

Living Church News

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Reflections on Two Anniversaries

Dear Brethren and Friends,

By the time you read this, we will have celebrated the tenth anniversary of the revival of the Work of God. A little more than ten years ago—in mid-December, 1992—God provided a “way of escape” for those who were troubled by the changes being made in our former association. My wife and I—with original founding Board member Mr. Don Davis—were literally overwhelmed with phone calls, letters and personal contacts from members all over the world who were deeply concerned about the mounting heresies. They deeply wanted, and needed, “somewhere to go.”

It was quite a time!

We had to step out in absolute faith in God—not knowing whether we would have only a few dozen or several thousand people joining with us in preserving the Truth and continuing the Work that Christ had begun through Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong so many years ago. In the early weeks of this Work, it seemed that every day was filled with phone calls and meetings, and writing letters, articles and booklets. Then, within a few weeks, we were able to go on radio and have a genuine “outreach” for the Work. About that same time, we were able to rent a very humble office space in San Dimas, near Pasadena, California. Within about six or eight weeks after going on KIEV radio in Glendale, California we were able to air our program on a big 50,000-watt station in Little Rock, Arkansas and then WOAI in San Antonio, Texas.

Retracing a few months, I should tell you that the first service of this newly organized Church was held in my living room and dining room—with exactly 19 people present, including children. Then, the following week—on January 2, 1993—we held the “official” opening service in a small hall near Los Angeles with 42 in attendance. Growth came quickly, and we had about 1,500 in attendance for the Feast that autumn!

During that spring of 1993, we were joined by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Hegvold—long time servants of God who had remained faithful to the Truth and were happy to help us establish the Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Also, an outstanding elder whom many of you know, Mr. Davy Crockett, came with us, along with his wife, and helped establish the congregation in Little Rock. They were joined in this effort by another elder, Dr. Jeffrey Fall—who, with his wife, had to drive down from the Batesville area to assist Mr. Crockett in pastoring this fledgling congregation. A few other ministers

came with us during that spring. Then, in late spring and early summer, Mr. and Mrs. John Ogwyn and Mr. and Mrs. Raymond McNair and others began to join with us. Mr. Ogwyn brought with him the largest congregation we had up to that point, and has done an outstanding job in Christ's service ever since. Mr. Carl McNair came on board the following winter to help run Church Administration and help us begin to have a real "Church organization." Mr. and Mrs. McNair helped immensely in organizing and directing the congregations, and have been very dedicated and loyal team players ever since.

After a year or two on radio, it became obvious that we should go on television to be able to genuinely reach most of the public. Immediately, the response increased tremendously and our magazine circulation began to shoot up into the tens of thousands. After I had been making the television program alone for a year or two, Mr. Richard Ames came on board with us and soon joined me in making the telecast. At first, Mr. Ames would fly out from his pastorate in Houston, Texas to "shoot" his programs. His excellent presentations added greatly to the telecast, and he was able to help the program—and me personally—with a number of ideas and suggestions, because of his former experience in doing the *World Tomorrow* program after Mr. Armstrong's death.

During this time, a number of other dedicated ministers came with us, including Mr. Dibar Apartian, Mr. Charles Bryce, Mr. Gerald Weston, Mr. Lambert Greer, Dr. Douglas Winnail and many others.

In spite of the trials and tests that we have experienced over the past ten years, this Work has grown and grown from the "original" 19 attendees up to about 7,000 today, including some of our newer brethren in India and elsewhere around the world. We are very grateful for what the living Christ has done and is doing.

And now, at last, we have been enabled by Christ, and through a number of generous gifts from the estates of some of our very dedicated brethren, to purchase our own Headquarters building in Charlotte, North Carolina! We were indeed very grateful to begin remodeling this 38,000 square foot brick structure last November, and are thankful to have it as our World Headquarters. As all of you know, we are planning to move into our new Headquarters in early March—though we will have official "opening festivities" on Monday, March 17, 2003. As events move along, we can see that God has truly opened this door, and that we will be able to accomplish a great deal more in reaching the nations of Israel—and the whole world—because of the excellent financial savings brought about by this move.

Also, dear brethren, as many of you know, December 20, 2002 marked the 50th anniversary of my ordination as an Evangelist of Jesus Christ. For a few months before my ordination, I had been pastoring the Church congregation in Portland, Oregon. Mr. Herbert Armstrong telephoned me and asked me to fly down to Pasadena to be there for the Sabbath of December 20, saying that he intended to ordain some of us as ministers of the Church. At first, I "argued" with

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What Do YOU Stand For?

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

In this swift-moving, godless society, each one of us had better take the time to decide what we *really* believe in—what we are willing to “fight” for and, if need be, *die* for.

Today’s materialistic, secular culture is almost overwhelming in its influence on most who call themselves Christian.

Most of our confusion or uncertainty of belief lies in the fact that, generally, we never bother to define what we really have faith in. Most people are “compromisers”—going along with their friends and family and not worrying very much about what they really believe in or what they stand for. Sure, they are—as we say—“nice” people. But they do not *stand for* anything.

No doubt there were millions of “nice” people in Germany as Adolf Hitler began his ascent to power in the early 1930s. Many of them obviously did not like the bestial tactics of Hitler and his storm troopers. But they *did nothing* about it. The *result* of their lack of conviction was inaction—an unwillingness to struggle against that evil and try to prevent Hitler from seizing absolute power. We all know the sad result: World War II—the biggest and most destructive war in history.

The Holocaust was able to occur because of people who lacked conviction about extending basic decency and respect toward those who were ethnically different. Once in power, the Nazis fulfilled their openly spoken threats, and butchered some six million Jews and millions

of others, including Poles, French, Danes, Dutch, Belgians, Slavs and Norwegians. In the aftermath of World War II, when they learned about the wholesale murder of innocents, most Germans undoubtedly disapproved of it. But by then it was too late. Again, *why* did that tragedy happen? Because people in Germany and, in fact, people all over the world, had not clearly delineated what they stood for—and what they would *not* stand for!

One study of American Protestantism indicated “that deeper currents of secularization persist in Protestant ranks, and that Protestants are ‘confused and disconnected’ about the direction of the larger society. Most tend to think and act more as ‘good Americans’ than as ‘good Protestants.... There isn’t a burning quest to know doctrine, substance, the character of God, the work of Christ,’ says Gordon Conwell Seminary in Hamilton, Mass. ‘What you see uppermost in thought are fears of money, stress, workload.... It seems the fires are dying down. Life is getting tougher’” (*The Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 19, 1995).

Yes, life is getting tougher for most people in this selfish society—a society that God calls “this present evil world” (Galatians 1:4, KJV). But, for true Christians, this should drive us to our knees all the more. And it should drive us to really *study* our Bibles so that we can truly “know” God—and be absolutely *sure* what we believe, and what our lives stand for. We need to know—and *know* that we know!

Even though so many around us seem willing to accept watered-

down doctrines, and practices and approaches that are not biblical at all, we in the Living Church of God must retain our zeal for the *full Truth*. We must let our separated brethren—and our worldly associates and relatives—know that we *stand for something*. That we will *not* compromise regarding the basic truths and practices revealed in God’s Word. That we will *live* by this code and, if need be, *die* by this code.

God tells us that His true Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). We are resolved to hang on to that Truth—and not participate in watering it down. We, together, are in a *crusade* to proclaim that Truth to all the nations of the earth (Matthew 28:18–20). And in this crusade, we are Christian “warriors.” The Apostle Paul said: “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:3–4).

Although we are *Christian* warriors, we can learn many lessons from outstanding military warriors who were of great ability and good character as far as they could understand. One of the greatest of these warriors in modern times was General Douglas MacArthur. If you know very much about American history, you know that General MacArthur was an outstanding patriot and leader of men. Because he was a man who truly *stood for something*.

Near the end of his illustrious career, returning to West Point

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What Do You Love the Most?

By John H. Ogwyn

What is the most important thing in your life? Your answer to that question is vitally important, because it will determine the choices you make in the days and years ahead. We are all confronted with choices and decisions every day, and those choices determine our future. Indeed, our very character is shaped by the choices we make. Ultimately, whether or not we are in the group that Jesus Christ gathers to Him at His coming—to whom He says: “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34)—will depend upon the choices that we make.

That is why it is important to examine where we are setting our affections. Where we set our affections shows what is important to us. Many people throughout time have loved the wrong things, and have made their choices accordingly. Many lives have been wrecked, as a result, by incredibly shortsighted choices.

Examples from Scripture show us the consequences of how we set our affections, and can help us understand more fully what we need to love the most—and why. When you really understand it, “What do you love the most?” may be the most important question you will ever answer!

Love of This Present World

What would it have been like to have known the Apostle Paul personally, and to have accompanied him on his journeys? Can you imagine what it would have been like to have heard his sermons, seen the miracles that God performed through him, and spent long hours in conversation with him, discussing God’s plan and purpose? We may think that if we had been given the opportunity to spend time with some of the great men of the Bible, we could far more easily maintain a spiritual frame of mind. Yet this is not necessarily true at all!

In Philemon 24, Paul speaks of Demas, whom he describes as a “fellow laborer.” Demas is also mentioned in Colossians 4:14, where he is linked with Luke the beloved physician in sending greetings to the Colossian

brethren. Clearly, Demas had known the Apostle Paul well for years. He spent time with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment, and must have carried out many important tasks for Paul—even preaching the gospel in Paul’s stead when Paul was restricted to house arrest.

Paul had a strong work ethic, so his calling Demas a fellow laborer clearly implies that Demas also worked hard in the ministry, and that Paul had esteem and respect for him and his efforts.

In spite of all this, Paul saw later on that Demas had set his affections on the wrong things. In 2 Timothy 4:10, written just months before Paul’s execution at the end of his second Roman imprisonment, Paul gave Timothy the sad news that Demas had left the Church. “Demas has forsaken me,” he wrote, “having loved this present world.” For all of the effort that Demas had devoted to preaching the gospel, and the hundreds of hours he had spent with Paul, Demas had never completely, in his heart, turned loose of this world.

