

Living Church News

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Prepare Now for God's Kingdom

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Greetings from San Diego! This recent Feast of Tabernacles was truly memorable and inspiring! All the reports I have heard and read indicate that it was an *outstanding* Feast in nearly every way.

I will leave the exact attendance figures and other facts for others to fill in—although we certainly did have a fine increase in attendance for this year's Feast of Tabernacles in the Living Church of God around the world. But the *spiritual* aspect of the Feast—the part that counts most with God—was especially uplifting. The depth and understanding and the inspiration in the sermons was most encouraging. The past few years, an increasing degree of love and unity was felt in nearly all of our Feast sites. This year, that warmth and unity continued. Also, as Mr. Charles Bryce expressed it: "The brethren seemed to be even more focused on moving forward." No doubt most of you have sensed that the **end** of this age really is drawing close and the move of the Church Headquarters to Charlotte, NC, will be the beginning of a *much more powerful Work*.

So **all** of us need to review our Feast notes and grow and move forward. We *all* need to study God's Word more profoundly, pray more fervently and—as I explained—begin to truly "fellowship" with God and Christ in a more profound way than ever before.

And *all* of us need to be inspired about the Headquarters move to Charlotte and be *fervently praying* for God's guidance and blessing in this move! For this move, I feel, is being made at the *right* time, and for the *right* reasons. As I may have explained in some sermons, I have no close friends or relatives in Charlotte. None of our leading men do, so far as I know. We are moving there even though most of us like the climate in San Diego much better. And there are certainly more recreational and interesting things to do in San Diego. But, if it will enable us to do a much more powerful work, most of us are *more than willing* to move to another location. It appears that God's face is already shining upon us because of this.

Doors are opening that never seemed to open in the same way in any other place we looked. And we have been enabled to buy a Headquarters property for about three million dollars *less* than we would have had to pay out here in San Diego for a similar property. This will free up *hundreds of thousands* of dollars each year—once we have moved and settled in—to go on more television and radio stations, publish more magazines and book-

lets, hire more ministers, hire more Headquarters employees, and to do the Work more powerfully in every way. And if *all* of us—including you dedicated members and brethren—are really zealous about this, then God will pour out His Spirit and help us to have an even deeper *spiritual* understanding and a much greater impact as we do His Work around the world.

It is vital that each of us realize that this world desperately needs what we have to give. No, we are not the only ones who have any of the Truth. But, in His mercy, God has made us *more willing* to hang on to the *full* Truth than any other Church of God group on earth. We are practicing the *government of God* more fully—certainly better preparing us to assume positions of leadership in that *same kind of government!* And by devoting a *much larger* portion of our resources to actually “doing the Work” instead of taking care of ourselves, we are going to be enabled to have an increasingly large impact on a sick and confused world out there that desperately needs God’s Truth, and desperately needs to be **warned** before the full-scale Tribulation begins.

As we plan and prepare to make this move to Charlotte, I hope that every one of our dedicated brethren will join us in drawing closer to God and praying that God will indeed “pour out His Spirit” upon us in a special way so we can have the kind of impact on the world that the Church of God has not had for many years. As I have often cited to you, Jesus Christ told His followers: “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and *you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake*” (Matthew 24:7–9).

Not long ago, Hurricane Lili devastated a number of cities and small communities in Louisiana and Texas. Drought is still affecting the American and Canadian farmers and causing food prices to rise, and as disease epidemics increasingly appear even here in North America, we must all realize that the stage is certainly set for the **final** prophetic events of this era to take place. But Jesus said that—no doubt as our prophetic message increases in power and focus—“You will be *hated* by all nations for My name’s sake” (v. 9).

At this point, dear brethren, *not one* of the various “splits” from the former Worldwide Church of God is having a significant impact on the world. The world *cannot* “hate” us if they do not even know we exist! However, as we boldly preach the *true* message of Jesus Christ and powerfully **warn** modern Israel of the coming Tribulation, we will undoubtedly step on many toes. We must not be focused on simply “attacking” other religions because of their obvious errors. Nor must we be focused on simply “attacking” the world with all of its problems of homosexuality, abortion, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, drug abuse, pornography, crime and such. Nevertheless, *we must and will* need to mention these as living examples of what we are talking about. This will certainly not make us “popular.” It will bring upon us *enormous persecution* before our work is ultimately finished.

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Editor in Chief Roderick C. Meredith
Editorial Director Richard F. Ames
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Layout Editor Donna Prejan
Proofreaders Sandy Davis
 Linda Ehman
News Bureau June Olsen

Regional Offices

UNITED STATES:
P.O. Box 503077
San Diego, CA 92150-3077
 Phone: (858) 673-7470; Fax: (858) 673-0310
<http://www.tomorrowworld.org>

AUSTRALIA:
GPO Box 772
Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia
 Phone: (07) 5546 0472; Fax: (07) 5546 0768

CANADA:
P.O. Box 27202
Toronto, Ontario M9W 6S8, Canada
 Phone: (905) 814-1094; Fax: (905) 814-7659

NEW ZEALAND:
P.O. Box 2767
Auckland, New Zealand
 Phone/Fax: (09) 435 3592

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

SOUTH AFRICA:
P.O. Box 4271
Luipaardsvlei, 1743 Republic of South Africa
 Phone: (27) 11-664-6036

UNITED KINGDOM:
P.O. Box 9092
Motherwell, ML1 2YD Scotland
 Phone/Fax: 44-1698-263-977

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Christ Is Our LEADER

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

With an upcoming move to Charlotte, North Carolina, and other areas of growth and change in the offing, it is *vital* for all of our people to come to a deeper faith and trust in Jesus Christ. It is easy to forget that Jesus Christ is *alive* and *very active*! That He is the *living* Head of the Church. That He is aware of the smallest detail. That, indeed, “the very hairs on your head are all numbered!” (Matthew 10:30).

God’s “Instruction Manual”—the Holy Bible—speaks of the resurrected Jesus Christ in this way: “And He is the **Head** of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). And in Ephesians 1:22–23, Paul speaks of how God “put all things under His [Christ’s] feet and gave Him to be **Head** over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Do we truly believe that Christ is the “**Head over all things**” to the Church?

Thousands of God’s people became disillusioned by some of the upsets and trials of the 1970s. Then, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, many of us were deeply concerned about the introduction of major heresies in our former association—and in the absolute “trashing” of Mr. Herbert Armstrong and all that he represented and had taught us.

“Where was Jesus Christ in all of this?” many wondered.

But now, in retrospect, it should be fairly easy for a Spirit-led Christian to see that this time of trial was truly needed. For tens of thousands in our former association were not converted. They were simply “going along for the ride.” They had just “grown up in the church” without ever coming to a profound, heartfelt repentance and full conversion. Or, as an adult, some had become excited by Mr. Armstrong’s understanding of prophecy and/or had proved to them-

tually every strange and perverted teaching imaginable! That is sad to say, but very true.

Also, as one evangelist said years ago: “It was time for the Laodecian church era to begin.” So God allowed a major spiritual “test” to come on His people during those years. It appears that most of those weak and confused individuals **failed** this major test. They very quickly gave up the **major truths** of genuine Apostolic Christianity and slid back into the “mainstream” of American Protestantism!

It is *vital* for all of our people to come to a deeper faith and trust in Jesus Christ. It is easy to forget that Jesus Christ is *alive* and *very active*! That He is the *living* Head of the Church. That He is aware of the smallest detail. That, indeed, “the very hairs on your head are all numbered!” (Matthew 10:30).

selves the truth about the seventh day Sabbath or similar topics. But, again, thousands of these people had not genuinely **surrendered** their lives to God through Jesus Christ. And Christ was **not** living in them—as shown by the “fruits” in their lives back then, and certainly indicated by their confused response as the massive **heresies** became apparent. The evident carnality and self-will of many has been displayed by the fact that they seem to be “running around like chickens with their heads cut off” following this man or that man into vir-

Could such people have really been converted? I doubt it, *and for their own sakes I hope that they were not!* Because if they were converted, they have perhaps knowingly and deliberately rebelled against the Holy Spirit of God.

However, most of you dear brethren in the Living Church of God have come with us one person or one family at a time. You did not wait until it was “convenient” to come out with a large group in order to have a

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Did Jesus Abolish the Law?

By Douglas S. Winnail

Many sincere Christians have been told that the laws of God in the Old Testament—about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, clean and unclean foods and tithing—have been abolished and are no longer relevant for New Testament Christians. Supposedly, these ancient laws were “nailed to the cross” by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Professing Christians are told that they are no longer “under bondage” to the Old Covenant and its “outdated laws” recorded by Moses, but are now under a New Covenant—at liberty to worship God in whatever manner they choose.

Words of the Apostle Paul are commonly cited in support of this teaching; Romans 6:14—that we are no longer under the law but under grace; Colossians 2:14—that Jesus blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us; Galatians 3:13—that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law; and Galatians 3:24–25—that the law was only a tutor to bring us to Christ and that we are no longer under a tutor.

Concluding that these scriptures “abolish the law” may *seem* logical to some who do not read the whole Bible carefully and who lack the Holy Spirit. But do these scriptures *really* teach that the law is abolished? Or is this false doctrine a part of the subtle scheme Satan has devised to deceive the professing Christian world? We need to understand what the Bible reveals about this vital subject, because this issue has divided and splintered the body of Christ down through the ages. Conflicts over the law have crippled the work of God and confused many people. To misunderstand this issue could result in losing your salvation and your eternal reward!

New Testament Warnings

One of the first things to note is that a misunderstanding of *isolated verses* in Paul’s writings may suggest to some that Christ abolished the necessity to keep the laws of God, yet the Apostle Peter clearly warned that Paul’s epistles contain “some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable *twist* to their own destruction, as they do also the *rest of the Scriptures*” (2 Peter 3:16). At the beginning of His ministry Jesus warned about false teachers who would come in sheep’s clothing (claiming to be Christians) and lead people astray (Matthew 7:15–20). At the end of His earthly ministry Jesus issued a prophetic warning, “take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name [claiming to be Christian teachers]... and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:3–5).

Paul also warned that false teachers would arise within the Church, and draw disciples away from the truth (Acts 20:29–31). Paul specifically stated, “in the last days” many would follow a false Christianity “having a *form* of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:1–5). **We deny the power of biblical religion when we ignore or reason around what the Bible clearly teaches!** This is why Paul advised the church in Thessalonica to “prove all things and hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21), and why Luke records the example of the Bereans who “searched the Scriptures daily to find out” if what they were hearing from the disciples of Jesus was really true (Acts 17:10–12). The real test of doctrinal truth is agreement with *all* the scriptures on a subject—not just a few taken out of context! To understand whether Jesus abol-

ished the laws of God pertaining to the Sabbath, Holy Days and similar subjects, we need to step back and look not just at a few verses out of context, but at the *big picture* as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments.

Law Before Sinai?

Today, many wrongly assume that the laws recorded by Moses were merely part of the Old Covenant (between God and ancient Israel) that was terminated at Christ's death, and that they therefore no longer apply to Christians who live under a new covenant. *However, the Bible reveals something quite different!* The New Testament explains that “through one man [Adam] *sin* entered the world” (Romans 5:12). Sin is the transgression of the laws of God (1 John 3:4). There can be no sin where there are no laws of God (Romans 4:15). Adam and Eve sinned by

Bible reveals that Abraham was blessed “because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge [instructions], My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:5), yet those commandments, statutes and laws are not listed until Moses recorded them (see Exodus 20–23) as part of the covenant between God and the nation of Israel.

When God revealed knowledge of the Sabbath at Creation, He *sanctified* (set apart and made holy) the seventh day, and rested to show how to keep the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1–3). Many sincere Christians have been told that we can worship on whatever day we desire, or that church tradition has established Sunday as the day on which we are to worship God. Yet the Bible nowhere condones such practices! The Israelites were given instructions for observing the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread—and the Sabbath—*before* the Old Covenant was agreed to (see Exodus 12; 16:23–26).

God will forever share with His family the blessings of God-life and all He possesses (Revelation 21:7). The divine family will be sharing life and its joys and its labors through creative work forever. With an eternity to engage in creative endeavor, the possibilities are endless.

violating the laws of God. They *dishonored their parent* (God) and *put another god before Him* when they listened to Satan. They also *lusted* after and *stole* what God said was forbidden, and then *lied* to cover their guilt, instead of admitting that they had made a mistake. Cain was warned before he murdered his brother that giving into anger would lead to *sin* (breaking a law of God—Genesis 4:6–8). Scripture clearly indicates that the laws of God were in force from the beginning of creation—thousands of years before Moses recorded the Ten Commandments.

Noah is called a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5), and the Bible defines righteousness as “all Thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119:172)—so the only logical conclusion is that Noah preached obedience to the commandments of God! Some, wishing to deny the need to obey God's laws, have proposed that Moses was preaching different commandments than those mentioned in the Bible. Yet in Genesis, we learn that Abraham and Jacob *tithed* (Genesis 14:18–20; 28:22) even though the tithing system is not fully explained until later in the writings of Moses (see Deuteronomy 14:22–28). Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for sins including sexual perversion (Genesis 19:1–13), yet homosexuality is not termed a sin until Leviticus 18:22 (see also Romans 1:24–27). Adultery is recognized as a “great sin” (Genesis 20:1–12) *before* it is listed as one of the Ten Commandments. The

When the Israelites failed to follow the instructions for keeping the Sabbath, God asked: “How long do you *refuse* to keep *My commandments and My laws?*” (v. 28), which clearly indicates that the laws of God—including the Sabbath and Holy Days—were in force *before* the Old Covenant. The termination of the Old Covenant did not remove the necessity to obey the laws of God that were in force *before* the covenant was made!

The Old Covenant

One subtle argument wrongly suggests that since the Old Covenant and the writings of Moses contain *hundreds* of laws, and that anyone who believes in keeping the Sabbath, the Holy Days, tithing and the dietary laws must then also keep *everything* that was part of the Old Covenant; they say that anything less amounts to making an *arbitrary selection* of which laws to keep. Such an argument illustrates the ignorance about the Old Covenant, and blindness about the real meaning of Scripture, that has permeated professing Christian churches over the centuries.

