

# THE LIVING CHURCH NEWS

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## A Life in God's Service

### Dear Brethren and Friends,

Solomon tells us, "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). How can this be? How can the day of death be better than the day of one's birth?

After all, Solomon also tells us, "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward" and "Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:3, 5). One of the happiest days in one's life is when one's own child is born. There is hardly a more exciting day, but what has that tiny bundle of joy actually accomplished?

A good name has to do with reputation and accomplishment. When a child is born, he or she has accomplished nothing and has no reputation. We know not whether he will be a scientist who makes some great discovery, or whether he will be nothing but trouble for his parents and society in general. It is only when one comes to the end of life that we have a record of accomplishment or failure.

### A Life of Accomplishment

In the case of Roderick C. Meredith, we see a meaningful life, and we rejoice at what he accomplished. We see a man who walked with God. We have all heard of his influence on young minds at Ambassador College, but I doubt that those of us who took his Freshman Bible Class fully appreciate all that he gave us. Not only did he give us the best instruction found anywhere regarding the life of Jesus and His message, but he gave us much more. He taught us how to apply God's law in our lives on a daily basis. He encouraged developing the habit of daily prayer and study, and occasional fasting. How can one measure the lasting effect this has on someone? He instilled

within us, at least those of us who were responsive, respect for the opposite sex. We learned a new approach to dating, how to reject selfish desires and to treat one another with outgoing concern. Yes, there were others who taught these values, but no one did more than Dr. Meredith to "hold the line" and lift our standards. The impact that instruction had on my life is beyond measure, and I owe him greatly for that!

Those of us on the Council of Elders were privileged to see a side of the man that many have not seen. We are all aware of his strength, his perseverance, and his drive. One of his sons spoke at Dr. Meredith's funeral of how forgiving he was. We all know he focused on the big picture and avoided the petty. But, to sit with him in meetings was a real privilege. I admired the way he conducted Council meetings. He was patient and allowed everyone to speak on a topic, but he also knew how to cut off discussion and move on when appropriate. He did not let a discussion drift or move off track and he kept control of the meeting. He had that delicate balance.

### Starting Again at the Dining Room Table

My first experience on the Council was at the beginning of the Living Church of God. God used Dr. Meredith to raise up the Global Church of God when the former association was reverting to an apostate form of Christianity. Certain ungrateful men thought they knew better how to lead the Church and, through circumstances and evil plotting, they were able to gain control of the Global Church of God. As it turned out, they were far better at destroying than building. Dr. Meredith prayed that God would scatter his enemies, and that is exactly what He did! They could not get along with one another and quickly scattered in more than seven different directions!

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The newly formed Council of Elders met around Dr. Meredith's dining room table. One of the first items on his agenda involved the ministerial fleet program and I confess that I did not understand why that was so important. Cars at such a time seemed rather secondary to this neophyte. However, in retrospect, cars were incredibly important. Our ministry needed to travel to the various congregations on the Sabbath and to visit members who needed encouragement and reassurance at that difficult time. He saw the importance of ministerial transportation to the Church. He saw the big picture and what was important at the moment.

Dr. Meredith recognized that those who made themselves enemies also had a problem. They held a lot of leased cars, and the obligation to make payments, but very few ministers to drive them. He sent Tom Turner back and forth to negotiate a deal with them that was beneficial to all involved, including the lease company. He did not let bitterness or revenge blind his judgment regarding what was best for everyone, especially the members who needed their ministers during the crisis.

Serving on the Council of Elders has been a tremendous learning experience. Dr. Meredith understood the value of a multitude of counsel and he always showed great respect for each of the members. The council members individually and collectively showed him great respect in return.

Occasionally someone claims that there is conflict on the Council. These individuals know nothing. If everyone thought the same on every subject, why would one need a Council of Elders? Dr. Meredith maintained open communication where each man could speak his mind openly, but respectfully. That is the way it has been from the beginning of the Living Church of God. Compared to what we read in Acts 15, I can say without any hesitation that we are a very unified group of men.

Greatness does not always come with fanfare. Often it comes down to the quiet things one does. These are a few of my memories of this great man. We each have our stories to tell and our observations to make, and in the remainder of this "Dear Brethren" article we are going to read how other men on the Council of Elders were influenced by Dr. Meredith.

### Comments from Council of Elders Members

Dr. Meredith was not able to travel to observe his final Passover, so Wyatt Ciesielka and his wife had the privilege of keeping the Passover with Dr. Meredith and his daughter, Elizabeth, in his home. Here are Mr. Ciesielka's observations in general and on that Passover in particular.

Dr. Meredith set a wonderful example of faith, of pushing himself to do the Work, and of servant leadership. To Dr. Meredith, Jesus Christ was not only His personal Savior, but He was also the very real and active head of the Church. Over and over, we saw how real God was to Dr. Meredith, when he would really focus on how Christ would want him to handle "such-and-such" challenge or opportunity. We also saw Dr. Meredith's drive as he pushed himself—well into his 87th year—to come into the office every day and to be involved in all of the big decisions. I personally saw Dr. Meredith's humility and drive when I was able to take the Passover with him at his home, a little more than a month before his death. It was his 68th Passover, and although his mind was strong, he was too weak to get up out of his chair without assistance. However, he was determined to do his part in the foot-washing service, and as he had done so many times throughout his life, that evening he again pushed himself to do his part in the service, just like any younger, healthier person would. I will always greatly cherish being able to have that last Passover with Dr. Meredith, in his home. Our conversation continually went back to his profound appreciation for Jesus Christ's sacrifice, his love for the brethren all around the world, and his absolute faith that Jesus Christ had indeed gone to prepare a place for all of us and would soon come again.

Rod McNair is one of the younger men on the Council, but one of the early ones to leave the apostasy and join in reviving

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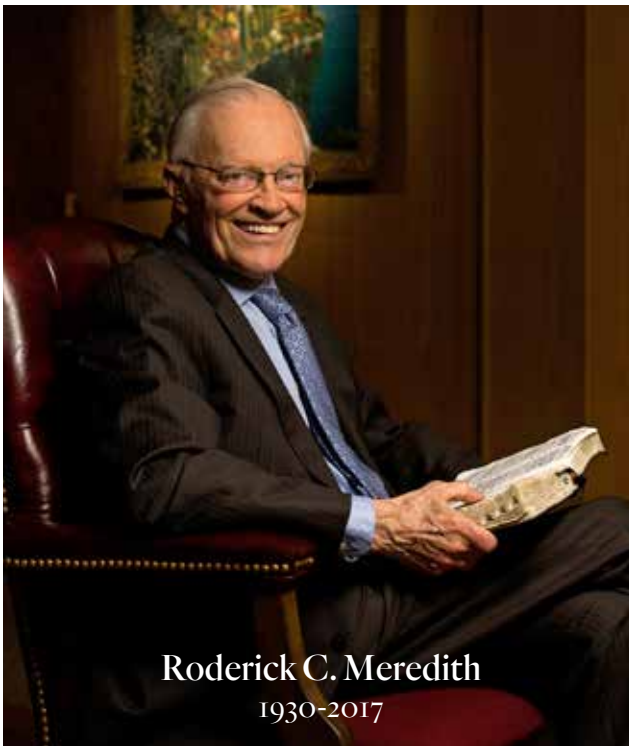
## How Will We Be Judged?

*The following article is from a transcription of one of Dr. Meredith's sermons and was chosen, reviewed, and edited by Dr. Meredith himself, with the help of his daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Stafford. They sent it in not long before he died, and it is our privilege to be able to publish his last editorial in this issue. —Editorial Staff*

**B**rethren, many of us will die before Christ returns. We all have to think about death. As people say, "There's nothing more certain than death and taxes." When you die, or when I die, and our casket is lowered into the earth, how is God going to judge us? Think brethren: *How is God going to judge you?* What has your life turned out to be?

### Important Questions to Ask

In the 1950s, at Ambassador College, I began teaching a speech class in advanced homiletics. In the first lecture of the course, I would immediately ask these young potential leaders and ministers the question: "What is the main quality or characteristic that God is looking for in a true leader or servant?" The same question applies to each of us. What is the main thing



Roderick C. Meredith  
1930–2017

God is looking for in each of His children, as a future ruler and a king and priest under Christ? It's not how good a speaker you are, or how much knowledge you have. It's certainly not how good looking you are, or how charming your personality is. It's none of these things. Rather, you need to ask yourself, "What kind of *character* do I have? Am I truly surrendered to God, and do I really mean it?" Are we showing God that we're surrendered to live by His every word, and *that He can trust us forever*? Are we showing God that we will be loyal, clean and pure by the way we live our lives? We must be demonstrating that we're not here to "get" or to "show off," but rather to serve others and work hard to be productive in our lives. A big question we must all ask ourselves is, "What do we do when *no one else* is around to see us?"

In Luke 6:46, Christ asked the question, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" Christ is **not** your Lord unless you do what He says. He makes that very clear in the Bible, that we are to actually obey Him. The word *Lord* means "boss," and it means "master." Yet, many in this world's churches talk about "How good it is to know the Lord this morning," all while observing the wrong day, even though many of them know better. They can read what the Bible clearly says, and they *should* know better about a lot of things. Others in modern seminaries have been confused, and often teach that God is not a real Being, and that the Bible is a collection of myths and allegories. They're teaching people the *wrong way of life*. We must know what we mean when we call Christ our "Lord," and that it involves actively keeping His Sabbaths and commandments.

### Whom Will God Bless?

Isaiah 66:2 gives us a clear understanding of the sort of person for whom God is looking, and on whom He will look favorably: "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit..." This means the one whose attitude is humble—who is willing to be taught and to learn! This refers to one who is willing to repent, to turn around and go the other way—an individual who is teachable and willing to listen. To be contrite is to be genuinely sorry. The scripture continues, "...and who trembles at My word." This person will have a profound

respect for the Bible as the inspired word of the Great God of Creation, and will be willing to *live by every word of God*. That's the person God is looking for, the one who is developing this kind of character.

*What is character?* True character is that moral or spiritual force that impels us to integrity. It is exercising the power of the Holy Spirit so that you resist the wrong, and do what is right. Character is based on the Ten Commandments, which are the revelation of God's character. These commandments show us in detail how to love God and our fellow man and are expanded in the statutes. By yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we're able to resist doing wrong and choose what's right.