If you are in love with the world, you cannot truly love God. The values at the core of this society are the antithesis of the things of God (1 John 2:15–17), and will ultimately be relegated to the “dust bin” of history, along with the society that they define. How much do you love this world and its ways?

Loving the Preeminence

Many people want to be thought of as important. They desire status, and this inevitably leads to jealousy and politics. This desire has caused “spiritual shipwreck” for some in our day, but it is nothing new. This same misplaced affection was also at work in the lives of many who interacted with some of God’s greatest servants, as recorded in the Bible.

Most Bible students are familiar with the account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram described in Numbers 16. As is so often the case, the things of which they accused Moses were really the things of which they themselves were guilty! Korah claimed that Moses was taking too much upon himself (v. 3), while Dathan and Abiram declared that the whole reason behind the Exodus

was so that Moses could make himself a prince and be in charge (v. 13). Of course this charge was patently ridiculous. If Moses had simply wanted to be a “big shot,” he could have been one by staying in Egypt as a prince! Moses did not love the preeminence; he was the meekest man in all the earth (Numbers 12:3), and was content to have remained in the land of Midian as a shepherd. Yet Korah and others, in love with status and desiring to be considered important, chose to rebel against God’s servant Moses, and actually against God Himself.

Toward the very end of his life, John (the beloved disciple) had to deal with individuals in the Church who were trying to “take over” because they loved to be thought of as important. Diotrophes was such a person (3 John 9). Diotrophes had actually become so bold as to put out of the Church those who remained loyal to the truth and to the Apostle John’s leadership. Diotrophes wanted to be “in charge” and was prepared to walk over others in order to achieve that status.

Diotrophes, though he claimed to be a Christian, displayed an attitude contrary to everything that Christ personally taught and stood for. In Matthew 23, for example, Jesus Christ denounced the Pharisees because of their desire to be considered important. They loved status and all of its trappings, and were highly important in their own eyes. They were continually plotting and politicking to get “one up” on the Sadducees, and even on one another. This was completely contrary to the example of Jesus Christ, surely the most truly *important* man ever to walk the earth. Christ voluntarily emptied Himself of the divine power and glory that He had shared with the Father from eternity, and came in the form of a servant so that He might serve and redeem humanity (Philippians 2:5–8). Those who are in love with status do not please God, nor do they have the mind of Christ.

Loving the Praise of Men

While some love power and status, many others simply want the approval and affirmation of others. King Saul was such a man, and many of his bad decisions were driven by a desire to receive the approbation of others. For instance, in the account given in 1 Samuel 15, Saul transgressed God’s clear command to destroy completely the Amalekites and their property. Why? As he finally admitted to Samuel in verse 24, he did so to win the people’s approval, even though this directly contradicted God’s instructions. For Saul, as for many others, people seemed far more real than God did!

Jesus Christ performed many dramatic signs, providing clear evidence that He was truly who He said He was—Israel’s Messiah. The gospel of John in particular

makes this point plain, focusing on seven specific signs of His Messiahship. John also records that even though many of the religious leaders saw, and were impressed by, these signs, they would not acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. What could hold them back from such a confession? John explained that they simply “loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43). The Pharisees had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah. The thought of such ostracism was too much for many, even if they knew the truth deep down.

How important to you are the opinions of others? Jesus told many religious leaders of His day that they simply did not have the love of God abiding in them! That was evident, He said, because they sought the honor that came from other people far more than they sought that which came from God alone (John 5:42–44). Because of this way of thinking, many religious people made (and still make) a great outward show of their charity and religious expression (Matthew 6:1–6). Christ instructed His followers that they should make such expressions privately and anonymously. If we are after recognition and approval by other people, we may achieve it, but this will take us away from the most important approval there is—God’s approval. It all comes down to the question: Whose approval do we love the most?

The Love of Money

For many people, the love of money motivates their decisions. Corporate decisions that have bankrupted pension plans, while enriching a handful at the top, have been largely motivated by the love of money. So have many decisions in the food production industry. Agribusiness has sought maximum profits, heedless to the dangers of wearing out the land and compromising consumer health through the use of chemicals, growth hormones and genetic engineering. Our national rape of the land, and refusal to let it rest as God instructed, is one of the reasons that our nation will go into captivity (Leviticus 26:34–35).

People have betrayed their countries and sold out family and community, all for the love of money. Others have entered into contracts to commit every kind of crime, including murder, all for money. There is practically no immoral or degrading act that someone somewhere has not performed for money. In fact, Paul told Timothy that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10).

In the early chapters of 2 Kings, we find the story of the prophet Elisha—one of the most remarkable servants of God who ever lived. Elisha was a man of great faith, through whom God worked many miracles. Gehazi, his

servant, was with Elisha a number of years and witnessed many miracles. Surely, you would think, a man privileged to live in such remarkable circumstances would have his priorities right. That is not necessarily the case, however. Note in 2 Kings 5 the story of the Syrian general Naaman, who suffered from leprosy. Serving Naaman's wife was a young Israelite girl who had been taken captive in one of the continual wars and border skirmishes that were taking place at that time. This young girl felt sorry for her master, and told her mistress about the prophet Elisha, assuring her that through Elisha, Naaman could be healed. This was the only glimmer of hope that Naaman had found, so the Syrian king sent Naaman to Israel to seek help from Elisha.

At first, Naaman was quite perturbed, because Elisha did not act in the way that he expected. Instead of making some great dramatic scene, Elisha simply sent word for Naaman to bathe in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman's first reaction was to refuse to obey such a seemingly senseless request; nevertheless, he decided to follow the prophet's instructions. As a result, he experienced a dramatic healing. Overcome with a spirit of gratitude, Naaman returned to the prophet's home and offered Elisha a substantial financial reward. Elisha declined the reward, as God's true servants have always recognized that God's gracious gifts are not for sale. Gehazi, however, witnessed Naaman's offer and was overcome by greed, coveting the wealth that Naaman carried with him. A little later, when Gehazi thought Elisha was not paying attention to his actions, he took off after Naaman, caught up with his caravan, and told him a contrived story that an emergency had arisen and had caused Elisha to change his mind. The truth was that Gehazi loved money, and could not resist the opportunity to enrich himself.

Elisha, with God's inspiration, knew exactly what Gehazi had done, and confronted him about his choice. Gehazi was then stricken with the dread disease of which Naaman had been supernaturally healed. Gehazi's love of money produced horribly destructive consequences in his life.

We *can* change our affections, and consequently our priorities in life. Such an example is recounted in Luke 19, in Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus the publican in Jericho. Zacchaeus had been a tax collector in the employ of the Roman government, and had used his position to enrich himself unjustly. Zacchaeus' reputation in the community reflected the kind of life he had led, and many were shocked that Jesus would eat and spend time with such a man. However, as a result of his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus' priorities and affections totally changed. He announced to Jesus, shortly after they arrived at his home, that he was going to give half of his


goods to help the poor, and that he would refund fourfold the amount that he had cheated anyone. No longer was the love of money the driving force in his life (v. 8).

Where To Set Our Affections

The Apostle Paul brought out one of the most important keys to personal growth and overcoming: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). Where we set our affections will largely determine the priorities we set, and the choices we make. One of Jesus' best-known parables, recounted in Luke 10, is the story of the "good Samaritan." The two individuals who passed by the wounded man considered themselves deeply religious people—a priest and a Levite. If you had asked them if they believed in loving their neighbor as themselves, they would certainly have answered in the affirmative, for they were very familiar with God's injunction to do so (see Leviticus 19:15–18). This is a crucial point: our genuine affection is shown far more by our actions than by our words. Regardless of the beliefs to which these religious men would have paid lip service, their actions showed that helping others in need was not really a very high priority with them.

Jesus gave this "good Samaritan" parable in response to a self-professed expert in religious law, who had asked Jesus how to obtain eternal life. Christ turned the question back on the questioner by acknowledging him as a teacher of the Torah, and asking him what he understood God's instructions to be. The lawyer knew the right answer! He quickly responded that we are to love God with our whole heart (Deuteronomy 6:5), and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18). However, he made a crucial mistake. Instead of seeking Christ's advice about how to apply these principles more fully, he wanted to argue, in true lawyerly fashion, about the definition of "neighbor." He wanted to justify himself, and his choices in life, rather than truly to change.

It is not enough to know the right answers, or to believe the right beliefs. We must each examine the very core of our being to ascertain where we are setting our affections. What do we truly love the most? The way we spend both our time and money gives clear evidence about the priorities that we set in our lives. As many scriptural examples show, it is very easy even for those who "know the truth" to be in love with the wrong things. Genuine love of God is the source from which true love of one another (1 John 4:20–21), as well as true obedience to God's laws (1 John 5:3), will flow.

Where we set our affections will truly determine all manner of decisions that we make in life. What do *you* really love the most? 

Catch the Vision!

By Douglas S. Winnail

Have you *really* caught the vision that Jesus Christ brought to this earth and that His disciples proclaimed to this world? Do you *really* grasp the scope of the vision that God revealed to His prophets of old? What impact has this vision of the future had on your mind? Has the reality of that vision *changed your life* in any way?

Every year at the Feast of Tabernacles we invariably hear the same question: “Why are we here?” We have probably heard it so many times that it no longer causes us to stop and really examine our reasons for going to the Feast! It is easy to assume that *we know* the answer—we are there to *keep* the Feast and *enjoy* a foretaste of tomorrow’s world, where Jesus Christ and the saints will rule during the Millennium. However, *knowing* the right answer *does not mean* we have *caught* the vision!

