

# THE LIVING CHURCH NEWS

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November-December 2017

## After the Feast, the Work Continues!

*Dear Brethren,*

Another full cycle of biblical Festivals was completed with the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. All reports are that it was a successful and profitable Holy Day season. How many more will there be prior to the Day of the Lord, pictured by the Feast of Trumpets? World events indicate the time is short.

This was my 54<sup>th</sup> Feast of Tabernacles and my wife Carol's 56<sup>th</sup>. It is most unlikely that we will experience even half that many again in this physical life, and while we must be careful not to plan our lives around speculative dates for Christ's return, it is difficult to imagine this world seeing anywhere near another half-century.

Carol and I were privileged to observe the Day of Atonement in the Philippines. This was our first visit to the country that is home to our third-largest region of the Work, exceeded only by the United States and Canada. We were very warmly welcomed, with many members staying around to fellowship after services, even though the day did not call for snacks! The members there were truly a delight to meet.

We spent the first half of the Feast in Hanmer Springs, New Zealand with about 100 members, most of whom were from New Zealand. It was encouraging to see the growth there since our first visit 22 years ago. We spent the second half and Last Great Day in Nelson Bay, Australia and, again, it was encouraging to see so many new people who have come along in the last two decades. We were enthusiastically and warmly welcomed at both sites and appreciated the many encouraging words of support.

We attended services in Sydney following the Feast, before heading down to Adelaide to see our regional office and meet some of the staff. The Asian Pacific region is in good shape at

the moment, but it faces the same challenge we have everywhere, an aging ministry. We lost several ministers to death, retirement or transferring out of the area this past year. The small Bible Education Centre that Mr. Bruce Tyler instituted, in which students take Living University classes online, has provided several younger men to fill the gaps. Paul and Lisa Kearns and Tony and Faith Lehman are among our graduates and are doing a fine job in New Zealand, and Joseph and Janice Gonzales have returned to the Philippines to oversee the office there. These younger men and women are getting the job done and are loved and respected by the members.

No matter where we go, members ask what new initiatives we are working on. I find this encouraging, as it shows that our members realize we have a Work to do. They are not like those individuals who proclaim the Work was finished by Mr. Herbert Armstrong. The majority of those we met on this trip have come into the Church of God since the death of Mr. Armstrong. One of those, Mr. Paul Kearns, was not even born until after Mr. Armstrong's death, and he now serves full-time in the ministry!

Psalm 133:1 tells us, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" This is a fitting description of what we encountered in our travels among God's people, and I trust you found the same to be true wherever you traveled over the Festival period. But this is not the world to which we've returned. At the time of this writing, Australia is spending more than \$95 million (in U.S. dollars) on a non-binding referendum in an attempt to trivialize and pervert the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. We heard numerous reports from our members of intimidation to cast a "yes" opinion for same-sex marriage.

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Some businesses display “yes” posters and make it clear that they expect their employees to fall in line. Government buildings, which one would expect to be neutral, display the rainbow flag, making it obvious which side they support. To be sure, there are vocal critics on the “no” side, but “yes” has the support of the media, academia, many businesses, most celebrities, and even the national football team.

Truly, this generation has no respect for God or His instructions found in the Bible. “There is no fear of God before his eyes” (Psalm 36:1); and “The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts” (Psalm 10:4). Even in the unlikely event that these misbegotten efforts fail, same-sex marriage will eventually prevail in Australia, just as it has in the other Israelite nations. It is only a matter of time. The god of this world and his invisible spirit influence will make sure of that! Is it any wonder that parts of Australia are in severe drought, and some farmers, seeing no hope for the future, have committed suicide?

And in California, Governor Jerry Brown recently signed into law a bill allowing people who consider themselves as transgender to identify as having a “non-binary” gender on state identification documents such as driver licenses. It might be a stretch to blame the fires that have destroyed 6,000 homes and killed nearly 50 people on a single piece of legislation, but it is evident God is withdrawing His blessings from the “Golden State” and from the Israelite nations as a whole for disregarding His ways.

Many members of the Church sense that time is closing in on us and that real persecution is just around the corner. We are losing our freedom of speech, which is so essential to the preaching of the true Gospel and proclaiming the Ezekiel warning. A cadre of people—small, percentage-wise, but very vocal—have taken over our governments, educational institutions and the media as a whole, and people who lack a godly moral foundation are going right along with it. So, while the Feast of Tabernacles was an oasis of peace, love and harmony, we must not be lulled into a lukewarm Laodicean attitude. We may be surprised. It may take longer than we expect before man’s Babylonish system comes crashing down, but collapse *is* on the way.

Then, the reality pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles will be here. At that time, all nations will be commanded to come up (i.e., send representatives) to Jerusalem to learn of God’s master plan. It is evident from Zechariah 14:16–19 that Jesus Christ will accept no excuses for failing to do so. This should be a lesson for all of us that we must take these holy convocations seriously and prepare each year to observe them. I hope all of you will be doing so. We have the better part of six months from the Feast of Tabernacles until Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread to ensure time off from work.

The First Day of Unleavened Bread 2018 falls on a weekly Sabbath, so most who work daylight hours have to take off only the last Day of Unleavened Bread, which falls on a Friday. You should have plenty of time to work out arrangements to have that day off. The Festivals that fall later in the year will require more time off, but most members have little trouble arranging that, if they plan early and work with their employers. It should go without saying that the better employee you are year round, the more inclined your employer will be to meet your needs. And the same may be said for students who must miss classes. We know that there are exceptions, but most employees and students will do just fine with a bit of hard work and planning.

Another way to prepare for the Festivals and Holy Days is by preparing according to God’s financial instructions. Deuteronomy 14:22–26 explains how each of us are to set aside a tithe for these special days. (See Mr. Dexter Wakefield’s article in this issue for more on this topic.) This is a well-ingrained habit for most members, but there are those who think they have a better way. Some wait until the Feast and use their last paycheck. Others go to the Feast on credit cards that they know will take months to pay off. Others try to save a Festival tithe, but end up “borrowing” from it for various emergencies. This should not be the case.

Brethren, we understand that many struggle financially, but as one minister put it, “How can you be blessed if you are under a curse?” For the scripture asks and explains: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what

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

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**Postmaster: Send address changes to**

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

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# EDITORIAL

By Gerald Weston

## The Way of Cain

Observing one's first Feast of Tabernacles is a memorable experience for those of us who did not grow up keeping it. I have more memories of my first Feast than I should take the space to relate in this Editorial, but I want to share one with you. It involves a sermon by a senior minister, an evangelist in the Church of God at that time. I do not remember whether he had a title for the sermon, and if he did, I cannot remember what it was, as that was more than half a century ago. But if I were to put a title on it, it would be, "The Way of Cain."

There was quite a buzz among the members following that sermon, but I found it a bit intellectual and obscure, a little over my head. I had only attended one weekly Sabbath service and the Day of Atonement prior to leaving for the Feast. The truth is that I understand it better today from the strands I remember than the day I heard it. The primary verse he used relating to Cain was Jude 11: "Woe to them! For they have gone **in the way of Cain**, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah." So what is that "way of Cain" that he expounded upon?

Cain is best known as the first murderer, the one who killed his brother, but what else do people know about him? And what do they know about his "way"? Few, even in the Church, had ever thought about this, and that is why the sermon had such an impact. It gave new knowledge. It was a revelation to most everyone.

The first-century historian, Josephus, was referred to in order to shed some light on the subject: "But Cain was not only very wicked in other respects, but was wholly intent upon getting, and he first contrived to plough the ground.... Now Cain brought the fruits of the earth, and of his husbandry; but Abel brought milk, and the first-fruits of his flocks; but God was more delighted with the latter oblation when he was honoured with what grew naturally of its own accord, than he was with what was the invention of a covetous man, and gotten by forcing the ground..." (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 2, p. 1).

How much Josephus can be relied upon regarding Cain, or any other subject, is certainly a question. The remainder of the Bible does not indicate any sin in ploughing the ground (1 Kings 19:19; Luke 9:62; 17:7). However, most agriculture today in the advanced

nations involves "forcing the ground" through chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and other means. It is difficult to know exactly *how* Cain was forcing the ground at that time, if indeed he was, and this was the part of the sermon that I found difficult to understand. Nevertheless, it is evident that Cain based his life on the get principle, and Josephus is no doubt correct when he says Cain "was wholly intent upon getting...."

### God's Question to Cain

Cain's life was marked by the get way. Even apart from Josephus, we discern this was his problem from the few Bible verses devoted to him. The account in Genesis 4 gives no hint of regret on Cain's part, only self-absorbed pity for the punishment imposed on him for murdering Abel. There is no indication that he understood the magnitude of his sin. He appears without a conscience. "My punishment is greater than I can bear!" (Genesis 4:13). We learn from 1 John 2:11, "But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." Cain was blinded by his jealousy and hatred toward his brother Abel.

