part of preaching the Gospel over the last ten years.

Since 2006, the Living Church of God has conducted 741 TWPs. Ninety different ministers have conducted them. Through these presentations, LCG has conducted live events

Tomorrow's World Presents

Unique visitors from January 2006 to May 2016



in 304 cities in 36 different countries. Many of them are major cities where we already have established congregations, but some are local areas where we do not yet have a presence. The potential for new areas to explore is endless! As Christ said, “I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 10:23). We still have much work left to do!

The Living Church of God has also conducted five live Internet TWPs over the last few years. These live Internet events are exciting for different reasons. Through the Internet, the Living Church of God is able to reach a larger audience than in local events, and reach remote places that otherwise would not be reached. Also, there is something exciting and compelling about a live broadcast on the Internet!

In the first century, Jesus Christ and the apostles spoke to audiences in whatever opportunities they had—in the Temple, on a mountain, or from a boat on the Sea of Galilee. Today, the Living Church of God continues to reach out to people who are interested in hearing about the exciting hope of the Kingdom of God, and the warnings for the world before Christ returns.

In recent years, the Church has developed several themes as an overall thrust for the TWP effort. In the United States, from 2012 to 2013 the TWP theme was “The Gathering Storm.” In 2014 we presented a two-year theme entitled “After Armageddon.” Beginning this year, we started a new theme in the U.S. entitled “Wake Up, America!” International areas have adapted the title in 2016 to fit their cultural environment, such as “Has God Abandoned Mankind?” in Canada and the UK and “Is Australia Broken?” Currently, each TWP typically consists of two presentations in one day, each lasting roughly 50 min-

utes to an hour long, separated by a short break with refreshments. The first presentation usually consists of a sobering assessment of world events, with a prophetic warning of the coming Tribulation and Day of the Lord and the way we can escape it. The brief intermission gives the audience a chance to stretch their legs and have light refreshments and coffee. The second presentation in the U.S.—entitled “The Pathway to Hope”—takes the audience through the prophetic plan of the Holy Days, explaining the hope that the Holy Days give to all of mankind. After the second presentation, many guests typically remain to chat with ministers and members and browse the information table for booklets and offered DVDs.

Putting it all together

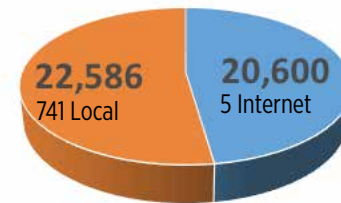
The TWP are a very important part of the overall effort to preach the Gospel to the whole world. With the mass media efforts—the *Tomorrow's World* telecast, the *Tomorrow's World* magazine, and the growing Internet effort—the Church puts a lot of energy and money into putting the Truth in front of hundreds of thousands of people all over the globe. TWPs then give *Tomorrow's World* subscribers an opportunity to know that the Work is active in their local area. They are sent a letter and brochure inviting them to attend the event in their locality, weeks in advance. Then, if they have an e-mail address, an e-mail invitation also reminds them of the event and gives them a chance to register for the presentation. The *Tomorrow's World* website also gives curious TW website-visitors the chance to request an invitation through the Internet. The printed brochure and letter also includes the local phone number of the pastor who will be hosting the event, so people can get in touch with him and ask any questions they may have.

A common question new people often have is, “This all sounds good—but can anyone really live this way of life? Can anyone really keep God’s commandments in the world today?” TWPs give new people the chance to meet with others who are proof that it can be done! Members of the Church—who are keeping the Sabbath and observing the Holy Days—are a powerful witness to visitors that God’s way works, even in Satan’s world. It is eye-opening for newcomers to see what is being done! TWPs can help people along in their growth, encouraging those whom God is bringing to repentance. For those who are interested in starting to attend services, it can give them the gentle nudge they might need to make that leap of faith. There is nothing like a live contact to encourage people in their spiritual development, as they come in contact with the Church of God for the first time.