The Old Covenant was a formal agreement between God and the ancient nation of Israel. It consisted of promises of *physical* blessings, and of being a special people, *if* the Israelites obeyed God's laws and provided an

example to the world (see Exodus 19:5–6; Deuteronomy 4:1–10). It included no *spiritual* promises of eternal life, or of receiving the Holy Spirit, and it included *warnings* of punishment for disobedience. This agreement consisted of obedience to three types of laws: the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), the statutes, judgments and ordinances (Exodus 21–23) and the ceremonial laws (see Exodus 25–40). This fundamental distinction is essential to understanding what practices were no longer required upon the establishment of the New Covenant.

The Ten Commandments form the *fundamental core* of the laws of God. The first four (including the Sabbath commandment) explain how to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5), and the last six explain how God wants us to show love for our neighbors (Leviticus 19:18). These laws have been in force since creation, and will continue through all eternity because the nature of God does not change (Malachi 3:6). The statutes and judgments show how to apply the Ten Commandments (God's laws of love) in specific situations. Many of these same principles can be found in the civil laws of nations around the world today (see Exodus 21). The biblical laws were given for the benefit of humankind, and you can even wind up in jail today if you violate some of them! These laws are a *blessing*—even in civil society—*not* a “curse.”

The *ceremonial laws* are a different matter altogether. The Bible reveals that the laws concerning sacrifices and offerings were *not* originally part of the Old Covenant (Jeremiah 7:21–23). These laws were *added* later “because of transgressions” (Galatians 3:19). Paul

Dietary Laws—Abolished?

For centuries, many professing Christians have been led to believe that observing the biblical laws of clean and unclean foods is no longer essential for salvation. It is claimed that these “laws” were a part of the Old Covenant that was terminated with the death of Jesus Christ. This belief, however, is not supported by the Bible. The first reference to clean and unclean foods is found in the book of Genesis. The instruction given to Noah, to take seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals on the ark (Genesis 7:1–3), indicates that Noah knew about the dietary laws *long before* they were fully explained in the writings of Moses (see Leviticus 11). The extra pairs of clean animals would obviously have been used for food, and not just preserved to reproduce after the flood. From the Bible we also learn that the blood of animals was forbidden as a food (Deuteronomy 12:23–25). These laws were given “that it may go well with you and your children forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 12:28). God would not do away with an instruction that He refers to in this way.

Some teach that Jesus Christ did away with the dietary laws, yet the verses commonly used to make this false assertion actually concern *ceremonial washings* (see Matthew 15:1–20; Mark 7:1–23). When we read the accounts, we see that Jesus does not even mention clean or unclean foods. He refers instead to the Pharisees' question about eating without following a traditional ritual of hand washing (Mark 7:3–8). The words “thus He declared all foods clean” found in some translations of Mark 7:19 were *added* by translators trying to make this verse say something that neither the context nor the original Greek text supports. When Peter, in a vision, was instructed to eat unclean animals that appeared on a great sheet, he was *puzzled* because he recognized that this was contrary to the laws of God (Act 10:9–17). However, Peter *did not* conclude that the dietary laws were abolished; he realized: “God has shown me that I should not call *any man* common or unclean” (Acts 10:28)—indicating that Cornelius (a Gentile) could also become a Christian. Decisions by the council in Jerusalem affirm the need to follow biblical dietary laws (Acts 15:28–29; see also Leviticus 3:17; 7:23–26). These laws were designed to prevent infectious disease and promote health (Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 12:28). If our bodies are “the temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3:16–17) and we are instructed to “glorify God in our bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20) we will not deliberately ingest food that God forbids and that modern science has linked with the spread of disease.

The prophet Isaiah reveals more on this subject. When Jesus Christ returns to judge the world, “those... eating swine's flesh and the abomination [broth of abominable things] and the mouse shall be consumed together” (Isaiah 66:15–17; see also Isaiah 65:4). These verses indicate God's displeasure with those who eat “unclean” foods that He instructed should not be eaten. One of the reasons that sickness will disappear in the coming kingdom of God (Isaiah 35:5–6; Jeremiah 30:17) is that the laws of God will be taught and explained to human beings all over the earth (Isaiah 2:2–3; 11:9; 30:20–21). The Bible does not support the idea that the dietary laws have been abolished; rather, it explains how these important laws fit into the plan of God.

could not be speaking here of the Ten Commandments, which formed the core of the Old Covenant and were in force from creation. Even the Mosaic writings indicate that the ritual sacrifices and offerings did not begin *until* the Tabernacle was dedicated—a year after the Old Covenant was made at Sinai (Exodus 40:17, 29). The Bible plainly shows that the ceremonial laws were *additions* to the Old Covenant and, as we will see, were of a *temporary* nature. These alone, were terminated at the death of Jesus.

A Matter of Context

Critics have asked: If laws were given “forever”—including the ritual laws—how can some such laws be just temporary? The answer lies in understanding what the term “forever” means in its *proper biblical context*. The Bible commands that the Sabbath and the Holy Days are to be observed *forever* (Exodus 31:17; Leviticus 23:41). When we see that Christ, the Apostles and the early Church kept these days, and that these practices will be observed in the kingdom of God (Isaiah 66:22–23; Zechariah 14:16–19), it should be obvious that “forever” in *this context* means “for all eternity.” When we read that the Aaronic priesthood was to be perpetual (Exodus 29:9), that priests were to wear special garments forever (Exodus 28:42–43) and to tend a lamp in the Tabernacle, or temple, forever (Exodus 27:21), the word “forever” is used in a different context. The Tabernacle and the temple no longer exist, so there is no lamp to tend! The Bible reveals that the priesthood has been changed (Hebrews 7:12), so instructions about wearing special garments no longer apply. Laws that allow a servant to decide to serve a master forever can only apply as long as the servant or master *remains alive*—which is obviously not for eternity! These simple observations illustrate what was permanent and what was temporary about the Old Covenant. The *fundamental* aspects of the spiritual laws of God never change. The ceremonial rituals were no longer required of Christians.

Jesus, the Apostles and the Law

But many will ask: if we “love the Lord and believe in Jesus,” must we still *obey* the laws of God? Regrettably, many sincere believers have been told that Christianity is about love, not “rules and regulations” which critics term *legalism*! While this argument may *seem* reasonable to some, the Bible tells a *different* story! Jesus said: “Do not think that I came to destroy [annul] the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill [complete]” (Matthew 5:17). Scripture explains that Christ came to “magnify [amplify, expand] the law and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21). Jesus taught that we must

obey not just the *letter* of the law, but also the *spirit* (or intent) of the law (Matthew 5:21–30). When Jesus was asked how we enter the kingdom of God, and He replied that we must *keep the commandments*, He was referring, in context, to obeying the Ten Commandments (Matthew 19:16–20). He equated “loving the Lord” with *obeying the commandments* (John 14:15)—yet His plain statements are ignored by many today. Jesus *did not* abolish the Sabbath or the Holy Days, but kept them and instructed His disciples to do the same (Luke 4:16; John 7:8–19). Jesus taught that we “ought” to tithe (Matthew 23:23). It should be obvious that the common idea—held by many professing Christians—that Jesus abolished the law is an *erroneous assumption* that is *not* supported by the Bible.

Many wrongly assume that the Apostles and the early Church came to realize that the “Mosaic Laws” covering the Sabbath, Holy Days, the dietary laws and tithing were no longer required of New Testament Christians. However, this is *not* what we find in the book of Acts. The Bible reveals not only that Paul kept the Sabbath (some 20 years after the Crucifixion; see Acts 17:1–2), but that he also continued to observe the Holy Days (Acts 18:21), and even admonished other Christians to do the same (1 Corinthians 5:7–8). This is consistent with what historians record about the early Church. Edward Gibbon wrote that the early Jerusalem Church, for nearly a century after the death of Jesus Christ, “united the law of Moses [including tithing] with the doctrine of Christ” until pressure from Gentile converts led to the rejection of these biblical and Apostolic practices (see *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 15).

While the writings of Paul are sometimes offered as evidence that keeping the law is not required of New Testament Christians, it is worth noticing what Paul himself had to say about obedience to the Law. The *biblical* Paul says that not hearers but “*doers* of the law will be justified” (Romans 2:13), that the law is for our instruction (Romans 2:18) and that the law defines what sin actually is (Romans 3:20). He explains that faith does not abolish, but *establishes*, the law (Romans 3:31), and that “the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good” (Romans 7:12). Paul echoes the teachings of Jesus when he states that “love is the fulfilling of the law”—referring to *obeying* the Ten Commandments (Romans 13:8–10). For Paul, keeping the commandments was *the way* to become a Christian—it was not legalism!

But what does Paul mean when he *appears* to say just the opposite? In Colossians 2:14–15, the “handwriting of ordinances” (bond of indebtedness) that was “nailed to the cross” does *not* refer to the laws of God, but to *our sins*. When we sin, we incur a debt—a death penalty (Romans 6:23). This death penalty is the *curse* from

which Christ's death redeemed us (Galatians 3:13). The law of God cannot be a curse, for Paul himself said it was holy, just and good! When Paul writes that we are “not under the law, but under grace,” he means that when we have repented and begun to obey the laws of God we are no longer under the *penalty of the law* (death) since we have received unmerited pardon, and thus we are not to sin (not to break the laws of God, cf. Romans 6:15). When Paul states that “man is not justified by the *works of the law*,” he is using a term that specifically refers to *ritualistic practices*—not to the Ten Commandments (see Galatians 2:16; 3:2, 10 and *Biblical Archaeology Review*,

to reason around them and look for excuses not to obey them. While most professing Christians hope to be in the kingdom of God, many seem to be unaware that “the law” will go forth out of Zion [Jerusalem] when Jesus Christ sets up His kingdom on this earth (Isaiah 2:2–4). The saints, as teachers in the kingdom, will teach the world to observe the Sabbath (Isaiah 66:22–23), the Holy Days (Zechariah 14:16–19) and the dietary laws (Isaiah 66:15–17). The New Covenant will be based on the laws of God—just as the Old Covenant was. But with the New Covenant come *spiritual* promises: of forgiveness of sin after sincere repentance, of the Holy Spirit and of eternal


We should be thankful for *the truth* that God has made plain in His Word, and that we have not been duped by the many false arguments, because Jesus warned that *many* would be deceived about this fundamental issue (Matthew 24:4–5, 11, 24). Let us continue to pray, and study, so that we may not lose sight of the truth!

Nov-Dec. 1994). When Paul states that “the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ... but after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Galatians 3:24–25), he is referring to the temporary nature of the entire system of statutes, *ceremonial* laws, rituals and sacrifices that pointed to the need for a Savior. This is what the book of Galatians is discussing. He is not saying that the fundamental laws of God—the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath, the Holy Days, tithing and the dietary laws—have been abolished. This is confirmed by his statements in Hebrews 9:9–10. The writings of Paul, when viewed in their total context, *do not support* the idea that obedience to the laws of God is no longer required of Christians. For many professing Christians, it boils down to a matter of “which Paul” they are going to believe—the Paul of Scripture, or the Paul created by critics of the law!

The New Covenant and the Law

Most professing Christians today hold *conflicting beliefs*—that they are under a new covenant, and that they are no longer required to keep the laws of God—spelled out in detail in the writings of Moses—because these laws are now written in their minds and hearts (Hebrews 8:1–13; 10:16; Jeremiah 31:31–33). Yet the same God who inspired these verses also explained that, under the New Covenant, He would give His rebellious people a new spirit “that they may *walk* in My statutes and *keep* My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 11:19–20; 36:24–27). All who have the laws of God written in their minds and hearts will *want* to keep the laws of God, not

life. That is why the New Covenant is called a “better” covenant (Hebrews 12:24). There is more to the New Covenant than just loving the Lord and loving your neighbor—it also involves learning to observe *rules and regulations* (the laws of God) that keep us pointed in the right direction.

Those who wrongly teach that Christians no longer need to obey the laws of God fail to realize that their reasonings are a product of the carnal human mind—a mind that does not have access to, or is not using, the Holy Spirit. Paul explains that such a mind “is *enmity* against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). An unconverted mind tries to *reason around*—or simply ignores—the laws of God, in spite of the fact that a person may profess to believe in God and love the Lord. Satan is able to influence and deceive anyone in this frame of mind (2 Corinthians 4:3–4). The Bible reveals that this is the basic reason why so many assume that Jesus abolished the law—a concept that is *unsupported* by the Scriptures and *alien* to the whole plan of God. The laws of God outline a way of life that God has emphasized from creation, which Christians are called to learn to live now, so that they will be able to teach it to the world in the coming kingdom of God. We should be thankful for *the truth* that God has made plain in His Word, and that we have not been duped by the many false arguments, because Jesus warned that *many* would be deceived about this fundamental issue (Matthew 24:4–5, 11, 24). Let us continue to pray, and study, so that we may not lose sight of the truth! 

“Are you ‘Good Enough’ Yet?”

Understanding the Righteousness That Is by Faith

By John H. Ogwyn

Have you ever wondered whether or not you will “make it” into the Kingdom of God? Have you wondered whether you are *good enough* for the Kingdom right now? If you are going to enter the Kingdom, how much better must you become? Perhaps you have not phrased the questions in exactly this way, but these thoughts have gone through the minds of many in God’s Church.

Down through time, devoutly religious people have engaged in a wide variety of practices in attempting to make themselves “good enough.” During the Middle Ages, many sincere people lived lives of incredible asceticism trying to make themselves worthy of heaven. In order to recruit soldiers for the Crusades, to take back Jerusalem from the Arabs, the Roman Catholic Church promised recruits that their going to fight the Muslims would win them absolution from their sins and give them entrance into heaven at death.

Some of the Jews in Jesus’ day also wondered how they could ensure that they were “good enough” to inherit the Kingdom. Jesus, in one of His parables, told the story of the Pharisee who, in prayer, reminded God how much better he was than ordinary people. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not like other people, and reminded Him that he fasted twice in the week and very carefully paid his tithes (Luke 18:10–12). Surely all of this scrupulous observance, he thought, would make him good enough and guarantee his entrance into God’s Kingdom.

