

# Living Church News

Vol. 2, No. 4

May–June 2000

## In This Issue

<b>Enthusiasm And ZEAL</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Being a Holy People</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Teamwork</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Having the Mind of Christ</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Christ's Most Painful Experience</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>CAN You Take It With You?</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Report from The Treasurer</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>A Christian's Need for Fasting</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>2000 Feast Of Tabernacles</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Local Church News</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Commentary</b> .....	<b>28</b>

## Correction: The Way to Maturity

Dear Brethren and Friends,

We are rapidly coming up on the Day of Pentecost. It is my hope that all of you have experienced a *positive* Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread observance. Now, as we prepare for Pentecost and the fall Holy Days, I want to share with you something we *all* need to work on *all year long*. It is a character trait that many people do not like to face up to. But, to enter God's Kingdom, we **MUST** understand and build this seldom thought of character trait into the very fabric of our lives. It must become an important part of what we are—part of the way we think, feel and act.

This character trait is the *willingness to take correction*.

Is it simple? Is it easy?

No! To humble the self and genuinely receive correction is one of the hardest things for most human beings to do. For it gets right at our pride, our sense of self-importance and our basic self. Oh, my! How hard it is to admit that we are really, truly, totally **WRONG!** *That hurts.*

Yet, as each year of our Christian conversion goes by, we must become *even more willing than ever* to let God fashion and mold us—clean us up and scrub us out. For *genuine* Christian maturity will come no other way.

Each of us has to be willing to ask God—fervently and sincerely—“Father, please clean me up. Please help me to see myself as YOU see me! Please cleanse me even from secret sins. Knock me down, if need be. Rebuke and chasten me as You do every son You love. But **HELP** me! Fashion and mold me that I may reflect Jesus Christ. Make me in Your image so that I may be in Your Kingdom, in Your Family and *bear Your name forever!*”

God's Word tells us: “And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?” (Hebrews 12:5–7). **WHY** does God “chasten us” and put us through these trials and tests that come upon us so often in this life? “That we may be partakers of His **HOLINESS**” (v. 10).

Brethren, if we deeply want to be in God's Kingdom so much that we can “taste it,” then we should be willing to go through every trial, surmount every obstacle, suffer every indignity and even suffer physical **DEATH** in Christ's service if that is what it takes. But all too often we have various “idols” that can

come between God and us. We have pride and vanity. We get our “feelings” hurt very easily because God is really NOT the very center of our lives. Yet God says, “Great peace have those who love Thy law; and NOTHING shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165, KJV).

However, when we are corrected, some of us DO get offended, don’t we? We only want correction if it is easy to take and preferably is “sugar-coated”! But much of the book of Proverbs is telling us that the way to wisdom—the way to God’s Kingdom—is to be willing to take instruction, to take correction and to take rebuke.

God says, “Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning” (Proverbs 9:8–9).

Again, we are told: “The wise in heart will receive commands, but a prating fool will fall” (Proverbs 10:8). And again, “He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses CORRECTION goes astray” (v. 17).

Often the “idol” of our own vanity is the thing that prevents us from humbly listening and heeding when we are corrected. All of us have some kind of idol or idols in our lives. Anything that comes between us and total SURRENDER to God must be SMASHED.

Herbert W. Armstrong found—on a number of occasions—that he was making a virtual idol out of his business and/or his desire for importance and esteem in the eyes of successful men.

In his autobiography Mr. Armstrong tells us:

So let me say right here something about conversion I find most people do not understand.

The REPENTANCE required as a condition to being truly converted by receiving God’s Holy Spirit is something far different than most people suppose. It is infinitely more than merely “seeing” God’s TRUTH, or some of it, and being good enough to embrace and accept it. It is something altogether different from merely agreeing with certain doctrines.

Whoever you are, you have, or you have had, an IDOL. You have had another “god” before the true living Almighty God. It might be your hobby or your habitual pastime. It might be your husband, or wife, or child or children. It might be your job. It might be your own VANITY, or the lipstick you paint on, or your business or profession. Very often it is the opinion of your friends, your family, your group or social or business contacts.

But whatever it is, that idol must first be CRUSHED, SMASHED—it must be literally torn out of your mind, even though it hurts more than having all your teeth pulled out and perhaps a jawbone, too! I don’t believe that many people experience this painlessly. I don’t know of any anesthetic that will render it pleasurable. Usually it seems like something more excruciating than the agony of death by the cruelest torture. [Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 593].

**Correction: The Way to Maturity**  
continues on page 20

**Editor in Chief** . . . . . Roderick C. Meredith  
**Editorial Director** . . . . . Richard F. Ames  
**Executive Editor** . . . . . William Bowmer  
**Managing Editor** . . . . . Gary F. Ehman  
**Regional Editors** . . . . . Charles Bryce (Canada)  
Rod McNair (Philippines)  
Bruce Tyler (Australia)  
**Layout Editor** . . . . . Donna Prejean  
**Circulation** . . . . . Aaron Eagle  
**Business Manager** . . . . . Fred Dattolo

**Regional Offices**

**UNITED STATES:**  
**P.O. Box 501304**  
**San Diego, CA 92150-1304**  
Office (858) 673-7470  
Fax: (858) 673-0310  
<http://www.livingcog.org>

**AUSTRALIA:**  
**GPO Box 772**  
**Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia**  
Phone: (07) 3841-8360  
or freecall: 1800-816-543  
Fax: (07) 3841-8325

**CANADA:**  
**P.O. Box 27202**  
**Toronto, Ontario, M9W 6L0**  
Phone: (905) 671-3730  
Fax: (905) 671-9599

**NEW ZEALAND:**  
**P.O. Box 2767**  
**Auckland, New Zealand**  
Freephone: 0800-380-584

**PHILIPPINES:**  
**MCPO Box 1774**  
**Makati City 1257, Philippines**  
Phone: 63-2-813-6538  
Fax: 63-2-867-1569

**SOUTH AFRICA:**  
**P.O. Box 1154, Ferndale 2160**  
Republic of South Africa  
Phone: (27) 11-664-6036

**UNITED KINGDOM:**  
**3 Burnside Tower**  
**Motherwell, ML1 2BA Scotland**  
Phone: 44-1698-263-977  
Fax: 44-1698-263-977

The Living Church News is published bi-monthly by the Living Church of God, Subscriptions are sent without charge to all members of the Living Church of God and others who may request them. 16935 W. Bernardo Dr., Ste. 260, San Diego, CA, 92127.

Copyright© 2000, Living Church of God. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. Periodical postage paid at San Diego, CA.

**Postmaster: Send address changes to**  
**Living Church News**  
**P.O. Box 501304**  
**San Diego, CA 92150-1304**

The Living Church News is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photographs. Scriptures are quoted from the New King James Version (Copyright 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

# Enthusiasm and ZEAL

## Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

**E**nthusiasm and zeal are both characteristics of nearly every great servant of God in the Bible. Yet, in our modern age, the attitude of being “cool” seems to prevail. People seem to be suspicious of anyone getting “too excited” about Christianity.

*Why is this?*

Part of the answer is that we have become such a secularized society. Religion is nowhere near the “big issue” in modern life that it was a few generations ago. Another reason is that some people feel they have been “burned” by religion and are therefore afraid to commit themselves wholeheartedly to *any* religion—even the *true* religion of their Creator.

But this can only be self-defeating, for again and again God makes it clear that—in *every age*—He wants His servants to go “all out” to seek Him and to serve Him. After describing how His people would be taken into slavery in the “latter days,” God says: “When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the

nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with ALL YOUR HEART and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice” (Deuteronomy 4:25–30).

In the book of Ecclesiastes God tells us: “Whatever your hand finds to do, *do it with your MIGHT*; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). And in Colossians 3:23 we are commanded: “And whatever you do, *do it HEARTILY*, as to the Lord and not to men.”

Indeed, the *entire Bible* is filled with instructions and examples of the need for *enthusiasm* and *zeal* when serving the Living God. The patriarch Jacob, after all of the machinations and trickery he had been involved in—finally turned wholeheartedly to God in his later years. At the time of a sort of “conversion” in his life, Jacob cried out to God, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you’: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. DELIVER ME, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I

fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children” (Genesis 32:9–11).

Later that same night, we read that Jacob “wrestled all night” with that Great Being who later gave His life for us. It was obviously a “test” to reveal *how much* Jacob wanted God’s promise. After he had zealously wrestled *all night long*, Jacob told God’s Messenger, “I will NOT let you go unless you bless me” (v. 26). And the One who became Christ answered, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel [prince of God]; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed” (v. 28).

Commenting on this scripture, *The Critical and Experimental Commentary* states:

It is evident that Jacob was aware of the character of Him with whom he wrestled; believing that His power, though by far superior to human, was yet limited by His promise to do him good, he determined not to lose the golden opportunity of securing a blessing. And nothing gives God greater pleasure than to see the hearts of His people firmly adhering to Him. But as Jacob continued wrestling all night, and was not blessed till “the breaking of the day,” so God frequently does not answer the prayers of His people till the last moment,

**Enthusiasm and ZEAL**

continues on page 19

# Being a Holy People

By John H. Ogwyn

**T**he children of Israel were overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude and awe. They had just witnessed one of the most dramatic miracles of all time—the Red Sea literally opening up and providing them a highway of escape from their captors! Not only had God brought them through the midst of this mighty body of water without so much as getting their feet wet, He had then closed the waters over the pursuing Egyptian army!

The Israelites were in a festive mood as they celebrated their deliverance from Egypt. Only a week earlier they had been slaves in Egypt ready to begin their exodus. Now, on the seventh and final day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they stood on the eastern bank of the Red Sea singing the Song of Moses. This was only the beginning, however.

Over the next weeks, Moses led the people farther and farther into a desolate wilderness area en route to Sinai, the mountain of God. After several days the people began to worry about where they would get water and food. In spite of their griping and complaining, God performed miracles to give them a flowing stream of water out of a rock and to give them manna to eat. In the course of providing manna, God also performed a weekly miracle that made clear which day He had sanctified as the Sabbath. An eventful six weeks elapsed as they made their trek to Sinai. Finally, on the first day of the third month, they arrived. The literal Hebrew in Exodus 19:1 shows that they arrived on the day of “the third moon.” The expression “the same day” in that context means the day that the third moon—or month—began.

Preparations began to be made for the God of Israel to address His people from Mount Sinai. Over the next few days, Moses went up and down the mountain to receive God’s message, convey it to the people, and then bring their response back to God. Finally, on Sunday, the sixth day of the third month, Moses had all of the people assemble at the foot of the mountain. This was the first celebration of the day that we call Pentecost, known as the Feast of Weeks in Old Testament times.

A cloud settled on the top of the mountain, lightning flashed and thunder rolled. Then the whole mountain suddenly began to quake, as smoke and fire ascended up

from the top. As the people stood awestruck and trembling at the foot of the mountain, a great voice boomed out. “I am YHVH your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt,” the voice began. During the following minutes, each of the Ten Commandments was thundered to the people below. God was preparing to enter into a special covenant with the people whom He had delivered, and He was stating the terms of that covenant to them.

His sparing of their lives and subsequent deliverance from Egyptian slavery had been only a prelude. Israel had now come to Sinai, the mountain of God, to meet with their Creator and Savior. The relationship into which they were then entering had been offered to no other people. It was being offered to them because of the special relationship established between God and their ancestor, Abraham.

Understanding the purpose and the demands of the Sinai Covenant is important to Christians today. Just as the covenant at Sinai was an extension of the covenant which the Creator had established with Abraham centuries earlier, so also the New Covenant, which Christ came proclaiming, is an extension of both. The relationship God offered to Israel of old is a type of the relationship that He offers to spiritual Israel today. As we look at what God demanded of them, we will be better able to understand what He desires of us.