Catching the vision entails being able to *see the reality* of the coming kingdom of God—that it is *actually going to happen*—and that you can begin to prepare *now* for important roles in the coming kingdom of God. Catching the vision means that you will begin changing any aspect of your life—the way you think or act—to follow God’s instructions more perfectly, because you realize we are in training for future opportunities in God’s Kingdom. One of our major responsibilities in the kingdom will be teaching others how to live God’s way of life (Isaiah 30:20–21). We will not be able to teach what we ourselves do not *really* believe and do not *fully* follow now! When you really catch the vision of the coming kingdom of God—when it is *real* to you—the pulls, thrills and priorities of this

world will no longer have the attraction they once had. Your primary focus will be on preparing for the future, and that focus will guide your decisions about how to use your time and where you devote your energies.

But *how* do we *really* catch the vision? How do we bring that vision into focus? What do we do when we catch the vision? How do we make sure that vision does not become fuzzy or pushed aside by other more immediate concerns? How can we avoid losing sight of this incredible and exciting vision?

Vision Defined

To catch anything, we first must have a clear idea of what we are trying to catch. Today, when we hear the word vision, it may bring to mind a weird supernatural or surrealistic experience totally unassociated with reality—a dream that can easily be dismissed. People who take dreams seriously are often viewed as a bit crazy. However, a real vision is a *practical* dream—something you can visualize in your mind—a dream with a *deadline*. It is something you want to do or accomplish; something that you develop plans and a strategy to achieve. It is something you can imagine really happening and being part of—a goal that you can see in your mind and feel in your heart, that you will sacrifice for in order to achieve it. A person with a vision understands what is coming—just out of sight over the horizon—that other people do not grasp at this time. When people catch a vision, they begin to structure their life and channel their energies toward achieving that vision—they focus on a future that is *real* and *attainable*!

Choosing the *right* vision is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Developing a *sense of vision* will also have a powerful impact on your life because it will set you apart from the average person—you will no longer fit in with many of your friends—or even family members. The novelist Jonathan Swift once wrote, “vision is the art of seeing things that are invisible to others.” The American humorist Will Rogers stated that “the fellow who sees a week ahead is popular because he is looking with the crowd, but the one who sees *years* ahead has a telescope and people find it hard to believe him.” In order to stay focused on a vision, it must be *real* to you—and you must see the *benefits* to yourself and others of achieving the vision. The benefits of making the vision a reality must outweigh any short-term rewards you might have to sacrifice. The Feast of Tabernacles and other festivals of God are *designed* to help us focus on the vision—to gain a better grasp of the plan of God, what it means for the world and how we can prepare to participate and contribute in the coming kingdom of God. These are some of the *real* reasons for attending God’s festivals.

Vision of Jesus

But *what was* the vision that Jesus Christ brought to this earth and proclaimed as the gospel? Sadly, the only gospel—the only vision—that many professing Christians have heard and accepted is about the *person* of Jesus: that He loves them, gave His life for them and will bless them if they love Him and everyone else. All too often this translates into a gospel of *feelings and emotion* that actually ignores and obliterates the

incredible *message* Jesus preached and the awesome implications of that message. Yet the Bible is very clear about the vision that Jesus conveyed to His disciples.

Mark records that “Jesus came to Galilee, *preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*, and saying... Repent, and *believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:14–15). Jesus’ ministry involved “teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness” (Matthew 4:23; 9:35). When Jesus called His twelve disciples “He sent them to *preach the kingdom of God* and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1–2). Jesus later commissioned His disciples to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). While Jesus understood that part of His mission was to die for the sins of mankind (John 3:16), so we can be forgiven upon repentance (Acts 2:38), His major focus—as the Bible reveals—was preaching the gospel of the coming kingdom of God. Jesus said that His message came directly from His Father (John 6:38; 8:26) and that He was totally devoted to the work that would entail (John 4:34). Jesus was a man with a mission who was focused on a vision of the kingdom of God. If we believe His teaching and follow His example, we will be focused on the same vision.

Apostolic Christianity

What was it that attracted people to the message of Jesus Christ? Why were many willing to die for their beliefs? What was the vision that the Apostles conveyed to the world? Jesus’ disciples readily understood that positions of great responsibility awaited them in the kingdom of God. Jesus told the Apostles that their reward would be to inherit eternal life and “sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel”

(Matthew 19:23–30). The mother of James and John asked Jesus to let her two sons have top jobs in the kingdom (Matthew 20:21), which led Jesus to explain that the critical attitude necessary to be in the kingdom was to learn how to *serve others* (Matthew 20:26–28). Individuals that God will use in positions of responsibility in the kingdom will *develop their talents now* to function as *servant leaders* tomorrow!

It took time for the disciples to understand the importance of developing the proper attitude and motivation for entering the kingdom of God. However, they saw the big picture and were excited about this incredible future! Luke mentions that the major topic of Christ’s conversations with His disciples after the Resurrection involved “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). The big question on the minds of the disciples concerned their reward: “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). They were not babbling with emotion about how much they “loved the Lord.” They caught the vision and they wanted to know when it would become a reality. That was their focus. That is why they were excited!

The disciples’ explained that God would forgive sins, and grant His Spirit, to those who repented, and that He could save them from the fate of a world heading for destruction (Acts 2:36–41). However, they continued to preach the same gospel and proclaim the same vision that had captured their hearts and minds. When Philip went to Samaria “he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). When Paul spoke to the elders in Ephesus he reminded them he had come to them “preaching the kingdom of God” (Acts 20:25). Later, in Rome, Paul was still

“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ... from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets” (Acts 28:23, 31). Decades later the Apostle John was still describing the awesome future for individuals willing to share this vision, as he explained that God has “made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10; see also 1:6), and that those who qualify for the kingdom of God “shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6). The Apostles *never let go* of that vision! For them, the kingdom of God was their *magnetic north*—it kept them pointed in the right direction—toward the right goal.

This amazing vision of the kingdom of God was the driving force in the expansion of *true* Christianity during the early centuries of the Church—before misguided teachers began to lose the vision and turn aside to another gospel. Historian Edward Gibbon provides an amazing account of how this occurred. He writes, “The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ... that Christ, with the triumphant band of saints and the elect who escaped death... would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection... The assurance of such a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles... Though it might not be universally received, it *appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers*; and it seems so well adapted to the desires and apprehensions of mankind, that it must have contributed in a very considerable degree to the progress of the

Christian faith.... But when the edifice of the church was almost completed, the temporary support was *laid aside*. The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a *doubtful* and *useless* opinion, and was at length *rejected* as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism" (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1, chap. 15). That is a remarkable statement about what happened to the central and most powerful aspect of the gospel that Jesus Christ and His disciples proclaimed to the world. The facts of history record that the mainstream of Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) simply *lost the vision* and now preach *another gospel*—about going to heaven!

Early Warnings

This gradual, yet dramatic, departure from the truth was anticipated, and warnings were issued to alert anyone who would listen from losing sight of the *real* vision. Jesus predicted that "many will come in My name... and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:5). Paul marveled when individuals he had personally taught turned away to a "different gospel" (Galatians 1:6–9). We are warned that at the end of the age *many* will be deluded into believing lies because "they did not receive the *love* for the truth" and because "they did not *believe* the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10–12). Paul warned some would grow tired of hearing the truth and would prefer the novelty of speculative ideas and fables (2 Timothy 4:3–4). This is what can happen to anyone who never really catches the vision, or who allows the vision to become fuzzy and clouded over or pushed aside by other more immediate, short-term concerns, or who simply

lets go of the vision. This is why Jesus cautioned, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back [takes his eyes off the vision], is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). This is also why Jesus encouraged His disciples to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).


Details of the Vision

But where do we find the exciting details of the vision of the kingdom that the disciples of Jesus Christ seem to have understood, yet say little about in the New Testament? Paul indicated that his source of information was the writings of Moses and the prophets (Acts 28:23). John's assertion that we will be kings and priests and reign on the earth comes from Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 61:6 and Daniel 7:18, 27. God gave the Old Testament prophets numerous details about the coming kingdom of God that many professing Christians have never heard or do not understand. Isaiah reveals that in the coming kingdom of God the laws of God will be proclaimed to the world from Jerusalem and that nations will not "learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:2–4). All nations will learn to keep the Sabbath (Isaiah 66:23) and the Holy Days (Zechariah 14:16–19). Jesus Christ will establish a world government to teach people the way to peace (Isaiah 9:6–7). The environment will be restored (Isaiah 35:1–6) and cities will be rebuilt (Isaiah 61:4) with pedestrian malls (Zechariah 8:5) and green belts to allow mankind contact with nature (Isaiah 11:6–9). Human beings will no longer have to live in dwellings that are crammed together (Isaiah 5:8); they will live in garden-like settings (Genesis 2:15) where private ownership is an incentive to

care for and develop their property (Micah 4:4). Sickness will be eliminated as people are taught and begin to follow the dietary laws and sanitary principles outlined in Scripture (Isaiah 35:4–6; 66:15–17; Leviticus 11–13). The whole focus of the Millennium will be on a *total restoration* of a way of life based on the laws of God (Acts 3:19–21).

When you begin to catch the vision of what tomorrow's world is all about—what is *actually going to happen* on this earth when the kingdom of God is established—it gives you a clear goal to prepare for. Catching that vision will provide the motivation for gaining not only a knowledge of the Bible, but learning how to *apply* scriptural principles to every aspect of life: agriculture, architecture, animal husbandry, child-rearing, city planning, civil engineering, conservation, ecology, economics, education, entertainment, forestry, government, health, literature, marriage, music, nutrition, recreation and wildlife management, to name a few—the list is almost endless.

Few seem to realize that the Bible contains *fundamental guidelines* that provide the *right approach* to so many important disciplines. This is why we are told that "the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Biblical principles provide the *real starting point* for any field of study. This is why Peter advises Christians to "grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" and to diligently "add to your faith" if we hope to attain the kingdom (2 Peter 3:18; 1:5–11).