The Apostle Paul commented on the religious zeal of many of the Jews of his day, like this Pharisee, who displayed an attitude that Paul himself had once shared. “For I bear them witness,” he wrote, “that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2–3). They strove to make themselves “good enough,” just as have many sincere people throughout the centuries. Yet with all of their effort, they missed the point. Over the years, many, even in the Church of God, have fallen into the same pitfall as the religious Jews of whom Paul wrote.

When we seek to establish our own righteousness—to make ourselves “good enough”—there are two possible results. Some wind up with a smug, self-righteous approach similar to the Pharisee that Jesus described in the parable. They look down on others who just never seem to “get it together” the way they do. They are proud of their careful obedience, and smug in their relationship with God. More commonly, those who are striving to make themselves “good enough” wind up discouraged and overwhelmed, with a sense of their own inadequacy and imperfection. They worry that they will not ever measure up, and therefore will never make it. Such a state of mind can lead one to say, “What’s the use?” or “Why even try?” This eventually leads many to give up and fall by the wayside, rather

than continue their journey of the Christian life.

Looking to Abraham and Sarah

The books of Romans and Galatians, where Paul most fully discusses the subject of righteousness by faith, often discuss the example of Abraham and his relationship with God. Many of the Jewish religious leaders felt that circumcision—the sign of God’s covenant with Abraham—was necessary for all men who desired unfettered access to the Creator and entrance into His Kingdom. This ceremony was absolutely necessary for salvation, they declared (Acts 15:1). Paul strongly disagreed with these critics, but did not rely on human ideas and human reasoning to prove them wrong. Rather, he used the authority of Scripture to prove his point. He went to the first book of the Torah, to the account of Abraham in the book of Genesis, to illuminate the true basis of a real relationship with the Creator God.

Paul knew that if his readers truly understood the story of Abraham, and of the relationship that developed between this ancient patriarch and the Creator of the Universe, they would understand the means by which entrance into the Kingdom of God can truly be assured. If they understood the principles illustrated by Abraham’s story, they would finally understand the meaning of righteousness that comes by faith.

What did Abraham do that merited his being made the heir of such amazing promises from God? Did God

make His promises to Abraham because he was the first man to become circumcised? Paul thundered emphatically: “No!” God made the promises to Abraham *before* he became circumcised (Romans 4:9–12). When Abraham was 75 years old, God had told him to leave his homeland and his family, and go to a land that God would show him and afterward give to his descendants. Years before Abraham was circumcised, he had come to *trust* God. As he came to know God more and more deeply, he trusted him more fully and completely. Paul explained that Abraham’s relationship with God rested on faith, and not on works that Abraham had accomplished.

Still childless at an advanced age, Abraham nevertheless *believed* God’s promises. Abraham’s relationship with his Creator grew because God was very *real* to Abraham, who learned to *trust* God completely (Romans 4:19–21). When Abraham was 99 years old, God appeared to him and proposed a covenant that resulted in the birth of a son and heir within the year. God chose circumcision to be the sign of that covenant. Paul emphasized that Abraham’s relationship with God existed long before circumcision—and was based on *faith*, not on a specific act or ceremony that he carried out. Paul emphasized that this example contains the key to understanding how *we all* can have a genuine relationship with our Creator, and be assured of entrance into His Kingdom.

You see, there is a futility involved in human efforts to “be good enough.” As the ancient prophet Isaiah explained in Isaiah 64:6, all of our humanly contrived righteousness is like filthy rags. Our own human efforts can *never* be good enough! Seven centuries before Paul wrote Romans and Galatians, Isaiah emphasized the importance of the pattern set by both Abraham and Sarah, which true believers were to emulate.

He wrote: “Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look unto Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him” (Isaiah 51:1–2). But why would Isaiah instruct those who wished to pursue righteousness to look to Abraham and Sarah? He did so because of their *living* faith.

The Difference Between Dead Faith and Living Faith

Faith is the basis of true righteousness, as Paul emphasized in Romans and Galatians! But *what kind* of faith? Was he talking about the “I believe in sweet Jesus” outlook so typical to the approach of many Protestants? Emphatically not! The kind of faith that Paul and the other biblical writers taught is a *life-changing* faith. This faith is not an empty belief, or a mere profession of pleasant sentiments. It involves a *confidence* that sets a pattern for a Christian’s life.

Paul explained “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe *in your heart* that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation” (Romans 10:9–10). If we *really* believe from the very depth of our being that Jesus Christ is alive and at the right hand of the Father, it will *change* our whole life! If this does not change our life, then we really do not believe it very deeply.

James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ and the Apostle who presided over the Jerusalem Church, made this same point using different words. He explained in James 2:19–20: “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But

do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?” Faith that does not manifest itself with actions is dead and empty. Such dead faith never saved anyone. James then discussed Abraham’s example. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God” (vv. 21–23).

Abraham ordered his whole life—all his decisions and choices—on his absolute conviction that God was real and that His word was sure. His faith gave him strength to move away from everyone and everything that he knew, it enabled him to wait for decades in anticipation of the inheritance God had promised, and it empowered him to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice of his only legitimate son when God instructed him to do so. Abraham followed and obeyed God because he *trusted* Him. The Eternal God was not only Abraham’s creator—He was his friend!

Isaiah wrote of looking not only to Abraham, but also to Sarah. Peter further developed this theme by showing that Sarah is an example to all Christian women, “as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror” (1 Peter 3:6). Faith in God was the basis of Sarah’s continuing respect for and deference to Abraham. Her example of faith set a pattern for Christian women to emulate. So often, the fear of what *might* happen paralyzes us, or causes us to panic and take matters into our own hands. In Sarah’s life, faith triumphed over fear. Her submission to Abraham was not based on a conviction that his judgment was always impeccable, but rather in her

confidence that God had established the structure of the family. She knew that she could be a submissive wife and trust God to take care of her. Peter told Christian women, in effect, that they are daughters of Sarah if they allow their lives to be governed by faith rather than by fears.

John 11 gives us an example that helps us understand the difference between the righteousness that comes by faith, and that which is merely the result of human efforts at being “good enough.” Christ’s astounding miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead “got people talking” all around Jerusalem, and convinced many that Jesus must indeed be the Messiah prophesied in Scripture. When word of this reached the Pharisees, they arranged a conference with their archrivals, the Sadducees. “Word of this miracle is going to get out and cause everyone to believe that He is the Messiah,” they reasoned, “and this is going to cause great problems with the Romans. They will be upset with all of this talk of a King of the Jews and will come and take away both our place and our nation. We’ve got to do something. In fact, we’ve got to ensure that Jesus of Nazareth dies!”

When it really came down to it, God and His promises seemed remote and unreal to these religious leaders. They were more concerned about the Roman legions, whom they could see, than they were about the invisible Creator. Here were men who prided themselves on being righteous. They certainly did not think that the law had been done away. Yet, when they became frightened about the future, they took matters into their own hands rather than looking to God. Righteousness to them consisted simply of rituals, ceremonies and rules that were to be obeyed meticulously. This was far different from the approach of Abraham, whom they considered their father. Obedience that does not

flow from faith will never stand up under stress or the test of time.

True obedience is the *result* of a genuine relationship with God, and flows *from* it. Where does that relationship originate? It does not start with us, or with our ability to be “good enough” to earn God’s approval and acceptance. Rather, it starts with God and what *He has done* for us. He com-

gave His uniquely begotten Son to pay for our sins by dying in our stead, then raised Him from the dead and restored Him to His right hand in heaven where He serves as our High Priest. He took the initiative in our lives by offering us a slate wiped absolutely clean from the record of our sins and a chance to share life with Him as a member of His very *family* forever. This represents God’s

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mended his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). God took the initiative in our lives, but we must *respond* to His initiative with *living faith*. That is what Abraham did when God told him to leave his homeland and family behind for a new land that God would afterwards give to him. Because Abraham truly believed God, he obeyed.

The originators of Rabbinic Judaism in the second and first centuries BC took a far different approach. They sought to establish and ensure righteousness by inventing more rules. Strict adherence to such rules would ensure God’s favor, they reasoned. They developed ever-increasing emphasis on the externals, but in the process the inner relationship with God fell by the wayside. Christ compared many of them to whitewashed tombs, since outwardly they appeared fresh and clean but inwardly they were filled with rot and decay (Matthew 23:27). In the midst of all of their efforts and their striving, they had lost sight of what God was really after (v. 23).

Real righteousness is made possible by what God has done. The Father

grace, or His freely offered gifts. However, we must respond to God’s grace with *faith*. If we trust Him to guide us, to change us and to save us, we will surrender both our life and our will. We will want to fully obey Him and to seek His guidance in every aspect of our lives, because we will be convinced that God is *always* right! “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in *newness* of life” (Romans 6:4). A life regulated by faith is a *new* life!

You and I can never make ourselves “good enough,” but God *can* and *will* if only we will *trust* Him and *surrender* to Him. He has already arranged to pay in full our debt of sin, a debt that we could not even begin to work off in a thousand lifetimes! If we really *believe* what God has done for us, and understand what He offers us, it will change our whole lives by leading us to *respond* to Him—just as did Abraham, Paul and so many others. Such a *living* faith will reorder all of our priorities in life, and will produce in us the righteousness that is by faith! ☞



International Corner...

European Update

by Douglas Winnail

Reports from Feast sites in Ireland and France have been very positive this year. Efforts are currently underway to finalize plans for the Feast in 2003. We hope that arrangements for next year can be announced shortly.

The advertising programs in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe continue to grow and draw responses. The first ad for the fall in the UK, for the booklet *Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ's Return*, has posted over 1,900 requests to date. Another ad is planned for the spring. In Ireland, an advertisement on the topic of prayer has brought a good response. Advertisements in November will feature the *Beast of Revelation* booklet and *Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ's Return*. Currently the Dutch Web site and German Web site offer booklets and articles translated into those languages.

Just after the Feast, we began a new video group in Bedford (north of London). We have also begun holding services in Radlett (near St. Alban's and Bricket Wood) on the first Sabbath of every month. It has been encouraging to see interest begin to grow in that area.

Bali Update

by Rod King

October 12, 2002 will go down as a day of infamy. Indications are that more Australians were killed

in this one event than any other since World War II.

Not since the bombing of Darwin in 1942 could have so many perished. Just two days since suspected Al Qaeda terrorists detonated two bombs at the resort of Kuta Beach on the island of Bali, Indonesia, 20 Australians are confirmed dead. Another 200 burned and wounded have been airlifted to the mainland to capital city hospitals.

One hundred and sixty are still unaccounted for.

Melbourne's modern burns unit at the Alfred Hospital received its first victim, a man with 50 percent burns, head injuries and shrapnel. He is in a critical but stable condition. Eye witnesses tell of people running away from the blast scene with shards of glass protruding from their necks. Many died from loss of blood but most of the dead have been burned beyond recognition. Local Balinese, Europeans, Canadians and New Zealanders are also believed to be among the dead, but the majority appear to be Australians at this popular tourist island. Hundreds of footballers were on the island celebrating their end of season. One club from Perth lost seven of its players, another from Sydney is missing five of theirs.

The nation is in shock as the reality sinks in that global terrorism could be directed specifically at Australians. No longer can this far-flung continent feel secure.

Gainsayers are accusing Prime Minister John Howard of being too supportive of President

George W. Bush's war on terrorism. Like many Europeans, some Australians believe appeasement will keep them safe. Both history and prophecy tell us this will not happen.

It is because Australians, like the rest of the modern descendants of Israel, have rejected God that He will allow such calamities to befall them. Just as a loving father corrects his children, so God likewise is beginning to chastise our people (Hebrews 12:5-11).

"But if you will not obey me... I will do this to you: I will even appoint **terror** over you," says Almighty God in Leviticus 26:14-16. "Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you" (v. 17).

God loves all mankind and has a great plan for their salvation. He also has a wonderful plan for the people of modern day Israel, including the Australian nation. That plan means that He must warn them of their desperate moral condition. He wants them to repent and obey Him so that they can be amongst those who will teach others in the coming Kingdom of God.

South Africa Update

by Syd Hull

Since coming back from the Feast of Tabernacles, we have been very busy doing the work. We have changed the venue where the Pretoria congregation meets. Up to now we have been

meeting 30km to the far side of the city. It was the only venue available at that time. Since then, we have been looking for a more suitable venue. This week we found, with God's help, a venue in Pretoria itself. It is in the Mountainview suburb of Pretoria. We will start holding services there from the beginning of November. There have been many people who would have liked to attend the Pretoria congregation, but who were unable to attend because it was outside the city and to get there would have required them to travel on what is known as "the road of death"—a road that is both accident-prone and the site of many hijackings.

Now that the hall problem is solved, we want to concentrate on doing all we can to facilitate the growth of the Pretoria congregation. We are well aware that it is God who gives the growth; however, we have to plant the seed! We have 3,000 rolled-up Afrikaans magazines that we will distribute throughout the Pretoria post offices on an ongoing basis from next week. At just 14 South African cents each, that is extremely cheap advertising. There are several people from our mailing list who are on the verge of coming into God's Church. We are praying that God will motivate them to act. None of us wants to see them go into the great tribulation. Our people are unified and have their hearts in God's work. I have prepared three sermons, and there are about three or four more to follow, dealing with the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor—with the eras of God's true Church. I feel that there are vital lessons for us to learn from this history, especially for us who are now on the very threshold of God's Kingdom.

New Zealand Update

by Kinnear Penman

During the last two weeks in August my wife and I travelled the length of New Zealand visiting scattered members and *Tomorrow's World* readers who had requested a personal visit by a minister. Over 14 days, we drove almost 2,600 miles and visited a total of 23 people.

Some readers on the South Island had requested a visit for the first time, and we spent several hours visiting a man and a lady in their respective homes in Invercargill (New Zealand's southernmost city). Each indicated a desire to be baptized into God's Church in the future.

The Living Church of God also has its first South Island member.