## Called to Be Holy

In Exodus 19:6, the Eternal told Moses that He intended Israel to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. What is holiness, and what does it mean to be holy?

Understanding the answer to this question is fundamental to understanding all of God’s covenants. It is also vital not only to understanding the relationship that God has chosen to establish with us, but also to understanding what our response to God’s initiative in our lives must be. Herein lies much of the real meaning of Pentecost.

The essence of holiness is that it is an innate quality of God. “Holy and reverend is His name,” we are told in Psalm 111:9 (KJV). God is holy and where God chooses to place His presence becomes holy. The Hebrew word for

holy is *q'adesh* and, according to *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, the elemental meaning is associated with separation. It refers to something that is separate from the secular mundane sphere, but rather is reserved for God Himself. This is apparent when we look at the terms used as antonyms for holy in the scripture. In Leviticus 10:10 we find that the priests are to make a distinction between “the holy and the common” (*Jewish Publication Society* translation). Ezekiel 22:26 uses a similar expression in indicting the priesthood for profaning God's holy things by failing to put a proper “difference between the holy and the common” (JPS). Clearly the opposite of holy is that which is not separate and distinct, but rather is treated like everything else around.

Further evidence of this meaning is shown in examining other scriptures. In Leviticus 27:28 we are told, “...every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD.” Speaking of those individuals specially devoted to God under a Nazarite vow, Numbers 6:8 enjoins, “All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.” Another aspect of this is brought out by the injunction to the priests in Leviticus 22:2–3: “Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel... [because whoever] goes near the holy things which the children of Israel sanctify to the LORD, while he has uncleanness upon him, that person shall be cut off from My presence: I am the LORD.” We learn two things here. One is that something becomes holy by being devoted, consecrated or set apart for God. Secondly, we learn that uncleanness and holiness do not mix. What is devoted to God must be kept away from what is impure.

Through the various ritual washings and ceremonies that Israel was to observe under the Levitical administration, God sought to emphasize the importance of respecting the things that pertained to Him. Clearly, purity or cleanness is an important aspect of holiness. That which is consecrated to God must not be polluted by the unclean, or treated in a common manner. By making a distinction between those things that are common and those that are devoted to God, we are showing reverence to the Creator.

Understanding some of what holiness entails makes more meaningful such passages as Leviticus 19:2 where Israel is commanded, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.” This point is reiterated in numerous other places. Notice Leviticus 20:26, “And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.” God called His covenant people into a special relationship with Him. The essence of that relationship is that they were to be different from the surrounding nations. They were to have an access to the Creator that others were denied, but in order

to retain that access they must be clean—and indeed their entire lives must be devoted to God.

Ancient Israel showed, over and over, its failure to maintain the special covenant relationship with the Holy God. This covenant relationship was likened to a marriage. God pictured Himself in the role of husband, while Israel was the wife. In Jeremiah 2:2–3, the prophet writes: “I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the LORD, the firstfruits of His increase.” Later, Jeremiah quoted the Eternal as saying, “‘But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 3:1). A little later God inspired Jeremiah to record: “‘Return, O backsliding children,’ says the LORD; ‘for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion’” (v.

The essence of holiness is  
that it is an innate quality of  
God... God is holy and where  
God chooses to place His  
presence becomes holy.

14). Though God was faithful to His marriage to Israel under the Old Covenant, the nation simply did not have a heart to obey (cf. Deuteronomy 5:29)!

What is the answer to this dilemma? Very simply, God proposed to make a **new covenant** with Israel, one in which He would give the people a **new heart**. Jeremiah records God's promise in Jeremiah 31:31–34: “‘Behold the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,’ says the LORD. ‘But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: after those days, says the LORD, will I put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying “Know the LORD,” for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ says the LORD. ‘For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”

Notice the three aspects of the New Covenant as it differs from the Old. The law will be written by God's Spirit in the hearts and minds of the covenant people. Secondly, all

who are part of this covenant will personally know God, not simply hear about Him from others. Thirdly, the New Covenant offers forgiveness of sin to those who share in it. Under the administration of the Old Covenant, animal sacrifices gave a reminder of sin (Hebrews 10:3), but it was not possible for them to actually pay the penalty for sin (v. 4).

In introducing the New Covenant, there is nothing said about changing the law or the righteous requirements of a holy God. Rather, God sets out to change and transform the people, beginning in the heart and mind.

## The law will be written by God's Spirit in the hearts and minds of the covenant people.

Notice how the prophet Ezekiel describes the results of the New Covenant that God promised: "Then will I sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:25–27). The purpose for which God offers His Spirit is to enable His people to truly keep His law. Clearly, the New Covenant does not do away with the commandments of God!

### Holiness in the New Testament

The Apostle Peter explained that God's Church has a similar calling under the New Covenant to that of ancient Israel under the Old. "But you are a chosen generation," Peter wrote, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). We have been called out of this world by Almighty God to be different and distinct as His people.

Peter explained this concept further. We are to be, he wrote, "as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 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 1:14–16). Holiness clearly involves the way that we live as Christians. Our conduct, once we have entered into a covenant with our Creator at baptism, is to be markedly different from the way we were before, when we lived in ignorance of God's great plan and of His ways.

The Apostle Paul also wrote very forcefully about what our being a holy people under the New Covenant entails.

Notice what he said: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?... For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.' Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 6:14–18, 7:1). Again, in the New Testament, as well as in the Old, we see that purity and separation from the world are important aspects of holiness.

How do we as individuals become holy under the New Covenant? Initially we were cut off from God, estranged and alienated by our sinful thoughts and ways. However, God took the initiative to redeem us—to purchase us for Himself. He did this by offering His uniquely begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins. We were reconciled to God by the shed blood of Jesus Christ and we shall be saved through His life (Romans 5:10). His payment on the stake for our sins was only the starting point of Christ's redemptive ministry. After three days and three nights in the tomb, Jesus Christ was resurrected through the power of the Father. He ascended on high to sit at the right hand of the Father and to serve as our mediator and High Priest. Part of this role involves coming into the lives of Spirit-begotten Christians to live His life in them (Galatians 2:20).

Just before His death, Christ explained to His disciples that it was expedient for them that He would go away. If He went, He explained, He would send the Helper—the Holy Spirit—which would lead and guide them (John 16:7). Ten days after His ascension into Heaven came the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1). His disciples were suddenly empowered with the Spirit and then proceeded to preach to the multitudes how they also could receive the same power. "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," Peter declared, "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Through the cleansing and life-changing effect of the Holy Spirit, offered as a gift upon the condition of our responding to God with faith and repentance, we can share in the New Covenant.

We are sanctified, set apart as holy, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). God's mercy and grace

**Being a Holy People**

*continues on page 18*

# Teamwork

---

Is it really “just you and God?” Or is there a bigger and more important picture?

By Douglas S. Winnail

**O**ne of the greatest challenges we face in this life is learning to work together with other people. This is especially difficult today because we are continually bombarded by messages that urge us to do just the opposite. Be your *own* person! Do your *own* thing! Look out for Number One! Get yours while the getting is good! Nice people finish last!

These ideas are so prevalent, and heard so often, that it is easy to accept this kind of thinking as normal and right. Yet these *self-oriented* attitudes are tearing away at the very fabric of our society. The building blocks of Western civilization—marriage, family, churches and communities—are crumbling, as everyone pulls in different directions. The Bible clearly warns that, as we approach the end of this age, people will be “*lovers of themselves... blasphemers, disobedient to parents... unloving, unforgiving, slanderers... traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*” (2 Timothy 3:1–4). These destructive attitudes, and the results they will bring, are the very reason why God is going to send Jesus Christ to intervene in the affairs of mankind. God is going to save us from destroying ourselves (Matthew 24:3–7, 21–22).

But what does all this have to do with you and me? Simply this: as Christians, we are called to “come

out” of this world and “be separate” or different (2 Corinthians 6:17). We are to be *lights* to a world that is wallowing blindly in darkness (Matthew 5:14). We are to live according to a different set of standards. The ultimate goal for Christians is to become members of God’s family. God told Paul, “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters” (2 Corinthians 6:18). With that goal in mind, we need to ask: how does God’s family function? Does each member just do his or her own thing? Do sibling rivalries and domestic violence characterize God’s family? Or does God intend for His family to function in a different manner—*as a team*?

Most of us find it very normal to focus on ourselves, or our three closest friends: me, myself and I! However, this tends to shut us off in our own little world of *our* problems, *our* hopes and dreams and *our* personal ideas and opinions. To function as team members, we have to learn to *think bigger*—about how to relate to others, work with others and avoid offending others. Teamwork cannot be learned while off alone in a corner. Teamwork requires functioning together with others under a variety of conditions. Learning to operate as a team is an essential part of our calling as Christians. But just what is a team? Why do teams exist? What *qualities* enable us to become effective team

members? And why is this subject so important?

## What Is a Team?

Dictionaries define a team as two or more animals working together to pull a load. A team is also defined as a group of individuals *working together to achieve a goal*. Another definition refers to a team as a group of people *cooperating together to accomplish a mission* that is *unattainable* by one person alone. Teams exist for a purpose. Marriages, families, businesses, athletic organizations and even church congregations (in the true biblical sense) exist to achieve goals—not just to function as friendly social clubs. A group of people socializing together is a *party*, not a team! In order for these social units to function smoothly, each member must learn and practice teamwork skills. Teamwork involves joint action and coordinated effort by every member of the team. Each person must be willing to subordinate individual interests and desires for the unity, efficiency and effectiveness of the group in order to achieve the desired team goal! Each person must learn to appreciate, love, forgive and be patient with other members of the team. These are not easy things to do, but they can be learned! This requires knowledge and practice. It also involves understanding and

developing the qualities that make team members really effective.

### Teamwork Skills

The *first and fundamental* requirement of a successful team is that each member must *share the same sense of mission*—each must focus on the *same goal*. Every member of an athletic team must want to win. If several key members do not care, they will sabotage the efforts of other team members. Husbands and wives must share a commitment to making a marriage work and must develop the skills to make it succeed. Members of a family—father, mother, children, grandparents and relatives—must develop a commitment to the family to enable it to thrive. Members of a business must focus their efforts to make it profitable. Inefficient efforts made in different directions will lead to failure.

The Apostle Paul understood this principle when he admonished the Corinthian church to “be perfectly joined together in the *same mind* and in the *same judgment*” (1 Corinthians 1:10). He heard that the church was fragmenting as people chose to follow different teachers. Each was doing what he or she individually thought to be right, but this was destroying the church! They were not working together as a team. Paul was well aware of the scriptural admonitions that two cannot walk together unless they are agreed (Amos 3:3) and “every city or house divided against itself will not stand” (Matthew 12:25)—which the Corinthians had apparently forgotten.

We do not, and will not, think exactly the same way about any given topic. However, to function as a team we must all agree on, and focus on, the same goal. This is why God sets fundamental goals for us. The goal of the church is to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14–15, 16:15). Other key goals include feed-

ing the flock of God (John 21:15–17) and warning this world of sobering future events (Matthew 24; Ezekiel 3 and 33). These are not multiple choice items to be debated, but God-given goals to keep the Church focused and moving in the same direction. These are goals for the *church-team* to accomplish together.

Our goal as Christians is to develop the mind of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5). Jesus said, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30). Jesus and His Father are focused on the same goal—the salvation of mankind! They are working together to achieve that goal. As Christians, we must develop the same focus, the same perspective and the same goals as Jesus Christ and God the Father (John 17:11). That perspective is found in the word of God. As we study, meditate upon and strive to live by every word of God, we will develop the same perspective (become at one) with God and Jesus Christ—we will join the team (John 17:11–20; Hebrews 2:10–11).