Both Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 give us descriptions of Lucifer. He was a brilliant and radiantly beautiful spirit being of great integrity, originally. But he turned from being one whose name, Lucifer, means "light bringer" and "shining star of the dawn," to being Satan, which means *adversary*. Why did he turn? He began to think he was just as powerful and just as good as God, and could invent his own idea of what was right and wrong. This is the very idea he gave to Adam and Eve at the beginning, and they began to invent their own ideas of right and wrong. Satan convinced them that God doesn't really mean what He says, and that they wouldn't surely die—and he convinced them to accept, or experiment with, a mixture of good and evil. The world is not all bad, and every idea of Catholic and Protestant "Christianity" is not all bad. That's

These commandments show us in detail how to love God and our fellow man and are expanded in the statutes. **By yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we're able to resist doing wrong and choose what's right.**

what fools people, because they can see some good in many religions. However, the end *result*, just like mixing a little poison into otherwise good food, is going to end in *death*. This is what Satan the Devil has been feeding the human race ever since. We, however, must have enough of the fear of God *not* to take of this mixture of good and evil. Satan is a very powerfully persuasive being, with awesome knowledge. Does he know the Bible? Of course he does, and he quoted the Bible to Jesus Christ in the fourth chapter of Matthew. But it's never a question of how much you know. It's a question of what you do with what you know, how you live, and *what you stand for*.

### **It's a Matter of Character**

As God looks down on each one of us, what do we stand for? What is our basic character? Can the great Creator who gives

us life and breath trust us? Do we always keep His Sabbaths, or do we find various excuses not to do so once in a while? Do we make excuses to watch some rotten program on television on Friday night, or to skip church services when we don't feel perfect? Do we find excuses to get mad at others, to actually hate them so that we will not forgive them? Some may make excuses to lie or to exaggerate, in order to make themselves look good and to make another person look bad so they can "get ahead." Others make excuses to be mad at the Church, and even fight the ministry and undermine the Work of God because their feelings got hurt, or they don't yet fully understand doctrinal matters. God is watching every one of us to see how we respond in these ways.

I've seen so many—including many ministers and leaders, who seemed good on the surface—fall away from the Truth. When we look around and see various people who seem to look good on the surface, and are charming and clever, but try to put down the Church or the ministry, we should remember the example of Samuel choosing the future king of Israel from among the sons of Jesse. God told him to pass by all of the seemingly capable, strong and good-looking young men. Eventually, God showed Samuel that He had chosen David, the youngest and smallest of the brothers, who spent his time out in the field with his sheep, tending them. God wasn't looking at appearances; He was looking on the heart and at the *character* of David. Character includes being willing to do what's right, no matter what others around you are doing.

It includes having a good work ethic, being zealous in prayer and study, and being morally clean and pure in the way you live. Another important part of our character, brethren, is being filled daily with the humility and the fear of God, so that we will stand for God and stand for Jesus Christ every day of our Christian lives!

### **The Importance of Prayer**

Daily contact with God through prayer to our great Creator is indispensable to our character development. I learned when I first came to Ambassador College at the age of 19 that prayer was **vital** important. In order to pray the first thing in the morning, I had to get up very early, and use a dusty broom closet to pray in privacy. This life lesson of putting prayer first in my day, which I've continued for all these years, can also help each one of you—that is to always pray before you eat, or read the newspaper, or do anything else that would get your mind off of God and onto worldly things. Don't let anything else like that interrupt you. By setting this standard, you're making contact with God your first priority. Begin by hallowing God's name, praising Him and thanking Him for His mer-



cies and abundant blessings. I have often, as Mr. Armstrong did, spent a third of my prayer time praising and thanking God. Thank Him in detail for things such as your life, your home and family, your calling and being part of this end-time Work, and the peace you have in your country. Then, confess your sins and ask God **fervently** to help you to repent and to “clean you up and scrub you out.” Later, you can ask God for the things you need, such as love, joy, peace, faith, knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Also ask God for His power to help you overcome yourself, this world, and Satan the Devil. Talk to God as your Father and ask Him for your own personal needs, and to bless your family and friends, and to bless the Work we’re doing with His power. Ask Him to intervene and shake the nations to help them to begin to wake up and know God is there—and ask Him to help us to reach out to them with His truth.

Talk to God fervently as you ask for His help with all these things. Remember that Christ said in Matthew 6:33 that we should “seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Seek through your prayers for more of His Spirit, seek for His power, love, joy, peace, wisdom and self-control. We need these aspects of God’s character within us, so ask God to fashion and mold you, to send Jesus to live more fully within you, so you can represent Him better and be a “light of the world” and the “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13–14).

### **Develop Right Habits**

We need to develop *right habits* to have the closeness to God that we must have to be in His family. While developing character is not only a matter of habit, habit *is* a good tool to use along with the help of God’s Spirit. If you brethren all around the world develop these habits, they can literally

help you forever. We’ve already discussed building a habit of praying early in the morning, as the Son of God did (Mark 1:35). We should consider praying three times a day, as King David and Daniel did.

Also, build a habit of drinking in of God’s word through Bible study—this is how you “feed” on Christ. The Bible describes God’s character, and you will come to know Him through studying His word. God’s character is specifically described in the Ten Commandments. Do you love God with all your heart and strength and mind? Do you have no other gods before the true God, and make no idols or image of God? Are you reverent with God’s name, and do you try not to even be around people who are cussing and using God’s name in vain? Do you remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy? God made it holy, and He asks you and me to remember this special time that reminds us of who He is. He is the Creator who gives us our life and breath.

The fifth Commandment tells us to honor your father and mother, that you may live long on the earth. Even as an adult, you still honor the office that God has given them, and that honor goes right back to God Himself, who is the ultimate Father. You shall not kill, and as Jesus magnified it, you’re not even to hate and let an attitude of bitterness and resentment stay in your mind. That attitude could lead you to hurt or potentially even kill another person. Don’t let that attitude gain control of your mind. You’re also not to commit adultery or even have thoughts of lust stay in your mind. As soon as your mind starts down that path, turn away and ask God to help get your thoughts on something else, quickly. Take this seriously, because lust can keep you out of the Kingdom of God. Don’t bear false witness; if God can’t trust what you say, can He trust you in His Kingdom? Satan is a liar, and God

hates lies. He has **commanded us** to forsake lying. People should be able to believe what you say, and you should stand behind your word. Finally, don't covet and let your mind be on getting something from others, whether it's their husband or wife or their property. Be a **giver** and not a getter; *that* is part of the *character* of God.

### Meditation and Fasting

Along with developing the vital habits of daily, early-morning prayer and Bible study, you need to also develop the habit of meditating. When you're finished studying God's word, learn to stop and meditate on what you've been reading. It's helpful to have a habit of occasionally going outside, perhaps on the Sabbath, and looking up at the clouds or the trees and thinking deeply about God as the awesome Creator. Think about why He called *you specifically* at this time, and not someone else. Meditate on how far you've come in your Christian life, and how you can do even better.

Meditate on God's Law, and how you can better let His Law rule in your life as a Christian and a follower of Christ. Use the tool of fasting, and develop the habit of **fasting regularly**. If you're in good health, you may try to fast once every month. If you're older and have health problems, you may only fast three to five times a year—but be *consistent* in your fasting. Use that time for extra prayer, and extra Bible study and meditation. *Cry out* to God during your fast to work with you, shape you, and mold you to make you more like He is.

### Walk with God

Additionally, brethren, we must develop the habit of walking with God *all day long*. Mr. Armstrong told me a number of times that if he found himself in a really bad situation, he would often pray 30 to 60 times a day. He would pray to God all throughout the day, asking God to help him, to correct him, and to strengthen and teach him. Talk to God

often during the day, and picture having your hand in His and walking with Him. Remember, too, a key verse that I've often given you is Galatians 2:20 (KJV). "I am crucified with Christ"—the old self has to die; "nevertheless I live"—because we are not physically dead; "yet not I"—the ego or the old selfish and vain self. The key part of this verse is next: "but Christ liveth in me"! Does Christ **live in you?** He will then help you develop true character, because it will be God putting *Christ's character* in you through the Holy Spirit. "...And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Then we will be able to live by the "faith of the Son of God," to have that total trust in God that comes from Him through the Holy Spirit. That is how we will develop real character, by Christ living within us—and these tools and habits can help us toward that goal.

When the Great Tribulation begins, if you have the character of God, you will be able to stand up and do what He says, despite threats or being thrown into jail. You will say, "I will trust God, He is real, and I'm going to obey the God of the Bible." You are going to be the *winners*. The ones who take the easy way out and follow the Beast and the False Prophet are going into the Lake of Fire. If you have God's character and trust God, you will live forever, and God will be able to say to you, as He did to Abraham, "now I know"—He will know that He can trust you forever. Can God say that about you? I hope He can. We all want life, we want to live forever. So we must yield to God, cry out to God, walk and talk with God, and ask Christ to live His life in us.

Beseech God to develop in us the very character of Jesus Christ, that we may fully exemplify Christ and God in what we think and say and do. We won't be perfect in this life, but we must grow in grace and knowledge, and grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). Build *God's character* brethren. There are tremendous rewards! (LH)



# Why the Living Church of God?



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By **Mike DeSimone**

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**W**ith all the “Church of God” groups out there, it is healthy to ask ourselves, “Have I proven I am in the right one?” Truly, why are we here? Have we proven we are where we should be? Can we explain why we are in the Living Church of God? In this article, we are going to examine four concrete attributes that should be found in the Church of God.

The purpose of this article is **not** to convince anyone to believe these concrete attributes, though we **will** provide scriptural support to show why the Living Church of God believes and teaches these truths. The purpose is to provide four of the weightier objective, distinguishing qualities of the Living Church of God, which are provable from the *word* of God. If a person has proven these things from the Bible, and believes them, it becomes clear where he or she needs to be.

Mr. Lambert Greer wrote an article entitled, “We Are *Not* All the Same,” published in the September-October

2004 edition of the *Living Church News*. That article should be read along with this one to bring even more clarity to some of the differences, especially if individuals are trying to determine where they should be, or if they are trying to determine why they are where they are today. *Why the Living Church of God?*

Revelation chapters 2 and 3 exhibit letters to seven Churches extant during the first century—each of them led by Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9–20). While they were all God’s Churches, they were *not* all the same. They each had distinct characteristics, and if we have “an ear, [to] hear what the Spirit says to the churches”—something we see repeated several times in Revelation 2 and 3—we realize it does matter where we are, and what we are a part of!

## **Preaching the Whole Counsel of God**

What does this mean? Obviously, no one says, “Our Church does *not* teach the whole counsel of God.” Yet, as we will see, this first point is objective and concrete.

In the November-December 2010 *Living Church News*, Dr. Roderick C. Meredith wrote an article entitled, “We are Different!” In it, he explained:

Leaders in several groups seem eager to “dance” around these fundamental issues—to avoid clear answers, or even to deny the answers long taught by God’s Church and His word. The result of such spiritual neglect, and of their clever avoidance of these issues, is that their groups and the members become unsure about the nature of God, and about many other key issues that certainly are of importance to Almighty God!