Mr. Lambert Greer gave an insightful sermon on Cain's response to God's question, "Where is your brother?"—to which Cain replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Mr. Greer pointed out how this is one of the *central questions* posed by the Bible. Are you concerned for the well-being of others? Do you have genuine, heartfelt and outgoing concern for those around you? Yes, *are you* your brother's keeper? The answer to this question reveals your heart to God, and whether or not He will take you into His kingdom.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong presented the question to prominent and well-known leaders around the world in similar terms. He recognized the challenges facing these men and women and gave them a small part of the Gospel in terms that were neither overtly offensive nor difficult to understand. He explained that there are two ways of life: the get way and the give way. The first way is expressed through selfishness. It is self-centered, concerned only for "number one." The other way is expressed by outgoing concern, caring for the well-being of others. Mr. Armstrong may have never mentioned Cain specifically, but he understood Cain's

problem and he couched all the world's ills in these terms. He understood the choice each person eventually has to make: "Will I be a giver or a taker?"

Sadly, most leaders choose the way of get over the way of give. George Mason University professor Walter Williams explained the problem with politicians in words similar to this: "The way you get elected today is to promise to take by the force of law what belongs to one person and give what he has earned to others who have not earned it." Or to put it another way, as Henry Hazlitt suggests in *Economics in One Lesson*, two people work together to decide what someone *else* should do for society with that person's own resources. It is easy to live the give way when you are giving *someone else's* money!

A Pharisaic lawyer came to Jesus on one occasion with a question designed to trap Him: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus demonstrated not only that He knew the law, but also that He understood the magnitude of the question. "Jesus said unto him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:36–40).

### What Is Love?

Few people truly understand love. They equate it with an emotion, how someone makes them feel. One of the great lessons given to Ambassador College students was the true meaning of love, that it is outgoing concern for others. Sadly, some never internalized that lesson. In truth, it is a difficult lesson to learn. We all think we have it, but it goes against our nature, and Jeremiah 17:9 is perfect in its description of our nature: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Yes, who can know it? How many of our actions each day are based on outgoing concern? How many are based on exalting the self?

Learning to love God and to love those around us is something God is etching into our character one decision at a time—accomplished by Christ's living in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He educates our conscience to recognize the choices between give and take. His Spirit leads and urges us to show outgoing concern, but we must still exercise the will to do the right thing.

Real love is not simply an emotion. Emotion may accompany love, but it is not the same as love. We know that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). He cares for us. He wants the best for us. He hopes the best for us. And the greatest proof of that love is

found in the sacrifice of His Son so that our selfish thoughts and actions may be forgiven (John 3:16). This is the attitude He is forming in spiritual concrete for those who will become His children (Galatians 2:20).

As Mr. Greer pointed out in his sermon, the entire Bible is here to teach this lesson. Adam and Eve chose the get way when they took and ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. They disrespected their Creator and chose rather to please themselves. Cain chose a self-centered way to live. Saul craved the praise of the people more than obedience to God. It was a short-sighted decision.

One of the greatest examples of choosing poorly is that of

Esau. He sold his birthright to satisfy a temporary craving. He reasoned, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" (Genesis 25:32, *ESV*). But scripture shows that he was not truly about to die. "And Jacob

gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright" (v. 34). All he could think about was the here and now, how he could satisfy his temporal appetite. There was no long-range thought about how that decision would affect his future family. The Apostle Paul tells us Esau was a fornicator and profane, indicating a self-centered way of life (Hebrews 12:16).

Esau's brother Jacob learned the hard way that selfish ambition has a painful price. How interesting it is to read the story of his life and realize that just as he tricked his father, so his uncle Laban tricked and deceived him at every turn (Genesis 29:23–25; 31:38–42).

Even King David, a man after God's own heart, made a very selfish decision when he murdered another man and took his wife, and afterwards his life was never the same (2 Samuel 12:9–12). We see in the chapters that follow this sordid affair that all the curses Nathan pronounced on David came to pass. The child of his adultery with Bathsheba died, his daughter Tamar was raped by her half-brother, and, as a result, there was animosity between two of his sons that led to the death of one by the other. He even had to flee for his life when Absalom conspired against him.

My dear brethren, this lesson must be more than an academic exercise. God is molding and shaping our minds to act as He would act, but we must be participants in the process. We often refer to 1 Corinthians 13 as the love chapter, and indeed it is. When was the last time you truly meditated on what it says? How long-suffering are you? Have you grown in patience toward those closest to you, such as your wife or husband? What about as you drive to work? Are you a self-centered driver? Or do you consider the needs of others when two roads merge?

Mr. Armstrong understood the choice  
each person has to eventually make:  
"Will I be a giver or a taker?"



How kind are you? We all think we are kind, but are we? Are we always concerned about “getting ahead” of the other person? Are we more concerned about our personal ambitions than how we can help others move up the ladder? Imagine how God’s Church would grow if we all strove to grow according to this chapter written to the Corinthians.

### **Givers, Takers, and Matchers**

In a Wharton University podcast interview with Adam Grant, he was asked about the premise of his book, *Give and Take*. He explained that people can be divided into two opposites: those who are all out for themselves and those

When was the last time you truly meditated on 1 Corinthians 13? How long-suffering are you? Have you grown in patience toward those closest to you, such as your wife or husband? What about as you drive to work? **Are you a self-centered driver? Or do you consider the needs of others when two roads merge?**

who try to help others get ahead. He explained this about takers: “The takers are people who, when they walk into an interaction with another person, are trying to get as much as possible from that person and contribute as little as they can in return, thinking that’s the shortest and most direct path to achieving their own goals” (“Givers vs. Takers: The Surprising Truth about Who Gets Ahead.” Interview. Audio blog post. *Knowledge@Wharton*. Wharton University of Pennsylvania, 10 Apr. 2013. Web).

Mr. Grant then went on to explain the other extreme, the givers: “At the other end of the spectrum, we have this strange breed of people that I call ‘givers.’ It’s not about donating money or volunteering necessarily, but looking to help others by making an introduction, giving advice, providing mentoring or sharing knowledge, without any strings attached.”

But then he goes on to explain a third group, and this in many ways is the most interesting, because many—even in the Church—fall into it: “Very few of us are purely takers or purely givers. Most of us hover somewhere in between. That brings us to the third group of people, who are matchers. A matcher is somebody who tries to maintain an even balance of give and take. If I help you, I expect you to help me in return. [They] keep score of exchanges, so that everything is fair and really just.” And for the record, Mr. Grant points out that it is the givers who go the furthest in business.

Matchers may on the surface appear godly, but are they? Are they not rather takers in disguise? “I’ll give to you as

long as you give to me.” This is the nexus of many problems in marriage. Matchers believe that marriage is a 50/50 relationship. “I’ll meet you half way.” Or to put it more realistically, “If you were more (fill in the blank), I would be more (fill in the blank).” But this is NOT God’s way. God’s way is for each to fulfill his or her part without regard to how well the other is fulfilling his or her part. Wives are told to respect their husbands and husbands are told to love their wives. Each is to fulfill his or her role, not meet the other half way.

So how well are you doing? Can you read and meditate on each point of love found in 1 Corinthians 13 and say that you are more Christ-like? This must be more than an academic exercise. It is easy to read articles, listen to sermons, even read the Bible, but still never change. Where are all those people who sat and listened to the same sermon I did in the 1964 Feast of Tabernacles in Squaw Valley? What happened to them? What about all the ones who heard Mr. Herbert Armstrong explain the ways of give and get and the two trees? How many times he thundered out, “Most of you don’t get it!” Where are they today? We all thought we “got it,” but apparently not!

We live in a very self-promoting world. It may sound good on the surface, but is it? Is it God’s way or man’s way? We hear about self-esteem, self-love, self-actualization, self-fulfillment, and self-help. Is this latter day “self-love-athon” not what Paul warns us about and condemns?

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts (2 Timothy 3:1–6).

God is building a family and it is going to be a happy, harmonious family. He points us in the direction we should go. “A new commandment I give to you, that you 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). (L)



# God's Tithes Are Holy

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By **Dexter Wakefield**

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**W**hen you hear the word “holy,” what do you think of? The commentaries have a lot to say about the subject, but a good working definition of when something is “holy” has three elements: When something is (1) set apart (2) by God (3) for His special purpose. For instance, we think of ancient Israel’s priests as dealing very carefully with holy things, such as their vestments, bowls and sacrifices, in order to avoid profaning them by improper use. God gave them procedures for handling these articles, and the priests followed those procedures carefully.

