

Living Church News

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“A Mighty Oak Has Fallen...”

Dear Brethren and Friends,

My wife and I just completed a most inspiring and enlightening trip to Britain and South Africa. We learned many things of interest, and the brethren in South Africa were ecstatic that we had the pleasure of coming to visit them. They are doing well, though they need your prayers because of the potential dangers in that area of the world. I had started this letter on the way back, and intended to devote it to the trip to South Africa.

However, soon after I arrived home, I was awakened from a deep sleep to be told of the death of my friend and brother, Mr. Carl McNair. I feel that I can rightly say most sincerely: “A mighty oak has fallen!” For Mr. McNair was one of the “founding fathers” of the Global Church of God. He and Mrs. McNair came early on to devote their lives and their service to reviving the Work of God after the massive apostasy had taken over our former association. It took faith and courage for both of them—sterling examples of love and service in this Work of God—to step out as they did at that time.

Mr. Carl Eugene McNair’s full-time ministry lasted from 1961 until this April—about 43 years. Hundreds knew him as one of the most kind and caring ministers they had ever known. There is the story of how Mr. McNair came to visit a lady in the Church on her farm. She was standing up at a long counter, shucking peas. Instead of insisting on her stopping and talking to him, Mr. McNair simply sidled up to the counter and began shucking peas right alongside her, visiting and encouraging her *as he worked!*

This, by the way, was a *typical* example of Mr. McNair’s humility and willingness to serve. For he was truly a “people person.” In no way was he “above” kneeling down and “washing the feet” of his brethren. He did not “lord it over them” but rather gave, encouraged, helped and served.

Through the years, Mr. McNair served all across the United States as a local minister, and later as a District Superintendent, Regional Director and Area Coordinator. He served as Director of Church Administration for the Global and then the Living Church of God for seven-and-a-half years.

Mr. McNair was constantly concerned for the welfare of the brethren. He was scrupulously honest, forthright and had *no use* for church “politics” or seeking after personal advantage. He was indeed an *outstanding example* in all of these ways.

Mr. McNair lived a full and interesting life for 66-and-a-half years. That *full* life undoubtedly prepared him for a position of great service in Christ’s

soon-coming Kingdom. About 3,000 years ago, King David of Israel died “in a good old age, full of days” at the age of 70 (1 Chronicles 29:28). Although Mr. McNair did not quite reach that full 70 years, he came very close. We all need to remember that God does not promise that we will all live to be *exactly* 70 years. Some of us die a few years sooner, some a little later. Some of us still living are, in fact, living on “borrowed time.”

We can still suffer, sin and fall away. Mr. McNair cannot. For he served God *faithfully*—as much as we can know—until the very end of his days. So he undoubtedly “has it made” as we say in the vernacular. And the great God we serve would certainly have prolonged his life had he needed more time to qualify for a position in God’s Kingdom.

Like the Apostle Paul, Mr. McNair undoubtedly could have said near the end of his days: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7–8, KJV).

Mr. McNair and his wife, Dorothy, together reared an absolutely *outstanding* family. Mr. McNair leaves behind not only his wonderful and dedicated helpmate, Dorothy McNair, but five grown children and 18 grandchildren! Two of his sons, Mr. Jonathan McNair and Mr. Roderick Carl McNair are, as you know, doing a great job of serving God’s people in this Work even now. They—and the rest of his children and grandchildren—have had a sterling example of loyalty, dedication and service set before them by Mr. McNair. *So have we all.*

All the way from the Scottish Highlands to the Philippines, and from northern Alaska to the very tip of South Africa, you can find brethren who were touched by the genuine warmth, love and spirit of service that Mr. McNair exemplified. Yet he was a “man’s man” all the way. He deeply enjoyed God’s great outdoors, and exulted in fishing, hunting and hiking. And he was *never afraid* to tell anyone, including me, when he felt they were wrong. I, personally, appreciated his hearty counsel and will miss it greatly. All of us on the Church Board and the Council of Elders will miss the special insights that Mr. McNair provided in our discussions. He and Mrs. McNair—who was *always by his side*—provided an invaluable service in helping us “put together” the entire Work of God, especially the Church Administration Department.

As I am dictating this quickly upon returning from South Africa, following a harrowing 28-hour trip across six time zones, I will not continue further at this time. I will write in a future *Living Church News* about my trip to South Africa. Now, I hope we will all reflect on how *all of us* owe Mr. Carl McNair a deep debt of gratitude for what he accomplished in his life of faithful service. Let us continue to pray regularly for Mrs. McNair and the family as they adjust to life without the outstanding leader in their family who set before them a remarkable example to the end of his days.



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Called to Endure

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

We completed an *outstanding* General Ministerial Conference in March 2004! It was the largest we have had in two years, and the warmth, unity and love of the brethren for each other and for the Work was truly inspiring. A large number of ministers and wives commented to me personally—and I have heard from many others indirectly—that it was “the best conference they have ever attended either in this Church or in our former association.”

We do indeed have a dedicated team of ministers, an excellent Headquarters facility and staff and thousands of you wonderful brethren whom I know are also deeply committed to following the full Truth and doing God’s Work in these last days. I strongly feel that we are now in place and “positioned” to do an effective Work before it is too late. *If* we all “catch the vision” and put our hearts to the very *purpose* for which God has called us *now*, we will be blessed forever. Remember how Herbert W. Armstrong said that the *reason* God called you and me *now* was *to prepare us* as kings and priests to help Jesus Christ rule this earth in a few years, and *to do the Work* of witnessing to the world and preparing a people for God before Christ returns. God *could* have called us later. We would experience far fewer trials and tests if God called us during the Millennium or the Great White Throne Judgment. But, if we

are willing to go through the trials, tests and persecutions—and *persevere to the end*—we will have an **awesome** reward in the Kingdom of God!

It is *vital*, dear brethren, that we never lose our focus! It is extremely important that we learn to pray *ferverly* every day that God will keep us energized, and that we do not become “weary with well doing”! As each year goes by—and even this year as the summer “vacation”

the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Hebrews 6:9–12).

Notice the admonition **not** to become “sluggish.” And note how important it is that we imitate those who have *faith* and *patience* in their walk with God.

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months approach—it will be easy for some of us to let down. But being *zealous* for the things of God and the Work of God should not be a bothersome “chore.” It should be inspiring, uplifting and energizing, and should give us a *reason for living* above and beyond anything else on this earth.

The Apostle Paul was inspired to admonish the brethren of his day about the danger of falling away, and treating cheaply the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then, a few verses later, he exhorted them: “But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to

We must **never** “lose faith,” as did so many of our dear friends and brethren in our former association. So many *thousands of them* turned aside in the great apostasy that swept over God’s Church after Mr. Armstrong’s death. Now, many of these people—and many outsiders—often sneer at the Work that Christ did through Herbert W. Armstrong. Some “smart alecks” sarcastically comment about Mr. Armstrong’s “prediction addiction.” They seem glad to make fun of the prophecies that the living God gave through him for so many years.

Such comments, and other scurrilous attacks against God’s Work, have confused some of God’s people—and even caused some to

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“Thy Kingdom Come”

What does this really mean to you?

By Douglas S. Winnail

Have you ever *listened* to your own prayers? Have you ever noticed *what* you pray about? Prayer is an important part of Christian life, yet people of many religions pray. Our prayers often focus on our personal needs or the needs of others. However, Jesus Christ taught that the *primary focus* of our prayers should be directed *beyond ourselves* and our immediate personal relationships. Jesus emphasized that our prayers should focus on a much bigger and more inclusive goal. He gave these teachings for very important reasons!

When Jesus’ disciples requested, “Lord, teach us to pray,” He began describing the “model prayer”—“When you pray, say, Our Father in heaven, hallowed [holy, revered] be Your name. *Your kingdom come.* Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Luke 11:2). These very words have been recited endlessly for centuries, and millions repeat them today, in unison in congregations or alone in prayer. But what do these words really mean? *Why* did Jesus stress that prayers for the kingdom should *have precedence* over prayers for personal needs? How important is it that we actually follow this instruction in our personal prayers? What does the Bible reveal about this subject—and why is this relevant for Christians today?

The Real Gospel

Many professing Christians believe that the gospel is primarily about *personal salvation*—that God loves you, that Christ died for you and that if you accept Jesus as your Savior you will go to heaven. Yet the Bible reveals something *quite different!* In the New Testament we are told: “Jesus came to Galilee, *preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*” (Mark 1:14). Jesus told His disciples that their primary goal in life was to “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*” (Matthew 6:33). Much of Jesus’ ministry centered on “preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 9:35). When Jesus commissioned His disciples, “He sent them to *preach the kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:1–2). After His resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). After Jesus’ resurrection, His disciples expressed a prime concern: “Lord, will You at this time *restore the kingdom* to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). When Philip

went to Samaria, “he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). The Apostle Paul’s ministry had a primary focus on the gospel of the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8; 28:23, 31). The Bible reveals that just before the return of Jesus Christ, “*this gospel of the kingdom* will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). According to Scripture, the exciting message of the coming kingdom of God was—and will be—the *primary focus* of the *true* gospel!

The Bible also reveals *specific details* about the kingdom of God. The kingdom will be set up on this earth at Jesus Christ’s second coming (Daniel 2:44–45). Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives, outside Jerusalem, to become king over all the earth (Zechariah 14:1–9). He will establish a world-ruling government, headquartered in Jerusalem, which will teach and enforce the laws of God (Isaiah 2:2–4). In the kingdom of God, the saints will rule with Jesus Christ as priests and kings (Revelation 5:10), and there will be a “restoration of all things” (Acts 3:19–21). Peace and justice will be established over the earth (Isaiah 9:6–7), and wars will cease (Isaiah 2:4). Cities will be rebuilt (Isaiah 61:4) according to child-friendly principles (Zechariah 8:5). Impressive highways will be constructed (Isaiah 19:23). Sickness and disease will be eliminated, and the environment will be restored (Isaiah 35:1–6). To be in this kingdom, a person *must repent and begin to live according to the laws of God.* This is *the gospel* that Jesus Christ and His disciples preached to the world! This is the *real* hope of *true* Christians—and the *only* hope for mankind. This is *why* Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to pray, “Thy kingdom come.”