When we really grasp the vision of what the kingdom is all about, we will not merely put in time *waiting* for the kingdom, we will be *actively preparing* for it. This is what it means to *catch the vision!* 

The Hope of a Christian

By Raymond F. McNair

We all know that faith is vital to salvation, but so is hope. What crucial role does hope play for a Christian seeking to obtain eternal life?

God's Word says that "without *faith* it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). But it is also clear that a Christian must maintain *hope* if he expects to enter God's Kingdom. "For we are saved by hope" (Romans 8:24, KJV). What is the priceless Christian *hope*?

There are now more than six billion people on this earth. But why do the vast majority of those billions have no realistic *hope* of a future life? Why are so many totally ignorant of man's only real hope of achieving immortality?

Nearly six thousand years ago, God explained to the first man, Adam, how he and his descendants could obtain eternal life—if only they would obey their Creator and do those things that were pleasing in His sight. They could either partake of the "tree of the knowledge of [both] good and evil" and suffer the terrible consequences of sin: sorrow, mental anguish, poverty, strife, violence and war, or they could obey their Creator and live in peace, happiness and eternal glory (Genesis 2:15–17).

Regrettably, Adam and his wife Eve rejected God's commands and His way of life, and chose the *bad* way that is a *mixture* of both "good and evil." Consequently, God barred their access to the way that would have permitted them to live forever. "Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and *live forever*'—therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden" (Genesis 3:22–23). At that time, God barred them from the "hope of eternal life."

A World Without Hope

During the past 6,000 years, man has gone his own way, has done his own thing and has steadfastly refused to follow God and His benevolent ways (Romans 3:10–18). But what have been the tragic results of this refusal? They have been a mountain of woe and misery; emotional and physical suffering, sickness and disease,

human distress and insanity, crime and violence, premature death, mass murder and global wars, (see Romans 1:21–32; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4)! Few of the billions upon billions of men and women who have lived have ever known real happiness and joy, or peace and prosperity. Most of those billions have had little if any real *hope* of a "good life" either in this world or in the world to come. The vast majority have been *cut off* from God, devoid of true knowledge of their Creator, and without *real hope* in God.

The Apostle Paul explained this *hopelessness* to the Ephesians: "Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh... that at that time you were *without Christ*, being *aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having *no hope* and without God in the world.... But now... you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:11–13, 19).

The Apostle Paul rejoiced in the knowledge of the true God, who clearly revealed how human beings can become members of His Family: "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the *whole* [divine] *family* in heaven and earth is named... that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (3:14–19). The once-darkened minds of the Ephesians were no longer cut off from access to their Creator, but were able to share in the "*hope* of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23)—eternal membership in the Family of God—as His dear "sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

Most of the countless billions who have lived and died never really knew their Creator; consequently, many of them lived in utter *hopelessness*, believing that after death they would face oblivion! Even those who somehow came to believe in an afterlife often embraced the pagan world's superstitious counterfeits, such as *nirvana*, *limbo*, *purgatory* or some kind of an earthly *paradise*, or they believed that they might spend eternity with God in *Heaven*. Some American Indian tribes believed that, after death, they would enter a "happy

hunting ground” and so made sure that they were buried with their weapons, beads and other personal effects. The ancient Egyptians embalmed their dead, believing the “souls” of the dead would cross over into the underworld, where they would enjoy the material things with which they had surrounded themselves in their tombs.

Faith and Hope

Faith and hope work together for our salvation. Faith in God’s promises, coupled with obedience, leads to genuine hope (James 2:17–26).

God’s people do *not* believe in a humanly devised “vain hope”—a fictitious “paradise” somewhere off in the

tion has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but *God is faithful*, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” The Word of God assures us of God’s utter faithfulness: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has *begun* a good work in you will *complete it* until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

A true Christian does not just *hope* that God will supply all of his needs, protect him from fatal accidents, forgive him of all his sins, or not permit him to be tempted beyond his ability to cope. Rather, a true Christian has absolute *faith* that God will faithfully keep His promises! He *knows with absolute certainty*—he has complete *assur-*

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heavens. What, then, is the Christian hope? The Apostle Paul clearly revealed that *hope*, along with *faith* and *love*, is one of the three most important tools of a Christian (1 Corinthians 13:13) that will enable him to endure to the end, thereby surmounting every obstacle that Satan, the world or “human nature” can put in front of him.

We are assured that “God... cannot lie” (Titus 1:2) and that “with God nothing shall be *impossible*” (Luke 1:37). Furthermore, Christ declared that “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). So, if we really know God’s Word, we can have *absolute assurance* that whatever we ask in *faith*, “in [Christ’s] name,” God will surely grant us (John 14:14): “Now this is the *confidence* that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to *His will* [as revealed in the Bible], He hears us” (1 John 5:14, KJV).

Let us notice a few of God’s unbreakable promises. Jesus said: “But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and *all these things* [such as food, clothing and shelter] shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Paul declared: “And my God shall supply *all your need* according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). God also promises: “*I will never leave you nor forsake you....*” (Hebrews 13:5–6). Furthermore, David said: “The *angel* of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and *delivers them*” (Psalm 34:7). Psalm 91 gives many assurances of God’s deliverance and protection, which His people can claim.

One great promise, which Christians can find very comforting, is found in 1 Corinthians 10:13: “No tempta-

ance—that since God cannot lie, and His Word can never be broken, that God will always come through, and that He will keep every one of His promises! There are hundreds of promises in the Word of God that His children can claim, if we *believe* Him and His Word. But we must always remember to ask those things that are according to His revealed will. And equally important, we must be *obedient* sons and daughters, if we expect God to hear us, and to grant us what we request of Him: “And whatever we *ask*, we receive from Him, because we *keep His commandments* and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:22).

What Is the Christian Hope?

How are *faith* and *hope* different? Faith is the “*assurance* of things *hoped* for, the *conviction* of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1, RSV). By examining a number of key scriptures, we can see clearly how *faith* and *hope*, although complementary, are different—yet each is absolutely vital to our physical and spiritual survival. *Hope*, working in conjunction with *faith*, enables us to patiently *endure* all our trials, and to *overcome* all our difficulties so we can confidently attain the Kingdom of God!

The Apostle Paul tells us that “the *earnest expectation* [i.e. *hope*] of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19). *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says that hope (*elpis* in Greek) is a “favorable and constant expectation”

(p. 232). Abraham, the father of the faithful, set us a sterling example by firmly anchoring all his *hopes and dreams* in God: “Who, contrary to *hope*, in *hope* believed, so that he became the father of many nations” (Romans 4:18).

Paul says that believers “rejoice in *hope* of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2), that is, rejoice in the *expectation* of being made immortal. Further, he says: “We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, *hope*. Now *hope* does not disappoint” (vv. 3–5). He also says that those who now have the “firstfruits of the Spirit” sometimes “groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption [i.e. “sonship”], the redemption of our body. For we are saved in this *hope*, but *hope* that is *seen* is not *hope*; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we *hope* for what we *do not see*, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance” (Romans 8:23–25). Christians should ever be “rejoicing in *hope*, patient in tribulation” (Romans 12:12). Paul said that only “through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures [do we] have *hope*.... Now may the *God of hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in *hope* by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:4, 13).

The Apostle Paul fervently prayed “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ... may give to you the spirit of wisdom... that you may know what is the *hope* of His calling” (Ephesians 1:17–18). Later in this epistle, Paul told the Ephesians: “There is one body [i.e. true Church] and one Spirit, just as you were called in *one hope* of your calling” (4:4); he also reminded the Colossians of the “*hope* which is laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:5), and admonished them to take care “not [to be] moved away from the *hope of the gospel*” (v. 23), which is the “*hope of eternal life*” (Titus 1:2). Paul often referred to the “*hope of the resurrection*” (Acts 23:1, 6), telling the Jews that “there will be a *resurrection of the dead*, both of the just and the unjust” (24:13–15).

“The Hope of Eternal Life”!

This same Apostle assured Christians that the “*hope of salvation*” was like a “helmet” in their spiritual armor (1 Thessalonians 5:8). But this “salvation” was something that no true Christian could take for granted. Even though it was God’s free gift (by His “grace” according to Ephesians 3:8–9), nonetheless, Paul’s writings reveal that it is possible for believers to fall short of that prize of immortality (Hebrews 6:1–6; 10:21–31). Paul also wrote to the Hebrews saying they must “hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the *hope* firm to the end” (Hebrews 3:6), and exhorted them to “show the same diligence to the *full assurance of hope* until the end”

(6:11). He then reminded them that they must hang on so that they ‘might lay hold of the *hope* set before us. This *hope* we have as an *anchor of the soul*, both sure and steadfast” (vv. 17–19).

Paul reminded Titus, his fellow minister, of the Christian “*hope of eternal life* which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Titus 1:1–2); and he also reminded Titus “that having been justified by [Christ’s] grace we... become heirs according to the *hope of eternal life*” (3:7).

Furthermore, Paul informed the Jews who sat on the Sanhedrin of his firm belief in an afterlife: “But this I confess... I worship the God of my fathers [and] I have *hope* in God... that there will be a *resurrection* of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:13–15).

Peter’s and John’s Testimony

The Apostle Peter also realized the importance of “*hope*”: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who... has begotten us again to a *living hope*... to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled... reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3–4). And he exhorted Christians to make certain that their “faith and *hope* [were] in God” (v. 21). He also admonished the believers to “always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the *hope* that is in you” (3:15).

Christ’s beloved Apostle John also realized that the Christian’s fervent *hope* of attaining the resurrection had a “purifying” effect on the mind of every believer: “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!... And everyone who has *this hope* [of glorification] in himself purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:1–3).