What are the fruits of TWPs? New people are attending the Living Church of God who never did before. We also have brethren who have a Church of God background who have found us because of local TWP events. TWPs are also energizing to our local congregations, as local brethren get to be

Tomorrow's World Presents

Total visitors/viewers from January 2006 to May 2016



on the front line of the Gospel, interacting with new people as greeters and ushers, answering questions and manning the information tables, or providing food for the guests.

But perhaps the biggest fruit of the TWPs is simply to be a witness to the world. Over 22,000 people have attended the TWPs over the last ten years. Of course, they have not all become Church members. But Christ was very clear that our purpose is not solely to bring people into the Church! We are here to preach the Gospel as a witness, as He said in Matthew 24: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (v. 14). Our job is not to convert the world—but rather to get the message out to as many people as possible, before time runs out!

Our local brethren are crucial to the success of the TWP program. We could not accomplish it without them! Thousands of brethren have been involved in hosting local TWPs over the last ten years. If there were no base of manpower, it would be impossible to put on these local events. There are always needs in running the sound system, preparing refreshments, stocking and manning the information table, and just greeting people with a friendly smile and handshake. The ministry alone cannot accomplish what is being done through the TWPs! And for those whom God is calling into His Church, it is very encouraging to meet people just like them, who can help make them feel comfortable and welcomed.

What can you do to help in the TWPs? Be yourself! Be warm and welcoming. Just engaging new people (but not interrogating them) has a profound effect on the visitors, to know we are happy to see them. Every TWP event involves new people who may be experiencing their first-ever contact with the Church of God. What a great opportunity to make a first impression! So, it is our responsibility to do all we can to let them know we are here to help in their spiritual development, as God wills.

Thank you to all who have given of themselves to make the TWPs a success. Your efforts and enthusiasm are vital components of this exciting program. And if you are interested in hosting a TWP in your local congregation soon, check with your local pastor—he might be planning one already! (LN)

CRY OUT continued from page 2

It is important to realize that—since Jesus is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8)—He was willing to do those things even with unconverted people. *How much more—if* we truly cry out to Him—will He use us today, even if we are weak, to have the power to show that **He is God** and that He has **true servants** on this earth?

Matthew 10:1 shows that Jesus called the twelve apostles, and that “...when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.” Later, when they returned, He told them: “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:6–8). So Jesus gave His apostles—even **before** the Holy Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost—the power to **heal** the sick and to **cast out** demons! This was **always** part of preaching the Gospel. So it is our responsibility to carry on with this very same type of ministry today, and we need to *beseech God* to grant us these gifts more than ever as the end of this age approaches!

As the original Church of God—under the apostles’ faithful leadership—began to do the Work, notice how God reacted after He was forced to **strike down** Ananias and Sapphira for their obvious cynicism and rebellion against His leadership: “So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. 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. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women” (Acts 5:11–14). Notice that it was after God began to intervene with “signs and wonders” that *great numbers* were added to the body of Christ, “**multitudes** of both men and women.”

Do you begin to realize the “signs of the times” in which we are living? Will you then join me in **crying out** to God so that we in *this Work* may be given the **power** of God’s Spirit as never before?

Brethren, I hope that all of you will. For, to the extent that you yield yourself to God and beseech God to send Jesus to *live His life within you* (Galatians 2:20), you will be part of the body that is going to do a **powerful** Work before the end of this age and you will be rewarded *forever*—as we all know—because you have been willing to “turn to God” at a critical time in human history.

All of us should know what God says about these things, but let us, once again, review God’s promise to those of us who are willing to be spiritually “wise” and *do God’s will* in getting out His Work powerfully: “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

With Christian love,



LIGHT continued from page 4

Instead of demonstrating these qualities in their lives, too many Christians proceed in a hesitant, apologetic or sometimes a belligerent attitude to try to “talk people into” some of their beliefs.

Humanly, we all tend to do this to some degree, and it is hard to overcome. But God has given us the Spirit of power to do so!