The *second* requirement of a successful team is that all members must *work together* to achieve the same goal. In the book of Acts we read that members of the early church “sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need” (Acts 2:45). This was a temporary situation that accompanied the momentous events that occurred on Pentecost when the New Testament church began. Thousands were being called and the brethren pulled together in this exciting work. Acts 4:29–31 recorded dramatic results when the church prayed together about the same goal. However, we also read that Paul and Barnabas, although focused on the same goal, had difficulties working together because they could not agree on methods (Acts 15:36–40). To work smoothly together as a team, we must learn to be patient, understand-

ing, forgiving and pleasant with others. These are the attributes of a *real* Christian (Galatians 5:22–23).

A *third* requirement is that each team member must be willing to *subordinate personal opinions and agendas* for the good of the team. This prevents conflicts and divisions that hinder a team from achieving its goal. Paul told the Corinthians that promoting different opinions and agendas is divisive and disruptive, which is contrary to God’s desire (1 Corinthians 1:11–13). Paul further explained that there will always be divisive individuals who do not see the big picture and do not understand what teamwork is all about (1 Corinthians 11:18–19). The Bible reveals that contentions and arguments are the result of *pride* (Proverbs 13:10). This is why we need to ask ourselves periodically if we *really understand* what it means to be a *team player*—as a husband, father, wife, mother, child or church member. Are we really thinking of the team when we promote our own opinions and agendas, or are we simply motivated by pride? Jesus put the goal of the team first when He said to His Father “not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39).

A *fourth* requirement for an effective team is that all members need to see and understand the importance of *their individual roles* to the overall mission. When we each see how our own efforts contribute to the overall goal, we are more inclined to work for the success of the team. Paul draws a parallel between the members of a church and the parts of the human body (1 Corinthians 12). He explains that when each part makes its own unique and essential contribution, the body thrives. When we neglect or reject the role we have been given, wishing to have a different role, we hurt the team!

The Bible outlines *God-given roles* for members of marriages, families, churches and other social units.



Husbands are to love and provide for their wives, and wives are to love and submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22–33). Children are to honor their parents, and parents are not to provoke their children (Ephesians 6:1–4). Employees are to work hard and be respectful of employers, and employers are to be considerate of employees. Church members are to respect their leaders, while leaders must be respectable and show loving concern for their flock (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; Philippians 2:19–22). We get into trouble—as many do today—when we begin to alter and reject these fundamental roles. The basic social building blocks of society work best when all members understand the importance of their own unique roles and strive to fulfill them.

The *fifth* requirement is that each team member must strive to do the *best job possible!* The biblical principle is; “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). We are also admonished in Scripture to “be wise as serpents” (Matthew 10:16) which means working smarter, not just harder. If we are going to “grow in grace and knowledge” we will need to study not just the Word of God, but about whatever challenge we face. Choose wisely among the books available on such topics as identifying and developing our abilities, seeking employment, building a marriage, rearing children and improving our health. We also need to study Scripture (2 Timothy 2:15) and seek wise counsel—but not just from those who happen to agree with us (Proverbs 11:14). Teams succeed when everyone goes above and beyond—when all members strive to function together at an optimal level!

The *sixth* requirement for teamwork is *motivation!* One of the sharpest rebukes in Scripture is leveled at the Laodicean era of the Church. Its members are rejected by

God Himself because they become “lukewarm” in their efforts to do the work of God (compare Revelation 3:7–10 to Revelation 3:16). Another rebuke is directed at individuals who do nothing to glorify God with the knowledge and talents they are given (Matthew 25:24–26). Jesus set an example as a motivated servant leader (John 4:31–35). He motivated His disciples by outlining clearly what the

Rewards do not go to those who give up and quit, but to those who finish the race (1 Corinthians 9:24–27). We must develop discipline and determination to hang on through difficult times. In all aspects of life—marriage, child-rearing, finding employment and even in religious belief—we cannot afford to give up in the face of trials. We must persevere and endure in our efforts to work through problems

---

One of the biggest challenges we face in life is learning to work with other people. To work smoothly with others as a team, we must develop the appropriate skills.

---

future held for them if they developed as mature Christians (Matthew 19:28). Because they caught the vision (Acts 1:8), their motivation was contagious and the Church grew (Acts 2:47). One scholar referred to the Apostle Paul as a “human storm center” as a result of the energy he brought to the task of preaching the gospel and urging others to join in this task. However, Jesus also warned that we must be careful not to let the “cares of this world” sidetrack and dampen our motivation for living God’s way (Matthew 13:18–23). God’s people *together*—as families and members of the Church—are to be inspiring, motivated lights to the world!

The *seventh and final* requirement for a successful team is that individual members *cannot give up* when the going gets rough—they must continue to play hard until the game is over! They must be determined and persistent in their pursuit of the team goal. Jesus told His disciples “he who *endures to the end* shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13). Again, He said “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

as we look to God to show us the way (1 Corinthians 10:13). But it is not just for us alone. As Christians and potential members of God’s family, we must also learn to be encouraging and supportive to other members of the team (Romans 12:10–13). We do this by praying for, calling, writing to and expressing concern for others. This is how God’s family is to operate.

One of the biggest challenges we face in life is learning to work with other people. To work smoothly with others as a team, we must develop the appropriate skills. This will come with knowledge, with practice and with the help of God’s Spirit. Learning to function as a team—in marriage, family or church congregation—is an essential aspect of our calling as Christians. Why not set a goal of becoming a better team player? Examine yourself and determine what qualities you need to work on. You will be developing the very skills that Jesus Christ will require of those who reign with Him when He sets up the Government of God on this earth. God wants each of us to be on His team! This is why learning to function as part of a team is so important! ☐

# HAVING THE MIND OF CHRIST

By Martin Fannin

“**L**et this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). Why this emphatic statement about having the mind of Christ? Since the mind is the seat of intellect, the control center for our thoughts and actions, can we really have the mind of Christ? After all, Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the member of the Godhead who as the “Word” or spokesman created all things (John 1:1–3). “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16–17).

The pre-incarnate Christ, as the “Word” of God, created all things, including mankind whom He created in the image of God. Then He was willing to empty or divest Himself of all His glory and power to become Jesus Christ—the Messiah—the Savior of mankind. So, can we really have the mind of Christ? Can we think, reason, act, or react as Christ would or does? The answer is yes! However, while we are still human we can never do it perfectly. Yet we must always strive for that perfection. Why? It is because of the awesome purpose for which we were born and our calling to be among the firstfruits.

Mankind was created to become members of the family of God—created first as human beings, clay models—but with the incredible potential to be born into God’s very family! Since this is the main reason or purpose for human beings, it is obvious that *we must have the mind of Christ* if we are to enter that family. Therefore, the ability to think like Christ is essential to our salvation. We are reminded of this in Romans 12:2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (See also Ephesians 4:23). And “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His” (Romans 8:9). From this, we understand that having God’s Spirit and having the mind of Christ go hand-in-hand.

Having God’s Spirit is essential and God plainly tells us the process through which we receive it. We repent, are baptized in Christ’s name for the remission of our sins and He gives us the gift of his Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). After this, we are reminded that the *inward man is renewed day-by-day*

(2 Corinthians 4:16). That is, we must be thankful for God’s Spirit, use it and ask God for more of it daily. In Luke 11:9–10 Christ confirms we will have a continual supply.

After we have God’s Spirit, how can we know that we have the mind of Christ? How can we know that the way we think or act reflects His mind? We can know by comparing our life the way we live, think and act—to His life. What did Jesus do? What were His qualities?

The world in general does not keep the commandments. The evidence of this is all around us. War, crimes, broken homes, lying and stealing are generating ongoing misery and problems. In our modern world, God’s law has been presented by many as oppressive (bondage), unnecessary or done away. This is the opposite of the mind of Christ. He states that the commandments are a “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25). Knowing the mindset of a deceived world, Christ said that He would “magnify the law and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21, KJV). He did this abundantly, as recorded in Matthew 5:17–48.

His statements are bold and plain as He declares that He did not come to destroy the law and that not the smallest thing would pass from it, even the dotting of an “i” or the crossing of a “t.” He says anyone who transgresses the law and teaches others to break the commandments will be least, or nothing, in His kingdom! But those who do and teach them will be called great in His kingdom (vv. 17–19).

Christ kept the commandments in their magnified state: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (vv. 27–28). When He was asked what good thing an individual could do to receive eternal life He replied: “But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). We are called to follow the example of Jesus Christ—He kept the law both in the letter and spirit. If we are to have this mind in us, we must keep the commandments.

## Thankful

Today, thankfulness is a character trait in short supply, but Christ was thankful. He thanked God for His approach to calling people into truth (Matthew 11:25), and for the

necessities of life such as food (Matthew 15:36). Also, He was thankful that His prayers were answered (John 11:41). Not being thankful causes people to lose sight of the true God and to follow foolish ideas of men. This is made clear in Romans 1:21–22: “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.” So, we are admonished to “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Our daily approach to God must be one of thankfulness—thankful for life, truth, our calling, abundant blessings, the work of God and the awesome future ahead of us. The mind of Christ is a thankful mind.

### Peacemaking

Jesus Christ is a peacemaker! He is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). When His kingdom is established, peace will spring forth abundantly and flow like a river around the earth. Then: “He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken” (Micah 4:3–4). War done away! What an amazing statement—and impossible for men to accomplish in this current evil world. However, the Prince of Peace will accomplish it when He returns.

Christ tells us “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). His approach was one of humbleness and consideration. However, we are not to confuse meekness with weakness, for *Christ is not weak!* He will return, with great power, and rule the world as Lord of lords and King of kings. Yet, His desire is to promote peace, not generate conflict.

Christ and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem and attempted to spend the night in a Samaritan village. However, they were refused lodging because they were Jews. When this occurred, James and John became angry and said: “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to *save them.*’ And they went to another village” (Luke 9:54–56).

The mind of Christ reflects the attitude of a peacemaker, and this must be our attitude. Also, one of the key fruits of God’s spirit is *peace*. So, our approach to others must be to promote peace and not strife. Because:

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

### Compassionate

Christ was always mindful of the needs of others, sympathizing with their need or distress and responding with compassion. Whether the need was physical or spiritual, his desire was to help. “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:35–36). Christ’s compassion was evident in His reaction both to the needs of multitudes or individuals. “And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep’” (Luke 7:12–13). Then He raised the young man from the dead and delivered him back to his mother.

On other occasions, Jesus provided food for multitudes that numbered 15 to 20 thousand people. “Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, ‘I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way’” (Matthew 15:32). He then took a few loaves of bread, a few fish, gave thanks and fed everyone abundantly.

To see someone with a severe affliction, such as being blind or crippled, is a touching scene for many. Certainly it touched the heart of Jesus Christ. One day He was passing by two blind men and they called to Him for help. They asked for mercy and that their sight be restored. “So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him” (Matthew 20:34).

We are called to be kings and priests in the coming kingdom of God—an awesome responsibility—to help a world that is starving physically and spiritually. A world where many will be sick, crippled or blind, in need of healing—a spiritually blind world that must have the veil of darkness removed. To help them we must have the compassion, the mind of Jesus Christ.