So, in an effort to accommodate personal tastes, side-step confrontations, and thereby avoid losing congregants who disagree, some reject or avoid various truths found in God’s word that were opened to the Church’s understanding through Mr. Armstrong. A few of these easily provable truths that some dismiss are proper church government, the identity of Israel’s descendants, who and what God is, and the Church eras of Revelation 2 and 3. God’s Church should be teaching all of the truth of the Bible. It should not evade certain truths because of personal taste, or to avoid conflict.

Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders, said, “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26–27). It was on the Apostle Paul’s shoulders to preach the entire truth. **It is on the shoulders of God’s Church to do the same.** The

Some groups do make efforts to preach the Gospel, but they put minimal resources toward it, and others only want to preach the “good news” aspect of the Gospel **and not warn of the impending destruction that is going to come on our nations if they don’t repent!**

church in Philadelphia spoken of in Revelation chapter 3 is commended for “[keeping] My word, and [not denying] My name” (v. 8), while some of the other seven described in chapters 2 and 3 clearly strayed from the “whole counsel.” They were still God’s churches and still keeping the Sabbath, **but not teaching the full truth!** The Churches at Pergamos (the “Compromising Church”) and Thyatira (the “Corrupt Church”) are especially poignant examples of this. Teaching the “whole counsel” as it has been revealed from God’s word is critically important!

## Preaching BOTH the Gospel of the Kingdom of God AND the Ezekiel Warning

The second concrete, scriptural commission that the Living Church of God proclaims and seeks to fulfill, is the obligation of the Church to preach the Gospel of God’s coming Kingdom, as well as the Ezekiel Warning message. Claims that this Work has been “finished” and no longer needs to be done or that we only need to preach it to the members of the Church to “prepare the bride” are simply not compatible with Scripture. They deny the very mission of the Body of Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34). He is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). And, “He is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18). This is what His entire life was focused on while He was here on earth. “Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God... ‘because for this purpose I have come forth’” (Mark 1:14, 38). This was again on His mind after He was resurrected, and He commissioned His disciples to, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19–20). Did He intend that only for His immediate disciples? Did He command that only until Mr. Herbert Armstrong died or until some other arbitrary time in the future? Some here and there have claimed this, but in the Living Church of God we believe this directly applies to God’s Church until the very “end of the age”!

For He continues in the commission, “...and lo, I am with you always, **even to the end of the age**” (Matthew 28:20). In fact, we see that the “gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, **and then the end will come**” (Matthew 24:14)! There will be a group of God’s people doing this right up until the onset of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:3–28). It will not be done in a corner, but powerfully! It will not be achieved if it is believed and taught

that preaching to the world has already been completed, and it will not be achieved by a little website run by one guy in his basement. It will be done by the Body of Jesus Christ, made up of many members, who are led by His Spirit and take the commission seriously.

The early Church took every opportunity to preach the gospel and went through every “great and effective door” God provided (1 Corinthians 16:9). Some were large opportunities: “Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He



had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27). Other opportunities were more limited, allowing them to preach in one city and not another: “...when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel... a door was opened to me by the Lord” (2 Corinthians 2:12). Just as Christ did for His Body shortly after His resurrection, He continued to provide open doors to

## Proper church government is essential for preparing for the Kingdom of God! Just as the Church that Jesus Christ founded did not vote or “ballot” the apostles or others into office, **we will not be voting or balloting one another into the various positions in God’s kingdom.**

the Church of Philadelphia to preach the gospel at the end of the age (Revelation 3:8)! Someone will be going through those doors, and the Living Church of God believes it is a commanded mission from God!

Concerning the idea that “The Work is done, and the Church’s job now is to ‘prepare the bride,’” Mr. Gerald Weston argued in his July-August 2006 *Living Church News* article “Preparing the Bride” that the way to prepare the Church is to do what Jesus Christ commanded His Church to do. That is, preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and warn the world of the troubles that are coming! Yet, just claiming to preach the Gospel and then putting only minimal available resources toward it is not enough (Matthew 6:21). Also, only preaching the “good news” aspect of the Gospel and not warning of the impending destruction that is going to come on our nations if they don’t repent, is a very dangerous position to take!

God’s people would be neglectful if they knew the “sword was coming” but didn’t say anything! “If the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand” (Ezekiel 33:6). As God’s people, if we know what’s coming and do not say anything, the world’s blood will be on our hands (Ezekiel 33:1–11)! The Living Church of God believes and teaches it is our job to preach the Gospel to the world and warn of the coming troubles, *before* God sets up His Kingdom!

Christ says that “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” (Matthew 24:14)! However, not all of God’s people will be doing this in the end time (Revelation 3:14–22). Yet those who do participate in God’s Work to bring the Gospel to this dying world can reflect on the promise made through Daniel, that “those who turn many to righteousness” shall shine “like the stars forever and ever” at the resurrection to everlasting life (Daniel 12:3).

## Proper Church Government

Another concrete doctrine that should distinguish the Church of God is its approach to church government. God’s word reveals how the government of God works, and we see its pattern in descriptions of the Kingdom of God. We understand from Scripture that God the Father rules above all, and Jesus Christ is under Him in authority (John 14:28; Daniel 7:9–14; Luke 1:32–33). We see that in God’s Kingdom, Jesus Christ will reign on the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 19:16). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah and others will hold high positions, no doubt (Hebrews 7:4–10; 11:8–29; Matthew 17:1–3). The resurrected

King David will reign over all Israel (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24–25; Hosea 3:5). The twelve apostles will “sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28), under King David. Finally, speaking to all His disciples, Jesus said, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). We understand that one of the reasons the first resurrection is called the “better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35) is because true Christians will be given the extraordinary opportunity to reign over cities as kings and priests during the Millennium, under the aforementioned saints (Matthew 25:14–30; Revelation 5:10; 20:4–6)!

Proper church government is essential for preparing for the Kingdom of God! Just as the Church that Jesus Christ founded did not vote or “ballot” the apostles or others into office, we will not be voting or balloting one another into the various positions in God’s Kingdom. Instead, God will set those positions by appointment (Matthew 20:23), just as He ordains positions in His Church now, which is one of the 18 truths God restored to His Church through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong! “He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11). Paul “commanded” Titus to “appoint elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). The apostles asked for input from the brethren in Jerusalem about some of the leading members, *not* to ballot on which ones were to be deacons, but to suggest “whom we [the apostles] may appoint” (Acts 6:3) as deacons.

Voting/balloting in leadership sounds like a good idea in our democratic society, though it is never how God established His spiritual leaders. In fact, something like this was attempted when Moses was leading Israel. We read about it in Numbers 16, where several who did not like the government God had established confronted Moses and Aaron, telling them, “You take too much upon [or assume too much for] yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of

them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" (Numbers 16:3). The entirety of the Bible points toward godly leadership by appointment, not men choosing who their own leaders will be.

Separately, it is interesting to note that the letter to Philadelphia has to do with government (cf. Revelation 3:7; Isaiah 22:22; 9:6)—in this case, the government of God, “on the shoulder” of Jesus Christ. Dr. Meredith often stressed the connection between the “key of David” and right government, and Jesus Christ begins His letter to the church in Philadelphia—picturing zealous, faithful, end-time Christians—with a reference to proper, legitimate, godly governmental authority.

While God **allows us to decide** for ourselves, and **He does not currently force His people to submit** to His form of government, we should be very careful not to stray from the biblical pattern. The question is this: While He will not **make** us do it His way, **are** we doing it His way? (See Matthew 4:4.) The Living Church of God believes and practices the type of government God uses and shows to us in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. This form of government requires trust in Jesus Christ as the loving Head of His Church, and it also demands the need for our next point. One without the other is not godly government!

### Godly Love and Servant Leadership

In explaining to His disciples **how** to execute God’s form of government mentioned above, Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25–28). Peter also explained how the ministry is to serve the brethren: “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers... not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock...” (1 Peter 5:2–3).

Love includes keeping God’s Church clean of sinful practices (breaking of God’s Law, 1 Corinthians 5:1–8). At the same time, it does not include the invention of extreme and ungodly rules and regulations, such as the Pharisees added, that, if broken, will lead to disfellowshipping. We are not to be dictatorial or harsh in our approach. “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition...” (2 Timothy 2:24–25).

As God’s people, it is our job to grow in an attitude of service and warmth toward others (Philippians 2:3–4). Christ Himself commanded: “...love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that

you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35). Jesus Christ was the perfect leader and showed perfect love. He came to **serve** humanity! The very word *Philadelphia* means “brotherly love.” This is God’s way of life and is to be reflected in *our* lives!

We are not to instill fear of men in God’s people, but we are to strengthen, encourage, build and edify (Ephesians 4:11–16). It is our job to build families, not tear them apart (1 Corinthians 7:10–16; 1 Peter 3:1–5)! Some unconverted family members may be troubled when God first calls us and may even become hostile **toward us** (Matthew 10:34–39). We should, in no way, be the ones instigating division by shunning our family members if they do not attend the Living Church of God with us (Matthew 15:6; Romans 12:18). God’s ministers should not point the members toward discord, separation and division, but toward peace and unity in the family (Malachi 4:6).

The Living Church of God believes and teaches as part of its mission statement, “Learn and practice Servant Leadership in all our dealings with others.” Dr. Meredith guided us toward a culture of **love and servant leadership** and wanted us to continue growing in it! We are to exhibit Christ-like leadership in faithfulness, steadfastness, humility, and love. If some want to dispute the truth, we are not to be wishy-washy, but rather we are to be firm—but always gentle and loving.

### The Question

God allows each of us to make our own choices, and He does not “make” us do anything. When it comes down to it, each of us must prove what God’s word teaches (1 Thessalonians 5:21), step out in faith, and do what it says. There are many organizations claiming to represent God today, each with its own twist. There are those that keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days, and many of them have at least some of the Truth, but they are not all the same. As Mr. Richard Ames asked in his sermon, “Churches Under Judgment,” we, too, must ask as we consider the churches of Revelation 2 and 3: Which church do we want to be a part of? The dead one? The corrupt one? Which attitude and spirit should we try to emulate?