From now on, instead of being “down on the world” in all your talk and actions, why not **show the world by action** that you have found something better? Show your neighbors that your faith works for good, by doing good to them.

Through God’s Spirit within you, **live up to what you believe** and set a shining example before others. They may not agree with all your beliefs, but they will respect the results you achieve in your life.

Certainly we must try hard not to give others the impression that we are odd or peculiar. Our job is to show those around

us the spirit of a sound mind in everything we do. If people do ask you questions concerning your beliefs—which they will, if you are living them—be prepared by diligent study to answer them in a non-argumentative, clear and common-sense way. Show them that God’s way makes sense, and is based on a law of love that would prevent war, murder and most of humanity’s troubles, if it were only taught and obeyed. But only tell people what they ask you about. Do not try to **force** too much new truth upon them all at once. Instead, show them by your words and actions that God’s way is based on common sense and a sound mind.

Even though you will still be persecuted by many, this positive attitude in Christian living can gain you new respect from those around you. You can then be an even greater influence for good. More importantly, this way of living faith and action can give your own life more meaning, interest and joy, and will prepare you to serve more effectively as a king and priest under Christ throughout life eternal. Use it! (LH)

Birth

Mr. and Mrs. Rob Bennett (Sian) of the Manchester, United Kingdom, congregation are delighted to announce the birth of their second child, **Joshua James Bennett**, on January 23. Mother, father, big sister Faith and baby Joshua are all doing very well.

Weddings & Anniversaries

Jonathan Paul Bueno and **Michelle Lynn Matherly** were united in marriage on November 14, 2015 by Mr. Rod McNair in Charlotte, North Carolina. The ceremony was held after Sabbath services, allowing the whole congregation along with invited guests to witness the wedding and celebrate with the happy couple at the beautiful reception that followed. The presence of many friends and family contributed to making a memorable wedding. The groom is the son of Joe and Rosie Bueno of the Corpus Christi, Texas, congregation and the bride is the daughter of Don and Linda Matherly of the Indianapolis, Indiana, congregation.

Mr. and Mrs. Neil (Dot) Alberts of the Welkom and Cape Town, South Africa, congregations were united in marriage on December

16 in Cape Town by Area Pastor Christo Botha. Family and friends came together to celebrate the happy occasion. The couple now resides and attends services in Port Elizabeth.

Mr. and Mrs. Gaspar (Rick and Martha Evelyn) Bordonaro, deacon and deaconess in the Macon, Georgia, congregation, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 7. They spent a wonderful week surrounded by friends and family.

Congratulations to **Bam and Hazel Glenister** who celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on May 27. The Glenisters are long-time faithful members of God's Church and attend the West Wales, United Kingdom, congregation.

ORDINATIONS

Mr. Phillip Johnson was ordained a deacon on September 14 by Area Pastor Rick Stafford. Mr. Johnson serves the brethren in the Beaumont, Texas, congregation.

Mrs. Lula Jefferson was ordained a deaconess on September 14 by Area Pastor Gene Hilgenberg. She and her husband are moving from Kansas City, Missouri, to the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, congregation.

Mr. Jean-Yves Celeste was ordained a deacon on October 4 by Area Pastor Wilner Pierre. Mr. Celeste serves the congregation in Gosier, Guadeloupe, in the French West Indies.

Mrs. Liliane Colombo was ordained a deaconess on October 4 by Area Pastor Wilner Pierre. Mrs. Colombo serves the brethren in Guadeloupe, in the French West Indies.

Mr. Bill Williams of the Laurel, Mississippi, congregation and **Mr. Lawrence Johnson** of the Jackson, Mississippi, congregation were ordained as elders by Area Pastor Ed Breaux on the First Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. Both congregations were excited to see the ordination of these men.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry (Valerie) Craig were ordained as deacon and deaconess on April 23 by Area Pastor Gary Stein and elder Wade Brown. Mr. and Mrs. Craig serve in the Temple, Texas, congregation.