### Merciful

We live in a world where “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and a time when mercy, or a genuine concern for others, is in short

supply. Many find it easy to condemn and judge, but not to show mercy. But we are admonished: “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13). Mercy is reflected in the mind and actions of Christ. He stated that mercy is one of the “weightier matters of the law” (Matthew 23:23). He showed mercy by not condemning for past mistakes or sins, forgiving them and focusing on the present and the future. He illustrated this when He told the woman who was taken in adultery, that He did not condemn her, but “go and sin no more” (John 8:10–11). He desired that nations and individuals learn the easy way! That is, they should learn through obedience to God, not through human trial and error. He thought of Jerusalem and said: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!” (Matthew 23:37). To ancient Israel he said: “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

A day of mercy is coming when Christ returns. Satan will be bound and rebellion crushed. Then, great mercy will be shown to mankind—mercy given by God, through Christ, the King of kings and the saints who will rule with him. Truly: “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).

### **Committed to the Will of God**

The mind of Christ was always committed to doing the will—the work, the ongoing purpose—of God. King David was inspired to write about Christ and His first coming, when he said: “Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart’” (Psalm 40:7–8). God inspired the repeating of this statement in Hebrews 10:7.

From His youth, the focus of Jesus was on doing the work, the job, He had been given to do. When He was 12 years old, He traveled to Jerusalem with His family for the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. After the feast period, Joseph and Mary started the return trip thinking Jesus was among the family group. When they discovered He was missing, they returned to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple talking to the doctors (teachers) of the law, both listening to them, asking questions and answering their questions. Then His mother said to Him: “‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’ And He

said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’” (Luke 2:48–49).

Food is a basic need for human beings. It is the source of nourishment for our bodies—and without it, for an extended period, we would die. Yet, Christ likened doing the work to food. Once when His disciples had been away buying food they returned and urged Him to eat: “But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work’” (John 4:32–34). His commitment to the work and doing the will of His Father never faltered. Even with death awaiting Him in Jerusalem: “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). And, on the very night that He was taken to be beaten and then crucified, He said to His heavenly father as He prayed “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4).

Christ continues to work, but now as our Savior, High Priest and soon-coming Lord of lords and King of kings. If we have His mind, we will be doing the work He has given us (Matthew 28:19–20). A key sign of His coming is that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). We are admonished to continue doing the Work to the very end—preaching the gospel, providing godly meat (food) in due season. “Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing” (Matthew 24:46).

Among the many acts of mercy and compassion of Jesus Christ, none are more poignant, more touching, than His healing of a leper: “Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, ‘If You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed’” (Mark 1:40–41). This is a marvelous example of the mind of Christ in action: instantly concerned, compassionate, and desiring to help. Do you have His mind—His approach? Remember: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

It is God’s will and desire that we have the mind of Christ. It is necessary if we are to be in His family and kingdom; if we are to be among the firstfruits to help with the restoration of all things! For there is a world waiting to be made clean—waiting to be healed. We have the opportunity to help it—if we will! ☐

# Christ's Most Painful Experience

By Don Roach

**J**esus Christ was a man of suffering, and One who was acquainted with grief. "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him" (Isaiah 53:3). "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). But have you ever wondered what was His *most painful* experience? We will have to ask Him when we meet Him in the Kingdom. But we can speculate as to what it *possibly* was.

**Was it His temptations?** Christ certainly was tempted. He experienced every temptation that every human being has ever experienced. He was tempted in *all* points as we are (Hebrews 4:15). Temptations are stressful. Christ resisted unto blood (Luke 22:44; Hebrews 12:3–4). But was this Christ's most painful experience?

**Was it the slander He endured?** Slander is hurtful. It is motivated and driven by hate. It causes pain. Christ endured His share of it. He was called a glutton, a winebibber and a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Luke 7:34). Some thought that He was empowered by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons (Luke 11:15). Some said that He was born of fornication (John 8:41). That is a hurtful taunt, as one cannot choose through whom one is born. But was this Christ's most painful experience?

**Was it the Pharisees' envy?** Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews, told Christ, "Rabbi, we [Pharisees] know that You are a teacher *come from God*; for no one can do these signs that You do *unless*

*God is with him*" (John 3:2). The Pharisees *knew* that Christ was come from God. But, they were dishonest in pretending otherwise. An example of their dishonesty is given in Matthew 28:11–15, where they bribed the soldiers to say that His body was stolen by His disciples. Why such opposition to Christ? Pilate put his finger on the pulse of the matter, "For he knew that because of *envy* they had delivered Him" (Matthew 27:18). Solomon asks, "Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but *who* is able to stand before jealousy [envy, KJV]" (Proverbs 27:4)? But was this Christ's most painful experience?

**Was it His rejection by the people?** Christ *wept* over the people's rejection of God and His way (Luke 19:41–44). We feel His pain, grief and longing as He cries out: "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD'" (Matthew 23:37–39). But was this Christ's most painful experience?

**Was it betrayal by His hand-picked disciple?** Betrayal is a very difficult thing with which to deal. David described how he felt about his betrayal (Psalm 55). Judas, Christ's betrayer, was a trusted disciple. He was the treasurer, he kept the money bag (John 13:29). A treasurer has to be a *trusted* employee. So betrayal by such a one must be particularly painful. Then, to add insult to injury,

Judas called Christ *Master* [Rabbi, NKJV], as he betrayed Him and even *kissed* Him (Mark 14:45). But was this Christ's most painful experience?

**Was it His disciples abandoning Him?** In Christ's darkest hour, His disciples fled. Mark fled naked (Mark 14:51–52). Peter, despite his boast (Mark 14:29; Luke 22:33; John 13:37), denied His Savior (John 18:15–27). However, we read in Matthew 26:56: "Then *all* the disciples forsook Him and fled." But was this Christ's most painful experience?

**Could it have been the crucifixion?** This undoubtedly was an indescribably horrific experience. Christ asked His Father *three times* to spare Him from it (Matthew 26:39, 42–44). But, thankfully for us, He submitted, willingly, to His Father's will (v. 39). He said that His heart was *exceedingly sorrowful* as He faced His ordeal (Mark 14:34). He was hit in the face, spat upon, crowned with thorns, beaten, made to carry His own cross part of the way, nailed to the cross, then speared in His side, and out flowed His blood to pay for our sins (Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19). Christ's love for us *cannot* adequately be expressed in words. Read also Isaiah 53. But was this Christ's most painful experience?

## Possibly Christ's Most Painful Experience

Read in Mark 15:34: "And at the ninth hour Jesus *cried out* [from the Greek *boao*, to shout] with a loud voice, saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama

## Christ's Most Painful Experience

continues on page 18

# Can You Take It With You?

By Dexter B. Wakefield

It was an astonishing thing to hear. The Church member said that a man with whom he had attended Church several years ago had asserted: “Nowhere does the Bible say there is a reward for works!” Not only did this man, an elder, not believe as he once did—he had forgotten what he once believed. But what does the Bible actually say about “taking it with you?” Is there a reward for works? Do our works in this life make a difference in the Kingdom of God, or do they mean nothing after we die?

The Bible teaches that in a sense, *you can take it with you*, but what you can take with you might not be what you expect. In the world, many are confused about this important subject; however, the Church of God need not be.

## God’s Economics Are Different

People sometimes chuckle over what is called *The Iron Law of Distribution*, which states, “Them that has, gets.” But Jesus Christ refuted and confounded the carnal mind when He taught that, in effect, “They that give, have.” Understanding Christ’s teaching about this is a key to understanding how God rewards the works of His children.

If a reward is necessarily for works, then why does the Bible talk about *unearned* salvation through faith? First of all, we must always remember in any discussion about good works that it is by grace—unearned pardon—that we have salvation, not by works. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8–10).

## Eternal Life Cannot Be Earned

God reveals right and wrong to humanity through His Divine Law as summarized in the Ten Commandments, and the Bible says that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4, KJV). We cannot repent of sin and break God’s commandments at the same time. But all our repentance from sin, all our law keeping and all our good works cannot save us, because it cannot remove the guilt of our past sins. Only the shed blood of Jesus Christ can do that. There is no question that God commands Christians to repent (Acts 17:30) and also to do good works (Ephesians 2:10). But

even with a righteous life full of good works, we do not have the power to cleanse ourselves of the guilt of our past sins or to give ourselves eternal life. Only God has that to give. Christ’s sacrifice cleanses us, reconciles us to the Father, and makes it possible for us to receive the gift of eternal life at the coming of Christ. Good works are the operation of our active, living faith and a truly repentant life. As the Apostle Paul explained to Titus: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.... This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men” (Titus 3:5, 8).

## Jesus Affirmed a Reward for Works

Why then do we say that there is a reward for works? Because Jesus said so! Notice what He instructed His disciples: “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then *He will reward each according to his works*” (Matthew 16:27). He further instructed them: “But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and *your reward will be great*, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil” (Luke 6:35). The Apostle John cautioned the Church: “Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward” (1 John 8). Jesus Himself explained where our reward is kept and when our reward is received: “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12–13). He 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). Christ brings our reward at His coming.

The Bible unquestionably teaches that there is a reward for works, but *nowhere does it say that the reward for works is our salvation*. What then is our reward? Extra halos? A harp?

## What Reward Does God Promise?

Jesus’ disciples asked Him this same question, wanting to know which one would be rewarded the most. He answered. “But you are those who have continued with

Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28–30). He explicitly promised them *offices* in His Kingdom!

Jesus further explained the connection between reward and office in the Kingdom in His parable of the pounds or minas: “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant; *because you were faithful in very little, have authority over ten cities*’” (Luke 19:17). Similarly, the servant who had earned five for the one he was given was made a ruler over five cities. But the man who hid his mina and gained nothing from it was severely criticized and had his mina taken from him. Jesus made it clear that He knows that those who have the character and love of God to be faithful in *little* will also have the same character and love to be faithful in *much*.

And Jesus has much for the Sons of God to do in His Kingdom: “Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us *kings and priests* to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever” (Revelation 1:5–6). “To him that overcomes I will grant *to sit with Me on My throne*, as I also overcome and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21). Christ will “have made us *kings and priests* to our God; and *we shall reign on earth*” (Revelation 5:10).

This hardly sounds like Jesus plans for His brethren to stand around on clouds forever. Rather, Jesus Christ will establish a Kingdom on earth and will give those who overcome to the end rulership with Him. According to your Bible, this is His reward for His resurrected and immortal brethren.

Put simply, the Bible teaches that obtaining eternal life and entering God’s Kingdom come only as free gifts by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. But what one does *after entering* the Kingdom of God is by reward according to works.

It is not as if God owes us anything for living fruitful lives in this age. Rather, God’s Kingdom is for the benefit of the whole world. He is pleased to give it to us, and said so: “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). But there is another reason that God tells us that He rewards our works with offices in His Kingdom.

### Character in the Kingdom

In addition to a reward for works, there is something else that we “take with us” into God’s Kingdom—our character. When Christ comes, God’s children will be resurrected (or transformed if they are still living) and they will “put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53–54). Christ will

“transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working of which He is able to subdue all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:21). God will change *what* we are but not *who* we are. The Bible makes it very clear that we must be transformed inwardly in this life, and for an important reason.

