

Living Church News

Vol. 7, No. 1

January–February 2005



Inside:

Trust in the Real God	3
Put God's Word in Your Heart	4
Redeeming The Time	7
How Much Fruit Are You Bearing?	10
Earthquakes and God	13
International Corner...	14
Child-Rearing: Passing the Baton	16
Local Church News	22
Living Youth Camp	24

Open Doors for the Work

Dear Brethren and Friends,

The warmth, love and unity at our most recent Council of Elders meeting last November was most encouraging—as it always is. It was very inspiring to hear reports from all over the world about the growth in the Work that Christ has given us to do.

Mr. Bruce Tyler gave an encouraging report about how we are moving forward in Australia, New Zealand and throughout all of Australasia. Mr. Syd Hull told us about growth in South Africa—and the unusual challenges God's people face there. Dr. Douglas Winnail—stationed in Ireland—told us about plans for moving our Church offices to a location north of London, and about continuing growth in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Europe and Northern Africa. Mario Hernandez gave an inspiring report about the growth in the Spanish Work—still a small Work, but with outstanding individuals coming along to help move us forward. I will be writing more and in greater detail about each of these developments in the future. Christ is certainly moving this Work to a higher level, and we are all grateful to have a part in what *He* is doing!

One of the most inspiring developments is that our station representative, Richard Janik, was able to meet two gentlemen in Canada who represent television outlets in the British Isles. He and our Canadian Director, Mr. Gerald Weston, were able to talk in detail with these men and convince them to come to our Headquarters here in Charlotte to discuss the opportunity to go on British television. Now, after so many years, it looks like we are going to be able to reach the British Isles and parts of Northwestern Europe via television for the *very first time!* There are *tens of millions* of potential viewers.

I have hoped and prayed for decades that God would help His Work really “get going” in reaching the “mother country” of our English-speaking world more powerfully. Way back in 1954, I had the opportunity to join Mr. and Mrs. Herbert W. Armstrong, and Dick Armstrong, in some of the earliest efforts to establish God's Work in Britain. I joined Mr. Armstrong in speaking briefly at small public lectures in Belfast, Glasgow, Birmingham and then London in the summer of 1954. Later, my wife and I were sent to London to expedite the growth of the Work there. Our first child, Elizabeth, was born in London. Then, in 1960, Mr. Armstrong sent me back to Britain to hold *12 solid weeks* of evangelistic campaigns—four weeks each in Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester. We were able to establish regular Sabbath ser-

vices in each of these areas and help lay the foundation for God's modern Work in Britain at that time. Mr. Armstrong then asked me to remain over for the first semester to help get Ambassador College established at Bricket Wood, England. It was a wonderful opportunity. I am grateful to have had a part in the earliest beginnings of the Work Christ established in Britain in our time.

However, with the massive apostasy that engulfed our former association, Christ's Work in Britain has dwindled to practically nothing! So now, I hope and pray—and ask all of you to *please pray with me*—that we can finally get Christ's message out with genuine power throughout the British Isles! We will do all that we can to expedite this. And with the backing of your prayers, I am sure Christ will help us do *far more* than we could ever remotely do on our own.

Another encouraging development is that we are now greatly expanding our use of the Internet. The worldwide Internet has absolutely *tremendous* potential to reach people in a way that nothing else does! We will be able—through this medium—to reach into communist China, into India, throughout the Muslim world, and into many other areas of Central and South America, Africa and elsewhere in a way we could not do by any other means. So please pray for our Internet Coordinator, Mr. Steve Stiffler—who is also director of the *Tomorrow's World* telecast—and for all of us on the “team” involved in this project! You will be hearing more about our use of the Internet in months to come.

Additionally, we are now working on plans for a Young Adult Training Program. This program will be designed to strengthen the Bible knowledge, leadership and capacity of scores or even hundreds of young people in the Church. It will strengthen the base of our Work and Church around the world, provide additional ministry and leadership in the Work, and help these young people to grow in grace and knowledge in a way they might not by any other means. With a number of years left to complete the Work, we still have a great need for future ministers and leaders—especially as many of our older ministers and leaders come to the end of their lives. We need to do *everything we can* to train future leaders, and will appreciate *your prayers* in this regard!

As this present age draws to a close, we need to go “all out” to reach this confused world with Christ's message—more than we have ever done. As most of you know, more of the senior ministers and leaders in our former association came with this present Work, to assist me in getting out this message, than went to any other group after the apostasy got underway. I am so grateful that we have such dedicated and experienced men and women to help us. Many of us spent *decades* helping build the Work that Christ did through Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. We deeply *appreciate* what Christ did through Mr. Armstrong, and we appreciate the opportunity we had to assist. But, without question, the Work back then *did not* “complete the job.” As Mr. Armstrong's final letter to the brethren stated: “The greatest work lies yet ahead.”

So we are not trying to “outdo” what Mr. Armstrong did at all! It was part of *our lives* and *our effort*, also. If he were still alive, I know he would tell me: “Rod, *of course* you need to move ahead and do the Work

continues on page 20

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The *Living Church News* is published bimonthly by the Living Church of God, 2301 Crown Centre Drive, Charlotte, NC 28227. Subscriptions are sent without charge to all members of the Living Church of God and others who may request them.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Living Church News
P.O. Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227

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Trust in the *Real* God

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

As one who spent thousands of hours with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong over a period of some 36 years, I noticed that one of the outstanding qualities that made him a truly great servant of God was his remarkable trust in Almighty God. Mr. Armstrong—coming into the Truth after a career in business—had a most unusual background as he came into the “Sardis” Church of God. Many of the less educated ministers with whom he was working did not in any way see the “Big Picture,” and most were unwilling to grow in new knowledge as well. So Mr. Armstrong stood virtually *alone* in restoring the full Truth of the Bible in God’s Church—and in having the vision, the zeal and the perseverance to build an effective worldwide organization to proclaim Christ’s message to the nations of this world. As he stood virtually *alone*, with only the help of his dedicated wife, he learned to trust in God, quietly, in a way that many of us who worked with him in those years found most inspiring and encouraging.

Abraham, the “father of the faithful,” also exemplified this quality to a remarkable

degree. For Abraham was willing to leave his home—and his entire nation—and go to a land he had never seen before. He had to trust God—again and again—to see him through, and to protect him, lead him and guide him in the way that he should go. The life of Abraham does not seem as exciting as that of Moses or David, who *seemed* to perform

eousness” (Romans 4:3). And: “For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (v. 13).

Abraham never turned aside. Abraham never wavered from full trust in his Creator. “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbe-

The life of Abraham does not seem as exciting as that of Moses or David, who *seemed* to perform great exploits far beyond what Abraham did. But when you carefully read of Abraham’s life, you will notice how he “pioneered” the approach of *total faith* in God—no matter what.

great exploits far beyond what Abraham did. But when you carefully read of Abraham’s life, you will notice how he “pioneered” the approach of *total faith* in God—no matter what. He left his home, lived in tents for decades, wandered in a foreign nation, was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac—and time after time proved to God that he was humble enough and *faithful* enough to put **full trust** in his Creator.

Notice how God inspired the Apostle Paul to describe Abraham: “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for right-

lief, but was strengthened in **faith**, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness’” (vv. 20–22). This approach of deep love, constant communication and profound **trust** in God was exemplified by Abraham perhaps more than any other human being apart from Jesus Christ. It set him apart, and we recognize him as the “father of the **faithful**.”

As we in the Living Church of God lose dear

continues on page 21

Put God's Word in Your Heart

By Ben Faulkner

God has recorded His word in a wonderful, unique book for mankind, and has preserved it through the millennia. Of course, God used human instruments to put His words on parchment, skins or paper. But God wrote the book. It is His book, written to and for you! Man did not create it; God did!

This book God wrote to you contains His thoughts, plans and purposes. It provides written evidence of how God has worked with His chosen people in the past, and of how He will deal with all humanity in the near future.

Christians recognize the Bible as the written word of God. But while the word “Bible”—from the Greek *byblos*, “book”—is frequently used as a synonym for the “word of God,” we must realize that the word of God is more than just a book. It is Holy Scripture! It is Truth, and it is much, much more!

We have God's word in print today because Jesus Christ, who was the Word from the beginning (John 1:1, 14)—inspired His servants through the Holy Spirit, in complete harmony with God, the Father, to write down His word. By His great power, God has preserved His word for us today.

God's word is found in numerous translations and languages around the world. It is consistently a bestseller in bookstores, and it is frequently quoted—sometimes even correctly. Yet, while it is studied and prized by many scholars, many serious students and avid readers view it merely as “great literature.”

However, those inclined to read Scripture simply as human-created text miss its most valuable and unique assets. Why? Because the Bible is not human-created text! Scripture is more than ancient literature! It is more than a simple compilation of words, sentences and paragraphs. It is more than chronologies, histories, stories, biographies and predictions. It is even more than doctrine and law. Jesus explained: “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

It is important for Christians to realize that God intended His word to be perceived spiritually. Some have described the Bible as a coded book—and, in fact, God's Holy Spirit *is required* if we are to fully grasp and benefit from its spiritual intent. The Holy Spirit reveals the Bible's intent, its meaning and its purposes to God's people.

God uses His word to work powerfully in His people for His own divine, eternal purposes. In the fourth chapter of the book of Hebrews we read: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged

sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). The ASV translates this same passage this way: “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”

What should be our approach to this amazing book—the written word of God? We all desperately need a fuller awareness of Scripture, and a deeper appreciation for this magnificent gift of God to mankind—especially to His Church. We need to realize there is great profit for those who diligently work to put the word of God in their hearts.

Within His own word, God reveals His desire—indeed, His command—that we put His word in our hearts, as well as in our minds and on our lips. “Your word I have hidden in my heart” (Psalm 119:11). With the word of God in our hearts, we are far more likely to have the word correctly in our minds and on our lips. God said to ancient Israel: “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart” (Deuteronomy 6:6).