The New Testament writers frequently mentioned holiness as well. They understood that God is serious about holiness and that His Church must take it seriously. Sometimes, however, we may not remember that God gives *spiritual* Israel some holy things to *keep* holy and to do so by proper use. We must not profane holy things by improper use.

*Like what?*

## **Set Apart by God for His Purposes**

For instance, the holy time of the Sabbath is one thing we must keep holy. Working on the Sabbath day profanes something that God has set apart as holy. He gave us the command, “Remember the Sabbath day, to *keep it holy*” (Exodus 20:8), and “There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9, *NIV*). The Sabbath is as holy today as it always was. Also, the name of God is holy, and we are not to profane it by taking it in vain. God said, “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain” (Exodus 20:7), and “You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel” (Leviticus 22:32). These holy things are so important that two of the Ten Commandments concern God’s holy time and His holy name.

In addition, the Church of God is comprised of holy people, and we must not profane ourselves with sin. The Days of Unleavened Bread are an annual reminder. The Apostle Peter reminded the churches about this when he quoted Leviticus 11:44–45: “...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am

holy’” (1 Peter 1:15–16). Church members should always be aware of these holy things.

However, there is another holy thing that we may not remember as being holy, and as a result, risk profaning it. *It is set apart by God for His special purpose.*

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’s. **It is holy to the LORD.** If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, **the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD.** He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for **it shall be holy**; it shall not be redeemed (Leviticus 27:30–33).

God’s tithes are holy. They are *set apart by God for specific purposes*, and *we are to use them in a prescribed manner*. The tithe is the Lord’s—not ours. Malachi 3:8 teaches us, “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.” If we spend it for our personal uses, we are *taking something that is God’s, and we are profaning what is holy.*

This article is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the tithing laws, but rather, it is intended to be a reminder of the *sanctified nature of the tithes.*

## **The Tithes**

So, in the New Testament, what are the purposes for which God uses His tithes? The Apostle Paul instructed the Church that we are the temple of God, and our tithes continue to be set apart by God for His purposes. “Do you not know that those who minister the **holy things** eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:13–14). God’s ministry is to use the tithe for its support and to do the Work.

Let’s look briefly at the set-apart use of the Festival Tithe or second tithe. “You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. And you shall eat

before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always” (Deuteronomy 14:22–23).

Verses 26–27 give its specified purpose. “And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and **you shall rejoice**, you and your household. You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.” What a pleasant command!

All the tithes are God’s, and all are holy to Him for a purpose. We give God a first tithe for His use, and *He gives us an equal amount* of His tithes so that we can obey Him and rejoice at His Feasts—especially the Feast of Tabernacles. The Festival Tithe is **set apart by God** for that purpose.

When Christ comes in glory, He will initiate the reign of the Kingdom of God, the first 1,000 years of which are pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles. That will be a time of great rejoicing! We should remember that very special picture as we save our second tithe. Our rejoicing at the Feast pictures the far greater joy that the resurrected saints will have in God’s Kingdom. Have you considered that using the second tithe for a purpose other than for what God has specified for it profanes a holy thing?

Saving our second tithe faithfully and taking it to the Feast pictures our storing of treasure in heaven, which Christ brings at His coming. Christ said, “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (Revelation 22:12). For those called by the Father (John 6:44), receiving eternal life in the Kingdom of God is an unearned gift that we receive through living faith in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:8–9). What we *do* in the Kingdom, however, is by reward according to our works (Matthew 16:26–27).

God commands us to attend His Feasts and to *rejoice*—and He does not command us to do something without making it possible. When we set aside our Festival Tithe, God is providing us with the means to *obey* His command to attend and rejoice. This instruction is there for our good, and a command to rejoice is certainly a pleasant obligation. But if someone fails to set aside this tithe or spends it for something other than God’s Feasts, he or she is profaning something that has been **set apart by God** for *His special purpose*—the purpose of fulfilling His command.

### The Third-Year Tithe

In the third and sixth years of a seven-year cycle, God sets apart a different tithe for a special charitable purpose: providing for the needs of widows, the fatherless, and others. The term “third tithe” is often used, but some outside the Church have misrep-

resented that term to mean “triple tithing,” which of course isn’t true. That term can be problematic, because, for instance, we *keep* the second tithe for our use at God’s Feasts, and this additional tithe is only set aside two years out of every seven. “Third-year tithe” is more descriptive. Here are some instructions for the use of the *third-year tithe*.

When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year—the year of tithing—and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, then you shall say before the LORD your God: “I have removed **the holy tithe** from my house, [for what purpose?] and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them” (Deuteronomy 26:12–13).

Verse 14 lists some ways that a person in ancient Israel could profane this tithe. “I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed any of it for an unclean use, nor given any of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me.” In the Church today, we also can profane it by not setting the tithe aside or by improper use of it. Of course, the special tithe of the third year is *for* the poor, not *from* the poor. If anyone believes that the latter circumstance applies to them and that paying this tithe would be inappropriate—that they are among those in *need* of support, not those who can provide it—then his or her local minister can help with counsel.

### A Special Blessing

Verse 15 gives us a request we should make of God at the end of the third year: “Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’” This request can be for a blessing for God’s Church—which is spiritual Israel—and for you personally as part of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).

When you finish your third year, and you have kept and used God’s tithes faithfully, be sure to request that blessing.

We should not lose sight of the fact that God’s tithes are holy, and God set them apart for a divine purpose. Like any holy thing, misusing them profanes what God has declared to be holy. Let us remember to faithfully handle God’s holy tithes in the way He commands.

If you have questions about the principles behind tithing, consider reviewing the booklet *God’s People Tithe!*—available in your local congregational library, on our [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org) website, or in print. (L)



# A Mocker and a Brawler



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By **J. Davy Crockett, III**

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**T**he old Victory Hotel had seen better days. In fact, at that time, some 40 years ago, it was an abandoned building, shuttered and boarded up, though it was only a stone's throw from the main railway station in the city. Passenger trains were no longer in vogue, and this area had become a pocket of decay in the community.

No one knows how the fire started on that bitterly cold, windy night, but flames quickly engulfed the old building. The firefighters used their resources to prevent the fire from spreading to nearby structures, with little thought of saving the building where the blaze started. By morning the building was a pile of smoldering, charred rubble as the exhausted firefighters continued to put water on hot spots in the ruins.

As this scene unfolded, bystanders were startled by a rustling of charred materials and smoking debris as a man pushed his way upward out of the blackened heap. It was a struggle, but he made it to the surface. Apparently, this person was well known as a local alcoholic, a “wino” if you will, who had wandered down into the bowels of the old building seeking shelter from the cold. Somehow, he had survived the inferno that had occurred above him, as well as the deluge of water poured on the fire.

Those on the scene watched in amazement as this person got to the surface and unsteadily made his way out of the rubble into the street, covered from head to toe with black soot. He looked around at all the bystanders for a moment and then turned away from them, heading unsteadily down the street, exclaiming, “What I need is a drink!”

## **A Dark Irony**

While this story has a touch of irony and dark humor, it is a stark reminder of the ravages of the wrong use of alcohol as a beverage. The number of people who abuse alcohol is astounding, and growing—especially as we see economic conditions deteriorate, prompting many to seek escape in a bottle. The fallout from the abuse of this legal substance touches far too many homes, resulting in domestic chaos, which is devastating to spouses and children. It seems that many of the problems with violence in the workplace, financial troubles and other serious difficulties are directly related to the intemperate use of alcohol. Serious automobile accidents are often the result of “driving while impaired,” and many states have tightened their standards on the blood alcohol level that is considered “intoxicated.”

Because of these horrendous problems, many people, especially those with religious beliefs, strongly urge total abstinence instead of responsible use of alcohol. In 1920, the United States even outlawed beverage alcohol with the 18th amendment to the Constitution. However, making alcohol illegal did not solve the problems. Instead, it actually added to the chaos by creating a climate in which there was a market for “bootlegging” or illegal alcohol trafficking. This provided an opportunity for organized crime to flourish, and Prohibition was repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933.

Today, alcohol consumption is growing, as Americans have developed a taste and appreciation for wines. Beer is a perennial favorite, with a huge variety of domestic and imported beers purveyed by giant brewers. In addition, there is a very popular trend for local micro-breweries or “brew pubs.” Distilleries are not to be left out of the picture, and a wide array of “hard liquors,” domestic and imported, are available.



An incredible amount of money goes into advertising alcoholic beverages, with messages that are cleverly designed to give the impression that the only way to have a really good time is to imbibe of one's drink of choice.

Sporting events, particularly the major-league sports, which attract huge crowds at ballparks and stadiums, plus television audiences with multiple millions of viewers, seem to provide a huge supply of thirsty fans. As long as moderation is used, there is nothing inherently wrong with enjoying a drink with the game. However, there is a tendency to over-indulge as the game wears on. How often do we see riotous activity after a big win or a disappointing loss at some great sporting event? Sadly, it happens much too often.