San Juan, Puerto Rico congregation at Mr. Colon's home after Sabbath services in August 2002.

Mr. Earl Woolridge has recently transferred to Christchurch to take up employment, and we were able to share a meal with him and a mutual friend who attends with another fellowship.

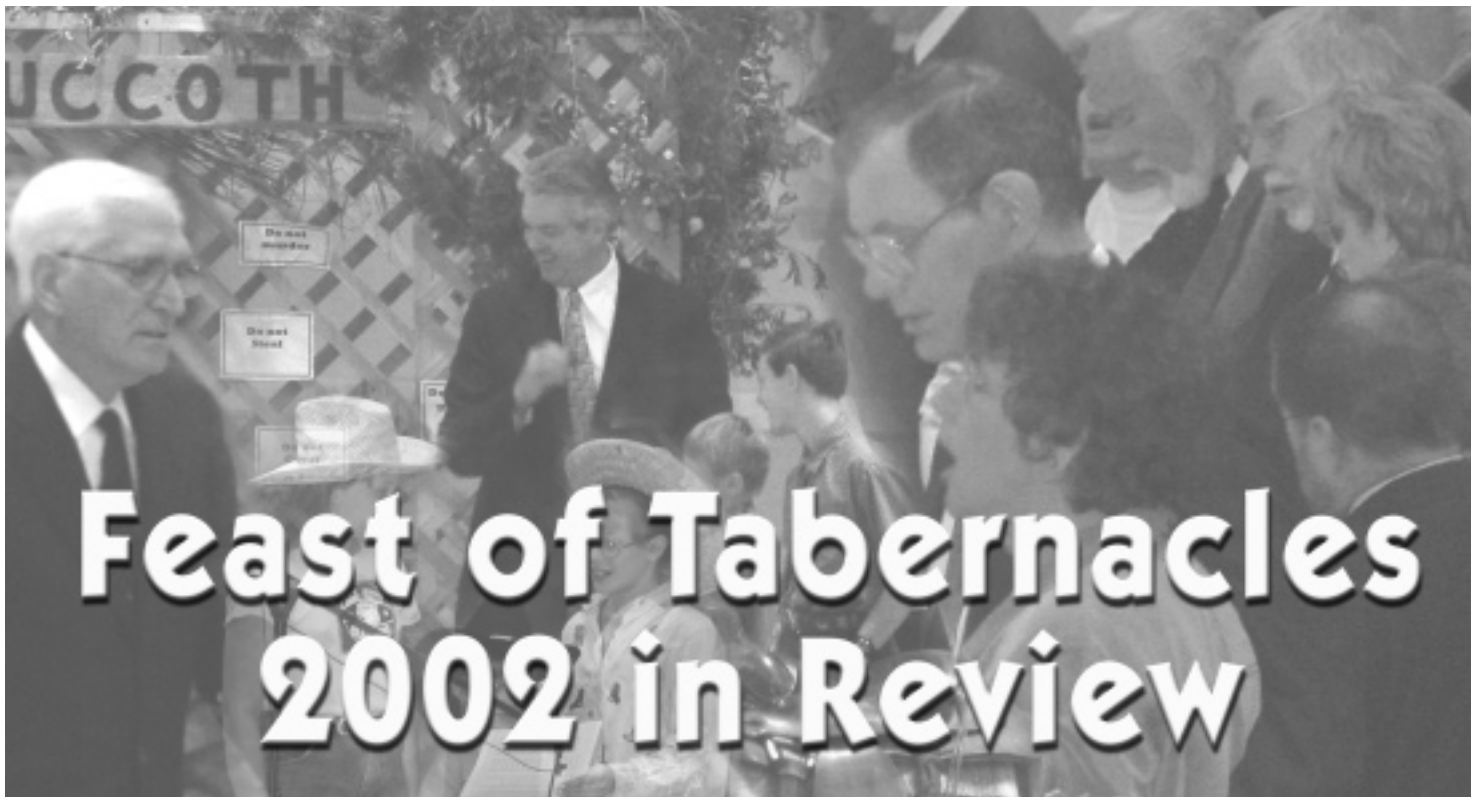
Although New Zealand was in the middle of winter and snow closed several main roads, our travel was never impeded. Indeed, it was noticeable that although rain and foreboding clouds were all around,

those same clouds lifted and allowed us to enjoy this beautiful part of God's creation. Similarly, although the Cook Strait ferries (which connect the North and South Islands) had been forced to cancel sailings because of bad weather, we enjoyed smooth, calm sailings when we needed to cross the Strait.

We returned to the North Island on a delayed ferry, which arrived at the unsociable time of 11:30 p.m., but there was still a Wellington gentleman who was happy to receive me at that hour. This fine man had seen the *Tomorrow's World* telecast and had immediately recognized it as the same message he had read years before in the *Plain Truth*. He also wants to be baptized, and I invited him to attend services on the Day of Trumpets with our small group in the lower North Island.

Stopping in Taupo on the central North Island, I visited two men who are excited about what they are learning. Taupo was the new site for the Feast of Tabernacles this year, and we took the opportunity to conclude some arrangements for the Feast.

There seems to be an upsurge in people in New Zealand who are serious about God's truth and the way of life they are learning through us. In August I visited a total of ten people completely new to the truth. Eight of these seemed to be being called by God, and we pray that they will continue to grow and "bear fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). Within a week after arriving home from this trip, I offered visits to three more people who have expressed a serious interest in God's way. I eagerly anticipate meeting them in the future. LCN



Around the globe, Living Church of God brethren gathered at 44 sites in 26 countries to keep the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in 2002. The following accounts, from many of those sites, are meant to share a small taste of the joy and peace they experienced.

Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Brethren from the United States and Canada, and one citizen of South Africa, attended the Feast in scenic and peaceful Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Services were held at the Quality Inn in Eau Claire; its beautiful meeting facility was just the right size for the 180 attending.

Highlights included the sermons from traveling speakers Mr. Rand Millich and Mr. Carl McNair, on “The Bride of Christ” and “The Meaning of the Last Great Day.” Other messages included “They All Shall Know Me” by Mr. Val Burgett, “Responsibility Builds Godly Character” by Mr. Bill Oswald, “As Little Children” by Mr. Brian Pomictor and “The Second Exodus” by Mr. Randy Gregory.

For many, the fellowship began early each day at a breakfast buffet for Feastgoers staying at the Quality Inn. During “Children’s Hour” each morning before services, youngsters learned about the armor of God and the Ten Commandments through special crafts and activities.

Excellent participation was the norm for all planned activities, and served to draw the group closer together. On Monday afternoon, the singles enjoyed a meal together and a wagon ride through scenic woods. That after-

noon, the youth “took over” an indoor sports facility for pizza, basketball, flag football and special activities for the younger children. The seniors enjoyed a Tuesday luncheon with steel guitar music provided by Mr. Oswald, and a talk by Mr. Burgett reminding them of the importance of example. At the family dance that evening, in addition to dancing, brethren enjoyed a hula hoop contest, a midget bike race and bouncing around the “moon walk.”



About sixty brethren took a Wednesday afternoon bus trip to a nearby historic flour mill and a tour through Amish country, which included opportunities to purchase baked goods from Amish families. A local expert on Amish customs and culture accompanied us and educated our group. A genuine Wisconsin lunch was served on family day, Thursday afternoon, with bratwurst, burgers, cheese, apples from a local orchard, and all the side dishes, accompanied by live music, games and activities including capture-the-flag and bingo. On Friday afternoon, 80 met at nearby Lake Wissota for a cruise and dinner. A small armada of nine pontoon boats carried these festive sailors on an enjoyable cruise around the lake and up Paint Creek. It was a beautiful day, with lots of sunshine, and temperatures in the upper 60s. The wildlife and

scenery were outstanding. Between services on the Last Great Day, the elders, deacons, hosts and department heads had a luncheon together, with Mr. Carl McNair as the special speaker. The atmosphere, messages, activities and fellowship provided a real foretaste of the closeness and harmony the family of God will enjoy for all eternity!

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

Cool, crisp temperatures and clear blue skies greeted nearly 800 brethren attending the Feast in Eureka Springs, a small Victorian town in the Ozark Mountains of northwest Arkansas. The mountain vistas, beautiful lakes and small town charm provided a millennial setting for the Feast of Tabernacles.

From the first evening service, positive, enthusiastic comments were heard. The new Best Western Inn at the Ozarks Convention Center suited our needs very nicely, though we filled it nearly to capacity. The seating was comfortable and the decor was conducive to the Feast.



The stage was graced with a beautiful quilt depicting the “lion and the lamb with a little child” as a backdrop.

The sermons were excellent, with such subjects as “Recapturing True Values,” “Anticipating the Kingdom,” “Our Role in the Kingdom,” “The Second Exodus,” “God As a Builder,” “Our Liberty in Christ,” “Preparing for What Is To Come,”

“Our Future in the Family of God” and “Know the True God and Christ of Scripture.” The messages by guest speakers Mr. Charles Bryce and Dr. Roderick C. Meredith, as well as the other ministers, were warmly received.

There was enthusiastic participation in Festival activities. On Sunday, 58 singles enjoyed box lunches at the Eureka Gardens, a 33-acre botanical garden in the hills outside of town. It had beautiful plantings, a huge free-flowing spring and a trout stream with an abundance of large trout. Truly, it was a millennial setting for getting to know one another.

On Monday, 152 teens and school-aged children enjoyed an exciting afternoon of fun with go-carts, baseball-batting cages, miniature golf and an arcade at the Fun Spot, a small amusement park. That evening 300 brethren enjoyed a “Night at the Movies” at the Convention Center featuring the movie *Joseph*.

Senior citizens were honored at a luncheon where they heard Davy Crockett explain God’s perspective on growing older, and each of the 122 attending received a framed souvenir of the Feast containing the words of

Proverbs 16:31: “The silver-haired head is a crown of glory if it is found in the way of righteousness.”

At the “Blessing of Little Children,” eight infants and small children were brought forward to have God’s blessing bestowed upon them. Interestingly, three of the infants were brought in from another church group that no longer blesses little children at the Feast.

As we wrapped up the Feast on the Last Great Day, it was with some nostalgia that everyone departed for home. Many expressed how much they had enjoyed the Feast at Eureka Springs, and that they were already hoping to come back to this site in the future.

Flagstaff, Arizona

Pine trees and picturesque mountains greeted more than 450 brethren at the elegant Little America Resort in Arizona high country. At 7,000 feet, the crisp nights, warm daytime temperatures and abundant sunshine offered a truly millennial environment for great fellowship, study and activities.

The Grand Canyon, Oak Creek Canyon, Sedona, Sunset Crater National Monument, Wupatki National Monument, Meteor Crater and Walnut Canyon offered breathtaking vistas, educational opportunities and visits to ancient southwest civilizations. The 12,663 foot San Francisco Peaks, adjacent to Flagstaff, were one of many areas that provided great outdoor hiking and adventures.

The well-planned activities for seniors, singles, teens and youth were enjoyable and complemented evening fellowship gatherings, sing-alongs, a fun show and a family dance designed to enhance a family atmosphere. Many commented on the wealth of Festival and other activities offered in Flagstaff, and said it would take multiple Feasts to be able to see and do everything.



A banner in the ballroom, “Welcome, Kingdom Seekers!” reminded us of our mission. Festival Coordinator Mr. Glen Gilchrist opened with an inspiring “Vision of the Kingdom” message, and also spoke on “The True Gospel and the Kingdom of God.” Dr. Jeff Fall presented God’s way as “A Path Less Traveled” and explained the meaning behind our “Temporary Dwellings.” Mr. Dennis Chornomaz spoke on the strength of comfort in our true “Christian Hope.” Mr. Rod Reynolds stressed our need for “True Christian Humility.” Mr. Karl Beyersdorfer reminded us of our weekly and millennial rest presented in “Hebrews 3 and 4.” Mr. Richard Ames closed the Feast

admonishing us to be “Ambassadors with a Mission” and gave a Last Great Day message on “Humanity’s Ultimate Destiny.” The heartfelt and meaty messages provided enough spiritual food to digest for a year!

God’s Spirit was evident in the abundant enthusiasm, warm and loving fellowship and the totally inspiring experience. We are grateful to God for all He has done for us! It was truly a special Feast!

Florence, Oregon

In a friendly town of 7,000 on the central Oregon coast, more than 200 brethren gathered to keep the Feast in a peaceful and hospitable setting. Temperatures were pleasant and weather dry throughout the Feast.

Activities included a family day in nearby Woahink State Park, a family fun night and dance, and a choice of lunch and dinner cruises aboard a paddle-wheel boat that gave brethren a beautiful view of the scenic Oregon coastline.

Many enjoyed sightseeing at nearby attractions such as the sea lion caves, the lighthouse and the sand dunes (where dune buggy rides were available), and exploring Florence’s “Old Town” with its variety of small shops and boutiques.



Feastgoers heard sermons from visiting speaker Mr. Richard Ames and featured speaker Mr. Don Haney, as well as by Mr. Don Davis, Mr. Terrence Graves and Mr. Fred Wittlake. Mr. Graves also served as Choir Director.

Services were made especially pleasant and convenient by the Florence Events Center, with its comfortable theater, large stage and ample room for social activities—and by the friendly and helpful Events Center employees, who went out of their way to be of service during the Feast. Truly, brethren were well-fed both physically and spiritually at the Feast in Florence this year!

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Three hundred lively brethren enjoyed a relaxed, family Feast in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Our first time holding the Feast in this extremely popular part of historic Pennsylvania Dutch Country was a memorable one. We met at the Lancaster Host Resort, nestled in a picturesque patchwork of rolling farmlands, fresh air and pure tranquility. Home to the Amish and Mennonites, life in these parts has changed little over the centuries. Horse-drawn carts, beautifully kept farms and the distinctive dress of the

Amish were common sights. This slower-paced lifestyle provided a tranquil backdrop to God’s Feast of Tabernacles.