Just how can Christians put the word of God in their hearts? What does having God's word “in your heart” actually mean? Does it mean simply to remember or to memorize it? Or does it mean more?

Of course, we must not forget God's word, nor let it carelessly slip away (cf. James 1:22–25; Hebrews 2:1–4). There are many strategies we can use to remember Scripture. But is remembering the word of God the same as having God's word in your heart?

Consider this: To assist the ancient Israelites, God described several tools for remembering the words He commanded them. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:8–9).

Obviously, the Old Testament history of ancient Israel demonstrated that those tools were insufficient. It appears that an important element was missing; the Israelites never had the word in their hearts! “Oh, that they had such a heart in them...” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Certainly, having God's word in our hearts can mean to memorize it—but is memorizing Scripture sufficient to truly have it in one's heart? The answer is, “No!” Ponder the devil's use of Scripture: The devil has memorized scripture and can quote it verbatim, or can pervert it to suit his whims and intentions. In Matthew 4:6, the devil correctly quoted Scripture—but misapplied it! In Genesis

3:1–5, the devil both quoted and contradicted God’s word, telling Eve that she would not surely die as a result of disobedience. Yes, the devil “knows” God’s word, but he does not use it to accomplish God’s purposes. He never lets the word of God change him to be like God. He never puts God’s word in his heart, and God’s word never becomes part of him.

Having God’s word in our hearts means to allow it to be part of us. It means to rehearse it and to use it for God’s purposes—for His will. We can do this when we know exactly what Scripture says, when we understand what it means and when we have the intent to allow it to change us by its power. Then, after we have rehearsed God’s word enough, and (through the Holy Spirit) put God’s word into practice often enough in our lives, it will become part of us. Just by repetition, we will probably have memorized much of it. Purposefully memorizing Scripture can certainly speed the process of putting it into our hearts, of making it part of our being.

The word of God is truly a precious treasure with which every Christian should be intimately familiar. In fact, we should be so familiar with it that it becomes an essential part of who we are. James, the brother of Jesus, described a familiarity with Scripture so deep that it is “implanted” (James 1:21). When God’s word is “implanted” in Christians, it becomes difficult to forget, because it is part of us, just like a branch grafted onto a tree becomes part of the tree.

David, the man after God’s own heart, came to understand and respect the value of God’s word. He depended on specific aspects of it to work out God’s purposes for his life: “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11). What a remarkable insight, to understand that God’s word in our hearts can assist us in not sinning! We should ask God to write His laws and His word on our hearts, and in our minds (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16). As we do our part, God also does His!

God’s word is a necessary ingredient in keeping us from sin and death, putting us on the path of life. In the inspired book of Proverbs, David’s son, Solomon, commented on a *most essential component* of God’s word—the law of God: “My son, keep your father’s command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light” (Proverbs 6:20–23). God’s word has other wonderful benefits as well. In the New Testament, we read of several more: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be

complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Because God’s word is so extraordinary—His words are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63)—we must approach God’s written word with His objectives in mind. Following David’s example, we should delight in it: “I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word” (Psalm 119:16). God wants us to rejoice at His word as David did: “I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure” (Psalm 119:162). God wants us to love His word (119:140) and to meditate upon it (119:48). Further, God wants us to hold His word in high esteem. After all, God thinks highly of His word. He has *magnified* it: “I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name” (Psalm 138:2).

David said that he was *in awe of God’s word*. We should be, too. Notice David’s words: “Princes persecute me without a cause, but my heart stands in awe of Your word” (Psalm 119:161). Standing in awe of God’s word becomes easier when we meditate on it and come to realize its immense power. In the first chapter of Genesis we learn that God spoke, and it was done. Scripture also shows us that all that exists is sustained by the power of His word. “Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3). What great power!

Additional evidence of the power of God’s word is Jesus’ healing the sick and casting out demons by speaking “a word.” The centurion, seeking healing for his servant, knew Jesus only had to speak, because of the authority and power associated with His words: “The centurion answered and said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed’” (Matthew 8:8). In the same chapter of Matthew, we read about the power of His word over demons: “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick” (v. 16).

Most assuredly, God desires that we continue in His word as disciples. In fact, continuing in His word is what *defines* us as disciples: “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed’” (John 8:31). God wants His disciples *to be proficient* in using his word, rightly dividing it: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

And *God intends that we speak the word of God, passing it on to future generations*: “‘As for Me,’ says the LORD, ‘this

is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants,' says the LORD, 'from this time and forevermore'" (Isaiah 59:21).

God wants His word to be a constant in our lives. We are to speak of it in both formal and informal settings: "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

We must each make a diligent and concerted effort to make a place for God's word within us! We need it for every aspect of our lives. Think about what it could mean to have Scripture in *your* heart. Having Scripture in your heart will make it instantly available, at any moment, day or night, in a crowd or all alone, on a throne or upside down in a well, in sickness or in vibrant health, when you have just been flattered, when you have just been criticized, when you are in imminent danger, when you are being tempted seemingly beyond measure, and on and on... *you get the picture!*

Remember! The devil crouches and pounces like a lion. Typically, we will not see the attack coming. The devil is far too wily to wait until we have Bibles in our hands before he starts his attacks. Having Scripture in our hearts will give us an instant weapon for the battle, because God's word is the *sword* of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). Jesus taught us how to use this weapon successfully when He rightly used Scripture to push Satan back (see Matthew 4:1–11). With God's word in our hearts, we too can win!

Sometimes we face enormous challenges that unsettle and confuse us. But Scripture provides the answers we need, because it gives discernment and wisdom, subtlety and discretion. You will find that these are the stated purposes for the entire book of Proverbs (see Proverbs 1:1–6). As we hear new suggestions, ideas, philosophies and opinions, we can instantly compare them to Scripture, which we have stored in our hearts. We can recognize immediately what is or is not in line with God's word.

Having the word of God truly in our hearts will ensure that we have more of the Holy Spirit, and more of Jesus Christ living in us so we can be more in harmony with God as He works in us to achieve His purpose. Scripture is very clear on this point: God's word accomplishes what He sends it to do! "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and

bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10–11). As we continue our walk with God, His word gives us a way by which we can check ourselves: "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Psalm 119:9).

God's word guides us (v. 105) and gives us light on the path (vv. 105, 130). We can use it to order our steps, keeping ourselves from iniquity (v. 133).

By God's word, we are quickened (made alive): "This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life" (Psalm 119:50). We are set apart [sanctified] by its truth (John 17:17), cleansed by its washing (Ephesians 5:26) and fed (Matthew 4:4). And, as we continue in God's word, it also increases our faith: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). In fact, God's word is the word of faith that is preached to us: "But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach)" (Romans 10:8).

In Scripture, we find what to hope for, and what we can expect from God (cf. Psalm 119:81, 114). God's word even tells us how to pray and what to pray for (cf. Matthew 6:5–13, 1 Thessalonians 5:17). Clearly, God's word is a vital element in our receiving answers to prayer: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7).

True Christians will genuinely want to please God by keeping His word in their hearts. We all desire and need God's attention. We want Him to look *at* us, not *away from* us. God's word tells us what motivates Him to attend to us: "'For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,' says the LORD. 'But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word'" (Isaiah 66:2).

Yes! The word of God is vital to Christians! Let us all treat the word of God with the respect it deserves! Among other things, it is inspiring, life-enhancing, nourishing, instructional, corrective, comforting and protective. Let us hear it! Read it! Study it! Memorize it! Rehearse it! Feed on it! Treasure it!

Let the word of God dwell richly in us (Colossians 3:16)! We do this by putting it in our hearts. In it, we find life. Remember, Jesus Himself said: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). 

Redeeming the Time:

How to turn good intentions into reality

By Douglas S. Winnail

At various times in our lives we are filled with good intentions—when we are baptized, when we marry, or when we start a new job, a new year or a new semester of school. When we are married before God, we promise to keep a life-long commitment to our spouse, and to follow God’s instructions regarding the marriage relationship. When we are baptized, we declare our intentions to live a godly life in preparation for entering the family of God. Returning home from the Feast, we are often filled with a renewed zeal to prepare for the coming kingdom of God.

Despite our best intentions, however, we are constantly faced with pressures that can *stifle* our good intentions. We may become bogged down in routines that *work against* the noble goals we hope to achieve. Every Christian must face the challenge, every day: how can we turn our good intentions into reality? Scripture gives us several vital keys!

Ancient Admonitions

God understands the challenges that Christians face. Nearly 2,000 years ago, God inspired the Apostle Paul to write to new converts in Ephesus: “For though once your heart was full of darkness, now it is full of light from the Lord...” (Ephesians 5:8, *Living Letters*). What, then, should Christians do? Paul explained: “Walk as children of light” (v. 8). Paul then described how to do this: “See then that you *walk circumspectly* [carefully and diligently in making wise decisions], not as fools but as wise, *redeeming the time*, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15–16). The phrase

“redeeming the time” means to “buy back” or “regain” the time we have available to us. It is also translated as “making the most of every opportunity” (*20th Century NT*) or to “make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days” (*NT in Modern English*, Philips).

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that we must be careful and diligent when making decisions that affect the directions our lives will take. Moses and Joshua urged the leaders of Israel to “take careful heed” of the laws of God, because this would bring success in life (Joshua 22:5). Solomon wrote that the *diligent* will prosper, emerge as leaders and stand in the presence of kings, while those who make *careless* decisions and *fail to use their time wisely* will forfeit opportunities and have a difficult life (Proverbs 10:4; 12:24; 22:29). The Apostle Paul advised Christians: “Let us therefore *be diligent* to enter that rest”—the kingdom of God, the Millennial rest—foreshadowed by the Sabbath (Hebrews 4:11). Paul also taught Christians seeking the kingdom of God to *diligently examine themselves* and to *straighten out their lives*—or risk losing the opportunity to be in the kingdom (Hebrews 12:12–17). This same approach of careful self-examination is also an essential part of personal pre-Passover preparation (see 1 Corinthians 11:27–32). The Bible clearly stresses the importance of *periodically assessing* the direction of our lives and evaluating whether or not we are making progress toward godly goals.