We will not do it perfectly in this life, but we should strive to reflect the character of the one found in Revelation 3:7–13 and have an ear to “hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” If we claim that we **are** Philadelphian, what room for improvement is left? We would be wise to heed the warning in Revelation 3:17–18! We must continually examine ourselves, identify the wrong, and cast it out! Dr. Meredith frequently told us, “We are the Church of God in the Laodicean era, trying to do a Philadelphian Work.” It *does matter* where we choose to attend, and with whom. While there are other points that could be addressed, these four points are concrete and easily provable from Scripture. And the Living Church of God fully believes, teaches, and strives to live up to them. (LN)



# HOW TO SQUEEZE THE LEMON

By **Gary F. Ehman**

If there is one thing I've come to understand in the process of growing old, it's that life can be extremely unfair. Not so much now, but when I was much younger, it was—as some put it—*the pits*. What really made it much worse was all the advice older people would dish out at the very time when I was at my lowest—advice such as suggesting that what and how I felt was not all that earth-shaking or painful. “Just wait until the going really gets tough...”

Does this all sound familiar?

The fact remains, “stuff” happens to all of us, and if we do not take charge, it will overwhelm us. Now that I have reached this more ancient point in my own life, I find myself enormously qualified to assume the role of dispensing some of that sage advice, too.

When we look back over some of the dire aspects of our past and recent lives, we can easily conclude that life really isn't fair, with a growing awareness that this doesn't appear to be diminishing in intensity. In fact, it may appear, at times, to be careening out of control. How do we face this? How do we survive when life hammers us over and over?

The answer is in one of the most galling bits of advice people gave me, repeatedly, which I felt trivialized my horrendous experience of the moment. Their advice? “When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade.” It was even more galling in view of my dislike of lemonade. Interestingly, that bit of advice can be found in the Bible—not exactly in those words, but in concept. And, it is great advice when you understand the principles involved. We will look at this principle in this article and, hopefully, help you “squeeze the lemon” when it's handed to you.

## **Lemonade in Prison**

The Apostle Paul understood this issue:

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and

most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:12–17).

Paul was in prison at this point, but he kept the big picture in mind: the Gospel. In every circumstance in which he found himself, proclaiming the Gospel was foremost in his mind, especially if he could inspire others to do the same. Paul was jailed—a big lemon. Preaching the Gospel meant going to prison—a big fear. Reality was simple for him: “Preach the Gospel, go to jail!” But this did *not* cause him to develop fear or a negative attitude. The threat of jail produced the opposite reaction; such persecution, in his mind, should breed even more boldness.

There is a tremendous lesson in this for us. Paul faced many such traumas, and he survived them by converting them to good. “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Philippians 4:11–12).

These key words of advice to us from Paul are the key words of this article. Paul's use of the word “content” implies a strength in self-sufficiency—not feeling as though one is in dire need. But how did he do it? Verse 13 explains: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

## **Trials and Persecution Will Come**

The Church has always understood that preaching the Gospel *will produce* persecutions and trials. Bad times will come, not only on our leaders, but on God's people in general. Jesus said it would happen:

Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up

against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes (Matthew 10:21-23).

This doesn't mean that evil is all we can expect, or that we might as well quit. Paul tells us to take heart in 2 Corinthians 1:6-10 (cf. Colossians 1:23-26; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-7).

In each case, Paul is saying Christian trials result in good things, such as faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. This is the process of growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

The Philippians were aware of Paul's plight. Yet he did not want them to be overly concerned, because he had "good news," not bad news, to report: the Gospel was still being spread. This was "lemonade-time" for him:

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice. For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Philippians 1:18-21).

Paul could have looked at the bad side of his situation—his own imprisonment, his restriction in travel, his physical suffering—but he looked at life from the viewpoint of the Gospel. If the Gospel was spreading, it was "good news"—lemonade. And his imprisonment and trials were increasing the advancement of the Gospel.

The Bible explains why this was happening, and the book of Acts tells the story.

Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him. And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans..." (Acts 28:16-17).

He was under "house arrest"—under constant guard. "Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him" (vv. 30-31).

Scripture clearly shows that Paul repeatedly referred those who visited him to the matter of Jesus Christ. Most likely the emperor's own guards were also under the continual influence of Paul and the Gospel he was preaching. It is almost certain Paul would have tried to teach his "captive audience"—the soldiers who may have occasionally been chained to him. So, it is possible that some of them were converted: "But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ" (Philippians 1:12-13). His example and effect were widespread: "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household" (Philippians 4:21-22).

### Joy that the Gospel Is Preached

Even more amazing about Paul's attitude is that some, at the time of his imprisonment, were preaching their version of the Gospel to deliberately hurt Paul:

Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice (Philippians 1:15-18).

Paul did not fall into the trap of self-pity and despair. He could see those seeking to persecute him were inadvertently spreading the Gospel!

But, whether in pretense, envy or strife, in Paul's mind, Christ was still being preached! To "rejoice" means to be cheerful and glad about something. Whatever it was going to take, whether he was to live or die, even caused by others seeking to condemn him while he was in chains, Paul was determined to support the preaching of the Gospel. This is how you can explain 1 Corinthians 9:16, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, **for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!**" As a minister of the Gospel, he felt compelled to follow through, whatever the cost.

One of the most graphic examples of lemon-squeezing in the Bible is Paul's stoning. "Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes,

they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead” (Acts 14:19). It was all over. Paul, a bloody mess of torn, smashed, crushed flesh, was dead. Surely, no one **ever** survived a stoning! It was the end of the story.

But, wait! Paul moved!

However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (vv. 20–22).

### **A 1940s Tune with Lessons for Today!**

What about us, today—Christians facing 21st century realities? What can life’s hard knocks teach us about making lemonade? At times in past sermons, the late Presiding Evangelist, Roderick C. Meredith, would sing the lyrics to a 1940s melody which provide the key to making lemonade: “You’ve got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative.”

A Christian must make **the choice to “accentuate the positive.”** That means controlling our attitudes, our thoughts, our moods. For example, we can choose to be positive, even rejoice, when difficulties arise. “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2–4). This certainly is lemonade!

A real, positive choice is remembering that God is always with us in every aspect of any trial we face, if we ask Him for help. With a proper understanding, we maintain a positive attitude despite external circumstances (cf. Romans 5:3–4; Romans 12:12; Philippians 2:17–18).

The Christian then must make **the choice to “eliminate the negative.”** When trials come, we tend to talk ourselves into negativity, dredging up negative phrases—“I can’t do it,” “It’s too hard,” “Why me?”—and by constantly reminding ourselves of such things. As we read earlier, the Apostle Paul suggests a better way in Philippians 4:11–13, knowing that in all his negative circumstances he can be content, reassured that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (v. 13).

The more lemon-squeezing efforts you make, the more results you will see: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we

shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:7–9). You can start by choosing your friends carefully (1 Corinthians 15:33).

And a Christian must stay away from “negative” people—those whose constant pessimism poisons their efforts to cope with the reality of their lives. With the right self-encouragement and by picking the right companionship, we can avoid becoming hardened by what Paul describes as the deception of sin, which is always negative: “...but exhort one another daily, while it is called **‘today,’** lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrew 3:13).

A Christian must then make **the choice to “latch on to the affirmative.”** One of the most disastrous mistakes Christians can make is to dwell on the past. Yes, we all have sinned and fallen short, but God says that, upon repentance, He has put away those sins from us. Christians need to live in the present, not the past. Paul was a prime example of this concept: “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:12–15).

### **The Prize of the Upward Call**

Paul’s solution was simply, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the **prize of the upward call** of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12–14). God is telling us to live in the present, but look to the future.

It was the future glory inherent in all Christians that enabled Paul—and will enable us—to endure the present trials we face. This mature approach is what helped Paul to maintain a positive attitude, even in the most difficult of times:

But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen! (2 Timothy 4:17–18).

While God can provide the lemons—or, at the least, allow them to come into our lives—He also, through His Spirit, gives us the means to *make lemonade*. (L)

# Living University: Ten Years and Growing

By **Michael P. Germano and Scott D. Winnail**

Living University completed ten years of operations in May, celebrating a decade of “*Recapturing True Values*.” The University will begin its 11th year of operations in mid-August. Many exciting events occurred during the 2016–2017 academic year, with the following highlights punctuating the year’s activities.

## 2016–2017 Highlights

The Fall 2016 semester began with both our largest online enrollment, and our largest on-campus class yet! More than 225 students, from 15 nations, enrolled in classes. These included 14 on-campus students in Charlotte, North Carolina, and four studying at the regional office in Adelaide, South Australia. Charlotte on-campus students inaugurated two new student residences (Sheryl Manor and Redstone Hall) with the annual Faculty Reception on August 24, 2016. More than 60 students, faculty, Living University Board of Regents members, Headquarters ministers and wives, and donors attended this memorable event. The evening featured encouraging remarks by L.U. Founder and Chancellor, Roderick Meredith and L.U. President and CEO, Michael Germano. Guests then toured the newly furnished student residences.

On February 27, 2017, roughly 50 students, faculty, staff, and invited guests celebrated the first annual “Founders Day Luncheon” to recognize the vision and efforts of Living University Chancellor Roderick Meredith and the other men whose foresight helped establish L.U. in February of 2007 (Richard Ames, Dibar Apartian, Douglas Winnail and J. Davy Crockett III). President Germano, faculty members, and Board of Regents member Richard Ames gave speeches about the history of L.U. and God’s hand in its creation. A portrait of Chancellor Meredith was unveiled and now hangs in the L.U. library in Charlotte.

In March, 2017, Living University received notification from the University of North Carolina General Administration that its application to license a proposed Associate of Arts (A.A.) program and two Bachelor of Theology minors (Business and Communications) was approved by the UNC Board of Governors. Beginning in August, 2017, L.U. students can enroll in a fully licensed A.A. degree program and in Business and Communications certificate programs. Licensure of these programs completed an in-depth, two-year application process.

On May 15, 2017, Living University held its annual commencement exercises and tenth anniversary celebration in Charlotte, North Carolina with more than 100 attending. Twenty students, representing six different nations, received their credentials either in person or in absentia. Canadian Regional Director Stuart Wachowicz delivered the com-

mencement address, and graduating senior Richard Franz gave the student address. Dr. Franz (who began his L.U. studies in August 2007), along with graduating senior and Living Church of God employee Jacob Hall, were jointly awarded the *Herbert W. Armstrong Excellence Award*, L.U.’s highest honor.

Other exciting events this academic year include the ministerial hire of one of our Living University graduates studying in Adelaide, South Australia, Joseph Gonzalez (now pastoring congregations in the Philippines). Several of our part-time distance students were also ordained as elders, deacons or deaconesses. This academic year saw the marriage engagements of three of our Charlotte-based on-campus women students, each to an L.U. alumnus.

Other good news includes the expansion of our Early College Program. Early College students receive a tuition reduction (discount) so that their net tuition cost is \$25 per semester credit hour for courses in which they enroll. Students admitted to the Early College Program may enroll in lower division courses numbered 100–299 provided they have met course prerequisites. Enrollment in the Early College Program is open to students enrolled in public and non-public schools (including home schools) to expand their opportunities for university-level, Bible-based instruction.

