

# Living Church News

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## Moving Forward to the Kingdom

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Greetings from Charlotte! My wife and I returned from the Feast of Tabernacles tired, but happy. We visited fine Feast sites in Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania; Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and Panama City, Florida. Everywhere, we encountered hundreds of very enthusiastic and very dedicated brethren who are behind this Work of the living Christ, and filled with a sense of zeal and urgency to “get out the Message” to a dying world.

Here are some typical comments from coordinators at the various Feast sites: “Feastgoers are enjoying a foretaste of fellowship and the instruction of Tomorrow’s World!.... We rejoice with all of you, knowing that together we are worshiping the God who soon will send His Son to rule the earth!”

“Enthusiastic members feasted on inspiring messages about distinguishing between holy and unholy lives, true freedom through total submission to God and the confidence we need to have in the soon-coming return of Jesus Christ. These messages are helping us learn to rule with Christ, and renewing our zeal to finish this end-time Work.” “Messages have focused on a sense of urgency, our need for salvation, and optimism for the future.”

Those quotes give a sense of the feelings of the brethren my wife and I encountered everywhere—and that most of our ministers report from all the Feast sites around the world. We, in the Living Church of God, realize that we are finally near the end of this world’s society and truly need to become stirred up and “on fire” in finishing the Work of God. This mixed-up, confused world *desperately needs* the Truth we have to give. So it is a wonderful opportunity we have to serve Jesus Christ at this most exciting time in the history of the world.

We had fine Feast attendance everywhere. Growth is coming in a number of areas across the United States, Canada, Central and South America—as well as new groups coming with us in India and Africa. As prophetic events increasingly shake people’s confidence in this present society, additional thousands will begin to act on the Truth and want to be a part of God’s Church. We need to *pray fervently* for them and ask that God will guide us and help us to do *our part* in reaching these people—humbly *welcoming them* when they come into our fellowship—loving and encouraging them in every way we can.

Now, as I have mentioned before, we are in the process of greatly boosting the impact of this Work over the Internet. I have asked the director of

the *Tomorrow's World* television program, Mr. Steve Stiffler, to shoulder the responsibility of Internet Coordinator, as well as to continue to direct the telecast. Since the "Industrial" television (the various Church sermons, Feast sermons, etc.) is now handled by others, Mr. Stiffler feels that he will have at least half or more of his time to devote to this effort. Additionally, I and a number of others on our Headquarters team are going to devote *more funds* and *more effort* to this vital project. As you know, we will reach an entirely different spectrum of people through the Internet than we may have been reaching before—and open up unlimited possibilities in communist China, India and elsewhere. Please join us in *praying fervently* about this project!

Also, we have recently been informed by our station representative, Mr. Dick Janik, of a good potential for going on television in the United Kingdom! With a combined population of some 60 million in the British Isles, this has huge potential! Soon we will be meeting with Mr. Janik and the individuals involved in this project. We will be praying that God will guide it for good, so that we can finally reach the "Mother Country" of the English-speaking world with a kind of power that has never before been accomplished in modern times. Again, your fervent prayers will be greatly appreciated.

Just days after we returned from the Feast, my wife and I traveled to Gladewater, Texas, for the funeral services of Dr. Lynn Torrance, who died in September at age 86. Dr. Torrance lived a long, eventful and very fruitful life. He died peacefully in his own bed at a ripe old age—living nearly 17 years longer than did King David 3,000 years ago.

We can be grateful for the life, the service and the *example* of Dr. Torrance. As so many of you in the South and areas of the Midwest know, Dr. and Mrs. Torrance traveled regularly to visit various churches and to encourage and inspire the brethren, even though he was an octogenarian. His dedicated, faithful wife did the driving for him and has always been a warm and encouraging individual to God's people, as was Dr. Torrance himself.

Although I am not able—at my own age and with the responsibilities I carry—to attend *everyone's* funeral, I was grateful to be able to be there for the funeral of Dr. Torrance. For I knew him back in 1953, when he first came into God's Work. I was, temporarily, the "acting" Superintendent of Imperial Schools, and he was the Principal. In many different situations, I was able to work with Dr. Torrance through more than 50 years, and found him a most dedicated and inspiring individual.

Many of you may have heard Dr. Torrance tell of his *remarkable* experiences in a Japanese prison ship and later a Japanese concentration camp at the end of World War II. As he often told his students, when you are virtually suffocating down in the hold of a prison ship, you are not thinking about "pretty girls and good times!" Your first need—and *main interest*—is air! Then, you begin to realize the need for *food*. Later, you may think about your clothing, your appearance and other matters. But the things we Americans often think we

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# The End Is Near

## Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

**B**rethren, I *urgently* want you to know that—along with most of our leadership—I now feel that the very **end** of this present age is coming *even more quickly* than we have emphasized in recent years. As a Church, we need to **focus** on this and carefully *think through* what we all need to be doing!

What if you *knew* that Jesus Christ would come in **less** than 14 years—and that the three-and-a-half year Great Tribulation would begin just nine years from now? And what if you also *knew* that the coming Roman ruler or “Beast” would *already* be “in charge” and would make a treaty with the state of Israel in **less than** six years? That would be getting pretty close to our time—**now!**

*Think carefully!*

If all of the above were the case, then you would realize that **enormous** prophetic events would have to take place even *before* this final dictator could take office and make such a treaty. For this would clearly indicate that the United States would no longer be the dominant power in world affairs—calling the tune in the Middle East and other parts of the world. And all of this would clearly indicate that *traumatic events* would begin to affect the American, the Canadian and British-descended peoples in even the next two to five years! For these prophesied punishments would *greatly weaken* our

Anglo-American alliance and the prosperity and power we have together exercised for so many generations. The prophesied drought, famine, disease epidemics and the “**great earthquakes**” Jesus directly predicted (Luke 21:11) would probably have already started affecting our peoples. Also, a number of scholars indicate that the term “fearful sights” mentioned in the above verse may also be translated “terrors”—probably indicating the increased **terrorism** we are now beginning to experience!

Counting back *seven years* from the Feast of Trumpets 2017 brings us to Feast time in the year 2010—*less than six years* from now. *If* there is to be a seven-year treaty between the coming Beast and the state of Israel, allowing the Jews to once again offer sacrifices on the Temple Mount, that treaty could come very soon—indicating the scenario I have outlined above.

Jesus warns us to watch for, and to *understand* the meaning of, the coming “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel the prophet”

## What if you *knew* that Jesus Christ would come in less than 14 years—and that the three-and-a-half year Great Tribulation would begin just nine years from now?

Amos’ *dual* prophecy of alternating drought and flooding—possibly induced by heavy storms or **hurricanes**—would also have served to greatly weaken our nations. And the “fire” of God’s wrath on the “House of Joseph” predicted in Amos 5:6 and elsewhere may turn out to be more literal than figurative—indicating the forest fires and wildfires that are *even now* devouring thousands of acres in the American west, parts of Australia and other Israelitish nations.

By the time you read this, most of you will have *already* heard one or both of my prophecy sermons indicating that the end of mankind’s first 6,000 years could possibly occur at—or very close to—the year 2017.

(Matthew 24:15). Jesus said that this “abomination” will stand “in the holy place.” *Next?* “For *then* will be **Great Tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (v. 21).

God’s servant Daniel describes a similar “abomination of desolation” set up by Antiochus Epiphanes in about 170BC (Daniel 11:31). This was undoubtedly a type or “forerunner” of the *final* “abomination” that Jesus Christ clearly predicted to occur in *our time*—at the very end of this age. Antiochus Epiphanes stopped the “daily sacrifice,” as the coming Roman prince will also do.

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# The Blessings of Church Government

By Charles E. Bryce

**W**hat is the right approach to Church government? Some in God's Church do not want any Church government, or want very little. You can read through the book of Judges and you will see what happens when there is no real leadership and no government among God's people. That has been tried many times, with anarchy as the result. Should we all just do what is right in our own eyes (Judges 21:25)?

Other people in the Church want too much government. They do not want to think for themselves. They do not want to be responsible for their actions, or to make their own decisions. That is the other extreme. What should we think about that approach? God said to Israel, and to us: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

God has given us free moral agency. We build character and develop responsibility, understanding and knowledge—in short, we develop as Christians—when we are required to get the facts and make decisions with an understanding of their consequences, good and bad. God has set it up that way.

Too much government turns into dictatorship. Too little government turns into anarchy. What is the balance? The form of government that works, both in the Church and elsewhere, is from God as found in His word. For some, because of unpleasant experiences, when they hear "Church government," a kind of "tensing up" takes place. That reflects a misunderstanding of Church government from God's word. When we really understand God's form of government, we can appreciate it as a blessing.

What is our attitude toward any form of government, whether we are exercising the government or whether we are under the government?

It is not humanly natural to appreciate and to cooperate with even proper government. We have to overcome resentment toward it. Lucifer, along with one-third of the angels, had this problem. They were in the presence of a magnificent, perfect, all-powerful Being—God—yet they came to despise His authority. They considered His authority restrictive and oppressive. It "cramped their style." If we let our guard down, our human nature begins to kick in, and we can reach a point where we despise government and authority from any direction, and also from anybody. God does not take that kind of attitude lightly: "The LORD

knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (2 Peter 2:9–10, KJV).

How do we react to the governments of this world? Do we despise authority? Do we despise government? We all need to check our attitude toward authority and government.

Within the Church, this is also a matter that requires self-examination. Most of God's people are very respectful and appreciative of the ministry. Occasionally, though, we all can have a bad day, and some few have not grown to the point where they appreciate those who labor among the Church. We should not put ministers on a pedestal. Rather, we should appreciate their service, and the responsibility they have, and we should recognize that they do have authority. We must not dilute what it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13: "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize [to know] those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you [or instruct you], and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves."

Those in the ministry must esteem the brethren very highly as well. The brethren are to respect ministers and their office, and the ministry is also to respect the brethren, and respect the fact that we are all in God's Church. When there is respect and love, that solves many problems.

What is the premise, and the need, for government in God's Church? There must be government. How can "all things be done decently and in order" without proper Church government (1 Corinthians 14:40)? It is not possible. Decisions will not be made, or once they are made they will not be carried out. Who decides where we will have Feast sites? Who decides where to meet for Sabbath services? In order for things to be done decently and in order, God has put government in place, because He "is not the author of confusion [or disorder] but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (v. 33).

To have fairness, justice, service and love in God's Church, there must be Church government, properly administered. Many blessings come to everyone as a result. It has been that way from the beginning. Government from the top down, for the well-being of all, is a basic principle that runs throughout the Bible. It is God's way, and it is the



only way that ever really works in the long run. There is never a problem with godly government. Problems arise only when abuse and wrong use of government takes place, or when rebellion against right authority occurs.

Exodus 18 shows a wonderful example of the way Jesus Christ, the Rock, views government: “And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, ‘What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?’” (vv. 13–14). Moses was doing everything himself. There was no structure in place, and what was the result? He was exhausting himself and the people.

“And Moses said unto his father-in-law, ‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God’” (v. 15). Moses was trying to help them, but he was being worn out—and they were being worn out—in the process. “‘When they have a difficulty they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws.’ So Moses’ father-in-law said to him, ‘The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself’” (vv. 16–18).

God inspired this, and He preserved it in His Word, so we are to learn from it. “Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens” (vv. 19–21).

*This is organization.* Moses provided the overall direction, and people were put in place to serve various numbers of people in Israel. “And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace” (vv. 22–23).

Look how wonderfully that all turns out! Everybody benefits! What a blessing! The people could get answers to their questions and go about their responsibilities without wearing Moses out or being worn out themselves.

Government, organization, titles, and authority—you find them all there. But for what reason? To serve, to help and to enable the people to have peace. To save everybody

time, and to see that everything is done decently and in order. *Church government properly administered is a tremendous blessing for everyone.*

How did Jesus Christ practice government? He taught with confidence, assurance and authority. He was not a bully. He did not intimidate or mistreat anyone. He did not abuse or misuse His authority. But He was a leader. People knew where He stood, “for He taught them as one having authority” (Matthew 7:29).

Did He pass that along? After praying all night, “He chose twelve whom He also named apostles” (Luke 6:12–13). What else did He do? “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1–2). He gave them *power* and *authority*. To misuse? Never. To abuse others with it? No. It was all for the good of others. It was all for serving, for helping. The power and authority that was passed along to the servants Jesus Christ sent out was a blessing.

If we are to think the way Christ thinks, and if we are to follow God’s Word—living by every word of God—we cannot avoid the fact that He has placed government in His Church. It is from the top down for the purpose of serving the brethren, keeping things in order and making sure that the Church is taken care of and the Work is done. It is not a democracy. It is not government that exists by consensus or by polling people. We do not send around ballots, and eventually try to make a decision based on that. This is God’s Church. Jesus Christ is its Head. He guides His Church through His ministry by the power of God’s Holy Spirit. We do take counsel, we do take input and we do base decisions on God’s Word. But we **make** decisions and we lead. It is for the good of everyone, and God backs that up.

The laying on of hands is exercising government. In order to receive God’s Holy Spirit upon repentance and baptism, a minister lays hands on a person, and sets him apart. God then gives that person His Holy Spirit. “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet it had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:14–17). Notice they had repented and Philip had baptized them, but they had not received the Holy Spirit until the apostles came and laid hands on them. Could just any man do that? No. It had to be a servant of God. God backs up His ministers, and works through them.

God has placed within His Church ministerial offices that have to do with serving, giving and helping, repre-

senting God and reflecting Jesus Christ. They are offices of responsibility and service, authority and leadership: “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11). Why? So they could walk around in august gowns and collars, pontificate and be surrounded by an entourage? No! God did all of that “for the equipping [or perfecting] of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the

how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:2–7).