But just how do we transform good intentions into reality? How do we make progress toward physical and spiritual goals in a world that seems designed to work against us?

How can we—in a world still ruled by Satan—stay focused on, and prepare for, the kingdom of God? How can we make the most of the time and opportunities before us? The Bible contains many helpful keys, which we should *learn about* and *use!*

Develop a Plan

Long ago, King Solomon discussed the importance of careful planning. He observed that “*the plans* of the *diligent* lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty” (Proverbs 21:5). Solomon also wrote: “*Ponder* the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil” (Proverbs 4:26–27). If we do not think about where we want to go in life—and how to get there—we will probably find ourselves somewhere that *we do not want to be!* We must avoid being sidetracked or derailed from our intended goal by temptations and circumstances that we encounter along the way—roadblocks often thrown in our way by Satan (Ephesians 6:10–12).

The Apostle Paul taught that, in order to keep our focus on the things of *primary importance*, Christians should “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Ephesians 5:11). Rather than focus on the carnal pursuits and drunken dissipation of this world’s society, Christians should focus on “*finding out* what is acceptable to the Lord... therefore do not be unwise, but *understand* what the will of the Lord is” (vv. 10, 17). Many sincere people wander through life, *seeking* God’s will, yet Paul explains that we can *find out* and *understand* God’s will if

we read what is plainly stated in the Scriptures.

Jesus taught that we should “*seek first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [e.g. food, clothing and shelter] shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). According to the Bible, the major focus of our lives should be on preparing to rule with Jesus Christ in the coming kingdom of God (Revelation 5:10)—not on becoming rich or soaking up the temporary pleasures of this world. To rule with Christ in the kingdom, we must develop the mind, perspective and character of Christ (Philippians 2:1–11). This will require that we “overcome” our problems and shortcomings (Revelation 2:26; 3:5, 12, 21), that we “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) and that we learn to bear the right kind of godly fruit (see John 15:8; Galatians 5:16–26). Jesus also said that “he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13). To be in the kingdom of God, we must not only *stay on course*—we must *stay the course!* These scriptures reveal God’s will for our lives, and we can use this revealed information to formulate plans for living.

Do you have a plan for your life? What do you hope to accomplish in the coming year? Where would you like to be in five years or 10 years? What changes must you make in your life to be ready to rule with Christ in the kingdom of God? What would you like to do in the kingdom? What would you like to change that would improve the lives of others in the kingdom? What can you begin to do now to prepare for a meaningful role in the government of God? Think about these questions as you formulate a plan for your life. If we periodically evaluate our plans and our progress toward these God-given goals, we will grow in the right direction. However, there are still other biblical keys to consider.

Stay Close to God

The prevailing ethic in our secular society is that we do not need advice from anyone, and that we should do things *our way*—whatever we want, whenever we want! However, this is a tragically misguided philosophy. As human beings in a world influenced by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4), we need regular contact with God if we hope to stay on course and turn our good intentions into reality. Jesus understood *His need* for God’s guidance and help (John 5:30). He taught His disciples: “I am the vine, and you are the branches. He who *abides in Me*, and I in him, bears much fruit; *for without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5). Paul touched on the same theme when he wrote that God “is a *rewarder* of those who *diligently seek Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). This is why Jesus *took time* for regular, unhurried prayer to God *at the beginning of the day* (Mark 1:35). This is also why Jesus taught His disciples *how to pray* (Luke 11:1–4; Matthew 6:9–15)—so they could seek and maintain close contact with God. Jesus taught His disciples to follow the example of David and Daniel, who communicated with God frequently every day (Psalm 55:16–17; Daniel 6:10). These men understood that living a godly life—and dealing with the challenges of life—requires staying close to God in prayer.

Another key to staying close to God involves *making time* for regular study of God’s word. David wrote: “Oh, how I love Your law! *It is my meditation all the day*” (Psalm 119:97). Showing that he savored the opportunity to study and think about the application of the Scriptures, David wrote: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path... I love Your commandments more than gold” (see Psalm 119:105, 127). David followed the biblical

advice for kings, that “when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book... and it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes” (see Deuteronomy 17:14–20). David was a “man after God’s own heart” because he *took the time* and *made the effort* to stay close to God. He knew that the way to develop the mind and perspective of God was through regular prayer, and regular study and meditation on the word of God. *If* we seriously desire to reign with Christ in the kingdom of God, as kings and priests who will teach and administer the law of God from Jerusalem (Revelation 5:10; Isaiah 2:2–4), we will *find time* to draw close to God by studying and learning to apply the laws of God.

Prepare for Your Mission

It is instructive to notice that Jesus did not call disciples just so they could be “saved.” He called disciples to *participate in a mission*—to be part of a Work. He told His disciples: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:18–22). He trained them and sent them forth to preach about the coming kingdom of God (Luke 9:1–2; 10:1). He sent them to work miracles demonstrating the power of the real God, to feed those God calls, to warn of coming events that would announce the end of the age and the imminent return of the Messiah (Matthew 10:6–8; Matthew 24; 28:19–20; John 21:15–19). He prepared them “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). That commission is still in force today. Jesus also described a need that is still current today, when He said that “the harvest truly is plenti-

ful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:37–38).

Later, as the Church grew and the need for more laborers increased, the Apostle Paul told Timothy: “This is a faithful saying: If a man desires [to serve in] the office of a bishop, he desires a good work” (1 Timothy 3:1–13). Paul then listed qualities to look for in potential servant leaders—including not only exemplary character, but the *ability to teach* the word of God. These are qualities that we can develop *if we take the time and make the effort*, and they apply to both men and women (see Acts 18:26). This is why Paul urged his audiences “not to strive about words to no profit”—not to become involved in theological arguments over petty issues—but rather to “*be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing [able to explain] the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:14–15).

When the Apostles traveled from city to city, preaching the gospel, they explained the truths contained in Scripture. When Paul met various groups, he reasoned with them from Scripture, showing from Scripture that Jesus was the Christ (see Acts 17:1–4, 16–34). The Bible also mentions Apollos, “an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures” who “spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord” (Acts 18:24–28). Apollos was not born with the ability to explain the word of God. He made the most of the time and opportunity available to study and explain the Scriptures—and God used him mightily! The same needs and opportunities exist today. It has been said: “If you are preparing, opportunities will come!”

Another person who made the effort to prepare and be used by God was Ezra. Ezra was a priest who was “a

skilled scribe in the law of Moses” (Ezra 7:6). Skills are developed over time by diligent effort. When Ezra learned that he was to lead a group of returning Jewish captives from Babylon to Jerusalem, he “prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). Later we read that Ezra “stood on a platform of wood” and read from the Law before the congregation (Nehemiah 8:1–5). Ezra was assisted by other priests who “read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading” (Nehemiah 8:7–8). Ezra and his assistants were able to teach and explain the Scriptures because they *took the time* to prepare themselves for this mission.

The Bible reveals that in the coming kingdom of God, the laws of God will “go forth” from Jerusalem to all parts of the world (Isaiah 2:2–4; 11:9). Those who qualify to rule with Christ will teach all people how to live by the laws of God (Isaiah 30:20–21). We are also told that when Christ returns to set up His kingdom, He will marry a bride [the Church] who “has *made herself ready*” (Revelation 19:7–9).

Most brides preparing for a wedding have a plan—a long list of things to do to prepare for the wedding. Do *you*, as part of the potential bride of Christ, have a plan to prepare yourself to rule with Christ in the kingdom of God? Are you making the most of the time and opportunity you have now to prepare for that incredible opportunity? Are you making a diligent effort to live by every word of God? Can you show someone *how to prove* that there is a real God? Can you provide evidence that the Bible is the *inspired* word of God? Can you explain the fundamental doctrines of the Bible? Can you, from Scripture, show someone the true

purpose of life? Can you explain, from Scripture, the *true* Gospel, which day is the Christian Sabbath, and why keeping the Holy Days is important? Can you show, using scriptural and historical evidence, how to identify the Israelite nations and other modern nations—and why this is important? Can you explain what happened to the true Church, and to the doctrines of the Church that Jesus Christ founded? Can you point out the benefits and scientific evidence that stand behind the biblical health laws? Can you explain from experience the wisdom of living by the laws of God? This is what teachers in the kingdom of God will be doing, and what many do not understand today! These are the fundamental “trunk of the tree” issues on which Paul taught us to focus—not the “twiggy issues” that consume the time of so many today.

We have been called to reign with Christ in the soon-coming kingdom of God—and the time to prepare is *now*! If we hope to receive a crown and be teachers in Tomorrow’s World, we must *make the most* of the time and opportunities we have to prepare for this incredible future. Sit down and develop a plan for your life. Make out a schedule to study the Scriptures, and to study Church publications that explain the major doctrines of the Bible. Diligently strive to develop the mind, perspective and character of God, so you can be a light to the world around you. Ask God regularly for guidance, and study His word for help in developing a plan for your life. Notice the needs of humanity, and identify biblical principles that can be used to solve many of today’s big problems. Prepare to be used by God in changing the course of human history. *Do not* let this incredible opportunity slip away. Make a determined effort to *redeem the time!* 

How Much Fruit Are You Bearing?

By John H. Ogwyn

Have you ever visited an avid gardener? Before your visit is over, you just know that he (or she) will take you outside and show you the garden. Up and down each row, you will be shown the various plants and told how each is producing. You will hear about what it took to make each plant produce well, and what had to be done to make the soil as fertile as possible.

Avid gardeners take great pleasure when their gardens produce well. They devote much time and energy to their gardens, and care deeply about their success. They study the soil and the needs of each plant. Perhaps they have even produced their own compost, working over the years to improve and build up the soil. Their investment of time and energy is rewarded when the garden produces well.

Did you know that God the Father compares Himself to a gardener? After all, as Paul explained to the Church at Corinth, “you are God’s garden” (1 Corinthians 3:9, *NEB*). God takes great delight and satisfaction when we bear much spiritual fruit (John 15:8). If we are not bearing much fruit, it is *not* because God is indifferent to our growth! Even so, there are reasons why some people bear more fruit and some bear less.