This year’s sermons were particularly moving, and cut to the heart of our purpose for keeping the Feast—to learn to fear God and to picture the soon-coming beauty and harmony of “Tomorrow’s World.” Dr. Meredith’s powerful opening night message set the tone for the entire Feast by challenging us to diligently use the eight days as an opportunity to walk with God in a special way. The harmony, cooperation and beautiful attitudes were a sure sign that many took to heart his admonition to saturate themselves with Christ by spending time praying and studying their notes each day.



We were blessed to open the Feast with the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Carl McNair. Mr. McNair treated us to two inspiring messages, exhorting us to have vision to rejoice in God’s sure plan to bring about His glorious kingdom, and discussing the challenge of properly preparing to be teachers and kings in the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

Other messages included Mr. Paul Shumway speaking on the loving, patriarchal nature of God’s true government, and on youth’s minds being open to the Truth of God, Mr. David Chornomaz speaking about five new and wonderful things we will enjoy in the Kingdom of God, and Mr. Charles Knowlton speaking on avoiding spiritual pollution and holding fast to the Truth.



Mr. and Mrs. John Ogwyn provided a wonderful conclusion

to the Feast with their warm presence. Mr. Ogwyn gave three powerful sermons relating to where we are on the world scene and what we should do, celebrating the wonders revealed by God’s glory, and the inspiring meaning of the Last Great Day.

Besides the wide variety of restaurants, favorite attractions in the area were a life-size reproduction of the Tabernacle, a two-hour live presentation of Daniel at the Sight and Sound Theatre, Hershey’s Chocolate World, hot air balloon flights, Gettysburg, two large outlet malls and three railroad museums. Family day at Cherry Crest Corn Maze was well-attended and proved to be a highlight as well. There was something for everyone. Activities ranged from a petting zoo to hay rides, “pumpkin launch,” tube

slide and three different mazes. It was a wonderful day that brought everyone closer together.

Most brethren stayed at the Host Resort, which provided a warmth and unity that permeated the atmosphere in a most profound way. This year's Feast in Lancaster will be long remembered with special fondness.

New Braunfels, Texas

The Feast of Tabernacles was held at New Braunfels, a city of 39,000 on the edge of the beautiful Texas hill country. New Braunfels, which abounds in natural beauty, charm and family attractions, was founded in 1845 by German settlers and provided a peaceful, tranquil country setting for this year's Festival. Services were conducted at the T-Bar-M Ranch and Conference Center. Feastgoers came from all over the United States as well as "Paradise" (Hawaii).

The Feast was opened by an elder in the Lufkin, Texas area, Mr. Daniel Friz, with a sermon "God's Government - Now and Forever." Other sermon topics were: "Why You Are Here," "The Mind of a Little Child," "Our Race for the Goal," "Prepare to Teach" and "Does Character Count?" Dr. Jeffrey Fall gave three sermons: "The Path Less Traveled," "Why Isn't It the Feast of the Kingdom of God?" and "The Last Great Day!"

The teens had a great time at a pizza party. Our family day was excellent in every way. The Riggs family organized the event—including bingo, children's activities, barbecue meal, live musical entertainment and a talent show. Family fun was had by all.

Thirty-five elders, deacons, and hosts attended a luncheon held at the Grist Mill, overlooking the beautiful Guadalupe River. This was followed in the evening by a church dance at the T-Bar-M. Fifty nine seniors attended a buffet luncheon at the T-Bar-M after services on Friday. Dr. Fall gave an inspiring talk to all there and touched a little on the Headquarters move to Charlotte.

One of the physical highlights was the "Louisiana Luau" where the gumbo, fellowship, music and scenic backdrop of the Comal River made it a truly inspiring evening in a millennial setting.

Panama City, Florida



God's hand in controlling Hurricane Isidore was quite evident as nearly 900 people enjoyed the Feast of Tabernacles at the beautiful Marina Civic Center in Panama City, Florida. Bright blue skies prevailed throughout the

Feast and even threatening rain squalls did not materialize to dampen the family day beach activities. On the other hand, higher than normal hurricane-generated tides provided beachcombers an unusual opportunity to glean some very pretty seashells.

Traveling speakers Messrs. Lambert Greer and Charles Bryce, as well as Mr. Ben Faulkner, Mr. Dan Hall, Mr. Sheldon Monson and Mr. Carl Ponder, presented messages that clearly focused on the fantastic future ahead in tomorrow's world.

Teenagers were able to meet daily, not only to establish new friendships but to strengthen older ones. Mr. Greer conducted a special Bible study for the teens. Again this year, the "Super Speed Fun Park" in Panama City Beach opened its gates at a reduced price for all Church members, and many families enjoyed the rides and attractions there. The teens also enjoyed the bowling and pizza party on Monday afternoon. A teen choir, directed by Miss Jennifer Hall and accompanied by Miss Audra Kemp, presented special music on Friday morning.

On Sunday afternoon, the singles enjoyed a very successful outing to Shell Island. Back at the Marina Civic Center, Mr. Dave Burson conducted a Bible study for the singles on Monday morning.



Three selections by the Festival Choir, and other meaningful special music, added to the pleasure of worshipping our Great Creator God in peace and harmony.

An overflowing crowd was present at the family dance at the Marriott Resort on Thursday evening. For about an hour, J. R. Wells and his band delighted the throng of dancers with live music and, as an added pleasure, there were featured vocal selections sung by Mrs. Lou Torrance. Music for the remainder of the evening featured recorded selections for various types of dancing.

The Panama City Country Club was the site of two events this year. In this beautiful setting, on Tuesday, Mr. Dan Hall hosted a luncheon for the seniors. Mr. Charles Bryce addressed the elders, hosts, deacons and deaconesses assembled there for lunch on Friday afternoon.

Situated on the Gulf Coast, Panama City features many fine restaurants and venues for family entertain-

ment. Condominiums and town houses provide a very comfortable atmosphere for home-style entertaining.

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

Much needed rain did not dampen the spirit of over 500 Feastgoers gathered at the Smoky Mountain Convention Center in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. “An entire way of life is going to be restored... and we’re going to teach that way of life!” stated Dr. Meredith as he kicked off the opening night of the Feast. Dr. and Mrs. Meredith began the Feast in Pigeon Forge where Dr. Meredith gave three sermons and an offertory to a peak attendance of 545 rejoicing brethren and visitors. Dr. Meredith explained: “Jesus Christ and God the Father are now planning our future!... We are to become one, as God the Father and Jesus Christ are, for all eternity!” He exhorted us to use self-control, pray and study, really love our neighbor and “be inspired to draw close to God!” Additionally, this Feast was exemplified by powerfully inspired, informative and encouraging sermons by Messrs. Carl McNair, Lambert Greer and Martin Fannin. As one longtime member observed: “We have received more spiritual meat at this Feast than we have in years!” Another remarked: “All the speakers spoke with power, zeal and conviction; they were very encouraging, edifying and motivating!”

Festival activities featured a senior luncheon buffet with great food and lots of fellowship, where 116 seniors were entertained by vocal performances of Mrs. Judy Lowe and Mr. John Shelton, and piano classics by Mr. Michael Thomas. Afterward Mr. Lambert Greer gave an update on the progress of Headquarters’ move to Charlotte. Local hosts, deacons, elders, department heads and their families also relished a delicious and delightful banquet, amplified by an encouraging and motivating talk from Dr. Meredith.

Singles enjoyed several opportunities for fellowship, including a breakfast-planning meeting, from which came an afternoon of bowling and a lively evening of music, food, fun and entertainment. Teens were treated to a bible study on “Making Wise Decisions” by Mr. Darrell Lovelady, and participated in a variety of activities including ice skating, alpine slide, go-carts, black bear habitat, shopping and more. The family dinner-dance provided something for everyone. Feastgoers rejoiced heartily with good food and live entertainment, coupled with a variety of dance tunes from the big band era through to the nineties.

This year’s Feast was characterized as “very smoothly running,” with all departments and brethren functioning as one to give each other the “best Feast ever!”

Teton Village, Wyoming

The Feast of Tabernacles 2002 at Jackson Hole was a wonderful success for the 145 brethren who came to Teton Village this year. “Everyone at the Feast was happy and in good spirit,” commented guest speaker Mr. Bob League. The weather was fantastic as always in Jackson during Feast time, with clear skies for the entire eight days, and temperatures in the mid-60s to 70s during the day and mid-30s and low 40s in the evening.

Feast activities included a “Wyoming Night” hosted by site coordinator Mr. Ben Whitfield, where more than 100 brethren shared good food and rejoiced. Other activities included a family day picnic and a family dance. Some ventured out to the two national parks, Grand Teton and Yellowstone, for an afternoon of sightseeing and wilderness enjoyment.

The videos and live Feast messages were truly inspiring and meaningful. Bob League said it best when he commented: “It is as if ‘One Voice’ is being spoken here at this Feast!” We had fantastic and inspiring messages, sound spiritual meat and good encouragement about



what God is doing, where God is working, what He expects of us and how to truly fear Him. Other messages discussed the meaning of Jesus’ name, His eternal work, the historical illustrations of His coming to the temple, the coming Kingdom of God and the resurrections to eternal life.

Special music by the festival choir, the children’s choir, and individual soloists singing God’s praises brought a wonderful sound to the services. Children even helped decorate the stage, with a posting of the Ten Commandments and a wooden bear that silently stood watch while fishing in a stream. A special campfire burned throughout the Feast right on the stage and never burned the logs. Many folks just did not want to leave this year, and truly wished that the Feast would go on. Their fellowship with each other, and a deep spiritual “refilling” of God’s Spirit, characterized the entire eight days of this year’s Festival. It will truly be one to remember for a long, long, time.

Dorado, Puerto Rico

For the first time since 1993, the brethren were able to enjoy the Feast in Puerto Rico. A total of 37 attendees were able to share messages about the plan of God at one of the island's most modern and beautiful hotels. The services were conducted in Spanish or English with simultaneous translation provided.

We were certainly blessed and happy to have reestablished the Feast in Puerto Rico, with the attendance of visiting English-speaking brethren who shared their love of God's truth with us in peace and harmony. The honor belongs to God; the blessings and good memories belong to us, His children.

Cranbrook, British Columbia, Canada

This year, 213 brethren gathered at the Town and Country Inn for God's Feast of Tabernacles. Cranbrook is located in a beautiful valley, among several freshwater rivers that flow down from the majestic Rocky Mountains. The weather was



perfect, with full-moon-lit nights and partly cloudy shirt-sleeve days.

The video messages from Dr. Meredith came through strong and clear. Inspired messages by guest speakers Mr.

Richard Ames and Mr. Gerald Weston pointed out our opportunities to serve now and in the Kingdom of God.

The very helpful messages from the other elders, and all the volunteer help from the brethren, made this Feast an uplifting experience for new and old members alike. We welcomed three new baptized members during the Feast—one from the U.S. and two from Canada. Visitors attended from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii.

The family day, a seniors' luncheon, the ministerial luncheon and the family dance added much to the blessings that all enjoyed by observing God's Feast of Tabernacles.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada

"It was the greatest Feast ever!" Ask anyone who attended the Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful Prince Edward Island and this is the response you are sure to hear. It was small by some standards—89 in all—but a happier, friendlier and more outgoing group of God's people you will never see.

The weather was sunny and warm earlier in the week, with periods of cloudiness and light rain toward the sec-

ond half. But the change in the weather did not dampen the spirits of these Feastgoers one bit. The fellowship was something to see and get involved in.

Most took advantage of the warm weather to take in the many activities the island has to offer. There was whale watching, Indian reserves to visit, bald eagles to spot, fishing and many shopping malls for the ladies. The wonderful restaurants are among the finest in all Canada, and deserve attention.



However, it was definitely a spiritual Feast. The sermons and sermonettes were very inspiring. The lineup of speakers included Mr. John Ogwyn, Mr. Gerald Weston, Mr. Jim Arnaldo, Mr. Gary Ehman and Mr. Carl Klink—all "batting 1,000."

With its wonderful Millennium atmosphere and pastoral setting, it is hard to imagine a better place to spend a Feast of Tabernacles before the Eternal God.

St. Adele, Quebec, Canada

"Awesome" and "magnificent" were some of the comments used to describe the beautiful scenery of the Laurentian mountains as 180 assembled for the Feast of Tabernacles under almost perfect weather in beautiful St. Adele, Quebec.

Sermons by Messrs. John Ogwyn, Gerald Weston, Ken Frank, Dexter Wakefield and Randy Kobernat, along with taped opening night and Last Great Day sermons by Dr. Meredith, highlighted the Feast.

One Feastgoer described it as the happiest Feast he had ever attended. Another said she had never enjoyed a Feast as much in her more than 20 years of attending.

One highlight for some newly attending French brethren, who had come from our "former association," was a special question and answer period held by Mr. John Ogwyn.

Thanks to all who attended in St. Adele this year. A special thanks to all those who transferred in from other areas.

Arklow, Ireland

The festival in Arklow, a pleasant seaside village nestled against rolling green hills and away from the hurry and congestion of a big city, offered more than 90 brethren and guests a foretaste of the Millennium. God

made His presence felt by providing eight-plus days of stunningly beautiful weather and by inspiring the speaking, listening and serving. Clear, practical and inspiring messages focused on how to prepare for the coming reality of the kingdom of God. Many felt the Feast this year was one of the most spiritual they had ever experienced. Fewer activities were planned, which allowed for more time to think, to fellowship and explore the unique sites in southeast Ireland. Everyone was encouraged to take time to reflect on why they had come to the Feast, to observe the local wonders of God's creation, to think about how to prepare to play a meaningful role in God's plan, to pray for God's guidance in their lives, to review notes, to identify lessons learned at the Feast and to set goals to accomplish upon returning home. Many commented on the spirit of friendliness that permeated the festival. The benefits of not letting the physical aspects of the festival overshadow the spiritual were clearly evident in Arklow.