## Living University’s Heritage

For ten years now, Living University has served the people of God in the 21st century, utilizing state-of-the-art online instructional delivery methods. Where Ambassador College served as a liberal arts institution with a theology program, L.U. differs in that its focus is as a theological institution with a small liberal arts program. As a result, L.U. offers certificates, diplomas, and degrees—primarily in theology.

Dr. Roderick C. Meredith, as Presiding Evangelist of the Living Church of God, founded Living University in 2007 in the spirit and tradition of Ambassador College. He had formerly served as the Deputy Chancellor at each of Ambassador’s three campuses and maintained throughout his life a firm commitment to its godly ideals and values. Dr. Meredith chaired the nine-member Board of Regents, which governs the affairs of the University and gave the charge that



L.U. “exists to educate men and women in the skills, concepts, and values that lead to success in life, while helping them prepare for successful careers, leadership and worthwhile service to God and humanity.”

The University’s president and chief executive officer is Michael Germano, former Executive Vice President of Ambassador College at Pasadena, California, and Dean of Faculty at Ambassador University in Big Sandy, Texas. Other past members of the Ambassador faculty who joined Dr. Meredith and Dr. Germano include Richard Ames, Douglas Winnail, Peter Nathan, David Maas, and Howard Woodard. All L.U. faculty members teaching courses in the General Education and Biblical Foundations Core hold at least a master’s degree or the equivalent in their area of teaching. All theology faculty members are ordained ministers in the Living Church of God with at least fifteen years of ministerial experience.

### Our Programs and Students

The University offers seven undergraduate certificate options for men and women—Biblical Christianity, Biblical Studies, Business Studies, Christian Leadership, Christian Family Studies, New Testament Studies and Old Testament Studies. Students may also pursue diplomas in Biblical Studies or Christian Family Studies. Degree programs consist of coursework leading to the Associate of Theology and Bachelor of Theology degrees. Through its Bachelor and Associate of Theology degree programs, the University seeks to prepare students with a solid Bible-based foundation for leadership, teaching and ministry within a local church congregation, particularly related to volunteer or career service. The new Associate of Theology program will enable students to complete a core of theology courses while also completing a traditional general education program. Our hope is that in the future, these courses will be more easily transferable to other colleges and universities. The University continues to develop its on-campus undergraduate program in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is further expanding its educational services to a rapidly growing online global student body.

The Living University student body is comprised of about 55 percent men and 45 percent women, roughly 93 percent of whom are part-time students and seven percent of whom study full time. The plan is to increase full-time, on-campus enrollment at Charlotte to about 25.

The design of the on-campus program is to serve single young adults. On-campus students take on-line courses with an additional weekly discussion session led by a Charlotte-based faculty member. In addition, on-campus students participate in monthly social gatherings, speech classes, Spokesman and Women’s Clubs, and many activities unique to the Charlotte congregation of the Living Church of God.

Living University students are overwhelmingly very happy with their learning experience. When asked to answer anonymously, “All things considered, were you satisfied with your studies with us?” 99 percent responded “yes.” And 100 percent responded “yes” to the question “Would you recommend these studies to a friend?” The overall course completion rate for the last eight years is 93.3 percent, with a course attrition rate of only 6.7 percent—far better than many universities.

As a Christian institution, Living University offers a values-based higher education wherein “The Word of God Is the Foundation of Knowledge.” Its theology courses focus on the beliefs and practices of the Bible, taught by Herbert W. Armstrong and the Living Church of God. The University is a growing educational community where our collective quest is restoring true values in an ever-changing world and applying them to lay the foundation for a godly life.

### The Future

Over the last ten years God has richly blessed Living University and its students. Dozens of graduates and hundreds of brethren are now better equipped to serve in their



local church areas and regional offices and at Headquarters. L.U.’s future will continue to be bright as its students and leadership continue to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

If you have not already done so, we encourage you to consider taking a Living University course in theology. Many of our students use these courses to inform and direct their personal Bible Study. Most students report that their L.U. classes are deeply rewarding, beneficial, and well worth the time and effort. A list of Fall 2017 classes is now posted on the L.U. Web site. For single young adults, we also encourage you to consider on-campus study with Living University. This richly rewarding and life-changing opportunity will be one you will not soon forget. To learn more or to enroll in classes, visit our website at [www.livinguniv.com](http://www.livinguniv.com) or call us at (704) 844-1966. (LN)

# Paul's Admonitions to the Ephesian Elders



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By **Wyatt Ciesielka**

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**P**aul's final personal *message* to the Ephesian elders was an important plea to a church that he had pastored and loved, for the purpose of strengthening them so they might prevail in the perilous years ahead of them. In reality, the apostle's counsel is actually *God's timeless admonition* for Christians of *any* age, and is becoming increasingly relevant as we prepare for the "perilous times" we know will precede Christ's return (Matthew 24:4–14; 2 Timothy 3:1). Like the Ephesians before us, we can greatly benefit from using these spiritual tools so we too may grow stronger spiritually, and so we too may *prevail* "against the rulers of the darkness of this age" (Ephesians 6:12–13) in the years ahead.

What do we know of Ephesus and of Paul's Ephesian ministry? We know that this great city was the location of Paul's *longest known-continuous ministry in one place*. History records that Ephesus was a major trade city in the

Roman Empire, located between the Croessus mountain range and the Aegean Sea, and by Paul's time it had become wealthy and affluent, partly because it was situated between major imperial trade routes. Its first-century population is estimated to have been more than 300,000, making it one of the *largest and most prosperous cities* in the empire. We also know that Ephesus was a very *pagan* city, with a great temple of Diana prominently located at the head of its harbor. And we know Paul visited Ephesus briefly during his "Second Apostolic Journey" and eventually returned to work in Ephesus for almost three years (likely 53–56AD), where he helped further establish the Church of God (Acts 20:31). It was a church he grew to love, and a congregation that soon became very vibrant and strong in the faith. Paul's Ephesian ministry is part of the time called his "Third Missionary Journey" or the "Third Apostolic Journey," which is generally agreed to be from around 53AD to the winter of 57AD.

As his custom was, Paul began his Ephesian ministry in the Jewish synagogue, where he "spoke boldly for three



months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8). But persecution from the Jewish authorities soon forced him to relocate to a public lecture hall—the “school of Tyrannus”—where he continued for about two years (Acts 19:9–10). Despite this persecution, *many* came to hear Paul, making this a very productive time in his ministry. Paul drew large crowds of both Jews and Gentiles on the seventh-day Sabbath, and God worked many powerful *miracles* and performed many *healings* through him (Acts 19:10–12). During this productive time, Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians to address problems and to strengthen the Church of God in Corinth, Greece (1 Corinthians 1:2), about 250 miles west of Ephesus, across the sea. God was doing a mighty work through Paul throughout the area, and in Ephesus *many* believed, and “the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” (Acts 19:18, 20).

After about three years, Paul left for Macedonia and then Greece. In Corinth, in the fall of 57AD, he wrote his Epistle to the Romans. Then, that winter, on his way to Jerusalem, he stopped at Miletus, just south of Ephesus, *where he summoned the Ephesian elders for the important admonition that we’ll review in this article*. The apostle’s address to the Ephesian elders is found in the book of Acts, chapter 20. It was an emotional meeting and a powerful message. The elders feared they would not see him again in this life (Acts 20:38), and they were right. While Paul’s ministry continued for about 13 more years, these would indeed be his final *personal* instructions to the Ephesian elders.

In fact, God used Paul to *prepare* the church at Ephesus for what would be “perilous times” in the coming years. In 57AD, through the Holy Spirit, Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders that they would need to “remember” and do the “first works,” just as Jesus Christ would admonish them, decades later, through the Apostle John in Revelation 2.

As we consider what true Christians will increasingly face in the years to come, it would be wise to remember Paul’s admonition to the Church of God at Ephesus, and

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Jesus Christ’s instruction to *every* Church era. Like the Ephesians, we too must labor and not become weary (cf. Revelation 2:3). We, too, must hate evil (cf. Revelation 2:2),

and like the Ephesians, we too are being prepared for spiritual battle and a time when the days will grow darker as the world increasingly falls under Satan’s sway (2 Timothy 3:1). For these same reasons, when Paul wrote his epistle to the Ephesians—about three years after his meeting with the Ephesian elders—he reminded them that they do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but “against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12), just as we do today.

### Paul’s Five Admonitions at Miletus

Acts 20:17–38 contains the account of Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders who met with him in Miletus, and the specific instruction we will focus on is contained in verses 24 through 32. Inspired by God, he gave them **five admonitions** to practice and to teach to the Church of God in Ephesus. Additional lessons can be extracted from the account, but this article will review these five admonitions that are particularly relevant for us today. How well do *we* appreciate and practice these five admonitions?

#### Admonition 1: Work to Preach the Gospel

In Acts 20:25, Paul reminded the elders that he had been **preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God** among them for years. True Christianity is an entire way of life, obedient to all of God’s law, and it is more than simply prayer and Bible study. God has given His Church a great *Work* to do. The “work” or the “priority” of the Church of God to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is extremely clear from Scripture (Mark 16:15; Acts 16:10; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Galatians 2:2) and is the first of the “sevenfold commission” that Dr. Meredith often mentioned (see “The PURPOSE for God’s Church” in the May-June 2009 *Living Church News*). This was the instruction and example of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:14–15; Luke 4:18; 9:10–11).

As Jesus foretold, “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 (Matthew 24:14). If we are true followers of Christ, then, especially as we see prophecy moving forward, we will consider admonitions such as Dr. Douglas Winnail’s: “If we merely focus on self—praying, fasting and studying the Bible for our own benefit—we will not fulfill the Great Commission that Jesus

Christ outlined for His Church. Are we willing to risk our reward by ignoring Christ’s own words?” (“The Mission of God’s Church,” *Living Church News*, March-April 2006).

**Admonition 2: Follow God's Counsel**

Paul reminded them that he had “not shunned to declare to [them] **the whole counsel of God**” (Acts 20:27). The distractions of wealth, trade, society, and false religion were *major* pressures in first-century Ephesus. Similarly, today “modern Israel” is increasingly moving further away from God and Scripture. However, the true Church of God will be a bulwark of faith, never attempting to “water down” doctrine or be swayed by secular opinion. It will, instead, practice and teach *the whole counsel of God*. As Dr. Meredith often admonished, the Church of God will teach *all* of God's law. As he wrote, referring to the same passage where Paul was exhorting the Ephesian elders, “please consider whether you are truly following the ‘whole counsel of God,’ to which Paul had just referred” (“Do You Live by What Christ Taught?,” *Tomorrow's World*, May-June 2006).