A Different Gospel!

Regrettably, over the centuries, the true gospel of the kingdom of God has been twisted and perverted into a form that neither Jesus nor His disciples would recognize! Today, for many people, the concept of the kingdom of God is a pretty fuzzy idea. For many who call themselves Christians, the exciting *good news* of a world-ruling government of God has been reduced to little more than a warm feeling in the heart! This false notion of the kingdom is based on a misinterpretation of a solitary verse. In

some common translations of Luke 17:21, Jesus tells the Pharisees that “the kingdom of God is within you.” Yet other translations read, “the kingdom of God is in your midst” (*Moffatt*) or “is among you” (*Alford*). Jesus, as a representative of the kingdom, was there among the Pharisees talking about the kingdom of God. He was *not* implying—nor does the verse state—that the kingdom was “in their hearts!” Some assume that Christians working together can bring the kingdom about on this earth. Others have erroneously taught that the kingdom of God is the Roman Catholic Church. Yet the Bible plainly states that the kingdom *will not be set up until the return of Christ* (Daniel 2:44–45), and that it will be brought about by

site. These well-off people may feel that, for them, the kingdom has *already arrived*—so what is there to pray for? For affluent people in materially comfortable surroundings, it is understandable that personal prayers might focus on personal concerns about health, family or romantic relationships, job situations, and whether to buy a new house or move to a better neighborhood. A watered-down gospel about the kingdom of God “coming into your heart” does not generate a sense of urgency, or a need to pray fervently—“Thy kingdom come” is just not a pressing issue.

Regrettably, even for many who understand the *true* gospel, praying fervently for the kingdom to come is not

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God’s direct intervention—not by human efforts (Revelation 11:15–18).

With such mistaken and misleading ideas about the kingdom of God, it is no wonder that the phrase “Thy kingdom come” is a rather vague concept for many today. The real gospel of Jesus Christ—about the coming kingdom of God—has been *replaced by a different gospel* about being “saved” and going to heaven! Paul *warned* that this would happen (2 Corinthians 11:1–4). Jesus also prophesied that “many will come in My name... and will *deceive* many” (Matthew 24:3–5). The Bible reveals that Satan is the one responsible for *deceiving* the whole world and *blinding* human beings to the true gospel, which explains the real plan and purpose of God (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4). When the true gospel of the kingdom of God is watered down, and perverted to mere sentimental notions, the prayer “Thy kingdom come” becomes just so many words with *little* meaning or relevance!

An Irrelevant Prayer?

If the kingdom of God is already in your heart, or if it is the Roman Catholic Church, then there is really *no need* to pray “Thy kingdom come.” In fact, for many who live in the affluent countries of North America and Western Europe, there seems to be little interest—and no real sense of urgency—in praying for the kingdom of God to come to this earth. Many professing Christians drive new cars over paved roads to church services in climate-controlled crystal cathedrals, with padded seats, melodious choirs, stereophonic music, church schools, recreational facilities and even retirement homes located on the same

the urgent issue that it should be. For many of us, the most pressing issues of the moment—personal health problems, financial problems, relationship problems—are the most real, and tend to take precedence over future concerns like the coming government of God. Yet this is exactly why Jesus Christ taught that, when we pray, we are to pray about the coming of the kingdom of God *before* we focus on our personal concerns. The saints will rule with Christ in the kingdom, but these future leaders must develop specific qualities of *character*. This is why Jesus emphasized that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), and that His true disciples will “love their neighbors as themselves” and be willing to “lay down their lives” to serve others (see Matthew 20:26–28; John 15:12–17). We must learn not just to *like* people, but to develop real *love* for people—an *unselfish outgoing concern* and a *real compassion* for others. We must *care enough* so that we earnestly desire to change those circumstances that are hurting others. This is what leaders in the kingdom of God will do.

Back to Reality

If you take the time to step outside of the privileged lifestyle that you may enjoy, and consider the needs of the billions of human beings who struggle daily just to survive, you will be able to pray with more fervency and with a greater sense of urgency, “Thy kingdom come.” For anyone who has traveled outside the world’s most affluent nations (in North America, Western Europe and a few other spots on this earth), the *grim reality* of daily life for billions is sobering! Two-thirds of the world’s population

goes to bed hungry every night. Have you ever been so hungry that your body ached? Have you ever listened to your children cry because they did not have enough food to eat, and you had nothing to give them? Think about it—and *pray about it*—because this is something the kingdom of God *will change!*

Today, in many parts of the world, billions face poverty, disease, environmental devastation and widespread corruption. They may work in crumbling buildings, or have no work at all. They may live in windowless houses with dirt floors, with tattered clothing and no shoes to wear. Premature death—of both children and adults—is simply a fact of everyday life. Cooking may take place outside over open fires—or, if you are well-off, over charcoal or a kerosene stove. Water, when it is available, may have to be

should be sobering and alarming. Belief in God and respect for Bible-based religious values are rapidly disappearing from the so-called “Christian” societies. Biblical admonitions against promiscuity, adultery, divorce, homosexuality, hatred, murder, stealing and lust are not only ignored today—they are *despised* by large segments of society! As a result, marriages and families—the building blocks of a stable society—are being ripped apart by infidelity and divorce. Generations are growing up without any sense of true morality. Through the ever-present media, our culture has become saturated and obsessed with sex and violence. For many today, the focus of life is *self*—personal health, personal wealth and the selfish quest for personal happiness and pleasure. We are *kidding ourselves* if we think that our culture has progressed

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carried for some distance, and was likely obtained from a polluted source. Many have no electricity, and only a few have refrigerators. Cities are crowded, congested, dirty and dangerous. Transportation is irregular, undependable and often life-threatening. The most common means of travel is on foot, and miles-long journeys are common.

For most human beings living in less developed areas of the world, experiencing corrupt governments, pagan religions and false “Christian” teachings, *life is difficult*—and there is little expectation of real change. The kingdom of God is really the *only hope* they will ever have for a better life. Perhaps this is why people in these areas who hear the *true* gospel of the coming kingdom of God react with *real excitement!* They can *relate* to scriptures that speak of cities being rebuilt, major road construction, environmental restoration, the establishment of just government and the elimination of genocidal wars. For anyone who has walked some distance to fetch water from a polluted source, the scriptural references that “living [pure] waters shall flow from Jerusalem” (Zechariah 14:8) and “waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:1–7) carry real meaning. For hungry populations who battle starvation and struggle with the effects of periodic droughts and famines, prophecies about abundant harvests in the kingdom of God offer real hope—because that is what “Thy kingdom come” will mean!

However, the need for the kingdom of God to come is not limited to the Third World! For anyone who has eyes to see and a sense of history, the astounding social changes and the erosion of fundamental values in recent decades

beyond the need for the Bible’s directives about human behavior, which many “progressive” people naively call primitive, simplistic, unrealistic and restrictive. The *lesson of history* is that the changes in our society today are not signs of progress, but rather of the same *moral decay* that appeared in other great civilizations *during their demise!*

Today, millions trust that the United Nations and peacekeeping forces will eliminate war and create a peaceful world. Yet these humanly devised means *are not working!* The world continues to become *more* dangerous. Terrorist activities are spreading, in spite of the “war on terrorism.” Inter-racial strife is increasing, not decreasing. Attempts to build peaceful and tolerant multiracial communities are failing in many places. Human beings *do not know* the way to peace (Isaiah 59:8). World peace will only be achieved when the kingdom of God arrives (Isaiah 9:6–7). Until then, the world will become even more violent and dangerous (Matthew 24:3–8; 24:21–22). If we *truly care* about our fellow human beings, this is another reason to pray earnestly, “Thy kingdom come”—because unless Jesus Christ returns to intervene on this earth, “no flesh would be saved” (Matthew 24:21–22).

Redeeming the Time

So how can you motivate yourself to follow Jesus Christ’s instruction to pray more fervently, “Thy kingdom come?” Consider three simple steps. First, we need to

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What Defines Your Life?

By John H. Ogwyn

We are all powerfully affected by the world around us. Clearly, we have all been greatly shaped by our families, our communities, and our culture. In addition to that, our day-to-day lives are often a series of responses to the people and events that we encounter each day.

Most of us find it fairly easy to respond with a cheerful wave and hello to friends who greet us warmly. We can usually smile at those who smile at us. When we are surrounded by a pleasant and peaceful environment, most of us can maintain a sense of peace and well-being. Of course, the reverse is also true. When someone is inconsiderate and treats us rudely, it is natural to flare up and want to lash out in retaliation. We have all seen how easily others can bring out the best or the worst in us. It happens in the home, on the job, and in Church congregations.

Have you ever thought about what defines Jesus Christ? Did He go through His life simply reacting to His surroundings? Did He lash out in anger and resentment toward those who tried to hurt Him in some way? If not, *why* not?

While human beings naturally react to the world around them, Jesus Christ defined Himself by *always responding to the “above.”* Rather than letting other people determine His mood and behavior, He sought always to let the Father in heaven direct Him.

“Well,” you might think, “He was Jesus Christ and He could do that, but I’m just a human being!” This brings us to part of the meaning of the Pentecost season. Pentecost reminds us of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ

promised to His disciples (Acts 2:1–4). The Holy Spirit is the means by which Jesus Christ will actually *live the same life in you and me that He lived as a human being* when He walked the earth almost 2,000 years ago (cf. Galatians 2:20).

Whether we are defined by the “around” or by the “above” is a vital question that we all must face. If we simply go through life reacting to the world around us, we are living after the flesh and will ultimately perish (Romans 8:13). If, on the other hand, we seek to go through life continually responding to the “above”—regardless of the people and circumstances surrounding us—we are being led by the Spirit of God, and are on our way to life everlasting (v. 14). To react to the “around” comes easily—after all, it is *natural*! To respond to the “above,” day in and day out, is *spiritual* and **not** natural.