Lake Hasselfürth, France

A beautiful forest and peaceful lake provided a millennial setting for 193 brethren from many countries who celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles at Lake Hasselfurth, France this year. Brethren enjoyed eating together, participating in recreational activities, and learning to communicate and cooperate despite the challenge of different languages and cultures. A full plate of meaty sermons encouraged all to be watchful and prepare for God's soon-coming Kingdom. Mr. Apartian noted that adaptability is a key to preparing for the Kingdom, and focused on Ruth as an example of a person who changed to become an important person in the physical lineage of Jesus Christ. Mr. Apartian also offered



several new descriptions for the Last Great Day, such as the "Feast of Justice" and the "Feast of the Goodness of God." Other sermons covered such topics as the need to have the heart of a shepherd, the importance of Jerusalem in prophecy, a comparison between today's world and the coming reality of the Kingdom, learning patience and courage from the life of Jeremiah and an

exposition of the book of Zephaniah with its pertinent message for the people of God today.

Brethren enjoyed Church-sponsored outings to Haut Konigsberg castle, a medieval fortress restored by Kaiser Wilhelm II overlooking the Rhine valley, and to Saverne with its picturesque shopping street and the nearby canal and lock system moving boats up and down a mountain-side. Brethren also took the opportunity to visit the mountain fortress at Bitche which heroically held out for more than 1 1/2 years against Prussian attacks in the 1870 invasion. Some visited St. Avold, the largest U.S. war cemetery in Europe, the battlefield of Verdun (where more than 750,000 men died in World War I), and other sites in nearby Luxembourg and Germany. The Church-sponsored formal dance was "the best church dance ever" according to one teen-aged participant. More than 100 Feastgoers enjoyed music ranging from waltzes, tangos and passo doblo to country line and romantic slow dances. The family talent show evening showcased professional quality clogging from Kansas City, child and adult singing stars, comedy skits and instrumental music. It is also rumored that some wine and cheese tasting occurred at the Feast—which is most likely true, since France has a certain amount of good quality wine and cheese to offer.

Ballina, Eastern Australia

A total of 135 brethren from all over Australia, and visitors from South Africa, New Zealand, Malaysia and the USA, celebrated the Feast in Ballina, Australia. The millennium-like setting of the beautiful sandy Pacific Ocean beaches and wonderful weather set the stage for a most harmonious and joyful Feast. The unity and deep love shown by all who attended was evident by the fruits of the eight days—absolute fulfillment of Psalm 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

The sermons—from Mr. Bruce Tyler, Mr. Rod King, Mr. Dayrell Tanner and our visiting minister Mr. Rodger Bardo—were truly inspiring, capped off by Dr. Meredith's videotaped messages at the beginning and end of the Feast. We were inspired by the *Behind the International Work* video, thrilled to see the progress of the Work in far-flung foreign lands.

We were truly spiritually fed to the full. Sermon topics included: "The Rise and Rise of the Kingdom of God," "The History of the Kingdom Through Time," "Learn to Fear God Always," "The Government of God," "Positive Parenting," "Really Believe God," "God's Love of the Nations and Their Roles in His Kingdom," and "Persistent Prayer's Part in Our Christian Growth."

Activities were well attended and added greatly to the Feast, bringing us together as one body. The young adults and teens were a wonderful example of God's way of life, and they enjoyed getting to know each other at a "silver service" dinner after services on the first Holy Day.

Our barbecue by the waters of Shaw's Bay was cut short by a threatening thunderstorm that was supposed to have severe hail right in Ballina! It seemed to split around the town, and it provided a brilliant light show over the ocean, without any hail of consequence.

The energetic thoroughly enjoyed an "Aussie Bush Dance" led by the "Playing Possum Bush Folk Band." Our family day and seniors' activity were held at Byron Bay, Australia's most easterly point. The young and adventurous entertained the sedate, as they learned to



"fly" on a real circus flying trapeze, many being successfully caught by the catcher. Others played tennis, rode bikes, played volleyball, fellowshipped or tried their hand at

croquet. After such energetic activity we all enjoyed a specially catered afternoon tea in the restaurant.

One afternoon, golfers had a good time and exercise on the beautiful Ballina golf course.

The Melbourne brethren hosted an International Talent Show, with Mr. Rod King as a most amusing Master of Ceremonies. There were acts from many brethren, representing a variety of countries, which were enjoyed by all.

On each of the Holy Days, everyone enjoyed a catered banquet luncheon in the restaurant adjacent to the meeting hall, overlooking the Richmond River.

Services were held at the Returned Serviceman's League Club, a wonderfully warm and friendly venue just perfect for the 135 Feastgoers, who really did have a taste of the wonderful world to come!

Albany, Western Australia

A very special Feast of Tabernacles was enjoyed by 23 brethren in the picturesque town of Albany on the south coast of Western Australia. The weather, the beautiful environment, the fellowship and the spiritual food all combined to make this a very inspiring, educational and memorable Feast of Tabernacles.

Visiting minister Mr. Michael Gill, and site elder Mr. Ken MacLeod, used the opportunity to remind the older

members and instruct the newer brethren on the meaning and the importance of the Feast in God's plan, with sermons on "The New World Government," "Planning to Rule in God's Kingdom" and "The Duality of God's Message." Together with the videotaped messages from Dr. Meredith and Mr. Ogwyn, all the messages served to give a great boost to the understanding and enthusiasm for God's way to those present, especially to those experiencing the Feast for the very first time.

Our Activities included a visit to the historic Whaling Station museum, a bus trip to Two Peoples Bay—a pristine and interesting area of the coast—and a whale-watching harbor cruise (the whales were watching somewhere else, but the porpoises and seals filled in for them).

Ten-pin bowling, a musical appreciation evening and a video evening (showing historical proofs of biblical times), added much to the atmosphere and the spirit of the Feast.

At the end of these wonderful eight days everyone expressed appreciation for God's plan for all mankind, and was looking forward to doing it all again next year.

Lake Taupo, New Zealand

Lovely Lake Taupo, in the center of New Zealand's North Island, was for the first time the venue for a Living Church of God Feast. The meeting hall provided a grand vista of the lake and surrounding countryside; a beautiful setting picturing the peace and beauty of the coming millennium under Christ's rule.

According to the weather forecast we should have had a very showery time for the first few days, but most of this time we were blessed with sunshine.

Mr. Rodger Bardo, attending with his wife Betty, delivered enthusiastic and encouraging sermons, the first of

which asked the question "Do We Believe God?" He also conducted a small choir made up of visiting Americans and some local Kiwis who presented special



music of the chorale piece, "On Eagles' Wings." The Bardos were with us for the first few days of the Feast, after which they left for the Australian site. Our visiting minister for the rest of the Feast was Mr. Gary Ullerick with his wife Gail. Mr. Ullerick began his first sermon on Tuesday, showing us "By What Right Does Christ Take Rulership of the Earth?" Mrs. Ullerick sang some beauti-

ful songs, and all through the Feast our singing was accompanied on keyboard by Mrs. Elva Sedliacik.

On the first Holy Day, lunch was arranged at a local Greek restaurant. The generosity of the brethren was such that some who would have been unable to participate enjoyed the meal. This was a wonderfully loving and unified start to the Festival.

During the Feast, many of the brethren attended a warming meal at an Indian restaurant, followed by a very enjoyable games evening, featuring a Bible quiz, charades and indoor bowls. There were also barbecues and visits to some of the many restaurants in Taupo.

On the Last Great Day, a shared lunch of healthful finger foods provided our last opportunity to fellowship for the Feast, and Mrs. Ullerick sang us the beautiful song “Jerusalem.” While it was hard to leave, we are all looking forward to meeting again in Taupo next year.

Port Vila, Vanuatu

Port Vila, the Capital of Vanuatu, again hosted us for the Feast of Tabernacles. Up to 30 people attended and were treated to good, warm weather for the entire Feast. Members live on several different islands, and travel to Port Vila is expensive (by plane) and arduous (by boat).



At services the brethren were able to view Festival sermon videos supplied by Headquarters, and visiting minister Mr. Kinnear Penman presented several sermons covering the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles.

We were all able to enjoy a picnic at White Sand Beach. Lunch that day consisted of chickens spit-roasted over a bed of rocks heated in an open fire. We all enjoyed a family fun night. A Bible quiz taxed brethren’s knowledge in a fun way and all shared a “pot-luck” banquet.

Pulau Langkawi, Malaysia

Sheer joy and exhilaration were the order of the day when 69 attendees convoked at the Grand Continental Hotel on the island of Langkawi for the opening night videotaped message by Dr. Meredith.

Several brethren from Australia, one from the Philippines and one from Indonesia joined the Malaysian

brethren, making Langkawi a truly international Feast site. Intermittent rains during the Feast were a cause for concern, but the weather failed to dampen the high spirits of the attendees, who proved resourceful enough to counter the interference. Feastgoers had clear weather when it really mattered.

Supplementing the videotaped sermons, local elder and site coordinator Mr. Rajan Moses made significant contributions to the rich and balanced diet of spiritual food that everyone enjoyed.

The Grand Continental Hotel is nestled in a valley and surrounded by lush hills. Most of the facilities were within easy reach of the hotel, some even within walking distance. Numerous activities were lined up to cater to all the various age groups, from a Spokesman Club, to a family day at the beach, to the Talent Night showcasing some of the skills of the brethren, and featuring contributions by overseas visitors as well.

Physical feasting was not neglected. The brethren shared three group meals, with the poolside barbecue stealing the honors. Afterward, Mr. Rajan Moses and his wife Rachel led the brethren in dancing the waltz.

The hotel’s swimming pool played host to three baptisms this year. Mr. Arius Jayaputra Nusantara from Indonesia, and Ronald Moses and Shareena Isaac from Malaysia, became the latest additions to God’s Church. It was a most memorable Feast for the Moses family in particular, since Mr. Rajan Moses had the distinct privilege of baptizing his only son.

As is usually the case with a small Feast site, fellowship took center stage. Brethren enjoyed each other’s company, with serious discussions and casual chit-chat to while-away the time. Indeed, the whole Feast experience here was based on the theme of “Love one another.”

Mae Sot, Thailand

This year, Thailand brethren kept the Feast with 24 in attendance at Watana Holiday Cottage Village, 20 minutes east of Mae Sot in Northern Thailand. The Feast site is located at the base of the Thai/Burma mountains. For several weeks and just days before the Feast, the area had experienced heavy rains and flooding in the Mae Sot area. However, unbelievably, the rain stopped all the days and nights of the Feast.

Mehm Pho Saw and his wife, Phyu Phyu Aye, had to “wear three hats”—coordinating, conducting and speaking in English, Thai and Burmese. Doh Ma (widow of Bhaw Mu Htoo) helped with the Karen translations.

Brethren enjoyed watching the *Tomorrow’s World* telecast and the *Behind the International Work* video.

Also enjoyable was the traditional coconut rice with tenderized beef provided by Phyu Phyu Aye, and sight-seeing around the area. All brethren left their hometown by air-conditioned bus, peacefully and in great pleasure. Brethren made a special prayer for next year's Feast together with brethren from other nations by God's will.

Wadduwa, Sri Lanka

Brethren in Sri Lanka kept the Feast in a beautiful resort down south. We had a total of 45 in attendance, including children. The first night got off to a rough start as one of the senior citizens tripped, fell on her hand and fractured her wrist, and the equipment burned out. But that did not hinder the Feast spirit. It brought the brethren closer, as everyone asked for God's intervention in all things, and the result for the entire Feast was wonderful.

We had no live speakers, but we did have exceptional sermons on video. We truly appreciate their time and effort into making it possible for us to hear the Word of God expounded even through a videotape. There was great enthusiasm after hearing the sermons each day, as the contents exhorted both youngsters and adults alike to grow to be spiritually mature. The planned talent show and family day activity rounded off the family-based fellowship.

Everyone returned to their homes satisfied with the joy of experiencing fraternal union, strengthened by the spiritual and physical food received, and recharged with goals for the next year.

Andhra Pradesh, South India

Greetings from India! Special greetings to all from the Indian brethren and co-workers.

This 2002 Feast was a very great and blessed Feast. All our brethren enjoyed a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles, keeping the Feast at three sites in Andhra Pradesh: Bhimavaram, Kovvur and Seetaramapuram, with an attendance of 207, 195 and 220 respectively.

On the fourth day, the local city cable people came to the Feast site and took video for their local daily news. We made the news that evening.

We are looking forward to the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom, yet most people in the world do not even know about His first coming.

Our people are learning more and more. Please keep us in your prayers and for the gospel to be preached to all our peoples.

Sierra de la Ventana, Argentina

With a peak attendance of 49 enthusiastic people, we celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in one of the most beautiful regions on Earth. After more than six hours of travel from Buenos Aires through the Argentinean *pampas*, where you will not find even the smallest hills, the first mountain formations—that make part of the region's mountain range—begin to appear.

Sierra de la Ventana, a town firmly located in a valley and surrounded by two rivers of crystal clear water, gets its name from a "window" that opens through the top of one of the rocky mountain peaks of this region. The hike to this peak, called "Cerro de la Ventana" (Window Hill), constitutes one of the challenges that the youngsters, up to 62 years of age, were able to achieve after three-and-a-half hours of hiking. With the beauty of this place, such a hike is something that cannot be left undone. The population of this town does not exceed 1,500 and its architecture, weather and picturesque train station reminded us of a place we have all seen in some movie.



Members from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, the United States of America and Puerto Rico gathered here for the Festival. Everybody was very satisfied, even though it was a long journey for some. The beauty of this place and the extraordinarily low prices, for both lodging and food, are enough reasons to recommend this site to other brethren who are considering the possibility of attending the Feasts in Argentina in the coming years.

A high point of the Feast was the baptism of Alfredo Carvajal Hidalgo, son of Mr. Sergio Carvajal and Mrs. Audelia Hidalgo de Carvajal, our hosts in Santiago, Chile, who are also faithfully dedicated to the Work of our radio program *El Mundo de Mañana*.

Another interesting note was the attendance to the Feast of Mr. Aldo García, from Santiago, Chile, who began attending services just three months ago. Mr. García is fruit of a new harvest, having been called after listening to Mr. Mario Hernandez on the local radio program.

There are not enough words to express the unity, harmony, camaraderie and true brotherhood that we enjoyed during these days—something truly exemplary. We all left with the gladness of having enjoyed the best of all Feasts.