Mr. Larry McGaha was ordained a deacon on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread by Area Pastor Glen Harrison and elders Curtis Lambright, Mickey Mayeaux, Chip Wheelahan and Ray Joffrion. Mr. McGaha serves the New Orleans, Louisiana, congregation.

Mr. Jonathan Bueno was ordained an elder on Pentecost 2016 by Dr. Roderick Meredith, Midwest Regional Pastor Rand Millich, and elders James Wells and Gary Jones. Mr. Bueno has been serving in the Kansas City area for the past year and he and his wife will soon be moving to their new assignment in California to work with Dr. Jeffrey Fall.

We want to hear more about the happy milestones in the lives of our brethren. If your family has had a birth, marriage or major anniversary, please ask your local pastor to send word to the *Living Church News*, PO Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010 (or to send e-mail to lcn@lcn.org).

In Loving Memory

Mrs. Dana “Carol” Wood, 69, a long-time member of God’s Church, died November 18 after an extended illness. She was baptized into God’s Church in July 1981. Mrs. Wood is survived by her husband of 54 years, D.E. “Pete” Wood, three daughters and sons-in-law, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She was a good and faithful wife, a loving, caring mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who loved her family very much and always put them first. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Mr. Roger Allgeyer, an elder in the Long Island, New York, congregation, died April 6 at the age of 77, after a few years of declining health. He was baptized in August 1968. He is survived by his wife Linda, of 55 ½ years, daughter Christy and son Darren, as well as eight grandchildren. He is greatly missed by his family and many friends. We all enjoyed his loving sense of humor and warmth. His memorial service was conducted by his son-in-law, Mr. Jonathan McNair.

Mrs. Elizabeth Tolulope Abiodun Stephen-Samuel of the Lagos, Nigeria, congregation died on April 8 at the age of almost 65 years, after a brief illness. She was baptized into God’s Church in 2002 and was a dedicated member, standing firmly for the Truth during difficult times in the Church in Nigeria in 2005. In the community where she lived, she was known to be open and courageous about the hope of eternal life and the Truth of the Scriptures. She was warm, loving, kind and encouraging towards the brethren and always had a listening ear for everyone. She was loved, admired and respected by all who knew her. Her six children are members of the Living Church of God in Lagos. She will be dearly missed by her children, grandchildren, a host of family members and friends as well as the brethren. Dr. Oladele Akin-Ogundeji conducted the funeral service.

Mrs. Theresa Pantzloff, 85, of the Ocala, Florida, congregation died peacefully on April 30. She was the wife of Milton Pantzloff, a deacon for 59 years. Mrs. Pantzloff was born in Wisconsin in 1931. She is survived by her husband, two daughters and one son. Mrs. Pantzloff was a loving and kind lady and she will be greatly missed.

Mr. Robert John Tyler, 69, of Adelaide, Australia, died in his bed on the night of May 3, following a long illness. Despite his trials, Mr. Tyler maintained a zealous approach to God’s Work and was strongly supportive of Spokesman Club. Mr. Tyler first heard God’s Truth in his youth and returned to it some 48 years later, being baptized in 2012. Although he will be sadly missed, we are confident that his race is run.

Mr. Peter Edwards, 85, of the Hook, England, congregation died on May 3 while visiting his sons in Perth, Australia. He served as a loyal, kind, and faithful deacon in the Church for many years and his example of dedication to the Work of God was exemplary. He enjoyed his trips to Perth and visiting his family there and always served the congregation energetically while there. Earlier on the day of his death, he had sent warm greetings to England by e-mail, asking that his love be given to everyone who knew him. He will be greatly missed by all. The funeral and burial service was conducted by Mr. Mal Jennings.