### What Does The Bible Say?

The Bible has much to say about the use of alcohol, both the positive aspects and the potential pitfalls. For example, this plain warning is found in the Book of Wisdom, Proverbs: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). Then there is this graphic description of the result of abusing intoxicating drink:

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions?  
Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause?  
Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: "They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?" (Proverbs 23:29-35).

This brings to mind the survivor of the destruction of Victory Hotel! It is an extreme example, but it illustrates the point that the abuse of alcohol can cause aberrant, potentially destructive behavior. We see the results all about us in society today.

A particularly sobering admonition for leaders and those in positions of responsibility is found in Proverbs. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted" (Proverbs 31:4-5).

In the Old Testament, there were specific instructions for the Levitical priesthood regarding the use of alcohol. Aaron was the high priest and he received this instruction: "Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: 'Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a

statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses'" (Leviticus 10:8-11). It's obvious that when critical thinking is required, spiritual duties are to be performed or important decisions are to be made, abstinence from alcohol is advised.

God obviously takes this instruction seriously, as we see in the surprising account of the carelessness of Aaron's sons that cost them their lives. "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, 'This is what the LORD spoke, saying: "By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified."' So Aaron held his peace" (Leviticus 10:1-3). While alcohol is not specifically mentioned in this account, it is tempting to draw the conclusion that Nadab and Abihu's judgment may have been impaired due to "intoxicating drink," given that immediately after the incident, God begins instructing the priesthood on this very topic (Leviticus 10:8-11).

The New Testament also gives very plain instruction on the use of alcohol. The Apostle Paul, when explaining how to deal with those who thought eating meat was wrong, finished his instruction with these words: "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak" (Romans 14:21). His point was that we should be considerate of other peoples' levels of understanding, so as to avoid giving offense.

In his letter to the Church of God in Ephesus, Paul gave this clear instruction: "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:17-21). Elders and deacons were admonished to "not be given to wine" (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7).

Paul had more to say on the subject of abusing alcohol when, in his letter to the Church in Corinth, he wrote, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, **nor drunkards**, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

## Not Inherently Wrong

As we read these rather stern, sobering instructions, we might conclude that all use of alcohol is wrong, but that would be incorrect. In fact, the very first recorded miracle that Jesus Christ performed was at a large wedding in Cana, a village in Galilee, a few miles northeast of Nazareth, when—at His mother's request—He made at least 120 gallons of good wine. The Apostle John recorded the details of this miracle.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of

Like so many of the blessings that God gives us, the proper use of wine and strong drink requires self-control and a conscious effort to use it as God intended, **in moderation and in the proper setting.**

the feast." And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him (John 2:1-11).

Jesus, our perfect example, would not have transformed the water into wine if it would be wrong to drink it.

Very importantly, on the night that Jesus Christ was betrayed, wine was served at the Passover meal that Christ ate with His disciples, during which He used it as a poignant symbol of His blood that was to be shed for the sins of mankind (Luke 22:14-22).

Paul instructed young Timothy, encouraging a proper use of wine, writing, "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23). Jesus indicated that He looked forward to sharing a glass of wine with His disciple in the future when His Kingdom will be set up on the earth. Matthew recorded it

this way, "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

## A Matter of Self-control and Moderation

Like so many of the blessings that God gives us, the proper use of wine and strong drink requires self-control and a conscious effort to use it as God intended, in moderation and in the proper setting. For example, in instructing His people on how to use the Festival tithe, the use of alcohol as a blessing was mentioned, "And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household" (Deuteronomy 14:26).

Some may choose, for personal reasons, to refrain from any use of alcohol except for the Passover service. Certainly, that is their prerogative and should not be a cause for concern or comment by others.

In gatherings of friends, family and fellow Church members, whatever the occasion, alcohol should not become the centerpiece or be allowed to become the dominant factor in having a good time. It has been my observation over a period of many years that when the use of wine, beer, etc. revolves around mealtime, it is very seldom a problem. If the wine or other drink is considered a part of enjoying the meal, abuse does not come into play. For example, a glass of champagne in celebration of some special event adds to the festivity and enjoyment of the occasion. This approach seems to be borne out in cultures that use wine as food and as part of a meal. Problems more often arise when "recreational drinking" occurs, resulting in intoxication.

As usual, the Apostle Paul "nailed it" when he instructed the Philippian Church, "Let your **moderation** be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5, *KJV*). If we are to please God in all that we do, then practicing moderation in food, drink and all our activities is a key.

The instruction to the Church of God is clear: "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). This certainly includes the abuse of or the wrong use of something like alcohol, which God intended as a blessing. As Christians, our example within the Church and to those outside our fellowship is very important, for we are to be a "light to the world."

In all that we do, including our use of alcohol, let's be careful to do it according to Biblical instructions and guidelines, realizing that wine can be "a mocker" and strong drink "a brawler," and never let the use of alcohol cause us to be "led astray." (LN)



# Teen Camp *Moves to Texas*

By **Sheldon Monson**

**A**fter six wonderful, exciting and challenging summers at Camp Lazarus Boy Scout camp in Delaware, Ohio, the Living Youth Programs' U.S. Teen Camp has relocated to a new facility. Our new site, Lone Star Camp, is located approximately seven miles from Athens, Texas, and is just about an hour and fifteen minutes southeast of Dallas. Owned by the Southwest Regional Conference of Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), this marvelous 278-acre property is located in the beautiful pinewoods of East Texas and contains a twenty-five acre lake at its heart.

## **The Old**

The move to a new facility was necessary for two main reasons: (1) to secure better camp dates and (2) to accommodate the escalating numbers of campers and staff applying to attend camp. These are not the only reasons for the move, but they were the primary ones.

Because an increasing number of schools throughout the country began scheduling fall classes to begin in the first two weeks of August, earlier camp dates needed to be secured. When we were unable to obtain dates in late June or in the month of July at the facility in Ohio, we began looking for an alternate location.

It was also evident that we were outgrowing the Boy Scout campground in Ohio. Even though, during our time there, we purchased ten small cabins for staff housing and six larger buildings for dormitories, we were still bursting at the seams! The dining hall was overcrowded, and so was the main lodge we used for Sabbath services, Christian Living classes, morning

motivation and evening reflection, camp dances, and more. The lack of an adequate number of showers was also a problem—leading to long lines, a lack of hot water, and an enormous waste of time. Camp Lazarus served us well before camp attendance exceeded 250 people, but our numbers have long since passed that mark and have continued to climb. In fact, in the previous two years, attendance in Ohio grew past 300, then past 325. Looking back, it is difficult to see how we all managed to fit.

## **The New**

After spending considerable time searching for potential sites, looking at a number of camps in several locations across the nation and comparing them with Lone Star Camp, it was decided that the Texas location had the potential to become our new camp home. This property had many advantages including:

- An outdoor pavilion with room to seat up to 3,000—ideal for morning motivation, evening reflection, Christian Living classes, the Talent Show and much more
- Quality air-conditioned staff housing
- Twenty-five RV and travel trailer spaces with hook-ups that could be used to provide additional staff housing
- Four first-class air-conditioned dormitories capable of housing twenty-four campers each
- Several large outdoor grass athletic fields
- A spectacular **air-conditioned** gymnasium, complete with a dance studio, racquetball court, and two large classrooms

Even with all these wonderful amenities, the camp still lacked several important facilities, some of which were essential. First, it did not provide an adequate number of camper





dormitories, and therefore could not serve the campers' housing needs. Secondly, even though the dining hall was capable of seating 400 at one time, it was simply an outdoor pavilion with no walls. This would have meant hot and humid mealtimes in the hot Texas summer, with no way to keep out the bugs. This new potential camp also lacked certain non-essential facilities, such as an outdoor swimming pool in which to cool off and conduct swimming and water polo activities, nor did it have a storage building in which to house our equipment.

After several meetings and much negotiation, a decision was reached to make a deal. We would be responsible to build and pay for three duplexes (six dormitories with a capacity of 24 each), an outdoor swimming pool, and a metal storage building 20 feet wide and 40 feet deep. By making this initial investment into their property, we would immediately be helping with projects on their wish list—especially the swimming pool—creating a mutually beneficial opportunity. This would be a good deal for the Southwestern Regional Conference of SDAs, as these additions would improve their property, not only for their own use, but also to make it attractive to outside renters. Once we completed these projects, we would hand them the keys and they would own and maintain the entire property. In return, we would secure use of the entire camp facility for three weeks in July for the next *ten years*, at *no additional cost*. Also as part of the deal, they would agree to several improvements: Enclose and air-condition the dining hall; prepare and level the sites to be used for the new dormitories and bring power, water and sewer to each building; and make the necessary changes in the gymnasium to allow for two volleyball nets and two

basketball courts instead of just one, thereby doubling its use. Though the initial cost on our part would be substantial, when amortized over the ten-year period, it would end up being far less expensive than the normal costs of renting any comparable camp facility. All these terms were agreed to by both parties in a contract.