The Old Testament prophets and saints exemplified great hope in God: “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose *hope* is in the LORD his God, Who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 146:5–6). King Solomon said, concerning hope, that the “*hope* of the righteous will be gladness, but the *expectation* [i.e. *hope*] of the wicked will perish” (Proverbs 10:28). Solomon also explained: “*Hope deferred* makes the heart sick, but when the *desire* comes, it is a tree of life” (13:12). He added that the “righteous hath *hope* in his death” (14:32, KJV).

Righteous Job asked: “If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service [“appointed time,” KJV] I will wait, till my change comes [at the resurrection]” (Job 14:14). The prophet Jeremiah said: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is in the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters” (Jeremiah 17:7–8). He also stated: “It is good that one should *hope* and wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD” (Lamentations 3:26).

Is Our Salvation Assured?

Before we can answer the above question concerning the certainty of our salvation, we need to consider the following questions: Does God say it is His will that all people be given a chance to be saved? Yes! (cf. 2 Peter 3:9)! But will all be “saved”? No! Will some be “lost” and experience the “second death”? Yes (cf. Hebrews 6:1–6; 10:26; Revelation 20:12–15)! If anyone insists on rebelling against God, He will allow such a rebel to choose death!

But why would a loving God destroy the wicked? God will offer all men eternal life, but He will not force salvation upon anyone (John 3:16; Romans 10:13). If any per-

persons will be rejected by God! Such willful sinners will be annihilated by a loving, merciful Creator—whose great love could not allow them to live forever in abject misery (Psalm 145:8–9, 20)!

We can have absolute *faith*, *assurance* and *certainty* that God Almighty is not only omnipotent, but that He is also all-wise and perfect in character—therefore He will always do what He promises in His Word. But what is our part? We have the glorious “*hope* of the resurrection,” but not the absolute *assurance* of it—unless we “endure to the end,” according to Christ’s own words (Matthew 24:13). Only those who “overcome” evil in this life will make it into God’s Kingdom (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)! Even the Apostle Paul revealed that he did not yet


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son is willing to repent and accept God’s way of life, thereby turning resolutely away from wickedness, he will be saved. But if anyone turns against God and His way—refusing God’s extended hand of salvation, thereby sinning deliberately, willfully—then he will have to pay the ultimate price of rebellion and wickedness—eternal death (Hebrews 10:23–29)! How could a loving God allow anyone to live forever in an ever-burning hell fire, suffering for all eternity? He cannot, and He will not (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Romans 6:23)! The wicked will simply be annihilated, and will be as though they had never been (Malachi 4:1; Daniel 12:2; Matthew 10:28)! A Christian must never forget: God *desires* that *all* be saved (1 Timothy 2:4)! But He will not *coerce* anyone into choosing His way. Each person must himself “choose” whether or not he will obey God and go His way, or go the way of the wicked, and receive ultimate annihilation (Deuteronomy 30:15–20)!

Can anyone have *faith*—absolute assurance—that he will *not* “fall away”? Yes—but only *if* he obeys God, and is willing to meet the conditions that He lays down in the Bible. Notice that this “if” shows that it is *possible* for one to turn away from God and His way. *Doubts* or *uncertainties* regarding our salvation are always rooted in the frailties of the human will to steadfastly submit to God’s will. Each human being has the power to choose to *obey* or *disobey* God. But a person can choose to obey God, then later *turn away*. What then? Unless such a wicked person repents, he or she will not enter God’s kingdom (cf. Ezekiel 14:14; Revelation 22:14–19)! All unrepentant

“have it made.” He fully realized he could fall away if he was not vigilant. Paul wanted to “know Him [Christ] and the power of His resurrection... if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold [of eternal life].... Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended [grasped immortality], but... I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:10–14). Yes, we can have *faith* that we will enter God’s Kingdom—if we are willing to obey the will of our Creator!

Remember that *faith* and *hope* are *closely related*. They *complement* each other, but are *not* identical. To have faith is to have a certainty of something, whereas hope emphasizes our earnest expectation. Our hope of attaining the Kingdom spurs in us the obedience that will, through faith, help us strive to “keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:22)!

May all of God’s dear children maintain a strong, abiding *hope*—the *hope of the resurrection*! May all have the confident *expectation* that God will reward their obedience with everlasting life in His Kingdom. All who diligently “strive” (Luke 13:24) to enter His Kingdom, and who remain “faithful” to the very end will make it (Revelation 17:14). May our gracious heavenly Father grant us the very “*faith* of Christ” (Galatians 2:16, KJV)—which will enable us to turn our fervent *hope* of achieving immortality into reality—at the moment when we receive our long-expected “crown of life” (James 1:12)! 



International Corner...

Caribbean Update

by Jonathan McNair

Our current focus in the Caribbean is on solidifying our infrastructure for doing the Work. We have made progress on several fronts. First, Mr. Fitzroy Greeman, associate pastor for the Trinidad congregations, is currently in the process of moving to Trinidad. He has been serving the brethren as a “commuting” minister, traveling from his home in Georgetown, Guyana, once a month. With hundreds of responses every month to the program, as well as close to one hundred brethren living in Trinidad and Tobago, his full-time presence in Trinidad is a very positive step forward. This will also enable us to establish an official Church office, relieving some of the pressure on our members who have volunteered tirelessly in support of the Work. The Church in Trinidad has enthusiastically welcomed Mrs. Doreen Greeman, as well as their lovely daughters. Our brethren in Guyana are hoping for lots of good news from the Greeman family.

In Barbados, the Church is growing steadily, with monthly attendance hovering just under 50. During the first week of November, Mr. Hugh Wilson, associate pastor, visited a number of prospective members, and baptized Terrick Waite and Leonard Seale. Other encouraging news includes two weddings that are being planned for the near future—one in December, and another in June. These happy

developments have been dampened by the recent untimely death of Mr. Clement Lowe, a long-time pillar in the Church in Barbados. Mr. Lowe came down with what appeared to be pneumonia, which ultimately revealed more serious heart problems.

After a very inspiring Feast of Tabernacles at Negril Beach, the Church in Jamaica continues to remain strong, despite some very difficult economic times. Many industries have moved out of Jamaica, and unemployment is very high. Many of our members are struggling to find and keep jobs.

Mr. Wilson has conducted Bible studies in the outlying areas of Montego Bay and Mandeville, and plans to continue. This serves our brethren and prospective members, who find it difficult to travel to Kingston. Our *Tomorrow's World* telecast continues to receive between 30 and 50 responses every week.

South Africa Update

by Syd Hull

On Friday, October 31, my wife and I spent the day with Church members in Port Elizabeth, and also made contact with Radio Kingfisher. On the Sabbath of November 2, we had our first Sabbath meeting with the Port Elizabeth congregation. We spent a wonderful time with the brethren. With this latest addition we now have six congregations in South Africa.

That evening we left for Cape Town, starting out on our first

organized visiting tour to people on our mailing list who had requested visits. We slept over in a bed and breakfast establishment, and left on Sunday morning for Worcester, where we arrived that afternoon for our first visit, with former staunch members of the Dutch Reformed Church, who had recently become convicted about the true Sabbath.

The next day we left Worcester for Cape Town, stopping at Tygerberg to have discussions with Radio Tygerberg's public relations officer. Things are positive for our radio broadcast from Radio Tygerberg. We then arrived in Cape Town where we stayed for a couple of days. On Tuesday we saw Mr. Johan Joubert and Mr. Peter Dauth in Somerset West. These were very positive visits. On Wednesday we travelled up the west coast of the Cape to visit prospective members in Citrusdal.

That afternoon, we proceeded to Yzerfontein where we had a very fruitful visit with several prospective members on our mailing list, including one lady who had attended a *Tomorrow's World* lecture I had held in Pinelands, Cape Town about two years ago.

On Thursday I traveled to Hermanus, where we kept the Feast of Tabernacles in past years in our former association. While there, I met with a representative of Radio Seven, with regard to broadcasting our program. They are willing to take our program, but want us to leave out anything

controversial. I said that under no circumstances could we compromise with the truth and be ashamed of Jesus Christ. If God opens the door, we will go through it.

What we came to realize on this trip was that the personal contact we had with all those visited was very important. We have now identified several prospective members and are keeping contact with them. It is now evident that we will be going on more such visiting tours as time goes on all over the country. It takes my mind back to the many visiting tours we did while in our former association in the 1960s.

Cameroon Update

by Dibar Apartian

Since the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread in 2002, the group of 19 people in Cameroon, who joined the Living Church of God, is progressing steadily and growing stronger in the faith. Every Sabbath, they listen to the French sermon tapes sent to them regularly from San Diego. They are also receiving regularly all of our French literature, including the *Bible Study Course*. To this day, the French Department has the first 19 lessons translated, printed and in circulation. The leader and host of this group is Mr. Théodore Ndjebayi, who is very enthusiastic. Please pray for our 19 members in Douala, Cameroon.

Philippines Update

by Rod McNair

The Work continues to move forward in the Philippines. The *Tomorrow's World* radio broadcast is now airing in four major cities around the archipelago: Manila, Cebu City, Ozamiz City, and now

Davao City (DXUM, 7:45 pm on Sunday), which began airing last August. With a population of 900,000, Davao City is the second-fastest growing city in the Philippines (after Metro-Manila), so it was an important outlet to add to our radio coverage. Davao City also carries the unique status of being the “largest city in the world” in terms of area, with 2,440 square kilometers. We already are making plans to add a fifth radio station soon, possibly in the northern Luzon city of Baguio, the “summer capital” of the Philippines and popular site for the Feast of Tabernacles for many years. The *Tomorrow's World* television program continues to be telecast in nine local access stations around the country.

Another exciting development is a recent advertisement we ran on October 20 in the *Manila Bulletin*, listing the four *Tomorrow's World* radio programs, stations, and times around the country in Manila, Cebu City, Ozamiz City, and Davao. The *Manila Bulletin* is one of the most widely-circulated newspapers in the Philippines. Our last such ad, run six years ago, was crucial in building up the magazine mailing list. We are looking forward to seeing growth in the mailing list and radio listening audience as a result of this advertisement.