Mrs. Bobbie Vickers is now waiting for the resurrection after living 84 years, more than 51 of them in God’s Church. She finished her Christian race on May 12. Mrs. Vickers was born in Knoxville, Tennessee and spent much of her life there before moving to Illinois. She is survived by her husband, three children, 14 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, three great-great-grandchildren and a sister, who will miss her greatly. Mrs. Vickers was a hairstylist for 40 years. She was also an accomplished artist and a great asset to the Peoria, Illinois, congregation, where she attended. Her funeral was held in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Mr. Bruce Clifford Tyler, 71, died on May 25 as a result of a stroke several days before. Mr. Tyler served faithfully in Jesus Christ’s ministry for many years and served most recently as an Evangelist and Council of Elders member in the Living Church of God and as the Regional Director of the Australasia Region. His work took him into many parts of the world, serving God’s people wholeheartedly and working with those God is calling in distant corners of the globe. He will be deeply missed by his wife Sondra, his sons Michael (Angela) and Robert (Rebecca), his daughter Bethany (Brian) McKenzie, and seven grandchildren. Please see Dr. Roderick Meredith’s tribute on the next page for more information.

Mr. Bruce Tyler

1944-2016



It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Mr. Bruce Tyler—one of the earliest ministers to come with this Work way back in early 1994. He was ordained an Evangelist of Jesus Christ on March 14, 2001 in the Living Church of God and continued his faithful service as the Regional Director of Australasia and the Philippines until the day of his death. Mr. Tyler was always

completely loyal to the Truth of God, very faithful to Jesus Christ and the leadership of His Church and set an example of *loyalty*, *faithfulness* and absolute *dedication* in proclaiming Christ's Message to this world and feeding the flock.

As a pioneer minister in the Global Church of God—now Living Church of God—he helped build this Work all over Australia, New Zealand and the entire Australasian area. He was a faithful and very helpful member of our Council of Elders—flying clear across the globe to be with us for every meeting until shortly before his death. Mr. Tyler was a deep student of the Bible, and offered extremely helpful ideas and concepts about God's Plan and His Word. He had prophetic insights which came only from profound study of the Word of God. The Work in Australasia grew steadily under his direction. He was a tireless worker and was often found in the Philippines, in Malaysia and other areas all over Australasia serving God's people—even going into jungle areas that were considered dangerous by most people. He was a *brave man*. So he set an example of faith and **courage**.

Mr. Tyler suffered a severe stroke several days ago and never recovered from its effects. He died *peacefully* in the hospital on Tuesday, May 24, 2016. He was 71 years of age and would have been 72 in August. So he lived a long and *very productive* life. We should all pray for his family and for the entire Work in the Australasian area. Your prayers for them all will be deeply appreciated. However, we can be grateful that although we will

miss him deeply, he “has it made.” For he remained absolutely *faithful* to God and His Work until the very end of his life. So we can be confident that we will see him again soon in the resurrection from the dead—in which he truly believed.

—Adapted from Dr. Meredith's tribute posted at LCG.org

Mr. Gideon Quiñanola Benitez, 60, died on May 27 of heart failure related to his sudden illness the night before. He served in the ministry from his home in Cagayan de Oro in the Philippines, pastoring brethren in the two Mismais provinces, in Lanao del Norte and the Zamboanga peninsula. His father, Eustiquio Benitez, had been in the ministry, as well, and the members of his family have been pioneers of God's Church in the southern Philippines. He is survived by his wife, Rosanna, daughters Kate and Jannine, sons Eilon and Carlo, and one granddaughter, Stephanie. Mr. Benitez will be sorely missed by all who have appreciated his service to them throughout the years.

Mr. Karl Beyersdorfer, 73, died May 27 at his home in Joplin, Missouri. Mr. Beyersdorfer was a long-time servant in the Church of God, graduating from Ambassador College in 1966 and entering the ministry of Jesus Christ soon after in 1967. Over the course of his 49-year ministry, he served congregations in Minnesota, Iowa, Louisiana, Ohio, and Missouri. He is survived by his wife of almost 50 years, Gaylon, as well as four children—Kurt Beyersdorfer, Christi Ramos, Robert Smith, and Kraig Beyersdorfer—five grandchildren, and four sisters. Funeral services were held in his much-loved hometown of Joplin, Missouri on May 31.