Barbados

The local brethren were joined by two families from the United States and one from Canada to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles at the Barbados Beach Club, located on the south coast of the island. Thirty-five attended the opening night service, and attendance increased daily, reaching 50 on the Last Great Day.

Everyone was in high spirits, despite the death of long-serving member Clement Lowe on Friday, September 20, and the visit from tropical storm Lili four days later. Nether the Feast nor the brethren were affected by the storm.

The sermons were stirring and uplifting; Dr. Donald Roach delivered five sermons and conducted the blessing of the children, and Dr. Robert Thiel gave four sermonettes. Activities were well-subscribed and thoroughly enjoyed by all. These included the traditional family day, a dinner-dance, a picnic lunch aboard a catamaran sailing in the Caribbean, and a tour of the world-famous Harrison's Cave and Orchid World, a garden displaying a variety of exotic orchids.

Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

The Feast of Tabernacles returned to Quetzaltenango this year, the second largest and second most important city in Guatemala after the capital. It is called, among other things, "The Cradle of Culture." Its name means "the place of the quetzal." The quetzal is the name of a bird with a long tail, which is found in the country's flag and on its currency, also called the quetzal.

The group of 49 included 41 relatives, including La Crescenta, California deacon Vicente Enriquez, his expectant wife and daughter. The Feast is truly a family affair in more ways than one. Visiting elder Mr. Raul H. Reyes, not physically related, felt related as part of the spiritual family at the Feast.

It rained every day of the Feast, but that did not dampen the enthusiasm of the brethren. Neither did a small earthquake during Dr. Meredith's Last Great Day sermon—which occurred just before Dr. Meredith mentioned earthquakes in his message.

While the waters were coming down outside, God's living water—the Holy Spirit—was evident in the sermons. One subject that rained down on the church for three days was the book of Proverbs. Mr. Mario Hernandez sent two videotapes on the Book of Proverbs to the young people and Mr. Reyes gave a live sermon on it as well. In his 35 Feasts of Tabernacles, he had never heard a sermon on the book of Proverbs, so he had decided to give one.

All the sermonettes were live, as were three sermons by Mr. Reyes. The rest of the sermons were video sermons,

with Mr. Hernandez either translating or giving the sermon himself.

Georgetown, Guyana

About 25 brethren from Georgetown and the coastal regions of Guyana gathered at the Woodbine Hotel in Georgetown to observe the Feast.

On the first day of the Feast, the hotel provided a special lunch for the brethren. Brethren on the third day arranged a picnic after services in the nearby National Park. There, they enjoyed each other's company and participated in games such as cricket and "plug" and a variety of table games. On the fourth day, brethren enjoyed a trip to the Splashmins Nature and Fun Park, where Mr. Fitzroy Greeman gave the sermon.

After services on the fifth day, a children's party and talent show gave everyone a chance to socialize. The seniors enjoyed a special luncheon on the sixth day. On the Last Great Day, the hotel again provided a special lunch between services.

This year's Feast was blessed with a number of special musical renditions from the local choir, Mr. Noel Collymore, Mr. Daudi Husbands and Mrs. Marion Lewis.

Negril, Jamaica

The Feast of Tabernacles was once again held in Negril, Westmoreland this year. Negril is a tourist resort area on the northwestern Coast of Jamaica, with lush vegetation, white sand beaches and a relaxing atmosphere.

More than 200 were registered for the Feast; there were 76 local brethren attending, and 125 from overseas. One gentleman (a subscriber to the *Tomorrow's World* magazine) visited with his daughter on the Last Great Day. During the Feast, three people were baptized.

Services were held at the Negril Cabins Resort; the brethren stayed at different facilities in the area, with the majority residing at the Point Village Resort. We enjoyed fine weather throughout the Feast, though on the Sunday after the Feast the local brethren returning to Kingston had a very trying time, with heavy rains and flooded roads caused by tropical storm Lili. Encouragingly, though, there were no high winds.

Activities included a family fun day on the beach, a seniors' luncheon at Negril Cabins Resort, a games evening at Negril Cabins, a children's party at Long Bay Beach and a showing of the movie *The Sound of Music* at Negril Cabins.

The messages—all "live" except for Dr. Meredith's two videotaped sermons—were well received, inspiring

and helpful. Everyone had a great Feast, and the brethren are already looking forward to next year's Feast.

Oaxtepec, Mexico

"Marvelous," "wonderful" and "spiritual" could be some of the words used to express, to some extent, what a group of approximately 80 people lived and enjoyed during the Feast of Tabernacles in Oaxtepec, Mexico.

Brethren from the United States, Spain, Chile and the warm hosts from Mexico enjoyed the Feast with brotherhood, fraternity and love for one another. The seed of the Word of God given to us was filled with God's inspiration and power that He put in His servants, and the brethren received it as a true spiritual banquet.

Among the leisure activities held were an evening of games and gifts for the children; an evening of games, music, food and an enjoyable atmosphere for the young people; soccer and basketball matches; and excursions.

With great gladness and joy we announce the baptism of two new sisters in the faith whom we congratulate and for whom we elevate prayers to God, so that He might guide them in His way and protect them from this world.

Mr. Mario Hernandez, who attended with his son Ariel, directed the first half of the Feast. For the second half, Mr. Antonio Mora directed.

The Oaxtepec Recreational Center has big and beautiful features that can be used for enhancing the Feast of Tabernacles. However, the real Feast atmosphere was built by the brethren who attended, who with true love, zeal for the Work of God and contagious enthusiasm, made this Feast of Tabernacles most fruitful and special for everyone.

The final message of the Feast was "Be Strong and of Good Courage," knowing that each of us would soon resume our routine activities, but filled with the "seed" that we will nourish during the following months, to once again present ourselves before our God at the start of the coming Holy Day season, bearing mature fruits, sweet and bountiful for His praise, glory, honor and thanksgiving.

Tobago

The Feast of Tabernacles 2002 in Tobago was held at the Grafton Beach Resort. More than 70 brethren enjoyed activities including a trip to Argyll Falls, a trip to Bucco Reef, a family fun day at the beach, and a dinner-dance at the Store Bay Resort, where most of the brethren stayed during the Feast.

At Argyll Falls, brethren trekked through a forested trail for 15 minutes to see the falls; some who were up to the task then climbed a steep incline to reach the foot of

the highest waterfall. At Bucco Reef, brethren boarded a glass-bottom boat to view the reef and surrounding coral gardens. The family fun day gave brethren a chance to relax with games of cricket and soccer, and also to sunbathe, before the concluding event—a water-balloon toss—which left everyone enjoyably wet! At the dinner-dance, brethren enjoyed each others' talents, such as singing, joke-telling, playing music and performing a skit. Everyone enjoyed both the spiritual messages and the physical activities at the Feast this year in Tobago, and the brethren are looking forward to an even more enjoyable Feast next year!

Maweni Beach, Kenya

Brethren kept the Feast at Maweni Beach Cottages, 21 miles south of Mombasa—a beautiful foliage-covered beach resort. Mild temperatures and relaxing ocean breezes with, intermittent rainfall on the first and second days, contributed to a great Feast! Services were held in a large tent at the site, complete with lighting and conference facilities. With lush gardens, loitering but funny monkeys, and plenty of oceanside activities for everyone, this was the most enjoyable Feast ever.



The Maweni cottages hosted 97 brethren, some attending a Living Church of God Feast site for the first time. Many expressed their appreciation for the sound and inspiring spiritual food they received. The local elder and site coordinator, Mr. Ernest Owino, gave nine sermons and four sermonettes, with simultaneous translation provided for Swahili-speaking brethren. Several *Tomorrow's World* telecasts were played as sermonettes.

Mr. Owino performed three baptisms during the Feast. Two children were blessed, and one anointing led to a report of an almost-instant healing.

No one wanted to go back to the "world," so it was disappointing to see the Feast come to a close after such a pleasant family atmosphere of fellowship for eight days. Mr. Simon Muthama commented, "I wish we had another eight days to go... this Feast has come to a close so fast!"

Glentana, South Africa

The picturesque, rustic village of Glentana was where God placed His Name for the Feast in South Africa. Situated about 20 kilometers shoreward of George in the Western Cape, Glentana provided an abundance of sea, bird and plant life, in which brethren could draw near to their Creator, whilst enjoying His creation.

Services were held in a local community hall with all facilities and amenities, and the stage was set for a Feast



during which family and friendship ties could be strengthened.

With most of the Festival attendees living relatively close to the meeting

hall, time for fellowship with friends, both old and new, was in abundance. On the Holy Days and on Wednesday, following the free day, pot-luck meals were enjoyed at the hall. Everybody assisted in setting up tables and chairs under the refreshing blanket formed by the lush vegetation.

The family day barbeque was also held at the hall on Sunday. The free day was mostly used to do sightseeing in and around George, Mosselbay and Knysna. That evening the children and young-at-heart were invited to enjoy a movie at the hall. All brought snacks and families enjoyed a few laughs while watching an animated comedy.

On Thursday the senior citizens' luncheon was held. Seven of our older brethren could not attend the Feast this year due to health problems, and they were sorely missed by all present, especially during this joyous occasion.

That same afternoon the singles and young married couples enjoyed lunch at a seafood and pasta restaurant. The afternoon was rounded off by the young ladies challenging the men to a game of miniature golf, the outcome of which is still being debated.

During the 2002 Festival, several topics were emphasized in insightful sermons and sermonettes which will help the brethren to grow closer to God and to one another.

The nearly 100 Feastgoers, residing all over the map from Cape Town to Gabarone, Botswana, flocked to where God placed His name, worshipped and rejoiced before Him daily with one accord, broke bread from house to house and ate with gladness and singleness of mind. As they departed, they all left with the reminder from the Regional Director of South Africa, Mr. Sydney Hull, that this Feast was a little preview of how it will be in the place of safety.

Tacloban City, Philippines

The Feast of Tabernacles 2002 was observed by 64 brethren in the Mount Zion Function Room, Cawaksi Training Center, Tacloban City. On the opening night, brethren heard with excitement Dr. Meredith's greeting on video. On the third day, Mr. Casing exhorted us to have peace and unity. Mr. Gorgonio de Guia arrived fresh from the Baguio City site, and he gave a message the next day titled, "Giving Respect to Our God."

Dinner and fellowship came Saturday night, as the brethren held a hearty potluck meal. The following day came, with a combined singles' and young adults' activity. Accompanied by Mr. Felipe Casing, we were treated to a trip to the longest bridge in the country: the San Juanico Bridge. After that, the singles proceeded to the most advanced and only postgraduate maritime institution in the entire country. After the tour, the group then proceeded to the MacArthur Park and Leyte Landing Memorial where, after some pictures were taken, they feasted on steamed peanuts.

Third day was "swimming day," as the Church held a beach outing at Sahara Beach Resort, about five minutes away from the site. Later that evening, the church social was held. Hosted by the charming and talented Casing sisters, members were treated to a night of songs, dances and even parlor games, in which both the young and old participated.

Three hours of classes in the Youth Feast Program were conducted on the fourth day. The seniors' get-together was presided over by Mr. Gorgonio de Guia on the evening of the fifth day of the Feast. On the sixth day, the second children's class was held. Questions were asked on biblical subjects, and the children showed impressive knowledge, despite their young age.

Baguio City, Philippines

Warm sunshine and cool mountain air greeted 153 Feastgoers in the beautiful city of Baguio. As in the past several years, services were conducted at the Quezon Hall in Teachers Camp, where most of the brethren lodged during the Feast. Philippine Regional Director, Mr. Rod McNair, who came from the U.S. with his family, gave two inspiring sermons, "Proclaim Liberty" and "Children of the Kingdom." On the second day, Quezon City pastor Mr. Gorgonio de Guia gave important pointers on how to really "rejoice at the Feast." Festival Coordinator Mr. Basil Osillos spoke about man's history in his sermon "We Are the People of God."

Social activities started on Sunday afternoon with the singles enjoying a hike along the beautiful mountain

trails in La Trinidad. The following day, teens were taught the basics of photography and self-defense (against snakes, dogs, etc.) during the Youth Feast Program. Other activities included an afternoon of games, prizes and ice cream for the children, a city tour for first-time Feastgoers, a family day, a seniors' walk-a-thon, and chess and basketball tournaments. Brethren also enjoyed a family dance and fun show that featured a journey down memory lane and showcased home-grown singing talents.



fun, activities, fellowship and inspiring messages all added to the enjoyment and appreciation of God's many blessings now and more especially in the coming Millennium.

Maranding, Philippines

Maranding was the site for the Sindangan, Bogabongan, Iligan City, and Maranding brethren to keep the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. This year 160 brethren attended the Feast, with a high attendance of 168 on the Last Great Day. Everyone enjoyed the setting, the inspiring sermons and sermonettes, good weather, dining, and many interesting outdoor activities, which included the Festival and beach parlor games.

Every morning brethren took advantage of the opportunity to mingle with others in their quarters before service. Messages were well-received and the atmosphere was one of unity and warmth. Other activities included the picnic on the beach, a banquet, and games among the senior citizens and young ones. Mr. Tex Benitez delivered an encouraging message, followed by an insightful Bible study.

The choir services were joyously enthusiastic as God's people raised their voices in thanksgiving and praise to God. The peace and order remained constant throughout the Feast. Some Visayan songs were sung during the Feast. As usual, the folk dances were incorporated into the Barrio Fiesta program as a smash hit.

Highlights of the Feast were Dr. Meredith's sermons and the *Behind the International Work* film. There were

This year's Feast was truly wonderful and memorable. The beautiful weather, abundant food, clean

blessings of the little children on the Last Great Day. Everything about the Feast caused many people to remark that this was indeed the greatest Feast ever.

Don Carlos, Philippines


This year's Feast of Tabernacles was observed by 130 enthusiastic members from San Fernando, Mauswagon, Don Carlos, Cagayan de Oro, and by some scattered Church members. The venue was in Don Carlos, Bukidnon, in Central Mindanao.

The Feast was kept with our program of daily services, with activities including a picnic and an afternoon of field games. The highlight was the spiritual meat delivered in the sermons. Evenings were full of folk dances and variety shows. Everyone participated in and enjoyed the activities.