Some of the initial construction began last summer, starting with a metal storage building. It is now complete with lights and power, a finished and sealed concrete floor, reinforced steel construction, and rain-gutters and drains. Truckloads of fill-dirt and several inches of crushed rock were hauled in to complete the landscaping around this building.

Next, construction on the in-ground swimming pool began in the fall of 2016. The spacious structure, 10 meters wide and 25 meters long, was completed in late May of this year. It contains three pumps and filters and also contains three chillers to keep the pool cool in the summer. It was designed with a specific purpose in mind. If an individual pump, filter, or chiller fails, the others can sufficiently maintain the pool and keep it running, open, and usable. An impressive wood structure with a metal roof was also added to cover the pool equipment.

Finally, in December 2016 construction began on the dorms. These duplexes can house up to 144 campers. The dorms were operational by late May, as well. However, we are still putting a few finishing touches on them. Additional work is being done to tile the bathroom floors, stain the common area floors, install outdoor wooden decks, and extend the hot-water heater rooms. These projects will be completed during the off-season and, when finished, will fulfill our side of the bargain.

### How It Was All Possible

None of this would have happened without the dedicated love and very real, physical support of many in God's Church and some very special individuals. In helping with financing, creating contracts, doing the labor—it was clear that God was providing a way to help make this camp happen. Dozens volunteered, giving of their time and energy to help with the construction of these projects. An incredible amount of effort went into making this happen, for which we will be eternally grateful!



It has been refreshing to see how many have worked together to provide these outstanding facilities in which to conduct summer camp. Those who contributed with their time, energy, and resources did so because they value what is being done to provide opportunities for the youth to spend time together, have fun, learn, grow, and be uplifted in God's way. Rest assured, those of us involved in the Living Youth Programs are committed to make this camp the very finest of its kind anywhere on the planet! We have a duty to see to it that your efforts and contributions are fully appreciated and put to the best use.



### A Positive Start

Summer 2017 was our first session at this new camp. Camper and staff surveys indicated a very high approval rating for our new facility. Even though post-camp surveys showed that most who attended thoroughly enjoyed the new location, we also realize that there is still room for improvement. We plan to supply some of the labor (in the form of work parties) to remodel two of the staff dorms to bring them up to specifications. Plans are also being made to construct a new archery range.

With a summer behind us and lessons learned, we will also be making several changes in the overall camp schedule. Both soccer and Ultimate Frisbee will be moved to co-ed evening open activity spots, thereby reducing the number of field sports conducted during the heat of the day. Photography will be added as a new activity for both the boys' and girls' schedules. Leatherworking will continue to be offered for girls and will be added for boys. The skiing day will also be modified: On the day dorms have water skiing, they will also have use of the swimming pool. It will be a relaxing day at the pool when not skiing at the lake. Shade, cold drinks, snacks and games will also be available on those days. Regularly scheduled water polo classes will continue to be held at the pool during the off-days.

These are just some of the changes in store for 2018.

Although most campers thoroughly enjoyed their camp experience in 2017, improvements are already being made for the future. The post-camp surveys provided us with valuable input that will be used as we go forward. Every summer at the Teen Camp, we have the largest assembly of teenagers in God's Church in one place and one time! Camp is awesome! We hope to see you there next summer! (LN)





# *The Care of Our Young Flock*

**I**n August of 2015, my wife and I celebrated the birth of our fourth child, a healthy baby girl with bright eyes and a full head of curly brown hair. A new shade of God's color wheel soon took over the house, as pink bows and pink balloons welcomed her into our little family. Entering life with the reality of three big brothers, she would have quite the challenge keeping up with their action-packed, boisterous lifestyle. Yet, she has never skipped a beat, and has even managed to add her own flair and spicy personality along the way.

At the Feast of Tabernacles that year, like her brothers before her, she took part in the Blessing of the Little Children ceremony. This special tradition of the Church represents a formal request for God's unique blessing and protection over

tized members believe wholeheartedly in the existence of a supreme God and in His inspired Word, and have voluntarily entered into a binding covenant with their Creator. However, for the youth growing up in the Church, the fullness of that commitment is yet in their future. They are sanctified or set apart by God as holy to Him (1 Corinthians 7:14), and while God's Holy Spirit is certainly *with* them, His Spirit is not yet dwelling *in* them (cf. John 14:17). Therefore, in many ways these young people represent one of the greatest fields of "prospective members" the Church possesses, and they are deeply deserving of our consideration.

It can be tough to be a kid these days. The youth of the Church face incredible challenges in a society entrenched in lawlessness. They truly are "hard-pressed on every side," and have much to overcome, hence our real responsibility to care for and motivate this young flock. Satan, as a roaring lion, seeks whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8), often targeting those who are just beginning to commit themselves to God and His way of life. Nevertheless, under the direction of the Presiding Evangelist, Living Youth Programs

(LYP) maintains a concentrated and consistent effort by the Church to encourage young people to grow in their relationship with their Father in heaven. LYP endeavors to create an environment where young people can increase their biblical knowledge, build relationships with other youth, and connect to the idea that they, too, can have a place in the Body of Jesus Christ, with that same incredible potential to one day be full members of the God Family.

God's word is exciting, and we have the wonderful opportunity to share that excitement with young men and women poised to learn more about Him. They are not alone in their struggle against Satan and his devices. Parents work tirelessly to anchor their children in the faith, training them up in the way they should go from the very beginning. The Church dedicates considerable resources to programs focused on the instruction of God and His word. Together, as the Body, joined and knit together, let's strive to continue to inspire these youth, according to the example of our Shepherd, who feeds His flock and gathers the lambs with His arm, carrying them in His bosom (Isaiah 40:11).

Thank you for your prayerful support of these future members of the Body of Christ and God's Church!

—Jason C. Fritts

God's word is exciting, and we have the wonderful opportunity to share that excitement with **young men and women poised to learn more about Him.**

His little ones, through prayer and the laying on of hands by the ministry. As parents, we bring our children to God, dedicating them to their Creator and making a commitment before His throne to rear them according to God's way of life. In the book of Mark, Jesus Christ emphasizes this care and concern for the young potential members of His Family, saying, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.' And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:13–16). For more than twenty years, the Living Church of God has made significant efforts to build on that fundamental principle to serve God's youth and reinforce the biblical, godly values taught by parents at home.

## **Unique Challenges and a Unique Opportunity**

In the tragically misguided world of today, it's clear that baptized members of God's Church are a unique bunch. Many would say we worship God on the wrong day, or we keep strange Holy Days, or we have a funny diet. Yet a choice has been made to take this road less traveled, seeking to enter the Kingdom and Family of God by the narrow gate. Bap-



# One More Mile

By **Jake and Josie Monson**

*Siblings Jake and Josie Monson—ages 21 and 17, respectively, at the time of camp—wrote this article together about their experience at this year’s LYP Adventure Camp. Jake served on staff, while Josie went as a camper. We hope you will enjoy their thoughts and observations!*

—Editorial Staff

**T**his year, the Living Youth Programs Adventure Trip took place in the scenic environment of Washington’s impressive Mount Rainier. With its powder-white hat surrounded by cotton-candy clouds, the peak made for picturesque views and beautiful photos for the hikers. The glacial whitewater rapids were pristine for our rafting excursion, which followed the hike as part of the overall experience. The adventure trip of 2017 was unlike any other. We had fantastic weather and could not have been more blessed. The fields and hills beyond the trail were washed in sunlight every day, illuminating the wildflowers and western red cedars, and splashing them in vibrant colors.

But this trip was more than purely aesthetic. Its purpose was to help us become stronger in many facets of life. The overwhelming majority of the youth participating as hikers came from concrete jungles filled with the pressures of the world. Reconnecting with God’s stunning creation exposed the beauty of the world around us, which we tend to take for

granted. Being forced out of our shells, without the luxuries of life—such as air-conditioning, heating, electricity, mattresses, plumbing and (dare we say it?) cellphone reception and technology (*What?!?*). And yet, we still managed to prosper and made memories that will last a lifetime. It was just a tight-knit group of God’s people, strengthening and encouraging one another every step of the way.

As those who have been on “The Hike” before well know, the days can be long and sometimes quite grueling. When the stifling sun beats down and you’re sweating profusely, your feet are blistered, your body is sore, scraped and bruised, and you feel as though you can’t take another step, ask a trip leader, “*How much farther?*” and regardless of the real answer, you’re very likely to get the response, “*One more mile.*”

As youth in God’s Church, we had the amazing opportunity both to meet new people *and* strengthen existing ties to one another. Daily morning Bible Studies drew us closer to God and to each other in a way that only His word can. Being immersed in a setting of complete reverence to our Father in heaven helped us to understand Him and His plan, and allowed His Holy Spirit to work with us.