Those are very high requirements and standards. Think of what it means when someone is placed in the ministry. A minister will have the authority to anoint the

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**The ministry does not live our lives for us. It does not make the brethren’s choices and decisions. The brethren do not have to check with the ministry about their personal life and business. Ministers are here to teach and counsel, to set the right example in spiritual matters and Christian living and to be shepherds to the flock—to lead and guide in love, as needed.**

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unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, who is the Head—Christ—from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (vv. 12–16).

The offices of the ministry are for feeding, protecting, caring for, encouraging and serving the flock. That means leading the congregation, seeing to the needs of the brethren, instructing the Church—and, if troublemakers try to come in, showing them the way out.

There are “ranks” in the ministry. That word sometimes has a bad connotation, but it need not. It just has to do with organization. 1 Corinthians 12:28 clearly shows that God has put the offices in the Church in a specific order.

What are the qualifications for these ministerial offices? Sometimes people misunderstand the verse: “This is a true saying: If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work” (1 Timothy 3:1, *KJV*). This does not say that the *desire* is good. It is a good work; there is no doubt about it. But the Bible makes clear that, for one to be in the ministry, God has to have called the individual and placed him in the ministry. That is done through government in the Church, by observing the fruits that are born and by God’s guidance through the power of His Holy Spirit. “A bishop [an overseer or a minister] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know

sick, to advise on what the Scripture actually says and to look after the flock. Thankfully, we have a wonderful ministry in the Living Church of God, and we are not going to “lower the bar.” We have to follow what the Bible says. Because we have proper Church government in place, there is a process that is followed when someone is ordained and placed in the ministry, guided by Christ through the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

Paul told Titus to “set in order the things that are lacking and appoint [ordain] elders in every city as I commanded you—if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict” (Titus 1:5–9). What a blessing it is that God develops, trains, calls and ordains servants as Paul described in this passage!

We do not want to be careless about responsibilities that are assigned only to the ministry, such as anointing. God must back up the man who does the anointing. Therefore, we call only the elders of the Church for anointing; they pray in faith, and the person being anointed looks to God in faith (James 5:13–14).

What should our attitude be toward proper government in the Church? A minister loses his effectiveness to lead when too much familiarity begins to trivialize his leadership and his authority. We are to respect, appreciate and love God’s ministers (Hebrews 13:7), as they respect and love and care for us. “Obey those who rule over you [or lead you], and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (v. 17).

Ministers must give an account of how they take care of God's people, and how they fulfill their ministry—and that is a very sobering responsibility for any minister. Any dedicated and converted minister who is walking with God gives very sober thought to that verse. A minister knows that, somewhere down the road, he will look Jesus Christ straight in the eye, figuratively speaking, and will have to give an account of how he has carried out his assignment in the ministry. Any minister that takes that lightly is going to be in trouble. How does he take care of God's people? How does he take care of God's little ones? How does he care for those who are sick? How does he handle those who are discouraged? How does he guide the youth? How does he feed the congregation? What is his attitude and quality of service? Does he reflect Jesus Christ? Does he effectively represent God as an ambassador? Any minister will examine himself quite regularly on these points and others.

That verse instructs us to “obey” them. The word “obey” here implies an attitude of yielding and cooperating, of having confidence in the ministers and following them as they follow Christ. It is not that the ministry passes out orders and everybody marches. It has to do with cooperating with the leadership, yielding to authority, following as the ministry follows Christ, and submitting in the right attitude and in the right way.

The ministry does not live our lives for us. It does not make the brethren's choices and decisions. The brethren do not have to check with the ministry about their personal life and business. Ministers are here to teach and counsel, to set the right example in spiritual matters and Christian living and to be shepherds to the flock—to lead and guide in love, as needed.

There are a lot of instructions in the Bible that are pointed directly toward elders. The ministers had better read them regularly and follow them. “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (1 Peter 5:1–4).

It is a wonderful thing to see a congregation that is healthy, stable and solid, with a minister who is really following the calling that God has given him. It will not be perfect. There will be a few glitches and mistakes here and there; we are all human. But such a congregation is warm, friendly, happy, committed, dedicated and upbeat about the Work. It is not being neglected. It is not disoriented. It is not disjointed. What a wonderful thing to see! It is beautiful when we follow what God's Word says.

John 10 contains tremendous direction regarding the interaction between shepherds and sheep, ministers and God's people. “And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers” (John 10:4–5). Verses 11–15: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”

What a difference there is between a shepherd and a hireling! What a difference there is between a minister whose whole life—his vocation and his avocation—is taking care of God's people, rather than just putting in the hours and getting a paycheck. That is one of the most outstanding attributes that I see in the Living Church of God—we do have shepherds. We can be better shepherds, but we do have shepherds—men who have “fire in their bellies” to finish the Work, and who really do take care of the sheep whom God has put in their care.

Acts 20:28–31 contains directions to God's ministers. “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves shall men rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

How are the ministers to follow Paul's instructions without a government that is respected and properly administered? It cannot happen. How are they going to keep grievous wolves out if they do not have the authority given to them by God? They cannot. So it is a tremendous blessing to have proper government in God's Church. It provides authority, backed up by God, for the service and protection of the flock. We have already seen how that authority must be used—with love, mercy, kindness, consideration and respect. Paul told the ministry to “rule well” and to rule “with diligence” (1 Timothy 5:17; Romans 12:8). But make no mistake about it; there is leadership. There is government. There is authority.

What is the role of Church government in correction? Paul wrote to Timothy: “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: Preach

the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:1–5).

Paul wrote that one of Timothy’s duties was to “rebuke.” Many people do not want correction. Some have had experiences with correction that has been overdone, or has been done in an unchristian manner. But does this mean that there should be no correction at all? When you get on an airplane to fly from point A to point B, from the time you take off to the time you land, there are constant course corrections in the cockpit. When you get behind your steering wheel to go home, you are constantly correcting the direction of your vehicle. We need course corrections from time to time. Sometimes a correction has to be direct and strong, so we can pull ourselves up and repent and make a change. Such correction is a blessing. But it must be done in love.

Nobody likes to work one’s way through ugly and troublesome situations to render a decision, leaving one person happy with the outcome and the other unhappy. Sometimes this must happen, though, and it must be based on God’s Word. Paul had to do that. Notice what he wrote: “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16). In God’s Church, there is no room for adversarial relationships. We should have no adversarial relationships between brethren, between ministers or between ministers and brethren. If we do, we should work to fix them. We are not enemies. We are all on the same team. When a decision does not go our way, we should just say, “Okay, not my will but Your will be done,” and move on. Christ is in charge.

We are God’s people—God’s Church, God’s disciples. We are to love and respect and serve one another. Mr. Meredith has encouraged an atmosphere in the Church that is not intimidating—whether it is in the Council of Elders, or Spokesman Club or the congregations. Ask questions. Make suggestions. Give ideas. Bring to the ministry those concerns that bother and trouble you. Do not just gullibly say, “Oh, well, the minister’s in charge.” Respect that, but if you have questions or ideas, or if something is bothering you—come. Talk about it, and do what it takes to resolve it biblically. Of course, when we approach someone with questions, ideas or concerns, we should be sure to check our attitude. We do not want to sow discord and discontent. That does not help anything or anyone. Rather, we should go get help. And we can!

Church government exists, to a good degree, for that very reason.


Part of a minister’s job description is to be “helpers” of the brethren’s joy (2 Corinthians 1:24, KJV). We all look forward to Sabbath services. They are times of happiness and joy. They are times of fellowship and singing. They are times of being strengthened and renewed and refreshed. They are times of learning more and more about God’s Word. They are times when we *all*—ministers and brethren—have an opportunity to be helpers of one another’s joy.

We are to use authority only when we have to, and only to the extent it is needed to solve a problem. We must never be harsh, intimidating or abusive. Never! We must always be firm and strong and unbending on what is right. Always! God never bends on what is right. But, while being firm and strong and unbending on what is right, we must always use mercy and patience, and we must always have hope and concern for those with whom we are dealing.

There is a right balance to God’s government. It is, fundamentally, love in action. It is like His Law, which is love in action. God’s government is based on His great commandments. There is power and authority to be used for the good and protection of all. It is to be applied in love, compassion and wisdom—and firmness, when required.

There is a key to having the right attitude toward Church government. It is that we look to Christ in faith, knowing that He is in charge. Those who have the proper attitude toward Church government, and consider it a blessing, are those who always look to Jesus Christ, and remember that He is in charge. To the extent that we do this, we will come to recognize, more and more, what a blessing proper Church government is.

We must not carelessly reject proper Church government, as we see from the example of Samuel: “Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, ‘Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.’ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, ‘Give us a king to judge us.’ So Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them’” (1 Samuel 8:4–7). By rejecting Samuel as their leader, they were rejecting God, who put Samuel in his position of leadership.

Do we see God in the picture? Do we realize that Christ is the Head of the Church? Do we understand that He has instituted government in His Church, from the top down, to be properly administered with love and in mercy? It is there throughout the Bible. I hope that we all can come to appreciate more fully that God’s government, properly applied, is truly a tremendous blessing for everyone. 



# A Vital Key to *Failure*

By John H. Ogwyn

**B**ooks and seminars on success are commonplace. Walk into any large bookstore, and you will encounter an entire section devoted to “success” books. Motivational speakers have become wealthy by hawking various “secrets of success.” Clearly, most people would like to be more successful in life—and there is a ready market for those who purport to teach how to achieve it.

On the other hand, you do not generally find many books telling you *how to fail*. It seemingly takes no great effort or amount of study to achieve failure in life. Of course, those who are deemed failures did not set out to achieve failure. They simply found themselves at that point, and most never understand how they achieved their failure.

Yet, just as there are laws that lead to success, so also are there laws, or keys, that lead to guaranteed failure!

As important as physical success may be, spiritual success is infinitely more important. Just as God’s word reveals principles that lead to success, so also does it reveal keys to failure. One of these principles might even be described as “the most vital key to long-term failure.” Even if you practice all the laws of success, practicing this one vital principle will guarantee failure, no matter what else you may have going for you!

## Was Joab a Success?

Joab was the best known and most outstanding of the mighty men who served King David. He was the commanding general of Israel’s armies for more than three decades.

Joab had many outstanding traits of leadership, and exemplified many of the lessons of success—so much so that, for many years, he seemed to epitomize success. Whatever would happen in the political intrigues of his time, Joab would emerge still hanging on to his old job. He had clear-cut goals, and a great deal of drive, determination and tenacity. Through education he prepared himself for excellence, and he displayed great resourcefulness. He demonstrated wisdom and perceptiveness about people and situations. King David usually listened to what Joab suggested, and relied on him greatly. Joab seemed to love David genuinely, and was loyal when others let him down. He was, in short, a man who could be counted on for results.

Yet we must ask whether or not Joab proved to be a real *success*—in the true sense of the word. Did his life end on a successful note? More importantly, was he a spiritual success? There is no hint that Joab ever engaged in pagan practices, or that he ever worshiped any but the God of Israel. Yet we search in vain to find him mentioned later in Scripture as a great role model. We are told that King David will be king over all of Israel in tomorrow’s world, but there is no indication that Joab—David’s chief lieutenant during his years as Israel’s monarch anciently—will play an important role in that future realm. Joab is not mentioned in Hebrews 11, nor does any other passage of Scripture single him out for his positive qualities.

Instead, we find that one of Solomon’s first acts as king was to order the execution of Joab (1 Kings 2). Even though Joab applied many

laws of success in his life, a fatal flaw in his character undercut those noble qualities. That fatal flaw will also be a vital key to *our own* failure, if we do not root it out of our lives.

The fatal flaw that prevented Joab from becoming a true and lasting success was that **his life was ruled by self-will**. No life regulated by self-will can truly be successful! We might change many aspects of our thoughts and deeds, but perhaps the quality hardest for any of us to truly give up is self-will.

## Lessons from Joab’s Life

Joab and his brothers Abishai and Asahel were nephews of King David. They were the sons of David’s older sister, Zeruah. All three brothers had supported David loyally from the time that he had to flee from Saul and hide out in the wilderness. The brothers loved and honored their uncle, and willingly risked their lives on his behalf. While exiled, David once expressed his longing for home by wishing that he could just have a drink of water from the well at Bethlehem. Abishai and two friends took it upon themselves to plan a covert mission (1 Chronicles 11:16–20). Risking their lives, they sneaked through enemy lines to Bethlehem, and brought David back a drink of water! How often do we encounter such boldness and devotion?

Joab must have been even more outstanding than his brother, as 2 Samuel 2 makes clear that Joab was the leader not only of the brothers, but also of all David’s men. Yet Joab was also a hard and vindictive man, as we see from his assassination of Abner, Saul’s army commander.

Abner had earlier slain Joab's brother Asahel in battle. When Joab heard that Abner had come to make peace with King David, he became suspicious and assassinated him without the king's knowledge (2 Samuel 3:26–27).

For the first seven years after Saul's death, David ruled only over Judah. Seven years later, as king over all 12 tribes, David determined to take the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem and make it his new capital. He promised that whoever could gain entry to the seemingly impregnable stronghold and lead the army to victory would become the new army commander. Perhaps Joab had been demoted following Abner's assassination, but this did not last long, as Joab once again proved himself to be seemingly indispensable. He led a successful assault on the Jebusite castle, gaining access by using a water channel (which many archaeologists today identify as Warren's Shaft) that stretched from Gihon Spring to the ancient hill of Zion (2 Samuel 5:7–8, 1 Chronicles 11:4–6). As we read of David's exploits in the conquest of his enemies, we see the important role that Joab played as army commander.

King David had so much confidence in Joab's personal loyalty to him, that he wrote to Joab personally when he sought to get rid of Uriah the Hittite (after his adultery with Uriah's wife Bathsheba, and her subsequent pregnancy). Joab obeyed David's instruction to put Uriah in a part of the battle where he would be killed, and then sent the king word of what happened.