In Luke 22:28–30, Jesus told the disciples that they would be given authority in His Kingdom, but the circumstances of His comments are interesting. Verses 24–27 state: “But there was also rivalry among them, as to which of them should be considered greatest. And He said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.’” He then promised them “thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Jesus pointed out that carnal people seek power for their own benefit and exercise authority for their own service. *But the spiritual mind exercises authority for the service of others*. Unfortunately, our carnal natures do not suddenly vanish completely upon baptism and receipt of the Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit works in us to transform us inwardly and cause us to grow in the stature of Jesus Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul said, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, and to not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1–2). Among other things, this means learning the principle of *servant leadership* and having it incorporated into our very natures as it is in Jesus Christ’s very nature. This is a process that is made possible only by the indwelling of God’s Spirit. When we use whatever means, ability or authority we have to do service for others in love and outgoing concern, these good works demonstrate and develop Christ’s character and life in us. What we do changes us. These personal characteristics that Christ has and that He is building in us, enable us to hold offices in God’s Kingdom—which are actually *positions of service*. Those who are “least” now—the most serving—will be greatest in authority in God’s Kingdom. Jesus set a high standard for those “good and faithful servants” who will be “kings and priests” in His Kingdom. This is why He taught that if one were faithful in *small* services now, then that person would have the demonstrated ability and character to engage in *great* service in His Kingdom. *God’s reward for good works is actually a position of service*, and we “take it with us” in our own characters as transformed by God’s Spirit. ☞

# Report from the Treasurer

By Fred Dattolo

God continues to bless the Work! As of this writing, the offerings for the Days of Unleavened Bread are 11 percent higher than last year. And, through April 30, our daily mail income (not counting Holy Day offerings) was more than 13 percent above last year's mail income! Incidentally, in the September/October 1999 *Living Church News*, I mentioned that "although we have budgeted income [for year 2000] at current levels, we think a 20 percent increase is possible. Let's all pray that God would make it a reality!" So keep it up brethren, we are getting closer to that goal.

One reason for this growth is the support from co-workers and donors. Co-workers are non-member heads of households who have contributed at least twice in six months. They remain classified as co-workers as long as they continue to contribute at least once every 12 months. The graph below shows the rapid rise in co-worker support that we have enjoyed over the last 16 months. We now have a total of 469 co-workers as of April 30.

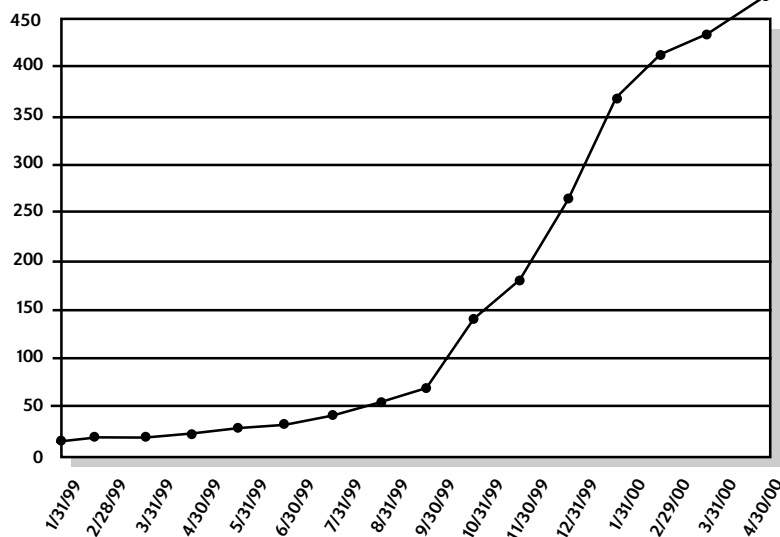
Also encouraging is the trend regarding donors. Donors are non-member heads of households who have contributed within the last twelve months, but never twice in a six-month period. Twenty of our current donors contributed for the first time in January. Twenty-one were added in February, 34 in March and 69 in April. As of April 30 we now have 372 donors, 144 of whom were added in the first four months of this year.

On another note, in April, we compiled the financial statements of the Church for the year 1999. Here are some highlights. Total income in the United States was \$6,244,000—of which \$4,876,000 was from tithes and offerings, \$1,250,000 was from Holy Day offerings and \$118,000 came from all other sources. Total expenses were \$5,631,000—resulting in a *net* income of \$613,000 (much of which was used to

purchase equipment and fund start-up costs for deposits and prepaid expenses). Expenses to "feed the flock" were \$3,127,000 (about 55 percent); to preach the Gospel \$1,947,000 (about 35 percent); and \$557,000 (about 10 percent) for administrative support. (Remember that 1999 was a "start-up" year and that local congregations were "in place" much quicker than the infrastructure needed to preach the Gospel, so we did not spend as much to preach the Gospel in 1999. *This* year, on the other hand, we have been able to increase the proportion spent on preaching the Gospel to 41 percent, as of March 31).

Other highlights of the 1999 financial statements include working capital of \$900,000 and

**Co-Worker Growth, as of 4/30/00**



"net worth" of \$1,101,000. Working capital is the difference between *liquid* (or current) assets and *current* liabilities—obligations as of December 31, 1999—most of which require payment in 2000. "Net worth" is the difference between *all* assets (including property and equipment) and *all* liabilities. We truly thank God that He has given us the ability to do more to preach the Gospel and still be able to maintain a healthy financial condition!



# A Christian's Need for Fasting

By Rod McNair

**W**hen was the last time you fasted? Was it last week, last month or on the Day of Atonement? The answer to these questions may reveal how deeply you feel the need for regular, personal fasting.

We sometimes do not fast often enough. Why? One reason is that it is inconvenient to set aside a whole day (Sunday, for example) after a busy week, just for fasting—especially when there are chores to do. Another reason is that fasting is never “comfortable.” Going without food and water for 24 hours is always a little bit painful! Perhaps the most common reason we do not fast, or do not fast often enough, is a lack of realization of our deep need for it. The Bible shows several reasons why faithful men and women of the Bible need to fast.

## **Fasting for the Welfare of Others**

David had a lot of enemies—some of whom were after his life! But when they were sick, David fasted for them. Psalm 35:13–14 says: “But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart. I paced about as though he were my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one who mourns for his mother.” How much do we fast for our friends, much less our “enemies?” Are we fasting when others are sick? Are we fasting for spiritual strength to forgive and love our enemies? That is one of the needs we have today.

## **Fasting for Physical Protection**

When Ezra and his party were heading out on the long voyage back to Jerusalem from Babylon, there were many dangers. What did Ezra do? “Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions... So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer” (Ezra 8:21, 23). We need physical protection today—especially in the end when God's Church will flee to a place of refuge. Even now, there are parts of the Philippines, and other places around the world, where our brethren face very real dangers. That is a need we can fast about today.

## **Fasting Before an Interview**

How many times have you had to go before a boss, teacher or administrator with a request? There is a biblical example of fasting to obtain a favorable response from a superior. Mordecai exhorted Queen Esther to approach the king to appeal for the lives of the Jews. She knew that if the king did not hold out the scepter to her as she entered, it would mean the death penalty for her. She desperately needed God to change the mind of her superior to be favorable towards her. Notice what she did. She told Mordecai: “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” (Esther 4:16). All men—including kings and presidents—are like “putty” in God's hands! When we are acting in faith by approaching a superior—in order to obey God—we can ask God to change their minds for our benefit, too!

## **Fasting to Overcome Temptation**

If anyone did not “need” to fast, in this sense, it would be God Himself. But we have the example of Jesus Christ who fasted before the Devil tempted Him in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–2). This was real temptation—it was not play-acting! The Bible says Christ was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). When Jesus Christ needed to be especially close to His Father—to resist the temptations that Satan would try on Him—what did He do? He fasted. If we are beset with temptations, if we are struggling to overcome a problem or a sin, how do we do it? How do we find the strength to fight against the Devil—to resist him and cling to God? As the disciples found out in Mark 9:29, fasting is an indispensable tool for spiritual strength! There simply is no substitute!

## **Fasting to Examine the Self**

So how can we take advantage of this powerful tool for Christian growth? Take the advice of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, as he wrote in his autobiography: “I first prayed and asked God to show me the way—to open my understanding. Then, I began to search the Bible for instruc-

tion. Then for one hour I sat in thought and contemplation. I turned over in my mind the scriptures I had read. I reflected on my own life in recent months. I tried to compare it with God's way, as revealed in the Scriptures. Then I spent the next hour in talking to God—in prayer. And so I decided to continue in this order—one hour in scripture study, one in contemplation, and one in prayer. I did not once ask God to heal my wife—as yet. I had been doing that for weeks, without result. I was fasting and praying, not for the purpose of bringing pressure on God to force Him to obey my will and give what was asked—but to find out what was

wrong with me! I realized we did not need to nag at God. **Never fast as a means of inducing God to answer!**" (*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Vol. 1, 1986, pp. 391–393*).

How can we experience real spiritual growth? How can we approach God when we have real needs for physical protection, success in difficult interviews and strength to overcome temptation or to forgive enemies? Examine the self through fasting—ask God to show us ourselves. Then, and only then, will we be in the right frame of mind to make our requests known to Him. We *need* to fast! ☞

### Christ's Most Painful Experience

(continued from page 13)

sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, *why have You forsaken Me?*" Even God the Father forsook Christ! And it was because of our sins being placed on His Son. What awesome pain for the Lord Jesus! The One with whom He had spent eternity *also* turned away. Christ was so close to His Father that He declared that They are One (John 10:30). The Father was His support system. He declared that He could do *nothing* without His Father (John 5:19, 30, 8:28).

Some speculate that Christ did not know that this would happen. However, Scripture indicates otherwise. Psalm 22, a prophecy about the crucifixion, opens with, "My God, My God, *why have You forsaken Me?*" So Christ, knowing that His Father cannot look on sin, *must have known* that, *at some point*, His Father would forsake Him, when our sins were placed upon Him. But it was such a horrific, shocking, lonely, agonizing and painful experience, that He cried out with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Christ had deep feelings after experiencing the pain of being forsaken by His Father. Notice which words He felt would be appropriate as His *very last words* to His disciples, before He ascended to heaven—as recorded by Matthew: "and lo, I am with you *always, even to the end of the age.*" Amen" (Matthew 28:20). Christ *experienced* the pain and agony of being forsaken, and He *promised* by His power and authority that He will *never* put us through that. This is our confidence, guaranteed by our High Priest, our Elder Brother, our King and our future Husband, that *once we do not turn away from God, He will not turn away from us!* EVER! What a promise, "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." ☞

### Being a Holy People

(continued from page 6)

are freely offered, but we are admonished not to receive that grace in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1). We are to respond to God's call by believing His message and unconditionally surrendering our lives to Him, turning from our ways to His. This is repentance. Being justified (made innocent before God) is pictured by the Passover. The Days of Unleavened Bread show our part in God's plan of salvation. Pentecost pictures our being made holy.

Understanding the importance of our being a holy people is what explains the Christian life and why God's people must be different from the world around us. We must love the people in the world and be willing to help and serve them. However, we must uphold different values and priorities than those who do not know the true God. Holiness should be reflected in all areas of our conduct. For instance, the entertainment we choose and the way in which we relax should not reflect the empty and decadent values of this

society. The way we pursue dating and marriage is to be carried out in holiness and honor, not in lust and immorality like it is in the world around (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5). The way we live our lives, as men and women, is to reflect the values of chastity, modesty, and discretion in our dress, demeanor and speech. This reflects reverence for God and the pursuit of holiness (cf. Titus 2:1–8).

As Christians we must reject the uncleanness of a world built upon lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life (1 John 2:16). The Apostle Paul taught us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:11–14). ☞

**Enthusiasm and ZEAL***(continued from page 3)*

—till, by the very delay—strengthening of the spirit of prayer, and by the continued exercise of it—their hearts are brought into such a state of submission and of faith, that they become fit recipients of the blessing (p. 215).

Because he went “all out,” Jacob [“Usurper”] had his very name changed to “Israel”—which means “prevailer with God” or “prince of God.” As you read this account carefully, you get the feeling that just as Jesus “sweat blood” during His super-intense prayer to God before His crucifixion, so Jacob must have virtually sweat blood in his total effort to prevail with God during his special time of trial.