We could draw many parallels from the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of this phenomenal trip, but if we leave you with only one, remember this: Sometimes in life, you hit a bump in the road—maybe it’s a trial that seems like it will never end and that you can’t get through it. But remember, God NEVER tests us beyond what we are able, but always gives us a way come through (1 Corinthians 10:13). Sometimes, you just need to remind yourself that your journey isn’t over quite yet. You just need to make it “one more mile.” (LN)



*Please enjoy these photos from the Teen Camp in Texas, as well as the Adventure Camp pictures that follow!*









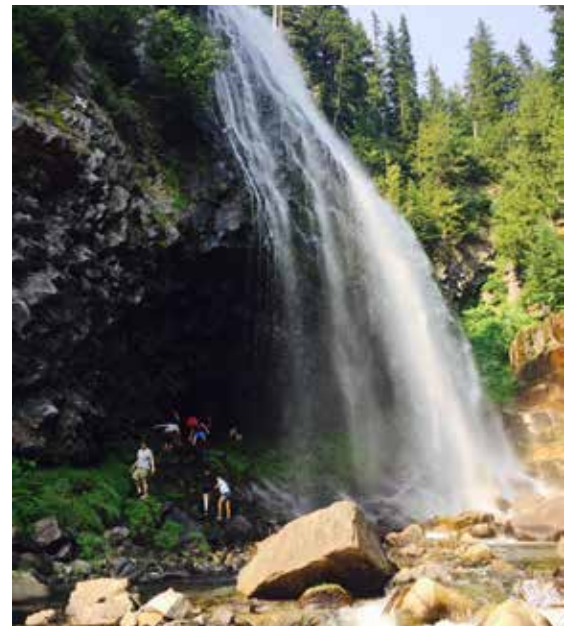








## Adventure Camp Mount Rainier





Jake Monson's sunset photo of a lake in Mt. Rainier National Park made him the boy winner of the Rainier Adventure Camp 2017 photo contest.

Chloe Ciesielka's beautiful photo overlooking the Mt. Rainier National Park made her the girl winner of the Rainier Adventure Camp 2017 photo contest.



#### AFTER THE FEAST continued from page 2

way have we robbed You?” And God’s answer? “In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation” (Malachi 3:8–9).

When God tells us to do something and we don’t do it, how can He then bless us? We have all learned from experience that it works out better when we obey God! Please examine yourself in this regard. Obey His commands and then claim His promises: “‘And try [KJV: prove] Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not

be room enough to receive it” (v. 10).

One has to wonder: How many more Feasts will there be before the seventh trumpet sounds and Christ returns? May we all prepare to rehearse God’s great plan of salvation for mankind next year and for as many years as need be until we are changed into spirit-born sons and daughters of God! May we all be busy, diligently fulfilling our calling!

*Josh E. Weston*



# Woman to Woman

## Women as Christian Soldiers

By **Faye League**

All women who have been called to know God's Truth have also been called to be Christian soldiers in this elite army of firstfruits. To be a Christian soldier requires us to seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness first, building holy righteous character as we win each victory over our enemies.

In the physical military (armed forces) in times past, it was usually the males who were drafted, recruited, or who volunteered to fight in wars. The women were to stay home and "keep the home fires burning," so to speak. However, while most of us ladies (being the gentle souls that we are) cannot even imagine ourselves in full battle gear on the front lines fighting in wars in mortal combat, it has become more popular and appealing to some women outside of the Church to be in full service in the military. Some are even deployed to dangerous war zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

So, with that introduction in mind, let us compare two types of soldiers—the military soldier and the Christian soldier—and learn what we can as women. We'll find that the spiritual role that the Christian soldier represents involves much more ongoing responsibility and is far more future-oriented.

Both types of soldiers have two main areas of common ground, but with crucial differences in purpose.

### 1) They both must go through a certain period of basic training.

Both soldiers are taught by seasoned officers, who have been through this training themselves and are very capable of teaching them to be fit soldiers, ready for service.

As we know, the basic training of a military soldier (male or female) consists of marching drills, long hikes in full military gear, fording streams and rivers with weapons held high, trench-digging, military maneuvers, vigorous exercise, mental conditioning and much, much more. At the completion of this training, it is evident to all that a definite change has taken place and that the soldier is qualified for the tasks ahead.

The Christian soldiers' basic training is taught by God's true ministers. They teach us how to live by God's word—His law, with all of its precepts, concepts, and principles—as well as how to overcome our enemies—the Satanic evil forces of this world and our own human natures. They begin with the milk of the word. "For everyone who partakes only of

milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:13-14). And as we grow toward maturity, we are taking on the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). By taking on the mind of Christ, we learn to do the Father's will. "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8). As women who are Christian soldiers, we are learning a new way of life—thus becoming a new creation, a different individual being trained to be fit for service in God's elite army of firstfruits. It should be evident to all that a definite change is taking place, as we who have God's Spirit increasingly bear its fruit.

It is incumbent upon us as women Christian soldiers to always follow the example of those who teach and train us. "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct" (Hebrews 13:7).

### 2) Both types of soldiers must stay the course.

There are certain term limits that a military soldier may choose, but to be a Christian soldier is a *lifetime commitment*. During the terms of service, etc., military *and* Christian soldiers will find it necessary to make difficult decisions for purposes of bringing about the right results. These may include standing fast, moving forward in the right direction, overcoming doubts and fears, or enduring hardship in order to stay the course. Making the right decisions leads to success—which, of course, we all desire.

For an example, consider a lesson from the past. In Judges 4:1-3 we read, "When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel."

The account continues: "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. Then she sent and

called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, ‘Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, “Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?”’ And Barak said to her, ‘If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!’” (vv. 4–8).

Then Deborah *stood fast* and spoke firmly, yet in a chiding manner to Barak, as any loving mother would to her own son whom she wants to see succeed in God’s will and way of life. “So she said, ‘I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will

Deborah the prophetess was not only used by God as a wise and kind judge but as a helper of Barak’s faith, and **she was instrumental in the deliverance of Israel from the oppression of King Jabin of Canaan.**

be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.’ Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh” (Judges 4:9).

After both armies had gathered together for battle—Sisera and his troops at the River Kishon, and Barak and his troops at Mount Tabor—Deborah again *stood fast* and urged and encouraged Barak to do God’s will, for the battle was his to win. “Then Deborah said to Barak, ‘Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?’ So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him” (Judges 4:14).

Then, with God’s power, guidance and direction, they were victorious in their pursuits, and eventually, with Israel growing stronger and stronger, they completely destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan, and the land had peace. Both Deborah and Barak received honor and gave God the credit for the victory in the “Song of Deborah,” singing joyously of their exploits. Barak is also honored by being mentioned in Hebrews 11:32, along with the other renowned men and women of faith.

Deborah the prophetess was not only used by God as a wise and kind judge but as a helper of Barak’s faith, and she was instrumental in the deliverance of Israel from the oppression of King Jabin of Canaan. “Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel” (Judges 5:7). Apparently, Deborah was a very strong mother figure to Israel as well.

So by inculcating these two ideas in our endeavors as Christian soldiers—going through basic training and staying the course—we will move forward, ever closer to our goal of God’s Kingdom and His righteousness.

### The Blessing of Putting Your Family First

Another example which I would like to relate actually had its beginning in the early 1970s. A young couple who attended Ambassador College—she from America, he from a neighboring country—were married shortly thereafter and moved to his home country to start their new life together. The husband obtained a high-salaried corporate job there and the wife also worked in the business sector for a while. Then, when she was expecting their first child, she chose to be a full-time homemaker and stay-at-home mom. In the area where they lived, the people were very steeped in the concept that women should be out in the workforce, whether it was necessary or not. That false idea seemed

ingrained in their minds, and the wife was amazed by the negative reaction she received from her co-workers, neighbors, some relatives and friends (the ridicule, barbs, insults and slurs). It was overwhelming at first. However, she relied on God and stood fast, holding her ground, not giving in to the pressure because she

knew that her choice was the right thing for her to do. She explained to them that she believed it would be counterproductive for her to attempt to accomplish both because one role or the other—full-time employee or mother—would suffer an injustice, and that her family was more important to her than a job. Then they were more accepting toward her decision.

This family was tremendously blessed over the years in many areas of their lives as they served God and were a fine example to everyone. The story continues with more blessings and joyous occasions. After this lady’s children were grown and gone from the home, she enrolled in nursing school and received a degree as a registered nurse. Nurses were in such high demand at that time that she was allowed to schedule her own hours for work and still have time for Church service, family and friends.