What is the difference between reacting naturally and responding spiritually? How do we move from the natural to the spiritual? Can we as human beings cease being defined by our surroundings?

The answers to these questions are made clear in the pages of Scripture. When you really understand and apply these answers, they will transform all of your relationships! This transformation is made possible through the indwelling power of God’s Holy Spirit.

Defined by the “Around”?

Jesus’ disciples were both bewildered and frightened on the night when Jesus was arrested by guards sent from the High Priest. When Judas embraced Jesus, the guards quickly surrounded Him. Simon

Peter’s immediate response was to grab for his sword and move against the guard closest to him. Swinging at the High Priest’s servant, Malchus, his sword missed its intended target and struck off an ear (John 18:10). As Malchus raised his hand to the side of his head, blood streamed down, and he began to feel the sharp pain that resulted from the cut he had received. Jesus quickly reattached the severed ear to the side of Malchus’ head (Luke 22:50–51)!

Jesus told Peter to put away his sword, and warned him that those who live by the sword will die by the sword. He then reminded Peter that he could ask His Father for twelve legions of angels, if He wished (Matthew 26:52–53).

About 30 years later, Peter wrote a letter to Israelite Christians living along the southern shore of the Black Sea (cf. 1 Peter 1:1). His words illustrate the difference between Christ’s response and Peter’s on that evening. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps,” he wrote (1 Peter 2:21). Peter had been an eyewitness to the example of Jesus, “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (v. 23).

How many times over the years had Peter “replayed” the events of that evening in his mind? As he thought about his own reaction, and how *totally* different it was from Christ’s response, he considered how Jesus was actually setting an example for His disciples. He had not allowed Himself to be defined by others’ attitudes and behaviors. Hours later, when Jesus was nailed to the post upon which He was to

die, He looked down at callous soldiers, squatted at the foot of His cross, who were dividing His clothes among them and gambling over His seamless coat. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do,” He prayed (Luke 23:34).

“But Jesus was the Son of God,” you may be thinking. “Surely a normal human being could never be expected to respond in a similar way!” Yet in Acts 7, we read about Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Taken outside Jerusalem’s walls to be stoned to death, Stephen’s final words were, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin” (v. 60). In his death, he followed the example of his Savior. Stephen was not defined by simply reacting and lashing out at the unfairness around him. First and foremost, He responded to God and followed the example of Jesus Christ.

These are dramatic examples of responding to God in a time of severe crisis. Most of us have not found ourselves in such dramatic encounters, so how do these examples apply to us? Almost every day, we all encounter situations that require us to choose how we will respond. In daily circumstances, in our families and on our jobs, how do we handle life’s frustrations and hurts? To what extent are we defined by others?

Trying to Protect the Self

Our reactions are often motivated by desires to protect and advance the self. We engage in self-protective strategies because we do not want others to hurt us. That is natural, but it is not the approach that Christ chose!

Notice the instruction that Jesus gave to His disciples as recorded in Matthew 16:24–25 and Luke 9:23–24. He explained that anyone who truly wishes to be His disciple must deny the self, take up his cross daily, and follow Him on the journey through life. *Think about what that*

really means, because it goes completely contrary to the self-centered spirit of our age.

Self-denial requires a spirit of sacrifice. It means that we recognize a cause that is of far greater worth than anything we could achieve here and now. As the prophet Isaiah expressed it, “the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever” (Isaiah 51:6). This contrast between what is permanent and what is temporary should put our choices into perspective.

The Christian walk starts with an attitude of self-denial rather than self-fulfillment. This means a willingness to say no to our human desires and pleasures, in order that we might do the Work for which God has called us.

Jesus’ listeners were very familiar with the cross as an instrument of Roman torture. They had seen posts erected on the hillsides, where the Romans hung those deemed enemies of the state. The Romans made a public spectacle of executions, even forcing the condemned man to carry his own instrument of torture to the place where he was to die. It is in this context that Christ said His disciples must be willing to carry their assigned burden every day. *Simply put, we are to follow Him. His example is paramount, and is one that we must seek to emulate as Christians.*

Emulating Christ will certainly bring criticism and reproach from the world around. However, those who would be Christ’s disciples must practice Isaiah’s admonition: “Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law: do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults” (Isaiah 51:7). With whom are we most impressed—with God, or with other people? Our answer will determine many of the choices we make.

Consider many of the Jewish religious leaders in Jesus’ day.

Virtually all had heard some of His sermons, and many had heard of, or had direct knowledge of, His miracles and healings. Did you know that quite a few actually *believed* that Jesus was the Messiah, but kept silent because they valued their status and reputation, and did not want to risk being ostracized by those who were “important” in their society (John 12:42–43)?

Take the example of Nicodemus, a prominent Pharisee who came to Jesus privately near the beginning of His ministry (John 3:1–2). We read of an event that occurred about two-and-a-half years later, at the fall festival season of 30AD. Some of the leading Pharisees and chief priests had sent soldiers to bring Jesus in for questioning, but the soldiers returned empty-handed. When questioned as to why this was so, the awestruck soldiers said that they had never heard anyone speak the way that Jesus spoke (John 7:46). The angry Pharisees replied dismissively with the question: “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?” (v. 48). The answer to that question was actually “yes”—but they just did not know! Nicodemus, present as part of the group, *had never told them* of his belief. When he asked a mild question, trying to soften their approach toward Jesus, he was immediately “put down” (vv. 50–52). He did not argue, or say anything further. Nicodemus, along with Joseph of Arimathea and others, was a “secret” disciple, perhaps out of fear of the religious leadership or because he desired their approval (cf. John 19:38).

This fear of rejection and harsh criticism produced an outward conformity on the part of many religious Jews of Jesus’ day. On the one hand, they recognized that this Teacher from Galilee was from God, yet they were also very reluctant to say or do anything that would directly associate themselves with someone so con-

troversial. Ultimately, they all had to come to terms with this issue: “Whose opinion really counts?” Was it God’s approval, or that of their fellow Jews, that mattered most?

When Jesus was arrested, tried and executed, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea finally had to take a public stand (John 19:38–39). At this lowest point, they came forth and identified themselves as disciples and friends by claiming His body for burial. Having wrestled for about three years with their fear of what other people would say, they recognized that *what God would say* was far more important.

Almost 80 years ago, Herbert W. Armstrong had to face this same test when he was first being converted. Upon learning that his wife wanted to begin keeping the biblical seventh-day Sabbath, he worried about what his business associates would think. It seemed like fanaticism, and he worried about rejection and disapproval from men whom he held in high regard. Ultimately, he came to the point where the approval of men was insignificant to him, in comparison to God’s approval. Only when we come to that point can we surrender unconditionally to God. We cannot be defined by the opinions and expectations of others around us, while at the same time being the complete bond-slave of Jesus Christ!

Handling Life Properly

The Bible is replete with stories in which people addressed their fears and frustrations the wrong way. It is relatively easy to respond as we ought when doing so is to our advantage. Satan thought that Job only obeyed God because of all of the protection and blessings that he received (Job 1:9–11). Soon, Job’s whole world turned upside down as he lost his family, his wealth, his social position and even his health. Yet, though

he became deeply frustrated and discouraged, Job never turned bitter against God, as Satan had predicted he would. In his depths, Job could still declare: “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at last on the earth” (Job 19:25). Job anticipated the resurrection, and the time when he would finally see God (vv. 26–27).

Knowing that God is *real* is vital to handling life properly. The Apostle Paul expressed it in Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” The men and women whose lives are cataloged in Hebrews 11 understood the profound reality of their Creator. That knowledge put into perspective all of the tests and trials they faced.

Why was Moses not intimidated and awed by the pomp, grandeur and power of ancient Egypt? *Because God and His power were far more real to him* (Hebrews 11:27). Moses made a decision that he would rather suffer affliction with God’s people than enjoy the temporary pleasures afforded by sin (v. 25). He understood the relative value of these rewards. The treasures of Egypt had no hold on him, because he recognized the far greater value of the promises offered by God. Through faith, Moses put his options into perspective, and had no trouble deciding what was truly important.

Others took a far different approach. When Jeroboam was an up and coming officer of King Solomon, rushing to and fro on government business, the prophet Ahijah confronted him with the startling news that he was destined to inherit most of his master’s kingdom (1 Kings 11:26–37). Ahijah conveyed God’s promise that if Jeroboam would faithfully serve God, and keep his commandments as King David had done,


his dynasty would be established permanently (v. 38). Over the next few years, this all came to pass—and Jeroboam found himself the king of a great nation. Soon, however, Jeroboam began to worry about the future. He became afraid that as the people went up to Jerusalem year by year to celebrate God’s festivals, they would eventually become nostalgic for “the good old days,” and would wish to re-unite the country under David’s dynasty (1 Kings 12:26–27).

Jeroboam’s apprehension about the future (and his wish for security for himself and his descendants) caused him to follow a human strategy that led the whole nation into idolatry. God and His promises were not *real* to Jeroboam, in the way they had been real to King David decades earlier. Jeroboam pursued the way that seemed right to him, rather than believing God’s promises and trusting his Creator to make it all work out.

It is natural to focus on the world around us, and to allow our choices and our behavior to be determined by it. It is quite natural to react to our surroundings—after all, human beings have been doing so ever since the Garden of Eden, when Eve listened to Satan’s “sales pitch” and Adam followed his wife! However, to do what comes naturally ends in death.

On the other hand, God offers us His Holy Spirit so that we might overcome the pulls of the flesh and *resist* doing what comes naturally. If we follow the lead of the Spirit, we are on the way to life everlasting (Romans 8:12–13).

To what extent are we simply reacting to what is around us, and doing what comes naturally? Or are we using God’s Spirit to reject the natural way and follow the **spiritual way**—responding to the “above”? “For as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (v. 14).

What defines *your* life—the “around” or the “above”? 

Child Rearing: Self-Esteem or Self-Control?