Have you cried out so earnestly that you burst a blood vessel? How *much* does eternal life in the very Family of God REALLY mean to you?

Put it another way: How *easily* can you become discouraged or bitter or just drift away from God and His true Church?

The very attribute that separates the Philadelphians from the Laodiceans at the end of this age is their ZEAL for the Word of God and for the Work of God. Remember that Jesus Christ, the “Faithful and True Witness,” clearly sets forth His judgment of the Laodiceans: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are LUKEWARM, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:15–16). This weak, insipid, lukewarm approach to God, of NOT being able to get totally excited and totally involved in the Word and Work of God, is one of the most disgusting things imaginable to the Living Christ. So He says, “I will SPEW you out of My mouth!”

*Please think deeply about that, brethren!*

For this present society is soon to come to an end. Those of you who make even a “lesser god” out of your job or business, your home or family, your professional or society friends, your money, your prestige—or whatever—are going to LOSE OUT unless you genuinely REPENT.

As Christ’s servant, I cannot help you by putting it in a “nicer” or “softer” way! You *all* know what to do. You have heard this many times. You need to diligently and regularly *study* the Bible and “feed on Christ” (John 6:57). You need to CRY OUT to God in your prayers on a *daily* basis. Remember Jesus Christ’s example: “Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with *vehement* CRIES and TEARS to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:7–9).

You need to learn to *use* the spiritual “tool” of FASTING—*regularly*. Remember Jesus’ instruction: “Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and *then they WILL FAST*’” (Matthew 9:14–15). And again, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and FASTING” (Mark 9:29).

David, the “man after God’s heart,” was a marvelous example of *passion* and *zeal* for God. David cried out, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and

appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’” (Psalm 42:1–3).

It is hard to read Paul’s story in the book of Acts, or to study his letters, without feeling the *enthusiasm* and ZEAL of this Apostle who “labored more abundantly than they all” (1 Corinthians 15:10). Throughout his letters, Paul displays a remarkable degree of zeal and total commitment.

Even in chains as a prisoner in Rome, the Apostle Paul was glad that the Gospel was preached even, at times, with wrong motives. He wrote: “For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:19–21).

Do you and I have the total commitment to wish, no matter what, that CHRIST may be “magnified” in our bodies—even if that means DEATH?

Is it “immature” to get excited and very enthusiastic about the Work of God and about our daily preparation for the soon-coming Kingdom of God? *Paul certainly did not think so*, for he was inspired to write: “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I PRESS toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you” (Philippians 3:13–15).

Indeed, real spiritual maturity is found in “giving” of ourselves to our Creator and to our fellow man. It is found in “emptying” ourselves in

service as Jesus Christ Himself did. It is found in ZEALOUSLY praying that our service to Him be the PASSION of our lives!

Others may yell and scream during football or soccer games, or at “rock stars” and other entertainment “idols.” But our fervent dedication and WORSHIP must be to the Great GOD

who gives us life and breath. Our total passion and worship must be to the *true* Jesus Christ who DIED for us and who is now sitting in GLORY at the right hand of the Father.

We must not allow *anything* to come between us and this heartfelt relationship with our Creator and our Savior. We must NEVER turn aside or

waver from this path. Then, we will be able to say, with Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7–8). LCN

### Correction: The Way to Maturity

(continued from page 2)

God tells us: “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11). Personally, I have learned that even when the correction is not given in a “nice” way and even when the motivation of the one giving the correction is questionable, it is FAR BETTER to truly “listen” to the correction, *think* about it and *act* on it than it is to get my feelings hurt or refuse to listen. Through the trials and tests of over 50 years in the Church of God I have learned that it is wise to consider carefully even what my enemies are saying. For *sometimes*, strange as it may seem, they may point out problems in my life or in my approach that even my friends have not told me about!

So if you truly LONG to be in God’s Kingdom and Family forever, it should not make any difference *where* the correction originates, or even if it seems to be given in a wrong spirit. Rather, you will want to think about it, perhaps learn from it and certainly ACT upon it if you find that even part of the correction is true.

Try to NEVER get your “feelings” hurt when you are corrected. And especially never allow yourself to become BITTER when you are corrected by God, by God’s ministers or by *anyone!* For that bitterness may not hurt them at all. But, if allowed to continue and to grow, it will DESTROY *you!*

As the inspired writer of Hebrews warns us: “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any *root* of BITTERNESS springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled” (Hebrews 12:14–15).

Even if it “hurts,” even if you have to literally CRY OUT to God for help, be absolutely sure that you never

fall into a spirit of BITTERNESS! For once you become bitter, you usually *cannot be reached* by logical reasoning. Often, even God’s Spirit cannot reach you! For your own carnal pride and bitterness will simply block out the influence of God’s Holy Spirit.

*Brethren*, that is *extremely* SERIOUS! For in all sincerity I have to tell you from the bottom of my heart that my entire experience in God’s Church has shown me that if you allow yourself to become totally bitter, you may have, *in that very moment*, chosen DEATH rather than *eternal life* in the glorious Kingdom of God!

So learn to genuinely humble the self. Learn to take correction and rebuke. Meditate deeply on these inspired words of the Apostle Peter: “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:5–7).

Truly, God *does* care for you. He has made you in His image. He wants you to become His *full* son in the resurrection. He wants you to become like He is forever. But, in order for that to occur, He has to work with you over a period of years. He may need to knock the “carnal crust” off of you. He needs to fashion you, correct you when you are wrong and chasten you when necessary. Then, God will “know” that you will really fit into His eternal Family which is based upon giving—NOT “getting”—upon genuine humility and service, on LOVE and out-flowing concern and on the inexpressible JOY of being in total union with God Himself.

*There is no other way.*

So let us all be willing to let God work with us, correct us and fashion in us the perfect character He wants us to have. Then, as Peter tells us, “AFTER you *have suffered awhile*,” God will, “perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you. To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 5:10–11).



# PRE-REGISTRATION FORM • Feast of Tabernacles 2000

**Please fill out the following form and mail it to Headquarters.** Coordinators need to know how many people plan to attend each site. Plans need to be made for activities, seating, etc. Even if your plans change later, we still ask that you send this form **right now** to:

**Living Church of God, P.O. Box 503077, San Diego, CA 92150-3077.**

**If you would like to serve at the Feast this year, please number your choices in order of preference:** (additional family members who would like to serve may list their names and the areas in which they would like to help on the back side of this form.)

- Business Office (Typing)
- Business Office (HDO Count)
- First Aid
- Family Day
- Information Table
- Parents' Room
- Parking
- Chorale (Experienced Director)
- Chorale (Alto)
- Chorale (Soprano)
- Chorale (Tenor)
- Chorale (Bass)
- Special Music (Singing)
- Special Music (Instrumental)
- Piano (Accompaniment for hymns)
- Ushering
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Feast Site:

San Diego is a *limited-transfer* site, please wait for Headquarters confirmation before making housing arrangements.

PERSONAL  
IDENTIFICATION  
NUMBER

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Number Attending:** \_\_\_\_\_ Children under 18: \_\_\_\_\_ Singles: \_\_\_\_\_

### I Am A:

- Local Elder    Deacon    Deaconess

### Special Needs:

- Handicapped    Non-English Speaking (Please Specify)    Other
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Please Describe Any Special Needs:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# 2000 Feast of Tabernacles 2000

The 2000 Feast of Tabernacles will begin with services on Friday evening, October 13. The Last Great Day this year is on the weekly Sabbath, October 21.

The Living Church of God will operate seven sites in the United States, three in Canada, one in Mexico and one in Europe, along with others around the world. Please use the information below to begin making reservations immediately; if you have questions about any information not covered here, please contact your pastor or the site coordinators listed below. *Those who need assistance to attend the Feast should contact their pastor as soon as possible.*

Please return your completed Feast Pre-Registration Form (includ-

ed in this issue of the *Living Church News*, and available online in the Members section of the Church Web site at [www.livingcog.org](http://www.livingcog.org)) to Headquarters as soon as possible. This is a key planning tool that will help the Church better serve Feast attendees. Those who wish to fax their forms to Headquarters may fax them to (858) 673-0310.

**NOTE:** The San Diego site is a limited attendance transfer-only site. If you wish to attend in San Diego, please send in your Pre-Registration Form as soon as possible. If you do not receive acknowledgement of your form, and approval to attend in San Diego, you will not be able to arrive unannounced and attend services.

Because of the limited transfer space, brethren living in California are especially encouraged to attend other sites if possible, to make more room for those who would like to keep the Feast in San Diego this year.

The following list of sites includes limited housing information. Please note that all detail is for information only, and except where noted (such as those sites at which meeting hall costs are defrayed by brethren staying at a suggested hotel) is NOT a recommendation of a facility. We strongly recommend that you do your own research to supplement the information given below, which is provided in the hope of giving you a "starting point" for your planning.

## Girdwood, AL

The Feast in Alaska will be held this year at the:

**Westin Alyeska Prince Hotel**  
Girdwood, Alaska  
(907) 754-2111  
(800) 880-3880

Girdwood is Alaska's premier resort destination, set amidst spectacular snow-covered mountains, deep blue glaciers and alpine valleys. All rooms at the Westin Alyeska Prince Hotel will be \$89 per day (plus 8 percent tax); children 18 and under stay free. Brethren are encouraged to stay at this hotel in order to ensure this specially reduced rate.

Just a scenic 40 mile drive from Anchorage (airport shuttle is available), the Westin Alyeska Prince Hotel is surrounded by forest, mountains and ocean. Available activities include: glacier cruises, wildlife viewing, gold panning, hiking, whale-watching and river rafting. Come

prepared for cool and sometimes cloudy weather, with temperatures ranging into the 50s.

If you have any questions about this site, please contact site coordinator Mr. Gary Ullerick by email at [ullerick@earthlink.net](mailto:ullerick@earthlink.net) or by phone at (253) 922-6917. If you have Internet access, you can learn more about the Westin Alyeska Prince Hotel at: [www.alyeskaresort.com](http://www.alyeskaresort.com).

## Jackson, WY

The Feast will be held in Teton Village, a small ski village 12 miles from Jackson Hole. Most attendees will want to stay right in Teton Village. Jackson Hole is a beautiful, mountain-enclosed valley in Wyoming. From its floor, at an elevation of 6,300 feet, the breathtaking Tetons rise 7,000 feet higher still. Those who believe they might experience health problems due to Jackson Hole's elevation should consult with a health care professional before attending. For those with special needs, many handicapped facilities are available. The site will provide many singles activities at the Feast, but the



range of activities available make it a good choice for a family Feast.

Those wishing to stay in condominiums may contact Jackson Hole Resort Lodging at (800) 443-8613 or Rendezvous Mountain Rentals at (888) 739-2565. Jackson Hole Property Management can offer discounts of 20 percent and more for three- to four-bedroom condominiums; they can be reached at (800) 876-3968.

One popular local hotel is the Best Western Inn at Jackson Hole-Teton Village at (800) 842-7666. Another choice is the Renaissance Resort & Spa at Jackson Hole at (800) 445-4655. The Alpenhof, the closest hotel at just 100 feet from the meeting hall, is offering a 35 percent price rollback for Feast attendees; call (800) 732-3244 for more details.

If you have questions about this site, please contact site coordinator Mr. Ben Whitfield at (307) 324-3600 (daytime) or by e-mail at [bhwhit@coffey.com](mailto:bhwhit@coffey.com)

## Kerrville, TX

The Feast will be kept in Kerrville this year at the:

**Y.O. Ranch Resort Hotel & Conference Center**  
2033 Sidney Baker  
Kerrville, TX 78028  
Phone: (877) 967-3767  
Fax: (830) 896-8189  
[www.hotelkerrville.com](http://www.hotelkerrville.com)

Recently remodeled, the Y.O. Ranch Motel offers lovely rooms with tiled floors; some with Mexican fireplaces, as well as suites at a special LCG church rate. The Y.O. has reserved 135 rooms especially for the church. Very affordable camping and R.V. sites are available in the area.