Her family was so very proud of her accomplishments over the years. “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her” (Proverbs 31:28).

No amount of money or job position can buy the joy and satisfaction that comes with *embracing the type of love and giving of yourself to others* that she chose, as we have the opportunity to do so. The lady and her husband are now retired, but are still productive.

As we continue in our journey as Christian soldiers, let us seek God’s will every day by putting our basic training into action and by continuing to stay the course on into God’s Kingdom, while growing in the righteous character of God. (LN)



## Births

Kevin and Beth Costello, of the Washington, D.C. congregation, are delighted to announce the birth of **James Edward Costello**, born February 6. He weighed 8 pounds 10 ounces, and was 21 inches long. Their first son, Ben, couldn't be happier to be a big brother.

Byron and Elizabeth Paegel, of the Calgary, Alberta, Canada congregation, are pleased to announce the birth of their second child, **Kenzie Jane Paegel**, on May 4. Kenzie weighed 7 pounds 8 ounces, and was 52 centimeters long. Older sister Vienna is also pleased to have a little sister.

Darryl and Elva Greene, of the Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada congregation are happy to announce the birth of their son, **Jeremiah Richard Greene**, on July 26, 2017. He weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces, and was 20 inches long. Big sister Alianna is devoted to her new brother.

## Weddings & Anniversaries

**Mr. and Mrs. Mark (Doreen) Reynard** celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on March 27. They have been blessed with three children and seven grandchildren, and all the family gathered, travelling from England and Ireland, to celebrate this milestone with them at their home in Yorkshire. The Pontefract congregation toasted them in a reception on April 1, where they were presented with a card signed by the entire congregation, a bouquet of flowers, and a bottle of wine. Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Reynard for this great milestone.

The Dallas, Texas, congregation celebrated the 70th wedding anniversary of **Don and Edith Mobley** during a

special after-services reception on August 26. Pastor Gary Stein read a beautiful tribute to their married life and the couple was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers and a framed photo collage of the members of the congregation. Mr. and Mrs. Mobley were married on November 8, 1947, and lived in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, for the first seven years of their married life. Then they moved to Dallas, where they still reside. They have been blessed with three sons, 12 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

**Simon Jackson and Valerie Berkes**, of the Joliet, Illinois, congregation, were united in marriage on July 30, as the highlight of an inspiring weekend retreat in picturesque Door County, Wisconsin. The ceremony conducted by Area Pastor Phil West.

**William and Kathy (Spade) Strine** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year on April 3, 2016, with a party hosted by their children. Mr. and Mrs. Strine were married on April 3, 1966, in West Salem, Illinois. They have lived their entire married life on the farm where Mr. Strine was raised in rural West Salem. They have three children, Thomas, Jannita and Terry. Mrs. Strine was baptized and became a member of God's Church in 1970 and now attends the Terre Haute, Indiana, congregation.

## ORDINATIONS

**Mr. Michael Johnson**, of the Midland, Texas congregation, was ordained an elder by Pastor Bob Rodzaj and Elder Larry Crooks on the Feast of Trumpets.

Clore conducted his memorial service and he was buried with military honors at Quantico National Cemetery.

**Sandra ("Sandy") Loving**, 69, of the Washington, D.C. congregation, died in her home on July 16 after battling illness for years. A short time prior to her death she experienced a divine healing of an infected sore on her heel. The doctor could not explain it. She was baptized in June 1972, and truly lived up to her name, "Loving." She was gentle, caring, and grateful, focused on God, her children, and praying for others. She had a successful career as Executive Coordinator at the U.S.

## In Loving Memory

**Mr. Donald Engle**, 91, of the Washington, D.C. congregation, died on September 24, 2015, after a long illness. He and his wife, Jenny, first heard Mr. Herbert Armstrong on the radio in 1949 and were baptized in 1971. An outstanding example of married love, they were inseparable as a team and were married for just a month and a half short of 73 years. Mr. Engle was a kind, giving, and true gentleman who served the congregation with evident pleasure in many ways. He is survived by his wife, a son, and two grandsons. Elder Raymond

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)).

Geological Survey. She was a painter early on and continued in the arts, often making gifts of handmade candles and knotted blankets, as well as sharing her poetry. Her customized electronic cards brought a smile to many. Mrs. Loving is survived by a daughter, son and daughter-in-law. Her funeral was July 23, conducted by Elder Raymond Clore.

**Mrs. Linda Stamm**, of the Hummelstown, Pennsylvania congregation, died June 12, 2016, at the age of 99 years, six months. She first heard Mr. Herbert Armstrong on his fifteen-minute radio shows and was baptized in 1959 during a visit from a baptizing tour from the Radio Church of God. She will be missed for her kind, humble spirit, and remembered for her uncompromising faithfulness to God and His way. Mrs. Stamm is survived by daughter Joan Zabel and two grandsons, who also attend the Hummelstown congregation, as well as by another daughter, three sons, 28 other grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren. Area Pastor Sheldon Monson conducted her funeral.

**Mr. John Smart**, a long-time member of the West Wales congregation, died suddenly on March 19, at his home in Cilgerran, on the Welsh Coast. He was 85. Mr. Smart was a staunch and faithful member, enthusiastic about the Work of the Church. He and his wife May were called into the Church in the mid-1970s. They were renowned for their hospitality, hosting services for the local congregation in their home. The eldest of nine siblings, Mr. Smart left school at 13 to help on the family farm after his father died, but he continued learning throughout his life and was both extremely knowledgeable and very capable. Mr. Smart was a native Welsh speaker, though he was also fluent in his second language, English, and he did some work translating from English into Welsh. He had an excellent singing voice, known to many because of special music given at U.K. Feast sites. Mr. Smart was humble, gentle, and friendly to everyone, a popular figure in his village, well known by most and highly respected and loved. Mr. John Meakin conducted his funeral, to which more than 300 people came to pay their respects, overflowing the chapel so that many had to stand outside to hear the service. Besides his wife, he is survived by their four sons, their wives, and grandchildren.

**Opal Mary (Baldwin) Staples**, age 79, of the Minneapolis, Minnesota congregation, died on March 6, 2016 at the Norwalk Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. She had been suffering from congestive heart failure and other illnesses for many years. Mrs. Staples was born in Nashua, Iowa on July 27, 1936. She was a long-time member of the

Church, baptized in 1973. She married Marshall L. Staples on September 11, 2005 and they made their home in New Hope (Minneapolis) until moving to Norwalk, Iowa, in 2015.

Her husband, **Marshall Leonard Staples**, of the Minneapolis, Minnesota congregation, died just under a year later, at 99, on January 30, 2017, in Norwalk. He was born in Portland, Oregon on June 8, 1917 and lived most of his life in New Hope (Minneapolis). He served in the Navy in a submarine during WWII. Baptized in 1957, Mr. Staples was a faithful dedicated member of God's Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Staples are survived by two stepdaughters from his first marriage, her three daughters and two sons from her first marriage, and their children's spouses and families—including grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Burial for both Mr. and Mrs. Staples was in the Iowa Veterans Cemetery in rural Van Meter, Iowa.

**Mr. Roy Monger**, of the Knoxville, Tennessee congregation, died on Friday, September 8, at the age of 91. He was a faithful member of God's Church for 47 years, and his service as a deacon and later as an elder was much appreciated. Mr. Monger was a WWII veteran. He is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Betty Monger, one son and one daughter and their spouses, two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Mr. Martin Fannin officiated at his funeral.

**Mr. Terry Graves** died peacefully on Sunday, September 10, at the age of 82. He will be remembered for his enthusiasm for his calling, his appreciation of the Church, and his love for the brethren. He dedicated his life to God for over 53 years, and was well and widely loved. His legacy continues through three generations of baptized family members, the Northwest U.S. congregations where he provided sound and strong leadership as an elder, and the brethren whose lives he touched. He was predeceased by his wife Sharon in 1999, and is survived by his daughter Carol (Gary) Pate, their three children, and other family members.

Perth elder **Malcolm Thomas Jennings** died after a three-year battle with cancer on June 30, 2017, at age 72. The funeral took place in Mandurah, Western Australia on July 5 and was conducted by the Adelaide Pastor, Mr. Michael Gill. He was ordained an elder by Messrs. Bruce Tyler and Dayrell Tanner in 2007 and, in 2008, moved with his wife, Judy, to Western Australia to pastor the Perth congregation. The passion and faith that he displayed right up to the end of his life is certainly a testimony to God's Truth, which he held onto faithfully through the years.