Our attitude and frame of mind can be compared to the soil of the garden. Some attitudes are conducive to healthy growth, while others are toxic. Do you know which attitudes are comparable to healthy and fertile soil? Do you know which attitudes will inhibit your spiritual growth, and keep you from produc-

ing the fruit in which our Father so greatly delights? When you know the difference, you can take steps to cooperate with the Master Gardener.

Humility Is Fertile Soil for Growth

There is perhaps no condition more important than humility, for those seeking spiritual growth. Two ancient kings of Judah, Asa and his son Jehoshaphat, illustrate well why humility is such a vital attribute.

King Asa came to the throne of Judah approximately 20 years after the death of King Solomon. For the first ten years of Asa’s reign, things were relatively quiet; the young king sought to encourage the worship of the true God, and to build his nation’s military defense. Then Zerah, the Ethiopian, mounted a massive attack on Judah. With a million-man army, he invaded the Middle East. Humbled by his inability to defeat the invasion with Judah’s military power, Asa cried out to God for deliverance. God heard Asa’s prayer, and delivered Judah.

In 2 Chronicles 15, we read that after the Ethiopian army was defeated, God’s prophet Azariah went to meet Asa, admonishing him that God would be with him if he would be with God. Taking courage from the prophet’s words, Asa called his nation to a renewal of the covenant at the upcoming Pentecost season (the feast of the third month) and began a systematic destruction of the symbols of idolatrous worship throughout the land. Asa even destroyed the idol of his mother, Maachah, and removed her from the

prestigious position of Queen Mother because of her poor example to the nation. With these reforms in place, the land prospered and enjoyed peace for the next 25 years.

Then another crisis arose. We read in 2 Chronicles 16 that in the 36th year of Asa’s reign, Israel’s King Baasha came against Judah. Asa was frightened, and took all the money he could quickly find—including money from the Temple treasury—to bribe the king of Syria to attack Israel on his behalf. Asa’s strategy seemed successful, but God’s prophet Hanani corrected the king for his lack of faith and trust in God. Hanani reminded Asa that God had intervened for him against the Ethiopians many years earlier, but that because of his most recent choice he would have warfare from then on.

Asa was infuriated by this rebuke. His reaction, in effect, was: “I’m the king; how *dare* you talk to me that way!” Asa had Hanani arrested and thrown in jail, and began to oppress some of the people at that time. When struck by a foot disease in the 39th year of his reign, he never went to God for healing, even as his condition worsened; he only consulted various physicians (2 Chronicles 16:12).

Why did Asa fail to seek God’s healing during his distress? One answer is clear: the king had imprisoned God’s prophet. How could Asa ask God for miraculous healing, when he had imprisoned His prophet and rejected His correction? This would have required humility, but Asa had too much pride to admit his mistake publicly or to apologize to Hanani.

Asa’s example is tragic: he did much good, and received many of

God's blessings, but he failed to grow spiritually as the years went by. In his youth, he had been willing to acknowledge his lack of self-sufficiency and his utter dependence on God. Sadly, many years of peace and prosperity left him with illusions of power and greatness, and he lost the humility that could have let him admit his error and seek God's mercy. As a result, he came to a tragic end.

Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, acted very differently than his father. Like his father, he began his rule by seeking God and trying to be a good king.

King Jehoshaphat made mistakes, as we all do, but throughout his life he had the humility to grow in response to God's correction. Later, when the Ammonites and the Moabites invaded the land, Jehoshaphat responded by proclaiming a fast and praying to God for deliverance (2 Chronicles 20). God heard Jehoshaphat's supplication, and intervened.

A h u m b l e h e a r t, l i k e Jehoshaphat's, will respond positively to correction—and will learn. Spiritual growth takes place, and healthy spiri-

lems. It is demonstrated by how we respond when we are being corrected for *our* problems! There is a big difference. Notice how the Pharisees responded when Jesus used the plain words of Scripture to correct them: they became offended (Matthew 15:12)! For all of their talk about following God's word, they were willing to lay aside the plain commandments of God in order to hold on to their own traditions. This is true of most people even today.

Many years later, when Paul was on what was probably his last jour-

Zeal for the truth is not demonstrated by how we respond when *others* are being corrected for *their* problems. It is demonstrated by how *we* respond when *we* are being corrected for *our* problems! There is a big dif-

Jehoshaphat seems to have been the kind of man who was always willing to help others, even when they did not deserve his sympathy. When wicked King Ahab of Israel came to him, seeking help against Syria which had taken part of Israel's territory, Jehoshaphat felt sorry for Ahab, and agreed to help him. Jehoshaphat barely escaped from the battle with his life, and God's prophet then rebuked him: "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD?" (2 Chronicles 19:2).

How did Jehoshaphat respond to this correction? He used the following months to better organize his nation's government (2 Chronicles 19:4–11). We can discern his attitude by the instructions he gave to his judges: "Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, 'Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes'" (vv. 5–7).

tual fruit will grow, *only* in the soil of a humble heart and mind.

The Importance of Loving the Truth

How much do we value truth? Do we want the truth *even when it hurts*? It is easy to want to see others "straightened out" about their problems, but how much do we desire to be straightened out regarding our own? The Pharisees of Jesus' day were quick to see where many of their contemporaries were falling short of God's righteousness. They were known for their negative and critical attitude toward others.

This attitude led them to find fault with Jesus of Nazareth for spending time with people who had problems. "Why would He spend his time with sinners?" they wondered. Do you think that the Pharisees saw their criticisms as a problem? Hardly! They believed that their negative spirit toward others was evidence of their zeal for God's truth. But *was it, really?*

Zeal for the truth is not demonstrated by how we respond when *others* are being corrected for *their* prob-

lems. Near the end of his life, Paul warned Timothy of what he would face in the years ahead. Paul admonished Timothy to continue preaching the word, but told him that the time was quickly coming when many who were supposedly part of the Church would turn aside. When the truth proved painful and corrective, many would prefer fables instead, and would seek out ministers who would cater to them, telling them what they wanted to hear (2 Timothy 4:2–4).

Of course, those who reject sometimes-painful correction cease to grow spiritually. If we are to grow

and bear spiritual fruit, we must learn to love the truth more than we love our own way. The religious leaders of Jesus' day loved their own way so much that they refused to accept correction, even from the Son of God. Think about it! At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Nicodemus came to Him privately, and acknowledged: "we [Pharisees and other religious leaders] know that you are a teacher come from God" (John 3:1–2). But while many, like Nicodemus, admitted privately that Jesus was God's messenger, they refused to heed His warnings and admonitions. As a result, noting that they did not love the truth, Jesus warned them near the end of His ministry: "Therefore I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matthew 21:43).

End-time prophecy reveals that, in the not-too-distant future, the False Prophet will deceive many—even while the Two Witnesses are proclaiming God's truth and working great miracles in Jerusalem—because they *do not* have a genuine **love of the truth** (2 Thessalonians 2:10). All of us who wish to grow spiritually must love the truth deeply.

Bearing Spiritual Fruit

You and I cannot generate spiritual fruit by our own power. We cannot will ourselves to have more faith or more godly love; these are the fruit of God's Holy Spirit in our lives. God is the one who yields the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6) or produces the growth. Many people appear to display naturally, to a limited degree, some of the characteristics that Galatians 5 calls fruit of the Spirit. But such natural displays are not what the Bible is describing; the Bible is describing the evidence of our *changed character*—the *new nature* that God is producing in us

through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22–23 describes nine different types of spiritual fruit. We have seen that God wants us to bear fruit; He is glorified when we produce *much* fruit. This fruit comes as a result of the working of the Holy Spirit in a receptive heart and mind. Such a heart is humble, and has a deep love of the truth.

What is this fruit that is to be produced? It is not merely a series of

results regardless of whether we are temporarily up or down. Paul wrote in Philippians 4 that he had learned peace and contentment—characteristics that did not come naturally to him (see Acts 9:1–2). *Spiritual peace only comes to a surrendered and thankful heart.*

Next come *longsuffering, kindness and goodness*. Some people, because of their background and temperament, seem to be more naturally patient and kind than others. Scripture, however,

The presence of *faithfulness, gentleness* and *self-control* in our lives is further evidence of the Holy Spirit working and bearing fruit. These qualities flow from God, and from our relationship with Him.

natural human characteristics; it is something that goes much deeper.

Love is the first fruit mentioned. It is natural to love those who are kind and loving to us. It is also natural to resent (and even to hate) those who are hurtful and unkind to us and to our loved ones. Real love is not expressed merely in words and platitudes; it will be shown by what we do—by the way we actually treat others.

Joy is the second fruit mentioned—and it goes far beyond mere momentary happiness or excitement. Paul declared emphatically that our current sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the ultimate glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18). True joy is what we have inside based on the living *hope* that is so real to us.

Peace—the third fruit mentioned—is produced by the Holy Spirit; it is not generated by ideal circumstances around us. It is an inner peace and acceptance, based on the knowledge that our lives are in God's hands. When we have truly surrendered our lives to Him, a peace

is talking about something far deeper than these natural qualities. The spiritual quality of longsuffering involves the ability to wait on God, and should not be confused with apathy or indifference. Because they know that God is real, and that His promises are real, those who are longsuffering are prepared to wait for Him. A humble heart that deeply loves the truth will search Scripture for examples of longsuffering, kindness and goodness, and ask God to change natural human tendencies so that we might become more like Him.

The presence of *faithfulness, gentleness* and *self-control* in our lives is further evidence of the Holy Spirit working and bearing fruit. These qualities flow from God, and from our relationship with Him. Faithfulness—fidelity to God—will cause us to take seriously all of our commitments in life. The spiritual quality of gentleness comes from our willingness to trust God to fight our battles for us. A life of self-control, or temperance, is the opposite of one

continues on page 20

Earthquakes and God

By Roderick C. Meredith

When will the next massive earthquake strike? And where?

The massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake recently experienced off the island of Sumatra—triggering huge tidal waves—has killed tens of thousands and left millions homeless. It is the most powerful earthquake in 40 years. Millions of people will be affected because of the widespread destruction of homes and property. Now the ominous threat of disease due to water pollution is also a factor. This earthquake is already recognized as one of the greatest natural disasters in recorded history.

But how long until the *next* big earthquake? The last earthquake of this magnitude or greater struck Prince William Island in Alaska 40 years ago. Most people may assume that disasters of this magnitude strike only every 20 to 40 years. That may have been true in the past. But we have definitely entered a different time—a time which very few truly understand.

You *need* to understand!

For the Eternal God who created the heavens and earth reveals specific information to those willing to listen. In His inspired Word which we call the Bible, God describes a time just before the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. He calls it “the last days” or the “time of the end.” We are definitely living in that time! And in the next very few years you will have come to fully realize this if you have eyes to see and are willing to understand.

This recent enormous earthquake is *not* a “once in every 40 years” incident! Sadly, it is only among the very first of an *entire series* of natural disasters which are destined to *shake* the entire world in a manner never before experienced!

Describing the time just prior to His Second Coming, Jesus tells us, “And there will be *great earthquakes* in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven”(Luke 21:11). A few verses later, Jesus continues, “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roar-

ing; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken”(vv. 25–26). We are assuredly entering that time. Many more earthquakes—*some* accompanied by powerful tsunami waves—will strike this earth within the next five to 15 years of your life.

In Isaiah 2, after describing the “latter days” and the time of Christ’s return to earth as King of kings, God tells us how He is going to *humble* all humanity to get them to genuinely “listen” to Him. Describing that time in detail God tells us in Isaiah 2:19, “They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to *shake* the earth mightily”! Since this chapter in Isaiah is speaking primarily about the “house of Jacob” (vv. 3, 5), we may be certain that *many* of the end-time earthquakes will strike the United States and other British-descended nations. So please do not assume that these prophesied disasters will strike primarily at far-off third world countries. For this will *not* be the case in the future!

The widespread destruction caused a few months ago by a *whole series* of hurricanes pounding their way through Florida and much of the southeastern United States was only the *beginning*! For describing this very end-time in which we now live, Jesus Christ stated, “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (Matthew 24:6–7).

We are now just beginning to experience the direct intervention of Almighty God to *shake* the nations until He gets their full attention! May God grant you the humility and the “open mindedness” to be willing to see what God Himself is doing—and who He is using to *warn* this world of the specific prophecies describing the time in which you live. ☞

This is an excerpt adapted from Mr. Meredith’s recent audio commentary, available on the www.lcg.org and www.tomorrowworld.org Web site.



International Corner...

Vanuatu Feast Report

by Jerry Sam

This year, for the first time, we observed the Feast of Tabernacles in Orap village, in the island of Malekula. A few hundred meters outside the village, in an isolated corner by the serene riverside that curves by the trees and that silently flows toward the ocean, more than 50 people experienced great joy for the eight days of the Feast within this peaceful and quiet environment.

God greatly blessed us with magnificent weather, delicious meals taken together at every lunch with a family spirit where love, joy and peace reigned.

Everybody appreciated the generosity of Mr. Meten Noel, a Church member, who assisted us with our electrical needs and cooking the beef at the Feast.

Even though we were without a minister this year, the spiritual nourishment was not lacking. We assimilated with joy all the videotaped messages by such ministers as Messrs. Roderick Meredith, Richard Ames, Charles Bryce, John Ogwyn and Jeff Fall. The themes of all their messages focused on the Kingdom of God and how to get there.

East Africa Update

by Ernest Owino

The foundation that has so far been laid in East Africa appears firm enough to withstand any spiritual hurricane. During my ministerial visits with the congregations in East Africa, I have tried to help our brethren to be constantly on guard

against spiritual onslaughts and innumerable false prophets.

From the beginning of the Fall Festival period, the Work in East Africa has seen some additional growth. From August 25, Dr. Douglas S. Winnail and I visited Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where on August 26 we conducted a Bible Study with a question and answer session for 23 of our Tanzanian brethren. The display of enthusiasm and warmth among our brethren there was simply contagious. Returning to Nairobi, Kenya, at around 1:00 p.m. on August 27, we took no time to rest; instead we drove northeast to Embu (in the Mount Kenya region) in time for the weekly Sabbath. Afterward, we drove further north to have a glimpse of Mount Kenya, and to investigate a possible Feast site for 2005. We are contemplating holding the 2005 Feast in this region—an area of gorgeous climate, completely out of bounds for mosquitoes!

In an effort to help bring along the new congregation in Dar es Salaam, I was there again on the Sabbath of September 18, when we had 26 in attendance.

We currently have eight congregations in East Africa, with an average weekly Sabbath attendance of 185, Ndhiwa taking the lion's share.

Though spread thin, I strive to visit some of the groups once every month (depending on the prevailing needs). I especially strive to visit the new congregations, which includes Dar es Salaam and Embu, once every month without fail, and of course, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

Despite the spiritual growth that has been witnessed, our brethren have not had a free ride when it

comes to the prevailing severe economic difficulties. Most suffer from malnutrition and hunger due to abject poverty. Jobs are scarce here, and most of the brethren have few options. In spite of so many difficulties, our prayers are with the Church leadership in Charlotte.

French Work Update

by Dibar Apartian

The French Work is on the road of steady growth. Exciting developments have taken place in the last few years. While the *Le Monde de Demain* radio program continues to be broadcast only in the island of Martinique, the Internet has been our main door for preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God.

From January to July 2004 our www.mondedemain.org Web site exceeded all 2003 statistics. During this seven-month period we recorded 44,693 unique visitors and 87,112 visitor sessions; and 21,240 broadcasts, 4,780 sermons, more than 74,500 articles and about 13,000 booklets were downloaded. Since the beginning of the French Web site (around four years ago), we have recorded about 80,000 unique visitors and 195,000 visitor sessions. More than 145,000 articles, 25,000 booklets, 34,000 broadcasts and 6,300 sermons have been downloaded. We have recorded visitors from 114 countries.

A Google AdWords campaign, begun in mid-2002, has to date brought 75,383 visits to the French Web site, at an average cost per click of about 14.5 cents. A smaller and less expensive campaign, through the Canadian company New World Media, has brought 2,334 clicks at an

average cost per click of 10 cents. These two campaigns have generated 1,347 online requests for Church literature. We hope to continue to increase our visibility to French speakers on the Web in the coming months.

To date, the French Work has translated, edited and published 13 booklets, all 24 lessons of the *Bible Study Course* and more than 180 reprint articles taken from *Tomorrow's World* and the *Living Church News*.

Much good fruit is being seen from these activities; Mr. Dibar Apartian, Regional Director of the French Work, reports that 2004 brought a noticeable increase in the numbers of French-speakers seeking information about the Living Church of God, or asking to attend Sabbath services with us.

Another exciting development in the past few years has been the growth of the Church in Cameroon. Presently, the Church has three video groups in Cameroon. In early 2002, about a dozen people from Douala contacted Mr. Apartian; they had a Church of God background and were interested in becoming part of the Living Church of God. By the end of 2003 a small group from Limbe also came to the Living Church of God. In June 2004, a leader from a Sabbath-keeping group in Nanga-Eboko contacted Mr. Apartian after reading some of our French literature and recognizing some similarities; he expressed a desire to keep all of God's Feasts, and to be taught by the Living Church of God.

The Church has also solidified its small presence in Haiti in the past year. In spite of the constant risk of violence, about 13 members gather every Sabbath to hear sermons in French, sent from Headquarters—and they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in peace this year.

The Living Church of God has French-speaking congregations in Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, France,

Haiti, Martinique and Switzerland. The hard work and valuable service of our French-speaking ministers is greatly appreciated. In Canada, our ministers Mr. Jacques Secours and Mr. Yvon Brochu take care of the brethren in Montreal, Quebec City and Saguenay, QC, and in Edmunston, NB. Mr. Marcel Ginier is our elder looking after the flock in Martinique. From Zurich, Switzerland, our elder Mr. Josef Felber assists Mr. Apartian in pastoring the French-speaking congregations in Europe.

United Kingdom Update

by Douglas S. Winnail

The Work in the UK and Ireland is moving ahead. We are excited about the opportunity to begin airing the *Tomorrow's World* program on British TV in February 2005. We will broadcast twice each Sunday morning on a satellite television station that will reach across the UK, Ireland and Western Europe, and into Scandinavia. The consultants we are working with have mentioned that our program is refreshingly different from the usual religious programming and that our presenters convey a sense of maturity and experience that is lacking in many other programs seen today.

After the Feast, we started a monthly video group in Manchester in central England. Responses to our Fall advertisement for *The Real God* drew more than 3,700 responses—the highest number of requests we have received to date for any booklet. We plan to run two more ads this Spring in the UK, along with our advertising program in Ireland. I plan to relocate just north of London in early January so I can work more effectively with our brethren in that area, while still traveling monthly to Ireland and bi-monthly to Scotland

and the Netherlands. This coming year should be interesting.

Earthquake Updates

from reports by John Bastiansz, Rajan Moses, Arius Nusantara, Frank Reckerman, Mehm Pho Saw and Bruce Tyler

All the brethren in Indonesia are in good condition (including a Malaysian brother working here), and not much affected by the great disaster. The earthquake occurred in the very western part of Indonesia, close to the island of Sumatra that is close to Singapore and Malaysia. The Indonesian brethren all live on Java, the island next to Sumatra, mostly in the eastern part. All are quite safe, but terribly saddened by the tragedy.

All the brethren in Sri Lanka are OK. The persons most affected are Mrs. Virginia Thamil and her family, who live less than one kilometer from the beach in Negombo. Her house and property are safe as of now (it had been partly filled with water, and as she tried to vacate she fell and hurt her leg), but the bridge there is damaged, which will cause many problems for people residing in that area.