Later, Joab played a key role in trying to reconcile David with Absalom, following the latter's flight from his father upon killing his brother Amnon. We read, in 2 Samuel 14, that Joab tried to trick David to win his agreement in invit-

ing Absalom back. Joab was clearly very perceptive, and not shy about intervening in situations when he was convinced that he had the right answer to a problem.

When Absalom launched a revolution to overthrow his father, Joab remained staunchly loyal to King David. Prior to the armies' battle, David had talked to all of his leading men. He personally asked them to be gentle with Absalom, for his sake. Later, as the army under Joab proved victorious, a young soldier brought word that Absalom had become entangled in an oak tree while trying to flee on his mule. Joab asked the soldier whether he had killed Absalom. "Of course not," the young man replied, "I heard the king give instructions to save his son alive." Joab, however, believed that David was being too "soft" on a troublemaker, so he went and executed Absalom himself. In his mind, Joab "knew" that he had to do this to solve the problem once and for all, regardless of the king's instructions (2 Samuel 18:10–14).

When King David learned that his army had been victorious, but that Absalom was dead, he was overwhelmed with grief. "Oh my son Absalom," he cried out, "would to God that I had died in your stead." While David spent the day mourning his personal loss, the people with him grew restless and discouraged. It was Joab who then told the king that he had to put his personal grief aside, and come down to thank his supporters for what they had done on his behalf. "If you don't do this," Joab told him, "you're going to find yourself in worse trouble than you have ever been in your life." David recognized that this assessment was probably correct, and followed Joab's advice (2 Samuel 19:1–8).

While putting the nation back together, David decided to place

Amasa, formerly the commander of Absalom's forces, over Judah's army (2 Samuel 17:25). Amasa, however, was late in reaching the appointed place, and David sent out the army under the command of Joab's brother Abishai. When Amasa caught up to the main army, Joab called him aside and quickly assassinated him, then led the army to a resounding victory over David's enemies (2 Samuel 20). In Joab's mind, he had "won" again, because he had been victorious in battle, and had his old job back. Once again, he had sought to prove himself the indispensable man.

When Satan stirred up David to number Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1), Joab was placed in charge of the census. Joab was opposed to the idea, however, and as a result did not do a thorough job (v. 6). Even though Joab was correct in perceiving what should and should not be done, he was self-willed about it, and did things his own way.

Finally, near the end of King David's days, Joab made a decision that ultimately cost him his life. Once again, Joab's hardheaded, self-willed approach came to the fore. As David was on his deathbed, a question arose about succession to the throne. David had previously told his close associates that Solomon was to succeed him. Though the Bible does not tell us Solomon's exact age at that time, putting the whole story together from the Bible makes it clear that Solomon was still a teenager, probably no more than 15 years old. Joab plainly thought that King David had made a mistake, and that Solomon was too young and inexperienced to take on such a job. Joab decided instead that Adonijah—one of David's older sons—was the right man for the job, and plotted with Adonijah to make his succession to the throne a *fait accompli* before anyone could do

anything about it. Of course, God had other plans; He ensured that Adonijah's succession was thwarted and that Solomon took the throne (1 Kings 1).

This event marked the end of Joab's career. One of Solomon's first acts as king was to order Joab's arrest and execution. Joab finally paid with his life for his stubbornness and self-will. Even though Joab was very capable and possessed sound judgment, he was always determined to do things his own way. He got away with it many times, because he was successful. Friend and foe alike saw him as indispensable to the king. However, his self-will was the key to his ultimate failure and ignominious death. Inevitably, that is where self-will leads!

### The Root of Self-Will

Self-will flows from a desire to protect and promote the self. It is "natural" to be concerned about ourselves, but God's law teaches us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Leviticus 19:18). Christ reiterated to His followers the importance of loving our neighbor, emphasizing that it was second only to the command to love God with our whole heart (Matthew 22:36–40). Self-will is a manifestation of pride, and is a roadblock to true success. God cannot and will not allow anyone into His kingdom who is governed by self-will. It does not matter what percentage of the time you may be "right." After all, Joab was probably right *most* of the time!

David, like Joab, was tested on the matter of self-will. He was anointed as king while still in his teens, yet had to wait until age 30 to be crowned king over Judah—and seven years beyond that to become king over all of Israel. For about 10 years, David was on the run hiding

from Saul—who was trying to kill him. Saul, increasingly paranoid, had become convinced that if he could get rid of David, all of his problems would be over. During those years, David had opportunities to kill Saul, and his followers pressed him to do so. Yet he did not. Rather than taking matters into his own hands, he trusted God to elevate him at the right time and in the right way. This attribute of looking to God, waiting on God, and trusting God *set David apart from his nephew Joab*. It was a difference of the heart that made the difference between the ultimate success or failure of these two men.

Those with self-will resist or refuse to listen and learn. Once, when David became very angry because of Nabal's arrogance and insolence, he decided to strike back. Propelled by momentary anger, David was prepared to take vengeance, when Nabal's wife Abigail, came to him, humbly pointing out the mistake he was about to make. Did David become angry with her, and resist her entreaties? No! He acknowledged that she was right—and he even apologized. Then, he became thankful to God that he had not allowed his temper to lead him into a serious mistake (cf. 1 Samuel 25). David had the humility to learn from others, and was willing to take correction. Self-will stands in the way of such a response.

Nehemiah 9 describes how, immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles, the people of Judah assembled before God to fast and to renew the covenant. As they listened to the history of their nation, they heard a recurring theme—that in spite of God's repeated warnings, through His prophets, they "refused to obey," "hardened their hearts" and "dealt proudly." Pride led to self-will, and stood in the way of humbly accepting correction,

acknowledging error and changing. *Is this true of us?*

In Titus 1:7, Paul instructed the young minister Titus about the qualities to look for when selecting elders to take spiritual oversight of a congregation (the Greek word translated "bishop" literally means "over-seer"). Paul explained that one ordained to such a leadership position must be "not self-willed." Later, when the Apostle Peter wrote the final epistle of his life, he pointed out the judgments that God would deliver to the godly and the ungodly. Peter mentioned that the ungodly are "presumptuous" and "self-willed" (2 Peter 2:9–10). Being self-willed is a *deadly* fault. It led to Joab's physical death. If not recognized—and *turned away from*—it will lead to our spiritual death!

The One who most perfectly rejected self-will was Jesus Christ. On the night of His final Passover, as He agonized in the garden prior to His arrest, He totally avoided self-will. "Nevertheless, not My will but Your will be done," He prayed (Matthew 26:39. *KJV*). Jesus did not come to the earth to pursue self-will, but rather to pursue the Father's will (John 6:38). He never sought His own will, but continually sought the will of the One who had sent Him (John 5:30).

Are we following Jesus' example, or Joab's? No matter how many of the laws of success we may apply in our lives, if we are self-willed we will ultimately fail. To humbly let go of the way that seems right to us, we must walk by faith. We must believe that God knows what He is doing, and we must be willing to trust Him to accomplish His purpose—even when we do not see how circumstances can work out. If we will truly trust in the Eternal with all of our heart, and not lean to our own understanding, He will bring about ultimate success in our lives! ☞



# International Corner...

## Feast Reports

**A**round the world, God's people gathered at 44 Feast sites in 29 countries in North, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Australasia and the Philippines. In this issue of the *Living Church News*, the "International Corner" is devoted to reports from many of those sites outside North America.

International Feast attendance increased by nearly 9 percent over last year! Our members at our International sites also participated in the Living Church of God Hymnal project through their donations in the blue envelopes. The enthusiasm everywhere was evident. The brethren came together as a real family to keep God's Feast, to learn to better obey Him and to practice His way of life. We experienced genuine joy and love for one another and were uplifted to persevere until the end. This year's Feast of Tabernacles was truly a type of the millennial Sabbath Day—the 1,000 years of rest in the Kingdom of God under the reign of Jesus Christ. Overflowing joy and everlasting peace will soon cover the earth.

One hundred thirty-one brethren from 12 countries celebrated the Feast in the pleasant Victorian seaside resort of *Llandudno, North Wales*. Llandudno sits on a peninsula that looks out to the Irish Sea and back at the rugged mountains of

Snowdonia. The region is dotted with prehistoric stone monuments, Roman ruins, medieval castles, peaceful river valleys and quaint country inns. Many commented that the highlights of the Festival were motivating, thought-provoking



Llandudno, North Wales

messages, inspiring music and the kindness and friendliness of the brethren and the townspeople of Llandudno. Many savored the international flavor of the Feast in Wales, the warm fellowship at services and the

opportunity for spiritual discussions in the evenings. A singles activity early in the Feast (a tram ride to a hill-top observatory and snack bar) and an outing for families with young children to an adventure park (with souvenir gifts for the children) provided opportunities to get acquainted and build friendships.

Many enjoyed the luncheons between services on the Holy Days, and evening activities that included a Bible Study, a banquet, and a Celtic folk dance. A tour through a slate mine, and a concert by a Welsh male voice choir provided moving insights into Welsh history and culture. Bus tours to a seaside model village and a mountain park with a steam train ride offered beau-

tiful views of Wales. A family afternoon in Conway included time to explore a castle, shop and walk the walls of a medieval town. Parting comments of Feastgoers included, "I will leave this Feast much more focused, with a better perspective on Tomorrow's World... This Feast was a dream of a lifetime—physically and spiritually... We are going home on a high... this was a fabulous Feast!"

More than 100 brethren greatly enjoyed celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles to the Eternal in the gorgeous lakeside resort town of *Evian, France*. Attendees from 14 countries were nourished daily with uplifting spiritual food: encouraging, instructive, and inspiring live messages—given by Messrs. Dibar Apartian, Davy Crockett, Josef Felber and Douglas Winnail—complemented the timely and powerful messages from Mr. Roderick C. Meredith.

Members were thrilled to fellowship with one another and to break



Evian, France

bread together for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Exquisite French cuisine, accompanied by cheese and wine, satisfied

appetites and provided energy for all the Feast activities, including a day trip to the international city of Geneva, Switzerland; a visit to the historically rich 12th century Castle of Chillon; and educational tours to



the Gruyère cheese factory and the Cailler Chocolate Factory in Switzerland.

Evian was truly a millennial setting for the Feast of Tabernacles. God blessed the site with beautiful spring-like weather that embellished the surrounding natural scenery. The stunning Alps, the green valleys where flocks of cows grazed, the blue, calm waters of Lac Léman (the biggest lake in Central Europe), the vineyards and the colorful flowery landscapes all combined to help us learn and prepare to serve in the soon-coming Kingdom of God. Brethren returned home with joy in their hearts, new friendships and plenty of spiritual seed that, with God's help, will become rich fruit in the coming year.

Brethren had a very wonderful Feast in *Wewak, Papua New Guinea*, at a site located on the beachfront with a refreshing breeze coming in from the Bismarck Sea. There were 64 in attendance, and it was enjoyable and encouraging to see the members and others interested in knowing God's Truth taking part all the way throughout the Feast.

Brethren heard God's "Master Plan" explained, as well as the meanings of the Feast days and what they stand for in God's plan of salvation. Elder Zig Svalbe, from Mebourne, Australia, visited for three days and gave several inspiring sermons.

In *Davao City, Philippines*, 69 enthusiastic brethren came together

to give their sincere thanksgiving to God. Activities such as children's Bible classes, Bible bowl for all, the senior's night, the singles' event and other programs were meant to bring all Feastgoers closer and in harmony



Wewak, Papua New Guinea

through songs, games together, meals together, knowing each other more and sharing positive knowledge about God's plan and how to cope with trials ahead and endure to the end. As the

Festival progressed, brethren experienced beautiful weather, with sea breeze around the clock, well-fed by spiritual food and a nice physical diet. Sermons triggered thoughts about the events that will set the stage for the Millennium, about what constitutes the kingdom, about the good news of the royal family and about the Last Great Day, when most of humanity will be given its first genuine opportunity to learn and know about God's will.



Davao City, Philippines

Brethren from the Visayas met at the Cawacsi Training Center in *Tacloban City*, in the Philippines. Adjacent rooms meant that brethren would always meet when cooking and eating, as well as during services. Forty-one happy faces of industrious people of God convened and listened to the message by Mr. Roderick C. Meredith on opening night. It was

clear and direct, reminding all that soon the kingdoms of this world will be under the leadership of God's people who are now building the character of kings and priests. Sermonette men spoke on change of heart, learning to fear God always, being God's jewels and more. Regional Pastor Mr. Rodney King came from the Baguio Feast site, arriving in Tacloban in the middle of the Feast. The brethren were delighted to meet him for the first time. During the Feast, Mr. King gave a public Bible lecture, which seven new contacts attended. The high attendance count was 61.

Members in *Vanuatu* met to keep the Feast on the island of Malekula. More than 50 men, women and children had a happy time together from the first day of the Feast right through the Last Great Day.

Everyone declared it to be a better Feast than in previous years because, for the first time, whole families were able to attend—not just the

fathers and maybe a son or two. Brethren met near the village of Orap, and had built a new tabernacle in which to meet. God provided good weather and a good environment, as well as good physical and spiritual food throughout the Feast. Sermon tapes from Headquarters were translated by local deacon Jerry Sam, so everyone could understand, and all were happy with the Feast.

The Feast at *Homa Bay, Kenya*, in Nyanza Province, was a wonderful experience for the brethren, who all felt this was their best Feast ever in terms of brotherly love, and having "oneness" of spirit together. Ninety-one brethren, including one overseas member and one brother from neighboring Tanzania, completely



Homa Bay, Kenya

filled the two hotels provided, and had an unforgettable eight days of spiritual as well as physical food.

Daily sermons by Mr. Ernest Owino, site coordinator, not only discussed the events leading up to Christ's second coming, but also gave a thorough explanation of the three resurrections, and asked the challenging question: "Are we preparing to be teachers in Tomorrow's World?"