### 2017 LCG Upper Midwest Family Weekend

Congregations from Milwaukee, Chicago, Appleton, Joliet and Wisconsin Dells attended a fun-filled weekend at the YMCA Camp Wabansi, located on the shores of Green Bay, on the edge of Door County, Wisconsin. Activities got off to a great start Friday night with hot dogs roasted over an open fire and fellowshiping well into the evening. Saturday morning began with a hearty waffle breakfast, followed by a Sabbath service with messages concerning “Our Calling” and “Our Shared Dream,” highlighting our dream to one day partake of the “Tree of Life.” Following the service, a delectable covered dish lunch was provided before we all settled down for an afternoon Bible Study conducted by Mr. Phil West on the topic of “Avoiding Marriage Pitfalls.” After viewing a beautiful sunset over Green Bay, a campfire and sing-a-long concluded the evening.

Sunday morning, the children enjoyed archery lessons taught by an on-site instructor, while others prepared for what was to be the highlight of the weekend. At 11:00 on Sunday morning, everyone came together to witness a beautiful wedding of two of our own, followed by a lunch reception for the wedding couple. The final activities on Sunday afternoon were kayaking, swimming and paddle boating, while others fellowshiped along the beautiful Green Bay shoreline.

All in all, the weekend was a huge success and created memories of love, friendship and fellowship.

—Phil West



### Northeast Region Men's Leadership Weekend

More than 60 men traveled from across the United States to meet in New Hope, Pennsylvania, for the Northeast Region annual Men's Leadership Weekend. The theme this year was “Followership,” which Mr. Jonathan McNair introduced Friday evening. We looked at some troubling facts about men in today's world and the direction families are headed as a result. On Sabbath morning, we had Church services, with the sermonette given by guest speaker Michael DeSimone from North Carolina, followed by the sermon by Mr. Rick Stafford from Texas. The men then broke into four separate groups which rotated through four different discussion groups, each covering a different topic. Mr. McNair covered the impor-

tance of being a good follower, Mr. Rick Stafford covered the Work being done in the Caribbean, Mr. Michael DeSimone looked at the basic outline for writing a sermonette, and Mr. Michael Aviles looked at different methods for generating ideas for sermonette messages. Saturday evening, all four groups came together and combined the elements they had learned in the discussion groups to create a sermonette on the topic of “Followership.” The men reconvened Sunday morning for the final lecture on being a supporter and good follower of God and the leaders He has placed within His Church. The weekend was an inspiring one for the men, with many commenting on how encouraging it is to be able to come together with other men of like mind, in an age where it is increasingly difficult to do so.

—Jonathan McNair



### Men's Training Camp in Charlotte, North Carolina

On the weekend of August 25–27, a Men's Training Camp was held at Copperhead Island in Charlotte. The theme of the weekend was “No Excuses: Building Godly Manhood.” There were 35 in attendance, including a few who came from as far away as Massachusetts, to rough it and sleep in tents! Friday night, Mr. Rod McNair opened with an introduction to the weekend and a Bible Study focusing on a lesson from Joshua, entitled, “Does God Have Our Full Attention?” Sabbath morning, Mr. McNair led an interactive, one-hour discussion session on “Personal Spiritual Leadership.” After a short break, Dr. Scott Winnail led another interactive session about “Marriage and Family.” A relaxing two-hour break was followed by Sabbath Services, with Mr. Mike DeSimone and Dr. Winnail giving split sermons. Saturday evening, Mr. DeSimone guided the final interactive meeting on the subject of “Work and Career.” Each of the sessions was designed to draw out input, thoughts, and counsel from each of the men attending. The evening closed with a bonfire and a heart-to-heart fireside chat. Sunday morning, Messrs. McNair and DeSimone wrapped up the weekend, focusing on the “takeaways”—how we can continue to grow in becoming even more godly men.

—Mike DeSimone

# AUDIT 2016: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

We are very thankful to God for continuing to provide for His Work through our members, coworkers and donors. The Living Church of God (International), Inc. and Affiliates audit is complete and the entire, independently audited statement is available online. On the *lcg.org* website, go to the “About Us” page, and scroll down to the bottom of the page. Then click on “Living Church of God: 2016 Consolidated Financial statements.” The statement is published in its entirety—meaning the document on the webpage includes all the “Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements” at the end of the report. The Church strives to maintain the highest quality of accounting and reporting procedures.

The audit was performed by Cherry Bekaert, CPA and Advisors, a large southeastern independent auditing firm. Once again, they have issued an “unqualified opinion” on the Church’s financials. When an auditor issues an unqualified opinion, it means that, in the auditor’s judgment, a company’s financial records and statements are fairly and appropriately presented and are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Some highlights follow. For those interested in more details, please see the full report on the website.

The Church had total revenues of \$19,455,806, which is 5.8% above 2015. Expenses were \$18,934,733 for the year, and the net income was \$521,073.

It is important to note that the Cherry Bekaert audited statement includes only figures for our U.S. entity. The various international entities under which the Church must organize in other countries report separately and at different times, and comply with the laws of the countries in which they are organized. Their incomes are spent on God’s Work in their local regions and add considerably to the total world effort of the Church. We plan to report world totals at some time in the future.

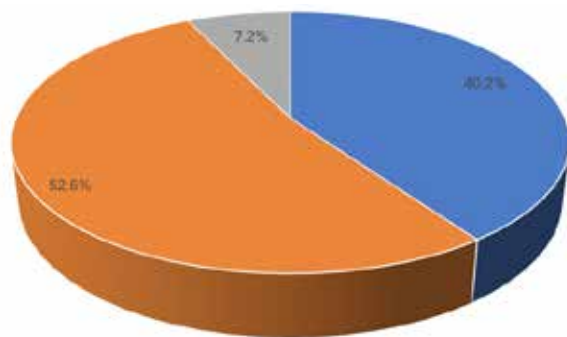
As in past years, in 2016 about 40% of all income received was spent on preaching the Gospel, as noted by the accompanying chart.

The faithfulness of our members, coworkers and donors makes it possible for the Church to preach the Gospel to the world as a witness and to feed the flock that God is calling in this difficult time. As God opens the doors, our collective effort helps in so many ways. It purchases television time and pays for the effort needed to process viewer requests, as well as for all the material we send around the world. It supports the Internet effort, which is a vital ingredient in getting our message of hope to all corners of the globe in multiple languages. At any given time, everything we produce can be accessed worldwide. Our collective effort also allows for God’s people to meet around the world on the Sabbath and Holy Days and to be served by dedicated ministers. It allows us to support the elderly and those who need help, and it even allows for a vibrant youth program.

Under the leadership of Presiding Evangelist Gerald E. Weston, we are poised to drive the Work forward, and we are thankful to God for the solid base that He prepared through Dr. Roderick C. Meredith. We will continue to do the Work with growing power to preach God’s truth around the globe and to feed the flock in an end-time world that greatly needs this message.

—Dexter B. Wakefield and D. Jerry Ruddlesden

**Percent of Expense**



■ Preach the Gospel ■ Feed the Flock ■ Admin



## COMMENTARY

### Red Words and Every Word

**M**any people have a “red letter” edition of the Bible, which prints the words spoken by Jesus in red ink. But even with Jesus’ words printed in red to draw attention to them, some seem to misunderstand the things Christ actually said and taught.

A “red letter” edition of the New Testament of the Bible was first printed in 1899, the idea of Louis Klopsch, editor of a British weekly magazine called *The Christian Herald*. A red letter edition of the whole Bible followed in 1901.

Some mistakenly think they only need the New Testament, alleging Christ did away with the Old Testament. What did Jesus say?

In Matthew 4 is the account of Jesus’ being “led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (v. 1). Jesus said: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (v. 4). Christ was quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 in the Old Testament. Jesus’ words—the “words in red”—instruct us to live by every word of God, in both the Old and New Testaments.

Some think Jesus came to do away with the laws given in the Old Testament. But notice what Jesus said: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:17–18). Any serious student of the Bible knows that all is not yet fulfilled.

He also said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

Another mistaken idea some have is that all one has to do is “believe” and that there are no other requirements of us. But Jesus said, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Christ continued by showing that one who does not do what He says brings destruction on himself (vv. 47–49).

Christ also said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28). We must keep, observe *and do* what God says.

Some think Jesus spoke in parables to help people understand. But Jesus’ own words clearly show why He spoke in parables. His disciples asked Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” (Matthew 13:10). Jesus answered, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given... Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand” (vv. 11–13).

One subject that is timely for today is in Matthew 19:4–6. Jesus said, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” God made two sexes, and marriage is between a man and a woman. There is no confusion in the words of Jesus.

There are many other things that the Word of God makes plain, if only mankind would read what Jesus actually said. And He pointed us to not just the “words in red” but also “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

—Roger Meyer

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**The above is adapted from one of the many commentaries discussing vital topics facing our world, available at the [lcg.org](http://lcg.org) and [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org) Web sites.**