In Malaysia, the brethren are safe. Penang Island, however, where Malaysian brethren have kept the Feast in past years, was the worst hit part of the country.

In Thailand, the brethren are OK, even as dangerous earthquakes devastated southern provinces including Phuket, Phi Phi, Karabi and Satoon. To the north, the village where Mehm Pho Saw lives experienced a severe earthquake for about 30 seconds, but all are safe and sound.

The Indian brethren are all OK. Most live fairly far inland (20 miles or so), and were not affected directly. However, the location where they kept the Feast in 2004 was hit by the tidal wave. 

Child-Rearing: Passing the Baton

By Jeffrey Fall

All Christian parents want their children to grow up to really love the Supreme God and His way of life. We know the tremendous benefits that God's law will bring to our children, both now and in the future—a stable and fulfilling life now, and eventual eternal life in God's family at Jesus Christ's return. All parents want this for their children, but they may wonder: how can parents succeed in “passing the baton” and in teaching their children to want this for themselves?

Christian parents have a very high and a very challenging “dual calling.” Our Heavenly Father is training parents (who are His children) in His image. In turn, Christians' primary duty as parents is to train and shape their children's hearts and minds in God's image.

Passing the baton to the next generation, however, remains a very difficult task in Satan's world. The pervasive influence of mankind's perverse society, coupled with Satan's broadcasting as “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), provides a very formidable foe in our attempt to mold our children's hearts and minds in God's image!

Scripture shows us that even the best possible parent will not automatically achieve a perfect outcome. Adam was truly a “son of God” (Luke 3:38), yet God did not force even Adam and Eve to make the right decisions! God taught Adam and Eve His way of life, yet the perfect Parent allowed his children to *accept* or *reject* His example and teaching.

The same applies to human parents. Parents cannot force their children to seek God as their Father. But parents can certainly help lay the foundation for their children to have a better life now, and eventually to surrender to the true God. Happily, we know that God will open the minds of all human beings, either in this lifetime or in a future resurrection, and that most whose minds are opened will choose to receive the tremendous blessings and benefits of obeying the true God.

How, then, can parents begin to transfer to their children the desire to seek God fully? Every salesman knows that to sell his product, he must first create a desire. Parents must somehow help their children desire God's way of life. Children must be brought to understand that God's way of life will benefit them—that it brings very real blessings and rewards for them personally. People are always motivated by what they *want*—not by what they *should want*.

The world tries to convince children of a huge Satanic lie—that God's way of life is a terrible sacrifice, and a “real drag.” When children understand that God's way of life brings blessings and benefits—for themselves, and for their loved ones—they will begin to see through the world's Satanic propaganda, and will grow in their desire to live God's way.

God motivates parents in a similar way. He provides the sure knowledge of tremendous benefit for those who *choose* to follow Him. Scripture explains that “he who comes to God must believe

that He is, and that He is a **rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). One who does not believe that there is *substantial reward*—benefit—in seeking God will never be motivated to follow Him. This applies to parents, and it certainly applies to children.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is full of the knowledge of blessings for obedience. “And all these **blessings** shall come upon you and overtake you, because you **obey** the voice of the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 28:2). Every day, the benefits of God's way can fill our lives: “Blessed be the LORD, Who daily **loads us with benefits**” (Psalm 68:19).

Ultimately, parents have just two ways to convince children that God's way of life will benefit them greatly: teaching diligently, and demonstrating by positive example. Neither teaching nor example alone will accomplish the task, without the other. Some parents have been outstanding examples, but have not taken the time to teach godly principles on their children's level, using vivid examples that children can grasp and clearly understand. As a result, their children may love and respect their parents, but be unable to understand or apply God's principles in their own lives. By contrast, other parents have diligently taught their children God's principles, but have been poor examples of the principles they taught. Their children will often rebel against the hypocrisy they perceive in their parents, and will turn against reli-

gion—and even against authority in general. The “do as I say, not as I do” approach rarely convinces anyone.

Notice God’s instruction to parents: “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children...” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19). The principles of God are to become bound up in our mind (what we **think**) and in our hand (what we **do** as an example)—*and* we must **teach** them effectively to our children.

Effective Teaching

Children must recognize, by their parents’ instruction and example, that God’s way of life is loaded with blessings and benefits for them personally. Long before it is asked, parents must help their children answer the question: “Why should I follow God? What’s in it for me?” Unless parents can answer this question with honesty and sincerity, they will never reach their children effectively. King David understood this question perfectly, and said: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not **all His benefits**” (Psalm 103:2).

Of course, parents do not want to create self-centered children who think only of their own benefits. The idea is to help children understand that *all* of God’s laws are for their own good. As children grow, they can then understand, by extension, that God’s laws are good for their family and friends—and indeed that *every human being* will benefit from God’s laws and His way of life.

Scripture makes it clear that children can be taught God’s way of life most effectively in the home, informally and constantly: “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your

children, and shall **talk of them** when you **sit** in your house, when you **walk** by the way, when you **lie down**, and when you **rise up**” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7).

Years ago, while attending Ambassador College, I attempted to support our family by practicing dentistry on Sundays. Every Sunday evening, we would ship a box of lab work from my dental practice to my dental lab in northern California. We shipped the box by Greyhound bus. At the end of the workday, all four of our children would ride with my wife and me to the Greyhound bus station in one of the rougher sections of Los Angeles.

The children would watch as we drove past people stumbling in alcoholic stupors. We saw others rummaging through garbage cans looking for something to eat. We saw people curled up, asleep, in the doorways of buildings. We saw cross-dressers, prostitutes and many other sad examples of human society.

At first, my wife and I wondered whether it was appropriate for our children to see these sights. My wife, however, began talking about what we were seeing—describing what might have brought the people we were seeing into such a sad state of life. With her descriptions, she was helping the children understand the emptiness of human life apart from God. This seemed to leave a very vivid impression on our children’s minds, and each weekly trek became an interesting testimony to the penalties of breaking God’s laws. We had turned a horrifying portrait of depraved humanity into a lesson on the blessings and benefits of “choosing life.” Years later, our children still remember those Sunday nights, which often prompted long discussions of the many blessings that we could enjoy and appreciate as a family as long as we followed God. This was an excellent opportunity to

point out the advantages of God’s way of life, such as the promise that we will have our needs met and we will never starve: “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and **all these things shall be added to you**” (Matthew 6:31–33).

Parents should constantly point out to their children the benefits of God’s way of life—sitting on the couch watching television, driving down the street, reading the paper and at *every opportunity* when God’s way of life can be contrasted with the suffering that this world’s lifestyle brings. There is no shortage of examples in this sick world; the question is: will parents put in the effort? Granted, it takes considerable time and a consistent focus on this meaningful goal, but it has **huge** payoffs. Relying on Sabbath services, by themselves, will not accomplish the task. Parents must reinforce Sabbath lessons, whenever possible, with both a mother’s nurturing love and gentle teaching, and a father’s consistent support and guidance.

Parents will find it helpful to frame God’s laws in terms of “**cause and effect**.” Children can easily grasp the “cause and effect” concept when discussing physical laws, such as gravity. If they jump out of a tall tree, gravity will yank them to the ground, resulting in a broken leg or a very painful sprain. The **effect** (the painful injury) was **caused** by violating the law of gravity (jumping out of the tree). God’s spiritual laws operate the same way. If we violate God’s laws, we automatically injure ourselves (or others) in some way. If we obey God’s laws, there is an automatic benefit or blessing.

My wife consistently emphasized the *choices* in our children’s

lives by maintaining clear rules of the household. When our children disobeyed those rules, we could remind them that they *chose* to disobey, so they had *chosen* to receive some form of punishment. This applied in the physical realm as well as the spiritual, as when my wife reminded our children to be very careful with knives, using them only when we gave permission. Our young sons tended to be intrigued with knives' shiny sharp blades, and sometimes attempted to cut into something on their own. When they did, they usually ended up with cuts on their hands. After one such mishap, I overheard one of our children telling my wife what his brother had done, saying: "Mommy, he wasn't supposed to do it, and he punished himself!" At least the concept was making sense!

Helping children understand the causes and effects of all of God's laws is crucial to helping them really want the benefit of God's way, instead of the harm they will do to themselves when they disobey God's laws. Notice God's instruction to us: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing [benefits] and cursing [penalties]; therefore choose [God's way of] life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days" (Deuteronomy 30:19–20).

Every family sets rules for its children. Most parents would never allow their children to run into the street after a bouncing ball; the chance of being hit by a passing car is too great. Clearly, this rule is for a child's benefit and is easy to explain. In the same way, parents can explain to their children that God also has certain family rules—His laws—that

are for our protection. Even by appealing only to a child's self-interest, parents can explain that God's law against stealing, for example, will protect them from possible jail time—or even from being shot at by the one from whom they are stealing!

Parents' goal in child rearing is to explain, in language that their children can *understand*, how all of God's principles are for their own good—and in fact that they are the "*blueprint of human happiness.*" Teaching God's principles on the basis of obedience—"just because God said so"—is a start, but a child's motivation and understanding must go far deeper. The more that parents can frame God's laws by the concept of *cause* and *effect*—benefits for obedience and penalties for disobedience—the more likely that children will internalize them. After all, who wants to harm themselves? We *all* want the benefit of a good life, full of happiness and joy instead of misery and emptiness. Truly godly parenting is ultimately deficient if it does not help children understand and truly grasp how God's way of life brings them very real benefits.

When children reach their teenage years, parents have the same goal—teaching the benefits of God's way—but must help their children understand more complex reasoning than in their earlier years. While this takes significant parental effort, it is well worth the effort. Many teenage boys can readily understand that physically assaulting a woman is wrong, but how would you explain to your teenage son that lusting after near-naked images of women is also wrong—that it will harm him and that, conversely, avoiding such lust will greatly benefit him? How could you convince a teenager who does not really grasp Jesus' instruction: "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her

in his heart" (Matthew 5:28)? How would you combat a teenager's assertion: "What's the difference? Who is it going to harm? After all, I am not married, and I am only looking."