We continue to receive brand new responses from the magazine and radio broadcast, as well as numerous families with a Church of God background that have recently come with us. God willing, 2003 will be a time of growth and expansion for the Church and the Work in the Philippines.

Kenya Update

by Ernest Owino

Greetings from Nairobi! I just arrived back here from a very benefi-


cial trip to western Kenya, though I encountered difficulties connecting between Ndhiwa and Opoya due to very heavy rains that had been pounding the region for the last month or so.

Opoya is situated about 50 miles southeast of Ndhiwa. The road network in this area is very poor, so that during rainy seasons (such as the current one), I have to endure much trouble visiting this congregation. While there, because of deep muddy roads, I was occasionally compelled to remove my shoes and walk barefoot. Failure to do so would leave one without the soles of his shoes. It is that bad!

Otherwise, the Work there is proceeding well, and those whom God has called are upbeat about the Work. Leaving Nairobi on Wednesday evening, November 20, I arrived in Ndhiwa very early in the morning of Thursday 21 and proceeded straight away to visit with our host there for a few minutes, before proceeding on to Opoya.

On the Sabbath of November 23, I was able to speak with our brethren in Opoya on “Our Ultimate Reward” and “Why Trials and Tests?” Several brethren came up afterwards to tell me how much they had benefited from the messages, which tackled the problems they had been undergoing.

The Sultan Hamud video group, about 110 miles southeast of Nairobi, is also beginning to stabilize, with an average weekly attendance of 6. Of course, this is a very small number of God's people but they treasure it—and we do too!

The current political situation in the country is very volatile. We have been witnessing, in a number of regions, lawlessness connected to December's general elections. Please keep up your prayers for us as we do for you. 

Living Youth Camp 2003

By Gerald Weston

Applications Now Available

Summer is only a melted snowball away, and summer means **CAMP**! Yes, and **CAMP** means seeing all your friends who share your beliefs, making new acquaintances, having your mind flushed out from all the secular waste put into it in psychology and health science classes, and having fun!

This year, once again, we will be holding both teen and pre-teen camps. The teen camp will be held in Michigan, as before. In addition, there will be a pre-teen camp in Ontario, Canada, and four in the United States: in California, Missouri and Texas, plus a new pre-teen camp location in North Carolina. This new location will

offer an opportunity for pre-teens from the southeast to enjoy the camp experience, and make new friends in the Church. It will also give teens, young adults and others the opportunity to serve in a camp environment.

Each camp has its own unique features, but all are governed by the same guiding principles and traditions. The law of God is fundamental to all our activities, and the way of outgoing concern is emphasized constantly. All camps are highly structured and organized. All workers are screened and have passed a background check conducted by an independent outside agency.

Our Ontario, Canada camp was deliberately kept small last year so we could learn how best to conduct a wilderness camp. Rather than a fixed campus, this is a canoe trip into Algonquin Provincial Park. Instead of cabins, there are tents; instead of a dining hall, there are cook stoves. Because of the camp's success last year, we can this year open it up to as many as 24 campers and 12 staff. Families with children interested in this type wilderness experience should submit their applications as early as possible. The same advice applies to staff. Please read below for details on each of the camps.

Northwoods Camp, Michigan Teen

Dates: Tuesday, July 22–Sunday, August 3. Some staff will need to be there by Sunday, July 20.

Ages: Open to campers aged 13–17. High school workers must be 16 or older and it is preferable if they have attended LYC in previous years. Young adult workers should be aged 19–24. We can also use older adults to oversee various programs and work in support areas.

Location: Near the eastern Upper Peninsula town of Pickford, Michigan.

Cost: Tuition for campers is \$330, for high school staff \$105, and for adult staff \$30. There is an additional non-refundable \$5 application fee for all applicants.

Deadline: All applications should be returned no later than April 15, 2003. Applications received after that date may be accepted, but your chances of acceptance will drop.

Where to Get an Application: You can download an application from the Web at: www.youth-web.org. You may

also request an application by sending e-mail to lyc@cogl.org, or by writing to Living Youth Camp, 16935 W. Bernardo Dr., Suite 260, San Diego, CA 92127, or by phoning Suzanne Ruddlesden at: (858) 613-7970, extension 219.

Jackass Rock Camp, California Pre-Teen

Dates: Sunday, June 29–Friday, July 4.

Ages: Open to campers aged 8 to 12. High school workers must be 15 or older and will find previous LYC experience as a camper helpful. Young adult workers should be aged 19–24. We can also use older adults to oversee various programs and work in support areas.

Location: Two hours east of Fresno, California, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Cost: Tuition for campers is \$90. Tuition for a second camper from the same family is \$80 and for a third camper is \$70. Tuition for high school and adult staff is \$30. There is an additional non-refundable \$5 application fee for all applicants.

Deadline: All applications should be returned no later than April 15, 2003. Applications received after that date may be accepted, but your chances of acceptance will drop.

Where to Get an Application: You can download an application from the Web at: www.youth-web.org. You may also request an application by sending e-mail to jfall@cogl.org, or by writing to Dr. Jeff Fall, 1040 Coronet St., Glendora, CA 91741, or by phoning Dr. Fall at (626) 914-1474.

Fort Parker State Park, Texas Pre-Teen

Dates: Sunday, June 22–Friday, June 27.

Ages: Open to campers aged 8 to 12. High school workers must be 15 or older and will find previous LYC experience as a camper helpful. Young adult workers should be aged 19–24. We can also use older adults to oversee various programs and work in support areas.

Location: Near Mexia, Texas, about 90 miles south of Dallas.

Cost: Tuition for campers is \$75. Tuition for a second camper from the same family is \$65 and for a third camper is \$55. Tuition for high school and adult staff is \$30. There is an additional non-refundable \$5 application fee for all applicants.

Deadline: All applications should be returned no later than April 15, 2003. Applications received after that date may be accepted, but your chances of acceptance will drop.

Where to Get an Application: You can download an application from the Web at: www.youth-web.org. You may also request an application by sending e-mail to alamogutter@yahoo.com, or by writing to Mr. John Ogwyn, 1218 Brook Dr., Kilgore, TX 75662, or by phoning Mr. David Crockett at (682) 518-8292.

Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada Pre-Teen

Dates: Sunday, August 10–Friday, August 15.

Ages: Open to campers aged 8 to 12. High school workers must be 15 or older and will find previous LYC experience as a camper helpful. Young adult workers should be aged 19–24. We can also use older

adults to oversee various programs and work in support areas.

Location: Three hours north of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Cost: Tuition for campers is CN\$100 (US\$75). Tuition for a second camper from the same family is CN\$90 (US\$65) and for a third camper is CN\$80 (US\$55). Tuition for high school and adult staff is CN\$35 (US\$30). There is an additional non-refundable \$5 (CN and US) application fee for all applicants.

Deadline: All applications should be returned no later than April 15, 2003. Applications received after that date may be accepted, but your chances of acceptance will drop.

Where to Get an Application: You can download an application from the Web at www.youth-web.org or www.lcgcanada.org. You may also request an application by writing to Mr. Brian Frank, 43 Schooner Dr., Kingston, ON K7K 7J8 Canada, or by phoning Mr. Frank at (613) 544-7109.

Camp Sherwood Forest, Missouri Pre-Teen

Dates: Sunday, June 8–Sunday, June 15.

Ages: Open to campers aged 8 to 12. High school workers must be 15 or older and will find previous LYC experience as a camper helpful. Young adult workers should be aged 19–24. We can also use older adults to oversee various programs and work in support areas.

Location: About one hour northwest of St. Louis, Missouri, in Cuivre River State Park.

Cost: Tuition for campers is \$90. Tuition for a second camper from the same family is \$80 and for a third camper is \$70. Tuition for high school and adult staff is \$30. There is an additional non-refundable \$5 application fee for all applicants.

Deadline: All applications should be returned no later than April 15, 2003. Applications received after that date may be accepted, but your chances of acceptance will drop.

Where to Get an Application: You can download an application from the Web at: www.youth-web.org. You may also request an application by sending e-mail to rgregory@cogl.org, or by writing to Mr. Randy Gregory, 1981 Alpine Court, Gurnee, IL 60031, or by phoning Mr. Gregory at (847) 249-1057.

Maranatha Springs, North Carolina Pre-Teen

Dates: As of the writing of this article, all arrangements had not been finalized. Hopefully, by the time you receive this they will be. For more exact information please go to one of the addresses under “Where to Get an Application” below.

Ages: Open to campers aged 8 to 12. High school workers must be 15 or older and will find previous LYC experience as a camper helpful. Young adult workers should be aged 19–24. We can also use older adults to oversee various programs and work in support areas.

Location: Near Siler City, about 45 minutes southeast of Greensboro, North Carolina.

Cost: All arrangements have not been completed. However we expect the cost to be around \$100 for the first camper in the family with discounts for additional children. Tuition for high school and adult staff will be approximately \$30. There will be an additional non-refundable \$5 application fee for all applicants.

Deadline: All applications should be returned no later than April 15, 2003. Applications received after that date may be accepted, but your chances of acceptance will drop.

Where to Get an Application: You can download an application from the Web at: www.youth-web.org. You may also request an application by sending e-mail to kfrank@cogl.org, or by writing to Mr. Ken Frank, 5083 Blarney St., Fredericksburg, VA 224076503, or by phoning Mr. Frank at (540) 786-8015. ☎

What Do YOU Stand For?

(continued from page 3)

Military Academy for the last time, he gave what is still regarded as one of the most eloquent speeches of modern times. After being greatly honored at West Point, General MacArthur spoke to the assembled corps of cadets and many high-ranking dignitaries:

“No human being could fail to be deeply moved by such a tribute as this, coming from a profession I have served so long and a people I have loved so well. It fills me with an emotion I cannot express. But this award is not intended primarily for a personality, but to symbolize a great moral code—the code of conduct and chivalry of those who guard this beloved land of culture and ancient descent.