God rebukes the people of end-time “modern Israel” through the prophet Hosea: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The more they increased, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame” (Hosea 4:6–7). Addressing this “lack of knowledge” in our modern time, Dr. Meredith wrote,

“Millions of Americans, Canadians and Britons attend church and recite standard prayers, sing songs, clap their hands and hope they are learning something worthwhile. But they are not actually learning to understand the inspired word of God. They are *not* being taught the details of *why* they were actually born, the ultimate *purpose* of life and *how* to attain that purpose. They are not being told of the dozens of *specific prophecies* now beginning to occur, which will greatly affect *their very lives* over the next decade or two. They are *not* being taught the ‘whole counsel of God’ as the Apostle Paul taught” (“Why Don't Most Churches Preach the Truth?,” *Tomorrow's World*, March-April 2014).

Are we guarding ourselves against spiritual apathy, learning and practicing *the whole counsel of God*?

**Admonition 3: Remember Christ's Merciful Sacrifice**

In Acts 20:28, Paul reminded them of **the importance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice**. We must always *deeply* appreciate the importance of Christ's sacrifice. Consider reviewing Mr. Richard Ames' article on this vital fact, “Worthy Is the

Lamb” (*Living Church News*, March-April 2013). Ephesians 2:12–13 reminds us that we have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ, that through His sacrifice we have a relationship with the Father. And Romans 5:8–9 reveals that “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

The love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ do not abrogate the need for God's law and heartfelt repentance. A converted, repentant person will *want to* live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). Such an individual will *desire* to show his or her love for God by keeping God's commandments (1 John 5:3) and will *want to* act on the Truth (James 1:22). Converted, repentant Christians will

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desire to walk in newness of life, as they walk “in the light” and have fellowship with one another. For the truly repentant person who understands and appreciates the sacrifice of the Son of God, the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse that person from sin (cf. 1 John 1:7). As Dr. Roderick Meredith wrote, “And, *much more* than most of us probably do, we should constantly *think about* and *appreciate* the sacrifice Jesus Christ made in literally *giving His blood* as payment for our sins!” (“What Does Christ's Death Mean to YOU?,” *Living Church News*, September-October 2006).

**Admonition 4: Defend the faith**

Understanding the unrighteous influences that the Ephesian Church strove against, and understanding that persecution and heresy would increase after his departure, Paul admonished the Ephesian elders to **defend against false doctrine**. Paul wrote, “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock,” and he reminded them that for three years he passionately taught them and pleaded with them, “night and day with tears” (Acts 20:29–31). The work of an elder includes compassionately and fervently warning and protecting the flock that he shepherds and serves, including, when needed, warning those in the body of Christ, to “turn away” from ungodly people (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

The carnal mind that wants to pursue its *own* will recoils at this instruction, but we are wise to remember that we are commanded, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for

that would be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17). And when people come teaching false doctrine, Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians is relevant to all true Christians; “Do not be deceived, ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

### **Admonition 5: Diligently Study the Bible**

Finally, Paul commended the Ephesian elders to God’s word (Acts 20:32), and so, too, should we *be diligent about Bible study*. It is through studying, reading and hearing Scripture that we grow in faith (Romans 10:17). Of all that we could invest time and energy into studying, it is the entirety of *God’s word* that is Truth (Psalm 119:160). The Bible teaches that God cannot lie and that Scripture is true (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; John 10:35; John 17:17; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). The Bible is God’s instruction to mankind, and we can trust it. The Bible is inerrant in its original manuscripts and has been faithfully preserved and historically verified.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament have been preserved with *incredible accuracy*, including which books should be contained within the Old and New Testaments. The Apostles canonized the New Testament, and that canonization was preserved through their disciples, such as Polycarp. Although canonized well before, the oldest *surviving* list of the canonical scriptures of the Old Testament comes from about 170AD, and was recorded by Melito of Sardis, who was a friend of Polycrates of Ephesus, where Paul had ministered so diligently and so effectively decades before. It was this same Polycrates of Ephesus who was a disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John.

Archaeological evidence also upholds the historical accuracy of the Bible. For example, the *Prism of Sennacherib*, which was discovered in Nineveh in 1830 and is now housed in the British Museum, describes Sennacherib’s conquest of 46 Judean cities during Hezekiah’s time, thus aligning with the preserved Biblical record. The *Israel Stele*, a stone slab discovered in Thebes, Egypt in 1896, is the oldest record of ancient Israel found outside of the Bible, and it records Pharaoh Merenptah’s conquest of Israel and Syria in the 13th century BC. Similarly, the *Tel Dan Stele*, which was discovered in fragments between 1993 and 1994, provides extra-biblical evidence of King David and the House of David. And in 2015, a half-inch clay *seal of Hezekiah* was found near the old Jerusalem city walls, bearing the inscription, “Belonging to Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, king of Judah.”

We are told, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [or ‘God-breathed’], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” that we may grow to perfection (2 Timothy 3:16–17). We must be diligent to study God’s word daily, and we can be confident that we can trust the Bible.

### **Paul’s Arrest, His Appeal, and His Martyrdom**

After Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he continued on his way to Jerusalem and encountered the prophet Agabus, who warned him that if he continued to Jerusalem, the Jews would turn him over to the Romans and he would be put in chains (Acts 21:7–14). Just two of Agabus’ prophecies are recorded in Scripture (the other being his prophecy about a severe famine to come, which was fulfilled during the time of Claudius), and both of his recorded prophecies came true. Paul was, indeed, turned over by the Jews at Jerusalem, and was eventually taken by Roman guard to Caesarea where he was imprisoned for two years. Paul insisted on his right, as a Roman citizen, to have his case heard by Caesar (see Acts 25:11). This is likely around 59AD, and Scripture records that Festus asked the Jewish king Agrippa II to evaluate Paul’s defense before the apostle was sent on to Rome to continue his appeal.

Paul records that at his *first* defense before Caesar Nero, no one stood with him, but *the Lord stood by him* (2 Timothy 4:16–17). While Scripture and history are unclear on exactly what happened, we know that around 61 or 62AD, he was eventually released. It was around this same time that James the brother of Jesus was executed in Jerusalem.

Paul continued his ministry, and some events of this period are covered by the book of Acts. He preached, was persecuted, and traveled to places throughout the Roman empire. The ancient letter “Clement to the Corinthians” suggests that Paul traveled to Spain. Some tradition says that Paul even went to Britain. Eventually, he would be arrested again. And even in his chains, he remained productive, preaching and writing (for example, he would write 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus while in chains).

Finally, Paul was taken to Rome a second time and brought before Caesar Nero again, now around 67 or 68AD. In 2 Timothy 4:21–22 we find Paul’s final recorded words in Scripture, and then God’s word is silent on Paul. Tradition says that he was sentenced to beheading. Nero died in the summer of 68AD, and tradition is that Paul was executed before Nero’s death, just outside of Rome, probably on the Ostian Road, where the aged apostle laid his head down on a block, and an imperial swordsman took his life. Paul’s life was over, but his ministry continues through Scripture.

We are being built up upon the foundation of the apostles, the prophets, and Jesus Christ Himself (Ephesians 2:19–20). As Jesus Christ warned the Ephesian Church decades later, let us never forget our first love (Revelation 2:1–7). Instead, let us be *zealous* to heed the admonition of Paul to the Ephesian elders at Miletus nearly 2,000 years ago, as we, too, prepare for perilous times—so that we can prevail, ourselves, and rise with Paul to meet Christ in the resurrection. (LN)

**A LIFE IN GOD'S SERVICE** continued from page 2

the work of maintaining and capturing original Christianity. He currently serves as Assistant Director of Church Administration in Charlotte, NC.

I will always admire Dr. Meredith for his courage and fortitude to step out alone in reviving the Work in December of 1992. At that juncture in his life, he had already spent decades in Christ's ministry, and many men would have been thinking about slowing down and pondering retirement. But he didn't do that. He had no idea how many would follow but stepped out in faith and put his life in God's hands. I remember being overseas on an Ambassador project when Global began, listening to recorded sermons by Dr. Meredith, and drawing a lot of strength and encouragement from them. I admired him as an uncle and a teacher, and I appreciate his legacy as a man who yielded his life to Christ.

Mr. Rand Millich is a longtime minister and has been on the Council for many years. He currently pastors our second-largest congregation, Kansas City, and is Upper Midwest Regional Pastor.

One of the most memorable moments I experienced was during the apostasy. I called Dr. Meredith concerning being part of the Work God was doing through him. He didn't get upset because I waited so long. Instead, he was kind and understanding—willing to answer any questions I might have had. We had known each other through the years. He taught me as a student, baptized me and watched over me as my boss and head of Church Administration. During this critical time in the Church, he accepted me as a fellow minister and friend. I've remembered this time because it showed God's Spirit working through him as a servant leader and as a genuine Christian.

Dr. Douglas Winnail serves as Director of Church Administration worldwide. He is a longtime member of the Church and is one who took Dr. Meredith's Freshman Bible Class at Ambassador College in Pasadena.

My wife and I have known Dr. Meredith for 50 years. He was my contact before coming to Ambassador College. We were both in his class, and he married us on the Pasadena campus. He was also one of my speech teachers. When I

served as the Regional Director in Ireland and the UK, we had the opportunity to travel together to a number of historical sites and major cities in the European region to get a firsthand view of those areas. I have always been impressed with his focus on preaching the Gospel, doing the Work and obeying God. The theme he stressed of "servant leadership" is something we plan to continue to emphasize. Probably due to his track team experience in high school, he has always seemed determined to finish whatever race he was in. It has certainly been a privilege to work closely with Dr. Meredith here in Charlotte for the last twelve years.

Mr. Wallace Smith has served in the field ministry and, for the last two years, here at Headquarters in Charlotte. Dr. Meredith added him as the third presenter on the telecast in 2006. He has more recently stepped into the role of Managing Editor for our magazines and booklets.

I have so many memories of Dr. Meredith that mean so much to me, yet one stands out as representative of so much of what Dr. Meredith stood for and of the importance he placed on God's Work, both to the world and within the Church.

My wife and I were on our first official visit to Charlotte as part of the ministerial trainee program, and Dr. and Mrs. Meredith took us out to dinner to get to know us better. Dr. Meredith was sitting right next to me, and as he was talking to me about the serious responsibility of serving God and His people as a pastor and shepherd, he leaned very close to me there in the restaurant and spoke in a soft but emphatic voice, as if he were saying something of the utmost importance. He looked right in my eyes and said, "Wally, we are helping people to become a part of God's own Family!" His earnest sincerity and the gravity in his voice moved me and still comes to mind from time to time. He passionately believed in God's calling and our mission, and I will always remember him for that conviction and deep faith in God and His purpose.