By Jeffrey Fall

Almost all the parents with whom I have ever talked have readily admitted that they could have done a better job of rearing their children. They made plenty of mistakes, and they were frustrated at times with both their own behavior and their children's. Thinking back over the years, I see many areas where I, too, could have been a better parent.

Why is child rearing so difficult? One obvious answer is that there are so many variables, many of which are beyond our control. Our primary examples in child rearing have been our own parents. Whatever we have experienced from our parents is the pattern that is indelibly stamped on our minds, whether good or bad. The example we have experienced with our own parents, of course, cannot be changed; the past is beyond our control. But none of us are prisoners of the past. With God's help, we *can* change the present!

The society we live in also shapes and molds our children. Violence and sexual themes flood the media as never before, and peer pressure in the school system is ever present. Satan broadcasts constantly as the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), and he is ever ready and willing to influence our children.

Even the supposed "experts" on child rearing have strongly disagreed among themselves. Over the last century, we have seen wild swings of the pendulum among those who claim to know the answers.

In 1928, behaviorist J. B. Watson (one of the first so-called "experts" on child rearing) wrote a book that influenced millions. He advised parents, concerning their children: "Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit on your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Remember, when you are tempted to pet your child, that mother love is a dangerous instrument: an instrument which may inflict a never healing wound, a wound which may make infancy unhappy, adolescence a nightmare, an instrument which may wreck your adult son or daughter's vocational future and their chances for marital happiness."

This very extreme view of child rearing was popular for a while, but eventually gave way to an atti-

tude of total permissiveness. One of the more extreme examples of permissiveness was illustrated in *Summerhill*, a book by A. S. Neill. James Dobson, in his book *The New Dare to Discipline*, summarized some of Neill's philosophy with the following: "Adults have no right to insist on obedience from their children. Attempts to make the youngsters obey are merely designed to satisfy the adult's desire for power. There is no excuse for imposing parental wishes on children. They must be free. The best home situation is one where parents and children are equals. A child should be required to do nothing until he chooses to do so.

"Children must not be asked to work at all until they reach eighteen years of age. Parents should not even require them to help with small errands or assist with the chores. We insult them by making them do our menial tasks. Punishment of any kind is strictly forbidden, according to Neill's philosophy. A parent who spansks his child actually hates him, and his desire to hurt the child results from his own unsatisfied sex life" (p. 129).

With such confusion among the so-called experts, is it any wonder that parents have difficulty knowing the best course in rearing their own children? Society has seen a definite shift in emphasis even in the last 30 years. When my wife and I first began our family in 1975, we observed many children who still seemed to be quite obedient and disciplined. I can remember being invited to the home of friends who had several children, and being impressed by how polite they were and how quickly they responded to their parents. When asked to bring popcorn and cold drinks to the adult guests, their response to their father was an immediate, "Yes, sir!" The hallmark of their child rearing seemed to be "consistent discipline." Initially we were impressed, but a few years later we began to see signs that this strict obedience was giving way to rebellion in the teenagers.

As my wife and I were preparing for our first child, I decided that it was time to experiment with the "consistent discipline" approach to child rearing. Before our first child was born, I bought a German Shepherd puppy and began to train him with a "con-

sistent discipline” model that I would later describe as authoritarian. Sharp, crisp, clear commands were given, with instant discipline when any infraction occurred. A quick swat, with the hand or a rolled-up newspaper, was the instrument of correction.

When our dog grew to full size, I trained him not to set one paw in my garden, lest he receive an automatic swat. I remember watching him follow behind my little two-year-old niece, who ran into my vegetable garden. Exactly at the edge of the garden he came to a dead stop, as my niece ran among the tomato plants.

I was quite impressed with my “dog training” techniques, until I finally began to see that a lot of consistent discipline and punishment *without a lot of love and encouragement* produced a family dog without much spirit. He was obedient, but did not show much life or personality—and he did not amount to much of a watchdog, either.

I began to think of this style of child rearing as the “dog training” method, which my wife and I came to see was not the right approach.

Authoritarian parents seem aloof from their children, showing little affection or nurturance. Maturity demands are high, and parent-child communication is rather low” (*The Developing Person Through the Life Span*, Kathleen Berger, p. 287).

Of course, these traits are a mixture of good and bad. The positive aspects are that the parents’ word is law, and is not to be questioned, misconduct brings consistent punishment and the demand for maturity is high. However, this approach also has negative aspects, as parents seem aloof from their children, showing little affection or nurturance, and parent-child communication is rather low. Studies show: “Children whose parents are authoritarian are likely to be obedient but not happy” (*ibid.*, p. 288).

In the early years of our family (which included two girls and two boys, seven years apart), I leaned too much to the authoritarian model, though I have since changed significantly. Fortunately for our children, my wife was more balanced from the beginning, and added a nurturing dimension.

Our primary examples in child rearing have been our own parents. Whatever we have experienced from our parents is the pattern that is indelibly stamped on our minds, whether good or bad.

In the last 25 years, as society has changed, we have seen the pendulum swing the opposite way. I was reminded of this when a little five-year-old girl got into our pre-teen son’s briefcase, and sprayed eyeglass cleaner into her eyes. She went screaming to her mother, and the mother’s response was to chide our young son for leaving his briefcase where a child could get into it. The mother gave absolutely no thought to reminding her child that she should respect other people’s property and stay out of their personal items.

A few years ago, I watched a television network “newsmagazine” program, in which cameras were placed in a fourth grade classroom for a few weeks. The result was what you would expect of a class full of children reared without consistent discipline or self-control. The classroom was chaos. Children were standing on their chairs, walking all around the classroom, throwing paper wads at each other and talking constantly. All the while, the teacher would yell a hundred times a day: “Sit down. Be quiet. Stop that; I’m not telling you again.”

Over the last 100 years, society has debated as to what is most important in child rearing: developing *self-esteem* or *self-control*? Those who believe self-control is the primary value subscribe to the authoritarian method of child rearing, in which: “The parent’s word is law, not to be questioned, and misconduct brings strict punishment.

In contrast to those who most value self-control, parents who consider self-esteem the primary goal of child rearing tend to subscribe to the “permissive” method, in which: “The parents make few demands on their children, hiding any impatience they feel. Discipline is lax. Parents are nurturant, accepting and communicating well with offspring. They make few maturity demands because they view themselves as available to help their children but not as responsible for shaping how their offspring turn out” (*ibid.*, p. 287).

Here, again, these traits are a mixture of both good and bad. The positive aspects are that parents are nurturant and accepting, communicate well with their children, and view themselves as available to them. The negative aspects are that these parents make few demands on their children, hiding any impatience they feel, and making few demands of maturity. Such parents do not view themselves as responsible for shaping how their offspring turn out. Amazingly, studies show that: “those whose parents are permissive are likely to be even less happy and... lack self-control” (*ibid.*, p. 288).

So which is the most important goal in child rearing: developing *self-esteem* or *self-control*? Is the *authoritarian* or the *permissive* model the best method of child rearing? Parents’ answer to this question tends to determine their style of child rearing, and the end of the pendulum to

which they swing. Those who consider self-esteem the crucial factor in human development tend to be more permissive in child rearing, while those who are convinced that self-control is the crucial factor in life tend to be much more authoritarian.

A similar question might be phrased: When pouring a cement foundation, which is more important, the cement powder composed of minerals, sand and rock, or the water that mixes into the powder?

In fact, *both are needed* to make a strong lasting foundation. The proportions of water and cement powder must be properly balanced to have any lasting strength. Too much water and not enough powder will make a very weak foundation. Too much powder and too little water will produce a weak and crumbly foundation. *Both are crucial* for lasting strength.

As you may well suspect, both self-esteem and self-control are equally essential for a child's lifelong well-being. Either end of the pendulum of permissiveness and authoritarianism will bring severe deficiencies in child rearing.

Children reared by authoritarian parents—who experience strong self-control and discipline without an equal emphasis on self-esteem nurtured with unconditional love—grow up with a sense of never measuring up. They tend not to venture out of their limited comfort zone. Socially they are self-conscious, and they feel insecure and anxious. They grow into teens and adults who are always trying to prove themselves.

Children reared by more permissive parents tend to have more self-esteem, but self-control is severely lacking. For the rest of their lives, they become slaves to their immediate needs and impulses. They cannot sit still long enough to pay attention in the classroom. Succeeding in college is difficult, and holding down a job for any length of time may be equally difficult. Having never developed the valuable trait of self-control, they have difficulty tolerating any situation that is not immediately pleasant.

Clearly, an imbalance in either self-esteem or self-control is a serious handicap for the rest of a child's life.

What every child needs is a *balance* of the two, which we could call *loving authority*. This would consist of equal parts self-esteem (developed through unconditional love) and self-control (fostered by authoritative discipline and training). Together, these will build a stronger foundation for a child, just as the right balance of cement powder and water bond together into the most stable cement.

In this style of child rearing, “parents set limits and enforce rules, but they are also willing to listen respectfully to the child's requests and questions. Parents make high maturity demands on offspring, communicate well with them and are [nurturing]” (*ibid.*, p. 287).

When you think about it, isn't this *exactly* the style of child rearing that we find in the Bible? God sets limits for us, but He is ever willing to listen to us as we come to Him in prayer. He makes high maturity demands for our spiritual growth, but continually communicates with us through His written word, giving us equal amounts of encouragement and forgiveness.

The Need for Teaching Self-Control

When children are reared in a permissive environment, without real control and guidelines, the price is always high. The author of *Lord, Why Is My Child a Rebel?* had this to say: “Do you want to know the most bitter, resentful children I've ever met? The kids whose mothers and fathers failed to provide guidelines and discipline. Children who live in permissive homes have trouble believing their parents really care about them” (p. 45).

Some doubt that children really want guidelines. But, in fact, firm guidelines and restrictions provide a measure of safety and security.