San Antonio is only an hour away, with an international airport and offers premium restaurants and world-class attractions such as Sea World, Six Flags/Fiesta Texas, the historic Alamo, the Tower of Americas, and the famous downtown Riverwalk with authentic Tex-Mex dining on the river or gondola river-boat tours.

Fredericksburg is minutes away, with European tea rooms, fine restaurants, antique shops and bed & breakfasts.

Another major point of interest in Fredericksburg is the Admiral Nimitz naval museum, where you can discover WWII naval history and learn about a World War II hero. You can learn about the 36th President of the United States by touring the official LBJ museum and ranch—a great educational experience. Nearby is “Enchanted

Rock,” a huge dome rock which after a pleasant hike will reward you with magnificent views. Bring your compass and watch the strong magnetic fields affect its readings!

Plan for good weather and good fun; expect temperatures in the 70s with nice breezes, plenty of sunshine, Texas BBQ and horseback riding for the adventurous.

If you have any questions about the Kerrville site, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Keith Walden, by phone at (512) 244-5478 or by e-mail at [kwalden@cogl.org](mailto:kwalden@cogl.org).

## Lake of the Ozarks, MO

Services at the Lake of the Ozarks, MO, site will be held at the Main Street Music Hall in Osage Beach:

**Main Street Music Hall**  
1048 Main St.  
Osage Beach, MO  
(573) 348-9500

There is a Comfort Inn just one block from the meeting hall; call (573) 348-9555 for information or reservations. Alternatively, the Scottish Inn, one mile from the hall, has some of the least expensive rooms in the area; call (573) 348-3123 for more information. The Lazy Days Resort, 2.8 miles from the meeting hall, has condominiums ranging from two-bedroom, 900 square foot units, to four-bedroom, 1,400 square foot units. Phone (573) 348-2930 for information or reservations. Those not wishing to stay in the above-mentioned facilities may contact the Lake of the Ozarks Convention and Visitors Bureau at (573) 348-1599.

If you have further questions, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Gerald Weston, by phone at (816) 228-2035 or by e-mail at [gweston@pars.net](mailto:gweston@pars.net).

## Panama City, FL

Services during the Feast will be held at the:

**Marina Civic Center**  
8 Harrison Avenue  
Panama City, FL 32401

A variety of housing arrangements are available in the Panama City area, from motels to hotels to condominiums. Please note that while condominiums may offer amenities, space and convenience not available in some hotels or motels, you can expect substantial variations in the furnishings of different condominiums within the same com-

plex, since décor is determined by the units' individual owners. If there are problems with your condo rental, property management agencies will work to transfer you into a more acceptable unit, but when most condos are booked there may not always be an alternative available.

Special rates will be available from three property management agencies; remember to mention that you are with Living Church of God to secure these rates: Panama City Beach Rentals has a special rate that will give you nine nights for the usual cost of five. Condominiums and houses are available; call them at (800) 923-2737 or visit their Web site at [www.pbeachrentals.com](http://www.pbeachrentals.com) for specific rates and condo availability. Condo World is another option for less expensive condos; call them at (800) 232-6636 or visit their Web site at [www.condoworld.net](http://www.condoworld.net) for more details. Sun Spot Realty has a variety of luxury units; call them at (800) 423-8367 or visit their Web site at [www.sunspotrealty.com](http://www.sunspotrealty.com) for more information.

If you are interested in a motel on the beach, you may want to investigate the Beach Tower Motel at (800) 446-8694; you may send e-mail inquiries to [beachtwr@bellsouth.net](mailto:beachtwr@bellsouth.net) or visit their Web site at [www.pbeachtower.com](http://www.pbeachtower.com). These are relatively inexpensive units and are limited in number, so make reservations early if you are interested. Another relatively inexpensive option, 5.5 miles from the Marina Civic Center, is the Sleep Inn; for more information, call (888) 285-7534.

For additional information or special assistance, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Ben Faulkner, via email at [bfaulkner@cogl.org](mailto:bfaulkner@cogl.org) or by phone at (813) 684-1423.

## Pigeon Forge, TN

God's people will celebrate eight inspiring days of spiritual food, family fun and fellowship along the scenic Little Pigeon River at the:

**Grand Resort Hotel and Convention Center**  
 Highway 441  
 3171 Parkway  
 Pigeon Forge, TN 37863  
 Phone: (423) 453-1000  
 Fax: (423) 428-3944  
 Toll-free (800) 251-4444  
[www.grandresorthotel.com](http://www.grandresorthotel.com)

Those staying at the Grand Resort Hotel will receive a free continental breakfast and a 20 percent discount on

lunch. Rooms will also be available at the nearby Days Inn (865) 453-4707, Comfort Inn (865) 428-1069 and Best Western Plaza Inn (865) 453-5538.

Opportunities will abound to take advantage of family oriented attractions such as country music shows, shopping and sightseeing amidst the millennial setting of the river and nearby Smoky Mountains. In addition, teens, singles and senior citizens will enjoy specially planned activities during the Feast. This year's Feast at Pigeon Forge will also host a fun-filled "family dance"—providing a wonderful evening of fellowship and entertainment for all ages.

If you have any questions about this site, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Dan Hall, by e-mail at [dhall@cogl.org](mailto:dhall@cogl.org) or by phone at (334) 626-0585.

## San Diego, CA

As a convenience for brethren in the southwestern United States, a small transfer-only site is being held in San Diego this year. Limited to no more than 330 attendees, it will allow brethren to keep the Feast at Church Headquarters and to enjoy the many attractions and recreational facilities available in the San Diego area. Those wishing to attend this site must return their Pre-Registration Forms (included in this LCN) as quickly as possible, since space will be allotted on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the site is full, all those who have been accepted will receive a confirmation notice containing further information and suggestions regarding local accommodations. For further information, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Don Davis, by e-mail at [ddavis@cogl.org](mailto:ddavis@cogl.org) or by phone at (858) 673-7470. Spanish translation will be provided at this site.

## Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada

The Feast will be kept in Charlottetown on Prince Edward Island at the Carrefour de l'Isle Saint-Jean School. Ample affordable housing is available in the Charlottetown area. Options range from the Best Western Charlottetown, reachable at (800) 528-1234, to the Travelodge Hotel at (800) 565-7633, to the Inn on the Hill at (800) 578-7878, to a variety of other hotels, motels and cottages nearby.

For more information please contact site coordinator Mr. Jim Arnaldo, by e-mail at [jimarnaldo@aol.com](mailto:jimarnaldo@aol.com) or



by phone at (508) 393-6209. Individuals with Web access may find out more about the site at its unofficial URL: [www.users.erols.com/markarnaldo/peiplanner.htm](http://www.users.erols.com/markarnaldo/peiplanner.htm)

## Cranbrook, British Columbia, Canada

Services during the Feast will be held at the:

**Prestige Rocky Mountain Resort and Convention Centre**

209 Van Horne St. South

Cranbrook, BC V1C 6R9

Phone: (250) 417-0424

Fax: (250) 417-0423

The city of Cranbrook is nestled in the beautiful Kootenays of the Great Canadian Rocky Mountains and maintains a pleasant climate with four distinct seasons. For those who do not wish to stay at the main hotel, there are more than two dozen motels within a 15-block area around the Convention Centre. The Prestige Rocky Mountain Resort has more than 100 guest rooms, a swimming pool and hot tub, a full fitness center and two restaurants. More than 60 eating establishments are available in the area of the Convention Centre.

Available tourist attractions include four provincial parks, Fort Steele Heritage Town, and the ski resort village of Kimberly, located just a half-hour drive from the Convention Centre. Several hot springs near White Swan Lake are within an hour's drive to the north. Fall daytime temperatures are expected to range from 50–70 degrees Fahrenheit.

For further information, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Eng Monson, by phone at (306) 545-5250 or by e-mail at [esm@sk.sympatico.ca](mailto:esm@sk.sympatico.ca).

## Saint-Sauveur, Quebec, Canada

“Bonjour!” (Welcome!) to Canada’s bilingual Feast of Tabernacles in the village of Saint-Sauveur, just 45 minutes from the cosmopolitan city of Montreal. This typical Quebec village attracts numerous visitors to its many restaurants, art galleries and craft shops. Feastgoers will experience a mixture of French hospitality coupled with a truly family atmosphere. Expect cool nights and warm

days with temperatures between 35–70 degrees Fahrenheit (5–20 degrees Celsius).

Services will be held in a five-star resort hotel, the:

**Manoir Saint-Sauveur**  
246 du Lac Millette Road,  
Saint-Sauveur-des-Monts, Quebec  
JOR IR3  
(800) 361-0505  
[www.manoir-saint-sauveur.com](http://www.manoir-saint-sauveur.com)

This hotel offers 220 luxurious rooms, including 40 suites. It offers sports facilities, fine dining and inside and outdoor parking. Ample housing within walking distance surrounds the feast site with prices ranging from \$35.00–\$89.00 per night. Available activities will include: horseback riding, biking, boating, canoeing and mountain walks over the many hiking trails in the area. For the golf enthusiast, the area offers many fine golf courses which will be offering special year-end rates.

For further information, please contact Mr. Jacques Secours or Mr. Frank Best. Mr. Secours may be reached by e-mail at: [srobichaud@sprint.ca](mailto:srobichaud@sprint.ca) or by phone at (450) 623-5002; Mr. Best may be reached by e-mail at [fbest@nfld.com](mailto:fbest@nfld.com) or by phone at (905) 845-7922. For more information about the Mont Saint-Sauveur region, you may phone (800) 363-2426 or visit its Web site at: [www.montsaintsauveur.com](http://www.montsaintsauveur.com).

## Australasia

**Australia:** For information about Feast sites in Australia, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Bruce Tyler, via email at [btyler@pacific.net.au](mailto:btyler@pacific.net.au) or by phone at 61-7-3841-8360.

**New Zealand:** For information about the Feast site in New Zealand, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Kinnear Penman, via email at [penman@igrin.co.nz](mailto:penman@igrin.co.nz) or by phone at 64-9-435-3592.

**Papua New Guinea:** For information about the Papua New Guinea site, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Bruce Tyler, via email at [btyler@pacific.net.au](mailto:btyler@pacific.net.au) or by phone at 61-7-3841-8360.

## George, South Africa

For information on the Feast site in South Africa, please contact site coordinator Mr. Syd Hull by e-mail at [sjh@global.co.za](mailto:sjh@global.co.za).

## Jamaica

The Feast will be kept in Jamaica this year at the:

**Jamaica Grandiosa Resort**  
 2 Ramparts Close  
 P.O. Box 139  
 Montego Bay  
 Phone: (876) 979-3205  
 Fax: (876) 940-5111

The hotel, on the north coast of Jamaica, is five minutes by car from the Sangster International Airport and from the world famous Doctor Cave beach. For further information, please contact the site coordinator Mr. Hugh Wilson by e-mail at [ehd.wilson@cwjamaica.com](mailto:ehd.wilson@cwjamaica.com).

## Nyeri, Kenya

The Feast will be kept in Kenya at the Crested Eagle Hotel in Nyeri, 155 kilometers northeast of Nairobi. For further information, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Ernest Owino, by e-mail at [sedgwick@iconnect.co.ke](mailto:sedgwick@iconnect.co.ke), by phone at 254-2-340540, by fax at 254-2-217033 or by mail at P.O. Box 35050, Nairobi, Kenya.