“Duty, honor, country—these three hallowed words reverently dictate what you want to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying point to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn....

“But these are some of the things they build. They build your basic character. They mold you for your future roles as the custodians of the

nation’s defense. They make you strong enough to know when you are weak, and brave enough to face yourself when you are afraid.”

Further on, General MacArthur concluded this historic address:

“The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished—tone and tints. They have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wondrous beauty, watered by tears and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen, then, but with thirsty ear, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll.

“In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield. But in the evening of my memory I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes: duty, honor, country.

“Today marks my final roll call with you. But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the corps, the corps and the corps.

“I bid you farewell.”

Brethren, unlike General MacArthur and the West Point cadets, we are engaged in a *spiritual*

warfare. But *war* it is, nonetheless! Many of us in the Living Church of God—like General MacArthur in his day—are “old timers”! We have witnessed many a battle scene of spiritual blood and carnage. We have seen Satan’s withering attacks on ourselves, on our friends and on God’s Church and His Work again and again.

We know and deeply understand that “our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). *That* is the “country” we are fighting for! We know that our warfare is not participation in the “corps” of West Point, but in the *Work* of the Living God!

So we can, *in that light*, deeply relate to General MacArthur’s words: “Duty, honor, country.” As we grow older as a Church and as individual members, let us *never* forget why we are here. Let us hold our heads high as we charge on day and night to do the Work of God with zeal, with dedication, with courage and with sacrifice.

No military mission was ever so vital. No warfare was ever so important. And no reward was ever so magnificent as the one we will receive, if we overcome ourselves and Satan, and *if* we are zealous and faithful in proclaiming Christ’s Message to a world that has truly lost its way. ☎

Reflections on Two Anniversaries

(continued from page 2)

him! For I did not know that he was an Apostle—and neither did *he* know it at that time. We did not fully understand Church government, but I deeply respected him.

However, I felt that I was “too young,” too inexperienced and “not yet worthy” to be ordained. I told him so. But he explained that I had been actually performing ministerial functions for the last several months—leading out a nationwide baptizing tour that previous summer, writing articles for the *Good News* magazine, raising up our local congregation in San Diego, and at the time of our conversation pastoring a congregation in Oregon, plus preparing to raise up an additional congregation in the Seattle/Tacoma area within a few weeks after his call.

After counseling with my uncle (Dr. C. Paul Meredith) and others, I decided to leave it in God’s hands and trust Him to guide Mr. Armstrong in this decision. And so, on the afternoon of December 20, 1952, God’s servant Mr. Armstrong first ordained Herman L. Hoeh as an evangelist, since Mr. Hoeh was the first male graduate of Ambassador College. Next, they in turn ordained Raymond C. Cole. Then, the three of them ordained Mr. Armstrong’s elder son, Richard David Armstrong. Next, all of them turned and together ordained my uncle, Dr. C. Paul Meredith. Finally, last and not least, I was ordained as an evangelist in the Church of God. It was certainly fitting that I be last on this occasion, because I was physically the youngest and spiritually the newest as part of God’s Work. But I have been everlastingly grateful and thankful to be a part of that first ordination service, and to have had the awesome opportunity to help “build the Work” along with Mr. Armstrong and other leading men throughout the last 50 years of my adult life.

I have made many mistakes. I have shed many tears for being too strict during the 1960s, especially in regard to the “system” of having the ministers send in detailed reports and make quite a number of visits, which made their work exceedingly difficult—more than I realized at the time. But, through the years, God has humbled me, chastened me, worked with me and helped me grow and learn the lessons that I needed to learn—and there are, no doubt, many other lessons that I will still be learning up until the day of my death or the Second Coming of Christ!

What are some of the basic lessons that I can impart to you brethren that I have learned during my 53 years in God’s Church and my 50 years as an evangelist of Jesus Christ?

One of the outstanding lessons that has come into my mind, again and again, is the importance of always keeping our minds on the **big picture**. Please *do not* let other peoples’ personalities, or even minor doctrinal or administrative disagreements, “sidetrack” you! For if you allow yourself to get sidetracked or to get a spirit of bitterness, you could **lose** eternal life—or at the very least have a *greatly diminished reward* in the coming Kingdom of God. Through the years, I have seen many people “get their backs up” at Mr. Armstrong or other leading men. People did not think things through as carefully as they should have, and often allowed minor issues to sidetrack them or bring on a spirit of bitterness. Some of these individuals even tried—directly or indirectly—to “overthrow” Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, God’s Apostle, and somehow get control of the Work so that *they* would be the “big shots” and be able to exalt themselves. We have also had individuals—as you know—who have tried to “overthrow” me in *this revival of the Work*. All of these people seem to have forgotten God’s instruction in Proverbs 24:21–22: “My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not associate with those given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin those two can bring?”

All of us, including those of us in the ministry, must constantly guard against Satan “working” on us and leading us into a spirit of bitterness. *It does not make any difference* what causes us to become bitter! Under *no circumstances* should we allow this type of spirit to grip us, for it is something that will *destroy* our ability to think straight, and will ruin our spiritual life and our opportunity for eternal life itself! We must constantly remember God’s admonition: “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any *root of bitterness* springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled” (Hebrews 12:14–15).

Another vital lesson I have learned, through the years, is the importance of constantly asking God for **genuine** humility. Many people can “put on” an act of humility. However, over time, their “fruits” show that they are arrogant, self-willed and **not** willing to take correction from those over them. Often, they are **not** “team players” and willing to serve in whatever capacity God places them. Some are constantly “angling” or “politicking” for a higher position, more money or more prestige in whatever way. If we can constantly compare ourselves **not** to others, but to Jesus Christ, we will be in a better frame of mind. We will realize *how terribly weak* we all are, and how much we need Christ in us to amount to anything. So try **not** to “push” yourself into any office or position—*especially* any spiritual office in God’s

Church! Remember God's admonishment: "The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility" (Proverbs 15:33). Also it is good to focus on Jesus' powerful counsel: "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

Dear brethren, without naming names I can tell you wholeheartedly that I have seen these principles "at work" over and over again in the Work of God! When men—even leading men—have tried to "exalt" themselves, it seems that God would often intervene and "jerk the rug" out from under them, so that they would fall flat on their faces. If they were willing to learn the lesson and truly **repent**, they generally then went on to "greater" things. But if their personal vanity and arrogance would not allow for that kind of repentance, then they nearly always either dropped out or had to be *put out* of God's Church!

In this time of confusion among God's people since the death of Mr. Armstrong, it seems that every Tom, Dick and Harry is trying to exalt himself and "appoint" himself to some leading position in the ministry, or even to "ordain" himself whether or not he has been ordained by legitimate authority! Frankly, brethren, this is a *travesty*! God's own Word *sternly warns* against *anyone* trying to "put himself" into the ministry. Notice God's inspired word regarding this very matter: "And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was" (Hebrews 5:4). The "fruits" of most of these self-appointed leaders or ministers are usually greater confusions and divisions among God's people. And Satan—the *author* of confusion—is using the vanity of these misguided men to **severely hinder** the gathering together of God's people so that a truly powerful Work might be done!

Also, over the years, Christ has led me to think again and again about a basic question: *what would Jesus really do?* For even in God's Church, men and women take unto themselves responsibility to *change* the clear instruction of Jesus Christ—or to ignore it in their own lives. And they ignore His *direct example* in the way we all ought to live. So we all must constantly ask ourselves: "How can I genuinely **serve** the most, considering the talents and strengths I do have, and the weaknesses that are also apparent even to me?" With the background, the training, the talents and the experience you have had, how can you *genuinely* "serve" Jesus Christ and His people the most? Where and how do you have the most to **give**? As Jesus said: "It is more blessed to *give* than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

It should be apparent that *not everyone* should try to be a minister, a teacher or some greater "leader" in God's

Work. Yet many feel "frustrated" if they do not have that opportunity in this life. Some are not able to grasp the fact that God rewards us according to what we do with the talents we genuinely have. He does **not** reward us if we "grasp" for higher things just for the sake of our own vanity and sense of self-importance. Always remember Paul's instruction in Philippians 2:5–8: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

We all know that Christ was actually the Personality who had been with the Father from eternity. He was the One who said, "Let there be light" in Genesis 1. *He* was the One who gave the Ten Commandments. He was the One who was the God or "Rock" of Israel, and was that great Being to whom Abraham, Moses and David prayed and worshiped! Yet, as the correct Greek translation has it in verse 7 of the above passage, Jesus "emptied Himself" in order to better *serve* all of us. We must constantly think on this and try to find out how and where we can best serve our God and our fellow human beings.

In this regard, we must also regularly focus on Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." If Christ **really** lives in you and me, He will be helping, building and serving others in the way that is best accomplished within the strengths and also the weaknesses of each one of us individually. For we will not consider that we belong to ourselves, but that we have "given" our lives to Christ so that **He** may live within us.

Dear brethren, as I look back on the last ten years—and at the last 50—there are many other matters that I would like to share with you. Perhaps someday I may write at least a short autobiography, to share a more complete version of some of the main lessons I have learned through 50 years of ups and downs, trials and tests—and sincerely trying to "walk with God" during these last five tumultuous decades. Please keep praying for me, as I certainly need your prayers! And pray fervently for *all* of God's faithful ministers and His people around the world.



Sabbath Service Marks Anniversaries for God's Church and Dr. Meredith

On the Sabbath of December 21, 239 members of the Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego and Palm Springs congregations gathered in Orange County for a special Sabbath service marking the 10th anniversary



of the revival of God's Work, and the 50th anniversary of Dr. Roderick C. Meredith's ordination as an Evangelist in God's Church.