As in previous years, special music was provided mostly by the Ndhiwa Choir, which had written many new songs especially for the Feast. It was a great pleasure to hear them in close harmony. Another highlight was the blessing of the children: this year, 20 young ones were blessed by Mr. Owino! Brethren were also treated to a recital of Exodus 20 in Swahili, from memory, by most of the children of the Nairobi congregation—even down to the youngest, about 5 years old!

Once again the children tackled the Activity Book and enjoyed the experience, with prizes for the best three. We also managed to secure some Bibles in the Luo language, and presented them to those brethren who had the most need.

The torrential rain that accompanied most of the brethren on their journeys into Homa Bay soon subsided, leaving the Lake Victoria area looking beautifully green and lush, with breathtaking views of the lake and surrounding hills from the windows of the meeting hall on the second floor of the Prudence Hotel. In their leisure time, many of the brethren would enjoy a stroll into town, and down to the lakeside,

where a cool breeze was welcomed in the warm afternoon sunshine.

For various reasons it did not prove possible to visit the local Game Park, or the islands on the lake; however, the brethren (especially the children) were very happy with the alternative, which was to have a special lunch at the nearby Hippo Buck Hotel, and spend the afternoon in the beautiful picnic and recreation area of the hotel. Another treat was the Senior Citizens' Dinner, where good conversation complemented an excellent meal for the five over-60s in attendance.

The hotel staff, owners—and everyone with whom we had dealings in Homa Bay—were very helpful, and were pleased to welcome us there. It was with great sadness that everyone said goodbye and departed after the service on the Last Great Day.

Eighty-two Living Church of God brethren had a wonderful time keeping the Feast in *Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh*. Church youth helped prepare the tent and sidewalls, and arranged the chairs properly. This was the first year that members in India had all been able to keep the Feast together in one place, and brethren greatly enjoyed the fellowship. The children were especially happy about the Kids' Activity Adventure Books! Brethren enjoyed every aspect of the feast tremendously, except perhaps the occasional bursts of heavy rain.

The Feast of Tabernacles 2004 was really wonderful and memorable

for brethren in *Mae Sot, Thailand*. There had been almost constant rain, day and night, for nearly three months before the Feast. But the rains stopped just three days before the Feast, and the climate was wonderfully changed in time for 37 brethren and children to be greeted by sunshine and fresh air during the Feast days. Mehm Pho Saw spoke, and interpreted the sermons into three languages—Burmese, Thai and English. Doh Ma and Eh Mu Shi helped with some of the interpreting into Karen language. Phyu Phyu Aye and her team were responsible for special food arrangements and the welfare of the brethren. The men were responsible for decorations, games and other activities. The brethren were very interested in Mr. Meredith's "Opening Night Message" and his "Last Great Day" sermon, as well as the other six audio sermon tapes. The children very much enjoyed the "Kids' Activity Adventure Books." Special hymns and choir services were also joyously sung by the brethren in thanksgiving and praising God.

Brethren enjoyed a special coffee, cold drinks and special meals for children. The brethren also enjoyed the water balloon activity, volleyball games and a biscuit-eating competition, as well as swimming and boating in the lake at the bottom of Tak mountain range near Mae Sot. Everything during the Feast days was truly memorable, and it was indeed the greatest Feast of Tabernacles ever in Thailand.

A total of 74 individuals attended the Feast site in Malaysia this year. Although the majority were



Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh



Mae Sot, Thailand

from Malaysia, the occasion was also graced by members from Australia, the Philippines and the United States, making the event a “Unity in Diversity” reality.

In *Port Dickson, Malaysia*, brethren kept the Feast at the Le Paris Hotel, situated along the beachfront, a 90-minute drive from

the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. The weather did not bode well at the outset, with intermittent rains set on trying to

dampen the spirit of the brethren. But, amazingly, from the second day of the Feast right up to the end there was absolutely no rain.

Many members commented on the meaty and diverse nature of the sermons, which touched on such themes as prophecy and Christian living. At the same time, brethren were reminded to get back to basics and focus on displaying a childlike attitude, with the ultimate objective of being ready to fulfill their potential in the Kingdom of God. Site coordinator Mr. Rajan Moses performed three baptisms during the Feast.

While the central focus was on the spiritual aspects of the Feast, there was no let-up in the physical enjoyment in the form of nourishing meals and family-oriented activities. Apart from the barbeque dinner, there were also three other occasions when members got together for a combined luncheon. Also a host of activities were lined up. On one end of the family divide, little children enjoyed games and coloring books and the many gifts that were given out. The youth, on the other hand, had an afternoon out in the hotel’s



Port Dickson, Malaysia

bowling alley. On a separate occasion, a speech club was organized to instill and encourage public speaking among the younger generation. To cap the activities, the brethren were treated to the annual Feast Fun Show, which proved immensely successful. Adding variation and flavor to the show were renditions of a couple of Tamil songs and a

Scot tish dance. The Feast in Malaysia this year was truly a well-balanced event, with

members savoring every morsel of the spiritual and physical blessings with which the Feast site was endowed. Our praise and thanks to our God and Father for His rich and bountiful blessings upon us!

At the Neptune Hotel Beruwala, situated on Sri Lanka’s southwestern coast, 60km from *Colombo*, 30 adults and eight children kept the Feast this year, joined by Mr. and Mrs. Dayrell Tanner. Mr. Tanner serves as a minister in Brisbane, Australia; his leadership and company was much appreciated.

God’s presence was felt throughout the Feast. Mr. Tanner’s live sermonettes and sermons added spice to the variety of recorded sermons. Indeed, brethren received a full spiritual plate appropriate to each day’s planned activity. The occasional shower never interrupted any outdoor activities. The physical blessings were great. Brethren enjoyed the delicious food spread on the buffet tables with great variety, prepared by the hotel during the entire Feast. The atmosphere was one of unity, warmth, joy and peace. The commitment and contribution of brethren in the organization of the

Feast program was very much appreciated and encouraging.

Amongst the highlights were the special music provided at services by the youth, and a song written by Kumar De Silva titled, “We are the Children of God,” sung by the talented members of the congregation. The brethren were enriched with a Bible Study and a few new hymns learned from Mr. Tanner. Outdoor activities consisted of a cricket match and a Family Day filled with fun and games. Little gifts were distributed to all brethren after the Family Day. A quickly planned outing to the historical Galle Fort a further 60km towards the south, was enjoyed by the brethren who also visited a turtle hatchery on the way. The Youth Day ended with a dance spiced with indoor games and good music.

The brethren applauded the dancing talents of all ages—and of Mr. and Mrs. Tanner, who taught the locals an Australian specialty. The juniors served the seniors at the luncheon on the Senior Citizens’ Day, backed by some fine calypso music provided by the hotel. The variety of talents bestowed by God upon His little flock in this part of the world was amply demonstrated at the Talent Show, highlighted by a skit, short drama, dancing, singing and electronic organ playing. Frequent visits to the swimming pool by both the kids and adults, when time permitted, were also fun. Parting at the end of the Last Great Day was somewhat sad, but the joy of the next Feast is yet at hand.

In Australia, brethren kept the Feast at *Batemans Bay*, located at the mouth of the Clyde River on the south coast of New South Wales. A total of 175 brethren from throughout Australia, along with visitors from South Africa, New Zealand and the United States, had a most



rewarding and uplifting eight days of sermons, fellowship and activities during which God's spirit was very evident.

For the first four days, the spiritual food was served by site coordinator Mr. Michael Gill and visiting

elder (from Columbia, Missouri, USA) Mr. William Oswald. Sermons were given on "Catching The Vision Of The Kingdom,"

"Two Different Worlds Of Attitude" and "Learning Our Role as Peacemakers." Ministerial reinforcements arrived on the fifth day, in the form of Regional Director Mr. Bruce Tyler, Mr. Zig Svalbe from Melbourne, and Mr. Ben Whitfield from Wyoming, USA. The brethren heard sermons on "Developing Your Faith," "Accepting Responsibility And Developing Character," "Maintaining The Goal And The Vision Of The Millennium" and "The True Meaning Of The Last Great Day." Pre-recorded sermons by Mr. John Ogwyn, and the opening and closing sermons by Mr. Roderick C. Meredith, also provided wonderful learning, insight and exhortation for all present.

Throughout the Feast, a feeling of love, unity, friendship and giving was evident. Special functions were held for the children, the singles and the older brethren. The children enjoyed an afternoon of fun on the beach, the singles had a fellowship meal at a local restaurant and the older brethren came together for an afternoon of fellowship and food. A family night was held where the "Behind the Work" DVD was shown, followed by an evening of games. Many talented members performed at the Talent



Batemans Bay, Australia

Night, entertaining the brethren with delightful singing and music. The Feast concluded on a high note with many brethren wishing they could have continued for another eight days.

*Taupo*, nestled in the centre of New Zealand's North Island, was again a site where brethren gathered for God's Feast of Tabernacles. Local members were joined by guests from the United States, Canada and Australia, bringing total

attendance up to 70.

The area offers truly millennial physical surroundings, with clear lake waters backed by green hills and snow-covered mountains. Because it is the spring season in the southern hemisphere, newborn lambs were in abundance on the hills, and a cherry tree adjacent to the venue entrance opened its full blossoms during the Feast.

Sermon messages by visiting elders Messrs. Gaylyn Bonjour, Dana Glatz and Ben Whitfield were warmly welcomed. A thread running through their sermons was that we need to be committed to preparing for our role in Christ's coming kingdom, while fully trusting in our all-powerful, faithful God. All attendees rejoiced in the announcement that Elijah Sale had been baptized part way through the Feast. Elijah may be the Church's only Samoan member.

We enjoyed good weather throughout the Feast, without hin-

drance to activities. On one occasion a rain squall approached across the lake, but then skirted around the town, allowing a game of mini-golf to continue.

Feastgoers enjoyed such activities as a tour of the Aratiatia Rapids and Craters of the Moon thermal area, jet boat rides, trout fishing and hiking. Those who ventured further afield were able to visit the city of Napier, famed for its art-deco architecture and wine trails, or Rotorua with its trout springs and farm shows. Singles' outings involved indoor rock-climbing and ten-pin bowling, while seniors were treated to a champagne breakfast. A games evening involved a hilarious game of Play-Dough Pictionary, a Bible quiz and supper. During a family afternoon, many were able to enjoy the pastimes of cricket and petanque, with tag-football and Frisbee occupying the more active. The Feast of Tabernacles in Taupo certainly fulfilled its God-given purpose of teaching all a greater awe of our Heavenly Father and an appreciation of His plan of salvation.

Brethren enjoyed the spring weather in a millennial setting in the southwestern coastal town of *Glentana, South Africa*. If Feast success can be measured by smiles, the score in



Glentana, South Africa

Glentana was 117! This is an attendance increase of approximately 17 percent over last year.

From day one, the Feast was packed with spiritual meat and physical enjoyment. Ministers in attendance, including a visitor from New Jersey, gave inspiring sermons covering subjects such as spiritual metamorphosis, rewards for God's



people and what the Millennium will be like.

On Friday, October 1, the senior citizens were treated to a special lunch. Several younger married couples served their older brethren to make the afternoon a good time to fellowship and relax. Double services on the Sabbath were followed by an evening of laughter, when the young and young at heart were treated to an animated movie. The family day followed on Sunday in the form of a barbeque. The children played games and won prizes; even teenagers partook with much enthusiasm. Double services on Monday were followed by a free day on Tuesday, giving all the opportunity to explore the numerous tourism sites the area has to offer. Early in the morning of the free day, five new members were added and welcomed into God's Church. Later in the day, a group of about 25 people went whale and shark watching off the coast of Mossel Bay. After a rainy Last Great Day, all went their separate ways, but with the same vision: God's soon-coming Kingdom.

Approximately 125 of God's people from Mexico, Spain, Argentina, Chile and the United States, gathered at the beautiful Los Cocuyos resort in *Huatusco*, in the state of *Veracruz*, Mexico, to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

The beautiful spirit of Christian love, fraternity and camaraderie—in addition to the outstanding accommodations—made this Feast one of the most beautiful and significant for many who attended.

God provided abundant spiritual food, guiding us strongly in the spiritual vision of the Kingdom and to endure “as seeing Him who is invisible.” The spiritual nourishment was complemented by messages helping the brethren deepen their love for our future husband, Jesus Christ.

Festival activities included various sports and sightseeing activities, as well as a bonfire organized by the Mexico City brethren and a “Mexican Night” with typical country cuisine and live music—including some songs performed by the local brethren.

There was one baptism during the Feast. With joy and happiness in our hearts the brethren in Huatusco welcomed a new sister to the body of Christ.

The Mexican brethren did a wonderfully professional job handling the technical and logistical coordination of the Feast site. They took

care of the smallest details to make services and every activity take place with the highest quality. Those who attended in Huatusco will remember their help for years to

come. But the glory and honor belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ, from whom we received the invitation and all the spiritual and emotional help that we needed to make this Feast one of the most beautiful Feasts of Tabernacles and Last Great Day that we have ever celebrated.

A small and friendly group of 22 brethren kept the Feast in *Merida, Venezuela*. The intimate size of the group encouraged fraternal warmth and great enthusiasm, exhibited especially during services. The sermons and the sermonettes were received with much attention, and prompted comments expressing the need of putting into practice all of God's teachings.

The Feast site was a hotel surrounded by approximately 30 cabins

in a beautiful forest within the Sierra de la Culata National Park, which is part of the Andes mountain range. Both the cabins and the hotel had

a full range of amenities. During the evenings, brethren enjoyed the heat of the wood fireplaces, as the temperature was extremely low at night. God provided good weather with cool and sunny days. Feastgoers enjoyed a change in weather from the moment they raised their prayers during the opening service.