Mr. Ray Reynolds, 76, died on June 5 after a short illness. He was an elder in the Oklahoma City congregation. He had faithfully served the Oklahoma area for many years as a deacon and was ordained an elder on the Last Great Day of 2015. He is survived by his wife Marilyn of 54 years, two brothers, two sisters, many nieces and nephews and other family and friends. Mr. Reynolds was a native of Oklahoma, a Master electrician, and he retired as an instructor at the United States Postal Service Technical Training Center at Oklahoma University.

LU continued from page 15

begins on August 15, 2016. You can enroll in the university's Open Learning Program and take several courses before having to meet regular admission requirements. You can also take a course as an “auditor” rather than “for credit” (if you prefer not to take exams or write papers). Even high school students can enroll in LU's Early College Program and take specific courses while completing their high school requirements. For Early College students, the tuition is greatly discounted.

To enroll and to learn more about the full range of courses being offered, visit us on the Web at *LivingUniv.com*. If you

need some additional time to examine the course offerings, plan and save up tuition, classes for the Spring semester will begin on January 11, 2017.

If you are interested in learning more about which Living University courses may be right for you, visit our Web site or contact Assistant Registrar, Mrs. Michelle Broussard at *mbroussard@livinguniv.com* or by phone at (704) 708-2294. For the 2016-17 academic year, the on-campus student placements have already been made; but if you are thinking about the possibility of LU on-campus study in the future, do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Broussard to begin the application process. (M)

COMMENTARY

A Bridge to Nowhere

Why would someone build a bridge to nowhere? Either they do not realize where they were headed, or they just are not the sharpest tool in the shed. Yet most of us, at one time or another, have held onto *grudges*—which are effectively bridges to nowhere.

Human nature can lead us to be quite hypocritical in how we address hurt feelings. We may recognize that when *another* person holds a grudge, he or she essentially journeys away from the healing process—and yet when we have our *own* bone to pick, we might hang on to our grudge, deluding ourselves into thinking that, for us, the results will somehow be different.

Grudges are like terrible dinner guests; they have endless appetites, but the only thing they are eating is the one who invited them to dinner. The list of health effects is lengthy, and can include any and all of the complications that result from depression, as well as increased risk for cardiovascular diseases. The real kicker is that intellectually we understand that these are side effects, and yet in reality we still may find it difficult to let some things go.

Why do we cling so tightly to feelings that we often know only hurt us? Basically because they are ours, those feelings belong to us, and to let go of them means that we must realize they are wrong to preserve. We just do not want to have to admit: perhaps we were wrong, or at least that it may be better to be wronged and have peace than to get revenge.

At times, hurt feelings may indeed be justified, but holding onto them is completely opposite of the very core of Christianity because it ignores its two core concepts: “You shall love

the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5), and “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

Do we go to God when we have slipped up and tell Him, “I really blew that one—you’d better deal harshly with me this time so I will learn,” or do we ask Him to be merciful with us? If we love God with all of our heart, then our heart will reflect His, which is filled with forgiveness and patience. If we love our neighbors as ourselves, then we will extend to them the same level of mercy that we request from God, and if we do not really forgive from our hearts, then God will not forgive our debts either (Matthew 18:21–35).

In bridge building there is a process called surveying, where a surveyor will come to the potential construction site to see how best to lay the road, and which route the road or bridge should take to arrive. Another way to look at this is that the surveyor eliminates any routes that may traverse over treacherous terrain. We can apply this to the times when we are upset or angered by the actions taken by others. God tells us that those who wish to see Him must first pursue peace with all people, and if we are not making that pursuit then we will lose out on eternity (Hebrews 12:14–17).

Are we counting the cost of holding grudges? We each have to ask ourselves: “Which route will lead me to God’s Kingdom?” Adjusting our road’s trajectory to avoid a mountain is one thing, but changing course over a molehill may have us building a bridge to nowhere.

—Ryan Dawson