Teenagers need to be taught that years of lusting will result in *great harm* to one's future marriage and happiness! Those who have become deeply involved in "visual immorality" (magazines, movies, internet, "adult entertainment clubs," etc.) literally experience a chemical response in the brain that mimics the chemical response generated by real live human contact! The brain can store images of airbrushed or surgically enhanced bodies that one has seen, and then compare a future mate to those false ideals. So we see that **consistent lust**, inflamed by visual immorality, will reduce appreciation for one's own mate, and will diminish the potential for happiness in marriage. The old adage, "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence," becomes especially true when one lives in a fantasy world of visual immorality. Children need to be taught that God's law regarding sexuality is a blessing that will enhance their lives, and marriages, in the years ahead of them.

Family Testimonies

Family testimonies, or family stories of God's dramatic interventions, healings and other blessings, can help children appreciate the reality of God, and of His loving nature as a living and vital being who is personally interested in our lives. Our family tells and re-tells many such stories of how we have experienced, through dramatic healings and protections from accidents, many wonderful examples of God's love, power, mercy and concern for us. We have never claimed to deserve God's intervention, but those interventions

have been a frequent reminder to our children of just how loving and merciful our God truly is.

For example, years ago, on one cold and rainy Sabbath in the Arkansas Ozarks, we were driving the 40 miles to church. All of a sudden, our car's windshield wipers quit clearing the windshield. We quickly realized that we were being hit by freezing rain. My wife immediately suggested: "We all need to pray that God will protect us." She and our four children closed their eyes and prayed silently for God's protection; I tried as best I could to pray silently while driving. About five miles further along, on the shady north side of the mountain, we suddenly hit "black ice" and began to slide down the road sideways—out of control! Just then, another car coming the opposite way also hit the ice and lost control. We were hurtling toward each other at about 40 miles per hour—a combined speed of about 80 miles per hour if we were to hit each other! It was a sure collision. The thought flashed through my mind: "This is it!" Just at the last possible

moment, we felt a **tremendous unseen force** push us sideways off the road. We came to a soft landing in the mud, hitting nothing. Ten feet further on the left was a large cement culvert, and to the right of the road was a 40-foot embankment leading down to a river. Our hearts were pounding as we realized we were unhurt. We sat there, stunned, extremely thankful for God's intervention.

Over the years, my wife and I have talked with our children about many such dramatic interventions—including many healings. These stories have become our personal family "**testimonies**" of God's intervention—stories that have reinforced our appreciation of the **love, the reality and the power** of our God. All parents should regularly share personal testimonies from their own lives, to help bind their children to the real God.

Parents' testimonies may include the dramatic stories of how God intervened in their lives to open their minds to His truth. My wife has often told our children of how great

a miracle it was that God opened her mind. Her personal testimony extends from when she at first believed that God's Church was totally deceived, to the time she accepted the challenge to prove the Truth, no matter where it led, to the day when she and I first sat in God's Church, awestruck that God Himself was actually calling and choosing us. My wife has often reminded our children of her testimony as a miracle of God: as "the blinds being opened to her mind, enabling her to finally see."

Parents have an obligation before the Great God to do the best they can to train and shape their children's minds in His image. Parents must consistently use *every tool* that is available, knowing that their children will be affected not only by teaching but by personal family stories of God's love and mercy. As children see the example of their parents' lives, they can see for themselves that God's way of life will also benefit them tremendously, and that His laws are for their own good. LCN

Upcoming **Tomorrow's World** Telecasts

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 AM ET

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

January 2	2005 and Prophecy
January 9	The End of the World!
January 16	Tomorrow's World: What Will It Be Like?
January 23	The New Roman Empire
January 30	Watch the Middle East
February 6	A Nation of Adulterers?
February 13	America's Coming Catastrophe
February 20	How You Can Be Spared!
February 27	How to Get Answers When You Pray

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

Open Doors for the Work

(continued from page 2)

more powerfully than ever—building on the foundation that Christ laid through me and all of us back then! I *never* would have wanted us to lie down and do nothing! A bigger Work *does* need to be done before the end of the age!”

I hope that each of you can “catch the vision” and join us in *praying fervently* for God’s powerful blessing on this Work! As time goes on, dear brethren, I feel that we should help people realize that we are, indeed, *continuing the Work* that Christ began through Herbert W. and Loma D. Armstrong. For it was *our work*, also, and Mr. Armstrong would *want us*—so many of whom worked very closely with him in building the Work from the late 1940s onward—to feel that way.

As many of you know, I worked *very closely* with Mr. Armstrong—full-time in the Work from 1952 until his death in 1986. At one point, I was made Second Vice President—third man in the Work—for some 12 years. More than anyone still living and serving, I was active in meetings with Mr. Armstrong and others regarding plans for radio, television, campaigns, establishing congregations and managing the growth of the Work. So I do sincerely feel—in all humility—a special responsibility to carry on that Work under the leadership of Christ—the real Head of the Church and Work of God.

By the time most of you read this, it will be 19 years since the death of Herbert W. Armstrong, and it will be 12 years since the beginning of this present Work which Christ has been doing through so many of us. The Bible indicates that the number 12 is the number of “organized beginnings” (as Mr. Armstrong put it), so we are now at a point when truly *big* things should begin to happen! Everything now indicates that we are truly near the end of this age. Now that we are here and settled in Charlotte,

NC, this Work is now set up and organized in a way that we can move forward far more swiftly and far more expansively than ever before. We now have a depth of organization, of unity and of experienced men and women so that we can complete the Work in a way that was simply not possible a few years ago.

Therefore, dear brethren, as some of the truly **horrifying** things begin to take place in world affairs and in our own nations—drought, famine, *disease epidemics*, earthquakes, storms and also *religious persecution*, we should realize that the “end” is truly near and that we need to “get going” in finishing this Work more than ever! I pray that every one of us may be more inspired to “cry out” to God for His guidance, help and power as never before! Truly, this is **His** Work—not the work of man. As most of you realize, we are, in fact, carrying out the Work that Christ began through Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong more fully than any other group on earth. We are not perfect. We are not “there” yet in many, many ways. But we do need to sense what is happening, and also to understand our *responsibility* to respond to Christ in order to “finish the Work” in the way He wants—and in the way Mr. Armstrong would have wanted us to do if he were still here.

Also, as I will explain more fully in the Editorial in this issue, we need to *immerse ourselves* in Bible study, meditation and prayer so that we can learn to put our full **trust** in God! Only in this way can we go through trials and persecutions and be able to “stay the course” as we should. I hope that this overview of our recent Council of Elders meetings and some of the plans we are making will encourage all of you and inspire you regarding this wonderful undertaking to which Christ has called us. May God encourage and inspire each of you to do your part with all your heart!



How Much Fruit Are You Bearing? (continued from page 12)

governed by lust, greed and covetousness. Since Scripture tells us that covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5), loyalty to our Creator requires us to lead a life that is neither out of control nor filled with excess.

When we examine the fruit that our lives are bearing, we must recognize God’s part in the process. We cannot manufacture spiritual fruit, nor can we make it grow, mature and ripen

by our own strength of will. We must, however, understand how much God *delights* in seeing abundant fruit in our lives. He is in no way indifferent. We never have to wonder whether God is really interested; He is an avid gardener, and *you* are His garden! He takes great pleasure in seeing healthy spiritual fruit come to maturity in your life!

God is the One who causes spiritual seed to germinate in our lives, but *our hearts and minds* are the soil in which it must take root and grow. Are we offering Him soil that is fer-

tile? Are our hearts and minds truly humble, so that we are open and receptive to God’s correction and thankful for His involvement? Do we genuinely love His truth more than anything or anyone? If so, we will be continually searching the Scripture so that we may understand more deeply the spiritual qualities that God desires to see in us. We will continually ask Him to transform us, by the renewing work of His Spirit—and to glorify Himself by bearing more spiritual fruit in our lives! 

Trust in the *Real* God*(continued from page 3)*

friends and loved ones to apostasy, confusion or even death, it is important that we focus on the **reality** of our heavenly Father, and learn to build the kind of *faithful relationship* that Abraham built. In the persecutions, and in the enormous trials and tests that will come upon us over the next few years, we must realize that we can *only survive* spiritually through the type of deep and abiding **trust** in God that Abraham had.

idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:7–8). It is very revealing that God equates the “cowardly” and the “unbelieving” even with **murderers** and others who commit truly enormous sins! If we cannot learn to **trust fully** in the God who created us—who gives us life and breath and is constantly revealing Himself through *powerfully intervening* in world affairs as His Word describes—then that great God *will not have us* as His children,

situation—probably saving his life—and “Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison” until the king called on him for more advice later on.

Soon, as Jeremiah had warned, the Babylonians stormed into Jerusalem, conquered the city and killed most of the leaders. Then God gave some encouraging words: “Meanwhile the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, ‘Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

More than ever, we must realize that it is only a *little while* until Jesus Christ will, in fact, return to this earth! So we must *live by faith* in the traumatic years just ahead! We must not “draw back to perdition,” as so many have done; we must truly believe in God and *believe what He says*.

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

More than ever, we must realize that it is only a *little while* until Jesus Christ will, in fact, return to this earth! So we **must live by faith** in the traumatic years just ahead! We must not “draw back to perdition,” as so many have done; we must truly **believe** in God and *believe what He says*.

Notice this biblical passage revealing how God *looks at things*: “He who **overcomes** shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, **unbelieving**, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers,

to bear His name, to live forever in His Kingdom! Each of us must *quietly think through* the implications of this. We must *study*, learn to put our full **trust** in Almighty God and truly “cry out” to God to give us *increased faith*! For, as we saw in Hebrews 10, “the just shall *live by faith*.”