Perhaps the most enjoyable activity during the Feast was the trip to Sierra Nevada on the Merida cable car, which begins at 5,174 feet above sea level at one end of the city, and ends 7.8 miles later at Pico de Espejo, 15,633 feet above sea level. During the trip, the climate changes rapidly, first through a tropical forest, over impressive precipices, before the plant life changes as altitude increases and a plant known as the “frailejón,” believed to have great medicinal value, predominates. Finally, after passing several lagoons, travelers arrive at the perpetual snow and the glaciers of Pico



Merida, Venezuela



Glentana, South Africa

*continues on page 23*

# Feast Roundup 2004

**A**t more than 40 sites around the world, nearly 7,000 Living Church of God brethren kept the 2004 Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day in a joyous mood of celebration and gratitude for God's plan.

Brethren rejoiced at the strong and helpful Feast messages—beginning and ending at most sites with video messages from Presiding Evangelist Mr. Roderick C. Meredith—which reminded us of our roles and responsibilities as firstfruits in God's soon-coming Kingdom, and of His love for all those who have not yet had their minds opened to His Truth.

The following accounts from Living Church of God Feast sites in the United States and Canada may give a flavor of the wonderful experiences shared by many this year. For news of Feast sites elsewhere, please see the "International Corner" section of this issue.

In beautiful *Myrtle Beach, South Carolina*, more than 800 brethren kept the Feast in the millennial surroundings of the Kingston Plantation resort. Feastgoers were inspired by messages from speakers including Presiding Evangelist Roderick C. Meredith, Director of Church Administration Charles E. Bryce and Messrs. Val Burgett, Ray Clore and Don Davis.

From long-time members who had kept the Feast for more than 50 years, to several newly baptized Christians keeping their first Feast as members of God's Church, everyone enjoyed the many opportunities for fun, fellowship and learning more about God's plan. Activities included a Bible Study led by Messrs. Ray Clore and Don Davis, a singles' "drop-in" evening, a seniors' luncheon and a "Family Fun Night" with good food, dancing, fellowship and more than a dozen "talent night" acts. The surrounding community offered attractions as varied as an alligator exhibit, plays, nature walks, and plenty of excellent fishing. A great Feast was had by all at Myrtle Beach!

More than 650 happy Feastgoers enjoyed sunny and rain-free weather at *Panama City Beach, Florida*. Much of Florida was reeling from an onslaught of one hurricane after another during the worst storm season on record. The National Weather Service had predicted that several of these hurricanes would smash into the northwest Florida area, yet they all miraculously changed course in time to miss God's Feast site. During all the storms, hur-

ricane force winds never reached our Panama City Beach site. For sure, God had placed His name there!

A tornado, spun out by hurricane Ivan about two weeks before the Feast, did go over the roof of our beautiful new meeting hall (the Saint Andrews Ballroom at the Marriott Bay Point Resort), but other than a few downed trees and a damaged boat dock, the Marriott property escaped major damage. The tornado continued on its course, destroying a dozen businesses less than a mile

away and damaging the roof of a high-rise condominium where several of our brethren were scheduled to stay. These brethren received a blessing, however, when the rental agent called each of them before the Feast began with news that they were being given better accommodations—for the same price!

Brethren were thankful and upbeat as God inspired special music, sermonettes and sermons at this year's Feast. Living Church of God Singles

Coordinator Mr. Lambert Greer addressed the Singles Luncheon and discussed upcoming events for singles in the Church. A high point of the Feast was the arrival of Mr. Roderick C. Meredith near the end of the Feast with news of the Work, and comments about where we are going from here.

An afternoon at the beach and a bowling-skating-pool shooting-video gaming-pizza-eating party were fun for everyone. The Dinner-Dance was also well attended... with music by the Baton Rouge Band and a guest appearance by someone introduced as blues guitarist B.B. King—but bearing a striking resemblance to Mr. Carl Ponder. The Feast at Panama City Beach was great!

More than 700 brethren enjoyed the Feast in *Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri*. They enjoyed beautiful fall weather, warm fellowship, and the excitement of those first-time attendees who were so happy to be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Highlights, as at all the sites, included Mr. Meredith's video messages and the "Behind the Work" film. Brethren also appreciated the sermons by visiting evangelists Mr. Charles Bryce and Mr. John Ogwyn.

Services were held in the Northwinds Meeting Room at Tan-Tar-A, Resorts. This beautiful resort property has a variety of housing and on-site activities. In addition to Tan-Tar-A, there are many other condominiums and hotels available in the community. Tourism is the prima-



Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

ry business in the Ozarks, and as a result there is an abundance of restaurants and shopping. The chain of lakes provides all types of water-related fun.

Sermon topics in the Ozarks this year were: “The Feast: A Life-Changing Opportunity” (Mr. James Wells);



Panama City, Florida

“Extreme Makeover: Kingdom Edition” (Mr. Randy Gregory); “Zephaniah” (Mr. Karl Beyersdorfer);

“Becoming a Peacemaker” (Mr. Charles Ogwyn); “The Fear of God” and “Prepare to be Teachers” (Mr. Charles Bryce); “Doing Our Part in the Work” (Mr. John Turner); “Have A Sense of Urgency” and “The Eighth Day” (Mr. John Ogwyn).

There were special activities for the singles, teenagers, and pre-teens at this year’s Feast. Fifty-seven singles enjoyed a barbecue at the State Park. They played croquet and had a game of Bible Trivia. Most of the singles were more interested in fellowshiping than kickball, football or horseshoes. Since this activity occurred on the second day of the Feast, it gave the singles an opportunity to meet one another and plan other activities. The singles also enjoyed pastries, juice and coffee one morning several days later in a seventh-floor hospitality room at Tan-Tar-A with a beautiful view of the lake and hills.

Approximately 40 teenagers and parents gathered at the State Park on October 3 for a cookout and fellowship. Hamburgers were grilled as teens visited with one another and played kickball and horseshoes against the backdrop of a gorgeous afternoon. That same afternoon, the pre-teens assembled at a family fun indoor entertainment center in Lake of the Ozarks. Children enjoyed the tubes, slides, ball pits, Ferris wheel, bumper cars and roller coaster.

Tan-Tar-A hosted three functions for the brethren. One hundred nineteen brethren attended the Honors Luncheon for those aged 65 and older. Mr. Karl Beyersdorfer addressed the group after the meal. The Dinner/Dance occurred Tuesday evening, and was attended by over 300 people. A formal, plated dinner was served, after which tables had to be moved in order to accommodate all those who wanted to dance. The Deacons and Elders Luncheon took place between the two services on the Last Great Day. Mr. Rand Millich spoke to the group after lunch.

The Feast provided a foretaste of the Kingdom, with inspiring and timely messages, beautiful surroundings, special activities and family togetherness.

About 300 northeasterners and mid-westerners gathered at the Fernwood Resort and Convention Center in *Bushkill, Pennsylvania* for our first-ever Feast of Tabernacles in this Poconos community. Mr. Meredith joined these pioneers for the first few days, delivering three sermons before traveling to Myrtle Beach.

Other Poconos speakers included Messrs. Dan Friz, Jonathan McNair, Charles Knowlton, Carl Derstine and Ken Frank, who discussed such topics as how to prepare for the glorious future, how to make a Feast to remember, having a vision of the Kingdom, trusting Christ as our leader, our resurrection bodies, rearing children for kingship, ridding ourselves of fear in the millennium, restoration (not reformation) of the world, the Kingdom mystery, overcomer rewards and the meaning of the Last Great Day.

On Friday evening, Mr. Jonathan McNair conducted an interactive teen Bible Study on “the Feasts of God in the Bible.” The next night they had a pool and pizza party. Singles also had a Bible Study with Mr.



Bushkill, Pennsylvania

McNair on “Boundaries in Dating” and visited Bushkill Falls together one afternoon. Family Day was outdoors with a miniature golf tournament. Mr. Charles Knowlton addressed everyone at the Seniors’ Luncheon on the topic of “Survivors from Doing the Work Back to Doing the Work.” Elders, deacons and deaconesses dined together between services on the Last Great Day and were addressed by the site coordinator, who expressed appreciation for their service there and in their home churches. Seven little children were brought forward for the formal “Blessing of Children” during the Feast.

Rain during the first few days soon gave way to clear and sunny autumn skies for the rest of the Festival, amidst leaves just beginning to change into their golden splendor. Bushkill Falls provided an exciting afternoon’s walk around the “Niagara of Pennsylvania.” Nearby trails at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area offered scenic paths for hiking, horseback riding and other out-



door activities. Many acts of Christian generosity and service will make this Festival a cherished memory until our next preview of the Kingdom age.

Sunny weather and beautiful fall colors welcomed 375 Feastgoers from around the United States and Canada



Rapid City, South Dakota

to *Rapid City, South Dakota*.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau, and seemingly this whole city of 60,000 people, greeted brethren warmly. Surrounded by seven acres of

park and a quiet lake in the very center of Rapid City, the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center offered a fine place to conduct services throughout the Feast.

The messages were timely and inspiring. Visiting evangelist Mr. Richard Ames gave sermons titled “The Royal Family” and “Visualize The Kingdom”. Other sermon topics were: “Rejoice With Your Family At The Feast,” “Our Key To The Millennium,” “Could God’s Kingdom Be Near,” “Thy Kingdom Come,” “The Work of God in Modern Context,” “Are You Thankful You See?” and “The Last But Not Least Great Day.”

Mount Rushmore National Memorial, carved from a Black Hill peak, was the site for Family Day. The 60-foot granite faces of four U.S. Presidents provided a beautiful setting for this event. Approximately 360 brethren enjoyed the evening, a tour of the facility, and a fabulous dinner at the beautiful Buffalo Dining Room, which was closed to the public and opened just for this event. Mr. Nick Clifford, one of the few men still living who actually worked on the mountain, lectured and then fielded questions.

After a brief course in etiquette and the finer points of waiting on tables, the young singles (ages 21–30) served various courses to the 33 attendees at the Deacons and Elders luncheon. On a separate occasion, 23 young people (ages of 13–20) waited tables and served 55 who were in attendance at the Seniors’ Luncheon. Musical entertainment (by young people) and a message from the Festival Coordinator titled “The Golden Years” wrapped up this event.

A teen/family activity at Jackson Park provided exercise for those who so desired. More than 100 played volleyball or Frisbee golf and ate a Rapid City-style cookout. The teens and families also enjoyed a well-attended evening at the Flags-n-Wheels go-kart track. Approximately 30 singles had lunch together at the Courtyard Café between services on the first Holy Day,

and also enjoyed dinner together at Sanford’s Pub and Grub during the Feast.

Feastgoers visited area attractions such as Keystone City, Custer State Park, Mount Rushmore National Monument, Crazy Horse Memorial, the Badlands, Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave and the Hot Springs. Plenty of area restaurants, places to shop, museums, and hiking and cycling trails helped to make this a memorable Feast site. The power of God’s spirit was evident among His people in their fellowship, acts of service and positive giving attitude.

At the Omni Bayfront Hotel in *Corpus Christi, Texas*, 296 brethren came together to keep the Feast, not only from Texas but also from the east and west coasts of the U.S., as well as from throughout the southern U.S. Messages were timely and inspiring. Mr. and Mrs. Rand Millich were guests for the first part of the Feast. Mr. Millich first focused on how we are to be perfecting holiness now in preparation for the Kingdom; his second sermon focused on the fact that God’s promises of the future are sure. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bryce were guests for the last part of the Feast. Mr. Bryce gave two sermons: “The Blessings of Learning to Fear God” and “Preparing by Overcoming.” Other sermon topics included, “Keeping a Feast unto the Lord,” “The Feast Pictures God’s Grace Being Poured Out to the World,” “Are We Setting a Pattern of Loyalty?” and “Sowing Seeds for the Kingdom.”

Brethren enjoyed the many attractions Corpus Christi had to offer, including the USS Lexington, the Texas State Aquarium, Columbus’ Fleet and a variety of museums and art galleries. Many also enjoyed spending time at the beautiful beaches. Family Day was held at Fun Trackers, where everyone enjoyed the rides and games. The Teen Day was held at a local bowling alley. Singles enjoyed a dinner, a dolphin watch and a Bible Study by Mr. Rod Reynolds.

Attendees at the Seniors Luncheon enjoyed a nice meal with Mr. John Harbison as the guest speaker. Mr. Charles Bryce was the guest speaker at the Deacons and Elders luncheon, where he gave an update on the Work and some plans for the future. Those attending the Feast in Corpus enjoyed being together with God’s people and partaking of the spiritual Feast God gave us all.

After more than 20 years, *Squaw Valley, California* once again served as a Feast site to 379 enthusiastic brethren. Many of these brethren returned with fond memories of coming to Squaw Valley’s first Feast back in 1961. Near the magnificent Lake Tahoe, and host of the 1960 Olympics, this picturesque site captured the beauty of God’s nature. Services were held at the Plumpjack Conference Center, with many of the brethren staying on site or within a convenient walking distance. Feastgoers came from all over the United States and parts of Canada.



Following Mr. Meredith's inspiring opening night video, Mr. Rod McNair spoke to the brethren about becoming an eternal optimist and becoming "dealers of hope." For the afternoon service, Feastgoers heard Mr. John Ogwyn discuss latter-day prophecies. The next day, Mr. Ogwyn spoke about developing a sense of urgency. After Mr. Ogwyn's departure, brethren heard from visiting evangelist Mr. Richard Ames, who spoke about God's royal family and gave seven essential keys to loving one another. Other messages throughout this year's Feast centered on God's law, statutes and judgments, the soon-coming Millennium and enduring to the end.