After an opening prayer by Mr. Jim Meredith (one of Dr. Meredith's sons and a deacon in the Los Angeles, California congregation), the brethren heard a sermonette by local elder Dr. Donald Roach, who spoke on the importance of continuing the Work and going through open doors.

Dr. Meredith then gave a sermon outlining the history of the Philadelphia era of God's Church, and emphasizing the importance of remaining Philadelphian even in this Laodecian era. Stressing that we must not lose sight of the "big picture"—the importance of carrying out the Great Commission that Jesus Christ gave His Church—Dr. Meredith spoke movingly of the reward that God will give to those who endure to the end and become pillars in the temple and the Family of God.

During his sermon, Dr. Meredith recalled the service on December 20, 1952, at which a young Roderick C. Meredith, who had graduated from Ambassador College just six months before and was pastoring a congregation in Oregon, was among the first five men to be ordained as Evangelists by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Dr. Meredith described that of the five ordained that day, he was ordained "last and least, as was appropriate," since he was both the youngest physically and the youngest in the Truth.

Following a heartfelt closing prayer by Evangelist Dibar Apartian, Evangelist Richard Ames made a special presentation to Dr. Meredith—a mantel clock inscribed with Romans 10:15 and with the following text: *In grateful recognition of Roderick C. Meredith's 50 years of servant leadership as an Evangelist in God's Church, restoring Apostolic Christianity around the world.*

As part of Mr. Ames' presentation, two taped segments of the old *World Tomorrow* radio program were played—featuring guest presenter Roderick C. Meredith! Even the few brethren who did not quite recognize the voice of the 24-year-old Evangelist still recognized in those old radio programs the same zeal for God's Truth for which Dr. Meredith has been so widely appreciated since his earliest days in God's Work.

Indeed, it was that zeal, and his pattern of faithfulness to the Truth, which inspired so many to support



Dr. Meredith when, following his firing by WCG in December 1992, he was moved to establish the Global Church of God—and later the Living Church of God—in

order to continue the Work that was given its modern-day foundation by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

After the service and the special presentation, brethren enjoyed a reception organized by the Garden Grove congregation. Though the Garden Grove congregation is known for its exceptional covered-dish meals and gracious hospitality, most who attended felt that the Garden Grove brethren outdid themselves on this occasion with the wide and sumptuous array of finger-foods that kept more than 200 brethren circulating for hours, sharing their appreciation of the Work and one another.

In Loving Memory

Ralph Scarborough, of Kansas City, Missouri, died on December 21, 2002 at age 67, as a result of a massive blood clot in his lungs. With his wife Pat, he had ten sons and two daughters, 52 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Seven of his sons, and both daughters, along with their families, are members of the Living Church of God congregation in Kansas City.

Mr. Charles Bryce conducted the funeral service on Monday, December 23, 2002. In all, approximately 500 people attended the funeral service, after which approximately 200 friends and family visited with Mr. Scarborough's widow Pat at her home. Mr. Scarborough was greatly respected by those who knew him; he will be deeply missed.

Jerry Alan Stevens, age 43, died on November 8, 2002, after suffering a massive cerebral hemorrhage. A member of the Merrill, Wisconsin congregation of the Living Church of God, he is survived by his parents Jerry M. and Shirley Stevens, by his brothers Jeffrey T. Stevens and Brian M. Stevens and by several nieces and nephews. A baptized member of God's Church since 1980, he was an avid reader and Bible student, and also enjoyed biking, archery, target shooting and hunting. He held a Master CNE (Certified Novell Engineer) certification, worked as a computer consultant and owned an Internet Service Provider company. Mr. David Burson conducted the funeral services on November 12, 2002.

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
February 2	Overcoming Your Anxieties
February 9	Building an Intimate Marriage
February 16	What Is the Great Tribulation?
February 23	Who Will Cause the Great Tribulation?
March 2	Facing Your Fears
March 9	The Seven Seals of Revelation
March 16	What Is Real Christianity?
March 23	Ezekiel: A Watchman for Our Time
March 30	Where Is God's Church Today?

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

Births

Abdon and Cielo Buena, of Cainta, Rizal, in the Philippines, announce the birth of **Victor Gabriel Buena**, on October 5, 2002. He measured 48 cm. long, and weighed 3.1 kilos. Mother, baby, father and brothers are fine.

Tara Danielle Winnail, daughter of Scott and Dinah Winnail, was born October 23, 2003. Tara weighed 8 pounds, and was 20.5 inches at birth.

Saratoga Family Weekend, June 13–15

Every year, the Wyoming brethren get together for a summer “retreat,” joined by brethren from near and afar for a summer weekend of worship, fellowship, fun and relaxation. This year, the Saratoga Family Weekend will be held from June 13–15 at the Rivera Lodge in southern Wyoming.

A Friday evening Bible study starts the weekend off with news of the Work, Headquarters updates, and a personal appearance by a leading minister. Sabbath brunch begins the next morning’s activities around 10:00 am, with fresh coffee, pastries and other delicious entrees. Church services at 2:30 pm are followed by a Wyoming steak cookout on the lawn of the Rivera Lodge.

This is a wonderful way to spend the Sabbath with family, friends and fellow brethren. Sunday is the activity day, with trips to the Saratoga museum, fishing down at the lake or on the river or a trip to beautiful Lake Marie right below Medicine Bow Peak.

Plan now on attending, if you can. Mark your calendars for June 13–15. For those who prefer not to make reservations at the Rivera Lodge (307-325-5651), camping facilities are available at the lake, and space is available at nearby Deer Haven Trailer Park. For 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).

Church Headquarters Getting Ready to Move!

The Headquarters staff of the Living Church of God will be moving into the Church’s new World Headquarters in March.

Final renovations are underway on the new Headquarters building, located at 2301 Crown Centre Drive in Charlotte, North Carolina. The official “opening day” is currently scheduled for Monday, March 17. Please be aware that the San Diego office’s last official day of operation will be



Friday, February 21; if you need to contact Headquarters between February 21 and March 17, please contact the new Headquarters in Charlotte. Please be aware, however, that no full-time receptionist will be on duty before March 17, so response time to your calls may be slow. The phone company has tentatively assigned (704) 844-1970 as our new main phone number, though there is a small possibility that this may change before the phone systems are finally installed. God willing, voice-mail may be available at the new phone number as early as March 5.

After February 21, any correspondence (including tithes and offerings) should be mailed to the following new address in Charlotte: Living Church of God, PO Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010.

The new Headquarters office is a 38,000 square foot facility, built in 1994 at the respected Crown Pointe business park in southern Charlotte. The two-story building will bring under one roof several Headquarters operations that since 1999 had been operating

across two locations in San Diego. No longer will the Mail Processing and Television departments be separated from the rest of the Headquarters staff.

The move will dramatically reduce the Church’s monthly facilities expenses. In San Diego, the Church’s monthly lease payment is now \$27,234 to lease approximately 14,900 square feet of office and warehouse space—space that has been entirely filled, leaving no room for expansion. In Charlotte, the

Church will be making payments on a 30-year loan at 5.67 percent, which in 2003 will mean a monthly mortgage payment just under \$10,000 for the substantially larger facility. Even when utility and maintenance costs are factored in, monthly savings in Charlotte are projected at well above \$10,000. Additional savings will be realized because North Carolina, unlike California, does not require churches to pay sales tax or property tax.

Although most of the “high-profile” move activity will not occur until February–March 2003, when five or more Graebel Van Lines trucks will haul Headquarters equip-



ment and staff belongings more than 2,400 miles across country, some aspects of the move have been underway since November 2002. Mr. and Mrs. Don Davis moved to Charlotte shortly before Thanksgiving last year, and have been busy coordinating renovations and other move-related details. They have been greatly helped by local brethren who have volunteered their expertise to assist in various aspects of the renovations.

Commentary

The Fallacy of Situation Ethics *By Charles E. Bryce*

Situation ethics—the concept that human conduct is not based on absolute right and wrong—is alive and well all over the world today. Millions believe that values, standards and principles are all relative—fluid and determined by what is expedient at the moment.

Consider the idea that whether or not you should lie or steal depends not on right or wrong, but on the situation you find yourself in. This type of thinking always leads to the conclusion that there are no absolutes—no steadfast unmovable virtues that never change. Yet when you really think about it, the teaching that says that there are no absolutes is an absolute in itself!

I recall two men discussing this point. One said to the other: “So, you believe there are no absolutes.” To which the other man replied: “Absolutely!”

This approach leads to breakdown in all aspects of our society, especially in the family. It leads to conflict. It even leads to war between nations. It ultimately leads to everybody doing what is right in his own sight. The problem, of course, is that what *you* think is right often contradicts what *someone else* thinks is right. When that happens, then what? Is there a source we can depend on to know, absolutely, what is right and wrong—what is good for all concerned, and what is bad and to be avoided? Can we establish a pattern of behavior—a set of values, standards, ethics and virtues that are absolutely correct, in every single situation and circumstance, no matter what?

We can. “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17). God’s word is the foundation of all true knowledge. It stands the test of time. It stands up through thick and thin. You can depend on it to delineate what is right and what is wrong, and you can know what manner of conduct you ought to be following.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). This is the way of life that brings peace and success, as found in God’s Word. The Bible is full of guidelines and directions, values and standards, and principles governing human conduct and behavior. If we follow these guidelines and these principles—these ethics—it will lead us down the right path, and we will end up in the right place.

All of the Bible teachings regarding human conduct are summed up in ten great principles called the Ten Commandments. Scripture describes the results of following these standards, these ethics: “Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18, KJV).

Millions have bought into the satanic philosophy of situation ethics, which espouses no ultimate standards, values or principles of behavior. Millions merely do what “feels good” or what “everyone else is doing.” They do what the situation calls for—what “circumstances dictate.”

That philosophy leads to misery and failure. But “happy is he” who follows God’s law. God’s way of life, and the conduct and principles and behavior taught in His Word, lead to tremendous happiness.