Whenever I drive across my favorite bridge, the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, I have no trouble driving in the lane closest to the edge. Although the bridge is more than 265 feet above the water, I gain a sense of safety and security from the guard rail at the edge of the bridge. I have never even come close to hitting the guard rail, but if it were someday removed and you asked me to drive across the bridge in the same right lane, I know I would refuse. More than 265 feet above the water, my sense of safety and security would be totally gone.

The same principle applies to child rearing. Take away the guard rail, and the safe and secure limits are gone; a sense of insecurity and a fear of the unknown are always present. An extreme example would be of a child who has become lost in a crowd, and has absolute total freedom. The child's fear of danger when facing the unknown is overwhelming.

When children are given solid guidelines over which they cannot cross (like the Golden Gate Bridge rail), those guidelines become internal restraints that we call “self-control.” In children, self-control becomes the restraint (or “guard rail”) exercised upon impulses, emotions, fears and desires. When children cross over the guard rail and receive discipline, they learn that their actions have consequences. Well-disciplined children are a delight to their parents, because they are not constantly trying to cross over the guard rail.

God made this abundantly clear when He inspired the instruction to parents: “Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul” (Proverbs 29:17).

Have you ever seen a child who was totally out of control, running and screaming and getting into everything imaginable while the mother was shopping? Any parent who ever experiences this becomes totally “stressed out.”

Years ago my wife would take our four children grocery shopping. The youngest rode in the cart, and the older ones walked along holding onto the side of the cart. Our children were normal rambunctious children, but they came to know that the grocery cart was like the guard rail of the Golden Gate Bridge. Cross that rail, and there were serious consequences.

Well-disciplined children, who are gradually taught self-control from the earliest age, have a foundation laid for a much more successful life. A five-year-old with self-control can sit quietly in class or at services without talking, and can learn much more quickly. The same child as a high school student can sit through classes that are difficult or uninteresting, and “stick it out.” Their prospects for college are that much greater.

When self-disciplined teenagers reach adulthood, they become much more valuable and successful employees. They tend to be on time to work. They handle diffi-

This was an example of a temper tantrum on wheels, which we call “road rage.” It resulted in gunfire, murder and many years in prison. The seeds for such a lack of self-control invariably start in childhood.

God’s Word teaches us to chasten our children “while there is hope” (Proverbs 19:18). In other words, *do it in the early years*. If you wait until a child is in grade school to begin teaching him the lessons of self-control, it is almost too late for his maximum success in life. It is never too late to try, but any success will be diminished.

Self-control learned in early childhood is also a crucial ingredient in any future marriage relationship. The self-controlled adult is less likely to have an adult temper tantrum and lash out in uncontrollable anger. It is much better to be corrected as a young child for emotional tirades and outbursts, than to face loss of job, marriage failure or even prison time after a loss of control as an adult.

Building Self-Esteem

As we have seen, self-control is only half of what is needed to rear a well-adjusted child and adult. The second vital ingredient in *loving authority* is the self-esteem

Well-disciplined children, who are gradually taught self-control from the earliest age, have a foundation laid for a much more successful life. A five-year-old with self-control can sit quietly in class or at services without talking, and can learn much more quickly.

cult assignments with far less complaining, and they do not get caught up in office squabbles with people who may rub them the wrong way. In short, they are more successful in their jobs, they keep their jobs longer—and when it is layoff time, they tend to be the *last* to lose their job, not the *first* to be fired.

Self-control, taught at an early age through firm guidelines that cannot be violated, results in children and adults who have more control over their emotions and irrational behavior. If parents allow children to express rebellion at the earliest age, they lay the foundation for lifelong temper tantrums.

Years ago, when my wife and I were living in San Francisco while I was attending dental school, we learned of a tragic example of the consequences of lack of self-control. One day, the traffic was particularly heavy across the Oakland Bay Bridge. A hurried driver cut in front of another motorist, who in turn passed him and purposely hit the brakes immediately in front of the first driver. They jockeyed back and forth for position until one finally pulled out a gun, pulled up alongside the other driver, and shot him dead on the spot.

that is generated with unconditional love. Real love is unconditional. The Apostle Paul was inspired to write: “Love suffers long and is kind... bears all things.... Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7–8).

“Unconditional love means loving a teenager [or a child of any age], no matter what. No matter what the teenager looks like. No matter what his assets, liabilities and handicaps are. No matter how he acts” (*How to Really Love Your Teenager*, Ross Campbell, M.D, p. 25).

Of course, parents do not always love a child’s behavior, but we do love the child no matter what. God loves us, even though we make our share of mistakes. Christ loved us and died for us, even while we were going the wrong way. “God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

If we make the huge mistake of only loving our children when they please us, we will rear children who never feel that they “measure up.” Every child makes mistakes, and when love is dependent on being “mistake-

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International Corner...

South African Update

by Syd Hull

During the last week of April, I baptized a young married couple. They are fine young people who grew up in the truth, and were very impressed by Mr. & Mrs. Meredith on their recent visit to our country.

I did four programs for Radio Parys that week, and am pleased to report that the station manager has fully recovered from a burst appendix. The doctors all said that he had no hope of recovery and that his recovery is a miracle. He was in and out of intensive care for two weeks. When I saw him, he said that the only reason God healed him was so that he could get our program on the air again!

In May, I hope to visit the Port Elizabeth congregation, and also to visit some new people in the Eastern Cape. We also have a couple from Sasolburg, attending in Johannesburg, who will be baptized shortly. There is no doubt that God is bringing new people into His Church. This trend is a very encouraging sign to all of us!

Some of our co-workers attended Mr. Meredith's Sabbath services in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Two who attended in Cape Town have now asked for baptism!

Can Mr. and Mrs. Meredith visit us again soon?

Canada Update

by Gerald Weston

The work in Canada continues to move forward. Average weekly attendance figures for the

first quarter of 2004 show an increase of some 35 people over the same quarter in 2003. While this number is small, it continues an upward climb of steady growth. Not only is this exciting for the new attendees coming to the truth, but our members are invigorated by new people coming to services with all their enthusiasm and questions. You can feel the rejuvenating impact new people have on a congregation.

Our income topped the \$1 million mark for the first time in 2003, with an increase of 12.4 percent over 2002. Looking at income longer-term, 2003 income was 31.7 percent higher than 2001, and we are already off to a good start in 2004 with a 10.1 percent increase for the first quarter of the year. All of this shows the dedication of our members and co-workers, and demonstrates the growing commitment of new people to the Work. As the scripture says: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). When we see people requesting envelopes, saying they want to donate to the Work, we know that the message is affecting them in the heart.

Public Bible Studies have been scheduled for Vancouver, Edmonton and Kelowna. In each city we will hold one Bible Study on Friday evening, and another on the Sabbath. This way, we can have two opportunities to reach people, and some who cannot attend one may be able to come to the other. We deliberately chose the Sabbath for these Bible Studies because of all the articles in recent

Tomorrow's World magazines, and the number of requests we have had from people wanting to know where there is a congregation they can attend. The last location where we held a Public Bible Study was in Winnipeg, and about 5 percent of those invited responded. We will report on the success of these Public Bible Studies in the next update.

Passover in the Pacific 2004

by Kinnear Penmen

For the Passover and First Day of Unleavened Bread, I had the opportunity to visit our brethren in the island nation of Vanuatu. This was the first time the members in Vanuatu have had a minister with them to celebrate the Passover.

Our members in Vanuatu live on three islands. The largest congregation is on the island of Mallicolo, and most members there live in the village of Orap. Nine of us observed the Passover in the Church's little "tabernacle." One newly baptized member, Noel Meten, kept Passover for the first time. Mr. Meten lives in the village of Benut. The only access to Benut is a two-hour hike over steep, jungle-clad hills. He makes the hike to attend services, which are supervised by local deacon Mr. Jerry Sam, a couple of times a month.

On the Night to Be Much Observed we met in a hall in Orap. The meal consisted of fish, chicken and beef, along with local crops such as yams. In fact, the

first yams of the harvest had been specially dug for the feast. In the local language, the word for “new year” is actually “new yams.” Several families had prepared *lap-lap*—a local staple dish of grated roots, wrapped in banana leaves, baked with hot stones and served with coconut milk. Fifty-seven people attended the Night to Be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread services. I anticipate that there will be several more baptisms in the near future.

Leaving Mallicolo, I flew to Tanna, where we have a few members who are also able to get together on the Sabbath and listen to an audio sermon from Headquarters. On Tanna, there was much evidence of damage caused by a recent cyclone. Many houses and schools had lost their roofs. Trees were down in great numbers, streams were clogged with debris and food crops had been damaged. Our members lost food such as bananas, and were short of some root crops that had also suffered damage. An unusual feature of this past cyclone was the length of time it remained in the area. Most cyclones pass over, doing their damage in just a few hours, but this cyclone remained active in the vicinity for two days.

Preparing to return home to New Zealand, I flew back to Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, on the island of Efate. There, we have just three members. I arranged for our members to meet each Sabbath in a local motel room. They will be able to worship and fellowship together in better surroundings than afforded by schools or public facilities.

In your prayers, please remember our brethren in Vanuatu. They need protection for their homes, their crops and their lives from ravaging tropical storms. Those who live in towns need to be able to find

work, or establish businesses that can support them. Like us all, they need to “be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” in their relatively isolated situation.

Europe and East Africa Update

by Douglas Winnail

Recent months have seen a number of visit requests in Ireland, the United Kingdom and the European Union countries, leading to subsequent visits to Church services. Some making contact with the Living Church of God are new to the truth, while others have had previous experience with other Church of God groups. The spring advertising program in the U.K. and Ireland produced more than 3,400 requests for the booklets *Revelation: The Mystery Unveiled!* and *Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ's Return*. In late March, I was able to conduct the first LCG wedding in Holland—at a historic castle in Roon. Plans are progressing well for the Feast of Tabernacles in Europe this year, which will be held again in Llandudno, North Wales and in Evian, France.