Many group activities were available for brethren in Squaw Valley. On Friday afternoon, 79 teens, singles and



Squaw Valley, California

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2,000 feet  
up a two-  
mile trail.  
After a bit  
of rest and  
some great  
fellowship,  
hikers had  
the option

of returning back down the trail or taking the scenic tram. On Sunday, 29 deacons, elders and wives attended a luncheon at Jake's Restaurant on the beautiful shores of Lake Tahoe. That same afternoon, teens were invited to a Drop-In for pizza, games and fellowship! Family Day was held on the following afternoon, on the shores of Donner Lake. Brethren enjoyed picnic lunches, games and more fellowship with one another. On Monday evening, 54 singles boarded the MS Dixie II for a dinner cruise and dance. With the entire Milky Way visible from the deck of the ship, and a live band playing for the dance, this was surely a memorable evening! On Tuesday afternoon, 42 seniors gathered at the Wild Goose Restaurant overlooking the crystal shores of Lake Tahoe. That evening, brethren met back at Plumpjack for a Fun Show and Family Dance. This year's Fun Show featured talented brethren who sang, played the piano or guitar, told jokes or acted out skits. After the Fun Show came the Family dance. People of all ages joined on the dance floor for the Chicken Dance, Electric Slide, Hokey Pokey and good ol' swing dancing.

Many also enjoyed such area attractions as great shopping areas, horseback riding, and fishing and hiking at the stunning Lake Tahoe. Brethren left Squaw Valley spiritually filled with the wonderful messages inspired through God's ministers. Brethren were truly living God's way of give, helping others have a wonderful Feast.

Atop a mesa in the heart of *Prescott National Forest, Arizona*, 270 brethren enjoyed endless vistas as they caught the vision of ruling with Christ. God's ministers served a spiritual banquet brethren will be digesting throughout the year.

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Prescott, Arizona

brethren to recognize their *need* for salvation and to have a sense of urgency. Mr. Glen Gilchrist explained our importance to God and how to be a submitted Philadelphian. Mr. Ames stressed the real hope for the world and the importance of the "royal family." The offertories and sermonettes also added to the spiritual Feast.

Evening gatherings at the beautiful Prescott Resort brought Kingdom-seekers together in relaxed fellowship. Family Day at Castle Golf, a teen hike at Walker Lake, a singles' hike at Granite Mountain Basin, a Family Dance and a Fun Show all added to the outstanding Feast. The spectacular location afforded outdoor recreation, historical and cultural education and fabulous dining experiences. Feastgoers enjoyed sunny days and starry evenings scented with pine. Everyone reveled in rejoicing before the Lord, and learning to fear God.

The "Garden Island" of *Kauai, Hawaii*, once again provided a peaceful and near-millennial setting for 161 brethren enjoying the Feast. Comments from the Festival survey included: "Indeed, the most millennial Feast site ever attended" and "A fabulously spiritual Feast in a setting as close to paradise as the world can offer." Very high attendance at Church services—as well as at all scheduled activities—reflected the spirit of fellowship and anticipation of God's coming Kingdom. The organized activities included a Family Day with catered lunch at a beachside park, sand sculpturing contests, volleyball, and snorkeling in a protected cove with colorful tropical fish.

One of the Festival highlights included a very talented family entertainment evening followed by refreshments and a family dance. Early the next morning, nearly 100 brethren gathered to board two fast-moving catamaran boats that were to take brethren to the

renowned Na Pali coast, famous for its green cliffs rising more than 3,000 feet from the ocean.

Along the way, brethren were treated to spinning dolphins hurtling out of the water as they kept up with the boats. A lunch was provided along with midday snorkeling, before the boat returned back to port in time for everyone to attend afternoon Church services.

Continually changing skies provided bright blue clarity, brief rain showers and spectacular sunrises and sunsets. A heavier rain occurred before one morning service, which reminded us of the “latter rain” of blessing upon the earth during God’s Kingdom. The brilliant green tropical countryside contrasted beautifully with the bright blue ocean, which provided perfect water temperature for snorkeling and scuba diving. Festival messages kept everyone focused on the coming Kingdom of God and made brethren long for the time when the whole earth will be as peaceful as the beautiful island of Kauai.

For many brethren, the small city of *Cranbrook, British Columbia*, population 20,000, offers an ideal setting for observing a foretaste of Tomorrow’s World. A beautiful natural landscape guarded by the granite peaks of the Purcell and Selkirk ranges of the Canadian Rockies affords a quiet and relaxing atmosphere.

Those who kept the Feast at Cranbrook this year experienced unforgettably fine fall weather throughout. The sermons and sermonettes complemented the time and place in a very inspiring harmony. Mr. Bob League reminded us of the value of “Our Priceless Calling,” of how the Feast is a “Renewal of Our Dedication” and of the importance of “God’s Purpose for Us.” Mr. Stuart Wachowicz spoke on “Preparing to Rule.” Mr. Eldon Davis spoke on “Cleaning Us Up for the Kingdom.” Mr. Norman Aitchison spoke on “Our Coming Change.” The messages reached a climax with Mr. Gerald Weston’s sermons on “Preparing to Survive” and on “The Meaning of the Last Great Day.”

The attendance, averaging 163, lent itself to a true family atmosphere. Most activities invited the entire group to participate. Parents with children, teens, singles and seniors together added a wide variety of talent to the “Family Night,” where brethren enjoyed games, fellowship and dancing. The Holy Day buffets were well-attended, as was the Family Day at Fort Steele and the Family Swim Night at the impressive new Aquatic Centre. Many brethren, as you might expect, commented that this was their “best Feast ever!”

Ontario and Quebec Canadians, and few visitors from the United States, came together in a millennial setting in a North Hatley valley, near *Sherbrooke, Quebec*. Maximum attendance during the Feast was 160 on the weekly Sabbath. The Great Artist gave us a different picture daily, with more and more bright colors of His creation each day, with rain on just one evening and sunny warm days for the whole Feast.

All the speakers gave very uplifting messages regarding the Millennium. Site coordinator Mr. Jacques Secours put an emphasis on “we are family” and “unity.” Mr. Winston Gosse and Mr. Michael Elertson spoke on such topics as teamwork, having vision and being pilgrims of the truth. Mr. Gerald Weston, Director of the Work in Canada, spoke on “Five Lessons for Our Journey to the Kingdom.” Mr. Elertson highlighted the seventh day of the Feast with a sermon on how to prepare *now* to be a ruler; for his finale, everyone received a cup of apple juice with

which we all together toasted, “Thy kingdom come!”

More than three-fourths of the brethren participated in the dinner-dance and the Family Day activity, and a similar number chose to stay at the “Le President” hotel, which offered great opportunities for close fellowship. Each evening, one could see brethren going from one room to another, either to chat, share food or have

impromptu Bible study sessions. The pool was a popular location for having fun with the children, or relaxing and enjoying fellowship in warm whirlpool waters.

Teens and singles had the opportunity to visit a copper mine—since none stayed in the mine’s “bottomless pit,” all were at services the next morning. For the Seniors’ Luncheon, a hot buffet meal was served in a room adjacent to the meeting hall. Mr. Winston Gosse spoke, reminding them of how important they are to God, and how they serve God and His people through the prayers they offer for everyone.

At the Deacons and Elders Luncheon, Mr. Secours spoke on the importance of our calling and our service to God’s people, and reminded everyone that they are instruments in God’s hands and pillars in His house. Mr. Elertson presented statistics of the work done by the LCG. Rejoicing, participation and teamwork was the “name of the game” at all times at the Sherbrooke Feast site.

Approximately 120 brethren attended the Feast on *Prince Edward Island* at the Linkletter Hotel Complex, with rooms, the meeting hall and a nice restaurant all within walking distance of downtown Summerside.



Kauai, Hawaii

The atmosphere was of a joyous, convivial family reunion as brethren did almost everything together. Our Church family came together from all over Canada and the United States. Sermons from Mr. Weston, Mr. Ehman and Mr. Arnaldo were appreciated by all who attended.

Family Day was hosted by members from Massachusetts who were staying in a large three-story house. While the ladies served a meal provided by our hosts, the children played outside on an emerald green lawn overlooking the sapphire blue waters and red cliffs of the eastern shore. The relaxed atmosphere lent itself well to our catching up with the “family” members while getting to know our brothers and sisters from other areas.

One of the most enjoyable parts of the Feast in PEI is the annual “Newfie Scoff.” Newfoundland brethren put together a fabulous meal of moose, venison, salt beef, turkey, pease porridge, cloudberry and partridge berry tarts, not to mention vegetables that are common to most of us but prepared in the most delicious ways! The leftovers were made into a fantastic stew that was served at

Family Night. The next day, our teens, tweens and young adults enjoyed the unique and famous five-pin Canadian Bowling.

The Family Night activity began with displays of daring-do. Then one young lady, as part of a family routine, counted to 18 in roman numerals. Another young woman displayed her comic abilities with a routine about coal-mining. Entertainment was enhanced by the master of ceremonies, who told jokes between the skits, songs and musical performances. After the performances were over, everyone enjoyed board and card games and sitting in small groups talking over old times and

future plans. The Holy Day fellowship was enhanced by between-services walks on the nearby red shoreline for which PEI is famous.

—Compiled from reports by William Bowmer, Eldon Davis, Marshall and Jo Duhaime, Jeffrey Fall, Kenneth Frank, Glen Gilchrist, Adrienne Greene, Randy Gregory, Sheldon Monson, Carl Ponder, Jacques Secours and Larry Solomon. [CEN]



Prince Edward Island, Canada

## International Feast Reports

(continued from page 17)

Bolivar, the highest peak of Venezuela (16,427 feet), visible on clear days from the last two cable car stations.

An evening Bible Study, the blessing of the little children on the Last Great Day, a trip through the La Culata Paramo and a visit to the city of Merida completed the activities for a wonderful Feast.

Brethren in the beautiful colonial city of *Antigua, Guatemala* enjoyed a pleasant and moderate climate made even more comfortable by the human warmth of the brethren—those from Guatemala as well as those visiting from abroad. Truly this was a millennial Feast site, in a fitting place—quiet, hospitable, surrounded by mountains and three imposing volcanoes, pure air and temperate climate. Feastgoers heard edifying sermons

from Mr. Mario Hernandez, Director of the Spanish Work, and by Mr. Antonio Mora, visiting from San Francisco, California, USA.

Events included a children’s party that gave great joy to young and old alike, and a hike to one of the mountains surrounding Antigua. Many found the hike a challenge, but appreciated the rewards of pure air and the view from the mountaintop, which afforded a majestic view of the city and the imposing volcán de Agua. A special joy during the Feast was the baptism of a new sister into the body of Christ. One Feastgoer from Miami commented, “This has been the most spiritual and friendly Feast which we have had in 28 years.”

Thirty brethren kept the Feast in *Georgetown Guyana*, at the Woodbine Hotel. Messages encouraged the brethren to strive

for the Kingdom of God. Everyone present enjoyed hearing from Mr. Meredith via video, as well as hearing from visiting elder Mr. Donald Roach.

Brethren enjoyed a wide range of activities. Services one day were held at a nearby water park, where afterwards there was swimming as well as kayaking and pedal boat riding. There were also trips to the zoo and botanical gardens. Feastgoers also enjoyed a game of cricket at a picnic in the sports arena. The brethren in Guyana showed all, once again, that they are a warm and loving group.

—Compiled from reports by Dibar Apartian, Sergio Carvajal, Jr., Felipe Casing, Peter Devis, Raj Kumar, Kinnear Penman, Frank Reckerman, Donald Roach, Sergio Roca, Jerry Sam, Mehm Pho Saw, George Schaubeck, John Soosay, Peter Watson, Ian West and Douglas S. Winnail. [CEN]

# Are You “Playing a Role”?

By Josef Felber

**M**ost everyone has heard of John Wayne, Audrey Hepburn, Sophia Loren, Richard Gere, Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts. They are famous people who have one thing in common: they are all *actors*. They play roles that millions recognize and enjoy as entertainment. Although we have seen them many times in films, we probably know these people more by the roles they have played than for *who they really are* as individuals. This can lead to very interesting situations. Sometimes an actor plays a role so convincingly that members of an audience begin to believe the actor is actually the person they portray on the screen! A German actor, Klausjürgen Wussow, who played the role of the chief medical doctor in a TV film series called *Schwartzwaldklinik* (Black Forest Hospital), once mentioned in an interview that he received many letters from people who watched his films asking him for medical advice—in spite of the fact he had no medical training and was not a real doctor!

## Actors and Reality

But you may be wondering just what can you learn from this and what does all this have to do with your life as a Christian? Simply this—we not only play many roles in life, we have roles as sons, daughters, husbands,

wives, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles and grandparents. Some people play these roles more effectively than others. Even as Christians we play a role, yet many fail because they merely “play” this role instead of becoming what the role requires. Christians must “live” their roles, fulfilling their responsibilities. This is where knowing something about actors and acting can be helpful.

An actor and the character played by the actor are usually two very different people. When actors are on stage or in front of

period of time. While they are *acting* they are *only pretending*. When they play a role we do not see their real personalities or know their deepest convictions—we only see what the actor wants us to see. Actors just *pretend* to be a different person while they are doing their job in front of other people—and this is what has important implications for Christians.

When we are called to become Christians we cannot be actors—we must actually become a *different person* (see Acts 3:19; Romans 12:1–2).

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**Actors are seldom like the characters they play when they are acting. However, as we have seen, actors who play their roles convincingly can lead people to believe they are something they are not—they can deceive other people.**

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a camera they simply *play a role*. When the camera goes off, or when they leave the stage, they become a different person—they become themselves—who they really are. Actors are seldom like the characters they play when they are acting. However, as we have seen, actors who play their roles convincingly can lead people to believe they are something they are not—they can deceive other people. Sometimes actors can lose touch with reality and *deceive themselves* into believing they are something they are not because of the role-playing that goes on. The critical point to remember is that actors only play their role for a *temporary*

Christians are called to be ambassadors of the government of God and representatives of God’s way of life (2 Corinthians 5:20). These are not just *roles* that we learn to play in front of people. True Christians must actually become *real* ambassadors who are *deeply convicted* about God’s way of life. One of the major differences between an actor and a real ambassador of a nation is that the ambassador is an official representative twenty-four hours a day—wherever he goes and in whatever he does. As Christians, we have a similar responsibility of representing Jesus Christ in everything we do and say. We cannot just be



actors when we are at church or when we are around other Christians! We must become real Christians who *actually live* by every word of God *all the time* (Matthew 4:4).