Because of his strong warnings about God’s coming judgment and the sins of Israel (Jeremiah 38:1–13), Jeremiah was let down into a dungeon where there was no water—there was mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire (38:6). But God guided a faithful black man, “Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs who was in the king’s house” (v. 7). This dedicated and courageous man went to the king to warn him of Jeremiah’s serious condition. The king gave Ebed-Melech permission and, trying to keep this secret from the princes who wanted to kill Jeremiah, faithful Ebed-Melech and others “took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah” (v. 11). So they brought him up from that terrible and dangerous

‘Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, and they shall be performed in that day before you. But I will deliver you in that day,’ says the LORD, ‘and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid. For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, *because you have put your trust in Me*,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 39:15–18).

As we go through our coming trials and tests, brethren, we must learn to put our **trust** in God just as Ebed-Melech did! We need to look to God continually, as **all** His faithful servants have done throughout the ages—from Abraham, to Moses, to David, to Peter and Paul—and, of course, Jesus Christ Himself. This attitude of **complete trust** in God as our Father makes us very special in God’s sight. We must pray for it, study for it, cultivate it, build it and use it in every way. We must truly learn to “walk by faith” in the months and years ahead. Please do this, and *never forget this lesson!* ☐

Ordinations

On the Sabbath of May 8, 2004, *Mr. Gideon Benitez* was ordained to Pastor rank by Messrs. Charles Bryce, Bruce Tyler, Rod King and Rod McNair. Mr. Benitez serves as the area pastor of Central and Northwestern Mindanao in the Philippines. On that same day, Mr. Benitez ordained *Mr. Edwin Benitez* and *Mr. Carlito Pisalbon* as deacons. Both men serve the congregation in Maranding, Philippines.

Also on May 8, 2004, Messrs. Charles Bryce, Bruce Tyler, Rod King and Rod McNair ordained Messrs. Anastacio Catamco and Mr. Freddie Benitez as elders. Mr.

Catamco, a long-time member of God's church, serves the congregation in San Fernando, Philippines. Mr. Benitez, a long-time member and deacon, serves the congregation in Don Carlos.

Mr. Severiano Lopez was ordained as a deacon on June 5, 2004, by Mr. Gideon Benitez. Mr. Lopez serves the congregation in Bogabongan, Philippines.

Mr. Bienvenido Redoble was ordained as a deacon on June 19, 2004, by Messrs. Gideon and Freddie Benitez. Mr. Redoble is serving the brethren in Mauswagon, Philippines.

Mr. Elesio Catamco was ordained as a deacon on July 17, 2004, by Mr. Gideon Benitez, assisted by Messrs. Anastacio Catamco and Freddie Benitez. Mr. Catamco serves the congregation in San Fernando, Philippines.

Mr. Feliciano Rivera was ordained as a deacon on September 18, 2004, by Mr. Rod King. Mr. Rivera serves the brethren in Sindangan, Philippines.

Mr. Mike Elertson was ordained to the ministry on December 5 by Mr. Rand Millich in Kansas City, Missouri. He and his wife Roslyn will be serving the growing Work in Canada from Toronto, Ontario.

Anniversary

The Calgary, Alberta congregation honored *Mr. and Mrs. Jack Routledge* at a social after the Sabbath on January 1, 2005, celebrating their 61st wedding anniversary. There had not been opportunity to honor them for their 60th the previous year. Jack and Yvonne were married at Melfort, Saskatchewan on December 29, 1943 and were baptized together in March of 2002—both at 80 years of age! After sharing a special cake and receiving a card of greetings from the brethren, Mr. Routledge rose and spoke eloquently on their secret for a long and happy marriage.

Marriage

Angie Malney and *Justin Wilsbach* were married on September 5, 2004. The ceremony was conducted by Mr. Rand Millich.

Births

Michael and Shonta Palmer, of the Anderson, SC congregation, announce the birth of their son, *Noah Bernard Palmer*, on December 9, 2004, weighing 8 pounds and measuring 19 inches.

Rachel and Dan Contardi of the Minneapolis, Minnesota LCG congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, *Elizabeth Rae Contardi*. She was born on November 18, 2004, weighing 6 pounds, 5 ounces. Grandparents Bob and Bonnie Goddard, and Carol Contardi, are thrilled to welcome another grandchild; Mildred Clancy of the Kingston congregation welcomes a great-granddaughter.

Legacies and Other Gifts

From time to time, the Church receives requests for information about how to make a current gift to the Living Church of God, or a future gift by way of a will or trust or other charitable means. Those wishing to receive such information should send their request to the Legal Affairs office at Headquarters. Please write to:

Living Church of God
Attn: Legal Affairs
PO Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227-8010

You may also write via email to legal@cogl.org. As the laws of different countries vary, most of the information available through Legal Affairs will only apply to the United States. However, Legal Affairs will furnish as much information as possible. You may also wish to consult with your own financial and legal advisors.

In Loving Memory

Jim Frederick, a member of the Sacramento, California, congregation, died on November 8, 2004. Jim had been suffering from cancer for several years, and his condition had been worsening over the last few months of his life. Though it was a long ordeal for Jim and his family, God's hand was evident in guiding and comforting him through it all. He had a special place in the hearts and minds of the Sacramento congregation, and his spiritual brothers and sisters look forward to seeing him again soon, pain-free. Jim is survived by brothers Gary (LCG member in Fresno) and Tom, children Angela, Joshua and Jeremiah, and grandchildren Dustin, Emily, Caleb and Marissa. More than 100 friends and brethren gathered at the memorial service in Roseville California, on Sunday, November 14, conducted by Mr. Rod McNair, pastor of the Sacramento congregation.

Randle Graham Rice died peacefully at home on August 14, 2004. He was 70 years old, and had battled a serious heart condition for 14 years. Baptized in January 1977, he loved the Work of God. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Charlotte Rice, of Mentone, Alabama; by his brother Arthur (Mary) Rice and brother-in-law Raymond Campbell, of Birmingham, Alabama; by his son Richard (Tracie) Rice and father-in-law Harry Campbell of Huntsville, Alabama; by his daughter Tammy (Jerry) Adcock of Nashville, Tennessee; his son Cecil (Kendra) Rice of Acworth, Georgia; and his grandchildren Blake Rice and Kyle and Grace Adcock. A

memorial service was held in Birmingham, Alabama, on August 19, 2004, with Mr. Bob League officiating.

Angie Kschesinski, a long-time member of God's Church, died on July 8, 2004. Mrs. Kschesinski was the wife of Mr. Herman Kschesinski, a deacon serving the Barrie, Ontario congregation of the Living Church of God. The Kschesinskis were first called into God's Church back in the 1960s. Angie will be missed by many. Church members from many parts of the world were recipients of her letters and cards of encouragement. She was eager to help, and was conscious of the needs of others right up to her death. Mr. Frank Best, Associate Pastor in Ontario, Canada, conducted the funeral service in Kitchener.

Viktor Vidmar, age 68, died suddenly of massive heart failure on November 26, 2004. Born in Yugoslavia, he immigrated to Canada at age 19, and became a fine masonry worker. In January 2001, Mr. Vidmar made contact with the Church and started attending faithfully in Calgary—rain or snow, traveling by bus, despite suffering from the effects of a previous stroke. Baptized on March 31, 2004, he will be remembered for his courage, tenacity and friendly smile.

Mr. Vidmar is survived by three children, Charlcie, Andrej (Darlene) and Renee, as well as three grandchildren, Mandy, Alyssa and Matthew. He was predeceased by his wife Winnifred. The funeral service was held on December 6, 2004.

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 lcn@cogl.org).

Living Youth Camp

LYC 2005: Time to Get Ready!

By Gerald Weston

Are you ready for a break from school? Would you like to see the good ol' outdoors? Would you enjoy the opportunity to spend time with friends—and to make new friends? What about challenging yourself to learn some new skill, do something you have never done before or travel to new territory? If so, LYC 2005 is the place to be!

The pre-teen camps are open to campers age 8–12. The teen camp is open to campers age 13–17. High school workers are also needed; it is preferable if they have attended LYC in previous years. Adult and young adult workers are also needed to oversee various programs and work in support areas.

This year, we are making a special appeal to any adults who would like to help out with one of the pre-teen camps. The continuation of these camps is very much dependent on having sufficient numbers of adults to oversee various programs, to serve as counselors, and to serve in support areas. If you think you can help, *please* apply. In addition to contacting the addresses below for applications, you may also download applications from www.youth-web.org. All applications should be returned no later than April 15, 2005. Applications received after that date may be accepted, but the likelihood of your acceptance will drop. Please note that in addition to the tuition fees mentioned below, there is a non-refundable \$5 fee for all applicants.

Three camps are planned for this summer:

Teen: July 19–August 1. Northwoods Camp, MI (near the eastern upper peninsula town of Pickford).

Tuition is \$345 for campers, \$120 for high school

staff and \$40 for adult staff. High school workers must be 16 or older; young adult workers are those aged 19 to 24. Please note that the arrival date for counselors and department heads is Sunday, July 17.

You may request an application by e-mail at lyc@cogl.org, by mail at Living Youth Camp, P.O. Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010 or by phone at (704) 844-1960, x. 235. (please ask for Sue when you call).

Pre-Teen: June 5–10. Fort Parker State Park, TX (near Mexia, 90 miles south of Dallas).

Tuition for campers is \$75 (\$65 for the second camper from the same family and \$55 for the third). Tuition for high school and adult staff is \$20. High school workers must be 15 or older; young adult workers are those aged 19 to 24.

You may request an application by mail from Mr. John Ogwyn, 1218 Brooks Dr., Kilgore, TX 75662 or by phone at (979) 709-2712 (please ask for Lori Forrestier).

Pre-Teen: June 19–26. Camp Sherwood Forest, MO (one hour northwest of St. Louis, in Cuivre River State Park).

Tuition for campers is \$100 (\$90 for the second camper from the same family and \$80 for the third). Tuition for high school and adult staff is \$40; high school workers must be 15 or older.

You may request an application from Mr. Randy Gregory by e-mail at rgregory@cogl.org, by mail at 1981 Alpine Court, Gurnee, IL 60031 or by phone at (847) 249-1057.