The Work in East Africa also continues to grow. Mr. Ernest Owino recently responded to a visit request from a group of 40 people who live in the area north of Nairobi. In January, I spent nine days visiting congregations and groups in Kenya with Mr. Owino. We spoke to and conducted Bible Studies for six different groups: Oyugis, Opoya, Got Kajowi, and Ndaiwa (in western Kenya), Nairobi, and Sulton Hamud (east of Nairobi). Many in attendance asked basic questions about Church history and doctrine. We also viewed several potential sites for the 2004 Feast of Tabernacles in western

Kenya, and selected one near Lake Victoria. The brethren in Kenya would welcome 20 or so visitors from abroad who would like to keep the Feast in East Africa.


Philippines Update

by Rod McNair

Growth in the Work in the Philippines was good for the year of 2003. Income picked up in the last few months of 2003, with preliminary figures showing an 11.6 percent increase in income, with expenses held to a 9.6 percent increase.

As of January 1, 2004, the mailing list for the *Tomorrow's World* magazine stands at 1,719. In 2003, 890 pieces of mail were processed by the Manila office, with 1,462 *Bible Study Course* lessons and 1,762 booklets also mailed. One of the exciting trends developing is the growth of Internet responses. There were 257 requests for the *Tomorrow's World* magazine in 2003. Since August, 36 percent of requests came from people who found out about the magazine through the Internet.

On December 6, 2003, our ministers in Mindanao conducted a special Bible study for 23 people who requested a visit in Bala-oro, Damulog. Bala-oro, while only 45 kilometers from Don Carlos (where we already have a congregation), is difficult to reach in the rainy season because of the muddy roads.

Plans are being made to go on a new radio station in Bataan, Luzon, through one of our prospective members who works at the station. The small station covers five municipalities and will only charge the cost of running the electricity—about \$4 per program! With this station, the number of radio stations around the Philippines will total five, along with nine local access television stations. 

Feast of Tabernacles 2004

The 2004 Feast of Tabernacles will begin with an opening night service on Wednesday evening, September 29. The Last Great Day this year is on Thursday, October 7.

All brethren who receive the *Living Church News* should also be receiving the *Festival Planner 2004*, which was mailed during the week of May 10. For those of you who may not yet have received your copy, this brief overview is being provided.

In 2004, the Living Church of God will have nine sites in the United States, three in Canada, one in Mexico, one in Great Britain and one in France, as well as sites throughout Australasia, Africa, and Central and South America. The *Festival Planner 2004* highlights the sites where transfers are encouraged; if you are aware of another site that it does not mention, and wish to ask for a transfer, please contact Headquarters (or send e-mail to festival@cogl.org) before sending in your Pre-Registration/Transfer Request Form.

For the first time since the Living Church of God began, brethren in the United States and Canada have been assigned to the various Feast sites. When you receive your *Festival Planner 2004* in the mail, it should include a Pre-Registration/Transfer Request Form indicating your assigned Feast site, and an enclosed postage-paid envelope. Please return that form, as soon as possible, *even if you plan to attend your assigned site*. Transfer requests will be processed as quickly as possible, and if you return your Pre-Registration/Transfer Request Form promptly you can expect to be notified in ample time to make your travel and housing arrangements. At all but a few sites, the Festival Office expects to be able to approve transfers generously, to most who request them, but we need to know the numbers transferring in and out of the various sites so that we can plan accordingly. Please do not assume that you can just “show up” at a site without pre-registering; site coordinators are counting on the pre-registration information to help them make proper arrangements for those who intend to come. *If you plan to transfer outside the U.S. or Canada, we still need you to send your Pre-Registration/Transfer Request Form to Headquarters*. This form *replaces* the “hand count” that the Church has conducted in June for the past few years.

The basic rule is “one person out, one person in,” but a few sites (such as Hawaii) have too few people assigned, and transferring in should not be a problem. Since Hawaii has ample room for all who wish to attend, and since airfares are particularly volatile, Hawaii-bound

Feastgoers may wish to “risk” making airline reservations even before receiving formal approval. Even so, in case of some exceptional circumstance, we urge you to be aware of any cancellation penalties that might apply if your plans must change at the last minute.

Feastgoers planning to attend somewhere other than Hawaii are urged not to finalize their housing and travel arrangements until they have received notice that their transfer has been approved. The Festival Office will do its best to process each request quickly, but the sooner we receive your Pre-Registration/Transfer Request Form, the faster we will be able to respond.

If you would like to volunteer for service at the Feast, please complete the Festival Volunteer Form on the back of the Pre-Registration/Transfer Request Form. A copy of your form will be sent to the appropriate site coordinator, who will contact you regarding specific service opportunities.

Lessons Learned

Before last year's Feast of Tabernacles, the Festival Office encountered a very scary situation. We had planned for approximately 800 brethren to attend the site at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and in a pinch the hall could have crowded 1,000 of us in, though uncomfortably. But when the hand-count numbers from the congregations were reported to us, nearly 1,500 had indicated this new site as their intended destination!

Thankfully, once people were told of this potential overcrowding, many helpfully chose to attend another site, and a potential disaster was averted. The Festival Office “learned its lesson,” though, and recognized that Church membership has grown to the point that we must plan to avoid such problems in the future. We do not want to face the situation where so many members show up for a site that we cannot accommodate them.

As a result, we decided to return to a practice that has served the Church well in the past. As you will see from the maps on page 17, each state of the United States and each Canadian province has been assigned to a particular site. Combined with a generous transfer policy, this arrangement should balance the needs and desires of almost everyone, while helping to ensure that adequate space is available for all who attend the Feast.

God's people are noted for their eagerness to be helpful, to cooperate and to serve. The Festival Office recognizes that a few may be inconvenienced by this new procedure, but we are grateful for the growth that has

prompted it. We have all been praying and fasting, seeking growth in God’s Church—both in the number of laborers who will join with us (Matthew 9:38) and in our individual growth and conversion. Please pray with us that we will be better able to serve everyone decently and

in order (1 Corinthians 14:40) as these new procedures are implemented. Thank you all for your help in making the 2004 Feast of Tabernacles a spiritual and physical success.

—Don Davis

2004 FEAST SITES

IN THE UNITED STATES:

- Prescott, AZ
(AZ, NM, UT, southern CA)
- Squaw Valley, CA
(NV, OR, WA, northern CA)
- Panama City Beach, FL
(AL, FL, MS, TN)
- Kauai, HI (AK, HI)
- Lake of the Ozarks, MO
(AR, IA, IL, IN, KS, MO, WI)
- Poconos, PA
(CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, WV)
- Myrtle Beach, SC
(GA, KY, NC, SC, VA)
- Rapid City, SD
(U.S.: CO, ID, MN, MT, NB, ND, SD, WY; Canada: MB)
- Corpus Christi, TX
(LA, OK, TX)

IN CANADA:

- Cranbrook, BC
(AB, BC, NT, SK, YT)
- Summerside, PEI
(NB, NL, NS, PE)
- Sherbrooke, QC
(NU, ON, QC)

AROUND THE WORLD:

- Evian, France
- Llandudno, Wales,
United Kingdom
- Bateman’s Bay, NSW,
Australia
- Taupo, New Zealand
- Port Vila, Vanuatu
- Homa Bay, Kenya
- Huatusco, Mexico
- Valle Grande, Argentina
- Negril, Jamaica
- Mayaro, Trinidad & Tobago
- Christ Church, Barbados
- Georgetown, Guyana
- Antigua, Guatemala
- Port Dickson, Malaysia
- Glentana, South Africa



Called to Endure

(continued from page 3)

become cynical or lose faith. While it is absolutely true that the *exact dates* for which Mr. Armstrong and many of us “hoped” were sometimes off by a number of years, it is vital to fully remember that the Big Picture of prophecy—which Mr. Armstrong gave us—was *right on track!* God’s prophecies of national greatness for the American and British-descended peoples beginning in Genesis 12, the specific statements about us being given the “gates of our enemies” and so many other *specific* prophecies are vital to remember, understand and appreciate.

For, now, those national blessings *are indeed* being taken away. One by one, the great “sea gates” God gave us are being taken away. Of all the major sea gates, *only* the Strait of Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands are still in the hands of the House of Israel. The Argentineans are still crying out for the return of the Falklands, and Spain is constantly trying to take over the Rock of Gibraltar! It may not be too many more years before **all** of these gates have slipped from the control of the peoples of Israel!

The unique understanding Christ gave Mr. Armstrong—of the rise of the Beast Power in Europe with the “woman” riding the Beast (Revelation 17:3)—is an understanding that *very few*, if any, other groups share, unless they were taught this by Mr. Armstrong. Yet all these events he explained over the years *are now happening!* As Mr. Armstrong predicted, the “Russian boot” was indeed removed from the communist-controlled nations of Eastern Europe, so the Eastern “leg” of the Beast (described in Daniel 2) is now able to rise. The events of 1989–1990 shocked even most top news analysts, who had *no idea* that

such a collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe could or would occur. But God’s Apostle *did* understand and predict those events years in advance, before he died.

And now, as our British-descended and American peoples increasingly *turn away* from the true God and “**despise**” His statutes and laws, the prophecies of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are truly *beginning to occur* right before our eyes! Our national “pride” and “power” are

former “experts” on biblical prophecy and chronology *agreed* on at least one point: that the 6,000 years of man’s human society under Satan’s influence could last 20 to 30 years *beyond 2000AD*, and *still* be within God’s timetable.

“Why?” you might ask.

Because, as nearly all chronologists acknowledge, their chronologies are often determined by the “accession years” of the kings of Judah. If the Bible does not give the *exact part*

If each of us learns to *walk with God* every day, if we deeply study His Word and “feed” on Christ and *pour out our hearts* to Him each day of our lives, we will succeed in “enduring to the end.”

being broken even as I write! So the scoffers and cynics will not have too many more years to sneer and laugh at the specific prophecies, given in God’s Word, affecting the **major** nations of this earth!