The ultimate future for Christians is to become members of God's family and participate in the coming kingdom of God. There we will *actually be* kings and priests (Revelation 5:10). These will not be temporary roles that any actor can play; they will be *permanent assignments*! We will not be able to *pretend* to be godly leaders and rulers. To succeed and be effective, we must actually develop the character and wisdom necessary to be *real* kings and priests that God can use to advance His kingdom. Anyone who is *just acting* will not receive these rewards!

This brings up some interesting questions. If you have attended church and followed God's way of life for years, and you then drift off in other directions, were you just playing a role? Were you just pretending? Are you deeply committed to God's Church and to God's way of life, or are you simply playing a role that is convenient or expected for now? Is the person that people see at church the *real you*—or are they watching an *actor*? The word "hypocrite" comes from a Greek word meaning "actor"—though today it is used to describe someone who puts on a false appearance in word or deed. This is something to think about.

### Role of the Heart

But what is the *key* to becoming a real Christian, a successful ambassador and an effective future king or priest? If we truly desire to follow Jesus Christ and become real Christians we must develop the right attitude. This involves our deepest

intentions, our deepest motivations—what is really in our heart. We must earnestly desire, and strive to develop, the very heart and mind of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5). David became "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22) because David earnestly asked God, "create in me a clean heart" (Psalm 51:10). If we want to develop a godly heart we must let God's laws be a "lamp to our feet, and a light to our path" (Psalm 119:105). We must also

actions that are contrary to God's laws. True Christians cannot be actors who pretend to think one way and then behave another way. Our actions must come to reflect our true thoughts—God's thoughts.

The Apostle Paul states that he had a pure heart and a pure conscience (Acts 23:1) because that was his overriding goal (Acts 24:16). If we really desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1) we will strive to

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**But what is the key to becoming a real Christian, a successful ambassador and an effective king or priest? If we truly desire to follow Jesus Christ and become real Christians we must develop the right attitude. This involves our deepest intentions, our deepest motivations—what is really in our heart.**

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develop real compassion for those around us (Matthew 23:37).

The Christian process of becoming a different person with a godly heart also involves being careful not to have an evil heart (Hebrews 3:12). The Bible tells us, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). Human reasoning, influenced by Satan and the ideas of this world, can be very deceptive. If we begin to trust ourselves instead of relying on God's word to guide us we can easily become *actors* and actually deceive ourselves—thinking we are right when we are actually very wrong (see Jeremiah 17:5–8). This is why Jesus warned us to carefully watch the words that come out of our mouths because our words reflect what is in our heart (Luke 6:45). As Christians we must constantly strive for a pure heart by examining our thoughts and intentions and bring "every thought" into subjection to Christ's instructions (2 Corinthians 10:3–5). This is what the Bible refers to as "circumcision" of the heart (Romans 2:29). It involves recognizing and getting rid of thoughts and

have a pure heart. This is important because our prayers will not be effective if we know we have sins and evil thoughts in our heart that we continue to tolerate. We become *actors* when we *pretend* we are OK and do not make the required effort to overcome and get rid of evil thoughts and habits. Are you "playing a role"? Or are you truly striving to fulfill your God-given responsibilities?

God wants us to succeed and to be in His kingdom. To have a pure heart is the *beginning* of all good things and the *key* to obtaining the rewards that God has promised. Real Christians cannot be actors who pretend to be something when they are not. True Christians must *really become different people—people after God's own heart*. This is how we can become successful ambassadors, and serve effectively in the kingdom of God as kings and priests. This is why Jesus said, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Jesus was not talking to actors. He was pointing the way to real and lasting success. ☐

# Living Youth Camp: Home Away from Home

By Gerald Weston

“**B**eing here is like coming home again.” This statement reflected the sentiment of many of the staff and veteran campers who gathered at Northwoods Christian Camp from July 20 to August 3. Joshua Penman, a veteran of five years, came to his “home away from home” all the way from New Zealand. Gina Gosse has been to all ten GYC/LYC camps and Annette Frank and Rachelle Fall are close on her heels with nine camps apiece. About a third of our campers were first-timers this year, but many of the others have made LYC a rite of summer.

Before camp began, there was a two-day staff orientation for counselors and department heads. This preparation time is essential to the success of the program. In it, Camp Director Gerald Weston covered the “Philosophical Approach” that is the undergirding of the camp. One point he made was that: “These teens who come here are not ours. They belong to their parents and ultimately to God. Parents have a reasonable expectation that they will be properly cared for and returned to them safely, and hopefully even a little better than when they arrived.”

Mr. Lambert Greer then covered various legal considerations of which everyone needed to be aware. He also discussed how one can be successful as a staff member and said, “You are writing your resumé for 2005 by how you perform this year.” Mr. Jonathan McNair pointed out the “big picture” of our responsibility to pass along to the next generation the true way of life we are learning. “We are here to do more than just ‘play camp.’ We are here to un-apologetically teach God’s way of life,” he said. Mr. Sheldon Monson spoke on the importance of leading by example—a principle that all his canoe staff know he practices.

Most campers arrived on the afternoon of Tuesday, July 20, but more than 50 were scheduled to arrive in the late evening by bus from the Saginaw Airport. This is always a stressful time for the office personnel, as each year some few individuals will have a flight delayed or cancelled and camp staffers must scramble to solve the difficulties that arise. Everyone was happy when the last flight came in on time and no one was delayed past the bus departure time, but cheers changed to disappointment a short while later when

the chartered bus broke down 20 minutes out of the airport. This delay caused the bus to arrive at camp shortly after 1:00 a.m. and every dorm was disturbed by campers’ late arrival, as they checked in and were scattered throughout the campus. Nevertheless, camp started with great enthusiasm the next morning in spite of the short night.

On opening day, Mr. Weston asked the question: “What makes this camp so special?” He explained: “We have a wonderful location with a picture-perfect lake, green trees surrounding a grassy meadow, deer with their spotted fawns roaming about freely, white fluffy clouds and blue skies. But is this what makes LYC so special? Other camps can make similar boasts, but what makes LYC really special is the way of life promoted here. We teach the way of love, which is defined as outgoing concern for the other fellow. When someone is trying to out-cool the other person, who is he thinking of? Himself! We want you to get your mind off yourself and be concerned about the other person. That shy, awkward or backward person may appear very different from you, but inside he has a heart, feelings, hopes and dreams, and he wants to love and be loved just like you. This is why we have traditions and rules to help you learn *how* to show outgoing concern and to think of the well-being of the other person. When all of us care about the other person, we all win!”

Christian Living was the first class of each day. The theme this year was “God is our Creator.” Exciting new information has come out in recent years demonstrating absolutely that life demands a designer. As one prominent former chemical evolutionist explained on a video that was shown, “there is not the slightest possibility” of life springing up from chemicals alone. Each minister explained different aspects of creation vs. evolution. For example, Mr. Greer explained the gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, which allows for harmonizing some aspects of science with the Bible.

After Christian Living, campers participated in a full schedule of activities. A highlight for many campers was the canoe trip to Government Island. Mr. Sheldon Monson and his staff set up a well-ordered

camp with interesting activities to keep everyone occupied for the overnight adventure. We were blessed this year with cool but good weather conditions for all four trips.

Before breakfast, each day began with Morning Motivation and one of our traditions: singing a corny little song for which campers and staff make up verses relating to events that occur during camp. For example, campers returning from the canoe trip look forward to stopping off at an ice cream shop in the quaint little village of Cedarville. Several years ago, the following verse was added regarding this delightful excursion: “After our trip / We took a walk / And soon we found / An ice cream shop.” Another verse from a couple of years ago went like this: “In Mike’s mattress / There lives a squirrel / He comes and goes / His name is Meryl.” (It should be noted that the squirrel is no longer allowed in the dorm!)

For Creative Skills class, Mr. Greer had the campers launch bottle rockets and build bridges out of toothpicks. Dorm 4-B designed a bridge so well that it suspended 20.5 pounds of water before collapsing. In Life Skills class, taught by Mr. Jerry Ruddlesden (who attends each year as our business manager) students this year learned the life skill of saving money while shopping for groceries. Other classes included dance, campus improvement, volleyball and media.

Each year we drop a few classes and replace them with something brand new, or resurrect an old class to give variety to the program. This year we revived speech, fitness for life and flag football. We also introduced golf. The department head for fitness was Mrs. Larry Solomon, who also doubled as camp nurse. No campers needed to see her *after* fitness class, but more than one was known to see her *before* the class, looking for a way out. “Fit” is something most of our campers are not!

Each day ended with Evening Reflection. Campers and staff assembled in the chapel to sing a few hymns and hear Mr. Weston read a story that taught a lesson. Campers left Evening Reflection for their dorms and a good night’s rest, singing “By This Shall All Men Know.” After a hard day of work, staff then retired for relaxation to a tent dubbed “The Leaning Elephant.”

One evening at the Leaning Elephant, staff member Dwayne Wilks noticed some strange lights in the sky. Being from Canada, he quickly recognized them as the Northern Lights. Within a few minutes, the entire sky was filled with streaks and waves of light. Runners were dispatched to all dorms to get everyone out to see this strange phenomenon, which most had never seen and some had never even heard of. Even some of our Canadian youth saw the Northern Lights for the first time this year! This was a special treat for Cecille and Cole

Burkes and T.J. Arender, who traveled 31 hours by bus all the way from Mississippi. It was something very few of their friends back home will ever have an opportunity to see.

This year, we were pleased to have two special “guest appearances” at camp. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bryce came for the opening days of camp, and Mr. and Mrs. Roderick C. Meredith saw us close it down at the end. This was the Bryces’ first visit to camp since it became known as Living Youth Camp in 1999, and they seemed pleased with the maturing of the camp program. This was the fourth visit by Mr. and Mrs. Meredith, and their third to Northwoods. Messrs. Meredith and Bryce each answered questions during Friday night Bible Studies, and spoke on the weekly Sabbath. Mr. Bryce challenged everyone to “be a pioneer in character,” and Mr. Meredith spoke on the “big picture”—where we are in the world today, and how it is leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. It was very encouraging to have the Presiding Evangelist and the Director of Church Administration show such interest and support toward our youth and the camp program. We also appreciated having their wives help out in the kitchen and participate in the program.

Some members have asked why we chose a camp with such a remote location. There are two primary reasons. First, this camp offers a truly unique opportunity for our young people. It is away from big city lights and has a “camp feel.” It is surrounded by wilderness, rather than by farmland or the hustle and bustle of a resort community. Our young people are able to see and experience things that they could not elsewhere. In addition to the abundant wildlife (including three wolves and a bear that were seen), there is the unique beauty of the magnificent Mackinac Bridge, which straddles the passageway between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. The beautiful Le Cheneaux Islands near the villages of Hessel and Cedarville also add to the atmosphere. A fundamental reason, however, is that this camp is available, affordable and suitable for our program. It is extremely difficult to locate a camp that meets these qualifications, and the present location far surpasses our experiences in both Missouri and North Carolina. Every other camp we investigated was either too expensive, not available for the length of time and dates we need to work within, or lacking housing facilities that matched our needs. Even Northwoods lacked adequate housing at first, but after two years of negotiation the camp built a double dormitory, freed up a two-week time slot within our parameters, and was willing to work with us on other necessary improvements. So far, this camp has served us well and, for those of us who attend each summer, it is truly “like coming home again!” ☐

## Moving Forward to the Kingdom

(continued from page 2)

“need” are at the very *bottom* of the list when you are in *real trouble*—as untold millions of people have experienced, even in modern times in the prison camps of Adolph Hitler, Emperor Hirohito and elsewhere on this earth. It is good for all of us to **meditate** on this—and on what is **really** important.

Mr. John Ogwyn, Dr. Torrance’s immediate supervisor and pastor, told me that as he visited with Dr. Torrance and his wife, on the night before he died, Dr. Torrance’s last thoughts were about his sermonettes planned for the Feast. He said, “Would you want to take my notes so that someone else could give these sermonettes in case I am not able to?” Dr. Torrance realized that his body was giving out, and he was having trouble breathing. But, his last thoughts were of serving the brethren!

This reminded me of the life of the patriarch Jacob. Remember how, in Genesis 49, he gathered his sons together to explain what would befall them in the “last days” (v. 1). Then, after this prophetic discourse, he charged them to bury him where Abraham and Sarah had been buried. Finally, “when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people” (v. 33). So Jacob was *positive* in his outlook. He was focusing upon the “end time” fulfillment of God’s promises to the

tribes of Israel—and on what his sons should be doing after his death. He was not moaning and pitifully crying out to God in a morbid *fear* of death.

Similarly, as Moses died, he told his successor Joshua, “*Be strong and of good courage*, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

So, dear brethren, as a number of us leave this physical existence over the next 10 or 15 years, we need to realize what is **most** important: the *Kingdom of God*, and our preparation for it. We, too, should tell those we may be leaving behind to focus on the *vital* opportunities to serve others and be involved in God’s Work and be preparing for His Kingdom—the very **purpose** of human existence.

We all need to be **positive**. For, although *serious* trials and troubles are certainly ahead, as Moses told Joshua about our God, “**He** is the One who goes with you. He will **not** leave you nor forsake you.”