At Dr. Meredith's request, Mr. Dexter Wakefield and his wife Marcia moved from Florida in 2011, where he was pastoring several congregations, to serve here in Charlotte as the Church's Director of Business Operations.

One of the most interesting experiences I have had while working at the Charlotte Headquarters

has been the lunches we had with Dr. Meredith a few times every week. At 12:30 p.m., we would sit down with our lunch boxes around a couple of tables that we put together in the Staff Meeting Room. The discussions were wide-ranging and often light-hearted, but the most interesting part was hearing Dr. Meredith recount his experiences with the people and events of the earlier years of the Work in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. He provided a remarkable institutional memory of those decades, and the rest of us listened intently when he spoke of them. His comments and stories were candid and balanced, and he gave us invaluable insights into the development of the Work and the personalities present during those decades. Dr. Meredith spent more time with Herbert W. Armstrong than anyone alive in recent years, and through Dr. Meredith's many recollections, I feel as though I know Mr. Armstrong and the Church's history much better.

Dr. Jeffrey Fall, Western U.S. Regional Pastor, has been serving in the ministry since 1987 and has been a longtime member of the Council of Elders. Having known Dr. Meredith and his family for 37 years, he mentioned that he considered Dr. Meredith a tremendous role model. He had these words to share.

One of the first sermons from Dr. Meredith that had a profound effect on me, was a passionate sermon on being sure that *all* that we do is to the honor and glory of God. If we use God as our guide, staying close to Him, obeying His laws, and walking with Him in submission, loyalty and obedience, we will not fear what any man can do, and we will have peace and confidence. It is to God we hold the allegiance and accountability. Dr. Meredith was tested on that level more than once. Years later, following Mr. Armstrong's death, God allowed new leadership to test the people of God, and through no fault of his own, Dr. Meredith was removed from virtually all responsibility in the Church. While talking with Dr. Meredith often in those very difficult years, I was totally amazed that he showed absolutely no bitterness in the way he was mistreated. His real concern was the relentless destruction of the Truth and the Work. Clearly, being mistreated and yet maintaining a godly, faithful attitude without bitterness was an awesome character trait that God used for future leadership. It was in humility that Dr. Meredith could forgive and

discard the false accusations, while keeping his eyes firmly on protecting the Truth and walking wholeheartedly before God.

While we had known of Dr. Meredith from the onset of coming into God's Church, it wasn't until entering AC in 1980 as a married student that our families became closely acquainted. Our entire family profoundly saw that Dr. Meredith was a straightforward, sincere man—that what you saw in public was what he truly was. He loved God, his family, the mountains, and he had a profound love and zeal for God's Work which was not diminished even to the end of his life. We felt honored to be able to consider him a true friend and mentor—a sincere upholder of God's Law and Work. Dr. Meredith truly lived by "vision," seeing and teaching that if we do all things to the honor and glory of God, we will be living with our eyes focused on the coming Kingdom of God.

Mr. Stuart Wachowicz is the Regional Director of God's Work in Canada. Dr. Meredith found his experience in the field of education and the halls of government to be eminently useful, and he was added to the Council of Elders in 2012.

In the months following the death of Mr. Herbert Armstrong, there came, with growing frequency, announcements or new teachings which challenged nearly all doctrines we had learned and proven in the Scriptures. Many were driven to a detailed study of the Bible only to prove again the teachings expounded by Mr. Armstrong. In 1993, my wife and I, after contacting what was then the Global Church of God, received a package with some printed literature and audio tapes. It was hard to contain our joy when we heard Dr. Meredith in these sermons. The sound of truth was once again available! The day we heard those early tapes is one of our fondest memories. Our prayers were full of gratitude that God was preserving His Work through His servant, Dr. Roderick Meredith.

The Canadian brethren are certainly feeling the loss as we contemplate the death of Dr. Meredith. His very long history in the Church, during which time he held a solid grip on the Truth, encourages and inspires us all. Despite being derided by those who sought to return to error, Dr. Meredith was unflinching. He also deeply cared for the flock entrusted to him. And now his greatest legacy would be for the Living

Church of God to remain faithful and loyal to God in a manner which he exemplified, and to complete the great Mission of propagating the Truth to all Israel and the world.

Finally, Mr. Lambert Greer is the Regional Pastor for the Mideast area of the U.S., and has served as a minister for 50 years. He worked closely with Dr. Meredith for many years, and has served on the Council of Elders from the beginning of the Living Church of God.

An important moment in my life was to hear the voice of Roderick C. Meredith on the radio program, *The World Ahead* from the Global Church of God, saying, "Don't believe me, believe your Bible." Those words resonated through my mind and heart. They were words I had not heard for years and words that, in so many ways, framed the life and example of Dr. Meredith. The strength of Dr. Meredith was not that he said these words, but that he lived these words. I was among many in the Living Church of God who were taught "at his feet" in Ambassador College, and in the years that followed it was my blessing to call him my friend and to serve in the ministry under his leadership. I will always remember

Dr. Meredith in the light of the words of Jesus Christ, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish his Work" (John 4:34).

We are all very thankful for Dr. Meredith's leadership and thankful that he established the Council of Elders. It gave him wise counsel and created a more stable environment in the Church. We expect it will continue to do so in the future. Dr. Meredith commented on more than one occasion that the leadership as seen on the Council was more unified than any time he could remember except for the very early years of Ambassador College. I expect that will continue, based on the fine men we have serving in that capacity.

The loss of Dr. Meredith is something that will grow on us as we come to questions and situations for which we would like to consult him. There will also be times when we want to share some experience or accomplishment with him, but will have to wait until the resurrection. Until then, the best way we can honor him is to do what he did: look to Christ and do the Work. Then we can truly look forward to that day when we will stand together and hear those most comforting of all words: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" May God speed that day!

*George E. Weston*

*These photos of Dr. Meredith from various stages in his life and work were among those selected by his family to show at his funeral.*









## Albuquerque Outreach Project



Ten members of our Albuquerque, New Mexico congregation, including one of our teens, participated in an outreach project at the Joy Junction homeless shelter in Albuquerque on Sunday, January 29. Joy Junction, New Mexico's largest shelter, aims to provide a "hand up" to the homeless and hungry, not only with food, shelter and clothing, but with a recovery program and life-skills training, to empower men, women and families to break the cycle of homelessness. As many as 300 people rely on the shelter every day. The outreach project involved sorting, organizing and cleaning an entire building full of various types of donated items, such as toys, books, craft supplies and school uniforms. Our ten members worked in teams of two to three to complete the project in about four hours. It was a great opportunity to work together and build bonds, as we helped provide a more efficient and effective way for the shelter to distribute donated items to its residents. Our

group was presented with Joy Junction's Volunteer of the Month award (see photo). The project was intended to reflect the efforts of the Charlotte congregation and other Living Church of God congregations in actively reaching out to those in need in our communities (Galatians 6:9-10).

—Bob Rodzaj

## Dallas, Big Sandy Annual Church Picnic

May 7 marked the date of the annual church picnic of the Dallas and Big Sandy, Texas congregations. This event has been held for the past several years at the 111 Ranch Pavilion in the city of Garland, and this year 135 happy, hungry brethren enjoyed fellowship, food and fun!

Pastor Gary Stein and elders Doc Crisman, Marshall Moluf, Alex Celan and Bobby Jacques provided the cooking expertise as dining tables were set up by many helping hands. Lunch included juicy grilled burgers, hot dogs, stuffed jalapenos, many great salads, casseroles and

desserts for the young and not-so-young in attendance to enjoy.

During the four-hour event, many enjoyed playing games such as bean bag toss, Frisbee, hopscotch, horseshoes, football toss and water balloon toss, and young children enjoyed the sandbox and swings. Others visited and fellowshiped under the covered pavilion.

The normal hot summer days of Texas were delayed just long enough for all to enjoy the comfortable weather, and everyone is looking forward to next year's picnic.

—Scott Smith



We want to hear more about 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](mailto:lcn@lcn.org)).

## ORDINATIONS

**Mr. Jeff Rosenthal** was ordained a deacon on October 12, 2016, by Northeast Regional Pastor Jonathan McNair. Mr. Rosenthal serves in the Pawtucket, Rhode Island congregation.

**Mr. Edgar Guerra** was ordained an elder on January 28 by Regional Director Mario Hernandez and Area Pastors Armando Orrego and Cristian Orrego. Mr. Guerra serves in the Medellin congregation in Colombia.

**Mr. Brian McKenzie** was ordained a deacon on April 8 by Regional Director Robert Tyler and Area Pastor Martin Montgomery. Mr. McKenzie serves in the Adelaide, Australia congregation.

**Mrs. Marie-Cecile Venus** was ordained a deaconess on April 11 by Area Pastor Wilner Pierre and elder Marcel Ginier. Mrs. Venus serves in the Fort-de-France congregation in Martinique.

**Mr. David Crockett** was ordained a deacon on April 11 by Area Pastor Gary Stein and elders Dale Bailey, Marshall Moluf, and Bobby Jacques. Mr. Crockett serves in the Big Sandy, Texas congregation.

**Messrs. David Fogg and Tony Mincey** were ordained deacons on April 11 by Area Pastor Joseph Brown and elder Jack Lucas. Mr. Fogg serves in the Jacksonville, Florida congregation, and Mr. Mincey in the Thomasville, Georgia congregation.

**Mr. Stephen Woolley** was ordained a deacon on April 11 by Mideast U.S. Regional Pastor Lambert Greer. Mr. Woolley serves in the Cincinnati, Ohio congregation.

**Mr. Riaan Taylor** was ordained a deacon on April 15 by Regional Director Robert Tyler and Area Pastor Mal Jennings. Mr. Taylor serves in the Perth, Australia congregation.

**Mr. Timothy Wilson** was ordained a deacon on April 17 by Mideast U.S. Regional Pastor Lambert Greer and elders George Dellinger and Michael Grovak. Mr. Wilson serves in the Indianapolis, Indiana congregation.

**Mr. Larry Rigling** was ordained an elder on April 17 by Pastor Martin Fannin and elder Roy Monger. Mr. Rigling serves in the Etowah, Tennessee congregation.

**Messrs. Jon Fike, Louie Hughes, and Joe Meyer** were ordained deacons on April 17 by Area Pastor Ron Poole and elders Gaylyn Bonjour, David Wakefield, and Manuel Burdette. Mr. Fike and Mr. Hughes serve in the Anderson, South Carolina congregation and Mr. Meyer serves in the Braselton, Georgia congregation.

**Mr. Mark Gustafson** was ordained a deacon on April 17 by Area Pastor David Stiffler. Mr. Gustafson serves in the Memphis, Tennessee congregation.