## Penang, Malaysia

This year the Feast of Tabernacles will be in held at the Paradise Tanjung Bungah, in Penang, Malaysia. The hotel is located in Tanjung Bungah, along the beachfront, just 12 minutes from the city center and 45 minutes from Penang Bayan Lepas International Airport. Those with Internet access can learn more about the hotel at [www.paradisehotel.com](http://www.paradisehotel.com).

For further information, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Rajan Moses, by e-mail at: [rajend@pc.jaring.my](mailto:rajend@pc.jaring.my), by phone or fax at (603) 930-1187 or by postal mail at: M263 Perkuburan Cheras Batu 4, Jalan Cheras 56100, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## Philippines

The Feast will be kept this year in Baguio City, Tacloban, Maranding and Davao City. For more information please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Rod McNair, by e-mail at [rmcnair@cogl.org](mailto:rmcnair@cogl.org), by phone at 011-63-2-813-6538 or by mail c/o Living Church of God, MCPO Box 1774, Makati City, 1257.

## Portbail, France

### Combined U.K./France/Europe Site

Brethren from all over Europe will be joining with visitors from overseas to keep the Feast this year in the northern French town of Portbail. On the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula, just 14 kilometers (8 miles) from the Channel Islands, Portbail is a beautiful old town with a rich history. Services (in English and French, with translation) will be held at the:

VVF Canterelle "La Porte Des Iles"-Portbail  
 Villiage Vacances  
 La Porte des Isles  
 50580 PORTBAIL

Housing at the site includes 100 semi-detached bungalows with lawns, in a village-style setting, in a dune décor on a six acre site between the sea and grove.

Amenities include a bar, library, play area, television room and tourist information center. A shopping area with a variety of stores is less than three miles away. Facilities for volleyball, basketball, football, and bowling are available at no charge. For a small charge, visitors may rent bicycles or use the equestrian center, tennis courts or sail carts.

Because of favorable exchange rates and the affordable accommodations, many visitors will find this site more affordable than the North American alternatives.

Those with Internet access can send e-mail inquiries about the town and its amenities to the local tourism bureau at [tourisme.portbail@wanadoo.fr](mailto:tourisme.portbail@wanadoo.fr) or may visit [www.ville-portbail.fr](http://www.ville-portbail.fr) and [www.manchetourisme.com](http://www.manchetourisme.com)

For further information about this site, please contact the site coordinator, Mr. Dibar Apartian; he can be reached by phone at (858) 673-7470, by fax at (858) 673-0310 or by e-mail at [dapartian@cogl.org](mailto:dapartian@cogl.org).

## Metepec, Mexico

Metepec, two hours west of Mexico City, offers a mild climate and mountain scenery. Visitors can catch trout, ride bicycles, swim, play basketball or soccer, or exercise in a gymnasium. English translation will be provided.

The meeting hall and hotel are in the same complex. Those arriving at Mexico City International Airport before 11 a.m. on October 13 will be transported to the Feast site.

For more information about Metepec or Spanish-language sites in Argentina, Colombia and Guatemala, please contact Mr. Mario Hernandez by phone at (858) 673-7470 or by e-mail at [mhernandez@cogl.org](mailto:mhernandez@cogl.org).

# Local Church News

## Living Youth Camp 2000

If you are a teenager or young adult and feel isolated where you are, come join us for two weeks of fun and fellowship, with people of like mind, July 25 through August 7. Applications are available for Living Youth Camp 2000 at beautiful Northwoods Camp near Pickford, Michigan.

Activities include a two-day canoe trip, flag football, archery,

Christian living classes, challenge course and volleyball, along with our traditional cookouts, pizza parties, game nights and dances. A class in building construction is also planned as we expand the size of one of the boys' dorms. Another new feature will be a class in Web site design and news broadcasting on the Internet.

If you would like an application to be a Camper, High School Worker or Adult Staff member, please contact LYC at one of the following:

**Phone:** (816) 228-2035

**E-mail:** [lyc@cogl.org](mailto:lyc@cogl.org)

**Mail:** Living Youth Camp  
2200 Cherokee Strip  
Blue Springs, MO 64015

### Birth Announcements

Fred and Janet Dattolo are *thrilled* to announce the birth of their third child, **Christina Sarah**. She was born on March 8th at 5:15 p.m. She weighed 9 pounds and was 21 inches long. The family is very happy for God's blessing!

**Danaka Marlene Reed** was born to Brad and Marlene Reed of Monrovia, California. Danaka was born on Nov. 18, 1999, the granddaughter of Albert and Jolene Myers of Houston, Texas and Mrs. Emily Reed of Pennsylvania.

### Ordinations

**Roger Baillargeon** was ordained as a deacon in the Montreal congregation on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Mr. Baillargeon has been an active member of the Church since 1985 when both he and his wife were baptized. Evangelist Dibar Apartian and Montreal minister Jacques Secours conducted the ordination. He is a song leader, gives sermonettes and is a source of encouragement to the congregation.

**Jerry and Shirley Stevens**, of the Living Church of God's Merrill, Wisconsin congregation, were ordained as Deacon and Deaconess on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Area Pastor Paul Shumway officiated.

### Anniversaries

In recognition of their 65th wedding anniversary, the Living Church of God in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan joined in celebration with **Steve and Maria Thoms** to honor them on this very special anniversary of 65 years together.

Numerous letters came from all over Canada. Prime Minister Jean Chretien sent congratulations and many provincial and local dignitaries sent correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. Thoms. They still are able to attend church services every week.  
—Ed Stringer

The 50th wedding anniversary of **Alex and Ethyl Kirk** was celebrated on February 26, 2000 following Sabbath services at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. They have been a living testimony of commitment and faithfulness in God's Church.

All enjoyed the special time of fellowship in recognition of the couple's more than 50 years together. Letters of congratulation were received from local government leaders, from Provincial Premier Roy Romanow and from Mr. Jean Chretien, the Prime Minister of Canada. The Queen's Representative Adrien Clarkson also sent congratulations.  
—Ed Stringer

# Joplin Hosts Family Weekend

On the weekend of February 19th and 20th, the Joplin, Mo., Living Church of God congregation hosted a family weekend, featuring a costume ball and men's basketball tournament. To start the weekend, Joplin pastor Karl Beyersdorfer gave an excellent sermon entitled "Christ and the Sabbath." After services, everyone was treated to a delicious lasagna dinner at the church hall, then at 7:00 p.m. the costume ball began. Approximately 170 people filled the hall. Guests came from St. Louis, Mo.; Rolla, Mo.; Columbia, Mo.; Fayetteville, Ark.; Little Rock, Ark.; Russellville, Ark.; Jonesboro, Ark.; Tulsa, Okla.; Oklahoma City, Okla. and Coffeyville, Kan. Large Roman pillars and candle-lit tables made for an elegant décor, and a



Left to Right: Kraig Beyersdorfer as Austin Powers, David Hilgenburg as a Viking, Kirk Prince as Braveheart and Rick Rupert as Moses.

delectable array of finger foods, prepared by several of the ladies, was served. Most everyone dressed in costume, young and old alike. Halfway through the evening awards were given for best homemade costume, best rented costume and

best-dressed couple. Dancing and fellowship lasted until midnight. On Sunday morning, five men's basketball teams arrived at the college gymnasium for a sausage and egg biscuit breakfast before the games commenced. Guest teams included Columbia, Mo.; Little Rock, Ark.; Russellville, Ark. and two teams from Tulsa, Okla. Six games were played, and a picnic lunch of sandwiches, nachos and a variety of desserts was provided. The entire weekend was an enormous success! Numerous brethren commented that the weekend reminded them of old times when family weekends and church activities were common. In fact, the weekend went so well that we are hoping to make it an annual event. *—Ashleigh Beyersdorfer*

## Michigan Carnival

February 6, 2000 dawned like any other Sabbath day, but something special was going to happen. Families in northern Indiana and southern Michigan had been hard at work in the previous weeks planning for this day.

Once a month, the congregations in this area meet in Marshall, Michigan, for services, a potluck and Bible study. This time, a costume party and carnival were also going to take place after sunset!

As the carnival was being set up, familiar children and adults began disappearing into changing rooms and different (but still recognizable!) ones emerged. There were butterflies, dancers, cowboys and cowgirls, spacemen, clowns, Star Wars characters, a princess, Zorro, Albert Einstein, a couple of fuzzy dice, a Harley "Momma" and her driver, a gypsy, a salt shaker, a Dalmatian puppy and many others. Mr. David Burson, area pastor, came as a carpenter.

Everyone took part in the games of skill at the carnival or just wandered around the midway, snacking on treats and chatting with other partygoers. As the evening ended, some were already discussing what they were going to dress up as next time!

*—Nick Carl*

## In Loving Memory

**Emma (Anna) Thomas**, 94, of Otterville, Missouri, died on April 6th at a nursing home. She was a member of the Living Church of God, baptized in 1960. Miss Thomas lived her entire life on her family's farm until she broke a hip and was placed in the nursing home. She had no family; all her near relatives preceded her in death.

**Percy Scott**, 84, of Marietta, Georgia, died on March 20, 2000. He was born in Surrey, England on July 22, 1915. He and his wife Gwenn have lived in the United States for 33 years. They have been part of the Church of God since 1982, and have attended with Living Church of God in Atlanta, Georgia. His wife, a son and daughter, five grandchildren and six great grandchildren survive him.

## What Is Servant Leadership?

By Roderick C. Meredith

Servant Leadership is a concept and a practice that all Christians should implement. But what is *Servant Leadership*? And how can we practice it?

In all human history, the best example of Servant Leadership is that of Jesus Christ. He had been with the Father from eternity. He had awesome glory, power and majesty. As the “Word” or Spokesman for the Father, it was His voice that said, “Let there be LIGHT” (Genesis 1:3). At the very throne of God, He was surrounded by indescribable beauty and majesty. Over 100 million angels were there, worshipping and praising Him and the Father (Revelation 5:11–12).

Yet, since the Word and the Father had decided to bring millions of human beings into their Family, this great Being was willing to “empty” Himself—as the Greek word is correctly translated in Philippians 2:7. He took the “form of a SERVANT.” Then, “being found in appearance as a man, He HUMBLED Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (v. 8).

In the human flesh, Jesus “gave” of Himself all day long. He lovingly and patiently taught, He healed, He blessed, He encouraged, He SERVED. Jesus had very clearly taught His disciples by His example, “Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your SERVANT. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to SERVE, and to GIVE His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28).

In *all* our activities, the emphasis must be on serving—NOT on pleasing the self or exalting the self or seeking a bigger “position.” All of us must constantly *humble the self* through God’s Spirit, and try to be sure that we are genuinely motivated by a spirit of SERVICE in whatever we do. If we have to take a lower position for a time—as even the Son of God did—in *order to better serve*, let us graciously do this and THANK GOD for the opportunity.

God is testing the attitudes of every one of us! He wants to know IF we are truly learning the lessons of Servant Leadership. Are we *willing* to take the “lowest seat” if that works out better and helps us serve more? Are we constantly thinking about how we can best use our talents, our time and our resources to better SERVE others and to prepare for the Kingdom of God?

John, the beloved Apostle, tells us, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16). Let us truly be motivated by a spirit of giving, helping, serving and encouraging one another. Then, without doubt, we will be granted entrance into our Father’s everlasting Kingdom which will be totally based on that spirit of LOVE, kindness, patience, service and profound JOY.

---

*This commentary can be found on the Church Web page, [www.livingcog.org](http://www.livingcog.org), in the Commentary Library, along with many other commentaries on key topics facing our world.*