Brethren, now that we are back from the Feast, let us review our sermon notes and pray fervently that God will *energize* us with a spiritual zeal surpassing anything we have ever experienced. For the end of this society is coming, and we *need to be ready!*



## The End Is Near

(continued from page 3)

Daniel 12:11 also states that the “daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up” about three-and-a-half years before the **end** of the age!

Then, the specific prophecy of the Messiah and the *final* “prince who is to come” is given in Daniel 9:26–27. The prince mentioned in verse 26 undoubtedly refers to *Titus*—the Roman general who conquered and destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD. According to normal grammatical structure, *Titus* would be the antecedent of the “he” noted in verse 27. So, if our understanding is correct, this *final* “prince” will confirm or “cut a covenant” with the Jewish people for a prophetic week—seven

literal years. Then, he will apparently *break* that covenant in the middle of the seven-year prophetic week—after three-and-a-half years. According to the other two references I have cited in Daniel, he will “take away the daily sacrifice” at that time and place there an “abomination”—probably some pagan idol, as Antiochus Epiphanes did.

Brethren, I am *very aware* that these exact dates and events are not fully provable! But there is *no question* that we are now, finally, *extremely close* to the very end of the 6,000 years of human rule allotted to mankind before God’s intervention. We are told to “watch” and to “understand.” Remember, the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell us: “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so

that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:4–6).

So I now *urge* all of you dear brethren to fully realize how **very close** we are to the glorious appearing of our Savior and King! Certainly God can *speed up* events (Romans 9:28) or slow the pace (2 Peter 3:9). Yet we will need deep *understanding*, faith and **courage** to go through the intervening years without turning aside or giving up! We must prepare for the Second Coming **now**, and endure to “the end” (Matthew 24:13), or to *the end* of our own personal lives! For the most horrifying tribulation in human history *lies just*



*ahead!* And the *preliminary* manifestations of drought, famine, disease epidemics, fires, hurricanes, floods and “great earthquakes” will be upon us before the full-scale Great Tribulation.

As these events unfold, we should all pray fervently—*not only* for our brethren, but for our friends, our loved ones and our neighbors all over this world. When these events begin to occur, we should take the opportunity to humbly and lovingly *reach out* to our neighbors and say, “Look, we are not perfect and we don’t have all the answers! But the Church I attend *really does* understand *why* these terrible events are now happening, and what is going to happen next! *If you’d truly like to understand*, please get in touch!”

Perhaps at that point, you might offer them our booklet, *Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ’s Return*, or some other pertinent material. But

do sincerely, *humbly* and *lovingly* reach out to them in a way that will make them know you love them and sincerely care! Then **pray** that God will open their eyes and use *you* as an instrument to help them.

Let us all remember, brethren, that most of these people are truly sincere. They have been **blinded** by Satan the Devil (Revelation 12:9). Without God’s intervention, they cannot understand! As Jesus Himself stated: “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day... Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father” (John 6:44, 65).

But God’s Word also shows us that in the apostolic Church, at a time of upset and “havoc” after the martyrdom of Stephen, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere *preaching the word*” (Acts 8:4). And Paul wrote the

Christians of his day that God “called you **by our gospel**” (2 Thessalonians 2:14). So God “calls” people through the agency of human beings preaching the Truth to them—though **He** must open their minds.

There are *many* indications that God wants us to *reach out* to the whole world—especially at this time of the **end**. After describing the Great Tribulation—the “time of trouble” at the end of this age, Daniel was inspired to write to us, “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who *turn many* to righteousness like the **stars** forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

Dear brethren, let us draw *closer to our God* than we have **ever been!** And let us use these coming traumatic events as an opportunity to powerfully **serve** our fellow man with the precious Truth we have been given. ☞

## Upcoming **Tomorrow’s World** Telecasts

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 AM ET

VISION (Canada): Sunday, 5:30 PM & Monday–Friday, 3:00 AM ET

Air Date	Broadcast Title
November 7	Europe: The Next Superpower?
November 14	Armageddon in Prophecy
November 21	Battle for the Bible
November 28	The Coming Spirit War
December 5	Peace of Mind Through Prayer
December 12	A Tale of Two Churches
December 19	Will You Go to Heaven?
December 26	Origins of Christmas

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

## Ordinations

*Mr. Charles Ogwyn* was ordained as an elder on August 30, 2004, during the Southern Region Ministerial Conference. Mr. John Ogwyn performed the ordination, assisted by other ministers in the region. The newly ordained elder will serve the brethren in the Little Rock, Arkansas, area as well as in Memphis, Tennessee. On this same occasion, *Messrs. Carl Ponder and Larry Solomon* were raised to Pastor rank. Mr. Ponder has been serving as Area

Pastor for south-central Alabama and Georgia, and for South Carolina. Mr. Larry Solomon has been serving as area pastor for Oklahoma and the Texas “panhandle.”

On September 30, *Messrs. Vincent Lardé and Roland Lecocq* were ordained as deacons in Evian, France, during the Feast of Tabernacles. Mr. Lardé, who assists Mr. Apartian in the media phase of the French Work, will continue to serve the brethren in

Brussels, Belgium. Mr. Lecocq serves the Geneva, Switzerland, congregation; he contributes as Treasurer for the French Work and in many other ways.

Regional Pastor Rand Millich raised *Mr. Sheldon Monson* to the rank of Pastor on the Sabbath of August 14, 2004. Mr. Monson is currently serving congregations in Bismarck, North Dakota; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Dubuque, Iowa and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

## Missouri Pre-Teen Camp a Success!

On Sunday, June 20, 2004, 39 campers and 35 staff members from 13 states gathered for the Missouri Preteen Living Youth Camp. This fourth year of the camp was held at the Cuivre River State Park, north of St. Louis.

Temperatures during the week were pleasantly mild, and for seven days campers enjoyed activities such as flag football, volleyball, archery, riflery, a challenge course and fitness for life. Rounding out the outdoor activities were fishing, canoeing, a nature hike and instruction on how to build a campfire. Students also participated in classes on first aid and emergency preparedness, water safety, manners and Christian Living. Mr. Davy Crockett taught the Christian Living classes, and gave Biblical guidelines for sportsmanship and good citizenship. In the manners class this year, Mrs. Linda Stevens discussed clothing care and modesty. Mr. Jeff Henderson gave guidelines for building campfires, and let the campers try starting a fire without matches.

On Wednesday, the campers enjoyed a morning of softball, a special arts and crafts class where the boys decorated caps and the girls made American flag pins, a children’s choir practice to prepare for the Sabbath performance, and an afternoon of swimming at the lake.

Highlights from evening activities were a mega-relay race; a blindfolded maze tournament; a musical talent evening; Bible baseball; and a visit by a local expert on Indian artifacts who brought along arrowheads, tomahawks and beaded handicrafts. Kitchen crews led by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Oswald and Mrs. Carolyn Ramsey served excellent meals, much to the appreciation of the hungry campers and staff. On the Sabbath, the St. Louis congregation and Mr. and Mrs. Rand Millich joined the LYC group for Sabbath services and dinner.

—Ann Rankin and Randy Gregory

## Marriage

*Sergio Carvajal, Jr., and Vanesa Navarette*—Living Church of God members from Chile and Argentina respectively—were married in Santiago, Chile, on September 26, 2004. Elder Raul Colon performed the marriage ceremony.

## Birth

Brian and Jennifer Frank of Canada’s Kingston, Ontario congregation, are happy to announce the birth of their first child, *Zachary Matthew Frank*. He was born on August 8, 2004, weighing 7 pounds, 13 ounces. Grandparents Ken and Colleen Frank, and Winston and Edna Gosse, are pleased to welcome their first grandson.

# In Loving Memory

Funeral services were conducted Sunday, October 24, 2004 for *Dr. Lynn Edward Torrance*, a minister of the Living Church of God and a pioneer in this era of God's Work. Dr. Torrance served full-time in the Work of God, first as a teacher and later as a minister, for just over half a century. At the time of his death he was living in Big Sandy, Texas and serving as Associate Pastor of the Gladewater congregation.

Born in Kansas on October 5, 1917, Dr. Torrance served during the early part of World War II in the Philippines and was taken a prisoner of war by the Japanese in 1942. In 1945 he emerged from a Japanese prisoner of war camp weighing just 87 pounds. Returning to the United States, he pursued a teaching degree, and within a few years began listening to Herbert W. Armstrong on the radio. After traveling to Pasadena, California in 1953, Mr. Armstrong hired him to begin teaching at Imperial Schools, a Church-sponsored elementary and high school.

Dr. Torrance initially served as Principal of Imperial Schools, then, beginning in the fall of 1956, started teaching at Ambassador College. When the third Ambassador College campus was opened in 1964 at Big Sandy, Texas, he was transferred there to serve as the Registrar. He continued in this capacity (except during the period of the school's closure) until the spring of 1994 when he resigned because (in his words), "the one called the Greek scholar had undermined every last single doctrine Mr. Armstrong had proven from the Bible to be true."

Ordained as an elder in 1979, Dr. Torrance served in the field ministry until the College at Big Sandy reopened in 1981. A few months after his resignation from the College in 1994, he and his wife went to San Diego to meet with Mr. Roderick C. Meredith, and once again began to serve full-time in the ministry. In the years following, he traveled throughout much of Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas, giving sermons, conducting Bible Studies and serving God's people.

Dr. Torrance died in his sleep at his home in Big Sandy on the Day of Atonement. He is survived by his wife, Louise, as well as by two sons, five stepchildren, and numerous grandchildren. Dr. Torrance remained active in the Work up until the very day of his death, having com-

pleted work on two sermonettes he was scheduled to give at the Feast the very afternoon before he died. His kindness and humor as well as his hard work and dedication to God will be remembered by all who knew him.

*Robert E. Danford*, an LCG member in Denver, Colorado, died on August 22, 2004. He was 76 years old. With his wife Joanne, who preceded him in death, he had been a member of God's Church since 1968. Throughout the years, the Danford home welcomed hundreds of travelers and other visitors. He is survived by four children—Robert, Lalia (Sash), Elise (Newlin) and Duane—and by seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

*Tom Hill*, a member of the LCG congregation in Fresno, California, died on July 28, 2004, after a prolonged illness. He was 62 years old. Baptized on June 23, 2000, Tom was deeply committed and dedicated to his faith and the hope of the resurrection. He suffered many serious health trials for years, yet through it all set an inspiring example of enduring affliction patiently and cheerfully. The memorial, conducted by Mr. Rod McNair, pastor of the Fresno congregation, was held on August 8 at the Hill home and was well-attended by family members and local Fresno brethren. Tom is survived by his wife Lilla (also a member in Fresno), two brothers, three children, five grandchildren, one great grandchild, two stepdaughters, one step grand-daughter, and his "adopted" mother (in-law) Elizabeth Newberry, also a member in Fresno.

*Christopher Marshall*, LCG member in Atlanta, Georgia, died on October 15, 2004, while recovering from complications of back surgery. He was 47 years old. First called in his teens, then baptized into God's Church in his twenties, he wholeheartedly studied the Bible, and though others might have considered that he led a hard life, he would always say that no matter how hard one's trials might become, God expects us not to give up on His truth. Chris was known as one who experienced great trials but never gave up. He is survived by three children, and will be missed by many, many friends who will remember him for his knowledge of the Bible, his humor, and the love that he showed to everyone.

**We want to hear more about the happy milestones in the lives of our brethren. If your family has had a birth, marriage or major anniversary, please ask your local pastor to send word to the *Living Church News*, PO Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010 (or to send e-mail to [lcncog.org](mailto:lcncog.org)).**

# Commentary

## The Way to Peace

By Douglas S. Winnail

The search for peace is a major concern in the world today. People pray for peace. They light candles for peace. They march in the streets and stage demonstrations to promote peace and prevent war. Yet strife, violence and war continue. Is there a reason? Why have the concerted efforts of intelligent human beings for more than a century failed to find a lasting peace between nations and peoples?

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, representatives of the leading nations of the world held a series of peace conferences at the Hague in Holland to find ways to eliminate hostilities between nations. Yet, these conferences failed to prevent the outbreak of World War I—the war that was supposed to end all wars.

Idealistic leaders formed the League of Nations in an effort to prevent wars. Yet the League was unable to prevent the devastation of World War II.

More recently, the United Nations has proven powerless to prevent the war in Iraq.

Why have human efforts to prevent war and establish lasting peace failed again and again? Are there vital keys that have been overlooked? While it may come as a surprise in our modern secular world, the Bible reveals why intelligent human beings have not been able to find the way to peace. The scriptures also explain the way to peace and the scriptures show how war will ultimately be eliminated from this earth.

More than 2,500 years ago, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed: “The way of peace they have not known and there is no justice in their ways. They have made themselves crooked paths. Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.”

The Bible states that human beings simply do not know the way to peace. Armed forces, peace confer-

ences, international negotiations have not and will not solve the problem. In the Psalms, King David revealed the key to peace when he said: “Great peace have those who love Your law.” The laws and the commandments of God—“Thou shall not kill” and “Love your neighbor as yourself”—point the way to real peace.

This might sound naive and unrealistic to our modern ear. Yet one of the greatest military leaders in modern history pointed to the same solution. General Douglas MacArthur said at the close of World War II that the real solution to the problem of war would involve a spiritual dimension. The Bible reveals that God—not the United Nations or some international conference—will establish peace in this troubled world.

The book of Revelation states that Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth as “King of kings and Lord of lords” to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth and reign on this earth.

Isaiah refers to the returning Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace who will establish a world ruling government, and reveals that of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. That government will be set up in Jerusalem, and will proclaim the laws of God to the world. As the peoples of this world learn to live by the laws of God, they will eventually “beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

This is the way that peace will come to this earth, and this is what the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is all about.

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The above is an adaptation of one of the many commentaries, on key topics facing our world, available at the [www.lcg.org](http://www.lcg.org) and [www.tomorrowworld.org](http://www.tomorrowworld.org) Web sites.