Dear brethren, as these events unfold it will be *exciting* to those of us who understand. It will be encouraging, and it *should build our faith*. But it will **not** be “fun stuff.” Rather, it will be a *long* and *slow* process of national humiliation—lasting perhaps some five to 25 years before the Great Tribulation begins. As these events unfold, it will hurt us to see many of our unconverted friends and relatives suffer. We and our families, too, may suffer, even if God spares us from directly experiencing the Great Tribulation. Remember, God *does* allow many events in our lives to take their natural course. Yes, He is *especially merciful* to His own people, but we have *never* been spared from the normal process of growing old and dying. We may see more and more of our brethren and other loved ones die.

It may be helpful for me to point out, again, that **all** of the Church’s

of the year during which one king succeeded another, the timing of the 6,000 years before God’s millennial Sabbath might vary 20 to 30 years *either way* over a period of several thousand years. So do **not assume** that God’s 7,000-year plan is something to forget about or laugh at. Although that is not a “salvational” doctrine of the Church, it does seem to be revealed as God’s plan and purpose—and we will probably yet see that it *did work out exactly* according to God’s timetable, and according to the 7,000-year plan He has had in mind from the beginning.

So, if another five to 15 more years go by before the Great Tribulation begins, we will need to learn to *focus* on the **Big Picture!** We will need to learn to look at world events from **God’s** perspective, **not** trying to hold Him to some exact timetable of which we ourselves are not sure. For, as we have seen, the truly **major** events predicted by this Work—which began through Mr. Armstrong and is being carried on by us—*have been* and *are* being fulfilled! As Paul warned the older brethren of his day: “Therefore do

not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 'For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.' But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:35–39).

Brethren, we all certainly *do* "have need of **endurance**." As we are encouraged to see that God is intervening as He promised, this should increase our faith. And as Paul said: "The just shall *live by faith*." If each of us learns to *walk with God* every day, if we deeply **study** His Word and "feed" on Christ and *pour out our hearts* to Him each day of our lives, we will succeed in "enduring to the end."

Only through a continuing close contact and "fellowship" with God

will we be enabled to "hang in there" until the end. *Only* through genuine *humility*—**not** seeking our own will, but **God's**—can we make it to the end. And remember, brethren—God's Word tells us that the "overcomers" are to inherit God's Kingdom. So each of us must determine not merely to "hang in there" but to be a *conqueror*—as some translators express it—a true **overcomer** so we can *be worthy* of the magnificent promises that God offers us.

Truly **we are called now** to complete the final Work of God's Church in this age, under the leadership of the living Jesus Christ. *This is an honor!* **We are called now** to develop the mind of Christ and the character of God, and so be "fit" to **rule** under Jesus Christ and assist Him in straightening out *this entire earth!* We must put this magnificent calling at the very *forefront* of our minds. As God's Word tells us: "If then you were raised with Christ, *seek those*

things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. *Set your mind on things above*, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:1–4).

The transcendent *glory* that God promises each of us will make the trials and tests of this present time seem like nothing, when all is said and done. So be *encouraged!* Determine to *keep on* and endure until the end in your walk with God! Our God will **never** leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Let us make sure that we do **not** ever leave or forsake Him because we have become "sluggish" or ungrateful, or filled with self-will! As the final years of this Work get underway, may God protect, guide and encourage all of us to continue walking with Him and with Jesus both now and forever. LCN

"Thy Kingdom Come"

(continued from page 6)

remember that the good news of Jesus Christ's return to establish the kingdom of God on this earth was and is the *primary focus* of the gospel. Jesus Christ will establish a world-ruling government that will *resolve* the problems we face on this earth. The coming of the kingdom is the *only real hope* for ending the suffering and deception that plague human societies around the world.

Second, we need to ask God to help us *develop real compassion and concern* for the plight of human beings wherever they are—whether struggling to survive in less-developed countries or materially satiated into complacency in the world's affluent nations. Do your biggest worries involve decorating your house, deciding on the shape of your swimming pool or wondering whether God will provide you with a better job or nicer clothes? If so, you might want to spend some time meditating on *how little* many other people have, and how difficult life is for millions around the world. Think about how *you* would feel in the shoes of the poverty-stricken who struggle daily to survive. Think of parents who watch their children die of preventable diseases—and of those who do

not understand the gospel of the kingdom, and thus lack the hope that you have—and you will begin to pray more fervently for the kingdom to come.

Third, learn about the major problems confronting human beings today, and prepare to solve those problems. Read books about the problems, and understand their causes. Learn about sound principles of health, how to prevent major diseases and how to heal damage to the environment. Identify factors that contribute to happy marriages and families. Collect useful information about child rearing and what comprises a sound basis for education. Study your Bible, and learn which biblical principles can be applied to prevent or relieve problems that are causing people to suffer. *Discuss* these situations with God in your prayers, and *express* your desire to have a part in changing the circumstances that are hurting other people. Make the most of the opportunity that God has given you to know the true gospel, and prepare to serve God and your fellow human beings in the coming kingdom of God (see Ephesians 5:8–21). As you begin to "lay down your life" preparing to serve others, you will find that problems, solutions and the need for the kingdom of God will become much more real to you—and you will find yourself praying more fervently, "Thy kingdom come." LCN

Child Rearing: Self-Esteem or Self-Control?*(continued from page 13)*

free,” they will forever feel like incompetent failures. In the same way, if God only loved us when we were praying, fasting, studying the Bible or serving someone else, we would be unloved most of the time.

Similarly, as adults, if our spouse only loves us when we are doing something pleasing, such as bringing a gift, cooking a nice meal or giving a back rub, we will feel unloved more often than not, and our relationship will suffer. ***Love must be unconditional!***

Scripture admonishes us: “Fathers, do not provoke your children [to anger], lest they be discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). Children need to feel loved, and not just feel corrected. If our only communication with our children is correction, it will not take long for them to

physical contact tends to decrease more and more. Eventually, physical contact in many families occurs only when it is deemed absolutely necessary. At any age, a hand on the shoulder, a pat on the back and an occasional hug are always possible. Appropriate physical contact is a life-long value between parents and children. While children may not appreciate public demonstrations of affection, sincere expressions of approval and encouragement that begin in the early years will still be appreciated in the teenage years.

Undivided attention is also vital. Undivided “focused attention means giving your teenager [or child of any age] full, undivided attention in such a way that he feels truly loved, that he knows he is so valuable in his own right that he warrants your watchfulness, appreciation, and uncompromising regard” (Campbell, p. 31).

My wife has always made this a priority with our children. She has often followed our children into their

Children who receive unconditional love, and are taught obedience through *loving authority*, have the greatest likelihood of success in life. Authority without unconditional love invariably brings anger and rebellion.

become discouraged and feel like an “inadequate unloved failure”—a consequence of the authoritarian style of child rearing.

Many of us parents really *do* love our children, but have not adequately communicated this to them. Children care more about how we act toward them, than about what we say or what we feel inside. So how can we show love to them in ways that they can readily understand and appreciate?

One vital tool is *eye contact*. Looking a child in the eyes in a loving manner says, loud and clear: “I value you; you are important to me.” Have you ever felt really close to anyone who would not maintain eye contact with you? Of course not! An inability to maintain eye contact comes across as aloofness and lack of caring. For children’s emotional well-being, they need eye contact from their parents. Children seem to look deeply into others’ eyes, seeing their degree of sincerity and genuineness.

Physical contact is another needed tool for showing love to children. Notice how Christ interacted with young children: “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me...’ And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them” (Mark 10:13–14, 16).

Almost everyone knows that babies need physical contact to develop properly. But as children enter the teen years,

bedrooms and said, “I want to know what is bothering you. I can tell something is wrong, and I’m going to stay here till you are ready to talk.” Different personality types will respond differently, but all—when they see their parents’ love and concern for their well-being—***will*** appreciate the individual attention, and the lines of communication will open.

How valuable this has been, time and again, as her actions have spoken loud and clear: “Your well-being is more important than my time.” This type of unconditional love lays the foundation for a loving relationship with our spiritual parent, God the Father.

So, back to the question: Which is more important in child rearing: self-esteem or self-control? ***Both*** are absolutely ***vital!*** A child who feels unloved will not prosper, and a child who is never taught self-control will be severely limited in life: in school, in college, on the job, in marriage—and, spiritually, with God.

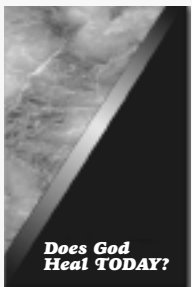
Children who receive unconditional love, and are taught obedience through ***loving authority***, have the greatest likelihood of success in life. Authority without unconditional love invariably brings anger and rebellion. When the proper balance is applied, God’s summary of obedience and self-discipline can be realized: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right... And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training [nurture] and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1, 4). LCN

Ministerial Conference 2004



More than 200 Living Church of God ministers and wives gathered in Charlotte, North Carolina, from March 1–3, at the Matthews Community Center (pictured above). Elders and their wives heard presentations by Presiding Evangelist Roderick C. Meredith and the other Headquarters evangelists, experiencing many opportunities for discussion and fellowship. Headquarters staff hosted visiting ministers for a Monday evening “open house,” which gave many visiting ministers their first opportunity to see the new facility, and to discuss the Work with Headquarters staff. On a lighter note, a Tuesday evening banquet at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel provided an enjoyable opportunity for elders and their wives to get to know each other better in a relaxed and festive setting. Several ministers told Mr. Meredith that it was the “best conference they had ever attended.” There was a widespread feeling that God was guiding everything, and pouring out His special blessings on all who attended.

After the main conference, regional pastors held a one-day conference at Headquarters on March 4. International coordinators held a one-day conference at Headquarters on March 5. Council of Elders members had met during the previous week, dodging snow and ice for meetings from February 26–29.



New Booklet!

Mr. Meredith's latest booklet, *Does God Heal TODAY?*, will be offered in his “semi-annual letter” to *Tomorrow's World* subscribers, which will be mailed during the month of May.

Church members need not send in a card or otherwise request the booklet; it will be sent to all Living Church of God member households. If you receive the *Living Church News*, you will also receive a copy of the booklet.