**Mr. Ryan Nicholson** was ordained an elder on May 27 by Regional Director Robert Tyler and Area Pastors Martin Montgomery and Michael Gill. Mr. Nicholson serves in the Adelaide, Australia congregation.

**Mr. Chad Ridgeway** was ordained a deacon on June 4 by elders Peter Nathan, David Wakefield, and Manuel Burdette. Mr. Ridgeway serves in the Anderson, South Carolina congregation.

**Mr. and Mrs. John (Freda) Cox** were ordained deacon and deaconess on June 4 by Evangelist Richard Ames, Regional Pastor Dan Hall, and elders Hugh Stewart, Rick Bordonaro, and Richard Grimes. Mr. and Mrs. Cox serve in the Macon, Georgia congregation.

**Mr. Tommy Grimes** was ordained a deacon on June 4 by Evangelist Richard Ames, Regional Pastor Dan Hall, and elders Hugh Stewart, Rick Bordonaro, and Richard Grimes. Mr. Grimes serves in the Macon, Georgia congregation.

**Mr. Aaron Anderson** was ordained a deacon on June 4 by Area Pastor Ed Breaux and elders Bill Williams and Lawrence Johnson. Mr. Anderson serves in the Laurel, Mississippi congregation.

## Births

David and Cindy Lindly are happy to announce the birth of **Ephraim Peter Lindly**. He was born on Tuesday, June 13, weighing 7 pounds 4 ounces and measuring 20.5 inches long. The entire Lindly family is excited to finally have him with them and would like to thank everybody for their support in helping to get ready for the baby, and especially for their prayers.

Chad and Sarah Brinkman of the Washington, DC congregation happily announce the birth of their fourth child, **Avery Marie Brinkman**. She was born on March 24, weighing 7 pounds 3 ounces. She was welcomed to the family by her older siblings Ella, Arlee and Elias, and grandparents Eugene and Teresa Brinkman of the Washington, DC congregation. Everyone is enjoying the new addition to the family.

Dustin and Janelle Carmichael of the Washington, DC congregation are happy to announce the birth of their first child, **Caleb James Carmichael**, born naturally at home on March 31, just after sunset as the Sabbath began. He weighed 8.5 pounds and was 21.5 inches long.

Mr. and Mrs. Tim Wilson of the Indianapolis, Indiana congregation are happy to announce the birth of their fifth child and first daughter, **Anne Christine**. She was born on May 5, weighing 8 pounds 13 ounces, and was 21 inches long. Her four older brothers are happy to have a sister.

## Weddings & Anniversaries

**Brandon James Damon and Kelsey Louise Johnson** were united in marriage on March 19 at the home of the groom's parents, George and Alice Damon, in Kansas City, Missouri. The ceremony, conducted by Kansas City Pastor Rand Millich, was followed by a reception. The couple attends services in Kansas City, where they reside.

On March 23, **Mr. and Mrs. Stan (Joan) Jennings** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They were baptized in 1962, and Mr. Jennings was ordained a deacon in the mid-70s. Both have faithfully served in God's Church for over 50 years. They received cards and flowers from the Hook, United Kingdom congregation and celebrated this great achievement with their four children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

# In Loving Memory

**Dr. Roderick C. Meredith**, Presiding Evangelist of the Living Church of God, died May 18. He was 86 years old. Dr. Meredith was well-known around the world for his tireless evangelism, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. One of the first evangelists ordained in 1952 by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, he spent 64 years in God's Work until recent months. During his time as Presiding Evangelist, over 350 congregations were established in 55 countries worldwide. His funeral was conducted on May 28, with Evangelist Richard F. Ames presiding, followed by a graveside service by Regional Pastor Rand Millich.

Dr. Meredith labored his entire adult life in the service of God's Work, and his greatest wish was for that Work to go forward in power and unity under Jesus Christ.

He is survived by his sister, Kathryn Lind Ames (Richard); six children, Elizabeth Helen Stafford (Rick), Michael Rea Meredith (Lindsey), James Paul Meredith (Sue), Rebecca Ann Sena (Phil), David Grant Meredith, and Jonathan Carl Meredith; ten grandchildren, Margie Jones, Stephen Martin, Alexandra DeJager, Christopher Meredith, Benjamin (Blake) Meredith, Michelle Wayne, Spencer Sena, Lauren Sena, Brenna Meredith, and Keeley Meredith; and four great-grandchildren, Briona (Bria) Martin, Meredith Hodges, Jaxson Jones and Bella Jones.

We look forward to seeing him again in the resurrection at Christ's return. For more thoughts on the life and service of this servant of God, please see Mr. Weston's article on page 1 of this issue, "A Life in God's Service."

**Mrs. Joyce Tremlett** died on March 14 at the age of 95. She was a well-loved and dedicated member of the Birmingham, United Kingdom congregation, who, up until the last year of her life, braved a two-hour journey involving two trains in order to attend services. Mrs. Tremlett was one of the oldest members in the UK and had lived a fascinating life. She was born in Southeast London on 19 August 1921, but spent most of her youth in Heston, Middlesex. During World War II, at the age of 18, she worked at the Foreign Office in the Communications Department, dealing with codes and ciphers. In October 1944, she and a few other London staff members were chosen to travel to Moscow with Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden when they went for talks with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. Mrs. Tremlett also had the opportunity to work in Brussels and Tokyo, before being transferred to the Commissioner General's Office in Singapore in 1949, where she met her future husband, Lewis Tremlett. The couple married a few months later and had one daughter, Sheila. As a young married couple, they had begun to research religion together, and shortly after they emigrated to Canada, they heard Mr. Armstrong on the radio. After their

baptism in January 1969, she and her husband attended services in Kitchener, Ontario, and later in Guelph. Mr. Tremlett died in 2010 after 61 years of marriage and Mrs. Tremlett moved back to the UK, where she lived near her daughter. We will all miss her extraordinary example.

**Mr. Carl Balheim** of the Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada congregation died March 29 at age 73. He is survived by three sons as well as two brothers and two sisters. Funeral services were conducted by Area Pastor Frank Best.

**Mrs. Ella H. Frye** died at her home on Sabbath, April 1, surrounded by her husband and loving family. She had battled cancer for eight years. Mrs. Frye was born in St. James, Missouri, on November 2, 1936. She was a homemaker who was devoted to the Church, where she served as deaconess since 1982. In addition to her husband of 60 years, Mrs. Frye is survived by two daughters, Maureen Smith (Steve) of Smoaks, South Carolina, and Rebecca Grygier (Steve) of Edinboro, Pennsylvania, as well as by nine grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by three children, Dianna Lynn, Dale and Kerry. She was the last of ten children born to her parents. Mrs. Frye finished her race and was faithful to the end, and she will be greatly missed by family, brethren, and friends. Graveside services were conducted by Pastor Bill Whitaker.

**Mr. Frank Bramhall, Jr.** of the Omaha, Nebraska congregation died at his home on April 5 at age 83, after years of declining health. Baptized in November 1991, Mr. Bramhall was a longtime faithful servant in God's Church and he will be dearly missed by all. Despite health trials, he kept a positive attitude and strong faith as God intervened in his cancer and other ailments. Having lived in Omaha since 1961, he used his talents as a broadcaster, singer, and speaker to serve God's people by researching local media outlets for the *Tomorrow's World* telecast, leading songs at Sabbath services, singing in chorale ensembles at the Feast, giving sermonettes, participating in Spokesman Club, and helping brethren in any way he could. Mr. Bramhall is survived by his wife of 29 years, Jovita, their six sons, many grandchildren, and other family members. Memorial services were conducted by Associate Pastor Brian Pomicter.

**Mrs. Sharon Fowler** died on May 19 at age 76. She had come through open-heart surgery, but died afterwards from a blood clot that traveled to her lungs. She is survived by her five sons, two of whom are in the Living Church of God (James and Mike McEachern). She had four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren and was baptized into God's Church in 1965.

## COMMENTARY

### 50 Years and 6 Days

**F**ifty years ago, the tiny nation of Israel won a conflict known today as the Six-Day War. One major result of this war shows us an aspect of how God will fulfill His plan at the end of the age.

In early 1967, the world watched with increasing concern as Syria, Egypt, and (to a lesser degree) Jordan made provocative gestures towards Israel. Modern-day Israel was a relatively young nation—established in 1948, in part, to give the Jewish people their historic homeland after the Holocaust atrocity. From day one, the Jews had to fight. The ancient land of Israel had been occupied for centuries by many different nations, and had been under Ottoman control until the end of World War I.

After that war, the British took control of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire and began encouraging Jews to return to their Biblical homeland. As the Jews grew in numbers, they started to demand independence from the British Empire, even though the British maintained peace, however imperfectly, between the Jews and Arabs living there. Nevertheless, Britain agreed to withdraw, and the Arabs and Jews quickly went to war in 1948. The Jews were successful, but the Arab nations around them continued to seethe.

These feelings escalated over the next several years as both sides continued to arm themselves. In 1967, when it became obvious that war was inevitable, Israel acted quickly and decisively. Their surprise attack destroyed most of the air forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan in a matter of hours, while their ground units went on the offensive. In six days, Egypt lost the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula, Syria lost the Golan Heights,

and Jordan lost the West Bank. Israel was stunned by its own success, despite its commitment and preparation.

And, while the speed of events caught most people off guard, those who study their Bibles were focused on one major prophecy that came to pass during this time: Beyond all other successes, Israel also conquered the city of Jerusalem. Even when it was established as a nation in 1948, Israel did not have complete control of Jerusalem, the Jews' holiest city. Muslims, too, believe Jerusalem to be a holy city, as do many Christians. However, since the rise of Islam, Jerusalem had (for the most part) been under Muslim control.

Yet, God's word declares that Jerusalem will play a role at the end of this age due to the Jewish people's presence. Zechariah 12:1-3 declares that Jerusalem will be troubled, but will perplex the nations who trouble it. Those who seek to harm it find it to be a "heavy stone," while others will find it like a "cup of drunkenness." Zechariah 14:1-2 shows that all nations will eventually attack and overwhelm Jerusalem. Yet, strangely, they only take half the city captive. Today, we see how this prophecy may be fulfilled: The Jewish half of the city will be taken captive while the Arab half will be allowed to remain. This prophecy only makes sense when speaking of a time when Jerusalem would be a mixed population, half of which are Jewish.

The Six-Day War advanced prophecy in a major way by giving Jews control over the city of Jerusalem. While there are many prophecies yet to be fulfilled, those of us who believe the Bible should be reminded that God's hand has been guiding world affairs to bring us all the closer to the end of this age.

—Mark Sandor