Davao City, Philippines

Davao City was once again a Feast site this year, where 79 brethren stayed in one compound to keep God's Feast. The weather was really nice on opening night, and happy brethren sang "To God Be the Glory." The opening night video message by Dr. Meredith was moving, interesting and uplifting. This Feast site was a tremendous blessing for the brethren. Being near the sea, you could hear the waves rolling down the sand. Tropical and coconut trees abounded, giving shade under the heat of the sun. It created a nice playground where we could exercise or play some games like volleyball or basketball.

Mindanao is threatened by lawless elements, and yet how happy we were, experiencing peace, harmony, love as brothers and sisters in the Lord, under one roof—the Kingdom of God affecting us now physically and spiritually. We can sing again and now more meaningful, yearning for its fulfillment in the whole world—"Let us go to the Mountain of the Lord!"

—Compiled from reports by Jim Arnaldo, Tex Benitez, Frank Best, William Bowmer, Cielo L. Buena, Sergio Carvajal, Felipe Casing, Susan Church, Ray Clore, Raul Colon, J. Davy Crockett III, Rose Demillo, Diane Gilchrist, Austin Gill, Fitzroy Greeman, Randy Gregory, Charles Haughee, Daudi Husbands, Raj Kumar, Ken MacLeod, Armand Malonjao, Jonathan McNair, Eng Monson, Ernest Owino, Benito Parbo, Bob Parker, Kinnear Penman, Ray Pereira, Raul Reyes, Mehm Pho Saw, George Schaubeck, Paul Shumway, John Soosay, Phil Steagall, Jimmy Sweat, Dayrell Tanner, Patrick Wallace, Ben Whitfield and Douglas S. Winnail 

Christ Is Our LEADER

(continued from page 3)

“good social life” or any other such reason. As many of you have said: “It was almost like a ‘second calling’ from God” when you had to sometimes “stand alone” after re-proving the Truth and stepping out of our former association. You had to *prove to yourself* where Christ was now working, where the full Truth was now being preached, and *who* was doing the Work of God. I am sure that you have been—and will continue to be—truly *blessed* for that!

Even so, it is easy to forget that Jesus Christ really is in charge. We may tend to see the “human element” in decisions within the Church. We may even see real or imagined “mistakes” from time to time. Does that mean Christ is *not* really in charge? Of course not! For Jesus Christ and our heavenly Father *allow* us, as human beings, to make mistakes—even in serving God. But, as Mr. Herbert Armstrong used to say: “Brethren, Jesus Christ allowed me to make dozens of mistakes over the years. But Christ has **never** allowed me to make the kind of **major** mistake that would seriously cripple or destroy the Church!”

Yes, God allows **all** of us—including His human leadership—to

make mistakes and learn the lessons of life (cf. Galatians 2:11–13). And even Jesus Christ, who neither sinned nor made mistakes, *learned* from His human experience: Your Bible says: “Though He was a Son, yet He learned *obedience* by the things which He **suffered**” (Hebrews 5:8).

As the Living Church of God moves its earthly Headquarters to Charlotte, I fully expect that we will soon begin to do a more powerful work. It is evident to me through many circumstances that Christ is now “positioning” us to enlarge our efforts and finally have a major impact on this sinful world. Truly, brethren, this world **needs** what we have to give! As we grow and expand, mistakes will be made. Changes will occur—and they will sometimes be misunderstood or disliked by some. As the Church grows, exact jobs and responsibilities of many will change because of different needs in the Work.

Overall, however, Christ will certainly be “in charge.” He will be guiding, directing and inspiring us all along the way.

For our part, we must draw ever closer to Him. We must walk and truly “fellowship” with Christ and with our heavenly Father. We must **believe** in God and **trust** in Him. As

the Apostle Paul wrote: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must **believe** that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). And again: “For He Himself has said, ‘I will **never** leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).

Since Jesus Christ is “the **same** yesterday, today and forever” (v. 8), we must have confidence that our Head and Savior will directly lead and guide us as He did the early church soon after His death and resurrection. Notice Mark 16:19–20: “So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.”

Brethren, please meditate on these basic biblical principles. We will *need* to understand them in the months and years that lie ahead of us. May God help **all** of us to build an even greater degree of *faith* and *confidence* in the leadership of Jesus Christ in His Church today. In the trials and tests that are sure to come, we need to look “beyond” man and see what **God** is doing in His Church and in His Work today! ☞

Prepare Now for God’s Kingdom

(continued from page 2)

I hope and pray that all of you are “ready” for this—willing to trust God to take care of you and give you eternal life, even if some of us have to suffer a premature death in the service of Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus’ prophetic commission and warning to His disciples—which applies to us today as it did to His original disciples: “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have

gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 10:21–23). Again, in this passage, God indicates that we will be hated by “all” for Christ’s name’s sake. Only those who “endure” to the end will be saved.

We must constantly be drawing closer to God—making God more “real” in our hearts and minds—in order to *faithfully* go through the traumatic years ahead. We must always remember what Jesus told His disciples: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:24–26).

There is, in all of us, the normal desire to “save” our lives in this world. But Jesus tells us: “Whoever loses His life for My sake will find it” (v. 25). Our constant communion with God—our “fellowship” with God and Christ through profound Bible study, meditation, prayer and fasting—all of this will enable us to focus on God’s Kingdom and not be drawn into this world in the selfishness, worldliness and confusion that is rampant throughout our entire society and even among many of God’s people today.

As I cited to you in my sermon during the Feast, let us remember the Apostle Paul’s admonition: “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:1–4). We must indeed “set our minds” on what Christ and the Father are planning up in heaven. We must mentally picture the coming Kingdom, the glorious rule of Christ over a reconstructed world of prosperity, peace and love. We must picture the magnificent opportunity to serve right along with Jesus Christ, in helping millions of human beings reconstruct their own lives and come to know God during the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment. These things must become the *ultimate reality* in our minds and thoughts. For, dear brethren, they are the ultimate reality!

As I explained during the Feast, a number of us may die before the Tribulation begins or Christ returns. For those events may still be a number of years away—and *thousands* of our members are already in their 60s, 70s and 80s! Remember that King David, the “man after God’s own heart,” died “old and full of days” even though he was only 70 years of age! And many of us are already *beyond* the age at which King David died some 3,000 years ago. Yet, even in the next few years, most of us will have the opportunity to *genuinely prepare* in a positive way for the return of our Savior as King of kings. We will truly be “laying up treasure in heaven” by helping and serving in the very Work which Jesus Christ is doing through His Church today. And, again, by teaching and *practicing* the correct form of government in the Church—trusting **Christ** as the living Head of the Church to guide and lead—we will be preparing more than any other group for significant positions of authority, rule and service in Christ’s soon-coming government.

So let us continually pray for one another. Let us *encourage* one another—and be constantly aware that some may at times become discouraged or downcast as

they grow older, as human weakness and sickness sets in and Christ “still doesn’t come” as soon as we, humanly, would like. Yet, if we are truly converted, in our heart of hearts we *know* that this *extra time* may be needed by our other brethren to overcome and grow, and for God to be genuinely sure that conditions are fully “ripe” before He intervenes and brings on the horrifying Great Tribulation. We would not want to press God to “hurry” the Great Tribulation, would we?

Brethren these things are on my mind because of a dear elderly lady in the Church who I learned has recently died. She was a faithful and “gutsy” lady filled with enthusiasm and courage. As I was visiting her a couple of years ago, just before she underwent a serious operation, she told me: “Mr. Meredith, I may not be alive at this time tomorrow afternoon. But let’s talk about the resurrection! I am interested in the resurrection and plan to be there! Could we discuss this for a few minutes?” She was focusing on what Paul said. She was setting her mind “on things above, not on things on the earth.” *All* of us need to do this more than we probably now do. For, as the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell us: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:19–20).

The genuine hope of all Christians is the *resurrection* of the dead. Let us all plan to do all we possibly can in this life to *prepare* for God’s Kingdom, to help others while we have the opportunity, and still prepare *ourselves* mentally, emotionally and spiritually for the resurrection from the dead. If we truly “walk with God” in this way in our thoughts and prayers, God will bless us. We will soon become His full sons in the resurrection. We will—in the resurrection—have the magnificent and exciting opportunity to literally “interact” with Christ and with the Father in planning, preparing and executing wonderful projects on this earth and perhaps later throughout the universe. We will literally “fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

May God Himself help all of you to catch this vision and to make the Kingdom of God and the Work of God a more vital part of your lives. Then, we will soon be part of the extended family of God and share eternity with Him, with Jesus, and with one another in a Kingdom based on love, joy and peace.



Ordinations

Mr. *Jerry Sam*, who hosts a Living Church of God congregation on the island of Malekula, in Vanuatu, was ordained as a deacon during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Mr. & Mrs. *Colin McIntyre*, of Glasgow, Scotland, were ordained as deacon and deaconess at services on the Last Great Day in Arklow, Ireland.

At the Feast of Tabernacles in Baguio, Philippines, Mr. *Val Martin* and Mr. *Max Noble* were ordained as deacons. Mr. Martin will be serving brethren in Isabela; Mr. Martin will serve brethren in Cavite.

Mr. *Ronald Parbo* was ordained as a deacon during the Feast of Tabernacles in Davao, Philippines. He will be serving the brethren in Monkayo.

Birth

Lilli Anelise Parman was born on August 22, 2002, to Frank and Lisa Parman of Woodenville, Washington. She weighed 9 pounds, 3 ounces at birth.

The Middle East in Prophecy



In his upcoming "semi-annual letter" to *Tomorrow's World* subscribers, scheduled to be mailed in mid-November, Dr. Meredith will be offering a new booklet—*The Middle East in Prophecy*—written by Mr. Richard Ames. This booklet will be mailed automatically to all Church households. Members **do not** need to send in the return card from the semi-annual letter in order to receive the booklet.

Marriage

Ray and Katherine Joffrion and Rand and Gloria Millich are pleased to announce the marriage of their children *Melissa Grace Joffrion* and *Daral Nicholas Millich* on September 14, 2002. The maid of honor was Sarah Joffrion, sister of the bride. The ceremony took place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and was performed by Mr. Millich, Southeast Regional Pastor and father of the groom.

Family Ski Outing in Montana

Brethren in Montana will be gathering for their annual Winter Family Ski Trip from December 26–31, 2002, at Big Sky, Montana. An Alpine and Nordic winter wonderland, Big Sky offers beautiful vistas, fresh air and uncrowded conditions, fellowship for young and old alike, snowy days and warm evenings by the fire! You need not be a “Snow Rider” to enjoy this year’s trip! For pricing information and further details, please contact Mr. Ben Whitfield by e-mail at bwhitfield@cogl.org, or by phone at 307-324-3600 (days) or 307-324-7931 (evenings).

New **Tomorrow’s World** Telecasts

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 AM ET

VISION (Canada): Sunday, 3:30 AM & 5:30 PM ET

Air Date Broadcast Title

November 17	The Bible: A Book for Today! (presented by Mr. John Ogwyn)
November 24	Will Prophecy Fail?
December 1	Does God Control the Future?
December 8	What Really Lies Ahead in Tomorrow’s World?
December 15	Will You Follow Christ or Paul?
December 22	Keys to Effective Prayer
December 29	What Is Man? A Search for Answers (presented by Mr. John Ogwyn)

For additional stations and times, check the Television and Radio Log on page 31 of your **Tomorrow’s World** magazine.

Commentary

Ominous Weather Ahead

By Jeffrey Fall

The vast majority of scientists believe that the trend of “global warming” will have serious consequences for humanity. But until recently, politicians were pretty much divided on this subject.

As reported in a *Reuters* news article last June, “the Bush administration acknowledged for the first time in a new report that U.S. greenhouse gas emissions will increase significantly over the next two decades.”

When fossil fuels such as gasoline, oil and coal are burned, carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere. Of course, this is the same gas that we human beings give off when we exhale. All the plants of the earth absorb this same gas and release oxygen as a byproduct. Throughout the entirety of human history, this cycle was in apparent balance—until the past century. Over the last 100 years, as vast tracts of tropical rain forests have had their timber cut, Earth’s atmosphere has seen a build-up of carbon dioxide. Compounding this build-up has been the burning of huge quantities of fossil fuels, which has released enormous amounts of this gas that required hundreds of millions of years to be accumulated in the fossil fuels in the first place.

The net effect is what is called the “greenhouse effect.” Carbon dioxide in our atmosphere traps heat more effectively than oxygen, and this allows the earth’s temperature to climb. As the human population continues to expand, more fossil fuel release of carbon dioxide is inevitable. *Reuters* reported the Bush administration forecast that: “The total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions will increase 43 percent between 2000 and 2020. Average temperatures in the U.S. will rise 5 degrees to 9 degrees during this century. Average sea levels, rising 19 inches from global warming, could

threaten building, roads, power lines and other infrastructure. With a higher sea level, coastal regions could be subject to increased wind and flood damage.” These are startling admissions from a White House that had never before acknowledged these effects and mankind’s role in them.

Other factors beyond mankind’s control—such as the sun’s regular cycle of sunspot activity—may also affect weather and the rise in temperature.

There is one other factor that scientists do not take into consideration. The Creator reserves the right to affect weather patterns. The Word of God clearly indicates that God will use the weather patterns to bring us to Him, for our own good. For those nations that obey their Creator, God says in Leviticus 26:4: “I will give you rain in its season and the land will yield its produce.”

To the nations that turn their backs on God, He warns: “I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze” (v. 19). God will get the attention of mankind with weather patterns that produce drought and famine.

When Jesus Christ was asked by His disciples what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age, He replied: “There will be famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places” (Matthew 24:7). But whatever the weather patterns that will affect our nation as God begins to withdraw His blessings, we can truly seek God in our own lives—and God promises protection to those who truly seek Him: “A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked” (Psalm 91:7–8).

The above is an adaptation of one of the many commentaries, on key topics facing our world, available at the www.lcg.org and www.tomorrowworld.org Web sites.