In Loving Memory



Carl Eugene McNair died on April 14, after a brief bout with cancer. He was 66 years old. Mr. McNair was born in August 1937, in Camp, Arkansas, one of eight children born to Joseph S. and Tressie E. McNair. He was baptized at the Feast of Tabernacles in 1954, and entered Ambassador College in 1956. Mr. McNair

took part in baptizing tours in the summers of 1960 and 1961, and graduated from Ambassador College in 1961 with a B.A. in Theology and Communications. He was ordained a preaching elder in 1961.

His first ministerial assignment after graduation was to the congregations in Memphis, Tennessee and Little Rock, Arkansas. In 1969 he became the pastor of the St. Louis, Missouri and Belleville, Illinois congregations. In 1970 he moved to Atlanta, Georgia as a pastor and district supervisor. In 1975, he became the area pastor for Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he served until 1984. After spending four years as area pastor in Tucson, Arizona, he moved to Helena, Montana in 1988, where he served as area pastor until December 1993. In January 1994 he moved to southern California, becoming the first Director of Church Administration for the Global Church of God, and was ordained an evangelist in the spring of 1994. He served at GCG headquarters until July 1997, when he returned to Helena to serve as regional pastor for the northwestern United States. In November 1998, he again came to southern California, to serve as the first Director of Church Administration for the Living Church of God, a post he held until March 2003, when he once again returned to Helena—this time to serve as regional pastor for the western U.S.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 42 years, the former Dorothy Jean Ochs, whom he married on September 17, 1961. He is also survived by his sisters Vivian (Joe) Parsons and Peggy (Jack) Batterton, brothers Marion (DeLoyce) McNair, Raymond (Eve) McNair and Herbert Burk (Billie Sue) McNair, by his five children, Karla (Philip) Steagall, Jonathan (Christy) McNair, Peter (Mique) McNair, Kathryn (Thomas) Greider and Roderick (Dana) McNair, and by 18 grandchildren. His sons Jonathan and Roderick currently serve in the ministry of the Living Church of God. He was preceded in death by his brother Archie and sister Margie.

Mr. Roderick C. Meredith conducted the funeral service on April 25 in Salem, Arkansas. More than 300 came to pay their respects to Mr. McNair, a man who was deeply loved and respected by those who knew him. He was truly a student of life, with a deep love of learning. He loved the outdoors, and fished and hunted all his life. Above all, he loved God's way, and was devoted to his wife, children and grandchildren. His example of outflowing love and concern set an example for all to follow. In his words and deeds, he exemplified the principles of "servant leadership," inspiring and encouraging many in their Christian growth. Please see the article on page 1 of this issue, "A Mighty Oak Has Fallen..." for Mr. Meredith's reflections on Mr. McNair's life of dedicated service.

Bernardino Acero, a deacon in the Bogabongan church in Mindanao, Philippines, died on January 28. He was 63 years old. He became a member of the Church of God, Seventh Day in 1957, and later the Radio Church of God. He was a jolly person and well-loved by the brethren. He was buried on February 8, in Bogabongan, Leon Postigo, Zamboanga del Norte. He is survived by his wife, children and grandchildren.

Eustiquio (Tex) S. Benitez, pastor of eight congregations in Mindanao, Philippines, died on February 12. He was 68 years old. Mr. Benitez was baptized in 1955 in the Church of God, Seventh Day, and later came into the Radio Church of God. He was well-loved and respected by the brethren for more than 34 years in the ministry, and is survived by his wife, children and grandchildren. Mr. Benitez was buried on February 22 in Maranding, Lala, Lanao del Norte.

Gorgonio Dagami de Guia died of sudden cardiac arrest in Tacloban City, Philippines, on March 30. He was 66 years old. Mr. de Guia was baptized in the Church of God in 1982, and was serving as church pastor in the Visayas upon his death. He is survived by his wife Ramona Mengote de Guia, eight children, and 21 grandchildren. He was laid to rest April 8 in Talib, Catbalogan, Western Samar (his home place); funeral services were conducted by Felipe Casing.

Byron Hartman, a deacon and longtime member of God's Church, died of bone cancer on April 29. He was predeceased five years ago by his wife Lavelle, also a longtime Church member. Mr. Hartman is survived by his children Kurt and Glen Hartman and Wanda Simmons, and by grandchildren Brandon Hartman, Kyle Hartman, Byron Sanchez and Joe Sanchez. The funeral service on May 3 was conducted by Mr. Mark Mendiola.

Roberta Deloris Cooper died on August 19, 2003. She was 88 years old. A member of God's Church for many years, she attended the El Dorado, Arkansas congregation of the Living Church of God with her husband of 54 years, Grover Cooper. In addition to her husband, she is also survived by her aunt Edith Flanagan, her cousins Dorothy Frazer and Vera (Jesse) Hargrove, her brother-in-law Samuel (Marva) Cooper, her sisters-in-law Pauline Johnson and Heidi (John) Dock, and many grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. One step-son preceded her in death.

Alice Rosetta Pruett, member of the Rolla, Missouri Living Church of God congregation, died on October 5, 2003. She was 86 years old, and had suffered from deteriorating health for several years. A member of God's Church since 1978, Mrs. Pruett loved people, and often greeted her friends with a big smile and a hug. For years she worked in a nursing home caring for the infirm—a job she loved. She will be fondly remembered and missed by her friends and family in the Church and the community. She is survived by her daughters Karen (Gary) Davis and Barbara (Nathan) Abbott. The Davises attend LCG services in Rolla. She

is also survived by two sons, 17 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, four great-great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and other extended family members and friends.

James Michael Sena of Farmington, New Mexico, died suddenly on April 18, at the age of 44. Jim had been a faithful baptized member of God's Church for more than 20 years. He demonstrated his dedication by regularly making the six-hour round-trip drive to his local congregation in Albuquerque. Recently, Jim was helping to serve the Monument Valley, Utah video group in various capacities.

Known as a gregarious and energetic person, Jim made many friends wherever he went. He had a great love for almost all things with engines—especially helicopters and motorcycles. Last year, Jim realized a life-long dream by starting his own business to develop and manufacture many of his mechanical inventions.

Jim is survived by his parents, Augustine and Shirley Sena; his former wife, Linda; his children, Sabrina, James Jr., Raymond and Veronica and granddaughter Aviendha, all of Farmington; and three brothers, Lyle of Mesa, Arizona, Wayne of Heriman, Utah and Phil, an LCG minister in Denver, Colorado.

Conscientious Objector Status for Young Adults

United States law currently requires all males to register with the Selective Service Administration within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Keeping in mind the biblical guidelines of Romans 13:1–2, the Church advises its young men to comply with this requirement, and to do so retroactively if they have previously failed to do so.

At present, there is no draft. However, if a draft is reinstated, current regulations will give conscientious objectors as little as nine days to document their status if they have not already done so. As a result, it would be wise to begin documenting your conscientious objection now, so that if the military reviews your claim it will already be established, and not be seen as the hasty action of someone simply afraid to fight.

Current Selective Service regulations apply only to men; however, it may also be wise for young women to document their conscientious objector status as soon as possible, so that they will be ready in the event that the draft is extended to women.

Our *Official Statement of Fundamental Beliefs* teaches that a true Christian will be a conscientious objector to military service. If you are a young adult in the Living Church of God, and would like more information about establishing conscientious objector status, please write to the following address for an information packet:

Living Church of God
Attn: Office of Legal Affairs
2301 Crown Centre Drive
Charlotte, NC 28227

If you prefer, you may send your request via e-mail to legal@cogl.org, or phone (704) 844-1960, extension 228.

Bible Study:

“Proverbs 6:6”

By Charles E. Bryce

Proverbs 6:6 is an admonition to all of us regarding our work ethic, and regarding being diligent. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest” (Proverbs 6:6, KJV)

In other words, God tells us that we are to learn from whatever and whichever and wherever we can. In this case, we can learn from the little ant. If you have ever taken the time to observe ants in an anthill or in a colony, you will see that they are very industrious; they are very busy. They are little creatures that plan ahead and make provisions for the future. It is just built into them. It is in their instinct. God Himself is the One who designed the ant. God Himself is the One who put into the ant this approach to being busy, providing for the needs of the ant colony, being busy and industrious, planning ahead, not waiting until the last minute, not putting it off, not procrastinating, and always carrying out responsibilities when they need to be carried out.

Even a little ant, or an ant colony, does that. As you watch ants going along one behind the other, carrying pieces of leaf or grass or other things, they just work and work while they *can* work. They do not delay until the time when they can no longer get out and work. They work while they can so that, when the time comes that they cannot gather what they need, they need not worry; they have already done it at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.

The lesson is that we need to do the same. We need to avoid this age-old problem of procrastination, of laziness, of putting things off—of waiting for somebody else to do it for us. Rather, we need to have an attitude of diligence. We need to stay busy. We need to be planning ahead. We need to take stock of our family needs—what we need for the coming winter, or the trip we are going to take, or the education of our children, or clothing costs and budgets for the coming year or for needs for repair in the house, etc. And we need to go ahead and start making provisions. We need to go ahead and start making arrangements. We need to go ahead and start preparing, and gathering what we need in order to get those things done. The basic lesson here is: *Do not procrastinate*. It is not that we should be workaholics—that is not what God is saying. He wants us to practice moderation in all aspects of our lives. The point He is making here is that we should not procrastinate; we should stay engaged, stay busy, be a good provider, work while we can. “Make hay while the sun shines,” so to speak. Do not delay bringing the hay in until it starts raining and you cannot bring it in. If you go ahead and make hay while the sun shines, then when it starts raining the hay is already in the barn. That is the principle, whether we are on the farm or whether we are working in the factory or whether we are working in the home. Do not delay doing what needs to be done while you can do it. Do not delay acquiring what needs to be acquired while you have a means to acquire it.

The above is an excerpt from Mr. Bryce’s online Bible Study audio series on the book of Proverbs. A new installment is available each week at the www.lcg.org Web site.